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| <b>Title of Motion</b>       | Right to Grow                                                  |
| <b>Political Group</b>       | Labour Group                                                   |
| <b>Proposer and Seconder</b> | <b>Proposer:</b> Cllr Troughton<br><b>Seconder:</b> Cllr Smyth |
| <b>For Consideration by</b>  | Full Council                                                   |
| <b>Date of Meeting</b>       | 4 March 2026                                                   |

### **Motion**

*Everyone in Hackney should have access to enough fresh food to feed themselves and their families well and this is all the more challenging during the cost of living crisis. The right to grow will provide a renewed focus on the importance of providing affordable healthy food and sustainable methods of producing the food we eat.*

#### **This Council notes:**

1. *Hackney puts the health and well-being of residents at the heart of all we do;*
2. *The cost-of-living crisis is creating real hunger, reinforcing the need for healthy fresh food at an affordable price;*
3. *Hackney declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and local food growing contributes to our response to the climate emergency for those in greatest need;*
4. *Social justice remains at the heart of Hackney’s Climate Action Plan, which prioritises “inclusive decision-making, prioritising accessible and affordable solutions, and tackling systemic issues, the Council aims to create a fair, equitable, and inclusive environment.”*
5. *The powerful evidence demonstrates the link between people’s health and wellbeing and the availability of fresh food, fruit and vegetables. Communities coming together to grow food can improve health and reduce the demands on public services including the NHS and social care budgets, by reducing social isolation and providing healthy food;*
6. *The Council has already established the Right to Food and an ambitious Green Infrastructure Strategy and Nature Recovery Plan. Food grown locally supports this work;*
7. *Food growing supports our Healthy Weight Strategy and the aims of Hackney’s FoodNetwork;*

8. *Community food growing is an intergenerational activity, enabling young and old to enjoy learning cultivation skills for life and strengthening food security;*
9. *There is land in Hackney which could be used for growing food.*

**The Council resolves to:**

10. *Adopt the principle of “right to grow” on council-owned land that is considered suitable in agreement with the Council;*
11. *Work with local resident groups and external partners (such as Hackney Food Network, Incredible Edible, Sustain Hackney, Made in Hackney, Hackney School of Food and others) to identify land suitable for community cultivation, and to make that land available;*
12. *Work with local resident groups and external partners to embed the principles of Right to Grow across the borough and share good practice;*
13. *Work with the Hackney Food Network as a platform to promote the work around the “right to grow” developing the opportunities for shared learning and support for future*

**Proposed Amendments**

- 2.1 Amendments to the motion were submitted by the Green Group and Hackney Independent Socialist Group in accordance with Part 4A Paragraph 17.8 of the Council's Constitution. The amendments to the motion are attached at agenda item 12a and 12b respectively. These amendments were not accepted by the proposer and the seconder before publication of this motion.

**Comments from the Group Director for Housing, Climate and Economy**

- 3.1. There is currently a provision to enable a Right to Grow programme for tenants of Hackney Housing Services. This is managed through the Tenants and Resident Association and 34 of the Resident Engagement Guide sets out about how to set up a garden on estate land. This can continue as is.
- 3.2. Granting land for community gardening and growing has legal complexities. A clear agreement needs to be drawn up which ensures the Council's land is safeguarded; for example, able to be returned to the Council, excluded if there is a potential future development, compliance in the agreed use, and complying with any statute including the Local Government Act 1972 and the Housing Act 1985. The Council's Liability policy does not extend to cover any groups liability relating to their activity under such an agreement. As with other schemes, like St Albans District Council, we would need each group to hold liability cover to the value of £5m to £10m throughout the lifetime of the agreement.
- 3.3 Regarding point 11 - the Council has no resources to identify land or to deliver community food growing activities. Proposals for food growing will be community-led with groups needing to identify potential sites, follow the Council process for suitability, and deliver activities themselves, The Council

will endeavour to check any options put forward by community groups and where appropriate proceed with an agreed legal agreement for use of land - notwithstanding point 3.2 above. The Council will not be able to provide funding, materials or ongoing support to enable delivery, as there are no resources to do so currently.

- 3.4 There is limited capacity in the services. Environmental Services will act as the initial point of contact for requests that would come through a dedicated form online (which will need to be developed). IN the event of a high volume of requests, an initial triage process will be required to prioritise proposals and manage expectation in line with available capacity and land constraints. Granting the use of the land and legal agreements thereafter will need to be resourced.

Group Director comments prepared by: Geeta Subramaniam - Mooney, Director Environment and Climate Change  
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Date: 10 February 2026

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Community food growing proposals will be community-led, and the Council currently has no budget or resources to identify land, provide funding, materials, or ongoing support for the delivery of these activities.
- 4.2 There will be resource implications for Council services, particularly Environmental Services, who will need to act as the initial point of contact for requests. This includes the development of a dedicated online form, establishing an initial triage process to manage expectations and prioritisation in the event of high volume, and resourcing the work required for the legal agreements and granting the use of land thereafter.
- 4.3 The Council's Liability policy does not extend to cover the liability of community groups relating to their activities under such an agreement. Each group will be required to hold their own liability cover to the value of £5m to £10m throughout the lifetime of the agreement.

Financial Implications prepared on behalf of the Group Director, Finance & Resources by: Mizanur Rahman, Assistant Director of Corporate Finance  
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Date: 10 February 2026

## **Policy and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Implications**

- 5.1 On average, in 2025 healthier foods are more than twice as expensive per calorie as less healthy foods, with healthier food increasing in price at twice the rate in the past two years.<sup>1</sup> To afford the government-recommended healthy diet, the most deprived fifth of the population would need to spend 45% of their disposable income on food, rising to 70% for those households with children.<sup>2</sup> The data below outlines key considerations for food insecurity by protected characteristic. However, design of policy will also be key to ensure that Right to Grow is successful in engaging and supporting the most vulnerable.

### **Food security**

- 5.2 Data on food insecurity and food bank usage are collected in the Family Resources Survey. The latest edition of the FRS was published in March 2025, drawing on data from the financial year 2023-24<sup>3</sup>. Food security data is only available at the Inner-London level. Food insecurity is higher in Inner London than nationally. 83% of Inner London households are classed as food secure, with 17% food insecure. This compares with 90% food secure households and 10% food insecure households in the UK. Groups impacted by food insecurity generally mirror our understanding of groups impacted by poverty more generally, with younger people, disabled residents, households with children and households on income-related benefits most at risk

### **Foodbank use**

- 5.3 The Family Resources Survey also collects data on foodbank usage. Use of food banks among households in Inner-London is higher than the national average. In Inner-London, 3% of households had used a foodbank in the past 30 days compared with 2% nationally, with 5% using foodbanks in the previous year, compared with 4% nationally in 2023/24.
- 5.4 Again national data suggests that the following groups make greater use of foodbanks - matching our understanding of groups impacted by poverty more generally. Households with a younger head of household were more likely to use a food bank in FYE 2024. Households in the UK with children were more likely to use a food bank in FYE 2024 than households without children. Households with one or more disabled adults were more likely to use a foodbank. Households receiving income related support were more likely to use a Food Bank in the last 12 months. usage, in the long and short-term, is higher among households headed by people from Black, Mixed or Other Asian or Other ethnic groups and lower for households headed by individuals of Indian or Chinese heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/TFF\\_BP\\_At%20a%20Glance\\_FINAL.pdf](https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/TFF_BP_At%20a%20Glance_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, United Kingdom Food Security Digest, 2025: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/united-kingdom-food-security-digest-2025/united-kingdom-food-security-digest-2025>

## **Foodbank Usage Locally and Additional Local Food Aid**

- 5.5 Hackney Foodbank is one of the largest foodbanks in England, supporting approx. 800 visitors a week. Between April 2024 and March 2025 Hackney Foodbank distributed the equivalent of 282,800 meals for people experiencing hardship – a 22% increase in a year<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, a rising number of pensioners are turning to Hackney Foodbank for support - with some surviving on just £37 per week. The food bank has been responding to a 95% increase in demand from people aged over 65 in the past year and say living on a shoestring is causing many anxiety and isolation.<sup>5</sup>

Policy and PSED Implications prepared on behalf of Director Corporate Strategy & Transformation by: Abby Hauver and Rachel Salmon Strategic Delivery Managers, Strategy, Equality & Community Partnerships  
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Date: 12 February 2026

### **Legal Implications**

- 6.1 S1 Localism Act 2011 provides that the Council may do anything that individuals may generally do subject to certain caveats and exceptions
- 6.2 A disposal including a lease to grant land over 7 years is reserved to the Mayor and Cabinet pursuant to the Mayor Scheme of Delegation 25/26
- 6.3 Section 123 of the Local government provides the Council with the power to dispose of land and property, provided such disposal is made for the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
- 6.4 The General Disposal Consent 2003 removes the requirement for local authorities to seek specific consent from the Secretary of State for any disposal of land where: the local authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of: (i) the promotion or improvement of economic well-being; (ii) the promotion or improvement of social well-being; (iii) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being; and the “undervalue” (i.e. the difference between the unrestricted value of the interest to be disposed of and the consideration accepted) is £2 million or less.
- 6.5 Where the case does not fall within the terms of this General Consent then an application to the Secretary of State for a specific consent is required. The General Consent Order 2003 also specifies that it is the responsibility of the Council to satisfy itself that the land is held under powers which permit it to be disposed of under the terms of the 1972 Act.
- 6.6 In addition any land held for Housing Purposes needs to take into account S32

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<sup>4</sup> [Hackney Foodbank: A Year of Impact, Annual Report 2024-25](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hackney.foodbank.org.uk/news/huge-surge-in-pensioner-poverty-in-hackney>



of the Housing Act 1985

- 6.7 Careful consideration is required when disposing of land held by the Council taking into consideration obligations set out by statute and ensuring the land can be returned to the Council in the same state as provided in the first instance.

Legal implications prepared on behalf of the Director of Legal, Democratic & Electoral Services by: Georgia Lazari. Team Leader (Places)  
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Date: 10 February 2026