

# 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>
Food Plymouth
<b>Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:</b>
Sophie Paterson, <a href="mailto:sfp@foodplymouth.org">sfp@foodplymouth.org</a>
<b>Geographic region which this award will represent*:</b>
Plymouth
<b>Award you are applying for*:</b>
Silver

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

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

**ANSWER:**

The City of Plymouth is surrounded by Plymouth Sound (a recently created National Marine Park and with a major fish landing quay) to the south, Dartmoor National Park to the north, the River Tamar (the border with neighbouring Cornwall to the west) and the South Hams of Devon to the east. Plymouth is 220 miles / three-and-a-half hours travelling time from London. It is a Unitary Authority, currently run by a Labour administration on a Cooperative Council model. Plymouth has a population of some 265,000 people, making it the second largest city in the south west of England after Bristol.

Historically Plymouth has been a military city, and has therefore been shaped more by a utilitarian culture rather than by the presence of a strong creative, arts and mercantile tradition. Plymouth's historical dependency on the defence, shipbuilding, manufacturing and construction industries and various public sector occupations has created challenges for the city, especially during the past 20 years during the post-Cold War run-down of the Royal Naval dockyard and the impacts of globalisation. Plymouth has also been hit hard by the economic crisis, government austerity measures and the impacts of Brexit. However, considerable energy and effort is being invested in countering these challenges, notably around Plymouth being one of the UK's pioneering Social Enterprise Cities.

Despite many positive developments, there is a recognised 'crescent of deprivation' (based on indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) mapping), running from the north west through the west and centre of the city. Associated with this, Plymouth's Gross Value Added (GVA) measure has been around 86% of the UK average for many years and when wealth is created, it is distributed unevenly. For example, in the wealthiest neighbourhoods only 1 in 20 families are on low incomes, whereas in the poorest areas nearly half of the families are in this bracket and are therefore vulnerable to household food insecurity.

The impacts of these inequalities are clearly evident in the city's health and wellbeing statistics. The average life expectancy in Plymouth is below the England average, and in the poorest area the life expectancy is nearly 8 years less than in the wealthiest. One of the key drivers of this low level of health and wellbeing is lack of access to good quality, affordable food.

Furthermore, Plymouth is still 90% white British, often ignoring the value and contribution of people from around the world, despite being a Home Office dispersal area for asylum seekers. The city has committed to welcoming resettled refugees, e.g. people from

Afghanistan. This sometimes leads to difficulties, which Food Plymouth is working to counter in partnership with the Diversity Business Incubator (DBI), of which more below.

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

**ANSWER:**

Expansion and diversification of Food Plymouth's governance structure is underway via new working partnerships with DBI, notably through our SFP Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) for Change pilot. DBI Director Jabo Butera and colleagues are representing Food Plymouth and presenting at Food Plymouth events, becoming recognised faces of the partnership and network and its infrastructure organisation. Their enterprise focus is also valuable in ensuring a more balanced representation between public, private and third sector organisations, which continues to develop under Food Plymouth's Good Food Economy work, including events such as the Food Plymouth Community of Dragons Local Entrepreneurs Forum. Reflections from DBI regarding the ongoing partnership are below.

*"At DBI, we've always held a strong belief in the unifying power of food. Whether it's cultural food that brings back memories of home or simply enjoying a satisfying meal, food has a remarkable ability to foster connections, initiate meaningful conversations, boost morale, and bring happiness.*

*One quote that resonates deeply with us is, "I appreciate any food, but cultural food makes me happy." This sentiment underscores the importance of celebrating cultural diversity within food and its ability to bring joy to individuals and communities. This shared appreciation for the role of food in building connections and creating happiness has been a driving force in our increased sense of connection within Plymouth's wider food space.*

*In summary, our increased sense of connection is rooted in the genuine support, active collaboration, and shared values we have experienced through our partnership with Food Plymouth, and our belief in the transformative power of cultural food and community engagement."*

Working in partnership with each other, Food Plymouth and DBI are introducing and trialling the SFP REDI for Change toolkit during the autumn of 2023, starting with an anti-racist training being created and delivered by DBI. In keeping with the REDI approach, this will in turn inform efforts to understand and assess potential barriers to and steps needed for increased participation, inclusion and equality as regards gender, sexual orientation, age and health needs across the board going forward.

## 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

Food Plymouth's diverse mix of agencies, organisations, businesses, community groups and individual citizens include over 50 active partners collaborating to deliver positive food system changes, plus around 200 engaged supporters and additional partners as part of a wider network of 1,200 friends and stakeholders. Food Plymouth's [key partners](#) include (but are by no means limited to) [All Ways Apples](#), [CATERed](#), [Diversity Business Incubator](#), [Food is Fun CIC](#), [Green Minds](#), [Livewell Southwest](#), [Plymouth Market](#), [Plymouth Community Homes](#), [Plymouth Food Aid Network](#) (PFAN), [Tamar Grow Local](#), The University of Plymouth and more, with representation across all six key issues of the SFP framework.

Quarterly Food Plymouth Partnership and Network meetings and events - online, face-to-face and hybrid as circumstances have allowed in recent years - saw engagement from more than 300 unique participants representing over 80 different organisations between 2020 and 2023. Meanwhile, 135 members, partners and stakeholders attended monthly PFAN meetings facilitated by Food Plymouth between May 2022 and August 2023. A September 2023 Food Plymouth Partnership and Network survey revealed a growing and deep-rooted sense of collaboration and support across the city's food space over the last three years, as illustrated by the following quotes.

*"I'm finding more and more around as I meet the right people working in these fields - there are many amazing groups who are so willing to offer their support and to share their own knowledge. I am so grateful for this! With the Food Plymouth network and all that is being done to connect and bring together communities, we are really making way in the*

*right direction with the whole plan to improve health and wellbeing for people in and around Plymouth.” (Wise Roots CIC)*

*“The Food Plymouth Partnership have worked tirelessly at keeping everyone updated, connected and informed by online and in-person meetings. The network of support for the city is evident and Four Greens Community Trust is very much a part of that.” (Four Greens Community Trust)*

*“We feel significantly more connected to Plymouth's wider food space over the past three years. The primary reason for this increased sense of connection is the support and collaboration we have experienced, particularly with Food Plymouth. As representatives of underrepresented communities, including people from diverse and disparate backgrounds, such as the BAME community, we have felt not only supported but genuinely heard within the Food Plymouth network. This level of understanding and engagement has been instrumental in strengthening our connection to the broader food community in Plymouth. It has been a gratifying experience to witness members of Food Plymouth actively participating in our projects, demonstrating a shared commitment to community well-being. Simultaneously, DBI's active involvement in the work of Food Plymouth has solidified our place within the wider food space of the city. ” (Diversity Business Incubator)*

As well as serving as a network in itself, Food Plymouth maintains active membership of a wide variety of other relevant networks and initiatives within the city, ensuring a local food partnership presence within [Plymouth Social Enterprise Network](#) (PSEN), [Plymouth Octopus Project](#) (POP), [Belong in Plymouth](#), [Green Minds](#), the [Thrive Plymouth](#) Network, the Plymouth VCSE Planning and Response Group, the Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, the [Plymouth Charter](#), Plymouth Changing Futures (Levelling Up Agenda) Volunteering Network, [Devon Climate Emergency](#) and [Future Plymouth 2030](#), amongst others.

In addition to building relationships within and across Plymouth, maintaining connectivity across the wider Devon region, and indeed further afield, is a key element of Food Plymouth's work and integral to its strategic and collaborative approach. This is evidenced by its representation within the Devon Food Partnership Steering Group and close working relationships with neighbouring food partnerships in Cornwall, Exeter and Torbay. Monthly calls bring together the Devon, Cornwall and Plymouth food partnerships, with ongoing collaboration around social media and communications strategy in particular.

On a regional level, Food Plymouth actively connects with [The Bioregional Learning Centre](#) and [Totnes REconomy Centre](#), and is active on an international level thanks to Plymouth's participation in the European-level [FoodSHIFT2030](#) programme (paired with

Copenhagen), the international [Fab City](#) movement and through Plymouth's Fairtrade City status.

In summary, Food Plymouth is continuing to grow connections, support and solidarity between, within and outside of the partnership, developing a dense and robust relational web that is greater than the sum of its increasingly diverse parts. For visual overviews of this web of connections and activity in Plymouth and beyond, please see [here](#).

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

With multiple iterations of a Plymouth Food Action Plan in place from 2011 onwards alongside other key documents including The Future of Food in Plymouth (2014-2031), the major upheavals of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing cost of living crisis demanded a reappraisal of needs and priorities. As a result, a newly updated [Plymouth Food Action Plan](#) is currently in place for the three year period from 2023 to 2026.

The collaborative plan was developed with a diverse range of cross-sector organisations across the city, including input from three different Plymouth City Council departments. Actions have been shaped and informed by Food Plymouth Partnership and Network members, in addition to [learnings from the Best Food Forward People's Assembly](#) held in July 2023, which facilitated direct input into the 2023-2026 plan from over 50 residents from across the city thanks to a SFP Participatory Processes Development grant.

The Plymouth Food Action Plan 2023-2026 adopts a whole systems approach, incorporating dedicated sections for each of the six key issues of the SFP framework, as well as sections pertaining to REDI and future infrastructure. The plan is endorsed by Plymouth City Council, with forewords from its dedicated Food Champion Councillor Chris Penberthy and Rachel Silcock, Community Empowerment and Operational Lead in the Public Health department.

Eight specific actions within it correspond with food-related actions included in the [Cost of Living Plan for Plymouth](#) published by Plymouth City Council in August 2023, ensuring a joined-up approach across multiple policy areas. Short-term priorities include encouraging local food businesses and charities to operate a 'pay it forward' system and launching a Veg Box scheme with Plymouth University to help students to access healthier food more easily.

Longer-term plans include setting up an additional five food clubs or food co-ops by 2024 through a [Cooperative Food Organiser](#) working to an adapted and localised version of the [Cooperation Town](#) model, and the establishment of a Plymouth Food Security (Food Buying) Collective CIC with a co-operative approach to securing cheap, good quality food for Plymouth communities. The Cost of Living Plan also explicitly recognises and commits to further developing the vital work of partnerships in order to achieve its aims, as below.



*“We will continue to develop, support and participate in the partnerships that are making a difference across Plymouth. Longer term actions in the plan will be picked up as part of our longer term approach to tackling poverty in Plymouth.”*

Recognising the need to continue the iterative process going forward, the current Plymouth Food Action Plan forms part of work underway to develop a wider Five Year Food Strategy and further Action Plan for Plymouth from 2024. Following the *Best Food Forward* People’s Assembly, further participatory opportunities in a range of local community settings in different areas of the city are planned going forward, ensuring as many citizens as possible will be able to share their input and feedback throughout.

The need for and value of participatory processes to ensure diverse voices and experiences are included in future and strategic planning for food in the city has long been recognised at Food Plymouth. From 2019-2021, the [Plymouth Food Equality Project](#) ran creative and interactive workshops reaching 150 people across Stonehouse, Barne Barton and North Prospect and Plymouth Youth Parliament.

The project also collaborated with Fotonow CIC to deliver online creative and digital skills workshops to young people at Barnardos and LiveWest. These culminated in the creation of an online zine bringing to life the voices of young carers in the city, who came together on and offline to share and document their food experiences through photography, collage and discussion. Throughout the lifetime of the project, conversations explored the affordability of food, the quality of food, free school meals, emergency food provision, and more, captured using creative approaches such as collage, zining, photography and audio recordings. These approaches were collated into the [Creative Methods Toolkit](#), a free resource available to any groups undertaking similar work.

Meanwhile, the 2020 mini documentary film [Food: On the Margins in Plymouth](#) amplified the voices of individuals in Plymouth experiencing food insecurity and the frontline workers seeking to support them, in a collaboration between FotoNow CIC and Food Plymouth core team member Dr Clare Pettinger. It has been viewed 2,000 times, with Clare reflecting that *“the biggest thing for me is that the film was spotted, and I am now involved in a £6 million food systems consortium as a result.”*

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

The long-standing relationship between Plymouth City Council and [Food Plymouth CIC](#) (as the supporting infrastructure organisation for the local food partnership) continues to go from strength to strength, having deepened in recent years throughout the course of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

This is evidenced through continuous match funding of the Food Plymouth SFP Coordinator role from 2020 through until 2024 and of the Good Food Economy campaign

grant in 2021-2022, and direct commissioning work relating in particular to facilitation of the [Plymouth Food Aid Network](#) and transitioning from an aid to alliance approach moving forward. Numerous other organisations working in the food space have been similarly supported through local authority funding for delivery of activities and workshops, including Livewell Southwest, Food is Fun and more.

Food Plymouth maintains strong connections across different council departments, from Public Health to Planning, Natural Infrastructure, Economic Development, Sports Development and the Low Carbon City team. By building relationships across teams and with a wide array of staff, Food Plymouth ensures that collaboration remains adaptive and resilient in the face of personnel changes. In a similar vein, relationship building with elected Council members has been cross-party and with multiple office holders, an approach that has reaped benefits in the face of consecutive changes in administration, most recently following the May 2023 local elections.

## **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 2022, Food Plymouth's Good Food Movement work has centred around *Best Food Forward*, an overarching public-facing umbrella campaign to inspire action at individual and organisational levels across the city. It serves as the primary hashtag for social media activity, invites direct action via a dedicated *Best Food Forward* [pledging tool](#) and provides an instantly recognisable tagline for events such as the *Best Food Forward* People's Assembly, as well as the forthcoming *Best Food Forward* awards scheme for caterers. Together, *Best Food Forward* galvanises a shared sense of purpose, moving step by step towards a city that is home to a healthy, sustainable, more equitable food system for all.

Plymouth is already home to a diverse range of engaging and dynamic food events and activities, many of these free to attend. Major events such as [Flavour Fest](#) and Plymouth Seafood Festival ([Seafest](#)) attract visitors in their thousands and Food Plymouth has regularly collaborated with partnership organisations such as Livewell Southwest to make the most of these high-profile public outreach opportunities, which have included live cooking demonstrations from the likes of Food is Fun, [Purdy's Punjabi Cuisine](#) and more. Further annual fixtures with significant food culture elements include the stalwart All Ways Apples Festival held in Devonport, the [Union Street Party](#) in Stonehouse and monthly International Dinners with the [Global Plymouth](#) team, each reaching hundreds of people.

Across the city, over 50 community groups known to the food partnership work to inspire and engage the public about good food. [The Village Hub](#) in Stoke is one shining example,



epitomising a ‘with, not for’ approach truly centred around the values and needs of their local community. Alongside a Community Larder provision, a dedicated Good Food team organise foraging walks, pot-luck feasts, and food-themed Culture Club and Hackathon events, facilitating improvements in wellbeing for 3,000 visitors a year and collaborating with a host of food enterprises and initiatives along the way, from [Good Earth Growers](#) to Real Bread Week to the [Stoke in Bloom](#) initiative.

Another flourishing hub of food activity, the [Jabulani Food Court](#) housed at [The Plot](#) on Stonehouse’s Union Street is a vibrant space that offers an opportunity for people to experience authentic Ethiopian, Eritrean, and African cuisine. It serves both as a platform for food entrepreneurs from the BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) community to flourish and showcase their culinary talents and as a community hub and meeting space to gather, connect, and network. Interactions go beyond food, fostering social bonds and connections that enrich the fabric of the local community. With sustainability a core aspect, the team have implemented innovative approaches to growing food on and close to site that is utilised by both the community and the talented chefs operating within the Jabulani Food Court, as part of the [Communities of the Soil](#) project.

A variety of different maps and directories exist across the city that facilitate direct involvement in food-related activities. As part of the Green Minds project, The Data Place, Food Plymouth, Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Octopus Project are mapping groups of nature-supporting organisations, resources, spaces and projects in the city, with 73 of the total 110 listings on the resultant [Growing with Nature online map](#) relating directly to food, climate or biodiversity. One of the key goals is to show groups working on community gardens, green social enterprises, allotments and culture projects in green spaces that they are part of a bigger movement. Meanwhile, [GoVolunteering Plymouth](#) provides a comprehensive city-wide platform to share volunteering opportunities, including dedicated Environmental, Climate Emergency, Food Poverty, Growing, Horticulture and Hospitality categories.

The Food Plymouth [newsletter](#) provides monthly updates of upcoming good food events, volunteering, job and funding opportunities and a *Spotlight on...* profile of different good food initiatives and enterprises direct to 1,200 inboxes, with a vibrant social media presence approaching 7,000 followers across [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter) and [YouTube](#). These are underpinned by the Food Plymouth website, complete with a blog, calls to action, videos, project pages, food support resources and a forthcoming Good Food directory. Connections continue to be developed with local and independent media outlets, with Food Plymouth featured on several community radio stations (including Soundart Radio [here](#)) and BBC Radio Devon in the past year.

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

In addition to the in-person and online interactions available via the quarterly open meetings of the Food Plymouth Partnership and Network, a host of online and in-person networks are in operation, helping Plymouth residents of all kinds actively participate in different aspects of the food system across the city. A major success story over the last three years has been development and delivery of the [Green Minds](#) project, spearheaded by Plymouth City Council and a host of partners, and described in their own words below.

*“In June 2022, Green Minds (in this case primarily Plymouth City Council and digital specialists The Data Place) teamed up with Plymouth’s local sustainable food partnership Food Plymouth and the city’s community and voluntary infrastructure organisation Plymouth Octopus Project (POP) to achieve the common aim of connecting people, facilitating action, mapping spaces and initiatives and supporting growing projects with people and nature in mind.*

*Food Plymouth was commissioned to lead on the Growing with Nature networking events and to create additional opportunities for connectivity and learning. These included five seasonal networking events, five All Ways Apples events and a 12 day Permaculture Design course for community growers and green space guardians, plus a special five day Introduction to Permaculture course for Plymouth’s Community Builders, Plymouth City Council staff and other professionals.*

*So far 243 people have attended the five seasonal events, with 136 unique participants, 13 of whom considered themselves disabled and 43 of whom lived close to the venues. Topics included: a guided walk in Zoo Field in Central Park to see the changes there through permaculture design; composting; community growing; microgreens in winter; plant and seed sharing; growing in inner-city spaces using African vertical grow bags; and employing the national Good to Grow Harvest-ometer online produce measuring tool from Sustain. Seven community gardens have taken this up and Plymouth Community Homes – the city’s majority Housing Association – is also interested in implementing it across all of their green spaces and community growing projects.*

*Originally Green Minds had set up a 'rewilding network' and, although these were well attended, we noticed when we teamed up with Food Plymouth as it evolved to Growing with Nature that it brought many other individuals and groups together. Incorporating growing and best practice in terms of wildlife friendly gardening has been great to spread the word about helping nature as well as food growing, with allotment holders and community garden groups attending networking events. We continue to work with Food Plymouth on opportunities around growing in public spaces, such as the Central Park Zoo Field design which was created through a permaculture design course, and in future we hope to develop on these ideas with Green Community Hubs.”*

Despite the original ERDF funding ending in August 2023, the achievements of the network are happily set to continue, with Food Plymouth taking on a facilitation role in

tandem with the existing [Growing Community Abundance](#) network currently connecting 167 members in an online Facebook group.

Also of significant note is the [Generous Earth](#) network of local community composters established by Food Plymouth in 2020, who support each other to make best use of resources locally, showcasing and encouraging composting on different scales and sharing a wide variety of methods via on-site visits within and outside of the city, alongside a [Facebook group](#) of 70 members. International composting guru Nicky Scott serves as an adviser to the project.

Supported by Food Plymouth since its inception in 2022, the ongoing [Communities of the Soil](#) project from Diversity Business Incubator and The Apricot Centre connects a wide range of BAME residents, asylum seekers and refugees together in person to collaboratively design and prepare to implement spaces in the Stonehouse area for growing food, sharing cultures and cuisines.

Last but by no means least, significant groundwork was laid by the [Growing Community Abundance](#) initiative, which ran between 2019 and 2020 and still continues as an online community, as above. The quote below from Claire Turbutt of Plymouth City Council's Public Health team speaks for itself as regards the impact and importance of the project for Plymouth as a Sustainable Food Place.

*"At the end of the year Tess Wilmot organised the All Ways Apples Festival and at that event I was able to bring along one of the senior leaders of the Council – the Director of Public Health, Ruth Harrell – who upon speaking to the members of the group who had stalls decided to make it easier for community groups to take on small pieces of land. This has already resulted in Adelaide Street Angels being given responsibility for some small pieces of land in North Stonehouse.*

*The impact of the Growing Community Abundance project is difficult to quantify - a shift has occurred over the past twelve months where people who previously would have struggled alone to overcome the obstacles to community volunteering in a significant way are now supported and feel part of a cohort in the city. The strategic importance of these people has been recognised by those with power in the city and the change in policy that has resulted is going to have implications which are not seen for many years.*

*Tess and the team have made a massive difference and I am hopeful that they will continue to impact on health inequity in the city by spreading skills to those least likely to have them and joining up with the wider food system in Plymouth."*

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

Taking a wider lens to the practice of food citizenship in Plymouth, Food Plymouth have held a number of events in the last three years that directly enabled the fostering of connections between individual residents and grassroots organisations across the city, growing awareness of what is already happening across the food space and having direct input into potential actions and solutions to grow Plymouth's Good Food Movement further.

As already referred to above, the [Best Food Forward People's Assembly](#) held in July 2023 served as a further catalyst for engaged food citizenship. Incorporating an interactive exhibition space, the event centred around a series of three facilitated small group discussion sessions, exploring what good food meant to participants, if and how participants were able to connect with and around good food in Plymouth, and what actions could be taken to ensure that everyone in the city can access, grow, share and celebrate good food in the future. A [summary of key learnings](#) was shared on the Food Plymouth blog.

A welcome chance to re-connect in person, this was preceded by an online [Food Talks People's Assembly](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic in May 2021, which explored the six themes of free school meals, food aid, food affordability, wellbeing, mental health and food, sustainability of food and the future of food in Plymouth. The virtual event was supported by an online and offline survey to explore the impacts of the pandemic for people's experiences of food in 2020, with findings summarised [here](#).

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

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

Whilst Food Plymouth has been deeply involved in tackling food insecurity with a strong track record in food justice work since its inception, in common with food partnerships across the country this area of work became - and remains - an urgent priority as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing cost of living crisis.

Since 2020 this wide-ranging work has included but is by no means limited to:

- Facilitation of the Plymouth Food Aid Network (PFAN) established in 2018 with monthly meetings and dedicated WhatsApp group for an expanded membership of 50 organisations
- Training opportunities for PFAN members with input from partners organisations around food safety, gambling awareness, loan sharks, mental health first aid and suicide awareness and Money Counts sessions, as well as a wide range of

resources covering topics such as Plymouth Energy Community, Healthy Start, Warm Spaces, the Household Support Fund and working with FareShare

- A dedicated Food Aid Coordinator role within Food Plymouth with funding from Plymouth City Council, liaising with food aid groups and signposting members of the public to appropriate support
- Development of a [Plymouth Community Food Access map](#) featuring 43 food support organisations across the city as of September 2023
- Development of a new food access signposting tool on the Food Plymouth website [homepage](#)
- An active role in the Plymouth VCSE Planning and Response Group throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the more recently convened Plymouth Cost of Living Taskforce
- Establishment and operation of the [Aid Redistribution Centre](#) from 2020-2022 as a centralised distribution point for food aid groups
- Working with the Independent Food Aid Network and partner organisations in Plymouth to co-develop a Cash First approach to support including a [“Worrying about money?”](#) resource available in hard copy across the city and online
- Active contributions to the [Devon VCSE Food Insecurity Hub](#), including a collaborative research project with Diversity Business Incubator entitled *“The barriers faced by Black and Minority Ethnic Residents in Plymouth in Accessing Food Support”* published [here](#) in May 2023

Throughout this period, Plymouth City Council have further developed an asset-based community development approach to prevention and support. Since 2022, an expanded network of [Wellbeing Hubs](#) in seven (soon to become nine) areas across the city has been bolstered by a new team of [Community Builders](#) funded by NHS Devon in partnership with Plymouth City Council and employed by Four Greens Community Trust. This includes a [Cooperative Food Organiser role](#) funded for two years from November 2022, adapting the [Cooperation Town](#) initiative developed in London to suit the local context in Plymouth. Significant progress has already been made, as described below, with plans for a further two neighbourhood co-ops by December 2023.

*“As a result of research undertaken, we’ll be trialling four different sustainable food co-op models going forward: food co-ops, co-op fruit and veg boxes, co-op food clubs and co-op social supermarkets. We need to establish a diversity of provision in Plymouth and already have two co-op food clubs established, with weekly sessions at the Manadon Sports and Community Hub and Southway Youth and Community Centre. We’re working with the University of Plymouth on a fruit and veg box co-op ahead of the new academic year and are also linking with Mayflower Community Academy and a local church there to form a neighbourhood food co-op, as well as with Mutley Baptist Church.”*

Most recently, and as mentioned above, in August 2023 Plymouth City Council launched a new [Cost of Living Plan](#), refreshed Cost of Living [resource hub](#) (including a dedicated section covering food support alongside help with housing and utility costs, budgeting and more) and a new communications toolkit for partners. As part of their wider Anti-Poverty work programme, it includes longer-term aims shared by Food Plymouth, primarily to transition from food aid towards food alliance and the setting up of a city-wide co-operative bulk food buying organisation, both of which Food Plymouth will play a key role in over the coming months and years.

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

Promotion of healthy eating continues to be an area of considerable strength across the Food Plymouth partnership and network. Highlights since 2020 include:

- A SFP [Veg Cities](#) grant that enabled the creation of new resources and supported the delivery of [grow-your-own workshops](#) that reached over 1,200 children from low-income families across the 2022 and 2023 HAF-funded Fit and Fed summer holiday programmes
- A revival of the [Sugar Smart](#) network in Plymouth in a collaboration between Food is Fun, Food Plymouth, Livewell Southwest, [Argyle Community Trust](#) and more, with a relaunch event planned for Sugar Awareness Week in November 2023
- Extension of Plymouth City Council funding until 2025 for Livewell Southwest to continue providing integrated health and social care services for people across Plymouth, which includes a 12 week weight management intervention, running healthy eating workshops, workplace wellbeing training, supporting local businesses to consider their food environment, and commissioning local services to run cookery workshops for patients accessing certain services

Highly effective partnership working between [Food is Fun](#) and [Livewell Southwest](#) has included production of a healthy eating recipe booklet specifically for slow cookers with coordinated outreach events to support local communities with healthy lifestyle behaviours under the constraints of the cost-of-living crisis. 18 roadshows were delivered between November 2022 and April 2023 in deprived neighbourhoods and communities based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for Plymouth. 93 brief health interventions were delivered, with positive feedback from participants and local VCSE stakeholders. This work has had powerful impacts on individuals with complex needs in the city.

*"I managed the wellbeing offer to rethink mental health assessments. One of my staff working with those with SMI (Serious Mental Illness) promoted and arranged Food is Fun sessions and supported a particular individual to attend. This sparked an interest and built their confidence in food and cooking, wanting to try other things. The impact of this session on the individual has showcased the benefits of using a social, strength based*



*model using food as the driver, to those professionals working with a medical model, who were surprised by the outcome!” (One You Plymouth team member, Livewell Southwest)*

Perhaps the single most significant development addressing food and health inequalities in the city has been the involvement of Food Plymouth and the University of Plymouth in the £6.2 million [UKRI-funded FoodSEqual research project](#) led by the [University of Reading](#). Running until 2025 and working with a host of organisations across the city - including Food Plymouth partners - the research project aims to provide citizens of culturally-diverse disadvantaged communities in Reading, Brighton and Hove, Tower Hamlets and Plymouth with choice and agency over the food they consume by co-developing new products, supply chains and policy frameworks that deliver an affordable, attractive, healthy and sustainable diet.

Six trained community researchers hosted by Food Plymouth have worked in the Whiteleigh area since 2021, delivering 11 co-designed workshops, a foraging walk and cream tea afternoon, with 173 individual participants to date. With fish and fresh fruit and vegetables identified as particularly difficult to access, next steps will explore potential options to ensure a more affordable, accessible local supply, with community engagement continuing via monthly breakfast meet-ups. A dedicated [FoodSEqual blog](#) on the Food Plymouth website shares the journey so far.

Much of the inspiring and impactful work taking place in Plymouth featured in *“Is Food All We Need? Assessing the Impact of Food-Focused Initiatives in Plymouth”*, a University of Plymouth [research partnership](#) with Plymouth City Council and VCSE organisations, supporting VCSE organisations to conduct research with their service users. With the final research paper forthcoming, a July 2023 stakeholder event brought together 45 people from over 35 different organisations and council departments to showcase Food Plymouth’s Growing Resilience programme, the ongoing [Grow, Share, Cook](#) initiative with Tamar Grow Local, Food is Fun [Argyle in Aprons](#) workshops, the work of [Plymouth Soup Run](#) and more.

Finally, at planning policy level, [supplementary additions](#) to the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan in 2020 incorporated a 400m exclusion zone around secondary schools for new hot food takeaways, resulting in the [refusal](#) of a 2021 application for a pizza takeaway close to Plymouth High School for Girls. Increased stipulations around provision of allotments (including ensuring a minimum of 10% of plots incorporating disabled accessibility requirements) were also included, amongst numerous others.

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

Critical to Plymouth’s response to food insecurity over the past three years, many frontline food support groups continue to face unrelenting demand for their services.

Reflections from the recent Food Plymouth Partnership and Network survey offer compelling insight into the complexities of navigating a transition from food aid to food alliance that ensures vital emergency food aid provision for those in need is sustained.

On the one hand, work at Four Greens Community Trust shows this transition in progress.

*“More than 100 families were provided with food during the 2020 lockdown, of which 90 have transitioned from Food Bank provision to the Community Larder, enabling individuals to choose products that suit them. Social and other support for individuals is provided on a weekly basis and continues to grow.”*

On the other hand, Plymouth Soup Run - whose team of 300 volunteers provided 82,585 meals to some of the most vulnerable groups in the city from 2020-2023 - shared some concerns whilst recognising potential benefits.

*“The drive to move from an aid to an alliance model to support people experiencing food poverty will surely work for some sectors of the population, but we have a particular concern for those who may be left behind by such a model. We believe that many current clients of Plymouth Soup Run would fall into that category.”*

Food Plymouth continues to engage deeply with a wide range of partners around these issues to ensure appropriate, adaptive approaches that meet as many needs as possible going forward.

#### **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**

Despite significant and ongoing turbulence since 2020, Plymouth’s local food economy continues to diversify, with support at both local authority policy and at grassroots community and consumer levels.

The launch of the [Plymouth Charter](#) by Plymouth City Council in 2021 (initially as the RESURGAM Charter) represents a renewed commitment to inclusive growth, championing local enterprise and building connections within the city’s local economy. As a free, voluntary scheme and charter mark with the aim of helping Plymouth’s businesses commit to a fairer, greener future, it includes a network of Ambassadors and Champions across the city. It has [280 signatories](#), 20 of which are local good food enterprises with a further 25 organisations linked to food systems work of varying kinds, including Food Plymouth as the city’s local food partnership. [Toolkits and resources](#) encourage action around the Plymouth Charter’s seven SUCCEED themes of Spend, Upskill, Community, Collaborate, Employ, Environment and Deliver.

The Plymouth Charter actively promotes another essential tool supporting good food enterprises in Plymouth, in the form of the [Crowdfund Plymouth](#) platform, facilitating direct fundraising sometimes paired with match funding from Plymouth City Council. Since 2020, almost £230,000 has been pledged by over 1,500 members of the public to support 18 different good food enterprises and projects around the city, fast becoming an increasingly popular and consistent tool to support and grow Plymouth's local good food economy.

This included £69,006 raised in December 2021 for [Cosmic Kitchen](#) to grow their low-carbon, sustainable business and inspire the city and region to reduce its meat consumption, and in turn increase the health and well-being of the residents, in tandem with a £20,000 first prize in the Plymouth Climate Challenge [featured on BBC Spotlight](#). Meanwhile, in April 2022, [Heyl Bakery](#) raised £16,091 to purchase a new bread oven as they moved to their very own shop, continuing to go from strength to strength at Alma Yard with match funding support from Plymouth City Council, as below.

*"We've just received a very exciting email from Crowdfunder... Plymouth City Council have accepted our application for the City Change Fund! This means that if we can raise a total of £7,500 the council will match this funding to help us hit our £15000 target! This is incredible news, and testament to the amazing support you have given us so far."*

Continuing the community theme, Food Plymouth held its very first [Community of Dragons](#) event in November 2022, inspired by the Local Entrepreneur Forum initiatives developed by the Totnes REconomy Centre with funding from a SFP Good Food Economy grant and match funding from Plymouth City Council.

With a central venue at the [Community Climate Centre](#) (free of charge under a two-month Food Plymouth pop-up part of a council-led [meanwhile use scheme](#)), it brought together over 30 members of the public to pledge support of all sorts of kinds directly to three food enterprises: a microgreens supplier, a vegan catering company and a community fridge and cafe project. Co-hosted by Jabo Butera of DBI, the Community of Dragons proved another exciting focal point for diverse talent across Plymouth's food space.

*"DBI has actively participated in the Food Plymouth Community of Dragons Local Food Entrepreneurs Forum. This platform has enabled us to provide valuable support to local food entrepreneurs, fostering their growth and development."*

Set to become embedded as an annual occurrence, the next event will be part of [Plymouth Social Enterprise City Festival](#) in November 2023. Meanwhile, continuing Good Food Economy grant campaign work centres around the development of a Good Food Enterprise peer support network and resources, responding to identified needs around social media and marketing through an ongoing [Good Food Enterprise survey](#).

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

The push to promote healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses to consumers again benefits from support at both local authority and local food partnership levels.

Sitting alongside the aforementioned Plymouth Charter, the [Shop4Plymouth](#) online directory built by Plymouth City Council's Economic Development team from 2021 profiles [200 food and drink enterprises](#), with a call to action focused on both supporting local independent enterprises and sharing experiences of this via the #shoplocal and #geddonplymouth hashtags. Eleven of the twenty four profiles feature on the homepage of the site, ensuring a significant local food presence from the off.

*"Whether it's supporting your local fishmonger, visiting a local café or browsing on the high street we're asking you, the awesome people of Plymouth, to geddon and enjoy what our city has to offer, meeting some of the great characters behind some of your favourite independents. Better yet, we want to help you discover the favourite places that you haven't found yet!"*

Meanwhile, with fuller emphasis on health and sustainability aspects, the Food Plymouth Good Food Directory is set to launch with a splash at the forthcoming Food Plymouth Community of Dragons event this November during the Plymouth Social Enterprise City Festival 2023. It will link to Shop4Plymouth, PSEN, and Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce profiles where relevant, to ensure cross-pollination and awareness-raising as regards wider initiatives in the city. As further highlighted under Key Issue 5 below, the directory will be linked in with the forthcoming *Best Food Forward* awards scheme for caterers, as an added incentive for hospitality businesses to participate in both and increase profile numbers.

A variety of targeted campaigns and new initiatives have helped to boost specific local food areas over the last three years. One such example is that of [Call4Fish](#), birthed in Plymouth during the Covid-19 pandemic to link consumers directly to fishers, with backing from Plymouth City Council. Its widespread success means it is now operating nationwide.

*"Call4Fish was set up in direct response to Covid19, to enable people to buy safely and to help UK fishermen and local traders. The fishing industry was in desperate trouble, with many fishermen and their families finding themselves outside government support measures. A small group of us decided to see what could be done to help. Call4Fish was the result. From a modest local scheme set up almost overnight within weeks Call4Fish became a national service supporting fishermen and businesses across England and beyond. We have been bowled over by the public's reaction. Special thanks go to Seafarers UK, the Fishmongers' Company and Plymouth City Council, who provided vital backing*

*when it was desperately needed and have shown unstinting faith in the project. We would also like to thank the many fishermen who, throughout the pandemic, have set aside their personal safety in the interests of bringing in vital fresh food supplies.”*

Meanwhile, following a decline in footfall and number of traders over a number of years, [Plymouth Market](#) in the city’s West End has benefited throughout 2023 from dedicated social media marketing campaign led by Plymouth City Council and the return of events such as the West End Carnival and activities as part of Love Your Local Market Week. It is currently home to 140 stalls, eateries and cafes, with a recent proliferation of [multicultural food offerings](#) from traditional British fare and the obligatory Plymouth staple of pasties through to Vietnamese, Thai, Nepalese, Korean, Japanese, Mauritian, Turkish and Jamaican cuisine.

Diversity is also on the menu at The Box museum and gallery, thanks to brand new Diversity Business Incubator venture [The Bazaar](#). It combines live music, entertainment and, of course, delicious food in a monthly marketplace gathering on the last Saturday of the month and represents another leap forward in bringing diverse food cultures to new audiences across Plymouth.

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

Further Sustainable Food Economy work not mentioned above has included support for food businesses via Food Plymouth CIC’s consultancy wing, most notably involving Cooperative Hive business adviser and Food Plymouth associate Andrew Shadrake and Food Plymouth CIC Co-Director Ian Smith. Examples include support for the Jabulani Food Court - including formation of the company and a community shares offer in 2019-2020 and support for the development of the Plymouth Food Security Collective CIC, including legal form selection, company formation and business planning, ongoing since 2022.

### **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**

With a major drive to increase the availability of healthier eating options provided by Plymouth caterers, Food Plymouth and Plymouth City Council colleagues have been working in the past year to develop a new *Best Food Forward* awards scheme with cross-departmental input from Public and Environmental Health teams.

Adopting an easily accessible tiered approach with an early-stage focus on healthier eating (Bronze level), plus community impact and environmental sustainability (Silver and

Gold levels), the scheme is due to enter a pilot phase to test the survey process and accompanying resource packs with a variety of hospitality businesses ahead of an autumn 2023 launch. It will then be open to the circa 1,500 food businesses in Plymouth with a Food Hygiene rating of 4 or above.

Ensuring a joined-up approach, the *Best Food Forward* awards scheme will effectively cross-promote and cross-populate the online *Best Food Forward* pledge tool (including Veg Cities and Sugar Smart action trackers where relevant) and the Good Food Directory housed on the Food Plymouth website.

Meanwhile, work is also underway to compile a series of case studies to showcase and inspire further best practice in the city, with the [University of Plymouth](#) leading the way, as evidenced below and in the [April 2022 issue](#) of TUCO Magazine.

*“We have been working on our sustainable food plan, operating a locally focused supply chain with 75% of suppliers based in the South West. Our drive on imported products from 33% to 16% has been maintained, meaning we are reducing the carbon footprint of our products. We display the carbon footprint of our products to enable people to make an informed decision on what they choose to purchase. The management team has been successful in curating a service that has achieved the top 3 star rating in the Sustainable Restaurant Awards over the past three years. A team of 12 people are currently working to achieve the Fairtrade University accreditation.”*

In addition to efforts around Fairtrade by the university, Food Plymouth successfully led the renewal of Plymouth’s Fairtrade City status in August 2023. Recent achievements included a first ever schools conference in partnership with [Devon Development Education](#) during Fairtrade Fortnight 2023, featuring special guests from the Twongerekawa Coko coffee cooperative in Rwanda that grows the Fairtrade organic beans for the [Jabulani coffee](#) collaboration between Owens Coffee roastery (a mere 11.7 miles from Plymouth) and Diversity Business Incubator.

*“The partnership between local businesses Owens Coffee and the Diversity Business Incubator in Devon links communities together in a way that allows small businesses to support each other locally and bring essential knowledge and leadership to their connected communities both in the UK and in Africa. The import and production of our Jabulani coffee is a collaborative step towards our vision to develop a deeper understanding and connection between the people of Rwanda and the UK, expand opportunities for improving community leadership and enable future generations of leaders to benefit from shared resources, ideas and information, with the ultimate goal to encourage global change.”*

Meanwhile, on the important front of school meals provision, Plymouth City Council was selected as one of 18 local authorities to take part in a 2022 [Food Standards Agency pilot](#)



aimed at understanding improving school food standards going forward. The city featured prominently in [National School Meals Week 2023](#), with the current LACA Chair being local to the city in the form of CATERed's Managing Director Brad Pearce.

The [CATERed](#) co-operative - jointly owned by Plymouth City Council and serving over 60 schools across Plymouth - includes the Food Plymouth, Sugar Smart and Sustainable Fish Cities logos on their menus and showcases an expanded range of local sourcing in their most recent 2023 menu.

*"Because we use fresh, local, seasonal and organic ingredients, we're also supporting local growers, farmers and the regional economy whilst we keep an eye on our eco-footprint. We use locally caught and landed Pollock and Mackerel, free range eggs (including in our mayonnaise), West Country milk and yoghurts, organic herbs, no fried food, Fairtrade sugar, wholemeal flour and seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit."*

All meals are served with seasonal vegetables, with one meat-free day each week and chicken as an alternative to beef and pork upon request. A vegetarian choice is always available, one third of which are suitable for vegans. Since 2019, CATERed have successfully taken action around reducing refined sugar content in all recipes (replacing it by using fruit and vegetables for sweetness) as a founder partner of the Plymouth Sugar Smart campaign. Food Plymouth looks forward to continuing to work with CATERed into the future, with renewed focus on universal free school meals, less and better meat, and across Sugar Smart and Veg Cities campaign work.

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

Marking a key shift towards a more economic focus in activities, Food Plymouth was a key partner in the [Sustenance Partners](#) UKRI-funded research project from November 2020 - April 2021. The project explored the barriers and opportunities inherent to strengthening local food supply chains, involving the South West Good Food Network and the [Open Food Network UK](#), amongst others. It included a trial of a new Sustenance food hub at The Plot in Stonehouse, with a temporary Tamar Grow Local veg box drop-off and community engagement activities. Online questionnaires and a voucher scheme trial explored the barriers to accessing local, sustainably grown food, with a lack of connectedness to public transport and an inability to transport potentially heavy quantities of food as problems.

Since then, the South West Good Food Network has developed into the small but mighty [Good Food Loop](#), funded for three years from 2021 by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation as an initial collaboration between Good Food Exeter, The Apricot Centre and Tamar Grow Local. It links up to 32 businesses across Devon and Cornwall, including ethical small-scale fisher collective [Sole of Discretion](#) in Plymouth.

*"The Good Food Loop is a not-for-profit weekly distribution network connecting local food hubs and wholesale customers with agroecological producers in Devon and Cornwall. The*

*project aims to support smaller-scale agroecological producers across the counties by providing easy access to new markets, either through local food hubs or direct sales to wholesale customers, allowing producers to extend their geographical reach and increase their sales with limited additional work. It works in a collaborative way, leaving producers in control of their sales whilst undertaking the distribution of produce on their behalf and making sure they receive prompt and fair payment each month. In turn, food hubs and wholesale customers benefit from access to a wider range of locally grown agroecological food, as well as speciality and seasonal food and drink from across the region, all with the knowledge they are supporting good environmental practices, paying producers a fair price, and are part of a short, zero-waste supply chain.”*

The benefits of being part of the Good Food Loop to Sole of Discretion were of particular interest on a March 2023 [PeerLink-funded visit](#) to Plymouth’s Fish Quay with Greater Lincolnshire Food Partnership, as summarised below.

*“Being on the Good Food Loop allows customers to buy smaller quantities of fish than the minimum order that is needed to cover direct delivery (£65). The Good Food Loop also supplies Sole of Discretion directly with local, organic herbs and potatoes which are used in their fishcakes. They also told me about their next plan: to include a greater diversity of local food – thanks to the Good Food Loop – on the food stall at their premises, in addition to the day’s catch.”*

Building even further upon these initiatives, the [Food Data Collaboration](#) project hosted by the Open Food Network UK is seeking to pilot their data interoperability infrastructure currently in development with the Good Food Loop by early 2024, with potential to further facilitate cross-selling while reducing the administrative burden.

Finally, at a local authority level, since 2021 the [Spend4Plymouth](#) theme of the aforementioned Plymouth Charter has been working to tackle local supply chain revitalisation head on.

*“The aim of Spend4Plymouth is to keep the pounds in Plymouth wherever possible and maximise the wider benefits of spending to the city’s economy, society and environment. We recognise that for our local businesses to thrive in a competitive business environment, they need a diverse range of clients. With Plymouth’s peripheral location, it can be difficult to build the networks to enter new markets and new supply chains. By buying local, we circulate money around the local economy as much as possible. In addition, we can increase benefits to local people by requiring our suppliers to apply the principles of the Plymouth Charter themselves. This is about optimising the benefits of the money that flows through our local economy.”*

The scheme ran a successful [Meet the Suppliers](#) event in March 2022 (80% of which were local food enterprises), with opportunities for many more to join a dedicated Plymouth

Supplier Directory. Procurers and anchor institutions are encouraged to measure their progress via a list of actions to take towards more local, sustainable procurement, with guidance materials relating to the use of [Social Value](#) procurement tools to make it easier to understand and measure the social impact of contracts and projects. A further new addition in the procurement space came from the Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, with a series of [Pitch and Procure](#) events from 2022 bringing senior procurers from the public and private sector together with local businesses to pitch local products and services and demystify the potentially daunting tendering process.

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

Food Plymouth remains aware of the wider activities and work around dynamic food procurement through [Dynamic Procurement Food](#) (DP Food), having engaged in webinars and briefings relating to the [Dixon Foundation funding](#) opportunity for regional hubs. This included the [South West Food Hub](#) applying for Level 3 funding, conditional on very significant match funding from anchor institutions. Whilst Food Plymouth was able to signpost potential anchor institutions to webinars and information sessions, with both a very tight timeline and such large sums of money potentially required of them, there was general unease as regards pushing for further involvement with a relatively unknown organisation at so early a stage.

## **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**

Sustainable food production is firmly on the map on multiple levels in Plymouth. Connections to its rural hinterland, most notably the Tamar Valley, are increasingly robust - not only as regards local retail and supply chains, but also in terms of social and educational connections. This was most recently exemplified by a [farm visit](#) organised by The Village Hub that enabled Stoke residents to experience aspects of agroecological growing firsthand at the Tamar Grow Local site in June 2023.

At a community level, small-scale growing is flourishing thanks to a cornucopia of projects developing in recent years, which include:

- The Food Plymouth [Growing Resilience](#) programme, working with a cohort of individuals over 9 weeks in 2023 to develop skills and confidence to start their grow-your-own journey, alongside microgreens workshops, water-saving top tips sessions and more

- A highly productive African vertical grow bags project as part of the Communities of the Soil project (as outlined in Key Issue 2)
- A productive network of community gardens, with some, such as the [YMCA Plymouth Community Garden](#), providing surplus produce to Devon and Cornwall Food Action for redistribution

Meanwhile, on the edge of the city in Derriford Community Park, [Poole Farm](#) - Plymouth's City Farm - provides vital educational workshops and apprenticeship opportunities around various aspects of land management and food production, alongside its offer of affordable, sustainably grown vegetables and ethically-reared meat.

*“At Poole Farm, we’re in a great position to educate people about ‘farm to fork’ and the provenance of their food, demonstrating sustainable and organic food production and how careful land management can benefit wildlife and the environment. We sell our farm produce of eggs, honey, pork and vegetables to local people and our volunteers, keeping prices low to ensure affordability for all. We employ the highest standards of animal welfare, ethical and sustainable farming standards and are privileged to work closely with local farmers who provide knowledge and advice, while our volunteers and community groups help with horticultural projects.”*

Whilst currently funded outside of council budgets, Plymouth City Council's Environmental Planning division lead on the delivery of Derriford Community Park, which is a key policy objective in the [Joint Local Plan](#). Significant work is underway to improve biodiversity, as below, sitting within the Green Minds project detailed under Key Issue 2.

*“We have delivered over £300k of biodiversity improvements at Derriford Community Park, including 1.75km of new hedgerow, planted Plymouth's biggest orchard (222 fruit trees) and approximately 1000 native trees within the park in 2019. The site offers space for tree planting which is listed as an ‘Immediate Action’ on page 39 of Plymouth's Climate Emergency Action Plan and is well placed to help deliver and educate others on this action plan for engagement and responsibility.”*

Also committed to improving on-site biodiversity is University Hospital Plymouth (UHP) NHS Trust, who in March 2023 signed an [historic agreement](#) with the Joint Hospital Group South West and third-sector organisation Grown That Way. UHP aims to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain by 2025, starting with a project to create a sustainable garden space in the grounds of Derriford Hospital.

*“Preventative healthcare is a powerful tool, and we need our public spaces to offer the best they can from great food, cleaner air, biodiversity growth and spaces to decompress. Part of this kick start is the organisations coming together to work on seeding and expanding the current orchard site. Greater tree coverage, wildflowers and growing spaces while monitoring the space as we grow together.”*

Plymouth is also home to over 50 community orchard sites (of which some are listed [here](#)) across the city, showcased with aplomb since 2010 through the annual [All Ways Apples Festival](#), which includes on-tour opportunities teaching local residents how best to care for their trees and make the most of their precious harvest, instilling genuine community ownership across successive generations.

*“We provided a rich and diverse programme of events across the city, visiting many of Plymouth’s community orchards. We were given an abundance of apples from private gardens, schools and community orchards and gave away both apples and fresh juice to volunteers and passers-by. Any juice that was not shared was quickly frozen and pasteurised to give it up to two year’s shelf life so we can continue to share this delicious resource. Some of the juice has gone to food banks, community fridges and community projects. We are steadily building a community of people with knowledge and skills who are caring for our orchards and becoming proficient in capturing and celebrating their abundance. In support of this, Plymouth Tree Partnership is encouraging people to become Orchard Keepers alongside their Tree Wardens.”*

Finally, moving from land to sea, 2020 saw consultation around and development of a new [Plymouth Plan for Sustainable Fishing](#), with the [marine sector](#) a Plymouth City Council designated priority sector for investment and growth.

*“Forming a key element of UK’s first National Marine Park (a non-designated landscape), collocated with the National Marine Aquarium, the Plymouth Fish Quay, centred in Sutton Harbour, should celebrate Plymouth’s rich maritime and fishing culture (past, present and future) and promote and demonstrate the vision of a sustainable, vibrant, living, exciting, thriving and optimistic fishing industry. Reimagining the Fish Market and Fish Quay would not only benefit from but also contribute to the tourism offering for Britain’s Ocean City. Further, new facilities, which integrate newer technology to improve working conditions, efficiency and safety, could play a part in attracting new workers into the industry.”*

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

Taking a lead on tackling surplus food issues between 2019 and 2022 was the ERDF-funded [FLAVOUR](#) project, in which Plymouth’s Marjon University participated. It focused on the prevention of food waste by collecting, redistributing and/or processing surplus while simultaneously creating catering sector jobs, pathways to employment and helping those living in food insecurity. The inter-European collaborative project - estimated to have created £87 million of social value with £9 of social return on each £1 of investment - was also supported by Food Plymouth as an official Observer Partner.

New to Plymouth’s food space in 2020, reducing and redirecting food waste has become a source of “*saucy solidarity*” and social-connectedness at [JarSquad](#), a creative cooperative championing circular economies around food preservation. Their JarSquad Assembly

events combine know-how, recipes, elbow grease, and each others' good company to turn surplus ingredients into tasty treats (jams, pickles, preserves and more), with over 26 separate events across Plymouth to date.

Whilst Plymouth is yet to implement domestic food waste collection, indications following the May 2023 local elections are that this will soon change in line with forthcoming national requirements - welcome news indeed to the long-campaigning [Plymouth Food Waste Partnership](#). In the meantime, Plymouth City Council collaborates with [GetComposting](#) to offer residents subsidised composting equipment, albeit often requiring space to house that is far from available to all.

Domestic composting has also been a rallying point for University of Plymouth students, who in 2021 formed the [Food 4 Fuel](#) group to develop potential solutions alongside an existing arrangement for commercial waste to feed into the anaerobic bio-digester at [Langage Farm](#), the UK's first carbon neutral dairy.

*"The University of Plymouth is ambitiously reaching for zero emissions by 2025 and they are committed to removing food waste as an emission source as much as possible. At present, the University directs food waste produced on campus to Langage Farm – the local anaerobic digester run by the same organisation that makes that amazing ice cream! But what about the food waste sources from other university-managed buildings, such as Halls of Residence?"*

Meanwhile, offering a practical community-level solution since 2019, Food Plymouth's [Generous Earth](#) composting initiative has supported food waste pilot projects with small businesses at Snapdragons and Blockhouse Park. This includes various business and community groups including The Plot, JarSquad and The Village Hub. Zoo Field in Central Park is also the site of a new composting area with the first stage in place and plans in progress to develop an Earth Systems project.

Single-use plastics have long been a source of concern to [Environment Plymouth](#), who have led the highly successful [Plastic Free Plymouth](#) campaign alongside Surfers Against Sewage since 2017. Supported by the Interreg-funded [Preventing Plastic Pollution](#) project which ended in 2023, over 80 organisations and individuals have taken action to achieve Bronze, Silver, Gold and Diamond awards as Pioneers, Ambassadors and Champions, with major players including University Hospital Plymouth and more. Most recently, Environment Plymouth developed a [Guide to Single Use Plastics Ban](#) for hospitality businesses ahead of October 2023. At policy level, Plymouth City Council's Plan for Plastics was [updated in 2020](#), delivered via Plastics Taskforce and providing resources for organisations across the city via its Plastics Code of Conduct. Food Plymouth further encouraged action on plastics through a variety of litter pick and clean-up events, as well as awareness raising at major events such as Flavour Fest and Plymouth Seafood Festival.



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

Further relevant Food for the Planet achievements not mentioned above include:

- Food Plymouth facilitating the Growing with Nature Network
- A Food Plymouth core enabling team member being appointed as one of the city's Climate Ambassadors (working in partnership with Plymouth City Council's Low Carbon officers and a team of fellow ambassadors)
- Food Plymouth partnership and network members and Food Plymouth CIC contributing to the Plymouth City Council led [Climate Connections](#) initiative
- Food Plymouth being one of the key partners in the public-facing September 2023 Climate Symposium at the University of Plymouth and formerly presenting at the University of Plymouth [Sustainable Earth Institute](#) conferences
- Promoting use of the Sustain / SFP Good to Grow Harvest-ometer online produce measurement tool - notably through the Growing with Nature Network
- Supporting the Pesticide Free Plymouth campaign by Food Plymouth partner organisation Pollenize CIC, with a feature in their [campaign video](#)
- Providing Permaculture courses in support of the Green Minds project, showcased in [this video](#) (using password growingwithnature2023, as a confidential preview ahead of public publication by Plymouth City Council)

**FOR PANEL USE ONLY**

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