

# A CALL FOR JUSTICE

**A right to grow for  
healthier greener lives**

An Incredible Edible briefing for local councils.



# A CALL FOR FOOD JUSTICE

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October 2022

## Why we need a Right to Grow

We know we can transform people's lives for the better by actively growing food together in our neighborhoods and by supporting more local food producers and markets. The biggest obstacle to more local food growing is the lack of available land close to people's homes. The land is there across our public realm, from verges to unloved, often forgotten, sites. It simply needs to be repurposed to better nurture our communities. In the middle of the cost-of-living crisis unlocking local healthy food could be a life line for many communities offering practical hope for everyone.

The Incredible Edible model has shown how local food growing can bring people together to reduce loneliness, connect with nature, combat climate change, provide healthy diets and stimulate local economies. Our experience over the years has shown that local growing can achieve multiple benefits for people and planet. Transforming space in cities for food growing creates green cities which are cooler in summer, less polluted, better for our mental and physical health, better for wildlife and encourage local food spend. And because many of these actions are about giving power to people to shape their community, they turn out to be more sociable and more connected places

The frustrating thing is that the land is there in underused verges, space waiting for development or land which is simply derelict. We all know the plots of land near where we live which

could be permanently, or just for a few years, made available for growing. A lot of this land is in public sector ownership and is either costly to manage or not managed at all. Where communities have the resources and the opportunity they may enter into leases or even buy small pieces of land. But for most community food growers that aspiration is out of reach and what we need is a simple way for local people to access land which is cheap and doesn't involve lengthy and complicated legal agreements.

## A new Right to Grow

We know there is plenty of land that could be used for local growing, so we ask a simple question. How can we make a new law to speed up and simplify access to land for community growing? The answer is the Community Right to Grow Bill and you can read the detail of how it works here. If adopted, it will give people a right to grow on suitable public sector land. This new right would create opportunities for communities and the public sector to come together, play to each other's strengths, build trust and make the very best use of public sector land. We are campaigning for new law in Parliament, but local Government can also act now to adopt the principles of right to grow and to begin to see how it can release land for local food growing. We are calling on all parts of local Government to adopt the right to grow as a motion to full council and below we have set out some draft wording which suggests the actions that local authorities might take to encourage local food. Local councils will wish to tailor the motion to their circumstances but whatever detail we hope every local council will want to be part of community food growing revolution.

## **Draft motion to full council**

### **'The Right to Grow'**

**This council notes that 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 fresh food for day to day living.**

**This council notes:**

- 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 the cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price.
- 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 there is plenty of under used publicly owned land which could be used for community food growing while also improving the public realm.

**This council agrees (or to the extent that the below concern executive functions, recommends to the executive) to adopt a right to grow on council owned land which is suitable or cultivation.**

**As a result, this council will:**

- Identify and produce a map of all council owned land suitable for community cultivation.
- Make this land available for cultivation by a simple license to community organisations at no cost.
- Consider community food growing on sites awaiting development for other uses on a fixed term basis.
- Write to MPs who represent the council area and ask them to support the Incredible Edible campaign or national right to grow.



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