



*A snowy growing session with residents in Greenheys, Moss Side as part of the Neighbourhood Greening Project - Mar 2018*

# **Social Impact Statement**

## **2017/18**

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## Introduction

Sow the City was established in 2009. The organisation has a mission to build a healthier city where everyone can grow their own food. We are small but specialised social enterprise providing workshops, events, and food growing advice for people and other organisations.

Our projects provide affordable and fresh food, reduce food miles, provide volunteering and employment opportunities and create happier healthier communities. We work in some of the most deprived parts of Manchester with a range of vulnerable groups including people with addiction issues, learning disabilities, looked after children, and people with mental health conditions.

Profits from the delivery of our projects go back into the organisation to ensure that the impact of our work is developed and expanded across Manchester and beyond.

## How do we measure our social impact?

Our social impact is measured in three ways:

*Learning* - This is a total for the number people that have been taught by Sow the City how to grow food or associated skills. People that attend courses learn how to access healthy and affordable food, benefit from the therapeutic benefits of the natural environment, improve their activity levels, learn new skills, and improve their community network.

*Growing* - This is the m<sup>2</sup> of new growing space created by Sow the City where we only count sites where we have had a direct involvement for example running volunteering sessions, designing or building the garden or getting funding for it. Many of these sites are converting brownfield and/ or derelict land into productive food growing spaces.

*Volunteering* - This is number of volunteer hours that people help with Sow the City projects. We have volunteers for practical sessions and volunteers that help with office duties and only count people that are volunteer directly for us (rather than groups we work with). Many of our volunteers go on to find full time employment.

## What happened in 2017/18?

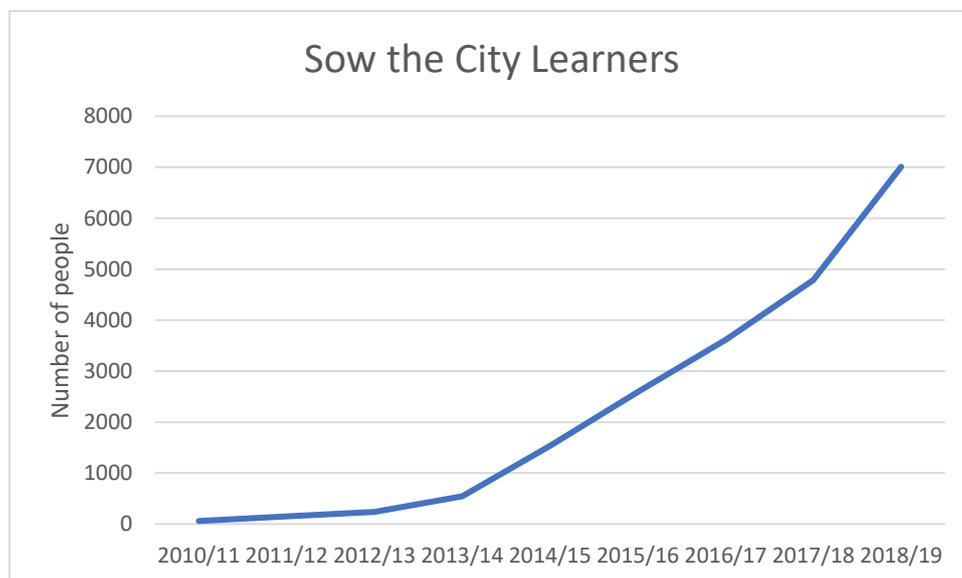
Sow the City had a varied workload in 17/18 delivering food growing projects for the public, private and voluntary sector:

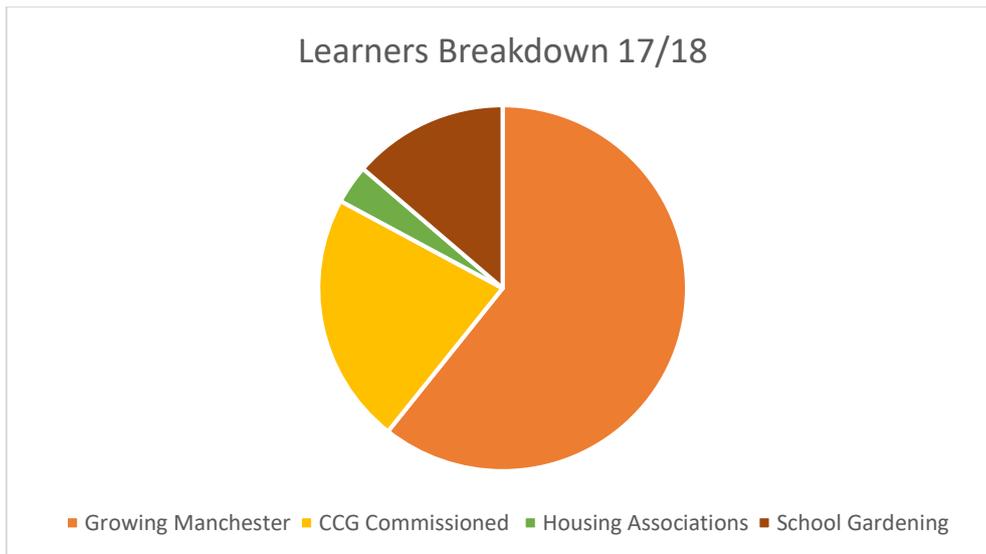
- 1) We continued to deliver the Growing Manchester programme for Manchester City Council (now Manchester Health and Care Commissioning). The programme provides training, support and advice for 80 groups across the city that want to set up food growing projects. The groups are diverse and range from local community groups, to community allotments, specialist support groups and housing associations.
- 2) We further developed links with housing associations, working with One Manchester on several community gardening projects across Hulme and Moss Side. We also extended our reach to Chorley in Lancashire, collaborating with the Adactus housing association on a community forest garden project.
- 3) We were commissioned by Heywood, Rochdale and Middleton CCG to run ecotherapy sessions in partnership with the #Thrive team at Pennine Care NHS Trust and Link 4 Life. The project focused on early intervention in children aged 0 – 19 years in the borough of Rochdale.

- 4) We were funded by Manchester Health and Care Commissioning to run the Green Minds Project in partnership with Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. By undertaking taught sessions in garden construction and growing, service users at North Manchester General Hospital were able to build their skills and work on their personal development.
- 5) We began work on the Neighbourhood Greening Project with Manchester City Council, supporting environmental groups across the city and improving greenspaces for wildlife and local communities.
- 6) Work began on regenerating an old district heating building, and ex-ONE Manchester housing association depot, The Boiler House into a thriving new maker space and community centre.
- 7) We continued regular school gardening sessions at various schools including nurture sessions for Looked After Children (LAC) and Special Education Needs children (SEN).

## Learning

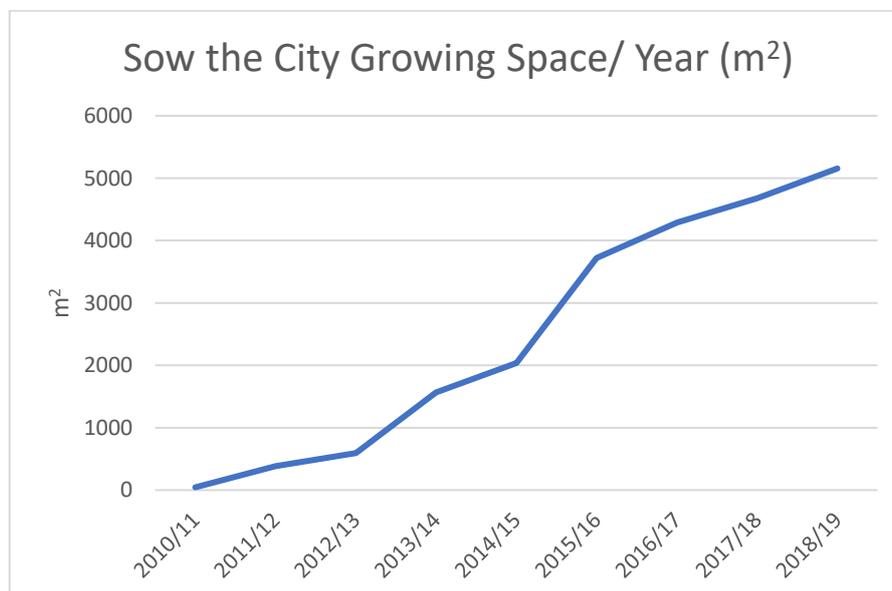
The total number of people that we taught food growing skills in 2017/18 was **1170**, an increase on the previous year of 150 learners. Most of our learners were taught through our Growing Manchester programme, but a large percentage also attended CCG commissioned projects illustrating the significance of newly developed health and social care focused activity.

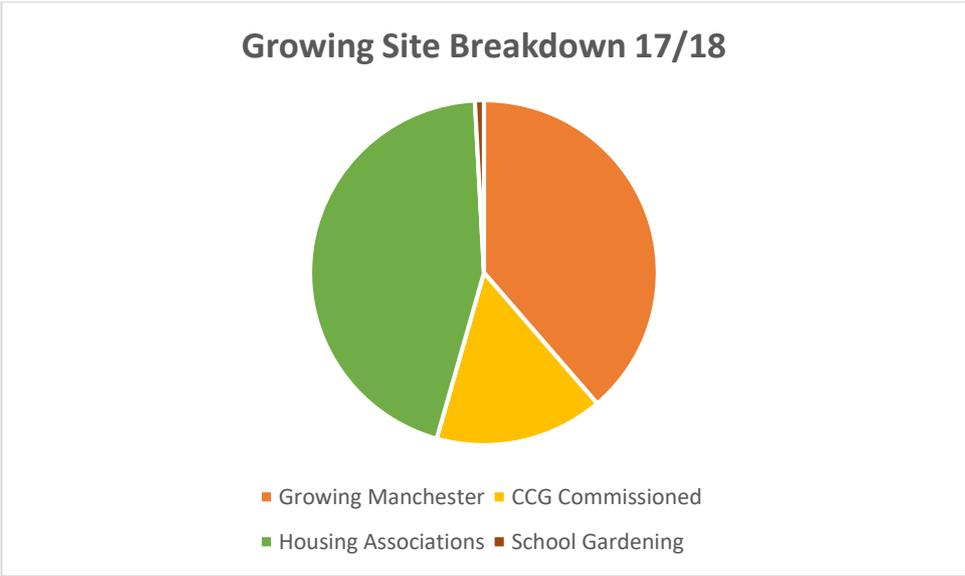




## Growing

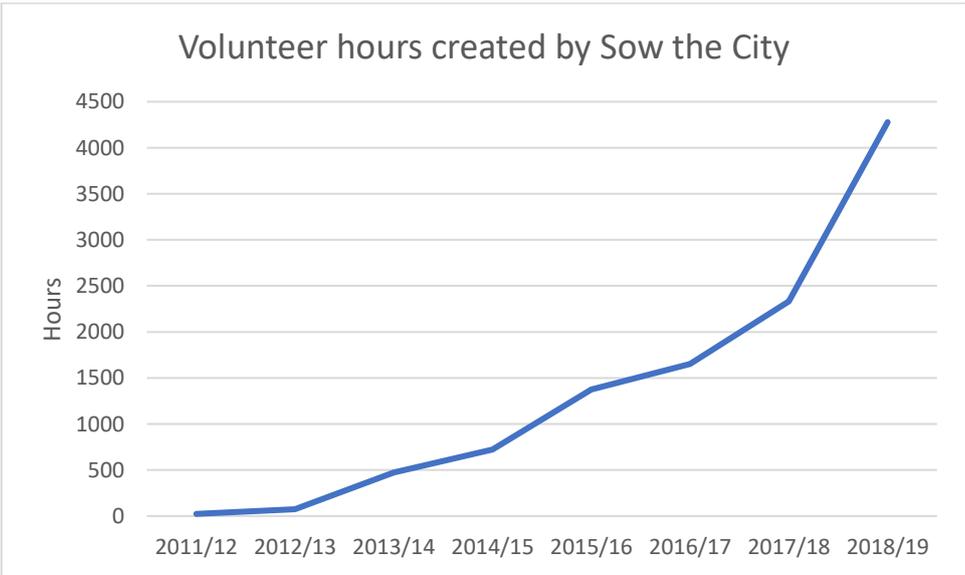
The total area of **386m<sup>2</sup>** was converted into food growing space in 2017/18. This is lower than the previous financial year, and continuing work on pre-existing sites may account for a portion of this decrease. New food growing sites were set up in Rochdale as part of the #Thrive ecotherapy project, Poet's Estate in Chorley alongside Adactus Housing Association and on various One Manchester sites across the city.



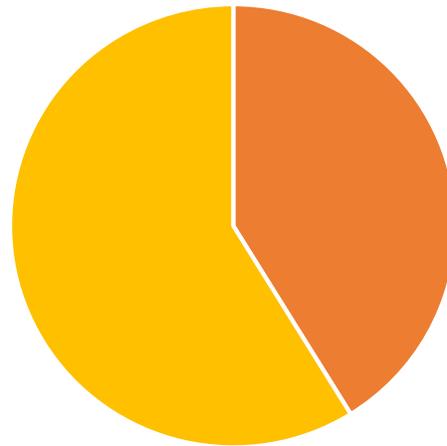


### Volunteering

The total quantity of volunteer time in 2017/18 was **680 hours**. This is a huge increase on the previous financial year. Sow the City office volunteers helped with project development, administration and provided practical help for projects (assisting with sessions, constructing and maintaining gardens, food growing). However, the largest contribution of volunteer time came from corporate groups. Businesses and organisations are able to join one of our partner projects for a team building or CSR day, to have fun, develop teamwork skills, and give something back to the local community.



### Volunteering Breakdown 17/18



■ Office volunteers ■ Corporate