

Strategic Benefits of Belhaven Community Garden

How our proposal fits with national and local policy outcomes	
Policy	How Belhaven Community Garden contributes
East Lothian Plan https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210603/performance_and_spending/12729/the_east_lothian_council_plan_2022-2027  East Lothian Plan 2017-27  "We will work in partnership to achieve an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy that enables our people and communities to flourish"	BCG fits with all aspects of the East Lothian Plan, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grow our Economy -through expanding existing skills training, particularly for young people• Grow our People -through increasing activities with young people and supporting health and wellbeing for all, including refugee families, vulnerable and older people• Grow our Communities -through all participants and volunteers having the opportunity to be involved in the running and development of the project.
East Lothian Climate Change Strategy https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/29179/climate_change_strategy_2020-2025	BCG contributes to many aspects of East Lothian's Climate Change Strategy. Specifically ownership will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enable us to build on the work that we have already started to develop a healthy, diverse natural ecosystem and greenspace that supports the biodiversity and wellbeing of our community and

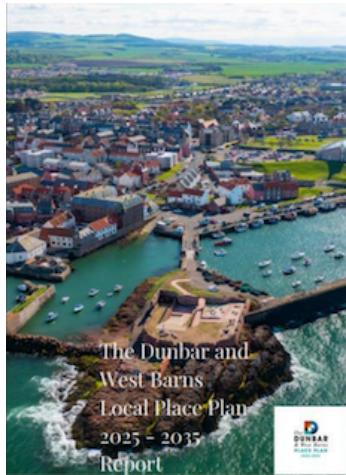
 <p>East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020–2025</p>  <p><i>"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."</i> John Muir 1838–1914, pioneer of nature conservation, born in Dunbar and inspired by its natural environment</p>	<p>builds resilience to changes in climatic conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create new opportunities for a wide range of people to develop general employability skills and train in specific skills for regenerative land management and organic food growing in the heart of our community and accessible by active travel. • help people to develop a deeper connection to nature and understanding of nature's closed loop cycles -encouraging understanding of a circular, sharing economy. • enable opportunities for healthy, outdoor, physical activity that enhances physical health and mental wellbeing, encourages social interaction between diverse participants, provides space for local food growing and for discussion around low carbon lifestyles and community resilience.
<p>East Lothian Community Wealth Building Strategy https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210699/community_wealth_building/12853/community_wealth_building</p>	<p>This commits 'anchor institutions' (such as NHS Lothian) to the Anchor Charter Mission Statement:</p> <p><i>"To commit to long-term collaboration between East Lothian Anchor Institutions, supporting shared Community Wealth Building goals to improve collective wellbeing and create a strong, resilient and inclusive local and regional economy. This includes a commitment to the embedding of Community Wealth Building principles and reporting on progress to the East Lothian Partnership."</i></p>

	<p>Community ownership of BCG will create an asset that is owned by and for the local community. It will also contribute to improving local wellbeing, including enhancing people's individual resilience (a key requirement for a strong, resilient and inclusive local economy) by creating a place where they can connect with others, feel useful, valued and listened to.</p> <p>The charter also commits signatories to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make productive use of land and assets to support communities • to support equitable land development and ownership models -including the imaginative use of assets for community and wider social and economic use • support social and community enterprises • take immediate and sustainable action to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the nature emergency. • develop and support strategies to support sustainable communities and our natural environment and biodiversity.
Improving Nature Networks for East Lothian's Communities	<p>This has the objectives of connecting, enhancing, restoring and creating habitats as part of East Lothian's Nature Network and undertakes to support and work in partnership with community organisations wanting to create their own nature</p>



network including **increasing orchards and local community food growing sites.**

Dunbar Local Place Plan



Community ownership of BCG fits with the **Dunbar Local Place Plan:**

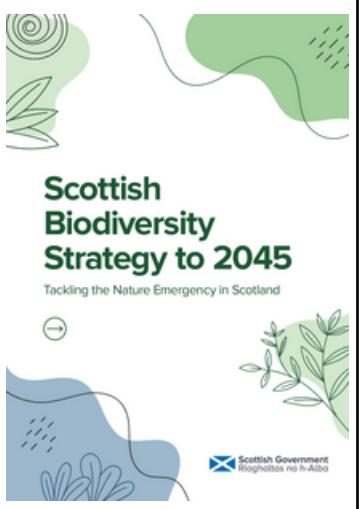
“One of the strongest messages we received in the survey was to protect green space and we should guard against further development of these in existing neighbourhoods..... Another special case is the Belhaven Community Garden adjacent to the, now closed, NHS Belhaven Hospital. We must ensure it is retained as a therapeutic space for education, training, community connection, mental health and supporting biodiversity.”

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-2045/>

BCG contributes to the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#), particularly Target 12:

“Significantly increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and

	<p>sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the provision of ecosystem functions and services.” And the outcome: ‘Towns and cities will include nature-rich environments close to all communities, contributing to Nature Networks and measurable increases in urban biodiversity.’</p>
<p>Scottish Government ‘Place Principle’</p>	<p>The Guidance on local-living and 20-minute neighbourhoods¹ states that “The concept of local living ...is a flexible approach which can adapt to support the context, local needs and aspirations of communities.” It proposes that: “Access to good quality natural space provides a wide range of benefits for wellbeing and the environment and is a central aspect of delivering local living” and requires consideration, inter-alia of “supporting existing natural features and forms, ecosystems, and biodiversity, incorporating allotments and growing spaces, including community food growing.”</p>

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-planning-guidance-local-living-20-minute-neighbourhoods/pages/3/>

NPF4

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>



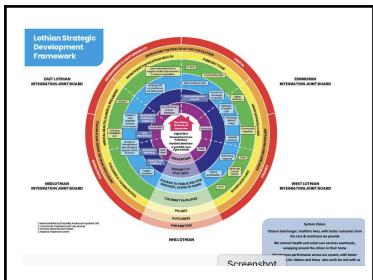
National Planning Framework4 (NPF4) obliges councils to allocate land for community growing and to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. BCG is included in East Lothian Council's map of local biodiversity sites. In community ownership, BCG will continue providing a space for community growing and to protect and further enhance the biodiversity of the site which has increased considerably over the thirteen years that we have been managing it.

NPF4 also requires that any development proposals “*which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on health will not be supported*”. Clearly, protecting this space as a community garden will avoid the adverse effects that would arise if the land were to be built on.

NHS Lothian Strategic Development Framework

<https://org.nhslothian.scot/strategies/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2023/05/LSD-F-Summary-for-website-08042022.pdf>

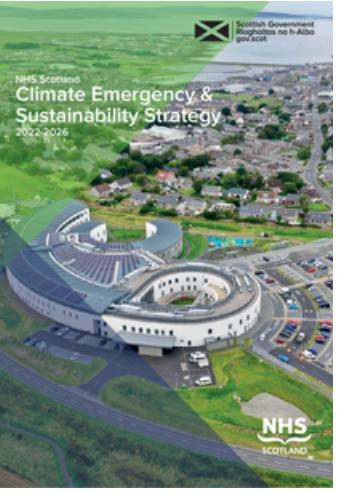
NHS Lothian's Strategic Development Framework has '**prevention**' and '**support to stay well**' at its core. NHS Lothian has supported the BCG in delivering this objective for 13 years with great success.



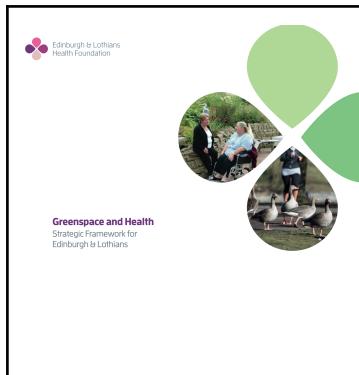
NHS Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/nhs-scotland-climate-emergency-sustainability-strategy-2022-2026/>

NHS Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy recognises the climate and ecological emergency as also being a health emergency and the responsibility of the NHS to support sustainable practices in our communities and neighbourhoods including: '**supporting health and wellbeing**', '**building community resilience**' and '**engaging our communities**'.

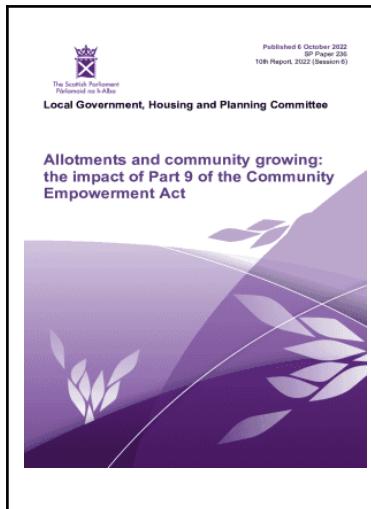
	
<p>NHS Lothian Greenspace and Health Strategic Framework</p> <p>https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/nhs-lothian-green-health</p>	<p>NHS Lothian Charity has highlighted Belhaven Community Garden as an exemplar of the implementation of its Green Health Strategy². Sustaining Dunbar took over management of just over two acres of the grounds and established BCG under the auspices of the NHS Lothian Community Gardens Steering Group. Now that the hospital has closed, we are seeking to bring the garden into community ownership so as to maintain the legacy by supporting public health and wellbeing for the long-term.</p> <p><i>Longer lives, better lived through our GreenSpace: Lothian's 'natural health service'</i></p>

² <https://greenhealth.nhslothiancharity.org/get-involved/green-health-activity-on-sites/belhaven-hospital/>



We fully realise the potential of the NHS outdoor estate and community greenspaces as a community health asset benefiting patients, visitors, staff and communities. Green health activities and services are recognised and resourced as vital tools for supporting health and wellbeing. Together, we are achieving the ambition of a health promoting health service

<p>Community Empowerment Act</p> <p>https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/</p>	<p>Part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act states:</p> <p><i>“There is a requirement for local authorities to develop a food growing strategy for their area, including identifying land that may be used as allotment sites and identifying other areas of land that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers.”</i></p>
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Scottish National Performance Framework

<https://www.gov.scot/colleccions/national-performance-framework>

Illustrates the BCG's core values

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and Young People <p><i>We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential</i></p>	<p>We will be able to expand our work and activities with young people to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing, their connection to nature and their knowledge and skills in food growing and regenerative landcare. Through the Garden we encourage children to engage positively with the natural environment and to play their part in its care. Our Beehive Garden outreach project gives nursery children opportunities to grow food and plants and connect with nature. Qualitative feedback from parents who volunteer at the Garden has highlighted its positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of their children (including children with additional needs).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities <p><i>We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe</i></p>	<p>The garden will be owned and managed by members of the local community, building skills and resilience and contributing to the vision that local people take responsibility for their community and engage with decisions about it. Our volunteering, outreach work and community events contribute to the outcome vision that Scotland has “friendly, vibrant and cohesive communities which value diversity and support those in need”.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture <p><i>We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely</i></p>	<p>The garden will be used for a wide range of creative activities. We use history, traditional and rural culture to bring the community together: for example through events such as Wassailing in the orchard; growing and celebrating Scottish Heritage apple varieties. We support expression of diverse cultures by welcoming refugee families into our community – e.g. through growing heritage crops.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Work and Business <i>We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone</i> 	<p>We will be growing healthy food for local consumption, selling surplus to our community-owned shop on Dunbar High Street whilst supporting local people to learn skills in food growing and regenerative land management. We foster economic participation through production and sale of preserves using produce from the Garden; and through hire of our fruit pressing equipment to local producers and growers.</p> <p>We support people into work through delivery of accredited training, by providing volunteering opportunities to Duke of Edinburgh participants, and through outreach projects which provide training on childcare and dementia awareness to Dunbar Grammar pupils.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education <i>We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society</i> 	<p>We will create formal and informal opportunities for skill sharing and learning about horticulture, regenerative land management, biodiversity, group working and more</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment <i>We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment</i> 	<p>Direct contribution to the outcome vision that communities “can engage with and benefit from nature and green space”. The Garden also supports carbon reduction efforts and biodiversity practice which are part of the outcome vision -we will be further developing and enhancing the range of habitats on the site including the orchard, hedges, coppice, woodland, scrub, wildflower meadow and creating a pond and wetland area..</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health <i>We are healthy and active</i> 	<p>We contribute to the vision of a whole system approach to promoting good health and activity. This relates particularly to food culture, where the Garden supports local, healthy</p>

	<p>food production and distribution. The therapeutic benefits of gardening and time in nature are well established: our volunteers report mental and physical health benefits of their engagement with the Garden. Community ownership will enable us to expand this work by developing a more formal approach to social prescribing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty <p><i>We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally</i></p>	<p>We will provide opportunities for all local people to participate in growing food for themselves and their neighbours in a setting that encourages everyone to contribute and develop their skills. We contribute to eradication of hunger through distribution of surplus produce to the Dunbar Foodshare, to volunteers at the Garden and to Dunbar Nursery.</p> <p>The Garden is inclusive and welcoming: everyone is treated with dignity and we encourage everyone to contribute and develop their skills. Qualitative feedback from our volunteers has commented on the friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental approach which supports people in moving forward in their lives.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Action <p><i>We live sustainably, achieve a just transition to net zero and build Scotland's resilience to climate change.</i></p>	<p>The Garden provides a healthy, diverse natural ecosystem and greenspace that supports biodiversity and builds resilience to changes in climatic conditions. It provides a means to engage the community around low carbon lifestyles and community resilience to the climate emergency. Through the Garden we promote sustainable food systems – distributing healthy produce for local consumption and supplying local businesses and the Dunbar Foodshare. As part of the East Lothian Climate</p>

	Action Network we use the garden to share skills and learning with other communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care <p><i>We are cared for as we need throughout our lives and value all those providing care</i></p>	Community cohesion is promoted at the BCG which builds strong connections between new and old residents in the area and beyond. Our Intergenerational Outreach Work supports the care of the Elderly at Dunbar Day Centre and our Beehive Nursery Garden project teaches our younger generation to care for the 3-4 year olds at the nursery.