

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