

# Community Food Growing in the City: towards net zero through inclusion



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## Aims:

1. Map & evaluate potential of urban community food growing;
2. Identify building blocks of a borough-wide urban community food growing strategy

## Methods:

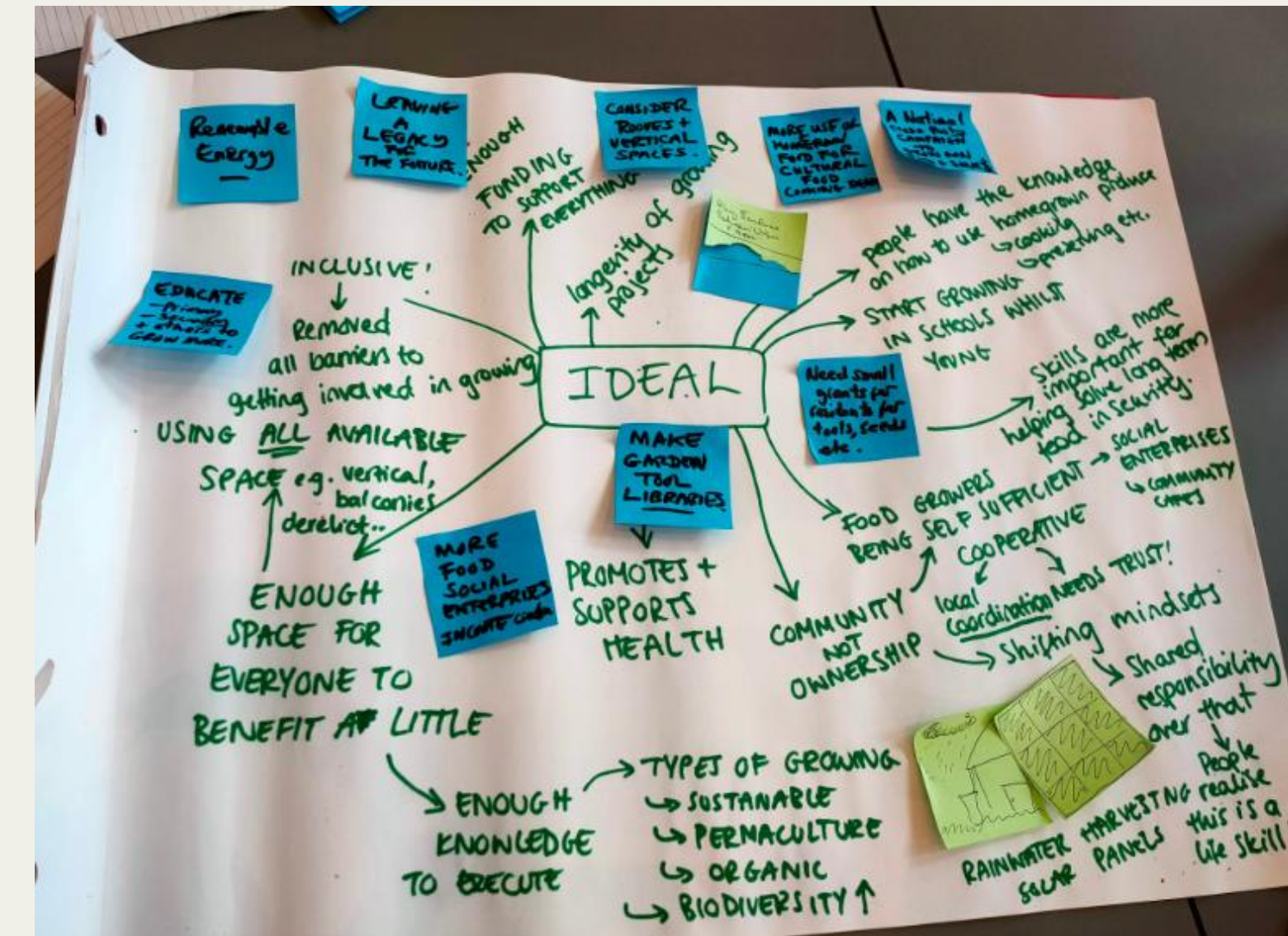
- Ethics approval (Kingston University London)
- Detailed questionnaires & optional interviews – Au Law Farm New Malden (n=57; n=2 respectively); Kingston University London (n=158; n=6 respectively)
- Wider perspective interviews (n=17 community food growing group representatives)
- Presentations & workshops with community groups (n=2; April & July 2024)



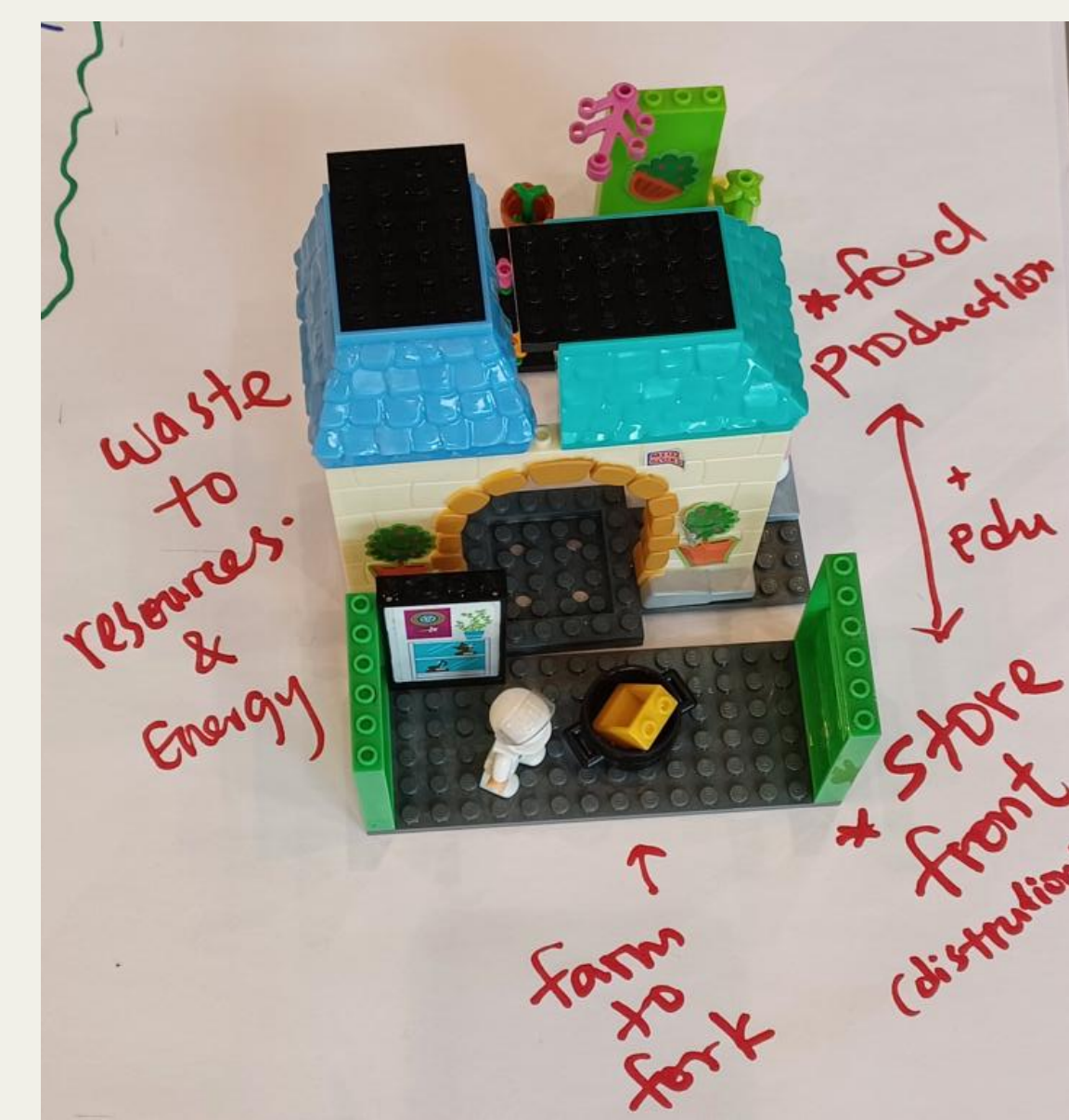
## Findings:

3. Workshops - enthusiasm for community growing & what that might look like (Figure 1)

Figure 1a & b: Workshop model of ideal community food growing initiatives



1a. Brainstorm map of aspects of ideal community food growing initiatives

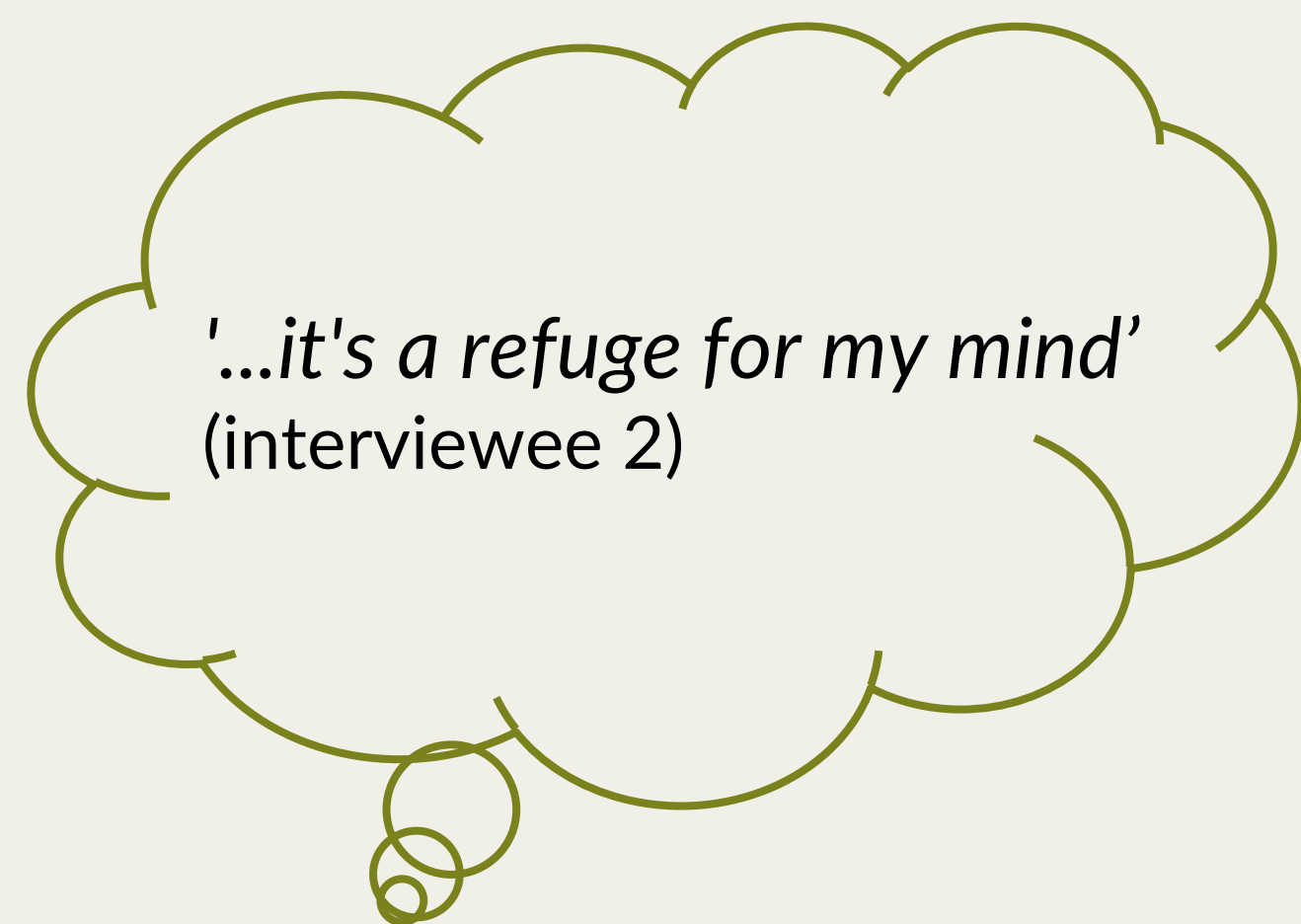


1b. Visual of ideal community food growing initiative

## Findings:

1. Multiple benefits of involvement in growing

- Mental & physical health & wellbeing
- Potential food security & resilience
- Climate benefits – net zero
- Could save money
- Community & social



'..hands in the soil proven to increase happiness...also being with other people reduces levels of isolation & loneliness' (interviewee 1)

## Workshop recommendations for policy:

Several proposed solutions proposed across a wide range of policy areas (Table 2). Findings shared with local authority & with GLA.

Table 2: Solutions & their policy areas proposed by workshop attendees

Proposed solution	Policy area
Include communal growing & cooking spaces in new building projects	Urban planning & land use/ housing & community development
Offer half-sized allotments	Urban planning & land use/ community development
Incentivise private garden space rental	Urban planning & land use/ environment/ economic
Tax rebates (growing produce, making compost)	Agriculture/ economic/ environment
Food growing & cooking in school curriculum	Education/ health
Tailored message about benefits of food growing	Public health/ engagement/ communication

## Findings:

2. Significant barriers to involvement in growing (Table 1), including lack of knowledge, resources, space, time & resilience

Table 1: Barriers to involvement in food growing: themes & quotes identified from interviews

Themes	Illustrative words/ phrases
Lack of know-how	'Are children taught to grow? National Curriculum?'
Risky	'No instant gratification'
Burdensome	'More work than I thought'
Lack of time	'Important to understand the commitment, amount of time involved'
Lack of space	'Flats....no gardens'
Expensive	'Seeds, compost, soil, effort...cheaper to go to the supermarket'

## Next steps:

- Broaden the work to include other urban areas.
- Contribute to development of local Growing Strategy.
- Write up findings for wider sharing.

Find out more about our work:  
<https://www.communityfoodresearch.com/>

This project is funded by the UKRI Agri-food for Net Zero Network+ [www.agrifood4netzero.net](http://www.agrifood4netzero.net)



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