**The Glasgow Food Growing Strategy** was launched in 2020. It includes commitments to develop new allotment sites, establish and maintain a list of those requesting an allotment plot, and to ensure that the wait time is no longer than 5 years. You can take a look at the Strategy and all 16 actions here: [www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=50891&p=0](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=50891&p=0)

We asked **Alexander Paterson, Assistant Food Growing Manager at Glasgow City Council**, to update us on how the Strategy is progressing.

This post is a part of our series, **‘Your Questions, Our Partners’** where we ask one of our partners your questions about the food system and their work. You can submit your questions at bit.ly/yourquestionsourpartners

***What does your role at Glasgow City Council involve, and how does it relate to the Glasgow Food Growing Strategy?***

Within my remit as Assistant Manager (Food Growing) I oversee a team of two officers with the team being responsible for delivery of the actions arising from the Food Growing Strategy. This encompasses everything from engaging with communities of interest and place to develop sites with the potential for Food Growing city wide. This can include developing steering groups of a variety of stakeholders as we support groups to develop their governance structures for sites in line with Glasgow City Council’s citywide policies, and taking a collaborative approach to co-design and delivery of these sites as we seek to meet our statutory obligations under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

I also oversee the administration of allotments within the City and support community growers wherever we can within the City. This includes supporting allotment associations with their devolved duties and supporting the application of appropriate governance for allotment sites. We are also looking to commence engagement with allotment associations across the City to develop updated rules and regulations for allotment associations city wide which will be no small task. We are also working to develop a digital approach to the administration of allotment sites through the use of technology to ensure we are efficient and responsive in managing existing sites.

We also work closely with colleagues in the Open Space Strategy to ensure the aims of the Food Growing Strategy make a positive contribution to the delivery of the Glasgow Open Space Strategy.

***What are the current steps you're taking to implement the strategy, and how would you assess the progress so far?***

Since the launch of the Food Growing Strategy and associated Action Plan we have been working with various partners and stakeholders including Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN) to develop sites and have successfully increased growing provision in Mansewood Allotments, Croftburn Allotments and have opened Growchapel Community Allotments. We are working closely with partners and communities to bring forward Sighthill Allotments which we should be in a position to open in time for the 2023 Growing Season.

Further to this we are currently working on delivering Phase 2 of Growchapel which will include the installation of additional infrastructure and biodiversity areas to ensure the site provides benefit to more than our own species. We are working to expand Centurion Way Growing Space and Yoker Allotments, and relocating Greyfriars Community Garden (and increasing its capacity) from its current home on a stalled space site on High St to a site on further up High St that will provide a more secure tenure. We are in the initial stages of developing a working group to deliver a site at Greenfield Park on the site of surplus bowling greens using the models of Bellahouston Demonstration Garden and Growchapel which seek to support the health and wellbeing of participants. We have recently supported SIMY to develop additional food growing capacity on surplus bowling greens at Lister St and are working with the Pyramid and Friends of Anderston Green Space to provide additional food growing opportunities on sites at Williams St and Elderslie St. We are also developing contracts to deliver growing spaces with Grow 21 in Ruchazie.

We have also instigated a series of working groups to support the aims of the Food Growing Strategy including an Internal Officers Group, Local Housing Association Group and the Community Food Growers Forum. These groups allow us to take a more cohesive joined up approach to delivering the FGS aims.

We have also been working in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society to deliver a series of CPD [Continuing Professional Development] sessions to support teaching staff in educational establishments across the city as we seek to ensure staff have appropriate knowledge and support to deliver growing projects within school grounds and embed this learning in our young people at the earliest possible opportunity.

We also work closely with colleagues in People Make Glasgow Communities on any projects that involve Food Growing as we seek to ensure our citizens have agency and a sense of ownership of sites being developed. This includes a variety of Food Growing opportunities including urban agriculture and market gardens.

We also contribute to the Community Theme of the Glasgow City Food Plan.

We are close to launching our Let’s Grow Together Fund that will provide grants of £50k a year to growers and interested parties across the City to support the identification and development of potential Food Growing sites across the City for the duration of the current food growing strategy.

We have also developed the Food Growing Strategy Storyboard which provides mapping, signposting and information on how to identify sites, funding and support to bring these forward as Food Growing sites. The Storyboard is available here: <https://glasgowgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d277ea6d8d7c4e07b4fbed01ff05a3f0>

We measure our progress against our reports delivered to various Glasgow City Council committees and through monitoring of allotment waiting list figures.

***What are your priorities for meeting the strategy in the next six months?***

Our priorities for meeting the aims of the strategy in the next 6 months are to ensure that we continue to identify sites and develop designs and contracts to deliver additional food growing capacity across the City to meet the increasing demand. We will also continue to work with stakeholders and empower communities to take ownership of these sites and make them the community assets they can be. We will also continue to liaise with various departments within Glasgow City Council to ensure a cohesive approach to the delivery of the strategy aims. We will seek to support planning colleagues to ensure provisions for growing spaces continue to be included in planning policy and developers include food growing spaces in new build developments or provide appropriate contributions where this may not be feasible. We will seek to work with other landowners such as Housing Associations, universities and religious groups to encourage and support them to develop food growing spaces on land they own.  We will also continue to work collaboratively with community food growers as we seek to increase the number of market gardens and restorative agricultural based growing formats to support community food growing increasing both in scale and yield and seek to ensure that anyone in Glasgow who wishes to grow Food has the opportunity to do so.