

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	29 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
REPORT TITLE	Community Food Growing Programme
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/162
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandy Highton

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from committee for a package of measures to generate the best outcomes from the £145,000 capital budget allocated in support of the emerging Food Growing Strategy for Aberdeen; a duty under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The projects and initiatives identified will deliver community food-growing spaces and seek to promote and facilitate community food-growing city-wide.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that committee:
- a. Approve commencement of the Community Food Growing Programme (“the programme”), as listed in Appendix 1.
  - b. Approve the estimated expenditure (as detailed in Appendix 1) in relation to the proposed programme including potential procurement exercises up to individual contract values of £25,000.
  - c. Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development in consultation with the Convenor of Communities Housing and Infrastructure to amend the programme should priorities and feasibilities change during the year.
  - d. Instruct the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to report back to this Committee in one years’ time with a review of the recommended programme.

## **3. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Finance Policy and Resources Committee of 9th March 2017 resolved to allocate £145,000 from the Non Housing Capital Programme, as follows:

Item 5.4 (3); *‘to allocate £145,000 to the three regeneration areas in anticipation of the publication of statutory guidance on the Community*

*Empowerment Act 2015 in respect of the requirement to develop a food growing strategy, with the money being used to identify and provide new community growing spaces and innovative ways of developing community gardens, noting the alignment to Aberdeen Sustainable Food City aspirations to tackle food insecurity and Aberdeen's membership of the Sustainable Food Cities Network, and further noting that tackling food poverty through community growing spaces is a key priority within the document 'Towards a fairer Aberdeen that prospers for all; a review of Aberdeen City Council activity tackling poverty' and the Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26.'*

- 3.2 Relevant officers working across Communities and Environmental teams were approached to put forward existing project ideas ("the project/s") to form the programme to deliver the above Resolution. Projects are within and across all three regeneration areas or serve the people of those areas. The three regeneration areas, or localities, are:
  - 1 - Torry;
  - 2 - Middlefield, Mastrick, Heathryfold, Cummings Park and Northfield;
  - 3 - Seaton, Tillydrone and Woodside.
- 3.3 A project assessment matrix (refer to Appendix 2) was compiled in consultation with Council officers. Its purpose is to create a more objective framework for assessment of projects on the basis of available information on site viability as well as governance arrangements and expected outcomes for communities. Each project was assessed by several Council officers, using the assessment matrix.
- 3.4 In addition city-wide initiatives have been considered and added to the programme if they are deliverable within this financial year and can demonstrate potential to deliver positive outcomes for people living in regeneration areas.
- 3.5 All project proposals have been recorded on forms adapted from the Project Management Office (PMO) toolkit. Outputs and outcomes have been identified for each, will be monitored over the relevant timescales and reported through the Programme annual report.
- 3.6 All projects include significant partnership working and require a collaborative approach between Aberdeen City Council teams and community partners.
- 3.7 In total 19 site-specific projects have been assessed and a further six non-site specific projects considered.
- 3.8 One project proposal is for a Food Growing Development Officer, employed by CFINE; a key Council partner and the lead organisation in Aberdeen for community food initiatives. The officer will play a vital role to support the Council, its partners and communities to develop, deliver, monitor and report on the programme, while also feeding into the wider Food Growing Strategy work which the Council is required to undertake. It is expected that the Council will provide funding for a limited period during which CFINE will also seek to secure additional external funding for the continuation of the post.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Funding for this programme has been allocated from the Non-Housing Capital Programme (NHCP850).
- 4.2 Projects have been assessed for their long-term sustainability, focusing on a community management approach, with the support of Council and CFINE officers. This approach seeks to secure community empowerment while reducing the long-term revenue burden on the Council for managing the sites.
- 4.3 Should any projects struggle to be sustained in the short-term, Environmental Services have agreed to continue to maintain sites until such time as the local community can build the capacity to do so. It should be noted that most of the sites are already under Council ownership & management, no new sites will be acquired and there will be little to no impact on existing revenue budgets.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council will seek to use existing in-house resources to deliver the programme, where possible. Where services cannot be provided in house, the Council will draw on existing contracts or framework agreements, where they provide the required services. Where the Council requires to secure external services, supplies or works, these will be done in compliance with the Council's Procurement Regulations and in adherence to Procedures for Following the Public Pound.
- 5.2 Section 119 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to prepare a Food Growing Strategy for their area. This programme will feed into the process of strategy development for Aberdeen.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

##### **6.1 Financial**

Overall the financial risk to Aberdeen City Council is considered to be low. Project Status Reports (PSRs) will be submitted by the budget holder on a monthly basis. Within these reports is a section on new and emerging risks where these risks will be scored using the scoring matrix within the Project Management Office (PMO) toolkit. Further detail on how these risks are to be mitigated and actioned is included within the PSRs.

##### **6.2 Employee**

Development and delivery of this programme in collaboration with communities requires significant officer capacity, which the Council does not currently retain. The inclusion of an external, fixed-term Development Officer is therefore considered as a critical element in managing the success of this programme.

##### **6.3 Customer / Citizen**

Partners and community groups involved in the food-growing projects will assess and mitigate their own risks and will be supported to do so.

#### 6.4 **Environmental**

Assessment for soil contamination will occur as necessary. Containers, raised beds and imported soil will be used to mitigate the risks if contamination is present.

#### 6.5 **Technological**

None

#### 6.6 **Legal**

Individual projects will be managed to conform to applicable legislation identified at the start of each project by the individual project manager. This may include statute that relates to contaminated land, waste, animal by-products, open space and natural heritage, for example.

#### 6.7 **Reputational**

A communications plan and consultation events will be developed with the Council's communications team to maximise positive publicity and minimise the risk of negative publicity.

### 7. **IMPACT SECTION**

There are many plans, policies and strategies that align to this initiative and the key ones are highlighted below.

#### 7.1.1 The [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#) (Pages 51- 52): A People Friendly City; states the vision to:

*'Reduce number of people affected by household food insecurity and increase the provision of allotments and community food growing spaces'*

From a baseline of 468 growing spaces there is a target to increase this by 1% in 2017-2018, amounting to 4-5 new growing spaces in 2017-2018.

#### 7.1.2 [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan](#). Within the vision of a smarter environment it is stated that:

4d) *We will provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote biodiversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside.*

#### 7.2 **Economy**

##### 7.2.1 The projects will aid and inform the development of a food-growing strategy for Aberdeen. By monitoring the progress of these projects valuable lessons will be learned to assist in the success of future community food-growing projects.

7.2.2 Building community food-growing capacity could lead to the productive asset transfer of vacant or derelict Council sites to community groups. This has the potential to contribute to a vibrant local food economy as promoted by the Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen and also reduce maintenance requirements currently covered by Environmental Services for these sites.

7.2.3 The Regional Economic Development Strategy has singled out the food and drink sector. It states:

*'We will capitalise on our natural heritage and quality of life, and broaden our economic base by growing and developing our food and drink, agriculture and fishing, tourism, life sciences, business, financial and professional services, creative industries and new energy technologies. So that in the longer term, we will have sustained and secured the well-being of the city, region and its people, delivering a more balanced and resilient economy and achieved inclusive economic growth that benefits all.'*

Providing opportunities for community food-growing will encourage skills development in this area which could benefit the local food and drink sector.

### **7.3 People**

7.3.1 Community food-growing presents an opportunity to engage across the generations as food growing knowledge and skills tend to be developed through experience. It can also be used to tackle social isolation.

7.3.2 All projects have been assessed for their suitability for people with mobility challenges.

7.3.3 The therapeutic qualities of food-growing and the resulting benefits to health and wellbeing will be monitored as appropriate.

7.3.4 People from ethnic minority communities will be able to share their food-growing skills and, if they are new to the area, learn the requirements for horticultural success in the north east of Scotland.

7.3.5 For people experiencing food-poverty, community food-growing spaces could offer a source of free and fresh produce.

7.3.6 An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been conducted. This identified only positive impacts for those with protected characteristics, in line with the above statements. Therefore, no actions are proposed to mitigate any negative impacts, as none are foreseen.

### **7.4 Place**

7.4.1 Aberdeen is a Sustainable Food City network member. Councillor Lesley Dunbar chairs the Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen. See appendix 3 for more information.

- 7.4.2 Community food-growing can be used as a vehicle to engage with local communities; it can help with place-making and provide an opportunity for a healthy and productive activity alongside other open spaces.

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017 (3.98) states:

*Protecting and enhancing the Green Space Network will also provide opportunities to enhance the landscape of Aberdeen, improve biodiversity and amenity, provide community growing spaces, reduce the impact of flooding and help us mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and support successful placemaking.*

## 7.5 Technology

- 7.5.1 A community food-growing layer will be added to the Aberdeen City Council Geographical Information System. This will allow a 2017 baseline to be established, identify gaps in provision and demonstrate progress over time.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Finance Policy and Resources Committee, 9/3/17, item 16 \(4\)](#)  
[The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017 \(3.98\)](#)  
[LOIP](#)  
[Regional Economic Strategy](#)  
[Towards a Fairer Aberdeen that Prospers for all](#)  
[Sustainable Food City Initiative](#)  
[Open Space Strategy](#)  
[Sustainable Food Cities - CHI/16/003](#)  
[Sustainable Food Cities - Tackling Food Poverty - CHI/16/187](#)  
[Tackling Food Poverty - Update Report - CHI/16/283](#)  
[Supplementary Guidance: Green Space Network & Open Space](#)

## 9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Community Food Growing Programme Projects 2017/18  
Appendix 2: Assessment criteria for site specific food-growing projects.  
Appendix 3: Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen

## 10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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## Appendix 1: Community Food Growing Programme

Please note    *Locality 1 - Torry;*  
                       *Locality 2 - Middlefield, Mastrick, Heathryfold, Cummings Park and Northfield;*  
                       *Locality 3 -Seaton, Tillydrone and Woodside.*

No	Locality / Scope	Project	Description of work	Estimated Expenditure	Score
1.	Locality 1	Deeside Family Centre Me2 Service	Baskets, planters and tools suitable for introducing food-growing to nursery aged children.	£550	57%
2.	Locality 1	Redmoss Allotments	Drainage investigation to bring three allotments back into use.	£1,000	54%
3.	Locality 1	Torry Food-growing initiative	Several projects in the Torry area are still being assessed.	£12,000	N/A
<i>Sub-total Locality 1</i>				<b>£13,550</b>	
4.	Locality 2	Cummings Park Community Centre	Fencing, planters, raised beds, tools, storage, fruit trees.	£20,000	61%
5.	Locality 2	Sheddocksley Bowling Green	Creation of a growing space, a polytunnel and community events.	£12,850	54%
<i>Sub-total Locality 2</i>				<b>£32,850</b>	
6.	Locality 3	Seaton Recovery Centre	Planters, tools, seeds and a community fridge-freezer.	£3,000	65%
7.	Locality 3	Tillydrone Community Flat	Container gardening and polytunnel for residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables	£3,000	57%
8.	Locality 3	Seaton Community Gardening	Targeting tenants unable to access the garden maintenance scheme.	£2,000	56%

No	Locality / Scope	Project	Description of work	Estimated Expenditure	Score
9.	Locality 3	Greening Donside – Community Garden & Wild Orchards	Creation of a community garden, installation of a polytunnel and composter.	£14,500	54%
<i>Sub-total Locality 3</i>				<b>£22,500</b>	
10.	All three localities	Schools Projects	Pilot projects working with selected primary schools in each locality. Includes projects in partnership with One Seed Forward and the University of Aberdeen. Also includes pilot project looking at innovative vertical growing in small spaces.	£20,000	66%
11.	All three localities	Food Growing Bags	In partnership with CFINE. 1000 bags for distribution through Community Food Outlets.	£8,000	48%
<i>Sub-total 'All-three locality initiatives'</i>				<b>£28,000</b>	
12.	City-wide	CFINE Development Officer	Support the Council, its partners and communities to develop, deliver, monitor and report on the programme	£35,000 (2017/18)	N/A
13.	City-wide	Communication Plan	Engagement, publicity and events.	£1,100	N/A
15.	City-wide	Grove Nursery	Clearance and erection of a polytunnel to support new growing initiatives	£12,000	42%
<i>Sub-total 'City-wide'</i>				<b>£48,100</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£145,000</b>	



## **Appendix 2: Assessment criteria for site specific food-growing projects.**

*Each project was scored by a group of officers from Environmental Services, Housing, Community Planning and Environmental Policy. The 'project assessment' section was applied to city-wide projects and the physical assessment was additionally done for site-specific projects. Each was scored between 0 to 3 where 0 = no information or not met, 1 = partly met, 2 = fully met and 3 = exceeded.*

<b>PROJECT ASSESSMENT</b>
Is there a demonstrable demand for this project?
Is this a new food-growing site?
Will it be accessible to many people (over 20)?
Will it be accessible to all (taking into account special needs or requirements of all users)?
Will it be visible publicly (other than to those involved in the project)?
Is it locally 'innovative'?
Will there be match-funding available (at least 50%)?
Are there multiple desirable outcomes from this project? (Health / social / economic / environmental / resource efficient / educational / biodiversity etc)
Will the project be self-sustaining within two years?
Can it be delivered within this financial year?
Is it fully located in the regeneration area? If not can it be demonstrated that people from the regeneration area will benefit?
<b>Project Score (out of a maximum of 33)</b>
<b>PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT</b>
Is the land available? (is the landowner known and in agreement).
Is the soil quality good for food growing? Or if it is contaminated can imported soil be suitably contained?
Is the site well drained? If not can this be remedied within the project?
Is the site sheltered and receiving adequate daylight? If not can this be remedied within the project?
Is the site secure? If not can this be remedied within the project?
Is water available on the site? If not can this be remedied within the project?
Are toilets available to users of the site? If not can this be remedied within the project?
<b>Physical Assessment Score (out of a max. of 21)</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE (Project &amp; Physical) out of a max. of 54</b>

### **Appendix 3: The Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen**



*The Sustainable Food Cities approach is about recognising the pivotal role that food can play in driving positive social, economic and environmental change.*

The Soil Association, Sustain and Nourish run the Sustainable Food Cities Network. The Sustainable Food Cities model for transforming food culture includes:

- Establishing a cross sector food partnership
- Developing and delivering a food strategy and action plan
- Embedding healthy and sustainable food in policy

There are six key areas which we have decided to focus our work on in Aberdeen:

1. *Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.*
2. *Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to healthy food.*
3. *Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.*
4. *Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.*
5. *Transforming catering and food procurement.*
6. *Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.*

An initial event entitled 'EAT Aberdeen' was held in May 2016 to gauge interest in Aberdeen taking forward the Sustainable Food Cities approach. The event was well attended and confirmed a positive commitment from the members to take this approach forwards. Since then a lot has been happening behind the scenes.

#### **Key Updates from Aberdeen**

- The Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen (SFCPA) was formed and had its inaugural meeting on 29th March 2017.  
This is a cross-sector partnership, with members including; Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership, Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE), Enscape Ltd., NHS Grampian, The Allotment Market Stall, The University of Aberdeen/ Rowett Institution, Tillydrone Community Flat as well as local food businesses.
- The partnership (and Aberdeen as a city) was officially accepted and announced by the Soil Association as the 48<sup>th</sup> member of the Sustainable Food Cities Network in March 2017.

- SFCPA have a 'shop window' page on the Sustainable Food Cities website:  
<http://sustainablefoodcities.org/findacity/cityinformation/userid/462>  
This is a chance to share work that is happening locally – if you'd like to see something shared on this page, email: [SFCPA@cfine.org](mailto:SFCPA@cfine.org)
  - The SFCPA submitted funding applications to the Esmée Fairburn Foundation for a Sustainable Food Cities Co-ordinator and person time to run a 'Sugar Smart' campaign. Both applications were successful.
  - It was agreed that the Co-ordinator post would be based at CFINE, reporting to the SFCPA. Laura Penny was appointed as the co-ordinator, and began in post as of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017.
  - Cllr Lesley Dunbar was elected Chairperson of the SFCPA at the SFCPA meeting on 31st May 2017.
  - Laura Penny, Lesley Dunbar and Hilary Bell (NHS Grampian) attended the annual Sustainable Food Cities conference in Edinburgh on 13<sup>th</sup> June, meeting other SFC partners across the UK, and attended workshops which ranged from 'getting the basics right', to 'engaging with businesses', 'developing multi-functional food hubs' and 'identifying, motivating and supporting local food champions' amongst other interesting topics.
  - Work has begun on developing 'working-groups' who will take the lead on each priority area – these groups will look at the draft action plan with the intention of strengthening it and firming it up.
  - To promote our approach, and to share information about what is happening with the SFCPA, a Facebook and Twitter page have been created.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SFCPAberdeen/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SFCPAberdeen>

