



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### SOCIAL VALUE

Norwich City Council

## Growing Communities – Reimagining Horticulture

At Norwich City Council we have a commitment to investigating whether the money we spend can have more positive outcomes than simply the purchase. This ethos is at the heart of our award winning floral displays around the city.

The flowers and plants in both our civic displays and in many community planting projects around the city are grown by students on supported learning courses at City College Norwich in a partnership spanning 20 years and producing over 20,000 plants a year. Many of the students also take on work placements with local firms, learning to plant and maintain the plants they have grown.

In 2019 we have taken our next step and broadened this partnership to include other community groups and residents. In previous years the scheme purchased plug plants for the students to grow to maturity, but we felt we could do more with the help of other green fingered people. The scheme began to also purchase seeds which are 30% cheaper than plugs and engaged local residents to take these home to their own greenhouses to nurture until they reach a stage the students can take them back.

Ten groups are already supporting the students this way with regular meet-ups, seed swaps, advice sessions and they've even diversified into growing vegetables for other local projects from seeds donated to them. This has meant that we can grow more, reduce costs and link groups together on a shared project where we work in partnership.

All the plants which are not used in civic plantings are freely available to other volunteer community planting projects in parks and neighbourhoods to help bring colour and pleasure to the whole city.

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#### For further information contact:

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