3. VISION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 As Members may be aware, Enfield’s overarching vision is to develop a vibrant and sustainable market gardening industry by creating a centre of excellence for locally grown food to feed London and the UK as well as developing new opportunities for training, skills and employment generation for Enfield residents.

3.2 Garden Enfield is an ambitious enterprise, aiming to reintroduce the borough's food growing heritage into the Borough. A key driver of the project is tackling unemployment and youth unemployment in Enfield, which is above the London average.
3.3 The development of large scale commercial growing is part of a borough-wide food growing and producing initiative, and act as a hub for the functional economic area extending from London up to Cambridge.

3.4 Enfield benefits from a strong local food and drink sector, which currently accounts for 1 in 3 manufacturing jobs in the borough. Our aspiration is to develop large scale commercial growing, processing and marketing opportunities, which will unlock potential for up to 1,200 new jobs, as well as apprenticeships, entrepreneurial activity and promote local economic growth.

3.5 For the Council, the project encompasses much more than physical growing structures, but includes the many other opportunities for direct and indirect job creation that will flow from commercial food production, including construction, logistics, building trades, food processing, and many other areas of related employment.

3.6 In addition to the economic and job creation benefits of the project, the outcomes will include a reduction of food miles and food poverty, as well as improved food security for Enfield, London and UK.

3.7 The Council plans to capitalise on the area’s history of food production by building on a long history of agriculture and horticulture in the Borough, which has played an important role in how Enfield developed.

3.8 The GLA awarded the Council £600,000 grant funding from the Mayor’s Regeneration Fund to progress the project in three strands: Cooperative Growing will focus on community growing and providing opportunities for growing entrepreneurs, Commercial Growing will bring large scale food growing back into the borough and the Centre of Excellence will provide opportunities for new, green growing technologies and the skill base to drive innovation.

4. HISTORY OF GROWING IN THE LEE VALLEY

4.1 Enfield was home to a large glasshouse industry in the Lee Valley during the early 1900’s and played a vital role in supplying London’s markets, with cut flowers and pot plants, delivering goods to Covent Garden.

4.2 In 1911, the Lee Valley Growers Association was formed to pool knowledge and resources from over 600 growers and in 1913 the Cheshunt Experimental research station was formed to improve growing techniques.

4.3 During the two world wars, growers were ordered by government to switch production to tomatoes and cucumbers to feed London.

4.4 Post World War 2, the area of glasshouses was reduced in order to provide homes for London. The formation of the Lee Valley Regional Park effectively drew a line around the glasshouse industry and prevented expansion and placing a large number of nurseries out of business.
4.5 Although none of this industry remains in Enfield, the Lea Valley today grows mainly salad crops under 300 acres of glass, reduced from 1200 acres at the peak of the industry.

5. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

5.1 The overarching objectives for the project include the following outcomes:

- Provide a sustainable framework for local employment through growing, processing and marketing food locally
- Increase food growing on a large scale commercial level
- Create apprenticeships, work experience and social entrepreneurship
- Engage volunteers in the community growing projects
- Increase and expand local food supply chains and reduce food miles
- Contribute to London's food security and vibrant food economy
- Establish food growing project at Forty Hall Farm
- Establish Vegetable Box Scheme for up to 120 clients over two years
- Engage with employers for work experience and potential future employment with secondary school students
- Improve Enfield residents' health and well-being and reduce health inequalities
- Explore opportunities for the use of green technologies for more sustainable growing
- Establish further community growing areas in the borough
- Establish food growing in primary and secondary schools over
- Provide training to teachers, parents, students and site managers
- Increased supply of fresh food to Enfield Borough
- Align with the policies in the London Plan, the Mayor’s Food Strategy and the Enfield Food Strategy.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

6.1 Launch Event

6.1.1 The Garden Enfield Launch event took place on the 5th of March at City Hall in the Mayor’s Living Room. The event attracted 90 attendees from a wide variety of organisations and was very well received. The programme featured an impressive array of speakers including Cllr Del Goddard, Rosie Boycott, Chair of the London Food Board, Enfield Council’s Chief Executive, Rob Leak, Gary Taylor and Doug Taylor, Lee Valley Growers Association Steve Dowbiggin, Principal, Capel Manor College, Julie Brown from Growing Communities, Julia Clarke from Prince of Wales School and Kate McGeevor from Forty Hall Farm. Topics covered included the broad spectrum of food growing from the large scale commercial growing perspective to community growing projects to growing food in schools.

6.1.2 The project is based around three main pillars which are:
- Cooperative Growing;
- A Centre of Excellence;
- Commercial Scale Growing.

6.1.3 These are set out in more detail in section 6.2.

6.2 Cooperative Growing (Community)

6.2.1 Cooperative growing involves working with residents to create growing spaces with a community focus to enable people to gain new skill sets in horticulture and related activities. This strand of the project benefits to people of all ages who may be retired, out of work, or have health or mental issues. Residents will have the chance to increase their social skills and self-confidence and be more job-ready as a result.

6.2.2 Progress so far includes the start-up of a three acre vegetable growing project at Forty Hall Farm over the last year. The farm produces a wide range of organic vegetables.

6.2.3 In order to deliver this part of the project, a horticultural grower post was created and a part time farm manager.

6.2.4 Two apprenticeships were created, one horticultural and one farming apprentice to support the growing project.

6.2.5 So far, 50 volunteers have given their time to the growing project at the farm, and students from Capel Manor College also give their time as part of their training.

6.2.6 A vegetable box scheme was launched providing organic vegetables to Enfield residents. The Council will form a Community Interest Company with Capel Manor College as a social enterprise, and aims to provide vegetable bags for up to 120 by March 2015. Cabinet recently approved this at its 12 March meeting.

6.2.7 Over the last year, the education strand of the project has supplied 10 primary schools with equipment and training to support growing on their school grounds. The school projects have reached 270 children to date, and an additional 10 primary schools will receive equipment and training in the next financial year.

6.2.8 Links for work experience have been established with major employer, Waitrose, to support young people in work experience.

6.3 Centre of Excellence

6.3.1 The centre of excellence will be used to try new growing methodologies, look at energy efficient ways of growing, and ultimately inform the large scale growing venture.
6.3.2 Capel Manor College have taken the lead role in the developing a centre of excellence at Forty Hall Farm. They are keen to link this to the expansion of the Forty Hall Farm organic growing project by introducing new and innovative green technologies, such as aquaponics, vermiculture to provide food for feeding fish in the closed loop system, wood chip compost for heat generation, provision of biogas through methane capture and solar power.

6.3.3 This will provide the opportunity to showcase these new technologies in a way that can be scaled up to a commercial level, and create a hub for learning and skills development for smaller growers.

6.4 Commercial Scale Growing

6.4.1 The commercial strand of the project will reintroduce food production at a substantial economic scale and will aim to supply Enfield and London markets with fresh produce. The industry will complement the existing food sector already present in the borough.

6.4.2 We are currently investigating a range of potential borough-wide growing sites with a particular focus on proximity to the borough’s existing food processing and distribution networks. The Council’s intention is to start with 10 acres and scale the operation up to 50 acres, with the benefit of robust business planning, market research and commercial expertise.

6.4.3 A business plan is in preparation, due for completion by June 2014. It will set out the key objectives and outputs for a commercial scheme. The business plan will include:

- Operating and corporate governance models
- Financial projections (capital and revenue),
- Funding strategy
- Viability assessment
- Deliverability assessment
- Economic impact assessment
- Strategic fit with activities in Enfield, London and globally
- Risk analysis and mitigation strategy.

6.4.4 Enfield is a key partner of the Food Task Force, that includes Broxbourne, Epping, Uttlesford, Herfordshire and Essex councils, private sector growers and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. This is one of the key sectors identified by the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium which aims to revitalise the food sector, through employment development, energy and sustainability initiatives and marketing.

6.4.5 The purpose of the Food Task Force is to look in detail into health of productive landscapes in the Lee Valley, the sustainability of current models and opportunities for growth. It will report to the Tri-Council Group and the One Epping Forest Board.
6.4.6 The key lines of enquiry for the group will be to gather and assess evidence on the following issues:

- Industry value to the area,
- Viability of the current business models,
- Pressures on land and impact of rising land values,
- Planning constraints,
- Opportunities for growth,
- Assessing demand/food security,
- Meeting London’s and the local area’s food needs,
- Carbon neutral challenges,
- Skills and employment dividend,
- Opportunities for research and development facilities,
- Finance requirements,
- Role of the public sector and
- Inward investment.

6.4.7 Enfield will join the emerging food production with the existing industry and maximise the benefits of its location as a sector in the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor.

7. THE WAY FORWARD

7.1 Timescales for taking the project forward include the following milestones:

7.2 Expand the food growing capacity of Forty Hall Farm from three acres to five acres by December 2014.

7.3 Establish four new community growing projects by March 2015.

7.4 Complete the business plan for large scale growing by June 2014.

7.5 Implement sustainable technologies at Forty Hall Farm by March 2015.

7.6 Provide equipment and training for an additional 10 primary schools and five secondary schools by March 2015.

8. MEETING COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 Fairness for All

8.1.1 Through the process of developing the market gardening project in the borough, residents of all ages, including secondary school children, retirees, unemployed persons, and college students will have the chance to participate in a food growing, improve basic life skills as well as horticultural and business skills.
8.2 Growth and Sustainability

8.2.1 All strands of the market gardening project will enable residents to gain skills, consider small business opportunities and encourage the growth of a new industry in the borough. The lessons from growing will be valuable in establishing additional growing spaces in other parts of the Borough. More residents will be able to participate in food production and share the health, social and economic benefits that can be achieved.

8.3 Strong Communities

8.3.1 A key driver for the overall Market Gardening project is the creation of local jobs. The project will contribute to Enfield’s aim of reaching full economic potential through small and medium sized business creation. This learning will be transferred to other parts of the borough and to other potential food-related enterprises.

8.3.2 The community growing projects, in particular, will provide opportunities to build bridges between and within communities and foster social cohesion on a local level.

9 PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The overall impact of the project including the delivery of a local, organic vegetable box scheme, will improve the health and well-being people in Enfield. Through the delivery process, the scheme will encourage healthier lifestyles, be inclusive across a broad cross-section of the population in volunteering, improve the skills base of residents and reduce food miles.