Improvement Project: *Aberdeen School Garden Project*

Executive Sponsor: *Chair of Sustainable City Group: Derek McGowan*

Project Lead: *Bob Donald from One Seed Forward with Dr Donald S Gray &*   *Dr Laura Colucci-Gray from the University of Aberdeen.*   *Olu Fatokun, Sustainable Development Officer*

Aim statement (What? By how much? By when?) *What exactly are you aiming to achieve?*   **To increase 'garden-time' for Aberdeen's primary school children, in the localities, by an average of 1 hour per child by end 2019.**

Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan/ Locality Plans: *The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (Pages 51- 52): A People Friendly City; states the vision to:*   • *'Reduce number of people affected by household food insecurity and increase the provision of allotments and community food growing spaces'*   • *From a baseline of 468 growing spaces there is a target to increase this by 1% in 2017-2018, amounting to 4-5 new growing spaces in 2017-2018.*   *The **Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017** (3.98) states:*   *Protecting and enhancing the Green Space Network will also provide opportunities to enhance the landscape of Aberdeen, improve biodiversity and amenity, provide community growing spaces, reduce the impact of flooding and help us mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and support successful placemaking.*   DRAFT LOCALITY PLAN 2017-27 for Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton includes a priority to 'Improve health and wellbeing with increased access to healthy food'.   DRAFT LOCALITY PLAN 2017-27 for Cummings Park, Heathryfold, Northfield, Mastrick and Middlefield states: 'We will work together to create opportunities for free / affordable food. We will develop sustainable food provision for those in greatest need via locally based outlets.'   DRAFT LOCALITY PLAN 2017-27 for Torry states: • 'We will tackle obesity and weight gain by taking a joined up community asset and partner approach. We will develop a project brand and community champions to drive this through this will link to local food growing and provision of free meals and active lifestyle choices such as community walks and walkathons.'   • 'We will develop sustainable food provision by identifying land options for food growing, such as a community orchard , linking this to a community co-operative or a local TAMS (market stall concept) providing cheap healthy food.'   ***How does this contribute to the Service Improvement Plan?***   *Community Gardening is mentioned in the Public Infrastructure and Environment Service draft Service Improvement Plan.*   • We will be a city where the local community is encouraged and supported to take an active lead in developing and improving greenspaces. Encourage communities to get involved in improving their local environment by developing new or joining existing friends of parks groups, community gardening groups, volunteering programme and environmental walkabouts.

Business case *What research can you draw on to justify why you are investing in this project?*

Aberdeen recently joined the Sustainable Food City network http://sustainablefoodcities.org/
ACC has a duty to prepare a food-growing strategy for Aberdeen under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. A pilot school gardens scheme fits in well with both of these drivers.

There is general research around the value of providing school children with food-growing opportunities contained in the links below.

https://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/ten-topics/food-and-environment/
Through work on the Food and the Environment Topic, pupils should:-
- Understand the range of food choices available to us.
- Understand the resources and skills required for food production and processing.
- Recognise the value of healthy, stable ecosystems to food production.
- Understand the wider environmental implications of our food choices.
- Recognise the dimension of social responsibility in our food choices.
- Recognise our own food culture within a diversity of food cultures.

https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Info-Sheet/Growing-Vegetables-in-Schools
- Food growing can teach children about soil, nutrition, science and life cycles of the vegetables and the creatures attracted to the garden.
- A vegetable plot can raise children's awareness of the seasonal nature and the variety of food.
- A food growing project should be part of a school's development plan with staff, pupils, parents and even local residents being involved.

http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/
- 'Learning outdoors offers so many new and exciting opportunities for pupils and can be even more powerful when teachers explore how to include the five senses in key learning activities.'

http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/
- "Every young person (0-19) should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances."

Measures: (How will we know if a change is an improvement?) *What data can you collect to tell you whether your change ideas are having an impact?*

- Number of classes having 'garden time' (where garden time is hours in teaching time where the garden is the focus of the activity whether in the classroom or in the garden). To be collected monthly.

- Number of pupils having garden time. To be collected monthly.

- Number of hours of garden time taken place. To be collected monthly.

  In addition the following will be measured by One Seed Forward:

- University of Aberdeen will produce in collaboration with the schools and One Seed Forward, an evaluation and monitoring framework. Data will be gathered to provide information on the extent to which the various objectives of the project, and school expectations, have been met.
- Quantitative data collected will include: quantity of food grown, number of lessons delivered across the curriculum, number of CPD sessions with teachers delivered and the area of new growing spaces created.
- Qualitative data collected will include: how confident teachers and pupils are with interacting with their garden, what motivates schools to start and sustain a garden and what are the perceived opportunities and threats to embedding food-growing in the curriculum.

Change ideas (What can we do that will result in improvement?) *What specific changes do you think will achieve your aim?*

- To create functioning school gardens in three primary schools (one in each of the localities) by February 2018.   The primary schools are: Bramble Brae Primary, Woodside Primary and Tullos Primary.

- Install pilot 'Edible Green Walls' in four primary schools by March 2018; The primary schools are: Bramble Brae Primary, Woodside Primary, Tullos Primary and Muirfield Primary.

- Develop a methodology for engaging with schools and teachers which is locally relevant;

- Develop and deliver age-appropriate, garden-centred lessons which strongly link to the National Curriculum;

- Develop and deliver CPD sessions for teachers as required.

- Develop links to the Eco-Schools Scotland initiative to facilitate more schools achieving Green Flag status (relevant themes: food and environment, school grounds, health and wellbeing).

Potential Barriers (What are the barriers to you making these changes)

- Lack of interest from primary schools in the localities.
- Lack of staff engagement or community engagement to maintain the gardens.
- Lack of food-growing expertise locally.

Where do you need support upfront to carry out this improvement project?

- None

Project Team: *Who is going to help carry out the improvement work?*
Bob Donald from One Seed Forward
Dr Donald S Gray & Dr Laura Colucci-Gray from the University of Aberdeen.
Staff at the four primary schools: Tullos, Bramble Brae, Woodside and Muirfield Primaries.
Olu Fatokun ; Edible Green Walls
Environmental Services will oversee the physical installation of the gardens.
Community Food-growing Worker (CFINE) Neil Woodward