

# Growing successful urban agriculture in the UK

**Authors:** Joy Carey and Katrin Hochberg, October 2019  
**Contributors:** Steph Wetherell, Sara Venn, Helen Carey, Ximena Ransom, Richenda Wilson, Sophie Verhagen, Julie Brown, Marlene Barrett, Gareth Roberts  
**Study visit hosts:** Manchester Veg People & Kindling Trust, Tamar Grow Local

## Purpose

This report is part of a project run by Green Futures Associates and the authors, which overall looks at how best to support urban agriculture in the UK in the future and is supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. For the project, urban agriculture is defined as *sustainable food production in urban, peri-urban and surrounding hinterlands that is commercial, social enterprise, or community-led trade, and which makes an effective and tangible contribution to increasing local food supply.*

This report is a snapshot review highlighting the typology of urban agriculture schemes; key limiting factors to scaling up and provides a broad overview of how existing schemes are addressing these limiting factors. In order to characterise a successful urban agriculture scheme and understand approaches to upscaling, we have included a reasonable amount of detail on selected examples, drawing on conversations, publicly available information and on study visit reports.

This review is intended to be used by those working to further the broad UK urban agriculture agenda – the pioneering urban and peri-urban agricultural entrepreneurs, funders, policy makers and campaign groups - to more effectively support emerging systems and strategic growth.

## Recommendations

1. Wider recognition and support for the type of enterprises that are creating more sustainable urban and peri-urban agriculture systems.
2. A multi-stakeholder assessment on how to apply an effective model of independent community-led finance model.
3. An assessment of how to support current and prospective alternative and hi-tech urban food production schemes in meeting strong environmental and social ambitions.
4. Support for local government in reviewing how their policies and strategies help or hinder the development of urban agriculture using as guidance the key limiting factors identified in this review.

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# 1. What is urban agriculture?

## 1.1 Why it matters

RUAF Foundation and its global partnership (<https://www.ruaf.org/>) remind us that 'urban agriculture is not a relict of the past that will fade away nor brought to the city by rural immigrants that will lose their rural habits over time. Rather, urban agriculture increases when the city grows - it is an integral part of the urban system.

Globally, urban agriculture is increasingly recognised for its capacity to:

- strengthen the resilience of the urban food system
- enhance access of the urban poor to nutritious food
- generate (self-) employment and income
- help cities to adapt to climate change and reduce their ecological foot print.'

*'A growing number of cities are designing policies and programmes on urban agriculture, applying multi-stakeholder planning approaches to identify effective ways to integrate urban agriculture into urban sector policies and urban land use planning and to facilitate the development of safe and sustainable and multi-functional urban agriculture. Urban agriculture has the potential to become a dynamic economic sector that quickly adapts to changing urban conditions and demands, intensifying its productivity and diversifying its functions for the city. Governmental policy should create the proper framework conditions for optimal development of the social, economic and ecological benefits of urban agriculture, whilst reducing negative effects on public health and environment that some types of urban agriculture can have if improperly managed or not well located. The sustainability of urban agriculture is closely related to its contributions to the development of a sustainable and resilient city that is socially inclusive, food-secure, productive and environmentally-healthy.'* (RUAF Foundation)

## 1.2 Defining Urban Agriculture

In his paper 'Urban agriculture: concept and definition' Luc Mougeot<sup>1</sup> discusses and defines urban agriculture as *'different from, and complementary to, rural agriculture in local food systems: urban agriculture is integrated into the urban economic and ecological system. Though the nature of cities and of urban food supply systems has changed, the need for urban agriculture to interact well with the rest of city, on one hand, and with rural production and imports, on the other, remains as true today as it was thousands of years ago.'*



Mougeot takes the need for conceptual maturity of urban agriculture as a starting point to show the various dimensions of urban agriculture and to claim its firm position in the urban system. He

<sup>1</sup> Urban Agriculture: Definition, Presence, Potentials and Risks, and Policy Challenges by Luc J.A. Mougeot, Ph.D. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) November 2000 Cities Feeding People Series Report 31

suggests the following revision of the concept: ‘Urban agriculture is located within (intra-urban) or on the fringe (peri-urban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, and grows or raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re-)uses largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplies human and material resources, products and services largely to that urban area.’

#### A working definition for this project

In looking at urban agriculture in the UK, we have taken a flexible approach. Our broad definition is: **“sustainable food production in urban, peri-urban and surrounding hinterlands that is commercial, social enterprise, or community-led trade, and which makes an effective and tangible contribution to increasing local food supply”**. We have included in this definition larger scale urban agriculture initiatives which could be both land-based or hi-tech. Whilst we entirely support the further development of allotments, community gardens and other ‘grow your own’ or more social initiatives, and recognise them as part of the urban food growing fabric, this is not our focus in this review.

### 1.3 Main types of Urban Agriculture in the UK

UK Urban Agriculture enterprises are typically land-based and fall into the categories listed in the following table.

Land-based	Description	Examples
Urban brownfield and green spaces	Small-scale horticultural sites. Managed by social enterprises or individual growers marketing produce at farmers markets or directly via box schemes or independent retailers. Usually limited to veg or salad production.	Edible Futures in Bristol Growing Communities micro-sites in London
Urban farm	A city farm that is producing food and plants for sale (usually alongside other educational and community focussed activities)	Meanwood City Farm in Leeds, Heeley City Farm in Sheffield
‘Community’ Farm established to supply specific urban outlets	Located in or very close to the city. Usually specifically set up to deliver on strong local, environmental and social values with consumer membership (in some cases) education and direct marketing focussed on the city. Scope for wide range of production and marketing links with rural farms within the city region.	The Community Farm Bristol Wortley Hall Walled Garden CSA farms
Producer and/or marketing co-operatives or business networks	Network of co-operating growers or retail/grower partnerships focussed on using city market to deliver on strong environmental and social values. Scale through co-operation enabling access to wider market opportunities (e.g. procurement).	Manchester Veg People Tamar Grow Local Growing communities
Small and medium-scale rural farms in the city region	Farms with predominantly but not exclusively local supply chains using marketing channels such as box schemes, farmers markets, farm shops, for some or all of their produce. Typically, but not necessarily member of a city region focussed producer and/or marketing network.	Plowright Organic, Somerset

Non-land based, alternative production methods are not typical in the UK currently. Some examples at the R&D stage exist (e.g. Grow Bristol) but generally there appears to be little sign of significant investment and development beyond just a handful of examples (eg Growing Underground,

London). And whilst it is beyond the scope of this review to investigate non-land based models in any depth, it is important to acknowledge the potential of such systems which have the capacity to address in-built commercial limitations of traditional urban agriculture, i.e. limited access to sufficient land; limited productivity in regards to volume and range of produce and seasonality. This is relevant particularly in the context of future needs of high density city populations. LUFA farm in Canada for example quotes that *'Our hydroponic rooftop farms are very efficient. We would only need to convert the rooftops of 19 average-sized shopping centres to grow enough veggies for all of Montreal.'*

Non-land based enterprises require significant investment and technical expertise. They usually market direct and often supply the hospitality sector; enabled by the benefits from all year production of a wide range of crops at commercial scale, and with maximum proximity to market. The examples of international enterprises highlighted in the following table are making a tangible impact on the local food system in terms of scale, range and volume and meet social and/or environmental principles to varying degrees (see separate document – 'Urban Agriculture International Case Studies').

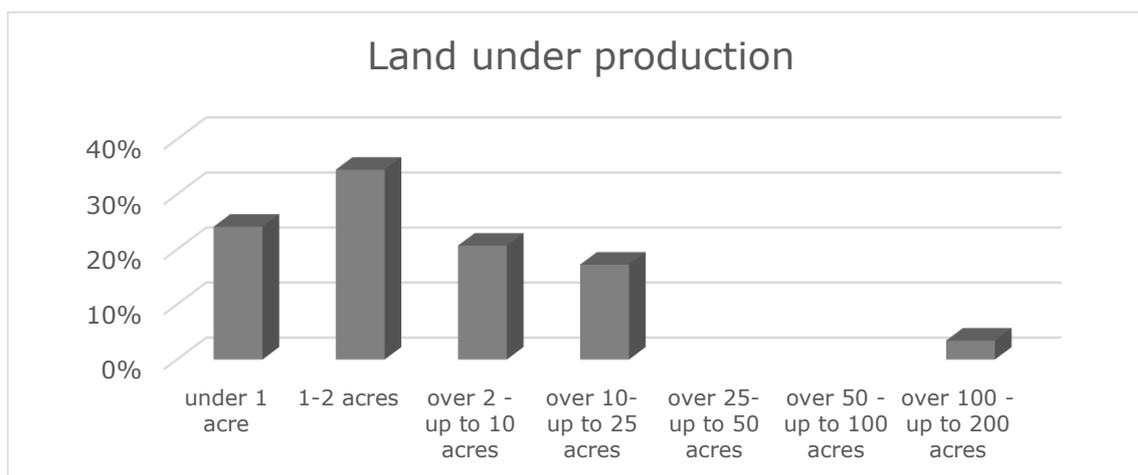
<b>Non-land based</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Rooftop growing	Inner city locations utilising the vacant space on top of buildings. Production options range from open roof top traditional agricultural methods for small scale production or educational purposes to commercial greenhouse production, including greenhouse production using hydroponic systems.	LUFA farms, Canada Gotham Greens, US
Custom-built or disused industrial buildings housing alternative production methods	Wide range of crops grown all year around in sealed environment using highly efficient alternative production methods; i.e. hydroponics, aquaponics or vertical farming.	The Plant, US Sky Greens, Singapore

## 1.4 Understanding the challenges facing UK Urban Agriculture

To understand better the limiting factors or challenges that affect growth or further development of urban and peri-urban agricultural enterprises in the UK a simple survey of community and small-scale food producers was undertaken in 2017/18. The sections below summarise 38 responses from the Bristol, Manchester and Sheffield regions, reflecting the focus of the project.

### Land under production

Most holdings (59%) have less than 2 acres under production.



### Type of organisation

Most commonly organisations are set up as limited company, partnership or social enterprise.

### Services offered

90% of the enterprises sell food commercially. Environment protection plays the second biggest role (75%) and for two thirds of the respondents, education and the provision of social services are important or very important. Training is also a key service for 60% of enterprises. The wide range of services that respondents pursue is set to grow with plans for therapeutic work and training most commonly stated.

### Land ownership

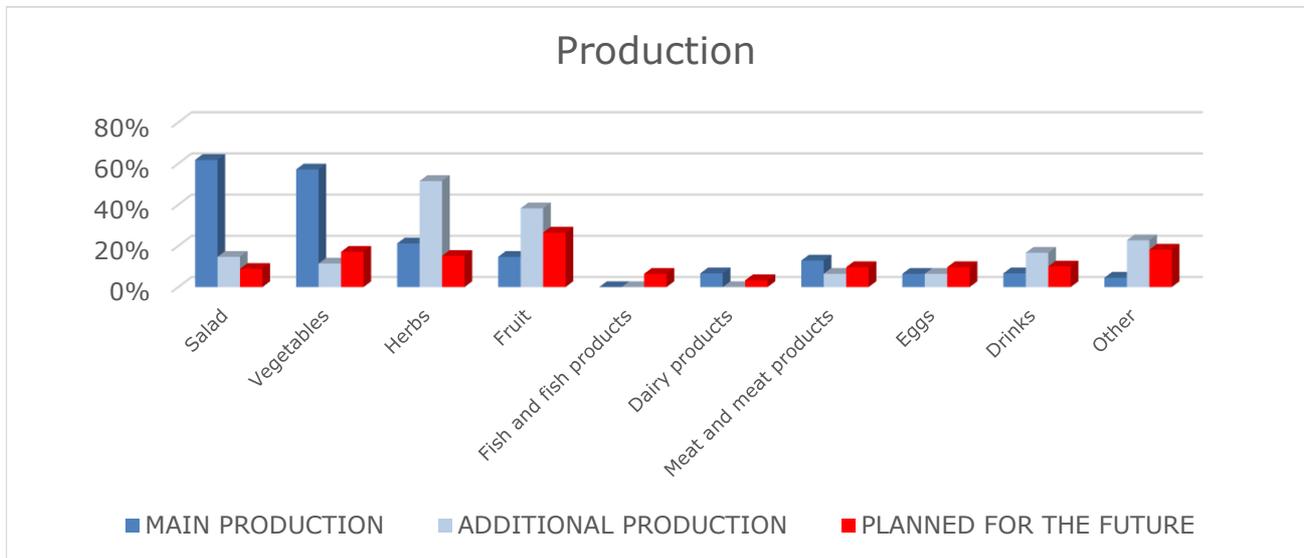
The most common landowner is the city council (almost 30% of schemes). Around 20% of UA initiatives own their own land or rent from private landlords. Other landlords include a wide range of owners from the NHS, National Trust, the Home & Communities Agency, Housing charity, The Duchy and colleges and food co-ops.

### Length of the leases

18% of respondents have no lease arrangement at all and are therefore likely to be limited in their ability to realise their ambitions. 32% have a lease of only 1 to 3 years. 27% have a lease of 5 or 10 years and 27% a lease of 20 or more years. Of the lifetime contracts the majority are 3 generations contracts.

### Produce

As common for small-scale enterprises, vegetables and salads are the most common main crops. Additional crops are dominated by herbs and fruit. Crops planned for the future are also predominantly herbs, fruit, salad and vegetables.



### Annual income

Most holdings (64%) have less than 2 acres under production.

### What is your financial situation?

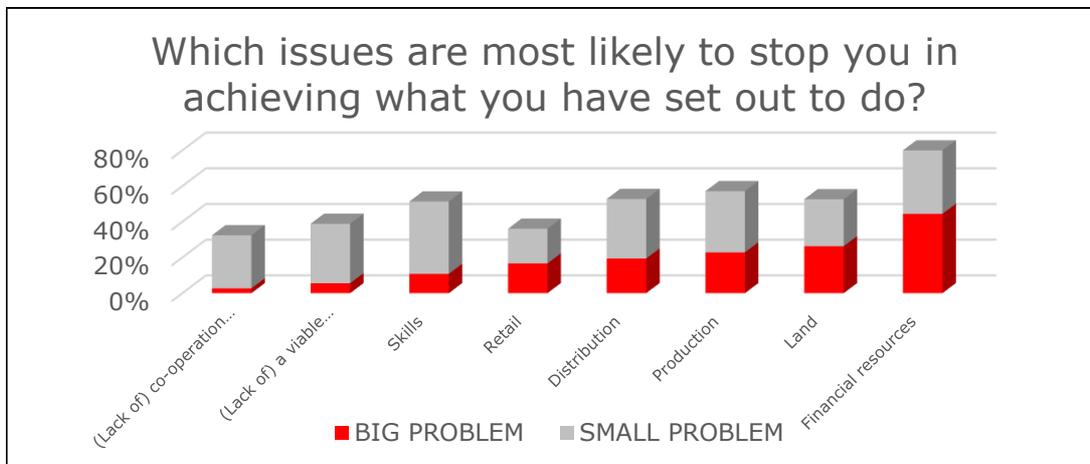
Two thirds of respondents' report an annual income of under £50k. This includes 15% with less than £5k and 9% with no income. 15% are in the £100-500k category and 9% over £500k.

### Assessment of the viability of the business model

44% of the respondents assess their business model as viable and a further 26% think that their business model is either 'not yet', 'in theory' or at least 'in parts viable'. Responding to the question of what would make their business model more viable, responses concentrate on the availability of financial resources, a viable scale and sufficient demand.

### Limiting factors

The most commonly cited issue that is stopping respondents achieving their ambitions is the availability of sufficient financial resources. Other key issues are related to land, distribution, production and retail.



Survey respondents were asked to explain key limiting factors further, as summarised below:

- If LAND is one of your big issues which factors are most significant for you?
  - Availability, suitability, accessibility and cost are all problems for at least half of the survey participants
- If PRODUCTION is one of your big issues which factors are most significant for you?
  - Labour, productivity levels and equipment are stated as the biggest issues.
  - Skills, experience and equipment - whilst not big problems - are also key factors
- If RETAIL OR DISTRIBUTION are one of your big issues which factors are most significant for you?
  - Demand or lack of, potential to upscale, routes/ efficiency, costs and visibility are the issues that present problems for at least 50% of participants.

(For more details, see the full survey report – available from the authors)

## 2. What enables a shift/unlocks the barriers to growth and scaling up? Learning from the pioneers

### *2.1 Selection of examples*

Reflecting on the results of the survey responses, key limiting factors were identified. These were in turn used to inform selection criteria and structure the analysis of the selected examples and include:

- Access to land and security of tenure
- Access to finance
- Limited productivity, scale and range of growing approaches
- Limited marketing/sales/distribution
- Lack of commercial viability
- Limited commercial collaboration

The selected examples below are visionary pioneer urban agricultural enterprises that have found ways to deal with these challenges, evidenced by their longevity, ongoing growth or larger scale operations (these were not pre-defined). Each of the selected examples seeks to provide an alternative to the current food system and/or to deliver clear environmental, economic and social values. Additionally, each one is already making, or working towards making, a tangible and effective contribution to more sustainable local food supply (meeting our working definition of urban agriculture as above). They all demonstrate a range of complexity that is necessary for their own enterprise viability and also critical to realizing their respective longer-term visions and principles. Five are from the UK and one is from Germany. The German example addresses the biggest issue identified in the survey - access to suitable finance - for both individual enterprises and for more strategic systemic interventions.

- Growing Communities, Hackney, London
- OrganicLea, Waltham Forest, East London
- Tamar Grow Local, Devon
- Manchester Veg People, Greater Manchester (Set up by Kindling Trust)
- Regather, South Sheffield
- Regionalwert, Germany

## 2.2 Growing Communities, Hackney, London

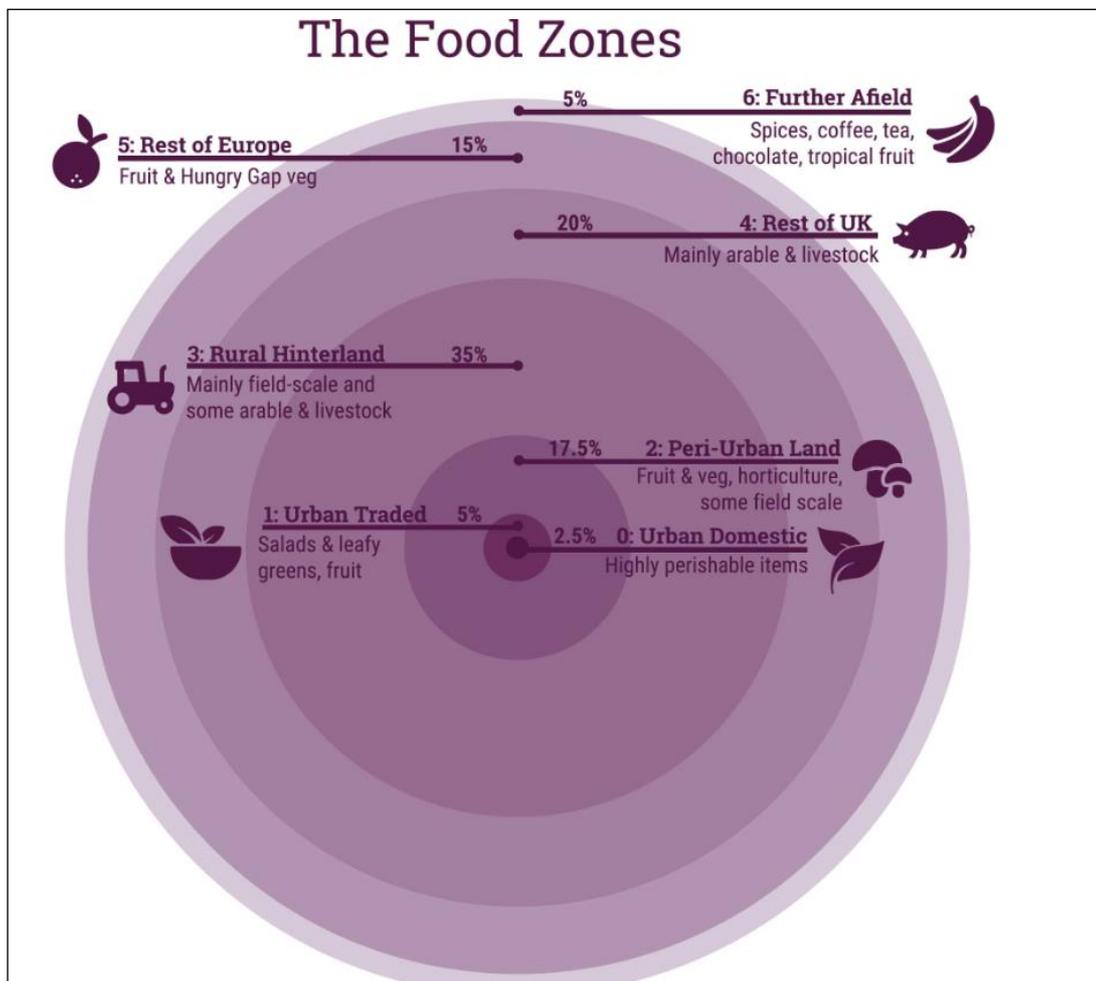
(Sources: website, annual reports, interviews)

### Summary

Scaling up through innovative marketing, sales and distribution that connects regional producers to urban buyers.

Growing Communities (GC) is a Social Enterprise Company limited by guarantee that is concerned with proactively creating an alternative sustainable healthy and resilient food system that creates jobs in both urban and rural areas. Based on a concept of connected spatial 'food zones' GC is an innovative approach to building a re-localised food supply network that 'feeds urban communities in a fair sustainable way in the face of corporate dominance and climate change'.

It began life as a CSA scheme in Hackney in 1997 with 30 families supporting a farm in Buckinghamshire and over the last 23 years has built up five main interconnected enterprise activities: household weekly bag scheme, weekly farmers' market, urban market gardens, café, and urban farm. 'Over the past 20 years or so, we have worked to harness the collective buying power and skills of our community to reshape the food and farming systems that feed us.' The Food Zones concept is to 'raise what we can as close as we can' and then moving outwards, take into account a set of 9 ethical principles and other practical considerations about what else feasibly grows best where.



**Scale and operations:** Turnover in 2017/18 was over £800k. In 2018 retained profit was £7427. Any surplus income is invested back into the organisation.

	£	2016/17	2017/18
Bag scheme		619,419	639,735
Farmers' market		59,083	58,445
Urban market gardens		8,520	10,647
Café sales		9,315	10,469
Dagenham Farm sales		27,926	29,602
Grant income		91,997	82,842
Other		23,836	9,341

Activity	Operational base	Scale	Impact
Box/bag scheme	15 collection points	Over 2000 people fed in Hackney weekly	Over £350k worth of sales directed to small scale farmers and suppliers. 85% of veg grown in UK
Farmers market started in 2003		23 organic and biodynamic producers (including artisan businesses). Approx 1500 weekly customers	Overall market takings in 2017/18 were £634000
'Patchwork farm' Started in 1997; new spaces added over the years	9 small urban market garden sites in Hackney growing salad crops (the 5 smallest are 150sqm each) Produced 1.5 tons of salad in 2018.	10 people work on the sites and harvest one day per week for the box scheme. 'Patchworkers' are given land and are paid for the salad they grow by the box scheme, but it doesn't provide a living wage.	Not financially viable on their own. The head grower's salary is subsidised from veg scheme income. The 2012-14 Lottery-funded Patchwork Farm investigation programme concluded that it was not possible to make this scale of urban growing viable. There are no plans to extend the patchwork farm for this reason.
Dagenham urban 'starter farm'; opened in 2012	1.4 acre ex-council nursery site. Glasshouses & polytunnels and outdoors – fruit, veg and salad. 4 tonnes of produce annually most of which is sold to the box scheme. Approx ¼ sales to restaurants. 3x weekly deliveries.	1 Grower; 1 Food Activities worker; 1 Education and Volunteer Coordinator; trainees; volunteers. Trainees learn to process preserves; also help with harvesting and packing. They earn money from local sales of preserves made from surplus farm produce.	Sales bring in enough income to cover the rent and the grower's wages (London Living Wage). Other funding enables community food growing and educational activities, traineeships, and staff to run the additional activities. A new space next to the farm is being turned into a community food hub space with council funding.

**Business approach:** GC operates according to 9 key ethical principles which challenge the mainstream food system of corporate driven profit above all, and against which its activities, practices and impact are tracked. The focus is trading for social purpose, not to maximise profit.

**Land access and tenure:** Land is rented from local councils.

**Access to finance:** Finance is raised through sales of produce, farmers' market stallholder fees and external grants.

**Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches:** Hackney and Dagenham produce make up a very small part of what is traded. Last year Zone 1 (Urban food from the Hackney Patchwork Farm) made up 2.4% of the total food traded; Zone 2 Peri-urban (Dagenham and Organiclea – see below) was 3.1%. These figures clearly show that food growing is only a tiny part of what GC does. The Food Zones concept guides productivity, scale and range of growing approaches.

**Access to markets & distribution:** Food growing makes up only a very tiny part of what they do. Their main focus is on increasing the organic food market and finding new avenues for growers to sell their produce. A fundamental reason for existing is to help create market opportunities for regional food producers. GC have proactively established new infrastructure to enable this to happen. The main market mechanisms are the veg box scheme and the farmers market. There are also smaller volumes of 'farmgate' sales from the larger growing sites.

**Scaling up of GC operations:** GC has no plans to open new urban farms nor expand their growing operations. The size and scale of existing operations of both the veg box scheme and the farmers market are at optimum capacity.

**Replication of the GC model:** Since 2010, GC has been helping other groups around the UK to set up similar vegetable scheme startups as a way of replicating/scaling up their model, with mixed success. A handful have started but since closed (mainly because they were individuals doing it on their own which proved too challenging). A Scottish pilot was discontinued, as the model doesn't work well in a rural area.

**Scaling up the GC community-led trade approach:** Following on from that work, GC has put effort into growing a network of community-led traders, sharing its principles, food zones concept and community led trade approach. The 'Better Food Traders', currently comprise 10 members based in Islington, Haringey, Lewisham, Herne Hill, Kentish Town and further afield in Hebden Bridge, Margate and Manchester. Better Food Traders are demonstrating that community-led trade and the Growing Communities approach has the potential to make a difference across the whole of the UK – giving consumers a way to reach out and support sustainable farmers – replication/collaboration by sharing an approach rather than a model. The next steps (with 3-years external funding) are to grow the BFT brand and network by finding retailers who are already offering the sort of Alternative Routes to Market (ARMs) that GC offers, and demonstrating that they are building a viable alternative to the damaging mainstream food trade system

**Collaboration:** *Better Food Shed* is a new organic, not-for-profit, wholesale co-operative in Barking, launched early 2019. BFS is focused on giving small, local, organic food producers efficient access to the London consumer market, predominantly via community led box schemes. This is a joint venture between Growing Communities, OrganicLea and the Better Food Traders. Aims are to support more regional growers of varying scales, grow the supply network, grow the independent organic movement, and provide more supply to the Better Food Traders; again scaling up both supply and demand through collaborative approaches.

## 2.2 OrganicLea, Waltham Forest, East London

(Sources: website, annual reports, interviews)

### Summary

Scaling up by increased productivity, scale and range of growing approaches - primarily through skills provision and training; and by increasing the amount of land used for food production - 'scaling up production and growing more growers'.

"We produce and distribute food and plants locally and inspire and support others to do the same. With a workers' cooperative at our core, we bring people together to take action towards a more just and sustainable society."

OrganicLea (OL) is a worker cooperative growing food in the Lea Valley, East London. It aims to create livelihoods for its 17 co-op members through growing, distribution and community work and to provide opportunities for more people to learn about food growing. The training and skills provision is both informal (eg volunteer sessions) and formal accredited learning (city and guilds qualifications). OL offers a range of courses and traineeships taking a pathways- to-employment approach. They also support schools and community gardens to grow food. They describe themselves as 'a family or network of people in East London who want to take action to produce a better food system.'

It was established in 2001 as a workers co-op growing food and running courses on a one-acre derelict allotment site on edge of Epping Forest. Volunteers were involved in work days and sharing the harvest from the outset. Since then OL has developed step by step. In 2004 it became a not for profit company limited by guarantee. In 2006 OL started a 'food hub' housed at the Hornbeam Centre in Walthamstow that runs a weekly market stall supplied by small-scale organic farmers from East Anglia and their European partners. The Hornbeam Centre was refurbished in 2008 with a grant from the Making Local Food Work Programme; the café was developed; a new box scheme was launched, and local gardeners & allotment holders were enabled to sell their surplus to these outlets through a new 'Cropshare' scheme that follows the Wholesome Food Association principles of food production. 2007 also saw the start of outreach work to provide tailored food growing and site planning skills to many different types of groups including community and school gardens. In 2009 OL acquired the 12-acre ex Waltham Forest Council plant nursery called Hawkwood Nursery (after a 2-year planning period) and were granted a 10-year lease in 2010. It has been extended to 35 years (to 2045).

**Scale and operations:** Turnover 2017/18: Income was £720,950 and expenditure was £753,670. The loss of £32,720 was due to infrastructure investment for refurbishment work on the Hawkwood site. That, with additional grants enabled full glasshouse renovation, new kitchen and bathroom facilities to enhance volunteer experience allowing for development of more cooking sessions with beneficiaries, improved classroom office and storage space. Self-generated income increased by 26% on the previous year making up almost 60% of turnover.

**Business approach:** Organiclea is a workers' co-operative. Business activities are managed by the workers directly, without the need for separate managers, owners, or bosses. Organiclea is also a not-for-profit enterprise: if there is any surplus it is reinvested within Organiclea, or in support of other co-ops or not-for-profit organisations with similar aims. The aim is to create livelihoods for co-operative members through local food growing, distribution and community work. Currently, most of the members earn a modest part-time income. These workers are also committed volunteers and agree to certain obligations as paid workers of the co-op. There is a procedure of application for

volunteers wishing to become a member of the co-op. The coop operates to a vision based on four key principles of a socially and environmentally just food system.

**Land access and tenure:** The original 1-acre allotment remained the main growing site until 2009. In 2009 OL acquired the 12-acre ex Waltham Forest Council plant nursery site called Hawkwood in Chingford (after a 2-year planning period) and were granted a 10 year lease in 2010. It has been extended 25 years to 2045.

Building on the existing grower training program they were already running, OL started a *FarmStart* programme in 2015 for people who have come through the training scheme and want to set up their own business. As they have spent several years training with OrganicLea, people already have the practical growing skills required, so the focus is on access to land and mentoring. OL help with access to land if required (sometimes people find their own plots of land), offer a guaranteed market through their box and market scheme if people want to sell to them, and provide mentoring as they establish their own business. It is very focused on the needs of individual growers – not a one size fits all approach. Each person has a different size plot of land, different routes to market, different needs and support requirements. However, the requirement is that everyone is a trained grower before they take on a piece of land.

**Access to finance:** OL earn a large proportion of their income from sales of plants and produce, (£294,000 in 2018 - compared to £29,000 at Growing Communities' Dagenham Farm). Other finance comes from donations and grants (£29,7500 in 2018) and from training courses (£96,074 in 2018). Venue hire and consultancy services also generate income.

**Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches:** Commercial and within the community

- Hawkwood is the main growing site. 1.5 acres are used as a market garden, of which half an acre is glasshouses. Food Production from Hawkwood 2017/18: Over 21 tonnes of organic produce to the value of just over £60k (an increase of 33% on the previous year). This was distributed alongside about £130k of produce from small scale growers and organic wholesalers. The box scheme grew by 29% in 2018.
- Total number of growers: 7 day to day plus volunteer traineeships. Each year there are 'trainee roles' at the Hawkwood site. There were 5 in 2017. On average are voluntary 1.5 days per week.
- OL does more hands on growing because they have a much larger area of land on which to grow their own produce, and 'from its early days has always tried to support others to develop their growing skills, recognizing the social, economic, health, environmental and community benefits achieved when people grow food in the spaces around them'. As well as offering training and providing seedlings and resources like compost, this support takes the form of specific tailored support to local community groups and organisations that want to start or develop their own food growing projects. The *Common Sense Growers* initiative, begun in 2007, aims to bring the benefits of food growing to as wide a range of people as possible, including excluded or vulnerable groups, providing support which ranges from project planning and design to regular practical training sessions with users.

**Access to markets & distribution**

- 2 Saturday Markets: Hornbeam Centre & Leytonstone (in partnership with Transition Leyton). 10% of the produce sold on the markets is from Hawkwood.
- The Box Scheme: around 15% of produce comes direct from the Hawkwood site. The rest comes from producers in E Anglia, Kent and Europe. Tomatoes, salads & herbs were the top crops this year (tomatoes gave highest yield per sq metre). Boxes cost from £6.50 per week.

Producers that supply the Box Scheme:

- (1) Hughes Organics, Norfolk (umbrella organization supporting 6 farms in East of England – Breckland Organics, Capel Mushrooms, Riverdale Organics, Woodland Organics, Sweet Apple orchards, Phoenix Wholesalers)
- (2) Sarah Green's Organics, Sussex
- (3) Brockman Family farm (Perrycourt biodynamic farm)
- (4) Cropshare Growers – produce is mainly sold on markets, sometimes in box scheme. 5 main members of cropshare in Leyton, Tottenham, Redbridge, Chingford.
- (5) Growing Communities Dagenham Farm (if they have surplus).
- (6) Langridge organic wholesalers

Other outlets

- Currently sell produce to 20 Restaurants and Cafes, including 5 local businesses – Hornbeam cafe, Il Bacio restaurant, Eat 17, Lot 107 and the Three Colts.
- Since 2011 they have been selling more widely to; The Deli Station (Enfield), Opera Tavern (Covent Garden), Dehesa (Regents Street), Emberyard (Soho), The Clove Club (Shoreditch), Tom's Diner (Chelsea&Canary Wharf), Friends' House (Euston), Duke of Cambridge Organic Pub (Islington).
- 15kg of salad are sold to outlets in Islington, Euston and Kings Cross (known as the 'Euston Loop') through 'Bikebox' (an East London Social Enterprise).
- They also sell produce in two grocers in Walthamstow – the Spar, Second Nature.
- OrganicLea also runs a Restaurant Supported Agriculture scheme: restaurants to pay an annual fee to help cover a grower's salary, plus other essential costs of production (tools, sundries and land rental). Chefs and growers discuss preferred crops at the start of the season and growers organise the weekly harvest and delivery of all the produce.

### **Training programme**

OL have a very successful training programme. In 2018 they trained 156 adults, 68 young people and SEN's and 70 primary school pupils.

New entrants get the opportunity to participate in and experience an integrated operation from all aspects of food production, distribution, using food and nature to connect people, working with marginalised people, organising cooperatively. There are clear pathways for learners to develop their skills and be supported in their progression, including supporting new growers to find land and supporting new cooperative enterprises to get established.

### **Scaling up of own operations**

Grant funding and investment of own finance to renovate and develop the site facilities and activities at Hawkwood to improve services and provide learning and volunteer opportunities to more people.

### **Replication of the OrganicLea model**

- The FarmStart programme began in 2015 (funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation until 2018). The idea behind it was for skilled growers who had been trained by OL to go onto being employed in similar projects. OL continue to support the development of 2 of the sites – Wolves Lane (Haringey) and Pasteur Gdns (Enfield). It was a challenge as all Farmstart Programmes have diverse needs.
- A 7-acre site from Haringey Council was taken on by 4 people
- One site was funded by the Clove Club Restaurant (who OL already supplied)
- Some needed loans so 'a loan to be repaid in produce in two years' was set up.
- Some got land outside London with a view to setting up a collective of growers and together renting the land.

### Scaling up the OL approach

OL were part of discussions at the Oxford Real Farming Conference to explore the setting up of a national Farmstart network to support new entrants to agriculture.

### Collaboration:

Together with Growing Communities and the Better Food Traders they are setting up the Better Food Shed (see above). This will enable other small producers to sell into the organic market.

Activity	Operational base	Scale	Impact
Commercial Growing at Hawkwood	Grow veg fruit herbs & flowers on 12-acre market garden site	Coop members (17), seasonal workers, paid trainees & apprentices (25+) volunteers (170+),	Over 21 tonnes of organic produce to the value of just over £60k (an increase of 33% on the previous year). This constitutes 10% of box scheme produce.
Box/bag scheme and two weekly market stalls	Hawkwood produce; bought in produce from regional farmers; delivery to pickup points by electric van and bicycle	Range of staff and volunteers; source from 6 regional businesses	£130k value of additional produce from regional small-scale growers and organic wholesalers
Supply to other businesses		Supply to 20 cafes and restaurants	(Included in the above figures)
Training	Takes place at Hawkwood	Trained 156 adult learners, 68 young people with Special Educational Needs, 70 primary school pupils. 90 students gained City and Guilds accreditation, 76 gained AQA accreditation	Generated £96,074 income in 2018.
Work in the community	Takes place at various community-based locations	Partnered with 8 schools; 3 regular school groups worked at Hawkwood; set up and looked after community gardens; ran food growing sessions for various community groups	Generated £15,895 in 2018

## 2.3 Manchester Veg people (set up by Kindling Trust)

(Sources: website, visit notes)

### Summary

Scaling up through collaboration between growers and buyers within a multi-stakeholder members cooperative – innovative business approach. (Set up by Kindling Trust as part of a family of interrelated enterprises – see note below).

“Manchester Veg People are a co-op of local organic veg growers and local food businesses working together in a unique way to supply quality, local produce to restaurants and caterers in Greater Manchester.”

The aim of Manchester Veg People is to bring together producers and buyers, to increase understanding and therefore fairness in the food supply chain - making small-scale organic production a viable livelihood.

Manchester Veg People is a pioneering co-operative of local organic growers, buyers (restaurants/cafes, caterers and the public sector), and workers – these members collaborate to provide fresh, seasonal food of the highest possible quality for Greater Manchester.

Manchester Veg People is different from a wholesaler in that growers work with the buyers to plan their crops according to demand. So produce is grown especially for the buyers, and is harvested to order – which means it's much fresher than produce that has been in transit and in storage for a number of days. It also provides a more stable way of working for the growers, who know they have a market for their produce, and will be paid fairly for it.

First trading in 2011, Manchester Veg People has grown from four growers and two buyers, to eight growers and forty (plus) buyers, as well as doubling its turnover in 2014/15. There are three part time employees paid at £9/hr - the living wage foundation wage. MVP is member-led with a committee that represents the different member classes and makes general operating decisions. There is good attendance at the AGM.

**Scale:** Current sales are around £250k a year. 8 MVP producers supply 40 businesses.

**Operations:** Producers deliver to a shared ‘hub’. An MVP worker liaises with customers, deals with orders and coordinates delivery. MVP make 3 deliveries a week (Tuesday, Thursday). An availability sheet is sent out weekly on a Friday (also what’s coming up in a fortnight and an annual seasonal plan). The packing ‘hub’ is shared with Veg Box People, MVP’s sister co-operative with whom they work very closely (including ordering through MVP, sharing deliveries etc.)

**Land access and tenure:** Each producer manages their own land.

### Access to finance

MVP has had £120-150k of funding over the past 5 years (from Esmee Fairburn, Ashden Trust, some from Crowdfunding and match funding). As of 2017 it is covering its own costs (although with a £5-10k cash flow shortfall).

### Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches

MVP has 7 or 8 producer members and co-ordinate annual crop with their most local growers. They source from the most local growers first and all growers have other routes to market, so duplication

isn't too much of an issue. All their producers have organic certification, but they accept growers from the first year of transition into organic production. MVP will visit the new member farm as part of the process. Having organically certified produce has made it easier with procurement. Producers set their prices to ensure that they are being paid a fair amount and covering the cost of production.

### Access to markets & distribution

They have around 40 businesses each week; a mix of restaurants, cafes, catering customers, one school and three universities. The University of Manchester can purchase up to £40k from them before putting into tender – the other universities (Salford and Met) do not buy as much as they don't have central processing. The Universities justify the extra spend by saying there is less waste as the veg lasts longer and no waste on the plate. Schools have been much more complicated with far more stakeholders to engage with and they have found it difficult to make it work. Average orders range from £170-650 per customer/week.

### Collaborative approaches

Work collaboratively as a multi-stakeholder coop of growers and buyers. MVP also shares a packing and storage 'hub' with Veg Box People (they have 400 customers at the time of writing and distribute bags via a number of collection points across Greater Manchester. They also crop plan with local organic growers and order through MVP). Some of the infrastructure and business costs are shared with VBP and also with Kindling Trust. KT also runs *FarmStart*, another grower-member of MVP that supports new entrants to growing with an opportunity to build up skills and experiment with organic growing on a larger scale (see below).

Activity	Operational base	Scale	Impact
MVP production	7/8 producer members		
MVP Sales	3 P/T MVP workers	Supply 40 businesses each week (including 3 universities)	Average orders range from £170-650 per customer/week. Current sales are around £250k a year.

**The Kindling Trust** has established a number of inter-related enterprises around Greater Manchester – scaling up by actively creating a collaborative network of more people and places growing and distributing local food, and also supporting network building for a wider sustainable food movement. The initiatives that KT establish and support tackle some of the most pressing issues in food and farming – at every level of this complex system. They include co-operative (stakeholder-owned) organic veg enterprises (Veg Box People and Manchester Veg People, Woodbank Community Food Hub), training programmes in organic growing (Commercial Growers Course) and new farmer incubation through their *FarmStart* initiative.

**Access to land:** The Kindling Trust was the first organisation to set up a FarmStart in the UK. In 2012 they leased a piece of organic certified land from a local farm and divided it into 1/8th acre plots. For £500 a year people could access one of these plots, plus get access to a training program and shared tools. They employed a coordinator to run the program, support the participants and provide the training. Participants could increase to a ¼ acre plot in the second year, then ½ acre in the third (above ¼ acre they contributed the market rate for the land on top of the £500 annual fee). People came in with little practical experience but were trained up through the program and were able to keep all income from produce sales. The new 1.5 acre FarmStart Woodbank is a now the main site. It is located in the heart of urban Stockport and is part of Woodbank Park, an exciting new urban agriculture hub that is joining up inclusive community gardening with commercial urban food

production ([https://kindling.org.uk/FarmStart\\_Stockport](https://kindling.org.uk/FarmStart_Stockport)). FarmStart supplies Veg Box People and Manchester Veg People.

**Future growth plans:** After a decade of experience in sustainable food and farming, Kindling is now working to establish a pioneering rural base within 50 miles of the city. Much more than a farm, the Kindling Farm will utilise truly regenerative agro-ecological systems for producing & distributing food, include a residential centre for social change, a social enterprise hub, and affordable, low-impact housing for members. (Source: website)

## *2.4 Tamar Grow Local, Devon*

### **Summary**

Scaling up through i) enabling community activity to grow into commercial enterprise ('microenterprise into mainstream wholesale supply chains') and ii) actively creating a collaborative network that in turn is enabled to scale up through increased market confidence as TGL helps to increase market opportunities. The Tamar Grow Local model connects various enterprises as a network working together under one roof, sharing staff, equipment, vehicles and premises and also helping to build the market through its own online delivery service.

Tamar Grow Local (TGL) is a Community Interest Company founded on co-operative principles and established in 2007. Over the last 10 years it has become an umbrella organisation that supports a family of land-based community projects and enterprises which promote local food and produce in the Tamar river catchment. TGL activities focus on three main areas:

- Community - Providing opportunities and support for local people to grow their own food including allotments, growing plots and orchards.
- Education - Raising awareness of the benefits of local produce and the unique market gardening history of this area.
- Commercial - Working with commercial growers and supply chains to increase the availability & consumption of local food and produce.

"We are also home to a number of other projects which in turn support these community groups and other food producing businesses, including local markets, food hubs, an equipment bank, and SailTrade - a project exploring low carbon distribution and transport using the Tamar River."

### **Approach to scaling up**

Tamar Grow Local has purposefully taken a phased approach to the development of its network. The first phase of development concentrated on community engagement in local food production. The second phase involved the development of initiatives that support both community groups and local food businesses. The current (third phase) activity involves scaling up these second phase projects and businesses to enable the system as a whole to become financially self-supporting.

### **Scale:**

The main enterprises are:

- 2 Produce Coops (honey, apple juice) - They help create volume and continuity of supply, allowing producers access to different markets and help reduce competition at the farm gate. They also reduce costs by sharing equipment and bulk purchasing things like jars and bottles. TGL have developed own branding. They buy the produce off members at a higher than farm gate price, and provide jars, the bottling/equipment, marketing etc then they sell the high value product to retailers and distributors at the full retail price.

- A Food hub (run through Open Food Network)
- Farmstart – 12.5 acres site split into smaller plots each with a polytunnel and water access. Shared equipment provided, access to markets. Cost £500/acre for first 3 years, dropping to £300 after 3 years. Take deposit of £150/acre.
- Grow Share Cook (funded by NESTA). Grow – community garden spaces. Share – Getting fresh produce to those who need it. Cook – Cookery skills workshops. Initially 100 families got fortnightly veg bag if came along to 3 cooking workshops. Produce is sourced from community projects, Farmstart tenants, local growers and local aggregator.
- Ready Meals (funded by Big Lottery). Worked with volunteers to develop recipes, adapted to local produce. Cooked in their kitchen at the office – batch cook 25-50 meals at a time. Potential to increase production if get own unit.

### **Operations**

TGL was set up 12 years ago and now has 3 full time and 2 part time employees – 3.5 FTE. MD Simon Platten’s position was funded to help support different community projects set up – in total, 22 different projects were supported, from livestock coops to orchards, apiaries to woodfuel coops. The organisation was funded to support these community projects but developed into a top-level organisation with strategic overview that could protect the assets of other projects, and was set up as CIC. They view their work in three tiers:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> level (strategic overview)– Tamar Grow Local CIC
- 2<sup>nd</sup> level (economics of scale & shared functions)– Equipment bank, produce coops, training and events, distribution, food hub
- 1<sup>st</sup> level (small scale production)– Family of community projects, existing growers

### **Land access and tenure**

TGL’s ‘Farmstart’ (grant-funded by Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, UnLtd. and Plunkett Foundation) began in 2015 on a 12.5 acres site of leased farm land. It is aimed at new growers wanting to access parcels of land of between 1-3 acres to kick-start their fruit, vegetable and flower growing business ideas. Tamar Grow Local provides the land, support and advice (mentoring but not training as it is expected that people already have the growing skills they need) along the way as well as routes to market for fresh fruits and vegetables. There is shared infrastructure and equipment and people pay approximately £500/acre a year for the first 3 years, dropping to £300 after 3 years. TGL takes a deposit of £150/acre. As of 2018, the Farmstart site, Mill Lane Acres is now home to 4 small business tenants including a vineyard, 2 traditional market gardens and a development orchard. (NB: Since the start 50% of tenants have left and not left the land tidy or clear which has been a drain on resources to tidy up.)

### **Access to finance**

‘In 2011 we had 3 years of Local food funding which totalled £98k. This was for development of community food projects. In 2013 we had 12k to set up the food hub via an Interreg project. The work with Plymouth community Homes and Plymouth city council has also brought in income, but more contractual delivery than grant funded development money. We have also had some small grants along the way the biggest being £10k lottery funding for the honey co-op. The rest has all been funded out of revenue generated through sales, and by concentrating on small (affordable) start-ups and steady incremental growth.’

**Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches** – see above Farmstart.

### Access to markets & distribution

The Food Hub runs through Open Food Network, with 35 producers supplying through it – 18% mark up on local producers, 30% mark up on wholesale (i.e. dried goods). They get around 50 orders a week, turnover of around £1500. They deliver to collection points (6 collection points plus two train stations to time with local train arrivals) as well as home delivery to individuals. They also have collection points for producers. They operate a wholesale version which goes out on a Friday to cafes hotels and restaurants.

### Collaborative approaches

Most of the initiatives within Tamar Grow Local have been founded with the capacity to be autonomous such that should any of the other initiatives that they are related to enter decline they have the capacity to continue themselves. However, when they are linked they become mutually supporting and create a network which ultimately supports the umbrella organisation that strategically co-ordinates them.

Activity	Operational base	Scale	Impact
Community project support			22 projects supported
Produce coops	Honey & apple juice processing and sales		
Food hub	Online ordering service and delivery	*35 local producers; 50 orders per week	£1500 turnover
FarmStart	12 acre site		4 new enterprises
Coop market stall			
Grow Share Cook			
Ready meals			
Equipment bank			

\*TGL supports around 35 producers (both production scale and micro-producers) through the Food Hubs. This includes many of the community projects and producer coops they also work with.

## 2.5 Regather, Sheffield

### Summary

Scaling up by building cooperatively-run local food and drink enterprises, and creating a market for events, locally grown produce, locally made products and organic products. Regather is a trading-led cooperative focused on community economic development and building community wealth with the aim of creating a mutual economic model. Activities are focused on scaling up food and drink production, processing and retailing activities within a range of 'Values Based Food Chains' located in South Sheffield and the Moss Valley, NE Derbyshire, supplying customers and benefiting communities across the whole of Sheffield.

**Scale:** Annual income was £186k in 2017 and £285k in 2018. Losses are reducing each year. In 2018 loss was £1500, narrowly missing break even. Income is forecast at £380k for 2019, of which an estimated 93% will be self generated through sales - driven mainly by the growth of the 'Regather Box' fruit and veg box scheme and their events based marketing strategy. Regather employs 9 people, and currently hosts around 120 volunteer hours per week.

**Operations:** Regather currently operates across 3 areas – food, drink and events.

#### Food enterprises

- Regather Box (see below)
- Regather Farm (see below)

#### Drink enterprises

- Regather Brewery: Microbrewery producing core range of four craft beers and offering brewery experiences
- Regather Cider: Seasonal product from local apples in the Autumn
- Regather Bar: licensed bar operation at Regather Works and other selected locations

#### Events

- The Folk Forest Festival Event Series (two day summer music festival attracting 4,000 attendees)
- Regather Club: Ticketed events at Regather (music, comedy, film) / Facilities Hire: From basic room hire to weddings with catering
- Regather Event Services: Supporting organisations such as Thornbridge Brewery Peakender festival & Heartbreak Productions outdoor theatre

**Venues, sites, land access and tenure:** Regather activity is across 3 main sites with two new proposals in development.

- Regather Works - the main business premises of Regather and a community food hub. A rented Grade II listed industrial building located near Sheffield city centre. Main facilities include office, box packing room, commercial standard kitchen, microbrewery and 45 person licensed venue with bar and events/stage area. (*Tenure* - 10 year commercial building lease with private landlord, started in 2010, renewed in 2019).
- The Club Garden – a small urban community green space to the rear of Regather Works. Consists of a collection of raised beds, fruit trees and open grassland. Suitable for 'edible landscape' style planting and management. (*Tenure* - Rolling 28 day notice 'community garden licence' with Sheffield City Council, started 2010.)
- Regather Farm – a newly established 14 acre organic, peri-urban farm consisting of a 4 acre market garden, 8 acre agroforestry development and 2 acre flower meadow. The site is suitable for a wide range of fruit, vegetable and egg production. Planning permission granted for agricultural buildings, borehole, access trackway and polytunnels. Located next to New Field Spring Wood, a 26 acre ancient woodland owned by a social enterprise with scope for wide range of woodland enterprise activities. (*Tenure* - 20 year FBT agreement with social enterprise landlord, started in 2019. Option to extend further 10 years and right of first refusal to purchase site in the event of sale.)

Regather is also currently developing proposals for the following Local Authority owned sites:

- Corker Bottom Allotment Garden – a block of 15 unused allotments in the Manor area of Sheffield. Offers mains water, electricity and security fence. Particularly suitable for horticultural training facilities. (*Tenure* - Rolling 1 year allotment garden tenancy agreement with Sheffield City Council. Allows for commercial sale of produce grown on the site.)
- Lynwood Gardens – a 'pocket forest' of mature woodland and glades virtually untouched for over 150 years. The site dates back to the 1820s and was the garden

of the wealthy Victorian cutlery manufacturer. Part of the site is currently used by a successful 'forest school' kindergarten. Suitable for 'forest garden' style food production and urban honey production. (*Tenure* - 10 year peppercorn lease agreement with Sheffield City Council. Permission to license specified areas of site to 3rd parties.)

**Access to finance:** Various income sources, loans and plans to issue a community share offer. In 2018 Regather successfully completed a £15k REACH Fund investment readiness project which enabled the organisation to: develop a theory of change to promote co-operation and mutualise the local economy through food; improve governance, leadership, accounting and e-commerce systems; define new objects; introduce a statutory asset lock; convert to a community benefit society; and produce a 5 year business plan (2018-23).

Initially finance was from private loans from friends and family of founder members. These loans have since been converted to member owned shares. Regather currently relies heavily on trading income and loans to finance the ongoing delivery of its business plan. Plans are in place for a crowdfunding campaign and community share offer to help raise finance for medium to long term investments. Regather has not yet required or received significant core revenue or capital grant funding. At this point in the development of Regather grant funding of £100-150k within the next 12-18 months would significantly improve the capability of Regather to continue the sustainable growth of trading activities, improve its social impact capability and further enable development of successfully working examples of sustainable 'values based food chains' linking urban / peri-urban locations across Sheffield and NE Derbyshire.

**Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches:** Food growing started at Regather Farm in Spring 2019 on approx. 1 acre. Crops included runner beans, beetroot, kale, courgette, squash, chard and salad leaf. 2019 yield to date is 454.25kgs. 2019 yield estimate is 600kgs. All produce grown is certified organic and has been sold directly to Regather Box scheme customers. Future plans for Regather Farm involve using agroforestry techniques. Regather is also actively engaged in developing opportunities for assisted / indoor growing, aquaponics and other forms of urban / brownfield food production techniques.

**Access to markets & distribution:** Regather Box collectively purchases produce under fair terms of trade from over 10 different small organic farms and market gardeners in the Sheffield region; currently packs 350 boxes per week. Delivery rounds cover all main residential areas of Sheffield. Deliveries are by diesel van and electric trike. Weekly collection points available at Regather Works, Union Street (city centre) and University of Sheffield (main campus). Produce is packed by 'living wage' or community volunteer co-workers. A newsletter connects customer and grower with stories, recipes and meet-the-grower events.

**Collaborative approaches:** Regather is highly collaborative across all trading activities. Regather also plays a key role in the strategic development of the local food system of Sheffield.

- Coordinates and hosts ShefFood, which is the Sustainable Food Cities (SFC) member and cross-sector food partnership for Sheffield - working towards a more sustainable food system for Sheffield.
- Leads delivery with University of Sheffield of the Fresh St. pilot research project in Gleadless Valley, South Sheffield. An innovative cash transfer voucher scheme to improve access and affordability of fresh fruit and vegetables in deprived urban areas.
- Proposing a community food hub and community orchard in Gleadless Valley, South Sheffield as part of the Sheffield City Council Masterplan to improve landscape productivity,

develop local food system infrastructure and improve employment and training opportunities.

- Works closely with the Sheffield City Partnership to develop and deliver the Inclusive Economy framework for Sheffield, which identifies 'local food production' as a 'key sector' for developing progressive procurement practice, and with the Sheffield Fairness Commission, which promotes a 'fairer food charter'.

**Vision:** Regather exists to 'mutualise the local economy through food' by scaling up 'Value Based Food Chains' that benefit of the local community. The Regather mission is to grow the economy of Sheffield by developing a more productive landscape, with particular focus on urban food production, and to transform the resilience and sustainability of the wider urban food system of Sheffield. The aspiration is to address issues of unsustainable food production, unemployment, ill health and unproductive land use in the Sheffield area by providing greater opportunities for more people to become more active and make a living from the land.

Activity	Operational base	Scale	Impact
Fruit & veg box with extras like sourdough bread, bagels, cheese, honey, tea and coffee, juices and more. UK only and plastic free options available.	Began in 2013	350 weekly customers	Created a market for locally grown produce, locally made products and organic products. Supports 10 food businesses including urban, peri-urban and rural organic farmers & growers. Have to supplement from wholesalers.
Brewery	Make craft beers, some also sold via the box scheme	3000 litres produced in 2018	Sheffield 'Real Ale Capital', awareness raising product, creates collaborative opportunities with other Sheffield breweries, pubs and festivals
Community cider	Use donated surplus apples; % of fresh juice given back to donor	1000 litres produced in 2018	New project in 2018. High levels of community engagement. Reduced food waste. High added value re-invested into local community
Event catering	Bespoke catering team operate from Regather venue		Also offer food biz incubator - bakery, ready meals, street food
Fruit & veg growing – plan or already happening??	Regather Farm market garden – organic food growing; orchard for cider apples and soft fruit	600kgs produced in 2019	Positions Regather as primary producer in established food producing peri-urban agricultural area. Organic standards. Connects customers with growers and growing activities.

## 2.6 Regionalwert (RWAG), Germany

**Summary:** A RWAG is a citizen shareholder company with the purpose of investing funds in members' enterprises to strategically develop the regional supply chain. Members are farmers, processors, caterers, independent retailers and or provide support services such as machinery hire, and they have to adhere to strict environmental, social and economic criteria. RW stands for Regionalwert, 'regional value' and AG is the German limited company equivalent.

The concept was developed and initiated by Christian Hiss, a biodynamic farmer with a background in financial services and a determination to re-create economically, socially and environmentally regional sustainable supply chains, governed for and by local businesses and citizens.



Source: Regionalwert Freiburg

**Approach to scaling up:** The first RWAG started in 2008 in Freiburg/Germany. The original model has been replicated in 4 other regions: Munich, Cologne, Berlin and Hamburg; 3 further regions are currently under development. No such model currently exists in the UK.

Within each network the limit is the regional scale, both in terms of business co-operation and citizen's identity.

**Operations:** range of partnership options for members (example RWAG Hamburg)

### Investment partnership

- RWAG becomes a partial shareholder to support a particular project, or buys part or all of the business
- Suitable for start-ups, expanding businesses, businesses with need for investment, farms looking for non-family succession, businesses re-structuring
- Investment conditions include: meeting membership criteria, organic certification (or conversion plan) for farms, non-farming businesses commit to relevant criteria and sourcing where possible from RWAG partners
- Costs: RWAG profit & loss share, share of costs for contract and due diligence checks

### Licence partnership

- Businesses become members of the network but no investment
- Suitable for businesses wanting to benefit from the network but not requiring investment, for businesses who want to support the network including service providers

- Cost: 0.05 – 0.1% of previous year's turnover; max 6.000 Euro/ year

#### Financing of specific items

- RWAG buys facilities, land, machinery, tools or retail fittings for example and rents or leases to businesses across the supply chain
- Suitable for businesses with a specific financing need, especially those who do not desire an equity share
- Costs: case by case basis

**Scale:** The Freiburg membership as in image below illustrates the scale and range of businesses within the network.

Table: Members of the Regionalwert Freiburg network

Services	Farming	Processing/ catering	Retail
<b>Researchers</b> Forschungsgesellschaft Die Argonauten e.V. Freiburg	<b>Organic horticultural holding</b> Querbeet, Eichstetten	<b>Bio-Catering</b> Maria Mocellin, Freiburg	<b>Organic wholesale</b> Großhandel für Naturkost Bodan GmbH, Überlingen
<b>Farm machinery hire and retail equipment</b> Regionalwert Immobilien- und Einrichtungs- Vermietungs UG&Co.KG	<b>Organic dairy and cheesemakers</b> Breitenwegerhof KG Eichstetten	<b>Processing organic (dried foods)</b> Troki Manufaktur, Breisach-Gündlingen	<b>Organic veg box (incl dairy)</b> Biohöfe Frischekiste Regionalwert Lieferservice GmbH, Freiburg
<b>Accountancy services</b> Regionalwert Dienstleistungs GmbH, Müllheim	<b>Organic vineyard</b> Weingut Andreas Dilger, Freiburg	<b>Organic Icecream manufacturer and distributor</b> Bolleschlotzer Eis Manufaktur	<b>Organic shops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biowelt Konstanz</li> <li>• Regionalwert Biomarkt</li> <li>• Naturalia Rinklin Naturkost GmbH</li> <li>• Regionalwert Biomarkt Waage GmbH</li> <li>• Regionalwert Biomarkt Breisach GmbH, Breisach</li> </ul>
<b>RWAG brandowner and consultancy services</b> Regionalwert Treuhand UG & Co.KG, Emmendingen	<b>Organic fruit farm</b> Siegel KG, Norsingen	<b>Processing organic (soups, sauces, etc)</b> Regionalwert Biomanufaktur GmbH	
<b>Consultancy</b> (start up, marketing, etc) RegioGründerWerk UG Emmendingen	<b>Organic dairy and arable farm</b> Hof Gasswies, Klettgau	<b>Organic restaurant</b> <b>Adelhaus Bio Restaurant Cafe</b>	
<b>Consultancy (start ups, marketing, business development, etc)</b> Regio-Werk UG	<b>Organic pig farm</b> Markstallhof von Familie Denk	<b>Catering nurseries in rural communities</b> Zwergenküche GmbH, Endingen	

Source: compiled based on <https://www.regionalwert-ag.de/partnerbetriebe/bestehende-partnerbetriebe/>

**Land access and tenure:** RWAG can provide functions that in the UK a Land Trust may offer. Farm businesses are supported by enabling succession from outside the family. For example, RWAG may buy a farm without succession or additional farm land and leases land to new entrants. In one case, RWAG set up a limited company jointly with the successor of a farm business (from outside the family) and it was the joint company that bought the land.

**Access to finance:** RWAG raises its own funds through equity offerings. Grants or research funds may be used additionally but they are not an essential part of the setup. RWAG is set up as a for-profit shareholder company that is not stock-listed and where shares can only be exchanged or bought at seasoned equity offerings.

RWAG Freiburg - capital raised

- total shares: 5974 @ 500 Euro per share, 643 shareholders

- capital assets: appr €2.98 million (end 2018)
- majority of shareholders from local city and 45-55 age group

#### RWAG Hamburg - capital raised

- total shares: 2534 @ 500 Euro/ share resulting from founding and two seasoned equity offerings
- capital assets: appr €1.3 million (end 2018)
- invested capital: 325.000 in 4 businesses
- dividends: none so far, not planned and not possible as development of network and social-ecological results take priority. (Shareholders receive thank you bags with products from partner businesses)

Citizens may invest in the company for a range of reasons; to support organic and local farming and biodiversity, to maintain the traditional landscape, to improve the availability of organic food in their cities, to support better school meal provisions or as a practical means to address climate change concerns.

**Productivity, scale and range of growing approaches:** Farm businesses in the network are either traditional farms or start up farms or holdings practicing organic methods. Each business within the network retains their independence but membership stipulates clear environmental criteria. Each network decides on their own, in the Freiburg case the criteria for farm businesses is organic certification (as well as others), in the Hamburg scheme they specify for example to actively increase soil fertility and using farm inputs from regional and organic sources where possible.

**Access to markets & distribution:** The network inherently includes retail outlets who all commit to sourcing as much as possible from within the partner network.

#### RWAG Freiburg – retail outlets part of the network:

- *RWAG's own veg box:* had a starting capital from RWAG of 50,000€ and sources 70% of produce from RWAG network
- *2 x Organic shops:* RWAG provided finance for extra retail space and financing of retail fittings through a specialist RWAG subsidiary (buying/renting/leasing farm equipment, retail fittings, etc)
- *1 restaurant:* unusually RWAG run the business themselves as it was seen to be a key missing element of the network, menu planning follows availability of produce from the network

(For further details see supporting document – Regionalwert presentation)

## 3. Summary and conclusions

### *3.1 How the selected examples address limiting factors/ challenges*

The table on pages 29, 30 and 31 presents some summary points from each of the selected examples that highlight how each enterprise is dealing with limiting factors.

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Brief description and main business focus</i>	<i>Approach to scaling up</i>	<i>How the scheme addresses limiting factors/challenges</i>					
			<i>Land access and security of tenure</i>	<i>Access to suitable finance</i>	<i>Marketing, sales, distribution</i>	<i>Productivity, scale and range of growing</i>	<i>Innovative business model/commercial viability</i>	<i>Demonstrates commercial collaboration</i>
Tamar Grow Local	Began 2006. CIC supporting Farmstart, local trading, education. Creates routes to market for local food and drink enterprises	Scaling up by creating and supporting development of small-scale food and drink enterprises and a network	Manages rental of 12 acres private land for 'FarmStart' plots on behalf of new entrants	Grants and income	Online orders and deliveries of local products to urban market outlets	Engages with a range of food producers	A business incubator approach but with strategic 'design'; shared staff, equipment, vehicles, premises and marketing	Vertical and horizontal linkages between a family of interrelated but autonomous enterprises
Manchester Veg People	Began 2012. Co-operative of local organic growers, buyers and workers (IPS)	Scaling up through collaboration between a range of members	Kindling Trust (umbrella body) runs 'FarmStart' (first in the UK) and has plans for a 50 acres peri-urban farm.	Income and shared costs through Kindling Trust	Current sales are around £250k a year. 8 MVP producers supply 40 businesses	Attempting to coordinate cropping plans between different growers	The coop has multi-stakeholder members: growers (including Farmstart) and buyers.	A number of the Kindling Trust enterprises operate collaboratively

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Brief description and main business focus</i>	<i>Approach to scaling up</i>	<i>How the scheme addresses limiting factors/challenges</i>					
			<i>Land access and security of tenure</i>	<i>Access to suitable finance</i>	<i>Marketing, sales, distribution</i>	<i>Productivity, scale and range of growing</i>	<i>Innovative business model/ commercial viability</i>	<i>Demonstrates commercial collaboration</i>
Organic Lea, East London	Workers co-op set up in 2001. Company limited by guarantee since 2004. Enables urban farming, local trading and education. 7-800k annual turnover.	'Scaling up urban production and growing more growers'. Also provides routes to market for regional food businesses.	Rented land 12-acre site with glasshouses  Run 'FarmStart'	Grants and income	Weekly bag scheme, 2 weekly market stalls, supply to restaurants and cafes. Enabled £130k worth of sales for regional suppliers. Own distribution hub.	Grow commercially in own market garden and support wider community food growing; (2017/18, produced 21 tonnes food valued at £60k) buy from 6 other farms/ regional businesses	A workers coop that combines food production and horticulture training.	Better Food Shed wholesale coop – new collaborative enterprise. Ran Farm Start programme to help new entrants
Growing Communities East London	Began 1997. Social Enterprise Company limited by guarantee enabling urban farming, local trading and education. 7-800k annual turnover.	Scaling up through innovative marketing, sales and distribution channels that connects small scale urban and regional producers to urban buyers.	Rented land: urban micro sites; 4 acres farm at Dagenham (initially a 'starter farm')	Grants and income	Weekly 'Bag scheme' + Farmers Market reach over 3000 customers.  Enable £350k worth of sales for regional suppliers.  Own distribution hub.	Connects 23 farms & food businesses, and 11 city growers to London markets. Dagenham Farm produced £29k worth of veg in 17/18.	Five interconnected enterprise activities: household weekly bag scheme, weekly farmers' market, urban market gardens, café, and urban farm	Better food traders network – shared principles.  Better Food Shed wholesale coop – new collaborative enterprise

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Regather, Sheffield	Community Benefit Society set up 2010; and charity 2014. A central venue and farm site; operates range of food, drink and event co-op run enterprises. A 'values based food hub / chain' ready for significant investment and scaling up.	Scaling up by building cooperatively run local food enterprises and creating an urban market for own and other locally grown, locally made and organic products. Creates multiple 'Values Based Food Chains'.	14 acre organic, peri-urban farm consisting of a 4 acre market garden, 8 acre agroforestry development and 2 acre flower meadow, 20 year farm business tenancy lease.	Largely self-generated through sales. Seeking grant funding to scale up activity and improve social impact, and raising community investment for hedge and fruit tree planting projects.	A 350 customer per week box scheme, start up food business incubator kitchen, catering, beer & cider brewery and bar, events space, summer festivals	Small scale growing of fruit and veg; buy in from other producers. Fruit trees, field scale inter-cropping, poultry grazing within 2-3 years.	Community benefit society offering central support hub and strategy function to multiple trading activities, which co-operate and provide mutual benefit and value. Employs 9 people (6 FTE) + 3 FTE volunteers.	Trades with wide range of other Sheffield growers and food businesses. Operates large scale events and festivals to create audiences for multiple sectors (food, drink, arts, music & heritage)
Regional-wert model (RWAG)	A citizen shareholder company with the purpose of investing funds in members' enterprises to strategically develop the regional supply chain	Comprehensive supply network development supports growth of all enterprises. Model itself is being replicated in 7 other regions	Support for succession from outside the family or buying/ leasing additional land. Members commit to succession planning, supporting new entrants and apprentices.	Set up as a for-profit shareholder company. Raises its own funds through equity offerings.	The network includes, supports and establishes retail outlets who commit to sourcing as much as possible from within the partner network.	Wide range of produce within the networks	Sustainable finance model enables network to strategically build and support the supply network	Collaboration across the whole supply chain is in-built and part of the membership commitment

### *3.2 How urban agriculture initiatives scale up*

Based on the practical examples cited in this report, there are two main categories of scaling up. It is helpful to understand these approaches in order to tailor effective support.

1. Scaling up an individual enterprise Growing individual urban land and non-land enterprises
  - Scaled up operations: increased production and increased sales (this could be through increased land or infrastructure or labour or new market opportunities) (Example: OrganicLea)
  - Replication of the model: (Example: Growing Communities replication programme)
  - Setting up new enterprises under own umbrella (Regather's new Community Cider coop)
  
2. Developing effective co-operation across the urban supply network
  - Developing new cooperative enterprise: New enterprises resulting from cooperation and collaboration of two or more existing enterprises (Example: Growing Communities and OrganicLea 'Better Food Shed', see below)
  - Connect urban and city hinterland enterprises to create a local supply chain for mutual benefit, i.e. access to market/local recognition and complementarity, volume and range of production from hinterland enterprises (Example: The Community Farm, Manchester Veg People, Tamar Grow Local, Growing Communities, RegionalWert)
  - Encourage adoption of specific shared principles and approaches (though the operational models may differ); creating networks or communities of specific ethical practices (Examples: Better Food Traders)

### *3.3 What does successful urban agriculture look like?*

The ability of the selected enterprises to address limiting factors suggests that growth is best enabled through becoming a strategic creator or facilitator of a wider supply network with clear environmental, social and ethical criteria. This strategic body can be a for-profit or non-profit organisation and to varying degrees, share a number of features in common.

They:

- are the 'connectors' - from urban micro sites to rural farms - into urban markets
- create market channels for themselves and others in their networks
- provide a range of support (direct business support, marketing, new entrants)
- have a vision and ambition to create a sustainable food supply system
- have the capacity (financial and human resource) to address the complexity of issues within the supply network (from supporting new entrants, enabling access to land, to managing distribution and opening up and managing markets and addressing processing capacity).
- are capable of strategic and very specific intervention to address missing links or capacity in their supply network
- have citizen members supporting the network (e.g. through buying shares).

### *3.4 Reflections and key recommendations*

The UK is fortunate to have amazing urban agriculture pioneers who have against the odds found creative and innovative ways to address most of the limiting factors (Farmstart – an example of addressing access to land), not only growing their own schemes but also inspiring and growing new entrepreneurs. These pioneers are already creating significant social, environmental and economic impacts within their spheres of influence. They merit further recognition and support especially in relation to their role as ‘strategic urban-rural connectors’.

Increased access to suitable finance is one of the key areas that could significantly unlock further growth, especially for new or further scaled up urban agriculture schemes. One example offering an established working model is ‘Regionalwert’ in Germany - a citizen shareholder company with the purpose of investing funds in members’ enterprises to strategically develop the regional supply chain. The applicability of this model in a UK context needs to be assessed and such an assessment needs to involve a wider group of stakeholders especially those with finance and legal expertise.

Examples of non-land-based systems that have a tangible impact on the local food system and meet social and environmental principles are not commonly found in the UK. Further review is required to understand how to support such initiatives and ensure they complement and contribute to existing and new urban agriculture networks.

Other key limited factors such as access to land and to suitable markets (eg local procurement, marketing, retail) are areas where there is an opportunity for local authorities and other stakeholders to provide positive support. We recommend local policy reviews to identify the extent to which this may or may not be enabled.

#### **Key recommendations**

1. Wider recognition and support for the type of enterprises that are creating more sustainable urban and peri-urban agriculture systems.
2. A multi-stakeholder assessment on how to apply an effective model of independent community-led finance model.
3. An assessment of how to support current and prospective alternative and hi-tech urban food production schemes in meeting strong environmental and social ambitions.
4. Support for local government in reviewing how their policies and strategies help or hinder the development of urban agriculture using as guidance the key limiting factors identified in this review.

#### ***Other supporting documents from this project – available on request from the authors***

- *Urban Agriculture International Case Studies*
- *UA survey results – Bristol, Manchester, Sheffield*
- *Farmstart projects – UK overview (Kindling Trust, Tamar Grow Local, OrganicLea, Sheffield Organic Growers)*
- *Regionalwert presentation*