Capital Growth Presentation: Non-commercial Food growing

What is Capital Growth?
It is a campaign to create 2012 community food growing spaces in London by 2012. The campaign project is based in the Sustain office and supports communities by providing:
- training
- funding
- discounts
- practical support
- events

Why did Capital Growth start?
- In response to the demand for community food growing in London
- Lack of allotment space
- To create a voice for all the people involved in community food growing in London

Land that community groups typically use is:
- local authority land
- social housing land
- private businesses lease land

Challenges that community groups face
1) Finding land
2) Identifying the owner of the land and quite often there are complex ownership issues, or even the owner is unknown.
3) Unrealistic expectations: When dealing with big companies or institutions like TFL, network rail or Thames Water community groups tend to lose momentum as getting hold of land can be a long process.
4) No shared vocabulary between the group, the owner and other parties involved.
5) Future use of the land – the land may only be temporarily available e.g. via a meanwhile lease, therefore difficult to feel secure and invest in the long-term
6) Landowner may perceive risk at leasing out the land e.g. might not get it back

Capital Growth has been tackling some of these by:
- working with 18 London borough councils to help them give over land more easily to groups and respond more easily to enquiries about food growing, and they then have a more positive reaction to food growing when the public ask.
- Work with 10 housing associations in similar way
- Working with Transport for London (TFL) – this has only created two spaces and Styles House on Southwark is a good example

Conclusion and implication for planning
1) If planning policies could be adapted to assist in the creation of food growing spaces – most notably to include food growing designated space in the Core Strategy
2) Local authorities could make sure that there was food growing spaces in new developments especially new housing

3) Follow example of Kettering, Northamptonshire has 10 requirements for open spaces – includes a requirement for new housing developers to include allotments and community growing spaces