

# Report

Report to:	<b>Climate Change and Sustainability Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>4 November 2020</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Food Growing Strategy 2020-2025</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:

- ◆ Endorse the Food Growing Strategy 2020-2025 and year 1 action plan) and agree that the strategy will be referred to the Executive Committee for approval.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):

- ◆ that the food growing strategy and year 1 action plan be endorsed and referred to the Executive Committee for approval
- ◆ that following approval by the Executive Committee, the strategy will be published effective from 1 April 2020 to meet the legislative requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 brings new rights, duties and responsibilities regarding the provision of allotments and food growing opportunities. Part 9 of the Act governing the provision of allotments and food growing was enabled on 1 April 2018 and Councils were given two years to publish a food growing strategy that would outline how the Council will work towards meeting its legislative obligations.

3.2 In respect of the food growing strategy, Part 9 of the Act places specific statutory obligations on local authorities:

- A duty to prepare a food growing strategy which includes consultation and requirement for annual report on food growing activity on Council land
- Legislative obligation to electronically publish a food growing strategy by 1 April 2020
- Duty to review the food growing strategy every 5 years.

3.3 It was anticipated that detailed government guidance covering Part 9 would be published in 2016. However, further consultation was carried out by the Scottish Government in August 2018 and final guidance for local authorities was issued in June 2019.

- 3.4 As detailed in the action plan approved at the Community & Enterprise Resources Committee of 19 March 2019 the service:
- Established a food growing group to seek input from a variety of community groups involved in or with an interest in food growing, council resources and partner organisations. The food growing group also contributed to the development of the action plan for year one.
  - A public consultation exercise was undertaken from June – September 2019 via an online survey and also through members of the food growing group and their contacts. The results demonstrated that respondents were supportive of the vision with all respondents agreeing with the overall aims of the strategy.
  - Draft strategy was updated based on collated feedback from consultation.
- 3.5 The food growing strategy will contribute to meeting the strategic aims of the Council's overall Good Food Strategy which was approved by the Executive Committee on 4 December 2019.
- 4. Food Growing Strategy**
- 4.1 The Food Growing Strategy is attached as Appendix A.
- 4.2 The strategy covers the period 2020 to 2025. It provides a framework to identify current food growing provision and outlines how the Council can increase the opportunity for residents of South Lanarkshire to access and enjoy the pleasures and health benefits associated with growing your own food.
- 4.3 In summary, the strategy includes the following sections: -
- Introduction: this section outlines the Council's overall aims, the benefits associated with growing your own food, national policy, specific food growing legislation and how these link into the visions and values of the Council Plan.
  - South Lanarkshire Council provision - this section provides information on the local area, details existing food growing provision on Council land, funding arrangements and charging.
  - Developing food growing in South Lanarkshire: this section details the role of the food growing group, how Council Resources will contribute to increasing food growing provision, how we can tackle food poverty in relation to growing your own food, the challenges facing the Council, opportunities for more food growing, support on offer to groups who wish to develop community growing sites and how we aim to increase biodiversity.
  - Key objectives: details what the Council will do in relation to each key objective and provides examples of what is already happening in South Lanarkshire.
  - Monitoring and review – this section outlines Scottish Government reporting requirements, timescales for reviewing the food growing strategy and action plan including key indicators.

- 4.4 The action plan will be updated annually, and the strategy will be published electronically and reviewed every 5 years in accordance with Scottish Government legislation.

## **5. Next steps and timescales**

- 5.1. On the basis that the Committee endorses the Food Growing Strategy, it is proposed that the strategy is referred to the Executive Committee for approval.
- 5.2 The strategy was due to be approved in early 2020 with an official launch planned for April 2020, however the presentation of the strategy was postponed due to COVID. Nevertheless, work has continued with local groups to during this period, a communication plan was prepared in collaboration with the Council's Corporate Communications and this included the graphic design of the strategy document for electronic publication via the website and the development of a food growing storyboard to introduce the publication of the strategy and its implementation.
- 5.3 The Food Growing Strategy action plan for year 1 (Appendix B) has been developed with the relevant Council services and in partnership with partners and other food stakeholders. In addition, work to establish new sites and to create partnership opportunities has continued pending approval of the strategy.
- 5.4 During the implementation phase, regular updates on the implementation of the strategy will be provided to relevant committees and a mandatory annual report will be prepared for the Scottish Government following submission to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

## **6. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 6.1 The strategy was evaluated in terms of whether a formal strategic environmental impact assessment was required and as it is not spatial in nature, it was deemed unnecessary following the pre-screening exercise.

## **7. Employee Implications**

- 7.1 There are no employee implications at this time, however as the number of sites expands to meet our legislative obligations, the resources required to progress applications, plot allocations, inspections, disciplinary issues will require to be reviewed.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The expansion of allotments and food growing provision has to date been funded within existing resources however further development will require capital investment as referred to in the Future Capital Investment Strategy (Executive Committee on 21 November 2018). The Council will also continue to support groups who wish to apply for external funding to develop food growing sites.

## **9. Other implications**

- 9.1 The main risk relates to the continued need to expand the availability of allotments and food growing provision ensuring the Council meets the obligations with regard to applicants not waiting more than 5 years for a plot and to ensure that the waiting list does not exceed 50% of the overall number of plots available.

9.2 The Food Growing Strategy will support the outcomes of the current Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy.

## **10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

10.1 Consultation with the public has been undertaken at a previous stage. An equality impact assessment has been prepared and based on consultation feedback, there is no evidence that this will have a negative impact on specific equality groups.

**Michael McGlynn**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

21 October 2020

### **Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values**

- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for inclusive growth
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation, and supporting aspiration

### **Previous References**

- ◆ Community & Enterprise Resources Committee 12 December 2019 – Proposals for Food Growing Strategy 2020 to 2025
- ◆ Community & Enterprise Resources Committee 22 January 2019 – Allotments and Management Rules
- ◆ Community & Enterprise Resources Committee 12 December 2017 – Consultation on Part 9, Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

### **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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