

Additional Information and Guidance: Appendix 4 to the Aberdeen food-growing strategy.

Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020

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SUMMARY

'Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020' is Aberdeen's first food growing strategy. It builds on existing requirements and the broad landscape of **community empowerment** brought forward by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015¹. Section s119 of the Act requires that all local authorities prepare a food-growing strategy for their area.

Granite City Growing is a city-wide strategy developed collaboratively by the Aberdeen Food-growing Steering Group consisting of representatives from Aberdeen City Council (Operations, Customer and Place functions), The Hutton Institute, The Community Council Forum, Civic Forum, the Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen, the Allotment Market Stall, the Powis Residents Association and Community Food Initiative North East (CFINE).

The scope of Granite City Growing covers:



- all forms of community growing – where growing activities are collective and voluntary or expressly for community benefit
- all types of growing sites which can support community growing – temporary and permanent
- support for communities to get involved in food growing
- awareness raising and training relating to community growing and the benefits it provides

The strategic context of Granite City Growing is placed within Aberdeen as a 'Sustainable Food City' as taken forward by Granite City Good Food'; the Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan; and the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

The strategy describes where we are now, where we would like to be and how we are going to get there. It has been written with input from key stakeholders and informed by engagement activities, surveys and lessons learned from the community food-growing programme since the Autumn 2017. It has also been informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment undertaken in parallel.

A baseline for 2019 is discussed capturing both quantitative data of existing food-growing spaces and qualitative information with links to the many examples of known community food-growing taking place around Aberdeen city. The supply of existing community food-growing opportunities is mapped alongside potential demand. The existing city-wide situation in Aberdeen is largely in line with the Scottish average. Spatially there is an uneven distribution of existing food-growing opportunities across the city with some communities enjoying above average provision in their vicinity and others having none. The Aberdeen food-growing survey showed that a lack of time and not knowing how to grow food are perceived as the greatest barriers to 'growing your own' locally.

A statement of 'reasonable measures' is included describing what Aberdeen City Council will do to respond to the demand for food-growing opportunities. It presents a methodology of how the Open Space audit information will be used to create a map identifying future opportunity food-growing sites.

The delivery of Granite City Growing will require a partnership approach and a collaborative city-wide effort to achieve the many outcomes which community food-growing has the potential to positively effect. Key actions from the action plan are presented.

'Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020' and its supporting documents is available online from the Aberdeen City Council website <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/food-growing-strategy>

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/section/119/enacted>

1. INTRODUCTION : Why do we need a food-growing strategy?

'Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020' will play a key role in nurturing an inclusive city which offers more opportunities for its people to grow their own food. 'Granite City Growing' supports opportunities for community-based activity for those who live in, work in and visit Aberdeen to achieve healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.



Since 2017 Aberdeen has made a commitment to be a Sustainable Food City and a partnership called 'Granite City Good Food'² is taking this forward. Granite City Good Food believe that every person in Aberdeen should have access to healthy, tasty, affordable food and that this food should also be good for the environment and our local economy.

The current unsustainable food system is having a significant impact on the planet. A January 2019 report from the EAT-Lancet Commission³ concluded that "food is the single strongest lever to optimise human health and environmental sustainability on earth. However, food is currently threatening both people and planet." Food has an important part to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals⁴ set by the United Nations in 2030. Any conversation around how Scotland will reach the 2045 target of net-zero emissions⁵ will need to include food and how we source it, use it, value it and grow it.

Scotland has a vision for a healthier future. A Scottish Government July 2018 delivery plan⁶ set a vision to create a Scotland where everyone eats well, and we all have a healthy weight. Scotland also has a vision to become a 'Good Food Nation' by 2025⁷.

The benefits of community food-growing are cross-cutting with implications for health and wellbeing, diet, food-poverty, place-making, reducing 'food miles', intergenerational engagement, waste reduction, outdoor education, physical activity, soil management, adaptation to a changing climate, mental health, greenspace management, recycling of resources and biodiversity.

Opportunities to 'grow your own' food supports residents to reduce their personal 'foodprint' by sourcing and growing food plants locally. More community food-growing opportunities supports better access to affordable and healthy food; it also has a role to play in reducing social isolation, creating cohesive communities, encouraging physical activity, improving mental wellbeing, supporting educational objectives and creating habitats for wildlife.

Research published in the Journal of Public Health in 2015 found that just one session of gardening in an allotment yielded significant improvements in mood and self-esteem. The activity of growing food can play a key role in promoting mental and physical well-being and could be used as a preventive health measure⁸.

With the right skills, a 250m² allotment plot can provide a family of four with their fruit and vegetables for a year⁹. Local food can be grown in many ways: in private gardens, on allotments, on walls and balconies, indoors and out, in communal gardens, schools, workplaces, hospitals, and on reclaimed ground for community use. There is a role for local policy to encourage, strengthen and protect existing opportunities and support new spaces and growers.

² <https://www.cfine.org/granite-city-good-food>

³ <https://eatforum.org/>

⁴ <https://globalgoals.scot/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/climate-change-bill/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/healthier-future-scotlands-diet-healthy-weight-delivery-plan/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/food-and-drink/good-food-nation/>

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26515229>

⁹ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/GG3PlanToGrow.pdf>

There are already many initiatives taking place locally targeting inequality, food poverty¹⁰, mental health and wellbeing and seeking to expand food choices and knowledge of nutrition and cooking. This strategy promotes both the necessity of continued action and further support for food-growing activities that take place in our communities.

'Granite City Growing' has been prepared by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) which has a statutory function (as expressed in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) however the strategy has been written for everyone in Aberdeen with an interest; communities, partners, landowners and citizens. Food-growing is relevant to both community planning and spatial planning and the policy and legislative context in which a food-growing strategy sits is described more fully in appendix 1.

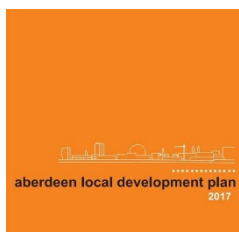
Community Planning: Community Planning Aberdeen¹¹ (CPA) includes Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, the Aberdeen Civic Forum, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, the North East Scotland College and the Active Partnership Aberdeen amongst others. The community planning partners are working towards making Aberdeen a prosperous place; not simply in economic terms, but also in the quality of life for the people of the city.



CPA delivers its ambition through the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which sets the local strategic direction up until 2026. It is based on a needs' assessment undertaken in 2016 and is regularly updated. The LOIP is a key document which underpins the delivery of many different strategies in Aberdeen. The 'Sustainable City Outcome Improvement Group' has responsibility for overseeing the community food-growing actions in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (see Appendix 2).

As a cross-cutting theme food-growing can help to deliver LOIP stretch outcomes 1,11,12,13 and 14. LOIP stretch outcome 13 states: **no one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026**. The LOIP incorporates the aims of the Anti-Poverty Strategy¹² and is the local Child Poverty Action Plan for Aberdeen¹³. One of the Improvement Aims to deliver the outcomes is to **'increase community food growing in schools, communities and workplaces by 2021'**. This aim will be measured by reporting on four indicators which will be incorporated into the Granite City Growing action plan and in the nine priority neighbourhoods through Locality Plans, overseen by Locality Partnerships. The three Locality Plans are: the Torry Locality Plan¹⁴; the Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton Locality Plan¹⁵; and the Cummings Park, Heathyfold, Northfield, Mastrick and Middlefield Locality Plan¹⁶.

Spatial Planning: Aberdeen's adopted **Local Development Plan 2017** was prepared in the light of Scottish Planning Policy: *"Local development plans should safeguard existing and potential allotment sites to ensure that local authorities meet their statutory duty to provide allotments where there is proven demand. Plans should also encourage opportunities for a range of community growing spaces."* Scottish Planning Policy, 2014 (Paragraph 227¹⁷).



The requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 mean that Aberdeen City Council has a statutory duty to provide allotment ground according to demand. Aberdeen City Council must consider and plan for future provision. Preparation of the next **Local**

Development Plan 2022 is already underway and different ways of broadening the scope of food-growing in the Plan are being explored through stakeholder consultation.

The preparation of an **Open Space Strategy**¹⁸ is also a requirement of National Planning Policy. The policy requires the creation of an audit, a strategy and action plans and it aims to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to protecting and developing the city's network of open space. The Open Space Strategy is currently being refreshed and informed by an open space audit undertaken during 2018-2019. Allotments are included as a subset of open space; and they have a broad definition as 'areas of land used for growing fruit, vegetables or other plants either in individual allotments or as a community activity'.

¹⁰ <https://www.afc.co.uk/2019/02/19/food-and-fun-partnership-wins-principals-award/>

¹¹ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/>

¹² <https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ambitious-priorities-set-out-to-tackle-poverty-in-aberdeen/>

¹³ <https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=619&MId=6668>

¹⁴ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Torry-Draft-Locality-Plan-2017-27-1.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/woodside-tillydrone-and-seaton/>

¹⁶ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Wider-Northfield.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>

¹⁸ https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/open_space_strategy_2011_2016.pdf

Granite City Growing will inform the next Open Space Strategy which in turn will inform the next Local Development Plan (LDP) of 2022. See Appendix 6 for more information.

2. WHERE WOULD WE LIKE TO BE BY 2026?

2.1 What is our vision?

The following vision came from a series of workshops with key stakeholders facilitated in early 2018 by greenspace scotland.

By 2026 we will be an Aberdeen where:

- **everyone who wants to, has access to food-growing opportunities**
- **people are aware of the benefits of, and opportunities for, local food growing**
- **communities and politicians will understand the link between healthy people, good, local food and a high-quality environment in and around the city.**
- **Community food-growing will continue to be recognised as part of Aberdeen’s policy and strategic priorities.**
- **and where food growing activities deliver:**

 - **improved health and wellbeing**
 - **stronger communities**
 - **benefits to the local economy**
 - **improvements to Aberdeen’s urban and rural environment and**
 - **improved access to quality fresh food**



2.2 What are our strategic outcomes and objectives?

Further discussion at the workshops; oversight from the Food-growing Steering Group and the incorporation of statutory guidance formulated the strategic outcomes and objectives taken forward into the Strategic Environmental Assessment and summarised below.

1. Overarching – governance and increasing the opportunities to ‘grow your own’.

Strategic Outcome: *Aberdeen will be recognised as an exemplar for local food growing.*

Strategic Objective: *We will take steps to make food growing opportunities available to all residents of Aberdeen to improve their health, reduce health inequalities and to alleviate food poverty.*

2. Environment – low-carbon living, biodiversity, food-miles, waste.

Strategic Outcome *‘Increase biodiversity, contribute to a Low Carbon Scotland, encourage climate change adaptation and mitigation (through changed behaviours) and improve the condition and carbon retention in the soil.’*

Strategic Objective *‘Embed the requirement to increase biodiversity and climate change adaptation and mitigation within growing spaces through the choice of plants, heritage varieties, site design and management.’*

3. Economy – social enterprises and the local food economy.

Strategic Outcome *‘Local food-growing will be part of a vibrant local food economy’*

Strategic Objective *‘Encourage all forms of community-led enterprise and social enterprise through making available and encouraging the uptake of food-growing opportunities.’*

4. People - communities and allotments.

Strategic Outcome *‘Empowered communities, with support from ACC and its partners, will be collectively growing and enjoying food’.*

Strategic Objective *‘We will endeavour to make all of Aberdeen’s food-growing spaces well managed community-empowered places, served by public transport and active travel, with quality facilities accessible by all, as far as is practicable.’*

Aberdeen City Council partnered with greenspace Scotland to capture learning on how to develop a food-growing strategy. The learning note can be found here: <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/food-growing-projects>

3 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

3.1 What Aberdeen has now.

By setting a baseline for 2019 we will be able to measure progress over the lifetime of this strategy. Food-growing requires suitable spaces and people with the skills and motivation to grow their own food. The measurements are therefore a mixture of ‘people’ measures and ‘spaces’ measures.

- There are **3 private ‘allotment’ sites** providing approximately 135 plots.
- There are at least **11 community growing spaces** in Aberdeen.
- There are at least **3 community orchards** in Aberdeen.
- There are at least **14 educational institutions** actively involved in growing food outdoors (3 nursery schools, 9 primary schools, 1 academy and 1 university). Many more are growing food inside the classroom.
- There are 14 local authority Primary schools, 2 local authority Secondary schools, 1 special needs school and 2 independent schools currently active in the **Eco-Schools scheme**¹⁹ 8 of which have recently achieved or renewed Green Flag status (July 2019).²⁰ A school garden provides an opportunity to advance the themes of the Eco-Schools scheme.²¹
- There are four **Britain in Bloom groups** and 28 **Its Your Neighbourhood Groups** engaging in horticultural activities (not necessarily food-growing).
- As of January 2019 there are **516 allotment plots** overseen by Aberdeen City Council on 21 sites. Of these **473 are available for permanent lease**: 166 are full plots (300 m²); 20 three-quarter plots (225 m²); 233 half-plots (150 m²); 5 plots of 130 m², 3 plots of 110 m², 21 plots of 100 m², 22 plots of 80 m² and 3 plots 50 m². A further **43 micro-plots (<50m²) are available in Aberdeen** which are offered to people on the waiting list when appropriate. They have proved to be an innovative way to actively engage with the waiting list and to build food-growing skills. In total this equates to approximately **95,000 m²** of allotment space provided by Aberdeen City Council. That is equivalent to over 13 football pitches!

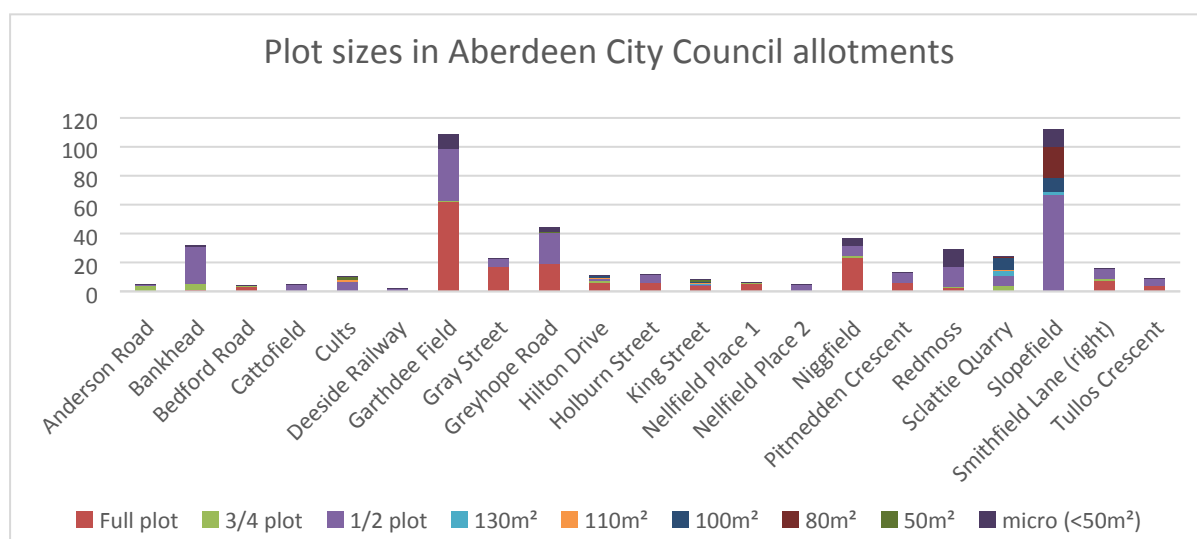


Figure 1: Range of plot sizes available at Aberdeen City Council allotments

¹⁹ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/local-authorities/aberdeen-city/>

²⁰ <https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/aberdeen-schools-do-the-double-and-treble-in-winning-environmental-awards/>

²¹ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/ten-topics/>

- In January 2019 the **allotment waiting list stood at 166 people** (43 of whom were tending to a micro plot); this means that the allotment waiting list at that time was **32%** of the number of plots available.

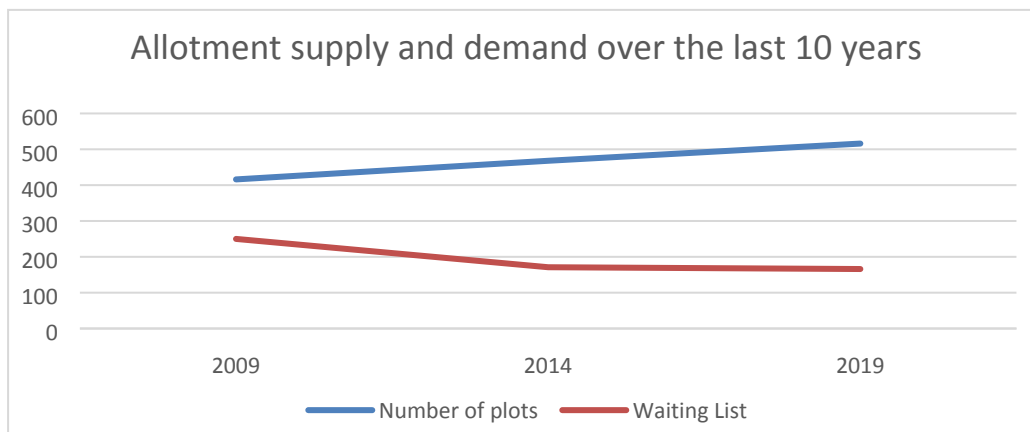


Figure 2: The Aberdeen City Council allotment ten-year supply and demand trend.

The trend over the last ten years should be viewed in the light of the following:

- more plots have been created from the subdivision of larger plots.
- two private ‘allotment’ sites have been created over the last ten years.
- the Allotments Management Policy 2008 created the Allotments Representatives Network, encouraged allotment associations and led to a more proactive management of sites causing more plots to be brought back into active use more quickly.
- There has been a step up in the frequency of allotment reviews in conjunction with enforcement of Lease Terminations should an allotment holder not respond to recommendations of the reviews. This has improved the frequency of allotments being offered to new growers.
- changes to Aberdeen’s demography over the last ten years. Population increased each year upto 2015 (230,350) and has declined each year since to 228000 people.²²

From the summer of 2019 the allotment application process has become digital. The allotment waiting list is reported annually.

A local Sustainable **Food Growing Map**²³ was developed alongside the preparation of this strategy. As of August 2019 it has been viewed over 10,000 times. It is available online and has been expanded to show where all the food-growing spaces are in Aberdeen and where other ‘sustainable food’ opportunities exist.

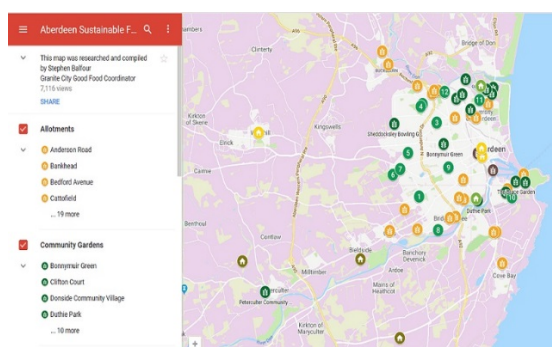


Figure 3: The ‘Aberdeen Sustainable Food’ google map signposted from the ACC and CFINE websites. There is also an interactive map available from the Ordnance Survey²⁴ which shows greenspace nationally.

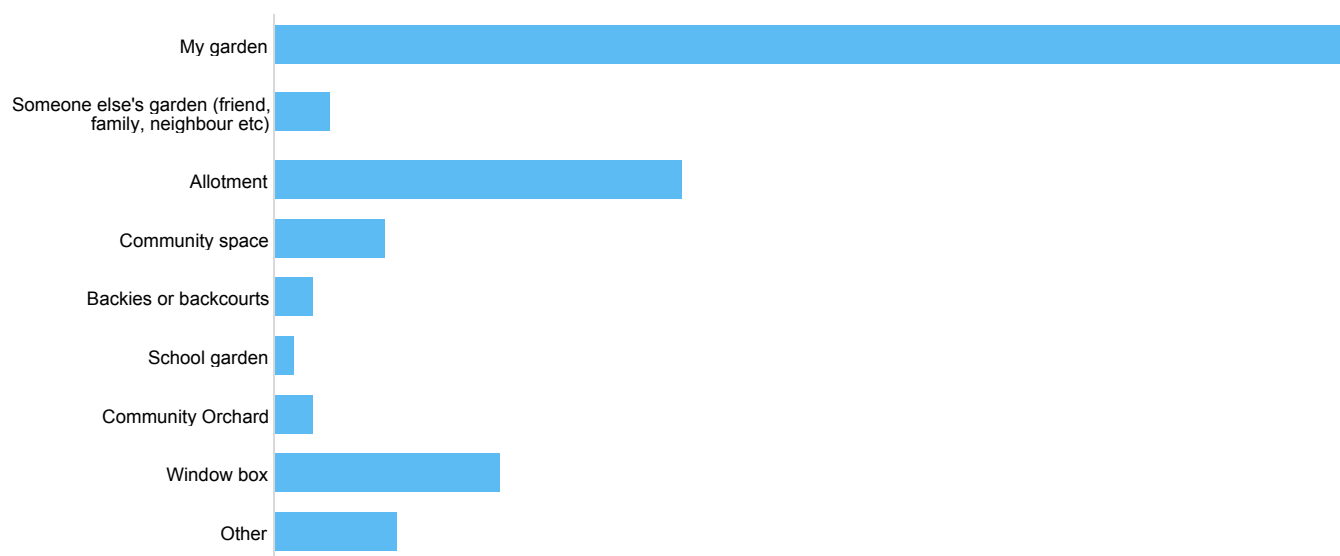
²² <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-04/Briefing%20Note%20-%202018%20MYEs%20.pdf>

²³ <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=109-glRByYBpLLCx077YfbGgom-AdCVV3&ll=57.132906161254446%2C-2.1429937798340006&z=13>

²⁴ <https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/greenspaces/>

3.2 What you said about food-growing in 2018

The Aberdeen City Food-growing survey²⁵ was conducted throughout February 2018 to inform Granite City Growing. It was conducted through the Aberdeen City Council consultation hub and attracted 394 respondents. Aberdeen citizen's are currently growing food in the following places:



217 people

Figure 4: Where are people currently growing their food?

- When asked *if you don't currently grow your own vegetables, fruit or herbs would you like to?*
40% of people said: Yes you would like to grow your own (160 respondents)
- When asked *if you are already growing your own vegetables, fruit or herbs would you like to grow more?*
47% of people said: Yes you would like to grow more (185 respondents)
- When asked *what, if anything, is stopping you growing your own vegetables, fruit or herbs, you said...*
you don't know how to grow food (29%: 115 people)
you don't have the time to grow food (28%: 111 people)
you have no food growing space near to you (17%: 66 people)
you don't have the tools (15% :60 people)

A greenspace scotland survey in 2017 covering the nation showed that 87% of respondents grew food in their gardens: 7% in allotments and 2% in community gardens.
<https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/FAQs/research-and-surveys>

These results align strongly with a Scottish wide survey conducted by greenspace scotland²⁶

3.3 What you said about food-growing in 2019

In March 2019 food-growing questions were included in the 43rd Aberdeen 'City Voice' questionnaire²⁷. 38% of respondents had done some gardening in the last four weeks.

²⁵ <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/food-growing-strategy>

²⁶ Greenspace Use and Attitude Survey (2017) <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/statistics>

²⁷ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/cityvoice/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Newsletter-43-Final.pdf>

When thinking about green/open space however only 5.5% considered that it was important that it was a good place to grow and or collect fruits, vegetables or herbs. However a significant aspiration for 'growing your own' was shown to be the desire to reduce personal environmental impact through making different food choices as shown in Table 1 below.

	Currently do		Prepared to do	
	Actual	%	Actual	%
Buy more locally grown and produced food	482	57.9%	350	42.1%
Grow your own fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers	199	41.8%	277	58.2%
Eat less meat and /or dairy products	362	61.8%	224	38.2%
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy loose fruit and veg • Do shopping as part of travel to other places • Plan meals and don't buy food that isn't on the plan 			

Table 1: Would you reduce the impact of your food choices? (from 43rd City Voice)

3.4 Do people have good access to food-growing opportunities in Aberdeen in 2019?

Food-growing opportunities take many forms; some are publicly accessible and some are privately accessible. Many people will be using their own gardens to grow food; others will have balconies and windowsills or have access to the gardens of friends or relatives. Other opportunities exist in 'semi-public' spaces on land with shared access to neighbouring residents, for example on 'backies', shared private gardens and in school gardens. Allotments are available to all residents of Aberdeen but each plot is leased for private use. There are also purely public spaces where communities can grow food flexibly and make their own arrangements for access.

In Scotland the existing allotment provision stands at approximately 2 plots per 1000 people²⁸. In Aberdeen, in 2019, we have 2.25 allotment plots per 1000 people. If private allotment plots are included it rises to 2.85 plots per 1000 people. An analysis of food-growing opportunities by Aberdeen 'neighbourhoods' has been conducted. Whilst it is recognised that each neighbourhood is open for people from other neighbourhoods to visit and make use of existing food-growing opportunities it is useful to identify 'hot-spots' and 'deserts' in existing provision.

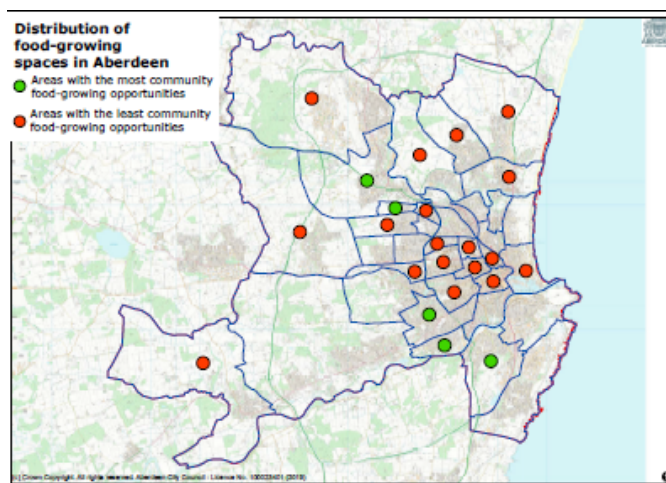


Figure 5: Distribution of food-growing opportunities (allotments plots and other known food-growing spaces). The areas in red have no known spaces; the areas in green have over 6 spaces per 1000 people)

²⁸ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/GG3PlanToGrow.pdf>

Availability of privately accessible food-growing spaces is assumed to follow the proportion of households with gardens. In Aberdeen 55% of households live in flats; this is higher than the Scottish average of 36%²⁹. It is assumed that access to private garden space is least in neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of flats. The percentage of households living in flats has been used to measure latent demand for community food-growing spaces in neighbourhoods.

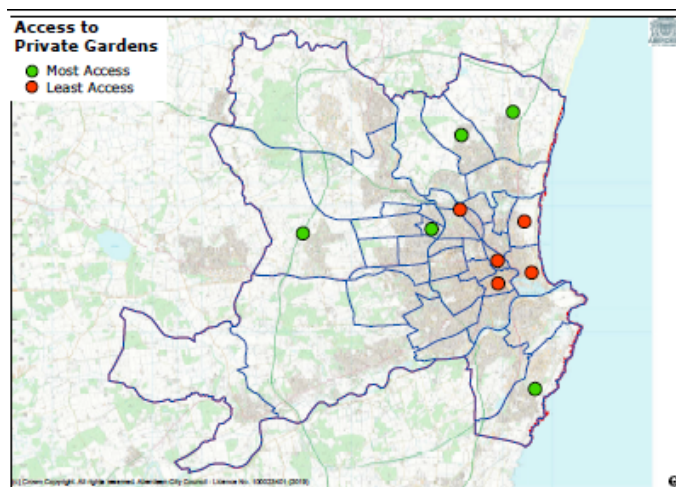


Figure 6: Distribution of access to private gardens. The areas in red are where over 90% of households live in flats; the areas in green are where fewer than 14% of households live in flats.

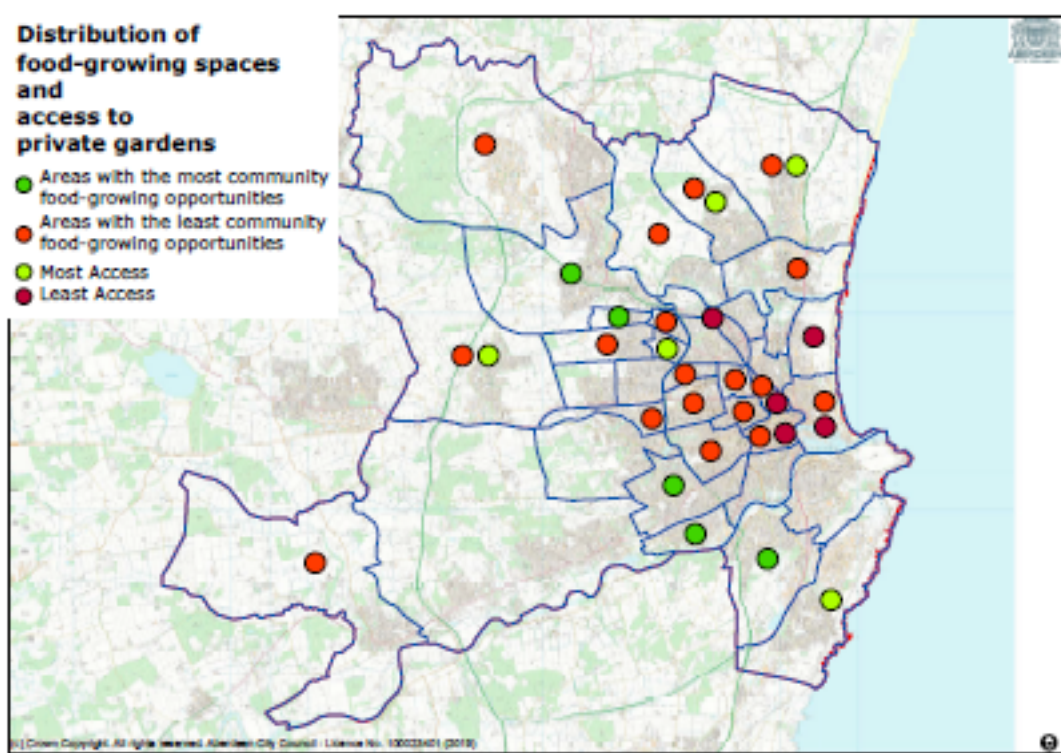


Figure 7: Combined map of food-growing opportunities from both community spaces and private gardens.

The distribution of allotment sites and other community food-growing spaces in Aberdeen is imbalanced. People living in the south of the city have the most existing provision. People living in the city centre and to the west of the city have the least provision.

²⁹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/geography/our-products/census-datasets/2011-census/2011-indexes>

3.5 Do people have good access to food-growing opportunities in the priority localities?

Of the 516 allotment plots in Aberdeen City Council allotment sites 61 are sited in one of the three priority localities experiencing most socio-economic need. A further 107 allotment plots are within 800 metres of the three priority localities. Therefore 32% of the total Aberdeen City Council allotment plots are within walking range of the localities experiencing most socio-economic need. In addition one of the private 'allotment' sites is sited in one of the three priority localities and another is within walking range providing access to approximately 100 more plots. Of the eleven community growing spaces in Aberdeen six are within the localities experiencing most socio-economic need and a further four are within 800 metres.

3.6 What else is happening in Aberdeen?

There are many good examples in Aberdeen of food-growing spaces being led by communities. Local case studies will be added to the Aberdeen City Council website³⁰ as they become available.

There are three private allotment sites in Aberdeen³¹: [Heathryfold](#), [Sunnybank](#) and Nether Loirston. Two of the biggest Aberdeen City Council allotments³² are run by constituted groups; [Slopefield](#) and [Garthdee](#)³³ who both actively engage with local schools and community groups.

The [Powis Residents Group](#) oversee a wide range of food-growing activities in their local area. Unused bowling greens are being converted into community food-growing spaces at [Bonnymuir Green](#) and [Springhill Community Garden](#) at Sheddocksley. The [Tullos Community and Wildlife Garden](#) is actively growing, holding events and engaging locally. There is a community garden at [St.Fitticks](#) with evolving plans for the future. [Brighter Bucksburn](#) have developed and maintain a herb garden and orchard.

Aberdeen City Council runs the [Grove Nursery](#) at Hazlehead which is actively used by the wider community including social enterprises, charities and schools. It also oversees a community garden at [Duthie Park](#).

There is considerable engagement taking place city-wide with school and nursery children. One Seed Forward and the University of Aberdeen created three school gardens and created educational materials which have been distributed to all schools in Aberdeen: [OSF Garden Schools](#). An [Edible Walls](#) toolkit has been developed by council officers and has been built in at least five schools and nurseries. [Gardening4kids](#) runs lessons for children. [The Royal Northern Countryside Initiative](#) has focussed on food-growing in the classroom linking it to tasting food and cooking lessons, distributing 77 growing boxes and engaging with nearly 2000 children. [RHS Groovy Growits](#) have provided gardening workshops at Duthie Park for children. [Project Craster](#) is Aberdeen City Council's project providing fun, educational materials and support to primary schools wishing to grow fruit and vegetables and making a link to biodiversity.

There are also many good examples already in Aberdeen of other food-growing initiatives which are growing skills and turning people's attention to 'growing their own'. In early 2019 the following organisations and projects are leading the way. [The Allotment Market Stall](#) is collecting surplus food from allotments and selling it to local people from stalls sited in Aberdeen parks. Aberdeen Inspired's [Urban Bee Project](#) partners with Aberdeen Alcohol & Drugs Action to explore the therapeutic benefits of beekeeping alongside wider engagement. [The Council Gardener](#)³⁴, Daniel Shand, regularly vlogs about topics linked to community food-growing. [One Seed Forward](#) widely engages with schools and other groups and individuals to plant and share potatoes. [Cultivate Aberdeen](#) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the aim to 'create kind, confident, and connected communities through the power of food-growing'. [The RHS](#) actively promotes community gardening to its local Britain In-Bloom groups and Its Your Neighbourhood

³⁰ <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/food-growing-strategy>

³¹ <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-parks/allotments/private-allotment-sites>

³² <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-parks/allotments>

³³ <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5e0b9f73-fae6-4d88-9973-c6e8f407c775>

³⁴ Council Gardener David Shand has his own vlog *The Council Gardener* <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/news/its-bloomin-lovely-in-aberdeen>

groups. A new social enterprise, Common Weal Cider, could increase foraging opportunities in Aberdeen and encourage the planting of a 'dispersed orchard'. Community Food Initiative North East [CFINE](#) is an established social enterprise well placed to make connections between food-growing and wider issues around sustainability and access to food. [The Aberdeen Multicultural Centre](#) have a vegetable growing initiative encouraging people to grow their own.

The Aberdeen University Students Association runs [AberGreen](#) which includes a community garden. [The James Hutton Institute](#) has its own allotments and its research into food and agriculture supports food initiatives across Scotland and worldwide.

Competitions are run each year and act as a driver for excellence and a source of publicity and recognition. Some are quite local like the 'Bonny Torry'³⁵ competition. The following are both city-wide awards competitions:

- [Aberdeen In Bloom Garden Competition](#) is run by Aberdeen City Council and its partners each year. It includes both a 'city allotment' category and a 'school garden' category.
- [Aberdeen EcoCity Awards](#) is run by Aberdeen City Council each year. It recognizes individuals and projects which contribute to making Aberdeen a more sustainable city. Many entries include food-growing. A new sustainable food category was included for 2018.

³⁵ <https://www.aberdeency.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/Newsbite%2048%20FINAL.pdf>

4 WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

This section discusses how we will move from where we are now to where we would like to be.

Aberdeen City Council will develop and maintain an action plan in partnership with key food-growing stakeholders. The action plan will be a living document; regularly reviewed and updated. The strategy has been written for everyone in Aberdeen with an interest; communities, partners, landowners and citizens. It will be taken forward by individuals and organisations across Aberdeen and, in particular, Community Planning Aberdeen³⁶ (CPA) which includes Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, the Aberdeen Civic Forum, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, the North East Scotland College and the Active Partnership Aberdeen amongst others. Further delivery partners are the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, the community councils and the Community Council Forum, Robert Gordons' University, the University of Aberdeen and SRUC. Key actions are shown in Tables 2,3 and 4.

4.1 What has been learned and what can be done?

Granite City Growing has been written in the light of what we have learned so far. Appendix 2 shows what has taken place to inform the development of the strategy.

In 2017 Aberdeen City Council put £145,000 towards the development of this strategy and to assist in setting up innovative food-growing projects; especially in the priority localities. The progress of the Community Food-growing programme has been reported through Aberdeen City Council committees^{37,38}. The key learning points collected from the community food-growing programme are summarized below:

- Supporting food-growing requires a cross-cutting approach; as it sits within both spatial planning and community planning and is relevant to five LOIP outcomes being delivered by a range of partners and ACC clusters.
- The community growing projects are only sustainable if communities are actively involved in their stewardship..
- Flexibility and partnership are important when supporting projects. There are many good projects and initiatives happening already but co-ordination and awareness of one another could be improved.
- Visibility leads to increased demand.
- Future resourcing of projects must be sought and maintained.

What we learned from the community food-growing programme	We will help by....	We can achieve even more by...
'a cross-cutting approach is needed'	Maintain a food-growing steering group to oversee the action plan.	Working with partners to express the ambition of Granite City Growing consistently in other local programmes, policies and plans

³⁶ <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/>

³⁷

<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s73137/CHI.17.162%20Community%20Food%20Growing%20Programme.pdf>

³⁸ <https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s87830/PLA18062%20-%20Community%20Food%20Growing%20Prgramme.pdf>

<p>‘ownership by the community builds in sustainability’</p>	<p>Streamline the process of accessing information, advice and support regarding external food-growing enquiries.</p>	<p>Facilitating food-growing groups in connection to the Community Café network</p> <p>Working with priority communities to develop ‘locality plans’ which include food-growing.</p>
<p>‘flexibility and partnership’</p>	<p>Streamline the internal ACC process of accessing information, advice and support regarding external food-growing enquiries.</p> <p>Publish and disseminate best practice case studies showcasing what is happening in Aberdeen to inform new potential projects.</p> <p>Encourage allotment-holders and community food-growing spaces to engage with their local communities.</p>	<p>Encourage land-owning partners to consider setting up their own community food-growing spaces and increasing foraging opportunities for their own workforces, customers or for the wider community.</p> <p>Support an active, City-wide food-growing network for sharing best practice and local growing knowledge.</p>
<p>‘visibility’</p>	<p>Include food-growing spaces in new community assets whenever possible; especially in new schools and nurseries.</p> <p>Encourage new and existing food-growing projects to maximise visibility through site selection and design.</p> <p>Investigate providing further food-growing spaces and foraging opportunities in public parks and gardens in Aberdeen.</p> <p>Encourage developers through the planning process to include food-growing and foraging opportunities within their plans.</p>	<p>Consider signing existing food-growing spaces on the ground where they are hard to locate.</p> <p>Consider developing a food-trail or local event to promote existing activities.</p> <p>Encourage land-owning partners to consider setting up their own community food-growing spaces and increasing foraging opportunities for their own workforces, customers or for the wider community.</p> <p>Link community grown food to local food outlets as far as is practicable.</p> <p>Plan and execute an awareness raising campaign.</p>
<p>‘future resourcing’</p>	<p>Develop a process to increase the flow of developer contributions towards food-growing making use of ‘community asset plans’ and local planning guidance.</p> <p>Work with colleagues to express the ambition of Granite City Growing consistently in the evolving Open Space Strategy, adopted Aberdeen Local Development Plan and refreshes of the LOIP and Locality Plans.</p> <p>Develop a process to trial the redirection of budget streams to</p>	<p>Work with community planning partners to redirect budget streams and funding opportunities towards food-growing to achieve LOIP outcomes.</p>

	support food-growing projects on Housing Revenue Account land.	
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Table 2: Key actions from the Action Plan responding to what we learned from the community food-growing programme.

In accordance with EU legislation a Strategic Environmental Assessment³⁹ has been completed for Granite City Growing. The requirement for a Habitats Regulations Appraisal has also been concluded. Both the SEA and HRA identified opportunities to develop best practice guidance for growers to encourage sustainable practices, minimise risks and maximise benefits to wildlife and the local environment.

What we learned from SEA and HRA process	We will help by....	We can achieve even more by...
'enhance the positive effects of Granite City Growing'	<p>Signpost to examples of good practice online and / or create new information for appropriate dissemination</p> <p>Encourage developers through the planning process to include biodiversity gain and climate adaptation aspects of food-growing and foraging opportunities within their plans.</p> <p>Supply and signpost allotment holders to best practice in order to maximise the environmental and social benefits of food-growing.</p>	<p>Working with local experts to investigate the best ways to encourage allotment holders and other food-growing project managers to include rainwater harvesting on their sites, to increase biodiversity, include organic soil management and composting and include bee hives and planting for pollinators on their sites.</p> <p>Raise awareness between community food-growing / 'grow-your-own' and reducing the carbon mileage of food and waste.</p> <p>Work with partners to signpost training and learning exchange opportunities.</p>
'reduce the risks of negative impacts'	<p>Seek the advice of local experts if food-growing projects are to be located in the Dee catchment.</p> <p>Streamline the internal ACC process of accessing information, advice and support regarding external food-growing enquiries to include contaminated land advice and biodiversity advice at an early stage in the identification of sites and projects.</p>	

Table 3: Key actions from the Action Plan responding to what we learned from the SEA and HRA process.

4.2 What you said you needed and what can be done

In the Aberdeen City Food-growing survey conducted throughout February 2018 (see Section 2.2), respondents were asked what support was needed to start growing or producing more of their own vegetables, fruit or herbs?

47% of people said **they needed advice on what and how to grow** (186 respondents)

³⁹ <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/strategic-environmental-assessment>

27% of people said **they needed help to find a suitable growing space** (106 respondents)

19% of people said **they needed help accessing equipment (e.g. gardening tools)**
(75 respondents)

14% of people said **they needed advice on how to use the vegetables, fruit or herbs**
(55 respondents)

13% of people said **they needed help to get a group started locally** (52 respondents)

9% of people said **they needed funding advice** (37 respondents)

Communities said...	We will help by....	We can achieve even more by working together to...
'advice on what and how to grow'	<p>Encourage allotment-holders to engage with their local communities.</p> <p>Consider making Grove Nursery at Hazlehead a local centre of excellence in food-growing.</p> <p>Update and signpost good advice for new allotment holders and community gardeners.</p>	<p>Signpost relevant organisations or good relevant food-growing advice and support from partner websites.</p> <p>Support an active, City-wide food-growing network for sharing best practice and local growing knowledge.</p>
'help to find a suitable growing space'	<p>Display existing food-growing opportunities on the Aberdeen Sustainable Food online map.</p> <p>Display new food-growing opportunities on a map displayed from the partner websites.</p>	<p>Encourage and support communities to use available 'Housing Revenue Account' land for food-growing.</p> <p>Community Planning partners will work with priority communities to include food-growing in all three locality plans.</p>
'help accessing equipment'	<p>Encourage the setting up of 'tool libraries' in community food-growing projects.</p>	<p>Divert gardening equipment from the waste-stream for reuse.</p>
'advice on how to use the vegetables, fruit or herbs'	<p>Signposting advice from relevant local partner websites.</p>	<p>Support training in food-growing skills alongside cooking and preservation skills.</p> <p>Include food-growing information in 'food conversations' held by local health professionals in the community.</p>
'help to get a group started locally'	<p>Signposting advice from relevant local partner websites.</p>	<p>Support an active, City-wide food-growing network for sharing best practice and local growing knowledge.</p>
'funding advice'	<p>Funding advice will be signposted from relevant local partner websites.</p>	<p>Support an active, City-wide food-growing network for sharing best practice and local growing knowledge.</p>

Table 4: Key actions from the Action Plan responding to what you said you wanted.

4.3 Aberdeen City Council's role.

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) is developing a map of 'opportunity sites' identifying land across Aberdeen which it considers suitable for allotments or other land that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers. Sites suitable for becoming allotments will be identified using criteria appropriate to growing into the soil on a regular shaped and sized plot. Sites suitable to also being used by the community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers will be identified using criteria appropriate to growing in a more flexible way ie not necessarily into the soil nor in a regular shaped or sized plot.

The 'opportunity sites' map will be publicly available so that communities and partners can make use of it if they require assistance in finding suitable land for new food-growing projects.

The Food-growing 'opportunity sites' map will be used to routinely inform decision-making to help make the best use of resources in supporting the vision of Granite City Growing.

The 'opportunity sites' map will initially be based on the 'Housing Amenity' layer available publicly through the Contact Centre Web Map Application from the Aberdeen City Council website:

<http://accvbsgisa02.acc.gov.uk/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=413d9c5290674db89ecbe7cd2ca60e52>

Housing Amenity land is predominately owned and maintained by Aberdeen City Council using payment from the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The map will be refined and expanded using data from the Open Space Audit and using the process described in Figure 9. It will be consulted on publicly in 2020 and published on the Council's website.

Food-growing projects which come forward on Council owned land will need to be co-designed with the relevant Council clusters.

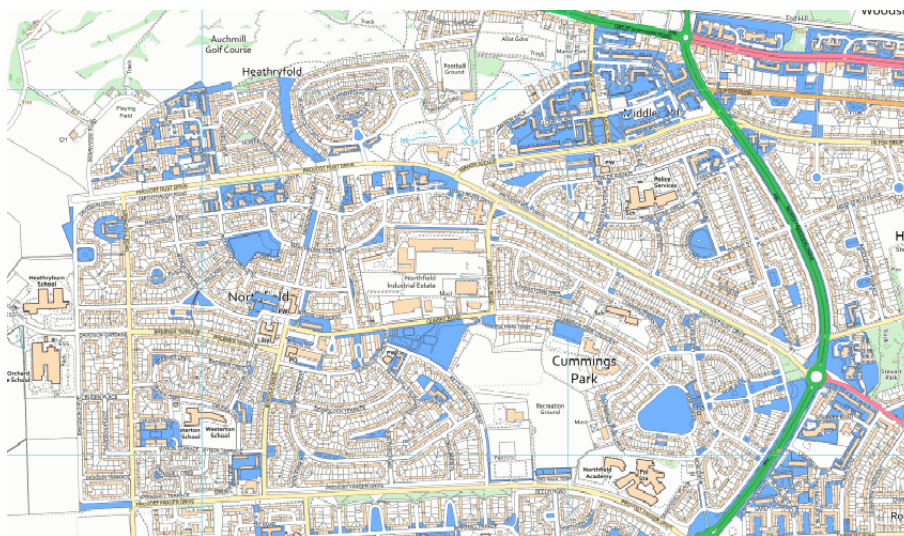


Figure 8 : An example of the Housing Amenity land taken from the Contact Centre Web Map App.

In order to support new projects to best achieve the ambition of Granite City Growing, ACC will prioritise projects in the following areas:

- areas where local demand has been demonstrated.
- areas with existing gaps in provision.
- areas with a lower proportion of private gardens.
- areas within the priority localities.

- areas where community capacity or partner capacity is evident

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 further requires ACC takes 'reasonable measures' to increase the provision of allotments or other areas of land that could be used for food-growing when the waiting list exceeds half the total number of allotments or when people are remaining on the allotment waiting list for a continuous period of more than five years.

Aberdeen City Council will report its allotment waiting list at least annually. If reasonable measures are triggered the Council will 1) make best use of the information and resources available; including the strategy, map and allotment waiting list to redirect existing resources and access new resources 2) work with partners and communities to co-create new opportunities.

In order to support new projects to best achieve the ambition of Granite City Growing once the trigger has been reached, projects will be prioritised and facilitated ***in the areas where local demand has been demonstrated via the allotment waiting list*** in the following areas:

- areas with existing gaps in provision.
- areas with a lower proportion of private gardens.
- areas within the priority localities.
- areas where community capacity / partner capacity is evident

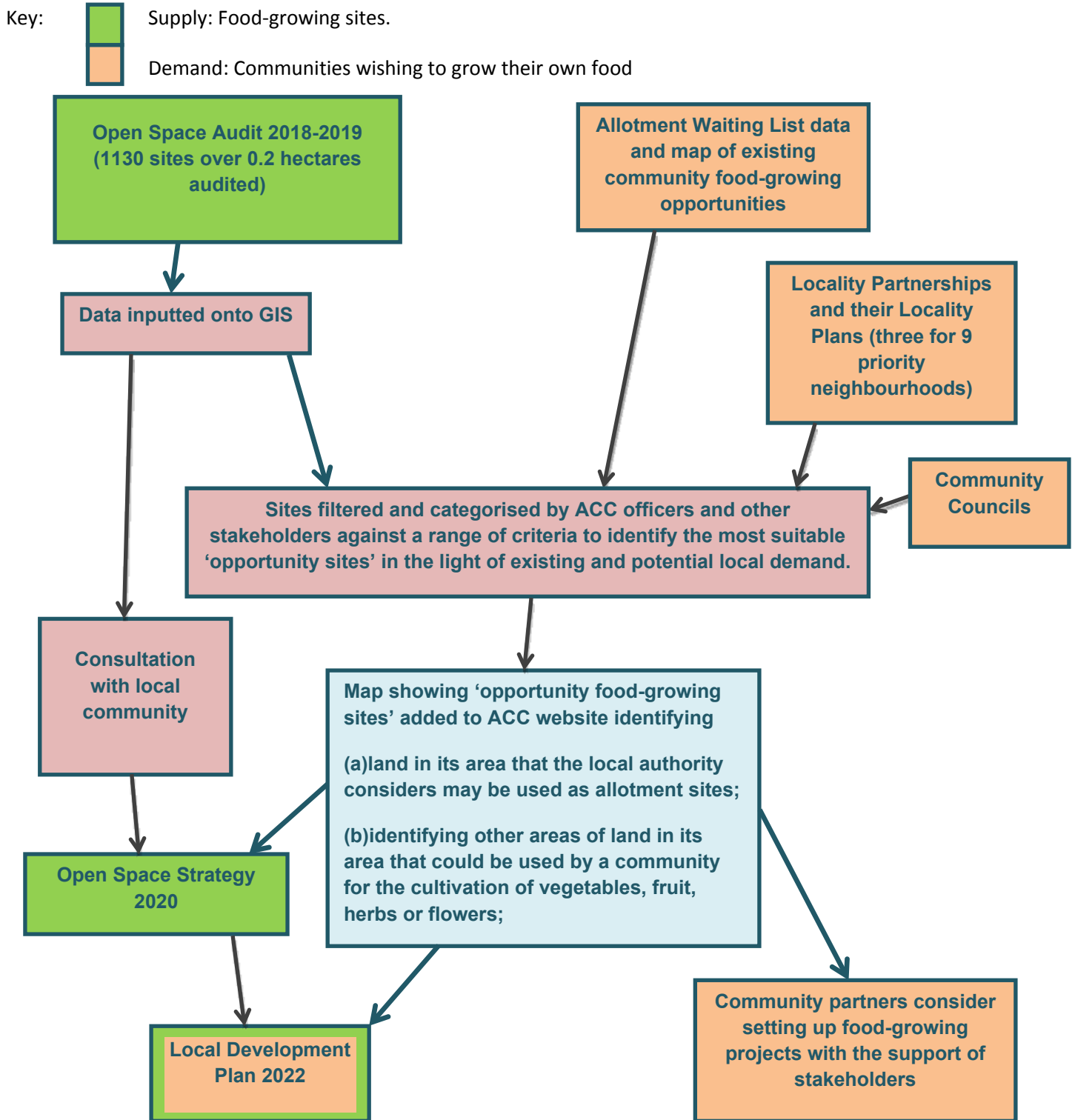


Figure 9: How ACC will create and maintain a map of 'opportunity food-growing spaces'

4.4 Resourcing food-growing.

There are many external funding pots available to community groups for well-defined projects. Community Engagement professionals have a role to play in helping groups come together to define food-growing projects and source external funding. Community planning partners will be encouraged to support food-growing in ways appropriate to their reach and available resources.

Local community groups have applied for funding from Tesco Bags of Help, their Community Councils, the Greggs Foundation, the Scottish Landfill Community Fund, the Climate Challenge Fund, Investing in Communities Fund and the local Health Improvement Fund (run by the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership) and the Fairer Aberdeen Fund for example.

By supporting an active, City-wide food-growing network, it is anticipated that the availability of non-financial resources (such as volunteers, tools, seeds and plants) in addition to knowledge of funding opportunities will be better communicated and accessed.

Opportunities for Aberdeen City Council to support food-growing through existing budgets have been considered in the preparation of Granite City Growing. There is potential for participatory budgeting, developer obligations, the Common Good Fund, Pupil Equity Funding and existing grounds maintenance budgets to be useful in supporting further food-growing opportunities and this will be explored more fully as Granite City Growing progresses.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 The Aberdeen, Scottish and International context and list of relevant policies, programmes and strategies.

1.1 The Aberdeen city-wide Context; key Plans, Policies and Strategies (PPS) were reviewed and considered in the development of the food-growing strategy. This list is not exhaustive and many other PPS and reports will be relevant, including organisation specific PPS developed by the stakeholders involved.

PPS	REFERENCE
New Urban Agenda 2017	http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf
Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives 2007	http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/objectives
Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy: Good Food Nation 2014	http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453219.pdf
Scotland's Economic Strategy 2015	http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00472389.pdf
National Performance Framework 2016	http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497339.pdf
Plenty – Food, farming and health in a new Scotland 2016	http://www.foodcoalition.scot/uploads/6/2/6/8/62689573/plenty_complete.pdf
Far reaching fare	https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/CFHS-far-reaching-fare.pdf
Empowering Scotland's Cities 2016	https://www.scottishcities.org.uk/site/assets/files/1184/empowering_city_government.pdf
National Allotment Society Policies	https://www.nsalg.org.uk/resources-and-downloads/national-allotment-society-policies/
Menu for change	http://menuforchange.org.uk/
Good Food Nation Bill	http://www.nourishscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Good-Food-Nation-Bill-background-briefing-Oct-2017.pdf and http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/1195/0
Granite City Good Food Charter	http://sustainablefoodcities.org/Portals/4/Documents/charters/SFCPA%20Food%20Charter.pdf
Towards a Fairer Aberdeen 2017-2020	https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s67197/CHI.17.004%20-%20Towards%20A%20Fairer%20Aberdeen%20Final%20Appendix%20A.pdf
Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen Action Plan Allotments Management Policy (dated 2008)	http://sustainablefoodcities.org/findacity/cityinformation/userid/462 http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files/ns_allotments/allotment_management_policy2009.pdf
Deprivation In Aberdeen City, An analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=73363&SID=332
Regional Economic Development Strategy	https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/aberdeen-cms/files/Regional_Economic_Strategy_0.pdf
Aberdeen Adapts	https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/climate-change/adapting-climate-change
Food Poverty Action Aberdeen	https://foodpovertyactionaberdeen.org/
Allotments Policy and Action Plan	http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/AllotmentStrategies/AberdeenActionPlan.pdf
Local Development Plan (and accompanying supplementary guidance).	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=74821&SID=9484
Housing Strategy	https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/consultation-to-shape-aberdeens-local-housing-strategy/
Open Space Strategy 2011 – 2016 (currently under review)	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=42832&SID=11561
Nature Conservation Strategy 2010-2015 (currently under review)	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files/Natural_Heritage/Nature_Strategy_Dec2015_extended.pdf
Tree and Woodland strategy (currently being drafted)	Draft not yet available on line.
Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027	http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A2360102.pdf
Scotland's Biodiversity: a Route Map to 2020	http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00480289.pdf
Polli Nation	http://www.polli-nation.co.uk/
Scottish Government Malnutrition Summit 2015	https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/malnutrition-summit-report.pdf
The nature and extent of food poverty 2015	https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/25717-The-nature-and-extent-of-food-poverty_2015.pdf
Dignity, Ending Hunger Together In Scotland 2016	http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502395.pdf
Urban Green Space interventions and health	http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/337690/FULL-REPORT-for-LLP.pdf?ua=1

1.2 The Scottish Context

a) The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015⁴⁰ requires that all local authorities prepare a food-growing strategy for their area. Section 119 of the Community Empowerment Act requires a food-growing strategy is a document :

- (a) identifying land in its area that the local authority considers may be used as allotment sites;
 - (b) identifying other areas of land in its area that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers;
- describing how, where the authority is required to take reasonable steps under section 112(1), the authority intends to increase the provision in its area of—
 - (i) allotments, or
 - (ii) other areas of land for use by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers,The description required by paragraph (c) of subsection (3) must in particular describe whether and how the authority intends to increase the provision of the types of land mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of that subsection in communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scottish Government has created guidance⁴¹ on how to prepare a food-growing strategy.

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 also defines the allotment duties of a local authority. They are obliged to create, maintain, report on and address the needs of waiting lists and will be required to ensure that no individual sits on a waiting list for more than 5 years without offer of a fit for purpose plot.

b) **The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009**⁴² requires that Public Bodies exercise their functions:

- in a way best calculated to contribute to deliver the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- in a way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- in a way that it considers most sustainable.

Local food-growing has a role to play in reducing emissions which contribute to climate change; adapting places to future climate changes and providing opportunities for more sustainable lifestyles.

c) The Good Food Nation Bill

Scotland has the aspiration to become a Good Food Nation⁴³ by 2025. The vision includes the following:

- 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.
- food companies are a thriving feature of the economy and places where people want to work.

A period of consultation was completed by the Scottish Government in April 2019.

⁴⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/section/119/enacted>

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/part-9-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-allotments-guidance-local-authorities-section-119-duty-prepare-food-growing-strategy/>

⁴² <https://adaptationscotland.org/why-adapt/legislation/climate-change-adaptation-scotland>

⁴³ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/food-and-drink/good-food-nation/>

In July 2019 the Scottish Government introduced its ***Vision 2030+ Learning for Sustainability*** report and framework⁴⁴ which strongly places access to greenspaces and food-growing within a vision to educate school pupils to be responsible citizens of the world.

1.3 The International context:

The United Nations launched the Global Goals for sustainable development in 2015⁴⁵, otherwise known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They set 17 goals for a better world by the year 2030. Local food growing is relevant to achieving ten of the seventeen goals. Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to sign-up to the SDGs. Scotland has worked to express them through the National Performance Framework⁴⁶.

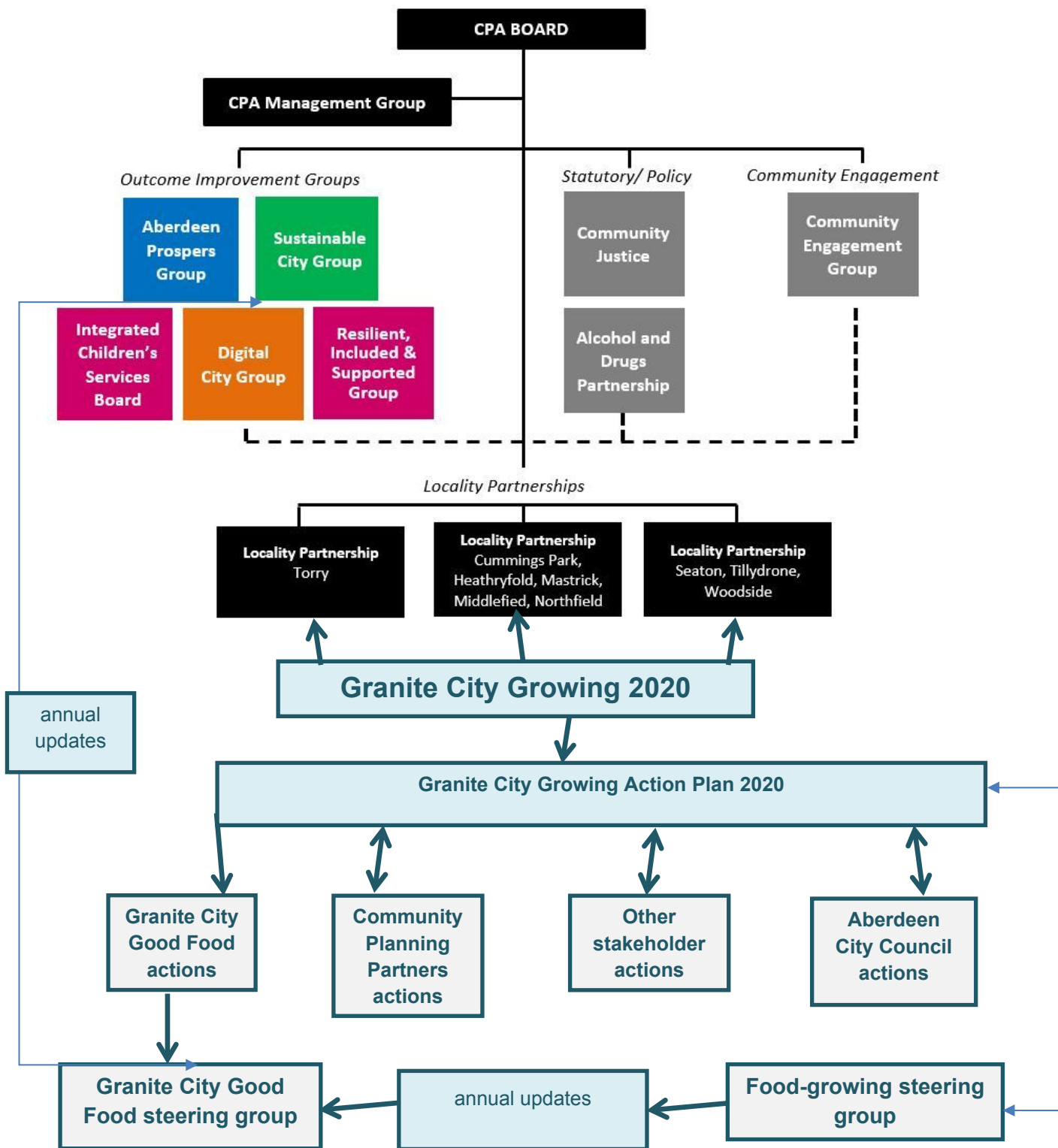


⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/news/commitment-to-sustainable-learning/>

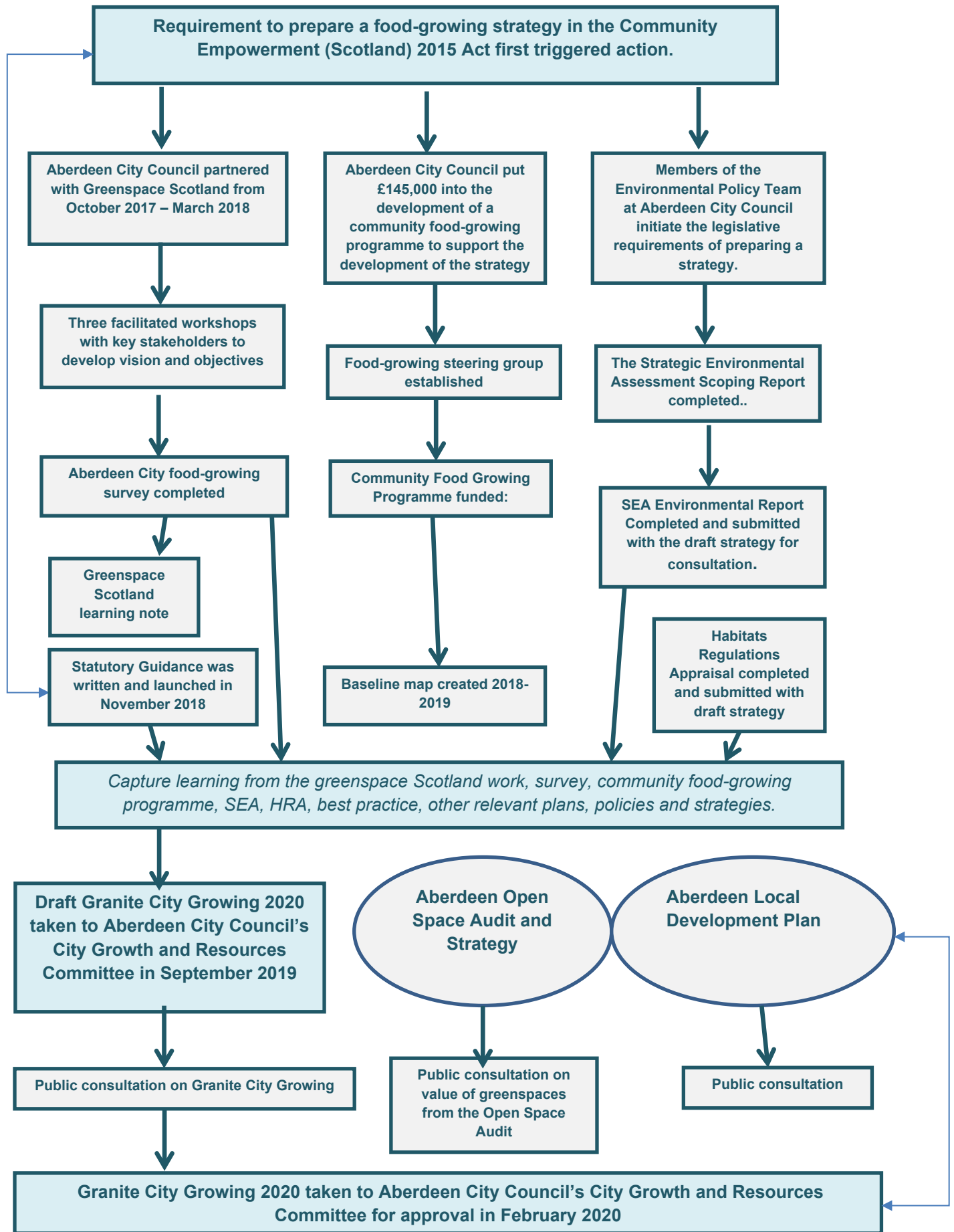
⁴⁵ <https://www.globalgoals.org> and <https://globalgoals.scot/>

⁴⁶ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

Appendix 2: Governance of Granite City Growing



Appendix 3 :How Granite City Growing has taken shape.



Appendix 4: Planning and Food-growing flow chart. Taken from the Scottish Government guidance on how to prepare a food-growing strategy.

