

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment & Infrastructure Committee

28 October 2020

PERTH AND KINROSS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT

Report by Executive Director (Housing & Environment) (Report No. 20/197)

This report seeks approval for the Perth & Kinross Food Growing Strategy Consultative Draft 'Growing Together'. When finalised, the strategy would meet the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and contribute to the Scottish Government's vision to be a 'Good Food Nation' by 2025.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This Food Growing Strategy Consultation Draft responds to the Scottish Government's vision to increase the health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities by encouraging more people to grow, and eat, fruit and vegetables. Their vision for a 'Good Food Nation' is that, by 2025, people from every walk of life take pride and pleasure in, and benefit from, the food they produce, buy, cook, serve, and eat each day.
- 1.2 Growing food helps reconnect people with the place their food comes from, to meet others within their community, and to develop new skills. Community growing also contributes to increasing biodiversity, tackling climate change and food poverty by improving access to high quality, local produce that is grown and distributed in a sustainable manner.
- 1.3 Both the physical and mental health benefits of growing food help build resilience within communities which has been especially important in the current coronavirus crisis. The demand for allotments saw a significant increase nationwide (State of the Market Survey 2020, APSE) during the lock down period. Having access to fresh, affordable food as well as an outdoor space to relax and exercise in became more important for many.
- 1.4 Perth & Kinross Council does not manage any allotments directly but leases land to allotment associations who also use private land. The Council has supported the establishment of around 20 community gardens, allotments and orchards, as well as assisted communities to set up and manage allotments in Letham, Tulloch, Crieff, Kinross and Auchterarder.
- 1.5 The Council now has a statutory duty under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, to publish a Food Growing Strategy that identifies potentially suitable land for allotments and other food growing areas. Local authorities are also required to create and manage a waiting list for allotments which are owned or leased by them and make reasonable steps to accommodate local demand for growing spaces. The strategy will advocate partnership working between the Council and communities, underpinning the Perth & Kinross Offer. It would also support the implementation of the

Council's Planning Policy 14: Open Space Retention and Provision in the Local Development Plan 2. This encourages opportunities for the provision of community growing spaces and allotments as part of new developments.

- 1.6 There are several groups and organisations in Perth and Kinross, including the Council, that have an interest in food growing and have been working to establish and improve food growing spaces and expertise. The approach to developing and delivering this new strategy will be based on collaboration with these groups as part of the development of the Perth and Kinross Offer. The aim will be to promote what is currently available, help create new opportunities and support those who want to grow their own food.
- 1.7 A stakeholder survey was undertaken in October 2019 which had over 200 responses and indicated increasing interest and demand for growing. Over the past year, we have continued discussions with community groups and visited allotments and community gardens to better understand their needs and aspirations. We also reached out to organisations (e.g. NHS, local schools, Perthshire Organic Gardeners) to explore how they could get involved and support the strategy through offering space for food growing or sharing expertise with others.
- 1.8 The Food Growing Strategy, once finalised, would provide a more joined up approach, facilitate closer partnership working and better use of resources, in order to deliver more support for stakeholders and new food growing spaces. This consultation draft sets out the Council's current thinking and offers the opportunity for those already involved, as well as those who want to be involved in the future, with food growing to contribute to ensuring the final strategy is fit for purpose.
- 1.9 Furthermore, the strategy will assist in meeting the Council's objectives in relation to health and wellbeing, sustainability and education/skills development. It would also contribute to increasing biodiversity and climate change mitigation. The strategy will also ensure that Perth and Kinross is on track to deliver the 'Good Food Nation'.
- 1.10 This consultative draft has been developed to allow for further engagement with growing groups to ensure the strategy, when it is finalised, is fit for purpose.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1. The proposed consultative draft strategy includes the following components:
 - Background – setting the context and how this strategy links to other initiatives such as Zero Waste Perth and the Food Share Network, the range of food growing areas and the benefits of food growing.
 - A vision and 5 key objectives to achieve it. The vision being: "Creating opportunities for people to grow their own fruit and vegetables across Perth and Kinross to promote healthy, sociable and sustainable lifestyles".

- The current food growing position - identifying and mapping existing food growing opportunities and gaps where we know there is unmet demand.
 - Identification of barriers which currently prevent more individuals and groups growing their own food and suggestions on how these can be overcome. This will include: setting up an allotment waiting list; supporting communities to develop the skills to grow their own food and make healthy lifestyle choices; and identifying potential future growing spaces.
 - Draft Action Plan – sets out how the Council and partners will deliver the objectives. It identifies opportunities for skills and information sharing with an emphasis on increasing opportunities in the most deprived areas of Perth and Kinross. Further engagement will allow for the development of these proposals and formations of partnerships to ensure the final action plan is deliverable.
- 2.2. It is proposed that the Council publishes the consultation draft (Appendix 1) and invites feedback from existing growing groups, potential partners and communities to inform the final strategy. Further strategy development will be dependent on available resources either within the Council or from external sources. The overall approach has the Perth and Kinross Offer at its heart, as well as linking to related initiatives and areas of work such as the Food Waste Strategy, biodiversity villages and Open Space Strategy.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The Perth and Kinross Food Growing Strategy Consultative Draft sets out the Council's proposed approach to meeting the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 3.2. Feedback from the consultation will inform the final proposed Food Growing Strategy and ensure a coordinated approach to managing the demand for, and benefits of, food growing opportunities in a fair and equitable way within Perth and Kinross.
- 3.3. The final strategy will assist in meeting the Council's objectives in relation to health and wellbeing, sustainability and education/ skills development. It will also assist in identifying where growing spaces could be delivered as part of new developments. This will help to deliver the Scottish Government's vision for a 'Good Food Nation' by 2025.
- 3.4. Following the consultation, resources will be required for the coordination and production of the final strategy as well as the delivery of the agreed action plan. As such, links to other complementary areas of work and opportunities for external funding will be explored. This will allow delivery of the action plan covering a wide range of food growing opportunities to ensure that people who would like to, and do, grow their own food can have the opportunity to do so. Support for community groups and individuals will be needed along with skills and information sharing, with an emphasis on the most deprived areas of Perth and Kinross. This will contribute to the Perth and Kinross Offer.

3.5. It is recommended that the Environment and Infrastructure Committee:

- (i) approves the Perth and Kinross Food Growing Strategy consultation draft (Appendix 1)..
- (ii) requests that a further report is brought back following the consultation outlining the strategy development along with resource requirements and the action plan.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	
Community Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

- 1.1 The draft Food Growing Strategy relates to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan in terms of contributing to the following priorities:
- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
 - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
 - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The draft Food Growing Strategy relates to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities by contributing to the delivery of:
- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
 - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
 - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

2. Resource Implications

Capital

- 2.1 Subject to the outcome of the consultation on the draft strategy, a capital funding bid may be required in future to allow the Council to acquire and develop sites to meet demand for food growing spaces.

Revenue

- 2.2 Subject to the outcome of the consultation on the draft strategy, future revenue funding is likely to be required to ensure the Council meets its obligations to develop and manage sites and waiting lists for food growing spaces.

Workforce

- 2.3 There will be a requirement for officer time to manage the development and implementation of the final Food Growing Strategy and action plan. This will include:
- Working with allotment associations to create and manage a waiting list for PKC leased sites
 - Organising and facilitating further discussions with groups and organisations involved with food growing, in order to establish partnerships.
 - Analysing feedback from the consultation and developing the draft strategy further to be ready for adoption
 - Exploring funding streams / grants for the delivery of new growing spaces
 - Acting as the main point of contact within PKC for community food growing

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.4 The Council will be required to secure land to meet the demand for food growing either through new development or acquisition.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The draft Food Growing Strategy was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) and were assessed as relevant and the following positive outcomes are expected following implementation.
- 3.3 The draft Food Growing Strategy aims to provide support for community groups and individuals as well as identify opportunities for skills and information sharing with an emphasis on the most deprived areas of Perth and Kinross.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.5 The matters presented in this report were considered and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.6 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:
- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
 - in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes; and in a way that it considers most sustainable.
- 3.7 The draft Food Growing Strategy aims to encourage locally grown community food production on suitable areas of land. This will encourage more healthy living, a reduction in food miles and make good use of available land.

Legal and Governance

- 3.8 Implementation of the draft Food Growing Strategy may require the acquisition of land and development of management rules for public food growing opportunities. The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on the policy presented within this report.

Risk

- 3.9 There is a risk that the Council may not be able to meet its statutory duties under the Act if it is unable to meet the demand for food growing opportunities.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Head of Legal and Governance, the Head of Finance, and the Head of Planning & Development have been consulted during the preparation of the draft Food Growing Strategy.

External

- 4.2 The results of the online survey for the draft Food Growing Strategy are available on demand. The consultation on the draft strategy will involve inviting feedback from the general public as well as key partners. Potential partners will also be invited to an online workshop to help shape the strategy's action plan and discuss how it could be delivered through collaboration with the Council

5. Communication

- 5.1 The Food Growing Strategy Consultative Draft will be made available for stakeholders to comment on. The draft incorporates key questions to help fill gaps in existing knowledge. It will be posted on the Council website and invitations to comment will be issued through social media and sent to known stakeholders, including growing groups and those who responded to the October 2019 survey.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Food Growing Strategy Consultation Draft.