

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 30 August 2022

## Sustainable Food Update

Executive/routine

Wards

Council Commitments [2](#), [18](#), [43](#), [44](#), [45](#)

### 1. Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee:

- 1.1 Note progress made on the first year of implementation of Growing Locally, the Council's first Food Growing Strategy.
- 1.2 Approve the proposed approach to allocation of resources under the Council's Sustainable Food Budget.
- 1.3 Note the progress made on the development of Edinburgh's second Sustainable Food City Plan and the timetable for implementation.
- 1.4 Note Edinburgh's Sustainable Food Places Silver accreditation which was awarded in June 2022

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# Report

## Sustainable Food Update

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on progress made in the first year of implementing Growing Locally, Edinburgh's first Food Growing Strategy, which was approved by the Policy and Sustainable Committee in April 2021.
- 2.2 To support Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy, the Council has allocated a budget of £130,000 for the financial year 2022-2023. This report seeks Committee approval for the proposed approach to allocation of resources within this budget allocation.
- 2.3 The Council is a lead member of Edible Edinburgh, the city's sustainable food partnership. The partnership is in the process of developing Edinburgh's second Sustainable Food City Plan, which will contribute to implementation of the Council's Food Growing Strategy. This report details the consultation already held and planned for this plan, its main objectives, and the timetable for its development.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Growing Locally, Edinburgh's first Food Growing Strategy was prepared under Section 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which places an obligation on local authorities to prepare a food growing strategy for its area.
- 3.2 The Act requires that the Food Growing Strategy:
  - 3.2.1 Maps the provision of food growing opportunities in the city including identifying land that the local authority uses as allotment sites and areas of land that could be used by a community for further cultivation
  - 3.2.2 Develops and broadens the range of food growing opportunities and land available
  - 3.2.3 Makes reasonable steps to increase allotments and food growing sites for communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage
- 3.3 In meeting these duties, the Council will support local communities to grow more within their own neighbourhoods and to encourage growing in all its forms and varieties.

- 3.4 In addition, Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy supports broader ambitions including helping to meet the Council's key priorities of eradicating poverty, achieving net zero emissions, supporting local business, and helping Edinburgh become a sustainable food city.
- 3.5 The role of food in the fight against climate change and the importance of food security are recognised in Edinburgh's [2030 Climate Strategy](#), with a commitment to "increase the proportion of the City's food and drink sourced from sustainable local and regional supplies". Consideration of opportunities for sustainable food purchasing is also highlighted within the Council's sustainable procurement strategy.
- 3.6 In 2021, Edinburgh made a commitment to put food at the centre of its response to the climate emergency and became a signatory to the International Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration – launched by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems and Nourish Scotland – which highlights the vital role food plays in meeting cities' net zero targets as well as helping to reduce poverty, inequality, and poor health.
- 3.7 There is an increasing interest in the contribution plant-based food systems can make to tackling climate change and local and regional food-growing activities have a significant contribution to make in this area.
- 3.8 Against this backdrop, the Council is facing a challenging financial outlook at the same time as significantly reduced capacity within the corporate teams which have been responsible for supporting the Council's work in this area. Going forwards, activities may need to undergo prioritisation to ensure that available resources are focused on the areas which can have the greatest impact in terms of the Council's key priorities.

## 4. Main report

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### **Growing Locally – Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy**

- 4.1 Growing Locally is Edinburgh's first food growing strategy and part of the Council's broader approach to a green recovery from the pandemic as well as meeting our key priorities on poverty eradication, becoming a net zero Council and city by 2030 and for a fairer, more inclusive city where citizens' wellbeing is protected and enhanced.
- 4.2 The Strategy has the following objectives:
  - 4.2.1 Increasing food growing in Edinburgh through the creation of more land for growing and encouraging the involvement of more people in food growing and providing support, where necessary, for community groups to participate and benefit from local food growing opportunities.
  - 4.2.2 Through food growing, recognising the key role biodiversity and the natural environment have in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

- 4.2.3 Increasing consumption of locally grown food through support for local food businesses and increasing the market share for local food producers and retailers.
  - 4.2.4 Encouraging take up of the Good Food Served Here Certification scheme by public and private sector organisations across the city. Council school lunches are seasonal and use local suppliers and our schools are part of the Meat-Free Mondays campaign. Ways to increase the share of plant-based meals in other Council catering operations are being considered.
  - 4.2.5 Building up resilience to food insecurity in Edinburgh through delivery of the End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan and the Edinburgh's Partnership's proposed approach to food insecurity.
  - 4.2.6 Continue to deliver emergency support for citizens experiencing poverty and hardship as part of Edinburgh's recovery from Covid including working with partners to ensure people in poverty have access to food support where it is needed.
  - 4.2.7 Improving awareness of and engagement in sustainable food across the city.
  - 4.2.8 Moving to a more regional approach to ensure our food system is developed at the scale needed to be sustainable through working with our regional partners across Edinburgh, South East Scotland and further afield.
- 4.3 The Council's Food Growing Strategy was supported by an allocation of £130,000 for the financial year 2021 to 2022, approved by Full Council on 27 May 2021. A summary of the main areas of activity that this budget funded and key highlights from the first of implementation of the Strategy is shown below.

**Objective 1: Grow more food in Edinburgh**

- 4.4 Key highlights from this first year under Objective 1 of the Strategy include:
- 4.4.1 Development of an online map of food growing sites in Edinburgh (Council and independent allotments and community growing sites)
  - 4.4.2 Increased food growing spaces through Cultivating Communities, Edinburgh's third allotment strategy, Council housing land and proposed food growing site allocations in City Plan 2030. There are currently 2019 allotment plots across 49 sites in Edinburgh, 1,683 of which are managed directly by the Council (up from 1,913 allotment plots across 45 sites in 2019/2020, 1,621 of which are managed by the Council).
  - 4.4.3 An additional 18 plots will be created in Leith Links allotment in summer 2022. A mid-survey update from Edible Estates, who manage on behalf of the Council community growing projects on Council housing land, have indicated that there are approximately 39 community gardens of varying sizes on Council housing land (up from around 25 in 2019/2020). The final figure will be known when the survey is completed in a few weeks.
  - 4.4.4 City Plan 2030 has identified approximately 3.3 hectares of new land in the city for allotments and community growing, the creation of new parkland with

potential for growing and the planting of new woodland, trees, hedging, and orchards. Just under 60 other community growing projects have been mapped (up from 47 in 2019/2020).

- 4.4.5 The creation of new land for growing and for growing and food-related projects in Council parks, greenspaces, and schools, delivered by the Council's parks and Thriving Green Spaces Team and Schools and Lifelong Learning. Within this:
  - 4.4.5.1 Fifteen community projects were funded on Council park and greenspace land with the money going towards the creation of one new community growing area, a children's food sensory garden, small orchards and fruit tree plantings, infrastructure and growing materials.
  - 4.4.5.2 Thirty eight school projects were funded, with the money going towards a variety of activities including construction of new growing spaces, infrastructure and materials needed for food growing, education and learning about growing and food, cooking and eating of the food produced.
  - 4.4.5.3 There was a very successful uptake of funding in 2021/2022 and increasing demand in schools to support food-related and outdoor learning activities.
- 4.4.6 Delivery of a local food growing project in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, promoting food growing and sustainable farming methods to staff, students, and the surrounding community as part of the Green Communities 'Growing with Nature' programme focusing on climate change and biodiversity. This project had three strands: planting fruit trees, use of wooden planters containing a range of herbs and permaculture design training for students. The trees and planters, located at student accommodation sites across the city, will provide free access to a range of fruits and herbs for students and staff. The use of heritage fruit trees provides a number of benefits in maintaining and preserving old and rare varieties. The training funds, provided to the University's Permaculture Garden student society, is supporting their permaculture gardening work. By training students in permaculture design, the hope is that this will also deliver positive changemakers who can employ this sustainable growing philosophy beyond University of Edinburgh campuses.
- 4.4.7 Supporting the development of Lauriston Farm, Edinburgh's first large scale urban agroecological food growing project, through improving the accessibility of the community garden and providing farm equipment to increase the potential for scaling up food production in the city. Improving the accessibility of the community garden will help encourage more participation by local residents, improving community cohesion and well-being as well as providing an accessible site for training and education around food growing and biodiversity. The purchase of farm equipment will help increase food production at the farm.

## **Objective 2: Increase consumption of locally grown food**

- 4.5 Key highlights from this first year under Objective 2 of the Strategy include:

- 4.5.1 Completion of phase 1 of a feasibility study into establishing an indoor market(s) and local food distribution hubs in Edinburgh, examining the current food situation in the city, the demand, need and viability of establishing hubs and markets, potential locations and the commercial and socio-economic cases for doing so. The results of this study will inform the development of business cases for the siting of food hubs and/or indoor market(s) in the city.
- 4.5.2 Edible Edinburgh's Economy Working Group's holding of four business breakfasts in 2021/2022 focusing on opportunities for food business to 'build back better' as part of Edinburgh's green recovery, Scotland's Food and Drink Recovery Plan, promoting the circular economy in ways that address social inequality and on public sector procurement. These were well-received and attended by up to 70 businesses, social enterprises, and community partners.
- 4.5.3 Development of a [Sustainable Food Directory](#) acting as the 'go-to' place for information on sustainable food businesses, organisations, and services in the city.
- 4.5.4 Promotion of Edinburgh's circular economy through the redistribution of surplus food and the recycling of food waste into compost, farmland fertiliser and gas for electricity (through reprocessing at Millerhill). This resulted in an 97% reduction in the tonnage of municipal waste going to landfill following Millerhill waste processing facilities becoming fully operational in 2019/2020.
- 4.5.5 Funding has been allocated to increase recycling in Council schools through the provision of indoor recycling and food waste bins and to ensure that support and facilities provided are consistent across the city. A supportive engagement campaign will run alongside to help encourage school staff and pupils to reduce, re-use and recycle.
- 4.5.6 The Council works with Changeworks to reduce and recycle waste, providing advice to consumers on making more sustainable food shopping choices and on how to compost unused produce. Changeworks' Food Waste Engagement programme encourages Edinburgh residents to recycle their food waste. 230 households were supported in reducing their food waste in 2020/21, resulting in a total of £102,080 in household food savings. In 2019/2020 385 people participating in Changeworks' Love Food Hate Waste workshops for businesses, employees and community groups. 84% said they changed their food behaviour as a result of these workshops.
- 4.5.7 Work under the Regional Prosperity Framework on data sharing and mapping of regional food and drink suppliers to identify opportunities for increasing local supplies and shortening the region's food supply chain. The project aims to encourage greater matching between regional supply and demand to achieve enhanced sustainability, jobs, fair work and quality innovative production. This is a long term project with further scoping working having taken place and data asks identified by the six local authorities that are partners in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal Region. Further engagement is taking place with potential data providers, industry and academia to produce a project plan.

- 4.5.8 [Food for Life Served Here](#) Bronze and Silver accreditation for Edinburgh's schools, care homes and day centres. The Council's catering service works closely with the Soil Association to develop recipes that meet nutritional guidance and promote the use of local produce such as meat sourced in Scotland, seasonal fruit and vegetables and free-range eggs.
- 4.5.9 The Council is continuing work with EVOC to develop an approach to addressing food poverty, as part of the wider response to ending poverty in Edinburgh. Progress has included extensive engagement with stakeholders, including a workshop hosted by EVOC in November 2021. The feedback has been used to inform a draft vision, scope, and principles to underpin the strategy. A progress report will be considered by the Edinburgh Partnership at their meeting in June 2022. Next steps will include public consultation on a draft strategy and commissioning research to develop baseline data and mapping of emergency and community food provision in the city (see 4.74).

### **Objective 3: Increase awareness and engagement**

- 4.6 Key highlights from this first year under Objective 3 of the Strategy include:
- 4.6.1 Refresh of Edible Edinburgh's website with a new look, better focused information, and new tools to increase awareness, encourage more sustainable consumer and business choices, and increased participation in food growing. Following this refresh, visitor numbers have steadily increased from 326 to a monthly total of 637 (an increase of 104%) with a 13.5% increase in number of pages visited. The same period has also seen a 107% increase in returning visitors totalling 118.
- 4.6.2 Edinburgh Talks Climate consultation (Nov 2019-April 2021) on attitudes towards climate change, including food, received 1,834 responses; with 74% of respondents pledging to eat less red meat, 80% to recycle food waste and 88% to eat leftover food instead of throwing it away.
- 4.6.3 Awareness raising among young people through outdoor learning activities in schools, including fruit and vegetable growing and by incorporating learning about food, ecosystems, rewilding, and biodiversity into the school curriculum.
- 4.6.4 The successful running of a sustainable food campaign to business, encouraging sign up to Edible Edinburgh's Sustainable Food Directory. Promotional material has been produced to support business including packs explaining the Directory and benefits of signing up, marketing and branding materials. Short videos have been produced highlighting the work that selected businesses are doing to promote sustainable food in the city. Eleven businesses are currently signed up to the Directory and work is ongoing to encourage more businesses to join.
- 4.6.5 Achievement of Edinburgh's application for Sustainable Food Places Silver accreditation in June 2022, following achievement of Bronze accreditation in 2019.

4.6.6 Work to establish a Local Food Growers Network to support increasing demand for growing spaces and allotments. Key stakeholders including Edible Edinburgh, FEDAGA and Edible Estates have held initial meetings to decide the format and functions of this network. An initial action coming out this has been to consider how the network can help reduce the Council's allotment waiting list through promotion and advertising of opportunities to volunteer and participate in community gardening projects in areas of high demand for an allotment.

### **Sustainable Food Budget Allocation 2022/2023**

4.7 The Council approved a second year of resources to support implementation of the Council's Food Growing Strategy in the form of a budget of £130,000 for the financial year 2022/2023.

4.8 In agreement with the Council's Sustainability Champion in April 2022, £22,270 of the 2022/23 budget was allocated as match funding for Edible Edinburgh's Sustainable Food Co-ordinator post. This match funding successfully levered an additional £10,000 award from the Sustainable Food Places Network under their Co-ordinator Support scheme.

4.8.1 It is proposed that the remaining food growing budget of £107,730 is used to support Food Growing Strategy priorities, in line with the officer capacity available to support project development and delivery, and/or the management of allocations to external organisations.

### **Edinburgh's Sustainable Food City Plan**

4.9 Over 5,000 people collectively shaped Edinburgh's first [Sustainable Food City Plan 2014-2020](#) which has successfully positioned Edible Edinburgh as the driving force behind Edinburgh's vision of being a leading sustainable food city

4.10 The Edible Edinburgh partnership is now working on the second iteration of this Plan. The new 10 year food plan (2022-2032) will build on the achievements made in the 2014-2020 Plan. The new plan will support action in six key areas:

4.10.1 Food equality, through working in partnership to monitor levels of food insecurity and address the challenges of access to sustainable, affordable, healthy food for all through a co-ordinated response.

4.10.2 Grow, produce, and distribute food more locally while protecting our natural resources and environment. This includes supporting school growing, urban food production at Lauriston and other sites in the city.

4.10.3 Reduce food waste, increase redistribution of surplus food, and reduce the environmental impact from food. This includes looking at the climate impact of what we eat and how this can be reduced, including through a shift to more plant-based diets. Ensure food continues to be part of the city climate conversation and plans.

4.10.4 Develop local supply chains and capacity to ensure that public catering benefits the local food economy. Work with schools, producers, and the Soil Association to increase standards and accreditation.

- 4.10.5 Develop a diverse, independent food sector that offers a variety of skills, training, and job opportunities. Provide resources to support businesses adopting sustainable actions including a directory and toolkit.
- 4.10.6 Inspire and support people to connect with food, get involved as active citizens and build their future food systems. Hold at least two annual events for the public to support and inspire.
- 4.11 Baseline indicators and an annual review will measure progress to maintain momentum and deliver on outcomes.
- 4.12 Consultation on the new plan started in September 2021 and will run to 30 September 2022, with a final plan delivery in November 2022. Over 200 people have already directly engaged in the development of the new Plan via online workshops (Sep-Nov 2021), a street stall (December 2021) and an Inspiring Food event (February 2022) which attracted over 100 attendees. Two further public events are planned in June and August with community gardening and food project organisations, as well as presentations to the Chamber of Commerce, EVOC and community councils.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Continued implementation of the Food Growing Strategy. A second year progress report on the Strategy will be brought to Committee in Spring 2023.
- 5.2 Edible Edinburgh's final Sustainable Food City Plan 2022-2032 will be brought to Committee for approval of Council actions in the plan and endorsement by the Council of Edible Edinburgh and partner actions.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 £22,270 has been allocated as match funding for Edible Edinburgh's Sustainable Food Co-ordinator post. Subject to approval of this report, the remaining food growing budget of £107,730 will be used to support Food Growing Strategy priorities, in line with the officer capacity available to support project development and delivery, and/or the management of allocations to external organisations

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 This report has been developed with input from the Council's Policy and Insight, Parks, Schools and Lifelong Learning, 20-minute neighbourhood, waste services and catering sections and from Edible Edinburgh and partner organisations.
- 7.2 This report has been assessed in respect of the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties. In summary, any action to promote sustainable, local, and healthy food in Edinburgh that is accessible to all citizens will help to mitigate and adapt the Council and city to climate change, improve social justice, economic wellbeing, and environmental good stewardship.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Growing Locally, Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy](#)
  - 8.2 [Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate](#), Policy and Sustainable Committee, 3 August 2021
  - 8.3 [Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan 2014-2020](#)
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