




BUSINESS PLAN

2023

Spinnaker House community garden
Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets





Cities that build and maintain
well-connected green spaces
are likely to have **healthier and**
happier citizens

Professor Alistair Griffiths, Royal Horticultural Society



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THE COMPANY

Greening Communities is a project of Seeds for Growth charity that supports communities to transform wastelands in their social housing estates into new community gardens for all to use and enjoy.

Seeds for Growth charity was launched in 2006 with a vision for a world with health, well-being, and fitness for all and to achieve this we collaborate with and empower disadvantaged communities to address environmental, social, economic and health issues.

THE PROBLEM

In urban areas, there has been a significant decline in the provision of green space due to large-scale construction, development and sprawl.

City ecosystems must adapt to the consequences of climate change and urban development. Therefore, it is fundamental that cities expand access to green space simultaneously.

The World Health Organisation recommends individuals have access to at least 0.5 hectares (1.24 acres) of green space within 300 metres (984 feet). More than 60% of urban residents lack that minimum recommendation. In 1,000 European cities, each with over 100,000 residents, 43,000 deaths would be prevented annually if the cities followed the World Health Organization's guidelines on access to green space.

THE SOLUTION

- **Creation of community led gardens**
- **Create places to grow healthy food with zero food miles.**
- **Significantly reduce the negative impacts of climate change.**
- **Offer a safe environment for children to play and women to exercise.**
- **Enhance physical and mental health from being out of doors.**
- **Opportunity for tenants to meet and socialise and manage their communities.**

SEEDS FOR GROWTH

Seeds for Growth has a strong reputation and acumen for delivering community-based projects and initiatives, focusing on sustainability, self-empowerment, health and wellness, and togetherness.

To address inequality, and discrimination and help realise the potential of people, often from disadvantaged communities. Additionally, Seeds for Growth has a proud history and resume of delivery, fundraising, engagement, and partnership activity with public organisations, charities, and other community groups to ensure successful delivery.

EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS AND CURRENT SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Food Co-ops - £360,000

- Sited in schools and community centres where there was a high incidence of poor diet-related ill health, 36 Food Co-ops were launched and run by volunteers which now serve 35,000 residents with healthy fresh food.

Buywell - £370,000

- Encouraged and supported 500 convenience shops to stock and promote fresh healthy food.

Prison Service throughout Europe - £1,500,000

- Seeds for Growth wrote and published a European-wide accredited training course to enable artists to deliver workshops in prisons. As well as the development of a programme for communication with prisoners where there was no common language, which was presented to the UK government to demonstrate the benefits to society if prisoners have access to computers.

In urban areas, there has been a significant decline in the provision of green space due to large-scale construction, development, and sprawl. Therefore, it is fundamental that a well-planned and managed infrastructure is introduced to cities to enhance health and well-being.

Alongside this will facilitate cities to adapt as the climate changes and we experience hotter, dryer summers and more extreme downpours. It is important that as cities expand access to green space is simultaneously provided.

In 1,000 European cities, each with over 100,000 residents, it was demonstrated that 43,000 deaths would be prevented annually if the cities followed the World Health Organization's guidelines on access to green space.

Almost half of Britain's natural biodiversity has disappeared, with farming and urban spread triggered by the industrial and agricultural revolutions.

More than **60% of urban residents** lack access to the greenery that the World Health Organisation recommends — at least 0.5 hectares (1.24 acres) of green space within 300 meters (984 feet) linear distance of every home.

Access to green space is associated with many positive health and social outcomes, but these benefits are unequally distributed, with more deprived communities having less access to green space.

A green infrastructure strategy is required and, as appropriate, supplementary planning documents to support policies for the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure.

Greening Communities ran a campaign before the London Mayor's May 2021 election and in direct response, Sadiq Khan significantly enhanced his greening commitments.

WHY GREEN SPACES MATTER

Green spaces have shown to be hugely influential in improving health and well-being and were particularly important during the COVID 19 restrictions.

This is evidenced in the **160% increase in green space** usage that was experienced as the COVID 19 restrictions were lifted. Furthermore, **62% of Londoners** now think that protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher priority since then.

London's greenspace has significant well-being benefits and was estimated in 2017 to avoid healthcare costs.

- **£370m saved on mental health**
- **£582m saving as a result of physical activity**
- **£952m Total healthcare cost saving**

This is particularly important given the role that exercise plays in the reduction of health risks and is echoed by the UN's 3rd Sustainable Development Goal (Good Health and Well-being) indicators, which revealed that 37.9% of Year 6 children (aged 10-11) in London were obese.

Access to green space is associated with many positive health and social outcomes, but these benefits are unequally distributed, with more deprived communities having less access to green space and as a result reduced opportunity to gain the associated health benefits. A green infrastructure strategy is required and, as appropriate, supplementary planning documents to support policies for the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure

LONDON MAYOR COMMITS TO GREENING

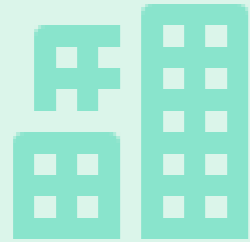
Greening Communities ran a campaign before the London Mayor's May 2021 election and in direct response, Sadiq Khan significantly enhanced his greening commitments.

“I commit to bringing nature closer to Londoners and to protecting, restoring, and improving green spaces in the city. This will improve biodiversity, increase habitats for birds, pollinators, and wildlife, absorb pollution, provide shade, reduce flood risks, and help London adapt to climate change.

Now more than ever we know that access to nature is crucial for both physical and mental health, and that is why all Londoners should live no more than a 10-minute walk from green space. Currently, this is not the case, so I will improve London's network of green corridors and open spaces that connect with town centres, public transport, places of work, and people's homes.”

BENEFITS OF

GREENING COMMUNITIES



DECLINE OF URBAN SPACE

The UK's urban green space is in decline because of large-scale construction projects and urban sprawl. More than 60% of urban residents do not have access to sufficient green space in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations. Access to green space has positive health and social outcomes, but these benefits are currently unequally distributed.

Indeed, it is estimated that 43,000 premature deaths in Europe would be prevented annually if cities followed WHO guidelines on access to green space.



GARDENS IMPROVE NUTRITION

Having access to green space can improve nutrition outcomes by providing tenants with the opportunity to grow fresh food. People who participate in community gardening may have better diets, with over 50% of community gardeners meeting national guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake. Another survey completed by 776 adults found that community gardeners were 3.5 times more likely to meet their recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables.



ENHANCED HEALTH & WELLBEING

People who spend two hours or more outdoors report better health and a greater sense of well-being than those who spend limited time outdoors. Research from Ireland found that participants who lived the furthest from accessible green space were 13.3% more likely to be obese.

Community gardens provide women with a safe space for physical exercise. One study found that gardeners engage in 30% more physical activity than non-gardeners. Physical activity performed in green spaces is also thought to be more restorative and beneficial than exercise performed in gyms, etc.

Exposure to nature has even been found to improve heart rate management among cardiac patients. Moreover, community gardens provide spaces for horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture which can support clinic and surgical recovery.



IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

Urban living can increase the risk of mental health problems. However, visiting green spaces has been found to reduce rates of depression. For example, a study by Forestry England found that regular visits to natural environments can improve mood, attention span and recovery from psychological stress. Indeed, the survey found that woodlands were important stress reduction strategies for 90% of respondents. Indeed, the organisation estimates that woodland walks save £185m a year in mental health costs.

Gardening can also provide a sense of success, pride and purpose, which can enhance well-being.



REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION

Community gardens provide places for people to socialise with their peers and neighbours, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Another study in the UK found that bonds were created between members of the community garden through the support and assistance offered by more experienced members to the newer members. This can be particularly beneficial for isolated groups such as asylum seekers and refugees.

One community garden project targeting refugees and asylum seekers found that the garden became a social centre for service provision, from physical and psychological therapy to practical assistance with housing and legal protection.



YOUTHS

Community gardens can provide young people with space to engage in constructive activities outside of school including learning how to cultivate, building relationships with other young people and adults, gaining social skills, and improving knowledge of nutrition. Evidence suggests that children who have exposure to more biodiverse natural environments have stronger immune systems.

There is also growing evidence to suggest that access to green space can have a positive impact on children's cognitive development. For example, one study of 600 children between the ages of 10 and 15 found a 3% increase in access to green space increased IQ by 2.6 points. The study, which controlled for familial socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, also found access to green space resulted in a two-point reduction in behavioural challenges.



ELDERLY PEOPLE

Gardening can help to increase balance and motor skills and has also been shown to accelerate recovery post-illness. Elderly people are often less able to travel far, so access to local community gardens is particularly important. For elderly people who enjoyed gardening in their youth, the nostalgia associated with gardening can also help people living with dementia and other types of memory loss.



MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

An estimated 59-76% of flats and 24-29% of detached properties in London are likely to experience overheating by the 2030s, and energy demand for domestic cooling in London could triple by 2050. In this context, community gardens would provide an important local source of shade and cool outdoor space. By the 2080s, there will be a projected 40% increase in the number of properties exposed to flood risk greater than 1 in 75 years. Community gardens can help to mitigate these risks by soaking up rainwater and diverting it away from sewer systems.



COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Photosynthesis filters the air taking in carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen; plant roots improve the soil by removing chemicals and heavy metals; and the air is cooled through transpiration. Local production of healthy, fresh, and often organic fruit and vegetables with zero food miles also helps to reduce tenants' carbon footprint.



IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY

Almost half of Britain's natural biodiversity has disappeared, with farming and urban spread triggered by the industrial and agricultural revolutions. Wildlife in urban areas is affected by human interference such as land use change, pollution, climate change and the introduction of invasive species.

Upgrading and greening misused or abandoned urban areas creates important spaces for wildlife to reside or visit, including birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, insects, and other invertebrates. Diverse flora and fauna improve pollination and encourage ecosystems to thrive.

BENEFITS - POSITIVE IMPACTS

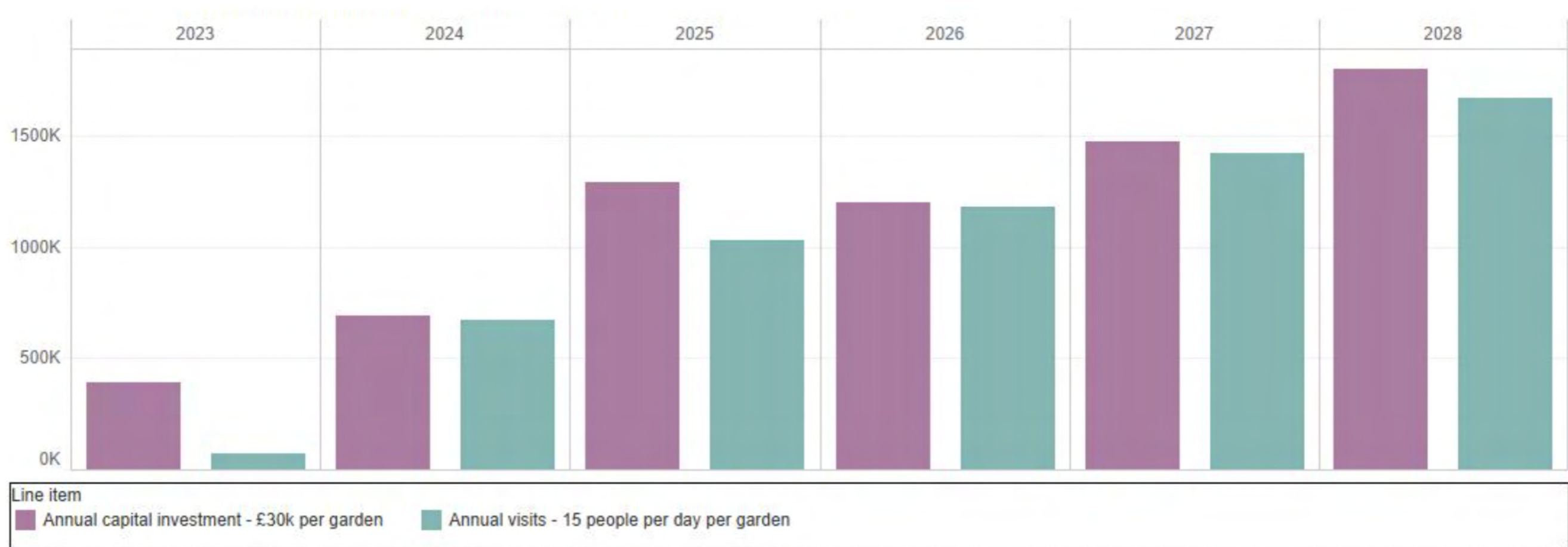
- **Neighbours will meet, chat, and make new friends.**
- **The tenants will exercise through gardening.**
- **Tenants will grow and consume organic fruit and vegetables with zero food miles.**
- **Diet will be improved through the consumption of fresh healthy food.**
- **Physical and mental health benefits will flow from being out of doors.**
- **The plants will transform carbon dioxide into oxygen.**
- **The new plants will provide new habitats for insects and birds.**
- **Pollination will be enhanced by the increased number of insects attracted.**
- **Air will be cooled through new plants.**
- **Noise pollution will be reduced by the new plants.**
- **Rainwater will be regulated as more soil will be exposed.**

Greening Communities programme will focus its outreach to tenants and residents to fully engage and involve them in the design, planting, use, maintenance, and management of their garden for food and plant growing, and safe spaces for children to play. The Greening Community programme will focus on the land of local authorities and local registered landlords.

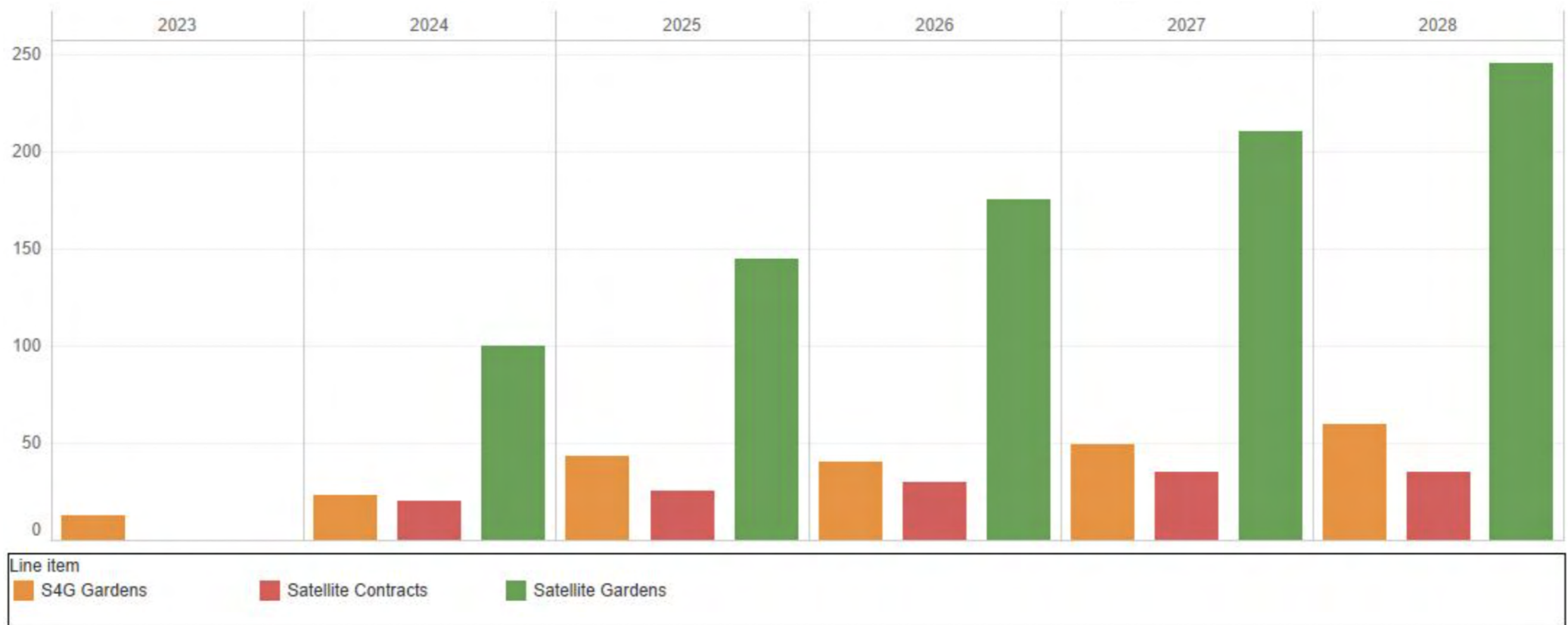
Through resident and tenant involvement in the development and management of their community gardens, the Greening Communities programme will enhance skills to provide the following quality of life improvements and benefits, with referrals by Seeds for Growth to other community-led services as appropriate.

- Upskilling through training and the development of key skills that will improve employment prospects, through both referrals to training programmes and the skills and competencies that will be gained through programme participation.
- Provision of financial advice and debt management, thereby enhancing financial inclusion and mobility.
- Provision of welfare benefits advice.
- Support for vulnerable and elderly people,
- Social integration of refugees and migrants into local communities, thereby helping to break down cultural, racial, and gender-related prejudices and barriers.
- Reductions in health issues related to child obesity, healthier food choices and improved well-being.
- Supporting improvements to the environment through the support and promotion of biodiversity, and improvements to air quality.

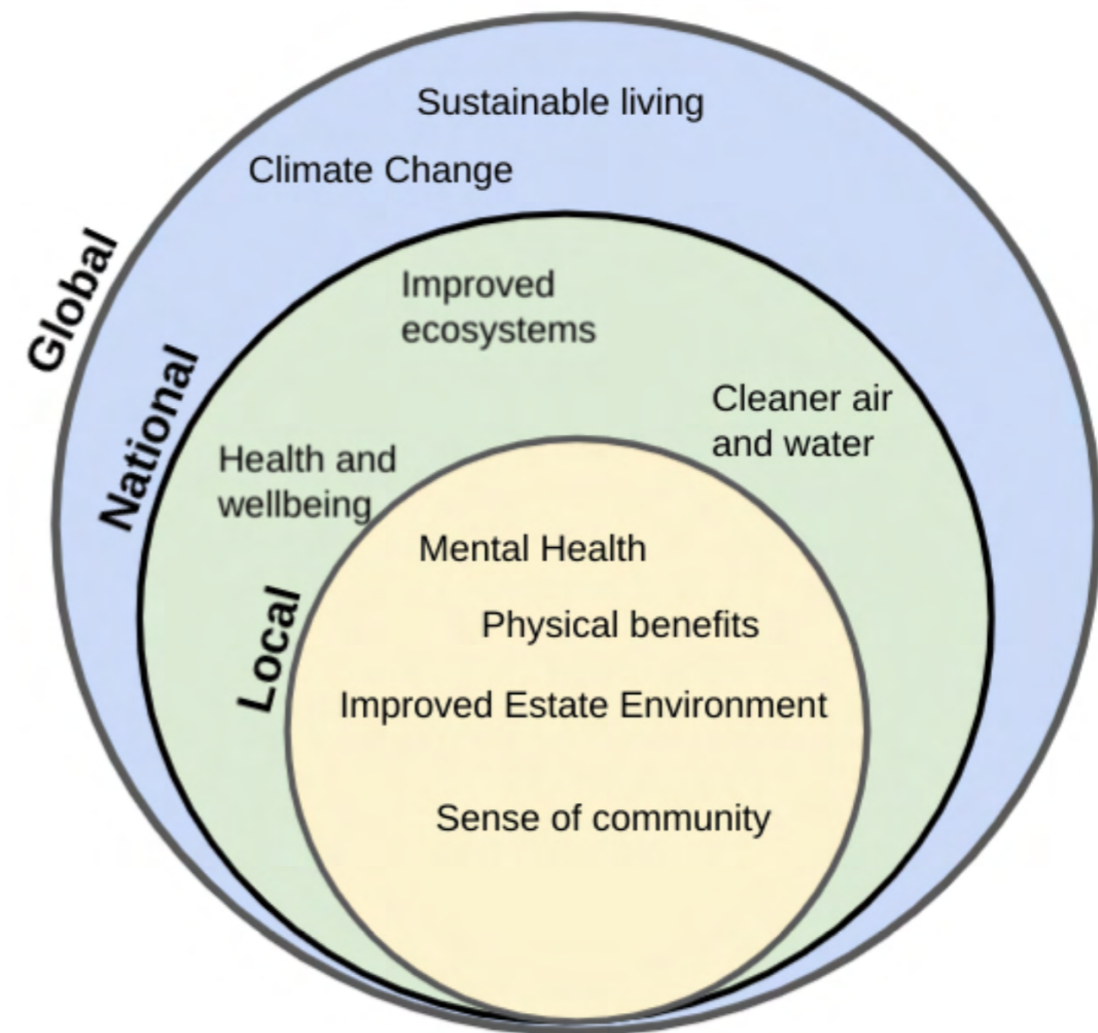
SEEDS FOR GROWTH, ANNUAL INVESTMENT AND VISITS, 2023-2028



SEEDS FOR GROWTH, NUMBER OF GARDENS, SATELLITE CONTRACTS AND SATELLITE GARDENS, 2023-2028



The Greening Communities programme will support and help to address numerous benefits and issues at a local, national, and international level as illustrated below.



Greening Communities has a clear alignment with 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were established in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future across the globe, to achieve these objectives by the year 2030.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



GREENING COMMUNITIES ADDRESSES THESE SDG GOALS

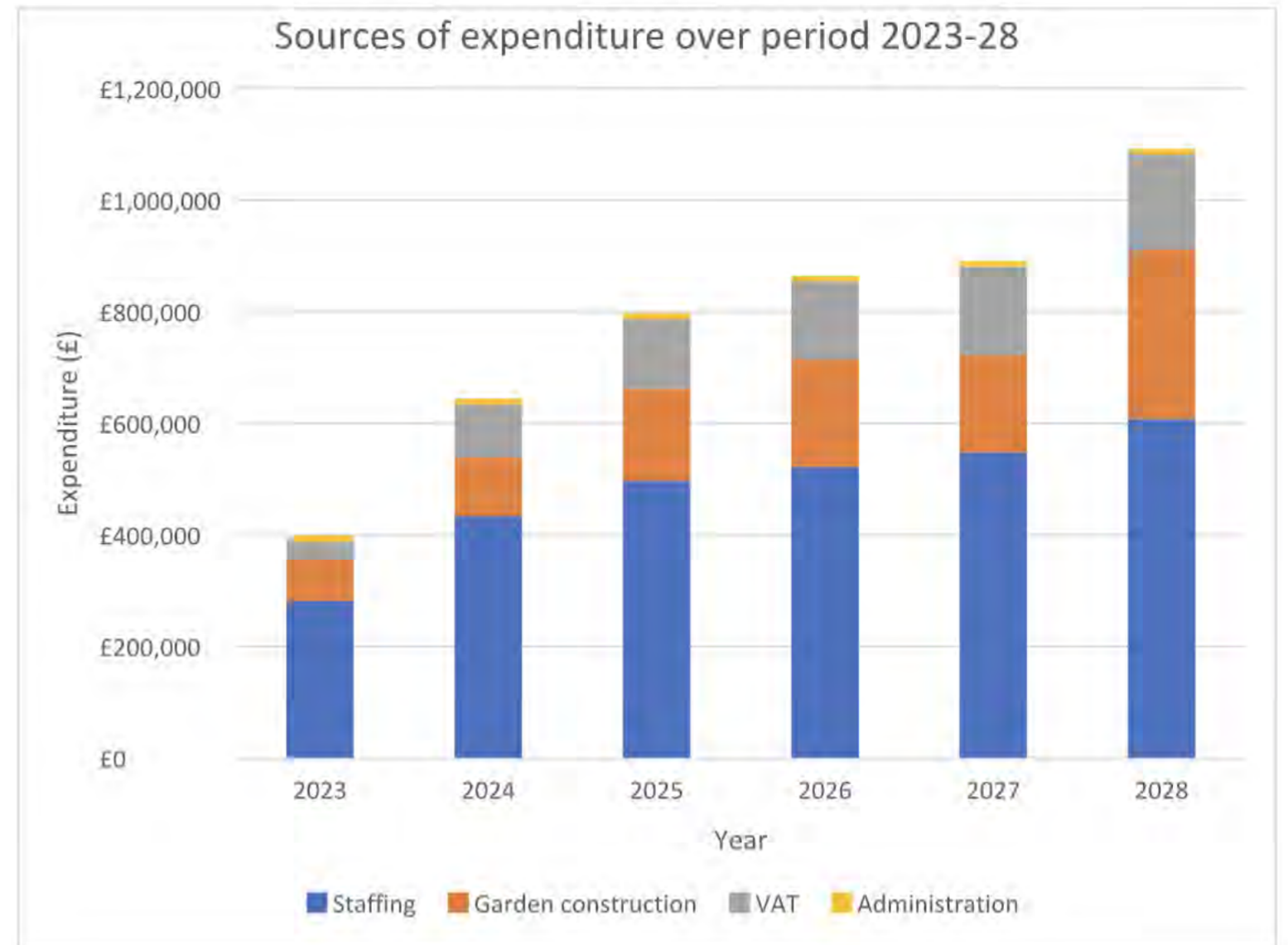
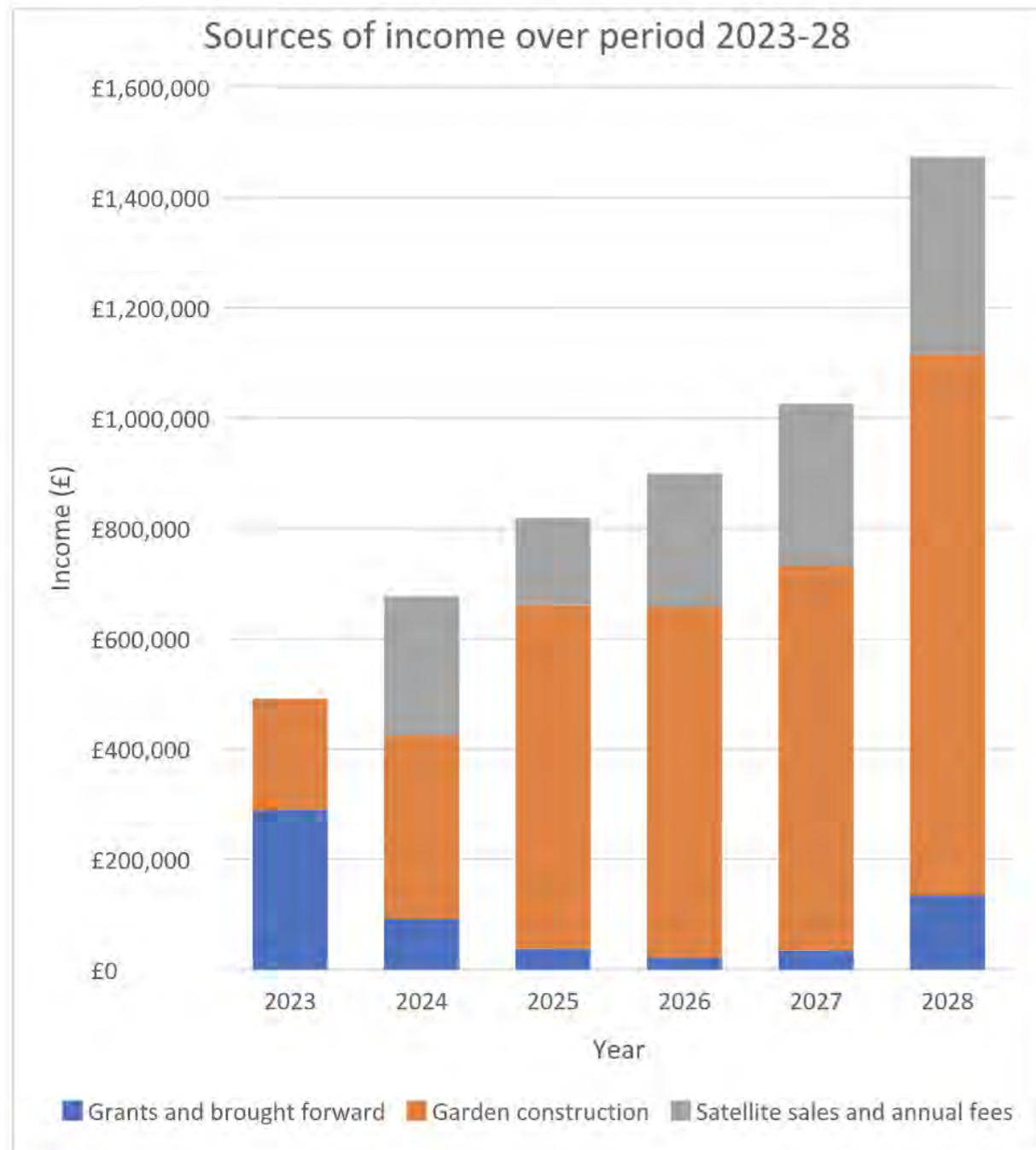
- **No Poverty**
- **Zero Hunger**
- **Good Health and Well-being**
- **Quality Education**
- **Gender Equality**
- **Affordable and Clean Energy**
- **Decent Work and Economic Growth**
- **Reduced Inequality**
- **Sustainable Cities and Communities**
- **Responsible Consumption and Production**
- **Climate Action**
- **Life on Land**
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**
- **Partnerships for the Goals**

The Greening Communities' strategy of focusing community garden development on urban social housing land would help to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on low-income communities by mitigating the heat island effect and reducing the need for air conditioning. Greening Communities would address this as per the guidance provided within the London Environment Strategy which includes,

- **Planting trees generates shade, creating new green spaces to cool the area.**
- **Using green spaces soaks up rainwater and diverts it away from the sewer system.**
- **Use of plants in the gardens to store water to cool the surrounding area over time through evaporation.**

OPERATING &

BUSINESS MODEL



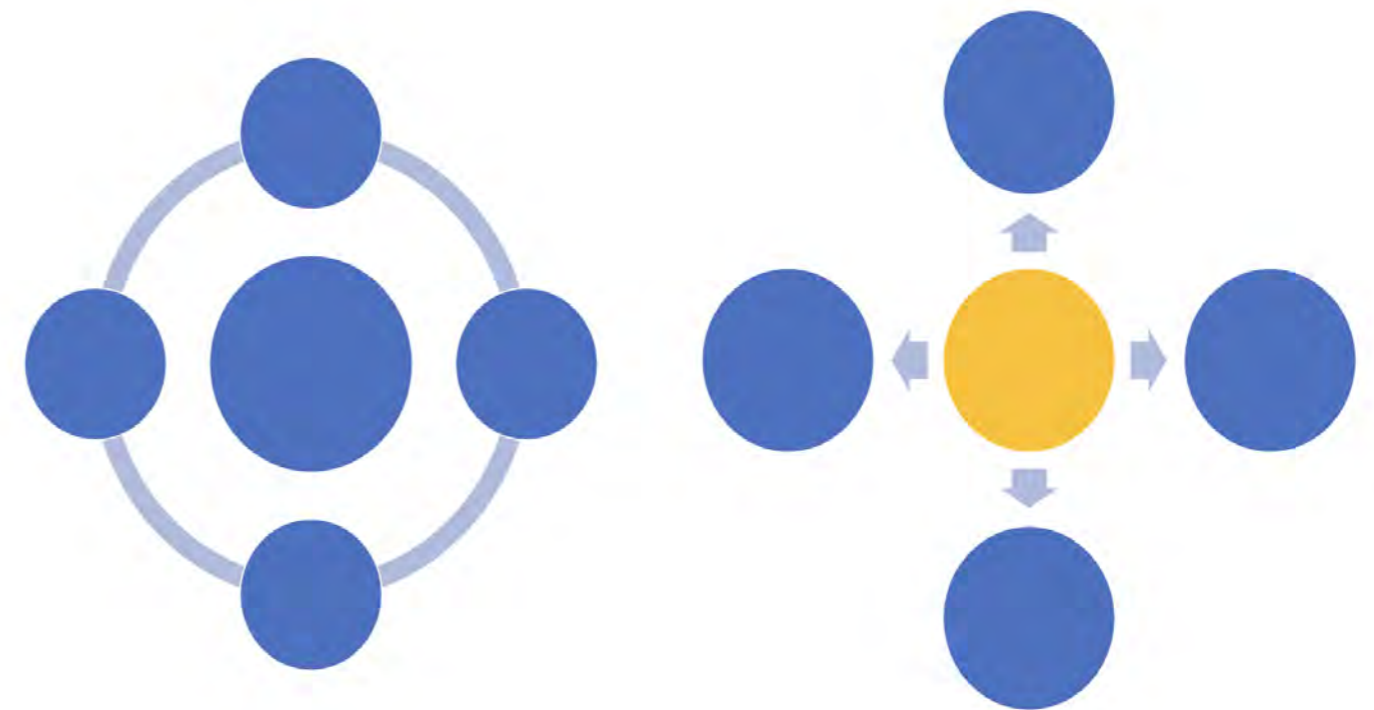
The Greening Communities programme would commence with the delivery of a London-based programme.

Once this has been established then the Greening Communities programme will adopt a franchising model to expand the organisation's reach across the UK, whereby Greening Communities projects will be established and structured as independent satellites throughout the UK in cities and large towns.

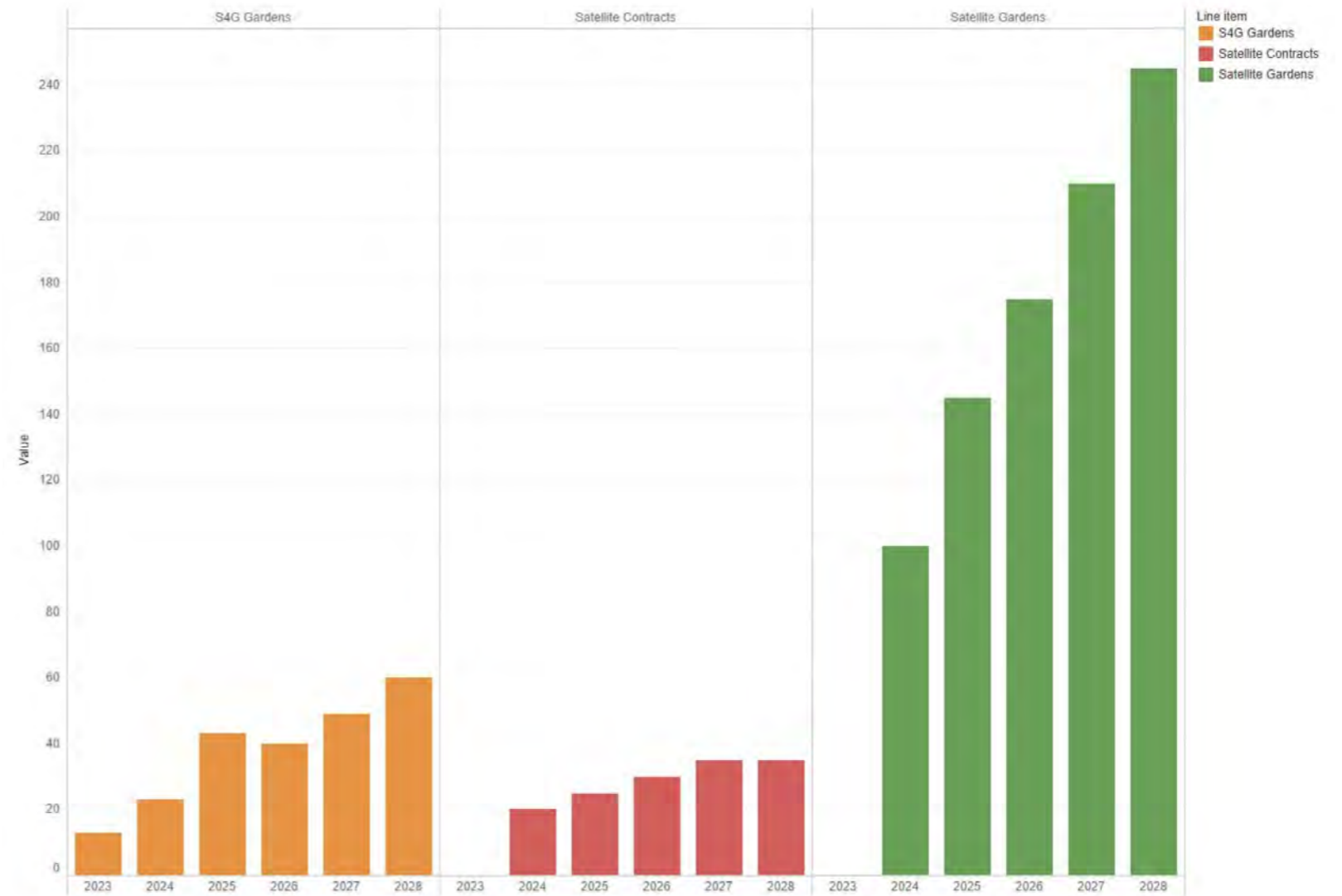
The satellite model would allow participants to use the Greening Communities branding and standards whilst enabling participants to expand their reach easily and instantly through greening.

The target participants for satellites would be well-established local voluntary service organisations such as mental health or other community development agencies. This operating model would provide an accessible route into the wider greening community space for prospective participants with the potential for grant funding (see Finance section), which in turn will help participants realise their community-led objectives and aspirations.

Each franchise would be set up as an independent project of the London Greening Communities programme, based on the 'Hub and Spoke' model to efficiently ensure that procedures, guidance and best practice are centralised via the Greening Communities 'hub' as illustrated



The goal for each satellite would be to conduct five different green “projects” a year, which could vary from rooftop gardens, planting orchards, housing estates gardens, etc. Furthermore, the satellites will be able to choose how the space gets designed, such as whether the space will be fully communal or if individuals can have their garden beds.



5 YEAR OUTCOMES



1,103

New community gardens



6 million

Annual visits



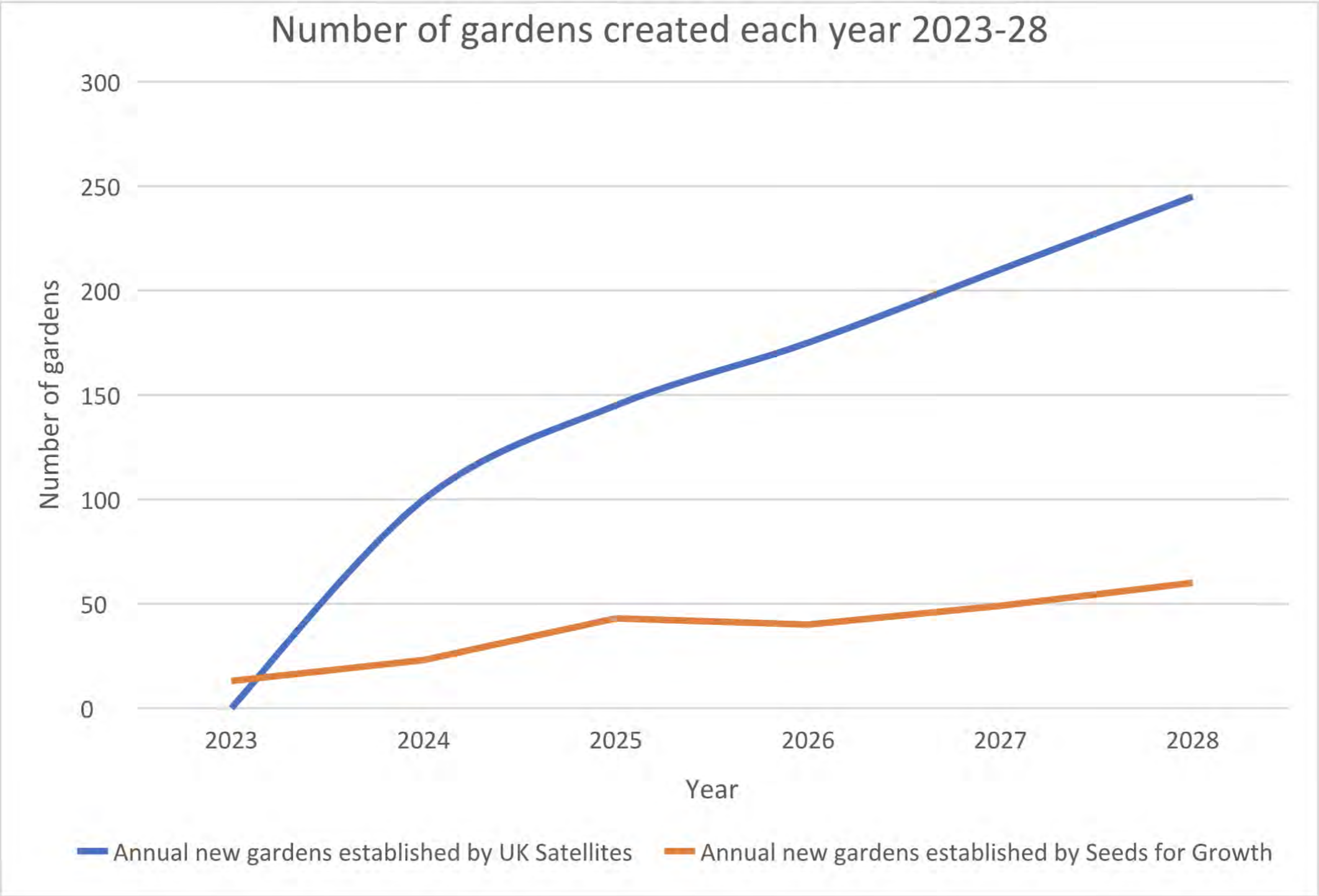
145

UK satellites



£7 million

Investment



SEEDS FOR GROWTH - INCOME STREAMS, 2023-2028



THE FOLLOWING FUNDING SOURCES WILL BE SOUGHT.

Corporate Investment

- The Greening Communities programme will seek a cash injection from the Corporate Sector of £225,000 – potentially to be provided by 9 donations of £25,000 from businesses in the construction and energy sectors. Thereafter, Greening Communities will through programme delivery cover all expenses and generate a surplus to be used to expand the work of the Seeds for Growth charity.

Government Grant

- A political lobby organisation will be appointed to approach the UK Government to establish a £3 million grant facility whereby 100 new franchisees will be eligible to apply to the government for a £30k start-up grant.

Emissions sequestering

- The Greening Communities gardens planting could generate income related to the carbon reduction achieved via partnering with offset arrangers and recognised offset registries to provide a revenue stream linked to emissions sequestering. Carbon offsetting is reducing or sequestering carbon emissions in one area to compensate for carbon emissions made elsewhere. For example, to compensate for the emission of one ton of CO₂, someone may plant a tree to remove one ton of CO₂ from the atmosphere over its lifetime. Using the example of creating 1,400 new community gardens, it is expected that trees would cover 10% of the garden area. These gardens would cool the surrounding area through shade and water evaporation to mitigate the heat island effect of about 2 °C reduction of ambient temperature during the summer months.

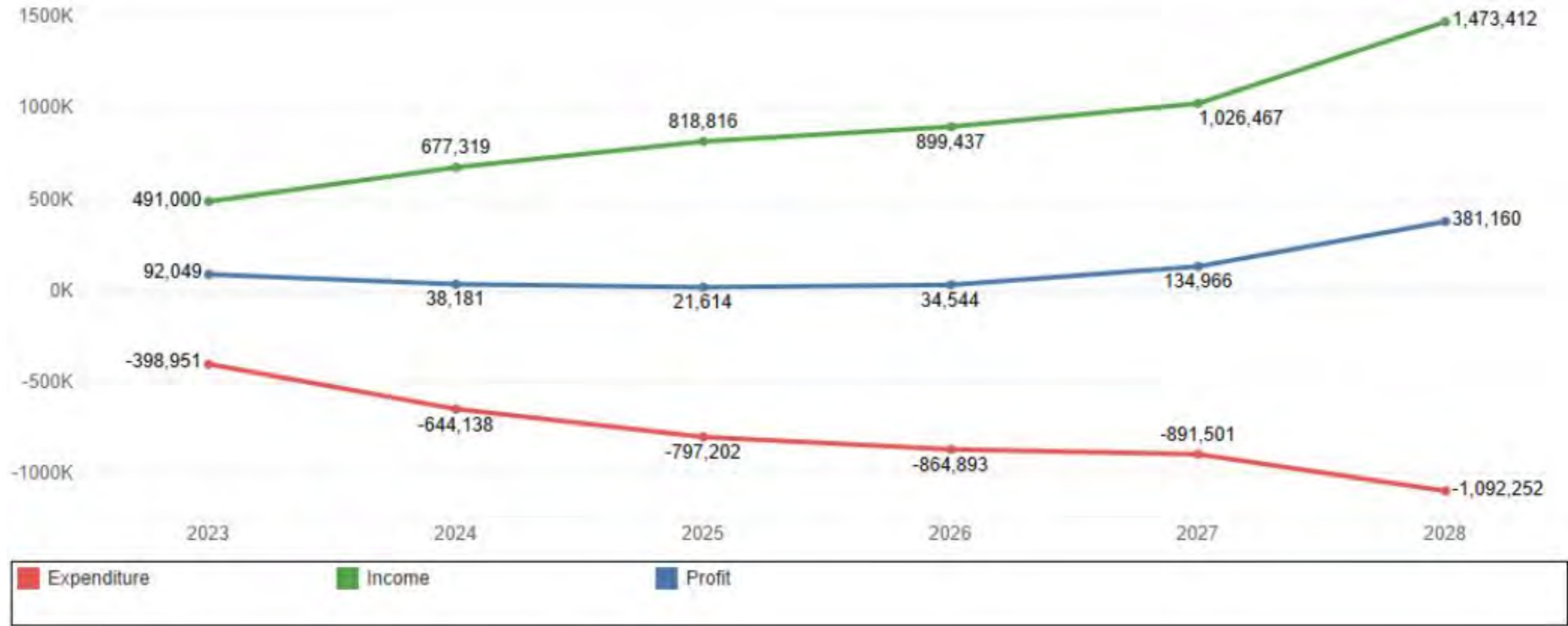
Annual Carbon sequestering and emissions avoidance potential	Annual greenhouse gas saving by 2026 (tCO2e)
Sequester of CO2 emissions from tree planting.	24,000
Emissions save from apartments near the garden not requiring air conditioning.	103,000
Total	127,000

The Greening Communities programme will create opportunities to mitigate urban spaces heat island effect, leading to emissions savings of at least 100,000 (tCO2e). The current prices for offsets range from £7.00 - £100.00 (tCO2e), which could provide offsets income from £168k to - £2.4 million per year. However, this potential income stream has not been included as more research is required.

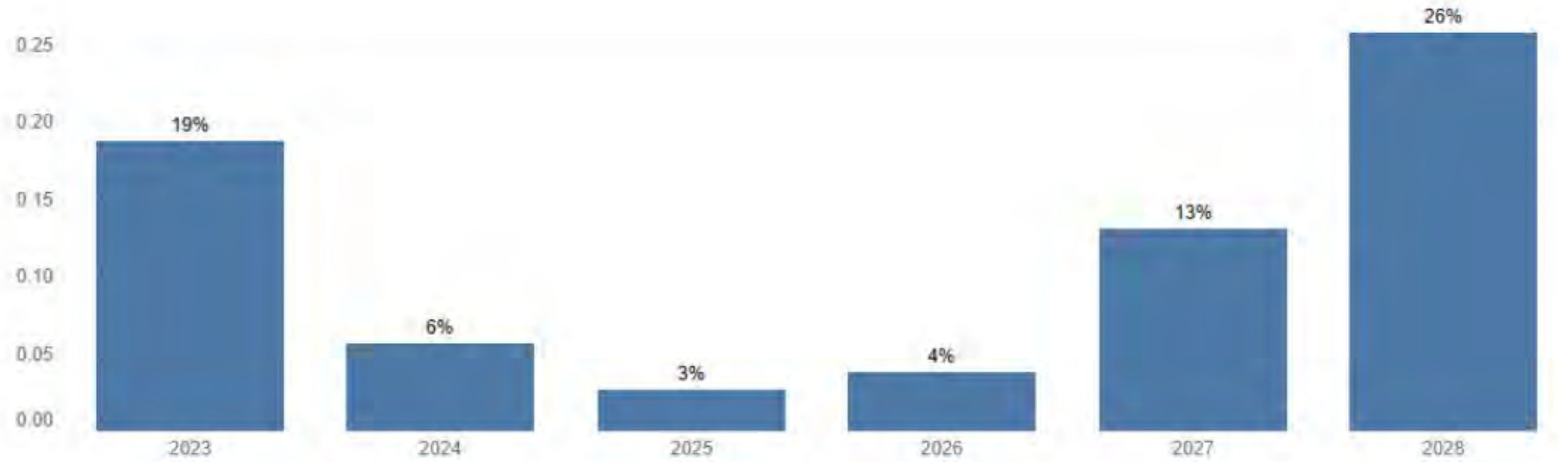
INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Based on the above sources plus additional income that is expected to be generated by our satellite projects, the Greening Communities programme is expected to generate an operating surplus (or profit) by the second year of delivery (currently 2024). The figures below provide an overview of the income streams generated over the life of the programme, staff salary costs and the net income, based on the gross income and expenditure projections.

SEEDS FOR GROWTH - INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND PROFIT, 2023-2028



SEEDS FOR GROWTH - PROFIT MARGIN, 2023-2028



RISK ASSESSMENT

The key risks that are likely to be experienced by the programme with the most significant risk revolving around the commercial risk that revolves around global market conditions and the resulting inflation rises. However, the impact of these key risks may be reduced significantly through the mitigation actions suggested, for which Seeds for Growth have experience in managing and mitigating through the successful delivery of other community-led projects and activities.

These key risks have been distilled from the SWOT analysis that Seeds for Growth has undertaken to understand potential opportunities and issues for the overall programme, as well as the London and UK-wide satellite projects.

Risk type	Description	Potential impact	Mitigation actions	Residual impact
Commercial	The current financial landscape results in limited and/or inflated tender returns for garden construction costs for both the programme team and franchisees.	High	Early market engagement to gauge market appetite and risk, and to explore value management opportunities in terms of innovation and efficiencies. Additionally, this may allow for the negotiation of a fixed price/fee over several years, as part of the supplier agreement to reduce costs. Further steps may also be taken to mitigate cost increases by providing a list of preferred suppliers to be used as part of the guidance to be provided to franchisees to meet cost and quality requirements.	Medium
Funding	The risk is that the programme fails to attract funding for the London project.	Medium	Review the Business Plan/Case for alignment against funding criteria and funders' objectives. Identify additional, potential funders for London-based projects including funding from local authorities (such as the Mayor's Greener City Fund).	Low

Continued...

Risk type	Description	Potential impact	Mitigation actions	Residual impact
Project delivery	Satellite projects are not delivered to time, cost, and quality standards and the agreed outputs by franchisees.	Medium	Greener Communities programme team to issue best practice guidance and delivery standards that franchisees will have to comply with, as well as participate in project monitoring and reviews via the project reporting process.	Low
Project delivery	Lack of suitable resources required for the London Programme Team to kick off Programme activity.	Medium	Additional staff resources and volunteers are to be recruited by Seeds for Growth via advertising of posts and skills requirements through the relevant websites, public sector, community, and voluntary agencies.	Low

APPENDICES

COMPETITORS AND PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS

In the UK there are a few organisations that provide community garden design and construction services, and garden and garden management training.

However, none replicate the Greening Communities programme which identifies sites and then supports tenants to develop and manage their new community garden. The existing agencies in the UK respond to requests for support but never take the initiative.

Similarly, no other organisations have been identified which replicate their model nationwide, as per the Greening Communities UK-wide Satellites other than Groundwork which offers a very much broader range of services focussed on training and volunteers.

Groundwork UK

Groundwork is a registered charity - an environmental organisation operating UK-wide for over 40 years. Groundwork has raised £96 million to support 9,000 community organisations on climate change and poverty issues. Groundwork focuses on strengthening local communities to improve their environment. Groundwork UK has a similar ethos to Greening Communities. however, their focus is to provide training opportunities for their target groups whilst enhancing the environment.

Wayward

Wayward is a private company that conducts landscape architectural design activities. Wayward offers new garden or greening project design services and then subcontracts development to garden construction companies. Wayward is a private architecture company with a social purpose, however, it is never initiative-taking in terms of its development work. Greening Communities could seek to contract with Wayward to undertake a community garden development.

Thrive

Thrive focuses on communities' health and well-being through gardening, horticulture, and spending time in nature in London, Reading and Birmingham. Thrive does not create new gardens for other organisations, however, they are a potential partner for the training volunteers.

Capital growth

Capital Growth is London's largest food-growing network with a focus on providing training and garden development support. Capital Growth is a potential partner as it can provide training programmes for the community garden residents.

LDC Landscapes and **Scotscape** are potential engineering partners for large-scale community garden development.

Royal Horticultural Society is an umbrella organisation for all the community garden-developing organisations.

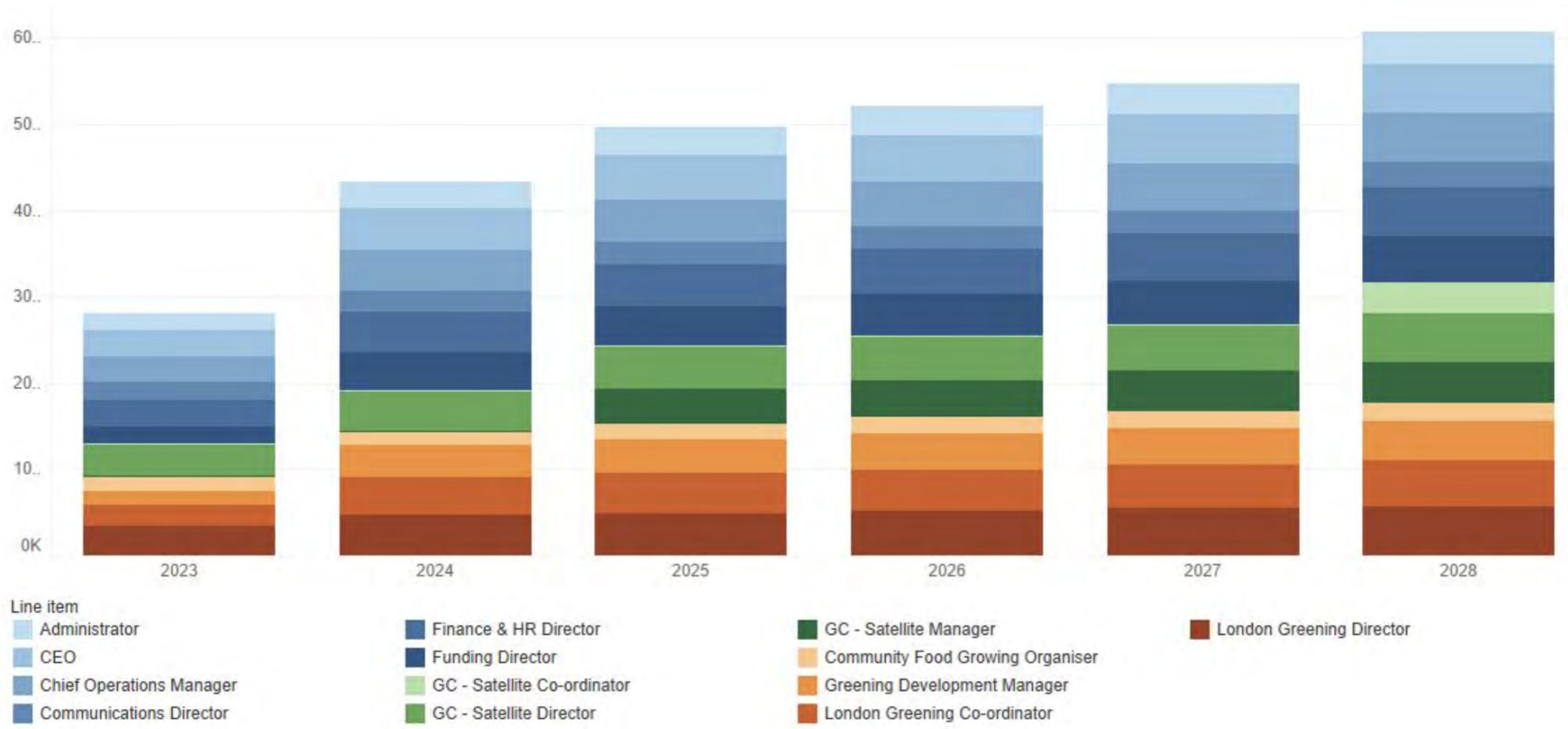
STAFF RESOURCES

Social farms and Gardens

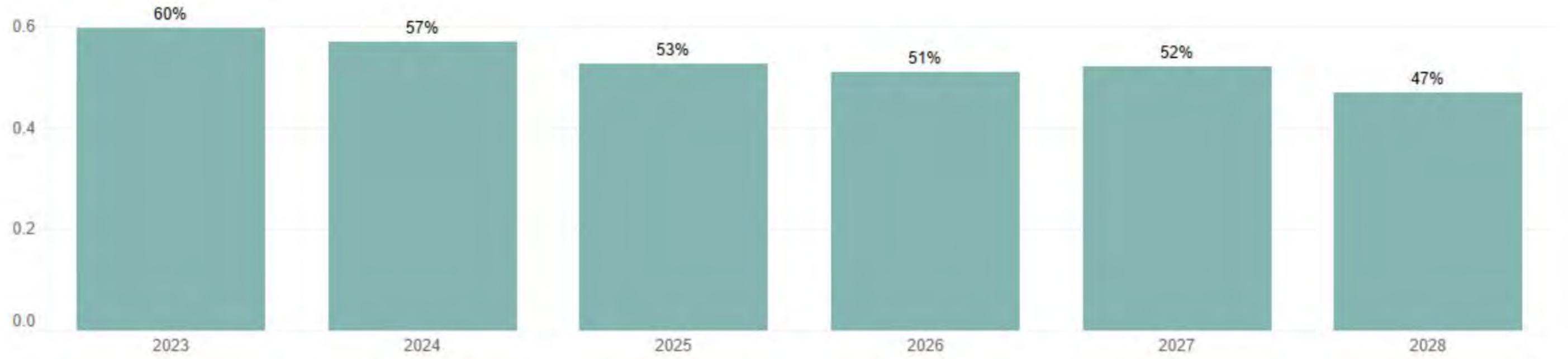
Social Farms & Gardens provides guidance, advice, and encouragement; however, they do not engage in development work. The staffing plan with the appointments being subject to accessing £225,000 corporate sponsorship, London's new garden contracts and the sale of the Greening Communities satellites.



SEEDS FOR GROWTH, ALL STAFF SALARIES, 2023-2028



SEEDS FOR GROWTH, HEADCOUNT AS % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE, 2023-2028



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the most important issue. The impact is witnessed through extreme heatwaves, floods, and biodiversity loss, etc.

Mitigation and adaptation strategies are vital solutions. Cities are both burdens and solutions to tackling climate change with their large populations and high consumption levels. Urban greening provides very effective mitigation.

Greening Communities reduces the negative climate change impacts.

1.5 DEGREE IMPACT SCENARIOS

40% increase in the number of properties exposed to flood risk greater than 1 in 75 years under all scenarios by the 2080s.

By the 2050s, a maximum daily temperature of 26°C or above is projected to occur on approximately 50 days a year in London compared to 18 days on average at present.

- **59-76% of flats and 24-29% of detached properties in London are likely to experience overheating by the 2030s.**
- **80-92% of flats and 56-61% of detached homes would exceed overheating thresholds in a heatwave event by the 2050s.**
- **Energy demand for domestic cooling could triple by 2050 in London, even if the uptake of air conditioning systems is low at 1% by 2050.**
- **If 50% of households install air conditioning systems by 2050, energy demand for cooling in London could be 37 times greater in 2050 than today.**
- **If heat waves are considered, energy demand for cooling could be 100% higher than today.**

Greening Communities would address many of these issues:

- **Trees provide shade and green spaces help cool the local area.**
- **Green spaces soak up rainwater and divert it away from the sewer system.**
- **Water is taken up from the plants in the garden, stored and over time cools the surrounding area through evaporation.**
- **New plants reduce carbon.**

DATA COLLECTION

Records will be maintained - to include ethnicity, gender, and disability, as appropriate. Some of the following will always be recorded and others only on sample days.

- **Community gardens opened.**
- **Revenue and capital cost of each garden.**
- **Garden users.**
- **Garden users are given direct support, or referred to other organisations, to access vocational training, work experience, get employment, or become self-employed.**
- **Youths including whether they are at school, attending vocational training, employed or unemployed.**
- **Elderly people.**
- **People with disabilities.**
- **Volunteer's time.**
- **Food grown.**

In the Barkantine Estate, the Isle of Dogs, London Borough of Tower Hamlets tenants sought support from Seeds for Growth charity to enhance the grassed area adjacent to their housing blocks. Tenants volunteered to work on the garden design, and construction, select plants and do the initial planting. Tenants now maintain and care for their community garden.

Alexander Community Garden

Alexander Community Garden is located on the site of ex-Universal Rope Works established in 1859. The garden has been designed with ropes along a boundary wall, rope children's play swings and long strips of tiles on the ground reflecting where the rope was stretched.



BEFORE



AFTER

Spinnaker Community Garden

In Spinnaker Community Garden the nautical site history is reflected in the design with portholes on the boundary wall containing photographs of the old docks, raised garden beds in the shape of a boat and a large wooden boat for children's play.

