



Councillor Michael Locke
Convener, Scrutiny Working Group
Community Growing

Please ask for: Councillor Alyson Anthony/ Cyril Anderson
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Our Ref: AA/CA/JW
Your Ref:
Date: 18 June 2024

Dear Councillor Locke

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP (COMMUNITY GROWING) 13 MAY 2024

We thank you for the opportunity to present a report on Community Growing to the Scrutiny Working Group. We are also grateful to all committee members for their consideration of the report and feedback provided during the session. The Scrutiny process is valued in informing the further progression of this work.

Responses to the Scrutiny Working Group's conclusions and recommendations as outlined in your letter are detailed below:

1. We were pleased to hear about the wide variety of work happening in the different areas of the Council. However, we felt a need for a more joined up approach or strategy for community growing with one department having oversight. Departments are making efforts to work collaboratively but this was happening due to those departments making this happen rather there being an existing structure in place.

As you are aware, responsibility for the oversight of community growing does not sit with any single department in our current structure. To progress more effectively as suggested would require additional resources to manage the oversight of community growing along with any further development work.

2. We recommend the Council consider running a scheme where people who are unable to maintain or use their own gardens for growing can offer them to other members of the community or community groups for growing in return for a share in the produce, offering opportunities for community connection.

To introduce such a scheme would require additional resources for the development and ongoing management. We also recognise that there would be significant issues and risks to consider such as safeguarding, insurance and dispute resolution, that would need to be thoroughly addressed to ensure the wellbeing of residents if such a scheme were to be developed.



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3. *We encourage the Council to share sites with potential for community growing with Councillors and ward members. This may encourage Councillors to use their budgets towards setting up a local community growing project that they may not have previously considered.*

All Councillors have been provided with Council ownership plans in their respective wards. Any identification of land should come locally due to the importance of the role and the reaction of the community. For this reason, a blanket analysis of spare but undevelopable land as a task would require additional, full time dedicated resource across the authority- similar to the tree planting exercise undertaken by Planning and Regeneration.

4. *We were interested to find out about the “Wild about our Ward” project and request this is shared with other Councillors.*

Officers within the Nature Conservation Team are developing ward based maps highlighting a range of biodiversity and greenspace features and within each ward. we hope to make these available to Council staff and Ward members by the Autumn.

5. *We ask the Council to consider a form of annual reporting for all allotment associations. This could help identify any issues or need for support, highlight misuse or regularly vacant plots which could then be advertised on the Councils website allotment page.*

The former Council allotments have transferred to individual allotment associations under community asset transfer and are now run autonomously of the Council.

6. *We recommend that schools are encouraged to have a nature and biodiversity governor appointed at each school. This would be not mandatory but encouraged and would act as a champion for any green space or growing projects within the school.*

We are happy to support this recommendation and will contact all governing bodies to encourage them to identify a link governor to champion green space and growing projects in their school.

Yours sincerely



**Y Cynghorydd /Councillor Alyson Anthony
Aelod y Cabinet - Lles
Cabinet Member – Wellbeing**



**Y Cynghorydd– Councillor Cyril Anderson
Aelod y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau
Cymunedol
Cabinet Member for Community Services**