

## SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2023

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at [sfpawards@soilassociation.org](mailto:sfpawards@soilassociation.org) to discuss the process.**



**Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:**

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#)
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#)

### SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (\*= compulsory):

<b>Name of your partnership*:</b>
Birmingham Food Revolution and Creating a Healthy Food City Forum
<b>Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:</b>
Sarah Pullen, Food System Team, Service Lead, <a href="mailto:sarah.pullen@birmingham.gov.uk">sarah.pullen@birmingham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Geographic region which this award will represent*:</b>
Birmingham
<b>Award you are applying for*:</b>

Silver

**Please provide us with background information about your place\*:** Advisory word limit: 400 words

This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

**ANSWER:**

Birmingham is England's second city and the largest local authority in Europe, with a population of over 1.1 million plus more who commute in to work in the city. Therefore, our urban food system has a huge impact on citizens and the world around us.

Birmingham is renowned for its young and diverse population. 37% of our population is under the age of 25<sup>1</sup>. The 2021 census revealed that Birmingham is one of the first 'super diverse' cities in the UK, where citizens from ethnic 'minorities' make up more than half of the population (51.4%). Birmingham is home to people from 187 different nationalities, with 31% of our population as Asian or Asian British and 11% of our population is Black, Black British, Caribbean or African<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, 70% of the population has a religious affiliation, with 34% of the population identifying as Christian and 30% identifying as Muslim in the 2021 census. Birmingham is also recognised as a Local Authority of Sanctuary, demonstrating our commitment to working to support asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and helping them settle in local communities<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, Birmingham is a thriving collective of different people, ethnicities, identities, backgrounds, languages, and religions. Historically Birmingham was always seen as the city of 1,000 trades; and as we move forward as a diverse and bold city, we are now the city of 1,000 cuisines.

Whilst there is so much to celebrate, there are also significant economic and social challenges in the city. Birmingham has high levels of deprivation – 43% of the population, and over half of Birmingham's children, live in the most deprived decile of LSOA in the UK, making Birmingham the 3<sup>rd</sup> most deprived core city nationally<sup>4</sup>. This, combined with other factors such as high unemployment and crime rates in some areas, leads to significant inequalities in diets and health. Two thirds of adults in Birmingham are overweight or obese, and a quarter of children are obese by the time they leave primary school<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, tackling inequalities is at the heart of the Birmingham Food System strategy and our city-wide partnership.

**How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership**

**\*? Advisory word limit: 300 words**

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<sup>1</sup> Birmingham City Observatory, 2023. Population Overview. Available from: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

<sup>2</sup> Birmingham City Observatory, 2023. Census 2021 Ethnicity and Religion Highlight Briefing. Available from: [Census 2021 Ethnicity and Religion Highlight Briefing \(birmingham.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Birmingham City Council, accessed 2023. City of Sanctuary. Available from: [Introduction | City of Sanctuary | Birmingham City Council](#)

<sup>4</sup> Birmingham City Council, 2019. Deprivation in Birmingham Analysis of the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. Available from: [Deprivation in Birmingham 2019.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> Office for Health & Disparities, 2023. Fingertips public health profile <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/adults%20obesity#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000005/ati/102/are/E08000025/iid/93088/age/168/sex/4>

**ANSWER:**

Birmingham being a “majority-minority ethnicity city”, with a thriving LGBTQ+ community, a large young population, and strong communities of all forms means considering EDI in our structure and partnership is a priority. The Birmingham Food System Strategy clearly outlines this with our three key principles of [Collaborate, Empower, Equalise](#) that is the foundation for all our activity and action that takes place across our food system. We have also created and established tools such as the [Big Bold City Tool and Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation \(FADMaP\) Tool](#). These tools enable us to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into everything our partnership does. For example, we review membership of our forums, action groups, partnership and the relationships we have built annually as well as whenever we set up working groups to begin working on new projects. The tools have enabled us to identify where there are gaps so we can reach out to people from communities who are particularly impacted by an issue, recognised as underrepresented or facing inequalities, and proactively ensure diverse voices are part of the conversations and decisions. It has also enabled us to target funding and opportunities towards priority community groups and geographic areas to address existing inequity. We undertook an Equality Impact Assessment for the Birmingham Food System Strategy as part of the approval processes for the strategy and recognised that we didn’t want this to be a one-off activity, and so embedded EDI into our ongoing processes through the tools we created. In addition to shaping our partnerships and relationships, our tools ensure our plans and actions are developed in a way that ensures we continually reflect on and improve our approach to EDI from the planning stage, through to delivery and evaluation. This includes actions taken by the Food System Team, Strategy Action Groups, the Birmingham Food Revolution partnership, and the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum. We work to empower, celebrate, and improve the lives of those with protected characteristics, challenging life circumstances, and those seldom heard.

## SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read **SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants**: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact*: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

### Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

#### Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

Our food partnership is made up of several parts. We have found that have multi-layered governance is key to a dynamic food partnership that can tackle the challenges we face in our food system. There is no one-size-fits-all and we have proactively ensured that people can engage with the food partnership in ways that suit them.

[Creating a Healthy Food City Forum \(CHFCE\)](#) This was established in 2019 as the strategic forum to drive forward good food in the city. The forum is chaired by Councillor Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and leaders of the Director of Public Health and the Food System Team at Birmingham City Council. The Forum is a dynamic local representation from organisations and key players from across the city's food system. There are 62 members including:

- Third sector organisations (including food aid, growing, surplus food, community projects, and other charities such as Trussell Trust, the Food Foundation)
- Health sector (NHS, nutrition projects, community dietitians, Healthwatch, dental, aging)
- Academics (food safety, food system, behavioural science, health economics, business school, Centre for Entrepreneurship, Mandala Consortium)
- Birmingham Food Council
- Businesses (fruit and vegetable distributor)
- Holidays Activities and Food Programme
- Birmingham Youth
- Councillors
- Local Authority Officers (including Food System, inclusive growth, youth service, inequalities)

Since 2019 the Forum has played a key role in building Birmingham's capacity to ensure that a whole system approach to the food landscape of the city. Its members were actively involved in the steering and consultation processes during the Food System Strategy. The forum also exists as a means for members to share updates and information on food activities, change and use networks to strengthen and progress work on key issues across the city. The forum meets every two weeks and are regularly recorded and shared with all the members after each meeting.

#### Topic-Related Networks

Our broad and thriving dynamic Birmingham Food Revolution partnership also includes topic related networks throughout our food system:

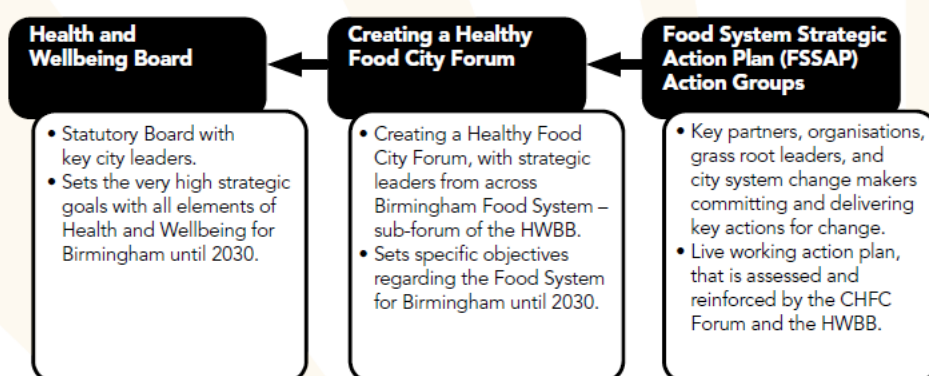
- Food Justice Network (network of 300+ foodbanks, community cafes, food pantries and others in Birmingham)
- Cost of Living Food Provision Group
- Urban Agriculture Consortium
- Growing Network
- Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
- Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Midlands Hospitality Network
- Nationwide Catering Association (NCASS)
- West Midlands Grain Network
- Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation
- Slow Food Birmingham

Where there are people that want to engage but aren't able to join the Forum or topic networks on a regular basis, we will ensure they are able to engage on a one-to-one basis in a way that meets their needs, and ensure their voices are heard. This includes:

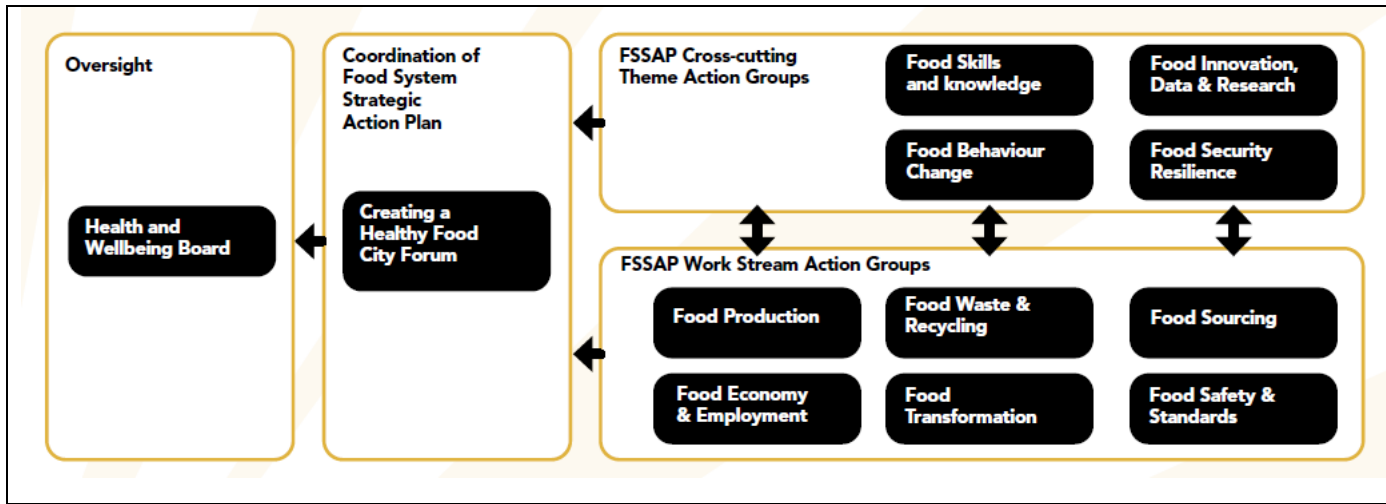
- Food Conversation engagement events
- Seldom Heard Voices focus groups
- Strategy consultation events and survey
- Meetings with wholesalers, Neighbourhood Network Scheme and National Producer Associations and Alliances such as Love British Food, Landworkers Alliance and Social Farms and Gardens.

### Food System Action Groups

As we move into the next phase of Birmingham Food System Strategy delivery our partnership is working on further developing the Food System Action plan across 6 strategic workstreams and 4 cross-cutting themes (See section 1B). Since the strategy was published we have actively been working on mobilising stakeholders across the food system in our city through reaching out to stakeholders at Forum meetings and at in-person events such as [West Midlands Greener Together Forum](#). We have a dedicated team embedded in Birmingham Public Health and who provide coordination and secretariat support to ensure actions are delivered across 6 workstreams and 4 cross-thematic groups. We now have over 60 additional stakeholders who have expertise in the Food System Action Groups.

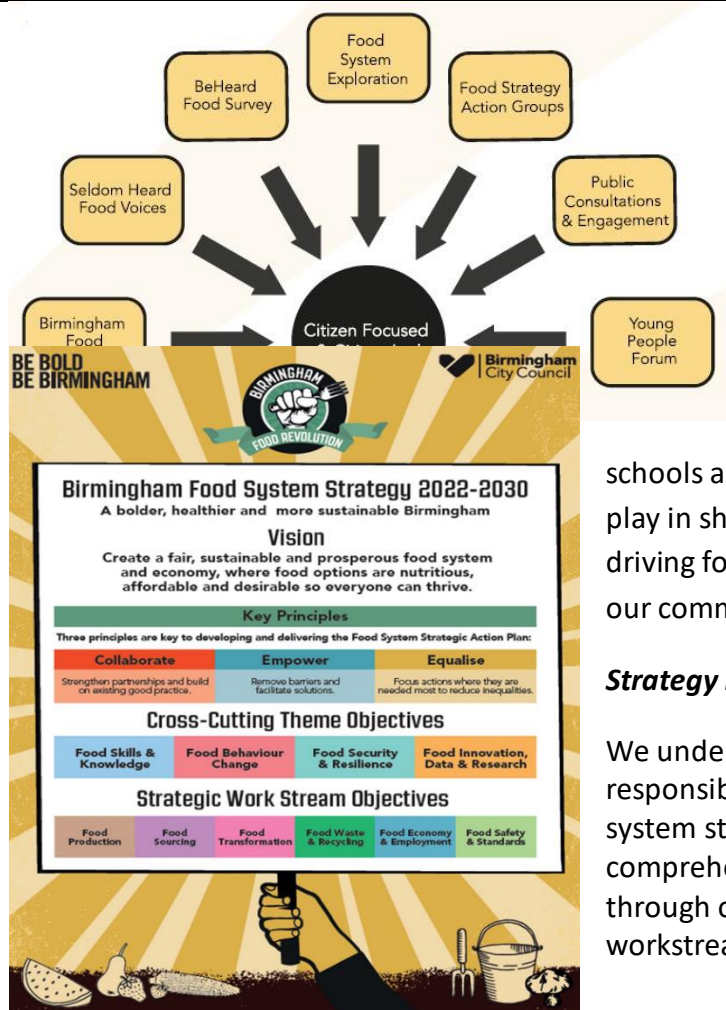


In October 2023 we will be hosting a series of 7 days we will hold meetings for each of the 4 cross-cutting themes. Each working group will deliver a set of terms of reference but will remain under the leadership of the CHFCF with a strategic support from the HWBB. Throughout our 8-year journey to deliver the strategy we will continue to grow and develop the CHFCF to ensure that we are able to establish a strong network leveraging change in Birmingham's food system.





## Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan



In April 2023 Birmingham City Council adopted the city's first comprehensive Food System Strategy which spans over the period of eight years from 2022-2030. The comprehensive Food System Strategy began in 2018 by listening to the views of Birmingham citizens. Through the [Birmingham Food Conversation](#) we wanted to understand the lived experience of over 400 citizens from diverse communities, captured through 33 facilitated focus groups, the [Birmingham Be Heard](#) survey and 10 consultation events including schools, colleges and universities, resulting in a strategy to draft strategy. The now published Birmingham Food System Strategy is the result of three years of hard work, collaboration, and dialogue with stakeholders from schools and universities to food producers, dietitians and food system experts. Citizens play in shaping this strategy. It's a roadmap that all of us in Birmingham are driving forward. Our aim is to have a regenerative food system that benefits our communities and our economy.

### Strategy Delivery and Action Planning

We understand the importance and responsibility of delivering the whole system strategy which is why we have set a comprehensive approach for its delivery through our model of 6 strategic workstreams and 4 cross-cutting themes.

Each of the cross-cutting themes and work streams and to feed into the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum and Food System Strategic Action Plan.

These action groups will be made up of a working collaboration of key organisations and change-makers from across Birmingham with influence on many key sectors such as health, economy and business, research and innovation, education and skills, communities, food justice, and many more.

The Food System Strategic Action Plan will include short-, medium- and long-term actions to achieve the objectives of each of the cross-cutting themes and strategy work streams of the eight year Birmingham Food System Strategy.



### [Our brand -Birmingham Food Revolution](#)

We also recognise the importance of uniting our city in delivering the change in our food system, and we are doing this through Birmingham Food Revolution branding and community identity. The revolution that has been building for years across the city with inspirational actions such as community dining projects, composting initiatives, surplus food redistribution, cook



research into eating habits, growing projects, getting more local food into the supply chain and so much more. This underpins our Food System Strategy and is a true example of how coordinated collective action can produce a city



- We consume a nutritious diet that helps us thrive
- Our diet doesn't cause us harm
- Our food system is ethical, fair and eliminates injustice from farm to fork
- We reduce harm to the world around us
- We empower people and overcome barriers to providing healthy and sustainable
- We respect and support diversity and choice
- We are resilient, and adapt, learn and evolve
- We celebrate what food brings to our city Birmingham

Birmingham City Council is also actively supporting the Food Revolution and has ran a [Food Legends grant scheme](#) Food Revolution this year (see section 2B).

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit 1000)

Connecting people and projects across the city and improving collaboration to ensure citizens can stay up to date is a priority. This is why Birmingham City Council Food System Team will publish an annual report later this year to share initiatives taking place across our city in support of the Birmingham Food Revolution (see reference to [Birmingham Food System Strategy](#) submission). By sharing these case studies, we hope to not only celebrate these initiatives but also to inspire further progress in transforming Birmingham's food system.

**Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement**

**Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food**

There have been a wide variety of projects and opportunities across the city to raise awareness about food issues with partnership organisations:

**Birmingham Food Conversation**

Birmingham Food Conversations were undertaken to reflect upon and understand the lived experience of over 40 diverse communities captured through 33 facilitated focus groups hosted by 24 commissioned providers. The Birmingham Food Conversation [was produced](#) that explored the diversity of Birmingham's food scene, the inequalities that exist in the city and the need for change. Participants were invited to respond to an online survey on their food choices. Food focus groups were commissioned.

**Seldom Heard Voices**

Targeted focus group conversations about food and nutrition with communities that are rarely heard, including ethnic minority community, people living with disability, youth and more. Conversations focused on:

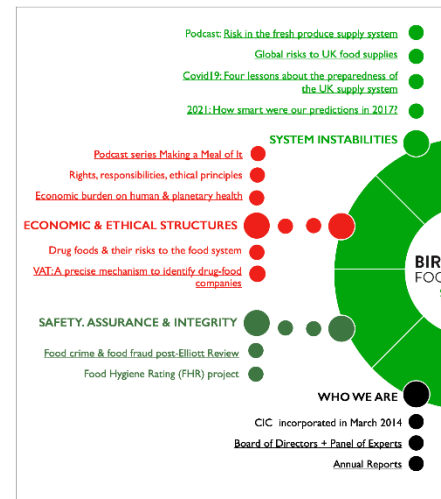
- Beliefs, barriers and influences
- Access, security and environment
- Eating and shopping habits
- Food waste
- Food and climate

The findings were used to inform the Emergency Food Plan during the pandemic and the city's food portfolio as a whole.

### Events

Many of **Birmingham's independent food organisations** have raised public awareness around food with a variety of free opportunities, through events, art projects, courses more. Including:

- [West Midlands Grain Network \(WMGN\)](#)
  - The West Midlands Grain Network met for the first time in March 2023.
  - Farmers, millers and bakers with an interest in rethinking how grain is grown, processed and consumed in the region attended.
  - In June 2023 WMGN held the follow up meetup and a farm visits to discuss challenges such as transport, storage and processing of grains while still keeping local and heritage grains and wheats to reduce the food miles of our products and the local grain economy, improve the traceability of our ingredients, and enables us to buy bread and the land the grain was grown on.
- [Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation \(BDAC\)](#)
  - As group of volunteer plot holders representing up to 7,000 plot holders on 113 sites in Birmingham number of events and sends quarterly newsletters. Some of the events include:
    - [The Annual Birmingham Allotment Fruit, Flower & Vegetable Competition](#)
    - [Birmingham Allotment Heritage Project](#) – project to create a record of Birmingham Allotments in the Library of Birmingham.
- [Birmingham Food Council](#) has produced a number of art exhibitions and exploring food issues in partnership with their Narrativium project including:
  - [The Hand That Feeds: A musical about food crime](#),
  - Graffeat: An installation at Kings Heath Health Club,
  - Grand Union Visual Arts project: The Empire Remains.
  - The info-diagram on the right is a summary of our current focus of activity:
- [Slow Food Birmingham](#) - the Birmingham branch of Slow Food: a global, grassroots organisation founded in 1989. It focuses on a range of different topics from food and circular economy, [food dignity](#) and growing workshops.
- [The Active Wellbeing Society \(TAWS\)](#) – is a community and benefit society offering a wide range of activities at an individual and community level to make communities more resilient by living more active and connected lives. A big part of the work that TAWS does, with some of the projects including:
  - **Big Feed Project:** The Big Feed project brings people together over food, by providing a safe, welcoming space in the city. There are 5 cafes across Birmingham offering residents an opportunity to come together for a coffee session twice a week.



- [Facebook live cook-alongs](#) - are designed to show individuals and families how to create a delicious, nutritious meal. The videos are designed so anyone can follow regardless of their previous skills or cooking knowledge. They have over 100,000 followers.

### International Events

[Food Cities 2022](#) - through the Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership Birmingham helped in facilitating peer-to-peer learning with The Food Foundation, tools and guides were prepared for cities looking to develop urban food systems solutions. We have focused extensively on lessons from the successful partnership between Birmingham and Pune in India, which among other things led to a city-wide food policy in Pune and informed both cities' COVID-19 emergency food response. Additionally, over 30 people attended a webinar series that ran from summer 2021 until summer 2022.

### Media Coverage

Many partners use social media and newsletters to engage on healthy food issues.

E.g. Twitter (X) followers:

@healthybrum (BPH) – 7,993

@UCBofficial – 6,913

@CREMEatAston – 2,599

@Food\_Foundation – 21.9k

@BDA\_Dietitians – 39.1K

@TAWsociety – 4,308

@IncredibleSurp – 1,936

Birmingham Food Revolution has also been recognised in local, national and international media our Strategy report was displayed at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation as well as at the World Food Forum in Rome and showcased at the Food Systems Symposium in Sweden.

### Campaigns

#### Fizz Free February (Every year since 2020)

We take part in the [Fizz Free February campaign](#) which aims to reduce consumption of fizzy drinks. It is a month-long campaign to persuade local people to swap sugar-laden fizzy drinks for healthier alternatives, like water. A number of activities were carried out during the campaign in 2023. We started with a launch [video](#) from Birmingham's Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care. During the campaign, information of the health impacts of drinking fizzy drinks and was a call for action to people to make healthier choices. This was followed up with an advert on Free Radio and UnityFM.. All of the resources were available on the BCC website ([link](#)).

#### Cook the Commonwealth

[Cook the Commonwealth](#) was a project that formed part of the council's Commonwealth Games legacy work. The project involved two key stages:

1. Capturing recipes from Birmingham and beyond and ensuring they are as attractive, tasty, and healthy as possible.
2. A campaign encouraging people to Cook the Commonwealth

More than **750 recipes** were captured, with **10-15 recipes** for each of the **72 Commonwealth countries**. The recipes were shared on the [Whisk](#) making these recipes accessible to all citizens of Birmingham. There are community pages for each country. As part of the Commonwealth Games, we engaged with **100+ people** on the Cook the Commonwealth project.

## Full of Beans

Birmingham is developing a multi-strand campaign to increase consumption of beans and pulses in schools, with the first intervention focused on increasing beans and pulses consumption of up to **4200 children attending 70 of the Holidays Activities and Food Programme holiday clubs** during the summer holidays. This involved creating many Full of Beans activities and resources to help children and young people discover, explore and celebrate beans and pulses through growing, tasting and cooking. Furthermore, in collaboration with the British Dietetics Association, we have ensured that there is a large collection of recipes that can be utilised in the development of resources for different settings and communities. **11 dedicated communities** were created, full of [recipes](#) showcasing the versatility of beans and pulses. The recipes have been promoted through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme holiday club resources and next steps include engaging with local food businesses to incorporate recipes using beans and pulses into their menus. The evaluation and feedback from the pilot will be posted on the [Full of Beans Webpage](#) in October/November.



## **Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement**

Through our partnership Birmingham City Council, Public Health and University College Birmingham (School of H together to create the [Centre for Urban Food @UCB](#). The new centre has been created through drawing upon U University to support the creation and dissemination of ideas, resources and knowledge related to food system t outcomes have included:

- Partnership between University College Birmingham and Birmingham City Council, Public Health innovation and sustainability across the City.
- Brought together other Higher Education Institutions from across Birmingham, as well as charities and has increased awareness of Birmingham's Food System Strategy approach and included 'v
- A series of **'Creative Dinners'** where representatives of local communities, charities, public health for a meal at the restaurant Birmingham College of Food to discuss and influence policy relating
- 3 dinners to date with key themes focusing on: cost of living; innovation and behaviour change
- All ingredients for the dinners have been locally sourced as much as possible, including working Wholesale Market.
- Students from across University College Birmingham's Culinary Arts Degree programmes were menu for each dinner with respect to the theme and then preparing it from scratch.
- 2 further dinners to be arranged for October and November 2023 following dissemination of t
- A solution focused approach to addressing issues pertinent to the Birmingham Food Strategy.

## ***Birmingham Food Legends and Affordable Food Infrastructure Grant***

To celebrate the launch of the Birmingham Food Revolution in 2023 and to support the city's cost of living response grants schemes:

1. [Birmingham Food Legends Fund](#) - This is a grant scheme to support food project initiatives which fit into our and prosperous food system and economy, where food options are nutritious, affordable and desirable so even were made available to kickstart new projects, or continue the good work of existing projects, and delivered able to fund 43 projects, totalling £200,000.
2. [The Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund](#) - grants of £3,000 available to foodbanks and other projects support them to purchase equipment that will increase access to affordable food (see section 3B).

The projects align with our 6 strategic work streams including food sourcing, food production, food skills and education. Information about the projects and their activities is featured in the relevant sections of the application.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit)

We also recognise the importance of knowledge-sharing and learning from other places around the globe to enrich our understanding on how to build a good local food movement. This is why Birmingham is an active member of number of international networks including [Urban Food Policy Pact \(MUFPP\)](#), Eurocities and Delice network as well as being part of Horizon's Food Trails project. We have established relationships with number of Commonwealth cities like Pune, Johannesburg and Windhoek. Since we signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Steering Committee for the period of 2021-2023 during which we have supported the recruitment of cities in Asia, Africa and Commonwealth links and supported 11 cities in Europe to develop the nutrition element of their food policy action plan as part of the Food Trails project.

We understand that we don't have all the answers so joining these networks has enabled us to build the capacity to learn from others growing and food tourism. We have actively translated these learnings into building our strategy and Food Legends project to continue our active participation which is why we have re-applied to be on the steering committee of the MUFPP project delivering a programme of activities on Food Justice as part of MUFPP Fellowship.

### Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food

#### Action area A: Tackle food poverty

As previously mentioned, deprivation is a big issue in our city. We know that many of our citizens are experiencing food poverty. Our partnership is committed to addressing this. This commitment has been demonstrated at all levels:

- As a city, we have launched a [Food Justice Pledge](#) for cities to commit to putting their political will behind it, emphasising the need for policies which create and support an affordable, safe, nutritious and sustainable food system, irrespective of social or economic grouping. This pledge has been supported by **35 community groups** and a [Food Justice Toolkit](#) to support cities in addressing food injustice in their localities.
- We have also included this issue as one of our cross-cutting themes in the Food System Strategy. The strategy is all about increasing access to sufficient affordable, nutritious and safe food for all citizens, all throughout the city, every age.
- The community food sector in Birmingham is extremely strong, and there are individuals, organisations and businesses in Birmingham who are committed to tackling food poverty and supporting citizens. [The Birmingham Food Provision](#) has more than **300 individuals** who sit on our Food Provision group to co-produce interventions to tackle the food poverty of Birmingham strategic response to the cost of living crisis.

### ***Measuring Food Insecurity***

One of the issues that we have encountered during our work to address food insecurity is a lack of consistent measures, including numbers of people using foodbanks and other food aid (as we often rely on Trussell Trust data as a proxy for 11 of the 150+ food projects in the city), insights into the numbers of people who may be experiencing food insecurity, an understanding of the severity of food insecurity, as well as the prevalence. Therefore, we have sought to increase our understanding of food insecurity in the city by:

- Commissioning work to model the number of Birmingham residents who may be food insecure based on the Eatwell guide according to the Eatwell guide.
- Conducting the [City-Wide Food Aid Count](#) in March 2023 in collaboration with the Food Justice Network.
- Food Justice Network has [mapped food projects](#) throughout the city so that people can know services located nearby. This has been shared to a wide array of partners including the Council's benefits team, who are now beginning to use this information to make therefore more accessible food projects. This insight work demonstrates our commitment to being evidence-based and to seek to tackle food poverty.

### ***City-Wide Coordinated - Cost of Living Response***

Over winter 2022-23, we ran the **Emergency Food Aid Fund** through Birmingham City Council's cost of living response. We supported food project who could demonstrate work in food insecurity and a need for funds. The Emergency Food Aid Fund provided **(£800/month over 6 months)** to over **100 food projects**. To do this, we developed a novel approach to community organisations to receive the funds quickly. The grant scheme was extremely well received by food projects, for example:

*"The Emergency Food Aid Fund has given us breathing space. We provide 1300 meals a week on average through our food provision, and so cost of food has really hit us. Supply issues, something we hadn't considered, have also meant that it costs more money. The fund has meant that we have time to build up our reserves and plan for the future, and that we are not in crisis",* (food pantry organiser in Birmingham).

Overall, this grant supported access to food for Birmingham's vulnerable citizens during the cost of living crisis. We will be running a [Food Aid Fund](#) as a follow-up to the Emergency Food Aid Fund for winter 2023-24.

Also, as part of the cost of living response, we ran the **Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund**. This fund was set up to support food projects to increase their capacity and infrastructure in order to provide food to Birmingham residents. Examples of such projects include food pantries, social supermarkets, on-street feeding and community cafés; we also accepted applications from community residents seeking to set-up or improve food-related support. The fund consisted of a grant of up to **£3,000 for individual projects** to increase the capacity of Birmingham's food projects for food provision. The funds could be used for equipment such as fridges, freezers, boxes, shelving, other food storage solutions.

Overall, more than **65 food projects** were supported with the Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund, providing support for short- and medium-term.

### ***Other initiatives***

**Shame and Stigma Toolkit** - We have developed a shame and stigma toolkit to support food projects to be able to support people in dignified ways when it is needed. We plan to utilise a stigma-preventing framework as we continue to work on this.



### **School Food Provision – HAF Programme, Healthy Start distribution**

As the youngest city in Europe, we recognise the need to support the young people in our city who might be experiencing food insecurity. [Bring it on Brum](#) (the Holidays, Activities and Food programme) engaged 52,519 young people last year across 386 holiday clubs. 10,000 young people were on Free School Meals. In addition to providing a huge number of meals, Bring it on Brum also runs a range of practical, interactive workshops and opportunities to broaden children’s experience of food (primarily fruit and vegetables). We have received positive feedback from providers and participants, with one child saying: “this is the best lunch ever because I had a choice”. The response also provided funding for equipment to 14 youth centres in the city which enabled them to deliver 75,000 meals a service in youth food insecurity.

The uptake for Healthy Start in July 2023 was 64.3% across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Uptake for Birmingham in July 2024 is 80% uptake. Birmingham also offers free Healthy Start vitamins for all pregnant women, all women with children aged 4 years who are on the healthy start scheme. There are 145 distribution settings, and finding the correct [postcode finder](#) on the Birmingham City Council site.

**Social Value and Real Living Wage** - Since 2012, [Birmingham City Council \(BCC\)](#) has been accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. All council employees are rightly compensated for their contributions. Organisations that have contracts with the council are required to pay the Real Living wage. As a pivotal institution in Birmingham, the council's dedication to the Real Living Wage sends a strong message about the ethos and the type of economy we want for our community and our city.

### **Action Area B: Promote healthy eating**

Our commitment to promoting healthy eating is demonstrated through the entire food system strategy, the vision of a sustainable and prosperous food system and economy, where food options are nutritious, affordable and desirable. This is achieved through an entire work stream, food transformation, dedicated to transforming the food offer and diets in Birmingham to be healthier, more sustainable ingredients, and less fat, salt and sugar. We also have two relevant cross-cutting themes in this area, food literacy (empowering citizens with knowledge and skills in relation to the food system) and food behaviour change (developing the motivation for key behaviours that will enable long term change.).

The previously mentioned **Full of Beans** and **Fizz Free February** campaigns have benefits in supporting healthy eating.

- The Full of Beans campaign aims to increase consumption of this food group which is affordable and nutritious, reducing reliance on meat and fish as a protein source and increased fibre and micronutrient intake.
- Fizz Free February campaign aimed to increase personal awareness of the intake of high sugar drinks and encourage healthier choices.

[Culturally appropriate diverse eating guides](#) are being produced following public consultation and partnership with Communities Engage and Thrive and Caroline Walker Trust. The purpose of this is to use the Eatwell Guide as a baseline for guidance which is representative of Birmingham’s residents and the diversity in diets. This will support individual dietary planning and portion control.

**Healthy food parcels guidance** was created for food provision services in putting together a parcel that was shared with partners across Birmingham via email. This provides a best practice approach in providing nutritional meals which are easy to prepare and items which can be consumed together, e.g., pasta and sauce.

### **Other Campaigns and projects**

<sup>6</sup> Bring it on Brum, 2022. Birmingham Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2022 Annual Report. Available from: [DFE BIOB 2022 Report \(bringitonbrum.co.uk\)](#)



- **Healthier Takeaway Pilot** - Birmingham City Council is partnering with WMCA and an online delivery provider to incentivise restaurants in Birmingham and West Midlands to make healthier food more easily available, not only around the UK, but also by exploring additional incentives through the commercial angle of marketing through the chain perspective of better wholesale rates.
- **[Healthier Convenience Stores Pilot](#)** – Birmingham City Council, in partnerships with Rice Marketing and MRC, is supporting a Good Food Retail and Wholesale pilot that was first developed in London. The Good Food Retail and Wholesale pilot aims to improve access to healthier food options by increasing the range of healthier products sold in convenience stores and to scale the work nationally to other major cities in the UK like Birmingham. A large-scale roll out will help us to engage with the health agenda by seeing both the commercial opportunity and moral responsibility of food retailers in convenience stores relied upon by families especially in low-income areas. Project is due to start in late 2023.
- **[Change Kitchen](#)** – is a social enterprise involved in many projects ‘cooking up change’ (the organisation’s mission is to provide meals for people in need, or delivery healthy eating training in an accessible, non-patronising way for 15 years since inception) to people most in need of it: women and children in shelters after fleeing domestic violence, helping people being rehoused more securely, children (and their parents) in schools in Birmingham’s most deprived wards, and food bank services (the cooking meals to deliver for free to people in need and the healthy eating cooking training to help people with the least access to these services). In June 2023 Change Kitchen launched a new [healthy takeaway shop](#) in Edgbaston by a grant from Birmingham City Council.
- **Food Safety and Standards** – The Food Safety, Hygiene and Management [Team @ UoB](#) are members of our network who are actively educating our network on issues of food safety, food fraud and standards.

### ***Birmingham Food Legends - Food Skills and Knowledge***

In 2023 BCC supported 16 groups and organisations which offered education and skills opportunities on topics such as healthy shopping, aligned with the objectives of our Strategy’s Food Skills and Knowledge workstream. Below is the list of organisations promoting healthier eating across the city:-

Organisation	Project Offering
<a href="#">Women Empowering Women</a>	Aims to bring local women from different cultures together in an informal friendly setting where they can share their experiences about other people in their community. It will deliver advice, information, education to improve food choices during the session. Additionally, recipes will be adapted according to requirements and all attendees will enjoy a meal. There will be a booklet of recipes at the end of the project. The aim is to educate service users about reducing food waste and provide information so that the women can undertake a basic food and hygiene qualification Level 2. Will also be growing herbs in our communal garden that we can use for our cooking sessions.
<a href="#">Lil's Parlour</a>	Eat Joyfully Project. At Lil’s Parlour CIC our mantra is “eat joyfully” They offer a range of outreach sessions to help people “eat joyfully”. The Eat Joyfully sessions will be offered on a “free” basis to groups where we will introduce people to fresh fruits, vegetables and breads to prepare and inspire our participants try new foods, debunk myths and learn how to adapt at home with their own families. Also, big Eat Joyfully lunch.
<a href="#">Saathi House</a>	Workshops helping local families better understand, learn, and implement nutritious and healthy meal choices. Addressing conditions such as diabetes that many of them when cooking food on a budget, sell buy and use buy decisions to help them make their purchases last longer, growing their own vegetables and herbs at home. This will help us better support the community in Aston to respond to the fuel and food poverty they are facing due to the cost-of-living crisis.
<a href="#">ecobirmingham</a>	Power to Eat will reach 5 organisations in 5 different wards across Birmingham. A course of 5 x 2.5 hours sessions (a total of 12.5 hours per beneficiary) will focus on using a slow-cooker. 1 person per organisation will be involved. The learning experience is around healthy food choices (less fat, salt and sugar), budgeting and cooking using a slow-cooker to save.

<a href="#">Kings Rise Academy</a>	Working to inspire and empower local families to cook affordable healthy meals. Using home-grown food from a community pantry, academy will offer a series of cookery workshops to every child and parent at academy, focusing on reducing food waste. Working together with local gardening and cookery businesses, will 390 children and their parents learn to cook food, prepare nutritious snacks and cook healthy meals, helping them develop positive habits for the future.
Limitless Fitness Centre CIC	Providing cooking classes for 50 families with children can teach them valuable skills such as following recipes, creating something delicious. It can also help them to gain confidence in their abilities and to develop a sense of achievement and accomplishments. Through a cooking project, young people and adults can learn to make nutritious meals and gain an understanding of how to prepare food safely and hygienically. This project will also develop skills in different cuisines.
<a href="#">Cook and Grow Together CIC</a>	To create cooking and growing classes for young people based at the Maypole youth centre, Druids Heath. We want young people to learn the skills and confidence to cook an evening meal for themselves and to share the meal with their families with a family cooking day. It is hoped some of the food would be sourced from local supermarkets and Incredible Surplus and some of the food and herbs would be grown on site in youth club growing sessions. We want up to 25 children to be involved and therefore could also influence 25 families. We propose a 12-week project of a cooking session based at Maypole youth centre. Encouraging teenagers to "cook your own tea!" or do something similar.
<a href="#">Incredible Surplus &amp; Bags of Taste</a>	The project will deliver Mentored home cooking courses to 60 people in Birmingham. All students are from low income, poverty/ill health. This is the target beneficiary group. This behaviour change course is comprehensive, addressing the barriers people face to eat well – the social determinants of health.
<a href="#">The Pump</a>	Training young people in making videos and podcasts about cooking for the local community and showing how to cook. The Pump Café and an internationally-renowned streaming professional will provide the equipment they need. The project will have footage direct to YouTube, Twitch and TikTok.
<a href="#">Longbridge Childcare Strategy Group</a>	Longbridge Childcare Strategy Group (LCSG) plan to increase the food skills and knowledge of disadvantaged children by teaching them in a very practical and innovative way how to grow and cook healthy food. This will be done through a series of workshops take place across 3 venues from April to August with a minimum of 16 children/young people at each session. Using internet sites, reference books and talking face to face to food producers growers and sellers the project will teach what healthy food is how it can be obtained and what impact food has on their bodies physically and nutritionally.
<a href="#">Community As One CIC</a>	The project is called Erdington link up. The workshops will offer agricultural and nutritional education to young people, individuals and families about agriculture and sustainability and how to eat healthy on a low budget. The project will also demonstrate a healthy body, also demonstrating how to grow fruit and veg with limited or no access to green space, using a portable green house, providing participants with home grown veg kits, delivering tasting and cooking sessions. Participants will receive an informative booklet on how to source these foods on a low budget with minimum cost. The project will also provide home and information about other community agencies which can help and support families such as food banks.
Hillstone School	The school providing practical cooking skills to children and their parents. 471 children on the role will be involved in cooking and growing related activities as well as their parents/carers who are encouraged to take part in our activities.
<a href="#">Fox Hollies Community Association CIO</a>	Cooking classes for young people to explore healthy eating habits, nutritious meal plans, food hygiene and safety skills.
<a href="#">Change Kitchen CIC</a>	The Wonder Bag - Project to support cooking with a non-electric slow cooker. This project is about helping people living in poverty, potential lack of skills and access as well as fuel poverty. There will be two pilot training programmes for attendees to support attendees with these issues and hopefully use this to demonstrate further need and support.
<a href="#">Headway</a>	Upgrading/equipping kitchen area at Wylde Green brain injury centre to run Daily Living Skills sessions for people with brain injuries.
St Chad's Church	Project will run a series of cooking sessions for vulnerable families where they will learn basic cookery skills, how to use leftover food, undertake a Food Hygiene Qualification and share their newfound skills at the Church Café.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit 1000)

Our partnership also works closely with the [Mandala Consortium](#), a large research project funded by UKRI focusing on food systems for planetary and population health, centred on the city of Birmingham and the regional economy of the Midlands. In the next two years the Mandala Consortium is looking to evaluate a number of projects across institutional catering, community food sub-systems. The projects that will be evaluated range from experimenting with changes to menus to reduce/remove meat and increase plant-based meals to improve health and sustainability impacts of institutional catering, to working with a supermarket to test how price flexing or in store promotions in some stores in more deprived areas affect food purchases.

#### **Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy**

##### **Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development**

Birmingham demonstrates a commitment to creating a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable food economy, and local economic development. This is evident in the Birmingham Food System Strategy, where Food Economy and Employment is a key work stream. This work stream is centred on facilitating a thriving local food economy for all and maximising training and employment opportunities. It contains the following aspirations:

- 1) Building a thriving, healthy and sustainable food economy
- 2) Strengthening the future food sector and food system workforce potential of our city

We are in the process of forming an action planning group for this workstream, which will bring together key players from across Birmingham, including hospitality networks, chefs, SME owners, a representative from the tourism board, Council, and organisations such as high streets and living wage, and academics with expertise in this area. This group will meet in October 2023 to develop actions for this workstream.

At present, the Cost of Living response group is working to include an emphasis on inclusive growth in their work. This has been included in these conversations from the beginning, ensuring that there is a strong food element and community focus to this work.

##### ***Planning and policy***

Birmingham City Council was one of five Local Authorities in 2019 awarded £300,000 over three years (2019 to 2021) for addressing childhood obesity and health inequalities across the city. The Food System Team took over the delivery of the [Obesity Trailblazer Programme \(COTP\)](#) in 2021. One of the key outputs of the Programme was a development of a toolkit for Birmingham.

The toolkit 'supports the creation of healthy communities through health-promoting planning policies, design and delivery in Birmingham.'

The indicator relating to food asks:

- Does the proposal facilitate the supply, delivery and self-sufficiency growing of local food, within a safe and accessible environment (e.g. community gardens and farms, access to water, compost, and farmers' markets, for example)?
- Is there a range of retail uses, including food stores and smaller affordable shops for social enterprises?
- Does the proposal avoid contributing towards an over-concentration of hot food takeaways in the local area?
- Does the proposal allow for large vehicle access to properties for the purpose of home deliveries and access to services?

The toolkit states:

Consider food access, location and how to facilitate social enterprises planners can help to create the conditions to better and affordable access to nutritious food. We have also developed an action plan to support the future processes as part of a whole system approach. In addition, we have looked at how planning and land use can be improved from a community growing perspective.

[Birmingham Development Plan \(BDP\)](#) - sets out a vision and a strategy for the sustainable growth of the City. A key aim is to encourage the development of healthier, more sustainable food retailing and social enterprise:



- Proposals for other forms of retailing such as markets and independent retailers will be supported and encouraged.
- A diverse range of facilities and uses will be encouraged.
- ...no more than 10% of units within the centre or within food takeaways.

We are also working closely with Birmingham City Council's Birmingham Development Team on exploring Healthier Advertising Policy and advertising space to promote Public Health campaigns as part of the Birmingham Transformation workstream. We are looking to progress this in the short term, working with West Midlands Combined Authority to bring

West Midlands as well.

### [The East Birmingham Growth Strategy](#)

East Birmingham is currently undergoing major redevelopment. [The East Birmingham Growth Strategy](#) has a strong focus on creating healthy food environments. Relevant points within the strategy include:

- Promote a healthy food economy across East Birmingham.
- Support the creation of new co-operatives and social enterprises and create greater opportunities for the public sector organisations.
- Working with the food industry including training providers, food suppliers, processors and retailers - in the long term to build a healthy food economy. This will both strengthen local businesses and increase access to fresh, healthy food.

### **Markets and distribution**

The city hosts two permanent food markets: the Bull Ring Open Market, which hosts 130 independent traders, and is home to one of the largest fish markets in the UK.

There are at least 10 farmers markets across the city, hosting independent local producers. Some have criteria for a certain mile radius. Moseley Farmers' Market has won FARMA UK Farmers' Market of the Year in 2009, 2012 and

In 2018, the [Wholesale Market](#) was relocated to a state-of-the-art, purpose-built site. This market is a key part of the city's food and drink sector, underpinning the local independent retail and city restaurant trade.

## Circular Economy & Food

### [Birmingham Circular Economy Club](#),

founded in 2016, meets 3-4 times a year to discuss key issues and opportunities to embed circularity in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Their events stimulated conversation with WMCA and led to the development of the Circular Economy Taskforce and [Routemap](#). Central to this initiative are several key interventions related to food that are described in the table on the right.

### Birmingham Tourism and Food

#### [The Sustainable Tourism Hub](#) has been

designed to help visitor economy businesses in Birmingham align with its local vision for sustainable development. This initiative showcases the region's commitment to fostering a sustainable business environment, especially within the food sector. The Hub puts spotlight on sustainable [food](#), emphasises the environmental impact of food and drink sourcing, driving businesses to introspect on the origin, their ingredients. It encourages businesses to actively engage with their supply chains, advocating for more ethics through local production, recyclable packaging, and diversified menus that cater to changing dietary preferences. A zero-waste café and cocktail bar in Digbeth, showcase successful examples. In essence, Birmingham's Sustainable Tourism Hub reflects the city's commitment to nurturing businesses that not only thrive economically but also foster an environment of economic and community well-being. The city also boasts zero-waste supermarket like [Clean Kilo](#) whose ethos of sourcing and waste is embedded in all that they do.

## Appendix 9: Circular Food

Strategic Interventions	Description	Drivers	Benefits
Regenerative Food Production	Support regenerative agriculture and permaculture practices as well as local food growing initiatives, including urban agriculture and horticulture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The West Midlands remains an agricultural hub yet currently imports 45-55% of its food.</li> <li>- Agricultural processes create land, water and air pollution which has negative impact on biodiversity and communities' health and wellbeing.</li> <li>- Unsustainable farming practices degrade soil health, which in turn negatively impacts farmers' yield and income.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain soil health.</li> <li>- Positive contribution to biodiversity increase and increase in natural capital.</li> <li>- Reduce food miles and CO2 associated with farming.</li> <li>- Increase farmers' income and resilience to climate change's adverse impacts.</li> <li>- Potential creation of new revenue streams for farmers.</li> <li>- Healthier diets and reduction of the cost of food with community-based/local food growing schemes.</li> </ul>
Circular Food Manufacturing	Develop circular strategies for food and drink processors and manufacturers, focusing on opportunity to use food waste as a productive resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New regulations around extended producer responsibility for packaging being introduced.</li> <li>- The region already benefits from several R&amp;D streams on improving agro-business processes and making them more sustainable.</li> <li>- New processes and infrastructures are required to support decarbonisation of large agro-businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of new processes and technologies that can be exported across the UK and globally.</li> <li>- Reduction in plastic pollution, especially plastic used in packaging.</li> <li>- CO2 savings and cost savings.</li> <li>- Reduce the impact of agro-business processes on the environment.</li> <li>- Using food waste for energy (including biofuels). For example, opportunity to capture heat from distillery.</li> <li>- Engagement with entire supply chain can enable innovation, efficiencies and new partnerships.</li> </ul>
Circular Food Hubs	Create circular food hubs with optimised logistics to collect and redistribute food that would otherwise be waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clusters and hubs around food are already being planned as part of Repowering the Black Country and the Social Economy Business Plan.</li> <li>- Opportunities for urban horticulture and agriculture identified in the Black Country.</li> <li>- Food waste is the major waste stream identified in the routemap from households going to landfill.</li> <li>- Food waste reduction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribution to localism.</li> <li>- Health and wellbeing improvements.</li> <li>- Creation of social value.</li> <li>- Reduction in amount of food waste and CO2 emissions associated with it.</li> <li>- Supporting existing community and volunteer groups working in the food sector.</li> <li>- Increase food security, food justice and food sovereignty.</li> </ul>
Healthy Consumption	Raise awareness and encourage sustainable, local food consumption, working closely with existing communities and volunteer groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No bans on fast food and unhealthy foods advertisement imposed in the West Midlands.</li> <li>- Obesity, particularly child obesity on the rise in England and the West Midlands.</li> <li>- Low-income neighbourhoods more negatively affected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase food security, food justice and food sovereignty.</li> <li>- Contribution to localism and generates social value.</li> <li>- Contribution to health and wellbeing particularly that of children and young adults.</li> </ul>
Circular Nutrient Loop	Close the nutrient loop by developing bio-technologies to recover and enhance the value of food waste and other key waste streams such as sewage and wastewater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of synthetic fertiliser causes environmental degradation.</li> <li>- Synthetic fertilisers increasingly expensive.</li> <li>- Food waste and other key waste streams (sewage and wastewater) currently not used at their highest value.</li> <li>- Build on existing innovative practice such as <a href="#">Minworth's</a> biogas recovery programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports bio-remediation and bio-fortification.</li> <li>- Maintains soil health and retain nutrients into the soil.</li> <li>- Creation of new revenue streams and jobs.</li> <li>- Cost savings by reducing reliance on synthetic fertilisers.</li> <li>- Positive impact on biodiversity, increase in natural capital, reduce use of finite resources.</li> <li>- Produce phages for pharmaceuticals and other life science sectors.</li> <li>- Produce biogas and other biofuels for hard to decarbonise sectors.</li> </ul>

### Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers



**Culturally diverse and appropriate local food - Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)** [hosted a conference for the Bangladeshi catering community](#), which highlighted the need for action in order for Pullen (Service Lead, Food System Team) was a panellist and discussed the role the local authority could play in s highlighted that to make the food economy in the region stronger, stakeholders will need to explore ways to create opportunities to support the Bangladeshi catering sector and to champion the role that it plays in Birmingham's closely with CREME, exploring ways in which we can support ethnic minority entrepreneurship in the city.



**Independent Birmingham** - [Independent Birmingham](#) provides is an app which lists independent businesses across the city. For a small monthly fee (£1.99), users of the app can find independent restaurants. It encourages consumers to support local and to discover independent businesses they have been aware of.

### **Slow Food Birmingham**

Birmingham boasts a plethora of independent food enterprises, many of which embrace sustainable and ethical business practices. Emphasizing sustainability and local sourcing challenges conventional, carbon-heavy supply chains. They rejuvenate the city's authentic farm shop experience to urban consumers. Prioritizing more than just quality, Slow Food bolsters city-wide food justice networks. Partnering with community groups, Slow Food redistributes, granting everyone access to fresh, quality sustenance. This initiative promotes local options but also fosters community spirit and eco-consciousness in Birmingham.

### **[Birmingham Food Legends](#)**

The Food Legends fund is supporting number of organisations delivering projects and initiatives in the area of Food

**Pip and Pals CIC** is delivering a project called [Pip and Pal's Creative Champions](#), which is designed to work alongside the Markets of a new regular artisan market. The market will be held on York Road, Kings Heath, once a month. The project highlights the many creative micro businesses based in Kings Heath. Giving them a shop window to the wider community is more inclusive than any online methods. The Creative Champions scheme subsidises a market stall at each of the Kings Heath Markets. On top of the market, Pip and Pal's will match the new business with an existing business as a mentor. The project also sources food to a consumer audience. Low food miles lead to a more environmentally sustainable and healthy food system. The mentoring aspect of this project supports the sustainable growth of economically viable new businesses.

**Aston Villa Foundation** - The [Aston Villa Catering Club](#) is using an innovative approach to create a state-of-the-art street food catering facility, promoting food classes, cooking skills and healthy eating. The van is anticipated benefit over 5,000 people through Digbeth Dining Club events, Aston Villa match days and have had commitment from a number of other Club and Foundation partners supporting their events, including Aston University and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. The project was previously a crime scene investigation van, which will be converted into a state-of-the-art street food catering van. The van will work at various Digbeth Dining Club Events, Aston Villa Match Days (discussions ongoing) and they have had commitment from Club and Foundation partners around supporting their events, including Aston University and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit 1000)

We are continuing to ensure are connected into the wider Food System by actively promoting the Strategy and its implementation in the city. In July 2023 Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health at Birmingham City Council, presented the Food System Strategy who came together to consult with stakeholders on the plans to minimise food wastage, maximise training and improve food security. To create thriving and economically sustainable food economy as part of the [Catering Hospitality Education Forum](#) (CHEF).

Hospitality Network). The Food System team will be working closely with Midlands Hospitality Network to connect implementation through the Food Economy and Employment workstream.

## Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains

### Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

#### ***Birmingham City Council – Sustainable Food Procurement***

In April 2023, Birmingham City Council approved a new [Catering and Food Procurement Strategy](#). Working closely with the Procurement team has included references to the new Food System Strategy and its key objectives related to food. This involves utilising the procurement process and relationships with suppliers and the supply chain to bring about a change in the way we work with. The Food and Catering Strategy also incorporates and commits procurement to:

- Proactively support the Food Sourcing work stream in the Council's practice with the objective to increase the amount of environmentally sustainable, ethical and nutritious foods in the food system.
- Increase the amount of local food in our city's food system.
- Increase demand and expectation of seasonal, local, sustainable food sourcing with ethical, transparent sourcing.
- Support businesses to adopt local sourcing in their food procurement.
- Support more rural-urban connection, especially through solutions that help connect local farming cooperatives and producers with local businesses and communities. We will proactively engage with the Shire counties that we work with.
- Commit to Coolfood pledge to reduce food greenhouse gas emissions by 25%

Many of the city's public sector bodies and caterers have policies to increase the uptake of healthy and sustainable food to a number of accreditation schemes.

#### **Early Years**

[Start Well Birmingham](#), provided by BCC, NHS and Birmingham Forward Steps, is a programme aiming to help early years settings to provide a healthier food environment. The scheme has an awards framework, looking at menus and food provision, as well as physical exercise and parent engagement. We also worked with our fresh food markets, [Birmingham Rag Market and Open Fruit and Veg Markets](#) to facilitate market traders to accept Healthy Start Vouchers for the purchasing of fresh fruit and vegetables from their stalls.

#### **Schools**

[City Serve](#) is Birmingham City Council's multi-award winning school catering business serving up to 50,000 meals a day, plus a small number of residential care homes. The business buys and procures £10 million pounds of food each year. City Serve adheres to the [School Food Plan](#), ensuring food is fresh and nutritious, and their flexible menus comply with the Soil Association's Food for Life catering mark requirements.

They are careful about the food that they give the students and 'work very closely with students across the city to understand what they want to eat.' They then 'take it back to our development kitchen and make it simple and mindful of reduced fat and reduced salt'. There are also healthy food assemblies where children come to learn about nutrition and participate in school cooking demos. They have also held 'meet the producer' style events with students from schools with funds to develop their own garden farm and support events that help provide skills and meals for families. City Serve also places great emphasis on purchasing within a 30 mile school radius wherever possible to support the local economy and reduce the adverse effects on freshness, flavour and nutrition, and reduces the impact of carbon emissions through 'food miles'.





## Universities

The city's universities have also shown a commitment to healthy and sustainable food through procurement.

University	Summary
University of Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30,000 students and 7,000 staff</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Food Procurement Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Catering Charter</a></li> <li>• Fairtrade University</li> <li>• Good Egg Award from Compassion in World Farming</li> <li>• Ongoing work to review food story and increase staff and student engagement</li> <li>• Monthly farmers' market</li> </ul>
Birmingham City University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24,000 students and 2,440 staff</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan</a></li> <li>• Fairtrade University</li> <li>• Follow Food for Life requirements</li> <li>• Supplied by BaxterStorey who put an emphasis on local produce</li> </ul>
Aston University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14,000 students and 2,500 staff</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Food Procurement Policy</a></li> <li>• Sustainability Strategy and Carbon Management Plan.</li> <li>• ISO 14001-accredited Environmental Management System.</li> <li>• Fairtrade University status.</li> <li>• Supplied by TUCO who focuses on sustainable food procurement frameworks li</li> <li>• Continuous efforts to integrate sustainability into the curriculum.</li> <li>• Regular sustainability-themed events and initiatives promoting eco-conscious li</li> </ul>
Newman University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,500 students and 400 staff.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sustainable Food Procurement Policy promoting responsible sourcing.</a></li> <li>• Emphasis on <a href="#">locally-produced and organic food</a> in campus eateries.</li> <li>• Participation in Fairtrade schemes, backing ethical supply chains.</li> <li>• Holds <a href="#">Eco Campus Gold Award</a></li> <li>• Frequent workshops and discussions to boost student and staff awareness on su</li> <li>• Eco-themed events spotlighting the importance of sustainable food choices.</li> </ul>

## Birmingham Children's Hospital

In 2019, the Children's Hospital overhauled their procurement contract, shifting to 95% fresh food prep on site. 'particularly around regional sourcing there is a commitment to developing a supply chain with a certain percent catering supplier is [Sodexo](#), who have a comprehensive sustainability approach. The hospital is currently collabo explore new menu options which boost plant based options for better planetary and human health outcomes

## Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain

The [Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility](#) is 'a set of guiding principles to which BCC will adhere the wider business community, other public sector bodies... and third sector organisations... to adopt. In some ca

requirement of specific contracts or grants. In all cases, adopting the Charter is a visible and recognisable sign of the local economy and its communities.’

The charter includes:

- Commitment to using local suppliers
  - ‘Use [Find it in Birmingham](#) as the primary method of sourcing suppliers’
- Environmental considerations
  - Minimising waste
  - Energy consumption and carbon reduction
  - Sustainable timber
  - Fairtrade

Birmingham.gov provide [Business Directories](#) under the Business Advice section of their website. Under Retail and Food are provided in a list of seven:

- [Fair Trade Wholesale Catalogue](#) - The British Association for Fair Trade shops maintains a directory of suppliers that have been assessed against internationally agreed fair trade criteria. Search by product categories.
- [Fairtrade Foundation](#) - Source Fairtrade certified products. Lists wholesale and catering suppliers.
- [Greenfinder](#) - Directory of eco-friendly products throughout the UK
- [Soil Association Source Marketplace](#) - UK’s largest organic ingredient sourcing database.

Finally, In July 2023 we held a first meeting of the Birmingham Sustainable Food Procurement group that will focus on discussion on the opportunities and challenges in public food procurement at city level, with an emphasis on supporting local suppliers with the objectives of the Birmingham Food System Strategy. The working group is comprised of 20+ representatives from other anchor institutions including universities, hospitals, education, catering providers and producer organisations. The group will be governed by principles outlined in the Food System Strategy. The next meeting will be held in October 2023 during the Strategy Launch.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit 1000)

### [East Birmingham Food System Exploration](#)

The East Birmingham Food System Exploration community led research aims to enhance understanding of the food system in East Birmingham on food businesses and the role they play in providing healthy food to their communities. We aim to understand:

- the barriers to provision of healthy affordable food that businesses experience, including cost of food, food supply, and perceptions and beliefs about food,
- the food system workforce, including where people are recruited from and what skills, knowledge, and training they have
- potential gaps in skills and knowledge among food system workers in East Birmingham and how these might be filled
- key actions that can be co-produced to support food businesses to provide healthy, affordable food,

The final report will be available in October 2023 and hosted on our webpage: [East Birmingham food system exploration | East Birmingham Council](#)

**Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food poverty**

**Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency**

**Local food production**

Local food production is an important element of Birmingham’s food system. There are a significant number of spaces, with over 200 growing sites, including 113 council owned allotments. This information was compiled through organizations which support these groups; [Birmingham City Council](#), [Birmingham Food Council](#), [Growing Birmingham](#)

While food grown on these sites cannot be commercially sold, they are utilised to make a positive impact in the community. Food is donated or shared, which in turn contributes to the augmentation of locally grown food incorporated into the broader community driven approach to food production not only encourages sustainability but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility. Community groups are actively involved in distributing surplus food to various food provision charities, such as [Food4Brum](#) and [Incredible Edible](#)

[Birmingham Food Legends Fund](#) funded twenty-four community driven growing groups in 2023 including following

Organisation	Project
<a href="#">Ampersand Projects CIC</a>	Building on Grow Your Road project which, since Spring 2020, has given 4000 households community support to grow their own food, most with no growing experience or outdoor space. We provide growing kits which contain everything people need to go from ‘pot to plate’. Seeds, pots, soil, tools, food growing, cooking and sharing between neighbours as easy and accessible as possible.
<a href="#">Grand Union Arts CIO</a>	Project to develop the <a href="#">Minerva Garden Group</a> further into a collective, practical, research-led project. The idea of food production & cooking as a way to empower & centre women, they will explore the relationship between seed, soil & plate. Based upon the success of the Harvest Dinner and previous workshops, we will pilot a series of public lunch club style paying events that pilots a new food service in Birmingham. We will support the Garden Group. Currently lunch food options for the Digbeth working community are expensive. We will explore opportunity with the future redevelopment landscape of Digbeth to create a new social enterprise that works with the communities we work with.
<a href="#">Kushinga Community Garden</a>	Running 22 gardening sessions during the growing season (April to September). The focus will be on a wide range of vegetables – many from around the world. Kushinga will encourage our migrants to bring any seeds and vegetable plants they have for us to grow at the garden. They will grow and share their produce around the globe.

This support enabled multiple organizations to enhance their growing sites in several ways, with some specific improvements in accessibility, ensuring site longevity, and the purchase of essential resources.

### Sustainability / climate emergency

Birmingham demonstrated its dedication to combatting climate change when they declared a climate emergency. The city has set targets to reduce carbon emissions as they committed to becoming net zero by 2030 or as soon as possible thereafter. See [Birmingham's Route to Zero Action Plan](#) which was updated in 2022 [Route to Zero Annual Progress Report](#).

In 2021, Birmingham signed the [Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration](#), a commitment by subnational governments to reduce food system emissions through integrated food policies.

The BCC also introduced the [Our Future Nature City Plan](#) in 2022, a remarkable 25-year plan which focuses on the health and wellbeing of the city's parks and green spaces, of which over 1000 were identified. This plan acknowledges the vital importance of green spaces to the wellbeing of citizens and the environment. By investing in the long-term preservation and enhancement of these spaces, we are taking proactive steps to ensure a sustainable and thriving future for the city. [The Naturally Birmingham](#), cross working with the City of Birmingham Nature Plan is also testing new approaches to caring for city’s green spaces through the [Future Parks Accelerator](#) [resources](#) and [events](#) to support communities and citizens wishing to grow on public land.

Birmingham has signed the [Cool Food Pledge](#), with commitments to reduce carbon by 25% by 2030, a target which is part of the [Cool Food Agreement](#).

Together, these initiatives reflect Birmingham’s commitment to addressing climate change and enhancing the city by setting ambitious targets, formulating comprehensive action plans, and safeguarding the city's natural treasures, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for all residents.

### ***Community and Research Initiatives***

In order to support more food production and small scale growing in the city, University of Birmingham Centre for Food and the Environment with BDAC allotment is conducting a research project to:

1. To examine and quantify the benefits of the allotment estate to the city’s residents and to Birmingham City Council
2. Benefits defined in terms of:
  - a. Food production especially benefits to the wider community including links to food banks and other community initiatives
  - b. Environment – biodiversity, carbon capture, reduced carbon footprint/water footprint
  - c. Mental and Physical Well-being.

### **Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste**

Across Birmingham there are number of project championing and empowering community groups with knowledge and skills to foster a culture of environmental responsibility and resource efficiency across the city:

#### **Food Composting**

Birmingham has initiated a targeted [pilot project](#) through Horizon 2020's 'Food Trails' Programme. The pilot focuses on separating and recycling separate food waste for composting. The produced compost will be utilized locally, either for home gardening or community projects. Various methodologies will be used to track the amount of waste collected, methane saved, and carbon reduced. This information will inform city-wide rollouts in the future. By integrating waste separation, composting, and community engagement. The pilot activity across Birmingham. The H2020 Food Trails project is led by the Council's European and International Engagement and policy input from Public Health. Food Trails is being delivered over four years from October 2020 to September 2024.

#### **Incredible Surplus**

Originally established in 2014 they intercept food and other usable materials that would otherwise go to waste from businesses, other sources, and provide them to individuals and community organisations on a “[Pay-As-You-Feel](#)” basis. Since 2014, they have intercepted tonnes of waste food, cooked and served over 36,000 meals, helped 100 people achieve a Level 2 Food Safety Certificate, and 100 volunteers move on into paid employment.

#### **Innovative Approach to Supporting Foodbanks**

In 2023, we began taking an innovative approach to supporting foodbanks. We have initiated a unique approach where we are seeking to encourage corporations to support foodbanks and other food projects in the city. This process has seen some initial partnerships being developed between corporations and food projects. A hackathon to bring together corporations and food projects is planned for the end of September 2023 – this will give both parties the opportunities to come together to work together on solutions. The community food sector is experiencing. In addition to linking food projects with corporations, we have also sought

support groups through the city-wide food partnership, for example, linking a surplus food distributor with a large community group in the city. We have also provided resources for food projects, for example providing guidance on how to put together a food bank.

We have also been undertaking work to address the leak in our food system, whereby surplus food goes to landfill. There is a current project exploring and [mapping new sources of surplus food in the city](#), and also creating a network of community groups to receive surplus food (through partnership with the [Food Justice Network](#)).

BCC has also supported a surplus food hub, where surplus food can be cooked into nutritious, ethical and innovative meals provided to vulnerable people in Birmingham. The above mentioned hub has catalysed the delivery of more free meals and to utilise more surplus food, thus helping those who are food insecure to eat nutritious diet while simultaneously providing jobs. As mentioned above [Change Kitchen](#) (see section 3A) has also catalysed the piloting of an innovative healthy fast food outlet. This is the potential for long term positive impacts on the city.

### Food Legends

BCC has also supported community initiatives promoting composting and waste reduction through the provision of resources to communities to use.

<a href="#">Compost Connection CIC</a>	<p>An organization dedicated to promoting composting practices. By educating groups about composting, they effectively advocate for a resource-efficient system. Their most recent project are educating about Bokashi, a way of fermenting food scraps in an airtight bucket, using a starter culture. The fermentation is done in a pre-proofed composter for safe, quick composting. These methods are both simple to use, and great for the environment. Compost Connection has provided these to households, community cafes and projects, including Incredibly Green. They have received excellent feedback. Compost Connection will now hold composting workshops to not only teach people how to use them, but also demonstrate how to cut the mesh and attach it to their bin, and send them home with a pre-compost kit. They will provide people a (cheap, recycled) starter kit of bokashi bins and bran so that they can compost all food scraps. The kit can be provided on a PAYF basis, with any funds being kept separately and put towards the cost of the bin.</p>
<a href="#">Brummie Cup</a>	<p>Project expanding reusable cup services by purchasing 3,500 8floz zero Waste reusable cups. The project will also introduce a deposit return scheme for venues serving takeaway drinks. Brummie Cup will also want to widen the use of reusable cups into areas often ignored by environment groups working with third sector organisations to address social injustice (e.g. through the HAF programme). They will provide free access to the reusable cup services to reduce the use of disposables. The high-level objective of the project is to reduce the waste, litter and carbon footprint of the city, which benefits everyone in Birmingham.</p>

### C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit 1000)

In 2022 Birmingham City Council's Route to Net Zero Team [commissioned](#) Ricardo Energy and Environment to deliver a local strategy for the city's waste management for the future. It also integrates with the review of the Birmingham Development Plan that will be published in 2023. This review will identify operational opportunities and priorities for waste reduction and promoting a circular economy. This will be done in collaboration with the waste management team. The vision is to be the first strategy to align resource efficiency and circular economy with waste reductions. The Environment Act 2021 includes implications for waste including:

- Introduction of deposit schemes
- Charges for single use items
- Food waste collected once a week and other recyclables separated out
- Electronic waste tagging

- Waste licencing and charging.

These emerging changes to legislation will be considered as part of the Food System strategy, and well as considering short

**FOR PANEL USE ONLY**

**Comments from the panel on your application:**

**Outcome of application:**

**Recommendations for onward progress:**