

ITEM No ...2....

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7 JANUARY 2019

REPORT ON: COMMUNITY GROWING IN DUNDEE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO. 3-2019

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform elected members on the duty to prepare a Local Food Growing Strategy, feasibility study for a growing project at Camperdown Nursery and the status of Dundee's Community Gardens/Allotments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to work with Dundee Social Enterprise Network investigating the feasibility of establishing a growing project at the nursery, Camperdown Country Park; and
 - b) Note the current status of Dundee's Community Gardens / Allotments.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The financial implications associated with undertaking the above feasibility study amount to £20,000. These costs will be met from external grant funding of £10,000 awarded to Dundee Social Enterprise Network and the balance will be met from Neighbourhood Services Revenue Budget. There are no further additional financial implications associated with the implementation of the above recommendations.

4. MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Reference is made to Article IV of the minute of the Environment Committee meeting of 20th May, 2013 which approved the establishment of a Community Allotment Officer post and the development of Community Allotment Pilot Projects (report 195-2013).
- 4.1.2 Since the approval of the report above, the Fairness Commission's recommendations – A Fair Way to Go, have been published (2016). As well as having input to a number of recommendations, Dundee's Community Allotment projects directly contribute to Recommendation 56.
- 4.1.3 Dundee City Council's Fairness Action Plan was agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee on 14th November 2016. One of the actions agreed committed the Council to the development of 6 Community Gardens / Allotments by March 2018.
- 4.1.4 The Scottish Government acknowledge the contribution that Community Gardens and Allotments make to the Government's aspiration for Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation. As such, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 furthers this aspiration by placing a duty on Local Authorities to produce a Local Food Growing Strategy by April 1st 2020.
- 4.1.4 Along with a range of interventions and support, Community Allotments have a role to play in reducing food poverty enabling individuals and organisations to grow fruit and vegetables. Not

only does this give an opportunity to increase access to food in general, but also access to healthy, fresh fruit and vegetables, which often become unaffordable for those in food poverty. The Scottish Government's Independent Working Group and NHS Health Scotland recognise the potential positive impact of local food growing initiatives.

4.2 Local Food Growing Strategy

- 4.2.1 Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 outlines communities' rights, and the corresponding duties and responsibilities of local authorities, in relation to allotments. Section 119 of the Act places a duty on every local authority to prepare a food growing strategy which must be published by 1st April 2020 that is within two years of section 119 coming into force.
- 4.2.2 The local food growing strategy should include the identification of land for allotments and other community growing, in addition to a description on how the local authority will meet demand for such land. The Act also places a duty on Local Authorities to produce an annual allotments report. The strategy must be reviewed every 5 years.

4.3 Upscaling Food Growing Opportunities

- 4.3.1 Although existing community growing projects are well received by those who use them, food production is relatively small scale with produce supplying the families, individuals and organisations who garden them. To have any meaningful impact on relieving those in food poverty, local food production will require upscaling.
- 4.3.2. An opportunity has arisen to consider the feasibility of this at Camperdown Country Park, in the Council's plant nursery. Discussions have taken place with potential partners including Dundee Social Enterprise Network and Dundee and Angus College. The site can incorporate vegetable and fruit growing, as well as the current use supplying shrub and plant material for Dundee's greenspaces and streetscene.
- 4.3.3. Dundee Social Enterprise Network, in partnership with the MaxWELL Centre, have successfully submitted an Awards for All application (£10,000) to part fund a feasibility report into the development of a community scale growing project. Match funding has been identified within existing Neighbourhood Services revenue budgets. The feasibility study will assess and provide recommendations of business models which will support the distribution of fruit and vegetables to those most in need. The report would also consider the opportunity for skills development and the continuation of plant production for Council projects.
- 4.3.4 The feasibility report would reference the impact that a growing project at Camperdown would have on food poverty in Dundee.

4.4 Community Gardens/Allotments

- 4.4.1 To date, the targets set in paragraph 4.1.3 above have been achieved and surpassed (Appendix 1 gives further information).
- 4.4.2 There are a number of conclusions which can be drawn from the development of Dundee's community gardens/allotments:
- 4.4.2.1 Partnership, Support and Governance
- Each successful growing space depends on strong partnership working. Establishment of successful gardens has required initial work by Community Officers and the Community Allotment Officer to gauge interest and build capacity.
 - Community allotments are unique. Despite a relatively common process, each growing space is a result of the community it serves. Partnerships differ, but recent experience has shown that input from local community workers and voluntary organisations is extremely beneficial.

- Governance of community growing spaces is not consistent, with models varying from lease of ground to communities (Douglas – Douglas Community Spaces Group/Ancrum Road Allotment – Lochee Community Gardeners) through to those with committee structures in place (Tayview), to others recently established and requiring significant support. This often depends on the maturity of the garden, but robust governing structures are encouraged and supported.
- Ongoing responsibility of spaces requires further development. There may be opportunity to consider Community Asset Transfer
- There is opportunity for community growing spaces to link into other initiatives such as development of cooking skills.

4.4.2.2 Development of Community Growing Spaces

- Development of the gardens has been enabled by Dundee City Council's capital investment since 2014/15, successful grant applications and the practical assistance by the Criminal Justice Service – Unpaid Work Team (Ardler, St Mary's, Charleston, Whorterbank Tattie Patch).
- The majority of the existing capital funding identified by Dundee City Council for the development of community growing has been committed to growing spaces at Robertson Street, Whorterbank, Arklay Terrace and Lochee Park (decommissioned bowling green).
- Subject to committee approval, it is anticipated that the remainder of this capital be allocated to existing projects enabling further consolidation and sustainability of these spaces
- Working in partnership with the Criminal Justice Service – Unpaid Work Team and utilising a Council revenue stream dedicated to community growing, has enabled the purchase of materials to develop other spaces at Ardler, Balgarthno and Whorterbank Tattie Patch.

4.4.2.3 Community Engagement

- Most gardens have a mix of individuals and organisations working on plots. Most individuals grow for themselves and their families, clients or community cafes may benefit from organisation plots.
- Community Allotments can have an impact on community cohesion reducing isolation, as well as enabling different cultures to come together under a common purpose, promoting integration and mutual understanding.
- Drug and alcohol addiction services have used parts of the gardens as therapeutic spaces, enhancing the efficacy of their interventions and helping to keep people on the road to recovery
- Involvement from local schools has been patchy despite community growing spaces being useful as outdoor learning spaces.

4.4.2.4 Impact

- The greatest impact that the Dundee's Community Growing Spaces have is on the communities themselves. Tayview Community Garden won a national UK competition and the top prize of £5,000 in September 2018. The judges commented:

Derelict and uninspiring in August 2016, residents, artists and Dundee City Council have thrown everything at the site over the last two years to transform it into a beautiful and productive space that ties the whole community together!

The Cultivation Street judges were bowled over by the huge cross-section of locals that have been involved in bringing this community garden to life. It has brought people with mental health issues and learning disabilities, school children, refugees and recovering drug addicts together in a positive and rewarding project bursting with community spirit.

They also loved the many ways in which the garden is being put to good use for the benefit of local kids and adults alike. The Dundee City Council's Sensory Service uses

the garden space as a therapeutic resource for children with impaired vision or hearing, schools use the biodiversity area as an educational resource, pedestrians and cyclists use it as a pleasant shortcut to avoid a dangerous junction, and the area has seen a reduction in litter and anti-social behaviour because of the project. Make no mistake, this project's impact on the local community has been nothing short of incredible.'

- 4.4.3 The development of Community Allotments and Gardens is not unique to the Council and there are other exemplary initiatives including Every1's Garden at the Maxwell Centre and the Ninewells' Garden, throughout Dundee. The Community Allotment Officer continues to work in partnership to progress these and provide support and advice where needed.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6. CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted on the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its contents.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

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26 November 2018

Appendix 1, list of DCC community gardens in Dundee:

Douglas Community Garden (4 years old). This site has been expanded with orchard space and additional raised beds. A large community shed with electrical connection and mains water has been added. The area has also been resurfaced. These improvements have been undertaken by the Douglas Community Spaces Group as they now have the lease on the garden itself and the surrounding greenspace. Funding was obtained from Awards for All and the local Regeneration Forum (Dundee Partnership). The original garden was constructed by Neighbourhood Services using DCC capital.

Ardler Community Garden (2 years old). The fruit area has matured to become highly productive and the community have used all of the space. Support has been available from a volunteer who attends the garden every week. He helps the nursery group and others to use their beds effectively as well as keeping the communal space weed-free and tidy. Grapes are ripening against the wall! Strathmartine communities team support the project. The garden was built by the Unpaid Work Team with materials supplied by Neighbourhood Services.

Whorterbank Community Garden (1 year old). Growing space has been popular with every bed used. Some dropouts have occurred but core group of 6+ enthusiastic gardeners have contributed to a tranquil, productive space in this area of Lochee. Local residents appreciate the garden, using it as a location for family picnics etc. St Mary's Primary School have been utilising the entire greenspace for their outdoor learning sessions; the local residents' group has plans to create a biodiversity project throughout Whorterbank, which could become an exemplar for the city. The old lockups area continues to be difficult, further investment in this area may enhance the space. Plans for a community kitchen did not come to fruition, so cooking facilities are still not available to complement the community growing. The garden was constructed by Neighbourhood Services and appeared on a recent edition of Beechgrove Garden (26th July).

Whorterbank Tattie Patch (3 years old). The Tattie Patch was originally established as a pilot project to showcase food-growing possibilities to the local residents, who were understandably cynical at first. With the main garden now built and in use, the Tattie Patch has been taken over by the local primary school. St Mary's PS have used a small amount of their Pupil Equity Funding to buy materials to construct raised beds and install permeable paving in the Patch. This should make the space more manageable and establishes the idea that PEF funding can be usefully spent on green resources. The popularity of the Whorterbank gardens with the Laughter Club and the local school means that the term 'Community Garden' has entered the children's lexicon and is now a requested destination for family outings. The Unpaid Work Team carried out the most recent work.

Tay View Community Garden (1 year old). This terraced garden has been enthusiastically embraced by the local community. The initial infrastructure, comprising 25 plots, has been enhanced by the addition of a community building, orchard and pond. Committee meetings happen regularly with Maryfield communities team support and the constituted group already has their own bank account. The garden has featured in the new edition of Fruit and Vegetables for Scotland, by Ken Cox and Caroline Beaton, and also on the 26th July episode of Beechgrove Garden. Neighbourhood Services constructed the garden

Kerr St Community Garden (2 years old). This small green space at the end of a cul-de-sac was taken over by local residents 2 years ago for growing fruit and veg as well as for recreation.

Ancrum Road Community Allotment (3 years old). This allotment plot was equipped with raised beds and a large shed as well as permeable paving, a polytunnel and greenhouse. The Lochee Community Gardeners run the site, along with the Gray's Lane garden. Much of the produce is given to the community café in the Lochee Parish Church. Neighbourhood Services provided the funding for materials.

St Mary's Community Garden (2 years old). This small development of raised beds was built in the grounds of the community church. It has been popular with groups using both the church and the community centre and is run by a Rank Foundation community worker. There are plans to expand

and improve the garden and funds are being sought. The construction of the garden was carried out by the Unpaid Work Team.

Menzieshill Community Garden (9 months old). This fantastic facility boasts a community building with accessible toilet, multiple water and power outlets and plenty of raised beds. The community has enthusiastically taken over the growing spaces and a responsible group is forming with the support of the Lochee Communities team. Despite this, there has been some localised vandalism. Construction of the garden was carried out by Robertson's as part of the overall redevelopment of the Menzieshill area with Scottish Government funding.

Balgarthno Community Garden (2 months old). This garden was built by the Community Payback team in the grounds of the new school(s) (Camperdown and St Clement's PS). Although the garden facility was requested by the schools, this garden is open to the entire community and many local residents have taken on growing space. The area comprises several raised beds, orchard trees by the south-facing wall and a storage shed that doubles as outdoor classroom space. The garden is supported by the School and Family Development Worker and the Lochee communities team.

Projects in development:

Arklay Terrace Community Garden: following the success of the Tay View garden in Maryfield, the local Regeneration Forum has funded a further garden in the north of Maryfield. Local residents are already coming together to show interest in the site and a group is emerging with Maryfield communities team support. Neighbourhood Services will continue to construct the garden.

Lochee Park Bowling Green: Fruit Bowl. This is a partnership project looking to bring a disused bowling green back into community use as a showcase fruit-growing facility. The James Hutton Institute, Lochee Community Gardeners and Allotment Lab are working with DCC to establish a fruit garden with support from the West End communities officer. Initial agreement to support this was given at a recent Neighbourhood Services Committee.