



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 7 AUGUST 2019

SUBJECT: DRAFT FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises the Council that all local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020 and asks the Council to agree a draft strategy for public consultation.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section II (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the approval of council reports and strategies of a corporate nature.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council agree:-

- (i) to note the statutory requirement to prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020;
- (ii) to note the content of the draft Food Growing Strategy;
- (iii) to approve the draft strategy set out in Appendix 1 (subject to the addition of graphics) and issue for public consultation for an 8 week period;
- (iv) to delegate responsibility for Section 119 and 120 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Food Growing Strategy to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee and make the necessary changes to the Scheme of Administration; and
- (v) that responses to the consultation be reported to a future meeting of Planning and Regulatory Services Committee along with the final Food Growing Strategy for approval.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 119 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which came into operation in April 2018, places a duty on every local authority to prepare a Food Growing Strategy which must be published by 1 April 2020. Guidance on preparing a Food Growing Strategy was published by the Scottish Government in November 2018 providing further information on the preparation process and a template for the strategy.
- 3.2 The Guidance recognises that many people in Scotland would like to grow their own food and the two most common barriers encountered are access to land and lack of the skills and knowledge to begin growing their own food. A significant objective in developing a Food Growing Strategy is ensuring that more opportunities are developed for those who would like to grow their own food. There is also a specific requirement to note how the Council intends to increase food growing provision in communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- 3.3 The strategy must identify land for allotments, other land for community growing opportunities and set out how the Council will meet demand for land. The strategy should cater for different forms of food growing spaces including orchards, raised beds, community gardens, edible hedges and planting and containers in landscaped areas. In addition to identifying land the strategy can assist with the delivery of wider aspirations regarding health and wellbeing, social interaction, environmental improvement, education, economic development and promoting biodiversity.
- 3.4 Section 120 of the Act requires every local authority to review its Food Growing Strategy within 5 years of the date of publication and every five years thereafter.

4. SUMMARY OF DRAFT FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

- 4.1 A working group was set up to prepare the strategy with representatives from Moray Council, NHS Grampian, Moray College UHI, Greenfingers, Moray Food Plus, REAP and Elgin Allotment Association. Stakeholder engagement events were held to develop a vision and key objectives for the strategy.

Vision and key objectives

- 4.2 The vision for the strategy is to “Promote the benefits of a healthier lifestyle by increasing access to nutritious healthy food by creating opportunities for people to grow their own fruit and vegetables in towns and villages across Moray, reducing food insecurity and food waste.
- 4.3 A number of key objectives help deliver the vision:
- Support healthier lifestyles by providing food growing opportunities across Moray including allotments, community gardens and community orchards.

- Promote opportunities for community food growing spaces to contribute to biodiversity, green infrastructure and enhancement of the natural environment.
- Support all schools and nurseries across Moray to have actively used food growing areas that are linked to the curriculum.
- Promote skills development related to food growing and encourage people to reconnect with where their food comes from.
- Encourage active participation in community food growing projects to support opportunities for social interaction and encourage communities to eat more fresh, healthy and sustainable food.
- Raise awareness of the health and wellbeing and economic benefits of growing your own food.

Themes and Actions

- 4.4 The strategy has been developed around four themed chapters, health and wellbeing, education, training and support, sustainability and delivery of land. These thematic chapters have identified supporting actions all with the aim of addressing the barriers to food growing. Key actions are set out in the table below.

Action	Partners	Progress	Timescales
Secure a partner organisation to take forward Maryhill Health Centre therapeutic garden	NHS Grampian/ REAP	tbc	March 2020
Investigate the possibility of replicating the therapeutic gardening project at Elgin Health Centre across other health care facilities in Moray	NHS Grampian/ Moray Council	Potential site at Aberlour Medical Practice and opportunities arising from new build health centres (e.g. Keith).	2020 – 2025
Investigate opportunities for funding to develop a food growing toolkit to support Moray Schools to embed food growing into the curriculum.	Moray Council/ NHS Grampian	Ongoing. Draft proposals developed. Identifying potential funding partners	2020
Further develop the relationship between Moray Schools and Moray UHI Horticulture department to support and sustain food growing. Link to STEM week, learn about career opportunities and skills	Moray College UHI/ Moray Council	Initial discussions held. Draft proposals to be developed.	STEM engagement March 2020

Action	Partners	Progress	Timescales
associated with horticulture.			
Explore opportunities for community growers/grow your own evening courses at Moray College UHI	Moray College UHI/ Moray Council	Initial discussion held. Draft proposal to be developed	2020/2021
Investigate opportunities and funding to support schools food growing as part of Active Schools	Moray Council	tbc	tbc
Greenfingers to develop a training program and two food growing training sites for trainees at Cooper Park and linking with Moray Resource Centre	Greenfingers	tbc	tbc
Prepare greenspaces guidance as part of wider design guidance that demonstrates how food growing can be integrated into green and blue networks and support biodiversity enhancement	Moray Council	Guidance will be prepared to support the Moray Local Development Plan 2020, anticipated for adoption in summer 2020.	June 2020
Promote edible species in all new developments of over 10 houses	Moray Council	Link to guidance being prepared	June 2020
Develop a pilot food growing project with partners linked to the Locality Plans for New Elgin East and Buckie Central East	Moray Council/NHS Grampian/TSI/REAP and partner organisations.	Initial meeting held, site identified in New Elgin and working group set up to explore delivery.	2020/2021
Work in partnership with third sector partners to promote, volunteering, community harvesting and sharing, community composting, equipment sharing and skills sharing	Moray Council, REAP/TSI	Ongoing, actively being explored as part of proposed New Elgin East LOIP pilot.	2020/2021
Investigate the opportunity to work in partnership with the Criminal Justice team to help deliver food growing projects across Moray	Moray Council	Initial discussions held.	2020

Action	Partners	Progress	Timescales
Prepare online tool providing advice and signposting support for communities seeking to take forward food growing spaces	Moray Council	To be prepared to support strategy which must be in place by 1 April 2020.	1 April 2020
Deliver allotment sites and food growing areas in large land releases through masterplans, development briefs and planning applications	Moray Council	Delivery of food growing sites through Findrassie and Elgin South developments and forthcoming masterplans for the south west expansion of Buckie and Lochyhill in Forres	2020-2025

- 4.5 The strategy is also supported by a number of case studies showcasing what is already happening across Moray.

Identification of existing and new food growing spaces

- 4.6 A key component of the strategy is the identification of existing and potential food growing spaces across Moray. As far as possible all existing food growing spaces in Moray have been mapped and included in the strategy.
- 4.7 Potential sites have been suggested by communities and identified by various Council services including Lands and Parks, Property and Estates and Development Plans. These food growing spaces include allotments, community orchards, community gardens, vegetable patches, raised beds, planters and edible hedges. The objective has been to ensure there is a network of accessible food growing spaces across the larger towns and villages. Allotment sites have been identified in Aberlour, Buckie, Elgin, Forres and Keith.
- 4.8 All existing and potential sites are set out in the Appendices of the strategy which can be viewed in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.9 In terms of the approach to areas of socio-economic disadvantage, the focus has been on aligning the strategy with the Locality Plans that are being prepared for New Elgin East and Buckie Central East. There is a proposal to develop a pilot food growing project in partnership with the stakeholder group/s involved in these Locality Plans.

Engagement

- 4.10 Extensive engagement and evidence gathering has been undertaken to support the preparation of the strategy, including two stakeholder events and an audit of school food growing provision across Moray. A questionnaire was developed and widely circulated to assist in identifying barriers to food growing and over 320 responses were received. A call for ideas for potential

food growing spaces was issued and resulted in over 150 suggested areas. Various Council services have provided technical input to help assess the suitability of sites and help shortlist those with the most potential.

Consultation

4.11 It is proposed to issue the draft strategy for public consultation for an eight week period supported by the following actions;

- A consultation event combined with compensatory planting proposals as agreed by Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 26 March 2019 (para 11 of the minute refers).
- Further consultation with internal services and key agencies.
- Press release, social media and website promotion to raise awareness of the consultation.

Review and Monitoring

4.12 The strategy will be reviewed and updated every five years. Annual monitoring will be undertaken and reported to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee as part of the Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report. This will provide an update on progress on the identified actions. A key measure of success will be the increase in the number of food growing spaces being actively used across Moray. The working group will continue to meet twice yearly to oversee the implementation of the identified actions within the strategy.

Next Steps

4.13 The next steps are as follows;

- Issue for public consultation September – October 2019
- Report final strategy to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee February 2020
- Adoption of strategy March 2020

4.14 The Planning and Regulatory Services Committee will be asked to approve the final version of the strategy as supplementary guidance, thereafter it will become a material consideration for development management purposes.

4.15 To enable issues relating to the Food Growing Strategy to be dealt with efficiently in the future it would be useful to have responsibility for S.119 and 120 of the 2015 Act delegated to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee (P&RS) which will require an amendment to the Council's Scheme of Administration. Whilst the strategy cuts across elements of contributing to wellbeing it would be best to delegate responsibility going forward to P&RS. Officers within that Service have prepared the strategy and it is most closely linked to land use planning considerations and will be used as supplementary guidance to be considered alongside the Moray Local Development Plan 2015. Whilst social inclusion and equalities fall within the remit of Communities Committee and are relevant to the Food Growing Strategy, it is felt that keeping the business in one place, supported by the group of officers

who developed the strategy, is the most efficient means of progressing the strategy. The decision is however one for the Council to make.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

A Food Growing Strategy can help to address the 4 priorities set out in the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires all local authorities in Scotland to prepare Food Growing Strategies by 1 April 2020.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising at this stage, beyond staffing costs and cost of organising stakeholder events. Any financial implications identified in delivering the strategy will be reported to a future meeting of the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk of not complying with legislation if the Council does not prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020.

(e) Staffing Implications

Preparation of the strategy has involved officers from Development Plans, Estates, Lands and Parks, Contaminated Land, Transportation, Flood Risk Management and the Community Support Unit. There will be continued staff resources required to implement the strategy primarily from Development Plans.

(f) Property

The strategy identifies potential food growing areas on Council owned land. All sites have been subject to consultation with the Estates Manager.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and concluded there is no potential for discrimination as a result of the strategy.

The delivery of food growing spaces across Moray can assist the Council in tackling socio-economic inequalities by increasing access to affordable fresh food. There are also identified benefits in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, by promoting physical activity and a healthy diet. It is recognised that food growing can also have positive impacts on mental health, dementia and loneliness.

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure), the Head of Development Services, the Legal Services

Manager, Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer), the Finance Manager and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty upon all local authorities in Scotland to prepare a Food Growing Strategy by 1 April 2020.**
- 6.2 A draft Food Growing Strategy has been prepared and aims to increase the number of food growing spaces across Moray. To support this aim a network of food growing spaces have been identified including allotments in Aberlour, Buckie, Elgin, Forres and Keith.**
- 6.3 The strategy includes a number of actions to address the barriers to food growing relating to education, training and support and preparation of an online tool for community groups seeking to develop a food growing space.**

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Background Papers:
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