



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Growing Communities Update
Date:	6 December 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officers:	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager

1. Relevant Background Information

As Members will be aware, in 2011 the Council in partnership with the Public Health Agency, Belfast Healthy Cities and the Belfast Health Development Unit commenced work on the development of the Growing Communities Strategy – a citywide approach to supporting and encouraging growing activities including allotments, community gardens, and Grow-It-Yourself initiatives.

In September 2011, the Growing Communities Steering Group was established comprising 40 representatives from the private, community and voluntary, and statutory sectors. Over a period of eight months officers engaged with the Steering Group in order to develop a draft Growing Communities Strategy. This was presented to Members for review in May 2012.

2. Key Issues

On 21 June 2012, at the opening event for Musgrave Park community garden and allotments, the draft strategy was launched for public consultation. The period of formal public consultation on the Growing Communities Strategy closed on 5 October 2012. On 9 November 2012, a request was made to the Steering Group for final comments on the draft strategy.

From the above, a total of three responses were received – from the following organisations:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GIY Ireland; - Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership; and - The Conservation Volunteers. <p>Two of the above responses were received late and, following appropriate revision of the strategy content, work will also be required to produce a finished document for publication. For this reason, it is proposed that the final strategy document will be presented to Members for endorsement at the February Committee meeting along with a wider Growing Communities update.</p> <p>Following completion of the strategy, it is proposed that the Growing Communities Steering Group no longer operates, and that an Implementation Group of key partners will be established to monitor and review delivery of the Growing Communities Strategy.</p>
--	--

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> None.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> None.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	<p>There are no implications at this stage. However, Equality and Good Relations factors will be taken into account in any activities being delivered in line with the strategy. The strategy will be equality screened in line with the council's existing equality screening process.</p>

5.	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to note the update on Growing Communities.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Revised strategy document to be provided to Committee for endorsement with the next Growing Communities update in February 2012.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None