



COMMUNITY FOOD GROWING STRATEGY



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1. INTRODUCTION

Community growing is for all. Community growing is about creating and sustaining places where people can grow together - where they can produce healthy food locally and experience the social, environmental and health benefits of growing. Anyone who wants to grow their own fruit and vegetables should be able to - growing should be accessible and affordable for everyone.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to help empower communities across Scotland and improve access to land for food growing purposes, for those wanting to grow your own. Scottish Borders Council recognises the benefits of community growing in its many forms and through this Strategy seeks to support and promote community growing across the region.

Community growing can offer a whole range of benefits:

Health

Fruit and vegetable consumption increases when people are involved in community growing. As well as the nutritional benefits, the physical and mental health benefits of gardening and community growing are well documented.

Environmental

Community growing can mean enhanced space and habitat for wildlife, such as pollinator friendly planting and the management of green infrastructure linking to adjacent wildlife corridors. Community growing can contribute to reducing carbon emissions through reduced food miles and improving air quality, as well as reducing waste packaging and food waste (people are less likely to waste food that they grow, with any grow-your-own waste being composted).

Economic

Community gardens tend to spend grant funding locally, utilising local goods and services, employing local people and training up local volunteers. Growing your own can be a cost effective part of household food spending, saving families money. The Social Value of community gardening has been measured through studies and clearly demonstrates benefits to stakeholders, volunteers and local people; the skills and training opportunities, both formal and informal, support the local economy indirectly by preparing people for employment.

Social

A sense of community is encouraged when people participate in good growing activities. Community growing can offer 'social horticulture' creating social inclusion for individuals or groups who may otherwise feel excluded, isolated or lonely.

Educational

Community growing can contribute to learning, offering both practical skills development and a therapeutic environment. Food growing is for all ages and encompasses a broad range of learning areas including biodiversity, provenance, horticulture, climatology, ecology, cookery, history and health and wellbeing.

Food Security

Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Grow-your-own and locally grown produce ensures sustainable, safe access to produce in the Scottish Borders.

Our vision for community growing in the Scottish Borders is that people wishing to grow their own fruit and vegetables can access or develop a range of community growing opportunities in their area.



Community food garden ©Abundant Borders

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2. AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

The aim of this strategy is to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing. Scottish Borders Council has consulted with communities and groups already involved in Community Food Growing initiatives to help us develop this Strategy.

The key objectives of the Food Growing Strategy are:

- To provide a central resource for community growing information
- To raise awareness around community growing in the Scottish Borders
- To show you how to get growing: where, how and who can help you/your community
- To help you get your community growing project off the ground
- To help identify potential allotment sites and growing spaces

In preparing this Strategy we consulted with members of the public and with community groups. Survey responses identified a need for support to individuals and communities interested in food growing, broadly falling into three themes:



Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden ©Lisa Brydon

Getting started: how do I get growing?	Support for getting started - Skills and Advice; training, confidence and resources to get started...
Where can I grow?	Help to find space – existing sites and new growing spaces and getting the right permissions in place...
Where can I get support for my growing/project/growing activities?	How to resource your project: Funding, networking and skills sharing...

In the following sections the Strategy sets out the context of Community Growing in the Scottish Borders, addressing these three questions, drawing together resources and information from across the Region to help you get started. Finally, the Action Plan sets out the Council's commitment to develop Community Growing over the next 5 years.



Wilton Lodge Park Walled Garden ©Lisa Brydon

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

"K has spent over a year and a half volunteering at the walled garden. He had never considered gardening before and was quite apprehensive... and was totally surprised at how enjoyable it was. He remarked on how it was like a 'family' and everyone 'looked out' for each other, he was amazed at how sociable it felt.

He has learned a lot about gardening over the year and even passed on tips and ideas to others such as companion planting, planting chives round the pear trees to help keep the aphids away. He also liked the fact that the gardening was all organic and learning how to make our own liquid fertiliser with comfrey and nettles.

One of the huge benefits of the experience is having company and being with other volunteers; it's something to look forward to and a routine to help get him out. This has contributed to increased self-confidence and he has been able to obtain a SQA Volunteering Skills Award. This, along with all the other skills gained and confidence on a personal level has helped with his illness and contributed to his general wellbeing and feeling part of a community project. Due to his new found confidence he now volunteers on another project, talking to the public and looking after an exhibition. This is a huge step, and his time spent in the garden has contributed to his much improved mental health."

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

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3. COMMUNITY GROWING

Supported by digital activity, develop a network of community growers and volunteers, with activities including events

3.1. Allotments

Allotments are plots of land made available for non-commercial gardening and food growing, leased by an individual or community group for that sole purpose. The standard sized according to most current legislation is 250m² for a full plot or 125m² for a half plot. As well as those managed by Scottish Borders Council, there are others leased and managed by Allotment Associations, or run privately by 3rd party groups. See the [map](#) for locations in your area. If you are interested in leasing an allotment, you can apply online for a Council site [here](#). If you are on the waiting list, there are other growing opportunities that you might want to consider in the meantime – such as local community gardens, garden shares schemes, or adopting a bed in your local public park!



Lee Brae Allotments



Mossilee Allotments

Scottish Borders Council manages 82 allotment plots at various sites in Peebles, Innerleithen and Hawick.

There are also privately run allotments sites across the region, in towns such as Peebles, Galashiels, Eyemouth, Tweedbank, Hawick, Kelso, Selkirk, and Traquair.

3.2 Orchards

Orchards are areas where there are a minimum of 5 fruit trees. Greener Melrose have established a community orchard at Drygrange Community Woodland and plans are afoot for Kelso Community Orchard. According to a recent inventory* there is a rich legacy of orchard sites within the Scottish Borders. Jedburgh was once famous for its orchards and the 'Jethart Pear' - Queen of Scots House in Jedburgh still has remnants of the original infamous orchard where Lord Darnley was allegedly found upon his death. [* https://www.orchardrevival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BORD-Orchard-Inventory-Area-Report-v1-2018-web.pdf](https://www.orchardrevival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BORD-Orchard-Inventory-Area-Report-v1-2018-web.pdf)



Apples ©Abundant Borders

3.3 Community gardening and food growing in public spaces

Community growing is about growing food within a shared space, where communities can come together and share the workload, learn, connect, and grow in a way that works for them. There are lots of different kinds of community gardens and growing sites, from therapeutic growing projects to community gardens, to 'public' beds that are adopted by community groups for growing plants, flowers, herbs or fruits and vegetables.



Courthouse Beds ©Adam Skelton

3.4 Schools

Across the Scottish Borders there are a large number of growing projects within Primary and Secondary schools already happening as an integral part of delivering the Curriculum for Excellence, Outdoor learning, Learning for sustainability and School Improvement Plans. From polytunnels to community gardens, there are opportunities to develop these further and for volunteers to get involved.

3.5 Community Planning Partners

There are opportunities to change the way Community Planning Partners manage their land. Within the NHS, there is scope to develop sites within their estate for community and therapeutic food growing. The Space to Grow Project in Melrose is a great example of what can be achieved, with the therapeutic benefits of gardening and food growing being offered to patients and volunteers alike.

3.6 Social enterprise and Business

There are a number of ways that community growing projects can be developed through Social Enterprise and Business. For example, Borders Food Communities has piloted an approach to getting locally grown produce from community gardens to the market place. Community farming can offer opportunities for community growing. Local Businesses such as Jarvis Pickle in Eyemouth have worked in partnership with organisations such as Abundant Borders to develop their own community herb gardens.

There are also opportunities for better connecting local growers and growing groups to communities who may benefit from their produce. Schemes such as Community Fridges, Fareshare, etc help to distribute food to anyone who needs it.

3.7 Other ways of growing

There are, of course, other ways of growing your own food – be it on your doorstep, balcony, garden, or even hydroponics. While the Strategy focusses on Community gardening and allotments, we recognise the hugely important role of ‘growing your own’ in all its many forms. If you are simply in need of some guidance and advice, then please check out section 4 and 6 for links to resources and training opportunities.



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Food Communities Food Share ©Adam Skelton



Courthouse Garden, Peebles ©Adam Skelton

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

4. GETTING STARTED: HOW CAN I GET GROWING?

Through consultation for this strategy you said (42%) you would like support for growing activities. If you or your group are needing help there are lots of organisations that can assist you to get started and develop your skills.

Scottish Borders Council in partnership with Live Borders, has operated a community volunteering project at Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick since 2010. This provides opportunities for a wide range of volunteers and voluntary groups to access and support for skills development in food growing, under a supervised programme offered by the Council. During the last 10 years, the project has made a huge difference in terms of supporting volunteers with specific needs to get involved in community food growing.

Anyone wishing to consider how to get their project off the ground is welcome to visit the garden at Hawick and meet the volunteer coordinator to discuss their project. The volunteer coordinator can offer real support to new groups, in terms of 'dos and don'ts' and provide tips and advice in setting up your project. The Volunteer Co-ordinator and team of volunteers have a wealth of experience about the creation and management of raised beds for people with access issues and we can help ensure that you get the best possible start for your project. Anyone wishing to find out more can contact Lisa Brydon on lisa.brydon@scotborders.gov.uk

4.1 Skills training, workshops and advice

Who Can Help?	Support Available
Assistance with funding	
The Bridge https://onlineborders.org.uk/community/thebridge	Finding the right funding for your idea How to apply for funding
BAVS http://www.bavs.org.uk/ Communities & Partnership Team, SBC	Can advise on local funds to get you started - full list of local funds available online here; https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund
Men's Sheds https://scottishmsa.org.uk/find-a-shed/	Can help you explore funding for your project
Keep Scotland Beautiful – Climate Challenge Fund https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/	Funding and sustainability advice
Support and Training	
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society http://www.sags.org.uk/	Advice on setting up your allotment group. Links to other Allotment Societies.
Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC The Conservation Volunteers Scottish Borders Public Health Team Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Borders	Offer a programme of “How to” workshops, for example composting, preserving, cooking, wildflowers and companion planting
Drygrange Community Orchard	Orchard development: Tree identification, planning, planting and maintaining an orchard
Scottish Orchards http://www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html	Advice on orchard growing
Borders Food Communities https://www.foodcommunities.org/	Gardening and food growing skills sharing Skills development Growing and cooking classes Organic gardening skills sharing

SBC Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Brydon	Advice, guidance and skills sharing
Burnfoot Community Futures https://en-gb.facebook.com/BurnfootCommunityFutures/	Community gardening skills development
Borders Organic Gardeners http://www.bordersorganicgardeners.org/	Organic gardening skills sharing
Trellis Scotland, https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/	Skills sharing, help setting up your site
Abundant Borders http://abundantborders.org.uk/	Permaculture – no-dig gardening, skills development, cookery courses

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

“In 2018 the garden became an official site which was classed ‘Macmillan Friendly’. This allows cancer patients either in treatment or remission to access the garden and join the project along with their family members should they wish to participate. P, along with his wife, started in the spring of 2018. His cancer was in remission and he wanted to get out and join a volunteer project to help him be more physically active. Both P and his wife have thrown themselves into the project and loved every minute of it. For them this has helped on various levels and P’s diabetes has seen a marked improvement in his sugar levels since being in the garden, and also said that some of his friends have remarked on his weight loss since joining.”

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

“B started volunteering at the Wilton Lodge Park project in 2014. Being part of a community project was very important to her and she felt it was very important to give something back. Within the garden B helps with seed preparation, digging of the beds, stone removal, planting and pruning.

She loves the social aspect of volunteering in particular the walled garden group and takes great pride in the maintenance and upkeep of the vegetable and perennial areas of the walled garden. Being part of the group has helped with her feeling part of the local community and having a routine and purpose in life.”

4.2 Setting up your group

If you are interested in setting up your own growing group, there are several places to go for advice and guidance. Social Farms and Gardens have a comprehensive Community Growing Resources Pack. Other local groups are happy to share their extensive knowledge of getting started.

Who Can Help?	Support Available
The Bridge CVS Communities & Partnership Team	Setting up your group Becoming constituted, etc.
Social Farms and Gardens	Resources for getting started; https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland
Borders Food Communities	Can put you in touch with local groups who are happy to share their experience of getting started.

4.3 Joining a group/getting an allotment

If you would like to find out more about getting involved in growing in your area, there are various groups across the region who would be very happy to hear from you - for a list of growing groups in your area, please see section 5.2. If you are interested in finding out more about allotments in your area, please consult the map [here](#), and read on to find out about groups in your area.



Abundant Borders Team ©Abundant Borders

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SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

5. WHERE CAN I GET GROWING?

Through consultation for this strategy, **you said (28%)** you would like **help finding suitable space for growing** fruit and vegetables, herbs and flowers. If you or your group wants to grow fruit and vegetables there are a variety of ways to get growing or joining in with those who might already be doing this in your area.

The priority for our support will be to match people wanting to grow or to get involved to liaise with those on these sites before creating new growing spaces.

5.1 Allotment Sites

The Council is committed to ensuring a sustained supply of allotment sites to meet demand. If you are interested in an allotment please let us know. There are currently public and private allotments sites across the region, and while there are waiting lists in some areas, we are required to ensure that no one waits longer than 5 years. We are also required to support a sufficient supply of land for allotments to ensure demand can be met.

For information on where the allotments in your area are and who to contact please check out [the map](#) online.

If you currently have a Council allotment, and have thoughts or ideas about how the site is managed or could be managed differently, there are opportunities for you to join with fellow ploholders and become a self-managed site. There is a pre-established model of self-management of Council-owned allotments by ploholders who can set up their own individual Allotment Association. The Allotments in Eyemouth, Tweedbank and Galashiels are already managed this way. Through entering into agreement with the Council to take over the running of the allotment site - under a lease - the potential benefits are;

- more autonomy and sense of ownership/stewardship of the allotment site
- accessing grant funding (not otherwise available to local authorities) for development and improvements to the allotment site, receiving advice and guidance from the Council
- more local decision making leading to social cohesion within the allotment community, making for a more enriching experience for all.

The Council can act as facilitator for self-managed allotment sites and their groups of tenants. The Scottish Allotment Garden Society <https://www.sags.org.uk/> can offer advice on setting up as an Allotment Association.

Case Study: Tweedbank Allotments

Tweedbank Allotment Society was founded in 2012 by a group of enthusiastic local residents who, with the help of Scottish Borders Council worked to identify a site and secure funding. The site at Essenside Drive is former amenity grass adjacent to an informal kickabout area. It is leased from the Council and was opened in 2013. The site is managed and run by a group of volunteer members of the Society and accommodates 15 plots, a communal shed and water butts.



If you are a community group looking to start your own allotment site, please see below for information on finding land and accessing support. Or have you thought about the community growing model?

Community Growing Map

We have developed a map of all community growing sites across the Scottish Borders. To find out more about sites in your area click [here](#), or if you have any updates you wish to add please get in touch at neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk



5.2 Community Gardens and Orchards

There are existing community gardens across the region, such as that in Peebles, Hawick, Innerleithen, Galashiels, Melrose, Eyemouth, and Ayton. As described in part 2 these are about sharing the load, supporting each other and making growing your own more accessible. Community orchards also offer a unique chance to come together. If you are interested in your local Community garden or orchard see the list of contacts below:

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Tweeddale		
The Courthouse Garden Beside Peebles Parish Church, Peebles High Street EH45 8SW	Community food garden created by volunteers from Peebles Food Community. Meeting times can vary so please contact Adam for details.	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
The Secret Garden Deans Wynd, off the High Street, Peebles EH45 8SW	Growing and learning community garden: sessions every Saturday 11-2 and daily.	https://www.tweedgreen.org.uk/community-garden
St Ronans Wells Garden St Ronans Wells Wells Brae, Innerleithen EH44 6RB	St Ronan's Wells community garden with lots for all abilities to do including a ground level herb bed. Volunteers meet from 11.00 - 3.00 on Thursdays and usually the 2nd Saturday each month. As the garden is at the top of a steep slope transport can usually be arranged	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Tweeddale (cont'd)		
Peebles CAN Garden Kingsmeadows Road, Peebles EH45 9BH	Volunteer sessions (Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.00 -12.00) welcome gardeners of all ages and abilities, from those who would like to share their knowledge, to supporting people who are learning to grow fruit and vegetables. The garden promotes sustainable living, inclusive communities and living a healthy lifestyle.	https://www.peeblescan.org/contact
Lamancha Community Hub	Old School House, West Linton, Scottish Borders, EH46 7BD	http://www.lamanchacommunityhub.org.uk/contact.html
The Glebe Project The Manse, Innerleithen Road, Peebles, EH458BD	The Glebe Project is a therapeutic growing project for people in the Tweeddale area with a mental health or cancer diagnosis who are in the recovery phase of their illness and have low to moderate support needs. People are welcome to come on a Wednesday between 10.00 and 4.00 for a coffee/tea and a chat, or to work in the garden. Volunteers welcome.	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
The Edible Garden St. Ronan's Primary School, St Ronan's Rd, Innerleithen EH44 6PB	The Edible Garden is a community garden behind St Ronan's Primary School in Innerleithen, run by volunteers and a steering group. Their aim is to inspire, motivate and build confidence in adults and children of all ages and abilities to learn how to grow their own food in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. They provide workshops about gardening, growing and reducing your carbon footprint. Volunteers meet on Friday mornings 10.00 - 11.00 to tend the garden and pick produce.	http://www.youcangrow.org.uk/
Teviot and Liddesdale		
Abundant Borders Hawick Community Food Garden Behind Salvation Army Store, High Street, Hawick TD9 9EE	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Hawick the garden is behind	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Teviot and Liddesdale (cont'd)		
	the Salvation Army Community Store on the High Street. Volunteers meet Tuesdays and Fridays 10.30 - 12.30 in the winter and 10.30 to 12.30 in the summer. There is a volunteer co-ordinator on site to support volunteers who may have additional needs.	
Burnfoot Grows Together Community Garden Burnfoot Community Hub, 89 Burnfoot Rd, Hawick TD9 8EJ	The Burnfoot Grows Together project is Burnfoot Community Future's ambitious community growing and eating project. The group has transformed the current outside space at the Burnfoot community hub into a new growing, demonstration and educational area.	www.facebook.com/groups/657099337996052/
Wilton Lodge Community Garden Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick TD9 7LG	Volunteer group meets Monday and Wednesday 10am until 3pm, April to November, and every Tuesday and Wednesday 10am until 3pm, December - March. If staying all day folk need a packed lunch but teas, coffees and biscuits provided!	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20032/parks_and_outdoors/833/wilton_lodge_park_volunteering
Eildon		
Selkirk Community Shed The Argus Centre Goslawdales Cottage Goslawdales, Selkirk TD7 4EP		http://selkirkshedders.org.uk/
Space to Grow Community Garden Huntlyburn, Borders General Hospital TD6 9BD	The 'Space to Grow' garden project at Huntlyburn is an innovative concept that allows patients the opportunity to leave the boundaries of the ward to spend time in the natural environment and is located only a stone's throw away from Huntlyburn Mental Health unit. The project provides an opportunity to utilize a sustainable resource which impacts positively on mental and physical wellbeing contributing to the patients' recovery and return to independent living by allowing patients to participate in Social Therapeutic Horticulture (STH), be active outdoors and engage/explore/absorb the natural environment.	https://www.facebook.com/nature4mentalhealth/
Community Allotments, Orchard & Woodland Drygrange, Melrose TD4 6AG		https://en-gb.facebook.com/AGreenerMelrose/

Community Growing Project	Description	Contact
Berwickshire		
Abundant Borders Ayton Community Food Garden Summerhill Park, Ayton, Berwickshire	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Ayton the garden is just off The Beanburn. The garden is open to volunteers each day, though volunteers meet on Monday and Thursday afternoons between 1.30-3.30	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Eyemouth Community Food Garden Eyemouth, Berwickshire	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Eyemouth the garden is part of Eyemouth Allotments, off the Harbour Road. The garden is open to volunteers each day, though volunteers meet on Friday mornings between 10.30 – 12.30	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Duns Community Food Garden, Todlaw, Duns	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Duns the garden is part of the BHA Housing Development at Todlaw (between Knoll Hospital and Pearsons Garden Centre). The garden will be open from Spring 2020. Contact robin@abundantborders.org.uk for more details	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders Coldingham Community Food Garden, Coldingham Priory, Coldingham	Abundant Borders support community food gardens across the Scottish Borders. They run training courses and workshops on all aspects of food from sustainable food growing, cooking healthy, affordable meals through to food preservation and avoiding food waste. In Coldingham the garden is alongside Coldingham Priory. The garden will be open from Spring 2020. Contact robin@abundantborders.org.uk for more details	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

5.3 Public spaces

Scottish Borders Council has a wealth of over 600 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace that may lend itself to accommodating food growing. From amenity bedding areas to tracts of grass in our towns and villages. 'Guerrilla gardening' is one term used for those engaged in adopting perhaps neglected pockets of ground and turning it over to local food production. 'Incredible edibles' is a network of community food growers who have adopted public spaces in their communities. Or you may see a corner of a park or greenspace near where you live that you simply feel could be turned over to food growing for the community. There may be scope within this network for sites to be informally 'adopted' by community growers on an agreed basis.

The Community Empowerment Act asks all local authorities to identify land for food growing where demand exists. Scottish Borders Council recognise this green network as a tremendous opportunity, and in order to ensure that land for food growing is identified collaboratively with communities, and is in the right location to meet local demands, we welcome enquiries for any sites within your area.

As a community or individual, if you wish to enquire about availability of land in your area, contact us at Scottish Borders Council Parks and Environment service – via email at neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk or telephone 01835 824000 and ask to speak to someone about community food growing. We can then explore the opportunities with individuals or groups to better understand their needs and consider the suitability of any spaces the Council may manage/maintain, for food growing. Should officers feel that a suitable opportunity could be realised through the 'adoption' of land within the Council's ownership, the proposal would be subject to a council report and permissions/consultations with other services. Where the Council does not believe that it has an appropriate site capable of meeting the local food growing needs, then it may consider what alternatives it can offer, including sites in settlements that may not be local to the individual or group.

Scottish Borders Council is monitoring demand and supply of Allotment sites, using the tools set out in the legislation such as demand thresholds and Annual Allotment Reports. Where necessary, the Council may consider the acquisition of appropriate land to meet the needs of the area, taking into account reasonable distance and travel times.

The Council will always wish to work in partnership to respond to enquiries about access to land for food growing.

Where Council land is not an option then you or your group may have other ideas for places where you would like to grow, and you may wish to consider leasing land from landowners or be interested in community growing as part of new development. We don't intend to be too prescriptive, but we are happy to discuss any local ideas you may have. Section 5.7 of the strategy sets out the permissions required for you and your group to begin using a space for growing.

Across communities there are also areas of amenity greenspace owned by our other Community Planning Partners (NHS Borders, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, and Scottish Enterprise). Community groups can apply for these sites to be transferred to Community ownership (for more information please see https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer) as community growing sites.

If you are interested in these kinds of opportunities for growing sites in your area, please see the following.

5.4 Schools

A number of schools within the Scottish Borders have an active gardening area which focuses on growing fruit and vegetables. This can enhance the outcomes and experience delivered within Curriculum for Excellence. There can be links made to all the curriculum areas.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/a-summary-of-learning-for-sustainability-resources>

Initiatives within schools are very happy to hear from those wishing to get involved in food growing and will welcome some support – many hands make light work, particularly through the summer break. If you are interested in finding out more about what's going on in your local school(s) then please get in touch.

5.5 Garden share

Schemes such as 'Lend and Tend', where a garden owner shares their garden with individuals or groups of growers, can be a great way to get growing. Schemes like this are already happening in Hawick and Peebles.

5.6 Making space for growing

Where council land isn't an option, you or your group may have other ideas for places where you would like to grow, and you may wish to consider leasing land from farmers or be interested in community growing as part of new development. Partners such as Eildon Housing Association are developing opportunities for food growing within their network. We don't intend to be too prescriptive, but we are happy to discuss any local ideas you may have. This section of the strategy sets out the permissions required for you and your group to begin using a space for growing.



Community food garden ©Abundant Borders



Space to Grow, Melrose©Jan Moffat

Case Study: St Ronan's Primary School, Innerleithen

The Edible Garden at St. Ronan's School in Innerleithen was established in 2014 in partnership with a local social enterprise company, You Can Cook. This was the first growing project of its kind to be set up in a school in Scotland. The initial project was funded by a grant from the Climate Change Fund and was professionally designed and staffed, all in conjunction with the children as a learning experience. In 2018/19, the direct input of the social enterprise partnership ended and the management of the garden became part of the St. Ronan's Youth & Community Centre, with a designated a sub-group, as part of a carefully planned transition for sustainability. The community centre committee presented a bid to the SBC Locality Bid Fund and was successful in obtaining funding to continue to employ a part-time gardener and make material improvements to the garden.

The gardener leads classroom sessions, alongside school staff, in sowing and propagating.

The children are then involved in the whole growing and harvesting process. The garden produces a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs. Produce is used in cooking projects, can be harvested for home use by all members of our community, are sent home with children from time to time as a family gift or sold in local shops. All ages of children, from Nursery-P.7, are involved, with a Friday afternoon gardening club open to all children and their parents/carers. There are also regular seasonal opportunities for adult gardening drop-in sessions.



Case Study: Courthouse, Peebles

The Courthouse Garden is a community garden run by Peebles Food Community, on an area of private land that the owners have allowed access to. In the space of two and a bit years, from a disused weed jungle, the community now has a brilliant space growing an abundance of organic fruit, veg and herbs. The garden is maintained by volunteers and produce is shared amongst volunteers and the owners.

All materials such as tools, seeds and plants have been donated by group members while others have been sourced for free locally (polythene, manure, cardboard, pallets, etc), with greenhouses, cold frames, compost bins, and planters all built by the volunteers. Local people of all ages have been involved in the progress

of the garden, including great help from five high school children doing their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The garden is run without community funding, and has no outgoings such as rent so is a self-sustaining project that can adapt and evolve to community needs.



Case Study: Salvation Army Garden, Hawick

Abundant Borders is a Charity aimed at giving everyone, regardless of personal circumstances access to freshly grown produce. In 2018, Abundant Borders joined together in partnership with the Salvation Army to develop the grounds behind the Salvation Army shop on the High Street in Hawick. This site offers growing and training opportunities for volunteers, as well as fresh produce to those in the town and immediate area who are using the food banks.

In partnership with the Community Hub, they also employ a sessional worker to deliver healthy cooking and healthy eating initiatives in the town,

for whom in turn they share knowledge and experience in helping to grow the community garden space at The Hub.



5.7 What about planning?

Early discussions with landowners and the Planning department about any community growing project is advised – they will explain what consents you may need and what information they need from you to help you get your project moving forward. If you are looking to enclose an allotment site, you may need to submit a planning application seeking consent to do this. You may also need planning permission for new structures, like sheds, and possibly raised planting beds. We would prefer that this be done for the site as a whole as part of the Allotment Management Group's initial planning application, rather than being done on an individual basis each time a plot holder wishes to put up a tool shed, which will also enable a consistent approach to buildings and structures. If there are any designations on the land that might be impacted by your allotment site, the Council will advise you about what you can and can't do. Designations to look out for include:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Landscape Areas, Special Areas for Conservation, Wildlife Sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
- Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value
- Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens

Designations can be seen on the relevant proposals map of the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan [here](#).

Planning consent is likely to be required for:

- Any works within a Conservation Area
- Structures on site, including:
- Outbuildings and sheds on each individual plot;
- Communal buildings;
- Fencing; and
- Parking facilities

To begin growing you will need to liaise with the landowner or developer. It's worth noting that new development will now be assessed against policy EP17 (see below) which seeks to safeguard food growing sites wherever possible and integrate community food growing needs into new development.

Planning Officers are finalising a new policy EP17 entitled 'Food Growing & Community Growing Spaces' within the proposed new Local Development Plan. In essence the policy confirms the requirement for the safeguarding and enhancement of any existing food growing area and lays down criteria tests for considering proposals for new or extended food growing areas which meet community needs.

Scottish Borders Council has details of land in its ownership. If the site belongs to the Council, there is a process you need to follow to agree how you intend to use the growing space. Scottish Borders Council Property and Estates team will be involved in agreeing lease arrangements for Council-owned land.

Contamination

When you have found your potential food growing site you should liaise with the contaminated land specialists within Scottish Borders Council's Environmental Health department to establish if land contamination presents a potential constraint which requires further consideration.

How potential land contamination is considered will depend upon the requirement for planning consent for the land's new use. In the first instance a request may be made to Scottish Borders Council for any relevant environmental information held about the proposed site (an Environmental Information Request). Please note that there may be a charge for this. The information provided may assist in understanding the history of the site, its former uses/

operations, neighbouring uses, if previous ground investigations have been undertaken and their findings, and if land contamination is a potential constraint likely to require further assessment.

If land contamination is identified as a potential constraint an appropriate phased risk assessment will also be required, where planning consent is necessary.

Where planning consent is not required the creation of a food growing site may still result in liabilities under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In considering such liabilities investigations can be undertaken on a voluntary or due diligence basis. SBCs Contaminated Land specialist can be consulted in regard to such investigations to ensure the site is demonstrated to be suitable for its proposed use, and to ensure future regulatory intervention is not necessary.

It is recommended that you liaise with the contaminated land team at an early stage, and throughout the process as necessary - we would be very happy to hear from you!

An overview flow chart of the land contamination evaluation process is presented in Appendix 1.

We will help by:

- Creating specific policy safeguarding for Allotments and food growing sites in the Local Development Plan.
- Support community growing within council land where possible
- Planning for future allotment sites in new developments and securing land for growing to meet demand
- Identifying potential community growing sites
- Sharing information on what's happening in your area.



Beds ©Abundant Borders

Who else can help	Support available
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)	Maintenance of online resources and database of growing sites http://www.sags.org.uk/
Private Landowners	May provide space for your growing and/or allotment project
Community Planning Partners	If you are interested in taking on a community asset such as greenspace around a local community facility, you can apply for a Community Asset Transfer; https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer
Registered Social Landlords	Eildon Housing Association Berwickshire Housing Association Scottish Borders Housing Association Waverley Housing Association Hanover Housing Association
Community Land Advisory Service	Help finding land and agreeing lease arrangements with the landowner. https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/
Land Register of Scotland	Information about who owns land in Scotland. Please note, there is a charge for obtaining land ownership information. https://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/land-register-of-scotland
Borders Food Communities	Garden share opportunities; information on local community growing projects; networking with other interested growers. https://www.foodcommunities.org/

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

6. WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT FOR MY GROWING PROJECT/ GROWING ACTIVITIES?

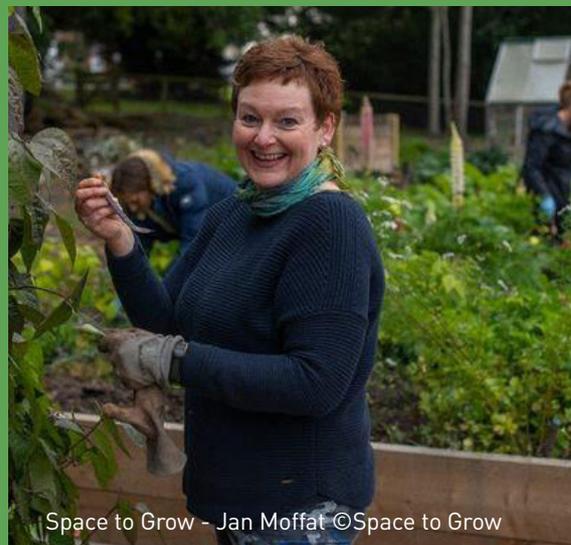
During the consultation **you said** (25%) you needed advice about funding your growing project or activities. As well as highlighting some key funding sources, we can help by facilitating sharing of resources and of skills, so that food growing is affordable and accessible to all who want to get involved. In the Borders there are various different models of community growing, from grant-funded to self-sustaining, and it depends on the individual needs and vision of your project which model may be best. There are many ways of achieving your goal of getting involved in growing, so don't feel overwhelmed or alone – please get in touch.

6.1 Resourcing your project

Resources – funding, materials, skills, volunteers – are vital to sustaining community growing in its many different forms. During the consultation various specific issues came up as well as funding such as linking up with volunteers, sourcing materials (e.g. timber for raised beds, seeds); lack of tools; a need for training/skills sharing.

We will help by:

- Supporting groups in submitting grant applications for their community growing project(s)
- Creating opportunities for groups to share resources to make growing affordable to more people.
- Providing information for networking with other groups who have a growing project
- Providing information on organisations and businesses that can help community projects as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments
- Share up-cycling and recycling opportunities, for example by connecting community growing groups with wood recycling projects



Space to Grow - Jan Moffat ©Space to Grow

With our partners, we will:

Explore the feasibility of 'sharing events' hosted by different organisations bringing growers together to share plants and seeds

Liaise with the Council's Unpaid Work team (Community Justice Service) who may be able to provide help with clearing your plot and preparing the ground for planting

Share information about potential funding sources and work together to maximise opportunities for all community growing groups in the Scottish Borders.

Who else can help	Support available
Communities & Partnership Team	Community funding applications; advice on local funds available; Community Planning Partners liaison
Social Farms and Gardens	<p>Free enquiry service to talk through any aspect of your project, available to everyone</p> <p>Resource pack available, "Getting Started – Community Growing Resource Pack" for projects based in Scotland.</p> <p>Regional Training and Networking Events</p> <p>https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources</p> <p>https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland</p>
Community Food Social Enterprise Network (SEN)	<p>Support for any community food organisation that is aspiring to be a social enterprise.</p> <p>https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2012/social-enterprise/</p>
Business sponsorship and Corporate Social Responsibility volunteer days	<p>Seek opportunities for groups to use "end of season" stock and donated materials.</p> <p>Many businesses provide Corporate Social Responsibility volunteering opportunities for their staff. Business volunteers could help you create and plant your growing space.</p> <p>Assistance may be available in developing your groups Risk Register through the Institute of Internal Audits UK – Risk Auditors</p> <p>Corporate Social Responsibility volunteering commitments</p> <p>Funding sources and assistance with funding bids</p> <p>Capacity building for local groups and organisations</p>
The Conservation Volunteers	Linking up Corporate volunteering to projects
Criminal Justice Team	<p>Unpaid workers are those who are required to undertake community payback work as part of a sentence. They may be able to help get your project started by helping with preparing your site (clearing the ground, preparing paths, etc).</p> <p>To find out more get in touch with the Unpaid Work Coordinator via</p> <p>https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20037/justice_services/89/community_based_services</p>

6.2 Other Resources

Community food growing has a role to play in carbon reduction, improving health and wellbeing, tackling poverty and enhancing biodiversity. There are a wealth of resources to help you develop your growing group in any one of these aspects.

The Joint Health Improvement Team

The Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT) aims to work in partnership to reduce health inequalities and build community capacity for health improvement. There are six public health priorities for Scotland, Community Growing makes a contribution to many of these and in particular Public Health Priority 6: A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active. The Joint Health Improvement Team leads and co-ordinates a range of projects with communities and vulnerable groups, helping to initiate and develop community led activity. Projects include community cooking classes, good food partnerships and summer holiday programmes for children and families.

The Joint Health Improvement Team uses a model of wellbeing called 'Six Ways to be Well' that fits well with the community growing approach. It encourages people to nurture themselves by eating well, being active, belonging to inclusive communities, enjoying and learning new things, building kind supportive networks and being mindful. Being outside and noticing nature is a good way of being mindful. The Joint Health Improvement Team also provides a range of training opportunities that support the development of community food work. For more information about the Joint Health Improvement Team please e-mail us: Health.Improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

You can find out more about the Six Ways to Be Well here:

www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/wellbeingpoint

Find out more about Scotland's Public Health Priorities here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-health-priorities/>

The Cyrenians operate the Fareshare network across the region, linking up people to produce. They are also interested in the link between food growing and production and healthy food for all.

<https://cyrenians.scot/social-enterprise/fareshare>

Volunteer experiences of community growing at Wilton Lodge Park

"I spent years in a very stressful job, needed to get out amongst people once I retired. I didn't want to be inside so decided to go to the community garden. I love the camaraderie, discussions, laughs and that we work as a group, discuss everything and decide what we want to grow and produce."



Abundant Borders Team ©Abundant Borders

Case Study: Greenhouse Project

The Joint Health Improvement Team works in partnership with Scottish Borders Council's Unpaid Work Team to grow a wide range of seasonal produce at a Greenhouse site in Galashiels. Produce is distributed back into the community through service settings and activities that support children and families.

The project has developed incrementally to offer new activities:

- REHIS training & cooking classes with Justice Service Users
- Live cookery classes in early years settings
- Recipe bags to support home cooking and healthier meals
- Welfare boxes & food distribution during COVID
- Distribution of plants to encourage home growing



Produce distributed included:

Spring onions, onions, leeks, rocket, mint, coriander, sage, rosemary, fennel, oregano, spinach, parsley, basil, cucumbers, sweet peppers, carrots, beetroot, radish, pea pods, jalapeno chilli, rhubarb, courgettes, thyme, cayenne chilli, broad beans, tomatoes, potatoes.

Galashiels Early Years Centre:

The Early Years Centre used the produce to top up 300 food parcels for children and families. Families reported:

- Eating more varied and healthier diets
- Tasting new foods
- Cooking more home-made meals



Quotes from families & staff confirm the benefits:

"Thank you so much for the fresh veg last week, I managed to make a pan of soup and a tomato sauce for pasta. We are currently in rent arrears and struggling to get through the week, your food top ups make a huge difference." (Parent)

"Overall I am extremely glad and grateful for the opportunity to work with Mos, the Gala Greenhouse project, and the NHS health Team, I hope the partnership will continue." (EYC Manager)

New partnerships have developed in the last year with:

- Children 1st
- Action for Children
- LINKS Eyemouth

Feedback from all services suggests the produce helped:

- Families to cook healthier meals & grow their own produce
- Services to maintain connections with families



Quotes from staff confirm the benefits:

"Being part of this project has been an especially wonderful experience for our service during the lockdown –the fresh vegetables were highly appreciated by the families we support (single mothers especially found it difficult to go grocery shopping, and receiving those herbs and vegetables made their day); it also gave us at Children 1st an opportunity to see them and keep connected during times of lockdown, even if just at their doorstep" (Children 1st Staff Member)

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

SCOTTISH BORDERS FOOD GROWING STRATEGY

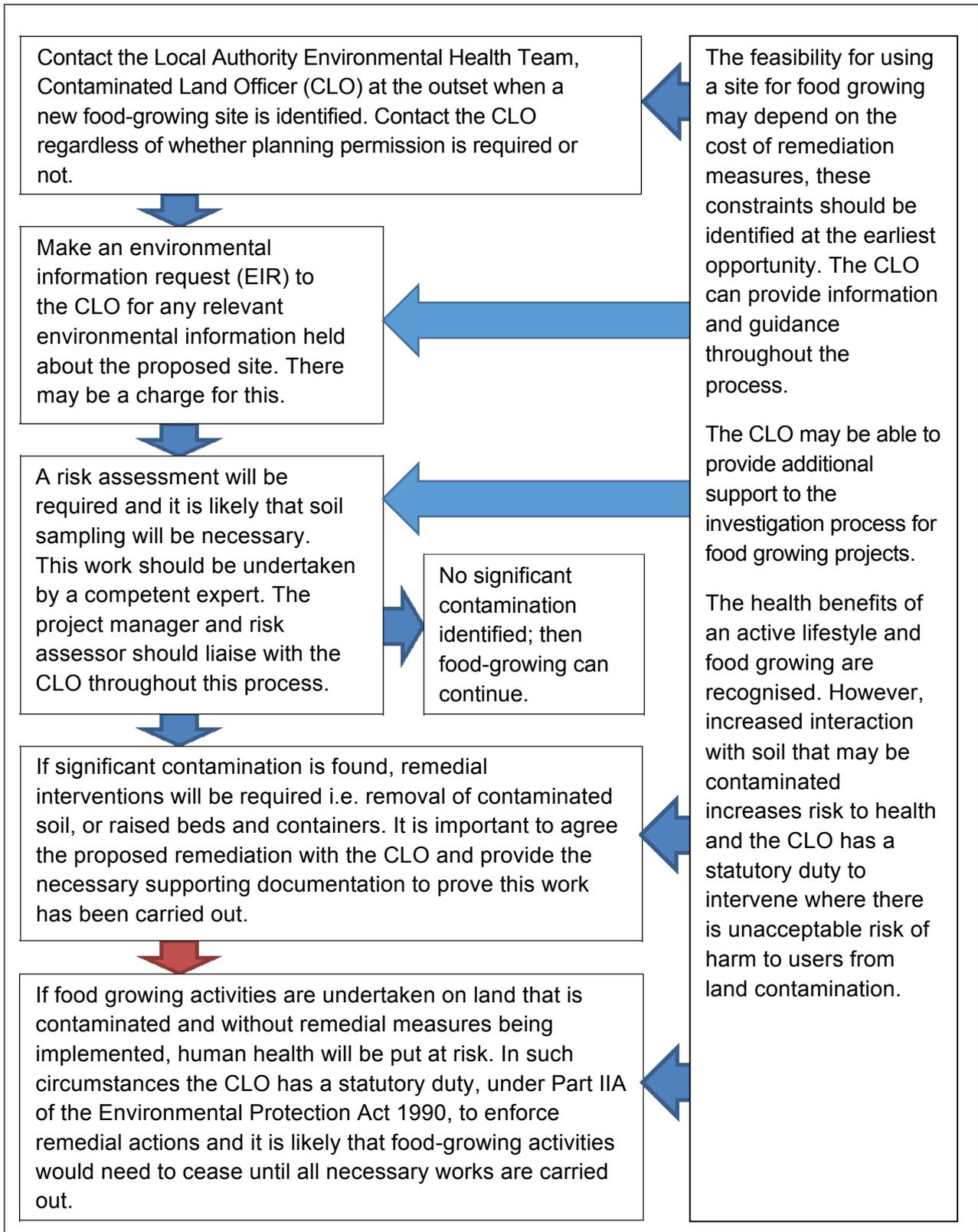
7. ACTION PLAN

This Food Growing Strategy covers a five year period from 2021-2026. As well as the activities listed above, Scottish Borders Council will undertake to deliver against the legislative requirements via the Action Plan:

Action	
1. Develop Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Investigate and explore opportunities to develop further policies in support of food growing and community growing with Community Planning Partners 1.2. Adopt new planning policy - EP17 Food Growing and Community Growing spaces – as part of the Local Development Plan, safeguarding food growing spaces and enabling increased provision. 1.3. Review of corporate policies and strategies to support Food Growing and Community Food Growing.
2. Review provision and Management of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Co-ordinate waiting list information with Allotments Associations on leased out sites to ensure data collection is handled accurately and appropriately 2.2. Investigate new allotment sites in areas of demand, working with community groups and private landowners where possible 2.3. Implement new Allotment Regulations 2.4. Prepare an Annual Allotment Report
3. Support the Community Growing Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Develop a networking event(s) for community growers and volunteers 3.2. Explore the creation of 'Growing Ambassadors', as part of the #yourpart Corporate Programme 3.3. Consolidate resources for food growing through the development of the Volunteer Coordinator role

APPENDIX ONE

CONTAMINATED LAND PROCESS



REFERENCES

Contacts at Scottish Borders Council for more information:

All community growing and allotments enquiries – Craig Blackie, Parks & Environment Manager - neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk / 01835 824000

Planning issues – https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20050/planning_applications

Contaminated land - https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20004/business/114/health_and_safety

Community funding - https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/773/communities_and_partnerships

WHO CAN HELP	
Skills and Advice	
BAVS	http://www.bavs.org.uk/
Communities & Partnership Team, SBC	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20076/community_grants_and_funding/261/community_fund
Men's Shed	https://scottishmsa.org.uk/find-a-shed/
Keep Scotland Beautiful – Climate Challenge Fund	https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society	http://www.sags.org.uk/
Scottish Orchards	http://www.scottishorchards.com/new_scottish_Orchards/Welcome.html
Borders Food Communities	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
Burnfoot Community Futures	https://en-gb.facebook.com/BurnfootCommunityFutures/
Borders Organic Gardeners	http://www.bordersorganicgardeners.org/
Trellis Scotland	https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/
Abundant Borders	http://abundantborders.org.uk/
Setting up your group	
Social Farms and Gardens	https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland

Community Gardens and Orchards	
Tweeddale	
The Courthouse Garden, Peebles	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
The Secret Garden, Peebles	https://www.tweedgreen.org.uk/community-garden
St Ronans Wells Garden, Innerleithen	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
Peebles CAN Garden, Peebles	https://www.peeblescan.org/contact
Lamancha Community Hub	http://www.lamanchacommunityhub.org.uk/contact.html
The Glebe Project, Peebles	https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/garden_flyer_web_reduced-2.pdf
The Edible Garden, Innerleithen	http://www.youcangrow.org.uk/
Teviot and Liddesdale	
Abundant Borders Hawick	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Burnfoot Grows Together, Hawick	www.facebook.com/groups/657099337996052/.
Wilton Lodge Community Garden, Hawick	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20032/parks_and_outdoors/833/wilton_lodge_park_volunteering
Eildon	
Selkirk Community Shed, Selkirk	http://selkirshedders.org.uk/
Space to Grow Community Garden, BGH	https://www.facebook.com/nature4mentalhealth/
Community Allotments, Orchard & Woodland, Drygrange	https://en-gb.facebook.com/AGreenerMelrose/
Berwickshire	
Abundant Borders, Ayton	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Eyemouth	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Duns	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/
Abundant Borders, Coldingham	http://abundantborders.org.uk/contact/

Planning	
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)	http://www.sags.org.uk/
Community Planning Partners	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/764/asset_transfer
Community Land Advisory Service	https://sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk/
Land Register of Scotland	https://www.ros.gov.uk/our-registers/land-register-of-scotland
Borders Food Communities	https://www.foodcommunities.org/
Support	
Social Farms and Gardens	https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/community-growing-resource-pack-scotland
Community Food Social Enterprise Network (SEN)	https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/2012/social-enterprise/
Criminal Justice Team	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20037/justice_services/89/community_based_services
Other Resources	
The Borders Healthy Living Network (HLN)	mailto:Health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk Health.improvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk
The Cyrenians, Fairshare network	https://cyrenians.scot/community-and-food/good-food/fareshare/.

Volunteering in our communities

To all the wonderful volunteers in our communities, thanks for playing #yourpart to keep our towns and villages looking their best. If you are planning to help with things like tidy-up operations and flower planting please take into account the following guidance:

SOCIAL DISTANCING



Please adhere to the Scottish Government's latest guidelines regarding social distancing measures.

01

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT



The sharing of tools, gloves, etc is strongly discouraged. Volunteers should bring their own gloves wherever possible. When working on Council land, please stick to non-motorised equipment only to avoid any accident or injury.

02

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE



Wash hands before arriving at the site. Use hand sanitiser and wipe down with disinfectant any shared equipment or communal areas after use.

03

TAKE CARE OF WASTE



Please dispose of green waste/litter appropriately, via your local recycling centre if required.

04

BE RESPONSIBLE



You are responsible for the safety of yourself, others around you and the general public.

05

KEEP IN TOUCH



Let us know how you plan to help out and we can offer further advice and support. Email neighbourhoodservice@scotborders.gov.uk or call us on 0300 100 1800.

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