



# **AN ALLOTMENTS STRATEGY FOR DARLINGTON 2009-2019**



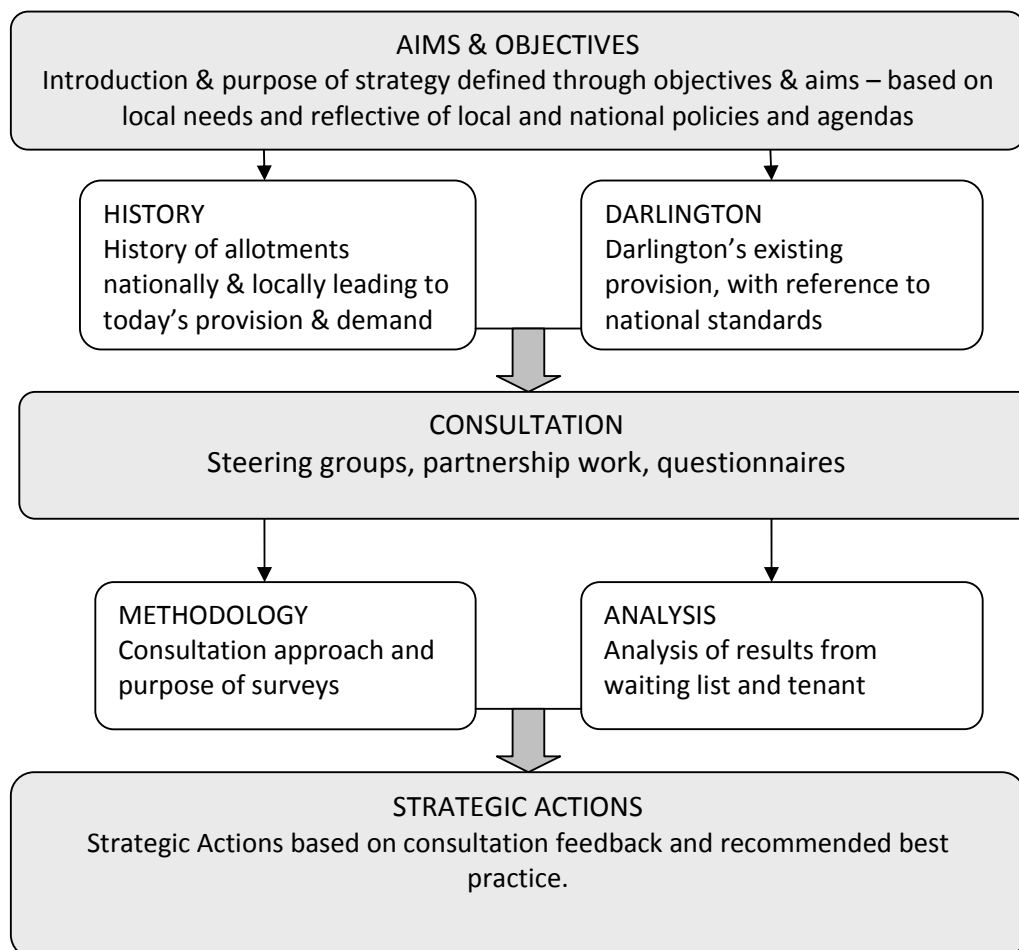
*“Local Growing, Healthy Living, Sustainable Lifestyles”*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Allotment gardens and spaces to grow food are an important part of the green space and leisure provision. They offer people across the UK the opportunity to strengthen their communities, achieve more sustainable lifestyles and maintain a better quality of life.
- 1.2 Growing your own food delivers many benefits, the most recognised of which is the provision of a better diet which in turn helps create an improved level of health and fitness. In addition, food grown on allotment gardens can act as a good resource for learning new skills, a better environment for wildlife, and a place for increased social connectivity.
- 1.3 Darlington Borough is home to a number of different kinds of allotment provision such as Council run sites, self-managed associations, and Parish or privately owned and/or managed allotments. This strategy has been developed for Darlington, and although inclusive of the Council's Service, it also takes into account other local allotment provision. By adopting a borough wide approach, and hence incorporating all identified allotment supply, it provides a more functional and connected Allotment Strategy for Darlington.
- 1.4 The production of a strategy for allotments in Darlington comes at a time when interest in the activity has seen a big increase. Only 10 years previous, the provision was under used with many semi derelict sites and vacant plots. The current situation is very different with a fast growing waiting list and the provision at full capacity.
- 1.5 What approach to take to this relatively new situation is the main reason for the production of this strategy. How do we address the new demand, is it likely to be a sustained trend? And what role do the various stakeholders have in the process are all questions that are looked at in the following pages.
- 1.6 The key partners involved in the production of this strategy are, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Primary Care Trust (PCT), Friends of the Earth and Groundwork North East. The strategy has taken shape through continued support and discussion from a diverse steering group that has included representatives from the above as well as from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG), The Children's Trust, Parish Councils, Self-managed sites, and DBC managed sites, Darlington Borough Council (DBC) departments including: Allotments, Estates, Environmental Services, Planning Services, Education, Connecting Communities, Sustainable Development Services, Parks and Countryside, and Housing.

- 1.7 The strategy has been produced following a detailed consultation process which was aimed at assessing the current attitude with regards to the existing provision, as well as identifying the communities view towards opportunities for an alternative programme for growing food. This has been carried out through a range of surveys with the Darlington public (see consultation section), including questionnaires sent to those on waiting lists, council tenants already with allotment gardens and plot holders who are members of the self managed sites.
- 1.8 All recommendations made in the strategy will be considered in terms of the long term sustainability of the service.
- 1.9 The strategy is aimed at providing a vision for how allotments and local food will be catered for, in the borough of Darlington, for the next ten year period up until 2020.
- 1.10 The process that was adopted in order to develop the Allotment Strategy for Darlington is described in the following diagram:



## **2. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**

### **2.1 The Aims of the Allotment Strategy**

2.1.1 In order to address the recent increase in demand, it is the aim of this strategy to look at delivering a more accessible and sustainable allotment service. To do this it is intended to firstly, increase the level of the provision by identifying where there is a shortage and where there are opportunities for new or enlarged sites, and, secondly, the quality of the provision, by helping existing or new allotment holders to access new resources. There is also a recognized need to publicise opportunities to grow food within the Borough of Darlington.

2.1.2 The strategy takes into account the different types of allotments provision within Darlington – namely, council run sites and self managed sites as well as non-council sites such as those run privately or by the parish councils. Any improvements to the existing allotment services, aimed at meeting the increased demand, should provide information that takes into account these different types of allotment provision.

2.1.3 Based on the overarching aims there are three strands that can be broken down as follows:

- Meeting Demand
  - Methods of Meeting Demand
  - Resourcing Allotments
  - On-site Provision
- Management of sites
  - Management of Allotment Sites
  - Association Forming
  - Monitoring systems
- Promotion and Marketing

2.1.4 Finally, the strategic vision is aimed at helping create greater levels of social inclusion for residents as the community engage in this relatively social activity. Alongside this, the movement encourages a healthy way of life for a variety of reasons associated with this activity as well as improving knowledge and awareness of natural processes.

## 2.2 Strategy and Guidance

2.2.1 The Allotment Strategy is a sub document of the Darlington Open Space Strategy 2007 -2017. It is identified as one of the actions of the Open Space Strategy.

2.2.2 In addition allotments are relevant to the health sector and have strong links with creating sustainable communities. There are therefore links with all the following strategies:

- Sustainable Community Strategy ‘One Darlington Perfectly Placed’
- Health Improvement Strategy
- Social Inclusion Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy

## 2.3 History of Allotments and National Recommendations

2.3.1 Allotment legislation has been altered and adapted over time to meet changing needs and demand. Land allocation, allotment provision, and a service to facilitate provision remain a fundamental right (under the Allotments Act, where there is demand) for the public to continue the tradition and pastime of sustainable self-sufficiency in growing food.

## 2.4 A Historical Context

<b>Historic Tradition of Allotment Gardening</b>	
•	Traditionally formed as areas of land to use for a sustainable supply of self-grown produce for consumption (and survival).
•	Divides between rich and poor and disproportionate land ownership effected food access. Thus, the General Enclosure Act of 1845 was formed which ‘required that the Commissioners should make provision for the landless poor in the form of “field gardens” limited to a quarter of an acre. This was really the beginning of allotments as we have today in the UK.’ <sup>1</sup>
•	Urban allotments plots also increased during the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century due to growth of high density housing with little or no garden area for planting or growing food.

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<sup>1</sup> Allotment Growing: Vegetable, Fruit and Herb Gardening  
<http://www.allotment.org.uk/articles/Allotment-History.php>

- The following figures<sup>2</sup> demonstrate the massive increase in allotment use and function during times of war:
  - First World War prompted a huge growth in the number of allotments from 600,000 to 1,500,000
  - The Second World War again increased the role for allotments and the 'Dig for Victory' campaign saw annual food production from allotments rise to 1,300,000 tonnes per year from around 1,400,000 plots.
- When food shortage threats ceased, the need and demand for allotment plots declined. Allotment provision and land allocation also reduced as land was required for new functions.

Following the peak of 1,400,000 allotment plots across the UK in 1943 there was a sharp decline in the provision to around 500,000 in the 1970s. The decline continued during the 1970s but at a much slower rate<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.5 Allotments, The Law and Recommendations

- Within allotment law, there are no national rules or recommendations with regards to quantity or time limits for meeting waiting list demand.
- The most widely acknowledged recommendation is the '1969 Thorpe Report which recommends a minimum provision equivalent to 15 per 1,000 households, but this is not legally binding' however....
- It is estimated that since 1969 some 30% of the then available allotments land has been lost irrevocably. Hence, the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NCALG) recommends that the irreducible minimum provision today should be 20 standard (300 sq. yd) plots per 1,000 households.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs [Fifth Report](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56007.htm#a6) History & Legislation [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56007.htm#a6](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56007.htm#a6)

<sup>3</sup> Provision of Allotments: Environment, Transport & Regional Affairs Fifth Report <http://www.parliament.the-stationeryoffice.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56009.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Allot More Allotments. <http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/legislation.htm>

- *The Survey of Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms*, carried out by the University of Derby on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2006 showed that the national average provision was 7 plots per 1,000 population.

2.6 A summary of key Allotment Acts which have been passed until now are as follows:

Principal Allotments Legislation<sup>5</sup>

Act and Date	Relevance
Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908	Consolidated all previous legislation and laid down basis for all subsequent legislation. Placed duty on local authorities to provide sufficient allotments, according to demand. Also makes provision for local authorities to purchase compulsorily land to provide allotments.
Allotments Act 1922	Limited the size of an allotment to one-quarter of an acre and specified that it should be used mostly for growing fruit and vegetables. Also protected tenants by laying down periods of notice, ensuring compensation for termination of tenancies and compelled most allotment authorities to set up allotment committees.
Allotments Act 1925	Required local authorities to recognise the need for allotments in any town planning development. Established 'statutory' allotments which a local authority could not sell or convert to other purposes without Ministerial consent.
Allotments Act 1950	Followed on from the findings of the Allotments Advisory Committee Report of 1949. Made improved provisions for compensation and tenancy rights. Also confined local authorities' obligation to 'allotment gardens' only.

### 3. Darlington's Existing Allotment Provision

3.1 Darlington has a population of 97,838<sup>6</sup> and the number of households within the Borough is 46,000<sup>7</sup>. With an allotment tenancy rate of approximately 900, we can estimate that Darlington's provision currently runs at 20 plots per 1,000 households.

<sup>5</sup> Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Fifth Report History & Legislation <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmenvtra/560/56007.htm#a6>

<sup>6</sup> Census 2007. Darlington. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/00EH.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Darlington Facts & Figures 2008: Number of Households 2008. [http://www.darlington.gov.uk/dar\\_public/documents/Chief%20Executive%20Office/DARLINGTON%20FACT%20CARD%202008.pdf](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/dar_public/documents/Chief%20Executive%20Office/DARLINGTON%20FACT%20CARD%202008.pdf)



- 3.2 Based on the provision guidelines, Darlington exceeds the Thorpe Report<sup>8</sup> recommendations of 15 plots per 1000 households and meets those of the NSALG of 20plots/1000 households. Darlington also surpasses the National Average calculated to be approximately 7 plots per 1,000 population.

The total number of allotment sites identified within the borough stands at 26 (plus two new community allotments projects which are in development). This figure may differ from other reports as some sites are divided into two or more sections thus depending whether the audit counted the sites individually or grouped together and hence counted as a single entity.

- 3.3 The following table shows identified allotment plots within the Darlington Borough, the management and/or ownership of each:

	Name	Ownership	Ward	Ha	Full Plots	Half Plots
1	Arnold Road	DBC	Lingfield	2.52	40	15
2	Sugar Hill	DBC	Cockerton East	2.2	85	3
3	Drury Street	DBC	Northgate	0.1	4	-
4	Field Street	DBC	North Road	0.93	34	-
5	Honeypot Lane	DBC	Faverdale	0.65	18	-
6	Lascelles	DBC	Lascelles	1.38	29	4
7	Salter's Lane North	DBC	Haughton West	1.55	46	10
8	Salter's Lane South	DBC	Harrowgate Hill	0.28	15	-
9	Springwell Terrace	DBC	Haughton West	0.15	7	-
10	Parkside	DBC	Park East	0.06	2	
11	Barmpton Lane	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Haughton North	2.42	89	27
12	Bellburn Lane	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Cockerton East	3.21	85	29
13	Dodmire	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Bank Top	1.7	48	-
14	Glebe Road	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Harrowgate Hill	1.8	47	-
15	Smithfield Road	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Park East	0.57	15	10
16	West Cemetery / Pondfield Close	DBC/Self-managed - Association	Hummersknott	3.51	115	15
17	Killinghall Row	Middleton St George Parish Council	Middleton St George	2.57	6	10
18	Sadberge Road	Middleton St George Parish Council	Middleton St George	0.86	20	5

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/legislation.htm>

	Name	Ownership	Ward	Ha	Full Plots	Half Plots
19	Belle Vue	Middleton St George Parish Council	Middleton St George	0.42	20	7
20	High Side Road / Batt Lane	Heighington Parish Council	Heighington	0.98	70	-
21	Emerson Road	Hurworth Parish Council	Hurworth	0.57	45	
22	Hurworth Grange Strait Lane	Hurworth Parish Council	Hurworth	0.25	9	
23	Nunnery Lane	Privately Owned	Hummersknott	1.69	70	-
24	Bedford Street / Chatsworth Terrace	Privately Owned	Park East	0.6		
25	Bridge Road, Blackwell	Privately Owned	Hurworth	0.98		
26	Harrowgate Club	Privately Owned	Harrowgate HILL	0.12		
27	Bowen Rd	Privately Owned	Cockerton East	0		
<b>Notes</b>						
1. Allotment gardens may vary in size and shape (may be larger or smaller than standard full or half plots).						
2. Been unable to get all the information for every site						

- 3.4 Open Space Strategy<sup>9</sup> states that although there is only 0.34 ha of allotments per 1000 people in the urban area in Darlington, almost all the urban population is within 15 minutes walk (1000m) of an allotment site, with exceptions being the urban fringe ends of Red Hall, Lingfield, Branksome and High Grange and parts of College and Park West wards.

*Darlington allotment Provision Standards to be maintained and improved: 95% population within 15 minutes walk (1000m) of at least one allotment site.*

(Open Spaces Strategy. Policy 18)

- 3.5 In addition to growing food, a number of allotments within the UK are used (partially) for livestock, for example: bee-keeping, hens, ducks and geese, pigeons and rabbits. Darlington Council has permitted livestock to be kept on five of its sites. Livestock has been restricted to predominantly chickens, pigeons, ducks, rabbits and one site where horses are allowed.

<sup>9</sup> Darlington Open Space Strategy 2007-2017. April 2007. (p21)

3.6 Existing site that permit livestock are:

1	Arnold Road	Livestock is currently only permitted within allotments away from residential housing.
2	Cockerton	
3	Field Street	
4	Salter's lane	
5	Smithfield Road	

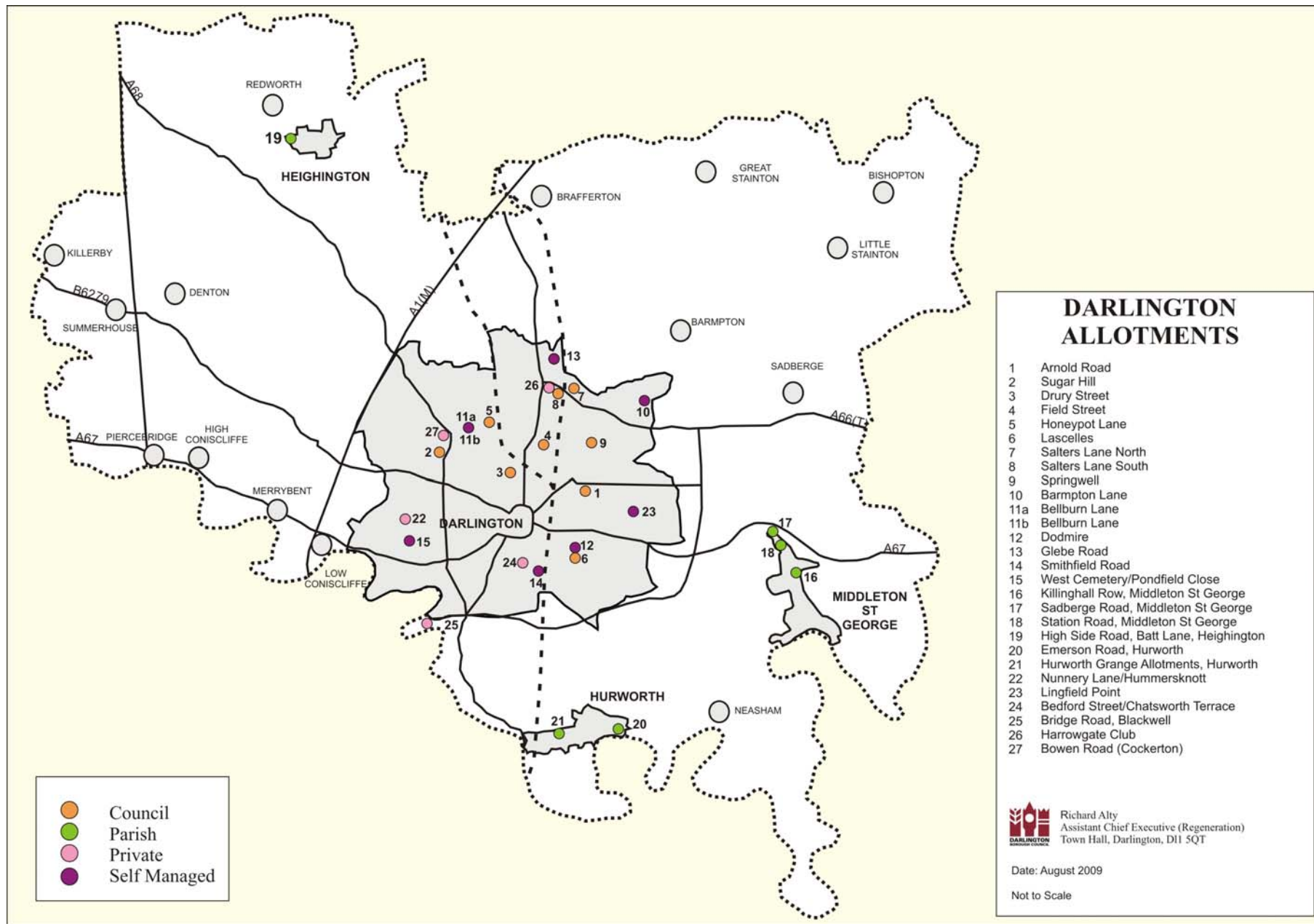
3.7 There are currently allotments present in 15 out of the 24 Darlington wards, the majority concentrated around the more urban and more densely populated areas where more demand exists.

DARLINGTON BOROUGH WARDS ( <i>U = urban, R = rural</i> )	
<b>With Allotments</b>	Park East (U)
Bank Top (U)	Hurworth (R)
Cockerton East (U)	Lascelles (U)
Faverdale (U)	<b>Without Allotments</b>
Harrowgate Hill (U)	Central (U)
Haughton North (U)	Cockerton West (U)
Haughton West (U)	College (U)
Heighington & Coniscliffe (R)	Eastbourne (U)
Middleton St George (R)	Haughton East (U)
Hummersknott (U)	Mowden (U)
Lingfield (U)	Park West (U)
Northgate (U)	Pierremont (U)
North Road (U)	Sadberge & Whessoe (R)

DBC Sites (C) Self-managed sites (SM)	Waiting List by Ward (2010)	Plots		Site
		Full	Half	
Wards		Full	Half	
Bank Top	16	48	-	Dodmire (SM)
Central	20	-	-	
Cockerton East	13	85	3	Sugar Hill (C)
		85	29	Bellburn Lane (SM)
Cockerton West	15	-	-	
College	8	-	-	
Eastbourne	22	-	-	
Faverdale	7	18		Honeypot Lane(C)
Harrowgate Hill	20	15		Salters Lane South
		48		Glebe Road (SM)
Haughton East	12	-	-	
Haughton North	6	89	27	Barmpton Lane (SM)
Haughton West	20	46	10	Salters Lane North (C)
		6	2	Springwell Terrace (C)
Hummersknott	2	115	15	West Cemetary (SM)
Lascelles	23	29	4	Lascelles (C)
Lingfield	16	40	15	Arnold Road (C)
Mowden	2	-	-	
Northgate	18	4		Drury Street (C)
North Road	26	34		Field Street (C)
Park East	22	2		Parkside (C)
		15	10	Smithfield Road (SM)
Park West	1	-	-	
Pierremont	13	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>115</b>	

Self Managed Sites	Rent	Concession
Barmpton Lane	30.00	Yes
Bellburn Lane	45.00	Yes
Dodmire	45.00	Yes
Glebe Road	30.00	Yes
Smithfield Road	40.00	No
West Cemetery	22.00	Yes

- 3.8 Out of the 26 allotment sites in Darlington, the Council's allotments provision consists of 15 sites, all of which can be found within the main urban area of Darlington, with just under 800 plots tenanted. The sites range from quite large with in excess of 150 plots down to very small sites with as few as 2 plots.
- 3.9 Some of these plots are let to the same people with as many as 3 plots under the same tenancy in some places. There are a few sites where plots are not let due to their unsuitability, mainly as a result of poor drainage.



## DARLINGTON ALLOTMENTS

- 1 Arnold Road
- 2 Sugar Hill
- 3 Drury Street
- 4 Field Street
- 5 Honeypot Lane
- 6 Lascelles
- 7 Salters Lane North
- 8 Salters Lane South
- 9 Springwell
- 10 Barmpton Lane
- 11a Bellburn Lane
- 11b Bellburn Lane
- 12 Dodmire
- 13 Glebe Road
- 14 Smithfield Road
- 15 West Cemetery/Pondfield Close
- 16 Killinghall Row, Middleton St George
- 17 Sadberge Road, Middleton St George
- 18 Station Road, Middleton St George
- 19 High Side Road, Batt Lane, Heighington
- 20 Emerson Road, Hurworth
- 21 Hurworth Grange Allotments, Hurworth
- 22 Nunnery Lane/Hummersknott
- 23 Lingfield Point
- 24 Bedford Street/Chatsworth Terrace
- 25 Bridge Road, Blackwell
- 26 Harrowgate Club
- 27 Bowen Road (Cockerton)

<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Council
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Parish
<span style="color: pink;">●</span>	Private
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	Self Managed


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Date: August 2009

Not to Scale

- 3.10 The actual plot sizes vary to some extent across the provision although the standard 25 metres by 10 metres or 250 sq metres can be used as a guideline for the average plot size. There are also some ½ plots tenanted at some of the sites which are offered to people who say they cannot manage a full plot.
- 3.11 In 2004 Darlington Borough Council contracted Groundwork West Durham and Darlington to work with them to set up self managed sites. To date six sites have become self managed. All these sites have their own committee, lease the site from DBC and have secured additional funds to improve their site.
- 3.12 The decision to develop self managed sites has proved very successful. It is widely agreed that the sites are very well managed, with external grants significant improvements that users have wanted have been made and they have a greater sense of community spirit.
- 3.13 Darlington Borough Council wants to continue to create more self managed sites if the conditions are appropriate.
- 3.14 Darlington Borough Council set the rent of plots for sites they manage and in 2010/11 this will be £45.70. The self managed sites set their own rent these range from £22 - £43.
- 3.15 Until recently the combination of Council run, parish run and privately run sites has been sufficient to cater for demand with most sites having a surplus of plots or only a small and temporary waiting list.
- 3.16 Over the past few years there has been a huge increase in the interest of growing food locally and now the Council's waiting list (which varies from site to site), currently stands at over 400 people in total and continues to grow at the same rate. The rate of turnover is very low with someone joining the waiting list, likely having to wait for as much as five years to get an allotment.
- 3.17 As part of the open spaces audit all the allotment sites were audited during the summer of 2009 and the following analysis of the provision was made.

Allotments provide sustainable opportunities for the community to grow their own food as well as promoting outdoor exercise and community interaction. 'Grow your own food' is becoming increasingly popular; the Council currently has approximately 300 people on its waiting list for an allotment site.

All of the allotments adjoin other large areas of open space; valuable connections are made with the rest of the infrastructure network allowing species like bees, newts, birds and insects to move around the Borough more easily.

Management and maintenance responsibilities vary; nine spaces are owned by the Council including Arnold Road and Lascelles, a further six like Glebe Road and Smithfield Road are owned by the Council and a self management association who take care of the day to day management of the spaces. All of the spaces in the villages are owned and managed by their respective Parish Councils. Others retain close associations with working men’s clubs and private organisations. All are only accessible to allotment holders but as a valuable, unique type of open space the ongoing quantity, quality and value must be monitored.

**Quantity and Type**

27 allotment spaces (28.2ha) exist; twenty in the urban area and seven in the main villages. Provision remains constant across the Borough but is unevenly distributed partly reflecting historic associations with working men’s clubs, railway and industrial buildings and land like Harrowgate Club, Smithfield Road and Killinghall Row, Middleton St George. The majority of provision (23%) is in the South West locality, in contrast the Central locality has the lowest provision (9%). At a more detailed level, there are no allotments in the Central, Cockerton West, College, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Mowden, Park West and Pierremont wards, including some of the more densely populated parts of the urban area.

Hierarchy	Number	Site Area
Strategic	-	-
Local	22	27.74
Doorstep	5	0.46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28.2</b>

*Local allotments*

81% are local spaces but site size and the corresponding number of plots varies significantly; West Cemetery Allotments cover 3.51ha while Lascelles Allotments covers 0.32ha. Allotments within the villages may be smaller but are classified as local spaces as a result of their village catchment.

*Doorstep allotments*

Five doorstep spaces exist in the urban area, all are very small spaces (less than 0.2ha); Bowen Road (0.06ha) and Parkside are the smallest (0.06ha) providing 2 plots but are still an important resource for the local community.

**Standards of provision**

**OSS Policy 18 Provision Standards By Open Space Type**



By 2017, within the main urban area, the overall provision of specific types of open space will be maintained and improved to achieve the following standards:

- Allotments: 95% population within 15 minutes walk (1000m) of at least 1 allotment site

In 2007 quantity and quality standards of provision were not considered appropriate for allotments as the factors that controlled appropriate provision varied across the urban area. But since then the waiting lists of the Council and other providers has grown significantly. To actively meet this demand the Council intends to use a new standard of provision:

### New OSS Policy 23

The Council and its partners will work towards a standard of allotment provision of 0.45ha per 1000 population so that 95% of the urban population is within 15 minutes (1000m) walk of at least one allotment site. The quality of allotment sites will be so that all sites are 4\* quality or above.

Currently provision is 0.26ha per 1000 people, well below this standard. The Council will continue to work with partners particularly the self management associations and Parish Councils to increase demand where possible to meet the needs of those on the waiting list. This may include changing management to encourage better use of existing stock as well as identifying new spaces for allotment provision.

### Quality and Value

Area	No of spaces	Quality	Value
Darlington North West	4	4*: 2 3*: 1 1*: 1	High
Darlington Central	5	4*: 4 3*: 1	High
Darlington South West	5	4*: 4 3*: 1	High
Darlington South East	3	4*: 2 3*: 1	High
Darlington North East	3	4*: 2 3*: 1	High
Villages	7	4*: 2 3*: 4 2*: 1	High

By nature, allotments are managed more intensively than other spaces, but their overall quality contributes to the Borough's landscape and 'sense of place'. So, new quality surveys were specifically designed to assess the qualities important to creating a high quality allotment space. 74% of spaces were classified as 4\* quality including the largest West Cemetery and the smallest Bowen Road as well as several in the villages like Hurworth Grange. Only two spaces are below average quality; Station Road, Middleton St George as a result of limited parking and difficult access and Honeypot Lane because of its poor overall condition resulting from anti social behaviour. All of the allotment spaces are high value reflecting the high demand for plots and the limited allotment spaces within the Borough.

### Actions

To help meet the 2017 standards of provision the following will take place in 2010-2011:

- Investigations will continue to help provide a new allotment at **The Ridgeway, Harrowgate Hill;**

In the long term

- Opportunities will be taken to increase the number of spaces and/or to extend existing spaces to enhance provision;
- The management of Honeypot Lane will be reassessed;
- By 2026 a new allotments space may be incorporated into the new development at Lingfield Point.

3.18 In recent years, a number of initiatives have taken place that explore greater involvement for Darlington schools in the growing of food and in some cases this has led to them actually leasing plots at local allotment sites. The success of this process often depends on one or two keen individual teachers but there have been some very good examples of plots being used in this way, recently and opportunities for this to continue as well as for schools to explore creating plots on their own land in the future are to be encouraged by those partners involved in this strategy.

3.19 Other local food initiatives are also being encouraged by the partners involved in the strategy such as community allotment gardens. This is a situation where, what is usually a larger plot, located at a new or existing site, is managed by one or more organisations in order to deliver a selection of outputs, from training, outreach work or simply to involve a group of people collectively in the local food movement.

3.20 Other methods being explored of producing food locally include the Darlington DiG project (Darlington its Growing) which is looking at providing an umbrella organisation, the purpose of which is to add value to the initiatives that are already taking place, making sure that people involved are aware of the opportunities in Darlington, learn from each other, introduce consumers to producers and bring in extra resources through combining efforts. The initiatives that fall under this banner are the Grow Zone approach, similar to those that have been successfully created in Middlebrough's back alleys, community supported agriculture, a process that has been trialled successfully elsewhere in the country and community propaganda using raised beds in more urban settings.

### **Darlington Borough Councils Management Policy**

**In the management of Council owned sites, DBC aims to maintain an efficient and effective service for the letting and re- letting of allotments.**

**In order to achieve this the Council will aim to:-**

- (1) Provide an efficient and effective lettings service, setting the rent in line with Council policy and collecting rents on an annual basis.
- (2) Aim to let a newly vacant plot within 1 month of the termination date.
- (3) Provide a basic maintenance service for the sites including grass cutting of the main paths, repairs to the perimeter fences, payment of the water bills and the repair of the water supply infrastructure if present.
- (4) Survey the sites at least once every 4 months in order to identify severely underused (uncultivated), neglected plots.

Definition of an uncultivated plot, (less than half of the plot is cultivated for 1 year, or all the plot lies uncultivated for 6 months). The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommend that 75% of a plot should be cultivated.

- (5) Contact the tenants listed as occupiers of severely underused (uncultivated) or neglected plots during the year of the tenancy and ensure action is taken by the tenant to cultivate the plot. If no action is taken within 28 days then the Council can either reclaim or re let the plot. The tenant could retain the plot under the existing tenancy for no more than 1 full year if an acceptable reason for the underuse is provided.

These are:-

- (i) Ill health. In these cases, a tenant needs to tell us in writing that they are unable to garden their plot until a specified time and this time

- needs to be not greater than 1 year. Otherwise, the Council will be entitled to re let the plot.
- (ii) An extended vacation. In these circumstances it would be expected that the plot holder will make arrangements to ensure that the plot is kept in a reasonable state by another party.
- (6) Allow the joint running of plots to a registered 'buddy'. The Council is now introducing a 'buddy scheme' whereby people helping on plots can formally register themselves as co-workers. Only one 'buddy' per plot. The 'buddy' will also be entered onto the waiting list.
  - (7) Ensure that the current vegetable only sites have tenancy agreements that identifies this restricted use.
  - (8) Protect and promote the use of existing Council allotments for vegetable growing and show a preference for the re letting of livestock plots for vegetable growing.
  - (9) Where plots are used for livestock purposes and the remainder of the plot is vacant or under utilised, the plot holder will be asked to either cultivate the remainder or subdivide the plot.
  - (10) Hens will be allowed on vegetable plots providing they occupy no more than 1/5 of the plot.
  - (11) A tenant that has had repeated complainants made against them by neighbouring tenants with regards to general behaviour, their attitude towards other plot holders, the management of their plot including the use of fires, the control of weeds, the control of pests, their conduct in the shared areas, and any other relevant matter, in these circumstances the Council will investigate the complaints and if upheld, will serve notice on the tenant to vacate the plot giving two weeks to leave the premises and hand in the key if appropriate.
  - (12) Ensure that tenants keep their structures/sheds in good order and to be in keeping with their surroundings.

#### Managing the Waiting List

- (13) The Council agrees to keep a waiting list of those wishing to become an allotment holder and to make this list available to the public when asked.
- (14) To ensure that when plots become available, people at the top of the list are given first refusal.
- (15) Give people on top of the list two weeks to assess the offer and if they fail to respond, offer the plot to the next person on the list.

- (16) If available, a choice of more than one plot will be made available if no specific request has been made.

**The Council's role in facilitating new self managed associations.**

It has been the intention for some time for the Council to extend the principle of self management. This means, handing over the day to day governance of the individual site to a management committee with the rents passing from the Council to the committee and hence most of the other functions following the same path. The Council maintains ownership of the site itself but for all other purposes, the site becomes independent.

It is the intention of the Council to further pursue this approach, aiming to extend self management to other sites including, Cockerton east and west, Salters Lane, Field Street, Lascelles and Arnold Road.

The benefits of this form of governance have been well established and include:

- Better access to external funding
- Better long term vision
- Better control over lettings and re- lettings
- More projects initiated
- Higher quality of sites shared facilities
- Able to turn run down allotments into high quality facilities

The Council's present role in facilitating existing and future self managed associations can be summarised thus:-

- Work in partnership with associations in accordance with procedures set out in the Darlington Compact.
- Works to facilitate the creation of new association's by setting out the principles of how this can be achieved. Namely, the setting up of the committee. Running the committee. Entering into a lease agreement. The Council's role as freeholder. See below.
- Provide or through a third party, provide an appropriate service to look at appeals from tenants who feel they have been treated unfairly by their association.
- Provide support for funding bids that the associations may make for the improvements of their sites.

- Try to be a help in negotiations on border issues with adjacent landowners.
- Provide support on governance issues.
- Work in partnership to look at ways of addressing the increase in interest in allotment gardening.
- The Council will continue to facilitate an association's forum.
- The Council will continue to require associations to receive approval for any major changes in association's constitutions if requested.

### **The Council's Role as Freeholder of the Land**

The Council retains a role in helping the association address a number of issues.

These are:-

- (1) Drainage. The drainage of allotment land is the responsibility of the lease holder but the Council will attempt to facilitate finding solutions to problems associated with poor drainage if and when they arise.
- (2) Exterior security fencing. The Council has in the past helped associations erect perimeter fencing using external funding and will continue to lend support to this process.
- (3) The Council will continue to help associations access external funding for other schemes that help develop the facilities further.
- (4) Large mature trees that lie in the perimeter of the association sites will remain the responsibility of the Council and will be identified within the lease agreement.

### **4. Consultation and Engagement**

4.1 In developing the strategy the consultation was carried out via two questionnaires targeted at the waiting list and existing users. The engagement was achieved via a steering group made up of a variety of interested parties that included:

- Various DBC departments
- Friends of the Earth
- Groundwork North East
- Primary Care Trust

- National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardens
- Representatives from self managed sites
- Representative from non self managed sites
- Parish Councils

Plus a short presentation on progress was made to the Greener Theme group in September 2009.

4.2 The major strength of this strategy is the identification of current trends through gathering qualitative and quantitative primary research ascertaining the reality of today's needs and demands in Darlington.

4.3 To achieve a clear picture of allotment perception and demand within Darlington, 2 questionnaires were developed and shared among all stakeholders prior to final agreement and distribution.

- PHASE 1: WAITING LIST QUESTIONNAIRES
- PHASE 2: EXISTING ALLOTMENT HOLDERS QUESTIONNAIRES

4.4 The questions for both the waiting list and tenant surveys were largely aimed at assessing the level of demand that exists at present and whether this is likely to be a lasting trend; the degree of satisfaction with the existing service; the amount people are willing to travel to a provision; level of experience with gardening; and principal benefits they feel they get from gardening. The surveys are aimed at building up a picture of what the service needs to do to address this enormous increase in demand.

#### 4.5 **Waiting List Questionnaire – Key Outcomes**

4.5.1 400 questionnaires were sent out May 2009 requesting returns by the end of June 2009. 145 questionnaires were returned. The following points highlight some of headlines. A full summary can be found in Appendix 1

4.5.2 **When asked:** 'How long have you been on allotment waiting list(s)?' the majority (29.4%) had been waiting for over a year.

4.5.3 **When asked:** 'How would you use an allotment?' over 90% of responses were to grow food. 22.8% of responses wanted to keep hens too. Other uses for space within their plot included: Bee Keeping, Compost Bins, Educational space for children, Flowers and special plants, Greenhouse and space to relax.

4.5.4 **When asked:** 'What are the key reasons you would like to hold an allotment?' (And rate importance)' the results showed that:

(Key reasons: Health benefits, exercise, food cost savings, leisure, relaxation, socialising and family activity, education/learning, sustainable living, environment, fun/hobby, rewarding project)

- ✓ Rewarding Project: highest overall response and rated 'Very Important' (64.7%)
- ✓ Health, Food Cost Savings & The Environment also had high ratings as 'Very Important'
- Socialising & family activity & Education: lowest ratings in the 'Very Important' category, and the highest in the 'least important' category.

4.5.5 **When asked about:** Learning, sharing knowledge and sharing growing space:

82.6% will share the use of their plot with friends or family.  
60.4% have never managed an allotment before.  
83.9% have experience of growing food.  
66.4% of those with experience are willing to share knowledge to help others.  
79.3% of those without experience would welcome advice and help.

4.5.6 **When asked:** 'How far are you willing to travel?' the majority (44.8%) of responses showed a willingness to travel up to 1 mile, with only 8.3% willing to travel over 3 miles.

4.5.7 **When asked:** 'What mode of travel would you prefer to use to get to your allotment?' the majority would prefer to walk (72.2%). Driving to an allotment plot was the next highest response (40.7%), closely followed by cycling (37.9%), with taking the bus being the least favourable option.

4.5.8 **When asked:** 'What size plot would you prefer or consider managing?' results showed that the majority either wants or wouldn't object being allocated a small half-size plot (70%), and only 30% wanted a full sized plot.

4.5.9 The majority of persons applying for an allotment plot are:

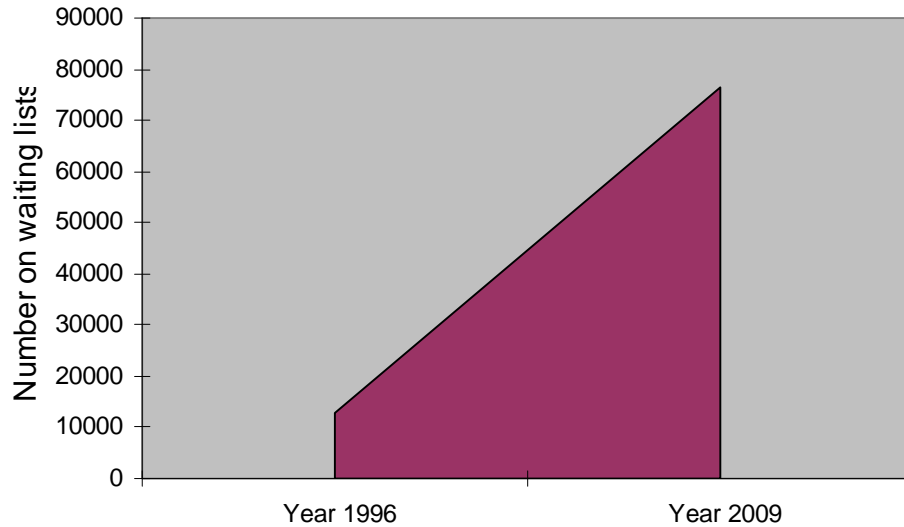
- ❖ Between 35 - 44 years of age (29.5%)
- ❖ Male (67.3%)
- ❖ In full-time employment (47.9%)
- ❖ White British (95.2%)

4.5.10 The results from the consultation showed that peoples renewed interest in renting allotments largely reflects the widespread desire to grow your own food locally. People are keen to avoid eating food that they are unsure of, they recognise the health benefits of being



involved in gardening and they feel more secure having their own food supply that they can afford.

### National Waiting List Increase



4.5.11 Figures show that in 1996, the total waiting lists for England totalled 12,950, compared to 2009 which shows a massive increase to 76,330<sup>10</sup>.

#### 4.6 Tenants Questionnaire – Key Outcomes

4.6.1 A total of 550 questionnaires were sent out with the support of some associations. Returns were requested and received in July 2009. The final survey results were generated in August 2009. 268 surveys were returned for analysis.

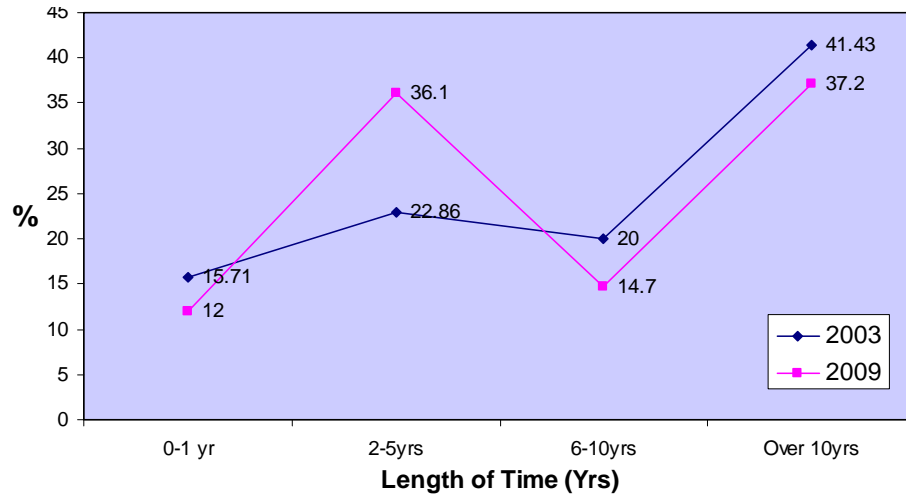
4.6.2 5 of the questions asked within this survey are replicas of those asked in a previous survey developed and circulated by Darlington Borough Council in February 2003. These questions are identifiable with this symbol: ➔ and can be used to compare how responses have altered over the last 6 years.

4.6.3 **When asked:** ‘How long have you had an allotment for?’ The majority (37.2%) had managed their plot for over 10years. 36.1% had theirs for 2-5yrs, 14.7% had theirs for 6-10yrs, and only 12% have had their allotment for up to 1 year.

➔ In 2003, the response showed that the majority (41.43%) had their plot for over 10 years. 22.86% have had theirs for 2-5yrs, 20%

<sup>10</sup> A Survey of Allotment Waiting Lists in England. June 2009. p4. NSALG & Transition Town West England. [http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk/files/ttwk\\_nsalg\\_survey\\_09.pdf](http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk/files/ttwk_nsalg_survey_09.pdf)  
Allotments Strategy for Darlington 2009-2019

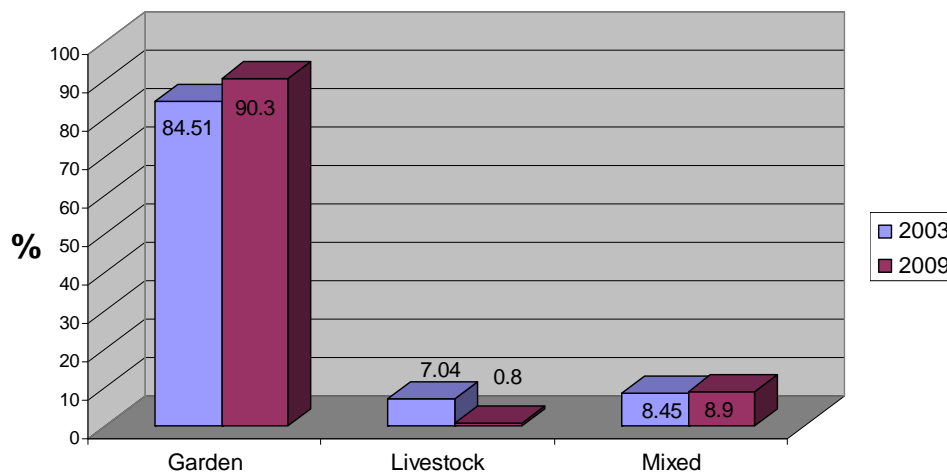
had theirs for 6-10yrs, and 15.71% were new allotment holders having had theirs for up to 1 year.



4.6.4 **When asked:** ‘What type of allotment do you hold?’

The response showed that 90.3% held a ‘garden’ only allotment, 0.8% had only livestock on their plots, and 8.9% had a mixture of both.

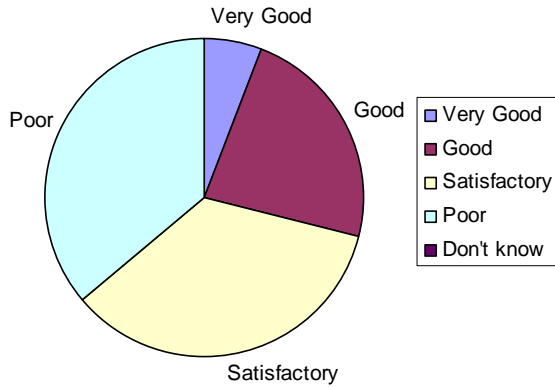
➔ In 2003, the response showed that 84.51% held a ‘garden’ only allotment only, 7.04% kept livestock on their plots, and 8.45% had a mixture of both.



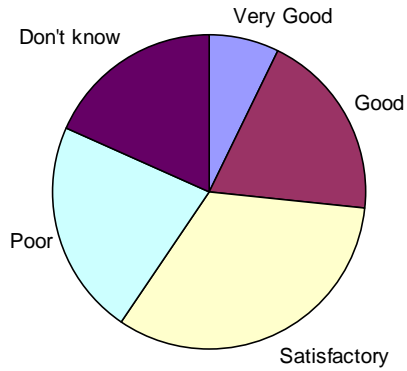
4.6.5 **When asked:** ‘What is your general view of the current service which the Council provides in respect of allotments?’ The response showed that only 7.1% had a very good perception, and 19.5% had a good perception. The majority however sees the service as either satisfactory (32.8%) or poor (22.4%).

→ In 2003, only 5.8% had a very good perception of the existing service and 23.19% had a good perception. The majority however saw the council service as either satisfactory (34.78%) or poor (36.23%)

**COUNCIL SERVICE - 2003**



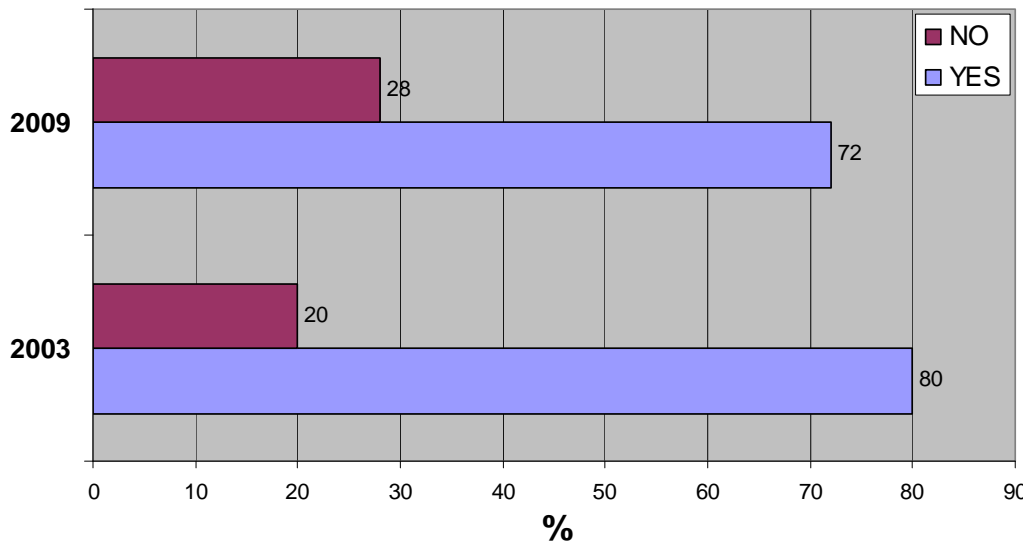
**COUNCIL SERVICE - 2009**



4.6.6 In both cases, the Council’s service is perceived by the majority as poor or satisfactory, with less than a third of responses seeing the service as good or very good. This could be due to a number of factors which may include communications between council and tenants, response from council towards complaints, issues and queries, and clarity of information available including allotment service promotion and publicity.

4.6.7 **When asked:** ‘would you like to see more information being made available – e.g. newsletter, allotment helpline, information on the Council’s website etc?’ The response showed that 72% replied yes.

→ In 2003, 80% replied ‘yes’



4.6.8 **When asked:** 'Are you currently a member of an allotment association?' the majority (68.3%) said yes. Of those in an association, the majority rated this system of management as satisfactory (49%), excellent (28.1%), good (10.4%). Only 6.8% viewed associations as poor.

- ✓ 85.7% think that more allotment associations should be formed  
→ In 2003, 71.88% said yes, more associations should be formed.
- ✓ 28.5% would be willing to be a Committee Member on an Association (if not already)
- ✓ 80% would be willing to share their knowledge to help others
- ✓ 69.8% who are new to their plot would want or welcome advice and help from others
- ✓ 38.7% would be interested in providing support in community allotments if they were developed across Darlington.
- ✓ 50.6% currently shares a plot with family and/or friends

4.6.9 **When asked:** On what (location) factors did (or would) you base your allotment site/s choice? The majority of responses rated the safety and security of site as Very Important (74.6%), followed by travel distance and accessibility.

4.6.10 **When asked:** 'How far do you travel to your allotment?' the biggest number (40.6%) travels up to half a mile to their site. 2.4% travel more than 3 miles.

4.6.11 **When asked:** 'what size plot do you manage?' 76.7% manage a full plot, and 23.3% manage a half plot. (12.4% managed more than one full plot)

4.6.12 The majority of tenants are:

- ❖ Between 55 – 64 years of age (29.1%)
- ❖ Male (74.5%)
- ❖ Retired (49.8%)
- ❖ White British (99.6%) (0.4% = white other)

4.6.13 **When asked:** 'Do you, or anyone in the group of friends or family that would use your allotment, have any long-term illness, health problems or impairments?' 29.8% said yes.

#### 4.7 Steering Group and Other Engagement

4.7.1 Two meetings of the steering group took place. These meetings considered the questionnaire before it was sent out, the results,

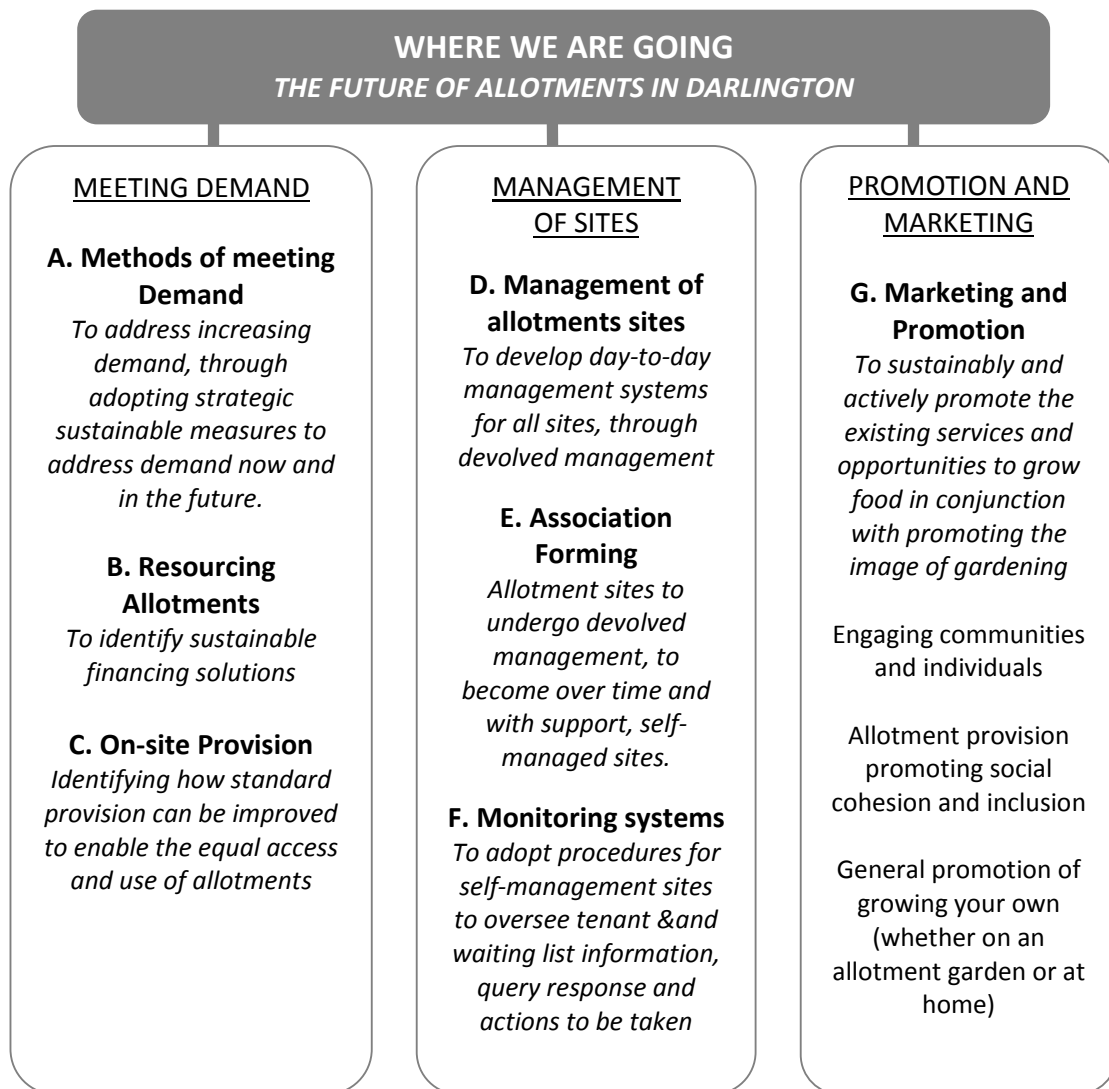
broad discussions about allotments and local food and debating the actions that needed to be included in this strategy.

- 4.7.2 In September 2009 a progress report was given to the Greener Theme Group regarding the allotment strategy and alongside this the theme group has been considering its role in the local food agenda. As a result a task and finish group was established to look into developing a plan to move forward the interest in local food and what its focus should be.
- 4.7.3 The questionnaires were used to promote a new project between Friends of the Earth and Lingfield Point which is about creating a temporary growing space for people.
- 4.7.4 With input from DBC's housing team the idea of supporting tenants to use their gardens to grow produce was raised. This is being pursued as an idea with the housing team.

## 5. STRATEGIC ACTIONS -

### The Future of Allotments in Darlington

- 5.1 Based on both the consultation results, partner engagement and existing provision within Darlington, the following actions have been developed to move the current allotment provision forward. These have been grouped under the main headings as identified in the early part of the report.



# ACTION PLAN

*Note: Short term= 1-2 years*

*Medium term = 3-5 years*

*Long term = 6-10 years*

<b>A. Methods of meeting demand:</b> To address increasing demand, through adopting strategic sustainable measures to address demand now and in the future.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
1. To consider what land DBC own and if any of this would be suitable to be used for growing produce. Either as allotment extensions or new sites.	Short term	Possible land identified	DBC	DBC estates
2. If in action 1 land is identified, agree how it could be developed and used for growing produce.	Short term	Action plan for any proposals	DBC	DBC Parks and Countryside Manager
3. Identify further opportunities for land allocation for new allotments through negotiations with developers.	Short,medium term		DBC	DBC Planning Policy
4. Where there is currently a lack of provision identify if there is suitable land to meet the local need.	Short term	Possible land identified	DBC	DBC Estates
5. Include a clause on allotments to protect and enhance current and future provision within the Local Development Framework.	Short term	Included within the LDF	DBC	DBC Planning Policy
6. Develop a policy for the creation of half plots	Short term	Policy produced		DBC Allotment Assoc's
7. Pursue and support other projects such as Grow Zone, the Community Allotment, school allotments that enable a wide range of opportunities for people to grow produce locally	Short,medium term	Projects established	External	DBC Groundwork Friends of the Earth Greener Theme Group

<b>B. Resourcing Allotments:</b> <i>To identify sustainable financing solutions for resourcing Darlington allotments, through measures such as: land acquisition, upgrading and improvement of allotment sites, and sustainable management systems</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
8. Increase the number of self managed sites (see D. Management of Allotment Sites).	Short term	Timetable to implement	DBC and external	DBC Groundwork
9. Increase communications and form partnerships between allotment sites	Short term	Continue 6 monthly review and widen engagement	DBC	DBC Groundwork
10. Review current tenancy rates for all sites and compare against national averages	Short term	Review carried out	DBC	DBC Allotments Officer
11. Support allotments and associations to secure additional funding	Short,medium term	Monitor on an annual basis	External Funding	DBC Allotments Officer Groundwork
12. Consider if water bills can be reduced by promoting appropriate water storage facilities	Short,medium term	Reduced water bills	External	DBC Allotments Officer
<b>C. On-Site Provision:</b> <i>For all stakeholders to look at how standard provision can be improved to enable the equal access and use of allotments to satisfy the increasing demand</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
13. Agree what the minimum level of provision on any new sites should be	Medium term	Produce statement on minimum levels	DBC	DBC Parks and Countryside Manger
14. Develop an access statement for each site	Medium term	Access statements for each site produced	Partners	DBC Allotment Assoc Other site owners
15. Review site audit and identify improvements required to achieve a minimum standard for existing sites	Short term	Plan of improvements	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer
16. Allotment Associations to source funding for improvements on their site.	Short to Long	Annual list of improvements	Allotment committees	Allotment Assoc's DBC Allotments Officer



<b>D. Management of Allotment Sites:</b> <i>To have a functional day-to-day management system of allotment sites, facilitated through devolved management systems and fed back centrally to the Council for monitoring and evaluation</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
17. DBC to review its current management practices and identify areas for improvement	Short term	Review carried out and actions agreed	DBC	DBC Parks and Countryside Manger
18. DBC to produce clear guidance on their approach to managing their sites and what they can offer the self managed sites	Short term	Guidance produced	DBC	DBC Allotments Officer
19 DBC to share their guidance with others who may want to adopt	Short term	Guidance shared	DBC	DBC Allotments Officer
<b>E: Association Forming:</b> <i>For all allotment sites to undergo devolved management to become, over time and with support, self-managed sites.</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
20. Identify sites that would be suitable to become self managed	Short term	List produced with rationale	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer
21. Agree a timetable for the development of more self managed sites	Short term	Timetable produced	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer
<b>F: Monitoring Systems:</b> <i>To adopt systems and processes for accurate management of tenant and waiting list information, query response and actions.</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
22. DBC to put in place systems for monitoring waiting lists and keeping those on the lists informed.	Short term	Systems in place	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer
23. DBC to ensure that regular site inspections carried out and appropriate actions taken to ensure that plots are fully utilised.	Short term	Records of site inspections	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer

24. DBC to collect all waiting list information on a six monthly basis to give an indication of waiting list numbers across the Borough.	Short term	Waiting list figures collected every 6 months	DBC	DBC Allotments Officer
<b>G: Marketing &amp; Promotion:</b> <i>To sustainably and actively promote the existing services and opportunities to grow food in conjunction with promoting the image of gardening.</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>
25. To provide more information about DBC's allotment service and what it offers.	Short,medium	A range of information available	DBC	DBC Allotment Officer
26. Increase public awareness of new local food growing opportunities as they develop.	Short,medium	Opportunities taken through new projects and ideas	Greener theme group members	Greener theme group Friends of the Earth Groundwork DBC PCT
27. Increase public awareness of the practice and benefits of 'local growing', and increase awareness of existing local food providers.	Short, medium	New projects successful	Greener theme group members	Greener theme group Friends of the Earth Groundwork DBC PCT

## **6. Equalities Impact Assessment Statement**

### **Council Sites**

The lettings process for allotments is open to any individual or group of people. The demand for allotments exceeds the number of plots that become available for new tenancies by a considerable margin, and a waiting list system is in operation (see lettings policy).

The Council manages the waiting list to ensure fairness to everybody on the list. It recognises that this may include treating disabled people who are near the top of the waiting list more favourably, as a reasonable adjustment, where a suitable plot meeting their needs in terms of location, accessibility and manageability becomes available. Each case will be treated on its merits.

Council-run allotment sites have varying degrees of accessibility, as can be seen from the information below. In addition to appropriate reasonable adjustment, in accordance with equalities legislation, in managing the waiting list the Council will consider other ways of helping disabled people to obtain and maintain a plot.

If more than one plot is available, the allocation process will allow a disabled person to choose the plot most suitable for their needs. Help will also be given to disabled tenants with the management of their plots, for example with help in clearing away vegetation or detritus left over from the previous tenant. Whilst it is under no obligation to do so, the Council will endeavour to provide support and advice to tenants to adapt plots, for example through the installation of raised beds, to make them more usable by disabled tenants.

For existing tenants who are unable to tend their plot through ill-health or disability, the Council will relax the usual requirement to cultivate at least 75% of the ground in any one year for a set period. Alternatively, tenants can choose to downsize to a half plot. The 'buddy' system is designed to enable people who are unable to fully manage their plot for an extended period or indefinitely to bring in a friend to help them. The policy allows the 'buddy' to take over the tenancy. This is subject to checks and provision of information before a 'buddy' can be included in the tenancy agreement, to ensure fairness to other people on the waiting list.

Groups with particular cultural or faith-related needs may wish to develop gardening projects in ways that cannot be accommodated satisfactorily through the allotments waiting list or the allocation of plots to individuals within existing allotment sites. If such circumstances arise the Council is under no statutory obligation to meet those needs but will endeavour to support such groups to identify potential locations and secure the resources needed to achieve their objectives.

### **Non-Council Run Sites**

Private sites have their own tenancy agreements and the Council does not have a role in their lettings processes. If contacted by concerned tenants or people wanting to be tenants about unfair or discriminatory practices or behaviours, the Council may be able to help by reminding associations of their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council maintains a watching brief on allotment association sites that were formerly Council sites, and it can ensure that associations adhere to principles of equality and fairness in the way it manages its members and those on the waiting list. An association taking over and running a Council owned site becomes subject in law to the Council's public sector equality duty, and the Council will require the duty to be upheld in the management of the site. The model tenancy agreement that associations are required to use incorporates principles of equality and fairness, and this can only be changed through agreement with the Council. Association tenants can complain to the Council about equality and fairness concerns or other issues, and these will be investigated. The Council will seek to resolve issues through negotiation and agreement, but may take formal action if this is deemed necessary.

### **Council-Run Allotment Sites**

Arnold Road: can drive to and park next to plot; loose stones may be a problem for wheelchair access

Brankin Road: can drive to and park next to plot

Cockerton: can drive to only 16 plots to off-load, but cannot park outside plots; narrow paths, access would be difficult for a motor scooter/wheelchair access for plots behind West Auckland Road; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Drury Street: cannot drive to plots, cars must be left on-street; narrow paths, access would be difficult for a motor scooter/wheelchair access; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Field Street: can drive into site to off load but cannot drive to individual plots; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Honeypot Lane: can drive into site to off load and park outside 6 plots; pot holes in access track

Lascalles: can park next to plot

Parkside: gate next to road; narrow paths, access would be difficult for a motor scooter/wheelchair access; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Salters Lane North: can drive into site to off load and some cars would be able to park outside plots; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Salters Lane South: can drive through park to site but cannot drive into site; narrow paths, access would be difficult for a motor scooter/wheelchair; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

Springwell Terrace: park on street and walk to site, cannot drive to offload; narrow paths, access would be difficult for a motor scooter/wheelchair access; unmade up surfaces could make access difficult after prolonged periods of wet weather.

### **Sites Managed By Associations**

Barmpton Lane: can drive into site, have car parks within the site; would be able to off load/park outside some plots

Bellburn Lane: can drive into site, have car parks within the site; would be able to off load/park outside some plots

Dodmire: can drive into site, have car parks within the site; would be able to off load/park outside some plots

Glebe Road: can drive into site, have car park within the site; would be able to off load/park outside plots

Smithfield Road: can drive into site, but cannot off load at plots

West Cemetery: can drive into site, have car parks within the site; would be able to off load at most plots

### FULL CONSULTATION RESULTS

1.1 To achieve a clear picture of allotment perception and demand within Darlington, 2 questionnaires were developed and shared among all stakeholders prior to final agreement and distribution.

- PHASE 1: WAITING LIST QUESTIONNAIRES
- PHASE 2: EXISTING ALLOTMENT HOLDERS QUESTIONNAIRES

1.2 The questions for both the waiting list and tenant surveys were largely aimed at assessing the level of demand that exists at present and whether this is likely to be a lasting trend; the degree of satisfaction with the existing service; the amount people are willing to travel to a provision; level of experience with gardening; and principal benefits they feel they get from gardening. The surveys are aimed at building up a picture of what the service needs to do to address this enormous increase in demand.

#### 1.3 Waiting List Questionnaire – Key Outcomes

1.3.1 Returns were requested and received in June 2009. The final survey results were generated in July 2009. 145 surveys were returned for analysis.

1.3.2 **When asked:** ‘How long have you been on allotment waiting list(s)?’ the majority (29.4%) had been waiting for over a year.

1.3.3 **When asked:** ‘How would you use an allotment?’ over 90% of responses were to grow food. 22.8% of responses wanted to keep hens too. Other uses for space within their plot included: Bee Keeping, Compost Bins, Educational space for children, Flowers and special plants, Greenhouse and space to relax.

1.3.4 **When asked:** ‘What are the key reasons you would like to hold an allotment?’ (And rate importance)’ the results showed that:

(Key reasons: Health benefits, exercise, food cost savings, leisure, relaxation, socialising and family activity, education/learning, sustainable living, environment, fun/hobby, rewarding project)

- ✓ Rewarding Project: highest overall response and rated ‘Very Important’ (64.7%)
- ✓ Health, Food Cost Savings & The Environment also had high ratings as ‘Very Important’
- Socialising & family activity & Education: lowest ratings in the ‘Very Important’ category, and the highest in the ‘least important’ category.

1.3.5 **When asked about: Learning, sharing knowledge and sharing growing space:**

82.6% will share the use of their plot with friends or family.

60.4% have never managed an allotment before.

83.9% have experience of growing food.

66.4% of those with experience are willing to share knowledge to help others.

**79.3% of those without experience would welcome advice and help.**

1.3.6 **When asked: ‘How far are you willing to travel?’ the majority (44.8%) of responses showed a willingness to travel up to 1 mile, with only 8.3% willing to travel over 3 miles.**

1.3.7 **When asked:** ‘What mode of travel would you prefer to use to get to your allotment?’ the majority would prefer to walk (72.2%). Driving to an allotment plot was the next highest response (40.7%), closely followed by cycling (37.9%), with taking the bus being the least favourable option.

1.3.8 **When asked:** ‘What size plot would you prefer or consider managing?’ results showed that the majority either wants or wouldn’t object being allocated a small half-size plot (70%), and only 30% wanted a full sized plot.

1.3.9 **When asked:** about the Friends of the Earth ‘Grow Your Own’ network, to gauge interest in local projects to grow food, 70% of those on the waiting list said they would like to be contacted about new food growing opportunities.

1.3.10 The majority of persons applying for an allotment plot are:

❖ Between 35 - 44 years of age (29.5%)

❖ Male (67.3%)

❖ In full-time employment (47.9%)

❖ White British (95.2%)

1.3.11 **When asked:** ‘Do you, or anyone in the group of friends or family that would use your allotment, have any long-term illness, health problems or impairments?’ 13% said yes.

1.3.12 Examples given of health issues linked to allotment gardening included: age-related problems, depression, diabetes, weight (fitness-exercise), stress, and physical problems (e.g. back and leg pain) – thus affecting distance able to travel.

1.3.13 **Choosing an Allotment Site:** Qualitative feedback - factors of importance

Those waiting for an allotment garden were asked which other factors (aside from those named: travel distance, safety and security of site, accessibility, parking, facilities and onsite amenities, appearance and upkeep, and

management and ownership) they see as important for choosing an allotment site. The following table shows a breakdown of responses:

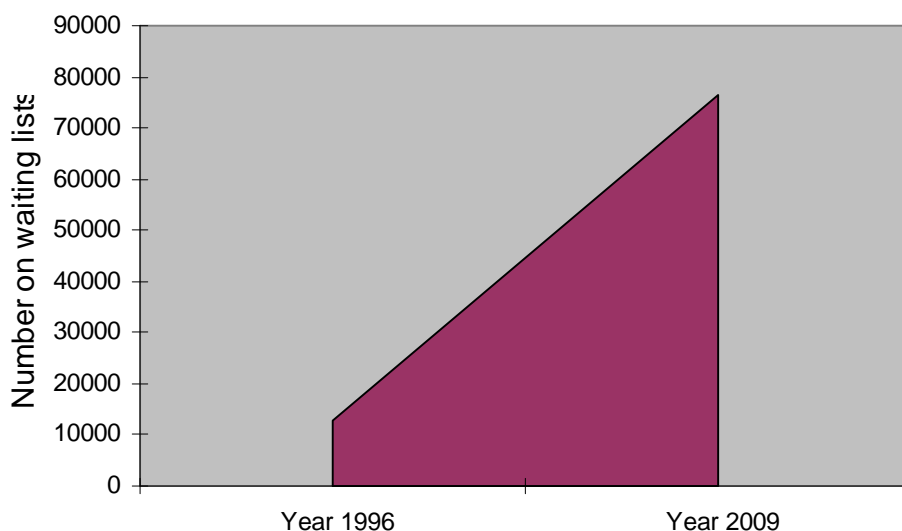
<p><u>WALKING</u>  <b>Preference for sites to be at walking distance from home address</b></p>	<p><u>WATER</u>  Water Access / supply / more taps  <b>Ground Water Level</b></p>
<p><u>COMMUNITY</u>  Community Space / Social Meetings  <b>Collaboration of Holders</b></p>	<p><u>PREPAREDNESS</u>  <b>Tenants making regular ongoing effort/ realization of work involved</b></p>
<p><u>LAND</u>  Free from land contamination,  Quality of soil,  Suitability of land,  drainage  <b>weed control, pest free</b></p>	<p><u>AMENITIES</u>  <b>Shelter &amp; toilet facility , composting area, electricity, smart allotment plot fencing (or rules for smart presentation of plots), disability friendly amenities</b></p>
<p><u>PETS</u>  Mixed opinions:  No pets,  <b>Dogs to be allowed on plot</b></p>	<p><u>FAMILY &amp; CHILDREN</u>  Family safety  Child friendly  <b>Activity / hobby for children</b></p>
<p><u>TENANTS</u>  <b>Neighbouring allotment holders to be friendly (polite, respectful, amicable and diplomatic). Similar age groups important to some.</b></p>	<p><u>ENVIRONMENT</u>  No weed-killers, no pollution, wildlife, rainwater  Location for sunshine, not too much shade.  location &amp; surrounding environment</p>
<p><u>COST</u>  <b>Costs of allotment rent should be affordable, and estimated ongoing costs of gardening (e.g. tools, seeds, equipment etc) should be made known.</b></p>	<p><u>CLEANLINESS</u>  Clean &amp; tidy – existing &amp; new tenants  Rubbish Removal.  <b>tidiness &amp; to stop fires)</b></p>
<p><u>STORAGE</u>  Greenhouse Sheds  <b>On site storage for tools</b></p>	<p><u>SECURITY</u>  <b>Secure fencing around the site to prevent vandalism internally.</b></p>
<p><u>EVENTS</u>  Annual competitions  Open days for sponsored charity  <b>National Allotments Week</b></p>	<p><u>PUBLIC TRANSPORT</u>  <b>Bus service &amp; transport routes should be available nearby all allotment sites</b></p>



Out of all responses received, 'Quality of Soil' was the most frequently mentioned factor of importance – making location a key issue.

1.3.14 The results from the consultation showed that peoples renewed interest in renting allotments largely reflects the widespread desire to grow your own food locally. People are keen to avoid eating food that they are unsure of, they recognise the health benefits of being involved in gardening and they feel more secure having their own food supply that they can afford.

### National Waiting List Increase



1.3.15 Figures show that in 1996, the total waiting lists for England totalled 12,950, compared to 2009 which shows a massive increase to 76,330<sup>11</sup>.

## 1.4 Tenants Questionnaire – Key Outcomes

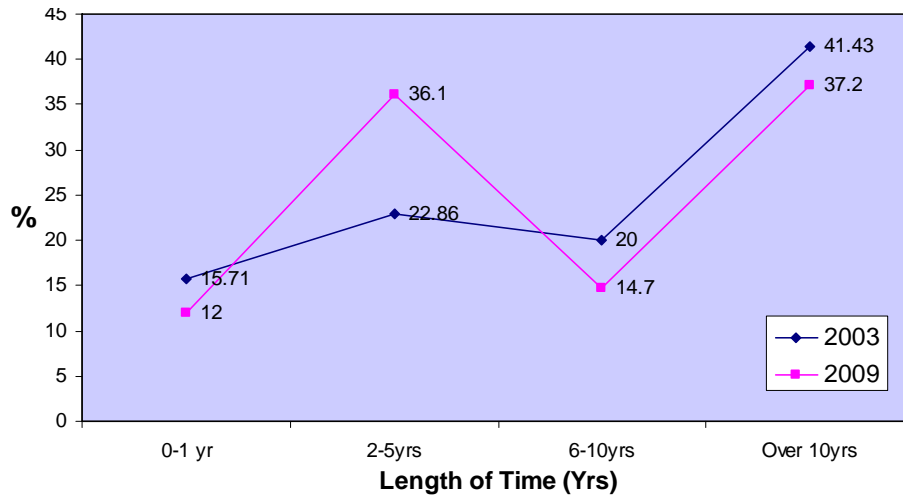
1.4.1 Returns were requested and received in July 2009. The final survey results were generated in August 2009. 268 surveys were returned for analysis.

1.4.2 5 of the questions asked within this survey are replicas of those asked in a previous survey developed and circulated by Darlington Borough Council in February 2003. These questions are identifiable with this symbol: ➔ and can be used to compare how responses have altered over the last 6 years.

1.4.3 **When asked:** 'How long have you had an allotment for?' The majority (37.2%) had managed their plot for over 10years. 36.1% had theirs for 2-5yrs, 14.7% had theirs for 6-10yrs, and only 12% have had their allotment for up to 1 year.

<sup>11</sup> A Survey of Allotment Waiting Lists in England. June 2009. p4. NSALG & Transition Town West England. [http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk/files/ttwk\\_nsalg\\_survey\\_09.pdf](http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk/files/ttwk_nsalg_survey_09.pdf)

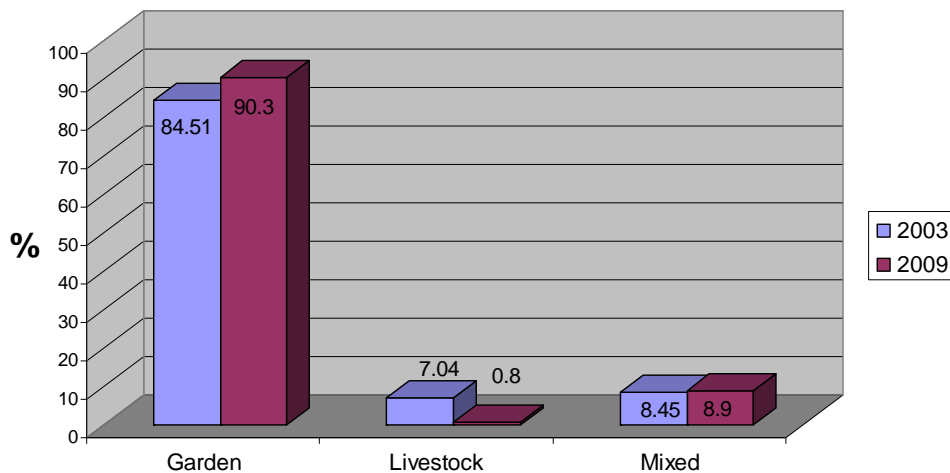
➔ In 2003, the response showed that the majority (41.43%) had their plot for over 10 years. 22.86% have had theirs for 2-5yrs, 20% had theirs for 6-10yrs, and 15.71% were new allotment holders having had theirs for up to 1 year.



1.4.4 **When asked:** ‘What type of allotment do you hold?’

The response showed that 90.3% held a ‘garden’ only allotment, 0.8% had only livestock on their plots, and 8.9% had a mixture of both.

➔ In 2003, the response showed that 84.51% held a ‘garden’ only allotment only, 7.04% kept livestock on their plots, and 8.45% had a mixture of both.

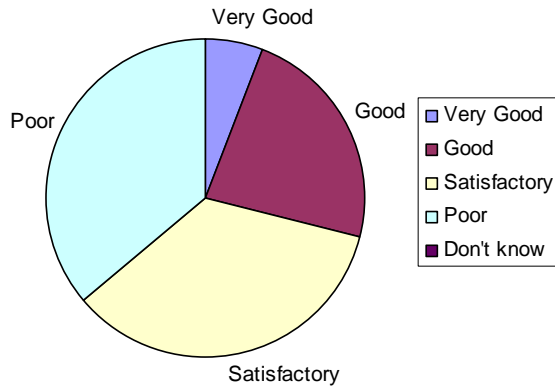


1.4.5 **When asked:** ‘What is your general view of the current service which the Council provides in respect of allotments?’ The response showed that only 7.1% had a very good perception, and 19.5% had a good perception. The majority however

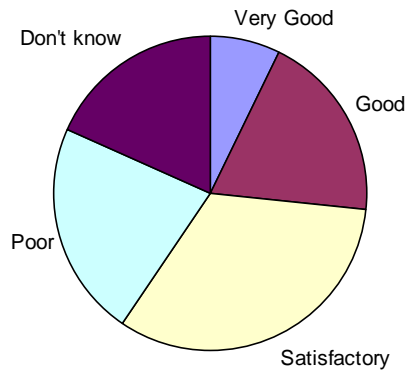
sees the service as either satisfactory (32.8%) or poor (22.4%). 18.3% didn't know about the council service.

➔ In 2003, only 5.8% had a very good perception of the existing service and 23.19% had a good perception. The majority however saw the council service as either satisfactory (34.78%) or poor (36.23%)

**COUNCIL SERVICE - 2003**



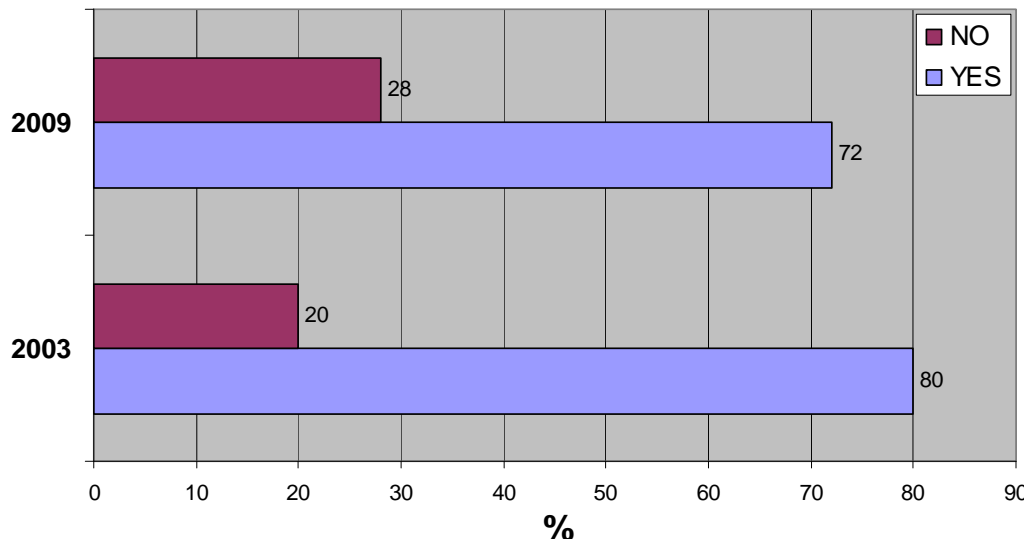
**COUNCIL SERVICE - 2009**



1.4.5.1 In both cases, the Council's service is perceived by the majority as poor or satisfactory, with less than a third of responses seeing the service as good or very good. This could be due to a number of factors which may include communications between council and tenants, response from council towards complaints, issues and queries, and clarity of information available including allotment service promotion and publicity.

1.4.6 **When asked:** 'would you like to see more information being made available – e.g. newsletter, allotment helpline, information on the Council's website etc?' The response showed that 72% replied yes.

➔ In 2003, 80% replied 'yes'



1.4.7 **When asked:** 'Are you currently a member of an allotment association?' the majority (68.3%) said yes. Of those in an association, the majority rated this system of management as satisfactory (49%), excellent (28.1%), good (10.4%). Only 6.8% viewed associations as poor.

- ✓ 85.7% think that more allotment associations should be formed  
→ In 2003, 71.88% said yes, more associations should be formed.
- ✓ 28.5% would be willing to be a Committee Member on an Association (if not already)
- ✓ 80% would be willing to share their knowledge to help others
- ✓ 69.8% who are new to their plot would want or welcome advice and help from others
- ✓ 38.7% would be interested in providing support in community allotments if they were developed across Darlington.
- ✓ 50.6% currently shares a plot with family and/or friends

1.4.8 **When asked:** 'What are the key reasons you hold an allotment?' (And rate importance)' the results showed that:

(Key reasons: Health benefits, exercise, food cost savings, leisure, relaxation, socialising and family activity, education/learning, sustainable living, environment, fun/hobby, rewarding project, growing food)

- ✓ Growing Food: received the highest overall response and rated 'very important' response (62.1%)
- ✓ Health benefits (53.7%) and rewarding project (51.7%) also had high ratings as 'Very Important'
- 'Education & Learning' received the lowest ratings of importance followed by 'Socialising & family activity'

1.4.9 **When asked:** 'Were you able to choose your allotment location within Darlington?' the majority (57.3%) responded 'yes, I could apply for a specific allotment site'. 31.1% had their allotment allocated to them, and 11.7% received theirs through a long-standing arrangement.

1.4.10 **When asked:** On what (location) factors did (or would) you base your allotment site/s choice? The majority of responses rated the safety and security of site as Very Important (74.6%), followed by travel distance and accessibility.

1.4.11 **Other factors considered important included:**

<u>INSPECTIONS</u> Regular inspections, and audits/ reviews of management systems	<u>FENCING</u> Vandal proof, Rabbit proof, Improved security, possible key access
<u>INFORMATION</u> Knowledge sharing Help and advise from others	<u>TOILET FACILITIES</u> Accessible for all allotment users on daily basis
<u>DISABILITY</u> Disability friendly Disability infrastructure	<u>SOIL</u> – Good drainage, pest control, Quality of soil and good maintenance of plots (used/unused) – no weeds.
<u>WASTE</u> Removal of garden waste Skips on site and/or collections	<u>AMENITIES</u> Water provision: More taps located around sites. Electricity – with meter.
<u>STORAGE</u> Availability of Sheds on plots or on site for storage of equipment/tools	<u>COMPOSTING</u> Communal composting facility to be provided on all sites
<u>TENANTS</u> - Background checks, council to respond to anti-social behaviour for pleasant environment	<u>LIVESTOCK</u> - Tenants to be allowed hens on site – rules to be made clear prior to agreement.
<u>ADVISOR</u> – New tenant advice, Present at meetings to act as referee, assist in decisions, & monitor problems	<u>ORGANIC</u> Desire to garden on a purely ‘organic’ allotment site
<u>CHILDREN</u> Children friendly – resource for children to play and garden	<u>PARTNERSHIP</u> With local garden centres for reduced costs of seeds and equipment
<u>MAINTENANCE</u> Within and externally to site Tidiness, no litter – good appearance	<u>PATHS</u> Suitable paths to plots; management of overhanging bushes/trees
<u>ISSUES</u> – e.g. noise, vandalism Response and response system to manage & follow up complaints	<u>DISTANCE</u> Distance and access from home to plot – cycle, walkways
<u>EVENTS</u> Autumn or summer produce sales and open days	<u>PLOT</u> Plot size appropriate to manage – offer of either half or full size plot

Out of all comments received, water provision, toilet facilities and security were the most frequently mentioned factors of importance.

1.4.12 **When asked:** 'How far do you travel to your allotment?' the majority (40.6%) travels up to half a mile to their site. 2.4% travel more than 3 miles.

1.4.13 **When asked:** 'what mode of travel do you use to get to your allotment?' the majority travel to their allotment site by car (54.5%), 53% walk, 24.3% cycle, and only 3% take the bus. The percentages differ as some may have selected more than one option as their form of travel.

1.4.14 **When asked:** 'what size plot do you manage?' 76.7% manage a full plot, and 23.3% manage a half plot. (12.4% managed more than one full plot)

1.4.15 **When asked:** about the Friends of the Earth 'Grow Your Own' network, to gauge interest in local projects to grow food, 44.4% of tenants said they would like to be contacted about new food growing opportunities.

1.4.16 The majority of tenants are:

- ❖ Between 55 – 64 years of age (29.1%)
- ❖ Male (74.5%)
- ❖ Retired (49.8%)
- ❖ White British (99.6%) (0.4% = white other)

1.4.17 **When asked:** 'Do you, or anyone in the group of friends or family that would use your allotment, have any long-term illness, health problems or impairments?' 29.8% said yes.

1.4.18 **When asked:** Do you or anyone in your group use a wheelchair? 1.8% said yes.

**GOOD PRACTICE**



The residents of Darlington have a responsibility towards preserving and respecting their local environment. The benefits of doing so include increasing the quality of life for Darlington’s population, creating a sense of pride and sense of place through the quality of open space and provision, encouraging diversity of wildlife and flora, and through contributing globally to limiting climate change and its effects.

Allotment gardens can be as diverse and valuable as nature reserves, and can act as accessible ‘rural feel’ green spaces predominantly within urban surroundings, available as a resource for hands on gardening/growing, play, education, and community activities.

The following tables identify the benefits to the local environment, community and economy through following an allotment strategy based on best practice, awareness of current needs and resource capacity.

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>BIODIVERSITY RICH SITES</b>	Ongoing progress and monitoring of all existing sites to improve wildlife interest.
	<b>ORGANIC ALLOTMENT GARDENS</b>	Organic gardening practices promoted to maximize biodiversity value, negating chemical uses.
	<b>WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>	Clarity of waste management services and waste protocol to all gardeners with regards to re-use & recycling of garden waste.
	<b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	Renewable energy opportunities on site for electricity supply for lighting, tools and equipment. Collection and use of rainwater, using water saver barrels, composting and recycling Promotion and increased local growing to reduce food miles and CO2 emissions.

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	ALLOTMENTS FOR ALL	Improve community access & increase opportunities through: Increased provision where feasible and maximising use potential of existing sites
	EDUCATION	Use allotment sites as a resource for academic learning as well as community group education, horticulture training and promote knowledge sharing.
	HEALTH	Strengthen healthy communities priorities through joint cooperation with the Darlington PCT.
	DISABILITIES	On site access, amenities and facilities to be developed to meet the needs and requirements of those with disabilities, impairments, or health problems
	COMMUNITY GARDENS	Allotment gardens available for shared community use to support and encourage community participation, community cohesion and social inclusion and interaction.
	SECURITY & CRIME REDUCTION	Onsite measures for reduction in theft and vandalism. Widespread benefits of community allotments through offering 'growing opportunities' as a means to reduce anti-social behaviour.

<b>ECONOMY</b>	SUSTAINABLE FOOD SUPPLIES	With economic uncertainties and health concerns gaining increasing media attention – the value of self-sufficiency and the local ability to create our own healthy and sustainable food supplies becomes more apparent. Aims are to increase growing food locally as a way of life for all (in allotments, in schools, at home or in gardens)
	LOCAL MARKETS	Promote local produce: As popularity increases for locally grown produce, it is expected that sales will also increase, thus benefiting local producers and local markets.
	FOOD COSTS	Promote growing as a sustainable means to save money in this currently unstable economic climate. Growing food is a more satisfying and affordable way to obtain supplies of fruit, vegetables and herbs.
	LAND/LOCAL AREA VALUE	Promoting and developing allotment sites into quality open green spaces: can increase the value of land and in turn the value of property within the vicinity.
	EMPLOYMENT / VOLUNTEERING	Allotment plots and food growing schemes can provide employment, training and voluntary work positions. Based on over 1000 existing plots, it may be possible to accommodate up to 2,000 individuals, and at 500hrs per person, this could equate to up to 1,000,000hrs per year.
	SALE OF PRODUCE	The use of allotments for trade or business is prohibited but the government has acknowledged that some small scale sale of produce is allowable: “The present legislation already enables some limited commercial activity to take place on allotments, but primary legislation would be required to allow commercial use to be greater than ancillary use” (Growing in the Community, 2008, p58, LGA)



**USEFUL INFORMATION**

IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF GUIDANCE & GOOD PRACTICE

The NSALG have a selection of forms<sup>12</sup> which may be useful for Darlington Borough Council to use at least as a framework for delivering a more functional and effective community allotment service.

Useful NSALG forms include:

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Clearing an Overgrown Plot                | Bees on Allotment Sites        |
| Hens and Rabbits on Allotment Plots       | Creating a New Allotment Site  |
| Save Money - Save Water                   | Allotment Site Facilities      |
| Expert Advice                             | Handy Hints for New Gardeners  |
| First Steps to Allotment Gardening        | Easy Vegetables to Grow        |
| Manures and Fertilizers                   | Composting and Recycling       |
| Provision of Allotment Gardens            | Tenancy Agreement - Individual |
| How to form & run a Gardening Association | Tenancy Agreement – Self M.    |

This strategy reflects aspirations for an innovative service for local food and growing, developed through partnerships and with up-to-date consultation and stakeholder feedback, looking for the best and most functional way to deliver this.

Rather than reinvent the wheel when developing the renewed allotment service, partnerships can be developed with those with specific Allotment expertise. The above NSALG forms list is an example of existing expert knowledge based fact sheets and forms for all people participating or interested in allotment gardening.

<b>USEFUL WEBSITES</b>	Darlington Borough Council <a href="http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Environment/Countryside+and+Rights+of+Way/Allotments.htm">http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Environment/Countryside+and+Rights+of+Way/Allotments.htm</a>
	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) <a href="http://www.nsalg.org.uk/">http://www.nsalg.org.uk/</a>
	Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI) – Sharing best practice <a href="http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari/allotment-officer-forums/">http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari/allotment-officer-forums/</a>
	Allotment Growing – Vegetable, Herb and Fruit Gardening <a href="http://www.allotment.org.uk/">http://www.allotment.org.uk/</a>
	Groundwork North East <a href="http://www.groundwork-northeast.org.uk/">http://www.groundwork-northeast.org.uk/</a>

<sup>12</sup> National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Limited.  
<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/page.php?article=459&name=useful+information>

<b>FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Future Jobs Fund <a href="http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund/index.asp">http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund/index.asp</a>
	Lottery's Local Food Programme <a href="http://www.localfoodgrants.org">www.localfoodgrants.org</a>
	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation <a href="http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk">www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk</a>
	Big Lottery Fund <a href="http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk">www.biglotteryfund.org.uk</a>
	Awards for All <a href="http://www.awardsforall.org.uk">www.awardsforall.org.uk</a>
	B&Q One Living Planet Grant Scheme – Grow Your Own <a href="http://www.diy.com/diy/jsp/bq/templates/content_lookup.jsp?content=/aboutbandq/social_responsibility_2007/better_neighbourhood.jsp&amp;menu=aboutbandq">http://www.diy.com/diy/jsp/bq/templates/content_lookup.jsp?content=/aboutbandq/social_responsibility_2007/better_neighbourhood.jsp&amp;menu=aboutbandq</a>
	Tudor Trust <a href="http://www.tudortrust.org.uk/">http://www.tudortrust.org.uk/</a>
	Sheila Mckechnie Award <a href="http://www.sheilamckechnie.org.uk/showSub.php?id=116&amp;page=3">http://www.sheilamckechnie.org.uk/showSub.php?id=116&amp;page=3</a>
	GRANTfinder <a href="http://www.grantfinder.co.uk">www.grantfinder.co.uk</a>
	Funderfinder <a href="http://www.funderfinder.org.uk">www.funderfinder.org.uk</a>

<b>NATIONAL GROWING CAMPAIGNS</b>	ALLOT MORE ALLOTMENTS – campaign for more allotments <a href="http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/index.htm">http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/index.htm</a>
	SHOOT – The National Trust is creating 1,000 allotments for people to grow their own fruit and vegetables <a href="http://www.shootgardening.co.uk/siteArticle.php?articleid=268&amp;name=national-trust-land-for-allotments">http://www.shootgardening.co.uk/siteArticle.php?articleid=268&amp;name=national-trust-land-for-allotments</a>
	LANDSHARE - Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall <a href="http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/01/land-sharing-is-trend.php">http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/01/land-sharing-is-trend.php</a>
	DIG IN - BBC Food Growing Campaign <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/digin/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/digin/</a> <a href="http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/news/415-bbc-food-growing-campaign">http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/news/415-bbc-food-growing-campaign</a>
	GROW YOUR OWN - BBC <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/grow_your_own">http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/grow_your_own</a>
	GROW YOUR OWN – Friends of the Earth <a href="http://www.foe.co.uk/living/articles/grow_food.html">http://www.foe.co.uk/living/articles/grow_food.html</a> <a href="http://www.foe.co.uk/groups/darlington/">http://www.foe.co.uk/groups/darlington/</a>