
SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING STRATEGY – YEAR 1 UPDATE

Report by Director Infrastructure & Environment

17 November 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on delivery of Year 1 of 'Cultivating Communities', the Scottish Borders Community Food Growing Strategy. It also proposes that Community Planning Partners establish a working group, comprising nominated named officers from each, to work with Scottish Borders Council on developing capacity and increasing access to Community Food Growing.**
- 1.2 The Community Food Growing Strategy was launched in 2021. It 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 a valuable model for supporting sustainable, resilient, healthy communities. The Strategy addresses a priority identified by the Community Planning Partnership through the Improvement Plan theme of 'A good place to grow up, live in and enjoy a full life'.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 I recommend that the Community Planning Partnership:-**
- (a) Notes the Year 1 Annual Report on the progress of the Community Food Growing Strategy and Action Plan.**
 - (b) Agrees that a working group be established to deliver active collaboration in developing capacity and increasing access to food growing (including but not limited to realising land, utilities, funding streams and skills development opportunities); and in doing so agrees to nominate a named officer from each Community Planning Partner.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduced new duties on Local Authorities, one of which was for every Local Authority to develop a Food Growing Strategy setting out how it would 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. 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.

3.2 Community Food Growing is integral to resilient, sustainable communities. The Community Food Growing Strategy supports the CPP theme of 'a good place to grow up, live in and enjoy a full life', contributing to the outcome that 'the Borders has a clear and planned pathway to Net Zero' through:

- 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

Community food growing also has a potentially vital role in addressing climate change adaptation within sustainable communities, as reflected in the Council's Climate Change Route Map – 5.4 and 5.5 set this out in more detail.

3.3 Since the launch of the Strategy, the Council has established a full time permanent post with the primary remit of supporting the delivery of the Community Food Growing Strategy, supporting and facilitating food growing with partnership organisations, the 3rd sector and communities.

4 THE STRATEGY THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

4.1 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. To do this we need to understand demand, supply and build relationships within communities. The Strategy includes a specific action which links this work with that of the Community Planning Partnership;

"Investigate and explore opportunities to develop further policies in support of food growing and community growing with Community Planning Partners"

4.2 Clear measurable progress has been made in Year 1 of the Strategy, as set out in the Community Food Growing Report 2021/22 (Appendix 1). To build on this, Scottish Borders Council are seeking to establish a working group with representation from all Community Planning Partners. It is proposed that this group of named officers would be formed to focus on active collaboration and would;

- Meet quarterly to review opportunities and share information, with interim collaboration as required to deliver on agreed actions.
- Explore the various land holdings for opportunities for community 'adoption' for food growing
- Liaise with the Council on any other initiatives or opportunities that their service users/service plans could benefit from.

4.3 The benefits of this across the Partnership could include;

- Tackling food poverty and food security through securing access to cheap, nutritious locally grown food
- Improved performance against climate change duties: e.g. less intensive grounds maintenance through open space (that currently requires regular grasscutting/maintenance) being repurposed by communities for food growing – bringing carbon savings/efficiencies
- Improved Biodiversity across the green estate
- Improved community benefit outcomes
- Improved relationships within the community
- Efficient use of resources through partnership working

4.4 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 is updated as new sites become available, with the opportunity to integrate land holdings and intelligence across all CPP Partners through the working group.

4.5 The Scottish Borders Food Growers Network has been operational since the Strategy launched last year; this forms an established platform for tapping into local capacity for food growing and features monthly newsletters showcasing successes and facilitating networking. While there is CPP representation in the Network this could be strengthened, for mutual benefit.

4.6 There is also an annual Awards initiative, the 'Cultivating Communities' Award for food growing within the Greener Gateway Community Awards programme. This can offer CPP organisations an opportunity for demonstrating success and raising awareness.

4.7 Through the establishment of a CPP working group these and other resources and initiatives can be fully utilised by partner organisations to achieve their own sustainability/community benefit objectives.

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 proposed establishment of a working group of officers would help to increase collaboration and communication, increasing the effectiveness of the Strategy to deliver against the Action Plan – this mitigates against risk in terms of accessibility, capacity and skills development.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA scoping exercise has been undertaken and as this paper constitutes a progress update it is not anticipated that there are any associated adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.

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 <p>the successful delivery of the Strategy and associated partnership working will positively impact on these UN SD Goals</p>

5.5 Climate Change

The Community Food Growing Strategy has directly impacted positively on climate change mitigation through the following;

- Support and facilitate locally, sustainably produced food thereby contributing to minimising 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

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Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Carol Cooke	Greenspace Manager
Amy Alcorn	Greenspace Programme Officer

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:

Community Planning Strategic Board, Thursday 18th November 2021 2.00pm

[Agenda for Community Planning Strategic Board on Thursday, 18th November, 2021, 2.00 pm - Scottish Borders Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jacqueline Whitelaw can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at:

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