

North Tyneside Allotment Strategy 2020 - 2030



Contents

| | Page Number |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Introduction | |
| 1.1 What are allotments? | 3 |
| 1.2 Why are allotments important? | 4-5 |
| 2. National and Local Strategic Context | 6-8 |
| 3. Current allotment provision across North Tyneside | |
| 3.1 Our allotments | 9 |
| 3.2 Where are our allotments? | 10-14 |
| 4. Costs and income associated with the Allotment Service | |
| 4.1 Costs | 15 |
| 4.2 Income | 15 |
| 4.3 Other funding | 15 |
| 5. Performance of the Allotment Service | |
| 5.1 Performance measures | 16 |
| 5.2 Current performance | 16 |
| 6. Profile of allotment holders | |
| 6.1 Profile of allotment holders in North Tyneside | 16 |
| 6.2 What our allotment tenants want | 17 |
| 7. Achievements to date | 18-19 |
| 8. Demand for allotments in North Tyneside | |
| 8.1 Determining a local standard for allotment provision | 19-20 |
| 9. Our ambition for allotments | |
| 9.1 Our ambition for allotments in North Tyneside | 20 |
| 9.2 Our objectives | 20-21 |
| 9.3 Benefits | 21 |
| 10. Further Information | 21 |
| Appendix A: Profile of North Tyneside Allotments | 22-23 |
| Appendix B: Key Legislation and Guidance | 24-25 |
| Appendix C: Plot succession policy | 26 |
| Appendix D: Waiting list Policy | 26 |
| Appendix E: Good Allotment Standard | 27 |
| Appendix F: Good Plot Standard | 27 |
| Appendix G: Inspection Schedule | 28 |

1. Introduction

This strategy sets out our commitment to allotment gardening and outlines our ambition for the allotment service in North Tyneside. In the strategy we identify:

- What we want to achieve through the allotment service for current and future plot holders and other North Tyneside residents over the next 10 years
- How we will work with plot holders, site associations, members of the local community and other voluntary and statutory organisations to make our ambition a reality
- The resource implications of our strategy and how we plan to attract those resources

1.1 What are allotments?

An allotment is historically defined as a plot of land, rented to individuals so that they can grow fruit and vegetables for themselves and their families to eat.

“An allotment not exceeding 40 poles (equivalent to 1210 square yards or 1012 square metres) in extent to which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family.” Definition of Allotment Garden, Allotment Act 1922

Allotments originate from the enclosure legislation of the 18th and 19th centuries. The word 'allotment' comes from land being 'allotted' to an individual under an enclosure award. The General Enclosure Act 1845 required that provision should be made for the 'landless poor' in the form of 'field gardens' limited to a quarter of an acre. At this time, allotments were largely confined to rural areas although during the second half of the 19th century, parcels of land in urban areas began to be used as allotments. The first Allotment Act which obliged local authorities to provide allotments if there was demand, was passed by Parliament in 1887. Local authorities have been required to meet statutory responsibilities regarding allotments ever since.

Allotment sites can be statutory or temporary. Statutory sites are those that have been acquired by the council for the purpose of being allotment gardens whilst temporary sites have been acquired for other purposes and are being used as allotments in the interim. Some allotments belong to private landowners rather than the council.

Fact: Allotment gardening is the only recreational activity to enjoy the protection of Law (Allotment Acts 1908-1950)

1.2 Why are allotments important?

In North Tyneside, we have long valued allotments as the green beating heart of the community because we recognise that they help to deliver the following benefits:

- **Health improvement:** Gardening is often recommended as a suitable form of exercise and can help prevent coronary heart disease and related problems. In some areas, formal GP referral schemes have been set up so that family doctors can 'prescribe' allotment gardening. Although we do not have such a scheme in North Tyneside, there have been many examples of doctors suggesting allotment gardening to a patient whose health has since improved.

We have an ageing population and by 2021 it is estimated that, nationally, a quarter of the population will be over 60. In later life, physical activity has an important role to play in maintaining functional ability, preventing disability and isolation and promoting independence. Allotment gardening has traditionally been enjoyed by older people and has an important role to play in helping older people participate in exercise.

- **Positive mental health:** Allotments help people get out of their house, give them a focus and the opportunity to be part of a social group whilst developing a sense of ownership. They allow residents to socialise, make friends and become part of the wider community or enjoy solitude in a safe environment. Gardening is also recognised as being useful in stress relief and relaxation.
- **Healthy food:** Growing your own vegetables and fruit can be relatively cheap, and it can be a distinct advantage for those who are feeling the pinch of economic downturn, have an interest in fresh food or would like to reduce food miles or their carbon footprint. Evidence strongly suggests that the type and amount of food we eat plays an important role in preventing the development of many chronic conditions including cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, dental disease and obesity. Allotments can be particularly valuable for people who don't have a garden at home in helping them to achieve their horticultural ambitions.
- **Bringing communities together:** Allotment growing attracts people from all backgrounds and can help promote community cohesion. The Local Government Association Growing in the Community guide states that "allotments have a distinctive contribution to make to the achievement of social inclusion at local levels, as communities of interest bring in a wide range of people, including people from different gardening traditions and cultures, together for a common purpose."

An example relates to the Balkwell C Allotment Site, North Shields which has community plots. These plots have been allocated to a number of groups including, young people, people who are in rehabilitation and also older people. These plots give individuals an accessible growing space without the pressure to individually work a large plot.

The community groups have collectively become an important part of a traditional site where the existing tenants offer advice, materials and assistance to the community plot users.

Allotments in North Tyneside currently help to support people with disabilities, enabling them to access sites and plots providing therapeutic outdoor green space and access to the wider community.

- **Biodiversity** – Many of North Tyneside’s cultivated allotments make a distinctive contribution to local biodiversity. Natural features, including hedges, mature trees and waterways can make working allotments a wildlife haven. Compost heaps are also mini biodiversity centres in their own right. Insects and other invertebrates as well as hedgehogs are attracted to compost heaps as they require shelter when not active. In turn, insects attract birds and other wildlife into the allotment; some plot holders have set aside a small area within their plot for wildlife.

Areas within three allotment sites have been specifically designated as wildlife areas in North Tyneside.

- **Learning** - People engaged in gardening learn to use many skills. Whilst horticulture is the obvious one, community and social skills are also developed. More experienced allotment holders enjoy sharing their knowledge with newcomers. Allotments and the principles of allotment gardening can help in educating children within all key stages across many curriculum areas. Additionally, they can deliver lifelong 'experiential' learning - via extended schools, family learning and intergenerational teaching and learning. Currently eight schools have allotments in North Tyneside and many other schools visit sites to enrich their curriculum.

Allotment gardening also has a role in terms of employment. In addition to helping to develop new skills, which can help increase employability, it can help individuals maintain work patterns where they have become unemployed.



2. National and Local Strategic Context

There is a range of legislation and guidance covering the provision and protection of allotments that our strategy must comply with.

Allotment law has developed in rather a piecemeal fashion with various Allotment Acts being introduced between 1908 and 1950.

A summary of allotment legislation is set out in Appendix B.

Allotments and Planning Policy

At a national level the recently updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated in February 2019) refers to allotments within the context of healthy, inclusive and safe places. Planning should enable and support healthy lifestyles and allotments are specifically identified as an example of good practice.

The Health and Wellbeing sub section of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) goes into a little more detail of the role of planning to help create a healthier food environment and allotments are seen as a way to support this ambition:

- Local planning authorities can consider bringing forward, where supported by an evidence base, local plan policies and supplementary planning documents, which limit the proliferation of certain use classes in identified areas, where planning permission is required. In doing so, evidence and guidance produced by local public health colleagues and Health and Wellbeing Boards may be relevant. Policies may also request the provision of allotments or allotment gardens, to ensure the provision of adequate spaces for food growing opportunities. (Para 6, Health and Wellbeing, NPPG, 2017)

The need for an Allotment Strategy is important for the Council to draw upon it as evidence to ensure adequate spaces for food growing opportunities. The relationship between allotments and health and wellbeing is referenced in Local Plan policy S1.2 'Spatial Strategy for Health and Well-being':

- 'Promoting allotments and gardens for exercise, recreation and for healthy locally produced food'.

In the broader scope of planning for the environment, allotments fall within the category of green infrastructure, which is defined by the subsection Natural Environment of the NPPG as:

- Green infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities

- Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls. (Para 27, Natural Environment, NPPG, 2016).

As recommended by the NPPG the Council produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy (2015) for the whole Borough that supports the Local Plan (2017). The Green Space Strategy also supports the Local Plan, setting out the current provision of different types of green space across the borough. The Green Space Strategy includes a chapter on allotment provision (chapter 12), which draws upon the previous Allotment Strategy (2009-2015).

Allotments are therefore an important component of Green Infrastructure and Local Plan Policy S5.1 'Strategic Green Infrastructure' aims to deliver the Authority's support towards 'the protection, enhancement, extension and creation of green infrastructure in appropriate locations within and adjoining the Borough'.

Based on the current Allotment Strategy the areas of greatest need for new allotment sites as identified in the Local Plan are Killingworth, North Shields/Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. Demand for allotments is Borough wide and North Tyneside Allotment Service will continue to seek appropriate S106 contributions to develop and enhance existing allotments.

The strategic sites of Murton Gap and Killingworth Moor are two large areas of housing growth in the borough and through the adoption of the Local Plan and the subsequent Masterplans for each site; both recognise the need for allotment provision with a shared objective:

- The site will include the provision of high-quality community facilities and services (such as allotments and play sites) to meet identified needs. These will be located in accessible areas around the site and delivered in line with the development phasing plan.

Each Masterplan includes minimum requirements for onsite allotment provision, 75 plots at Killingworth Moor and 111 on Murton Gap.

Our allotment strategy has followed The Local Government Association Growing in the Community guide "to assist those managing allotments, either within local authorities or under schemes for devolved management, to work efficiently and effectively by emulating examples of good practice."

As well as being guided by key national legislation and policies, this strategy has also been shaped by the local context. This includes:

North Tyneside Local Plan

The Allotment Strategy contributes to the aims of our North Tyneside Plan specifically in the 'Our People' theme. This aims to increase the health of our residents and promote access to healthier lifestyles. It acknowledges the network of allotments and provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing. It states 'allotments provide a place for people to interact and produce healthy locally grown food, which can help to improve the diet of residents.

The Green Space Strategy

The Green Space Strategy aims to “provide green spaces that are attractive, safe, accessible and well managed and to look at the future of sites to see how they can be protected, enhanced or even adapted to provide equal access to the various types of green space.” It acknowledges the work done in recent years to improve the condition of allotments by North Tyneside Council, allotment associations and individual tenants

Low Carbon Strategy 2016 - 2027

The Allotment Strategy supports the Low Carbon Plan by reducing the carbon footprint of the borough.

2015 JSNA

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) shows the health and wellbeing needs of local people which is used to provide and develop health, wellbeing and social care services. Allotments contribute to the health and wellbeing of local people.

Fact: The Luxembourg-based Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux is Europe's largest body representing allotment gardeners (it claims to have three million members). All councils in England & Wales (with the exception of certain inner London Boroughs) have to, by law, provide allotments.



3. Current allotment provision across North Tyneside

3.1 Our Allotments

Within North Tyneside there are a total of 70 allotment sites containing 2211 plots. The size of plots varies from 60m² to 600m², with an average plot being between 150m² and 250m²

- The Authority directly manages 48 of these sites, a total of 1306 plots.
- There are 13 sites which are self-managed; these have a total of 768 plots
- Non-Council sites have a total of 137 plots.
- The number of plots on Council managed and self-managed sites has increased by over 200 since 2009.

There are also:

- 9 allotment plots/sites managed by community organisations
- 4 community plots
- 4 wildlife spaces

In North Tyneside, we have a combination of statutory and temporary sites. Statutory sites are directly protected by Allotment Acts but temporary sites are not. Private landlords including Nexus, Duke of Northumberland and Northumbrian Water own some allotment sites.

Thirteen of our sites are under devolved management. This means that the formally constituted allotment association leases the site from the Authority and reinvests revenue (which it manages) on maintenance, repairs and capital items. Other responsibilities that associations under devolved management undertake include:

- Administering waiting lists and letting plots
- Collecting rents
- Carrying out the programming of works and repairs
- Promoting good site maintenance by quickly identifying any plots which are becoming neglected

17 of the 48 Council managed sites have a letting representative. This person is a volunteer who is appointed by the Authority's Allotment Officer. They assist the Allotment Officer by:

- Accompanying the Allotment Officer in any plot inspections
- Representing the Allotment Officer when any minor works are being carried out on site, taking delivery of skips etc.
- Meeting prospective new tenants to show them any recently vacated plots
- Updating on-site notice boards (where applicable)

Please see Appendix A for a detailed profile of our allotment provision.

3.2 Community horticultural projects

In addition to allotments, North Tyneside Council also provides or supports a number of other gardening projects and services across the Borough. These include:

- The Rising Sun Country Park- within its boundaries is a farm which includes day opportunities for people with a learning disability. The farm is operated by the Rising Sun Country Park Trust.
- The Grow and Eat project is for residents in targeted areas of North Tyneside encouraging them to grow their own food.
- Our parks provide opportunities for volunteers to get involved in growing their own.
- Community based horticultural projects including:
 - Justice Prince in Longbenton
 - Cedarwood, North Shields
 - The Community Garden at Redhouse Allotments, Whitley Bay
 - East Howdon Association Community Garden, Wallsend
 - Howdon Community Centre, Wallsend
 - John Willie Sams Centre, Dudley
 - Westmoor Community Centre Gardeners Group
 - Youth Justice Garden, North Shields
 - Age UK Garden, North Shields
 - Oaktrees Recovery Garden, North Shields
 - St Pauls Centre, Willington Quay Community Garden
 - The Meadows at Meadowell Connected (incorporating Tyne Fresh)
 - Community Gardens At Howdon and Shiremoor Childrens Centres
 - Foundation Futures Garden, Wiltshire Drive, Wallsend



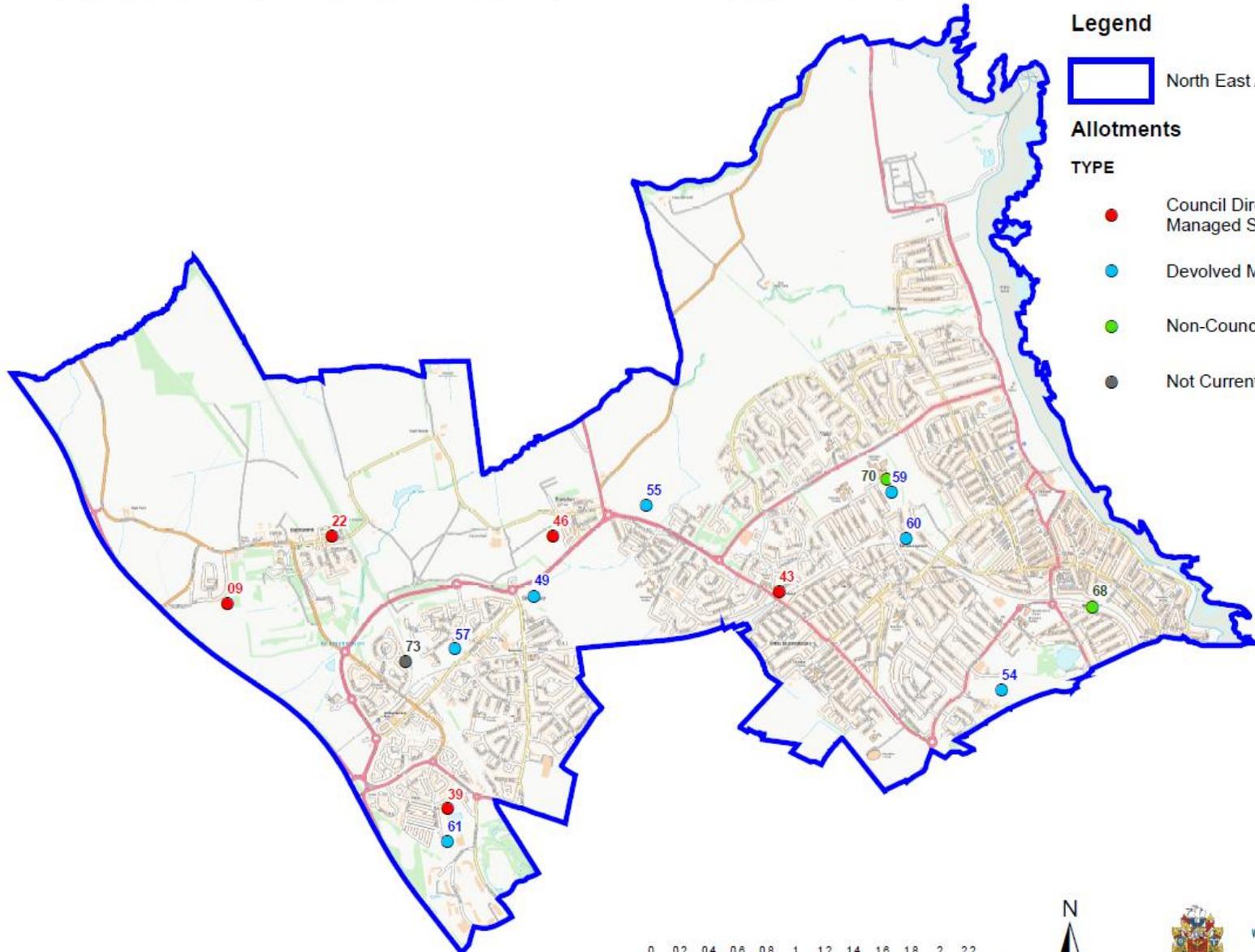
(Small wildlife area within an allotment plot)

3.3 Where are our allotments?

Allotments are distributed across the Borough.

The following maps illustrate the distribution of allotments within the four localities of North Tyneside. Each individual site has a unique number, which identifies the name of the site as listed on Appendix A.

ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN NORTH EAST AREA



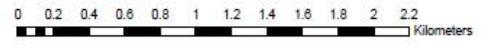
Legend

North East Area Forum

Allotments

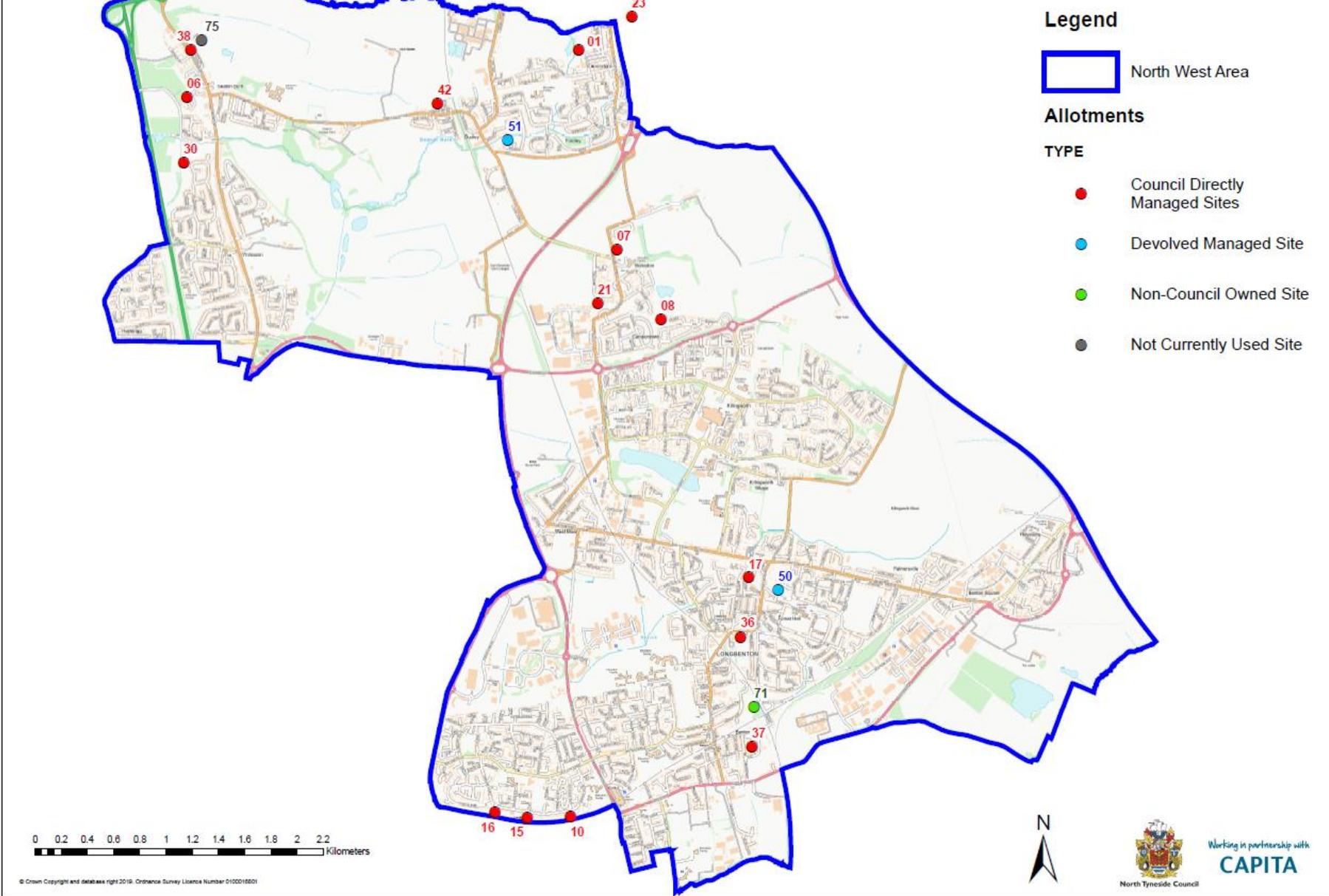
TYPE

- Council Directly Managed Sites
- Devolved Managed Site
- Non-Council Owned Site
- Not Currently Used Site

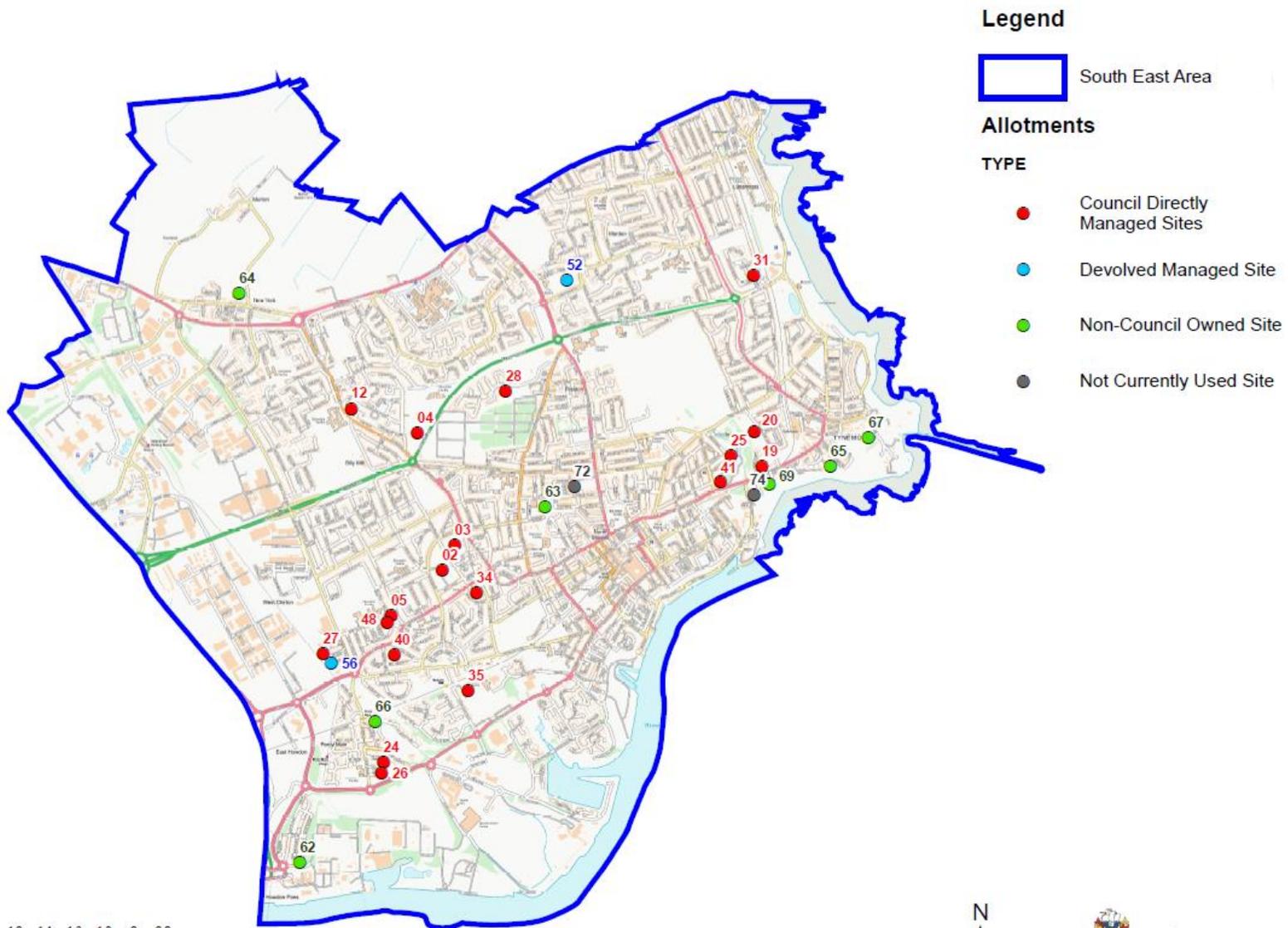


Working in partnership with
CAPITA

ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN NORTH WEST AREA



ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN SOUTH EAST AREA



- Legend**
- South East Area
- Allotments**
- TYPE**
- Council Directly Managed Sites
 - Devolved Managed Site
 - Non-Council Owned Site
 - Not Currently Used Site

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2 2.2 Kilometers



ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN SOUTH WEST AREA

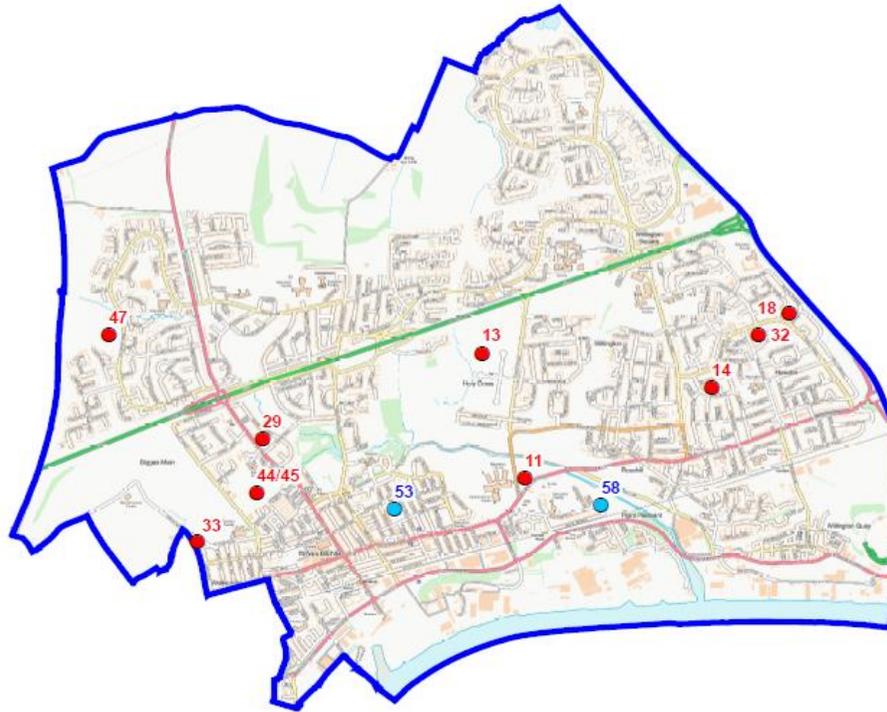
Legend

 South West Area

Allotments

TYPE

-  Council Directly Managed Sites
-  Devolved Managed Site
-  Non-Council Owned Site
-  Not Currently Used Site



© Crown Copyright and database right 2019. Ordnance Survey Licence Number 0100016601



Working in partnership with
CAPITA

4. Costs and income associated with the Allotment Service

4.1 Costs

The approximate cost for operating the Allotment Service is circa £110,000 which includes repairs and maintenance such as repair fencing and clearance of unlettable plots, removal of waste, payments for water and employee costs.

4.2 Income

The Allotment Service income generates approximately £110,000 per annum. The income received derives mainly from the rent paid by allotment holders.

The annual rental for an allotment plot must be paid in advance for the twelve-month period beginning the 1st October each year. The rental charges reflect the size of plots and whether water is provided on site. Prices range from £31.20 to £288.00 as detailed in the table below:

In North Tyneside there are 4 allotment sites which do not have a water supply; these are charged at £3.90 per 10 square metres. (Oct 2019)

| Plot Size (Square Metres) | Charges (Indicative) | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | A | B |
| 80 to 100 | £31.20 to £39.00 | |
| 110 to 200 | £42.90 to £78.00 | |
| 210 to 300 | £81.90 to £117.00 | |
| 310 to 400 | £120.90 to £156.00 | |

44 allotment sites that do have a water supply are charged at £4.80 per 10 square metres. (Oct 2019)

| Plot Size (Square Metres) | Charges (Indicative) | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | A | B |
| 80 to 100 | £38.40 to £48.00 | |
| 110 to 200 | £52.80 to £96.00 | |
| 210 to 300 | £100.80 to £144.00 | |
| 310 to 400 | £148.80 to £192.00 | |
| 410 to 500 | £196.80 to £240.00 | |
| 510 to 600 | £244.80 to £288.00 | |

4.3 Other funding

Section 106 funding associated with new developments across the Borough, has enabled investment into allotment plots. There are also opportunities for allotment associations to apply for grant funding. Individual associations, who have been able to obtain grant funding, have carried out various schemes on their sites. These include roadway improvements, fencing, biodiversity and communal projects and provision of storage containers and toilets.

5. Performance of the Allotment Service

5.1 Performance measures

There are a number of indicators that help to measure performance across the allotment service. These include;

- the percentage of plots let (quarterly)
- the number of unlettable plots (quarterly)
- the number on waiting list (reviewed every 2 years)
- the number of unworkable plots brought back into use (annually)
- the number of sites that are under devolved management (annually)

5.2 Current Performance

The following summarises our current performance:

- 3 un-lettable plots due to flooding and invasive weeds (Nov 19). As further funding becomes available these issues will be addressed and the plots relet
- 15 un-lettable plots have brought back into use in the previous 12 months
- 512 residents applied for an allotment (previous 12 months)
- 99% of plots let (Nov 19)***
- 1259 individual people on Council waiting lists
- 1093 people on self managed waiting lists

*** this figure fluctuates throughout the year due to surrender and termination of allotment tenancies

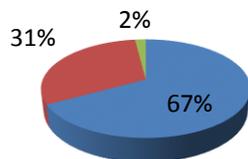
6. Profile of allotment holders

6.1 Our Allotment Holders in North Tyneside

A survey of Council managed allotment holders in North Tyneside has identified profiles of our allotment holders as follows:

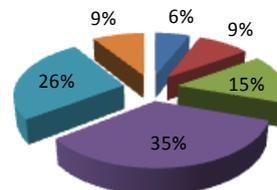
Gender profile

■ Male ■ Female ■ Prefer not to say



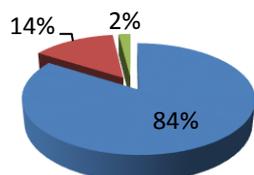
Age Profile

■ 20-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65-74 ■ 75 or over



Disability Profile

■ No ■ Yes ■ Prefer not to say



6.2 What our allotment tenants want

People's needs regarding allotments are evolving:

- we have an ageing population and some allotment holders want to downsize to a smaller plot
- busy families prefer a more manageable sized allotment plot.

New housing tends to have smaller gardens or no gardens at all, which can lead to homeowners looking to allotments to meet their gardening and self-sufficiency ambitions. Our allotment tenants told us which aspects they value most about allotments.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Secure boundary fences | 94% |
| Water supply | 93% |
| Paths | 88% |
| Rubbish removal | 85% |
| Close proximity to home | 82% |
| Quiet environment | 72% |
| Vehicle access to site | 62% |
| Access for the disabled | 59% |
| On-site information board | 51% |
| Car Parks | 48% |
| Site shop | 10% |
| Site meeting room | 6% |

Our allotment holders have told us that they would like to see the following improvements:

- Regular deliveries of skips and waste disposal provision were the highest requested improvements on allotment sites. Then maintenance of pathways, overgrown trees and hedges, security issues, water supplies and a timely turnaround of overgrown/vacant plots.
- The Allotment Service is striving to deliver the Good Allotment Standard across all Council managed sites in the Borough. Tenants are encouraged to compost and avoid bringing onsite/storing materials which cannot be utilised on plot, therefore reducing the need for skips or burning onsite. Where fires cause a nuisance, the Allotment Service takes appropriate action, which includes time restrictions or a complete ban.

7. Achievements to date (since 2009)

The Allotment Service has delivered a number of improvements since the introduction of the last strategy in 2009. These include:

- Developed the '**North Tyneside Good Allotment and Good Plot Standard**' in line with good practice (see appendices) this is the standard we aspire to for all North Tyneside allotments in the long term. It includes individual standards on:
 - Good access
 - Good security
 - Well-maintained paths
 - Adequate water provision
 - Freedom from neglected plots
- Improved allotment information on the council website.
- Secured funding to enable:
 - The creation of 89 new allotment plots since 2009 across new and existing sites
 - The creation of 1 new allotment site
 - The creation of 2 extensions to allotment sites
 - The reclamation of 2 areas within existing allotment sites which were previously unusable.
 - The creation of 2 community plots
 - increased the profile of the Allotment Service
- The Allotment Service has brought back into use more than 50 unlettable plots
- Plots are frequently returned in a poor condition following termination or surrender. Sometimes we are unable to immediately relet a plot due to fly tipping, dangerous structures or collapsed fencing etc. We would class these as unlettable plots. We relet these as soon as practically possible.
- Reducing levels of vacant plots (plot not currently let by a tenant and not designated as unworkable).
- The graph below illustrates the improvement associated with reducing the level of vacant plots.



- Made allotment gardening more accessible to different communities. In North Tyneside there are many plots that are used and enjoyed by tenants with disabilities. The service has assisted such tenants in identifying both sites and plots where ease of accessibility is essential and where the allotments' components are 'user friendly'.
- The "Grow and Eat North Tyneside" project was launched in April 2014. Its objectives are to provide an opportunity for residents in targeted areas of North Tyneside to grow their own food within private gardens, community spaces, parks and other green spaces close to where they live. The project is working within communities to give people the skills and confidence to grow, harvest, cook and eat food that they have grown themselves.

8. Demand for Allotments

8.1 Determining a local standard for allotment provision

Local authorities have a statutory duty under Section 8 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 to provide a sufficient number of allotments when they consider there is a demand.

The Local Government Association Growing in the Community guide identifies that waiting lists should not be treated as the only indicator of unmet demand: *"Expressed demand will also be conditional on the extent to which allotments have been actively promoted to all sections of the community and will remain latent if they are not."* However, it acknowledges that there is currently "no generally accepted procedure for assessing the gap between current use levels and waiting lists and the potential additional need for allotments if actively promoted."

There is no nationally agreed standard or formula for allotment provision.

We currently have waiting lists on all Council managed sites, which are maintained on a first come, first allocated basis for each site. We have almost as many people on the waiting lists as we have plots in the Borough.

Analysis of our waiting lists shows that:

- 8 - 12 people per week apply for an allotment plot. Approximately 500 applications per year are received, this has been consistent since 2009.
- There are 1259 residents on Council managed waiting lists
- The longest wait for a plot on a Council managed site is 13 years.
- The average wait for a plot from the date of application across the Borough is 3 - 5 years.

Given that there are a total of 2074 allotment plots (Council and Devolved Sites only); 1259 residents on Council waiting lists and 1093 residents on Self-Managed waiting lists, we would need 4426 plots to meet existing demand. There are 99379 households in the Borough; therefore our current level of demand is 1 allotment per 23 households.

The gap between the demand¹ for allotments and their availability can be shown as follows:

| Area | No. households | No. plots | No. on waiting lists* | Availability | Demand ¹ |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| North West | 25352 | 363 | 298 | 1 plot per 69 households | 1 plot per 38 households |
| South West | 22078 | 424 | 352 | 1 plot per 52 households | 1 plot per 28 households |
| North East | 22380 | 646 | 822 | 1 plot per 34 households | 1 plot per 15 households |
| South East | 29569 | 641 | 700 | 1 plot per 46 households | 1 plot per 22 households |
| Borough Wide | 99379 | 2074 | 2172** | 1 plot per 47 households | 1 allotment per 23 households |

* number of people on waiting lists differ from Appendix A due to multiple applications from residents

** this figure does not take into consideration the potential duplicate applications on self manages waiting lists.

9. Our ambition for allotments

9.1 Our ambition for allotments in North Tyneside

Our ambition is to deliver a good Allotment Service to current and future plot holders with allotments that are fully tenanted, well managed and maintain and are highly valued by ourselves, our partners and the communities we serve.

We will maximise the opportunities for our residents to enjoy the experience and benefits that allotment gardening can provide.

We will extend existing allotment sites and increase the number of allotment plots across the borough, where appropriate land is available and planning contributions support this.

9.2 Our objectives

As part of this Strategy we have identified six strategic objectives that we aim to achieve in order to deliver our ambition:

1. To maintain and improve the infrastructure, facilities and quality of allotment sites and make sure that sites are safe, welcoming and accessible to all.
2. To increase tenant participation in the management of allotment sites.
3. To provide allotments which meet local demand in terms of numbers and facilities wherever possible.

¹ Demand = current number of plots + number of households on waiting list

4. To promote the benefits of allotments to residents, partners and within North Tyneside Council so that the potential of allotments is maximised for the whole community.
5. To make the most of the resources available to allotment sites in North Tyneside and deliver value for money for plot holders, North Tyneside residents and North Tyneside Council.
6. To provide an effective management and administration process for allotments in North Tyneside.

9.3 Benefits

In achieving these objectives, we will deliver the following benefits:

- An agreed clear standard for the infrastructure, facilities and quality of allotment sites which will help focus and prioritise resources and investment.
- An increased number of sites that are under devolved management.
- Reduced waiting lists for allotments.
- An increased number of plots.
- Maintain the vacancy levels below 1% and reduce the number of un-lettable plots.
- An increased amount of external funding raised by North Tyneside allotment Service via S106 contributions, the requested funding is based on the current level of demand
- Follow the allotment Waiting List Policy and Plot Succession Policy, which ensure that access to allotments is fair and equitable.

10. Further Information

For further information about allotments in North Tyneside, please contact:

Allotment Officer
Quadrant East – Second Floor
The Silverlink North
Cobalt Business Park
North Tyneside
NE27 0BY

Tel: 0191 6437459

email - allotments@northtyneside.gov.uk

Appendix A: Profile of North Tyneside Allotments

| | Council's Directly Managed Sites | No. Plots | Statutory Status | No. unlettable plots | No. on waiting list |
|-------|--|-----------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Annitsford, Barrass Gardens, Annitsford | 13 | Statutory | 0 | 15 |
| 2 | Balkwell A, Heaton Terrace, North Shields | 98 | Statutory | 1 | 73 |
| 3 | Balkwell C, Eustace Avenue, North Shields | 37 | Statutory | 0 | 36 |
| 4 | Beach Road, Beach Road, North Shields | 123 | Statutory | 0 | 111 |
| 5 | Biddlestone Crescent, North Shields | 2 | Statutory | 0 | 2 |
| 6 | Blagdon Terrace, Blagdon Terrace, Seaton Burn | 13 | Statutory | 0 | 23 |
| 7 | Burradon Road, Burradon Road, Burradon | 10 | Statutory | 0 | 8 |
| 8 | Camperdown, Moor View, Camperdown | 19 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 35 |
| 9 | Castle Park, Killingworth Avenue, Backworth | 4 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 14 |
| 10 | Chesters Avenue, Chesters Avenue, Longbenton | 11 | Statutory | 0 | 9 |
| 11 | Church Bank, Church Bank, Wallsend | 28 | Statutory | 0 | 70 |
| 12 | Cragside, North Shields | 6 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 11 |
| 13 | Holy Cross, St Peter's Road, Wallsend | 56 | Statutory | 0 | 95 |
| 14 | Ilford Road, Howdon, Wallsend | 10 | Non-Statutory | 1 | 13 |
| 15 | Innisfree East, Chesters Avenue, Longbenton | 20 | Statutory | 0 | 10 |
| 16 | Innisfree West, Chesters Avenue, Longbenton | 10 | Statutory | 0 | 10 |
| 17 | Letchwell, Letchwell Villas, Forest Hall | 44 | Statutory | 1 | 46 |
| 18 | Lonsdale Gardens, Lonsdale Gardens, Wallsend | 7 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 22 |
| 19 | Mariner's Asylum, Mariners Lane, North Shields | 25 | Statutory | 0 | 143 |
| 20 | Mariner's Lane, Mariners Lane, North Shields ** | 102 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 196 |
| 21 | Means Drive, Means Drive, Burradon | 14 | Statutory | 0 | 11 |
| 22 | Melrose Avenue, Melrose Avenue, Backworth ** | 17 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 19 |
| 23 | Mill Lane, Mill Lane, Annitsford | 29 | Statutory | 0 | 31 |
| 24 | Nelson Crescent/St James' Terrace, Percy Main ** | 3 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 12 |
| 25 | Park Terrace, Park Terrace, North Shields | 5 | Statutory | 0 | 98 |
| 26 | Percy Main, Nelson Terrace, North Shields ** | 12 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 7 |
| 27 | Percy Main Extension, Mindrum Terrace, North Shields | 16 | Statutory | 0 | 8 |
| 28 | Preston Village, Monkswood, North Shields ** | 26 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 86 |
| 29 | Queens Crescent, Queens Crescent, Wallsend | 9 | Statutory | 0 | 27 |
| 30 | Rayleigh Drive, Rayleigh Drive, Wideopen | 31 | Statutory | 0 | 33 |
| 31 | Rennington Avenue, North Shields | 1 | Statutory | 0 | 0 |
| 32 | Ridley Avenue, Ridley Avenue, Wallsend | 11 | Statutory | 0 | 34 |
| 33 | Rutland Road, Rutland Road, Wallsend | 7 | Statutory | 0 | 17 |
| 34 | Silkey's Lane, Silkeys Lane, North Shields | 11 | Statutory | 0 | 25 |
| 35 | Smiths Park, Bridge Road South, North Shields | 56 | Statutory | 0 | 18 |
| 36 | Springfield Park, Station Road, Forest Hall | 28 | Statutory | 0 | 66 |
| 37 | The Oval, The Oval, Benton | 18 | Statutory | 0 | 44 |
| 38 | Thorntree Avenue, Front Street, Seaton Burn | 6 | Statutory | 0 | 7 |
| 39 | Turner Street North, Turner Street, West Allotment * | 11 | Statutory | 0 | 31 |
| 40 | Wantage Avenue, Wantage Avenue, North Shields | 19 | Statutory | 0 | 6 |
| 41 | Washington Terrace, Park Terrace, North Shields | 16 | Statutory | 0 | 85 |
| 42 | Western Terrace, Western Terrace, Dudley | 23 | Statutory | 0 | 16 |
| 43 | West Monkseaton, Sunningdale, West Monkseaton | 8 | Statutory | 0 | 82 |
| 44/45 | West Street / Balmoral Street, West Street, Wallsend * | 129 | Statutory | 0 | 66 |
| 46 | West View, West View, Earsdon ** | 64 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 119 |
| 47 | Wiltshire Drive, Wiltshire Drive, Wallsend | 94 | Statutory | 0 | 63 |
| 48 | Wooler Avenue North Shields | 4 | Statutory | 0 | 13 |
| | Total | 1306 | | 3 | 1966 |

* 2 sites at the same location

** Sites leased in from the Duke of Northumberland

| | Devolved Managed Sites | No. Plots | Statutory Status | No. unlettable plots | No. on waiting list |
|----|---|-----------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 49 | Bertram Place, Bertram Place, Shiremoor | 39 | Statutory | 0 | 100 |
| 50 | Clousden Drive, Forest Hall | 43 | Statutory | 0 | 54 |
| 51 | Dudley Depot, Weetslade Road, Dudley | 31 | Statutory | 0 | 7 |
| 52 | Edington Road, Edington Road, North Shields | 54 | Statutory | 0 | 92 |
| 53 | Ferndale Avenue, Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend | 44 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 63 |
| 54 | Hillheads, Hillheads, Whitley Bay | 102 | Statutory | 0 | 320 |
| 55 | Leg of Mutton, Earsdon Road, Whitley Bay | 80 | Statutory | 0 | 75 |
| 56 | Percy Main, Milldrum Terrace, North Shields | 25 | Statutory | 5 | 54 |
| 57 | Moor Edge, Eardon Road, Shiremoor | 56 | Statutory | 0 | 100 |
| 58 | North Terrace, North Terrace, Wallsend | 29 | Statutory | 0 | 20 |
| 59 | Redhouse, Alder Grove, Whitley Bay*** | 137 | Non-Statutory | 0 | 203* |
| 60 | Redhouse Extension, Dene Gardens, Whitley Bay ** | 30 | Non-Statutory | 0 | |
| 61 | Turner Street East & South, Turner Street, West Allotment | 98 | Statutory | 4 | 5 |
| | Total | 768 | | 4 | 1093 |

* Redhouse and Redhouse extension are managed by 1 Association therefore 1 waiting list

**Site leased in from Duke of Northumberland

*** Site leased in from private owner

| | Non Council owned sites | No. Plots | Statutory Status |
|----|--|-----------|------------------|
| 62 | East Howdon, Lesbury Street, East Howdon | 4 | Non-Statutory |
| 63 | Cleveland Road Terrace, North Shields | 35 | Non-Statutory |
| 64 | Murton Lane, New York Village, North Shields | 20 | Non-Statutory |
| 65 | Oxford Street, Oxford Street, Tynemouth | 6 | Non-Statutory |
| 66 | Percy Main, St Johns Green, Percy Main | 26 | Non-Statutory |
| 67 | Priors Park, West of Pier Road, Tynemouth | 43 | Non-Statutory |
| 68 | Whitley Bay Station Masters Garden, Station Road, Whitley Bay (Community Garden) | 1 | Non-Statutory |
| 69 | Sir James Knott Memorial Garden (Community Allotment/Garden) | 1 | Non-Statutory |
| 70 | Redhouse Community Gardens | 1 | Non-Statutory |
| | Total | 137 | |

| | Sites identified as allotment space, not currently used | Statutory Status |
|----|--|------------------|
| 71 | Benton Curve, rear of Granville Crescent, Benton (Non-Council owned - Nexus) | Non-Statutory |
| 72 | Camp Terrace, North Shields (Non-Council owned - Private) | Non-Statutory |
| 73 | Moorside rear of 138-140 Hartside Crescent, Backworth | Statutory |
| 74 | River View, Tanners Bank, North Shields (Non-Council owned - Private) | Non-Statutory |
| 75 | Seaton Burn Welfare, Seaton Burn | Statutory |

Appendix B: Allotments - Key legislation and guidance

- **The Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908**

This consolidated all previous allotment legislation. It placed a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient allotments according to demand.

- **The Allotments Act 1922**

This limited allotment size to a quarter of an acre and that they should be “mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetables and fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family.” This implies that only a limited proportion of a plot may be used for growing flowers and no commercial use may be made of produce.

The act protected tenants in terms of laying down periods of notice and requiring compensation for terminating tenancies. This act has since been amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

Any revenue obtained from the sale of land or exchange of statutory allotment land should be spent on discharging debts associated with the acquisition of allotment land, in acquiring new land for use as allotments or improving the existing stock of allotments. Only the surplus may be used for other purposes.

- **Allotment Act 1925**

The Allotment Act requires local authorities to give special consideration to allotments in any town planning development

Allotments are protected by Section 8 of the Act, which requires that local authorities seek the secretary of state’s consent, via the relevant local office for disposal or appropriation to other use. Consent cannot be given unless the secretary of state is satisfied that:

- the allotment in question is not necessary and surplus to requirements
- adequate provision will be made for displaced plot holders
- the number of people on the waiting list has been effectively taken into account
- the authority has actively promoted and publicised the availability of allotment sites and has consulted the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

- **Allotment Act 1950**

This strengthened the requirements on councils to provide allotment gardens. Provisions relating to rents were also affected. This Act included issues relating to notices to quit and compensation

- **Town and Country Planning Act 1971:**

Removed requirement made in 1925 Act for town planning authorities to consider allotment provision within town planning schemes.

- **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

Has considerable influence on the forward planning of allotments and is relevant to the council’s Local Plan.

- **The Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980 and the Local Government & Planning (Amendment) Act 1981**
Consolidated planning legislation, which has further influenced the forward planning of authorities.
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 (housing)** (revised 2011)
Annex B explicitly excludes allotments and associated buildings from the definition of 'previously-developed' land which should be the subject of ongoing search for suitable new sites for housing
- **National Planning Policy Framework (2014)**
Allotments are a specific category in the classification of open space
Local Authorities are obliged to undertake robust assessments for needs of open spaces of different kinds combined with audits of existing provision. This has therefore meant that allotments should be included in local authorities Green Space or Open Space Strategies.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (2014) Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17 (2002, DLTR, now CLG)**
The number of allotments required in any area is a function of demand and there needs to be a demand-led methodology based on local authority records. Local Authorities should provide and rent allotments and keep a waiting list. There is likely to be a need for a population based provision standard, coupled with an accessibility standard or distance threshold. Waiting lists should not be treated as the only indicator of demand.
- **The Local Government Association Growing in the Community guide** Its aim is "to assist those managing allotments, either within local authorities or under schemes for devolved management, to work efficiently and effectively by emulating examples of good practice." It sets out:
 - The opportunities and challenges that allotments provide to councils and local communities
 - How they contribute to a wide range of local authority agendas including wellbeing, health, cohesive communities and quality green space
 - A model for developing an allotment strategy as a clear map of the way forward for the allotments service

Appendix C: Allotment Plot Succession Policy

1. Any current tenant who wishes to share his/her plot with a friend/relative may do so providing that the tenant registers this person as a plot co-worker, co-workers will then be added to the waiting list at this date. Note: only 1 co-worker per plot.
2. A co-worker will not, under normal circumstances be permitted to become the new tenant until they have reached the top of the waiting list for that chosen site.
3. If the current named tenant surrenders their tenancy prior to the co-worker reaching the top of the list, the plot will be offered to the person at the top.
4. In the event of the death of the current tenant the Allotment Service/Association will consider any request for succession from the Spouse/family/co-worker.

Appendix D: Allotment Waiting List Policy

1. Applications for an allotment must be made by either completing a paper or electronic application form.
2. Any adult resident (18+) of North Tyneside can apply for an allotment.
3. Residents can apply for a maximum of 4 sites across the borough.
4. There is a waiting list for every site and all lists are kept in order of date.
5. When a plot becomes vacant it will be offered to the person at the top of the waiting list for that site.
6. When new sites are developed, the waiting lists for the nearest sites within a 1 mile radius will be used

Appendix E: The Good Allotment Site Standard

1. Good access – all plots should be easily accessible from an entrance gate. Sites should be located within communities and easy to get to.
2. Good security – all sites shall have a secure external boundary fence with a minimum height of 1.6m. All gates will have a locking system and all tenants will be provided with a key for this system. The Council will make every effort to ensure that current tenants and co-workers hold the key only.
3. Well-maintained paths - All access paths will be free from major potholes, with a possible presence of minor undulations. The surface can be compacted loose fill material (e.g. road planings), bitmac, concrete or grass, paths should be free from overhanging / overlapping tree, hedge or weed growth.
4. Adequate water provision – all tenants on a site with more than 8 plots will be able to access a mains supply of water. This supply shall be compliant with all water regulations, and no permission will be granted for any additional standpipes or extensions for tenants for individual plots. A minimum provision of 1 tap per 8 plots is the requirement standard.
5. Freedom from neglected plots – tenants will ensure that they regularly cultivate their plot and that the plot is maintained to ensure that it complies with ‘The Good Plot Standard’.

Appendix F: The Good Allotment Plot Standard

The Allotment Service, when carrying out plot inspections to determine that a plot is in compliance with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement will, under normal circumstances, measure this standard against the following criteria:-

1. A minimum of 70% of the entire plot is either prepared for crops or has crops growing on this space.
2. Any remaining space, including access paths, structure bases and the edge of boundary paths are kept free of perennial weed growth or annual weed seed.
3. Plot boundary fences are secure and not overhanging adjacent plots, access paths or tracks.
4. Any surplus crops from the previous season are lifted and disposed of within 4 weeks of the new growing season. Note: the exception to this being wintering crops (e.g. brussel sprouts, spring cabbage or fruits).
5. Boundary hedges are pruned as required to retain desired height/vigour and avoid shade or overhang nuisance.
6. No materials shall be stored on plot other than those that can be used for allotment purposes.

Appendix G: Allotment Plot Inspection Schedule

Monthly inspections - April to October

