

# GROWING LOCALLY

Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy  
2021 - 2026



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## Executive Summary

‘**Growing Locally**’ is Edinburgh’s first food growing strategy. It is part of the Council’s broader approach to recovery from the pandemic and meeting our key priorities to eradicate poverty, achieve net zero emissions, and work for a fairer, more inclusive city.

The strategy aims to support citizens and communities to play a part in meeting these challenges. It encourages greater participation in food growing, promotes healthy and sustainable food and supports local businesses to thrive. Through this document and its implementation by the Council and partners our vision is for:

“ Edinburgh to be a city with a vibrant, thriving and sustainable local food economy, where residents, community groups and local business can access healthy, sustainable food locally, and are able to grow more food across a diverse range of sites within the city. ”

‘Growing Locally’ is a city-wide strategy developed in collaboration with the **Edible Edinburgh partnership, Transition Edinburgh and Edinburgh Community Food**.



Figure 1: The three objectives of Edinburgh’s Food Growing Strategy

Through the implementation of this strategy we will:

 **Grow more food in Edinburgh:** We will find innovative ways to increase the land available for food growing, including increasing allotment provision and land for community growing. We will identify new potential areas for growing and ensure we grow sustainably, in ways that protect and enhance our biodiversity and habitats.



### Increase consumption of locally grown food.

We will support Edinburgh’s green recovery by encouraging new markets and opportunities for local food growers and sellers. We will do this in ways that promote a more sustainable local economy, shortening supply chains and encouraging reuse and recycling. We will address food poverty and insecurity by building community resilience, including income resilience and ensure systems for provision of emergency food are coordinated, while maintaining dignity and respect.



### Increase awareness of and engagement in sustainable food across the city.

We will increase awareness of sustainable food and its benefits and encourage more people to become involved in food growing and local food projects. We will provide support, where necessary, for community groups to participate and benefit from local food growing opportunities. We will increase awareness of working with nature through growing, improving our soils and providing skills for community groups and schools to benefit from sustainable growing. We will develop support mechanisms and ways to

connect growers and buyers that allows them to communicate with each other and seek the support and training they need.

## Benefits of local food growing

The benefits of achieving these outcomes are clear. Food growing in all its forms can deliver many lasting benefits for individuals and communities. It can:



Support local, substantiable food supply and consumption.



Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people and families across the city, reducing isolation and providing a means of bringing people together.



Help people by improving access to fresh locally grown fruit and vegetables, and helping people to enjoy good quality, healthy food.



Encourage people to learn new skills and build a sense of pride and self-esteem.



Reduce food waste and the carbon emissions associated with the growing, transport and selling of food.



Enhance the quality of the city's lived environment by encouraging

the development of sustainable green spaces and improving biodiversity.



Improve place-making, helping to promote the Council's principle of '20-minute neighbourhoods'



Support local businesses to thrive and grow through the growing and selling of local food.

Delivering our vision will be challenging, but we can achieve it if we work together, reaping the benefits and monitoring our progress to ensure we are delivering a truly sustainable food city.

## Foreword



The overarching ambition of the Council is to ensure everyone benefits from Edinburgh's success. As a

Councillor, on behalf of the city, we have also formally declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Through the development of our Net Zero 2030 Strategy and End Poverty Delivery Plan the council is working towards making the changes required to transition to a carbon neutral economy and to do so in a way that is fair to all including those in this city who experience poverty.

The last year has seen challenges we have not faced before following the coronavirus outbreak and the need for a green recovery from it.

As well as reducing our emissions, we are committed to ending poverty in the city by 2030 and ensuring well-being and equalities are enhanced for all in the city.

These are key priorities for the Council and the city as well as recovering economically and socially from COVID-19.

Growing Locally, Edinburgh's food growing strategy represents a major development for Edinburgh, bringing together for the first time our proposed approach to encouraging more local production, more sustainable management of food growing and perhaps most importantly of all, an ongoing discussion as a city about what a diverse and vibrant food economy looks like.

We are encouraged by the work already carried out by the Council, our partners and our growing communities and this strategy will look to enhance and extend that good work throughout the city.

Throughout the engagement process to develop this strategy local growers and citizens have been at the forefront of how we have shaped our approach. We have identified key areas for action which we will now take forward and identified the wider socio-economic benefits such action brings.

This strategy is about choice. It's about giving families greater information about healthy and sustainable food, it's about supporting local businesses to continue to flourish and it's about how the City of Edinburgh Council can help create the right conditions for these activities to thrive.

This will not be achieved by the City of Edinburgh Council alone but by us working together through strong existing partnerships and with the residents of Scotland's capital.

My thanks go to the Council partners involved for their participation in this strategy, and to the community groups, growers and interested parties who participated in the development of the document.

**Councillor George Gordon**

**City of Edinburgh Council  
Sustainability Champion**

**Chair, Edible Edinburgh**

## Introduction

'Growing Locally' is Edinburgh's first food growing strategy and is a core plank of the Council's broader approach to recovery from the pandemic and meeting our key priorities to **end poverty, become a net zero city, and ensure wellbeing and equalities are enhanced for all.**

These priorities are set out in the three-year **Council Business Plan: Our Future Council, Our Future City**, and represent an ambitious programme of work designed to ensure that Edinburgh's recovery meets the needs and aspirations of its citizens.

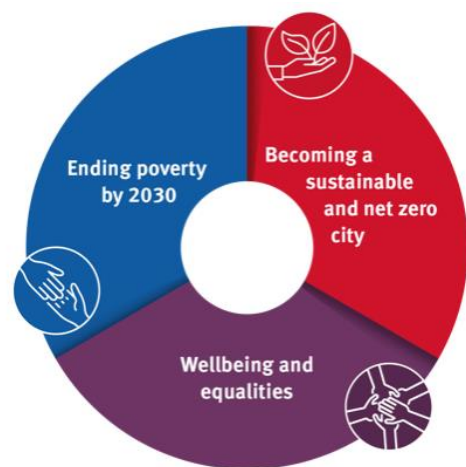


Figure 2: The three priorities of the City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan

Food growing has an important part to play in making sure we meet those aims. We know that the growing of food in communities is good for place making and bringing people together, improves people's health and wellbeing, helps people to enjoy good quality, healthy and local food, learn new skills, build new relationships, improve biodiversity, and mitigate the effects of climate change in a city.

It is for all these reason that this strategy aims to further develop opportunities for food growing in Edinburgh, supporting citizens and communities to live healthier lives, and support local businesses to thrive.

### Developing our food growing strategy

This strategy was developed in collaboration with **Edible Edinburgh** and supports the city-wide work of this partnership to inspire and motivate everyone across the city to work together to build new approaches to food.

Development of the strategy began in 2019 with events included a Food Summit, workshops organised by Edible Edinburgh

and community organisations and meetings with key stakeholders.

Edible Edinburgh held a short series of well attended Business Breakfasts in 2019 and 2020, focusing on how food and related businesses can contribute to making Edinburgh a sustainable food city, including through local food production and distribution.

Consultation on the draft strategy was launched December 2020 and ran for a 6-week period. Over a hundred responses were received from a range of individuals and organisations, including those growing food for their own personal or community needs and organisations who were either working in the food field or involved in food in some way.

Responses to the consultation clearly showed the amount and variety of food growing activity and sustainable food work going on in the city and the enthusiasm for growing that exists.

Demand for food growing is on the increase and responses clearly showed the importance of creating more space for growing, especially in less affluent areas of the city.

Many in the consultation highlighted the importance of ensuring food was grown as

sustainably and organically as possible, and in ways that protected and enhanced our rich and diverse habitats and species.

People felt support and training were needed for more people to get involved in growing and to support community gardening projects. There is a wealth of such support in Edinburgh provided by a range of organisations, and mechanisms are needed to help people find and access these resources.

Another major theme coming out of the consultation was the need to create a more localised and circular food economy in Edinburgh, to support and encourage local buying and selling. Ways to reduce and recycle food waste were seen as important aspects of this.

From the responses, ways to tackle food insecurity and poverty, especially in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, were highlighted as a crucial part of this so as a city we develop a sustainable, local food economy that benefits all.

Lastly, raising awareness and engagement in food growing and sustainable food were seen as important, to encourage more involvement in food growing, increase the physical and mental health benefits of good food and allow networking of growers, local food retailers and consumers to help develop Edinburgh's sustainable food system.

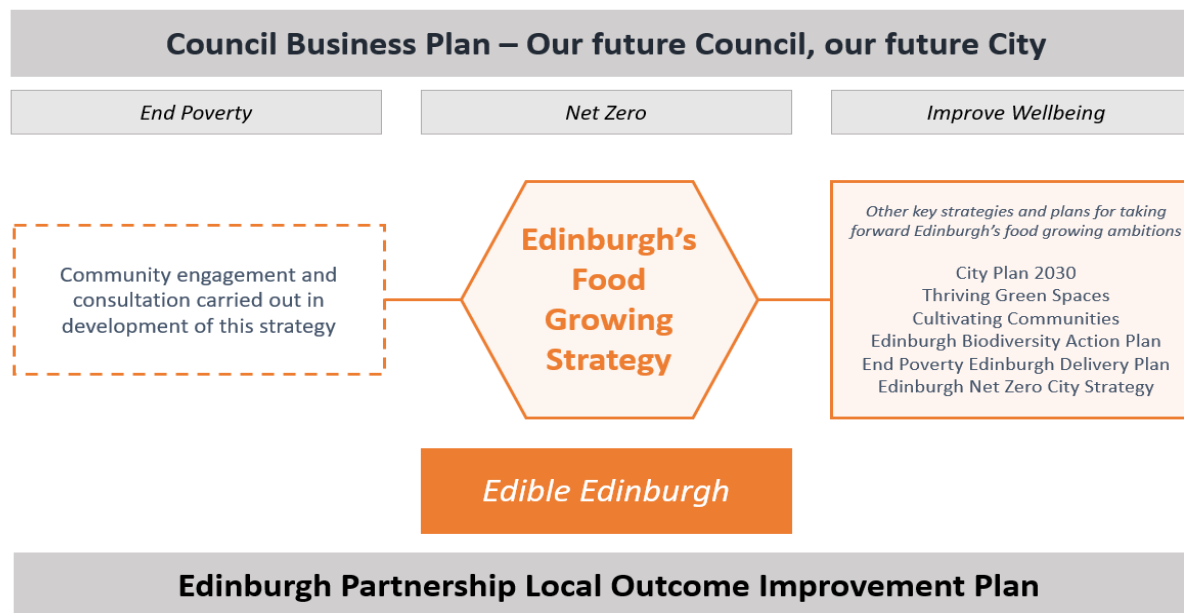


Figure 3: How Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy links to the Business Plan outcomes

## Policy context

This strategy does not stand alone but is part of a wider programme of work aiming to deliver the priorities set out in the Council Business Plan.

The development of our food growing strategy has been informed by and will itself inform the implementation of a number of other projects and workplans which offer key opportunities to take forward the city's food growing ambitions. These include:

- **Thriving Green Spaces:** Edinburgh is one of Europe's greenest cities with many award-winning parks that need to be nurtured and supported. With funding support from the National Lottery we are carrying on a conversation with our partners and residents about how we protect, evolve and make the most of our unique green spaces, protecting and enhance Edinburgh's biodiversity and habitats, and delivering greater benefits to our citizens.

- **City Plan 2030:** Edinburgh needs to make sure that its future growth meets our ambitions to be a sustainable city with the right types and quality of new homes and neighbourhoods, in the right locations, with the right infrastructure. City Plan 2030 will set out the policies and procedures needed to manage the sustainable development of Edinburgh over the next ten years.

During consultation carried out in development of the plan, 89% of respondents said that the plan should identify specific sites for new allotments and food growing.

- **Cultivating Communities:** The Council's third allotments strategy – Cultivating Communities – aims to increase allotment provision, reduce waiting times and make allotments as assessable as possible. Allotment provision is a statutory obligation of the Council. This food growing strategy, alongside the Thriving Green Spaces and other projects, will be key to helping to meet these objectives.
- **Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan:** Published in May 2019, the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2021 sets out a partnership approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the

city. The plan has a strong emphasis on the importance of private gardens, allotments and community growing areas as places for wildlife.

- **End Poverty Edinburgh Delivery Plan:** food poverty is a growing issue in Edinburgh, and the challenges and solutions to improving food security are incorporated within the city's plan to eradicate poverty by 2030.
- **Net Zero 2030 City Strategy:** In 2019 the City of Edinburgh Council declared a climate Emergency and agreed a target of becoming a net zero emissions city by 2030. To achieve that goal, a new long-term strategy for becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is being developed and due to be published in Autumn 2021. Sustainable food growing and consumption will be an important element of this work as it progresses.
- **Local Outcome Improvement Plan:** The Edinburgh Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan sets out the ways the city's key stakeholders work together to tackle long standing issues in Edinburgh.

The plan describes shared partnership priorities to end poverty in Edinburgh by making sure people have enough

money to live on, can access work, learning, and training opportunities, and have good places to live.



## Food Growing in Edinburgh: Key Facts

This strategy aims to take a more holistic approach to food growing in Edinburgh, so that the benefits of this can be realised by as many of our citizens as possible.

Allotments play an important role in promoting food growing in the city but are not the whole story. Edinburgh is also home to an estimated 69 community growing projects. Such projects are often involved in much more than just growing food, working with local communities to promote healthy eating, alleviate poverty and inequalities, improve community cohesion, reduce isolation and encourage nature and outdoor activities, and are often located in areas of deprivation in the city.

As well as growing, food is an integral part of Edinburgh's economy, accounting for almost 10% of all jobs in the city. Food insecurity was a key issue raised by the city's recent inquiry into the realities of poverty in Edinburgh, and food consumption and production are significant contributors to the city's greenhouse gas emissions.

### Key facts: Food in Edinburgh

Edinburgh is home to over **1,900 allotment plots**, and **69 community growing projects**.

Agriculture and related land use sector are responsible for just under a **quarter of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions**.

Even before Covid, an estimated **24,000 adults experienced food insecurity** in Edinburgh.

**Spending on food accounts for a fifth of all income** for Edinburgh's poorest households.

The **food economy employs over 30,000 people** in Edinburgh.

Only **19% of men** and **24% of women** consume the recommended daily amount of five or more portions of fruit and vegetables.



### Food related contributions to climate change

- The food we eat contributes 30% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the UK.
- A third of the food we produce goes to waste.
- More than half of food related emissions are driven by non-agriculture related activities – consumption, manufacturing and transport.
- Even as an urban centre with little agriculture activity, food systems in Edinburgh are still likely to make a significant contribution to the city's greenhouse gas emissions.



### Food economy in Edinburgh

- Only around 500 people in Edinburgh were employed in activities related to agriculture, fishing or aquaculture in 2019, around 0.1% of total city employment.
- Despite this the city is home to a large and vibrant food economy, with over 26,000 people employed across almost 1,700 city businesses.

- Food manufacturing accounts for more than 1,800 of these jobs and is one of the city's few concentrations of manufacturing employment – with particular activity in manufacturing bakery products, seafood processing, distilleries and breweries.
- Over 24,000 people are employed in food and beverage jobs.



### Food growing in Edinburgh

- Edinburgh has a vibrant local and community food growing culture. As of April 2020 there was 45 allotment sites in Edinburgh with 1,913 plots, of which 1,621 are managed by the City of Edinburgh Council.
- Demand for allotments has grown considerably in recent years. During the first Covid-19 lockdown (April-July 2020) there was a threefold increase in the number of plot applications received with a total of 1,095 applications received during this period. As of November 2020, the Council's waiting list for an allotment stood at 3,292.
- 37 sites have been identified as having the potential to be developed as allotments and are currently being assessed to determine any development or title restrictions. Newcraighall and the

Leith Links extension aim to be operational by 2022.



### Food Security

- An estimated 77,600 people in Edinburgh lived in poverty in Edinburgh in the year prior to the coronavirus outbreak, including almost 1 in 5 of all children in the city.
- Poverty affects people in all parts of the city and evidence shows a growing number of families struggling to get by and facing impossible choices as to how to feed their children.
- Food is a key component of household budgets in the UK, accounting for about one in every ten pounds spent. For the poorest 10% of households, food accounts for about 15% of all expenditure and takes up about a fifth of household disposable income.
- Accessibility to affordable, good quality food is a key issue. In Edinburgh Granton South and Wardieburn was identified as the 10th most deprived food desert in Scotland.
- 300 families have participated in the Council's Discover! programme since December 2019. The programme offers children and their families food support, cooking skills and advice, money advice, social trips and experiences, and wellbeing support.
- As a part of Covid response plans during 2020, the Council channelled over £1.5m in free school meal payments in cash to all families who were receiving them, while promotion campaigns resulted in a 100% increase in free school meal take up.
- During the period to November 2020, Council services, Volunteer Edinburgh and EVOC oversaw the distribution of funds providing the equivalent of 25,000 weeks of shopping or prepared meals to people in need of support across Edinburgh.
- Even before the Covid pandemic, analysis on food vulnerability estimated that 24,000 working age adults in Edinburgh worried that they would run out of food at times during 2018. Almost 10,000 said they had gone without food because of a lack of money.

## Vision and Objectives

Through this document and its implementation by the Council and partners our vision is for:

“ Edinburgh to be a city with a vibrant, thriving and sustainable local food economy, where residents, community groups and local business can access healthy, sustainable food locally, and are able to grow more food across a diverse range of sites within the city.”

To meet this vision, the strategy sets out three outcomes we need the Council and city partners to work together to deliver. Through the implementation of this strategy we aim to deliver three key objectives.



### 1. Grow more food in Edinburgh

One of the main themes coming out of the consultation on this strategy was the need for more land in Edinburgh to be identified and allocated for food growing. The demand for land in the city is high, and we need to develop innovative ways to meet food growers' needs.

As well as creating more land for growing we also need to ensure we grow sustainably. The Council's commitment to a Net Zero City by 2030 recognises the key role biodiversity and the natural environment have in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. Through this strategy we will aim to make sure our food growing activity supports biodiversity and habitats, and methods of growing that do so.



### 2. Increase consumption of locally grown food

A second theme coming out of the consultation was a need to create a more sustainable, local and circular food economy. This includes encouraging business to stock more local produce, support local food businesses in their recovery from the covid pandemic, and supporting new market opportunities for local food producers and sellers.

In doing so we will aim to tackle food insecurity in the city with a cash first approach that builds on the recommendations of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, builds income security, and provides access to emergency food provision where it is

needed in a way that is coordinated, and maintains dignity and respect.



### 3. Improve awareness of and engagement in sustainable food across the city

The engagement, enthusiasm and activism of our citizens and communities in local food growing is the foundation of the successful food growing in Edinburgh.

A key objective of this strategy is to increase awareness of sustainable food and its benefits, encourage involvement of more people in food growing and provide support, where necessary, for community groups to participate and benefit from local food growing opportunities.

This includes the promotion of healthy eating, sustainable food production and local food growing.

### The benefits of food growing

Food growing in all its forms can deliver many lasting benefits for individuals and communities. It can:

- Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people and families across the city, reducing isolation and providing a means of bringing people together.
- Help people by improving access to fresh locally grown fruit and vegetables, and helping people to enjoy good quality, healthy food.
- Encourage people to learn new skills and build a sense of pride and self-esteem.
- Reduce food waste and the carbon emissions associated with the growing, transportation and selling of food.
- Enhance the quality of the city's lived environment by encouraging the development of sustainable green spaces and improving biodiversity.
- Support local businesses to thrive and grow through the growing and selling of local food.

Delivering our vision will be challenging, but we can achieve it if we work together, reaping the benefits and monitoring our progress to ensure we are delivering a truly sustainable food city.

## Case study: Inchview Care Home



Inch View Care Home opened in 2011 as a purpose-built care home specialising in looking after residents with dementia. Inch View became the first care home in Scotland to win the Soil Association's prestigious Silver Food for Life Served Here Catering Mark.

The council-run home achieved the Silver Catering Mark through its commitment to sourcing most of its food locally and from organic suppliers.

The home is not only supporting local suppliers but also growing its own food. It has a wheelchair- accessible polytunnel, which was built in the grounds of the home by volunteers, local pupils from Liberton High School and Food for Life Scotland team members.

The garden is looked after by a volunteer gardener and has helped improve the health and wellbeing of its residents, some of whom play an active part in the garden's development and care.



## Objective 1: Grow more food in Edinburgh

Edinburgh has a wide range of food growing sites and food related activity going on across the city.

One of the main themes coming out of the consultation was the need for more land in the city to be identified and allocated for food growing. The demand for land in Edinburgh is high. As such, innovative ways need to be found to meet food growers needs.

As well as creating more land for growing, we need to ensure we grow sustainably, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and habitats through our food growing activity.

Gardens and allotments offer a valuable habitat for wildlife, particularly in urban areas. The Climate Change Declaration agreed by the Council in May 2019 recognised the key role protecting and restoring biodiversity and the natural environment has in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

As part of the development of this strategy, we invited citizens and organisations to tell us about any food

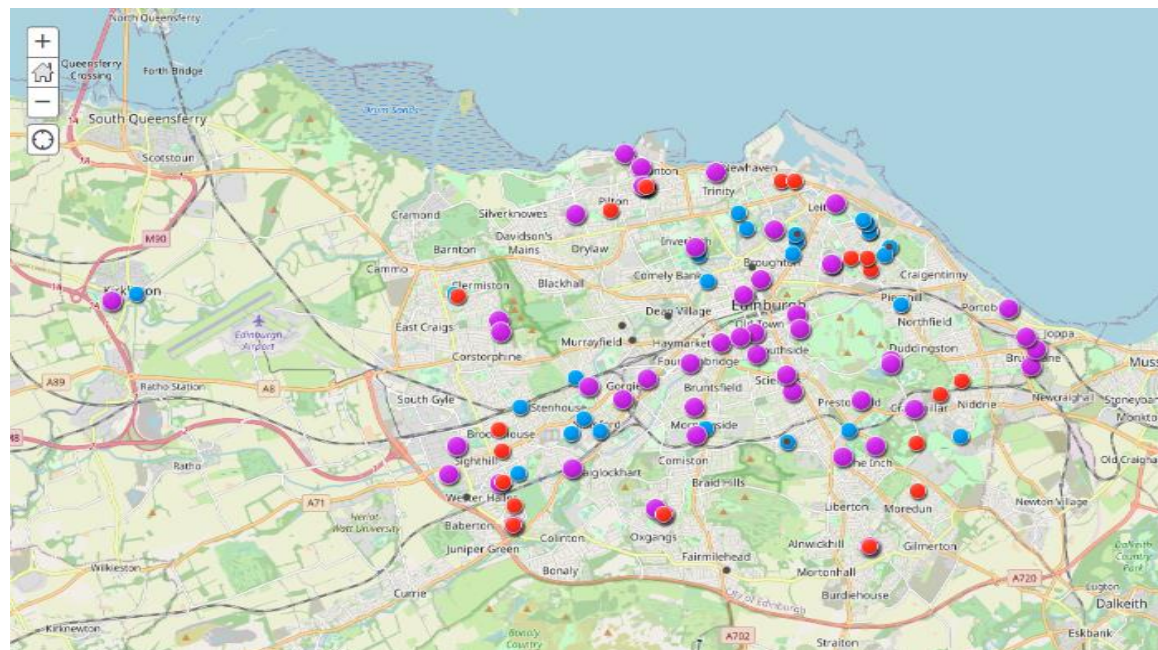


Figure 4: Growing sites and food projects in Edinburgh

### Action: Grow more food in Edinburgh

1. We will improve the information available about food growing in Edinburgh and use this information to help us to measure progress and identify opportunities to support.

growing activities they are involved in or knew about in Edinburgh. Figure 1 above shows a snapshot of this activity. Over the lifetime of this strategy we will continue to gather this information and use it to build a better understanding of food growing in the city, and the social and economic benefits it brings to our citizens, communities and the city.

## i. Allotments and Community Gardens

We are working to meet the growing demand for allotments through [Cultivating Communities – A Growing Success 2017-2027](#), our **ten year Allotment Strategy**. As highlighted by the response to the consultation, the demand for allotments has grown in recent years, especially following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Council has been actively working to increase allotment provision and the number of allotment plots in Edinburgh has increased year by year. There are currently 1,913 allotment plots across 45 sites in the city, 1,621 of which are managed directly by the Council. A 26 plot site is opening in April 2021 and an additional six plots are to be added to an existing allotment in 2022.

In partnership with the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, six further locations have been identified as having greatest suitability for development as allotments and/or community gardens. Subject to consultation, it is anticipated that these sites have the potential to add an extra 200 allotment plots to the Council's allotment provision.

The Council works in partnership with the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Association (FEDAGA) to ensure allotment standards

are maintained. An online allotment application process was introduced in 2019 which has improved customer access and ensures that the administration of the waiting list remains manageable within existing Council resources..

There are around 69 **food growing community gardens** in Edinburgh. The Council supported their creation and development through the provision of land, as well as funding from the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board.

37 sites in Council ownership have been identified as having the potential for

### Action: Grow more food in Edinburgh

2. We will deliver 'Cultivating Communities 2017-2027', to improve the number and quality of allotments and food growing sites in Edinburgh.
3. We will encourage sustainable growing practices and action to protect Edinburgh's species and habitats through the Cultivating Communities strategy, the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, and Council and Edible Edinburgh media channels.

development as allotments or community gardens. While many of these sites are recognised as being 'common good' and would require changes in use consents to allow development as growing sites, they represent a significant potential resource of up to 3,000 additional plots.

The Council has a legal obligation to help fulfil the Council's "biodiversity duty" under the Natural Heritage Act 1991. We do this through promotion and encouraging allotment holders and site managers using information such as the 'Gardening in harmony with nature' booklet. Gardens and allotments offer a valuable habitat for wildlife, particularly in urban areas.

## ii. Parks and Greenspaces

The Council's Thriving Green Spaces programme is developing new food growing sites and community orchards and encouraging increased participation in food growing in city parks.

The Council is working with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society and Scotland's Rural College to provide learning and teaching resources, and courses on growing in Saughton Park.

At the same time, the Council and Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust are working with local communities on

developing more growing sites within parks and other green spaces, especially in areas of deprivation.

The Council's '**Million Tree City**' initiative will include the planting of new trees, including fruit trees, on both public and private land, via new developments and through replacement of old, diseased and damaged trees.

### iii. Council Housing Land

There are more than 25 community gardens and food growing areas on Council housing land primarily for the use of Council tenants. The Council's housing investment strategy is supporting the use of land to support tenants to grow fruit and vegetables. Further investment is planned to improve and increase this activity, following support from tenants.

The use of a partner organisation to support the delivery and management of these community gardens and food growing areas is being explored and a pilot project in the Hutchison area of the city is currently underway. The scope of the Tenant Group Grants system has also been expanded to support community garden projects.

**Edible Estates** provides a framework for creating community growing projects in Council estates. It is working with the

### Action: Grow more food in Edinburgh

4. We will develop opportunities for creating new spaces for growing in our parks and greenspaces through our 30 year strategy 'Thriving Green Spaces 2050'

5. We will support and promote food growing initiatives on Council housing land and in our schools, ensuring that these initiatives also provide health, well-being and environmental benefit to communities.

Council on delivering food growing projects on Council housing land.

### iv. School Grounds

Several schools in the city are involved in growing food in their grounds as part of the Council's outside education programme. Allotment space is provided in the grounds of all the Council's new build schools and nurseries, and food growing is included in the school curriculum.

The Council's Eco-schools programme has the scope to extend opportunities for food growing in schools and at home. Schools can choose to focus on a number of different topics, including sustainable food.

The Council provides training with schools on developing their eco-school topic areas and under the food theme, helps schools to consider the potential for food growing in school grounds, learn from schools where food growing is already well-developed, and consider ways to involve parents and families in growing at home or in their local community.

City organisations are also working with schools on food growing projects. This includes learning about its links to health, nature and wellbeing. The aim is to help children learn through practical experience about the importance of food from how it is grown to how it benefits both people and nature.

### v. Future Growing

Edinburgh's new Local Development Plan, **City Plan 2030**, offers the potential for more food growing sites to be identified in the city, supported by a refreshed **Open Space Strategy** which will also seek to make provision for allotments. The Council will work with local communities to prepare Place Briefs for sites that could include food growing and will also support Local Place Plans being developed for communities.

The creation of new community growing spaces, allotments and community woodland has been proposed as part of the regeneration of **Granton Waterfront**.

This former industrial brownfield site comprises around 300 hectares of open green space and parkland and around 50 hectares of former industrial land.

The development aims to build with nature, providing the flexibility to meet the changing environment and communities it will serve. As well as the creation of a new coastal park, internal green spaces and a green network will be established. Proposed development of land east of Granton Waterfront also has the potential to create new community growing spaces and allotments.

**Lauriston Farm** aims to be Edinburgh's first agricultural enterprise and learning centre. The project is being taken forward by Edinburgh Agroecology Cooperative (EAC) through a long-term lease with the Council.

EAC aims to transform this 100-acre (40 ha) farm in North Edinburgh, delivering significantly scaled up food production, providing quality employment, training and volunteer opportunities with a strong focus on biodiversity enhancement and soil restoration, bringing the community together through hosting community activities and events.

A Biodiversity Management Plan is being developed with a focus on coastal bird habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement throughout the farm. These

interventions will all contribute to Edinburgh's Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

A Community Interest Company and Workers Cooperative have been established to work jointly with the local community to start growing food and continue to develop a thriving local business.

### **Action: Grow more food in Edinburgh**

6. We will look at opportunities for creating new spaces for growing through Edinburgh's City Plan 2030 and the redevelopment of Granton Waterfront.

7. We will support the development of Lauriston Farm and its potential for scaling up food production in the city.



## Case study: **Gracemount Walled Garden**



*Gracemount Walled Garden, (Image Source: <https://www.transitionedinburghsouth.org.uk/highlights-from-a-year-at-gracemount-community-garden/>)*

**Transition Edinburgh South (TES)** supports Gracemount Community Garden which grows fruit and vegetables in the walled garden in the grounds of Gracemount Mansion house. Their part-time gardener works with local volunteers using organic regenerative horticulture. All who are involved are welcome to harvest the produce and much of it goes home with local school children.

The project works very closely with local schools. Children from the primary school visit the garden once a week. Agroecological growing is practiced at the garden and children learn about growing in this way.

The project also works with community groups, the local residents' association, youth group, churches and organisations promoting nature, mental welfare and well-being. The aim is to help tackle climate change by providing access to locally produced, low-carbon food for local people, while creating a pleasant outdoor space and a friendly project for all who want to join in.

TES also works with Edinburgh Food Social to provide a free community lunch, run workshops on cooking using their seasonal local food, helping people gain food hygiene certificates, and giving tips about reducing food waste.



## Objective 2: Increase consumption of locally grown food

Edinburgh has a strong tradition of local food production. To meet our vision for a thriving local food economy, we need to do more to increase the selling and consumption of locally grown food within the city.

This means working to ensure our programmes encourage residents and businesses to buy locally produced products. In doing so we also need to better understand the barriers facing local growers.

A third theme coming out of the consultation was the importance of food in tackling poverty. The Council has set an ambitious target of eradicating poverty in Edinburgh by 2030. In June 2018 the Council supported the launch of a new independent Edinburgh Poverty Commission and agreed that recommendations proposed by the Commission would be taken forward by the Council and other partners, including the Edinburgh Partnership.

A citizen action group End Poverty Edinburgh has also been established to work with the Council and partners across the city to tackle poverty.

### Action: Increase consumption of locally grown food

1. We will work with partners and stakeholders to explore the feasibility of establishing an indoor market and local food distribution hub in Edinburgh.
2. We will work in partnership with Edible Edinburgh to increase business awareness and engagement through promotion of their sustainable food campaigns and supporting and participation in their Business Breakfast events.
3. We will promote Edinburgh's circular economy, shortening food supply chains, reducing food waste and developing local food markets.

#### i. Local Markets

Edinburgh has a thriving network of local food producers, shops, hubs and Farmers Markets that sell locally sourced and sustainable food. During the pandemic interest in and purchase of locally produced food increased. As part of the

consultation on this strategy we asked people in what ways they were supporting local food purchasing in Edinburgh. The vast majority of respondents said they regularly buy food from local shops and suppliers, a third said they had vegetable box deliveries.

To encourage growth in this sector, as well as how to encourage more people to buy from local farmers markets, the Council will work with partners to explore the feasibility of establishing an indoor market and local food distribution hub in Edinburgh.

Edible Edinburgh is working on raising awareness and engaging business on sustainable local food. A business food charter was developed, a number of sustainable food campaigns have been run, including **Peas Please** and **Edinburgh Sustainable Fish City**, and the partnership have hosted a number of Business Breakfasts. Next steps include further work to build on these foundations to improve opportunities for local food producers and to reach out to businesses and bigger retailers not currently engaged in this process.

#### ii. Circular Economy

The potential value to our local economy of a circular economy approach is set out in a

report commissioned by Zero Waste Scotland which highlights the economic opportunities unique to Edinburgh. Due for publication later in 2021, The **Net Zero 2030 City Strategy** will aim to promote key circular economy principles of reduce, reuse and recycling. This includes setting ambitious targets for reducing, reusing and recycling waste, providing advice and guidance and encouraging businesses to think about climate change as part of their regular risk monitoring, and establishing a circular economy kick-starter fund for SMEs based in the city.

The Council works hard to reduce and recycle its waste. The Council actively encourages residents to reduce and recycle food waste and works with **Changeworks** and other partners to do so. All municipal food waste collected is sent to **Millerhill food waste treatment facility** to be turned into energy. Changeworks provide advice on composting unused fruit and vegetables, the **Love Food Hate Waste Campaign** provides tips on reducing food waste, and advice is given on the Council's website on how to make food shopping choices that help consumers save money and help the environment.

Most allotment holders in Edinburgh follow organic growing principles and compost their green waste. New allotment sites developed over the last few years are fully organic.

### Action: Increase consumption of locally grown food

5. We will work with the Soil Association and other partners to encourage take up of the Good Food Served Here Certification Scheme by public and private sector organisations across the city.

### iii. Good Food served here

Public procurement of local and regional food is a key element of a local and sustainable food market. The Council is a member of the Soil Association's **Good Food Served Here** certification scheme which aims to ensure food served in council schools is high-quality, local, sustainable and organic. All Council schools and six council-run care homes have achieved Bronze accreditation under this scheme, the Silver Award is being trialled at two Council schools and Inch View Care Home.

By being part of the Good Food Served here accreditation scheme, the Council has shortened its supply chain, improved access to the public market for Scottish producers, developed skills of its workforce

and supported local and rural economies. This means school lunches in The City of Edinburgh Council schools, are nutritious, seasonal, have low food miles, use local suppliers and do not contain any unnecessary additives. Pre-COVID 18,600 meals were served daily in 87 primary and 22 secondary schools. The Council uses local suppliers to provide their fresh fruit, fresh meat, vegetables, bakery goods and milk.

Good food not only reduces food miles, it helps to support thriving local economies. Research has shown that every £1 invested by councils in Food for Life brings a social return on investment of £4.41.

The Soil Association support local authorities to make their supply chains shorter, more transparent, and more beneficial to their local economies. For instance, working with the City of Edinburgh Council, the Soil Association increased the spend on Quality Meat Scotland farm assured meat from around £16,000 in 2014 to £220,000 in 2016/17.

The Council will continue to work with the Soil Association to encourage more Council schools to achieve Silver accreditation and work in partnership to encourage more public and private sector organisations in the city to become part of this accreditation scheme.

### Action: Tackle Food Insecurity and Promote Wellbeing

1. We will build up resilience to food insecurity in Edinburgh through delivery of the End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan and the Edinburgh Partnership's proposed approach.
2. We will continue to deliver emergency support for citizens experiencing poverty and hardship during Covid-19. This includes working with partners involved in ensuring people in poverty have access to food support where it is needed.
3. We will deliver and encourage further take up of the Council's 'Discover!' programme, working with families to reduce food anxiety, build skills and address social isolation.

#### iv. Food Insecurity and Community Well-being

The impact of Covid-19 has increased food insecurity in Edinburgh, especially for vulnerable people and those at risk of poverty as a result of the pandemic. The Council has developed an **End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan 2020-2030**

which includes actions on tackling food insecurity, child poverty and holiday hunger during and post COVID-19.

As part of the Delivery Plan, the Council, EVOC and local organisations will continue to work together to fund, co-ordinate and operate services, improving access to quality fresh food to citizens experiencing food insecurity and avoiding a return to reliance on food banks. The Council will continue to work with partners involved in ensuring people in poverty have access to food support where it is needed.

All primary schools across Edinburgh provide access to a universal breakfast club and delivery of the Council's 'Discover!' programme will continue, working with families to reduce food anxiety, build skills and address social isolation. The Programme aims to reduce poverty and food and financial stress over the school holidays with increased access to community provision, support services and families feeling less isolated.

The Edinburgh Partnership is developing an approach to addressing food insecurity, taking account of learning from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and earlier frameworks and approaches. This approach includes improving the level and security of people's incomes to reduce the need for emergency food provision; and the development of a wider food strategy which encompasses the provision of food

in an individual or global crisis, and the role of food as part of a wider network of local support for wellbeing, building community and individual resilience.

Many people in the consultation highlighted the importance of food growing to physical and mental health, and well-being, especially during lockdown. Food growing and being involved in food growing projects and activities has helped people stay active, work outdoors, reduce loneliness and social isolation through bringing people and communities together and help build confidence and increase skills.

There are a range of horticultural therapy programmes run by a number of organisations in the city, including the Council. Horticultural therapy referrals received by the Council's Allotment Service are guided towards existing voluntary organisations, and subject to rental and access agreements being established, small growing spaces are created within allotment sites for allocation to individuals referred to the service for horticultural therapy. Help, support and mentoring on maintaining small growing spaces are organised by FEDAGA and local site committees. Many other organisations in the city deliver such programmes and ways need to be found to support and connect them together.

## Case study: **Edinburgh Community Food**



Food boxes delivered by Edinburgh Community Food during Covid-19 (source: <https://www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk/unicef-uk-food-power-for-generation-covid>)

**Edinburgh Community Food (ECF)** has supported citizens to access fresh food and nutritional education for 25 years. ECF has been a key partner in the Council's Discover! programme since it started, working closely with Lifelong Learning teams across the city to develop a blended range of themed activities, supporting over 330 children and families. For Discover! 2020, a Scottish-themed food and activity box was developed and delivered to families.

ECF commissioned seasonal vegetables grown locally at Jock Tamson's Gairden. ECF's nutrition team built a recipe plan around this fresh produce to share with children and families. Basic cooking and preparation equipment was supplied. A 'Plot to Pot' step-by-step video, sharing skills and nutritional facts was produced by ECF and the Scottish Tech Army. Children and families used the locally-grown food to make a healthy nutritious soup. Many shared the results on a (closed) Facebook page set up for on-going advice and peer-to-peer support.

Evaluation was undertaken. Findings included:

- 95% took part in the cooking sessions
- 95% enjoyed the cooking and baking the most of all the activities
- 91% saved money on food
- 90% report a better relationship with children over the summer.
- 81% felt that emotional health and well-being had improved.
- 70% felt more connected to the community and 62% more connected to other families.



## Objective 3: Increase awareness and engagement

The engagement, enthusiasm and activism of our citizens and communities in local food growing is the foundation of the successful food growing in Edinburgh.

A key objective of this strategy is therefore to increase awareness of sustainable food and its benefits, encourage involvement of more people in food growing and provide support, where necessary, for community groups to participate and benefit from local food growing opportunities.

This includes the promotion of healthy eating, sustainable food production and local food growing.

### i. Raising Awareness

In raising awareness of the benefits of local food growing and the opportunities that exist to get involved, it is important to celebrate success. The Council will continue to build on Edinburgh's success as a Bronze award Sustainable Food City, and work towards Silver status. In doing this, we will work with Edible Edinburgh and other partners to take a joined up, holistic approach to food and deliver

### Action: Increase Awareness and Engagement

1. We will ensure food becomes a key part of the city climate conversation and Net Zero 2030 City Strategy.
2. We will work with Edible Edinburgh and other partners to ensure Edinburgh achieves the Sustainable Food Cities Silver Award
3. We will work with partners in Edible Edinburgh and across Edinburgh to develop a joint approach to communications to improve the information and advice available to citizens, community growers and businesses about how to get involved in local food growing and what support is available locally.

impact on tackling climate change, building public awareness and citizenship, and helping to foster the good food movement. We will work with partners to better-coordinate social media and other

communication, engagement and promotional activity to improve the accessibility of information on local growing.

This includes information about opportunities for growing, advice on socially and environmentally responsible growing, promotion of volunteering opportunities, and information about food growing groups and organisations.

Engaging young people is key to ensuring our vibrant food growing community continues to thrive into the future. Several schools in the city are already involved in growing food in their grounds as part of the Council's outside education programme, and a key objective of our wider sustainability programme is to build on this and increase awareness and engagement of young people in school settings and beyond

In addition, as the city embarks on its wider Climate ambitions the Council will continue to discuss with all citizens and promote the benefits of a diverse and vibrant food economy. This engagement activity will continue to influence and inform Council activity but it will also inform the development and delivery of the Net Zero 2030 City Strategy.

## ii. Making Connections

Two key themes coming out of the consultation were firstly the need for a more joined up approach to enable food growers and producers to communicate with each other and secondly, a central location for information about learning how to grow including training, skills upgrading and sources of help.

As part of the consultation we asked people what ways they are or could be involved in food growing in Edinburgh. We will use the responses received to develop a better picture of the kinds of growing activities people are involved in.

From this, we will work with Edible Edinburgh, to establish a network for growers and community growing groups to communicate with each other and help encourage others to become involved. This network could have the potential to help growers share produce, support each other at all stages of growing and encourage more volunteers to become involved in growing.

At the same time, we will work with Edible Edinburgh to develop a central source of information and toolkits on food growing training and skills, hosted on Edible Edinburgh's website.

### Action: Increase Awareness and Engagement

4. We will work with Edible Edinburgh to establish what networks are needed for growers and community garden groups to communicate with each other and use the Edible Edinburgh website to provide a central source for information, toolkits and training sources for food growing in the city.

### Case study: Edinburgh Talks Climate

In July 2020 the Council launched **Edinburgh Talks Climate**, starting a new phase of engagement and collaboration around climate change.

As part of the launch, Steve from Edinburgh Food Social and Hannah from Changeworks spoke as part of a podcast about how we can make more sustainable choices around food.

The discussion is ongoing and the Council would like to hear from people about the choices they have made, or how they have managed to reduce food waste.

You can join in the discussion here, share your experiences and learn from others, to help explore the decisions we need to make together to live better and more sustainably.

## Delivering the strategy

### i. Implementation and monitoring

We will monitor progress towards achieving Edinburgh's first Food Growing Strategy, creating a baseline for growing and market share of local food. The implementation plan for this Strategy, including measures and targets to monitor progress, is set out in *Appendix 1*.

An officer lead group comprising officers from relevant Council Teams and representatives from the Edible Edinburgh Partnership, community growing groups and the wider community will be established to oversee implementation of the Food Growing Strategy.

We will also work with our citizens, community groups and other partners to take forward this implementation plan over the next five years, setting out how current and future activities will be driven forward to make Edinburgh a city with a thriving local food system.

Progress will be reported through the Council's Policy and Sustainability Committee at key milestones. Other forums also offer leadership and oversight of the food growing strategy in Edinburgh including Edible Edinburgh and progress will be reported to the Edible Edinburgh Partnership to maintain strategic coordination of activity across the city.

As we develop our Net Zero 2030 City Strategy, we will look for further opportunities to support the outcomes of this Food Growing Strategy by working with partners to reduce our carbon emissions, support local good growing businesses, increase land available for food growing, reduce inequalities and increase awareness and choice around healthy and sustainable food.

### ii. The Move to a Regional Strategy

A regional approach is needed to ensure our food system is developed at the scale needed to be sustainable. We will work

with our regional partners across Edinburgh, South East Scotland and further afield to expand our food growing strategy across a regional footprint. This intent will follow the good progress made in developing a food growing strategy for Edinburgh.

Agriculture and food production are a hugely important sector in the region with very significant opportunities for development. Starting in 2021 and beyond, we will look to work with the other partner authorities and the Regional Business Council to explore what a regional strategy could look like and to consider what priorities it might have.

As we develop our Net Zero 2030 City Strategy, we will look for further opportunities to support the outcomes of this Food Growing Strategy by working with partners to reduce our carbon emissions, support local good growing businesses, increase land available for food growing, reduce inequalities and increase awareness and choice around healthy and sustainable food.



## Appendix 1: Outcomes, Objectives and Actions

### Objective 1: Grow more food in Edinburgh

No	Action	Lead Stakeholders	Baseline	Key progress measure/ Milestones and Source
1.	We will improve the information available about food growing sites in Edinburgh and use it to help us to measure progress and identify opportunities to support.	City of Edinburgh Council	See <i>Appendix 2</i> baseline of mapped sites	Increase in number of food growing sites mapped.
2.	We will deliver 'Cultivating Communities 2017-2027', to improve the number and quality of allotments and food growing sites in Edinburgh.	City of Edinburgh Council	45 allotment sites, 69 community growing projects	Annual increase in allotment site and community garden provision as reported through Cultivating Communities 2017-27 reporting
3.	We will encourage sustainable growing practices and action to protect Edinburgh's species and habitats through the Council's Allotment Strategy, the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan and Council and Edible Edinburgh media channels.	City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership	As reported in the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan	Increase biodiversity as reported through the Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan and bi-yearly Statutory Biodiversity Duty report.
4.	We will explore opportunities for creating new spaces for growing in our parks and greenspaces through our 30 year strategy 'Thriving Green Spaces 2050'.	City of Edinburgh Council	In development	Annual increase in new growing spaces created in parks and greenspaces.

5.	We will support and promote food growing initiatives on Council housing land and in our schools, ensuring that these initiatives also provide health, well-being and environmental benefit to communities.	City of Edinburgh Council	25 community gardens & food growing areas on Council housing land.  Schools food growing sites to be mapped	No of food growing initiatives supported on Council housing land and in schools
6.	We will explore opportunities for creating new spaces for growing through Edinburgh's City Plan 2030 and the redevelopment of Granton Waterfront.	City of Edinburgh Council	Not applicable	No of new growing sites being developed and created
7.	We will support the development of Lauriston Farm and its potential for scaling up food production in the city.	City of Edinburgh Council	Not applicable	Approval of Business Plan and signing of Heads of Terms Agreement. Ongoing support by Council and Edible Edinburgh

## Objective 2: Increase consumption of locally grown food

No	Action	Key Stakeholders	Baseline	Key progress measure/ Milestone and Source
1.	We will work with partners and stakeholders to explore the feasibility of establishing an indoor market and local food distribution hub in Edinburgh.	City of Edinburgh Council, Edible Edinburgh	Not applicable	Development of feasibility study and business case for an indoor market and food hub by 4Q 2021.

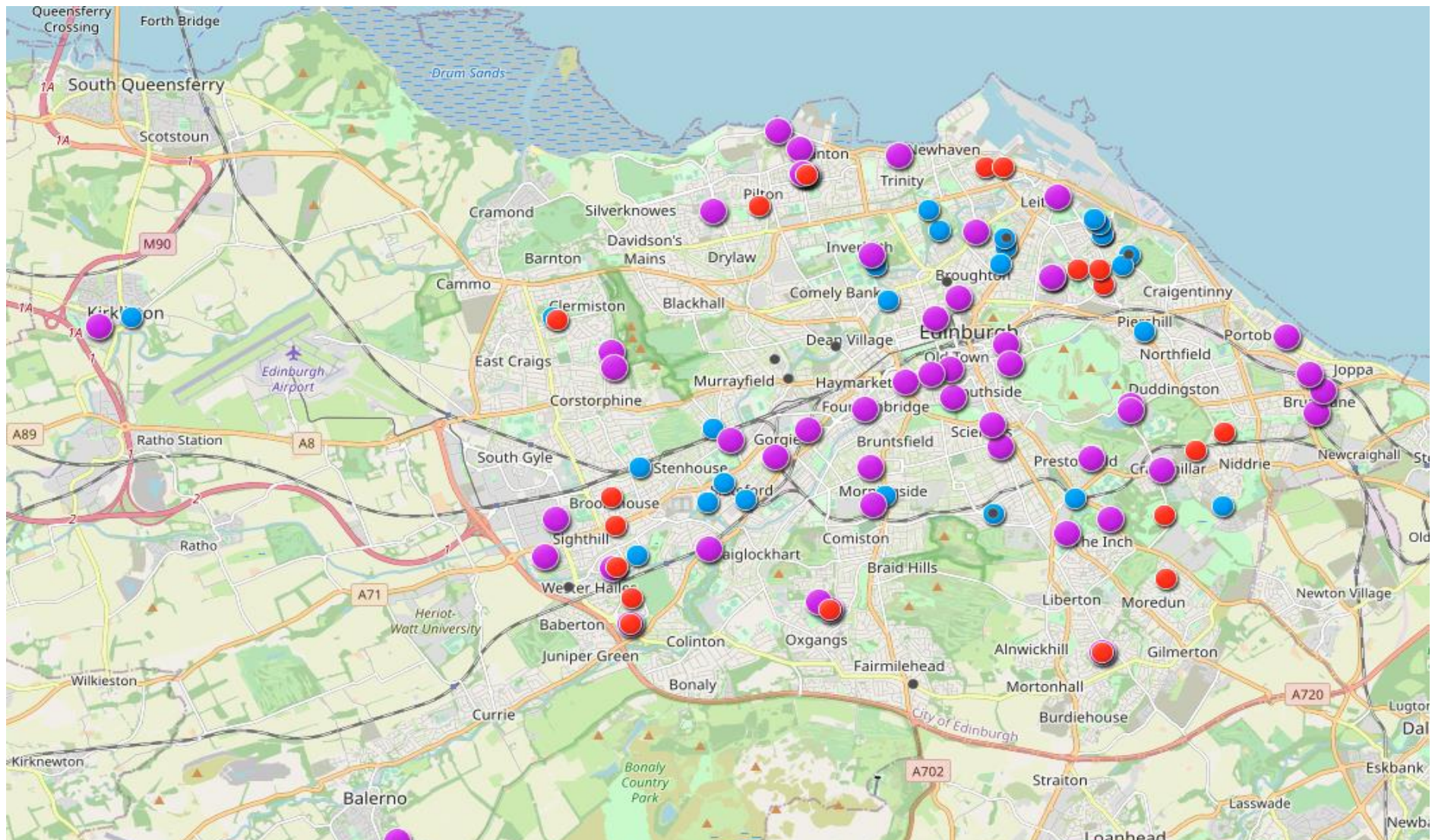
2.	We will work in partnership with Edible Edinburgh to increase business awareness and engagement through promotion of their sustainable food campaigns and participation in their Business Breakfasts.	Edible Edinburgh	96 Business Charter signatories  3 Business Breakfasts held	Increasing trend in campaign sign up and engagement numbers. Increased participation in Business Breakfasts. Source: Edible Edinburgh
3	We will promote Edinburgh's circular economy, shortening food supply chains, reducing food waste and developing local markets.	City of Edinburgh Council, city partners	30,000 tonnes of municipal food waste collected in 2019/2020. Turned into energy	Specific targets will be established and reported in line with the Net Zero 2030 Strategy
4.	We will work with the Soil Association and other partners to encourage take up of the Good Food Served Here Certification Scheme by public and private sector organisations across the city	City of Edinburgh Council, Edible Edinburgh	All Council schools & 6 care homes have Bronze accreditation. Silver trialed at 2 Council schools & 1 care home	Retention of bronze and increase in no of Council schools with Silver accreditation. Increase in city organisation accreditation
5.	We will build 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.	City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Partnership	In development	End Poverty Delivery plan and Edinburgh Partnership approach delivered. Progress reported annually.
6.	We will continue to deliver emergency support for citizens experiencing poverty and hardship during Covid-19. This includes working with third sector partners involved in ensuring people in poverty have access to food support where it is needed.	EVOC & City of Edinburgh Council	As reported in Covid-19 response dashboard	Specific targets to be identified in development of Edinburgh Partnership Food Insecurity Plan.

7.	We will encourage further take up of the Council's 'Discover!' programme, working with families to reduce food anxiety, build skills and address social isolation.	City of Edinburgh Council, delivery partners	Delivered to 390 families in 2019/2020	Increase in no of families supported by Discover! programme
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### Objective 3: Increase awareness and engagement

No	Action	Key Stakeholders	Baseline	Key progress measure/ Milestone and Source
1.	We will ensure food becomes a key part of the city climate conversation and the Net Zero 2030 Strategy.	City of Edinburgh Council	As reported to Council through Edinburgh Talks Climate	Specific targets will be established and reported in line with the Net Zero 2030 Strategy
2.	We will work with Edible Edinburgh and other partners to ensure Edinburgh achieves the Sustainable Food Places Silver Accreditation.	Edible Edinburgh, City of Edinburgh Council	Twice yearly reporting on progress towards Silver	Achievement of Sustainable Food Places Silver Accreditation in June 2022
3	We will work with partners in Edible Edinburgh and across Edinburgh to develop a joint approach to communications to improve the information and advice available to citizens, community growers and businesses about how to get involved in local food growing and what support is available locally	Edible Edinburgh, City of Edinburgh Council	Not applicable	Development of Communications & Engagement Strategy by Q3 2021
4.	We will work with Edible Edinburgh to establish what networks are needed for growers and community garden groups to communicate with each other and use the Edible Edinburgh website to provide a central source for information, toolkits and training sources for food growing in the city	City of Edinburgh Council, Edible Edinburgh	Not applicable	Online growers and community garden networks established.  Online training resources and toolkits developed by Q4 2021

## Appendix 2: Growing Sites and Food Growing Projects in Edinburgh



Growing sites and food projects in Edinburgh. Key on following pages

## Key

### **Community Growing Projects**

Acheson House Community Garden  
Barony Community Garden  
Bedford Community Garden  
Braidwood Centre Community Garden  
Bridgend Growing Communities  
Calders Green Shoots Community Garden  
Caleys Community Backgreen  
Clovenstone Growing Hub  
Corstorphine Hill Walled Garden  
Craigmillar Growers  
Cyrenians community gardens  
Donkeyfield Orchard  
The Field, Duddingston  
Duddingston Kirk Glebe Project  
Edinburgh Garden Partners  
Food Sharing Edinburgh  
Gracemount Walled Garden  
Granton Walled Garden  
Granton Community Gardeners SCIO  
Gracemount Community Garden  
Greendykes Organic Allotments  
Greening our Streets  
Greening Our Street, Meadows Community Garden  
Grove @ Summerhall  
Grove Community Garden  
Greyfriars Herb Garden  
Hailesland Mini-Growing Hub  
Harmony Community Garden  
Helping Hands Community Growing Space  
Heart of Newhaven  
Inch View Care Home  
Kirkliston Community Garden  
Leith Growers Association

Leith Community Crops in Pots  
Milton Road Community Garden  
Newhaven Heritage Community Garden  
North Edinburgh Grows  
The Orchard Project  
Orwell Community Backgreen  
Oxgangs Community Garden  
Pilton Community Garden  
Portobello East Junction Community Garden  
Redbraes Community Garden  
Royal Botanics - Edible Gardening Project  
Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens  
SAMH Redhall Walled Garden  
Saughton Park Community Physic Garden

### **Council Allotments**

Barnscout  
Cambridge Avenue  
Carrick Knowe  
Chesser Crescent  
Claremont Park  
Craigentenny  
Drumbrae  
Ferry Road  
Findlay Avenue  
Greendykes Organic Allotments  
Hutchinson Loan  
Inchkeith Court  
India Place  
Inverleith Park  
Kirkliston  
Lady Road  
Leith Links  
Midmar Fields  
Northfield Drive

Pilrig Park  
Prospect Bank  
Redhall  
Restalrig  
Saughton Mains  
Stenhouse Drive  
Victoria Park  
Warriston  
West Mains

### **Independent Run Allotments**

Dean Gallery  
Portobello East  
Roseburn Cliff  
Relugas Place  
East Scotland Street Lane  
Succoth Gardens  
Craigentenny Telferton  
Wester Hailes  
Winton Loan

### **HRA Community Gardens**

Bingham Neighbourhood Garden  
Broomhouse Growers  
Calder Gardens  
Calders Community Garden  
Clovenstone Community Garden  
Clovenstone Growing Hub  
Craigentenny Community Garden  
Craigmillar/Peffermill Court  
Drumbrae Community Garden  
Findlay Avenue / Sleigh Drive Allotments  
Gracemount Mansion House Walled Garden

Granton Community Gardeners  
Hamilton Wynd  
Hawkhill/Nisbett Courts  
Inchkeith Court  
Lochend Secret Garden  
Lochend Square Allotments  
Magdalene Neighbourhood Garden  
Moredun  
Murrayburn and Hailesland Neighbourhood  
Garden  
North Edinburgh Community Organics  
Northfield Drive Allotments  
Oxgangs Community Garden  
Piershill Square Allotments  
Pilton Community Garden

Prestonfield Allotments  
Redbrae's Community Garden  
Saunders Street Community Garden  
Wauchope Community Garden  
West Cromwell – Persevere – Citadel Court