

community
enterprise

Knocknagael

Research Report Final
Knocknagael Ltd

December 2020 – updated June 2021

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Project background

In 2012, two fields at Knocknagael Farm, the Scottish Government bull stud farm on Essich Road, south of Inverness, were identified as surplus and a planning application for 200 new houses was lodged in 2013. This proposal was met with local opposition rooted in the loss of other Inverness farms to housing development in recent years and growing awareness of environmental challenges.

Local Community Councils came together to find alternative uses for the site and identified a demand for allotments. Holm Community Council and Lochardil & Drummond Community Council organised the inaugural meeting of the Knocknagael Allotments Project later that year with support from MSP John Finnie, who also ran an online campaign. By early 2015, the final version of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan recommended that Knocknagael Farm should be kept in agricultural use. An initial feasibility study was carried out in July 2016 (with funding from the Pebble Trust), exploring the potential for allotment plots, a community garden, orchard, wildlife habitat and public open space at Knocknagael.

After an initial approach to the Scottish Government regarding asset transfer, the community group secured Stage 1 funding from the Scottish Land Fund to undertake further community consultation, with a focus on demonstrating a broad base of support in the local community and understanding the potential community benefit of the project. In parallel, site investigations and plans will be updated and developed in more detail.

1.2 Organisational background

A constituted community group, Knocknagael Allotments Association, was formed in 2016. Subsequently, Knocknagael Ltd, a Company Limited by Guarantee, was formed in 2020. Knocknagael Ltd has an asset lock and is in the process of obtaining charitable status. The organisation has a two-tier membership structure, in which Directors are elected by Ordinary Members. Ordinary Membership is available to people usually resident in Inverness and with an interest in allotments and food growing.

Knocknagael has 5 directors and 25 ordinary members at present. It will be recruiting further members over the next few months.

1.3 About the site

The Knocknagael bull stud farm is located around 3 miles from Inverness city centre and is easily accessible from the city's eastern and southern suburbs, which have been the main focus of population growth over the past decade. Knocknagael Ltd intends to take on one of two fields originally identified as surplus by the Scottish Government, the site owner. This field is approximately 10 hectares. Under the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (adopted July 2015), the site forms part of the Inverness Hinterland and is not earmarked for new housing. An adjoining, smaller field is designated for allotments or similar green space.

Further detail about the site, including its planning status, climate, flood risks known to SEPA, ecology, topography and soil conditions can be found in the 2016 Feasibility Study. An update to site investigations is currently in course.



1.4 Methodology

In line with the Invitation to Tender (July 2020), Community Enterprise and subcontractor Harrison Stevens (Landscape Architects) have been commissioned to deliver the following:

- Community consultation
- Business case/plan for the project (to include feasibility research building on the initial 2016 Feasibility Study and assessing additional ideas for wider community growing space, in addition to five-year Business Plan and Cash Flow Projection)
- Site Investigations update
- Landscape/Architectural drawing
- Independent land valuation (to be carried out by a suitable valuer)

This report covers the community consultation and additional research undertaken into ideas for the community growing space. The purpose is to present findings to the directors of Knocknagael Ltd. and assist the group in decisions ahead of the business plan. A report on site liabilities and investigations needed, a site plan and a five-year business plan will follow.

The research has been undertaken through a highly participative process, as follows:

Awareness-raising:

- Story published in the Inverness Courier print edition on October 30th and online on the 31st (available [here](#))
- Feature on BBC Alba on November 8th (from 6:45 [here](#))
- Story published on BBC Scotland in mid November (available [here](#))
- Posts on Knocknagael Ltd, Knocknagael Allotments and Save Knocknagael Fields Facebook pages (combined reach of over 8,000 people; over 1000 combined post engagements). Posts shared by other community organisations.
- Knocknagael website created and content added by committee members: 239 unique visits received
- Posters on 7 community noticeboards at shops, cafes and halls and large banner onsite.
- 900 Flyers distributed by Knocknagael Ltd to local households surrounding the field (see Appendix 2).
- Email contact with local groups sharing information on the project and how to get involved.

Community survey:

Survey distributed online from October 12th – XXXX 2020, with XXX responses, xx% from the surrounding community.

Stakeholder engagement:

1-1 calls with 16 organisations and individuals with a key role in the local community or the project.

Information/Q&A session with Lochardil and Drummond Community Council

17 other local groups engaged with via survey, email correspondence and meetings.

Consultation with young people:

Focus groups facilitated by staff at Inverness Royal Academy, using a questionnaire provided.



Drop-in day:

Consultation onsite at Knocknagael fields on Saturday October 31st 2020, run by Knocknagael Ltd with support from Community Enterprise on data gathering. 40 members of the community visited the site and shared their views with the committee.

Online open event:

Hosted by Community Enterprise and held via Zoom due to Covid-19. 18 people took part, including representatives of 3 allotments groups and 2 other community growing initiatives.

Demographic profile

Using Community Insight software, which compiles data for the local area from 30 statistical databases

Market research

Research into potential services for Knocknagael, based on case studies of existing organisations, information drawn from community consultation and published research.

Learning from others

Alongside research by Community Enterprise, Knocknagael Ltd directors have researched projects delivering allotments, community gardens and community-supported agriculture in the surrounding area and elsewhere, gathering learning which has been incorporated into this report.

Financial modelling and fundability

Early-stage financial projections and analysis of fit with funding streams

Research report

Report presented to Knocknagael Ltd and shared with Harrison Stevens to inform direction of travel and next steps



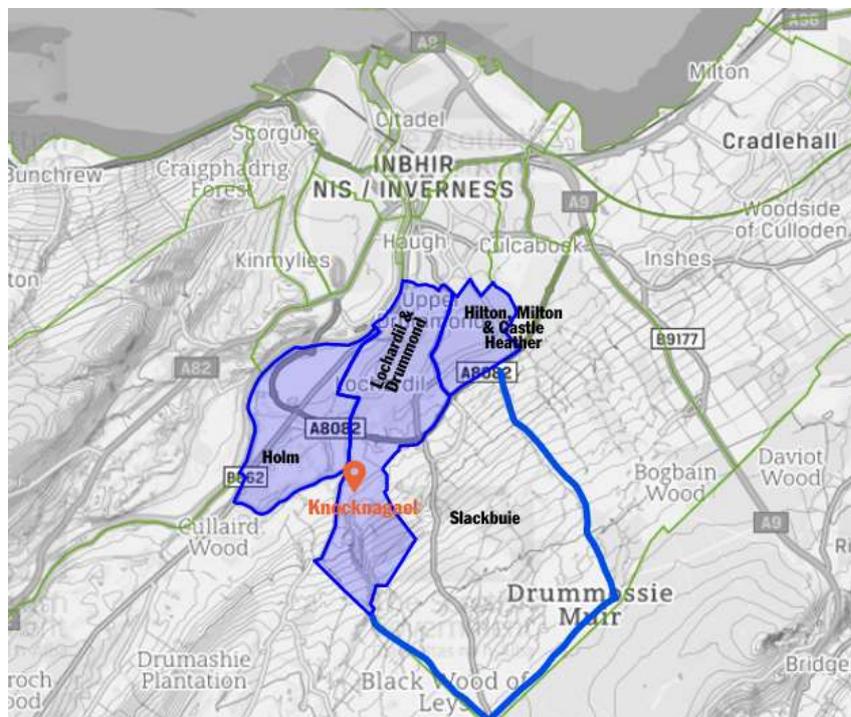
2. Development Context

2.1 Area profile

Defining the community

Membership in Knocknagael Limited is currently open to people with an interest in allotments and gardening, within the area of Inverness. Organisations may apply for Community Asset Transfer in representation of a community of interest such as this, but if Knocknagael Ltd wishes to be eligible for the Scottish Land Fund (assuming that criteria are similar when the fund is relaunched), the organisation would need to represent a clearly defined community of place. There is a need to consider the community immediately surrounding Knocknagael in this research.

There are a number of options open to Knocknagael Ltd in terms of defining the community as Inverness is a fast growing and changing city. Knocknagael sits on the edge of the southern suburbs of Inverness, within the Lochardil & Drummond community council area but close to the boundaries of Holm, Slackbuie, Hilton Milton & Castle Heather and Dores & Essich community council areas. Interest in community growing facilities at Knocknagael has come primarily from the suburban areas north and east of Knocknagael, rather than the rural Dores & Essich area to the south. Members of Lochardil & Drummond and Holm Community Councils were involved in early stages of the campaign for growing space at Knocknagael, and there has been interest in the project from people living in these areas. Slackbuie is a newly formed community council representing areas of rapid housing development east of Knocknagael, and Hilton, Milton & Castle Heather is a densely populated area within walking distance of the site.



Map of community council areas surrounding Knocknagael – from Community Right to Buy Mapping Tool (Slackbuie boundary added manually as this is a new community council area).



If Knocknagael Ltd intends to represent a community of place, residents of these areas would be the core beneficiaries of the project. However, the survey results and engagement with stakeholders show that there is demand for the services across the whole of Inverness. The lack of alternative facilities in Inverness and the integration across the city indicate other approaches could be considered. Following discussion with DTAS, Knocknagael Ltd has identified the Inverness city local authority electoral wards as the community of place for the project (**Inverness Ness-Side, Central, Millburn and West Wards**). Residents in the defined community would be eligible to become Ordinary Members of Knocknagael Ltd and have a say in its development as an asset in their community. This does not prevent some services offered at the site from catering to people from across a wider area.

Key Statistics

A full demographic report, including references to sources, can be found in Appendix 1. Key figures of relevance to the project are:

- The area surrounding Knocknagael, as represented by the four community council areas, has a **population of just over 15,000**.
- The population of this area has **grown by around 15%** in the past 10 years.
- The proportion of people aged over 65 is lower than average for Highland. There are **more people of working age, and particularly children and young people** (2-2.5% higher than average for both Highland and Scotland). The proportion of people who claim Universal Credit is about average across the whole area but rises to twice the national rate (12%) in parts of Hilton, according to DWP statistics from October 2020.
- **74.9% of people of working age in the area are economically active:** this is higher than average for Highland and Scotland. People in the area around Knocknagael are also more likely to be employed full time.
- However, **the jobs density is lower than average** for Highland and Scotland as a whole (this is the number of jobs as a percentage of working-age population). Many people commute out of the area for work, though commuting patterns are changing in response to Covid-19 and increased home working.
- The area around Knocknagael contains both **areas of extreme deprivation and some of Scotland's least deprived communities**, with areas falling into both the least deprived 10% and most deprived 10% on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In particular, part of Hilton is among the most deprived 10% of communities nationally, both overall and for the Income, Employment, Education and Crime domains.
- **15.6% of people across the whole area have a life-limiting long-term illness**, which is lower than average.
- However, there is inequality locally in terms of health: **life expectancy among males is almost 6 years lower in Inverness Drummond (within the Hilton area) than in Inverness Lochardil and Mains**. Parts of the Hilton area are **among the 20% most deprived communities nationwide in terms of health** (SIMD 2020), and the area's draft Locality Plan notes that the area has higher than average numbers of people living with chronic conditions, high hospital



admission and prescription rates, as well as challenges associated with long term alcohol and drug misuse¹.

- Similarly, the communities surrounding the Knocknagael site are very mixed in terms of housing. Much of the area is suburban, but **19.2% of the total population lives in a flat or maisonnette**, considerably higher than than average for Highland though lower than average for Scotland. Some parts of the community have a higher level of high-density housing stock and less local green space: in parts of Hilton, almost 60% live in flats.
- Several other proposals for housing development have been put forward in the area, and the closure of the local Fairways Golf Course has been reported as a critical loss of local green space. In community consultation (see Section 3), many people commented on the need to preserve green space, particularly and ensure that housing development is coupled with the creation of community spaces.

2.2 Strategy and Policy

National

Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and National Outcomes

The overarching purpose of the Scottish Government is to focus services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, chiefly through increasing sustainable economic growth. As such, the Government's strategic objectives are as follows:

1. **Wealthier and Fairer** – enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth
2. **Smarter** – expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to lifelong learning, ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements
3. **Healthier** – help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health
4. **Safer and Stronger** – help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life
5. **Greener** – improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it

Plans for Knocknagael would safeguard agricultural land and encourage people to enjoy and value it, as well as building outdoor, gardening and growing skills among local people and community groups, in line with efforts for a **greener** environment. Greenspace and allotments provide an ideal setting to promote physical activity including gardening as well as walking and cycling. In this way, there is also potential to promote **healthier** lives. Knocknagael will engage with NHS, GPs, Highland Council and other bodies promoting health through outdoor activity through the Think Health Think Nature partnership.

The development of community-led assets can be seen to contribute to many of these national outcomes (depending on project priorities). Knocknagael, as a green space where the community can come together, can be seen to strongly link to the following outcomes on this national framework:

- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe

¹ Draft Locality Plan shared by Inverness Community Partnership during research



- We value, enjoy, project and enhance our environment
- We are healthy and active
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

Place making Principle

The Scottish Government have committed to the Place Making Principle. Place making is about strengthening the connection between people and the places they live, work and share. Place making refers to a collaborative process by which people can shape the public realm where they live and work in order to maximize shared value. It is about focusing on a specific place and considering how to ensure it is resilient and the people who live there are committed to its development.

The Place Standard Tool was developed to help assess the quality of places and to prioritise areas for action. The Scottish Government has committed to the Place making approach and is investing in how it can help to reduce inequalities, build social capital, and encourage active participation in community life from all parts of the community.

Through its offerings Knocknagael enables the local community to build a stronger connection to their area – and to each other. As such, it connects strongly to the Place making principle and key indicators that are being used to promote this way of working across Scotland. Of the 14 measures underpinning this principle, Knocknagael will directly contribute to six of these and is expected to indirectly influence a range others:

- Direct contribution: *Natural space, Social contact, Identity and belonging, Influence and sense of control, Play and recreation, Facilities and amenities.*
- Indirect contribution: *Feeling safe, Care and maintenance*

The public health priorities outline a clear focus on 6 key areas

-  1. A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
-  2. A Scotland where we flourish in our early years
-  3. A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing
-  4. A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
-  5. A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
-  6. A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

Scotland's Public Health Priorities

The six public health priorities are intended to support national and local partners across Scotland work together to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities in local communities.

The variety of offerings at Knocknagael aim to build community cohesion, offer greater access to green space and locally grown, healthy produce. These link strongly with many of the key public health priorities (1, 3, 6) and their desire to work in partnership with local schools offers an opportunity to contribute to Priority 2 as well.

In order to achieve Priority 1, a number of factors underpinned this. The ability to “influence the decisions that affect us”, “improving local access to green space” and promoting “the availability of healthier [food] options” were noted as having a significant impact on our health and wellbeing.

Priority 3 highlights “a Scotland where we have good mental health”. Environmental projects, peer support and building strong social networks are all highlighted as ways to achieve this priority. As



such, Knocknagael offers considerable opportunity to improve local mental health and contribute to meeting this national priority.

Priority 6 outlines the goal for Scotland as a place “where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active”. When considering diet, particular emphasis was placed on the food environment, especially the availability and accessibility of healthy versus unhealthy food. For physical activity, highlighted priorities included building movement into our daily lives. Regional partners were highlighted as working to create community environments that support healthier eating and make it easier to stay active through programmes that include community gardens, local food projects and developing green spaces.

The influence of wider inequalities was also recognised across all six public health priorities. The community around Knocknagael has a mixed pattern of deprivation – and includes local areas that are classed within the 10% most deprived in Scotland. As such, Knocknagael offers an important opportunity to impact upon the health and wellbeing of these areas. Importantly, being community-led, this project will empower people who are experiencing disadvantage to influence and direct local solutions to it.

Fairer Scotland Action Plan

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan is a key Scottish Government strategy that outlines fifty actions to help tackle poverty, reduce inequality and build a fairer and more inclusive Scotland. It highlights the need for communities to “feel empowered to take action on the priorities that matter most to them.” It recognises the key role that community-led organisations have on this empowerment agenda as well as delivering innovative projects to help combat poverty and improve people’s lives. Amongst these projects, environmental projects and community food initiatives (such as that offered by Knocknagael) are specifically highlighted as areas that will be supported through this Action Plan.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act

The Community Empowerment Act aims to make it easier for communities to have more influence over the decisions that affect their area. One of the Act’s specific actions is to support communities to own assets. The Government recognises that asset ownership can provide revenue for community organisations making them more sustainable in the long term. This, in turn, can help give local people a renewed sense of control over their communities and a real sense of a stake in the future of the places they live and work.

Part 9 of the Act also highlights the Scottish Government’s aim to increase the provision of allotments and “grow-your-own land”. This provision recognises that the health, environmental and community benefits afforded by having access to good food are further benefitted through the ability of people to grow their own produce.

“When people are involved in growing their own food it enhances these benefits even further – fruit and vegetable consumption often increases, gardening can provide a source of low-impact exercise and offer mental health benefits, and growing spaces can improve biodiversity and reduce the air miles of the food that we eat.”

Mairi Gougeon
Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment²

In addition to the provision of allotments and community growing space Knocknagael Ltd is a grassroots organisation led by local people, motivated by a desire to support the long-term sustainability and wellbeing of the area. Aligning with the principles underpinning the Community

²<https://www.gov.scot/publications/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities/>



Empowerment Act, Knocknagael Ltd has consulted widely with the local community and partners about needs and plans for the project and is committed to this way of working going forward.

A Connected Scotland

The Scottish Government's strategy to tackle social isolation is underpinned by four priorities: Empower communities and build shared ownership; Promote positive attitudes and tackle stigma; Create opportunities for people to connect; and support an infrastructure that fosters connections. The Strategy also recognises the key role of third sector and social enterprises in tackling social isolation locally.

The policy sets out the need for places where the community can come together and build social connections. The development at Knocknagael will facilitate this through community growing, peer learning and support and informal community meeting space. It will also contribute to tackling social isolation through increased physical activity through gardening and access to green space for walks. It will help build intergenerational connections through partnerships with local groups and schools and promote volunteering at the Knocknagael site.

The Environment Strategy for Scotland (2020)

The Environment Strategy for Scotland created an overarching framework for the Scottish Government's strategies and plans on the environment and climate change. This vision outlines the long-term ambitions for Scotland's natural environment as well as actions needed to tackle the global climate change and nature crises. The urgency needed to address these issues is recognised in the strategy with efforts needed in the immediate future to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.

The role of individuals and communities in encouraging and enabling long-term behaviour change is recognised with Scotland's environmental strategy with localised solution and support vital. The project outlined at Knocknagael offers an opportunity to feed in to these national environmental goals. The focus on community-based, environmental education, seasonal local produce as well as encouraging active travel to the (accessible) site are all elements of Knocknagael's wider effort to improve access to the natural environment and increase local commitment to sustainability.

Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies (2018-2032)

This plan sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032. Note that since the report was published the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 has set the target to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest.

The site at Knocknagael will support the local area in adapting to more sustainable ways of living in response to the climate emergency. Practically, this will be achieved through:

- The provision of easily accessible green space – reducing car usage and associated carbon emissions.
- Community growing and allotment provision - helping to reduce food miles and carbon emissions; encourage composting and waste and promoting environmental and nature awareness.
- Urban green spaces have also been shown to help to mitigate climate change and improve the local environment e.g. air quality.



- The site at Knocknagael will enhance the biodiversity, landscape and amenity value of South Inverness; help create a native hedge/wildlife corridor, flowering meadow, orchard and range of crops to encourage bird species and pollinators.

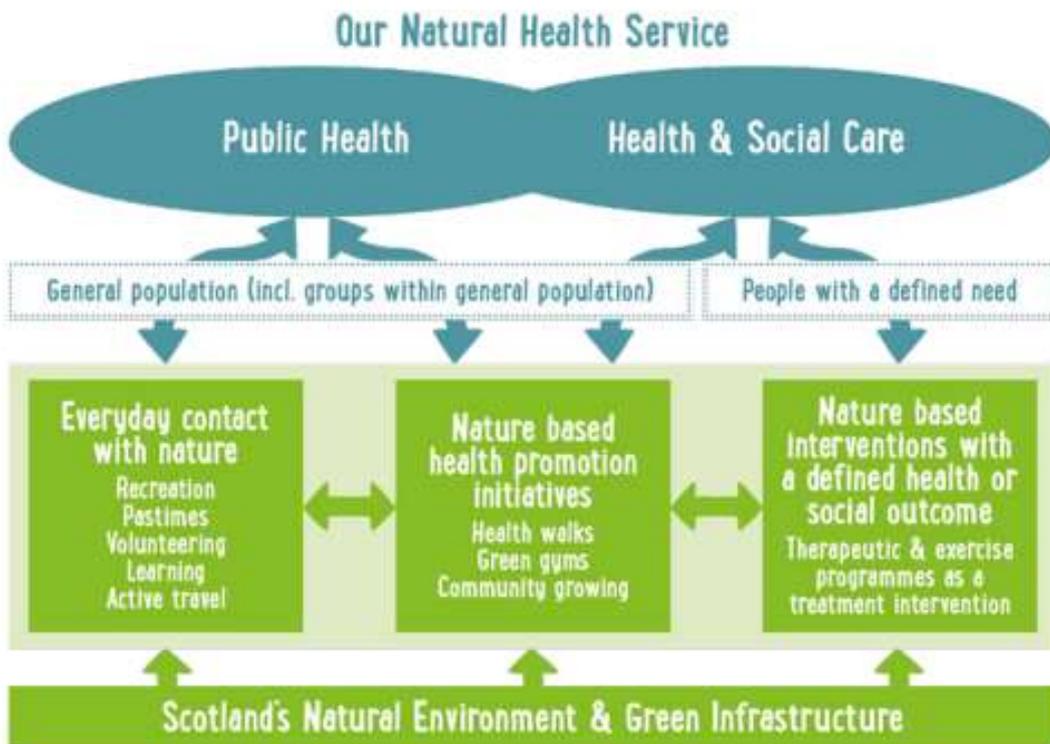
These actions can also be seen to feed into other key environmental strategies including the *Scottish Biodiversity Strategy*, *Scottish Pollinator Strategy*, and *Land Use Strategy* (due to be updated in March 2021).

Our Natural Health Service

The Our Natural Health Service (ONHS) programme is being led by NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) and works in partnership with Scottish Forestry, Public Health Scotland and a range of other national and local organisations across the environment, transport, sport, education and health sectors. ONHS has been developed with the key aims of; increasing awareness of the benefits of green exercise, and promote nature-based health interventions within routine health and social care e.g., through social prescribing.

Think Health, Think Nature – Highland Green Health Partnership

A key component of this programme utilises ‘Green Health Partnerships’. These regional partnerships are developing interdisciplinary approaches in order to develop and promote green spaces for public health benefits. Community growing is specifically highlighted as a core component of how these benefits might be realised. The Highland programme is being led on the ground by the Highland Green Health Partnership, *Think Health, Think Nature* and contact between Knocknagael and this programme has already been established.



Good Food Nation

The 2014 national policy ‘Becoming a Good Food Nation’ outlined a vision for Scotland: that by 2025 Scotland will be “a Good Food Nation, where people from every walk of life take pride and



pleasure in, and benefit from, the food they produce, buy, cook, serve, and eat each day.”³ The Programme for Government 2019 to 2020 contained a commitment to bring forward a Good Food Nation Bill. The Covid-19 crisis has delayed the introduction of this Bill, however, this issue remains a key priority for the Scottish Government going forward.

Key elements underpinning the Good Food Nation vision include:

- it is the norm for Scots to take a **keen interest in their food**, knowing what constitutes good food, valuing it and seeking it out whenever they can
- everyone in Scotland has **ready access to the healthy, nutritious food** they need
- dietary-related diseases are in decline, as is the **environmental impact** of our food consumption

The allotments and community growing space at Knocknagael will contribute to the Good Food Nation strategy through improving access to affordable, fresh locally grown produce. The nature of Knocknagael Ltd, as a community-led organisation, will also enable opportunities for local people to grow their own food, learn new skills through workshops and peer learning and develop opportunities for healthy eating initiatives.

This policy has been identified as a priority for the new government with a commitment in the new Government’s manifesto to introduce the right to food in law⁴, and specific commitments to:

“produce a local food strategy which support locally based production and circular supply chains, cutting food miles and enabling more people to enjoy good grown locally”, and,

“work with public agencies to make more land available for community market gardens, orchards and allotments”.

The [recommendations](#) of the *Just Transition Commission* published in March encourage all public bodies to commit to creating communities that embed low-carbon lifestyles, while improving our health and wellbeing and ensuring this transition is fair.⁵ Knocknagael Ltd has identified opportunities to work with partner organisations in food, well-being and social empowerment.

Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning

Engagement with schools has emerged as a key part of the project. As of 2010, the Scottish Government’s Curriculum for Excellence includes guidance on incorporating educational experiences in a variety of outdoor settings, which states that ‘Learning outdoors can be enjoyable, creative, challenging and adventurous and helps children and young people learn by experience and grow as confident and responsible citizens who value and appreciate the spectacular landscapes, natural heritage and culture of Scotland’.

The document notes that the Curriculum for Excellence can best be delivered through **partnership working** with practitioners and the voluntary sector, allowing for greater variety of experiences:

³ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/food-and-drink/good-food-nation/>

⁴ https://issuu.com/hinksbrandwise/docs/04_15_snp_manifesto_2021__a4_document_large_print?mode=window

⁵ See <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/pages/3/>.





At present, most outdoor learning in the area is delivered by teachers, although many schools have established strong links with community groups such as Culduthel Woodlands. By building links among schools and practitioners and potentially developing dedicated space for outdoor learning, the project can improve quality and ensure that all children in the area have access.

An additional benefit of Outdoor Learning that has become apparent in recent times is the potential to comply with physical distancing required to combat Covid 19. The Scottish Government’s Children’s Minister recently stated that Outdoor Learning “could have many benefits for maintaining physical distancing and minimising risk of transmission as part of the transition from lockdown back into early learning and childcare and school. While specialist outdoor nurseries are well attuned to the needs of children spending all day outdoors, other establishments are considering how to adapt their practice to enable more time to be spent in gardens and playgrounds.”⁶

Local

Community Planning: Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans

The key ambition of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (2017-27) is to tackle the issues that lead to inequalities. The Plan sets out Outcomes for 2027, which are:

- Poverty Reduction
- Community Participation and Dialogue
- Infrastructure
- Community Safety & Resilience (including community-led action)
- Mental Health & Wellbeing

The Knocknagael project can contribute, in particular, to the last two of these. The project is led by a local community group, formed out of a grassroots campaign to preserve the fields. The committee

⁶ Quoted in The Guardian: “[Scotland Eyes Outdoor Learning as Model for Reopening Schools](#)”



aim to grow membership within the local area and be led by and accountable to people in the community.

The plan identifies a need for partnership working with third sector groups to deliver improved **mental health and wellbeing**, and to support activities that encourage participation and social inclusion. In line with this, Knocknagael aims to provide community gardening and volunteering programmes, and to provide growing space and training to organisations working with people living with mental health issues and who are in recovery.

Through the Community Planning framework, a **Hilton Locality Plan** is currently in progress: this document sets out how the HOIP's aspirations will be achieved within this area. The Knocknagael site is not part of the Hilton locality, but, as noted above, Hilton forms part of the geographic community that Knocknagael Ltd intends to respond to and benefit. A representative of the Inverness Community Partnership with responsibility for this plan was consulted, and provided a draft of the Locality Plan.

Overall priorities within the Hilton Locality Plan are Safety and Security, Community Activity and Environment. Actions set out by the Community Partnership relate to spaces and activities within Hilton, such as the local Community centre, community garden and public spaces. Nevertheless, there is potential for Knocknagael to work with and support local projects within Hilton: e.g. by providing seeds and plants to be used for the community garden or planters in public spaces and access to tools through the tool library. Work with the local Primary Schools and the Inverness Royal Academy (see Section 3) will also benefit people living in this area.

Active Highland Strategy

“Increased participation in outdoor activities, especially within communities and close to people’s home”

The Active Highland Strategy was refreshed in 2019 to provide an updated framework of outcomes and commitments for promoting opportunities around physical activity and sport across the region. The offerings at Knocknagael will contribute significantly to the opportunities available in South Inverness to engage in nature-based activities close to people’s homes. This is a key priority that underpins 4 of the 6 outcomes within the Active Highland Strategy.

Highland Council Draft Community Food Growing Strategy 2020-2,

The Community Food Growing Strategy (currently undergoing consultation) seeks to inspire, promote and support community growing across the Highlands, in line with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Draft document sets out the vision: “By 2025 Highland communities are resilient, empowered and supported to grow their own food.” Plans for Knocknagael are closely aligned to this.

Under the Strategy, relevant Actions include the development of a Highland Community Food Growing Network (a potential future partner for Knocknagael, facilitating sharing resources and delivering joint projects) and a map of ‘Grow Your Own’ activities for people looking to get involved (which may be used to promote activities at the site). The Council also aims to work with communities to set up Tool Libraries.

Also of relevance, the strategy sets out an intention to waive planning application costs for Grow Your Own projects. Knocknagael would already be able to access free pre-application advice as a not-for-profit community group.

Highland Council’s Policy on Allotments (Available [here](#))



The Highland Council's Allotment Policy notes that promoting and enabling allotment gardening contributes to local outcomes including giving communities a greater role in shaping their own future, reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage and improving health (although this policy references the now outdated Highland Single Outcome Agreement, similar outcomes are contained within the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-27).

By working with stakeholders to increase provision of allotments in line with demand across the highlands, the Council aims to:

- increase the provision of allotments across the Highland Council area.
- improve local environments through increased biodiversity.
- promote the social inclusion and health benefits of allotments.
- ensure allotment sites are well used and effectively managed by empowered community groups

In line with this policy, Knocknagael has potential to:

- Provide around 180 new allotments
- Incorporate hedgerow wildlife corridors in site masterplan and raise awareness of biodiversity concerns through interpretation material and training
- Work with the council and other stakeholders to measure wellbeing outcomes for participants as required
- Provide accessible ways to get into gardening through volunteering, small plots and training
- Ensure at least 90% of available allotments are in use and site is effectively managed.



3. Community Consultation

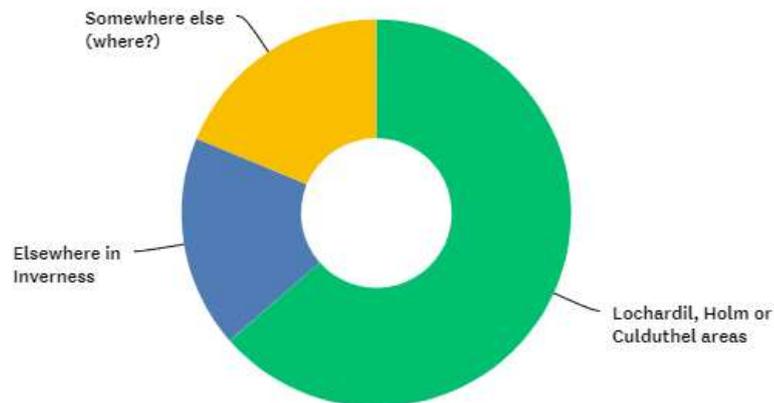
This research has been conducted to determine the level of support in the community for community ownership and development of growing space at Knocknagael, and to gather further ideas for the site. Information on how community consultation has been carried out is in Sections 3.1-3.4 below and Section 3.5 contains the main findings from all community consultation.

3.1 Community Survey

The survey was completed by 339 people. Respondents were mainly people who live the Lochardil, Holm and Culduthel areas (64%). 19% live 'somewhere else': many of these respondents specified that they were from other local areas such as Milton of Leys and Slackbuie, although there were also some responses from the Essich area, Nairn and a handful from further afield. 18% of respondents lived elsewhere in Inverness.

Please tell us where you live

Answered: 310 Skipped: 29

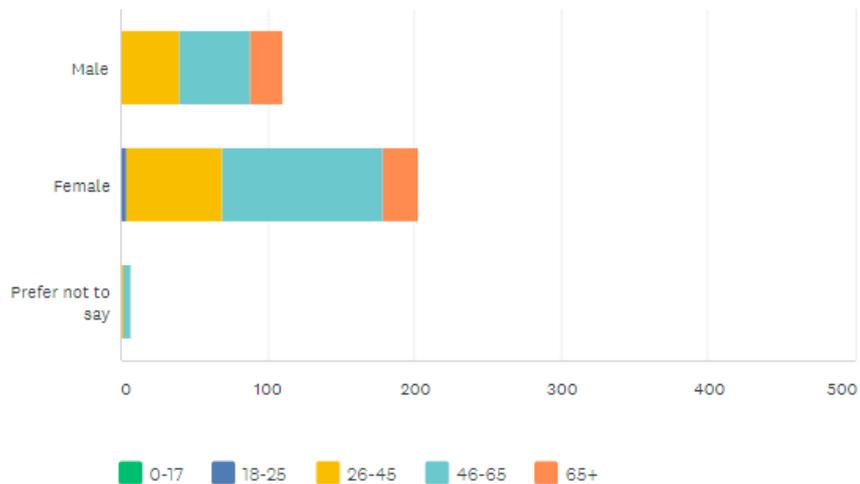


60% of respondents were female and 32% male (some respondents selected 'prefer not to say' or did not answer this optional question). Responses covered a range of ages from 25 up. Young people were underrepresented among survey respondents, but a different, shorter questionnaire was used with high school students to ensure that this group was represented in consultation (see 3.4 below).



Are you:

Answered: 304 Skipped: 35



3.2 Community Events

Two events were held during as part of community engagement and research for the project:

Outdoor drop-in at the Knocknagael site

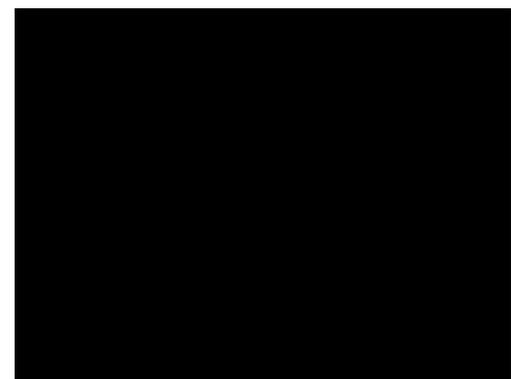
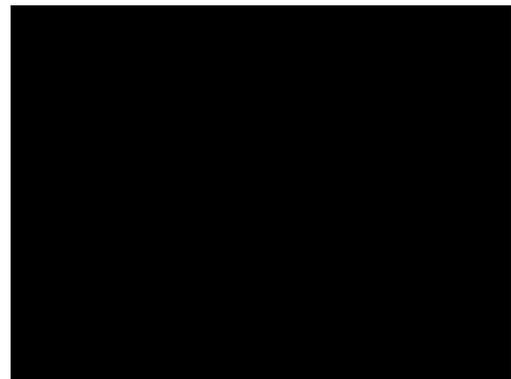
Held on Saturday October 31st, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM, run by the Knocknagael Ltd committee. A gazebo was installed next to the field with table, chairs, banner and project information.

30-40 people visited, despite windy weather and Covid-19 limitations (social distancing was maintained). A significant number were nearby residents; they were interested and believed the project would be valuable for the area. Some were very enthusiastic about engaging in the project. Others attended because they were keen on having an allotment or had a specific interest, thought the project would be an asset or wanted to find out more.

Online event via Zoom

Held on Tuesday November 10th, 5:30 – 7:00 PM. An online event page was created using Eventbrite and publicised using Facebook and email, enabling anyone to sign up and receive a link to join the event.

18 people took part, including representatives of three allotment groups and two community growing projects from Inverness and surrounding areas.



3.3 Stakeholder Interviews

1-1 telephone interviews were carried out with 17 organisations and individuals with a role in the community and/or the project:

- Highland Council Ward Officer
- NHS Senior Health Development Officer with responsibility for Think Health Think Nature Partnership
- L'Arche Highland
- Gateway (formerly Highland Homeless Trust)
- Inverness Recovery College
- Nairn Allotments Society (other local allotments societies consulted via meetings and survey; see below)
- Lochardil and Drummond Community Council (information session via Zoom)
- Inverness Community Planning – lead for Hilton Locality Plan
- Holm Community Council
- Local fruit and vegetable growers/suppliers:
 - The Natural Vegetable Company
- Knockfarrel Produce Schools:
 - Inverness Royal Academy
 - Lochardil Primary School
 - Holm Primary School
 - Cauldeen Primary School
- Churches/ faith groups:
 - Church of Scotland St Columba, Dores and Boleskine
 - Culduthel Christian Centre

In addition to one-to-one interviews, representatives of Hawthorn Allotments and Blackthorn Allotments in Inverness took part in the community meeting held via Zoom, along with Incredible Edible Inverness and MOO Food (Muir of Ord).

Several local groups answered the survey on behalf of a group or organisation, including the Culduthel Woods Group, local branches of RSPB and Dyslexia Scotland, Transition Black Isle (which operates two allotments sites), Nairn Eco, Inverness Mental Health Recovery College, Day One Youth Mentoring, Holm, Slackbuie and Milton of Leys Community Councils, Commonweal Inverness, Inverness-shire Beekeepers' Association, Inverness Bat Group. These responses were all in support of the project.



In addition Knocknagael Ltd directors identified scope for partnerships with the following organisations

Action for Children. – directly approached the group. As an organisation they run seven different services on behalf of Scottish Government and the local authority (Inverness and other parts of Highlands) working with vulnerable children and families. Food poverty is one of their biggest issues, but this is not just about giving handouts but involving those affected so they are empowered and families are supported. They were strong supports of the idea of ‘field to fork’ and the location of the site

Highland Birchwood – supporting people on mental health issues, who are planning to develop a Recovery College for the Highlands that will help people to understand their mental health and see the Knocknagael Green hub as providing some of the practical tools and opportunities. Directors have now met a couple of times with them.



3.4 Consultation with young people

Due to Covid 19, consultation was undertaken by teachers: a short description of the project and questionnaire was sent to teachers at Inverness Royal Academy who discussed the questions with small groups of students from the school's Nurture Base.

The questions asked were:

Are you interested in gardening or growing fruit and vegetables? What is it that interests you (or what don't you like about the idea)?

What do you think about the plans for the Knocknagael field? Is there anything else that you would include?

If this project goes ahead, how do you think it will affect the local area and people who live there?

A - grow food, get outside, plant stuff
Learn about plants, helps fight climate change
"from farm to fork"

B - all sounds good, bug hotels would be good
Birdhouses, ponds, protect Red Squirrels
Badger dens, communal area to sit
Fire pit. Solar panels, lit up @ night (safely)
outdoor cooking

C - Local people help out, community togetherness
Improve Mental Health, Alternative to Online lives.
Help kids get Vitamin D, positive promotion of lifestyles

Concerns - Vandalism,

3.5 Key Findings from Community Consultation

Need in the community A lot of new housing has been built in the area, but stakeholders noted that community spaces are lacking and it can be hard to meet people in the area and that isolation is an issue, particularly in the wake of Covid. Similarly, one survey respondent commented that there is "not very much 'glue' to hold the community together".

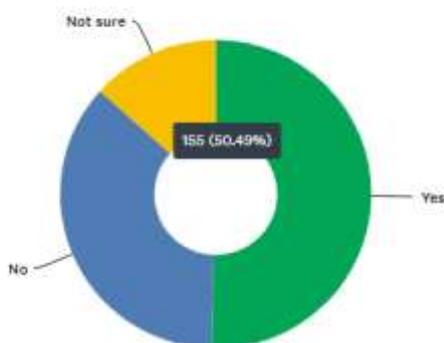
Given that much of the surrounding area is suburban and low-density, many people in the community have access to space for growing: 78% of survey respondents have access to outdoor growing space while 21% do not. The percentage with access to outdoor growing space rises to 84% among residents of the communities nearest to Knocknagael.

Among the people who responded to the survey, 50% felt that people in their area had enough access to green space for fresh air, exercise and relaxation. However, a significant minority - 36% - felt that this was not the case. 13% were not sure.



Do you feel that people in your area have enough access to green space for fresh air, exercise and relaxation?

Answered: 307 Skipped: 32



Schools interviewed called attention to a lack of safe, quality green spaces in some areas, especially Holm and Hilton, which limits children's time spent playing outdoors. Many children within catchment areas of the schools near Knocknagael do not have access to a garden at home. Hilton Primary School is about to lose access to a Polytunnel due to building work and Holm Primary has no green space at the school premises.

Via the survey, residents also raised concerns about overdevelopment impacting public green space: *"Inverness is growing far too rapidly without any thought to the need of peoples need for community focus and peoples mental and physical wellbeing" "spoiling our countryside"; "there won't be any green area left"; "we have easy access to walks and open areas but fear this may soon diminish if we don't have some project like this".* Other survey respondents pointed out that *"Growth in housing should come with growth in community resources"* and that *"gardens are now tiny in new developments"*. One respondent noted that *quality of green space is also an issue: "many of the parks here are just grass with no thought for wildlife which is really sad especially in the current climate crisis"*.

Survey respondents highlighted the site's conservation potential as a protected green space: *"The site is a great backdrop to the existing housing and like all development sites needs to be carefully balanced, with significant retention of green and wild spaces. Continuity of these is essential to the survival of many wild species."* Other respondents highlighted the value of community ownership to *"secure this land for generations to come"* and *"provide us with the chance to really make something of the land and our community"*. Similarly, respondents noted the site's location at the edge of urban area, providing a link to green space: *"the proliferation of housing estates is moving access to the countryside further and further away from Inverness residents"*.

Responses to the survey also drew attention to the impact of Covid: *"During Covid, we have seen how isolated folks can be"; "it has been a challenging time to make friends in the community" and said that "now more than ever we need countryside spaces on our doorstep"*. In general, many stakeholders observed that more people were getting outdoors during the Covid pandemic. Other green spaces such as MacDonald Park and local paths have been busy. However, the Senior Health Development Officer interviewed felt that gaps were being felt more strongly, and was aware of some families in the area having barely any access to outdoor space.



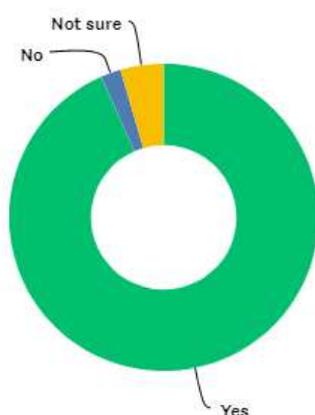
Fuelled by growing awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of allotment gardening, other allotments in Inverness and nearby all report that demand for plots has increased dramatically in the past year. The waiting list at at least one site has doubled. One survey respondent commented: “I’ve been on the waiting list for Blackthorn and Hawthorn allotments for over a year and the waiting lists are huge”. At the zoom meeting it was reported that Hawthorn allotment has a waiting list of 94.

Support for the project

93% of survey respondents support Knocknagael Limited taking on the field on behalf of the community. 5% were not sure, and 2% did not support this.

Do you support Knocknagael Limited taking on the Knocknagael Farm Fields on behalf of the community?

Answered: 333 Skipped: 6



Survey respondents identified several benefits from the project, which are explored below.

Reasons why respondents were ‘not sure’ centred around a need for further information, about “the capacity of the organisation”, and who owns the site currently. One person specified that they would want to see a charity take on the site. Among the 2% of respondents who stated that they did not support community ownership, reasons given by two individuals were a preference for the land to be used for more traditional agriculture, with smaller gardens that are “run-down” or “wasteland” being a better target for community use; while one person raised questions over the group’s purposes (perception that it would benefit a small number of interested individuals rather than the wider community). While these comments represent a minority of respondents, Knocknagael could consider addressing them via a website Q&A section or other communications.

Two respondents who said that they did not support the project commented in support of it (“It would be lovely to have a place for the community to get together and plan activities to help the environment and local charities”; “this is what Inverness desperately needs!”) and appeared to have answered in error.

All stakeholders consulted were also supportive of community ownership of the land at Knocknagael.

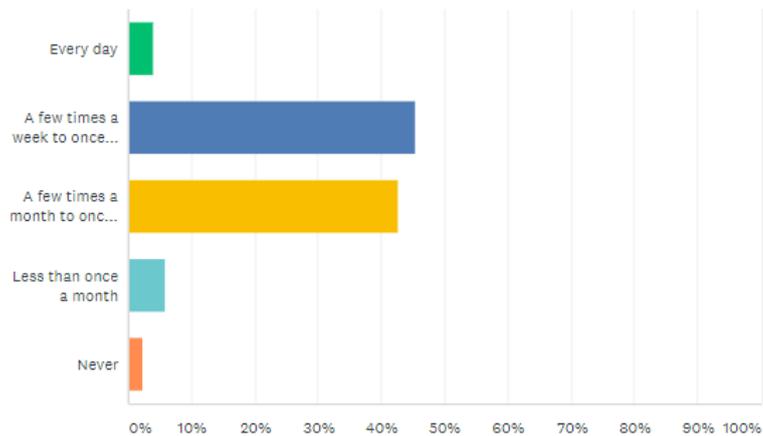


Use of the site

Most respondents thought that they would visit monthly to a few times a month (43%) or weekly to a few times a week (45%). Those interested in holding an allotment at the site would visit much more frequently: 67% would be at the site weekly to a few times a week while 10% would be daily visitors.

How frequently do you think you would visit the growing space at Knocknagael Farm?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 1

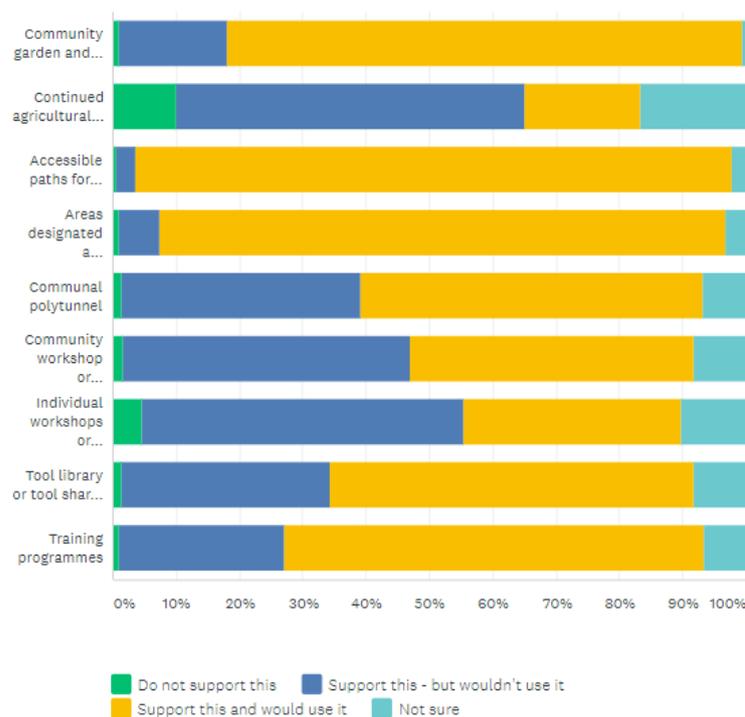


Evidence of demand for specific services is covered in more detail in section 4 below. Broadly, the survey showed support for all the potential services proposed. There was almost universal interest in at least casually visiting the site: 94% said that they would make use of paths and areas for walking at Knocknagael, and 89% would visit wildlife habitat areas. 81% would use/visit a community garden and orchard.



Please tell us what you think about the following ideas for the community growing project at Knocknagael.

Answered: 310 Skipped: 1



Impact of the project the community

Via the survey, members of the community agreed that the project would be lead to several positive outcomes:

- Help improve people's health and wellbeing (74% strongly agree, 21% agree). Survey comments suggested that Knocknagael would provide "healthy outdoor activity and accessing good food", "help mental health for all". Outdoor activity was seen as particularly important in response to Covid: "Outdoor recreation is immensely important for public health and wellbeing"; "Outdoor social contact less risk than indoor".
- Help people cope with stress, anxiety and improve their mental health (72% strongly agree, 23% agree)
- Give people access to fresh, healthy and sustainable produce (70% strongly agree, 26% agree)
- Help develop skills and knowledge for local people (66% strongly agree, 28% agree). "Educational for our children"; "gives a chance to meet local residents and gain from others knowledge"; "learn more about sustainable produce!"; "important that people learn about the area and how the food chain works". Respondents pointed out that this might involve opportunities to develop new farming and growing enterprises: "wider development of crofting skills, especially for those new to farming, as crofting is a way of young people gaining a foothold in the Highlands"; "opportunities for start-up farming via a tenancy" Bring the community together (64% strongly agree, 28% agree). Comments noted that the project: "will provide a focus for the community" and "help people get to know each other better and bring the local community together", in "an area of Inverness that has seen a huge amount of house building but very limited community development"



- Reduce carbon and encourage sustainable lifestyles (63% strongly agree, 27% agree). *“reducing carbon footprints, increasing sustainability and traceability of food”; “There is a climate and biodiversity crisis which will not be averted or mitigated by the conventional economic process which measures people's wealth/health/happiness by the quantity of their consumption rather than their own interests, creativity and individual sustainable productivity. This project is one which has the potential to contribute to this vitally necessary change in thinking.”*

Other potential benefits were pointed out by respondents:

- Conservation: *“we have a lot of wildlife in the area that is being pushed out by all the building and they need a safe haven i.e. red squirrels, deer, hedgehogs, birds”; “with the population increasing yearly we need to protect our soil”*

Democratising access to and decisions about land: *“The big developers should not have a monopoly on determining what Inverness will become”; “Too much land in Scotland is in the hands of too few”; “The land needs to be retained as a community asset”*

In consultation with stakeholders, other community growing projects described allotments as ‘a great place to be’, with positive impacts for mental health and healthy eating.

Several opportunities were identified to work in partnership with other organisations for the benefit of their users:

- L’Arche Highland, which already offers gardening activity, has seen significant benefits. Reducing isolation and building a sense of pride, developing resilience and ability to cope with stress and improving mental and physical wellbeing in adults with support needs.
- Similarly, Gateway, an organisation supporting vulnerable adults at risk of homelessness, is interested in offering gardening activities to its service users as a way to break patterns of substance use, give people a sense of purpose and provide social interaction and peer support.
- The Centre for WellNess, a service-user-led initiative formed by individuals involved in previous efforts to set up a Recovery College in Inverness, is interested in using the site as a base (if there is a suitable building onsite) and delivering therapeutic gardening activity, peer groups, coaching and similar services there. Similarly, those involved see benefits in terms of building confidence, giving a sense of purpose and providing interaction. –another issue that may be worth touching on is about access to healthy food (the Glasgow community garden project as an example) – maybe something to develop with other partnerships or reserving plots to particular groups like Gateway group?

Opportunities were also identified to benefit local schools and contribute to learning and wellbeing outcomes.

- Staff at The Bothy, the Nurture Base at the Inverness Royal Academy, are keen to visit the site with pupils and get them involved in growing. Participating young people consulted were keen to get outside and grow food, and saw the project as providing a break from ‘online life’, improving community ‘togetherness’ and mental health.



- The IRA also provides a Rural Skills programme for pupils interested in a career in agriculture. It was not possible to consult staff during research as the programme was not run in 2020, but it is likely that the site would provide students with opportunities for learning.
- Schools in the area see gardening as a way to build life skills, introduce children to different and healthier foods and get them enthusiastic about eating vegetables.
- One school runs a 'Care Cupboard, and aims to top this up with fruit and vegetables grown by pupils (primarily on the school site, but with visits to Knocknagael as a part of the gardening programme).
- Another school aims to use projects at Knocknagael to build links with a 'twinned' school in Malawi. Children would compare and contrast climate, crops and growing techniques.
- For comparison, Nairn Allotments Society has built links with the local Gaelic playgroup, which looks after a raised bed and has used of shared community shed facilities for shelter and is provided with compost and plants to teach children gardening. NAS also hosts visits by Nairn Academy students who are involved in the community orchard project there. Several participating Academy students have gone on to careers in horticulture.

Site access

- The site was felt by stakeholders and potential users to be well-connected in terms of public transport and road access.
- Many survey respondents intend to travel to the site on foot (43%) or by bicycle (30%). By contrast, only 22% aim to use a car as their main means of transport to Knocknagael, though some specified that they would sometimes need to do so to transport items to an allotment. Very few respondents intended to use public transport, despite the presence of a bus route – the group may need to raise awareness of bus connections to the site. Car sharing was suggested by some respondents.

Suggestions for the site:

In general, other community growing projects advised the committee to ensure flexible design of allotments area, in which plots can be split up if there is difficulty finding enough people to commit to a larger plot.

A resident with knowledge of the site explained that the area closest to the road soil is rocky and harder – a good location for the car park. As you go up the field and the brae, the area closest to the flood channel is the most productive and best soil. The brae (inclined area) is most productive (although not cropped now), just after the flood channel.

Further suggestions received through all community consultation (not all of these may be feasible, individually or in combination):

- Board where allotment ploholders can advertise swaps and surpluses.
- Honesty cupboard for vegetables with donation box.
- Compost area for allotments.
- A **seed library**
- A **shelter** or building of some kind can make a big difference. There was support for this from schools and other organisations that would potentially use the site.



- **Wheelchair access** would be a bonus for groups working with vulnerable adults (Harrison Stevens have confirmed this should be possible using self-binding gravel surfaces).
- Ensure **good drainage for footpaths** so they can be used all year round and are accessible.
- **Composting toilets** were raised as a possibility at the community meeting, although it was pointed out that somebody would need to take responsibility for cleaning. Schools also mentioned that toilets onsite would make visiting with younger children possible, as did the Think Health Think Nature partnership. At the meeting, there was some scepticism about maintenance of shared facilities such as toilets, but other allotments societies consulted have found maintenance to be manageable even for a site that is 100% volunteer-run.
- Small museum or **heritage information** on the contribution that the Bull Stud Farm at Knocknagael made to Scottish/Highland and Island agriculture. It was pointed out that Heritage funders are increasingly keen to support projects that deliver health and wellbeing outcomes as well as getting people engaged with history. A heritage element to the project could attract this type of funding.
- **Wooden play park** for children, such as the one at [Garve](#) (pictured), suggested by one school. A survey respondent also felt that a kids' play area would encourage parents to take up plots or get involved in the community garden. A mountain bike 'pump' track was also suggested, as *"there is nothing this side of town for the kids"*.
- **Sensory garden** (could be incorporated within community garden)
- **Bug hotels, bird houses, bat boxes, protection of red squirrels**
- Some **livestock**, such as poultry or a milking cow, for education. Demonstration farm using modern techniques such as aquaponics and high-density greenhouse growing also suggested.
- **Seating** in sheltered spots – a communal fire pit area and picnic benches was also suggested. An example given from another community green space was a system of colour coded benches, allowing people to plan and pace their walks or challenge themselves to reach a particular bench.
- **Solar panels** for lighting at night. A need for lighting was emphasised, in particular, by the Think Health Think Nature Partnership – lack of lighting can be a barrier to getting outdoors in the winter months, and comparison to Scandinavia shows that it can help people stay active outdoors year-round.
- Extending **cycle path** past the field
- **Consolidate food growing areas** to minimise cost of deer fencing (e.g. electric fencing).
- If Knocknagael will lease part of the site to a tenant for an agriculture / community-supported-agriculture project, a plot size of at least 3Ha offers advantages as this the minimum claim size for funding through the [Basic Payment Scheme \(formerly EU funding, guaranteed until at least end of current parliament\)](#).
- **Blackthorn and hawthorn hedges** planted at 30cm intervals along electric fence can provide attractive feature, security and protection against pests in the longer term.
- **Polytunnels** will make a huge difference to the productivity of any growing programme, extending the season and allowing warm-weather crops to be grown in summer. If **water and power supply** to polytunnels is possible, a propagation area can be included to start seedlings off earlier. Consider prevailing wind and drainage in siting.



- **Avoid timber edges on beds** as these are a hiding place for pests.
- A green burial ground: this is unlikely to be feasible within the field identified by Knocknagael Limited for the project.

Challenges

- Perception from Council is that community growing projects tend to involve older people and it is rare to find young people involved. Spaces can go through cycles of development and disrepair due to lack of volunteer capacity.
- Perception from existing allotments projects is that Highland Council have little interest in allotments and will not provide practical or financial support (this may not apply to broader community growing project).
- Shared access leads to maintenance issues. Security cameras and a high fence around the site (and/or the allotments area) were suggested by other Inverness allotments sites. Solar lighting was another suggestion to tackle this. Getting young people engaged through school involvement in planting and growing also helps to prevent vandalism in the long term.
- Other allotments groups have experienced problems with allotments not being put to use or maintained: a minimum weekly commitment for allotment plot holders has helped to address this at another site.
- For allotments run by a voluntary committee, it can be difficult to sustain levels of volunteer engagement needed to make community projects work.
- Although the site is on bus routes, there are poor public transport links from Hilton, the more deprived part of the surrounding community. For many people in this area, the site will also be too far away to walk. In order to ensure that the project benefits the whole of the community identified in Section 2, Knocknagael will need to partner with groups working at the neighbourhood level: e.g. supporting community groups working to improve planters and gardens.
- While generally there was strong support for the project at the site, a few comments on the survey suggested that the land at Knocknagael was 'too good' for this use and should be maintained for more traditional agriculture: *"Allotments etc should be sited in challenging ground and use gardens etc which is not being used. Balloon road & other communal land or waste land..eg Longman"*.

Suggestions on site management:

- A maintenance fund should be maintained by Knocknagael Ltd to cover the relevant facilities. Keep a list of local contractors for work that cannot be carried out by volunteers.
- Funding for project staff can make a huge difference to the degree of community engagement, particularly for joint growing spaces and initiatives.
- A standard risk assessment for the site was mentioned by schools as a way to facilitate their involvement. This should cover known risks associated with groups visiting Knocknagael, and any controls put in place by Knocknagael Limited.



Suggested partnerships

The following potential partnerships have emerged during community consultation.

Theme/activity	Potential partner org.	Nature of relationship
Core tenants Wellbeing activity, employability training	Knocknagael Allotment ploholders	<p>Plotholders responsible for upkeep of individual plots.</p> <p>Plotholders will be one market segment for training</p> <p>Plotholder involvement in community initiatives such as shared garden/orchard, events or training</p>
	L'Arche (Supported housing and community-based activity for adults with learning disabilities)	<p>Interest in occasional involvement through their Workshop Service: e.g. tree planting, visiting a produce show or other event, visits to the site to simply 'potter about'. This would give a sense of involvement in the community.</p> <p>L'Arche has access to a garden with polytunnel within its own grounds and does not require a plot or designated space: preference for low commitment. However, its own grounds are not entirely accessible, so wheelchair access would enable more participants to get outdoors.</p> <p>Housing service and Independent Living residents may be interested in small plots: 'a wee bit of land to look after'. Some houses nearby, not all have gardens.</p>
	Gateway (Supported housing and community-based activity for vulnerable adults – particularly people who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness)	<p>Would be interested in renting an allotment for use by service users. Need to gauge demand among service users, but anticipate weekly visits, so this would likely be a smaller or shared plot (possibly through existing network of organisations addressing homelessness).</p> <p>Would also be interested in training and in being involved in market gardening.</p> <p>Gateway have minibus transport and a support worker could accompany service users to the site.</p> <p>Run an existing programme of physical and outdoor activity for their service users. Find this positive in terms of getting people out of patterns of substance use, providing social interaction and peer support and giving people a sense of purpose.</p>
	Day One Mentoring	Works with school pupils in S4 who are need of mentoring support and guidance and links them to training opportunities. Have identified possibility for participants to take part in training at site.
	Inverness Recovery College / Centre for Well Ness	Initiative set up by service users involved in previous efforts to establish a Recovery College in Inverness.



		Potential use of the site as a base (if a suitable building is available) and delivery of therapeutic gardening and other activity, such as mentoring and peer groups, for people in recovery.
	Local GPs and NHS	One local GP has offered to signpost patients living locally to groups and opportunities at Knocknagael Signposting also available through Think Health, Think Nature, a collaboration between NHS and other groups.
Work with schools and young people	Inverness Royal Academy: 'The Bothy', programme for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the 'Core', for those with Additional Support Needs and autism	Interest in visiting the site for learning activities, possibly as part of John Muir Award at Explorer level. Most work is done outdoors (especially at Culduthel Woods) and they are already undertaking the John Muir Award at the Discovery level. Even though the school has a polytunnel and raised beds onsite, getting outside the school environment has value, providing interaction with outside staff and volunteers. Many pupils live in flats without access to a garden – appreciate getting outdoors. School has transport to site including bikes and minibus. Would require a risk assessment from Knocknagael showing they have planned for groups attending.
	Inverness Royal Academy: Rural Skills programme	Vocational Skills for Work course at S3/4. Work takes place at Aigas Field Centre and there is an employer partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage. Potential for students to be involved in developing or maintaining site. Currently paused due to Covid, so will require further investigation.
	Lochardil Primary	School has own growing space but still interested in visiting for outdoor learning. Would be interested in John Muir Award; project at Knocknagael as part of new link with school in Malawi: comparing planting, climate, etc. Most pupils do have access to gardens at home. Logistics can be difficult: may need parent helpers.
	Holm Primary	Would be interested in a substantial project that could be assigned to one of the older classes: 'adopting' a plot, helping to build something. Children could support older people who have allotments as an intergenerational project. Also interested in use of site by nursery for outdoor learning. School has little access to quality outdoor space and many parents say they want better areas for children to play outdoors. Would need to assess whether site is walkable – parent transport is an alternative if not.
	Cauldeen Primary	Developing their own allotment and have chickens and beekeeping at the school. Would be interested in learning visits –



		<p>'tapping into expertise' at Knocknagael. Also interested in intergenerational work at the site.</p> <p>Many children within catchment live in flats or houses without much garden space. Not a lot of quality green space. The school has a care cupboard (similar to food bank) for families and want to grow produce for that. Growing gets kids enthusiastic about eating vegetables.</p> <p>School has no minibus for transport but can arrange transport, e.g. use of IRA minibus.</p>
Building capacity for growing	Inverness-shire Beekeeping Association	Opportunity for some of the association's beehives to be introduced in the area for pollination and blossom honey, and for educational purposes.
	The Natural Vegetable Company	Potential provider of training. Have previously delivered tutoring on apprenticeship courses through the Highlands and Islands and advice for Scottish Crofting Federation day courses. Local Food Network, along with private 8-week courses.
	Culduthel Community Woodland	Several members answered survey with ideas on joint working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joint training courses • tree nursery at Knocknagael site for native species • tool hire and storage • joint volunteer development
	Incredible Edible Inverness	Groups installing small planters and beds in built-up areas of Inverness. Interest in polytunnel space to raise seedlings to plant around town as well as running workshops from the site. Contributing to the tool library and using it.
	Holm Community Council	Working on potential community orchard near Tesco on Dores Rd. – small but highly visible site. See this site as a way to get people interested in growing, with Knocknagael providing training and space for people who want to learn more.
Social enterprise activity	Flower-growing enterprise	Potential tenant has expressed interest, would require around 12x20 sq m; outwith area designated for allotments.
	The Natural Vegetable Company	Potential to stock limited selection of produce from Knocknagael, although most produce in their vegetable boxes is grown at their own site. Interested in running a stall at a market or café at Knocknagael.

Several other organisations, including MOO Food, a community growing hub in Inverness, and Nairn Allotments Society and Transition Black Isle, who run allotments in the wider area, have offered to share knowledge as the project progresses. Further general suggestions on organisations providing support and guidance to community growing projects can be found in the [Highland Council Draft Food Growing Strategy](#).



4. Market Research

This section explores the key services proposed by Knocknagael:

- Rental of allotments and associated growing space (including individual or shared workshop or shed space, polytunnels, etc.) – see section 4.1
- Horticultural training – see section 4.2
- Market gardening and sale of fresh produce – see section 4.3
- Community gardening volunteer activity – see section 4.4
- Tool library and repair activity – see section 4.5

It explores demand in general terms and assesses the level of competition and income generation potential (although not all services are income-generating), along with the potential to generate community benefit.

4.1 Allotments and associated facilities

General demand

Inverness has few allotment plots available and demand is high at existing sites (see below). Many areas of the country have reported increased demand for plots since the initial lockdown in response to Covid-19⁷, which increased concern about disruption to food supply chains and caused more people to seek ways to be active and social outdoors. Sites in Inverness and Nairn say that report that demand has ‘gone crazy’ and waiting lists have increased by up to 100%. New housebuilding around Knocknagael is another factor that could drive growing demand for allotments.

165 people so far have expressed an interest in renting an allotment at Knocknagael via the survey. 89% of those interested in an allotment would pay for this service, while 10% would make a small donation. Many potential plotheolders would also be willing to pay for other infrastructure:

- Use of part of a communal polytunnel (63% would pay – 86 people)
- Rent of an individual shed (64% would pay – 81 people)
- Access to a communal workshop or shed (45% would pay – at 39%, the proportion who would rather make a small donation is higher for this kind of shared workshop/shed space)

There is also demand from schools and organisations: at this stage, one primary school has expressed an interest in having a dedicated plot, along with an organisation working with adults with support needs (see section 3 for potential partnerships).

In line with the idea of Knocknagael as a ‘hub’ in a city with several existing community growing initiatives, there were also proposals by community groups to set aside nursery space for seedlings to be planted out elsewhere: this could include both polytunnel space for vegetable and herb

⁷ [Sunday Post: 'Demand Shoots Up for Allotments'](#)



seedlings (for planting by groups such as Incredible Edible and schools) and an outdoor tree nursery (for community woodland projects such as the Culduthel Woods Group).

Competition

Within Inverness, there are 3 allotment sites, 2 of which are actively managed by community groups and are oversubscribed.

- Hawthorn Allotments have 60 plots, a waiting list of 94 and an average of only two or three plots becoming available each year.
- Blackthorn Allotments, in Culduthel, have 34 plots for lease as well as community plots for local groups and charities. Plans for the site also include community advice events and seasonal produce events.
- Highland Council directly manages one site with 20 plots. Council officers consulted reported that this site was in disrepair, with no waiting list.

Representatives of both Inverness community allotments sites were involved in the community consultation and have expressed support for more allotment provision at Knocknagael. In the wider area, expressions of support have also come from Nairn Allotments and Transition Black Isle, who are involved in allotments in Rosemarkie and Cromarty.

Income generation potential

Allotments generate income through plot rentals, administration charges and fundraising for specific purposes. For comparison within the wider Highland area, at Rosemarkie Allotments on the Black Isle, plots are rented at £50 per year for a full plot and £25 for a half. Each plot comes with its own tool shed, and there is also a communal shed with shared tools. At Nairn Allotments, the yearly fee is £38 for a full plot; this includes both a standard membership and maintenance fee and a plot rental fee which is scaled by plot size.

Allotment fees would be paid to Knocknagael Ltd depending on the number of allotments available to rent. The following is an estimate of likely income from the allotments based on draft site designs and rental rates at comparable sites:

Income from allotments	Number	Price per year	Total
Full plots	40	£50.00	£2,000.00
Half plots	60	£25.00	£1,500.00
Quarter plots	80	£12.50	£1000.00
Total	180		£4,500.00
Allotment total estimated income (excluding fundraising):			£4,500.00



Community benefit

Around 180 households would gain access to outdoor growing space.

People who hold an allotment are likely to visit the site frequently, based on the survey: almost 80% of prospective allotment holders intended to visit the site at least a few times a week, benefiting from regular physical exercise and time spent outdoors. Allotment Gardeners report mental health benefits including feeling calmer and more hopeful. Plotholders also become part of a community of like-minded people through the allotment communal activities. Members share knowledge, tools and spare produce and are likely to volunteer and take part in social activities at the site, gaining a way to contribute to their community, particularly beyond retirement.

By growing their own fruit and vegetables, many plotholders will be able to supplement their household's weekly shop, saving money. Allotment growing raises awareness of seasonal eating, which can help to cut household carbon footprints by reducing 'food miles'.

4.2 Horticultural Training

General demand

Via the community survey, 66% of respondents (200 people) said that they would make use of some form of training at Knocknagael (a further 27% were supportive but would not take part). Among all survey respondents, 71% felt willing to pay for workshops and training, and a further 21% would be happy to make a small donation.

The strongest support was for organic gardening and growing techniques (86% of respondents said that this should be offered at Knocknagael). Several further suggestions were received in relation to environmentally friendly techniques: gardening for wildlife, composting, permaculture, rewilding. This was followed by programmes for children (82%), health and wellbeing programmes (67%), repair skills (64%). The audience for crofting techniques appears to be smaller (43%).

Other suggestions on training were:

- Training and general involvement of people with learning disabilities, and children with additional needs.
- Outdoor exercise classes
- Crafting – basket weaving, wool dyeing etc.
- Cookery – 'from plot to pot'
- Training for trainers, e.g. therapeutic gardening

In terms of customer base, training could be provided to:

- People looking to increase their knowledge of the environment and horticulture potentially as a career choice where there is a skills gap (In 2014, the Royal Horticultural Society found that 72% of 200 UK horticultural businesses surveyed were unable to fill skilled vacancies⁸).
- Keen amateur gardeners who wish to improve their skills for their own benefit. This would include Allotment Society members as well as others in the community (70% of those

⁸ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/Education-Learning/PDF/Training/1016-RHS-Hort-Careers-Brochure-V8.pdf>



interested in allotments would pay for training). Activities could focus particularly on environmentally friendly techniques.

- Local groups with an interest in the environment and horticulture (e.g. environmental groups such as the Transition network)
- Schools wishing to include gardening as part of the Curriculum for Excellence's Health and Wellbeing strand or extracurricular activities such as a John Muir Award.
- Organisations wishing deliver gardening or outdoor activity for benefits in terms of wellbeing and employability. Two groups providing services for vulnerable adults have already indicated an interest. There is potential also for a 'train the trainer' model.

Competition

RHS Accredited training

There are only 3 centres in Scotland that offer RHS Accredited training, the nearest being the Macrobert Trust in Aberdeenshire, which takes 6 trainees a year, followed by the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. It is worth noting that there are fees involved with becoming an accredited centre (£350 valid for 3 years) and certain standards of practice to be adhered to including the provision of suitable wet weather learning space and adequate growing space. There are 2 levels of courses, Level 1 runs for 6 months and level 2, 9 months. Fees are c. £400 for Level 1 and £600-800 for Level 2.

There is a proliferation of online, self-paced courses in a variety of topics e.g. a certificated Garden Design and Landscaping (£49 for 30 hours) or a SAC Diploma Garden Landscape course (£330 for 120 hours). These offer variety and value for money but lack the hands-on and peer learning opportunities offered by onsite programmes.

The Inverness Horticultural Society has previously provided horticulture training, but has closed, leaving a gap in the area.

Supported volunteering and employability training

Gardening and horticulture training could focus on building transferrable and vocational skills in people who face barriers to employment. Employability training is typically delivered within the Strategic Skills Pipeline framework, from Stage 1, (working with participants who face significant barriers to employment) to Stage 5 (supporting participants within the workplace).

The community growing project at Knocknagael could deliver (or host other organisations, such as the Centre for Well Ness to deliver) employability activity at Stages 2 (confidence-building, vocational rehabilitation, improving health and wellbeing) and 3 (accredited vocational training, work experience, volunteering). Stakeholder consultation suggests that there is interest from existing organisations. The Think Health Think Nature partnership is also working to facilitate referral pathways by which GPs in the area will be able to refer people to wellbeing-focused activity at sites such as Knocknagael. Several Inverness GPs already have Link Workers in place to do this, and interest is growing.

Within Inverness, structured volunteering and employability activity in gardening/growing is available through:



- Libertie Project, which received Climate Challenge funding in 2020 to deliver ‘Freedom Veg’, an urban edible garden in the Crown area of Inverness, with a community fridge and larder to help share surplus food that would otherwise go to waste and a range of activities and workshops. Gardening will form part of the organisation’s supported volunteering project, which works with 15 people with additional support needs each year.
- Highlife Highland G.R.O.W Project at Inverness Botanic Gardens provides an opportunity for practical horticulture in a workplace-like environment (stage 1-2 in the Employability Pipeline) for adults with a learning disability, upon referral by the individual’s Social Worker. The project works with around 20 adults, and has previously received long-term NHS funding. This was cut in 2019, and the project is now supported by a private donor and seeking grant support.
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), which offer structured learning programmes for young people in the Inverness area (subject to funding). These typically last for 6 months and include training such as Chainsaw, Brushcutters and the SQCF Level 4 Employability in the Outdoors Award (stage 3 in the Employability Pipeline).

Income generation potential

The table below shows a simple model for generating income from training. This combines some volunteer-led short workshops, which could be offered on a tiered or pay-what-you-can basis, with some more structured training courses. Employability-focused projects and those working with vulnerable groups would require grant funding – some possibilities are listed in this report. These have been excluded from the projection below.

TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS					
Income	Number per year	Avg price per head	Avg no. participants	Total	Notes and assumptions
Donation/PWYC workshops	12	£6	15	£1,080	1
Training courses	6	£120	8	£5,760	2
Training expenditure (core costs excluded)					
Trainer fees				£2,880	3
Surplus/deficit				£3,960	
Notes and assumptions:					
1. Volunteer-led, a few hours long					
2. More structured, 1 day to several days, led by professional trainer					
3. Assume 50% cost of training course					

Community benefit

People in the community would benefit through developing new skills. Based on community demand, a general training could focus on environmentally friendly growing techniques, which will in turn enhance the environmental benefits associated with the allotments and other growing spaces.

Depending on the focus, vulnerable groups and people facing barriers to employment would gain experience of gardening and growing in a supportive environment, building confidence and sense of



purpose, promoting healthy living and keeping fit, reducing loneliness and isolation and working as part of a team.

4.4 Sale of Fresh Produce

General Demand

Via the survey, 79% of respondents would be interested in a weekly market at Knocknagael, 72% would visit a farm-to-fork café, and 66% would make use of a vegetable box scheme. There were also various suggestions based around the idea of an honesty box/fridge/shed where customers can choose produce on their own time and leave a donation, and allotment holders can swap produce. This could be a first step or complement to an income-generating Community Supported Agriculture programme.

Other suggestions of a commercial nature were for the organisation to take up a stall at Inverness Farmers Market, or supply fruit and vegetables to local schools (who would also visit the site and have access to plots).

Competition

The main fresh produce market in Inverness is the Inverness Farmers Market, held centrally once a month. Based on stakeholder feedback, stalls are limited and there is little scope for new organic growers to take part. A smaller market in Dores is no longer running.

Vegetable boxes are available from:

- Macleod Organics (standard Family Box with 8-12 items £21.00; free delivery for regular orders or those over £25). Currently not taking new customers.
- The Natural Vegetable Company (Large Box with 10 items £15.50; delivery £1). Currently at capacity.
- Knockfarrel – does not deliver within Inverness but covers surrounding area such as Muir of Ord (Large Box with 12 items £22)

These have seen increased demand in the wake of Covid – The Natural Vegetable Company, which is located close to Knocknagael, have confirmed that they are running at full capacity, and would not see the Knocknagael project as having any negative impact on their business; instead, there is potential to work together, as outlined in the previous section. Similarly, Macleod Organics is not accepting new customers and Knockfarrel has very limited slots available.

Income generating potential

Consultation with other small growers in the area shows that successful growing schemes can run on relatively small sites – e.g. the Natural Vegetable Company uses only around $\frac{3}{4}$ acre to supply 70 vegetable boxes a week plus wholesale customers over the summer, with intensive planting on beds and in polytunnels. Similarly, Knockfarrel Produce supply vegetable boxes from one polytunnel and five beds. However,

Other community-supported agriculture programmes generate income through:

- Sales at external stalls or markets or a stall onsite e.g. Dunkeld Field generated £3,654 from an ‘honesty box’ stall at their own site in 2018, which is restocked twice a week. This covers around half total running costs, supplemented through membership sales (below), donations, fundraising and grants. With a larger population in the area, a stall at Knocknagael could generate more income, but an ‘honesty box’ model would be higher risk.



- Pop-up events, e.g. plant sales
- ‘Subscription’ models such as vegetable boxes/ bags for pickup or delivery. As shown below, a site on the edge of an urban area can generate £20,000+ in income and has the advantage of offering stability, but this requires capacity to deliver. Other growers felt that a Community Supported Agriculture programme at Knocknagael would take time to build and train a group of growers able to supply the full variety of produce needed for a box/bag scheme. Some others begin by buying in produce from others, then gradually replace items.
- Wholesale to other vegetable box schemes: while both Knockfarrel Produce and the Natural Vegetable Company aim to grow the majority of the produce they supply, both would in principle be open to distributing produce from Knocknagael.
- Wholesale sales to restaurant trade. An advantage is that demand from restaurants is higher in the summer when growing is more productive. Other growers in the area say that the main wholesalers are not currently receptive to purchasing from small local growers, however. Reaching wholesale customers requires work to build direct relationships with clients.
- Membership sales – e.g. Dunkeld Field offers annual membership in exchange for 20% discount on purchases. Individuals pay £12.50, households £25, concessions £5. As a charity, membership donations are eligible for Gift Aid generating an additional 25%.
- There has been some interest from other growers in running a stall at a market at Knocknagael, so a stall fee could be explored.

Below is an estimate of potential annual income in the initial years of the project:

Income	No. per year	Avg unit price	Avg no. participants	Total	Notes and assumptions
Membership		10	150	£1,500.00	
Gift-aid				£213.75	Membership donations from UK taxpayers eligible. Would need to be Charity. Assume 75% are eligible.
Income from stall	50	5	20	£5,000.00	Simplified estimate - based on stall refilled weekly, average customer spend and numbers. Members may get discount - included in avg. customer spend
Wholesale income	2	400		£800.00	Assuming a few small contracts to supply e.g. veg box schemes
Pop-up events sales	4	7	75	£2,100.00	Simplified estimate - e.g. seasonal markets, plant sales. In line with sales at similar events elsewhere.



Pop-up events table/st all hire	4	10	4	£160.00	A few outside sellers at each event
Total				£9,773.75	

Community benefit

Members of the community switching to local, seasonal produce will cut carbon footprint associated with food miles. There is also a potential benefit in terms of community wealth building: research by the New Economics Foundation suggests that money spent with local food producers is more likely to recirculate in the local economy, meaning that spending £10 in a local food outlet can be worth £25 to the local economy, almost ten times as much as an equivalent supermarket spend⁹.

Case study

Cyrenians Farm is a community organic farm just outside Edinburgh which is run as a residential farm for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The farm site is 8 acres and includes an orchard with 250 fruit trees, 8 indoor growing houses, outdoor growing spaces and 110 free-range laying hens.

The farm supplies Veg Bags to the public (Large Bag with 10 items £15) as well as wholesale orders. 1,944 veg bags were sold in 2019-20, generating around £23,000 Some produce for Veg Bags is sourced from other growers. Cyrenians partners with a home delivery 'milk run' business for deliveries and also offers pickup from a partner shop, avoiding direct involvement in distribution.

Note that this requires significant capacity to deliver. A dedicated Farm Enterprise Manager oversees the scheme and Veg Bags are marketed online and directly to companies via workplace pop-ups. A market gardening social enterprise at Inverness High School closed due to lack of funding for staff resources.

Further information available at: cyrenians.scot/social-enterprise/cyrenians-farm

⁹ Summarised in Nourish Scotland: Growing the Local Food Economy in Scotland



4.5 Tool Library and associated reuse and repair activity

General demand

58% of survey respondents indicated that they would use a tool library or other tool sharing project at Knocknagael. This rises to 75% among people interested in having an allotment at the site, suggesting that ploholders will be a key market (so a focus on garden tools would be a benefit). Among all survey respondents, 53% felt willing to pay for access to a tool library, while 28% would make a small donation; this was similar among prospective ploholders.

There may also be demand from other community groups and organisations needing access to tools for outdoor maintenance (such as the Culduthel Woods group).

Comparable projects have grown membership rapidly: Glasgow Southside Tool library has 300 members after two years of operation and Edinburgh Tool Library reported over 600 members joining in 2018-19.

Competition

There is no other tool library in Inverness. Commercial tool hire is available from several national chains, but existing tool libraries have found that there is little overlap, since the tools provided tend to be smaller and less specialised.

Income generation potential

Tool libraries in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling charge a membership fee of £20-30, scaled by ability to pay:

- Glasgow Tool Library: £20 p/y suggested donation. Prospective members are invited to donate more than £20 to support the library if they can, or to 'pay-what-you-can'. GTL states that nobody will be turned away due to lack of funds.
- Glasgow Southside Tool Library: £20 p/y suggested donation.
- Edinburgh Tool Library: £30 p/y standard membership; £10 p/y concession price for students, benefit recipients, unemployed, over 60s. £40 'pay-it-forward' membership includes 'a little extra to cover someone else's membership'. ETL also offers organisational membership for £50, if a charity or community group needs to borrow a large number of tools for a short period (e.g. refurbishment or work weekend).
 - Review of finances from 2018-19 shows the average paid per member was £25.01 due to 25% takes up rate of subsidised membership and pay it forward membership near 35%
- Transition Stirling Tool Library: suggested membership fee £30; pay-what-you-can

While most focus purely on tool hire, ETL also provides other income-generating services:

- Tool delivery by cycle courier £3.50 per delivery.
- Sharpening and renovation service during regular tool library opening hours, £3.50 per tool (chisels, planes, scissors/knives, garden tools such as shears and secateurs)



- Taught workshops: introduction to techniques such as wood turning; making items such as a dog bed, plant stand, chopping board. Priced at £30-50 per person including all materials; 10% discount for tool library members. Requires access to large enough workshop space and sufficient equipment for groups. These generated around £3000 in the last financial year.
- Fitting work (generated almost £12,000 in the last financial year)

All four of the above use software from [Myturn](#) to manage membership, inventory, tool bookings, return dates and membership renewals. Pricing for this software is on a sliding scale: USD \$250 per year up to 200 users/500 inventory items; USD \$500 per year up to 500 users/1500 inventory items¹⁰.

Tools can be reserved online throughout the week and picked up within a time slot: GTL, the Southside Tool Library and Transition Stirling all offer only one half-day slot, minimising staff time needed, while ETL offers two half-day slots at each of its two locations. Slots for pickup and return are timed around weekends to cater to the casual DIY market.

It should be noted that most other tool libraries are partially grant funded. The Glasgow Southside Tool Library is currently funded by the National Lottery Communities Fund and received startup funding through the Climate Challenge Fund, Transition Stirling has also received Climate Challenge funding and Edinburgh Tool Library has grant funding from the Tudor Trust towards staff salaries, plus other funds for specific project work.

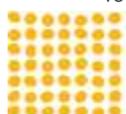
A tool library could generate income as follows:

TOOL LIBRARY				
Income	No.	Avg fee per year	Total	Notes and assumptions
Membership fees (Tool Library)	300	£25	£7,500	1
Tool library expenditure (core costs excluded)				
Maintenance, repair and replacement			£1,000	
Staffing			£5,928	2
Myturn software			£380	3
Surplus/deficit			£192	

Notes and assumptions:

1. Number of members based on comparable projects, by Y2 of Tool Library operation
2. Based on 8 hours/week tool pickup/return slots, 4 hours/week maintenance/member engagement etc., at living wage. Likely some grant funding or other income generation needed to support post.

¹⁰ Pricing available [here](#). Myturn were consulted about pricing by email and said: ‘We can be very flexible with small nonprofits/charities (long term trials while getting started, etc) and just ask that you get our fees, or a portion of them, into your budget when you can. You're welcome to set up a trial site and we can mark it not to expire until you're ready to actually open or at least sell memberships. If you have any questions on pricing or anything else, please let me know—I've also co-founded a Tool Library” (contact: gene@myturn.com).



Community benefit

- Carbon savings as members are able to repair or reuse an item by having access to a suitable tool, and due to members borrowing a tool rather than buying a new one. Saving tools and 'waste' material from landfill, particularly if donated tools requiring small repairs can be refurbished by volunteers. Glasgow Southside Tool Library reported half a tonne of carbon savings in its first 6 months of operation.
- Cash savings to members, which can be estimated based on price to buy the tools that members borrow. For comparison, Edinburgh Tool Library calculated that members saved £240,850 in the last financial year, based on 4817 individual loans (average £50 per tool)¹¹. With a smaller membership as shown in the projection above, a tool library at Knocknagael could still save members a total of £45,000 per year (if 300 members borrow 3 tools per year).
- Building confidence for DIY/making/gardening among groups excluded by traditional hire setup: other tool libraries estimate 70% of loans are to women¹².

¹¹ See ETL Accounts 2018-19

¹² [Case study: Glasgow Southside Tool Library](#)



5. Viability

5.1 Financial Modelling

The financial sustainability of this project is fundamental to success in the long term. Each potential service has already been explored in section 4 under 'income generating potential' for each potential service and it is advised Knocknagael considers a range of income streams. Funding will be needed to cover early operating costs including salaries. Funding may also be secured for specific project costs as the project progresses (for example work with schools or older people).

Financial projections will be provided in the Business Plan to show funding required and projected income streams from the various services.

Income Generation

At this stage, the research has identified opportunities to generate income in the following areas:

- Rental of allotment site to allotment plotters and rental of other growing space/infrastructure
- Horticultural training
- Community-supported agriculture and produce sales, which will take time to develop but could become a key source of income in the long term.
- Tool library (although associated operating costs mean that the tool library is unlikely to be a net income generator for Knocknagael).

Assumptions for income will be based on research findings of what average people would be prepared to spend as indicated in the surveys, as well as looking at competitors, industry average figures and case studies.

See extract from early-stage income and expenditure projection below (separate Excel spreadsheet). This is based around what will be achievable in early years of the project, and includes an element of revenue funding. The Business Plan will include a five-year cash flow projection.



	Annual
Income	
Rental income	£2,850
Tool library membership fees	£7,500
Training and workshop income	£6,840
Community supported agriculture income	£9,773.75
Donations & fundraising	£1,000
Total	£27,964
Expenditure	
Core costs	£29,790
Tool library costs	£7,308
Training and workshop costs	£2,880
Total	£39,978
Surplus/deficit (before grant funding)	-£12,014



5.2 Fundability

Funding will be needed to purchase and develop the site, and to cover operating costs initially. Funding will be shown in the projected cashflows within the Business Plan.

Community fundraising and crowdfunding

The potential for most fundraising events will be limited in near future. However, a modest local crowdfunding appeal could help provide flexible funding and create a sense of buy-in. Many local people's finances are likely to be under pressure and a large number of charitable organisations are currently running fundraising appeals. However, there is a high awareness of importance of local greenspace at present, both nationally and in the local community. This could encourage those who are able to contribute.

Crowdfunding has been used successfully by other community outdoor space projects, usually for a specific goal rather than general running costs. For example, Cambusbarron Community Development Trust raised £4,025 from 89 supporters to buy a woodland, and Findhorn Hinterland Trust raised £2,000 from 58 supporters to create an outdoor classroom¹³.

Consider whether rewards could be sourced for larger donations e.g. prints by a local artist or photographer or vouchers for a business. Depending on immediate priorities, donations could also be tailored to specific goals: e.g. sponsor a picnic table' or 'plant and care for a native seedling'. The possibility to 'sponsor an allotment' and subsidise access for a school or community group/charity was raised during consultation. Rewards are not always necessary: some appeals succeed without the use of rewards. Most donations will likely be at the lower end of the scale so rewards or suggested donation levels, if used, should include suitable options at say £20, as well as higher tiers.

Grant funding

As a charity, the group will be eligible to apply to a wide variety of grant funders. Some funders –such as the National Lottery Community Fund through Awards for All –are prioritising applications directly related to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. However, the project has potential to deliver both health and wellbeing and environmental outcomes that are likely to be attractive to funders in the longer term, for both capital and revenue costs.

The table below sets out suggested sources of funding for the site development and project delivery phases. Funds that are closed have been included if these are likely to reopen within the project timescale.

Funder	Criteria/Conditions	Amount available (up to)
Site development: capital funding		
SSE Sustainable Development Fund Contact: Marianne Townsley, marianne.townsley@sse.com (also potential revenue funder)	Supports strategic projects in the regions where SSE is operating. Must fit at least one of the following (all are possibilities depending on exact nature of funding requested) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities – increase opportunities for education and employment • Empowering communities – build resilience and protect vulnerable 	£10,000 up to £1,000,000 in exceptional cases, more likely to be up to £100,000

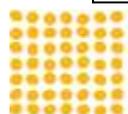
¹³ www.crowdfunder.co.uk/buying-gillies-hill; www.crowdfunder.co.uk/edible-woodland-garden-outdoor-classroom



	<p>residents with long-term environmental/social benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building sustainable places – stimulate meaningful community regeneration to improve landscape & biodiversity <p>Additional focus on value for money, community involvement and long-term sustainability Note: although this fund is open to whole of Highland area, SSE has a substation at Knocknagael so there may be an additional case for investment in the area. Currently closed – to reopen 2021</p>	
Postcode Local Trust	<p>Good fit with priorities: improving biodiversity and green spaces, increasing community access to outdoor space, and combatting climate change and promoting sustainability. Will not cover general running costs – projects only.</p>	Up to £20,000
Scottish Landfill Communities Fund , through various trusts	<p>Potentially a large fund but requires match funding and will cover only capital and contractor fees (no project management or salary costs).</p>	Up to £50,000 11.5% match required.
Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation	<p>Support for community projects working in areas including conservation and environment.</p> <p>Project funding – if substantial match funding required, wait to secure this before applying.</p> <p>Online pre-application form – projects also encouraged to call 01343 822599 to discuss eligibility and timelines.</p>	£100 to £25,000
The Mushroom Trust	<p>Funder specialising in green space projects. Interest in creating more managed green spaces through horticulture, including therapeutic green space. Main focus is Lothians but will support projects elsewhere. Applications assessed annually in summer.</p>	Up to £5,000
Finnis Scott Foundation	<p>Funder with interest in gardens/horticultural training. Capital and revenue projects – will not support salaries.</p>	Up to £10,000
Foundation Scotland Baillie Gifford	<p>Formerly Express Grants. Broad charitable grants programme.</p> <p>Max. total project cost £8000 – would work for small project within overall construction e.g. signage, composting toilet, shelter etc.</p>	£2000
Tesco Bags of Help	<p>Will support development of outdoor spaces, outdoor activity, purchase of equipment etc.</p> <p>Currently closed due to Covid but may reopen within project timescale</p>	Up to £2000 (based on customer 'vote', second/third place is £1000/ £500)
Site development: volunteer involvement		



Paths for All – Community Path grants	Projects which provide opportunities for people to be more physically active outdoors and in contact with nature – can be used to create, promote or maintain paths. E.g. tools, materials, contractor hire, signage, promotional material, planting. Will not cover staff time. Particular focus on projects engaging with people with poor mental/physical health, experiencing exclusion. Two-stage application process – EOI followed by full online application	Maximum £1,500 – must be matched with volunteer 'in-kind' contribution from at least 8 volunteers.
Action Earth Volunteering Matters Grants	Available to groups of volunteers carrying out environmental activities: e.g. habitat creation, planting, conservation work. Prioritise applications from groups who work in areas of social or economic deprivation, those involving disabled people, vulnerable people or young people.	£50-250 for general environmental volunteering; up to £500 if health impact can be shown
Tree Council Branching Out Fund	For tree/orchard planting projects involving young people (under 21). Yearly in time with National Tree Week (November/December)	£300 to £1500
Site development: donations in kind		
B&Q Community Re-use	Donate unsaleable products and waste materials for re-use by recognised community groups: e.g. paint, timber offcuts. Contact local store .	N/A
The Woodland Trust – Tree Packs	Various packs of tree seedlings available for planting by community groups. Must be in publicly accessible area	N/A
TCV I Dig Trees	Free tree packs for community groups.	N/A
Site development: Fundraising		
	Crowdfunding, fundraising, sponsorship etc. – see above	Up to £25,000
Revenue funding: contribution to staff and core costs in initial years		
Climate Challenge Fund Development Grants	For development of new activities: could be used for further consultation with parents/schools or to run trial activities. Currently closed	£500
Climate Challenge Fund Main Grants	Funding for projects including community growing, tool libraries Currently closed for 2020-22	Up to £200,000 over two years
Robertson Trust Small Grants (or Wee Grants, depending on income at time of application)	To equip people for the future through learning and skills – training programme is potentially a fit if working with people experiencing poverty or trauma.	Between £2,000 and £15,000 for up to five years Wee grants up to £2,000 one year only



National Lottery Awards for All	Broad funding programme	£10,000
Alice McCosh Trust	Education/research projects linked to the environment. E.g. cost of producing learning materials for school visits. Closed for 2020	Around £1000

6. Findings

This section highlights the key local research and consultation findings on the local demand, sustainability potential and fundability of the project.

- The surrounding area of Inverness South has gone through extensive housing development which residents feel has not been matched in development of communal spaces and green spaces.
- There is strong support for community ownership of the field at Knocknagael, and for the proposed activities.
- The project has potential to benefit the community through partnerships with local schools, several of which have already expressed interest and outlined potential projects.
- Organisations working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within the community, such as adults with learning disabilities and people in recovery from mental health and addiction issues, have also shown interest in partnership working and are enthusiastic about the benefits of outdoor activity and therapeutic gardening for their users.
- Demand for allotments is likely to outstrip site capacity. Careful management of the 'waiting list' (or at this stage, the list of people interested in joining a waiting list) will be needed.
- Fundability of capital work will depend on the cost of developing the site. There is potential for phased development to adapt to any delay in securing funding.
- Given the variety of activities proposed, the challenges of maintaining a site such as this purely through volunteer-led initiatives and the potential to create positive change for the surrounding community, it would be advisable for Knocknagael to seek revenue funding for a development officer or similar in initial years, to develop partnerships and help establish services.
- A phased approach could be used, i.e. focusing first on the development of the allotment site (which could be run on a volunteer basis) and allow capacity to grow other activities subsequently.
- In general, the site will require further surveys and permissions. Knocknagael Ltd should make use of the Highland Council's Pre-Application Advice, which allows plans to be circulated to relevant council departments (e.g. traffic) prior to formal planning application.

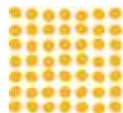


7. Next Steps

The table below shows the actions still to be undertaken in terms of site surveys, permissions and applications. This has been compiled with Harrison Stevens.

Knocknagael Action Table

Project planning		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	5-year business plan	December 2020		
2	Updated and costed Masterplan	December 2020		
Technical Surveys		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	Ecology Survey			
	Phase 1 Habitat Survey	late March - mid October		
	Preliminary Roost Assessment (bats)	any time		
	Bat Activity Survey	May - September		
	Hibernation Roosts (bats)	December - March		
	Breeding Bird Survey	March - June		
	Otter Survey	any time		
	Badger Survey	any time		
2	Topographical Survey	any time		
3	SEPA Flood Risk Management on-site meeting	any time		
Applications		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	Outline Planning Permission or/and discussion with planners		Highland Council	A community member working in planning has offered informal support. As a not-for-profit community group and soon-to-be charity, Knocknagael would have the fee for Planning Advice waived.
2	Water supply/connection application		Scottish Water	
Acquisition & funding		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	Site valuation	Earliest February 2021 – should be no longer than 6 months old at time of SLF stage 2 application		
2	Enter Asset Transfer application		Scottish Government	
3	Join Scottish Allotment Gardens Society and/or FCFCG and take out their insurance			
4	Apply for medium grants			
5	Apply for Scottish Land Fund - Stage 2	When new version of fund launches - likely Summer 2021	Scottish Land Fund	
Members and stakeholders		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	Regular updates on developments in an email or mailed newsletter			List of contacts from survey to be provided by Community Enterprise.
2	Update to Knocknagael Ltd constitution	Spring 2021? AGM required at least 14 days' notice to members	Knocknagael Ltd members must approve by 75% majority of those present at AGM	As mentioned in last page of SLF S1 offer letter. SLF officer should be able to provide guidance, but criteria are usually: geographically defined community, open membership
3	Campaign to expand membership in Knocknagael Ltd			At least 20 members required in most cases for Community Asset Transfer. Broad membership will also help case for SLF. List of contacts interested in being members to be provided by Community Enterprise. Consider online membership
4	Contact potential plot holders			
Site Constraints		When?	Whom?	Notes
1	Right of access		Scottish Government, Highland Council	
2	Waste management		Highland Council	
3	Power, sewage, drainage services		Scottish Power, Scottish Water	
4	Existing substation		Scottish Power	
5	Height restrictions (building / structures)		Highland Council	



Appendix 1: Further details on community engagement

DISSEMINATION/PROMOTION OF SURVEY IN THE COMMUNITY – POSTERS AND LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

POSTERS	KEY LOCATIONS
BANNER	On site - Field gate
A3	Lochardil Pharmacy LDCC Noticeboard
A3	Stratherrick Road
A4	Green Drive Hall
A4	Oil & Vinegar
A4	Scotmid Green Drive
A4	Drummond Stores (Spar)
A4	Velocity café
A4	
A5 LEAFLET	DISTRIBUTION - LIST OF STREETS COVERED (about 900 leaflets)
	Essich Road
	Essich Gardens
	Torbreck area
	cottages at Knocknagael
	houses along Essich road
	Holm Dell Park
	Holm Dell Place
	Holm Dell Gardens
	Holm Dell Court
	Holm Dell Avenue
	Holm Dell Road
	Culduthel Mains Court
	Culduthel Mains Avenue
	Culduthel Mains Crescent
	Culduthel Mains Garden
	Ardeness Place
	Grigor Drive? (tbc)

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS:

FB - Knocknagael Allotments (21 Oct-17 Nov) [Page created – 6 October 2015]

4,560 People Reached (up 988%)

678 Post Engagements (up 511%)

60 Page Likes (up 650%)

Total Likes 125

Total Follows 136



FB - Save Knocknagael Farm Fields (21 Oct-17 Nov) [Page created 4 September 2013]

3607 People Reached (up 11%)
351 Post Engagements (up 6%)
28 Page Likes (up 155%)

Total Likes 567
Total Follows 542

FB - Knocknagael Limited (21 Oct-17 Nov) [Page created 6 August 2020]

143 People Reached (up 117%)
35 Post Engagements (up 46%)
21 Page Likes (from 0)

Total Likes 21
Total Follows 24

www.knocknagael.org.uk (13 Oct - 18 Nov) [Went "live" on 13 October 2020]

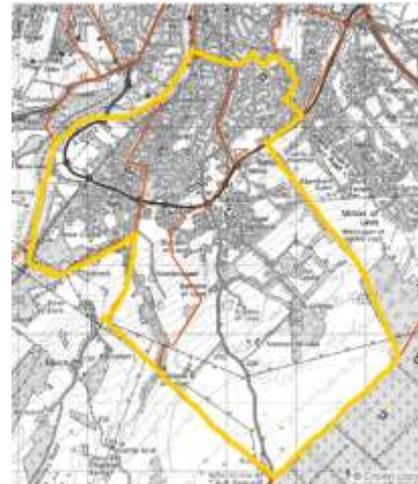
300 Total Visits
239 Unique Visits
56% Bounce Rate (visits to one page only)
4 Forms Submitted (enquiry forms)
145 Direct Visits, 121 Visits via Facebook, 23 Visits via Search Engines (Google)
145 Visits via Mobile, 137 Visits via Desktop, 18 Visits via Tablet



Appendix 2: Demographic Report

Overview of Knocknagael Area

The Knocknagael site lies on the edge of Inverness - around 3 miles south of the city centre. The area covered by this demographic report relates to four community councils that surround the Knocknagael site: Lochardil and Drummond, Slackbuie, Holm and Hilton, Milton and Castle Heather. The map shows the boundary of this area.



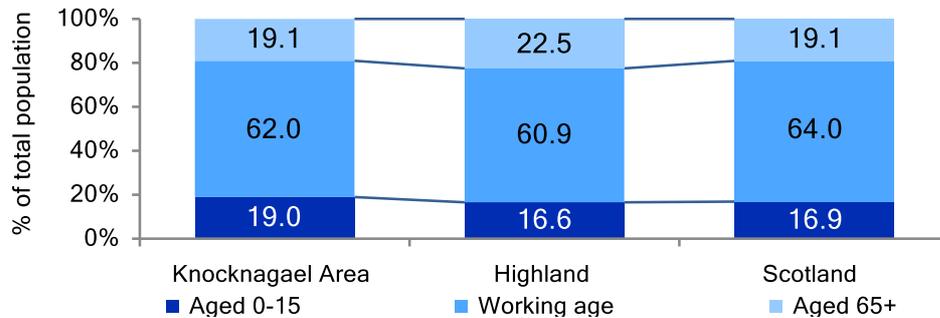
Demographics and Statistics

Desktop research was conducted to explore some of the statistics available for the area. The figures below are taken from the Community Insight software which collects data from over thirty database sources¹⁴.

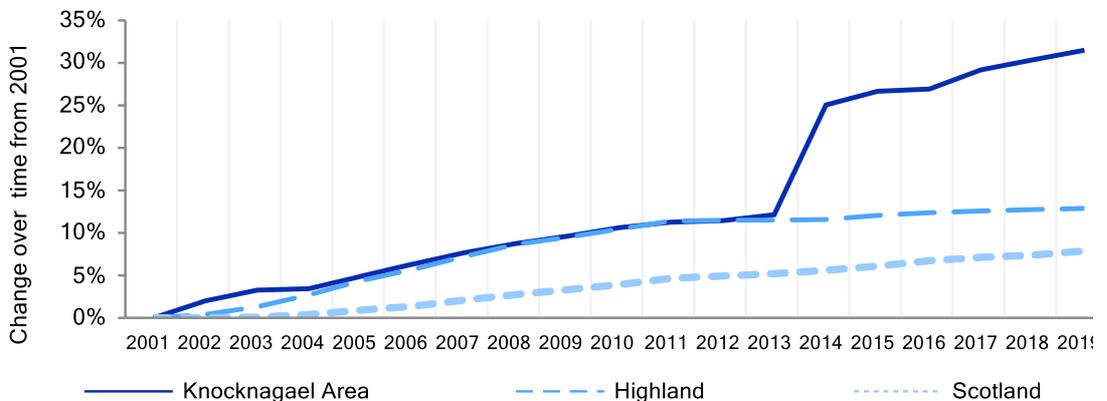
Knocknagael Area, Inverness



The Knocknagael area has a population of 15,115.



At 19.1%, the proportion of the population aged over 65 is equal to the Scottish average but lower than the average for Highland more generally (22.1%). Relatedly, the working age population and proportion of young people are higher than average for the region. The working age population sits at 62%, a figure that sits between regional and national levels. For the youngest age group (0-15 years) the Knocknagael average is 2-2.5% higher than Highland and Scottish averages.



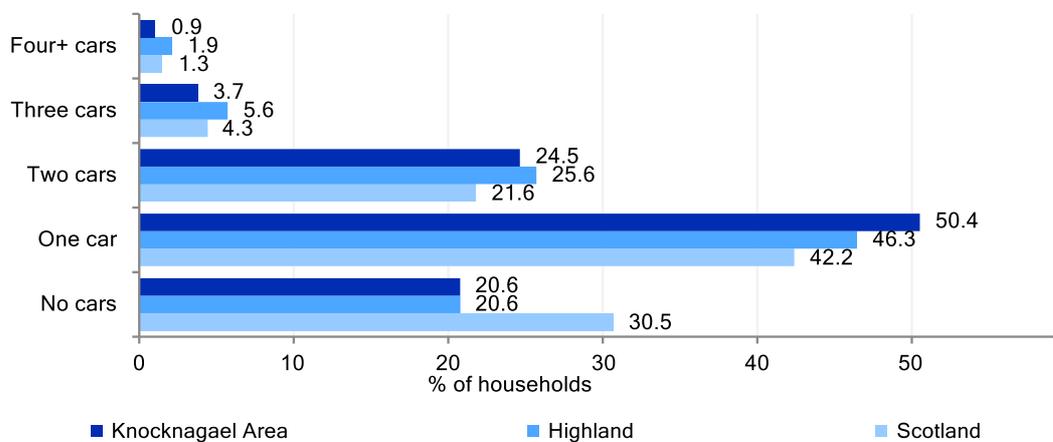
¹⁴ Data are obtained from Community Insight, a software that collects data from over 30 databases including Census Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, NHS and others. Community Enterprise does not own any of the above data.



The population trend for the area around Knocknagael shows a clear pattern of growth. Between 2013-2019 the population has increased around 15%. Of this trend, much of the growth was centred around the 2013-14 period. This contrasts with more stable growth regionally and nationally over the same time.



The Knocknagael area has a largely similar pattern of car ownership when compared to figures for Highland and Scotland more generally. Over a fifth of households do not have access to a car. At 50.4%, ownership of one car lies 4% and 8% higher than regional and national figures, respectively. Figures for higher levels of car ownerships (2+) are lower than Highland averages. With the location of Knocknagael on the southern edge of Inverness these figures are likely linked to the semi-urban nature of the area. The deprivation profile of the communities around the Knocknagael area, however, demonstrate pockets of deprivation potentially linked to lower rates of car ownership.



The Knocknagael area lies between two B-roads (Essich Rd and B861) that provide routes north into Inverness city centre. The A9 lies around 5 miles to the east of the area and acts as a link south to the Central Belt.

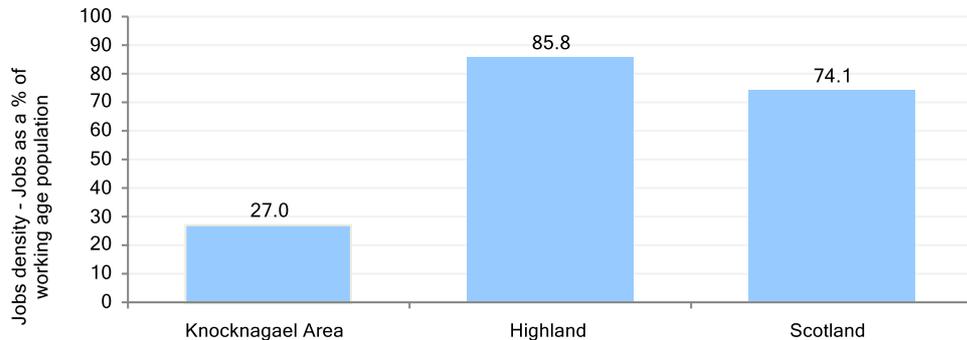
Bus routes in the area are provided through Stagecoach. These link the Knocknagael area to Inverness and beyond through various routes (1/14/16/46/48/49/107). There is no train station in the area, with the nearest located in Inverness city centre.





Economy and Employment

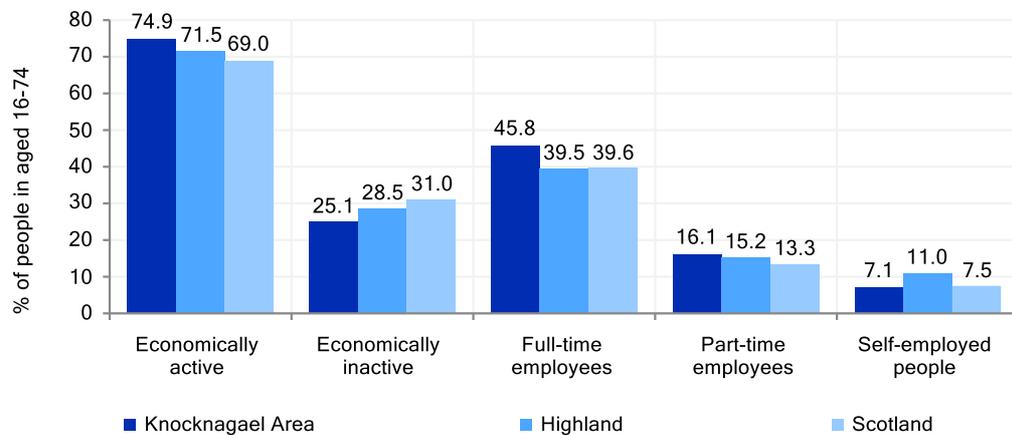
There is a significantly lower jobs density in Knocknagael than Highland, and Scotland as a whole (shown below). This measure reports on the number of jobs as a % of working age population and is 58.8% lower than the average for Highland. This suggests a large proportion of the working population commute out of the area for



work – likely north into the city centre of Inverness.

Locally, the largest industry sector is Education (21.1%) followed by Health (16.7%) and Retail (13.5%).

At 74.9%, the proportion of economically active people locally is almost 5% higher than the Scottish average and 3.4% higher than regional figures. 45.8% of these are employed full-time, which is noticeably higher than comparator figures. Self-employment, however, is less common in the Knocknagael area when compared to figures for Highland (7.1% vs. 11%).



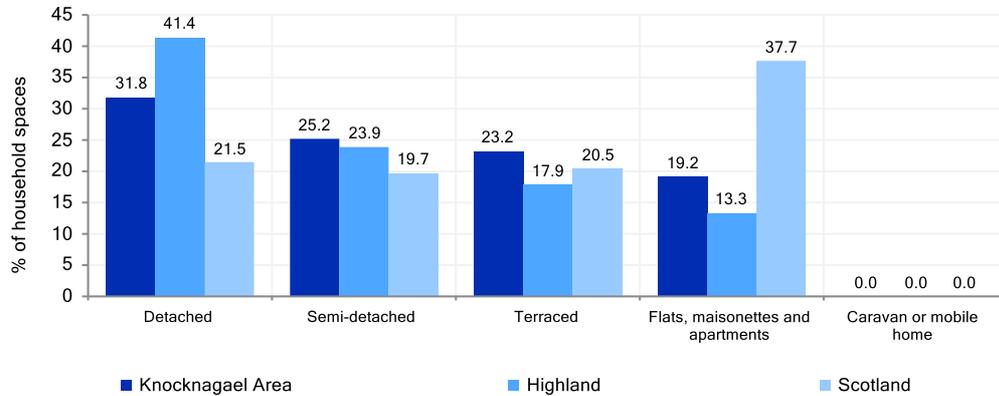
Excluding self employed people, 25.9% of working people are employed in the public sector, slightly higher than regional and national levels. The largest employment sector is Health and social work (18% of people in employment) and Retail (18%) followed by Construction (9%).





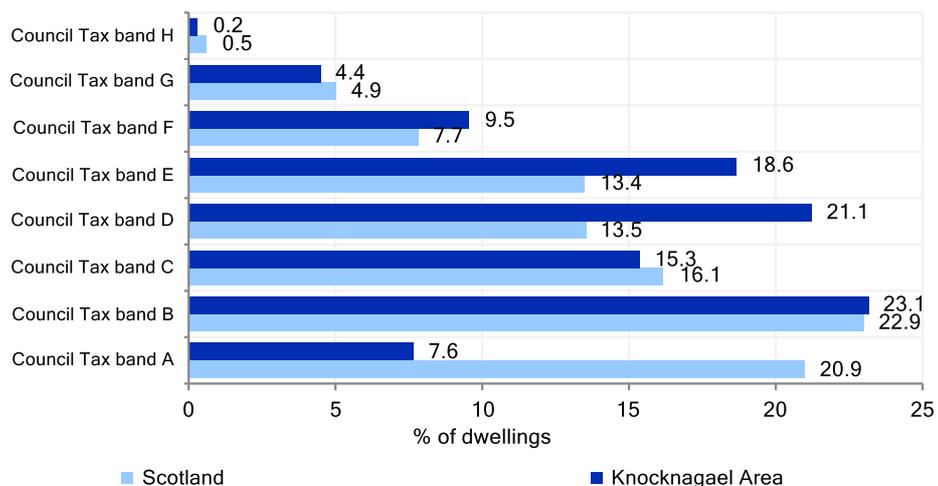
Housing

The communities around the Knocknagael site have a mixed housing profile. 31.8% of dwellings are detached – a figure that sits between the Scotland average of 21.5% and the regional figure of 41.4%. Levels of semi-detached and terraced housing as well as flats, maisonettes and apartments are all higher than the Highland average. At 19.2%, the number of flats in the Knocknagael area is considerably higher than the regional average (albeit still considerably lower than the Scottish average).



When considering the SIMD data presented at the end of this report, housing is a factor in the mixed deprivation profile seen across this area. With some communities such as Hilton to the north-east of the Knocknagael site having a higher level of high density housing stock e.g. flats, maisonettes and apartments. This will also relate to lower levels of local green space available with private gardens rare amongst this housing type. Additional housing proposals have also been highlighted in the local area and the closure of the local Fairways Golf Course has been reported as a critical loss of local green space.¹⁵

Council tax bands can be used as a measure for property value and levels of affordable housing with Band A representing the lowest property value. As highlighted above a mixed profile of housing emerges. Bands B, D and E are all common across the Knocknagael area (between 18.6% to 23.1% of housing stock).

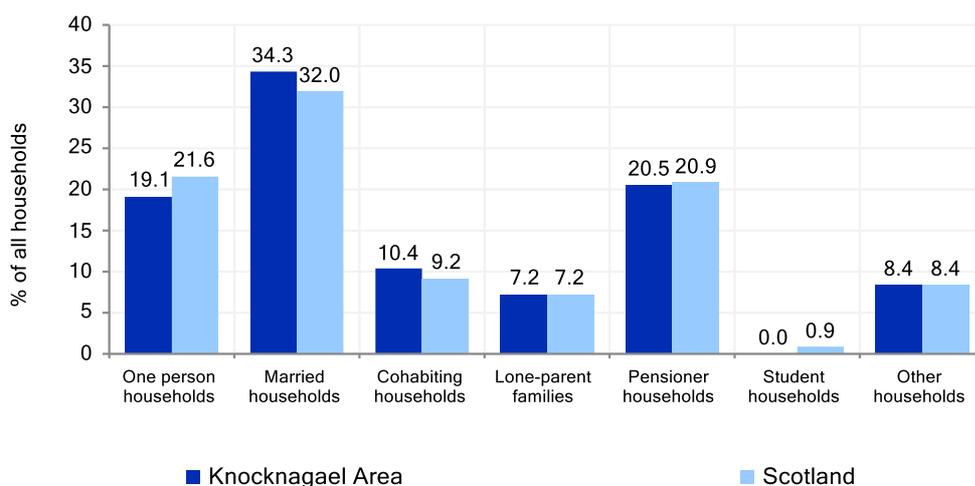


¹⁵ northerntimes.co.uk: 'Shock as Housing Planned for Golf Course'





Households



The local household profile largely match Scottish averages. The largest proportion of households are married (34.3%) with pensioner and one person households making up another 20.5% and 19.1%, respectively, of the household profile.



Health

15.6% of people have a limiting long-term illness, which is slightly lower than the Scotland average of 19.6%. Emergency hospital admissions are lower than the national average and admissions for common health conditions including coronary heart disease, respiratory disease and diseases of the digestive system are also lower than Scottish figures. Rates for cancer admissions, however, are considerably higher (5,733 vs. 2,614 per 100,000 for Scotland).

Life expectancy ¹⁶	Male (yrs)	Female (yrs)
Inverness Lochardil & Holm Mains	81	84
Inverness Drummond	75	85
Inverness Hilton	77	82
Scotland	77	81

Life expectancy across the three corresponding IZ areas around Knocknagael (see Table above) illustrate variations in life expectancy locally. This is more apparent within male life expectancy figures which highlight two of the three surrounding areas have levels comparable or less than the Scottish average (Drummond and Hilton).



Digital Infrastructure

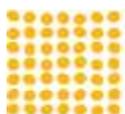
In relation to broadband connectivity, the average broadband download speed is 24.77 Mbit/s, just over half Scotland's average (41.80 Mbit/s). However, only 0.7% of connections have a broadband speed low enough to be classed under the Universal Service Obligation (compared to the Scotland average of 3.7%).

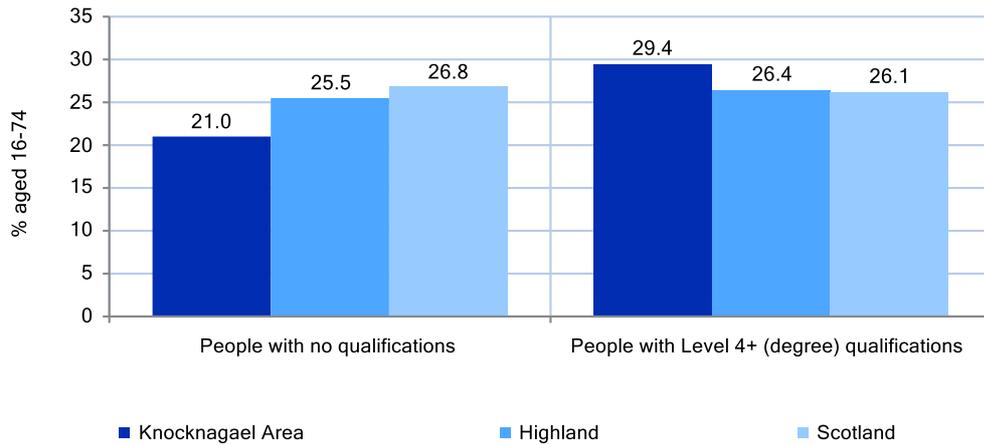


Education

This area is home to a highly educated population with 29.4% of people holding degree level qualifications, around 3% higher than regional and national averages. The proportion of people with no qualifications is lower than the norm at 21%.

¹⁶ https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/





There are 5 primary schools locally, namely Lochardil PS, Hilton PS, Cauldeen PS and Holm PS. A Gaelic language primary school is also based in this area. Additional support needs for pupils at both primary and secondary levels is provided by the Drummond School in Lochardil.

There is also a local high school in the Knocknagael area, Inverness Royal Academy. This institution was recently ranked 173rd in the 2019 Scottish school league tables (out of 339) with 33% of pupils achieving 5 Higher level qualifications.¹⁷



Vulnerable Groups

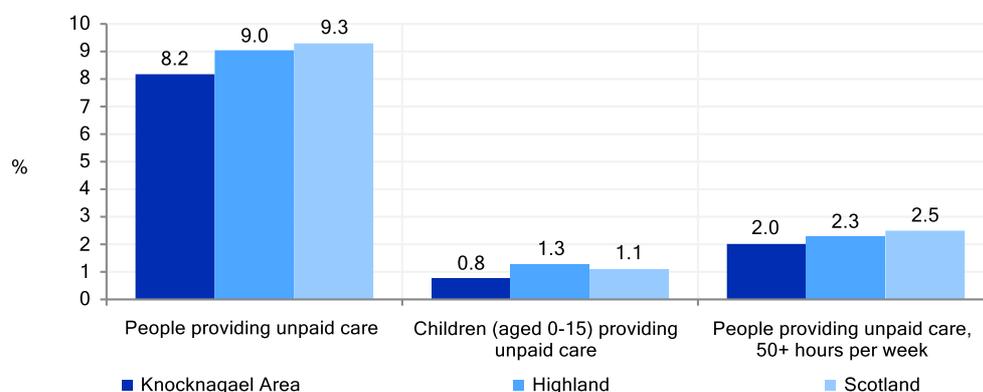
Only 2.7% of pensioners are living in poverty in the Knocknagael area – a level significantly lower than the Scotland average (14.2%). Levels of Universal Credit claims are similar to Scottish averages (around 13%).

A number of benefits can act as indicators for the health of local residents. Attendance Allowance is a benefit payable to people over the age of 65 who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of help with personal care or supervision. 9.2% of people in this area claim Attendance Allowance, which is 4.9% lower than the Scottish average.

¹⁷ [Extract from Scottish School League Tables 2019](#)



Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are payable to those under the age of 65 who need help with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health. There is a lower proportion of PIP claimants locally when compared to average levels across Scotland, with 6.4 % of the population claiming this benefit (7.8% nationally). This figure can be examined specifically for individuals who claim PIP for mental health conditions – which at 2.4% is also slightly lower than the national average of 3%.



There is a slightly lower proportion of people providing unpaid care in the Knocknagael area (8.2%, compared to the Highland average of 9%). Of these, less than 1% are children. 2% of unpaid carers are providing more than 50 hours a week of care. These levels are both lower than the regional and national averages.

SIMD¹⁸

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks areas from most deprived to least deprived. The map below shows this area according to the SIMD 2020 rankings. Red areas illustrate higher levels of deprivation and the blue areas correspond to areas of least deprivation. Deprivation is measured across a number of indicators: Housing, Health, Education, Income, Crime, and Geographical Access to Services.

The map illustrates a mixed pattern of deprivation across the local community. The presence of both dark blue (least deprived 10%) and dark red (most deprived 10%) illustrates considerable inequality across the Knocknagael region.

¹⁸ The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation. SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976).



