

The GYOWG is generally supportive of the draft Bill. Some of the members of the GYOWG have concerns about specific details in the Bill, and are raising these concerns on an individual organisation basis.

### 3. Do you consider communities across Scotland have the capabilities to take advantage of the provisions in the Bill? If not, what requires to be done to the Bill, or to assist communities, to ensure this happens?

For the Bill to be effective, communities need support to have the capacity to cope with changes to the legislation, including with the assets they acquire, and in engaging with and understanding Local Authority Food Growing Strategies. Therefore the CE (Scotland) Bill needs to be properly resourced, with a dedicated fund (in a similar way to the Climate Challenge Fund accompanying the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, or the Scottish Land Fund accompanying the Land Reform Act). This fund could include loans as well as small grants, for developing projects at a grassroots level and capacity building by intermediary organisations.

### 4. Are you content with the specific provisions in the Bill, if not what changes would you like to see, to which part of the Bill and why?

- In the previous Government consultation over the draft Bill the GYOWG were concerned that the right to buy was not the answer in many situations where communities want to grow food. Many community groups do not want the added responsibility of actually owning the land they work, they simply want to be able to use it. The GYOWG is supportive of the proposals for Participation Requests (Section 17) and Asset transfer requests (Section 52) as these support the right for communities to use land, without taking ownership, for purposes such as growing. The GYOWG is however concerned that these proposals only relate to land owned by those public bodies listed in Schedule 2 and 3 to the Bill, and so do not include land owned by other public bodies or do anything to promote meanwhile use of privately owned land.
- The GYOWG supports the proposal that Local Authorities must prepare a food-growing strategy (Section 77), but would like to ensure that any gaps in training requirements are identified in food growing strategies, and/or that training is a matter to be prescribed in future regulations (Section 77(3)(d)). At the moment, there is a significant shortage of skills relevant to food growing. This may be a contributory factor in the high turn-over of new allotment plot holders. Providing training is therefore essential to a thriving community growing sector, and there is untapped horticultural expertise in many traditional allotment sites and community gardens.
- The GYOWG are satisfied with the provision for finding alternative sites should an allotment site be closed (Sections 75 & 76).
- The GYOWG would like the legislation around Permitted Developments in the Planning System to be amended so that structures on community growing sites (E.g. sheds, polytunnels etc) do not require individual planning permission (they are usually permitted developments when within the curtilage of a dwelling). The current system is expensive and time consuming for poorly resourced community groups. If such features have been permitted and regulated by the

local authority within site management regulations (Section 73(4)(a) – (c)), we do not think that a separate planning application should be required.