

Council – 25 April 2024

Agenda item 10a

Councillor Berardi has given notice that he intends to alter his motion in accordance with Standing Order 17.10 as follows:

In support of community food growing

This council notes:

- The cost-of-living crisis and the continued efforts to recover from the pandemic brings a new focus on ensuring that residents have access to enough healthy fresh food for day to day living.
- The increasing need to put the health and well-being of residents at the heart of our corporate strategies.
- The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people's health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh locally produced food.
- That communities coming together to grow food can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets by reducing loneliness and providing healthy food.
- That localising food growing reduces food miles, reduces food waste in the production and consumption process, and can contribute to supporting biodiversity and community cohesion.
- That Runnymede Borough Council is a major landowner and some of its land could be used for community food growing while also improving the public realm.

This council resolves to request the Community Services Committee to review and propose to the Corporate Management Committee ~~to review options (or commission other committees as appropriate)~~ for promoting lease agreements for the purpose of community food growing with constituted community groups on council owned land which is suitable for cultivation.

This is a distinct policy strategy different to allotments where agreements are with individual plot holders.

Suggested considerations for the Corporate Management Committee include:

- Developing a policy enabling community food growing on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis for a term agreed with the council to allow at least one growing season (i.e. 1 year with the possibility to extend on an annual basis) a minimum 2-year term.
- The production of a map of all council owned land and buildings suitable for community cultivation and ancillary activities (e.g. equipment storage) and making this land and buildings available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost.
- Exploring external grants in order to support local Community Food Growing Coordinators and to provide utilities and materials (raised beds, mobile planters, water butts, composting bins, tools, seeds, etc).

- Promoting community food growing activities through the council's public communication channels (printed newsletter, website, and social media)
- Designating an officer to champion community food growing in the borough
- Providing support to communities that wish to establish a constituted community group to enable them to qualify for adopting a community food growing site.
- Integrating community food growing in citizen panel deliberations to explore the role communities, the council and other stakeholders (such as businesses) can play in order to encourage community food growing.
- The inclusion of community food growing within the council's climate change, biodiversity and community wellbeing strategies and action plans to the extent that such actions are not already reflected in Council documentation.
- The inclusion of community food growing within planning policies and frameworks, such as the emerging Local Plan and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document.
- The inclusion of community food growing within non-mandatory planning advice i.e. proactively explore with planning applicants the possibility of integrating community food growing spaces and edible landscapes in developments involving communal spaces within flats, student halls of residence and public spaces. Examples may include community fruit orchards and gardens.
- Submitting, for consideration by the Full Council, a proposal for creating a working group tasked with promoting leases for community food growing.