

Government to look at rules for allotments



Plans to simplify and overhaul Scotland's allotment rules were announced today by The Scottish Government.

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead has launched a consultation to consider the shape of future allotment legislation.

Among the questions being asked are:

Should councils be required to provide people in their area within a specified timeframe

Should councils have a duty to provide a specific number of allotments in their area per head of population

Mr Lochhead said: -"Growing your own food is continuing to grow in popularity in Scotland and this goes hand in hand with an increasing desire to know where our food comes from.

"Allotments provide a range of benefits including better health, an opportunity to learn new skills, and an understanding of where food comes from – not forgetting the chance to eat the fruits of your labour. We're committed to helping people to grow their own food and this consultation will consider what changes should be made to the existing legislation to make it simpler and fit for today's community needs.

"Many communities have expressed a desire to get back to nature and more involved with growing their own food and that's exactly what we're working to make possible."

[Allotment consultation](#)

Here in Edinburgh the council is currently working in terms of the [allotment strategy](#) which was agreed upon and published in 2010. New allotments have been opened at India Place, in response to the finding that there were at least twice as many people on the waiting list as there were plots. However now there is a four year waiting list for the 22 raised beds which were formed there. One of the main presumptions in the new council strategy was to presume against allotment holders using vehicles to get to their allotment site, so this gets rid of any need to provide car parking.

There are other initiatives to provide more space in the city for gardeners who do not have their own land. The Edinburgh Garden Share Scheme is an arrangement for a gardener to take over a garden where perhaps the owner is older and is not able to keep the garden any longer. This promotes gardening and also some social interaction. The prospective gardeners are subject to a Disclosure Scotland check.

There are also community gardens projects across the city funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, who have also recently announced substantial funding for a new scheme in Wester Hailes called Edible Estates.

In September last year the council's Transport and Environment Committee agreed:- "That land already in the ownership of the Council be used to establish new allotment sites before additional land on the outskirts of the city was purchased and that regular progress reports be presented to Committee."

There have been no further reports on this matter since last September.

There is information for prospective allotment holders [here on the council website](#), but don't get out your spade just yet there is still a long waiting list.