



Allotments and
Food Growing
Strategy 2023
to 2038

Overview

- Demand for allotment plots and food growing land is increasing.
- There are growing pressures on land functions.
- Customer's service demands are evolving.
- There are insufficient Service resources to meet customer expectations and enhance the service.

In order to set out how these challenges will be addressed, the Strategy will be structured using themes that reflect the activities and objectives needed to face and meet these challenges:

- Supply and demand
- Investment and sustainable finances
- Tenant and tenancy management
- Site management
- Community management
- Managing for nature
- Managing for climate change
- Sustainable food production
- Health and wellbeing
- Welcoming and accessible
- Education and learning

Theme: *Supply and demand*

Provide land to support and increase sustainable, local food production and maximise supply for Bristol's citizens. The Strategy will:

- Be informed by an up-to-date audit and assessment of the maximum potential of all existing land used for food growing and the potential for new land to be made available from public open space, smallholdings and land used for grazing.
- Propose where and how supply may be uplifted taking in to account local levels of demand, the relative costs and any potential impacts on current land function or tenants.



Theme: Investment & Sustainable Finances

Create a fair and reasonable pricing structure that enables the council to deliver the services that tenants and potential tenants require and provide a resource margin that enables the service to realise opportunities to meet demand. The Strategy will:

- Propose a new fee structure that continues to respond to people's ability to pay and amount of land under cultivation whilst acknowledging that on-site services are better on some allotments than others.
- Propose a fee structure that enables the council to match its resources more closely to customer demands and the need to improve services.
- Seek S106 and other funding for capital investment that will improve existing sites or create new ones.

Theme: Tenant and tenancy management

Updated, improved and modernised Tenancy Agreement & Rules that improve management of the service and enhance communication and understanding between the service and customers. The Strategy will:

- Set out a revised agreement and new rules that confirm plots are primarily used for food production by Bristol citizens, reduce the time taken to re-let vacant plots and reduce officer and tenant time spent on disputes and enquiries.



Theme: Site management

Improved quality & provision of facilities. The Strategy will:

- Propose a more proactive and dedicated approach to the maintenance of sites through an in-house team.
- Encourage ownership of sites by tenants through volunteer maintenance work to compliment BCC staff.



Theme: Community management

Providing shared spaces for citizens who wish to engage in growing food and be supported doing so. This might include new growers, those wishing to develop new or enhance their existing skills and knowledge and people who have specific support needs when carrying out food growing activities. The Strategy will:

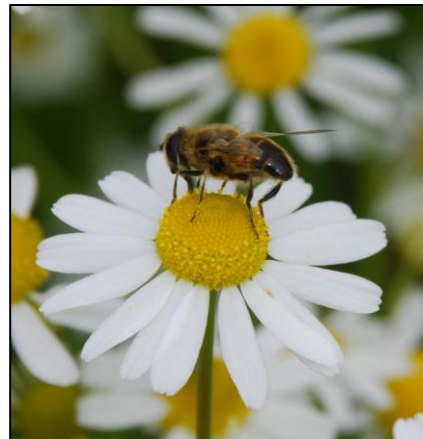
- Seek to create and support community managed plots in areas/wards where there is no provision – working with other providers, organisations and stakeholders to do so.
- Promote existing community managed plots
- Monitor community plots to ensure activities meet the aims of the Strategy



Theme: Managing for nature

Allotments will be a place where nature can thrive and be protected. The Strategy will:

- Identify land within sites not suitable for food production and that can be actively managed for nature
- Contribute to Bristol City Council's target to reduce the use of pesticides by at least 50% by 2030.
- Promote cultivation and husbandry techniques that work in harmony with wildlife, encouraging pollinators and diverse micro-habitats.



Theme: Managing for climate change

Promote an approach to food growing and site management that helps mitigate the impact of climate change and reduces the use of and release of carbon as much as possible. The Strategy will:

- Promote the need to lower water consumption including recycling of rainwater on-site and take further practical measures through investment to prevent leaks and loss through evaporation.
- Identify space not suitable for food production to convert to woodland/tree canopy.



Theme: Sustainable food production

Encourage sustainable land management and cultivation practices. The Strategy will:

- Propose that over time land use, particularly the use of smallholdings, is moved away from animal husbandry towards the growing of fruit and vegetables. This will act to increase overall production, release land to meet customer demand and encourage practices that may better work with nature and conserve resources.
- Encourage good soil retention, conditioning and conservation, discourage the use of plastic and promote organic and regenerative agriculture/horticulture.



Theme: Health and wellbeing

Contribute to the health and wellbeing of Bristol citizens. The Strategy will do this by:

- Promoting the mental and physical health benefits of food growing, seek to ensure more citizens are able to take up food growing close to where they live, provide opportunities for supported growing and learning including in community plots, support people on low incomes to access allotments and support people with different abilities and needs to experience growing food.
- Develop and work with partners to encourage use of allotments, particularly supported use, and to enable food growing to be part of 'green social prescribing' in the city.
- Promoting the valuable work of existing community plot growing groups.

Theme: Welcoming and accessible

Ensure that the Service is meeting the diverse needs of citizens and ensuring that food growing in the city is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. The Strategy will do this by:

- Provide comprehensive, accurate, up-to-date online information on allotment provision, availability, application processes and the customer journey.
- Providing food growing learning and support information with good signposting to the work of external organisations, bodies and partners.
- Use an online portal to provide a clear and transparent pathway for community and commercial food growing applications/land requests.
- Actively promoting food growing where participation is low for all citizens irrespective of ability, background or culture.
- Mapping, providing and promoting accessible sites, plots and supported growing opportunities.
- Foster a supportive culture for volunteer site representatives and staff to include better access to materials, training and support.

Theme: Education and learning

Provide opportunities to learn food growing skills within a welcoming environment. The Strategy will:

- Establish food growing training opportunities in partnership with local providers.
- Promote existing current learning providers including community & colleges.
- Propose co-designing a new training scheme and Handbook for Site Reps.

