

Draft Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval by the Policy and Resources Committee for the draft Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy for the purposes of public and community consultation before being reported back to Full Council for adoption by April 2020. The draft will assist in meeting our duty under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which provides a legal framework that promotes and encourages community empowerment and participation in growing food. The Act creates new rights for community bodies and places new duties on public authorities.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9 - A Cross Departmental Working Group (Development and Infrastructure, Community and Governance and Law) was established in February 2019 to deal with various tasks coming from the Act. This report deals with one of these which is the draft Argyll and Bute Council Food Growing Strategy (the Growing Strategy) and includes our vision, current provision, how the Council will meet demand as informed by our waiting list register, provide guidance for community groups and how we will carry out the monitoring of the strategy.
- 1.3 The draft Growing Strategy has taken account of the Scottish Governments Guidance (Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Allotments Guidance for Local Authorities Section 119 Duty to Prepare Food-Growing Strategy) which we have reflected in the context of our rural location and existing well established food growing culture.
- 1.4 The draft Growing Strategy contains the following content:
- legal framework created by the Act,
 - current provision of Allotments within Argyll and Bute,
 - the Planning context,
 - results of the Stakeholder Questionnaire which has provided us with a clear indication of the different approaches to growing food,
 - Community Food Growing Guidance and the Monitoring and Review process.
- 1.5 The Growing Strategy contains a Vision which is: to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food; by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.

2.0 Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- note the contents of the draft Growing Strategy which reflects the duties placed on local authorities arising from Part 9 – Allotments of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; and
- Approve the Draft Growing Strategy for the purposes of public consultation.

Draft Community Food Growing Strategy.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires each local authority to prepare a food growing strategy within two years of Part 9 of the Act which is due by April 2020.
- 3.2 This paper presents the Draft Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy for consideration by the P&R committee prior to it being put out to public consultation. After that consultation the updated Growing Strategy along with responses to consultation will be presented to Full Council for adoption prior to April 2020 in order to comply with the Act.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- note the contents of the draft Growing Strategy which reflects the duties placed on local authorities arising from Part 9 – Allotments of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; and
- Approve the Draft Growing Strategy for the purposes of public consultation.

5.0 DETAIL**Legislative Context**

- 5.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval by the Policy and Resources Committee for the draft Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy to proceed to the next stage of the process – the 4 week public consultation. The draft Growing Strategy will assist in meeting our duty under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which provides a legal framework that promotes and encourages community empowerment and participation in growing food. The Act creates new rights for community bodies and places new duties on public authorities.
- 5.2 To ensure compliance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9 - A Cross Departmental Working Group (Development and Infrastructure, Community and Governance and Law) was established in February 2019 to deal with various tasks coming from the Act. This report deals with one of these tasks which is the draft Argyll and Bute Council Food Growing Strategy (the Growing Strategy). The Act requires that the Strategy is adopted by the Council by April 2020.
- 5.3 Other requirements of the Act include: a duty to establish and maintain an allotments Waiting List register, make allotment site regulations; and produce an allotments report for the Area each year. These matters are not dealt with by this report but will be covered in due course by Governance and Law.

Production of Argyll and Bute Draft Growing Strategy

- 5.4 The draft Growing Strategy has taken account of the Scottish Government's Guidance (Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Allotments Guidance for Local Authorities Section 119 Duty to Prepare Food-Growing Strategy.
- 5.5 The draft Growing Strategy has followed and interpreted the Scottish Government Guidance on developing a Food Growing Strategy in as much as it's relevant to a rural and island local authority like Argyll and Bute which has an existing well-established 'growing our own' culture. Consequently the draft Growing Strategy reflects the established culture of growing our own from individuals to allotments, community growing spaces and school gardens.
- 5.6 As part of the process of producing the Draft growing Strategy, we have surveyed stakeholders including: Community Councils, Allotment Associations, Community Groups, Schools, Housing Associations and individuals thus providing the strategy with a snap shot of the current status of growing our own in Argyll and Bute:

Our growing spaces are recognised as a valuable resource for individuals and communities, they provide a range of benefits which includes:

- Growing your own food contributes to low cost and environmentally sustainable ethos,
 - Contributes to Health and wellbeing – influencing a positive lifestyle choice and physical exercise,
 - Social interaction and inclusion for a range of age groups and provides an opportunity for learning through knowledge exchange,
 - Contribute to and benefit biodiversity
- 5.7 The Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy Vision is –
- ‘To encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food; by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance’
- 5.8 The Draft Growing Strategy includes the following content:
- the legal context of the Act,
 - current provision within Argyll and Bute,
 - the planning context,
 - the results of the stakeholder questionnaire which has provided us with a clear indication of the different approaches to growing food,
 - Community Food Growing Guidance information, and
 - proposals for monitoring and review of the Growing Strategy.

Allotments

- 5.9 As the authority responsible for the Growing Strategy, we are also obliged to ensure there are enough allotments to meet identified need. In terms of accommodating any demand for allotments by groups and individuals interested in growing their own food, the Council (Governance and Law) is maintaining a Waiting List Register and this will be reported on annually. If enough people register in an area where the numbers are viable and suitable land can be found within the Argyll and Bute Council Estate that meets the criteria of being local, accessible and fit for purpose, the Council will provide advice and guidance in order to help explore the options.
- 5.10 Argyll and Bute Council has only three allotment sites (as defined by the Act which is those on Local Authority land) one in Helensburgh and two in Rothesay and they are all managed solely by allotment associations. Other Community Food Growing Spaces such as community gardens and schools exist within a number of mainland and island sites and they are managed by local dedicated community members and school groups.

Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

- 5.11 Under Section 120 of the Act the Council is required 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. If as a local authority we decide to change the Growing Strategy following a review, we are required to publish an amended strategy electronically at that stage.

Consultation and Adoption

- 5.12 The draft Growing Strategy supports the duty in the Act as well as encouraging community groups to get involved in growing their own. The advice that has been provided in the document will help frame local community action and thus empowering them to support the Growing Your Own national policy. The draft Growing Strategy will be made available for consultation via the Council's website with online response forms and will be publicised through the Council's Communication Team. After the consultation we will analyse the responses, finalise the Growing Strategy and report both back to Full Council.
- 5.13 The Growing Strategy is not expected to require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), but it has not yet been formally screened out as the draft has only recently been produced. This will be dealt with before the Growing Strategy is reported back to Full Council.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In conclusion, the draft Growing Strategy will help meet our duty under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and provide information for those individuals and community groups who wish to grow their own food. This activity has a wide range of benefits including local food supply, health and wellbeing, social interaction and learning as well as contributing to our biodiversity and excellent environmental credentials.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 **Policy-** Community Food Growing Strategy will fulfil the requirement for a
- 7.2 **Financial-** Officer time
- 7.3 **Legal-** meeting our duty to produce a Food Growing Strategy and Waiting List under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- 7.4 **HR-** N/A
- 7.5 **Fairer Scotland Duty** – See below
- 7.5.1 **Equalities –protected characteristics-** Needs an EQSEI assessment before publication.
- 7.5.2 **Socio-economic Duty** Strategy considers all benefits.
- 7.5.3 **Islands-** Strategy has been drafted taking consideration of the needs of remote rural and island areas.
- 7.6. **Risk** -Failure to progress and adopt the Strategy will lead to failure to fulfil our duty by April 2020.
- 7.7 **Customer Service-**Need to ensure customers are engaged with during the consultation on the Growing Strategy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Appendix 2