

Fair Food Policy

FOREWORD

When I originally wrote this foreword, in February 2020, I stated that, in Shetland, we had set ourselves a challenging aim - to move towards being an Equitable Food Community. This seems even more challenging, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, when the importance of emergency food provision really came to the fore.

However, to me, our aim seems even more important. The amazing community response to the pandemic and the support provided demonstrates we are in an excellent position. We need to build on this moving forward.

This policy was originally drafted during the autumn and winter of 2019/20. The change in context means it has been reviewed, but it remains a framework within which the Council can lead and support a shift, such that people will have the opportunities and support to grow, prepare and cook some of their own food; reaping the benefits that gardening can provide and going some way to reducing their household bills. This shift goes hand-in-hand with the Council's commitment to tackling and supporting change that will result in reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

By having this policy in place, the Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible, across Shetland, to grow their own food, and as close to their own home, as is practicable. Effort will be made to ensure those on a low income will feel able to get involved. Therefore, although the Council is required to increase the provision of land available for growing, the work in this area will also focus on developing the skills, knowledge and support to sustain the growing and cooking of local food.

The Council alone cannot achieve our aim. By developing this Food Growing Policy, we are setting out how we believe the Council and our partners can best support individuals and communities to help Shetland become an Equitable Food Community, whilst also contributing to reducing Shetland's Carbon Footprint. Success is going to depend on people feeling enthused to get involved, and help shape the support that is required. So, I would encourage anyone with an interest in this area to make contact with the Council using the contact details on the back page.

Steven Coutts, Leader, Shetland Islands Council

1. PURPOSE

Shetland Islands Council's Fair Food Policy sets out a framework through which the Council can most effectively support Shetland to move towards being an Equitable Food Community.

It supports the Shetland Partnership's Fair Food Improvement Project and includes the Council's Food Growing Strategy, as defined under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, at Appendix A.

It has been developed to initiate activity, and will be reviewed at relatively short intervals, reflecting our current rapidly changing context.

2. BACKGROUND

Shetland's **Commission on Tackling Inequalities** heard evidence and reported on the growing issue of Food Poverty in Shetland, and the challenges of being able to achieve a healthy diet on a low income¹. It was attributed to Welfare Reforms, in particular the delay in receiving a first Universal Credit payment² and Shetland's relatively high cost of living, particularly for essential items³. The Commission highlighted a risk that Foodbanks and the distribution of Food Parcels could become institutionalised and part of the everyday fabric of life in Shetland.

The Commission's Recommendations, to achieve by 2030, include:

Lower the percentage of households in poverty:

- Low income households are supported to reduce their household bills, such as food, energy and travel.

Ensure services are planned and delivered with communities, where possible:

- Encourage communities to find solutions: for example, the production of cheaper and healthier food, and transport.

Shetland's Partnership Plan⁴ highlights the high cost of living (from 20-60% higher to achieve an acceptable standard of living than the UK average⁵), and that, despite Shetland's relatively high average incomes, then 49% of Shetland's households do not earn enough to live well⁶.

Outcomes within the Plan include:

- Everyone will be able to access the support they need to minimise their outgoings with low-income households benefitting from reduced bills.
- Communities will be empowered to provide innovative solutions and support to help people maximise their incomes and minimise their outgoings from the support available.

¹ On da Level (2016), Shetland's Commission on Tackling Inequalities: <http://www.shetland.gov.uk/equal-shetland/evidence.asp>

² Salvation Army, Shetland (2015)

³ Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland (2013, 2016): <https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2016/november/30/a-minimum-income-standard-for-remote-rural-scotland-a-policy-update/>

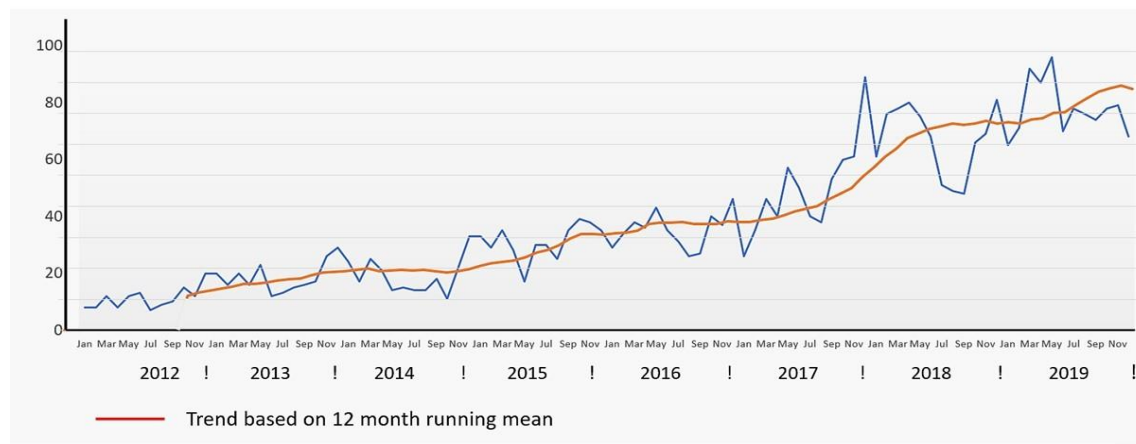
⁴ Shetland Partnership Plan (2018): <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/documents/180801SPPforWebFINAL.pdf>

⁵ Minimum Income Standard for Remote Rural Scotland (2016): <https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2016/november/30/a-minimum-income-standard-for-remote-rural-scotland-a-policy-update/>

⁶ Living Well in a High Cost Economy (2017): http://www.shetland.gov.uk/equal-shetland/documents/LivingWell_FINAL.pdf

The number of Food Parcels⁷ distributed by the Lerwick-based Food Bank is a relatively crude measure of the issue, but is a useful indicator of the size of the issue Shetland faces. The graph below is from the Shetland Food Bank.

Number of food parcels per month (2012 -2019)



In addition, the **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 9⁸**, places a number of statutory duties on the Council:

- To have regard to any guidance⁹ issued by Scottish Ministers about the carrying out of functions set out in Part 9;
- To maintain an allotments¹⁰ waiting list;
- To establish a mechanism for how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing, should certain triggers be reached;
- To make allotment site regulations and produce an allotments report each year, if required;
- To prepare a Food Growing Strategy, published by 1st April 2020.

The Food Growing Strategy must include the following:

- Land identified in the area that could be used for allotment sites;
- Other land identified in the local authority area which could be used by a community to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers;
- A description of how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing, should certain triggers be reached; and
- If new sites are established, how this will apply to communities that experience socio-economic disadvantage.

The Strategy must be reviewed within 5 years of the date of the first publication, and every 5 years thereafter.

⁷ Food parcels tend to be required when a household has an unexpected, often unplanned for, increase, in expenditure (such as white goods, birthdays, fuel) or reduction in income (through illness, retirement, for example), and they do not have the safety net of savings or networks to support them at the time.

⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/part/9/enacted>

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2018/11/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities-section-119-duty-prepare-food-growing-strategy/documents/00543068-pdf/00543068-pdf/govscot%3Adocument>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities/pages/2/>

¹⁰ For the purposes of this legislation, an allotment is land owned or leased by a local authority for use by people to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers on a non-profit basis.

The purpose of this legislation is to help empower communities across Scotland to access affordable, healthy and environmentally sound food. It acknowledges the role of Local Authorities in being able to support individuals and communities to improve access to land for the purposes of growing food and to help create opportunities for people to grow their own food. The guidance states: 'We want to avoid people being given access to food-growing space but not having the knowledge to properly use the land to begin to grow their own food'.

This legislation sits at the heart of the **Scottish Government's National Performance Framework**, contributing to a number of National Outcomes:

- We are healthy and active:
 - Taking steps to make food-growing opportunities available to all residents of Scotland to improve their health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities;
 - Helping to alleviate food poverty and raising awareness about the benefits of food-growing to mental and physical well-being through public engagement and encouraging uptake of food-growing opportunities;
- We value, enjoy and protect our environment:
 - Providing opportunities for local production of food through all forms of community growing/grow-your-own which will reduce carbon mileage of food;
 - Encouraging biodiversity, contribution to a Low Carbon Scotland, encouraging climate change mitigation through changed behaviours, improving soil condition and carbon retention in the soil through appropriate food-growing site design, practice and management, signposting to training and learning opportunities, and encouraging behavioural change, which will all contribute to protecting our environment.
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe:
 - Making all of Scotland's local authority allotment and other food-growing sites well managed, accessible by public transport and active travel, and community empowered with quality facilities, as far as is practicable;
 - Making the support of allotment and other food-growing sites transparent to all and compliant with the provision of the Act;
 - Encouraging all forms of community-led enterprise and/or social enterprise through making available and encouraging the uptake of food-growing opportunities.

In summary the guidance states: 'Community Growing, in all its forms, can provide wide-ranging and long-lasting benefits to communities and to individuals. The goals for local authority food-growing strategies will help authorities achieve a number of cross-cutting impacts and benefits in the five key areas of health, environment, economy, society and education.'

The **Islands (Scotland) Act 2018**, includes a duty on Scottish Ministers, amongst others, to have regard to island communities when carrying out its functions. Although an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) is not yet required, this Food Growing Policy has been developed within this context, and in particular taking into account the following two characteristics of Shetland:

- Socio-economic disadvantage is dispersed across our islands, rather than being concentrated in geographic communities;
- The majority of households have access to a growing space, such as a back-yard or garden.

In the spirit of this legislation, this Policy takes account of the needs of all of Shetland's island communities.

This policy provides an example of how the Council now needs to act, within the terms of the **Climate Change Strategic Outline Programme**¹¹, approved by Full Council in January 2020; it has been developed, and will be

¹¹ <http://www.shetland.gov.uk/documents/KeyCarbonReductionActions2020.pdf>

delivered, in such a way as to maximise opportunities to contributing to Shetland's carbon reduction targets. Growing our own food, and as close to our homes as possible, as well as reducing food waste are recognised as valuable contributors to reducing carbon emissions¹². In a study published by Zero Waste Scotland, food waste accounted for 25% of household waste by weight, but 32% of household waste carbon impacts¹³.

Shetland locked down early, in response to **COVID-19**. One of the relatively minor negative aspects of the pandemic has been that new pieces of work, such as this policy, had to be put on hold. However, it has also brought with it some positive changes. Of direct relevance to this Fair Food Policy has been that more people have started growing food for the first time, whilst others are growing more, and the quick and flexible response from the community to support those that were vulnerable, has been phenomenal.

There has been an increase in Emergency Food provision, with the Shetland Food Bank consistently distributing around 100 parcels a month. The parcels have been supplemented with fresh produce through the support of Food For the Way, and new emergency food outlets have started, including the Brae Food Bank (delivering between 50-60 parcels a month to areas of the North Mainland). 21 local community organisations, such as Community Councils and Community Development Organisations, took on the role of Community Anchor Organisations (CAO). This included the provision of emergency food, for households within the local area, in the form of food parcels or vouchers for use in local shops. It also included the provision of activities to support a community's well-being. One CAO decided to distribute 3 packets of easy to grow seeds, along with a voucher for pots and compost available through local shops, to all households. Feedback indicates that these packs were a real boost, and used by many. A local plant swap also started, through local shops.

In a recent report 'Islands and COVID-19: a global survey¹⁴' it highlights that 'Despite the fact that food supply chains did not breakdown, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of food security on islands. Food security should not only be seen as producing more domestic produce for people living on the islands. It should also be seen as an opportunity to diversify the economy of those islands that rely heavily on one sector (i.e. tourism). At the same time, the agriculture sector can be linked to tourism fostering agri-tourism, or slow tourism. Lastly, by fostering buy-local policies not only will this strengthen the island economy, but also avoid unnecessary imports that contribute to the carbon footprint of an island's economy.'

¹² <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/press-release/consider-carbon-footprint-food-climate-week-2>

¹³ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018%20Carbon%20Metric%20HH%20Brief%20-%20Final.pdf>

¹⁴ Francesco Sindico, Giulia Sajeve, Nicola Sharman, Patricia Berlouis and James Ellsmoor, *Islands and COVID-19: A Global Survey*, Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance and Island Innovation, 2020 https://www.linkedin.com/posts/francesco-sindico-1285597_islands-and-covid-19-a-global-survey-activity-6694738603706208256-mhdB

3. MONITORING IMPACT

The following are the proposed set of outcomes and indicators. The model for improvement, now being used more frequently in the Council, and across the Shetland Partnership, will be used to monitor change.

Long Term Outcomes:

- Everyone is able to access affordable nutritious food
- Reduce stigma associated with seeking support in all areas that can increase household income and reduce household costs
- Contribute to a reduction in Shetland's Carbon Footprint
- Contribute to the protection of the natural environment
- Promote and support innovation
- Individuals' health is improved

Medium Term Outcomes:

- More people are interested in food growing
- Land is made available for food growing
- Individuals and groups are supported to create growing spaces and take up food growing
- Individuals and groups gain knowledge, skills and confidence in vegetable and fruit production
- Locally produced food is shared within, and between, communities giving individuals and communities access to fresh, nutritious produce
- Individuals sense of self-worth, sense of belonging and personal confidence is increased as part of a food growing community
- Food waste and linked carbon emissions are reduced

Indicators:

- Confidence in home and community food production
- Knowledge and skills for home and community food production
- Number of growing sites and quantity of home and community grown produce throughout Shetland
- Knowledge of cooking and consumption of locally produced seasonal food
- Understanding of waste reduction, composting and recycling
- Number of effective pathways into growing and preparing food, for those who are more vulnerable to the high cost of food
- Health and wellbeing through participation in food growing and food growing communities

This document will be reviewed, and amended, as appropriate by 1st April 2025, if not more regularly due to the changing context.

This policy delivers on an Improvement Project, within the Shetland Partnership Plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Shetland Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), were undertaken on the Shetland Partnership Plan¹⁵. This policy provides a framework for delivery, so an SEA and / or IIA will be undertaken on any specific projects required.

¹⁵ <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/StrategicEnvironmentalReport.asp>
<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/documents/SPPIIAFinal.pdf>

4. INFORMING OUR APPROACH

Shetland is a community rich in resources for growing food. As a rural area, the ratio of land to people is high, and as a crofting community, there is considerable knowledge and skills in how to grow. The climate and extent of peat mean there are challenges, but recent developments, such as the diversity of produce grown outside by Transition Turriemfield and the production of Polycrubs by Nortenergy, a subsidiary of Northmavine Community Development Company, show that pretty much anything is possible.

Garden Organic is a UK based organic growing charity. It works to enable and support people to get involved in organic growing, through research, education, demonstration gardens and practical projects, and through lobbying and campaigning.

Garden Organic have developed and now run a series of Master Composter and Master Gardener programmes in urban and rural areas across the UK. These engage expert volunteers to mentor and support novice growers and help growers to compost effectively. They also have expertise in horticultural therapy, which uses organic growing to help those with special education needs or tackling drug and alcohol addictions.

Representatives of Garden Organic visited Shetland in November 2019, to assist the Council and wider partnership to explore how best to develop food growing, in Shetland. It was an opportunity to visit some community groups who are active in this area, as well as a school polycrub and staff at the early stages of using growing food for therapeutic reasons.

A Shetland Partnership Network was held during their visit, with representatives from over 22 organisations, community groups and services. Garden Organic representatives shared information on their Master Gardeners programme, which supports individuals to grow food in their gardens, windowsills, work places and other community growing spaces. A Master Gardener is a volunteer who promotes food growing in their community, running events and offering direct support to neighbours, to encourage and support more people to grow. They also have Master Composters and Food Buddies, based on the same concept. The event was also an opportunity for interested partners to share information and help shape this framework.

During October, 38 people took part in two **Climate Change Conversations**, run by Transition Turriemfield and Warmer Greener Homes Shetland (a project run by Shetland Islands Citizens' Advice Bureau). All individuals were taking action at a personal level but everyone felt more was required and guidance and leadership was required from top down. It was recognised that neither individuals nor government can tackle the issue alone; all parties need to take action.

The following points are of most relevance:

- An emphasis on the need to increase Shetland's food security and resilience, by producing and eating more locally produced food.
- A desire for more of us to grow our own food: with support in place to grow at home, and community growing projects.
 - Growing outside in windy, salty conditions, with poor soil and limited space.
 - Polycrubs.
 - Lifeskills, including cooking with basics.
- Educating households and businesses on food waste and composting, diverting it from landfill.

Over the winter of 2019/20, **Transition Turriemfield ran an online survey, Get Growing**, promoted on their Facebook Page and other related local Facebook Pages (i.e. the audience were already engaged in the topic). They received 143 responses, from most areas of Shetland. Over 70% of respondents wanted to start growing, or wanted to grow more.

Respondents were asked what they needed, to grow or grow more. By far the biggest need was more information on growing in the Shetland climate, followed by more information on growing in general and how to improve the soil. Only in two areas was the need for land highlighted, in Lerwick and Central Mainland. It is expected, but unconfirmed, that the need for land in the Central Mainland is in Scalloway.

Respondents were asked how they would like to gain information, knowledge, skills, experience and confidence in growing their own food. The top four were: visits to other growing sites, practical work days, training courses and online learning.

89% of respondents stated that they would prefer to grow on their own, in their own garden, but there was also an interest in growing in a communal growing area or as part of a local group.

Nearly 40% of respondents stated that they are willing to share their knowledge to support others to grow more, again, represented across most areas of Shetland.

During February 2020, a **formal consultation process was run**. This included conversations with people living on a low income; an online survey for the public, shared via social media; and an invitation to partner organisations through the Shetland Partnership Network. The feedback was as follows:

- Low Income Households: between 5-10 people were involved, with the following key points
 - Cost of fresh food is a significant issue
 - Positive response to: Growing Mentors, coming together to cook and eat, children growing at school
 - Ideas: honesty box schemes; ensure opportunities for group growing as well as individual to keep motivated (e.g. in Easter School Holidays / network of churches); need for areas for those who are less able / in a wheelchair; those with larger gardens able to share land with others.
- Online Survey: 40 responses, with the following key points:
 - Respondents were generally supportive, but stressing the need for practical action, ongoing support from statutory agencies to ensure the more vulnerable can benefit. Some expressed concern that nothing would change.
 - Strand A: 88% (30) of respondents felt the approach would be useful for them / their community: general support for the mentoring-model, and use of existing gardens, but highlighting the need for community spaces as well, to come together and to demonstrate possibilities. The most frequent suggestion is building on existing assets and organisations within communities, such as schools, halls, or leisure centres, to ensure responsibility.
 - Strand B: agreement of the importance of making land available, including support to crofters to provide land without long-term implications for them.
 - Strand C: there was particular enthusiasm for composting (community and Council) and ensuring the inclusion of land, for growing, in new housing schemes.
- Partner Questionnaire: six responses were received, with the following key points
 - Keen to get involved in delivery, potentially offering staff expertise, venues and land
 - Challenge of supporting community groups with burden of management and administration of allotments.

'I love the idea of sharing already existing skills and encouraging Shetland folk to be more self-sufficient.'

During the **COVID-19 lockdown from March 2020**, Shetland household's appetite for growing food increased. Many people started growing, who had not grown before. Now is an important time for building on this new enthusiasm and need. At the same time, many of the Community Anchor Organisations have developed a better understanding of the needs of their communities, and are keen to continue to develop this role, with ideas around food growing.

5. FRAMEWORK AND APPROACH

Shetland's Fair Food Framework

The breadth of this work means that success can only be achieved if it is shaped and delivered by individuals, households and communities.

Therefore, this policy provides a framework within which the Council and its partners can help facilitate change, and empower individuals, households and communities to grow and eat their own, healthy food. The framework consists of three strands, which complement and support each other:

- A. Practical development and implementation
- B. Access to land
- C. Embedding within existing policy.

The opportunities will be available to everyone, however, as the main aim is to move Shetland towards being a food equitable community, there will be particular emphasis on ensuring low income households feel able to get involved.

The intention is for the Council to work in partnership with communities and community groups, to deliver the change, using an agile approach.

A. Practical Development and Implementation

Aim: To increase food growing, access to affordable food and healthy eating throughout Shetland

This includes building skills and knowledge of individuals and communities in:

- 1) Growing
- 2) Reducing waste & composting
- 3) Cooking and eating

It is also about making various jigsaw parts fit, enabling, motivating, innovating and contributing to community empowerment and cohesion.

All aspects of **Practical Development and Implementation** will be delivered as a discrete project, linking into the other two strands. This project will be:

- Shetland-wide, providing a long-term resource for growers across the isles.
- Coordinated from a central point, which will oversee the training and deployment of Grower Mentors; management of support for community groups; organisation of community workshops and events; development of communications and online information. It will also put in place the systems for gathering data for evaluation.
- Actively seeking opportunities to work with community groups to develop community growing spaces, where possible associated with an existing asset, in order to bring people together and demonstrate possibilities. It will work alongside services to provide inclusive pathways into growing, from more vulnerable households.

Within this project structure, different opportunities will be tested. For example:

- Within a school environment, building on the network of school polycrubs and enthusiasm of young people
- School Holiday play-schemes based around growing, cooking and eating
- Growing in containers
- Within a social housing scheme
- Within in a workplace

- To provide therapeutic opportunities for those with physical and mental health issues
- Tapping into the older crofter generation, for their experience in growing, recognising the value of inter-generational learning
- SVQ cookery students at North Highland College, in Thurso have partnered with Thurso Grows, a local food growing initiative to promote healthy food and reducing food waste.

The numbers of individuals worked with, or groups supported, will be dependent on the resources available.

B. Access to land

Aim: To support individuals and communities to identify land for growing

Feedback, to date, indicates that the most purposeful way of achieving this is by encouraging people to use the land they readily have available to them (e.g. their garden, back yard, patio, windowsill)¹⁶. However, there may be requirements for additional land for growing. When this is the case, the Council will work with communities to support them to achieve this, as set out in the Council's Food Growing Strategy, Appendix A.

C. Embed in Existing Policy and Activity

Aim: To include food growing potential in all policy and activity, where possible and appropriate

This strand will ensure all aspects of Council policy and activity, where appropriate and practical, will take account of, promote the benefits of, and facilitate food growing for local people. From land use planning to waste disposal and grass cutting; support for people who are unemployed to education for our young people; economic development policy to housing provision.

Delivery

The following are examples of delivery within this strand:

a. Land Use Policy

The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out Shetland's land use plan. LDP 2 is under development. In line with the Community Empowerment Legislation and Scottish Planning Policy¹⁷, Shetland's LDP is key to safeguarding existing and potential food-growing sites. They seek to enhance existing green infrastructure sites, and promote the creation of new sites; so, for example, making provision for new-build residential development plans to have sufficient green space for a range of recreational uses, including food-growing.

However, Councils are required to take a balanced and considered approach when considering what greenspace, both existing and planned, could be used as growing space; taking account of current and future demand for growing space.

Local authorities are required to carry out an Open Space Audit¹⁸, to inform LDPs. This includes the identification of suitable food-growing sites, and should be linked to the Council's Food Growing Strategy. The links between these Audit, Strategies and Plans is provided in Figure 1.

At this point in time, the Council's LDP does not hinder the use of land for the purposes of growing food. However, over time, Planning Policy will become more proactive in encouraging growing. Ongoing work is

¹⁶ Householders should consult with Planning Regulations, to ensure that there is no requirement for Change of Use or permissions required to put up structures.

¹⁷ A principle of the Scottish Planning Policy is that planning should **protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure**, including open space and green networks, as an **integral component of successful placemaking**.

<https://www.transformingplanning.scot/media/1244/tp-a-plan-to-grown-more-food-v2.pdf>

¹⁸ Planning Advice Note 65: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-pan-65-planning-open-space/>

informed by Nature Scotland’s guidance on Green Infrastructure¹⁹ and any new planned housing developments will encourage the incorporation of the potential for food growing.

Ideas and Possible Tests of Change:

- Knab Master Plan: this includes both individual household and community Green Space. The implementation phase will link to Fair Food, in order to support and encourage food growing.

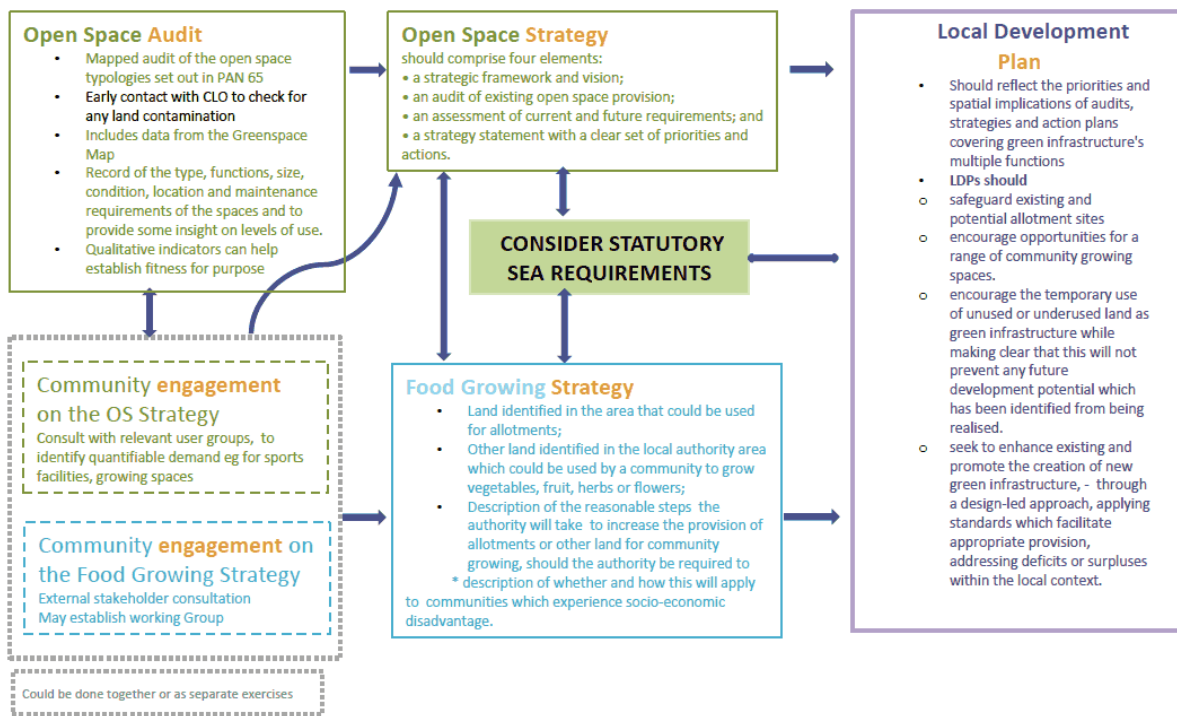


Figure 1: Links between Planning Policy and Food Growing

b. Waste Policy

Shetland, and other rural local authority areas, are currently exempt from food waste regulations. There is no requirement for the collection authority to undertake separate household food waste collections - and there is no requirement for businesses in these areas to present food waste separately. This derogation is currently under review.

It is anticipated that future derogations are likely to vary by locality as oppose to a blanket rural exemption. Irrespective of the outcome of the review it is important to try to reduce the carbon impact of food waste, divert as much as possible from energy recovery and landfill - and treat waste as a resource first and foremost.

There is an appetite for Council and / or community composting schemes.

Ideas and Possible Tests of Change:

- Tap into the enthusiasm of young people campaigning for change in order to reduce Shetland’s Carbon Footprint, through the promotion of food waste reduction apps, such as the OLIO and Too Good To Go apps.

¹⁹ <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/advice-planners-and-developers/placemaking-and-green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure>

- Support Northmavine Community Development Company (NCDC) to undertake a feasibility study into the collection of waste in the North Mainland, for composting and the creation of compost, for sale.
- Work alongside the Council's Catering Service to support schools to compost food waste, particularly those with established growing activities.
- Work alongside the community of Foula to become zero-waste, as soon as is practicable.
- Community Fridges / Freezers: build on existing fridges / freezers accessible to the public, such as Food for the Way and / or cake fridge businesses.

NB: any community composting scheme may require waste exemption, through SEPA

c. Economic Development Policy

All businesses, including those exploring food growing, can access support through the Council's Economic Development Service. There is a keenness, particularly since lockdown, in improving Shetland's food growing resilience, beyond that of individual households and communities.

Ideas and Possible Tests of Change:

- Link in with the work of Shetland Food and Drink
- Growing food in public places, to demonstrate and inspire growing
- Exploring role of seaweed in provision of food, and fertiliser
- Rural Food Tourism Places Project²⁰: this is a pilot project, led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It is looking at the diversification of opportunities for farmers and crofter working with tourism and food and drink businesses. Northmavine is one of two pilot areas in the region.

6. RESOURCES

This Policy will be resourced using existing Council staff and budgets (in particular Strands B and C). The delivery of Strand A will require external funding, which is currently being sought, from sources including the Crown Estate.

Strands A and C will be overseen by Community Planning and Development (CP&D), with relevant Council services being responsible to CP&D for aspects of delivery.

Strand B is the responsibility of Asset & Property Services.

7. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

This Fair Food Policy has been built on the views of individuals, community groups, staff and existing legislation and guidance. It has been developed in such a way that participation will be key to the development and delivery of ideas and projects that result in more food growing in Shetland. Community involvement and empowerment must be at the heart of Fair Food, either way, it will have failed; in particular, food growing which will benefit those who currently struggle to afford to eat healthy food.

Although a wide range of people and organisations have been involved at some point, to date, participation will be essential to the continued development and delivery of this project. This includes the need for more active engagement with Community Councils, and the Private Sector, including the Agricultural Community.

²⁰ <https://www.hie.co.uk/support/support-for-community-organisations/community-assets/crofting/>

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

In the spirit of community planning, the accountability for increasing opportunities for people to grow their own food, is to the communities of Shetland.

Achievements will be reported back to communities, but overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is delivered rests with the Council's Chief Executive, and the Director of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The day-to-day delivery will be the responsibility of the Council's Community Planning and Development Service, with support from other colleagues, as reported under 'Resources'.

CONTACT DETAILS

Fair Food, c/o Community Planning and Development, Shetland Islands Council

✉ Solarhus, 3 North Ness Business Park, Lerwick, ZE1 0LZ

☎ 01595 743888

@ community.planning&dev@shetland.gov.uk

🌐 http://www.shetland.gov.uk/community_planning_dev/

APPENDIX A: SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL'S FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

Legislative Background

The **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 9**²¹, places a number of statutory duties on the Council:

- To have regard to any guidance²² issued by Scottish Ministers about the carrying out of functions set out in Part 9;
- To maintain an allotments²³ waiting list;
- To establish a mechanism for how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing, should certain triggers be reached;
- To make allotment site regulations and produce an allotments report each year, if required;
- To prepare a Food Growing Strategy, published by 1st April 2020.

The Food Growing Strategy must include the following:

- Land identified in the area that could be used for allotment sites;
- Other land identified in the local authority area which could be used by a community to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers;
- A description of how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing, should certain triggers be reached; and
- If new sites are established, how this will apply to communities that experience socio-economic disadvantage.

The Strategy must be reviewed within 5 years of the date of the first publication, and every 5 years thereafter.

Specifically, for allotments, it makes provision for:

- Requests to lease allotments.
- Establishment and maintenance of a waiting list of residents of the area, who have requested an allotment.
- Reasonable steps to be taken to provide sufficient allotments (reasonably close to where people on the list reside²⁴, and accessible for people with particular needs) to keep the waiting list at no more than half of the authority's current number of allotments, and that any person on the waiting list does not remain on it for a continuous period of more than 5 years.
- Regulations for each allotment site²⁵.
- Disposal of allotment sites.
- An annual allotments report.
- Delegation of management.
- Incurring expenditure for the promotion of allotments, and training to tenants and potential tenants, for their use.

²¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/part/9/enacted>

²² <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2018/11/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities-section-119-duty-prepare-food-growing-strategy/documents/00543068-pdf/00543068-pdf/govscot%3Adocument>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities/pages/2/>

²³ For the purposes of this legislation, an allotment is land owned or leased by a local authority for use by people to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers on a non-profit basis.

²⁴ The guidance states, within a 3 mile radius, or within a 20 minute journey on public transport. It also states that Councils may opt to apply different travel-time or distance criteria, where appropriate, based upon local geography, particularly in remote rural areas.

²⁵ <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/ShetlandPartnership.asp>

Background & Stakeholder Engagement

This Strategy has been developed in tandem with the Fair Food Policy. Therefore, it has been informed by the participation from partners, community groups and individuals, including face to face and online surveys.

The geography and context of Shetland means that the scale and approach, for delivery, will be different than in areas of more concentrated population.

Vision & Goals

The Council's Food Growing Strategy will facilitate delivery of the Fair Food Policy, which aims to move Shetland towards being a Food Equitable Community. In particular, the Strategy will support the Council to make more growing space available in its local area to meet future anticipated demand.

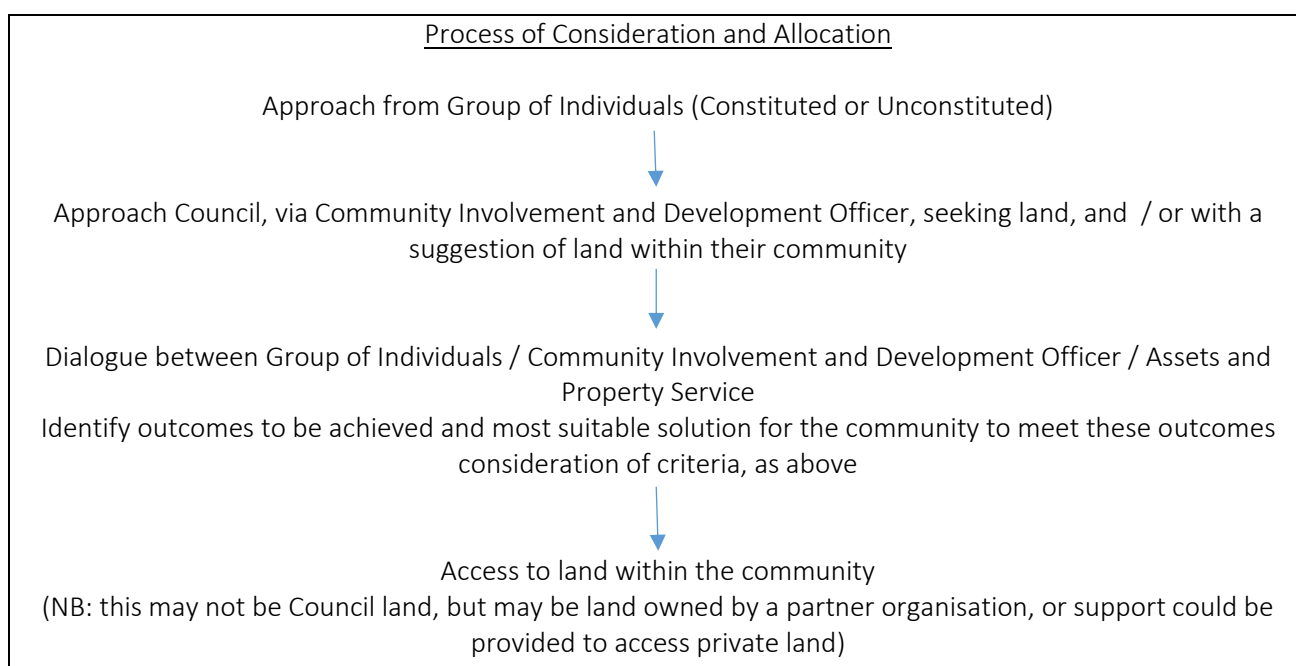
The Fair Food Policy sets out the outcomes to be achieved, in the medium and long-term. There is a particular emphasis on ensuring that low income households, and those with poorer health outcomes, are involved.

Identification of Land

Through a land audit, the Council's Asset and Property Service has identified two existing spaces for community growing of food. These are in Sandwick located near Parklands and Mossbank adjacent to the old Fraser Peterson Centre. The Council is also actively looking to free up additional land, specifically for growing. These will be listed and available from the Council's website.

The Council has a map of all existing allotments sites as required by the legislation, which is available from the Council's website.

The Council is committed to making land available for growing food. Therefore, in addition to any specifically allocated land, the Council will use a co-production approach, working with any community group who wish to grow food, in order to find suitable land. A process, similar to that used for Community Asset Transfer, will then take place, for example:



Provision of land will consider the following:

- Outcomes to be achieved by the community

- Tenure
- Environmental impact, for example consideration of peat and biodiversity
- Accessibility
- Contamination
- Allocation of land for future alternative use as identified in the Local Development Plan and / or Asset and Property Strategy
- Governance of Community Group

Some land may be deemed unsuitable for any of the above reasons.

The Council will keep in touch with individuals and communities and groups, through Strand A, in order to analyse demand for land and share information about Fair Food, and the support available.

Assistance to Community Growing Groups

Council officers within the Council's Community Planning and Development Service will be available to support community groups wishing to develop community growing projects. Specific advice, on growing, will be provided through the Fair Food Policy activity (Strand A).

Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Deprivation and social exclusion in Shetland are dispersed, not concentrated. Therefore, the emphasis will be on ensuring all community growing projects are accessible to households on a low income, rather than specifically increasing provision of land in certain areas of Shetland. How this will be achieved is set out in the Fair Food Policy. The Shetland Partnership is required to develop and implement Locality Plans to support communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; the process of development will include consideration of assets for growing, within the community.

Review Date

This Strategy will be reviewed within 5 years of the 1st April 2020.