

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Allotment Strategy and Associated Policies
Committee : Environment
Date : 8 December 2025
Author : Marc Read, Head of Environmental Services

1. Report Summary:

- 1.1. This report seeks Councillors' approval to progress the development and adoption of a Comprehensive Allotment Strategy (2026–2031) for Salisbury City Council, alongside supporting policies for Beekeeping and Livestock (Chickens) on allotment sites.
- 1.2. The strategy responds to the motion passed on 29 September 2025, which recognised the vital role allotments play in promoting community well-being, biodiversity, sustainable food production, and physical and mental health.

2. Background

- 2.1. Salisbury City Council manages approximately 700 allotment plots across multiple sites, fulfilling its statutory duty under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. Demand for allotments continues to rise, with waiting lists at near full capacity.
- 2.2. The motion adopted in September 2025 set out objectives for tenancy agreements, plot allocation, cultivation standards, community engagement, financial sustainability, biodiversity initiatives, accessibility, and monitoring.
- 2.3. The attached Draft Allotment Strategy (2026–2031) provides a five-year framework to address these objectives and ensure allotments remain inclusive, sustainable, and well-managed.
- 2.4. Supporting policies on Beekeeping and Livestock (Chickens) have been developed to ensure compliance with national legislation and health and safety standards while promoting biodiversity and sustainable practices.

3. Reasons for Proposal

- 3.1. Community Well-being and Sustainability
 - Allotments contribute to physical and mental health, food security, and social cohesion.
 - The strategy promotes biodiversity through organic gardening, pollinator-friendly planting, and water conservation.

3.2. Demand Management

- Waiting lists are growing; the strategy introduces measures to improve plot allocation and site utilisation.

3.3. Policy Clarity

- Clear policies on beekeeping and livestock ensure responsible practices, compliance with legislation, and risk management.

3.4. Financial Sustainability

- Proposals include exploration of external funding to maintain affordability and site improvements.

4. Considerations

4.1. Operational

- Implementation will require annual reviews, tenant engagement, and monitoring of KPIs.
- Digital systems for applications and waiting lists will improve efficiency.

4.2. Financial

- Initial costs/time relate to consultation, policy implementation, and potential site upgrades.
- External grants and partnerships will be sought to offset costs.

4.3. Public & Community

- Strong community interest in allotments and biodiversity initiatives.
- Clear communication will be essential to explain new policies and promote inclusivity.

5. Recommendations

5.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

5.1.1. Approve the draft Allotment Strategy (2026–2031) and associated policies

5.1.2. Note that implementation will include annual reviews, tenant surveys, and reporting to Committee.

5.1.3. Approve the inclusion of biodiversity and accessibility improvements in the Council's forward plan and budget considerations.

6. Wards Affected:

6.1. All wards, as allotment provision and improvements apply city-wide.

7. Background Papers:

- Draft Allotment Strategy (2026–2031)
- Beekeeping Policy
- Livestock (Chickens) Policy

8. Implications:

8.1. Financial:

8.1.1. External funding opportunities to be explored.

8.2. Personnel:

8.2.1. Officers will manage, implementation, and monitoring.

8.3. Environment

8.3.1. Strategy promotes biodiversity, organic practices, and water conservation.

8.4. Equalities

8.4.1. Accessibility improvements and micro plots will support inclusivity for all residents.



Salisbury City Council Draft Allotment Strategy (2026–2031)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Allotments are a vital community asset that support sustainable food production, enhance biodiversity, improve physical and mental wellbeing, and strengthen community relationships. Salisbury City Council manages approximately 700 allotments across multiple sites and has a statutory duty to provide allotments under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908.
- 1.2 Demand for allotments continues to rise. Waiting lists remain high and plots are close to full capacity across Salisbury. This five-year strategy sets out a clear approach to managing current provision, improving quality and accessibility, and preparing for future demand.
- 1.3 This strategy aims to:
 - Ensure transparent, fair, and efficient management of allotments.
 - Improve site quality, accessibility, and sustainability.
 - Support tenants and community participation.
 - Promote environmentally responsible practices.
 - Maintain financial resilience.

2. Benefits of Allotments

- 2.1 **Health & Wellbeing** - Allotment gardening supports active lifestyles, reduces stress, and provides therapeutic benefits.
- 2.2 **Food Security** - Plots provide affordable access to fresh produce, helping households reduce food costs.
- 2.3 **Community Cohesion** - Allotments offer opportunities for social interaction, shared learning, and intergenerational collaboration.
- 2.4 **Environmental Impact** - Allotments reduce food miles, improve soil health, support pollinators, and encourage sustainable lifestyles.

3. Vision

- 3.1 To provide high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable allotment sites that meet current and future demand, foster community engagement, and contribute to Salisbury's environmental and health objectives.

4. Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 **Tenancy & Administration** - Provide efficient, transparent, and fair management of allotment tenancies through modernised systems, clear communication, and consistent enforcement.
- 4.2 **Site Capacity & Allocation** - Maximise plot availability and ensure equitable access by improving plot turnover, reviewing plot sizes, and matching demand through flexible allocation policies.
- 4.3 **Cultivation & Plot Quality** - Maintain high standards of cultivation by supporting tenants, ensuring plots remain in productive use, and providing clear guidance and proportionate enforcement when needed.
- 4.4 **Community Engagement & Education** - Strengthen community involvement, support warden networks, and promote educational opportunities that encourage sustainable gardening and community cohesion.
- 4.5 **Sustainability & Biodiversity** - Promote environmentally responsible allotment management, including reduced chemical use, water conservation, composting, and habitat enhancement.
- 4.6 **Accessibility & Inclusion** - Ensure allotments are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all by improving site infrastructure and offering plot options that meet diverse needs.
- 4.7 **Financial Sustainability** - Maintain affordable allotments while ensuring financial viability through responsible budgeting, external fundraising, and transparent reporting.

5. Delivering the Objectives

5.1 Tenancy & Administration

- Maintain clear and current tenancy agreements.
- Provide transparent rules online and in print.
- Develop a digital management system for applications, renewals, and waiting lists.
- Apply a fair and consistent approach to communication and enforcement.

5.2 Site Capacity & Allocation

- Conduct regular plot audits to ensure active cultivation.
- Ensure plots are safe and ready for new tenants before allocation.
- Trial splitting large plots into half or micro-plots.
- Maintain regular communication with waiting list applicants.

5.3 Cultivation & Plot Quality

- Provide starter packs and optional mentoring support.
- Encourage shared plots and smaller plot options.
- Apply a graduated warning system for non-cultivation.

5.4 Community Engagement & Education

- Support and develop the role of allotment wardens.
- Hold twice-yearly meetings with wardens, AGAS, and council officers.
- Promote allotment activities through council communications.
- Explore opportunities for school and community plots.

5.5 Sustainability & Biodiversity

- Promote composting and organic gardening practices.
- Expand water-saving infrastructure.
- Develop and implement a biodiversity enhancement plan.
- Encourage pollinator-friendly habitats and wildlife corridors.

5.6 Accessibility & Inclusion

- Improve pathways, entrances, and internal roads.
- Provide accessible raised-bed plots where appropriate.
- Offer diverse plot sizes to meet varied needs.
- Promote allotments to underrepresented groups.

5.7 Financial Sustainability

- Review rents annually while keeping plots affordable.
- Seek external grants and partnerships.
- Publish annual financial summaries.

6. Implementation & Governance

- **Lead Officer** - Head of Environmental Services
- **Lead Cllr** – Nominated Allotment Representative
- **Oversight** - Environment Committee
- **Partnerships** - AGAS, local schools, community groups, and voluntary organisations.

7. Risk Management

- **Climate Change:** Increased drought risk – mitigation through water harvesting and drought-resistant crops.
- **Funding Shortfalls:** Seek external grants and partnerships where appropriate.
- **Vandalism/Theft:** Review site security and consider community watch schemes.



- **Demand Pressure:** Consider the introduction of smaller plots and community plots.

8. Monitoring & Reporting

- Annual report to Environment Committee
- Annual tenant survey
- Monitoring of Key Performance Indicators:
 - Waiting list length
 - Percentage of actively cultivated plots
 - Tenant satisfaction
- Mid-term review in 2028.

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Livestock (Chickens) Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy establishes Salisbury City Council's responsibilities and approach to the management of livestock (chickens) on Council-owned allotments.
- 1.2 It sets out the principles guiding animal welfare, biosecurity, risk management, and community relations.
- 1.3 The aim is to ensure that chickens are kept in a safe, responsible, and welfare-friendly manner, contributing positively to the sustainability of allotment sites.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Salisbury City Council supports the responsible keeping of hens (no cockerels) on allotments, recognising their contribution to sustainable living and local food production.
- 2.2 The Council will ensure that animal welfare standards are met, that livestock does not create nuisance or risk to others, and that all statutory obligations are observed.
- 2.3 Written consent must be obtained from Council Officers before any chickens are kept on allotment land.
- 2.4 All livestock activities must comply with relevant national legislation, including:
 - The **Animal Welfare Act 2006**;
 - The **Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007**;
 - The **Animal Health Act 1981**.
- 2.5 Mandatory registration with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) within one month of keeping any poultry or captive birds, as required by law since 1 October 2024.
- 2.6 Permission may be withdrawn if welfare standards are not maintained, or if livestock causes nuisance, health risks, or breaches tenancy conditions.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Council has a duty of care under health, safety, and animal welfare legislation to ensure that activities on its land do not create unreasonable risk or suffering.

- 3.2 The Council's Allotments Service is responsible for granting, monitoring, and if necessary, withdrawing permissions for livestock keeping.
- 3.3 Tenants are responsible for:
- The care and welfare of their chickens;
 - Maintaining hygienic, safe, and secure accommodation;
 - Preventing nuisance, odour, or vermin;
 - Complying with all national and local requirements.
- 3.4 Tenants must register their birds with APHA and provide proof of registration to the Council upon request.
- 3.5 All permissions will be subject to ongoing review, and the Council reserves the right to inspect any site where livestock is kept.

4. Conditions of Keeping Chickens

- 4.1 A tenant may keep a maximum of six (6) hens with the Council's written consent. Cockerels are not permitted.
- 4.2 Chickens must be kept solely for the tenant's personal use and not for commercial breeding or sale.
- 4.3 Hens must be provided with:
- A secure and weatherproof henhouse, offering at least 1 sq. metre per bird of indoor space;
 - An enclosed outdoor run, providing at least 1 sq. metre per bird of external space;
 - Perches and nest boxes;
 - Access to clean water, food, and shade at all times.
- 4.4 Feed must be stored in sealed containers to prevent attracting vermin.
- 4.5 The henhouse and run must be cleaned regularly to prevent odour, pests, or disease.
- 4.6 Livestock must not be allowed to roam freely on allotment sites or adjoining plots.

5. Animal Welfare & Biosecurity

- 5.1 Tenants must ensure the health and welfare of their chickens at all times in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006, including the Five Freedoms:
- Freedom from hunger and thirst;
 - Freedom from discomfort;
 - Freedom from pain, injury, or disease;
 - Freedom to express normal behaviour;
 - Freedom from fear and distress.

- 5.2 If disease is suspected or confirmed (including Avian Influenza), the tenant must:
- Immediately notify the Council; and
 - Follow all Government and DEFRA guidance for containment and reporting.
- 5.3 Any deceased birds must be disposed of safely and legally, not on-site.
- 5.4 Registration with APHA helps monitor and prevent avian influenza and other diseases.

6. Hygiene, Safety & Nuisance Prevention

- 6.1 The keeping of chickens must not be prejudicial to health or a nuisance to other tenants or nearby residents.
- 6.2 The tenant must:
- Maintain the coop and surrounding area in a clean, sanitary condition;
 - Manage waste to prevent odour and contamination;
 - Store feed in sealed vermin-proof containers;
 - Take steps to deter rats, foxes, and pests.
- 6.3 The Council may require removal of chickens or structures if hygiene or nuisance issues arise.

7. Livestock Clause

- 7.1 Except with the prior written consent of the Council, the Tenant shall not keep any animals or livestock on the Allotment Garden. If the Council consents, following a period of six (6) months, a maximum of six (6) chickens (no cockerels) can be kept on an allotment. Chickens must be kept so that they are not prejudicial to health or nuisance.
- 7.2 This clause applies in conjunction with all other requirements set out in this policy.
- 7.3 Permission to keep livestock may be reviewed or withdrawn by the Council if conditions are not maintained.

8. Structures & Equipment

- 8.1 Chicken houses and runs must be of solid, safe construction, positioned within the plot, and approved by the Council prior to installation.
- 8.2 All structures must comply with allotment size and aesthetic guidelines and be maintained in good condition.

8.3 Portable or moveable runs are encouraged where practicable to avoid ground contamination.

9. Insurance & Risk

9.1 Tenants are encouraged to hold Public Liability Insurance that covers livestock keeping.

9.2 The Council accepts no responsibility for loss, injury, or damage to livestock caused by disease, theft, or predators.

10. Withdrawal of Consent

10.1 The Council may withdraw permission to keep chickens, giving at least 40 days' notice, if:

- Welfare or hygiene standards are not maintained;
- Livestock causes nuisance or health issues;
- The tenant breaches any conditions of this policy or tenancy agreement.

10.2 All costs associated with removal of livestock or structures are the tenant's responsibility.

11. Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by legislative or welfare changes.

11.2 Consultation with tenants and local animal welfare advisors will form part of any review.



Salisbury City Council Livestock (Chickens) Application Form

For Allotment Tenants Requesting Permission to Keep Bees

Section 1: Applicant Details

Name: _____

Allotment Site: _____

Plot Number: _____

Address:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Section 2: Livestock Details

All poultry keepers must register with APHA, even if only one bird is kept.

Number of hens proposed (maximum 6): _____

Have you previously kept chickens? Yes No

If yes, give brief details: _____

Purpose of keeping chickens (e.g., personal egg use):

Section 3: Housing & Welfare

Please describe or attach a plan showing:

- The size and location of the chicken house and run;
- Screening and boundaries;
- Feed and waste storage arrangements.

Henhouse and run meet welfare space requirements (minimum 1 sq. metre per bird inside and outside).

Feed will be stored in sealed containers.

I agree to maintain hygiene and biosecurity standards.

Section 4: Insurance and Biosecurity

I understand and agree to comply with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and DEFRA biosecurity guidance.

I will notify the Council immediately of any disease outbreak.

I confirm that I have registered my birds with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) or will do so within one month of keeping them, as required by law.

(Optional) I hold public liability insurance covering livestock.

Section 5: Declaration

I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Salisbury City Council Livestock (Chickens) Policy and the Allotment Tenancy Conditions.

I understand that permission may be withdrawn if these requirements are not met.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Approved by: _____

Date: _____



Notes/conditions: _____

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Beekeeping Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy establishes Salisbury City Council's responsibilities and approach to the management of beekeeping on Council-owned allotments.
- 1.2 It sets out the principles and requirements governing responsible beekeeping, health and safety, environmental protection, and community engagement.
- 1.3 The aim is to ensure that beekeeping contributes positively to biodiversity and sustainability, while maintaining safety and amenity for allotment tenants and the wider public.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Salisbury City Council recognises the vital role of honeybees and other pollinators in supporting biodiversity, local food production, and environmental wellbeing.
- 2.2 The Council supports responsible and well-managed beekeeping where conditions are suitable and where it does not present undue risk or nuisance.
- 2.3 Beekeeping will only be permitted on designated plots approved by Council Officers.
- 2.4 All beekeepers must demonstrate competence, appropriate insurance, and compliance with national beekeeping standards.
- 2.5 The Council will promote good practice in beekeeping through engagement with local beekeeping associations and by requiring high welfare and safety standards.
- 2.6 Permission to keep bees is a privilege and may be withdrawn if this policy is not observed.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related legislation to ensure that activities on its land do not create unreasonable risks to people or property.
- 3.2 The Council's Allotments Service is responsible for approving, monitoring, and, if necessary, withdrawing permissions for beekeeping.
- 3.3 The beekeeper must:
 - a) Be a current allotment tenant;

- b) Hold membership of a British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)–affiliated association;
 - c) Hold, or be working towards, the BBKA Basic Assessment qualification. If working towards details of a mentor who holds a BBKA Basic Assessment must be provided;
 - d) Maintain bees in a safe, healthy, and well-managed condition; and
 - e) Ensure compliance with this policy and relevant legislation.
- 3.4 Beekeepers are personally responsible for the welfare of their colonies and for ensuring that suitable arrangements exist for hive management in their absence.

4. Site Selection & Hive Sitting

- 4.1 Hives may only be kept on allotments where the Council has designated specific plots for beekeeping.
- 4.2 Each site must be assessed for suitability, taking account of:
- Distance from public paths, boundaries, and communal areas;
 - Screening (minimum 2 metres high) to direct bee flight paths upwards;
 - Accessibility for inspection and management; and
 - Overall site capacity to prevent overpopulation.
- 4.3 Normally, no more than two hives and one nucleus will be permitted per plot. Temporary increases (e.g. for swarm control) must be reduced to permitted levels by the end of summer.
- 4.4 A clear sign must be displayed at the apiary stating: “Honey bees are kept here” and providing contact details for the beekeeper and their nominated emergency contact.

5. Beekeeper Competence & Conduct

- 5.1 All beekeepers must be competent and operate in accordance with BBKA best practice and the National Bee Unit’s Code of Conduct.
- 5.2 The beekeeper must ensure colonies are gentle and well-behaved. If bees become aggressive or exhibit persistent “following” behaviour, the colony must be re-queened or removed.
- 5.3 The beekeeper must liaise with neighbouring tenants and time inspections to minimise disturbance.
- 5.4 All hives and equipment must be kept tidy and stored securely. Wax combs or supers must never be left exposed.

6. Risk Management & Safety

- 6.1 A standard risk assessment will be completed and signed by the beekeeper before permission is granted.
- 6.2 This will cover, as a minimum:
- 6.2.1 Swarming and public safety;
 - 6.2.2 Fire precautions and safe smoker use;
 - 6.2.3 First aid and allergy awareness;
 - 6.2.4 Disease control and pest management;
 - 6.2.5 Emergency contacts and absence cover.
- 6.3 The beekeeper owes a duty of care to:
- Other allotment tenants;
 - Members of the public; and
 - Any person entering the site, whether authorised or not.
- 6.4 The Council reserves the right to inspect apiaries or withdraw permission where risk management standards are not met.

7. Disease Control & Hive Health

- 7.1 Beekeepers must register their colonies with the National Bee Unit (Beebase) and comply with the Bees Act 1980 and all associated legislation.
- 7.2 Colonies must be inspected regularly (at least weekly between April and July) and records maintained.
- 7.3 Integrated Pest Management methods must be used to control Varroa and other pests and diseases.
- 7.4 Any suspected notifiable disease must be reported immediately to the National Bee Unit.

8. Insurance

- 8.1 Beekeepers must hold valid Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million, normally provided through BBKA membership.
- 8.2 Proof of insurance and membership must be submitted to the Council annually when renewing the allotment tenancy.

9. Temporary Absence & Emergency Cover

- 9.1 The beekeeper must provide the Council with the name and contact details of a competent stand-by beekeeper who can attend in case of emergency or during absences.
- 9.2 The stand-by beekeeper must also hold the BBKA Basic Assessment or equivalent qualification.
- 9.3 The primary beekeeper remains responsible for hive welfare at all times.

10. Sale of Produce

- 10.1 Honey or hive products must not be advertised or sold directly from the allotment site.
- 10.2 Beekeepers may sell produce privately, in compliance with food safety and trading standards regulations.

11. Withdrawal of Permission

- 11.1 The Council may withdraw permission to keep bees, giving at least 40 days' notice, if:
 - This policy or allotment rules are breached;
 - Bees present a health or safety hazard;
 - A verified medical allergy risk arises for a neighbouring tenant; or
 - Aggressive or unmanaged colonies cause nuisance or danger.
- 11.2 All costs associated with hive removal will be the responsibility of the beekeeper.

12. Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed every five years, or sooner if national guidance or local conditions change.
- 12.2 The Council will consult with local beekeeping associations and allotment representatives as part of any review process.

Salisbury City Council Beekeeping Application Form For Allotment Tenants Requesting Permission to Keep Bees

Section 1: Applicant Details

Name: _____

Allotment Site: _____

Plot Number: _____

Address:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Section 2: Beekeeping Details

Are you currently a member of a BBKA-affiliated beekeeping association?

Yes No

If yes, please state association name: _____

Do you hold the BBKA Basic Assessment Certificate?

Yes No – currently working towards it

If no, please provide details of your mentor (must hold BBKA Basic Assessment):

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Number of hives proposed: _____ (maximum 2 hives and 1 nucleus)

Have you previously kept bees? Yes No

If yes, please give brief details:

Section 3: Site Plan and Risk Management

Attach a simple plan showing proposed hive location(s), screening, and flight paths.
Please confirm:

- I have completed a site-specific risk assessment.
- I have identified and briefed a qualified standby beekeeper.

Standby beekeeper name: _____

Contact number: _____

Section 4: Insurance and Registration

- I am registered with the National Bee Unit (Beebase).
- I hold valid Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million (copy attached).

Section 5: Declaration

I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the **Salisbury City Council Beekeeping Policy** and all relevant allotment regulations.

I understand that permission may be withdrawn if these conditions are not met.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Notes/conditions: _____