

Notes from conference ‘Cultivating Sustainable Scottish Cities and Towns in the 21st Century’ June 2008

The conference brought together 50 planners, developers, architects, conservationists and gardeners to discuss the incorporation of gardens and allotments in Scottish cities and towns. A booklet with articles from the four key note speakers and a description of the value of allotments, gardens and orchards will be available in the Autumn.

VISION:

That Scotland’s cities and towns should become the most attractive, productive and sustainable places to live and work in Europe, valuing and promoting the rich cultural potential of their allotments, gardens and orchards.

THE CHALLENGES to be faced in creating dynamic cities and towns with cultivatable spaces for everyone have been classified into **government**, **local councils**, **planning**, **individual** and **common issues**.

How can

- political leadership, policies and allocation of resources be used to enable everyone to garden?

- cultivable land become part of the SOA and the bidding process?
- more gardens, allotments and orchards be provided in the urban environment given the pressure on land and prices for new houses?
- the focus on cars and the rigid application of roads policies be changed?

- a vision of a growing, creative environment be incorporated into planning briefs?
- the process for producing Local Plans be less lengthy and complicated?
- greenspace and development land be presented in the same registers?

- skills in gardening and pride in growing food be encouraged?
- people be encouraged to recognise and value communal growing spaces ?
- we balance the tension between private and communal spaces?

- the benefits of gardening to health, economy, well being and environment be valued throughout society?
- we find good exemplars of community growing spaces?
- the important social interactions that take place in a cultivating community be recognised?

DRIVERS FOR RECOGNITION

1. Scottish Government Strategic Objectives

- Wealthier and Fairer
- Healthier
- Safer and Stronger
- Smarter
- Greener

2. Relevant policies:

- The Government Economic Strategy:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/12115041/0
- Scottish Government/CoSLA Concordat Single Outcome Agreements SOA:
www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/aboutcosla/concordatnov07.pdf
- Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland: www.wellscotland.info
- Food Policy: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry
- Climate Change: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change

3. Delivery Vehicles

- Urban Regeneration Companies: www.scotregen.co.uk
- the BIG Lottery Growing Community Assets Fund:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pub_manifesto_scot.pdf
www.hie.co.uk/growing-community-assets.html
- Development Trust Association for Scotland: www.dtascot.org.uk
- National Cultural Planning Forum: www.ncpsg.org
- Scottish Centre for Regeneration: www.scr.communitiesscotland.gov.uk
- greenspace scotland: www.greenspacescotland.org.uk
- Trellis; www.trellisscotland.org.uk
- Federation Community Farms and Gardens; Allotments Regeneration Initiative:
www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari
- Backcourts initiatives: g.robertson@re-solution.co.uk
- Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society: www.sags.org.uk

REQUIRED ACTION

Government:

To acknowledge the benefits of local cultivation) in cities and towns to food, health well being and quality of life.

To encompass gardening within health, education, environment, housing and food policies.

To promote technical innovation and radical designs incorporating greenspace in cities and towns.

To make the planning process supporting allotments, gardens and orchards uniform for all Councils.

To support the multiple use of cultivatable spaces – health, food, social interaction with a new PAN

To encourage commercial food growing within city boundaries and hinterland through planning process.

To ensure Open Space Planning Policies for new housing development include dedicated land for cultivation."

Local Government:

Strategic and Local Plans must incorporate explicit demands for cultivatable spaces.

Make information on land bank holdings and greenspace audits more widely available

Locate an easily accessible environmental portal on the front page of local authority web-sites

Link maps of land and greenspace together on local authority sites for interrogation

Make ownership of land easy to find

Ensure community participation in the design of open space and new housing association developments

Make creative and innovative approaches to Parks provision.

Promote twinning relations – e.g Chicago and Sydney for Glasgow

Community groups:

Seize initiative in organizing, planning and fund raising.

Present effective and coherent presentation of case with relevant data.

Disseminate good practice exemplars of community managed green space.

Encourage allotments to become social spaces with more accessible plots and small plots in public open spaces.