

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 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):

Name of your partnership*:
Devon Food Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Harry West (Harry.West@devon.gov.uk)
Kelda Salter (Kelda.Salter@devon.gov.uk)
Charlotte Molyneux (Charlotte.Molyneux@devon.gov.uk)
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay)

Award you are applying for*:
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:

Located in the South West, Devon is England's fourth largest county and home to 1.2 million people. Most of the county is covered by a two-tier local authority with eight district councils and a county council. Plymouth and Torbay, however, are unitary authorities. The county is also home to two National Parks (Dartmoor and Exmoor), the UK's first National Marine Park (Plymouth Sound), five AONBs, and a UNESCO Biosphere (North Devon), collectively reflecting the unique diversity of Devon's marine, coastal, and terrestrial landscapes.

Plymouth, Exeter, and Torbay are the main population centres, although large towns exist across the county. However, Devon is a predominantly rural area with agriculture accounting for 74% of land use and forming a vital part of Devon's economy, history, and cultural identity.



Devon's economy is worth almost £25 billion per year – larger than Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Bristol. Over 50,000 businesses are based in the county, of which the majority are micro, small, or medium sized. Devon has a range of nationally recognised food and drink businesses including [Riverford Organics](#), [Luscombe Drinks](#), [Burt's Crisps](#), and [Ambrosia](#), as well as a myriad of artisan producers, farm

shops, and farmers' markets. There is a strong and growing market for local, sustainably produced food.

Food, agriculture, fishing, and tourism are all important sectors of Devon's Economy. In 2021, agriculture, forestry, and fishing accounted for 6.2% of all employment in the county, whereas tourism sector related jobs accounted for 11%. Brixham and Plymouth are two of England's largest fishing ports by both catch and value.

Nevertheless, Devon also has pockets of high deprivation. Areas such as Barnstaple and Ilfracombe are among the most deprived 10% areas in England. Over the course of the pandemic and current cost-of-living crisis, levels of food insecurity have risen. The [Food and Fuel Insecurity in Devon 2023](#) report, commissioned by Devon County Council, revealed that around 16% of Devon households are now experiencing very low food security compared with 10% in 2021.

The [Devon Food Partnership](#) is coordinated from within the [Business Support and Innovation \(Projects & Programmes\) Team](#) at [Devon County Council](#) and covers the whole ceremonial county (including Plymouth and Torbay). It works closely with other council departments and a wide range of external partners, including the county's other food partnerships.

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

ANSWER:

The Devon Food Partnership steering group includes a cross section of representatives to help capture all aspects of the food system. The Partnership fosters a supportive environment, ensuring everybody feels heard, planning meetings so that a range of topics are covered where there is ample opportunity to contribute in a friendly, constructive way.

Since launching its food strategy in February 2023 (see Key Issue 1 below), the Partnership has reflected on how diversity and inclusion is an overarching theme across all food work and all parts of the strategy. As such, equity, diversity, and inclusion is kept at the centre of the current action-planning work and the future development of the Partnership.

The Food Insecurity Hub project (see Key Issue 3 below) included research projects that explored the effects of food insecurity and access to support for disproportionately impacted groups. In one of these projects, [Food Plymouth](#) worked with [Diversity Business Incubator](#) – a business hub for minority ethnic entrepreneurs based in Plymouth who showcased their work at the Partnership's strategy launch (see Key Issue 1 below) – to explore minority ethnic communities' experiences of food insecurity in the city. Another project, conducted by the University of Exeter and [Love Food CIC](#), investigated the links between mental ill health and food insecurity, including barriers to accessing support. Insight and findings from these projects are being used to inform the development and actions of the Devon Food Insecurity Task Group.

The Devon Food Partnership is subject to Devon County Council's accessibility requirements. This means that all public-facing communications materials, including the website and newsletter, adhere

to the internationally recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standards as a minimum. This ensures that those with visual impairments or using assistive technologies can easily access and understand content.

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

In October 2020, in response to the groundswell of local food activity during the pandemic, Devon County Council committed to developing a county-wide food partnership. The Devon Food Partnership was then launched in February 2021 with a [webinar to start the conversation and engage with key stakeholders](#), including [Food Plymouth](#), [Food Exeter](#), and [Sustainable Food Places](#). From this initial meeting, a steering group was formed, which is the core of the Partnership.

The Devon Food Partnership's steering group is made up of a range of stakeholders from across Devon covering the whole food system including Devon County Council departments (Public Health, Communities, Waste, and Climate Emergency), academia, VCSE organisations, farmers/producers, charities, other local food partnerships, to name a few. A full list of the fifteen organisations with representation on the steering group is on the [Partnership Structure webpage](#). The steering group is committed to working across the key food issues identified by Sustainable Food Places and produced the following vision statement in 2021:

Our aim is to ensure that nutritious, affordable, local, sustainably produced food is available for everyone in Devon. We support the development of a localised, sustainable food system and seek to tackle the issues of food poverty, diet-related ill health, food waste and unsustainable farming practices. Our focus is on achieving strategic step change across the county.

The steering group is broad, inclusive, and diverse, with a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints represented. It operates in an open and amiable way in accordance with clear terms of reference to ensure all voices are heard.

Steering group meetings are held online every month, with each meeting given a particular theme such as 'horticulture' or 'food in schools.' A typical meeting consists of presentations from members or guest speakers, followed by a whole group discussion about that month's theme and ideas for collaboration. There are also opportunities to discuss partnership updates, make decisions on partnership activity, and share details of any other work that may be relevant.

Beyond the steering group, several task groups have been established. Past task groups include the Strategy Task Group, which did the initial work in developing the Partnership's food strategy, and the Healthy Start Task Group, which helped coordinate the delivery of the Healthy Start scheme. More recently, the Devon Food Insecurity Task Group has been established to help focus work in this area. (For details of the Healthy Start and Food Insecurity Task Groups, see Key Issue 3 below.) The Partnership is currently implementing a Food in Schools Task Group, to tackle issues around school food and food education, and a Funding Task Group, to explore ways to make the Partnership more financially sustainable in the long term.

The Devon Food Partnership also includes a Local Authority Sub-Group. In the past, this group would meet every eight weeks to discuss a particular topic. A representative from each district authority in Devon, as well as the two unitary authorities, would ensure that the most relevant person for that meeting's theme from each council received an invite. From autumn 2022 onwards, the LA Sub-Group has become a more informal group to keep Devon's local authorities up to date on the Partnership's activities. Representatives from each local authority continue to meet regularly at Household Support Fund meetings organised by Devon County Council's Communities Team, and there has been a proposal to add a 'Devon Food Partnership Updates' standing agenda item to these meetings.

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

Throughout 2022, the Partnership's focus was to produce a food strategy. A food strategy task group was set up, consisting of a sample of steering group members, to discuss each of the Sustainable Food Places six key themes in turn. Notes from these meetings were used to produce a first draft, which was then circulated to the whole steering group and key external partners. Feedback was incorporated into the final version, which is now available on the Devon Food Partnership website: [Devon's Good Food Strategy 2023-2028](#). The strategy is structured around Sustainable Food Places' six key themes and identifies the strategic priorities for Devon's food system for the next five years, as well as who needs to be engaged to take action on them.

The food strategy was launched at an in-person event in February 2023, attended by roughly 50 stakeholders from across the county's food system. The day included speakers on each of the six key themes, facilitated breakout discussions, and a 'marketplace' where a range of businesses, initiatives, and organisations showcased their work. Pictures from the day are available on the [Food Strategy webpage](#). Participants provided feedback on which strategic priorities they felt were most important and potential solutions to them by using stickers and post-it notes on posters. This feedback, as well as the notes from the discussions, were collated and presented to the Devon Food Partnership steering group and serve to focus the Partnership's activities.

Work has started on delivering many of the strategy's priorities. For example, strategic priority 2.1 relates to establishing a social media presence for the Devon Food Partnership. Since then, the Partnership has developed its own logo and branding to use on all outward-facing communication and set up a Facebook page. This has driven other strategic priorities forward by connecting organisations, individuals, communities, and initiatives and promoting projects that demonstrate best practice.

The Partnership has also been working closely with other stakeholders to encourage them to deliver on the strategy's priorities. In May, the Devon Food Partnership worked closely with [Devon Community Foundation](#) (DCF) to deliver the first Devon Food Insecurity Summit and is continuing to work with DCF on the Devon Food Insecurity Task Group (see Key Issue 3 below). By bringing together and working with key partners in this way, the Partnership is starting to address the strategic priorities in Section 3 of the strategy.

Since launching the strategy, the Partnership has also been working on developing an action plan. This will identify the short-, medium-, and long-term actions the Partnership and other stakeholders can take to address the most pressing of the strategy's priorities. Additionally, the Partnership has committed to providing annual reports on progress made to implement the strategy across its five-year span.

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

The Devon Food Partnership maintains close connections with other food partnerships, including having regular catch ups with [Food Plymouth](#) and [Sustainable Food Cornwall](#). Within these conversations, an ambition has emerged to take a more regional approach and collaborate with some of the South West's other food partnerships like [Sustainable Food Somerset](#).

Maintaining engagement with Devon's district authorities has been an ongoing challenge since most councils do not have a dedicated point of contact for food-related issues. It is hoped that, by utilising the existing, well-attended Household Support Fund meetings, and by inviting key individuals to relevant task groups and steering group meetings, that

the Devon Food Partnership can continue to strengthen its links with all of Devon's local authorities.

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

Since launching the food strategy in February 2023, improving the Partnership's outward-facing communications has been a priority. First, the [Devon Food Partnership website](#) was updated to make it more public-friendly while maintaining accessibility. This included developing a logo, colour scheme, and branding that met accessibility standards, which could then be used across all communication channels. The website primarily acts as an anchor to inform the public and potential partners about Partnership and its activities.

Second, the Partnership set up a [Facebook page](#) to engage with members of the public and community groups. This page is used to post about food-related news and events and to promote the positive work of other groups and organisations. The page is also used to promote a diverse range of opportunities for everyone to participate in the Good Food Movement including food markets (such as the [International Market in Torquay](#)), food festivals (such as [Exeter Seed Bank's Tomato Festival](#)), agricultural shows, and other events and activities for people to get involved with (such as [Love CIC's Apple Scrumping and Juicing Days](#)). Furthermore, the Partnership participates in and raises awareness of national social media campaigns, such as the NFU's [Back British Farming Day](#).

Third, the [Devon Food Partnership newsletter](#) was launched in August 2023. Beforehand, people could sign up to receive email alerts every time a new news post was published on the website. Using this existing and expanding subscriber-base of circa 850 people, the Devon Food Partnership newsletter is now sent out monthly by email. It is primarily geared towards members of the public with some content aimed at businesses and community organisations (including grant opportunities). The newsletter covers Partnership updates, news, and events from across Devon's food system and beyond with a view to increase awareness of and engagement with food-related issues and activities. In the [September 2023 newsletter](#), we introduced a 'Spotlight' sections to highlight and celebrate a particular organisation or project each month. September's Spotlight featured [Okehampton Community Kitchen](#) – a food support service that provides essential support, nutritious meals, and cooking resources to individuals facing challenges such as disability, loss of income, end-of-life care, or sudden life changes. It is hoped that these Spotlights will raise public awareness of good food work going on across Devon and of opportunities to get involved, for instance through volunteering.

There are a wide range of ways for people across Devon to learn more about local, sustainable, healthy food and get directly involved in growing and cooking. [St Sidwell's Community Centre](#) in the heart of Exeter run a programme of food-related activities, events, and services for the local community. The St Sidwell Street Garden is maintained by a team of volunteers who use organic, nature-friendly techniques. Everyone is welcome to participate in their weekly gardening sessions and learn more about growing food. All the fruit and veg produced in the garden (along with surplus food from local supermarkets) is used in the St Sidwell Street Café in which volunteers produce nutritious, value for money meals. St Sidwell's simultaneously operate a bakehouse, cookery school, and catering service meaning that volunteers can experience and develop skills across the entire food journey, from garden to plate.

Across the county, there are also a number of farms which are part of the [Community Supported Agriculture](#) (CSA) network, including [Chagford Community Market Garden](#). This seven-acre, organic market garden on the eastern slopes of Dartmoor produces vegetables, herbs, and flowers which are distributed to over 140 local 'shareholders.' Ten percent of 'shares' of the harvest are offered to low-income families at a discounted price. Volunteers can participate in growing and harvesting to learn more about organic horticultural production, community supported agriculture, and local food systems in general. Chagford Community Market Garden also run CSA start-up and scaling-up courses to share their first-hand experience with individuals and community groups interested in establishing or expanding their own CSA projects. The sixth of these courses was run in September 2023.

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

The launch of the food strategy in February 2023 (see Key Issue 1 above) brought together key food stakeholders from across the county including community groups, initiatives, and organisations. The Devon Food Insecurity Summit in May 2023 (see Key Issue 3 below) similarly brought these groups together. As a result of these two key events, an informal community of organisations has developed around the Food Partnership. The Devon Food Partnership seeks to utilise this ever-growing network to facilitate and support collaboration, communication, and joined-up working.

Many of Devon's community groups and initiatives are part of the [Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay VCSE Assembly](#). Coordinated by [Devon Communities Together](#), this network brings together voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations across Devon to find holistic, collaborative solutions to local challenges. The Assembly does not have a formalised structure but aims to support and complement existing local, community-led networks and partnerships by enabling collaboration on specific issues (for example, the Food Insecurity Hub project discussed in Key Issue 3 below) and by acting as a voice for the sector on a strategic level.

Community organisations are also supported by [Community Action Groups \(CAG\) Devon](#). CAG Devon, managed by [Resource Futures](#) and funded by [Devon County Council](#), helps support community groups by issuing small grants to cover insurance costs as well as guidance, training, and opportunities for networking. Support is focused on groups engaged in activities that help reduce waste which, alongside general waste reduction projects, includes food surplus cafés, community fridges and larders, and community composting schemes. Over the course of 2022-23, the CAG Devon network consisted of 22 groups (such as [Ashburton Community Fridge](#) and the [ReRooted Surplus Food Café](#)) who collectively achieved 20,821 hours of volunteer work, helping to prevent an estimated 84.3 tonnes of waste and 297.2 tonnes of carbon emissions. CAG Devon members run regular events to help raise awareness of their work and encourage wider participation from members of the community.

There is also a large and growing academic good food movement centred on the University of Exeter. The long established and internationally respected [Centre for Rural Policy Research \(CRPR\)](#) is an inter-disciplinary team of social scientists focusing on all aspects the rural, agricultural, and food sectors. The more outward-facing [Exeter Food](#) network brings together researchers from across the University and connects them with external stakeholders. A monthly newsletter covers news, events, and opportunities to get involved in food related projects. Food Exeter also run their own public events including, in June 2023, welcoming Minette Batters, President of the National Farmers' Union, to discuss the current crossroads of change for food, farming, and the environment. The event – hosted in person but also streamed live – was well attended by academics and students as well as local producers and members of the public.

Exeter Food has also partnered with [Exeter Phoenix](#) – the city's premier arts venue – to put together a ['Food on Film' programme](#) to engage the public with food-related issues. Each season explores food from a different social, cultural, or political angle by screening a compilation of documentaries, features, and short films accompanied by talks, discussions, workshops, and events hosted by food researchers and producers. This included chances for the public to get involved with making and tasting local food. Summer 2023's theme was 'the Meat Debate' and included the films 'Food for Thought' (an exploration of the environmental impact of meat and dairy production in Cornwall), 'Meat the Future' (an examination of the ethical and environmental issues around lab-grown meat), and 'Chicken Run' (the family-friendly Aardman animation). The programme is starting much needed conversations and is reconnecting citizens with their food.

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

[Tamar Grow Local](#), who operate [Tamar Valley Food Hubs](#) (see Key Issue 5 below), run a number of projects in the lower stretches of the Tamar Valley, straddling the Devon

Cornwall border, which help connect people with their food. As part of the [Farmstart](#) project, individuals wanting to start or expand their own horticultural business can access up to an acre of land, shared equipment and facilities, and practical support and advice for £500 per annum. The [Grow, Share, Cook](#) project supplies low-income households in Plymouth with seasonal fruit and vegetables from community growing projects in the Tamar Valley along with recipe sheets to encourage recipients to try new and varied meals. Other projects associated with Tamar Grow Local include a community vineyard, apple and honey co-ops, and provision of allotments.

The rapid increase in the Partnership's communications activities has revealed the need to develop a communications and engagement strategy. Work has started on this to help guide and coordinate communications within the Partnership as well as foster collaborations with other stakeholders engaging with the public around food, including other local food partnerships.

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

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

Due to the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, food insecurity has increased around Devon. To assess the extent of the issue, Devon County Council's Public Health team commissioned the [Food and Fuel Insecurity in Devon 2023 Research Report](#). The results show that 16% of Devon households are now experiencing very low food security compared to 10% in 2021. These households are experiencing substantial disruptions to their eating patterns, such as household members eating less and going hungry.

Alongside this research, the [Devon VCSE Assembly](#) contracted [Devon Community Foundation](#) (DCF) – who are represented on the Devon Food Partnership steering group – to develop a specialist 'Food Insecurity Hub' to bring together insight, intelligence, innovation, and lived experience. DCF worked with a range of partners to pilot six inter-related, small-scale research projects which looked at various issues related to food insecurity including mental health, working with diverse communities, and exploring the role schools can play in focusing food support. Summaries of these projects have now been brought together on the [Food Insecurity Hub](#) page of the Devon Food Partnership website, along with the [Devon Food Insecurity Hub Report](#).

To bring these projects together, present their findings, and discuss next steps, the Devon Food Partnership collaborated with DCF to deliver the first Devon Food Insecurity Summit in May 2023. The summit brought together an audience of roughly 50 stakeholders including researchers, local authorities, and VCSE organisations. This was also an opportunity for food support providers to get together, share experience, and connect

with each other as well as with some local food producers. [Listen to some participants' comments in this video.](#)

Feedback from the summit revealed the need to keep the momentum going. As such, a Devon Food Insecurity Task Group has been set up under the umbrella of the Devon Food Partnership and is being led by colleagues at DCF. The group, made up of representatives from local authority departments, food support providers, and VCSE organisations, has four proposed workstreams:

- Sharing insight from research and experience of responses to food insecurity
- Advocacy and influencing policymakers
- Coordinating funders and funding across sectors
- Fostering relationships and collaboration between producers, providers, and consumers

Across the county, there is a network of organisations and initiatives taking a variety of approaches to support households facing food insecurity. [Torbay Food Alliance](#) is a partnership of local community organisations working together to support people struggling to afford food. Working closely with the [Torbay Community Helpline](#), they take an holistic approach to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. The Alliance connects people with the most appropriate support for their circumstances including referral to a food bank, joining a social supermarket (such as the [YUM Bus](#) – a mobile social supermarket run from a converted minibus), or accessing advice services. Since March 2020, Torbay Food Alliance have provided over a million meals for people in Torbay. A detailed video is available on the [Alliance's Facebook page](#).

Another project, [Feeding Devon](#), is a network of more than 30 organisations committed to ending hunger in their local communities. Originally piloted by [Feeding Britain](#), Feeding Devon brings together stakeholders to collaborate and improve access to food crisis support by providing training for volunteers, helping to distribute surplus food, and improving education about food and cooking. In the South of the county, they have developed a volunteer-run food distribution network including pop-up food hubs to reach isolated areas and affordable food clubs. Throughout their work, the dignity of service users is upheld by adopting a pay-what-you-can model and cultivating a sense of community by sharing food and running group cooking activities.

In a past project, a Healthy Start Scheme task group was set up under the Devon Food Partnership and led by Devon County Council's Public Health Team. The group worked with supportive, local food producers to provide high-quality, local, seasonal produce for Healthy Start recipients. Nine local suppliers distributed up to three free Healthy Start boxes to each recipient, along with a Healthy Start information booklet including recipes.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

Both the Devon Food Partnership's food strategy and the Devon Carbon Plan (see Key Issue 6 below) identify promoting a healthy, sustainable diet, as described in the Government's Eatwell Guide, to be a priority. Each of Devon's three main urban centres (Plymouth, Exeter, and Torbay) have taken part in [Veg Cities](#) campaigns. Furthermore, the [Sugar Smart Devon](#) campaign, run by the [Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and part of the national [Sugar Smart](#) campaign, encouraged schools to take action on the health impacts of excessive sugar consumption. Schools could pledge to promote and provide healthy lunches and snacks, encourage water consumption, and raise awareness about the risks of excessive sugar consumption to earn a Sugar Smart Devon certificate.

Conversations from the Devon Food Insecurity Summit (see Action Area A above) revealed a strong appetite for more work in improving food in schools, including education around healthy eating. As such, an extended, two-hour long, 'food in schools' themed steering group meeting has been planned by the Devon Food Partnership for the end of September 2023. Three speakers from the [Local Authority Caterers Association \(LACA\)](#), [Learn Devon](#), and the [University of Exeter](#) have been invited to share their work and discuss the challenges and opportunities around food in schools. Further stakeholders with an interest in food in schools beyond the steering group have also been invited to attend as guests. The speaker from the University of Exeter has proposed to set up a Food in Schools Task Group under the umbrella of the Devon Food Partnership to enable long-term, ongoing conversations and collaborations. It is hoped that discussions from the September steering group meeting will form the basis of this group.

Each of Devon's upper tier local authorities ([Devon County Council](#), [Plymouth City Council](#), and [Torbay Council](#)) delivers their own Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programmes, funded by the Department for Education. These programmes aim to support children from low-income households to eat more healthily and be more active over the school holidays by providing free activities and healthy meals. The programmes also include activities to help children improve their knowledge and awareness of healthy eating, and support for families to develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting. During [Devon County Council's Easter 2023 programme](#), 1,899 children attended HAF events and, of the 254 parents who provided feedback, 94% rated the HAF scheme as 'excellent' or 'good'. Detailed feedback has been taken into account when planning future HAF programmes.

[LOVE Food CIC](#) is an Exeter-based organisation that works to increase access to, and raise awareness of the benefits of local, organic, vegan, and ethical food. LOVE Food runs free and low-cost community cookery sessions in Exeter and Teignbridge where people can learn how to use local, seasonal produce to make healthy, sustainable, affordable meals. Additionally, LOVE Food run a regular lunch club where a two- or three-course meal is

served using surplus produce donated by [Exeter Food Action](#) and [Shillingford Organics](#), helping to demonstrate how healthy meals using local produce can be made on a budget.

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

[Free school meals](#) are administered by Devon County Council for all Devon maintained schools, as well as Devon academies through a traded agreement. Families can apply through an online portal. Over summer 2023, Devon County Council also ran a [free school meals holiday voucher scheme](#) where over 20,000 supermarket vouchers, worth over £1.8 million, were sent to support households in receipt of free school meals over the summer holidays. There has been an ambition to enable automatic enrolment for free school meals across the county. However, GDPR-related difficulties in sharing data between upper- and lower-tier local authorities have prevented this from happening.

To build on the Food Insecurity Hub project (described in Action Area A above), Devon Community Foundation has been undertaking another project exploring food insecurity in North Devon. With funding from the UKRI's Community Knowledge Fund, DCF has facilitated engagement between residents vulnerable to food insecurity and local food producers to better understand how to bridge the gap between food insecurity mitigation and wider access to local food systems. The project team has partnered with colleagues from the University of Exeter to share this work with key strategic stakeholder groups. Phase One of the project took place in summer 2023 and the report is now available on the [Food Insecurity Hub](#) webpage. Alternatively, [watch this brief video summary of the project](#). DCF have recently been awarded nearly £100,000 to undertake Phase Two of the project.

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

In 2022, Devon County Council and the Devon Local Nature Partnership commissioned [A Review of Devon Farm Advice](#) to better understand the provision of both environmental and business advice for farmers across the county and identify any gaps. The review found that Devon's farmers are well-served by 65 farm advice organisations from the private, charitable, and public sectors as well as 147 individual advisors. Many of the available advice services are free.

The Devon Food Partnership is hosted within the [Business Support and Innovation \(Projects and Programmes\) Team](#) which manages Devon County Council's food and farming projects aimed at supporting businesses to drive economic development. This includes the [Future Farming Resilience](#) (FFR) programme which is supporting the farming

community through the transition from the Direct Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) towards the government's new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS). Covering the Great South West area (Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, and the Isles of Scilly), farmers can access free, expert advice that is tailored to their business. This includes information workshops and one-to-one support around funding opportunities, succession planning, digital skills, and more. To date, a total of 946 farm businesses have been supported through the FFR programme. [Feedback from one beneficiary, as well as insight from Devon County Councillor Rufus Gilbert about the importance of supporting Devon's farmers, was recorded in this video.](#)

Meanwhile, the [Devon Agri-Tech Alliance](#) (DATA) supports Devon's agricultural sector by connecting farmers with innovative agricultural technology researchers and developers. Anyone involved in the sector can join the Alliance for free to receive a monthly newsletter covering the latest news, events, and funding opportunities, as well as examples of best practice. Additionally, DATA runs workshops, such as a 'Roots to Market' event hosted in February 2023 which explored innovative ways farmers are selling their produce to customers. The event was hosted at [Pipers Farm](#) – a family-run farm and online shop stocking the produce of 40 small-scale, family farms within a one-hour radius, with a strong focus on sustainability and using native breeds – who are also represented on the Devon Food Partnership steering group. The Alliance is the legacy of the original Devon Agri-Tech Accelerator project which concluded in December 2022. This involved working with the [University of Plymouth to map and gap](#) the agri-tech sector in Devon, as well as providing grants of up to £15,000 for 14 farm businesses to employ innovative agricultural technology.

[How Now Dairy](#) – the UK's first carbon negative dairy farm and milk delivery service, and also the only dairy in the UK to use 100% compostable packaging – was one of the beneficiaries of the Accelerator project and is now an active member of the Alliance. From their small, 100-acre farm in the South Hams and their herd of 40 Ayrshire cows, How Now Dairy deliver their organic milk directly to customers through the use of electric vehicles across South Devon, along with a selection of other sustainable produce from across the South West. [The DATA project commissioned this case study video to explore how How Now Dairy has benefited from the project, and encourage others towards innovation and sustainability.](#)

The [Heart of the South West Growth Hub](#) provides general business support and advice to businesses across Devon and Somerset. Some support is offered in-house, but Growth Hub advisors can also signpost businesses to other sources of support, including funding opportunities. The Growth Hub website includes a dedicated [Farming and Food Resources Hub](#) to bring together many of the sources of support available to food and farming businesses in one convenient place. Last year, they hosted a 'Spotlight on Food and Drink' event in Somerset as an opportunity for local food and drink businesses to come together,

network, and learn about some of the business support available for them. There is a well-supported ambition to run a similar event in Devon with a particular focus on food labelling and allergens. The Growth Hub team is working with the Devon Food Partnership to explore collaborative options for such an event.

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

A number of schemes around Devon serve to promote local produce to customers. The [Made in Devon](#) scheme, part of the national [Buy With Confidence](#) scheme, offers small businesses (including food and drink producers) around Devon expert, one-to-one Trading Standards advice. Members are also given a badge to demonstrate they are legal, trustworthy, and use local produce, suppliers, and materials wherever possible. Made in Devon also promotes its members and their produce to consumers through social media campaigns and an online [directory](#).

[Food Drink Devon](#) is Community Interest Company which represents a membership of food and drink producers, retailers, hospitality venues, and other related businesses around the county. It works to celebrate and raise the profile of Devon's quality, seasonal, and sustainable produce. Member businesses get access to the Food Drink Devon logo (which represents quality, sustainability, and provenance to consumers); marketing, promotional, and other support and training; networking opportunities with similar businesses and potential buyers; and representation at a range of trade shows, farmers' markets, and food festivals. Furthermore, the annual [Food Drink Devon Awards](#) are a chance to recognise the county's most respected, influential, and passionate artisan food and drink producers and establishments. Consumers and buyers can hear about Devon's excellent producers through Food Drink Devon's social media accounts and find they're nearest members using the [online map and directory](#).

Throughout the year, a range of food and drink events serve as opportunities to showcase the best of local, sustainable food to consumers. 2023 is the first year of the [Taste East Devon festival](#) – a 16-day celebration of East Devon's renowned producers, chefs, restaurants, and venues, including [Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage](#). Ticketed and free events are taking place throughout September and include kitchen and garden open days, seafood tasting experiences, foraging days, and more. Other, longer established festivals like the [Powderham Food Festival](#) and the [Dartmouth Food Festival](#), as well as agricultural shows including the [Devon County Show](#), provide consumers a full calendar of events to discover the county's amazing food and drink. The Devon Food Partnership works hard to promote these events to the public through its communication channels (see Key Issue 2 above).

Devon is well served by traditional farmers' markets, such as the [South Molton Pannier Market](#) and [Exeter Farmers' Market](#), in which farmers, growers, and food businesses can

sell their produce directly to local customers. The county is also home to some of the best farm shops in the country. Over the past 50 years, [Darts Farm](#) near Exeter has grown to become a unique destination shopping location including a food hall, butchers, fish shed, and eateries. Beef, fruit, and vegetables are all produced on farm using traditional, sustainable methods and sold with minimal packaging and zero food miles. Customers are invited to explore the farm and see how and where their food is produced. Darts Farm was named 'large farm shop of the year' in the 2022 [Farm Retail Association](#) Awards, an accolade which was awarded to another Devon farm shop – [Strawberry Fields](#) near Lifton, West Devon – in 2023.

Devon is a stronghold for organic food production. [Riverford Organics](#), based in the South Hams, operates one of the UK's largest organic veg box schemes, delivering to around 90,000 homes around the country every week. Riverford works with a range of small-scale producers to ensure that customers receive the best produce in the most sustainable way while also paying farmers a fair price. Riverford uses local produce in their own restaurant and publish the [Wicked Leaks magazine](#). Furthermore, the smaller [Shillingford Organics](#) delivers organic veg boxes directly to customers in Exeter and the surrounding areas, alongside selling at farmers' markets, at their own farm shop, and café.

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

The [Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service](#) provides bespoke regulatory business support across Devon and Somerset. In a [recent investigation](#), 56 out of the 100 businesses tested were in breach of Natasha's law – new Government rules which require full ingredient and allergen labelling on all food made on premises and pre-packed for direct sale. Trading standards are continuing to investigate and support businesses to comply with legal requirements, including by providing [clear online guidance on food law](#).

[Devon's County Farm Estate](#) is managed by South West Norse and consists of 65 fully equipped residential dairy and mixed livestock farms covering a total area of nearly 10,000 acres. The Devon Food Partnership and other Devon County Council food and farming projects have recently started to work more closely with the county farms around support that can offered to tenants and opportunities to demonstrate best practice (such as carbon footprinting and trialling greenhouse gas capture off of slurry pits).

As part of the [Dartmoor Hill Farmers Project](#), Dartmoor National Park maintain a [local food and drink map](#) which contains a collection of food and drink producers and retailers in and around the National Park. A small but growing number of businesses use this as a way to raise awareness of their produce. The [Edible Exmoor](#) project hosts a similar map for producers in North Devon and West Somerset.

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

In March 2022, a range of partners, including Devon County Council and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, commissioned the Centre for Rural Policy Research at the University of Exeter to produce the [Public Procurement of Food in the South West](#) report. Researchers engaged with public procurement buyers, suppliers, and producers to better understand the current state, challenges, and opportunities of the public procurement of food in the region. The report concludes there is 'growing interest among stakeholders regarding the opportunities and benefits of shortened supply chains' and that 'many public sector entities have demonstrated plans to move towards more sustainable food procurement systems in the future' (p.65). Although barriers remain to developing more local and sustainable supply chains, the report offers recommendations to overcome them, including the development of dynamic food purchasing systems and greater transparency and collaboration across the supply chain. The Devon Food Partnership supports and encourages action on the recommendations of the report, as identified in strategic priority 5.3 of the food strategy.

Based on the findings of the report, partners across the Heart of the South West prepared the [Local Food Procurement in the South West Public Sector Declaration of Intent](#). Signatories of the declaration note that they will endeavour to source, and encourage other local providers, to source more seasonal, locally produced food and to review procurement policies to enable this. The declaration has been signed by Devon County Council and Somerset County Council.

Devon County Council does not directly procure any food itself. Instead, it has a joint venture partnership agreement with [South West Norse](#) – another signatory of the above declaration. As such, South West Norse – who have achieved a Gold Award as part of the Soil Association's Food for Life Served Here scheme – supply over 100 of Devon's schools, as well as the main catering outlet at County Hall, Devon County Council's main premises. All meat is sourced from Devon or Cornwall, whereas dry goods, fruit, and veg come from suppliers across the South West region. There is an ambition to utilise the county farm estate (also managed by South West Norse) to supply schools with food.

[CATERed](#) is co-operative trading company jointly owned by 67 local schools and Plymouth City Council which supplies most of Plymouth's primary schools, as well as some schools in the surrounding area, with school meals. 86% of CATERed's menu is made from scratch every day and is nutritionally balanced, providing up to three portions of fruit and veg per day. CATERed works hard to use as much high-quality, local produce as possible by using

local or regional suppliers (many of whom are organic), rotating the menu to use seasonal ingredients, and making animal welfare a priority (for instance, by only using free range eggs).

Exploratory conversations have taken place between the Devon Food Partnership, NHS Services, and Devon County Council teams (including Business Support and Innovation, Public Health, and Waste) around opportunities to supply care homes with local, sustainable food. These conversations are ongoing.

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

Devon is well served by a number of food hubs which help to aggregate the supply of food from small-scale producers and shorten supply chains. Since 2013, [Tamar Valley Food Hubs](#), part of [Tamar Grow Local](#) and straddling the Devon-Cornwall border, has operated an online farmers' market bringing together the best seasonal, local produce. Over 60 farmers and producers sell through Tamar Valley Food Hubs at a volume and price of their choosing. A weekly delivery service is available for both individuals and workplaces in Plymouth and the Tamar Valley. Alternatively, customers have the option of visiting a collection point or buying in bulk. [In My Backyard](#) offers a similar and very popular service in East Devon.

Many of the region's food hubs work together with key agroecological producers, such as the [Apricot Centre](#) and [Shillingford Organics](#), under the umbrella of the [Good Food Loop](#) – a not-for-profit distribution network connecting local food hubs and wholesale customers with agroecological producers across Devon and Cornwall. Through the Good Food Loop, small-scale farmers and producers can easily sell their produce to a wider customer base not in their immediate range, including producer-to-producer sales. Producers share the transportation costs through a weekly van round, which in turn reduces carbon emissions. Meanwhile, by having an extended, shared supply base, food hubs have access to a greater diversity of produce and are better able to meet the demand of retail and wholesale customers year-round. Connecting producers, food hubs, and wholesale customers through the Good Food Loop has resulted in the development of resilient, shortened supply chains for good, sustainably produced food across Devon and Cornwall. [This video explores some participants' experiences of being part of the Good Food Loop.](#)

The [South West Food Hub](#) is a Community Interest Company committed to supporting the development of dynamic food procurement as a way to shorten supply chains and open up public sector food procurement to small and medium sized producers. The work of the South West Food Hub has been instrumental in driving forward activity to develop dynamic food procurement infrastructure and has led to Dynamic Purchasing UK being set up to support this nationally. The South West Food Hub website signposts buyers to

resources to help find good, local food and drink producers, including a [Local Food Map](#) provided by [Big Barn](#).

Devon Food Partnership is currently in the process of planning 'Meet the Buyer' and 'Spotlight on Food' events for food and drink businesses in collaboration with Heart of the South West Growth Hub. The aim of these events will be to bring food purchasers into contact with local suppliers and to increase accessibility for small and medium sized enterprises.

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

The South West Food Hub secured funding from the Dixon Foundation to develop a dynamic food procurement system for the region. However, key anchor institutions, including Devon County Council, felt they were unable to provide match funding due to the risks associated with the new technology and the current economic and financial circumstances. Nevertheless, there remains strong interest in the benefits of dynamic food procurement systems.

Food price inflation, tight budgets, and inflexible menus have made it increasingly difficult for caterers to use local, sustainable, seasonal produce, particularly in schools.

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

In 2019, public, private and voluntary organisations from across Devon (including Devon County Council) came together to form the [Devon Climate Emergency Response Group](#), declare a climate emergency, and endorse the principles of the [Devon Climate Declaration](#). Since then, Devon County Council has provided the secretariat for the [Devon Climate Emergency](#) partnership, which is itself represented on the Devon Food Partnership steering group.

Devon Climate Emergency partnership published the [Devon Carbon Plan](#) in 2022. This sets out the roadmap for how Devon can reach net-zero by 2050 at the latest. Chapter 11 'Food, Land & Sea' of the Carbon Plan recognises the importance of food, fishing, and farming in tackling the climate and nature emergency. Key actions include promoting a healthy and sustainably produced diet, bringing local producers together into food hubs, and supporting the adoption low-carbon agricultural practices. Devon Climate Emergency has taken action on the first point by providing guidance on sustainable diets on their

[dedicated Eating webpage](#), as well as through their social media channels and newsletter. Supporting the Devon Food Partnership is also considered a priority action in the Carbon Plan, recognising its importance in coordinating activities to raise awareness of and improve access to sustainably produced food, and to influence food and agriculture policy. Similarly, the Devon Food Partnership's strategy recognises the importance of working with and promoting the principles of the Devon Carbon Plan in improving the sustainability of Devon's food system.

Additionally, the [Devon Local Nature Partnership](#) is also managed from within Devon County Council to tackle the nature and biodiversity crisis. This voluntary, strategic collaboration of organisations, groups, and individuals is developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Devon to identify the opportunities, priorities, and actions around wildlife in Devon. This includes helping farmers and growers to manage, work with, and protect the natural environment. In June 2023, the Local Nature Partnership hosted an [LNP Conference](#) to help shape the development of its strategy which was attended by 200 people. The Local Nature Partnership also run the [Wild About Devon](#) initiative which includes a Wildlife Grant Scheme (to provide small amounts of funding for projects that promote wildlife) and an award scheme (to celebrate community action around the county).

The [Devon Wildlife Trust](#) is represented on both of the above partnerships, as well as the Devon Food Partnership. In addition to Devon County Council's agricultural support projects (see Key Issue 4 above), the Devon Wildlife Trust also works with hundreds of farmers and landowners each year providing advice and support on environmentally friendly farming practices. One project, running since 2011 in the [Avon Valley](#) in the South Hams and funded by South Devon Nature Trust, has worked with landowners to restore and reconnect habitats throughout the valley, including establishing over 40 hectares of new wildflower meadows and planting 675m of new hedges to link woodlands. The advice and support of the Devon Wildlife Trust has enabled farmers in the valley to work alongside nature in a sustainable way.

A [Devon Land Use Framework](#) has been developed and tested. Led by the [Food, Farming & Countryside Commission](#) (FFCC) working with local stakeholders, the pilot project has developed a set of principles to support public, private, and voluntary partners to make informed decisions about Devon's land with regard to conflicting priorities including net-zero, nature recovery, economic development, and food production. Between October 2022 and April 2023, these were tested at trial sites around the county. Results and data from these tests have been collected and findings will be reported on soon. Colleagues from the FFCC presented the Devon Land Use Framework at a Devon Food Partnership steering group meeting with an emphasis on how agroecological food production can satisfy the needs of the natural environment while maintaining local food security. As the pilot draws to a close, there is a strong appetite from stakeholders to build on the FFCC's

work and carry it forward. The Devon Food Partnership remains committed to the development of a land use framework in Devon and will continue to be closely involved.

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

Devon's district authorities, Devon County Council, and Torbay Council work together closely under the banner of the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee. In 2020, they produced their [Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay 2020-2030](#), in which they commit to assisting households to reduce their food waste by 20% by 2025, from a 2015 baseline. The strategy also uses the food waste hierarchy to identify actions across the food system to reduce food waste and, therefore, greenhouse gas emissions. Since the publication of the strategy, a range of projects and initiatives, led by both the councils and other organisations, have helped tackle food waste in Devon.

[Recycle Devon](#) helps induce behavioural change by providing Devon residents with advice and guidance to prevent and reduce food waste. In particular, Recycle Devon have produced the free, online ['Have your food and eat it!' recipe book](#) to help people avoid food waste and save money in the process. The first half of the book contains useful tips and guidance on meal planning, smart shopping, freezing, and portion size. The second half contains a selection of tasty and adaptable recipes suited to using up commonly wasted ingredients and leftovers. Recycle Devon also run competitions to engage with the public. In summer 2023, this included the chance to win a juicer when pledging to reduce food waste and use separate food waste collection.

Devon has an expansive and growing network of community fridges and larders to help redistribute surplus food. People can find their nearest fridge or larder by using the handy [map and list on the Recycle Devon website](#), as well as suggestions for food redistribution apps (like Olio) as alternatives. The development of many of Devon's community fridges has been supported by the National Lottery funded [Food Rescue](#) project, managed by Devon County Council's Waste Team.

The Food Rescue project is currently also working with [Exeter Food Action](#) - a local charity that works with wholesalers, manufacturers, and retailers to redistribute healthy, nutritious food that would otherwise go to waste to food banks and community groups – to develop gleaning opportunities around the county. See the [Gleaning Devon](#) Facebook page for details. [Food in Community](#), based in Totnes in the South Hams, operate an existing successful gleaning project. Every year, they gather more than a million portions of surplus, sustainably produced food from local farms, orchards, and food producers. This is then redistributed to the community through a food box scheme as well as 'pay what you feel' cafés and community events.

Community composting initiatives are supported by Devon County Council's [Recycling Credit Scheme](#). Through this scheme, community compost initiatives can receive payment

for collecting garden waste, producing compost, and re-using that compost within the community.

The majority of district councils in Devon offer a weekly food waste collection to residents or are in the process of rolling out a new food waste collection service. All domestic food waste that is collected separately is sent to anaerobic digestors to produce methane (which is then used to produce electricity or sent directly to the gas grid) and fertiliser. Anaerobic digestors are also used by Devon's food businesses. [Langage AD](#) (built by [Langage Farm](#), a large dairy farm and producer in the South Hams) uses waste from the production of its dairy products, along with food waste from a selection of local businesses, to produce biofertiliser which is used on the farm to grow forage for the cattle. Langage AD also produces electricity, which is used to power its factory, with any surplus exported to the national grid.

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

Following a successful pilot funded by Devon County Council's [Natural Capital Challenge Fund](#), the [Apricot Centre](#), near Dartington in the South Hams, is [now the only location in the UK to offer Level 2, 3, and 4 diplomas in Regenerative Land Based Systems](#). These courses are fully funded and free for participants. The [Level 2 Skills Bootcamp](#) is a 12-day short course, catering for 40 students and is part of the [Train4Tomorrow](#) programme, funded by Devon County Council and the Department for Education. Short courses in permaculture and agroforestry are also available. The Apricot Centre holds the tenancy for Huxhams Cross Farm – a 34-acre biodynamic farm – and sells its produce (including fruit, vegetables, preserves, flowers, and small-scale grain and flour) through local markets and digital channels.

In addition to producing the Devon Carbon Plan, Devon Climate Emergency are producing the [Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Strategy](#). This will detail the risks that the region might face as climate change increasingly affects the UK and identifies how we can all adapt to these changes. The strategy is inclusive of potential impacts on farmers, growers, and the food supply chain while proposing possible mitigations, such as altering the crops that farmers produce. A draft version of the strategy underwent public consultation in summer 2023 and feedback is currently being incorporated into the final version.

FOR PANEL USE ONLY

Comments from the panel on your application:

Outcome of application:
Recommendations for onward progress: