



GOSPORT
Borough Council

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

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ALLOTMENT STRATEGY
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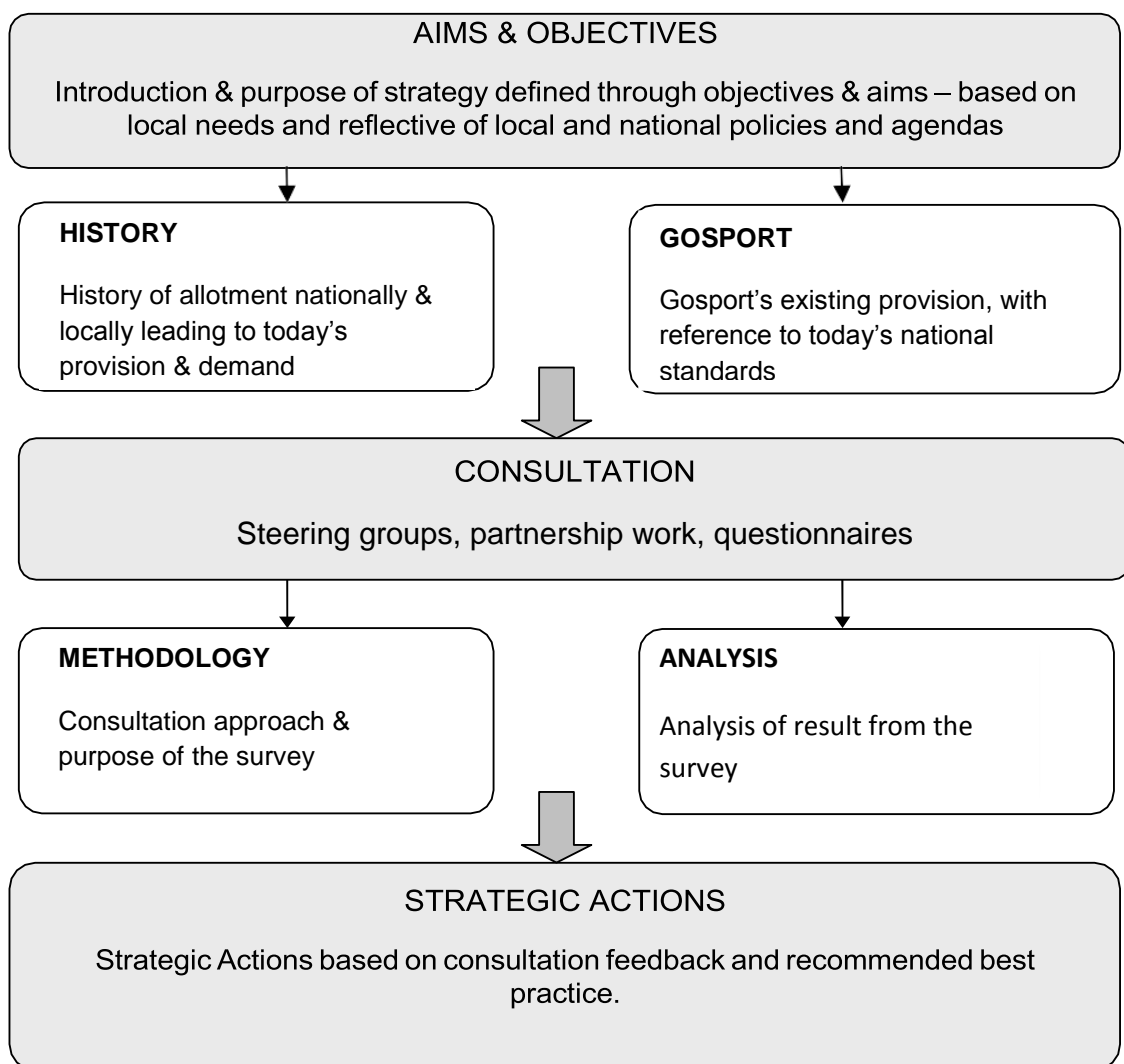
1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Allotment gardens and spaces to grow food are an important part of the green space and leisure provision. They offer people across the UK the opportunity to strengthen their communities, achieve more sustainable lifestyles and maintain a better quality of life.
- 1.2 Growing your own food delivers many benefits, the most recognised of these is the provision of a better diet which in turn helps create an improved level of physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, food grown on allotment gardens can act as a good resource for learning new skills, a better environment for wildlife, and a place for increased social connectivity.
- 1.3 Gosport Borough is home to eleven Council run sites and one Parish site that is managed by Gosport Allotment holders and Gardeners Association. Adopting this strategy incorporating all identified allotment supply provides a more functional and connected Allotment Strategy for the Borough of Gosport.
- 1.4 The production of a strategy for allotments in Gosport comes at a time when interest in the activity had increased and surged with the announcement by Government that allotment gardening was a permitted activity for people during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown: This report is produced with a backdrop of a fast growing waiting list and some sites are already operating at full capacity with no immediate resolution to accommodate the increased demand.
- 1.5 Gosport Borough Council's Streetscene department has produced this strategy with the continued support and discussion from the allotment steering group. The group includes officers from the Streetscene department, Elected Members, Gosport Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association, Democratic Services and local Police Community Support Officers.
- 1.6 The strategy has been produced following consultation with the Allotment Stakeholders Working Group and has been influenced by the results of the allotment survey carried out in 2019. A link to the survey on Survey Monkey was sent via e-mail and was published on the GBC website. Hard copies were available from the town hall, and allotment association run allotment stores. This survey captured the attitude with regards to the existing provision, as well as identifying the allotment community's view towards a range of topics and was circulated to all existing tenants via various platforms.
- 1.7 The overall objective of the strategy is to increase the ability and opportunity for people to cultivate allotment plots in Gosport. The strategy seeks through its targets and initiatives to optimise the use of allotment sites for existing and potential plot holders, identify needs and

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meet demand

- 1.8 All recommendations made in the strategy will be considered in terms of the long term sustainability of the service.
- 1.9 The strategy is aimed at providing a vision for how allotments and locally grown food will be catered for in the Borough of Gosport over the next 5 years.
- 1.10 The process that was adopted in order to develop the Allotment Strategy for Gosport is described in the following diagram:



2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

2.1 The aim of the strategy is to look at delivering a more accessible and sustainable allotment service. To do this it is intended to increase the quality of the provision, by helping existing or new allotment holders to access new resources; and to increase the level of the provision where there is a shortage, looking for opportunities for new plots or to regenerate unavailable plots and maximize opportunities to grow food within the Borough of Gosport.

2.2 Based on the overarching aim 'Delivering a more accessible and sustainable allotment service', there are four strands that can be broken down as follows:

Meeting Demand

Ensure existing provision meets the demand
Five year management plan
Ensure adequate resources

Management

Maintain and improve the infrastructure,
Work in partnership with the Allotment Associations
ensure good management procedures and processes

Monitoring

Evaluation of processes
GBC Procedures and Processes
Service delivery

Promotion

Education
Social Media
Community outreach

2.3 This strategy provides a framework for the next five years to develop and manage allotments in partnership with the Allotment Associations and Allotment Stakeholders Working Group. (The strategic vision is aimed at helping create greater levels of social inclusion for residents as the community engage in this relatively social activity. Alongside this, the movement encourages a healthy way of life for a variety of reasons associated with this activity as well as improving knowledge and awareness of natural processes).

2.4 GBC would look to provide accessible areas to individuals, community groups and for starter plots. As tenants vacate their tenancy where possible 10 rod plots will be split into 5 rod plots as a minimum. In exceptional circumstances a lower plot size may be offered in consultation with Gosport Borough Officer.

2.5 History of Allotments and National Recommendations

Allotment legislation has been altered and adapted over time to meet changing needs and demand. Land allocation, allotment provision, and a service to facilitate provision remain a fundamental right under the Allotments Act 1950ⁱ, where there is demand for the public to continue the tradition and pastime of sustainable self- sufficiency in growing food.

A Historical Context

Historic Tradition of Allotment Gardening

Traditionally formed as areas of land to use for a sustainable supply of self-grown produce for consumption (and survival).

The divides between rich and poor and disproportionate land ownership affected food access. The General Enclosure Act of 1845 was formed which 'required that the Commissioners should make provision for the landless poor in the form of "field gardens" limited to a quarter of an acre to resolve this in what was to become the beginning of allotments as we have today in the UK.'ⁱⁱ

Urban allotments plots increased during the 19th Century as a result of growth of high density housing, with little or no garden area for planting or growing food.

Allotment provision fluctuates for example;

First World War prompted a huge growth in the number of allotments from 600,000 to 1,500,000.

The Second World War again increased the role for allotments and the 'Dig for Victory' campaign saw annual food production from allotments rise to 1,300,000 tonnes per year from around 1,400,000 plots.

As when food shortage threats cease, the need and demand for allotments decline. With land allocation being used for new functions. An increase of people's interest of allotments peaked during Covid-19.

Allotment gardening was a permitted activity during lockdown. Reduced circumstances meant some people had a greater need to grow produce.

Some plots were left unattended that require an increased effort to bring them back in to use.

There was a sharp decline in the provision to around 500,000 in the 1970s. The decline continued during the 1970s but at much slower rate ⁱⁱⁱ

Allotments, The Law and Recommendations

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no national rules or recommendations with regards to quantity or time limits for meeting waiting list demand. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most widely acknowledged recommendation is the '1969 Thorpe Report which recommends a minimum provision equivalent to 15 per 1,000 households, but this is not legally binding' |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is estimated that since 1969 some 30% of the then available allotments land has been lost irrevocably. Hence, the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NSALG) recommends that the irreducible minimum provision today should be 20 standard (300 sq.yards) plots per 1,000 households.' ^{iv} |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•• The Survey of Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms, carried out by the University of Derby on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2006 showed that the national average provision was 7 plots per 1,000 population. |

3.0 BENEFITS OF ALLOTMENT GARDENING

3.1 Allotment gardening is a pursuit that provides a wide range of benefit to local communities and the environment and these can make a positive change to the quality of people's lives. In addition to the advantages of producing good quality, local, low cost, fresh food; gardeners gain the benefits of; healthy exercise, enabled social inclusiveness and reflects the ideals of sustainability and well-being. Allotments are available to all residents of Gosport including the old, young, disabled and people from ethnic communities. The high value low cost benefits are readily available to all.

3.2 Allotments are a unique and valuable aspect of the local area contributing to the quality of Gosport's urban environment. Gardening by the public has increased attention to allotment gardening through provision of greenspace, this not only provides for recreation but offers habitat's for wildlife.

3.3 The provision of allotments by Local Authorities is a statutory duty. Gosport Borough Council has a statutory duty to provide allotments and recognises them as an important asset and will continue to develop and provide them as a valuable contribution to the Borough's health and wellbeing by providing health, social, economic and environmental benefits which contribute to climate change policy and can be summarised as:

- Low cost fresh food production for the family.
- Promotion of healthy affordable diets.
- Healthy recreational activity.
- The opportunity to maintain and develop skills.
- Social contact and as a contribution to community spirit.
- Better partnership working.
- Working towards zero pesticide use.
- Organic growing.

3.4 In addition GBC is one of the partners in the newly formed Gosport Food Partnership (GFP). Allotments fit well with this Partnership's long term objectives as it aims to launch projects to reduce food waste, help residents grow their own food and boost healthy eating.

Working together the Gosport Food Partnership aim's to ensure that everyone in Gosport has the means, knowledge and confidence to get food related support and advice as and when they need it thereby

enabling access to food, healthy living and sustainable food sources.

Its immediate focus is

- Improve food provision for those in food and economic vulnerability.
- Promote sustainable food sources and healthy living.
- Provide and receive support from GFP partners.
- Provide support for smaller food related groups that may be setting up.

3.5 Available land is now at a premium for house building to achieve Government targets, with the trend towards smaller gardens or communal areas, to which Allotments can provide benefits to all.

3.6 The allotment strategy is to build on the excellent work that has already been undertaken, by providing the framework to increase the scope of these benefits, target areas for improvement.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Gosport Borough Council in consultation with the Allotment Stakeholders Working Group undertook a survey, targeted at the existing allotment tenants which closed 4th April 2019.

4.2 Participants were asked 21 questions, to which Gosport Borough Council received 234 responses.

4.3 The strength of the strategy is the identification of current trends through gathering of qualitative and quantitative primary data to ascertain from the survey data the reality of today's needs and demands in Gosport.

4.4 The questions contained in the allotment survey were aimed at assessing the degree of satisfaction for the existing service; and principal benefits felt from participating in allotment gardening and identifying areas for improvement.

4.2 Key outcomes

4.2.1 A highlight of some of headlines from the questionnaire in table 3, a full summary can be found in Appendix A

Table 3

Satisfied or very satisfied with the level of service	74.12%
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the level of service	10.52%

4.2.2 Gosport Borough Council has prepared this document in accordance with the recommendations on developing an allotment strategy and the proposals are in keeping with the examples of best practice given by the Local Government Commission in 'Growing in the Community: a good practice guide for the management of allotments' and with contributions from the Allotment Stakeholders Working Group.

5.0 LEGISLATION

- 5.1 Gosport Borough Council's delivery of its allotment service provision is managed through a complex network of legislation relating to allotment administration, which is governed by statute and case law.
- 5.2 The legal framework has legislation which directly affects allotment administration and the development constraints on this strategy are contained within the following statutes:
- 5.3 The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908
Repealed and consolidated the previous law and deals almost entirely with the provision of allotments and the compensations payable to tenants on the termination of their tenancies
- 5.4 The Land Settlement (Facilities) Act 1919G
Abolished the reference to 'labouring population', which had been a previous requisite, and made Metropolitan Borough Councils allotment authorities for the first time.
- 5.5 The Allotments Act 1922
This gave some measure of security of tenure to the tenants and improved their rights to compensation on termination
- 5.6 The Allotments Act 1925
Required the Town Planning Authorities to give special consideration to allotments when preparing their town planning schemes.
- 5.7 The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1926
Primarily concerned with small holdings.
- 5.8 The Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act 1931
A measure to relieve unemployment at the time, by encouraging allotments and small holdings.
- 5.9 The Allotments Act 1950
As a consequence of the report of the Allotments Advisory Committee, although not all the recommendations were implemented. In particular, it improved the security of tenure in respect of allotment gardens and amended the law relating to allotment tenancies. It also restricted the obligations of Local Authorities in the matter of allotment provision and increased the amount that may be expended out of the rates on the allotments.
- 5.10 Subsequent legislation, particularly the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 and the Local Government and Planning (Amendment) Act 1981 have had considerable influence on forward planning of allotments.
- 5.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) ^v and

associated National Planning Practice Guidance are also relevant. Specifically Section 8 paragraphs 92 – 93 of NPPF 2019.

“92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

(b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

(c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”

“93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

(b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

(c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

(d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

(e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”

There are no formal national standards for provision of allotments. In

1969, the Thorpe Report recommended a standard of 0.5 acres per 1,000 population, however, the publication 'Growing in the Community, Good Practice Guide' recommends that a more useful measure is 'plots per household'. In 1993, the average throughout England was 15 plots per 1000 household. In Gosport this is currently 22 per 1000 Household.

- 5.12 Gosport has eleven Council owned allotment sites spread evenly across the Borough totalling an area of approximately 22.5 hectares 0.27 hectares of allotment provision per 1,000 of the population with in Gosport, This is equivalent to approximately 1,050 Plots.
- 5.13 GBC's allotments are present in 8 of the 17 Gosport wards, however due to Government Legislation regarding ward boundaries this subject to change within the next twelve to twenty four month.

Table 1

Wards	Allotment Site within that Ward	Status
Alverstoke	0	
Anglesey	The Rectory	Private
Bridgemary North	Tukes Avenue & Wych Lane	Temporary - Both
Bridgemary South	Rowner	Statutory
Brockhurst	Brockhurst & Middlecroft	Statutory & Statutory
Christchurch	0	
Elson	Elson	Temporary
Forton	0	
Grange	Lee on the Solent	Temporary
Hardway	0	
Lee on Solent East	0	
Lee on Solent West	Lee on the Solent	Temporary
Leesland	Camden	Statutory
Leesland	Leesland Park	Statutory
Peel Common	0	
Privett	0	
Rowner & Holbrook	0	
Town	Park Road	Temporary

- 5.14 GBC continues to strive to meet the demand across the borough. There continues to be an increase in demand and growing interest which was particularly evident during 2020 (Covid-19 pandemic). Currently 629 residents are waiting for plots in Gosport. Applicants are only permitted to apply to go on one wait list for a plot Table 2 shows the wait list for each of the sites;

Table 2

Site	Number of Individuals waiting
Brockhurst	180
Camden	103
Elson	111
Lee on the Solent	152
Middlecroft	118
Leesland Park	167
Park Road	109
Rowner	97
Tukes Avenue	22
Wych Lane	69
Total number of Individuals waiting	629

- 5.15 Gosport Borough Council has acquired land at Lee on Solent, Manor Way open space, with a proposal to create new allotments. The stakeholders welcomed that the proposal would provide additional allotments for Lee on Solent as the waiting list was particularly long.
- 5.16 Gosport Borough Council has prepared this document in accordance with the recommendations on developing an allotment strategy and the proposals are in keeping with the examples of best practice given by the Local Government Commission in 'Growing in the Community: a good practice guide for the management of allotments' and with contributions from the Allotment Stakeholders Working Group.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENTS IN GOSPORT

Streetscene undertake the management of GBC's allotments under the Head of Streetscene, along with infrastructural works utilising the annual revenue budget of approximately £36,990.

6.1 Gosport Borough Council has an Allotment Stakeholders Working Group which meets four times a year. The group consists of Council Officers, Elected Members and Gosport Allotment Association Members and two Non- Association members the aims of the group are;

- To facilitate greater understanding of the needs and resources of the council and the allotment holders.
- For the Council and allotment holders and other stakeholders to work to secure improvements to allotment gardening throughout the borough.
- To promote the health and wellbeing of allotments to tenants.

To refer any suggestions and proposals made for submission to the Council's Community Board for further consideration and discussion

6.2 Wardens

Volunteer wardens to be known as site representative will work under GBC's Volunteer Policy. Site representative will be defined in a role description and they will be governed by the Volunteers Agreement.

6.2.1 The volunteers would be required to undertake induction training to include Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Equal Opportunity, Complaints and Grievance Dismissal.

Where possible, site representatives will be allocated a site at which they are a tenant.

A summary of their tasks are:

- To assist GBC in identifying non-cultivation of allotment plots.
-
- Represent GBC on site to meet with prospective new tenants to identify available plot locations (as directed by GBC).
- Attend regular site meetings with the GBC's appointed officer.

- Act as a liaison between current tenants and GBC appointed officer.
- Assist in the management and maintenance of site notice boards.
- Offer advice to new tenants and existing tenants regarding their tenancy as required.

6.2.3 The responsibilities of the Gosport Borough Council are summarised as follows:

- Overall management of sites.
- Liaising with associations, public and residents and Wardens.
- Legal advice and mediation in relation to provision, tenancy agreements and disputes.
- Major infrastructural works to fencing, footways, roadways and buildings including replacement or upgrading.
- Tree works.
- Supply of water, mains replacement, major leaks.
- Rent reviews.

6.2.4 GBC would also be responsible for Promotion, marketing, signage and profiling of the service.

6.3 Governance and Performance

6.3.1 GBC would look to review the existing tenancy agreement with the view to consider the tenancy year for the purpose of invoicing. Improve management processes to address inconsistencies in plot cultivation. Continue to monitor and review statistical information to produce improvement/work program for consideration by elected council members.

6.3.2 Continue to work with community groups throughout the Borough such as Friends Groups, Volunteers, Gosport in Bloom, Give Gain Grow.

6.3.3 GBC are working work with existing community groups to strive to achieve a greener Gosport supporting localised established groups such as GGG, the growing project, Motiv8, to help achieve targets and work in tandem with the GFP & HWB Strategy and climate change.

There is a further aim to reach out to existing and new community groups to promote horticultural interest to support GIB SSEIB & Green flag attainment.

6.4 Climate Change

6.4.1 Consider educational information to be distributed to allotment plot holders to encourage working practices that will have a positive impact on climate change.

6.4.2 Discourage the use of soft wood for the purpose of fencing which is currently used to define boundary's, prevent animal disturbance to plots

6.4.3 Promote educational information regarding the use of sustainable plastic and alternative horticultural practices regarding weed management cultivation and water conservation and composting within the boundaries of the tenants plot.

6.4.4 GBC's long-term aim is to remove skip provision and discourage the cultural practice of bringing "Recyclable materials" to site that eventually require Council intervention and disposal. The Council will take enforcement action through the tenancy agreement as required.

6.5 Management arrangements

6.5.1 The Council will continue to liaise with the Allotment Stakeholder Working Group to review the management of allotments to ensure best practice.

7.0 KEY OBJECTIVES

7.1 To ensure the existing provision of Allotments meet current trends for demand

- a Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide allotments as determined by section 23 of the Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908. The Council will fully recognise its responsibilities under this Act. National Planning Policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) and supported by the national Planning Practice Guidance (nPPG) which is a living document and regularly updated by MHCLG now makes specific reference to allotments, including details on the protection and disposal of sites. Allotment sites are also subject to an additional measure of protection as previously undeveloped land, which has the lowest priority for new development.
- b The Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted 2015) (GBLP) LP36: Allotments <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/article/1292/Local-Plan-2011-2029-Adopted-October-2015>. The Policy seeks to protect existing allotments from inappropriate development (part 1) and to facilitate the promotion of new additional allotments where the opportunities arise.
- c GBC to consider whether temporary sites can become statutory in accordance with current legislation.
- d The Council are currently reviewing the GBLP which will be the subject of public consultation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination.
- e The current demands for allotments in Gosport is an ever growing one with demand now clearly outstripping available provision, historical data can be found <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/amr> Local Plan 2011-2019 (adopted 2015) GBLP LP36: The Policy seeks to protect existing allotments from inappropriate development (part 1). As such the waiting lists need to be reduced in order to meet the statutory requirement to provide to demand.
- f Provide indicative figures against each site to determine timescales that prospective tenants are held on waiting lists.
- g The previous unmet demand has been mitigated by the development of manor Way Open Space in to an Allotment and rest Garden.
- h Gosport Borough Council needs to have an open minded approach to finding new sites which should in the first instance concentrate on the re-allocation of current open space/leisure land. (nPPG) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- i Private sites may be encouraged to offer up land under lease for the

community. Investigation in to the possibility of use and extending the provision should be actively investigated as an alternative option for sites.

- j The review of allotment provision will need to include an assessment of both current needs and latent demand, which will need to be balanced against the Council's ability to achieve a manageable level of provision where quality can be maintained within available resources.
- k In order to maximise current existing plots the council 10 rod plots will be split into 5 rod plots as a minimum. In exceptional circumstances a lower plot size may be offered in consultation with Gosport Borough Officer.

7.1.1 Protect existing allotment sites. By following all statutory and 'Growing in the Community Good Practice Guide' requirements

1. The Local authority has a statutory responsibility to provide allotments and will continue to monitor current provision and identify any further need if required
2. Investigate feasibility of changing temporary allotment site to statutory sites safeguard the land from future development.
3. Reduction of existing 10 rod plots to a minimum of 5 rods on vacation of tenant where practical.

7.2 To maintain and improve the infrastructure, facilities and quality of allotment sites, ensuring sites are welcoming, safe and accessible.

- a The infrastructure of an allotment site is very important to its tenants, in particular security against theft and vandalism.
- b It is important to establish an agreed quality standard for allotment sites in consultation with the Allotment Associations and aim to achieve and sustain this standard at all times and at all sites. This standard should seek to ensure good access, good security, good facilities, good paths, adequate water provision and prompt attention to neglected plots.
- c An infrastructural survey of allotment sites needs to be carried out to ascertain the levels of current provision at each site and to recommend any improvements that may be necessary to raise the site to the required standard. From this survey a programme of improvements will be prepared.
- d It is important to investigate ways of securing financing to ensure the continual improvement of the allotment service. This will involve exploring new and creative ways of generating additional funding.

- e There are no toilet facilities at any of the allotment sites in the Borough which particularly affects the prospects of encouraging disabled people and school groups. Finding a means of establishing toilet facilities should be a key target for the future and the feasibility of such should be looked into.
- f Site safety, although of key importance, has not presented serious problems with the main issues being break ins to buildings which have been sporadic.
- g Strong sense of community exists on the sites encouraging tenants to 'watch out' for each other and for the site as well as forge good relationships with local neighbours. This form of self-policing develops awareness of potential problems.
- h Gosport Borough Council work closely with the Police Community Support Officers who conduct regular visits to all the sites engaging with plot holders, sharing information and advice to improve security and deter vandalism.
- i The Council will seek to promote best practice in health and safety on all allotment sites. A system will be set up to enable annual site safety inspections to be carried out on all sites. These will be carried out by Gosport Borough Council Officer. The inspection will identify defects that present a safety problem to allotment users and adjacent residents.
- j The Council wish to phase out skip provision and will seek to do this through education of the allotment plot holders in effective waste management during the period of their tenancy and promote the use of compost bins, self-constructed compost heaps and the use of recycled materials.
- k The Council would look to provide educational information regarding the cultural practise of Bonfires to highlight the negative effect these have on the immediate community.

7.2.1 Actions:

- 1 Undertake an infrastructure survey of existing allotment sites covering fencing, security, water, tracks and signage and develop a works programme of improvement for the duration of this strategy.
- 2 Identify expenditure to undertake the improvement plan.
- 3 Produce a routine schedule of inspections
- 4 Review annually and continue to update risk assessments and associated site surveys i.e. water testing for legionella and asbestos on sites.
- 5 GBC to investigate alternative communication platforms and ensure noticeboards are kept up to date with relevant information.
- 6 Continue joint partnership with allotment watch to monitor the effectiveness of community engagement in the prevention of crime; continue to work with local Police and community safety groups along with other voluntary groups in assessing preventative measures to combat crime.
- 7 Produce leaflets and posters for waste management and crime reduction to be distributed to all plot holders.
- 8 Update the GBC's webpages and onsite signage information to reflect the negative impact of bonfires on site to the wider community unless during incidents such as Tomato and Potato blight.

7.3 To work in partnership with the Allotment Associations and ensure good administrative and management processes

- a The Council will ensure the effective management and administration of allotment sites by continuing to develop a strong partnership with the Allotment Associations in the form of quarterly Allotment Stakeholder Working Group meetings which representatives from the Allotment Associations attend.
- b Each site is unique in its geographical location and currently managed and administrated by the Council who work closely with the Allotment Association. There are currently eleven sites in the Borough. Regular site meetings take place between the Wardens and an Officer from Gosport Borough Council on a monthly basis. The Council seeks to reinstate the bi-annual Warden meetings in order to share information between the allotment sites.
- c To ensure that a high quality service is provided administration procedures will continue to be improved. This will include a review of plot letting, waiting list procedures, non-cultivation and termination procedures.

- d The keeping of bees is becoming more popular and in the interests of animal welfare and public health and safety the Council will continue to process applications and approvals to ensure suitability to location with monitoring arrangements applied.
- e The Council wants to ensure that it provides the very best service for tenants, ensuring that its performance remains high when compared with other Local Authorities. In particular, the Council will liaise and compare its service with neighbouring Councils to show its commitment to high quality and standards across Gosport.
- f The Council will review the existing tenancy to reflect the current strategy.

7.3.1 Actions:

- 1 Continue to hold Allotment Stakeholder Working Group meetings to review best practise.
- 2 Schedule regular monthly site meetings with individual Site representative.
- 3 Schedule bi-annual group site rep meetings.
- 4 Under take facilities audit to compare with neighbouring authorities to benchmark the existing service.
- 5 Establish site representatives in accordance with Volunteer Policy.
- 6 Review the tenancy agreement.
- 7 Establish a Bee Keeping Policy.

7.4 To highlight the role that allotments play in developing a more sustainable environment, encouraging biodiversity and conservation in climate change agenda

- a The integration of allotment gardening into local sustainable community development strategies can enhance the benefits of allotments. By growing their own food, allotment gardeners already make a contribution to local food production and the reduction of 'food miles' and this benefit can be enhanced through the distribution of surplus crops within local communities such as working with Gosport Food Partnership as their focus is identified in Paragraph 3.3. The adoption of organic methods provides the further benefit of production that is sustainable from an ecological standpoint. The growing of fresh vegetables, flowers and fruits is a sustainable physical activity and as a consequence this strategy provides a contribution to achieving the objectives contained within GBLP and works towards assisting the council in achieving the climate change agenda targets.

- b Allotments make a positive contribution to the local environment and form an important part of the network of green spaces across Gosport. Allotment plots and their margins, hedges and non-cultivated areas provide valuable habitats for many species of animals, birds and invertebrates. To some degree they also safeguard other flora and fauna, especially given that their access is restricted. There is undoubtedly a greater potential for the better management of the natural features of allotments, creating improved habitats and a richer source of local biodiversity. Even in their choice of crops, allotments gardeners make a contribution to biodiversity. To which the Council is working towards wherever possible the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – The Government have also published its 25 Year Environment Plan (January 2018) which seeks to connect people with the natural environment to improve their health and well being https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
- c The Council will seek opportunities to improve and sustain the biodiversity of allotment sites by supporting and assisting Allotment Associations with funding bids for biodiversity projects to create nature areas which in turn benefit crops through pollination and natural pest control. The Council would look to monitor the market for any potential developments in crop resilience and seek to promote the use of drought tolerant seeds that could be used by tenants.
- d The Council manages over 180 hectares of green space, maintained by Streetscene through its direct grounds maintenance work force. Over the past five years Gosport has informally begun a process of reducing the use of pesticides associated with landscape management and will endeavour to change mowing regimes with the introduction of sowing wildflower meadows and semi-cultivated urban meadows throughout the borough to increase biodiversity and decreased CO2 emissions.
- e The council will continue the management of grass paths overgrown vegetation and clearance of plots and where appropriate reduce the use of pesticides. GBC aim to maintain green spaces, in accordance with Management Plans.
- f Not all food grown on allotments is organic. Organic gardening practice, which avoids the use of pesticides, artificial fertilisers and peat is also helpful in maximising biodiversity value and preserving indirect negative environmental effects. An increasing number of allotment tenants in Gosport choose to grow their food organically and the Council seeks to encourage this further. The Council will endeavour to provide additional technical advice and assistance to tenants and forge closer links with both local and national organic associations to foster more organic practices. Further information on

this can be found in Natural England's leaflet 'Wildlife on Allotments' ref. NE20.

- g The opportunity to share with others the fruits (and vegetables) of one's labour is an intrinsic part of the culture of allotments. Surplus produce is often given away to neighbours, friends and relatives in a sociable and generous spirit of reciprocity. This is also one of the focuses of the Gosport Food Partnership.
- h Most allotment tenants are committed to recycling materials, self-sufficiency and environmental competence by the very nature of what they do. Allotments are the heart of a living a sustainable lifestyle and support the environment in many ways. The Council will encourage recycling methods and composting initiatives where possible and provide additional guidance on sustainable practices.
- i To promote tool recycling & sharing scheme amongst tenants to assist in aiding to reduce the use of plastic and fuel emissions.

7.4.1 Actions:

- 1 Encourage Allotment Associations and plot holders to aware of the balance between ecological diversity and appearance of allotment sites thus improving the wildlife value of their plots.
- 2 Encourage Allotment Associations to apply for grants to enhance biodiversity of sites.
- 3 Encourage Allotment tenants to follow the Council's own commitment to reduce pesticide use and to make greater use of recycled materials and products, biological and cultural methods of pest control and organic peat free gardening and take heed of any future development in the production of drought resistant crops.
- 4 Promote on-site composting using individual bins. Increase awareness of sustainable practices and publicise the services available from waste management.
- 5 The Council would look to monitor the market for any potential developments in crop resilience and seek to promote the use of drought tolerant seeds that could be used by tenants.
- 6 To promote the tool sharing scheme amongst tenants to assist in aiding to reduce the use of plastic and fuel emissions.

7.5 To promote allotments as a benefit for the wider community, realising the opportunity they offer for education, health and well-being and social inclusion.

- a It has long been recognised that there is something special about

allotment communities. Within the setting of the allotment site, age, gender, race, social status and occupation have little relevance.

- b The Council will continue to seek innovative ways of promoting and advertising allotments, along with the technical information for pest, disease and good cultivation processes. This will be done through the Gosport & Lee-on-the-Solent in Bloom & Gosport & Lee-on-the-Solent in Schools in Bloom Campaign and by utilising leaflets and posters, ensuring these are displayed for maximum effect, in public places such as libraries, the Tourist Information Centre and community notice boards as well as by developing the allotment pages on the Council's website. The Council's quarterly magazine 'Coastline' could continue to run articles on gardening and allotment related topics.
- c GBC will endeavour to raise awareness of food banks and healthy eating workshops and are committed to promoting the 25 Year Environment Plan objective to help reduce food waste.
- d The Council will carry out a review of allotment site notice boards to determine what on-site information is available and to promote better communication with tenants.
- e Allotments can play a valuable role in environmental education and some sites have plots let to younger plot holders and local schools. The National Curriculum provides scope for pupils to study plant growth, urban land use, composting, recycling, soils, organic gardening and local sustainable development. All of which can be taught effectively outside the classroom at an allotment and in turn develops community links.
- f Subject to budget approval the Council seeks to widen the appeal of allotment sites for vulnerable sections of the community by increasing accessibility. This could include making areas on certain sites that are more physically accessible with wider paths and raised beds.
- g Allotments play an important part in improving people's health. Not only do they offer the opportunity to grow organic produce but they also provide an excellent form of outdoor activity, exercise and relaxation.
- h Allotments can also be effectively used in co-ordination with education, healthy eating, and social inclusion projects.
- i In partnership with GFP, GBC will promote the redirection of surplus produce to local food banks and healthy eating workshops. For example, encourage tenants to donate surplus allotment produce.
- j By the allocating and redistribution of food is in support of the Local government 25 Year Environment Plan objective to help reduce food waste.

7.5.1 Actions:

- 1 Review, update and produce new leaflets and posters.
- 2 Monitor and review the Councils allotments Website pages.
- 3 To ensure the annual participation with Gosport & Lee-on-the-Solent in Bloom is upheld and continues to be developed.
- 4 To promote allotment gardening in Gosport as a leisure activity with the.
- 5 Aim to make allotments more inclusive.
- 6 GBC to work with local community groups to look at the feasibility within the parameters of the tenancy agreement to redistribute surplus food.
- 7 To survey existing sites and update existing maps and digitalise where feasible.

7.6 To ensure adequate resources are available to support the long term service provision

- a The general service provision and day to day running of the allotments is good and has worked efficiently for many years. However, the requirement for sufficient revenue in maintaining infrastructure is an area for re-evaluation to ensure the long term sustainability of the sites and uphold the expectations of the tenants.
- b It has been identified that the two main areas that present pressure to budgets is that of perimeter maintenance and the acquisition of additional land and associated costs that are required to facilitate a fully functional site.
- c It may be possible to reduce the budgetary requirements of allotments by increasing rent, as demand currently exceeds supply. However, this can only be achieved through negotiation and mutual agreement.
- d The provision of water is currently paid for by the Council and this is another area that needs to be investigated to look at the feasibility of full or part funding from plot rentals in order to make the provision more self-financing.
- e From time to time there may be opportunities to obtain some external funding through Government or Lottery grants along with health and community related schemes. These should be investigated further and could assist with capital funding of projects.
- f Plot rentals are reviewed on an annual basis.
- g In evaluating service costs it is most important to balance this against the voluntary work of the Associations/Wardens and the leisure, health and community benefits that the allotments provide.
- h Undertake periodic allotment surveys to monitor and improve service

provision

7.6.1 Actions:

- 1 Encourage and facilitate allotment associations/sites to apply for grants for facilities on site.
- 2 Encourage partnership working with external bodies/organisations and other site and allotment groups.
- 3 Ensure sufficient ongoing revenue and capital funding is allocated to ongoing allotment provision.
- 4 Review the Allotment Service Provision to achieve best value through comparison with other authorities within Hampshire.
- 5 Undertake periodic allotment surveys to monitor the allotment service.

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- a The strategy is a live document which will form the basis of Gosport Borough Council's priorities for allotments over the next 5 years. Its targets will be subject to annual monitoring and review, adjusting to suit the changing circumstances and needs that develop over time. The target dates for the actions identified in the strategy will enable an assessment of progress with objectives against those target dates.

- b Over the past few years a great number of improvements have been made to allotments in Gosport. However, there is still potential for their development that will be realised throughout this strategy, particularly in relation to seeking additional provision.

9.0 ACTION PLAN

9.1 Table of Actions

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE
8.1 To ensure the existing provision of Allotments meet current trends for demand			
1	The Local authority has a statutory responsibility to provide allotments and will continue to monitor current provision and identify any further need if required.		
2	Investigate feasibility of changing temporary allotment sites to statutory sites to safeguard the land from future development		
3	Reduction of existing 10 rod plots to a minimum of 5 rods on vacation of tenant where practical.		
8.2 To maintain and improve the infrastructure facilities and quality of the authorities sites, ensuring sites are welcoming, safe and accessible			
1	Undertake an infrastructure survey of existing allotment sites covering fencing, security, water, tracks and signage and develop a works programme of improvement for the duration of this strategy.		
2	Identify expenditure to undertake the improvement plan.		
3	Produce a routine schedule of inspections		
4	Review annually and continue to update risk assessments and associated site surveys i.e water testing for legionella and asbestos on sites.		
5	Council to investigate alternative communication platforms and ensure noticeboards are kept up to date with relevant information		
6	Continue joint partnership with allotment watch to monitor the effectiveness of community engagement in the prevention of crime, continue to work with local Police and community safety along with other voluntary groups in assessing preventative measures to combat crime.		
7	Produce leaflets and posters for waste management and crime reduction to be distributed to all plot holders.		
8	Update the Councils webpages and onsite signage information to reflect the negative impact of bonfires on site to the wider community unless during incidents such as Tomato and Potato blight.		
8.3 To work in partnership with the Allotment Association and ASWG to ensure good administrative and management processes			
1	Continue to hold Allotment Stakeholder Working Group meetings to review best practise.		
2	Schedule regular monthly site meetings with individual Site representative.		
3	Schedule bi-annual group site rep meetings		
4	Under take facilities audit to compare with neighbouring authorities to benchmark the existing service.		
5	Establish site representatives in accordance with the Volunteer Policy		
6	Review the tenancy agreement		
7	Establish a Bee Keeping Policy		

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE
8.4 To highlight the role that allotments play in developing a more sustainable environment, encouraging biodiversity and conservation			
1	Encourage Allotment Associations and plot holders to be aware of the balance between ecological diversity and appearance of allotment sites thus improving the wildlife value of their plots.		
2	Encourage Allotment Associations to apply for grants to enhance biodiversity of sites.		
3	Encourage allotment tenants to follow the Council's own commitment to reduce pesticide use and to make greater use of recycled materials and products, biological and cultural methods of pest control and organic peat free gardening.		
4	Promote on-site composting using either communal or individual bins. Increase awareness of sustainable practices and publicise the services available from waste management.		
5	The Council would look to monitor the market for any potential developments in crop resilience and seek to promote the use of drought tolerant seeds that could be used by tenants		
6	To promote the tool sharing scheme amongst tenants to assist in aiding to reduce the use of plastic and fuel emissions.		
8.5 To promote allotments as a benefit for the wider community, realising the opportunity they offer for education, health and well-being and social inclusion			
1	Review, update and produce new leaflet and posters.		
2	Monitor and review the Councils allotments Website pages.		
3	To ensure the annual participation with Gosport & Lee-on-the-Solent in Bloom is upheld and continues to be developed.		
4	To promote allotment gardening in Gosport as a leisure activity with the added benefits of exercise, healthy eating and social contact.		
5	Aim to make allotments more inclusive		
6	GBC to work with local community groups to look at the feasibility within the parameters of the tenancy agreement to redistribute surplus food.		
7	To survey existing sites and update existing maps and digitalise where feasible.		
8.6 To ensure adequate resources are available to support the long term service provision			
1	Encourage and facilitate allotment associations/sites to apply for grants for facilities on site.		
2	Encourage partnership working with external bodies/organisations and other site and allotment groups.		
3	Ensure sufficient ongoing revenue and capital funding is allocated to ongoing allotment provision.		
4	Review the Allotment Service Provision to achieve best value through comparison with other authorities within Hampshire.		
5	Undertake periodic allotment surveys to monitor the allotment service		

APPENDIX B

MAP DETAILING ALLOTMENT SITE LOCATIONS IN GOSPORT



Scale
0 125 250 375 500 625 m

If this map has been transmitted electronically, use the scale bar in preference to the written scale.



TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET
GOSPORT, HANTS,
PO12 1EB

MAP REFERENCE: SU9901
SCALE: 1:10000
DATE: 04/06/2014

END NOTES

ⁱ Allotments Act 1950 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/14/31>

ⁱⁱ Allotment Growing: Vegetable, Fruit and Herb gardening <http://www.allotment.org.uk/articles/Allotment-History.php>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56009.htm>

^{iv} <http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/index.htm>

^v(NPPF2019)https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

<https://www.gosport.gov.uk/article/1292/Local-Plan-2011-2029-Adopted-October-2015>.

<https://www.gosport.gov.uk/amr>

(nPPG) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf