

**PE1433/I**



RSPB Scotland  
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Edinburgh Park  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DH

Dear Clerk to the Petitions Committee,

**PETITION PE1433**

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2012, inviting further comments on the above petition on the topic of “what more could be done to move forward issues around bringing green spaces into productive use for local communities and others to provide local produce.”

Community food production provides cheap, local, healthy produce; and could help achieve a more equal and more sustainable society. It would also enable communities to learn more about the natural world, and bring benefits to health and wellbeing.

As previously stated, RSPB Scotland manages considerable areas of land which are notified as SSSIs by Scottish Natural Heritage, and thus we have a legal obligation to manage these areas in accordance with the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. This will often preclude land uses which are incompatible with the maintenance of species and habitats for which the sites are designated. We also have a number of objectives for our nature reserves which help us fulfil our charitable objective of environmental protection, including flood management, carbon sequestration, species protection and habitat enhancement. Thus, we have limited capacity to facilitate community food production on our own land, although moves have been made where possible.

Many of the opportunities to increase land for community production are more likely to be found in urban areas, on sites owned by local authorities and businesses. We are unfamiliar with the barriers to communities accessing this land, but other organisations may be better placed to comment on this.

Please get in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Harrison  
Parliamentary Officer