



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Growing Communities Update</b>
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on activities relating to community gardens and the development and implementation of the Growing Communities Strategy.
1.2	Following development of the draft Growing Communities Strategy, completed in partnership with the Public Health Agency, Belfast Healthy Cities and the Belfast Health Development Unit, officers undertook public consultation on the strategy between July and October 2012.
1.3	In anticipation of the continuing development of community gardens by the Council including those committed to in the Investment Programme, in August 2012 this Committee granted officers approval to seek tenders for a delivery partner or consortium of partners to undertake facilitation of growing activities in Council community gardens for a period of three years, to the value of £90,000.
1.4	The following summarises the development of Council community gardens to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Waterworks was the first community garden, developed through Peace III funding in 2010 and managed by GROW;</li><li>– During 2010, three further gardens were developed through the Growing Together project - at Glenbank, Suffolk and Lenadoon;</li><li>– Two pop up growing spaces were created in year one of the Growing Respect project at Ormeau and Shankill;</li><li>– Musgrave and Grove community gardens opened in Summer 2012;</li></ul>

2.	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p data-bbox="325 248 858 282"><u>Planned / Ongoing Activities for 2013</u></p> <p data-bbox="236 320 1374 685">2.1 We are about to move into year two of Growing Respect and a further three pop up gardens will be created at Ballysillan, Olympia and Whiterock; In addition, during 2013 a number of new Community Gardens will be completed and community engagement discussions and awareness sessions are taking place at present across Finlay Park, Wedderburn, Knocknagoney and Falls Parks areas. The community engagement exercise at Wedderburn has highlighted some local opposition to the chosen location. This will be taken into account and a new site may have to be found.</p> <p data-bbox="236 723 778 757">2.2 <u>Tender for Provision of Support</u></p> <p data-bbox="325 795 1382 981">Following consultation with relevant officers and key suppliers, an invitation to <i>Tender for Provision of Support for Council-Based Community Growing Activities</i> was advertised during January 2013. Following evaluation of the tenders received, the contract is expected to be awarded by the end of March for a period of three years.</p> <p data-bbox="325 1019 1254 1093">The work which will be carried out under this contract includes, in summary, the following:</p> <ul data-bbox="325 1131 1315 1637" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engaging with local communities to generate ‘buy-in’ to community growing, recruit garden users and ensure effective participation;</li> <li>– Working with community groups and individuals to assist with the preparation of new Council community gardens;</li> <li>– Designing and facilitating sessions for garden users including ‘grow your own’ horticultural skills and health and wellbeing aspects of community growing;</li> <li>– Training Council officers to ensure ongoing in-house delivery of the above activities post-contract; and</li> <li>– Working with the Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="236 1675 1331 1839">2.3 Work undertaken will be delivered according to a programme agreed between nominated officers and the contractor’s lead representative in advance, against which progress and achievement of outputs and outcomes will be routinely monitored and reviewed as a formal requirement of the contract.</p> <p data-bbox="325 1877 775 1910"><u>Growing Communities Strategy</u></p> <p data-bbox="236 1948 1382 2022">2.4 The public consultation on the Growing Communities Strategy closed on 5 October 2012, and a request was made to the strategy steering group on</p>

	9 November 2012 for final comments. A final strategy document has now been completed incorporating responses as appropriate, a copy of which can be provided to Members on request.
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<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The contract for Provision of Support for Council-Based Community Growing Activities will be awarded to a maximum value of £90,000 over three years. However, this will be subject to annual review to determine the requirement for continuation based on contractor performance and the need for further services. The annual amount is provided for within the annual 2013/14 revenue estimates.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>It is expected that the work undertaken through the above contract will contribute to the development of officers' capacity to deliver key aspects of the Growing Communities Strategy.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>It is expected that the work undertaken through the above contract will contribute to the development and maintenance of physical assets, including those community gardens to which the Council has committed through the Investment Programme.</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and good relations implications</b>
	<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>

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	<p>Committee is asked to -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note this update on Growing Communities; and</li> <li>2. Endorse the final version of Growing Communities Strategy prior to its publication.</li> </ol>

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	<p>Further Growing Communities update to be provided to Committee on an annual basis.</p>