

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Capital Programme Committee
DATE	12 th September 2018
REPORT TITLE	Community Food-growing Programme
REPORT NUMBER	PLA/18/062
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Gale Beattie
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandy Highton
TERMS OF REFERENCE	8. 1. (1.2) To oversee and monitor the development, approval and delivery of the Council's capital programme, including: those interventions that contribute to the overall place outcomes for the City as a result of investment in infrastructure.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report updates elected members on the progress of the Community Food-growing Programme and seeks the necessary approvals to support new projects.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 Notes the progress to date, including successes in attracting external donations and in-kind contributions to support the original Community Food-growing Programme, and the on-going consultations with the Food Growing Steering Group; and
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to amend the remainder of the Community Food-growing Programme should priorities and feasibilities change;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to investigate external funding opportunities to extend the Community Food-growing Programme into a self-funded model, and report this to a future meeting of the City Growth and Resources committee in a years' time.

3. BACKGROUND

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 A programme of work was approved by the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of 29th August 2017.

3.3 An update on the Community Food-growing Programme is provided in Appendix 1 and Tables 1 and 2 below.

3.4 Savings have been achieved across the programme because of donated material, other funding sources, volunteer labour and the use of existing capacity within the council. To date, five projects are complete and from the original £145,000 set aside from the Non-Housing Capital Programme, £95,152 has been spent, a further £27,505 has been allocated or carried forward and £22,343 is available to support new projects as they come forward (see tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1: Summary of financial position of programme (July 2018)

	Projects already allocated carried forward from the 2017 / 18 programme	Status	Spent / granted	Carried forward for 2018/19	Available for new projects.
1	Deeside Family Centre Me2 Service	Complete	£542	-	£8
2	Redmoss Allotments	Complete	£1800	-	-£800
3	Torry food-growing initiative	Pending	£0	£12,000	£0
4	Cummings Park Community Centre	Pending	£0	£5,000	15,000

5	Sheddocksley Bowling Green	Grant awarded pending planning permission.	£10,580	-	2,270
6	Seaton Recovery Centre	Complete	£827	-	£2,173
7	Tillydrone Community Flat	Grant awarded	£2900	-	£100
8	Seaton Community Gardening (Lord Hay's)	Grant awarded	£2170	-	-£170
9	Greening Donside – Community Garden & Wild Orchards	Grant awarded	£14,500	-	£0
10	Schools Projects	Grant awarded	£13,565	£6,435	£0
11	Food Growing Bags	Ongoing	£0	£3,100	£0
12	BID Bee Project	Grant awarded	£4,900	-	£0
13	CFINE Development Officer	Complete	£35,000	£0	£0
14	Communication Plan	Ongoing	£130	£970	£0
15	Grove Nursery	Complete	£8238	£0	£3762
	TOTAL		£95,152	£27,505	£22,343

Table 2: Value Added to the programme through external donations and in-kind contributions.

Project	Match Funding	Volunteer Numbers	Volunteer hours	Donated Materials (market value)
Sheddocksley Bowling Green	£500	16 + 8 from the Unpaid Work Team.	200+	£700+ of wooden boxes converted to planters, more to follow
Torry food-growing project	Up to £5000 from Dragados	22+6 from the Unpaid Work Team.	70+ and more Promised from Dragados	£160+ for tools etc
Seaton Recovery Centre	£900 from the Fairer Aberdeen Fund			
Schools Projects		50+	200+ during garden construction	£2500 of timber from EIS
Food-growing bags		8+ from Aberdeen Drugs Action	100+	Bags/plants/Compost from the waste team and Grove Nursery

- 3.5 A Food-Growing Steering Group (FGSG) sits monthly to oversee the progress of the programme and the emerging food-growing strategy for Aberdeen: Granite City Growing. Food-growing requires a cross-cutting approach as it affects physical and mental health, nutrition, climate adaptation, waste, poverty, social isolation and community cohesion. Consequently, the FGSG consists of representatives from the Environmental Policy Team, Environmental Services, the Communities Team, Community Food Initiative North East (CFINE), Granite City Good Food (previously the Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen), the Hutton Institute and the Civic Forum.
- 3.6 All projects have included significant partnership working and require a collaborative approach between Aberdeen City Council teams and community partners. A Community Food-growing Officer has been funded until the end of September 2018 for employment by CFINE to oversee the programme; to launch and support the projects; and to make connections across this cross-cutting agenda.
- 3.7 The FGSG assess project proposals against the criteria used when developing the programme. New project proposals will be assessed in the same way. Change requests can currently be authorised by the Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning in consultation with the convenor of the Operational Delivery Committee (the delegated authority was granted at the Communities Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 29/8/17 and was for the convenor of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee which was transferred to the convenor of Operational Delivery Committee until the end date of 29/8/18). Once approved for funding, agreement letters are put in place on a project by project basis reflecting what has been agreed.
- 3.8 The progress of the Community Food Growing Programme is reported through monthly Project Status Reports to the Programme Board. The change request procedure can be used to amend the programme should priorities and feasibilities change allowing new projects to be added as they come forward. Change requests are signed off by the Programme Board.
- 3.9 Over the course of the year it has been shown that the community's level of interest, confidence and skills are the most important factor determining the success of any food-growing space. Funds have only been released to third-parties once the level of community engagement has been judged to be sufficient. Without adequate community engagement the projects lack sustainability and are unlikely to last beyond one growing season. The delay to some projects in the programme has been due to issues of building this capacity.
- 3.10 In considering new projects the FGSG will attempt to protect the balance of the original programme between projects in the three localities and city-wide initiatives.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	<p>Increased maintenance costs in the future.</p> <p>Grants given to third parties who then do not deliver the project.</p> <p>More money committed than is available.</p>	L	<p>The sustainability of projects will be assessed to ensure that ongoing maintenance of projects does not become a burden for the Council.</p> <p>The 'Following the Public Pound' procedure is followed.</p> <p>Monthly Project Status Reports are taken to the Capital Programme Board for oversight.</p>
Legal	<p>Land owners object to their land being used for food-growing.</p> <p>Grants are given to third parties who then do not deliver the project to standard.</p>	L	<p>Lessons learned from the Food-growing Programme will inform the preparation of Granite City Growing.</p> <p>Land ownership will be assessed for each project.</p> <p>Letters of Agreement are put in place with constituted groups in receipt of grants. Projects are monitored by the FGSG.</p>
Employee	Supporting community	L	

	<p>food-growing projects could raise the morale of staff because of its health and wellbeing benefits. There is a risk ACC does not benefit from this opportunity.</p> <p>Employment of a Community Food-growing Officer may become necessary if the existing post is unable to secure further funding or the programme expands</p>		<p>Funding is found to extend the Community Food-growing officer post. If not then food-growing actions would need to be added to the remit of existing staff.</p>
Customer	<p>Increasing the visibility of urban food-growing could increase the demand for allotments and other food-growing spaces.</p> <p>There is a risk that demand for food-growing opportunities will not be met.</p>	L	<p>The allotment waiting list is reviewed annually.</p> <p>Food-growing is included in the current open-space audit to identify suitable land.</p> <p>Food-growing will be included within the next Local Development Plan. Identifying land for food-growing is a requirement of the food-growing strategy.</p>
Environment	<p>Community food-growing can contribute to reducing food-miles, improving soil quality and increasing biodiversity. There is a risk that Aberdeen does not benefit from this opportunity.</p> <p>Pollution can occur from food-growing activities.</p>	L	<p>A Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently being prepared.</p> <p>Advice on chemical use, composting, water use and potentially contaminated soil will be considered on a project by project basis.</p>
Technology	<p>Water harvesting and solar technologies could be part of food-growing sites.</p> <p>Digital platforms could be</p>	L	

	used to raise awareness of Granite City Growing. There is a risk that the Council does not benefit from these opportunities.		
Reputational	<p>Encouraging and supporting community food-growing should enhance the authority's reputation if adequately communicated. There is a risk that the Council does not benefit from this opportunity.</p> <p>There is a reputational risk to the Council if it doesn't actively support the evolving Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen: Granite City Good Food</p> <p>There is a risk to the Council if a project goes badly or the support for projects is pulled.</p>	L	Staff in the communications team are kept up-to date with progress.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Community food-growing can potentially supplement the local food economy; building skills and building expectations around valuing fresh local food. It has a place within the Granite City Good Food action plan regarding supporting local food economies.
Prosperous People	Community food-growing can potentially contribute to reducing food poverty, reducing social isolation, increasing mental well-being, increasing physical activity and improving people's diets. It can be used in schools or other institutional settings to achieve a range of educational, behaviour change and health outcomes. It can be an activity with which to engage and empower local communities.

Prosperous Place	Community food-growing could contribute to making Aberdeen more resilient to future shocks, bring green space into the urban landscape and highlight heritage varieties of fruit and vegetables unique to the area.
Enabling Technology	None.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	The community food growing programme could assist with demographic pressure, providing a meaningful way to interact with green-spaces for a growing and aging population with increasingly complicated social and health care needs.
Organisational Design	A flexible partnership approach best supports community food-growing projects. They must reflect what people want but also be innovative and aspirational to show what could be possible.
Governance	n/a
Workforce	There is an opportunity for food-growing skills to be supported and extended across the workforce as a land management option, a tool for community engagement and as an activity for improving staff well-being.
Process Design	n/a
Technology	n/a
Partnerships and Alliances	Moving towards a 'community food-growing fund' could be the best long-term solution for matching funding to the aspirations of communities. The membership of both the Food-Growing Steering Group and the Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen represent significant partnership working.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	EHRIA required and submitted to the Equalities Team 17/7/2018
Privacy Impact	Required; Brief DPIA submitted and signed off 14/08/18

Assessment	
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Local Outcome Improvement Plan
Finance Policy and Resources Committee, 9/3/17, item 16 \(4\)
Communities, Housing and Infrastructure, CHI/17/162, 29/8/17](#)

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Community Food Growing Programme Progress Update
Appendix 2: Summary report by the Community Food-Growing Officer

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1: Community Food-growing Programme Progress Update

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

No	Locality / Scope	Project	Progress Update (July 2018)	Estimated Expenditure	Spend commitment to date (July 2018)
1.	Locality 1	Deeside Family Centre Me2 Service	Baskets, planters and tools suitable for introducing food-growing to nursery aged children.	£550	£541.93 (Complete)
2	Locality 1	Redmoss Allotments	7 mini and 5 micro plots created. The whole area fitted with drainage and rotavated. Split into separate plots. All plots taken.	£1,000	£1800.21 (Complete)
3	Locality 1	Torry Food-growing initiative	There is an ambition for a community garden and orchard. A constituted sustainable group is still being developed.	£12,000	None
<i>Sub-total Locality 1</i>				£13,550	£2342.14
4	Locality 2	Cummings Park Community Centre	There is ambition for a community garden but a sustainable group is not presently forthcoming. The Food-growing Steering Group would like to reduce the allocation to £5000 for this project.	£20,000	None
5	Locality 2	Sheddocksley Bowling Green	Creation of a growing space, a polytunnel and community events. A change of name to the Springhill Community Garden will reflect the active group taking this forward.	£12,850	£10,580 granted pending planning consent
<i>Sub-total Locality 2</i>				£32,850	£10,580

No	Locality / Scope	Project	Progress Update (July 2018)	Estimated Expenditure	Spend commitment to date (July 2018)
6	Locality 3	Seaton Recovery Centre	A community fridge-freezer has been installed and is developing good regular usage. The Fairer Aberdeen Fund contributed £900.	£3,000	£826.69 (Complete)
7	Locality 3	Tillydrone Community Flat	Container gardening and polytunnel for residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables	£3,000	£2900 granted
8	Locality 3	Seaton Community Gardening	The Lord Hay's Gardeners community has 98 flats and will be assisted with their plan for a garden.	£2,000	£2170 granted
9	Locality 3	Greening Donside – Community Garden & Wild Orchards	Creation of a community garden, installation of a polytunnel and composter.	£14,500	£14,500 granted
<i>Sub-total Locality 3</i>				£22,500	£20,396.69
10	All three localities	Schools Projects	Pilot projects working with Bramble Brae, Tullos, Woodside and Muirfield primary schools. Raised beds and vertical growing spaces installed.	£20,000	£13,566
11	All three localities	Food Growing Bags	100 bags distributed and lessons learned regarding logistics. Very popular idea which will be repeated next Spring.	£8,000	None (£4900 moved from this project to fund the BID Bee project)
12	All three localities	BID Bee Project	Urban Beekeeping Learning Strategy and Development Project. Six bee hives with monitoring technology and engagement activities.	(New Project added to programme)	£4,900 granted

No	Locality / Scope	Project	Progress Update (July 2018)	Estimated Expenditure	Spend commitment to date (July 2018)
			<i>Sub-total 'All-three locality initiatives'</i>	£28,000	£18,466
13	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)	£35,000 granted
14	City-wide	Communication Plan	Workshops and logo.	£1,100	£130
15.	City-wide	Grove Nursery	Clearance and erection of a polytunnel to support new growing initiatives	£12,000	£8237.67
			<i>Sub-total 'City-wide'</i>	£48,100	43,367.67
			TOTAL	£145,000	£95,152.50

Appendix 2: Summary report by the Community Food-growing Officer June 2018



Thanks to Neil Woodward, the Community Food-growing Officer employed by CFINE for update text and photos.

Tillydrone Community Flat Project:

The Eastern European community is very strong in the area and it seems that the funding can be used and be very fruitful. This community has already started growing in their “Backies”; we await more developments and a newly written proposal within the next month.

Cummings Park:

We have struggled with community engagement at Cummings Park. The existing garden has just fallen into disrepair and we must do everything in our power to prevent this happening again. The workers in the centre do not have the time to maintain the garden within their own working hours. This is still a great project and in an area where we have seen the school garden flourish at Bramble Brae Primary. Geographically, it would make a great community space and it is an area that needs this kind of investment, so we are still trying.

Redmoss allotments:

7 mini and 5 micro plots created. The whole area fitted with drainage and rotavated. Split into separate plots. All plots taken. Seems that this type of project could be very popular, and not too difficult to set up, however needs to be more directed into community growing other than individual plots.

The Seaton project:

The Lord Hay’s community has 98 flats. A proposal has been accepted for simple works to be carried out by the Grove Nursery team. This project should run rather smoothly with some minor works already underway.

Seaton Community Centre have installed a community fridge and freezer. It has proved very popular.

Deeside Family Centre:

All monies spent. The children were planting last week and all has gone very smoothly. The children have really enjoyed the project and been involved from the very beginning, choosing their planters and the items they wish to grow.

Torry Orchard:

We held various community engagement days and have established a strong relationship with Dragados, the company constructing the new Harbour expansion. We have been offered staff hours and a JCB to help push things forward.

Cultivate Aberdeen, a new local group has shown a huge interest in the location and hope to prepare a Project Proposal with them in the next month. This is a fabulous opportunity for this area.

Donside Growers

A strong established group that has been progressing with the project. A community day saw 67 people turn up! The group has also installed a number of bee hives to increase pollination in the area. The growing side of the project has already engaged with large numbers of the youth.

Edible walls in Schools:

Various difficulties in the beginning slightly delayed installation but these problems were quickly resolved. Some damage did occur during construction, but they were quickly repaired. Tullos Primary, Woodside Primary and Bramble Brae and Muirfield primary schools benefited from this pilot project and were able to use their edible walls to aid learning. 252 pupils were involved overall and some useful information was gathered to inform future projects.



School Garden Project:

The school gardens are placed in three schools, Tullos Primary, Woodside Primary and Bramble Brae. Well planned and very driven by One Seed Forward and the University of Aberdeen. During the construction phase we established a relationship with EIS Waste Management.



The school projects alone have used in the region of £2,500 of retail value construction timber. The total monetary value of materials used from EIS totals £4,449 approximately, amongst all the projects.

Over 600 hours of gardening time in May alone was delivered (teaching time multiplied by number of pupils). 2 classes involved at each school. Classes averaging 30 pupils indicates that 160 students are engaging in the projects.

Sheddocksley project:

The Sheddocksley project is starting to move forward after months of community engagement with some very strong, driven members. A group is about to form in the next month and the local church is still strongly involved and have contributed £500 to help get the group set up.

Sport Aberdeen are involved and there has been contact with Dobbies and with the Tesco Communities Team. Work has started to happen as the area was cleared by the unpaid work team a few weeks ago. We hope to get a proposal in very soon. Our next meeting is discussing the creation of a constituted group. We have also received request from Aberdeen Performing Arts to get involved.

The Veg Bag



The veg bag is hugely popular. 100 were made up and distributed but we could probably send out 250-300 quite comfortably. Planning for next year could include an intern to help run logistics and answer email, phone calls etc. With the correct promotion this could be in the thousands and what a great way to publicise the fund in the future. Facebook engagement was significant in this project with daily hits exceeding 4000 during May.

BID Bee hive Project

The BID Bee Team's project will buy, maintain and monitor six bee hives in the city centre. Partnership working with Aberdeen Inspired to improve biodiversity, build bee-keeping skills, provide volunteering opportunities, educate people using webcam technology and provide a source of local honey.

Grove Nursery

The polytunnel is yet to be erected because of a delay in getting a water supply secured.

Communication Plan

Ideas for spend include logoed seed packets, stickers for watering cans, site signs and roller banner.

CFINE Community Food-Growing Officer

Neil Woodward, the Community Food-Growing Officer was funded as part of the programme from October 2017 until September 2018. He has worked to launch the projects, oversee progress and

make valuable connections across the programme and more widely. The value added to the programme shown in table 2 above can be directly attributed to Neil's efforts.

Sandy Highton
Sustainable Development Officer
July 2018