
SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

Report by Director Infrastructure & Environment

18 November 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) endorses the Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan contained therein and actively supports this within both CPP Community Planning and each members own organisational plans.**
- 1.2 The Community Food Growing Strategy, 'Cultivating Communities' was adopted in March 2021. The 5 year Strategy is a legislative requirement under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and is aimed at supporting all kinds of Community Food Growing within the Scottish Borders. The Food Growing Strategy supports each Area Partnership Locality Plan and is itself supported with the proposed creation of new policy EP17 in the Local Development Plan.
- 1.3 The Food Growing Strategy is a legislative requirement, but it is also our vehicle for nurturing and developing community food growing across the Scottish Borders, in line with the national food growing agenda. Community Food Growing is increasingly recognised as a valuable model for supporting sustainable, resilient, healthy communities. The impact of Covid-19 has increased awareness around the role of local access to community food growing in supporting health and wellbeing.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **I recommend that the Community Planning Partnership:-**
 - (a) Endorses the Community Food Growing Strategy, 'Cultivating Communities' 2021-2026.**
 - (b) Agrees that Partner members reflect the Strategy and Action Plan within their own organisational plans and considers how this can contribute to community planning objectives in relation to land use, climate change, health and wellbeing and community resilience.**

- (c) **Agrees to collaboration between CPP Partners to identify resources (land, utilities, funding streams, skills development) to develop community capacity and enable access to community food growing**
- (d) **Receives an annual report on the progress of the Community Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan**
- (e) **Considers the longer term evolution of the Community Food Growing Strategy and how shared objectives may be reflected in the next refresh of the CPP Community Plan.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduces new duties on Local Authorities. A key requirement under Section 119 of the Act is for every Local Authority to develop a Food Growing Strategy. Each Authority must set out in its Strategy how it will provide land to meet demand for food growing as allotments or other forms of cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers for community or individual growing.
- 3.2 The Food Growing Strategy is prepared in direct response to this legislative driver. The scope and content of the Strategy is set out in the legislation. The Food Growing Strategy is a legislative requirement, but it is also our vehicle for nurturing and developing community food growing across the Scottish Borders, in line with the national food growing agenda. Community Food Growing has a potentially vital role in addressing climate change adaptation within sustainable communities – 5.4 and 5.5 set this out in more detail. It is important to note that, while there are linkages, the legislation and resultant Strategy does not directly extend to socio-economic issues or commercial food growing and agricultural land use planning.
- 3.3 The legislation requires that Food Growing Strategies cover 5 year periods, therefore the Community Food Growing Strategy runs from 2021 to 2026, and will be reviewed thereafter every 5 years. In preparing the inaugural Strategy, officers undertook various appraisals and measures, including benchmarking, community consultation, land surveys of existing/potential food growing sites, reviewing resources and securing investment in the Council’s flagship community food growing garden at Wilton Lodge Park walled garden.
- 3.4 Since the launch of the Community Food Growing Strategy, the Council has allocated funding for a full time permanent post with the primary remit of supporting the delivery of the Community Food Growing Strategy. The recruitment to this post (appointed in September) reflects the importance of this Strategy in enabling the Council (and its partners) to support healthy, sustainable and resilient communities.

4 THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 In preparing the Strategy, a 12 week public consultation was launched. The aim was to gain insight into current/potential local food growing activity and demand for future capacity building, guiding the development of the Strategy. It had a very good response, with 300 respondents.
- 4.3 The Strategy has been developed based on the findings of the consultation process. The aim of this Strategy is to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new

approaches to growing. The key objectives of the Food Growing Strategy are:

- To provide a central resource for community growing information
- To raise awareness around community growing in the Scottish Borders
- To show you how to get growing: where, how and who can help you/your community group
- To help you get your community growing project off the ground
- To help identify potential allotment sites and growing spaces

4.4 In developing the Community Food Growing Strategy, Scottish Borders Council acknowledges the wider benefits associated with food growing including:

- Improving health and wellbeing outcomes
- Promoting opportunities for social interaction
- Environmental improvement including climate change and food waste
- Skills development
- Economic development and sustainability.

4.5 Survey responses identified a need for support to individuals and communities interested in food growing, broadly falling into three themes which form the structure of the strategy:

Getting started: how can I get growing? Support for getting started - Skills and Advice; training, confidence and resources to get started.

Where can I grow? Help to find space – existing sites and new growing spaces and getting the right permissions in place.

Where can I get support for my growing project/growing activities?

How to resource your project: Funding, networking and skills sharing

4.6 The Strategy places emphasis on participation and self-mobilisation, supporting and facilitating the linking up of volunteers to projects, new growing aspirations to existing resources, and skills sharing across the Borders. Within the Scottish Borders there are a wealth of projects and growing groups who work collaboratively, sharing skills and volunteers. There are opportunities to work with local schools.

4.7 The Strategy also sets out new growing opportunities within the Scottish Borders, thinking creatively about how and where communities can get growing. The extensive network of amenity greenspace owned by Scottish Borders Council and CPP Partners presents an opportunity for communities to 'adopt' areas for growing: amenity grass, shrub beds and former bedding plant areas may lend themselves to adoption for community food growing and the Strategy invites exploration of these opportunities within communities.

4.8 As part of the Strategy, information on all growing opportunities within the Scottish Borders are promoted via an online interactive map ([Community Food Growing | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/community-food-growing)). This is a 'live' resource that can be updated as new sites become available, with the opportunity to integrate land holdings and intelligence across all CPP Partners.

4.9 The Community Food Growing Strategy Action Plan is set out below, and attention is drawn to Action 1.1;

Action	
1. Develop Policy Framework	1.1. Investigate and explore opportunities to develop further policies in support of food growing and community growing with Community Planning Partners
	1.2. Adopt new planning policy - EP17 Food Growing and Community Growing spaces – as part of the Local Development Plan, safeguarding food growing spaces and enabling increased provision.
	1.3. Review of corporate policies and strategies to support Food Growing and Community Food Growing.
2. Review provision and Management of Allotments	2.1. Co-ordinate waiting list information with appropriate Allotments Associations to ensure data collection is handled accurately and appropriately
	2.2. Investigate new allotment sites in areas of demand, working with community groups and private landowners where possible
	2.3. Review and implement new Allotment Regulations, including the setting of fair rent charges
	2.4 Prepare an Annual Allotment Report
3. Support the Community Growing Network	3.1. Develop a networking event(s) for community growers and volunteers
	3.2. Explore the creation of 'Growing Ambassadors', as part of the #yourpart Corporate Programme
	3.3. Consolidate resources for food growing through the development of the Volunteer Co-ordinator role

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no direct costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- a) In order to meet the requirements of the legislation Scottish Borders Council has undertaken a consultation exercise and engaged with stakeholders, and their views have been taken into account in shaping the Strategy. The Action Plan aims to ensure that the Strategy is implemented and mitigates potential risks to success.
- b) The Action Plan requires resource to be implemented. There is a risk to delivery if insufficient resource is allocated to the Actions contained

therein, e.g. supporting community growing, sourcing land and associated infrastructure for growing etc. This has been mitigated through the appointment of the new post outlined at 3.4

- c) Due to Covid-19, signs have been erected across outdoor volunteering and allotment sites advising the public to follow government social distancing and other guidance regarding Covid-19 in accordance with Government guidance. The same information is included in the Strategy as a central point of reference.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA has been undertaken and it is anticipated that there are no adverse impact or unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation) and those who do not. Indeed, reducing socio-economic inequality is inferred in the promotion and facilitation of local food growing opportunities to all.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

UN SD Goal	Impact
1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all potential 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	By; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging local action and community involvement • supporting community enterprise and local food chains • being responsive to communities • promoting access to healthy locally produced fruit and vegetables • promoting community stewardship of, and access to, green public spaces and; • by promoting such stewardship, encourage biodiversity enhancement within community greenspaces, thereby contributing to halting biodiversity loss and raising awareness of climate change adaptation and mitigation • working with partners • encouraging local access to the outdoors and physical activity • creating opportunities for intergenerational activities, education and skills development within communities the successful delivery of the Strategy and associated partnership working will positively impact on these UN SD Goals

5.5 **Climate Change**

The Community Food Growing Strategy will directly impact positively on climate change mitigation through the following;

- Providing local opportunities for food growing, recreation, skills development and health and wellbeing benefits
- Support and facilitate locally, sustainably produced food thereby contributing to minimising local energy demand for food production/transportation
- Circular economy principles are embedded in community food growing models.
- Ensuring community resilience is enhanced by supporting local, self-sufficient community infrastructure

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from the proposals contained in this report.

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

- There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration of Scheme of Delegation.

Approved by

Name

Title

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
John Curry	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Carole Cooke	Greenspace Manager

Background Papers:

'Cultivating Communities – Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy -

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/7916/community_food_growing_strategy_2021

Proposed Finalised Food Growing Strategy – Executive Committee 16 March 2021 <https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50550/Item%20No.%208%20-%20FOOD%20GROWING%20STRATEGY%20ADOPTION%20-%20Exec.pdf>

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council Executive Committee Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 10.00 am , Item 5

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5149/Printed%20minutes%2016th-Mar-2021%2010.00%20Executive%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

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