

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Strategic Lead – Roads & Neighbourhood (Shared Service)

Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Growth: 16 September 2020

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council Food Growing Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval for the adoption of the West Dunbartonshire Council Food Growing Strategy (**APPENDIX 1**).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- a) Agree the contents of the West Dunbartonshire Council Food Growing Strategy which reflects the Council's duties arising from Part 9 (Allotments) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

3. Background

3.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Act received Royal Assent on 24th July 2015 and came into force on 1st April 2018. Part 9 of the Act, which updates and modifies allotments legislation, was developed through discussions with stakeholders in the wider public, private, third and community sectors and also through consultation.

- 3.2 The Act repeals allotments legislation dating from 1892, simplifies provisions and acknowledges and endorses the rising interest in community growing.

Part 9 of the Act lays a number of statutory duties on Local Authorities, including:

- a duty to maintain an allotment waiting list
- when certain trigger points of demand are reached, a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure: (1) that the number of people on their waiting list for an allotment does not exceed half the total number of allotments owned and leased by the Authority; and (2) that a person on the list does not wait more than five years for an allotment
- a requirement to make allotment site regulations
- a duty to develop a Food Growing Strategy. This includes the identification of land for allotments and other community growing and describing how the Authority will meet demand for such land

3.3 Section 119 of the Act requires Local Authorities to include the following in their Food Growing Strategies:

- land identified in the area that could be used for allotment sites
- other land identified in the Local Authority area which could be used by a community to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers
- a description of how the Authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing; and
- when detailing how the Authority intends to increase the provision of allotment sites and community growing areas of land in its area as it is required to take reasonable steps under section 112 (1), a description of whether and how this will apply to communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage

3.4 Each Local Authority must publish the Food Growing Strategy it prepares on a website or by other electronic means.

3.5 Section 120 of the Act requires every local authority to review its food-growing strategy. This review must be carried out within 5 years of the date of the publication of the initial food-growing strategy, and every five years thereafter. When the local authority decides to change its strategy following a review, the local authority is required to publish an amended strategy electronically.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The West Dunbartonshire Council Food Growing Strategy vision is:

To inspire people to make West Dunbartonshire the best Community Food growing and Garden location in Scotland.

4.2 The strategy outlines our plans to enhance and support food growing opportunities across West Dunbartonshire over the next five years.

4.3 Food growing in West Dunbartonshire is in high demand. The current waiting list for an allotment has 275 applicants. With the current provision and turnover this equates to a potential wait of up to 10 years.

4.4 In response to this demand and to meet the Council's obligations under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, capital funding of £500,000 has been allocated to develop new growing spaces.

4.5 In addition to traditional allotments there are many different ways of growing your own food including community gardens, backcourt spaces, school gardens and windowsill potting.

4.6 The strategy has been developed to encourage and empower people to take an active role in producing and growing their own food. This has real benefits for the health and fitness of our Society and Environment. It will also contribute to the Scottish Government's goal of Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation by enabling people from all walks of life to enjoy and learn about nutritious and healthy food.

4.7 The strategy also identifies the environmental benefits that growing food locally provides, including reducing the miles that food travels from growing space to plate and creating increased biodiversity areas for birds, bees and insects.

4.8 Current Provision

West Dunbartonshire Council manages two well established traditional allotment sites in Dumbarton at Castlegreen Street and Townend Road. These sites have 38 allotment plots that are serviced with water, composting facilities, green waste skips, fencing and access paths. Both sites have a high level of interest, with a low level of turnover.

In addition to the Council managed sites there are three privately managed sites in Clydebank at Bannerman Street, Second Avenue and Agamemnon Street. These sites have 100 traditional allotment plots.

There are 65 other Community Food Growing sites operating within the Growing West Dunbartonshire group. The group is made up of community groups, nurseries and schools, working together to spread the message and share the benefits of local grown food.

The Work Connect Levensgrove Gardening Project provides training and mentoring in gardening and Food Growing skills for upwards of 100 individuals in 13 client groups through-out the year. The project has access to plots, raised beds, poly-tunnels, greenhouses, land for development and a training suite, all located in the Greenspace Depot at Levensgrove Park.

The Friends of Levensgrove Park maintain a community orchard within the Park. The Friends group were successful in securing grant funding to purchase trees for the creation of the orchard and to purchase equipment to allow them to harvest the fruit and arrange jam making sessions.

Learn and Grow is a partnership committed to engaging, motivating and ultimately supporting residents to develop an active community food growing and outdoor activity resource in every education centre and community in West Dunbartonshire. There are currently 42 active food growing sites within West Dunbartonshire Education establishments benefiting from the Learn and Grow resource.

The Strategy provides maps identifying all of the current food growing sites. There will also be an interactive version of the maps made available online via the Council website.

4.9 Developing Future Provision

In line with part 9 of the Community Empowerment Act the Council will continue to maintain a list of residents wishing to have an allotment. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to reduce the number of people on the waiting list to less than half the number of Council allotments available.

Actions identified in the Strategy will offer opportunities to achieve this target by linking together the organisations and stakeholders who have an interest in food growing. This will allow for the development of a joined up approach to increasing food growing spaces throughout West Dunbartonshire.

A food growing working group will be established to assist with the development of food growing opportunities in West Dunbartonshire. The working group will represent the Council, Community groups and individuals who have an interest in food growing. The group will also assist with future consultation activities and the reviewing of the Food Growing Strategy action plan.

The Council has agreed to allocate £500,000 of capital funding to develop new food growing sites. It is recognised that given the scale of demand for allotments in West Dunbartonshire, other forms of funding will need to be secured. The Council will work with partners and community groups to secure external funding for the creation of additional growing spaces. In relation to community growing spaces options for community asset transfer will also be explored.

There are currently three projects being progressed to provide food growing sites:

- Townend Road Allotment site – a mix of 30 traditional allotments and community raised beds. Development work being carried out for delivery in early 2021.
- Clydebank Community Sports Hub – 20 traditional allotments to be managed by the sports hub board. Due for completion in October 2020.
- Melfort Community Park - 30 raised beds within a community garden. Due for completion November 2020.

The Strategy also identifies a further twenty three potential food growing spaces throughout the area.

West Dunbartonshire's industrial heritage has left a legacy of contaminated land that is not suitable for food growing. The food growing working group will continue to work with the council's contaminated land officers to assess land that has been identified as potential for food growing.

- 4.10** The Action Plan associated with the Food Growing Strategy is intended to be a functional working document that will be reviewed regularly and updated annually.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no direct people implications resulting from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** Financial – The Strategy identifies that £500,000 of Council capital funding has been allocated for the development of new food growing spaces. The management and maintenance of the Council's allotment sites will continue to be funded by the Greenspace revenue account. The Council will work with partners and community groups to secure external funding for the creation of additional growing spaces
- 6.2** Procurement – A project team comprising of Officers from Greenspace, Procurement and Consultancy Services are developing tender documentation for a new allotment site at Townend Road, Dumbarton. It is anticipated that this project will be delivered over financial years 20/21 and 21/22.

7. Risk Analysis

The Council has a duty under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to develop a Food Growing Strategy.

There is a risk that if the Council fails to produce a Food Growing Strategy, this may lead to legal action and reputational damage.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An initial screening confirms there is no adverse impact.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** A public consultation on the development of the Food Growing Strategy has taken place. The consultation will play a major part in the success of this Food

Growing Strategy by setting actions that work towards what people really want.

The consultation engaged with 65 community food growing groups, 275 residents that are on the allotment waiting list, schools and nurseries, Community Councils and Council Officers from Environmental Health and Forward Planning.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report supports the following Council Strategic objectives:

- A Strong local economy and improved employment opportunities.
- Supported individuals, families and carers living independently and with dignity.
- Meaningful community engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.
- Open, accountable and accessible local government.
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

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Date: 12 August 2020

Person to Contact:	Ian Bain, Greenspace Manager
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - West Dunbartonshire Council Food Growing Strategy
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	All