

# Feeding Stockport - Woodbank Horticultural Centre and Community Garden

## Growing Food, Nurturing Well-being, Cultivating Livelihoods

The project aims to take a 3.5 acre site in the heart of Stockport and transform it into a sustainable community garden supported by commercial growers who will work together to achieve a shared vision. This site is a base for a number of community groups who specialise in helping individuals develop new skills and improve health and wellbeing.



### Background

This site was split into 3 zones. Over a half the site was scrub-land with little being done with it. There were various community groups, some struggling and with austerity there was a deep-rooted dependence on the local authority, which wasn't sustainable.

The need was to try to maximise the utilisation of this site and support organisations to work together on one shared vision around growing. Developing the site, sharing knowledge, skills and resources in a way that ensures the site is sustainable for the long term.

### What we do

Feeding Stockport has been actively involved in shaping and delivering the vision for Woodbank. We designed a proposal to develop the site integrating small-scale organic, commercial agriculture with community growing. This was agreed with the Council through Exec briefings and engagement with the local organisations in late 2014.

### Further Information

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Feeding Stockport designed an implementation plan and worked with the various community and commercial growers to create a working model. As part of this we identified skills gaps and developed systems to make the site work more effectively. One of the key elements was to develop a farm incubator scheme for Stockport bridging the gap between community and commercial growing, developing skills to get people back into farming.

In addition to this 3 year plan on site we worked with key partners to identify opportunities to accelerate our work through rejuvenation of key areas of the site using local/regional opportunities to our advantage.

### Achievements

- We are a year ahead of schedule, we have managed to secure and deliver £250,000 of investment into the site turning the largest of the scrub areas into fertile, productive growing spaces.
- Currently, we have 16 key partners and site usage is significant higher than last year.



- We have our first crops being harvested through our commercial growers (new to the site) within 10 months of the project being commenced.
- We have our first incubator growers currently being recruited for Kindling Trust's FarmStart programme.
- The site is currently running as a Council run site in a cost neutral manner.
- We have all partners on the site engaged in working towards a new management structure.

### Partners

This group currently comprises of Feeding Stockport, Stockport Council, Kindling Trust / FarmStart / Landarmy, Stockport Growing in Partnership, We G.R.O.W, Glebelands City Growers, Stockport Bee Keepers, Stockport Homes, Marple College, Age UK, Bubble Enterprises, Community Payback / Probation, Carillion Plc and Morgan Sindell Plc.