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Introduction

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1.0 Our Vision

Our vision is that Glasgow citizens wishing to grow their own fruit and vegetables will have access to a range of community growing opportunities in their area.

1.1 Achieving Our Vision

Since 2016 we have held 15 engagement events across the city, to get the views of allotmenteers, community growers and fellow Glaswegians on how food growing in the city should be supported and enhanced.

Based on this feedback, this strategy outlines how we will support current community growing provision, develop additional sites for use and support new approaches to growing.

In addition, it will also show you how to get projects off the ground and how to start growing your own fruit and vegetables. It also identifies key organisations that can help you, and your group, and will guide you through the processes involved.

The Strategy shows our aspirations for community growing and how we intend to meet our obligations under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
1.2 Strategic Context

Achieving this vision and developing this strategy must be delivered within the context of a variety of external influences at both national and local level. These strategic or policy influences are outlined below.

National Strategies and Policies

The Community Empowerment 2015 (Scotland) Act, Part 9, places a duty on every local authority to prepare a food growing strategy which must be published by 1st April 2020, i.e. within two years of section 119 coming into force. (For more specific details of the legislation please see Appendix 1). This is the main national influence on the Glasgow Food Growing Strategy as its associated guidance contains suggestions, recommendations and proposals on what such a strategy should contain.

Going forward, as the Scottish Government continues to develop its national food and drink policy – “Becoming a Good Food Nation”, it is anticipated that there will be further impacts on local food growing strategies.
Local Strategies and Policies

At a local level, Glasgow’s Open Space Strategy (OSS) “sets out a long term vision for Glasgow’s open spaces”. It also “provides an overarching framework to guide the development and implementation of supporting strategies and action plans”.

The Glasgow Food Growing Strategy is a key supporting strategy that will contribute to this vision in conjunction with several other important strategies.

The other City Council Plans and Strategies that have “informed the development of both the Open Space Strategy and the Parks and Greenspace Vision” and, therefore, will influence how the Food Growing Strategy will go forward are noted in diagram below. Links to the plans, strategies and policies noted below are included in Appendix 2.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan | Food Growing Strategy | Sports Pitch Strategy

The Open Space Strategy (OSS) sets out a long-term vision for Glasgow’s open spaces to ensure that they meet the City’s needs in the years to come. It also provides an overarching framework to guide the development and implementation of supporting strategies and action plans. Informed by this framework, a Local Biodiversity Action Plan has been produced and work is underway to inform the production of a Food Growing Strategy and a Sports Pitch Strategy.

The Parks and Greenspace Vision sets out how the Council will undertake the management and maintenance of the parks and open spaces in its ownership to meet the needs of the communities and the aims of the OSS.

Other Council Plans and Strategies have informed the development of both the OSS and the Parks and Greenspace Vision including:

- The Council’s Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022
- The Community Plan
- The City Development Plan
- The Strategic Plan for Cycling 2016 - 2025
- Glasgow Economic Strategic Plan 2016 - 2023
- Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership
- City Centre Strategy
- Core Path Plan
2.0 Community Growing Options

There are several ways that you, as an individual, or perhaps jointly with local schools or community groups, can grow your own fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. The table in Appendix 3 shows many types of potential growing spaces that you could consider and the type of growing they may be suitable for.

The following are some of the currently most popular, and successful, ways of growing in Glasgow.

2.1 **Allotments** – a long established or traditional style of community growing whereby individuals rent their own plots of land for growing usually from an allotments association or a local authority. Although, in some cases, community groups or schools may also have a collectively managed plot.
2.2 **Community Gardens** – usually a single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people. They normally provide either individual or shared plots on private or public land while producing fruit, vegetables, and/or plants.

**Example:** “Shettleston Community Growing Project consists of 44 raised beds for food growing, six greenhouses, polytunnel, community garden, soft fruit area(s) and a wildlife garden.

The project recognises that getting plotholders to volunteer at weekends is, and always will be, a challenge but they have a dedicated group of volunteers that always give lots of support for the project and help keep the project running. Some of the reasons why are listed below -

**Volunteer 1** - I love volunteering at the allotments, it is my wee happy place and I would be lost without it, the project and people at the project have saved my life following the death of my mother.

**Volunteer 2 / Plotholder 1** – It is a brilliant laugh at the allotments, nothing is taken seriously but at the same time we are shown what to plant, how to plant it and how to look after our vegetables and I had a really good crop of everything that I planted.

**Plotholder 2** I used to be a volunteer and now I have my own plot. I had bad depression before I came here to volunteer and now I have learned enough to look after my own wee bit and it tastes so much better than vegetables from the shops.”
2.3 **Backcourts** (and private gardens) – growing can take place in the backcourts of privately owned blocks of flats or those provided by Housing Associations and, as such, can be initiated by the owners or the association itself.

**Example:** Roots of Ruchill is an award winning community garden, driven by the needs of local people, to grow fruit and veg and develop new skills through volunteering. It also acts as a hub for a culturally diverse community.

2.4 **Stalled Spaces** - a GCC programme to support community groups and local organisations across the city develop temporary projects on stalled sites or underutilised open spaces. In many cases these spaces are used to support community growing projects.

**Example:** “Greyfriars Garden is a ‘Stalled Spaces’ community garden on the site of the Franciscan Friars (Greyfriars) medieval monastery. It provides 45 raised bed plots for residents of the Merchant City & Trongate areas and Ladywell and High Street. The plots are 1 or 2 metres squared and are the perfect height for those with mobility problems. It is a unique space in the city centre. A bee corridor, a green lung and a refuge from the hustle and bustle of city centre living. It is space which has supported activities that brings people together and bridges generational, cultural, gender and socio-economic gaps. It is on the move to a bigger site up High Street as the current space is up for development.

We hold social events and open days and have worked with St Stephen’s Primary in Sighthill creating a garden discovery quiz for them.
Growing fresh vegetables as part of an inner city commune is quite a utopian solution to issues around what we eat and how we feel. Loneliness, poor health and pollution have been identified as inner city issues with many, if not most, of the residencies in Glasgow city centre being single occupancies. Greyfriars Garden’s policy of inclusion allows for people of all incomes, genders, ethnicities and abilities to become involved”.

2.5 School Grounds  growing locations in schools can vary from individual planters, to raised beds or directly in the ground.

Example: “Mount Vernon Primary have been using 7 outdoor boxes to try growing food within the grounds. In previous years our Eco group have grown carrots, onions, potatoes and beans and sold them in bags to parents.

In the school year 2018-2019 we grew potatoes, onions, broad beans and herbs. The potatoes were not very successful but we think this may be due to the fact that we did not give them enough depth to enable good growth. Our onions and beans produced a great crop in August after being ignored all during the summer holidays! They were enormous and the staff and families had a competition to see what delights they could make using our home grown produce. We had wild flowers in one of our boxes to encourage the bees and support the growth of our food.

We have a plastic bottle greenhouse that we have made which we plan to make good use of. One of our classes have made and planted bee bombs for the wild flowers we need. Currently we have sprouts in one of our boxes but have plans to plant many more types of vegetables at the appropriate time of year using the guide for West of Scotland planting seasons”. 
2.6 Social Enterprises – businesses owned collectively by their employees, such as social enterprises, are in many cases involved in growing food as part of their business.

Example: Greenheart Growers, are a social enterprise in Parkhead growing vegetables for sale to cafes, restaurants and local people, and working with the local community to connect people to food, nature, and one another.

2.7 Hospital Grounds – hospitals may have large areas of land as part of their grounds that would be suitable for a growing project. Alternatively, some hospitals have organised their own growing project as they have recognised the many health benefits associated with food growing.

2.8 Housing Associations – in addition to a potential role in supporting backcourt growing, housing associations also could have areas of land that could support a community growing project.

Example: Queens Cross Housing Association has three Growing Spaces community gardens projects that provide weekly horticultural learning sessions in otherwise grey urban spaces. These projects have a focus on food growing from seed and supporting people’s wellbeing. The project has advised that “they can help to build people’s confidence and they have been reported to benefit people suffering with mental health issues. In fact, some have managed to stop medication as a result”.

![Image of hospital grounds with trees and greenery]
3.0 What You Said! – Community Consultations 2015 to 2019

Since 2015, and our allotment’s consultation “Glasgow Allotments Say”, we have engaged with Glasgow growers and citizens on a number of occasions. The following issues were the main points raised across all events:

A: Better access to land and growing spaces was the key issue raised by our consultations. Feedback included requests for:

• **Availability of a wide variety of plot sizes (allotments)**
• **An easy system for permission to use land owned by the council**
• **“Buy in” from Housing Associations**

B: How to start up and maintain a community growing project i.e. how to access –

• **Land**
• **Community Support**
• **Group Development Support**
• **Funding**
• **Growing Skills Advice**

C: Whilst opportunities for more community gardens and allotments were the overarching objective they were often grouped under the following “key themes” at the consultation events:

• **Health**
• **Social Enterprise**
• **Outdoor Learning**
4.0 Increasing space for community growing and allotments.

The Council must establish and maintain a list of people requesting an allotment plot. We also need to take reasonable steps to ensure that the number of people on the city-wide allotment waiting list is no more than half the number of Council allotments available. We are also expected to make sure that no-one is on the list for more than 5 years. Whilst doing this we will also be considering how our actions will impact on communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage.

We will do this by helping individuals or groups find spaces for community growing and by continuing to look for locations where we can develop additional allotments/growing spaces.

Everyone will be able to follow our progress towards meeting these objectives, as we will be producing an allotments report annually that will highlight what actions have been taken forward and how the numbers are changing.
4.1 Allotment sites

The Community Empowerment Act (Part 9) provides a legal definition of what an allotment is and how a local authority should consider its provision in relation to allotment waiting list numbers.

As noted in section 3, the community engagement events all mentioned the demand for allotment spaces but, also, the subsequent difficulties in getting one - especially in certain areas of the city. This demand is further confirmed by the overall city-wide waiting list.

Therefore, to increase the availability of allotment plots we will look to create new allotment sites wherever there is an opportunity. This could come from a variety of sources including, GCC land or within a new housing development. In addition, we will also look at the potential for increasing the number of allotment plots within our existing allotment sites.

**ACTION 1:** We will facilitate the most effective use of our existing allotment sites by increasing the number of available plots wherever suitable land is available.

**ACTION 2:** We will develop new allotment sites where suitable locations are identified and there is recognised local demand.
4.2 Community growing groups and spaces

Through the associated development work, stemming from this food growing strategy, there will be more opportunities for individuals or groups to form their own community growing projects. Potential locations will be identifiable through the mapping initiative noted in section 5.1 i.e. from the maps it will be possible to find existing growing projects or nearby land that could be developed for use by the local community.

The mapping webpage will be accessed here - (this page will not be available until the FGS is published)

We will also be able to provide help or advice on various matters such as setting up groups, attracting funding and getting growing see section 5 and associated appendices.

**ACTION 3:** We will further engage with GCC Development and Regeneration Services to ensure full consideration is given to the provision of growing spaces or allotments in new developments within the City Development Plan and associated policies.

**ACTION 4:** We will engage further with Housing Associations to encourage and support them with their plans to provide residents with growing spaces or allotments.
5.0 How do I get started?

The development of new allotment sites will take time and will be very much dependent on the availability of suitable sites. On the other hand, the creation of new community growing sites should be possible in much shorter timescales such as where only a “licence to occupy” or “lease agreement” is required.

Setting up your own community growing group can be straightforward especially if you follow the guidelines highlighted. This section of the strategy, therefore, provides help on getting started especially around key subjects where new groups could struggle to get projects off the ground. In particular, it gives guidance to accessing:

- Land
- Community support
- Group development
- Funding
- Growing skills advice

It should be noted that whilst these broad themes will cover the full growing site development process, they should not be viewed in isolation as in many cases action under one theme will support and assist with development in the others.

See Appendix 5 for more information.
5.1 Finding Land for Growing

A key objective at our community consultation events was not only to establish current demand for community growing but also to find out from attendees if they knew of any potential growing sites in their local area that may not have been previously considered.

These nominated sites were then assessed under a variety of criteria such as ownership, growing suitability or accessibility - the criteria were based on a Greenspace Scotland advice note - site assessment matrix.

All nominated sites, irrespective of ownership, were mapped to provide an indication of local interest in growing.

A subsequent action of the Food Growing Strategy will be to provide an online map for Glaswegians to find their nearest existing or potential growing space. The map(s) will include the following:

- Existing allotment sites
- Existing community growing sites
- Stalled Space projects
- Potential GCC land for the creation of new allotment or community growing sites

5.2 Getting Permission to use a Growing Site

Feedback at all the community engagement events highlighted difficulties that could arise when a community growing group sought permission to use a piece of land. This was especially focussed on getting sufficient security or length of tenure to make it worthwhile investing in the site. The proposed solutions included:

- Longer leases
- An easy system for permission to use land owned by the council

Some initial guidance on accessing a piece of land for a growing site is included below.

5.3 Who owns the land and do I need a lease?

To use a potential growing space and start your growing project you will, in all cases, need the landowner’s permission. Therefore, in the first instance go to our on-line map and check the text-box associated with each mapped potential growing location to see who owns the land.

If it is indicated that GCC owns the land then you can contact the council/us at the details in the text-box. Alternatively, if the land is in private ownership then further details can be obtained from the Registrar of Scotland for a small fee (OS Map). Contact details are indicated in Appendix 5.
The flow diagram below provides an overview of the various stages that you would need to consider before being able to use the site:

5.4 Dealing with planning requirements

Many of the mapped sites with potential for use as a growing site may have had alternative uses in the past, be in areas with specific development constraints or may require enhancements to make them suitable for use. In such cases planning consent may be required, examples include:

- Change of use of land, for example from green space to allotment;
- Any works within a Conservation Area; and
- Structures on site, including:
  - Outbuildings and sheds on each individual plot;
  - Communal buildings;
  - Fencing; and
  - Parking facilities.

In such cases, early discussions with the GCC Development and Regeneration Services is encouraged. They can be contacted at: details to be confirmed.

**ACTION 5:** We will maintain and update an online map of nominated growing sites and identify whether each site is owned by GCC or not.

**ACTION 6:** We will review and simplify the current Permission to Use/ Licence to Occupy process to encourage easier use of available GCC sites.
5.5 Getting community support or developing your community group

Finding a site in your local area is a great start to setting up your growing project. This can be the catalyst to gather interest and momentum for your project and will also allow discussion for the later development stages but it can also be an incentive for others to become involved and help establish the initiative.

Our 2018 city-wide consultation on food growing - “Go Grow Glasgow“ - raised a variety of topics that our citizens felt that they would like more advice or assistance on - including on starting a community growing project. Similar issues were raised in the local ward consultation events.

Of course, you will find it helpful if you have the initial support from your local community - either immediately next to your growing site or in the larger area - as it is from this support that you are likely to find the individuals who will be part of your community growing project and who will help you develop the site.

In particular, for most potential growing projects it will be really helpful to have access to funding or resources to prepare or develop the site – and fortunately there are a many such resources available. However, most funding organisations will only fund “constituted” groups. The same will be true for getting formal permission to use a site.
Therefore, forming a constituted group for your growing project will allow you to use or even take ownership of the growing space and attract funding to develop the site for growing.

Once you have gathered the support from a group of like-minded, enthusiastic individuals and have become a “constituted” growing group then the development process is likely to be much smoother especially if actions are shared amongst other group members.

The momentum of getting the site operational will sustain the group in the short term especially if it is well organised. However, the future development stages will require different skills i.e. to ensure the longer term maintenance and sustainability of the site but also the growing group itself. If your group understands how to maintain commitment and where to get support when it is needed then it is more likely that the growing space will flourish.

Appendix 5 includes an initial list of some organisations that will help you get community support for your project, how to set up a growing group and subsequently how to maintain the group over the life of the growing site. This information will be made available online at our website and regularly updated.

**ACTION 7:** To provide signposting to resources that will help potential growers access community support for their project and/or will assist them with setting up their community growing group and will help them maintain it into the future.
5.6 Access to Funding

The next stage once you have followed the process of finding a site, got permission to use it, received local community support and set up your growing group is to source funding to develop the site. This was identified by consultees as a major issue on which more resources were desired.

Appendix 5 provides details of two key resources that will let you see the variety and range of funding sources that are available to help you develop your growing project. This GCC Community funding guide is also accessible from the following link: details to be confirmed.

In addition, as a further response to consultation feedback on access to growing project development funds, we will assess the range of existing GCC funding for growing sources and look to develop this into an easily accessible funding source.

**ACTION 8:** On our website we will maintain “sign-posting” to funding resources and the GCC issued funding guide.

**ACTION 9:** We will consider setting up the Let’s Grow Together Fund. This fund, for community groups, will provide initial or seed capital funding to assist in the establishment of new community growing projects.
5.7 Access to Growing Advice

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is very rewarding but it can sometimes make things easier if you can access some assistance or advice to get started or how to keep things going successfully.

If you are starting out on an allotment plot then many of your fellow allotmenteers will be able to give you the benefits of their years of experience on what to grow and when to start planting or even what to plant. Similarly, on a community garden site there are likely to be fellow growers to help you develop your growing space in the optimum way.

Access to training and growing support was highlighted at the majority of our consultation events. A variety of ways to deliver this were also proposed. In response, in conjunction with professional trainers and long term growers a starter guide - “Let’s Grow Together” - to growing “vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers” was produced. This guide will evolve based on feedback from groups and individuals as they start their growing project.

In addition Appendix 5 will also have details of existing growing advice resources.

**ACTION 10:** To collaboratively develop “Let’s Grow Together” – Glasgow’s Growing Guide to provide growing advice and tips to new growers and maintain sign-posting to existing growing advice resources.
6.0 How do I find out about community growing in my area?

As already noted, we held community engagement events in all areas of Glasgow and at these events we asked people to let us know if they felt that there was a forgotten but potential growing site in their area. All these publically nominated sites have been assessed and mapped. This map is available at details to be confirmed... If you click on each site there will also be some information on who owns the land and what type of growing it could potentially be used for.

This map will be regularly updated so if you discover any new potential food growing sites then simply complete the update form which is available on our webpage and send it to glasgowfoodgrowing@glasgow.gov.uk.

**ACTION 11:** We will maintain and regularly update the GCC Food Growing Strategy webpage with the latest information on community food growing in Glasgow.
7.0 Key Growing Themes / Opportunities Going Forward

The city-wide and local consultations revealed strong demand for growing sites of all types and forms. There was also a desire for subsequent support or assistance in setting them up and helping them to flourish. The consultation also highlighted the existence of current growing projects.

In many cases, the objectives of existing or planned growing projects help address broader, strategic ambitions of several GCC Services or even the wider public sector. This was especially relevant at the consultation events that considered the positive role growing can have for social enterprises, in outdoor learning and improving both mental/physical health at both individual and community level.

In recognition of the overarching role that community growing can have on several of the City Council’s strategic objectives, and the ongoing development of the Glasgow City Food Plan, there will, in the future, be opportunities to link with other Council Services or other public bodies to ensuring these benefits will be realised.

In addition, over the five year period of this strategy, GCC will be continuously reviewing its assets and its service provision. As a result, there may be opportunities in the future for additional growing sites on our surplus to requirements sites.

**ACTION 12**: We will encourage cross-service joint actions on food growing by introducing a GCC internal Food Growing Officer Working Group.

**ACTION 13**: We will respond to opportunities that arise for growing spaces on former GCC sites.
8.0 Monitoring and Review

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, part 9 section 121 asks that an “Annual Allotments Report” is provided to the Scottish Government on actions taken to provide more allotment plots or to reduce waiting lists for an allotment plot (alongside a variety of other requirements).

In addition to reporting on progress on allotments provision, Glasgow will, at the same time, also provide an update on its actions that have supported the overall aim of advancing community growing in the city. This report will be provided to the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Policy Committee prior to submitting to the Scottish Government.

In addition to reporting on Glasgow’s food growing progress annually, the Community Empowerment Act also requires that we review and revise the Food Growing Strategy within five years of its adoption and publication. As with the development of this first strategy, all future strategies will be based on the feedback and views of Glasgow’s growing community and, to support this, we will introduce a Community Food Growing Mentoring Group.

In addition we will specifically monitor the impacts of the food growing strategy in areas experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
ACTION 14: We will produce an annual Allotments and Community Food Growing Report.

ACTION 15: We will introduce a Community Food Growing Mentoring group, with representatives from growing groups, community groups and GCC, to assist with the monitoring of the strategy action plan.

ACTION 16: We will continue to monitor the impacts and response to food growing initiatives in areas experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. In the event of low impact we will look to provide more resources to support individuals or groups to develop their growing projects.
9.0 Next Steps/Action Plan

This Food Growing Strategy is for the five year period, 2020-25. It will be reviewed and updated every five years.

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<td><strong>Getting Growing</strong></td>
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<td>A10 Issue “Lets Grow Together” growing guide and signpost to resources</td>
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<td><strong>Awareness Raising</strong></td>
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<td>A11 Maintain Food Growing Strategy Webpage</td>
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<td><strong>GCC – Strategy Support and Actions</strong></td>
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<td>A12 Introduce GCC Officers Food Growing Working Group</td>
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<td>A13 Respond to opportunities that arise for growing spaces on former GCC sites</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy Review</strong></td>
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<td>A14 Annual Allotments and Food Growing Report</td>
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<td>A16 Assess Progress in SIMD areas</td>
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