

# 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>
Acorn Food Network
<b>Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:</b>
Allan Bogle/ <a href="mailto:allan.bogle@derrystrabane.com">allan.bogle@derrystrabane.com</a> / 07592103820
<b>Geographic region which this award will represent*:</b>
Derry City & Strabane District Council
<b>Award you are applying for*:</b>
Bronze

**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:**

### **Derry City & Strabane District Council Area (DCSDC)**

The area serves a population of 150,100, this represents ~8.0% of the Northern Ireland population. The City & District serves a wider city region of 350,000 people. The landscape of the council area includes mountain ranges, rivers, agricultural land, and coast offering vital habitats for species, destinations for tourism and recreation, a rich cultural heritage as well as settlements for local communities. Urban areas include the regional city of Derry connected to a number of vibrant towns and villages including Strabane. In addition, the Council area includes the border with neighbouring Donegal County Council covering some 140km.

Twenty of the Super Output Areas (SOA) in Derry/Strabane are within the top 100 most deprived SOA across Northern Ireland, with 5 being in the top 10. At 6.7% the claimant count (16 – 64 age) is the highest in NI, compared to a NI average of 5.3%, with male unemployment a particular challenge at 9.5%. Youth unemployment remains an issue for the Council area. At 34.1% the city and district has a higher percentage of economically inactive people aged 16-64 than the NI average of 27.2%

Most significantly, across a range of socio-economic indicators, DCSDC underperforms compared to 341 local authorities throughout the rest of the UK. Indicators such as claimant count, economic inactivity, gross disposable household income, children in low-income families and persons with no qualifications were examined, with DCSDC ranked against other Local Authorities in relation to these. Amongst 6 of the 9 indicators analysed the city region was ranked in the top 10 (with 1 being the most disadvantaged).

The issues facing the region in terms of deprivation, unemployment, economic inactivity and educational attainment present a challenge for the region. COVID-19 and BREXIT have had and continue to have an unprecedented impact on the region's economy.

The Health Inequalities Report (2021) highlights within the sub-regional analysis that the DCSDC area had a majority of health outcomes that were worse than the NI average.

**How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership\*?** Advisory word limit: 300 words

**ANSWER:**

Section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* requires Derry City and Strabane District Council to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity. This Act places a duty on us to promote equality of opportunities and good relations. Derry City & Strabane's Equality Scheme is in place to integrate equality and diversity into all areas of Council service delivery, decision-making and policy development.

By adhering to the Equality Scheme, we hope to ensure participation of **all** stakeholders who have an interest in *sustainable food*. We will provide different ways for a variety of types of audiences to be engaged and ensure that people are not excluded through barriers of language, disability, culture or opportunity ensuring all learning and communication material will be accessible and legible and easy to understand adhering the appropriate policies to ensure inclusion and data protection including GDPR, Photography, Social Media, Access & Equality.

We are very conscious of reaching those living at the edge of our society. We will use our local knowledge, networks and connections to continuously review the reach and impact of the network within our communities. The network's ethos is open, transparent, and welcoming to all and we will strive to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion principles are embedded across all activities.

Ensuring the representation of diverse community voices in project development and delivery, policies and emerging food systems will continue to be a core principle of the Acorn Food Network.

## 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

##### Acorn Food Network

In late 2021, the Acorn Food Network was founded with the objective of establishing a cross-sectoral Sustainable Food Partnership in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area (from here on referred to as DCSDC). From its initiation the partnership received enthusiastic backing from all sectors.

Through consultation, a stakeholder engagement plan was created to identify potential members for the partnership. Following 1-to-1 meetings with potential stakeholders two structured networking events were organised to explore the 6 Sustainable Food Places issues. This resulted in the *Acorn Food Network* being formed. It has over 15 active members from across the local food system. Officially we meet quarterly, however, there is daily communication with members of the network to help drive forward our shared vision.

##### Representation and terms of reference

Active cross-sector representatives of local authority, statutory services, community & voluntary sector and private sector include: Community Foundation NI, Developing Healthy Communities, Social Farms & Gardens, The Conservation Volunteers, LegenDerry Food Network, Foyle Food Bank, Apex Housing, Rural Housing, Eglinton Community Hall, North West Regional College, Foodovation, CAFRE Agricultural College, Ballymagowan Allotments, Tulacorr Allotments, The Play Trail, St. Columbs Park Allotments, Churchtown Allotments, NaturalWorld Products, Derry City Beekeepers, Visit Derry, Keep NI Beautiful.

The partnership collectively wrote and agreed [Terms of Reference](#) articulating shared ownership and expectations around connecting, collaborating, sharing ideas, and operating democratically. Meetings are chaired by the Sustainable Food Coordinator with minutes circulated after each meeting.

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

## [Good Food Plan- Framework](#)



The Acorn Food Network- Good Food Framework 2022-25 focuses on taking a local, place-based approach to good food. However, we recognise that many issues need to be solved at a NI, UK and even a global scale. By working with Sustainable Food Places (SFP), Nourish NI and the other Northern Irish SFP members it will be possible to have a wider impact - helping to co-create a better food system for Northern Ireland. To develop this Good Food Plan, we gathered evidence on the food system across DCSDC. Through our *Good Food Framework* we want it to inspire action across the region to make the food that we grow, buy and eat in Derry City & Strabane healthy, environmentally sustainable, empowering and connected. This framework will be annually reviewed and updated. Infographic above show the process the Acorn Food Network went to develop our Good Food Plan- Framework.

## [Food Systems Baseline Assessment](#)

To assess food provision and accessibility throughout the City and District, the Green Infrastructure team commissioned a 'Food Systems Baseline Assessment' focused on food resilience and climate change at a local level within a regional context, specifically considering food security, sustainability, and supply resilience. The evidence from this document, helped lay the foundations of the Good Food Plan- Framework (above).

## [Growing Food, Growing Community 2021/22](#)

[Growing Food, Growing Community](#) was a collaboration between Holywood, Co. Down, Derry City & Strabane District Council and the Acorn Fund. Funding was secured through the Community Foundation to work in partnership on the delivery of a three-stage engagement process with members of the public and key stakeholders to explore food, climate and democratic decision making. A key component of the project's vision was improving the relationship between Councils and local communities so that they are more productive, responsive, and democratic. The project developed methodologies and approaches to public engagement that can be easily replicated.

- **Stage 1** was delivered in October-November 2021, bringing approximately 30 stakeholders (2 separate events) to explore issues of climate change and biodiversity loss at a local level, by connecting people with these issues through food. This stage was an important catalyst in the establishment of the *Acorn Food Network*.
- **Stage 2** was a public Food Summit in March 2022 which saw over 100 participants made up of the current food sector and statutory bodies, traditionally excluded groups, and the members from the local community.
- The **final stage** included the project evaluation and feedback to participants, which helped inform the Good Food Plan- Framework and develop Good Food Charter.

## [Good Food Charter](#)

The Acorn Food Network's Good Charter has been developed through a consultation process with organisations, groups, businesses, and individuals. It sets out what we want to achieve across the city and district, so that everyone benefits from local good food. The charter is a *call to action* for

individuals, families and local groups, organisations & businesses. 5 objectives have been identified that closely mirror SFP's Key Issues, and it sets out the steps that can be taken to help support the charter.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

#### Acorn Farm- Capital Build & Programming

Acorn Farm is an ambitious capital project which is encouraging people to take climate action growing & cooking programmes, climate focussed activities and learning opportunities. The capital build, managed by DCSDC, and funded through [UK Levelling Up](#) will see the redevelopment of a disused site into an urban farm. The project has also received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to develop a five-year programme of sustainable food projects across the region delivered by the Acorn Farm Programme delivery team (see below).

#### Acorn Farm Programme Delivery

The Acorn Farm work packages delivery team is made up of DCSDC, Community Foundation NI, Social Farms & Gardens, Developing Healthy Communities, and The Conservation Volunteers. The partners are currently responsible for delivering 3 programmes; **I Can Grow** (The Conservation Volunteers), **I Can Cook** (Developing Healthy Communities) and **Growing Challenges & Activities** (Social Farms & Gardens). Each of these programmes involve other members of the Acorn Food Network, including- Natural World Products and 6 allotment groups from across the City and District.

The core delivery team meets every 2 weeks in a rotation of Steering Group meetings and Learning Meetings. These meetings are an opportunity for feedback, monitoring, reflection, and learning.

### **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**

#### Good Food Summit- March 2021

In March 2021, a Food Summit was held in the Guildhall. This event was planned and delivered by Allan Bogle (Sustainable Food Place Coordinator) as part of the *Growing Food, Growing Community* project. The aims of the summit were to help build public awareness for the exciting plans around growing and food, and to actively encourage members of the public to become involved in the local projects. This event was attended by 100 participants and was open by the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council. During the event participants took part in facilitated discussions around the different SFP key issues and heard from various speakers, including DCSDC Climate Manager, Communications Officer from Developing Healthy Communities, and the Vice Chair of LegenDerry Food Network. As part of the event a video highlighting local, seasonal food was produced and shown during the event- [video](#). The event appeared in the local press and received positive feedback. The analysis of the participant feedback from this event has helped inform the food charter and the participants had the opportunity to sign up to a mailing list.

#### Good Food Charter

Our Good Charter has been developed through a consultation process with organisations, groups, businesses, and individuals. It sets out what we want to achieve across the city and district, so that everyone benefits from local good food. The charter is a *call to action* for individuals, families and

local groups, organisations & businesses. 5 objectives have been identified that closely mirror SFP's Key Issues, and it sets out the steps that can be taken to help support the charter.

#### [Acorn Farm Network- Communication Strategy](#)

A communication strategy has been developed for Acorn Farm project partners to effectively convey our goals, activities, and impact to stakeholders. This strategy ensures clear messaging, engages the community, and fosters collaboration, ultimately enhancing project visibility and success.

#### DCSDC Marketing Department

Throughout the year DCSDC's Marketing Department coordinate various campaigns through social media, local press & radio to encourage local people and businesses to embrace sustainable food initiatives, from addressing food waste, to supporting local food businesses.

Examples include:

- Food Waste Action Week 2022 & 2023 #lovefoodhatewaste
- Compost Awareness Week 2023 #ICAW2023  
In recognition with of Compost Awareness Week 2023, a schools' competition was run in conjunction with Natural World Products- our composting waste partners. The winning school won a raised planter, gardening equipment and seeds.
- **Shopping Sustainably-** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCmaBsEU\\_xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCmaBsEU_xk)

#### Lifelong Learning

As a UNESCO Learning City, DCSDC and partners promotes lifelong learning to all its citizens. Lifelong learning lays the foundation for sustainable social, economic, and environmental development. The importance of good food has been recognised as a local learning opportunity. During the July 2020 (virtual) learning festival and 2022 learning festival, workshops included cooking demonstrations, simple home growing sessions, and horticulture training courses.

- [2020 Virtual Learning Festival](#)
- [2022 Learning Festival](#)

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

#### Acorn Farm- capital build

Funded through [UK Levelling Up](#), Acorn Farm is a social innovation project which will support skills development through food growing and production. This sustainable food hub will embrace innovative climate smart technology for local food production while showcasing new culinary practices and food systems. Once completed (ca. March 2025), the Acorn Farm will be an iconic eco-tourism and visitor attraction, a hub for learning, as well as a focal point for community climate action and food growing.

#### Acorn Farm- programming



Funding has been awarded to the project through [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) to deliver a five-year programme, encouraging people to take climate action through better food choices, growing programmes, climate focussed activities and sharing learning to change behaviours.

- **Growing Challenges & Activities**

This is a 5-year programme, which will be delivered in conjunction with *Social Farms & Gardens*, to support 7 local growing groups (allotments/ community gardens/ plus Derry City Beekeepers). Each group can nominate one '*challenge*' per year (e.g. retro fitting a rainwater harvesting system to a polytunnel; developing composting bays etc.). As a collective, the groups will tackle these challenges, learning from each other's projects.

- **I Can Grow**

I Can Grow Project has recruited 200 families across the city and district (Feb 2023). The 18 months programme will support families to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Families are given everything they need to grow food at home, learning from horticultural experts to begin the creation of a more sustainable food system throughout the city. This programme will continue for at least 5 years, with 200 new families being recruited each year.

- **I Can Cook**

Together with Developing Health Communities we are developing a cooking programme that will focus on affordable, local, seasonal, sustainable, and healthy cooking. Sessions will support family health and wellbeing; along with focusing on drivers of ill health such as weight management and gut health. Pilot sessions began in August 2023 at a range of venues across the city and district. In subsequent years sessions will be hosted on the Acorn Farm site. This programme will run for 5 years.

#### Allotment Provision

DCSDC directly manages St. Columb's Park Allotments (Derry City) and Mountcastle (Donemana) ~50 plots. Through Acorn Farm's Growing Challenges & Activities programme, we are helping growing sites from across the district to develop their sites, and to engage in best practise (see above).

#### Herbs on the Kerbs

DCSDC is currently undergoing a pilot herb/ vegetable scheme on a small number of city centre planters, known as *Herbs on the Kerbs*. These planters are maintained by a council employee wellbeing initiative- Grow Well.

The village of Eglinton also has a well-established Herbs on the Kerbs, maintained by the Community Hall and local volunteers.

#### Social Farms & Gardens NI

[Social Farms and Gardens \(SF&G NI\)](#) have been working across the DCSDC area since 2019 supporting Community Gardens, primary schools and community growing groups in organising to grow food. Since 2019 their [Growing Resilience](#) project brought gardens together through a series of skill shares, to encourage interworking and peer-to-peer learning, as well as eating and sharing produce together. Using a meitheal approach, has led to helping facilitate group purchasing and



deliveries of compost, manure, and mushroom compost. Following a successful pilot in 2021, a very active and successful cross-border seed saving group was established ([The Seed It Union](#)), and their 2020/21 Fruit Forest project distributed native fruit trees and bushes across the district, along with guides on propagation. They continue to campaign for a stronger voice for gardens and gardeners across the region, including for statutory allotment provision, promoting regenerative approaches to growing, and helping bring council officers together across NI to help facilitate a voice for community gardeners in the wider planning and statutory sector. SF&GNI work on an East-West and North-South basis with colleagues in England, Scotland and Wales, as well as with our sister organisation Community Gardens Ireland who are involved in similar work in the Republic of Ireland. Together with all 11 councils across NI, DCSDC has engaged with SF&GNI to develop their 2023 report [Case for a Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision in Northern Ireland](#).

### [Strabane Community Project](#)

Strabane Community Project began in 1987 and has expanded vastly to meet the needs of residents in Strabane and surrounding areas. The project hosts and implement a range of services which aim to enhance residents' quality of life and create empowerment; often through building public awareness of 'good food'.

Through the project's wrap around services, social supermarket, health food café and community garden they implement the following food projects:

- Meals on Wheels
- Luncheon Clubs
- Horticulture training
- Cook it programmes.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

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

### **Action area A: Tackle food poverty**

#### Food Transition Fund

The objective of the *Food Transition Fund* was to enable the transition from emergency food support to the implementation of more sustainable pathways/responses to address food poverty/insecurity that emerged over the Covid 19

The following key principles apply to this fund:

- a transition from temporary emergency food support infrastructure; with
- a focus on strategic and sustainable approaches to food poverty/food insecurity issues e.g. developing capacity and capability in the community food infrastructure, brokering partnerships with other support /service providers, linking access to food to other practical support streams.

DCSDC through the programmes such as the Food Transition Fund promoted and funded programmes that promoted food sustainability through community Allotment developments and 'Grow Your Own' projects, Community larders (tackling food wastage) Cook it programmes that promoted healthy eating in a low budget shop as some examples.

Food Transition Fund value was £165,792.59

#### Cost of Living Information & Advice Events- July 2023

DCSDC, in collaboration with the Dept. for Communities, is hosting a series of information events for residents across the North West to help with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Attendees will be able to access free advice and information on a wide range of cost-of-living issues food waste and every-day household bills.

#### The development of a Food Support / Wraparound Services Model for DCSDC

Eos Community Consulting CIC has been commissioned by DCSDC and the Department for Communities to work with local stakeholders to design a food support and wraparound services model for the Derry City and Strabane District. Members of AFN are active participants in this process.

In response to recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations report<sup>1</sup> the Department for Communities has operated a Social Supermarket Pilot programme since October 2017. The aim of the programme has been to test the potential for the concept to tackle food poverty and its root causes. In addition to the social supermarkets, as a response to the pandemic, the department supported a number of food support interventions in 2020/21 including funding to Councils who subsequently supported the Community and Voluntary Sector to develop interventions across the Council area. This has enabled a blend of emergency support for the short term whilst also supporting/enabling the transition to more strategic and sustainable responses to food poverty/food security in line with the principals of social supermarkets. Following positive evaluation of the Social Supermarket Pilot Programme the Minister has approved an approach which will expand the concept to all council areas using a Co-Design process to develop tailored models that best meets the needs of local communities and builds on the existing structures and partnerships. The learning from the Pilot programme and the COVID response work with the Community and Voluntary Sector and Councils provides an opportunity to Co Design an approach which allows a move away from the emergency response to a more sustainable, long term response to food poverty by seeking to address the root causes of food poverty rather than simply providing food, By providing people with a pathway out of poverty, a SSM recognises that food poverty is only one contributing factor and access to and uptake of a wraparound service to address advice needs, training and skills provides a holistic approach to a transition out of poverty. This wraparound support includes, but is not limited to, advice on debt, benefits, budgeting, healthy eating, housing, physical and mental health referral, and education, training and volunteering opportunities to enhance employability skills. It is intended this will provide a long-term solution in a dignified manner rather than short term crisis provision.

#### [Foyle Food Bank](#)

Foyle Foodbank is a cross-community organisation managed by a voluntary Board of Management who oversee the running of the organisation. The Foodbank employs one part-time manager who

leads a team of over 30 volunteers tasked with the collection, sorting and distribution of non-perishable food largely donated by the public. Part of The Trussell Trust network it has received funding under their Pathfinder Project to provide greater support to people in the Foyle area. Foyle Food Bank provide wrap around support both from their own services and by working with a wide range of partnerships across the City.

- **Foyle Food Bank Summer Lunch Programme- 2023**  
Funded through [Feeding Britain](#), the Foyle Food Bank provided 130 cooked lunches to young 3 days per week for 4 weeks during the summer holidays.
- **Foyle Food Bank Summer Breakfast Clubs- 2023**  
Provided breakfast items such as cereal, bread and fruit to 13 summer schemes and groups across the City with over 1300 children in attendance.

#### Social Supermarkets

There are 3 social supermarkets operating across the city and district offering members a range of essential groceries at reduced prices.

- Apex Social Supermarket
- Strabane Community Project- Social Supermarket
- The Centre Social Supermarket  
-A food refill shop supported by DCSDC

#### Redistribution of consumable surplus food- Community Fridges

There are currently 3 *community fridges* across the city and district, with The Playtrail & Creggan Country Park in the city and in Eglinton village. On top of this there are at least 3 other food redistribution schemes that are run by local churches- Kilfennan Presbyterian Church, The Hope Centre (Cornerstone Church) and The Churches Trust Pantry.

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

##### [WHO Healthy Cities](#)

As part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) European Network of Healthy Cities, the Derry & Strabane Healthy City & District project brings business, community and statutory leaders together to put health at the top of the public agenda in our city and district and face the factors that cause poor health and health inequalities head on.

In 2022 Derry City & Strabane became a World Health Organization Healthy City for the third time.

##### [Developing Healthy Communities NI](#)

Developing Healthy Communities NI has over 30 years of experience improving mental, physical and social wellbeing. Founded as Derry Healthy Cities, DHC NI coordinates Derry City & Strabane's membership of the European Healthy Cities network. Through strategic leadership, events and funding they support community, statutory and business leaders to prioritise health in their decision-making and combat health inequalities. In 2021, DHCNI brought together statutory and

community groups operating in Derry & Strabane to share strategic approaches to [food poverty](#). In 2022, their cross-sector Healthy Cities Leadership Group identified “*Heathy Food For All*” as one of three key themes for the council area; the same year they became a partner in the Acorn Farm project. In 2023 they supported the [World Obesity Day](#) global campaign with [local video](#) and [blog content](#). Together with the Acorn Farm project partners, Developing Healthy Communities have developed and delivered pilot cooking sessions with a focus on healthy sustainable eating for the Acorn Farm project called I Can Cook. This project is designed to make the link between the food we grow and the food we eat (see below).

### **Acorn Farm- I Can Cook**

Together with Developing Health Communities we are developing a cooking programme that will focus on affordable, local, seasonal, sustainable, and healthy cooking. Sessions will support family health and wellbeing; along with focusing on drivers of ill health such as weight management and gut health. Pilot sessions began in August 2023 at a range of venues across the city and district. In subsequent years sessions will be hosted on the Acorn Farm site. This programme will run for 5 years.

[Waterside Women’s Centre](#)/ Sumeeta Gupta

The Waterside Women’s Centre regularly organises healthy eating/ cooking courses. By way of example, in March 2023, to celebrate International Women’s’ Day, the centre organised two workshops on how to use herbs in your daily life facilitated by Sumeeta Gupta, a Doctor of Ayurvedic medicine. Sumeeta also facilitates workshops throughout the city and beyond promoting the use of herbs and spices in our daily life to maintain health and wellbeing.

In the past 10 years Dr.Gupta has worked extensively with the Pink Ladies, the Carer’s Trust, DCSDC, and various community groups educating and promoting the importance of people growing their own herbs and organic food and using them to enhance their family’s health.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance)  
(Mandatory word limit: 250).

[Restore Nutrition- My Food Community](#)

Restore Nutrition took part in *My Food Community* community leadership programme. Jade, from Restore Nutrition delivered a [Cook and Share](#) event at Foyle Bank. This budget friendly cookery demonstration was used to highlight the impact that the rise in food costs is having on local people and was featured on the evening news (UTV). This was followed by a 12 week cooking programme delivered at the food bank.

**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**

DCSDC has a vibrant independent food business community, recognised and supported by the council and other stakeholders for the role it plays in the region's economy.

#### [Local Food & Drink Strategy and Action Plan 2019 – 2025](#)

The Food and Drink Strategy and Action Plan, launched in February 2019, charts a clear path for the sector to become a key culinary destination in Ireland by 2025. Commissioned by DCSDC and informed by industry partners, the strategy acknowledges the current achievements and potential of Derry City and Strabane as food destinations. Funding came from the EU Interreg project NICHE.

The strategy concentrates on elevating Derry City as the hub of this thriving food scene. It acts as a significant attraction and a bridge to the wider district, which offers award-winning artisanal products, restaurants, and distinctive food experiences in the rural landscape.

The strategy maps out a direction to support the local food and drink sector, backed by skills, training, innovation, and business support. It emphasises raising awareness of local cuisine in the hospitality industry, effective branding, marketing, and the roles of festivals, events, and local advocates.

Key to the strategy is collaboration between key stakeholders and the private sector, with well-defined roles. A network of local food businesses played a pivotal role in shaping and implementing the strategy.

#### [LegenDerry Food Network](#)

The LegenDerry Food Network and brand was set up by DCSDC and the private sector in early 2019 to bring forward ambitious plans to build on the region's food offering as part of the wider Food and Drink Strategy for the Council area.

Membership of the network is open to all within the DCSDC Council area which have a commercial interest in any aspect of the local food and drink supply chain, who are committed to the promotion of DCSDC as a food destination and adhere to the Code of Practice, namely:

- Food & drink producers and processors.
- Independent retailers who stock local food a drink product.
- Cafés, restaurants, hotels & guesthouses who use locally sourced ingredients.
- Distributors and wholesalers.
- Food and drink related tours, attractions and experiences.
- Market Operators.

The network committee involves 12+ local representatives from across the food and drink sector working in collaboration to deliver the actions of the strategy and showcase the positive work being done within the food industry. The network uses the tagline "Great Place, Great Taste".

- [LegenDerry Food Trail](#)
- [Love LegenDerry Month](#)

#### [Visit Derry](#)

Visit Derry is a public private sector partnership funded and supported by DCSDC and the private sector, with a membership of ~260 businesses. Visit Derry has a key role in positioning the local

food and drink sector within their wider business support and capacity building initiatives, such food festivals, food tours & trails and food related events.

Below is a range videos showcasing food initiatives supported by Visit Derry:

- [Street Food Festival](#) -2019
- [A Taste of LegenDerry](#) -2020
- [Food Scene](#) - 2022
- [Food Month February](#) -2023
- [Derry Girls Food Tour](#) -2023

#### [COVID Recovery & Revitalisation: Street Life + Vibrant Places](#)

These works were carried out under the Covid Recovery Revitalisation Scheme, which is supported by funding from the DfC.

The scheme forms part of a programme of interventions aimed at revitalising the city centre emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, including environmental and infrastructural improvements as well as a business support plan.

As part of the innovative design, public realm spaces have been created to enhance the character of the city centre (Derry City), with the creation of new outdoor seating and outdoor dining areas to assist local food businesses in the area to attract an increased footfall and more amenities for customers to avail of.

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

##### [Design Council- Design Differently](#)

In February 2023 DCSDC Acorn Farm team hosted a workshop, facilitated by the [Design Council](#), to explore the possibility of creating a local food market on the site of Acorn Farm. This workshop was attended by 18 local producers, AFN members and other stakeholders. We will continue to engage with The Design Council and local stakeholders.

##### [Delta: Proposed city centre marketplace](#)

This project is being looked at through the city's *City Deal* and consultations with QS, NI Water, Roads etc. have been completed. PAD was completed and engagement has begun with LegenDerry Food Network as potential vendors.

##### [Foodovation](#)

Foodovation is North West Regional College's state-of-the-art research and development facility offers an opportunity to develop excellence in food innovation, science & technology solutions to current and aspiring industry producers across the region. As well as encouraging and nurturing small to medium sized food businesses industry specialists provide technical advice to help create successful and sustainable a route to market. With the right expertise, food and drink manufacturers can find new markets, develop new product ideas, and generate employment opportunities within the sector.

### Festivals & Events

Derry City and Strabane is firmly positioned as a go-to destination for tourists seeking history, culture and food. With a unique setting, nestled between the breath-taking Wild Atlantic Way and idyllic Causeway Coastal Route, the Walled City is a gateway to discovery and adventure. The festivals and events team deliver a range of key events throughout the year festivals and events, from the World famous [Halloween](#) celebrations, to the [Foyle Maritime Festival](#). Food is a key element across all festivals and an opportunity for local food businesses to showcase their offerings to a wider audience. It is estimated that events across the district have an annual economic impact of £7.2 million.

### Walled City Market

The Walled City Market has been operated by DCSDC in the city's historic Guildhall Square. The aim of the market has been to provide a platform for individuals and businesses to showcase their products whilst ensuring a family friendly shopping experience. Artisan traders offer a wide selection of locally produced, specialty foods and hand crafted goods.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance)  
(Mandatory word limit: 250).

### [NI Good Food](#)

NI Good Food is a website dedicated to showcasing local good food across Northern Ireland. Users are able to get information about producers, restaurants, experiences and food events in their areas, as well as recipes using local seasonal food.

### [NI Seafood Trail](#)

NI Seafood Trails have developed colourful, interactive maps to help people discover new places, taste local seafood, meet the fishermen passionate about their work, and explore harbours and ports around the coast and rivers of Northern Ireland. Their webpage provides information on local and native species, as well as new and simple seafood recipes to try out at home. Several local food businesses are featured on the [map](#).

## **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**

### [Fairtrade City Status](#)

In 2014 Derry City Council was awarded [Fairtrade City status](#). This meant that there was sufficient awareness of Fairtrade across the city, that an initial threshold percentage of schools, retailers, churches, and businesses were supporting it and that council had committed to serving Fairtrade products in their meetings, offices and canteens. A key aspect of maintaining Fairtrade status is an



ongoing commitment to promote Fairtrade as it's only a great idea when people buy the products it certifies.

In 2015 when the new council areas came into being (the merger of Derry City Council and Strabane District Council) the Fairtrade Steering Group extended its promotional work across it and got the new council to pass a resolution declaring its support. Derry City & Strabane District Council (DCSDC) was awarded Fairtrade District Status in 2018, the first Council in Northern Ireland to achieve this accolade. Maintaining Fairtrade status requires an ongoing commitment to promoting Fairtrade and Fairtrade International's criteria. This important work is carried for the Council area by Foyle Fairtrade, our local Fairtrade Steering Group which operates across the City and District Council area. Foyle Fairtrade is made up of a voluntary group of individuals, organisations, businesses, supported by a Council that meets on an ongoing basis to develop the work.

#### DCSDC Sustainable Procurement Policy Development

DCSDC is currently developing a sustainable procurement policy across all operations. A cross departmental initial workshop was held in June 2023. This workshop explored:

- Shared understanding of the opportunities and benefits of Sustainable Procurement;
- Insight into the experiences of Sustainable Procurement in practice;
- Shape the emerging vision and criteria for a checklist.

#### [Guildhall and Tower Museum](#)

To enhance sustainability, a *Green Team* has been established at the Guildhall and Tower Museum, both prominent council venues. Procedures are being adapted to look at waste, procurement and building management.

In the Guildhall's most recent Tender for their onsite café and their informal catering provision, sustainability ran throughout their specifications. Including:

- Fairtrade produce,
- no single use plastic,
- local food,
- Zero Waste circular economy,
- environmentally friendly practises.

An adapted version of the tender document can be viewed here- [tender document](#)

#### [Sus Health Index- Queen's University](#)

DCSDC is a co-design partner in Queen's University's Sus Health project. SusHealth is an interdisciplinary project funded through UKRI's 'Transforming UK food systems' programme which aims to establish a blueprint of a system that incentivises the consumption of sustainable and healthy food. The project will demonstrate to stakeholders how the use of a codesigned, combined measure of environmental impact and nutritive value (the SusHealth Index) of foods can be used to influence the future direction of our food system. The Sus Health Index will be tested through a series of 'Living Labs' in various settings across Northern Ireland.

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

#### [Sustainable Fish Cities](#)

Sustainable Fish Cities NI was an ambitious campaign by Ulster Wildlife and Nourish NI to create Northern Ireland's first-ever Sustainable Fish Cities in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. In the long term, the campaign aims to encourage other regions in Northern Ireland to follow suit.

Any business or organisation that serves fish, from restaurants and retailers to hospitals and education establishments, can get involved by committing to buy, serve, eat, and promote fish from sustainable sources. Businesses and organisations can do this by signing a pledge and completing a short self-audit of the seafood they serve, against the [Good Fish Guide](#).

The Acorn Food Network supported Ulster Wildlife in this campaign. A workshop was organised together with Ulster Wildlife for the local food partnership in August. 10 members of the local food partnership attended the event to find out more about the campaign and to sign pledges.

#### [Ethical Weigh Co-op- Eglinton](#)

Founded as a family business in 2020, Ethical Weigh is a plastic free, refill shop that specialises in plant-based, locally sourced produce. In early 2023 the shop reconstituted as a Co-op/ Community Benefit Society. The Co-op supplies products and ingredients from high quality, local suppliers. Many are based less than an hour away from the shop. A list of suppliers can be viewed here- [Local Suppliers](#)

#### [LegenDerry Food Network- Terms & Conditions](#)

LegenDerry Food Network members work to very high standards and adhere to a Code of Best Practice. Across the network's Terms & Conditions, reference is made to improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain. An extract from the Code of Practise can be viewed below.

#### **"Code of Best Practice**

- A commitment to the production of quality local food & drink products and comply with all relevant regulatory requirements i.e. food safety and hygiene.
- A commitment to source local raw materials and ingredients where possible and to keep full sourcing and traceability records.
- A commitment to meeting & exceeding customer expectations in terms of provenance, quality, safety, marketing & presentation.
- A commitment to continually improving & innovating with regards to product quality, marketing & customer service.
- A commitment to adhere to ethical practices with regard to labour & employment practices, animal welfare, environmental practices & product labelling declarations as appropriate.
- A commitment to promoting & highlighting locally sourced ingredients within local hospitality, retail and accommodation establishments.
- A commitment to collaborate with LegenDerry Food and Drink Network members to achieve common goals through sharing and exchanging information, group training, collective marketing initiatives & participation in joint networking opportunities, within the normal limits of competition.

- A commitment to utilise LegenDerry Food and Drink Network marketing material as and when appropriate.
- A commitment to use the hashtag legenderryfood on all relevant social media posts
- A commitment to abide by the governance and financial procedures of the LegenDerry Food and Drink Network.”

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance)  
(Mandatory word limit: 250).

[Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\) Food Strategy Framework](#)

In December 2021 a report was presented to elected members on the NI Food Strategy Framework consultation. The report highlighted the key elements of the framework and response submitted on behalf of DCSDC.

The Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework recognises the interconnectedness around food and proposes an innovative strategic food systems approach. It sets out a long-term vision, high level principles and areas for strategic focus to optimise cross departmental working on food matters in Northern Ireland to deliver the Programme for Government and departmental objectives. The vision is a transformed food system that protects natural resources for future generations, is economically sustainable and provides safe, nourishing, and accessible food.

The response submitted on behalf of Council welcomed the whole government approach to the food system as it is widely considered that the Food System requires a cross sectoral approach to drive measurable change.

Other issues highlighted a request to include additional recognition of pollinators and their importance to the food chain; ensure that food produced in NI is embedded in sustainable farming practices that minimise our impact on our environment, including climate change. We also requested that opportunities are sought to build better linkages between the Department of Education and Health with the food system in order promote the core ethos of health sustainable food for all.

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

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

Derry and Strabane’s [Net Zero Roadmap](#) outlines that the region’s direct emissions (Scope 1 & 2) in 2022 were 1.7 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e, currently 65% of all emissions from the region come from land-use and industry.

DCSDC declared a climate emergency in 2019 followed by the [climate pledge](#) to deliver a net zero climate resilient city and district by 2045.

Council have committed to the following national and international declarations:

- Glasgow Food & Climate Change Declaration
- Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

- United Nations Race to Zero & Race to Resilience
- Council currently report to the Global Covenant of Mayors, CDP and ICLEI EU climate change platforms and NI National Adaptation Programme in an annual basis.  
All of which, recognise the impacts climate is having on global food production and security.

All policy and committee decisions are subject to climate change screening process which considers both adaptation and mitigation. Climate governance structures include an officer Climate Action Working Group and elected member All Party Climate Emergency Working Group.

The city & district Local Development Plan 2032 General Development Principles outlines that development should demonstrate how they, “mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts, and to ensure resilience.”

Council launched a [Climate Adaptation Plan](#) in July 2020 which aims to ensure “Derry City & Strabane District Council is prepared for and resilient to the effects of climate change, creating a safe and sustainable region for all”. Progress is underway to deliver the 5 year Adaptation Action Plan with 69% actions either complete or ongoing for the 2021/22 period. This plan highlights the climate related risks associated with food production and food security; at global and local scale.

Council have launched a [Green Infrastructure Plan](#) providing a framework for a new approach within the North West. GI Plan Vision, “By 2032 the environmental, economic and social benefits of Green Infrastructure are valued and maximised by all”. The GI Plan provides a framework for nature-based solutions to climate change. The plan includes creating space for food production through allotments, community gardens and orchards, increases access to healthy food, provides educational opportunities, contributes to food security, prompts to more active healthy lifestyles and reconnects communities with their local environment. The plan recognises the importance of local sustainable food production and the benefits of a sustainable local food economy.

#### **Acorn Farm- A Sustainable Food Place For People, Planet & Pocket**

Acorn Farm (previously mentioned in this application) is an ambitious capital project with associated programmes. The vision for both the capital build and the programming is “*to create a sustainable urban food system which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and is resilient to the effects of climate change*”. Together with our partners we are developing a *monitoring and evaluation* framework to ensure that Acorn Farm is effective and sustainable as possible. This project will protect a previously disused piece of land (~2acres) for sustainable food productions for future generations.

#### **Acorn Farm- I Can Grow/ Pilot (2021/22)**

The initial *I Can Grow* pilot project, managed by DCSDC and Community Foundation NI; and delivered by The Conservation Volunteers, saw 250 families given the resources, equipment, and support to grow vegetables in their own gardens over 2 growing seasons. The project’s academic partner Dr. Stephen Flood from Maynooth University used a Carbon Calculator to estimate that

across the project over two tonnes of vegetables were produced by the Acorn Farmers saving 12.4 metric tonnes of carbon equivalent. The final project report can be viewed here- [Final Report](#)

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

### [Food Waste Recycling](#)

DCSDC collects food waste from across the district (this is a combination of source segregated food waste & combined garden and food waste).

- 2020/2021- 6898 tonnes
- 2021/ 2022- 8910 tonnes
- 2022/2023- 10424 tonnes

The council is also responsible for the collection of food waste from council building, leisure centres and community-based buildings across the city. After collection, the waste is taken to two local transfer hubs where the contractor, [Natural World Products](#), collects it and processes it into compost through anaerobic digestion. As per the contract with Natural World Product approx. 10% of the volume of waste collected is returned to the council area as compost to be used in local parks, cemeteries, by residents, schools, and environmental projects. This saves food waste going to landfill which is good for the environment reducing harmful emissions and it saves money which can be spent on other local services and events.

The council also, periodically produce awareness campaigns through local press/ radio and social media channels.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-H2nXA2gjs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nllCH4G4RXU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CbCztY9574>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0P5qeruGvIY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw0uoBanc94>

### [DCSDC Waste- Chatbot](#)

DCSDC have partnered with Finland, Ireland (Donegal & Galway) and Faroe Islands to Sundsvall (Sweden) to work together on the EMERGREEN project. This project is an EU funded project to improve public service technology to help create greener, more sustainable communities. DCSDC has worked extensively with NUI Galway to develop a ChatBot for the Recycling and Waste department. Users can ask questions about waste streams, refuse centres and recycling.

### **DCSDC Recycling Inspectors**

Temporary recycling inspectors were employed by DCSDC, with funding from WRAP-Waste and Resources Action Programme, for the purpose of conducting surveys aimed at influencing recycling behavioural change. These surveys involved gathering data on recycling practices and household

demographics. Additionally, the inspectors carried out door-to-door campaigns, providing valuable information, guidance, and distributing informative leaflets to households. The overarching goal of these efforts was to bolster waste diversion from landfills and encourage greater involvement in the recycling process.

Collaborating closely with refuse crews, the Recycling Inspectors identified areas where recycling performance was suboptimal. Data was collected over several weeks, both before and after the campaign, to gauge its effectiveness. Encouragingly, the results revealed notable improvements in participation rates, ranging from 3% to an impressive 20% in some areas. Overall, the campaign reached 17,500 households and successfully redistributed over 1000 food waste caddies, contributing to a more sustainable approach to waste management.

### [Natural World Products](#)

June 2023- Natural World Products (NWP) has become the new sponsor for the Eco-Schools programme in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

Eco-Schools is an international programme, with local environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful operating the initiative in Northern Ireland and NWP funding the Derry and Strabane scheme, that is aimed at fostering sustainable practices and environmental education.

**C: Other information: Other activities and context** (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

### [Arc Zero- Accelerating Ruminant Farming Towards Carbon Zero](#)

(ARCZero) is a European Innovation Partnership project made up of a co-operative of 7 farms in Northern Ireland. It seeks to measure and manage carbon flows at the individual farm level to empower farmers to make positive change towards carbon zero farming.

The project is independently led by John Gilliland from Brookhall Farm (Derry~Londonderry) alongside 6 commercial farms and industry partners including AgriSearch, Devenish, Queens University Belfast and Birnie Consultancy.

ARCZero will focus on producing an accurate, individual, whole farm carbon balance sheets – currently not available. It will precisely measure on-farm carbon stocks (soils, trees and hedges) combining them with the results of a whole farm Lifecycle Analysis calculator. This will allow an accurate creation of a base-line greenhouse gas position.

By assessing future management practices and identifying the most impactful behaviours the project intends to inform how farms across Northern Ireland could accelerate the move towards net carbon zero farming.

Each of the seven commercial farms in the project consortium will:

- Supply output and input data for use in SRUC's AgReCalc calculator.
- Undertake GPS soil analyses covering pH, P & K (7.5cm depth) as well as carbon content and bulk density (30cm depth)
- Be subject to LiDAR survey and analysis to identify above ground Carbon storage and routes of overland flow.

The AgReCalc analysis will be undertaken at both the beginning and the end of the project, to see if positive change has taken place and if so, by how much. These Lifecycle Analysis results will then be added to the carbon stock results to create a Net farm carbon balance for each farm.

**FOR PANEL USE ONLY**

<b>Comments from the panel on your application:</b>
<b>Outcome of application:</b>
<b>Recommendations for onward progress:</b>