

Agenda Item	12
Report No	CP/22/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 13 August 2026

Report Title: Growing Our Future – Community Food Growing Annual Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 In response to duties placed on the Council under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Members agreed a Highland Food Growing Strategy (2022-2027), *Growing our Future*, on 23 February 2022. The Strategy supports community food growing and allotments across Highland.
- 1.2 The vision for the Strategy is that by 2027, Highland communities are resilient, empowered and supported to grow their own food through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on the progress made against the Growing our Future Action Plan, which includes a specific update on allotment provision and includes the annual allotment reports for 2024 and 2025 for approval.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
 - i. **Consider and note** the progress made to implement the Growing Our Future strategy and deliver the Community Food Growing Action Plan; and
 - ii. **Agree** the annual allotment reports for 2024 and 2025, as detailed at section 6.3 and at Appendices 2 and 3.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The Community Support and Engagement team review has incorporated support for allotments and community food growing groups into the newly developed Community Development Manager and Community Support Officer roles. The Community Food Growing (CFG) strategy is overseen by a designated Community Development Manager as part of their functional specialism. The strategy and actions to support implementation have been embedded within the wider Council with named service leads and the action plan is monitored through management in the Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS).
- 3.2 **Legal** - Under the terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Section 9, the Council has duties regarding allotment provision, including producing allotment rules and regulations.
- 3.3 **Risk** - The Council is required to hold Rules and Regulations for Council owned allotment plots and to protect and provide allotments as part of its statutory duties set out within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no direct health and safety implications as a result of the policy however the Rules and Regulations do cover aspects of operational practice to support Allotment Associations and plot holders to operate safely.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic language implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a Community Food Growing Strategy. In response to the duty, 'Growing our Future', the Highland Council's Community Food Growing Strategy (2022-27), was agreed in February 2022. The strategy identifies land in Highland which could be used for local food growing and outlines how the authority intends to increase the availability of land where there is an identified need. The strategy includes a clear focus on supporting communities experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

- 5.2 The vision and aim of the strategy are supported by several key objectives:-
- Build knowledge and understanding of community food growing in Highland;
 - Communities are empowered to start growing or expand their growing;
 - Ensure communities are informed and connected, and are supported to access the resources they need;
 - Identify potential allotment and growing spaces; and
 - Support communities to become more resilient through community food growing.
- 5.3 To accompany the publication of the strategy, initial guidance on community food growing was produced and a detailed action plan was developed setting out how the Council, High Life Highland, and our community partners will work to meet the objectives laid out in the strategy. The action plan, with a summary of progress, is attached at **Appendix 1**. An update on allotments is included within the progress report, and this includes the annual allotment reports for 2024 and 2025, which the Council is required to produce under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) and be found in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

6 Progress on the Action Plan 2025-26

- 6.1 The action plan with a summary of progress is attached at **Appendix 1**. Highlights of activity in 2025/26 are outlined below.

6.2 Allotments Update

A key action within Growing our Future is to review the Council's approach to allotments. A revised policy was agreed in March 2024 along with new rules and regulations for allotments. Actions identified within the review were incorporated into the action plan that supports the Strategy. The annual allotment reports for 2024 and 2025 can be found in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

6.2.1 Progress to date on allotments includes:-

- The Allotment Steering Group included discussion on the need to ensure consistent sharing of information across services to support delivery and avoid duplication to maximise officers' time.
- Demand for allotments remains concentrated in urban areas such as Inverness, Culloden, Aviemore and Dingwall with emerging interest from communities in Lochaber and Thurso.
- Inverness - Knocknagael Green Hub: Now with 140 members, has successfully secured over £190,000 in grant funding from the Highland Council, SSE Renewables, Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation and the Nature Restoration Fund to support the Smiddy Field Green Hub project. This funding has enabled the group to purchase the field, secure planning permission, begin key infrastructure works, and progress plans for allotments, a community orchard, wildlife habitats and shared growing spaces that will benefit the local community for years to come.
- Inverness – Balvonie Park Association: This project aims to create 8 hectares of community woodland, 2 hectares of orchards and is looking at building a community food growing space, incorporating a Dutch barn style structure and a couple of accessible Polycrubs in Milton of Leys to encourage 'share cropping' and sharing growers' knowledge. Subject to funding, the project is aiming for Summer 2027 completion.
- The Council's Development Plans Team is preparing the new Highland Local Development Plan (LDP), with the Evidence Report approved in June 2026 and currently undergoing the Scottish Government's Gate Check process. Once complete, work will begin on the Proposed Plan, which will set future planning policies and identify sites for development and protection. This presents an important opportunity to ensure that community food growing and allotments are reflected within the LDP. Engaging with the process can help identify and safeguard suitable sites for future allotments and growing spaces, while also influencing policies, standards, and guidance that support food growing across the Highlands. Including these within the LDP will give them statutory weight throughout the Plan's expected 10-year lifespan.

- #### 6.2.2
- The annual reports (**Appendices 2 and 3**) show that allotment demand across Highland remains below the statutory threshold requiring additional provision, with waiting lists representing 37% of available plots in 2024 and 34% in 2025. Overall demand has reduced slightly, from 115 people on waiting lists for 312 plots in 2024 to 106 people waiting for 308 plots in 2025. Demand remains concentrated in Inverness, particularly at Hawthorn Allotments, where waiting lists continue to exceed local capacity. The reports also identify strong interest in new allotment provision in Culloden, Dingwall and Aviemore, with community groups actively developing proposals for additional sites. Highland Council continues to support allotment provision through its annual allotment steering group, planning policy, land audits and support for community-led projects. Key progress reported in 2025 includes planning consent for a new allotment site at Stratton, Culloden, alongside ongoing work to explore further opportunities in Inverness and support emerging projects across Highland.
 - Members are asked to note that the 2024 report is also included as it was not reported to Committee last year.

6.3 Community Food Growing

Growing in Schools - work continues to promote and develop growing projects in schools.

- **Go Flourish** continues to grow successfully at North Kessock Primary School, where pupils are developing food growing skills, confidence and ownership through hands-on outdoor learning. The project has also strengthened community involvement, promoted healthy eating and wellbeing, and gained recognition from Education Scotland, with plans to expand the model to Dalneigh Primary School when funding allows.
- **Little Growers project, The Family Centre Inverness**, brings together nursery children, families and the wider community through gardening. It promotes healthy eating, outdoor learning, wellbeing and stronger community connections, while helping families develop the skills and confidence to grow their own food.
- **Highland Good Food Partnership (HGFP)** continues to support community food growing and sustainable food initiatives across Highland through practical resources, advice and partnership work. Their [Highland Good Food Map](#) (helps people connect with local food and growing projects, while the free [FEAST toolkit](#) supports communities to organise local food events. HGFP has also expanded community composting through the [Highland Composting website](#) and support for local composting projects. Working with Highland Council, NHS Highland is developing a Good Food Nation Plan, with a network of almost 400 members. HGFP helps shape local food policy, share expertise, and connect communities with funding, resources and opportunities.

6.4 Community Growing projects

- **HLH Seed Libraries:** Have been successful and have expanded to other areas. Alongside this, HLH are delivering a Scottish Government funded initiative 'Cultivating Climate Champions' <https://www.highlifehighland.com/blog/posts/funding-boost-for-libraries-throughout-the-highlands>
- **Viewfield Garden Collective** is a Portree-based charity that supports vulnerable adults through therapeutic gardening. It helps people improve wellbeing, build confidence, learn new skills and connect with their community through gardening and outdoor activities.
- **Invergordon Community Garden:** Local volunteers have transformed this space with raised beds to grow fruit and vegetables and hold workshops.
- **Holm Grown, Inverness:** Holm Community Council in partnership with Incredible Edible Inverness. The Community Food Growing project transformed previously unused land into an accessible community garden where volunteers grow fruit, vegetables, flowers, and plants for everyone to enjoy and harvest free of charge. The garden is designed to be inclusive, with accessible raised beds and paths, welcomes all ages, abilities, and gardening experience.

6.5 Good Food Nation

- Community food growing initiatives across Highland support the aims of Highland Council's Community Food Growing Strategy and the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022, which seeks to ensure everyone has access to nutritious, affordable and sustainable food while improving health, reducing inequalities, supporting the environment, and empowering communities to shape their local food system. Highland Council is required to publish its own Good Food Nation Plan by 1 April 2028, providing an opportunity to strengthen support for community food growing across the region. Community growing projects contribute positively to these ambitions by increasing access to local food, improving wellbeing, promoting sustainability, and building more resilient and connected communities
- Highland Council are taking a whole Council approach to the development of our Good Food Nation Plan. In this regard an officer working group has been established involving all relevant service areas including Community Support. Through this involvement, the opportunities available across the region through the efforts of community food growers will be included in the Highland Council Good Food Nation Plan. The Plan will be available for public consultation in Spring 2027 prior to finalisation later that year and publication in 2028.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 17 July 2026

Author: Cai MacIver Community Development Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1: Growing our Future: Strategy Action Plan
Appendix 2: Allotment Annual Report 2024
Appendix 3: Allotment Annual Report 2025

Strategy Action Plan Updates

Objective 1: Build knowledge and understanding of Community Food Growing in Highland

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Updates
Support the development and delivery of a Highland Community Food Growing Network	THC in partnership with the Highland Good Food Partnership (HGFP)	Ongoing	During 2023/early 2024 HGFP have coordinated a series of workshops for CFG groups covering skills development and networking, funded by Sustainable Food Places. They are now taking a focus on connecting groups and signposting to information. Also work on development of a Good Food Nation Plan.
Develop and maintain CFG map highlighting all activity across the region	Highland Council and HGFP	Complete	Map available on the HGFP website. Communities can add to the map by contacting HGFP.
Pilot a community learning and development GYO project	Highlife Highland (The Highland Council)	Not started	There are many Community Food Growing projects and initiatives where HLH are working with community groups, children and young people. Due to team restructuring, a dedicated Community Learning and Development GYO project has not yet started.
Develop CFG webpage on THC website to host above information	Highland Council	Complete	Webpage updated for launch of strategy Allotments and Food Growing Strategy Climate change The Highland Council .

Highland wide guidance for CFG groups	Highland council	Complete	Guidance doc downloadable from THC webpage. Resources are on HGFP website and circulated to workshop attendees.
Raising awareness with Community Partnerships of how CFG supports their priorities and outcomes	Highland Council	Ongoing	CFG strategy is on the Community Planning Partnership website. Work is ongoing to raise awareness of CFG and wider benefits within partnerships.

Objective 2: Communities are empowered to start growing or expand their growing

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Encourage individuals to join existing groups	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	Community Support and Engagement team administer an allotment 'register of interest' and direct individuals that enquire towards known CFG projects
Encourage communities and individuals to explore CFG opportunities for their community	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement and the HGFP	Ongoing	Support has been provided to community groups and individuals by the CFG Coordinator from Aug 2021-March 2024. Ongoing support is in place from the Community Support Coordinators, and one Community Development Manager holds the functional lead for this area of work.
Encourage Grow Your Own projects in schools across Highland	Highland Council	Ongoing	UKPF Project: Growing Skills and Engagement Supporting young people to re-engage with learning through growing activities, youth work, and community partnerships. The project will help build confidence, develop skills, improve wellbeing, and support positive educational outcomes. Through a 10-week programme, young people will gain hands-on experience in horticulture, teamwork, and employability skills using

			a new polytunnel and outdoor learning space. The project focuses on S2-S3 pupils facing barriers to learning and is delivered in partnership with schools, Golspie Youth Action, and community organisations.
Develop guidance for cooking and eating Grow Your Own in schools	Highland Council Catering	Complete	School catering has issued guidance to catering staff.
Green Young Leadership Programme	Highlife Highland	Ongoing	This is now a fully incorporated Young Leaders programme for 12-25 years old across Highland, enabling young people to develop leadership skills, gain accredited SCQF awards and contribute to environmental conservation projects through hands-on activities such as wildlife surveys, habitat management and countryside conservation. The programme offers a structured pathway of achievement, supporting progression into further learning, volunteering and employment.

Objective 3: Ensure communities are informed and connected, and are supported to access the resources they need

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Work with communities to set up Tool Libraries	Highlife Highland	Complete	Clachworks had a promotional stand at Inverness Library to raise awareness of their existing tool library, this was successful, with 480 tools to hire, now situated at Newstart at the Carse Industrial Estate. They have been working with Transition BlackIsle to train them using a booking system.

Signpost communities and individuals to various online resources, funds and other organisations	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	Guidance doc containing information and signposting to other resources is available to download on the Council's CFG webpage. Community support officers are an ongoing source of guidance for CFG groups and individuals.
Encourage groups and individuals to work together and share resources	Highland Council	Ongoing	Work continues to raise awareness and encourage wider collaboration through the Community Support and Engagement team.

Objective 4: To identify potential allotment and growing spaces

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Carry out a green space audit	Highland Council Environment Team	Complete	This is now complete and as noted below, a public facing map is being developed.
Safeguard valued greenspace including where there is potential for CFG with each Local Plan review	Highland Council Development Planning	Ongoing	NPF4 contains supportive planning policies for CFG. HLDP is being prepared and can contain Highland specific policies for supporting CFG locally, or could allocate sites for this intended use. Engagement remains ongoing as this progresses
Develop Green Space Map to include land that has been identified as suitable for CFG	Highland Council Environment and Transport Planning Team	2022-25	Land suitable for community food growing has been potentially identified within the developed green space map, drawing on opportunities identified through the Greenspace Biodiversity Management Strategy, including community orchards, edible planting schemes and existing Food for Nature, Food for Life sites.

Explore opportunities to identify land with Community Planning Partners	Highland Community Partnership	Ongoing	CPP website updated with CFG strategy.
Explore development of a fund to support community food growing permissions (e.g. Title Investigations, planning permission etc)	Highland Council	2022-23 - complete	A specific funding stream has not been identified however groups are signposted to the Council's Ward Discretionary Fund and SAGS development fund. THC have made pre-planning advice free to remove this cost barrier for new projects.
Produce specific guidance on council processes and the options available to CFG groups that want to access THC land	Highland Council	2022 - complete	The CAT process has been simplified for low-risk projects that are supported within the council. Information on CAT process is available on THC website.
Provide simple occupancy agreements for smaller scale projects using Council land	Highland Council Housing team	2022-23 complete	Informal arrangements have been trialed, with a form and process in place for smaller scale projects as these arise.
Consider the provision of space for community food	Highland Council – Infrastructure and Environment Team	2022-27 - ongoing	This commitment is included within the Highland Council Allotment Policy 2024 . Local Development Plans identify opportunities for allotments, and developers of very large sites may be required to

growing in large and strategic housing developments			provide land for allotment use in line with the Council's Open Space Guidance this guidance
Co-location of services - promoting CFG opportunities beside libraries, Community and Sport centres	Highlife Highland	2022-27	Seed libraries: Local government funding has enabled HLH Libraries to develop seed libraries at Nairn, Bettyhill, Thurso, Wick, Dornoch, Culloden, Achilitbuie, Gairloch, Ullapool, Dingwall, Fort William, Caol and Ardnamurchan. Countryside Rangers have run seed library related activities including food growing workshops at some of the above locations. Sustainability books, including food growing themes, can be found within our libraries, in hard copy and e-book formats.
Consider CFG as an alternative use of play space as part of the review of play areas	Highland Council Communities and Place Service	Ongoing until 2027	Trial ideas did not come to fruition. Explore again once green space map is complete and if play spaces have been identified.
Promote GYO guidance on contaminated land	Highland Council	Complete	Link to guidance recommended by our contaminated land team is included within the strategy supporting guidance document.
Provide free advice to community groups on contaminated land	Highland Council	Complete	Advice is provided by the contaminated land team or Community Support Officers.
Review Provision and Management of Allotments	Highland Council	2022-2025 complete	Allotments policy review complete. New actions coming from the review have been added to this plan.

Review guidance for community groups growing in school grounds to make it easier and less prohibitive	Highland Council Estates team	complete	Estates team have created a process for external groups who want to use School land. Observe North Kessock Flourish project for learning points.
Support Private Public Partnership schools in negotiating the use of their land for food growing	Highland Council	complete	A process has been agreed with the school estate management team to enable agreeing land for food growing.
Explore the development of guidance on planning requirements for Community Food Growing	Highland Council Planning Service	2022-23 complete	The planning team provides allotments groups with free pre-planning advice.

Objective 5: Support communities to become more resilient through community food growing

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Develop guidance for CFG projects to consider promoting inclusion and tackling inequalities in the design of their project	Highland Council and the Green Health Partnership	2022-ongoing	Work being progressed by NHS NHS Highland Green Health Partnership and is currently ongoing but not yet complete.

Support interested groups that coordinate emergency food provision to add CFG elements to their work	Highland Council	Ongoing	Links are encouraged between allotments and food provision projects within the allotments policy.
Encourage CFG groups to be involved with community planning for emergencies	Highland Council	Complete	This action was part of covid response planning, which has now diminished.
Consider geographic areas of socio-economic deprivation when making land available for CFG where possible	Highland Council Environment and Transport Planning Team	Ongoing	Consideration of socioeconomic deprivation is evidenced within the Greenspace Biodiversity Management Strategy through the development of site-specific management plans for 20 larger urban parks, many of which are located within areas of high deprivation as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. These plans will explore opportunities for community orchards and other biodiversity-friendly food-growing initiatives in collaboration with local communities.
Promote CFG as a green health activity within health and social care referral pathways	Green Health Partnership	Complete	HGHP has been promoting this through their network and social media. HGHP is currently going through a transition at the end of the programme funding.

Allotment Policy Review Actions

Action	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Develop template policy and procedures and governance documents, for allotment associations.	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	2024-complete	This is now complete
Support the adoption of template P&Ps and incorporation process for Allotment Associations	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	For Allotment Associations that require becoming incorporated organisations to take on a lease of Council land, and those that wish to strengthen their governance. In partnership with HTSI
Set up and administer an annual allotment forum	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	Annual meeting
Council land made available for new or expanded allotment sites	Highland Council allotment steering group	Ongoing	When high demand is identified and/or trigger points are reached.
Support to AAs in formation & projects in development	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	Currently supporting and in dialogue with Culloden West, Aviemore, Dingwall, Balvonie & Knocknagael and Thurso. Support tailored based on needs of group. Community Support Officers will support on ongoing basis.

Allotments rules and regulations put in place	Highland Council Community Support and Engagement	Complete	Coordination with Allotment Associations on Council land.
Allotments annual report	Highland Council	Ongoing	Annual report delivered, available to view on HC website
Steering group meeting	Highland Council Allotment Steering Group	Ongoing	Annually review annual report data and register of interest data, and identify what if any actions should be taken
Data handling measures in place	Highland Council	2024	Such as data sharing agreements with AAs, update privacy policy for Register of Interest
Reduce rents for AAs on Council land	Highland Council	2024	All land managing services with allotments sites
Guidance to AAs on environmental /sustainable pest and weed control	Highland Council amenities service	Due 2024/25	Integrated Weed Control Strategy Plan attached Integrated Weed Control Strategy and Action Plan

Highland Council Allotments Annual Report 2024

This report details the data that the Highland Council holds regarding demand for allotments in Highland and the action being taken to support the provision and protection of allotments.



Allotments on Council land

The table below shows the following information for allotments on Council land, obtained from the Allotment Associations that manage each site.

1. Length of the waiting lists of each site
2. Number of people on the waiting list for more than 5 years
3. Any requests that have been made for adjustments to plots due to disability
4. Size of allotments sites (m2)
5. Plots data (total number of plots, no. of full plots, no. of half plots, no. of other sized plots, no. of community plots, no. of plots with no tenant)
6. A breakdown of fees for each site and size plot

The total number of people on waiting lists sits at 115. The total number of plots sits at 312. So, the waiting list number divided by the total number of plots across Highland sits at 37%. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 states a trigger point of 50% of demand for plots over and above provision, this has not currently been reached. Although taking the data in Inverness alone this figure is 123%, highlighting a high level of demand in Inverness and an uneven level of demand across Highland.

Table 1: Allotment sites on Council land data September 2024

Allotment site	Allotment Association	No. of total plots	No. of full sized plots	No. of half sized plots	No of other sized plots	No. of community plots	No. of plots with no tenant	Fees	Waiting list	No. waiting more than 5 years	Requests for adjustments due to disability	Area
Lybster	Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company/Lybster Allotments Association	21			5 large, 1 small plots + 15 polytunnel boxes	1	1 box	£24 - lrg plot, £20 sml plot, £6 lrg box, £5 sml box £5 - bed	0	0	0	1316 m2
Hawthorn, Inverness	Hawthorn Allotments	69	21	48	0	0	0	£55 full plot, £45 half plot	85	0	2	14682 m2
Nairn Sandown	Nairn Allotment Society	79	6 x 300m2, 14 x 200m2	11 x 150m2, 24 x 100m2, 7 x 75m2	14	4	0	£10 membership fee + 27.5p per SqM	20	0	0	16456 m2
Nairn Mill Road		43			33 plots + 9 raised beds	1	0					3885 m2
Ullapool	Lochbroom and Ullapool Gardens and Growers Society	65	60		5 (Inc Polytunnel plots)	3	1 (polytunnel plot)	£25 plot, £20 polyt, £6.50 sm plot	0	0	0	3377 m2
Wick	Wick Allotments	11	9	2		1	0	£45full plot, £22.50 half plot	0	0	0	2100 m2
Milnafua, Alness	Alness & District Allotment Society	24			24	2	0	£80	10	0	0	2600 m2
Total		312							115	0		

Allotments Register of Interest

Individuals can register their interest in an allotment through the Council's website. This register is used to gather data to inform our understanding of demand and to support community efforts when new allotment associations and sites are in development. The register is not a waiting list, and people are signposted to their nearest allotment site or community food growing project to make enquiries.

Data gathered from the allotments register since April 2020 indicates that the level of demand is rising. With note of high levels of demand in all of the Inverness City Wards, Culloden and Ardersier, and Badenoch and Strathspey.

Community feedback

Allotment associations with projects in a development stage exist in Inverness, Dingwall, Aviemore and Culloden/Smithton. Aviemore, Dingwall and Culloden do not currently have any allotments sites. Feedback from these projects includes:

Inverness; Knocknageal Ltd has a membership of more than 100 and expect a high take up of plots as their project becomes established. They are currently working through an asset transfer for land to create a green hub and allotment site. Balvonie Park Association have 10 people who have expressed an interest in allotments and are currently working through an asset transfer for land for a community woodland with an area for allotments.

Dingwall Community Development Company estimate 20 people have expressed interested, plus schools and youth groups and are currently exploring the feasibility for a site in Dingwall.

Actions to support allotments

The Highland Council updated allotments policy was agreed at the [Communities and Place Committee in March 2024](#).

The Highland Council's annual allotment steering group met on the 24th September 2024 to review the provision of allotments and data on demand for plots.

Options for increasing provision in Inverness are being explored with an existing site and in areas where new housing development is taking place.

The Council's Community Support and Engagement team are supporting community groups with projects in development in Inverness, Culloden, Aviemore and Dingwall.

Allotments data is being included within the Highland Local Development Plan and allotments have been included as one of the 22 services considered important for local living in the Highland wide development plan mapping.

Contacting allotment sites

The Highland Council do not directly deliver any allotment sites. The Council works in partnership with allotment associations who rent land from the Council. To join a waiting list for an allotment plot please contact allotment associations directly.

Allotment site	Allotment Association	Contact
Lybster	Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company/Lybster Allotments Association	llccdc@outlook.com www.llccdc.co.uk/
Hawthorn, Inverness	Hawthorn Allotments	hawthornallotments@gmail.com
Nairn Sandown	Nairn Allotment Society	www.nairnallotments.org
Nairn Mill Road		
Ullapool	Lochbroom and Ullapool Gardens and Growers Society	stephen996@hotmail.com
Wick	Wick Allotments	wickallotmentgrows@gmail.com
Alness	Alness & District Allotment Society	marymgillies@gmail.com

Information held about other allotment sites in Highland on non-Council land

To update Council records for these sites please contact communityfoodgrowing@highland.gov.uk

Allotment Site	Contact
Kingussie Allotments Association	www.facebook.com/KingussieAA/
Dalnain Bridge Allotment Association	Unknown
Cromarty Allotments and Gardens Association	cagssecretary@gmail.com
Community Land Association Morvern (CLAM)	www.facebook.com/CLAMorvern?locale=en_GB
Blackthorn Allotments Association, Inverness	allotmentsblackthorn@gmail.com
Broadford Green Growers- Broadford and Strath Community Company	nicholas@broadfordandstrath.org
Lovat Estates, Beauly	info@lovat-estates.co.uk
Appleseed allotments, Applecross	www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org/company-projects/appleseed-allotments/
Rosemarkie allotments	rags.secretary@gmail.com
Culbokie Allotments	www.transitionblackisle.org/userfiles/file/Community%20gardens/Culbokie%20garden.html?07-10-2022-105509
Fernaig Community Trust	https://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=226640
Dornoch and District Community Association	dornochallotments@aol.com
Tornagrain Allotments	nicole.petrie@morayestates.co.uk
Portree and Braes Community Trust	alec@portreeandbraes.org www.portreeandbraes.org/allotment
Sunny Lochaber United Gardeners (SLUG), Fort William	Unknown

For other community food growing projects see the Highland Good Food Partnership Activity Map:

www.highlandgoodfood.scot/food-map/

Allotment projects in development

Allotment site	Contact
Balvonie Park Association, Inverness	www.balvonieparkassociation.wordpress.com
Dingwall Community Development Company	dingwallallotmentsassociation@gmail.com
Aviemore Allotments Association	aviemoreallotments@gmail.com
Knocknagael Ltd Inverness	www.knocknagael.org.uk/
Poolewe	www.bac-dubh.co.uk
Culloden West Allotments and Gardens Association	cullodenwestallotments@gmail.com

The Highland Council Allotments Annual Report 2025

This report details the data that the Highland Council holds regarding demand for allotments in Highland and the action being taken to support the provision and protection of allotments.



Allotments on Council land

The table below shows the following information for allotments on Council land, obtained from the Allotment Associations that manage each site.

1. Length of the waiting lists of each site
2. Number of people on the waiting list for more than 5 years
3. Any requests that have been made for adjustments to plots due to disability
4. Size of allotments sites (m2)
5. Plots data (total number of plots, no. of full plots, no. of half plots, no. of other sized plots, no. of community plots, no. of plots with no tenant)
6. A breakdown of fees for each site and size plot

The total number of people on waiting lists sits at 106. The total number of plots sits at 308. So, the waiting list number sits at 34% of the total number of plots across Highland. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 states a trigger point of 50% of demand for plots over and above provision, this has not currently been reached. Although taking the data in Inverness alone this figure is 123%, highlighting a high level of demand in Inverness and an uneven level of demand across Highland.

Table 1: Allotment sites on Council land data July 2025

Allotment site	Allotment Association	No. of total plots	No. of full sized plots	No. of half sized plots	No of other sized plots	No. of community plots	No. of plots with no tenant	Fees	Waiting list	No. waiting more than 5 years	Requests for adjustments due to disability	Area
Lybster	Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company/Lybster Allotment Association	21			5 large, 1 small plots + 15 polytunnel boxes	1	0	£24 - lrg plot, £20 sml plot, £6 lrg box, £5 sml box £5 - bed	0	0	0	1316 m2
Hawthorn, Inverness	Hawthorn Allotments	69	21	48	0	0	0	£55 full plot, £45 half plot	85	0	2	14682 m2
Nairn Sandown	Nairn Allotment Society	77	8 x 300m2, 18 x 200m2	11 x 150m2, 25 x 100m2, 6 x 75m2	9	4	0	£15 membership fee + 27.5p per SqM	10	0	0	16456 m2
Nairn Mill Road		41		21x 100m2	20	0	0					3885 m2
Ullapool	Lochbroom and Ullapool Gardens and Growers Society	65	60		5 (Inc Polytunnel plots)	3	6	£25 plot, £20 polyt, £6.50 sm plot	0	0	0	3377 m2
Wick	Wick Allotments	11	9	2	0	1	0	£45 full plot, £22.50 half plot	1	0	0	2100 m2
Milnafua, Alness	Alness & District Allotment Society	24			24	2	0	£80	10	0	0	2600 m2
Total		308							106	0		

Allotments Register of Interest

Individuals can register their interest in an allotment through the Council's website. This register is used to gather data to inform our understanding of demand and to support community efforts when new allotment associations and sites are in development. The register is not a waiting list, and people are signposted to their nearest allotment site or community food growing project to make enquiries.

Data gathered from the allotments register since April 2020 is detailed in the table below. It indicates that the level of demand has dropped in the last financial year compared to the previous year but demand overall is high in all of the Inverness City Wards, Culloden and Ardersier, and Badenoch and Strathspey.

Community feedback

Allotment associations with projects in a development stage exist in Inverness, Dingwall, Aviemore and Culloden/Smithton. Aviemore, Dingwall and Culloden do not currently have any allotments sites. However, one site in Stratton, Culloden has been granted planning consent as of December 2025 as part of a wider commercial development. Once the commercial development has taken place ownership of the site will pass to The Highland Council who are collaborating with the Culloden West Allotment Association on its development.

Feedback from community led allotment projects regarding levels of demand:

Culloden West Allotment Association has 44 people interested in becoming plot holders. This is already almost double what the anticipated capacity at the new site in Smithton will allow for. This new site would be on Council land and therefore fall within the requirements of the CEA.

Inverness; Knocknageal Ltd has a membership of more than 100. As of December 2025, Knocknageal Ltd are continuing to work on the legal process of community ownership of land through community asset transfer from the Scottish Government. They plan to begin phase one of their project's development in 2026 to create their allotment site.

Inverness; Balvonie Park Association have 10 people who have expressed an interest in allotments.

Dingwall Community Development Company has 15 people who have registered their interest plus schools and youth groups.

Actions to support allotments

- The Highland Council's annual allotment steering group met on 24th September 2025 to review the provision and demand for allotments.
- Options for increasing provision in Inverness are being explored on Council owned land at Torvean and with the existing site at Hawthorn.
- Council officers are engaging with developers regarding inclusion of allotments in a development in Inverness West.
- The updated allotment data highlighting demand is being included in the Highland Local Development Plan.
- Officers are supporting community led Allotment Associations including: the Culloden West Allotment Association in their planning for the future site in Stratton, as well as projects that are using community owned land in Balvonie, Inverness and NHS land in Aviemore.
- The Highland Council's land audit is being used to identify other suitable sites for allotments.
- Communities are being encouraged to discuss community food growing and allotments as part of local place plans.
- The Highland Council's allotments and community food growing webpage is being updated as part of the Council's new website, to include local place plan submission information.
- The Council's Community Support Team are to be included in planning consultations for allotment opportunities.

Contacting allotment sites

The Highland Council do not directly deliver any allotment sites. The Council works in partnership with allotment associations who rent land from the Council. To join a waiting list for an allotment plot please contact allotment associations directly.

Allotment site	Allotment Association	Contact
Lybster	Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company/Lybster Allotments Association	llccdc@outlook.com www.llccdc.co.uk/
Hawthorn, Inverness	Hawthorn Allotments	hawthornallotments@gmail.com
Nairn Sandown	Nairn Allotment Society	www.nairnallotments.org
Nairn Mill Road		
Ullapool	Lochbroom and Ullapool Gardens and Growers Society	stephen996@hotmail.com
Wick	Wick Allotments	wickallotmentgrows@gmail.com
Alness	Alness & District Allotment Society	marymgillies@gmail.com

Information held about other allotment sites in Highland on non-Council land

To update Council records for these sites please contact communityfoodgrowing@highland.gov.uk

Allotment Site	Contact
Kingussie Allotments Association	www.facebook.com/KingussieAA/
Dalnain Bridge Allotment Association	Unknown
Cromarty Allotments and Gardens Association	cagssecretary@gmail.com
Community Land Association Morvern (CLAM)	www.facebook.com/CLAMorvern?locale=en_GB
Blackthorn Allotments Association, Inverness	allotmentsblackthorn@gmail.com
Broadford Green Growers- Broadford and Strath Community Company	nicholas@broadfordandstrath.org
Lovat Estates, Beaulieu	info@lovat-estates.co.uk
Appleseed allotments, Applecross	www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org/company-projects/appleseed-allotments/
Rosemarkie allotments	rags.secretary@gmail.com
Culbokie Allotments	www.transitionblackisle.org/userfiles/file/Community%20gardens/Culbokie%20garden.html?07-10-2022-105509
Fernaig Community Trust	https://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=226640
Dornoch and District Community Association	www.dadca.org.uk/communitygardenplots.asp
Tornagrain Allotments	nicole.petrie@morayestates.co.uk
Portree and Braes Community Trust	www.portreeandbraes.org/allotment
Sunny Lochaber United Gardeners (SLUG), Fort William	Unknown

Allotment projects in development

Allotment site	Contact
Balvonie Park Association, Inverness	www.balvonieparkassociation.wordpress.com
Dingwall Community Development Company	dingwallallotmentsassociation@gmail.com
Aviemore Allotments Association	aviemoreallotments@gmail.com
Knocknagael Ltd, Inverness	www.knocknagael.org.uk/
Poolewe	www.bac-dubh.co.uk
Culloden West Allotments and Gardens Association	cullodenwestallotments@gmail.com

For other community food growing projects see the Highland Good Food Partnership Activity Map: www.highlandgoodfood.scot/food-map/