

# Sustainable Food Places

## Guide for County Food Partnerships

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**Practical Tool: Shared Insights Collaborative Document**  
 This Guide for County Food Partnerships sits alongside our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#), a practical tool filled with detailed tips related to each section of this guide. We encourage you to take a look at this alongside reading this guide, and add any of your own comments and experiences into the document too.



**Sustainable Food Places  
 Guide for County Food Partnerships  
 Shared Insights Document**

**Introduction**

This is a shared, collaborative document for Sustainable Food Places county partnerships to share insights and experiences from their work. This is a live document, and we encourage anyone visiting to add their own experiences to the tables.

# BACKGROUND

This section outlines the background and context to county food partnerships across the country, including:

- [Introduction](#)
- [Why food partnerships?](#)
- [The county context](#)
- [County authority structures](#)

## Introduction

### Why a guide for county partnerships?

Sustainable Food Places began as Sustainable Food Cities, and grew out of movements within UK cities to build more sustainable local food systems. As the movement grew, our work expanded out across the UK, and at the start of 2024 there were over 90 food partnerships, almost half of which are county-based food partnerships. Our county cohort is specifically English counties, and the devolved nations are supported by their own focused networks.

The work of a food partnership is always unique to its particular area, and no two food partnerships are the same. But the work of county food partnerships often looks very different to city food partnerships – they have different political systems, nature and landscape context, different stakeholders, and different identities to those in cities.

This guide provides advice to those starting or already delivering county food partnerships on how to make them a success.

### Additional resources

This guide is part of the broader SFP Food Partnership and Strategy Toolkit, which you can find in the [menu bar of our website](#). We refer to relevant other sections in the toolkit throughout this guide.

You can see our [map of Sustainable Food Places members across the UK](#) to find similar food partnerships, and get in touch with them. Sustainable Food Places also has an active mailing list and counties cohort group that meets regularly to discuss county specific topics. Members are also able to connect with each other using the PeerLink search function on the SFP website.

If you're not already a member of Sustainable Food Places, you can [see our process here](#). If you're just starting out or have any questions, you can get in touch at [info@sustainablefoodplace.org](mailto:info@sustainablefoodplace.org) – we're always happy to help.

## Why food partnerships?

Acting on food is a vital part of tackling the UK's biggest social, economic, and environmental challenges. From obesity, ill-health, and food poverty, to waste, climate change and biodiversity loss, our current food system is causing some of our biggest problems. Yet food is also part of the solution. Sustainable Food Places (SFP) has shown that a transition to a healthy, sustainable, more

**BACKGROUND**

equitable food system requires not only strong national policy but also collaborative action between policy makers, businesses, and civil society at a local level.

No single organisation, whether public, private or third sector, holds the powers, remit, or insight to change the local food system alone. By forming an inclusive, cross-sector food partnership, public agencies, community organisations, businesses, and academics can collaborate to create lasting change by agreeing on priorities and action for the local area. The SFP network shows that a local food partnership can help drive a fundamental shift in its local food system and become a hub for a rapidly growing good food movement of active and engaged citizens.

Changing the food system demands a systems approach. This means having a vision and plan to achieve change across a breadth of different but connected food issues. It also requires local people and organisations working at all levels, and across all parts of the food system. The SFP framework for action identifies 6 key issues that we believe should be addressed together to achieve fundamental food system change:

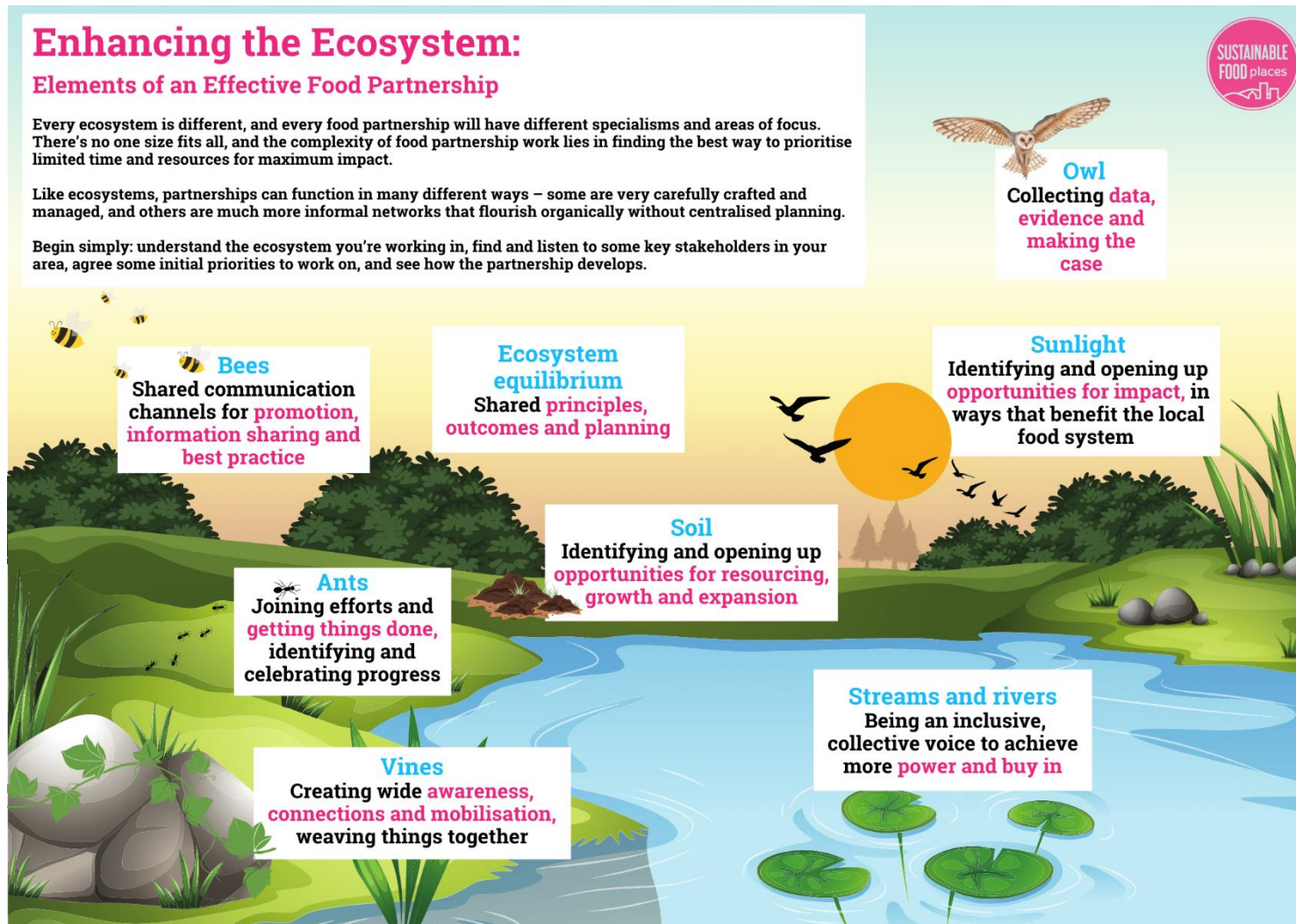


- **Food Governance and Strategy:** Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action
- **Good Food Movement:** Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement
- **Healthy Food for All:** Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
- **Sustainable Food Economy:** Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy
- **Catering and Procurement:** Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local supply chains
- **Food for the Planet:** Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.

These issues are complex and interconnected but are generally looked at in silos. A food partnership aims to join the dots.

## What do food partnerships do?

We use the metaphor of an ecosystem to demonstrate the different potential functions of food partnerships. There's no one size fits all, and the complexity of food partnership work lies in finding the best way to prioritise limited time and resources for maximum impact.



## Planning the approach of your partnership work

Like ecosystems, partnerships can function in many different ways – some are very carefully crafted and managed, and others are much more informal networks that flourish organically without centralised planning.

For most situations, we find it better to begin simply: find and listen to some key stakeholders in your area, agree some initial priorities to work on, and see how the partnership develops. Deeper partnership working and centralised planning can happen later down the line, but you only need to introduce this when you feel you need it to function more effectively.



Depth of partnership work	What you might be doing
<b>Casual engagement</b>	<a href="#">Mapping</a> , <a href="#">outreach</a> , <a href="#">bringing people together</a>
<b>Information sharing</b>	<a href="#">Research</a> , <a href="#">making the case and buy-in</a> , <a href="#">internal lobbying</a>
<b>Informal collaboration</b>	<a href="#">Building priorities</a> , looking at <a href="#">costs and potential funding</a>
<b>Coordination</b>	<a href="#">Branding, messaging and communications</a> , developing <a href="#">initial structures and governance</a> , including a <a href="#">board or steering group</a>
<b>Resource sharing</b>	Exploring <a href="#">funding</a> , looking at <a href="#">food partnership delivery</a> approaches
<b>Membership network</b>	Developing a membership offer, further <a href="#">messaging and communications</a> work
<b>Formalised strategic planning</b>	<a href="#">Building a strategy</a> , developing <a href="#">further structures and governance</a> , including <a href="#">leads, working groups</a> and <a href="#">additional paid roles</a>
<b>Joint venture</b>	Exploring <a href="#">legal structures</a>

The above table visualises the different potential levels of partnership working – from casual engagement to formalised strategic planning. Partnership work is all about becoming greater than the sum of our parts, so use this in deciding how to prioritise your work - make sure to focus your time on collective action that allows us to have an impact greater than we could individually.

Food partnerships still do function in many different ways – some food partnerships end up delivering a lot of projects directly, whereas others remain as more of a “backbone” system to support other organisations and groups to deliver work in the community.

## The county context

A variety of different systems need to be taken into consideration when planning a county food partnership.

### Political and public service systems

County food partnerships in the UK need to navigate multi-tier political systems to understand who has authority over different areas of the local food system. The [Local Government Association](#) provides the following basic overview of Local Authority responsibility for major services in England, as an initial guide. Beyond this, you can explore your local county website and local plans to look at their structures and priorities.

The NHS, education and transport authorities, utility companies and social housing organisations are all also other significant providers of public services locally in the UK.

	Shire Areas		
	Unitaries	County Councils	District Councils
Education	✓	✓	
Highways	✓	✓	
Transport planning	✓	✓	
Passenger transport	✓	✓	
Social care	✓	✓	
Housing	✓		✓
Libraries	✓	✓	
Leisure and recreation	✓		✓
Environmental health	✓		✓
Waste collection	✓		✓
Waste disposal	✓	✓	
Planning applications	✓		✓
Strategic planning	✓	✓	
Local taxation collection	✓		✓

One reason many county partnerships emerge is that relevant strategies, agendas, policies are set and delivered at the county level. More localised partnerships can be effective in many areas, particularly in supporting those experiencing food poverty, but can struggle impacting more systems-based change, as there is little or no opportunity to influence agendas set at higher administrative levels.

### Natural systems

Although food partnerships are structured around our political boundaries, of course the ecological and environmental systems in our local area are what influence food systems and agriculture in reality, alongside the human approach to land use in an area.

Therefore also think about food systems work at the bioregional scale when planning your work, and be open to engaging with relevant stakeholders outside your political boundary. Bioregions are generally defined as areas that share similar topography, plant and animal life, watersheds, and human culture.

#### Top tips from SFP counties cohort

There can be value in aggregating efforts by exploring regional/bioregional county clusters, rather than just working in county siloes.

### Social systems

Social systems at a county level always vary across every county – usually people may identify more with the village, town or city they're from than the county as a whole, and different approaches will be needed across rural areas compared to urban. For example, there can be significant variations in socio-economic circumstances, political views, environmental context and local services.



## Economic systems

The local economic infrastructure also has a significant impact on the local food system, i.e. the supply chains and infrastructure that brings food from farm to fork (and then to flush). Across the UK, 48% of the food we consume is imported from overseas. It is worth having an understanding of your local network of food businesses, and exploring what happens to locally grown food in your area, alongside the variations in affluence and deprivation across the county.

## County authority structures

The authority structures in your county will have a significant impact on the food system locally, and therefore the potential priorities and approaches of your food partnership.

### Single tier authorities

In single-tier authorities, there can be:

- **More streamlined decision-making:** Food partnerships often find it easier to engage with decision-makers as all relevant departments are within one organisation.
- **An integrated approach:** There's typically more potential for an integrated approach across different policy areas like public health, economic development, and environmental sustainability.
- **More direct implementation:** Strategies and policies developed by the food partnership can be more directly implemented across various council services.

### Two tier authorities

In two-tier systems, there can be:

- **More complex engagement:** Food partnerships may need to engage with multiple councils, which can be more time-consuming and complex.
- **More divided responsibilities:** Relevant functions are often split between county and district levels. For example, public health might be at the county level, while environmental health is at the district level.
- **Coordination priorities:** Implementing cohesive food strategies will need to align priorities and actions across different councils.

### City and county authorities

When city authorities exist within or close to counties, there can be:

- **Collaborative opportunities:** There may be opportunities for city-county collaborations on food initiatives, potentially leading to more comprehensive regional approaches.
- **Potential for overlap:** Care must be taken to avoid duplication of efforts between city and county-level food partnerships.
- **Urban-rural dynamics:** These partnerships may need to balance urban food issues with rural agricultural concerns.

The best approaches will vary in each county and area, but some top tips for approaches across these structures include:

- Ensure you are engaging equally across stakeholders from each authority level – they might not all engage with you equally, but make sure you are reaching out to all levels. Often a

food partnership can establish itself as an effective link between two authority tiers, and be seen as the go to for local authority officers

- Plan whilst aligning with local priorities as well as broader county and regional priorities and strategies
- In multi-tier areas, create separate engagement strategies for stakeholders at each level, as their interests will probably be very different
- In areas with city authorities within or close to counties, work to create cohesive regional approaches that bridge urban and rural divides
- Use existing strategic partnership structures to build in food related goals, for example in strategies, policies and committees
- For partnerships spanning multiple authority types, consider establishing sub-groups or working groups focused on specific geographical areas or themes

**If you could pick one key success, what would it be? How did it happen?**

“The fact that we’ve managed to bring together a partnership that is truly county wide is a massive thing here, as we have very different communities and contexts across the county. Since being in post, I’ve spent a lot of time trying to cajole people and inject energy into the work. Suddenly post-Covid, people started doing things and doing things together. We had a shared understanding of what they wanted, and what they could help with. For example, we’ve done a lot of joint work engaging with cafes and communities, and done a lot of education and awareness raising around seasonality.”

*Food Durham*

**Case study: Good Food Leicestershire**

Leicestershire was the first full county member of Sustainable Food Places, first setting up in 2013. The work initially started from work that was happening with the [Food for Life](#) schools programme, and was initially led by the public health team in the county council.

We initially began by holding an event with local food partners, trying to get wider buy in beyond the education sector. Because we are a two-tier authority, we wanted to pilot two localised district partnerships, and develop this alongside a county wide approach. We asked for two places to put themselves forward to be a local pilot.

When I came on board as the coordinator (based within the county council public health team) in 2017, I was tasked with understanding who was out there doing food work, and being the go-to person for Leicestershire. We tried to develop two more localised partnerships, but this didn’t really take off. So we kept the work broad and with a loose remit – just going out, speaking to people interested in food, and developing some potential joint activities. This was quite a good way of doing it – it’s easy to get too focused on action plans before seeing who’s out there and what they’re doing.

Alongside this, we were part of Sustainable Food Places, working towards the awards. We got Bronze, and then more recently Silver, and alongside this there has been more bubbling up of local interest, with local groups self-forming, as a result of people coming together around projects. The value in the awards for us was everyone getting to see each other’s work, and how it sits alongside theirs.

My advice for people starting off would be to have good case studies that you can relate to from other counties, especially through reading others’ [SFP awards applications](#). The most important thing about this role by far is the partnership aspect – being someone who is able to connect

across different stakeholders. The role looks very different in a city context compared to a county one.

If I think about what our key successes have been – definitely the fact we have a really good working relationship with Leicester City Food Partnership, some of the things we've done together have been great, for example getting funding for a big meals project. This relationship has opened up a research programme for us, and now we're really interested in looking at food production, poverty, diversity, and how those things all come together.

We have also done some great work with farming, had some great conversations, and developed new partnerships. For example, we have had some workshops at an agricultural project, bringing farmers, producers and the National Farming Union together to talk about sustainable farming.

Our funding has been a bit of a mish mash – my role is permanent and funded through public health. In some years I have had a budget, but recently this has been held back a bit. This has mainly been used for seeding new projects, running ideas through our small management group, identifying where we've got things that are already working. So for example, our research project fell out of funding we'd got from a local CSA (community supported agriculture site), holding a workshop with children on sustainable food systems. We seeded this with £5k, and we've ended up with a £2m+ research project from it. There is also grant funding elsewhere within the council, that has supported other projects.

In terms of engaging with other council departments, this has gone well, at least to a point! We've had really good engagement at Officer level, especially around the awards. We've had some interest at senior levels – it depends really on how big the asks are. Politics definitely plays a part in understanding of food poverty, and there was more of an interest once Covid hit, as across the country. But, since we've matured and developed as a partnership, the asks are getting bigger and more complex, and so senior buy-in has got more difficult – I hadn't thought about that before. Perhaps I thought it might be more of a snowball effect, but it's actually getting harder.

In terms of engaging with the community and third sector, I'm lucky in that I came from the third sector, so I brought a lot of relationships with me. People know that I work for the council, but they don't necessarily see me as a council person.

There is always that difficulty of independence versus buy-in in terms of where the partnership is hosted. I have the roots into the council departments directly, which gives me some buy-in and influence. But then I do sometimes worry about ownership from external partners. We have really good engagement at least. And, being based in the council can bring challenges in getting things done – it can be a lot slower than in the third sector.

What does the future look like for us? We have our two longstanding focus areas that we will continue to work on – a coordinated approach to food insecurity, and local sustainable procurement (I've been plugging away at this one for years, and a lot of local farmers want the council to buy their food, we just need to make sure we can walk the talk).

Both of those areas push at the question of what do we mean about food partnership work, and what do we do next. We could go for the Gold award, and push on with some really amazing work, but I feel like we're at a tipping point in making sure we all recommit to doing so, to achieve the buy-in. These are the conversations I'm going to be having in the next weeks and months.







# COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS IN PRACTICE

This section includes guidance as you start and continue to deliver a county food partnership, including:

- [Where are you starting from?](#)
- [Building a county food partnership](#)
  - [Connecting with stakeholders](#)
  - [Research](#)
  - [Planning and prioritisation](#)
  - [Monitoring, evaluation and learning](#)
  - [Costs, funding and financial sustainability](#)
  - [Branding, messaging and communications](#)

## Where are you starting from?

Food partnerships across the UK have started in many different ways. If you're just getting started in trying to set up a county food partnership, you are probably doing so from one of the following starting points.

	County Council wanting to start a county food partnership		Existing city food partnership wanting to expand county wide
	Group of local stakeholders wanting to create or formalise a county food partnership		District and borough food partnerships wanting to have county level influence
	Grassroots community groups or organisations exploring a food partnership model		Something else?

Depending on which category you fall into, you will be facing a different set of potential advantages and challenges as you begin your food partnership. We summarise some of the most common below, with some guidance on the best potential initial steps to take in getting your food partnership set up.

**Building out from a city food partnership example: Good Food Oxfordshire**

Good Food Oxfordshire was expanded out from the original Good Food Oxford partnership. They originally included a commitment to exploring this expansion in their Bronze to Silver SFP bid. The leader for this was food poverty and access, which during Covid, was quite easy to get traction on. They started working with each of the district councils to set up community networks, initially meeting every two weeks.

Coming out of the other side of Covid, all councils said they were interested in exploring wider cross county working, but still very much prioritising food poverty. A county wide steering group

was set up, with representatives from each council, plus the public health and corporate strategy teams.

They have since developed and signed off on a Food Strategy for Oxfordshire. They deliberately chose for it to be a multi-stakeholder strategy, primarily because this would make it easier to get it through, but then it has been harder to make it co-owned in practice. Of the five district councils, three have signed off, one is still in discussion, and one has had some political changes at the last election which has meant this has been delayed.

Their next step is setting up working groups in each district to deliver the strategy locally, and develop food action plans for each of the districts. They have also outlined scoping projects within the strategy, to do more research on before taking action, for example dynamic procurement.

Good Food Oxfordshire reflect that they have essentially approached this with a top-down model. Some district councils have been happy with the approach, and some felt they should have been engaged more. The coordinator reflects that it has been helpful for her to be the bridging person, from the VCSE sector rather than the council, to manage dynamics. They haven't yet tapped into community-based networks, for example West Oxfordshire already has an active network of people working together on food poverty.

**Practical Tool: Where are you starting from?**

Head to our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#) to see SFP and SFP member advice on getting started depending on where you are starting from - the advantages, challenges, and some potential initial steps.

**a) Where are you starting from?**

Starting point	SFP insights - do not edit	Advantages	Challenges	Potential initial steps
County council wanting to start a county food partnership	Your insights - please add	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing links across Council departments and other key stakeholders</li> <li>Potential for accessing LA resources</li> <li>Ability as a LA to reach out and connect with key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less community and grassroots connections than small organisations embedded in the community</li> <li>Limited flexibility in running a food partnership through the LA, for example compared to being third sector housed</li> <li>Not able to access grant funding pots that may be available to third sector organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Mapping, outreach, bringing people together</a>, in particular focusing on the community and gaps in existing connections</li> <li><a href="#">Research</a>, both <a href="#">policies and strategies</a> and <a href="#">assets</a>, to support with the below</li> <li><a href="#">Internal lobbying</a>, looking at <a href="#">costs and potential funding</a>, and <a href="#">where your partnership could be housed</a></li> <li>Developing <a href="#">initial structures and governance</a>, including a <a href="#">board or steering group</a></li> </ul>
Existing city food partnership wanting to expand county wide	SFP insights - do not edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing partnership structures and governance in place</li> <li>Potentially existing funding that can be utilised for expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty of expanding out to have equal representation across all the county, building a different identity for the partnership</li> <li>Complexity of planning and prioritisation, especially in comparing city and rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Mapping, outreach, bringing people together</a>, in particular focusing on the community and gaps in existing connections</li> <li>Redeveloping <a href="#">branding, messaging and communications</a> and <a href="#">priorities, shared approach or strategy</a> – this will be an early priority, to ensure buy in</li> <li>Looking at <a href="#">costs, funding and financial sustainability</a> for the expanded partnership – there will almost certainly</li> </ul>

You can read more case studies and stories from food partnerships in different contexts in our [Food Partnership Structures: Stories for Sustainable Food Places](#) guide.

# Building a county food partnership

## a) Connecting with stakeholders

The first stage of setting up a food partnership is connecting and reaching out to stakeholders from across all sectors, and getting to know their circumstances and priorities. These are some of the potential steps and approaches you can take to do this. You can find further guidance in our [Stakeholder Engagement and Steering Groups guide](#).

### Mapping

You might first want to spend a little time mapping out the main stakeholders in your county, in particular across sectors and areas you know less well. Your main stakeholders are the people, groups, businesses, organisations and institutions who:

- Are most involved in the food system
- Have most influence on the food system
- Are likely to be most affected by changes in the local food system

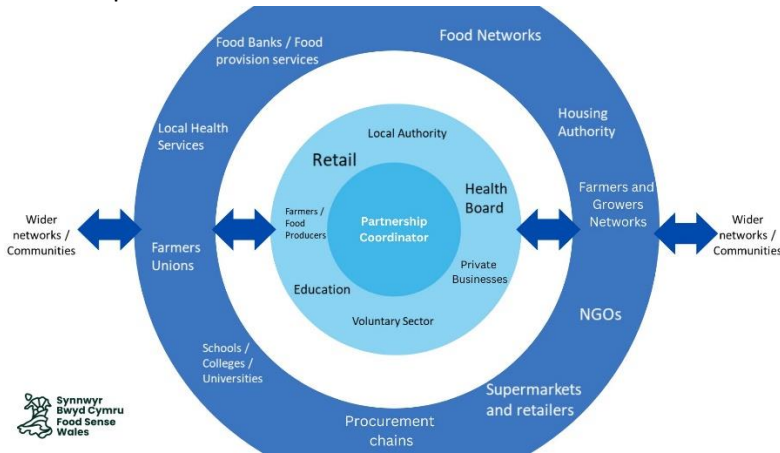
You can begin by bringing your current core committed stakeholders together a doing a “brain-download” of who you all already know, perhaps using a local map to draw out.

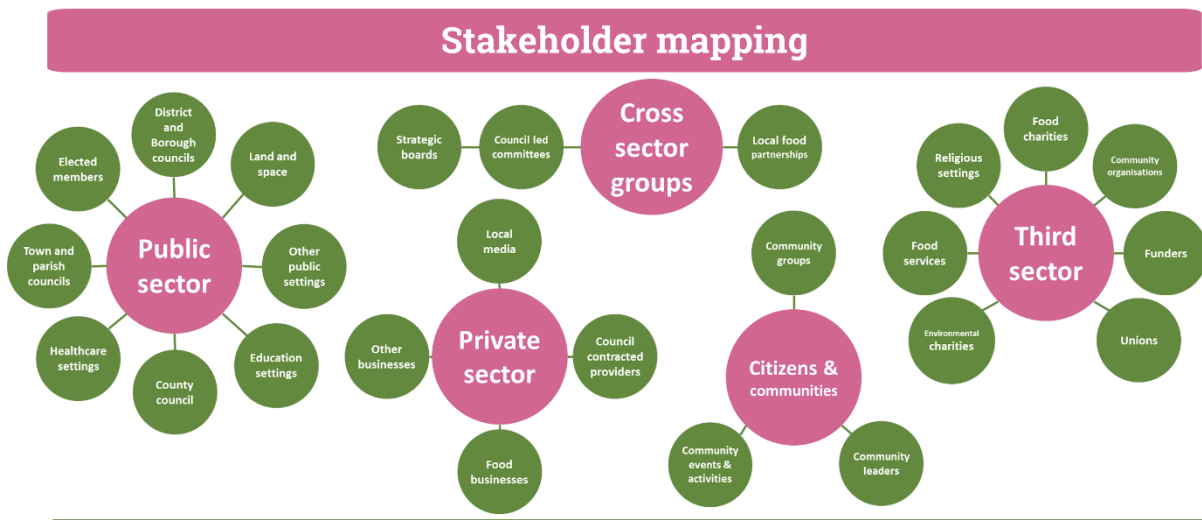
Across all these, you need to be thinking about diversity, inclusion and representation – making sure who you have involved can well represent the broader make up of your local population. We have a [REDI \(race, equity, diversity and inclusion\) tool](#) to support food partnerships to explore this in more detail. If your county is one that has lots of different ‘identities’ across different areas, you will want to make sure you have geographical representation from across all those areas too.

Once you’ve identified who your main stakeholders could be, you might want to research and understand:

- Their areas of operation and influence
- Any strategies, policies and budgets that guide their work
- The individuals in organisations whose remit being in a food partnership might fall under

You can find a table on some of the common key stakeholders across counties in the [Shared Insights collaborative document](#). The two diagrams below are ways to visualise who could or should be involved in your partnership.





#### A learning: engagement with Local Authority Officers

“We started our county wide work by developing eight strategic areas that we work across, not dissimilar to the SFP six issue framework. We are funded by public health, but wanted further engagement across other Council departments and Officers. We decided to trial a “co-chair approach, where someone from a local food partnership would co-chair each of the strategic aims with a Council Officer. However, when we reached out, we realised we didn’t have a clear enough idea or ask for the Officers, and we couldn’t get the idea off the ground. So, instead, we’ve reframed our strategy using a challenge-based approach – we’ve now identified two shared priorities (improving food in schools and institutions, and supporting the local food economy), which gives us a much clearer way to engage with Officers.”

*Good Food East Sussex*

### Outreach, making the case and buy-in

One of the main things you’ll have to do as a food partnership is make a compelling case for why people should put their time, and (directly or indirectly) their money, into food systems and food partnership work, over all of the other potential things they could be looking at.

Most people you reach out to will also probably not have heard of a food partnership or food systems work before. So, before you start your outreach, make sure you’ve thought about your key messaging and how you want to “sell” it. This can be very different across different stakeholders, as explored in the following table, but in general you’ll need to be prepped on:

- **What is a food partnership?**
  - You can see our description of this on our [website page](#)
  - You can take different approaches here – you don’t need to pitch an all singing all dancing food partnership when you’re just starting out, it can also just be as simple as saying you want to bring together people from across sectors within an interest in local food to talk about what we can do together
- **What is food systems work?**
  - Many of the stakeholders you speak to may be working on food poverty, but not looking at the broader food system. Working on tackling food poverty, especially in providing emergency food support, is hugely necessary and time-consuming work,

but we also need to work collaboratively on tackling the underlying causes of food poverty in the long-term – that’s what food systems work is (and much more!)

- You can see our description of this on our [website page](#)
- **What do we mean by our local food system?**
- **Why in our local area?**
  - It’s helpful to put some time into researching your local context and available data, exploring the assets and advantages that show investing in food systems work is a valuable investment locally.
  - See the [Assets](#) section below for more details.
- **Why I’m / we’re exploring this**
  - Share with people your motivations and goals for the work
- **Why get involved**
  - Food systems stakeholders are diverse, and you will need to do some thinking and planning on your messaging for different stakeholders. In the below table is a quick guide to some of the common stakeholders across counties, and tips on how to engage with them.

Islington Food Partnership has brought together a helpful FAQs description of the above questions and more in [their strategy](#), in the section defining some of our key terms.

**Case study: Making the case for food systems investment in East Sussex**

In 2022, Food Matters worked with East Sussex county council and the five local District and Borough food partnerships across East Sussex to design how they could come together to increase their impact on food at a county level.

Initial research was conducted to explore the East Sussex demographic and context, and the following presentation was developed to share with stakeholders across East Sussex county council departments, to make the case for food systems work.

This included a series of success examples from across the country, and also framing the case around the county council’s four overarching priority areas. One particularly useful piece of the research was exploring previous Freedom of Information requests on the number of food businesses in different English counties, which showed that East Sussex had a disproportionately high number of food businesses compared to other areas (for example, the same amount as East Anglia, an area with five times the population). This showed how important the food sector is to the local economy in East Sussex – in fact, almost three out of every 10 workers in East Sussex work in the food sector.

Click on the image below to download the full slides.





A shared vision for East Sussex



Local and National context



- Four overarching priorities**
- 1) Driving sustainable economic growth
  - 2) Keeping vulnerable people safe
  - 3) Helping people help themselves
  - 4) Making best use of resources now and for the future



- Recommendation areas**
- 1) Escape the junk food cycle and protect the NHS
  - 2) Reduce diet-related inequality
  - 3) Make the best use of our land
  - 4) Create a long-term shift in our food culture



**Practical Tool: Stakeholder engagement**

Head to our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#) to see SFP and SFP member advice on stakeholder engagement, including remits and priorities, and potential engagement and offers, across all the main food partnership stakeholders:

**Priority engagement when first starting out**

- County Council Officers
- District and Borough Officers
- Health Sector Managers
- Local charities and community services (VCSE)
- Local community food advocates
- Local funders (trusts and foundations)
- Local farmers and growers
- Local businesses
- Education sector
- Land and space management

**Engagement for when more established**

- Politicians and political parties
- Local authority departments leads, and other senior stakeholders
- Committees and boards
- Other public sector settings
- Public sector service providers
- Communities
- Local media

**b) Stakeholder engagement**

Who	starting out	Their remits and priorities	Engagement and offers
<b>County Council Officers</b> Most council departments have a connection to food, but in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate and sustainability</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Public health</li> <li>• Adult social care</li> <li>• Children's services</li> </ul>	<b>SFP insights - do not edit</b>	Council Officers have to deliver on their statutory responsibilities, the strategy and plans of their departments and teams, and their own roles. You can often find much of this on the county council website.  Especially currently, council budgets are lowering, and so Council Officers will be keen to find ways to achieve their goals within their limited budgets, and in particular if they can see how working with a food partnership might free up some of their capacity, whilst still achieving their goals.	It's best to try and find out where the energy is, and look at each council's policy commitments as a starting point. Even if it means coming at the SFP agenda from a slightly oblique angle!  Make sure you have an understanding of the remit of those you are engaging with, and what sits within each department, both at county and district and borough level. Relationships and level of cross-working across county and district and boroughs hugely varies across the country - some work really closely together, and others not very much at all.
<b>District and Borough Council Officers</b> Most council departments have a connection to food, but in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate and sustainability</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Environmental health</li> <li>• Leisure and recreation</li> </ul>	<b>Your insights - please add</b>	County Council Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key drivers are food poverty and net zero</li> <li>• Also Local Nature Recovery Strategies - links with land use. And Public Health are often interested through wider determinants and healthy weight</li> <li>• Food waste</li> </ul>	It can be helpful to research the political context too - again the political leads can vary across each council tier, and this might help you understand a little on the angles and approaches to take.  You can find more guidance and stories in our <a href="#">Engaging with Local Authorities guide</a> .
			County Council Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District and Borough Council Officers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Leics one District will often take a lead on behalf of all of them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

You can also find more guidance on mapping in our [Food System Mapping toolkit](#).

**Bringing people together**

At some point, you will want to bring people together to have conversations and create connections across your main stakeholders. If you are already quite well connected locally, you may feel it best to do this pretty early in your journey. Others may prefer to first spend a bit of time individually reaching out and building relationships with your main stakeholders, before holding a central event.

Our SFP network has found that bringing people together, especially in person, is one of the most valuable activities of a food partnership. It supports food systems work in itself, creating new connections and sharing experiences.

There's lots of potential ways to bring people together, and you'll want to brand it in the way you think most appeals to your target audience. For example:

- **A food summit** – might be presented more formally, for example involving consultations
- **A workshop** – might be more informal, and involve group working sessions
- **A launch or event** – for example sharing and celebrating local produce

You'll need to think about what the purpose of bringing people together is, for example:

- **Information gathering** – understanding more about your local food system, for example through mapping
- **Information sharing** – for example sharing the concept of a food partnership and food systems work
- **Work planning** – consulting to develop your food partnership's priorities
- **A 'call to action'** – something you want people to do through engaging them
- **Brand building** – raising awareness of the food partnership through a 'hook', for example a local food week
- **Developing a Food Charter** or food vision statement

It's OK to bring people together before you feel you've got a representative group of people interested in the work, just make sure you're mindful of this: be honest with those in the room about who you think you're missing, and ask for their help in engaging with them. Maybe you'll instead want to do a series of events in districts and boroughs, or with different types of stakeholders, to get better engagement.

You can find more guidance in our [Food Summits toolkit](#).

## b) Research

There's lots you can find out through your own research, alongside engaging with your local stakeholders.

### Policies and strategies

There will be lots of policies and strategies that govern the direction and priorities for work that impacts your local food system. Usually you will be able to find these online, and do your own review to understand how focused the work already is to food systems transformation, and some potential leverage points for your engagement.

Each Local Authority and other public sector institutions have autonomy over how they are structured and run, and so they will usually be slightly different in each area. But some that you might want to start with:

- County council plan
- Council portfolio plans – across each Council department. Some will be more relevant than others, for example you might want to focus on the departments of Adult Social Care and Health, Children's Services, and Communities, Economy and Transport (these will probably have different names in your local area)
- District and borough local plans
- Joint strategic needs and assets assessment (JSNA)
- Healthy weight plan

- School meal policy
- School health check
- Environment, climate or sustainability strategy
- Climate emergency declaration and/or net zero strategy
- Health and care strategy
- Waste management plan
- Tourism strategy

It's worth noting down the overall vision, framework, aims and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each, and then conducting a short review with a food systems perspective. Here's a potential framework and example of a summary review of a council plan.

<b>Insights &amp; Analysis</b>			
<b>Title:</b>	Council Plan 2022/2023	<b>Next Review:</b>	2023
<b>Developed and Delivered by:</b>	County council		
<b>Current Level of Focus on Food:</b>	Low	<b>Potential Impact on Food:</b>	High
Only two mentions of food, although much of the content is hugely relevant to the local food economy. Land-based industries are a key priority for skills training.		Further direct focus on local food and nature systems could have a significant impact on the county. The goals of food partnerships' work are very aligned with the overarching goals and principles.	
<b>Potential Leverage Points and Strategies for Engagement:</b> <i>E.g. influence development of new strategy/policy/role/remit, influence process, influence next review, support delivery of current</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Influence development of next Council plan to include more reference to food and food systems, in particular within driving sustainable economic growth</li> <li>● Ensure support for the local food economy is prioritised within economic targets, e.g. supporting start-ups and growth</li> <li>● Ensure food-based council procurement is spent with local suppliers - perhaps with the formation of a new food hub or consortium</li> <li>● Engage with children's services through food education programmes, in particular targeting disadvantaged pupils and looked after children</li> <li>● Engage with adult social care on early intervention and prevention, for example linking social prescribing and food and land-based projects</li> </ul>			

In particular, we recommend looking at our [Policy Levers guide](#) for ideas on potential policy improvements and success stories from across the UK.

You can also find more guidance in our [Food Policy Mapping guide](#).

## Assets

It's helpful to put some time into researching your local context and available data, exploring the assets and advantages that show investing in food systems work is a valuable investment locally.

When engaging your main stakeholders, you're essentially asking them to put their time, and (directly or indirectly) their money, into food systems work, over all of the other potential things they could be working on.

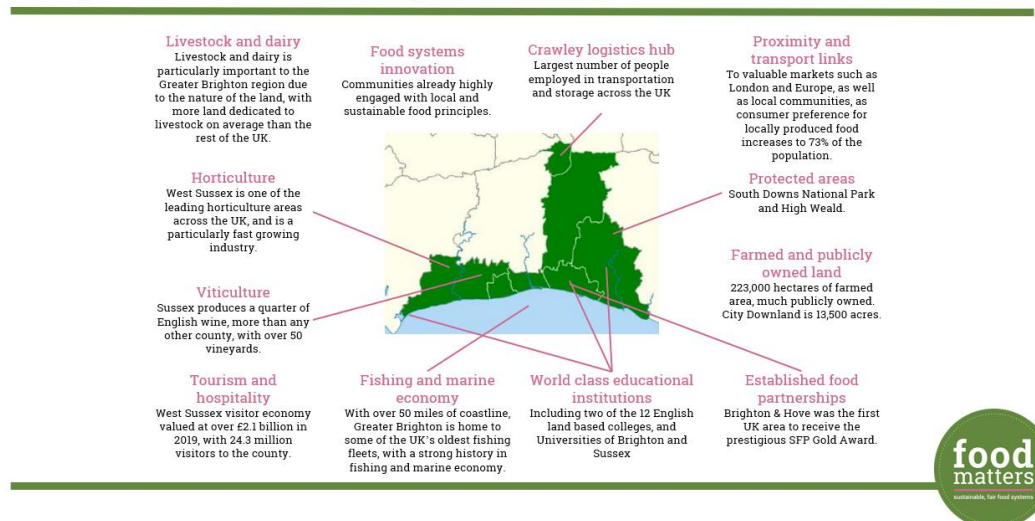
For example, for a county council public health team, they have to balance time spent across such diverse issues as health inequalities, substance abuse, nutrition and obesity, mental health and wellbeing, infectious disease control, environmental health, maternal and child health, and more.

The good thing is that food systems work addresses and impacts so many different areas. But food systems work isn't well understood in the UK, so it can take a lot of work and crafted communication to convince people of the value in it.

It can therefore be worth trying to seek out people who already 'get it' – these will be your champions, especially with a Local Authority, who can not only support what you're doing, but also open doors internally, and get you seats at the table.

Below is one example of a food systems assets mapping exercise, showing the assets and context across Greater Brighton that support further investment in food systems work.

### Food system assets across Greater Brighton



## c) Planning and prioritisation

People are usually interested in food systems work for many different reasons. Some people are interested in one or more practical issues in the community and finding ways to address them. Some are more interested in the bigger picture and what we can change locally, nationally and internationally about our food system.

It's important to have both an eye on the wider, systems picture, but also get things done on the ground, rather than just being a talking shop. It's also important to consider what's already

happened in your local community, and therefore what might be fresh and interesting to your members, compared to what might give them participation fatigue. Here's some potential approaches to planning and prioritisation.

## Systems change and leverage points

Changing the food system demands a systems approach. Yet our local food systems are complex and wide spanning across social, economic, and environmental issues. It can be overwhelming to think about where to start, and how we can best utilise our time.

Systems change thinking and planning is about identifying **leverage points** – points in the system that you can bring about change and have a positive impact on. Systems change theory encourages people to identify leverage points where a small shift in one thing can have wider knock-on effects, and produce bigger changes across the system.

In a practical sense, this involves thinking about the food system as a whole, and then prioritising some key actions and approaches based on thinking about:

- What is **possible** for you and/or the partnership to have an impact on?
  - For example, think about your assets, and your spheres of influence, and try to take hard decisions to bench things you think are hugely important, but recognise would be too difficult or impossible to have an impact on
- What of these would have the **biggest impact**, and how?
  - For example, which of these could build momentum and have positive knock-on effects for your work, which have multiple uses, and which are clear gaps that no-one else is filling?
- How much **effort** will it take?
  - It can be useful to start off with some low hanging fruits that can be quick wins and build momentum for the partnership, as well as having some long-term, high effort actions
- What should be the **priorities** across these?
  - Try not to spread yourself too thin, especially at the beginning, it's usually better to have a short actions list that you can complete and then add more to later down the line. Our food systems are ever changing, and it can be better to leave yourself flexibility to change and adapt, rather than spend a lot of time planning across every possible area at the beginning
- How can we best put a **plan** in place to make this impact a reality?
  - Make clear what are the exact tangible actions that need to happen, who is responsible for them, and who else will hold accountability to ensure they happen

## Planning your actions, priorities and strategy

At a practical level however, you'll need to start thinking about how to plan your actions, priorities and strategy.


In general it is usually best to start small and simple, and build out from there. A lot of partnerships can end up spending a lot of time early on visioning and thinking about complex local systems change, instead of just looking at potential shared priorities and practical actions that they could have a real impact in. Especially early on, it's important that people feel the worth of being engaged in your food partnership, and that usually means securing some quick wins, instead of spending too much time perfecting wording of a vision or strategy.

### Top tips from SFP counties cohort

Don't get too caught up in formalising your partnership – things will always change and develop, the goalposts are always moving, and relationships are always developing and changing too. Don't get too sticky fingered about holding onto things, instead be flexible to where your partnership is at right now, and be a facilitator rather than a manager.

However, it's important to consider this in terms of what's happened previously in your county – in some places people may feel there's been a lot of action but not enough coordination and visioning, rather than the other way round.

The following table gives an idea of the different types of approaches to partnership work, recognising that partnerships do not need to be formal and structured to be effective – sometimes informal collaboration and information sharing is the best way to have an impact locally.



Depth of partnership work	What planning and prioritisation approaches might be in place
Casual engagement	Shared actions
Information sharing	
Informal collaboration	
Coordination	Shared priorities and action plan, shared brand
Resource sharing	
Membership network	Vision, shared approach and values, membership benefits
Formalised strategic planning	Shared strategy
Joint venture	

At the basic level, any partnership work needs to achieve things that are greater than the sum of its parts to be worth doing. Going back to the metaphor for elements of an effective food partnership, in practical terms this could look like:

Elements of an effective food partnership	How does it become greater than the sum of its parts?
Identifying and opening up opportunities for impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working on county &amp; regional projects that couldn't be progressed locally, or are more effectively done at that level</li> <li>Working on priority initiatives on behalf of partnership members that don't have capacity to lead themselves</li> </ul>
Identifying and opening up opportunities for resourcing	
Joining efforts and getting things done	
Being a collective voice to achieve more power and buy in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through either informal collaboration on messaging, or having a shared brand and messaging channels</li> <li>Creating pathways for direct engagement between partnership members</li> </ul>
Creating wide awareness, connections and mobilisation	
Shared communication channels for promotion, information sharing and best practice	
Shared principles, outcomes and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus of roles aligned to achieve collective outcomes and understand opportunities for impact</li> </ul>
Collecting data, evidence and making the case	

There are many resources available online to support strategy development, and get in contact with us at SFP if you are interested in learning more about potential approaches to local strategy development.

The stakeholders you engage in your partnership may be used to very traditional approaches to strategy development, and you may be limited in the scope you have to be innovative, depending on the restrictions of your local authority or other stakeholders.

Ultimately, food partnership and food systems work is about doing things differently, and we encourage you to think about new and innovative approaches when it comes to strategy and planning in particular.

The following is an initial list of different approaches to strategy development:

- **Classical planning:** a traditional top-down approach involving analysis and centralised decision-making by power holders
- **Adaptive experimentation:** involving short cycles of testing and learning, with quick adjustments based on experiences
- **Visionary imagination:** an iterative process of developing and refining innovative ideas that have not been tried before, with strategy emerging over time
- **Goal based strategies:** working backwards from established long-term goals to develop strategies and plans



- **Challenge based strategies:** prioritising problem solving and tackling problems that can be fixed
- **Resource or systems-based strategies:** prioritising building connections and relationships, and enhancing existing assets, rather than having set outcomes



You can also read more on developing a food strategy in our [Strategy Guide](#).

**Snapshot: Impact examples of county food partnerships**

**Policy levers**

The [Good Policy For Good Food: A Policy Levers Guide](#) contains a list of 29 policy levers with case studies and success examples from across the country.

**Food procurement**

Many areas have introduced sustainable food procurement policies across their counties. In particular Bath and North East Somerset ran a successful dynamic food procurement pilot, which not only provided more than two million sustainably and locally sourced school meals, but also delivered a 6% saving on the previous contract (taking inflation into account), and saved 6.01 tons of CO2 emissions per year.

Monmouthshire have also been cited as an excellent example of dynamic school food procurement, and being one of four pilot regions awarded funding by the Dixon Foundation, supported by Dynamic Purchasing UK Food (DPUK), to a regional food hub for dynamic procurement. Carmarthenshire also [piloting a procurement model](#), like Monmouthshire and Cardiff working in partnership with a wholesaler (Castell Howell).

**Beyond the foodbank models**

Feeding Britain have many members who have successfully transitioned many local food services from traditional food bank models to more sustainable and person focused models, for example community supermarkets, pantries and cooperatives. They stated these changes have always come from bottom up and collaborative approaches, when all stakeholders are given space and time to co-develop their own models - space and time being a rare resource for those involved in these types of services. Bradford & Keithley was cited as a particularly good example, who held a whole network conference with the theme of 'from relief to resilience'.

You can find many more impact examples in the case studies section of this [SFP making the case report](#).

**Local food systems work frameworks**

Food partnerships across the UK tend to split their work in similar sets of strategic framework areas. Most Sustainable Food Places members have strategies fully or loosely based on SFP's framework, for example Devon Food Partnership uses SFP's exact framework for their own structure.

The below table gives some examples of the frameworks used by some UK food partnerships. You can also see all the SFP members and their frameworks on [our Members page](#).

<p><b>Bath and North East Somerset Local Food Partnership</b> works on three key delivery themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local food production</li> <li>• Provision of and access to good food</li> <li>• Healthy and sustainable food culture</li> </ul>	<p><b>County Durham Food Partnership</b> groups their shared activity into 4 key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food, Health &amp; Wellbeing</li> <li>• Food Economy and Production</li> <li>• Food, Community and Citizenship</li> <li>• Food, Climate and Nature</li> </ul>	<p><b>Islington Food Partnership</b> has four strategic framework areas, with governance and strategy underpinning them all, rather than being a stand-alone area of focus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy food for all</li> <li>• Sustainable local food economy</li> <li>• Climate and nature emergency</li> <li>• Local food movement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good Food Leicestershire</b> work within their three overarching principles of their Food Charter, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are supported and encouraged to grow, cook, buy and eat good food</li> <li>• A thriving local food and drink economy that works for people as much as they work for it</li> <li>• A food system which has a reduced environmental impact</li> </ul>	<p><b>Good Food Oxfordshire</b> currently works on the following five priority areas for action, as published in their May 2022 strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health</li> <li>• Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together</li> <li>• Grow the local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation</li> <li>• Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains</li> <li>• Improve the health and sustainability of institution catering</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shropshire Good Food Partnership</b> has six working groups across the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Food Economy: Connects local producers and consumers</li> <li>• Healthy Food for All: Tackles food poverty and access to quality food</li> <li>• Wise land stewardship: Promotes agro-ecological approaches and nature-positive farming</li> <li>• Grow Local: Supports growing initiatives getting more people producing &amp; eating food locally</li> <li>• Nature Connection: Enables opportunities to be in nature and engage in food production</li> <li>• Reducing Food Waste: On a mission to halve food waste in Shropshire in 5 years</li> </ul>

There are lots more resources in our [SFP Toolkit](#) related to action planning, strategy development and local consultations.

**If you could pick one key success, what would it be? How did it happen?**  
 “Using the SFP awards has been extremely helpful in galvanising energy behind the food partnership and food systems work. It shouldn’t be used only as a carrot of course, but the six-issue framework allowed us to bring together different groups from different organisations with different agendas – with a shared goal and shared values approach.”  
*Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership*

## d) Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

As a food partnership, you should always have some approaches to measure and demonstrate the impact of your work. This can be valuable in a number of ways: first and foremost to know that the approaches that you are taking are working, as well as having evidence of success to take to funders and other stakeholders.

In MEL specifically we mean:

**Top tips from SFP counties cohort**  
 It can be difficult to narrow down the complex, nuanced work that food partnerships do into “outcomes” and numbers. Sometimes funders might demand this, but make sure to focus on storytelling and case study approaches to demonstrating impact – these can sometimes be the most powerful.

- **Monitoring:** ongoing, real-time monitoring of project resources, activities and results and review of performance indicators and metrics
- **Evaluation:** any systematic approach to judge merit, worth or significance of an activity, by combining evidence and values
- **Learning:** using the results of monitoring and evaluation processes to adapt and develop our approach

There are a huge number of methods and approaches to conducting MEL, and what you choose depends on your unique circumstances – approaches need to be tailored to the specific nature of your activity and the objectives of the evaluation. The visual to the right outlines some of the most common approaches for measuring food partnership impact.

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Appreciative inquiry             | 16. Outcome mapping   |
| 2. Beneficiary assessment           | 17. Participatory evaluation  |
| 3. Case study                       | 18. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) / Participatory learning for action (PLA) |
| 4. Causal link monitoring           | 19. Positive deviance   |
| 5. Collaborative outcomes reporting | 20. Qualitative impact assessment protocol  |
| 6. Contribution analysis            | 21. Randomised controlled trial   |
| 7. Critical system heuristics       | 22. Rapid evaluation  |
| 8. Democratic evaluation            | 23. Realist evaluation  |
| 9. Developmental evaluation         | 24. Social return on investment   |
| 10. Empowerment evaluation          | 25. Success case method   |
| 11. Horizontal evaluation           | 26. Utilisation-focused evaluation  |
| 12. Innovation history              |   |
| 13. Institutional histories         |   |
| 14. Most significant change         |   |
| 15. Outcome harvesting              |   |

You can read more detail on these, and how to choose the right approaches for your partnership, in our [Understanding Food Partnership Impact](#) guide.

**Top tips from SFP counties cohort**  
**“The revolution will not be measurable.”**  
 In systems change work, we won’t always be able to measure, or even know the impact we’re having. But don’t be put off by this, some of the best impact happens in ways we don’t fully understand or can predict – food systems work is about trying new things and trusting the people involved to innovate.

## e) Costs, funding and financial sustainability

This can be the most important element of building a long-term sustainable food partnership and food systems work across an area. If you’re already reading this document, you probably already have some type of funding, even if that’s just “in-kind” support, usually someone’s time volunteered or offered for free to start building food partnership work.

Not every food partnership needs funding to operate, and some of the most successful community movement examples are unfunded, led by passionate individuals. It’s also very possible to run a very impactful food partnership with a small amount of funding, often put towards time for a Food Coordinator or similar.

Some food partnerships will support members to access funding for their projects, and some food partnerships will deliver projects themselves, which can support the financial sustainability of the partnership itself.

### Potential funding streams

Most food partnerships will raise funding through one or more of the following funders or fundraising approaches:

- Grant funding – usually from trusts and foundations
- Public sector funding – often from Public Health teams
- Private sector funding
- Earned income
- Community fundraising and individual giving
- In-kind support

#### Practical Tool: Funding opportunities for food partnerships

Head to our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#) to see SFP and SFP member advice on food partnership funding opportunities across different types of funders and fundraising approaches, including how to assess suitability, motivations and success factors, and examples.

#### c) Funding opportunities for food partnerships

##### TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS GRANT FUNDING

Trusts and Foundations are private entities that provide funds to support charitable endeavours. There are 8,800 grant making Trusts and Foundations in the UK, giving around £2.7 billion a year. Local food partnerships can access grant funding through local, regional or national trusts and foundations. Grants could be:

- Core funding for the overall running of the food partnership
- Project based funding, for delivery of projects that will benefit the funder’s overall aims

<b>POTENTIAL: HIGH</b> This is one of the most common funding streams for food partnerships across the UK.	<b>CAPACITY: LOW/MEDIUM</b> Dependent on the specific application process for each grant.	<b>RISK: LOW</b> Just opportunity cost of time spent on applications.
<b>FUNDER MOTIVATIONS</b> Public facing funders will usually have a published strategy and set of aims within which they offer their funding. Funders are usually motivated by funding new and	<b>SUCCESS FACTORS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to clearly demonstrate how you can meet the strategic aims of the funder</li> <li>• Showing you will deliver something</li> </ul>	<b>ELIGIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the eligibility criteria of the funder. Most grants will only fund charities or not-for-profit organisations, and many will only fund</li> </ul>

## Keys to fundraising

- 1) **Understand funder motivations:** Make sure you have done your research and read between the lines / conversation to understand exactly what motivates the funder. Then spend time thinking about what you can offer that meets these motivations, and exceeds their expectations.
- 2) **Relationship building:** Fundraising is all about relationships, and even applied for funding is much more likely to happen when you have built a strong relationship with the funder.
- 3) Food partnerships are of course also all about relationship building, so use this to your advantage and maximise the impact of your time.
- 4) Ideas ideas ideas ideas: Try to do as much blue sky thinking as possible and give space for creativity before looking with a critical or practical eye. The charity sector especially is often guilty of limiting creativity in the idea generation stage, for example:

*“This wouldn’t be mission aligned”*

*“We couldn’t justify dedicating internal capacity to this activity”*

*Only thinking about grant-based project modelling*

## Some other things to bear in mind

- Some funding sources are only available to certain types of organisations, for example non-profit organisations or charities. Charities are also restricted in some types of funding they can raise.
- Restricted funding is funding allocation for delivery of a certain project or set of outcomes. Unrestricted funding can be used for anything the organisation sees fit, for example core central costs and overheads.
- Food partnerships should aim for a diverse range of different funding sources, to minimise risk of different funding coming to an end.
- Fundraising should be done alongside modelling and budgeting of the funding you would like, ideally across different levels, e.g. minimum budget needed to operate and deliver on contractual responsibilities, optimum budget for highest impact.

You can also read more in our [Financial Sustainability Guide](#).

## f) Branding, messaging and communications

At some point you will probably want to develop a brand, messaging and communications for your partnership. This might include:

- A logo
- A tagline and/or short description of your food partnership
- Key messages / calls to action
- A website
- A mailing list (a lot of food partnerships use a Google Group for this)
- Social media accounts, in particular Facebook and X (Twitter), and/or hashtags
- A Food Charter that people sign to become members
- Brand guidelines, e.g. tone of voice, brand colours and fonts

Take a look at our [members website page](#) to see the ways other partnerships have approached their branding, messaging and communications. Many food partnerships have reflected that developing a logo, website and tagline was an easy, quick win to focus on when first setting up their partnership, which helped with their stakeholder outreach. Having a Food Charter or broad vision statement to unite people behind can also be useful.

In public facing communications, it is important to use positive and empowering language, recognising conversations about food systems and food poverty hold a lot of stigma and bias. For example, a foodbank sharing surplus food may want to focus its messaging on reducing food waste and brand itself as a community pantry, to encourage those experiencing food poverty to want to use the service.

You can read more guidance in our [Communications Strategy](#) and [Developing a Vision and Food Charter](#) guides.

**Top tips from SFP counties cohort**

Explore the power of campaigns to energise and mobilise local food action.

**Case study: Nottinghamshire**

Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Network (NSFN) started in response to the Covid pandemic in 2021 with a focus primarily on food insecurity. Before this Public Health at Nottinghamshire County Council had done some work on the Food Environment and participated in the National Childhood Obesity Trailblazer programme (with a focus on food and early years). The pandemic shone the light on the importance of food systems and kick started the current journey of sustainable food. It became clear very early on that partners working across the food system valued the opportunity to come together and share experiences, voice their challenges and look for ways to collaborate. There had been a focus on emergency food supplies but through the Network we were able to prioritise a sustainable, longer-term approach which centred on building community resilience. Governance was put in place- terms of reference broadened to incorporate the wider food system themes, include a strategic steering group and an accountability to the Nottinghamshire Joint Health and wellbeing Board. The current NSFN is hosted within Public Health in Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and has over 80 members.

The NSFN started as an informal City and County partnership and has maintained this inclusive approach with continued regular attendance at meetings from partners across the whole geography. We have worked together to identify shared themes where we can collaborate, and currently Academic partners are leading the development of a Nottingham City Food partnership. This is likely to align around the SFP themes and discussions with other SFP partnerships have been invaluable to shape this work. Relationships with Academic partners have grown and the local body of evidence around food systems helps support influencing at strategic level and fundraising for projects at community level.

Nottinghamshire is made up of seven Districts and Borough councils of which five have Feeding Britain Networks supporting local activity particularly on food insecurity. Support from the national Feeding Britain team has been invaluable. NSFN has also initiated the Nottinghamshire Community Garden network and Nottinghamshire Social Eating network, providing learning opportunities, events and peer support for VCSE's in both areas. This new food infrastructure has provided a framework for much of the community activity and feeds into the regular meetings and communication channels of the SFN. In March 2022 the Network held an engagement event with stakeholders to identify strategic priorities, hear the voices of stakeholders across the food

system on challenges and opportunities and celebrate achievements in the county wide journey so far. Through this we were also able to identify partners not 'in the room' such as business and the farming sector to enable us to broaden into a wider food system approach.

The NSFN has also supported the development of this 'food infrastructure' by using its expertise to advocate and administer a small grants scheme for the County council. NCC allocated £800k to develop and support community food activity with a focus on inequality which included food co-ordinator posts in four districts which have since been mainstreamed. A steering group of Network members provided oversight on decision making and management of the grants scheme.

Nottinghamshire became a Sustainable Food place in January 2022 and Nottinghamshire Food Charter was adopted by the JHWS. Food has a prominent place in the JHWS 2022-2026, so we are confident in the strategic drivers for our food work. The Network Strategy group provided oversight and ownership of the recently published Nottinghamshire Food Insecurity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlighting the high-level credibility and value placed on the Network. The success of the partnership relies on energy and buy-in, and being aware of the capacity in the sector and pressure of district colleagues is important. Building relationships with other departments in the council such as Tourism and Economic development has been fundamental to alleviating some of this pressure and using the system assets we have. Next steps in 2024 are our first Nottinghamshire Food Summit to support the development of our three-year plan and going for the SFP Bronze award.

# STRUCTURES AND GOVERNANCE

This section outlines some ways to approach building and structuring your food partnership, including:

- [Where your partnership is housed](#)
- [Internal lobbying](#)
- [Food partnership delivery](#)
- [Board or steering group](#)
- [Food partnership coordinator](#)
- [Food partnership chair](#)
- [Additional paid roles](#)
- [Leads, working groups and delivering the work](#)
- [Power dynamics](#)
- [Supporting those involved](#)
- [Legal structures](#)

The structure and governance of your food partnership will develop and grow through time, as you work out your priorities, get more people on board, secure more funding, and so on.

You can read more guidance in our [Food Partnership Structures](#) and [Stakeholder Engagement and Steering Groups](#) guides.

## Start minimal and build out

As a general rule, we encourage you to use the simplest structure and governance model for where you are at – ideally you want to spend as much of your time as possible doing the work, rather than focusing energy internally.

Usually this is also the most inclusive and effective approach to partnership work – flexibility and efficiency is key when doing complex work like food systems transformation, and it's rarely possible to have one size fits all approaches and policies. Focus instead on collaboration, open conversations and case by case judgements.

A way to think about this is to focus on introducing structures and governance approaches only when:

- They are needed to keep us safe and prevent issues and risks,
- They give clarity and improve effectiveness, to allow us all to do the work, and/or
- They are progressive and innovative, and allow us to be a more inclusive and sector leading partnership

If and when you're at the point of applying for funding or employing staff, there will be certain governance mechanisms you will need to introduce to meet requirements too.

## Where your partnership is housed

The journey from initial discussions and informal gatherings of interested stakeholders through to planning, consulting, drafting and publishing a food strategy or action plan along with formalising as a partnership can be a lengthy one requiring substantial resource (mainly person time) to achieve. There comes a point fairly early on in most food partnerships when they need to decide



how to administer this resource. The answer usually falls into one of three categories:

- **Housed by a public sector organisation** (e.g. public health, environment or economic development department of the local authority). These are funded or staffed by government employees.
- **Housed by a third sector organisation** (e.g. an environmental or community development organisation or charity). Funds are secured by the third sector organisation to support set up, running costs and staff.
- **Fully independent** These are likely to have minimal resources and be staffed entirely by volunteers initially, but over time develop into fully fledged organisations, secure their own funds and employ their own staff to administer the partnership.

There are inevitably grey areas between these categories; partnerships housed by third sector organisations may be commissioned by the public sector; partnerships that are fully independent with their own legal structure may still be based within the office of another third sector organisation. Partnerships will also cross over between categories over their lifetime; those that start out being housed by the third sector or public sector for example may later transition into fully independent partnerships.

#### Case study: Shropshire Good Food Partnership

When setting up Shropshire Good Food Partnership, they spent about 6 months travelling around and talking to anyone with an interest in food, and the issues raised formed the basis of their local food strategy. A steering group was put in place and the food partnership registered as an independent CIC (Community Interest Company). The partnership covers two Council areas: Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Daphne, who is the coordinator of the Shropshire Good Food Partnership, did her PhD on Sustainable Food Cities and how different food partnerships were working across communities and local councils.

Initially there were 6 working groups within each of their framework areas, some are more active than others. In practice, people within the working groups tend to focus projects in their own local areas, often starting as pilot projects. This then builds models that can be replicated in other areas of the county. Following a recent strategy review the role of the food partnership was clearly identified as to Convene and Connect; Inform and Inspire; Resource and Empower; and provide Vision and Voice. This has provided a useful framing for initiatives.

Shropshire have used these framework areas cleverly to make inroads into different council departments, for example they have had a project supporting people in care funded through the council, that sit within their nature and connection area. At the moment, there is no single person or team within the councils whose mandate is food - they were hoping the government white paper would change this, but have instead provided input to the different local plans and department strategies, to highlight the importance of a joined-up approach to food and farming. This was based on outcomes from a food summit in October 2022, to gather community views and bring these back to the council.

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are both unitary authorities, which means they don't have to engage with different tiers.

#### Internal lobbying

Unless you are fully independent, you will most likely need to undertake internally lobbying, similar to how you're engaging with external stakeholders. Often the host organisation and colleagues can

have limited or no experience of food partnerships, and a wider organisational commitment is needed to ensure success. For example, you may be “competing” with other internal services for funding, need capacity support from colleagues during busy times, and need senior colleagues to undertake engagement on your behalf.

**What do you wish you knew when you started?**  
 “That you don’t have to start with a massive and overwhelming vision of changing your whole local food system. You need to find somewhere to start – the low hanging fruit – rather than trying to think about the whole thing. We focused on first setting up a website and Twitter, and setting up an advisory group.”  
*Food Durham*

### Food partnership delivery

The scope of food partnership delivery is extremely varied, requiring abilities including:

- Project management
- Partnership management
- Event management
- Strategy and action planning
- Senior stakeholder engagement
- Grassroots community engagement
- Diversity, equity and inclusion, including lived experience
- Facilitation
- Fundraising
- Reporting
- Marketing and communications
- Policy and advocacy
- Campaigning and activism
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Systems change thinking and planning
- Administration

Clearly no one person can fulfil or be an expert in all these areas, and the value of a partnership is that you can ‘divide and conquer’ through multiple people holding responsibilities, both in voluntary and paid capacities.

Many food partnerships see themselves as a ‘backbone’ function, as in the visual below from Good Food Oxfordshire.



**Top tips from SFP counties cohort**

It's important to acknowledge that you can't do everything! Allow partner organisations to sometimes take the lead on initiatives.

The following are the different potential structures and roles that food partnerships have found most success with.

### Board or steering group

An early step for many Food Partnerships is to nominate a small group of cross-sector people who are going to actively work to take the idea of the partnership forward. This group could be called the board, steering group, steering committee, secretariat or management committee for example. What you name it is important – pick a title that will appeal to the main stakeholders you want to be on it.

Having a board is a valuable way to engage senior stakeholders – it gives them a clear role, a senior title, and connections with other senior stakeholders.

In most instances the board leads on the development of the food partnership, and your Food strategy and/or action plan. Possible tasks could include:

- Acting as a focal point
- Providing a forum for discussion and debate
- Motivating wider stakeholders to engage with action planning and strategy development
- Raising the profile of the food partnership and action plan
- Setting up and receiving reports from subgroups on particular themes e.g. food poverty, waste, procurement
- Helping develop more effective ways of getting things done
- Maintaining energy and enthusiasm

It can be helpful to develop a Terms of Reference that outlines the responsibilities and expectations of members. You can use our [Terms of Reference Workshop](#) and [Survey](#) guides to explore putting together Terms of Reference for your board (or broader partnership).

**Structure example: Devon Food Partnership**

The Devon Food Partnership was set up in February 2021 and is facilitated by the county council. They have a steering group of about 20 members, which includes council representatives from the waste, climate emergency, economy, communities and public health teams, as well as members from Food Plymouth, Food Exeter, and the Torbay Food Partnership; local food banks and the VCSE sector; local farmers and producers; and the National Farmers Union.

A lot of the work is held by themed working groups, District Councils, or individual partners and then fed back into the main steering group, which mainly focuses on sharing best practice and working together on cross-county projects. Food Plymouth and Food Exeter have been around for a long time, and have been very helpful for drawing on best practice and collaborative working.

### Food partnership coordinator

Being a partnership requires actively bringing together partners, in whatever form that takes. Often food partnerships start (and may choose to remain) voluntary, sharing the role out between the

members. However, most SFP members, as they evolve, reach a point where they need some paid support to fulfil their ambition and ensure consistency. Feedback from SFP members is that a paid coordination function has been crucial to their success.

**What do you wish you knew when you started?**

“Understanding what a food partnership coordinator role could and should be. I found the SFP guide on [Employing a Coordinator](#) really helpful, even though I was already in post. It was a penny drop moment for me really – as it was becoming apparent that different people had different ideas on what the role was going to be.”

*Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership*

Most food partnerships will begin with a food partnership coordinator. There is no one size fits all job description as different partnerships need different types of support. Plus they change over time. In some cases, an initial coordination role becomes a much bigger role – even a chief exec - as the food partnership extends its activities and reach.

**A quick practical overview of food partnership coordinators**

- **Background and experience:** since the role of a food partnership coordinator can be so varied, and vary across place and over time, there is no specific background or experience to succeed in the role. Depending on your own specific context, you may be looking for someone with skills/knowledge/experience in:
  - Partnership working
  - Community engagement/ participatory approaches
  - Relationship building – at different levels
  - Working strategically/ strategy oversight and reporting
  - Programme development/ project management/ organisational skills
  - Fundraising/ bid writing/ reporting and/or staff management experience
  - Events and/or campaign experience
  - Monitoring & evaluation skills
  - Communication skills – written and verbal – for diverse stakeholders
  - Facilitation skills
  - Experience of/ commitment to diversity and inclusion including less heard voices
  - Administrative/ event/ minute taking skills

Some food partnerships may also look for:

- Education e.g. degree level or equivalent (but think about experience/ lived experience as an alternative).
- Willingness to learn about food issues or food systems and/or relevant social/ environmental/ economic issues (some specify ‘experience of’ these - but this may exclude good applicants).
- Personal qualities e.g. initiative, empathy, diplomacy; a creative energy, solutions focused, imaginative, practical; comfortable with uncertainty.
- Ability to think strategically / identify the best opportunities in a complex situation.
- Knowledge of specific area such as public health, climate change; or understanding of community food.
- Understanding of local and/or national opportunities to influence policy.
- Political awareness in relation to food issues.
- Ability to work on the ‘big picture’ while also delivering projects on the ground.

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- Understanding or lived experience of food poverty and/or experience of working with underrepresented or marginalised people.
  - Working locations or patterns e.g. evening/weekend availability.
  - Especially in councils, may require link into other areas e.g. to lead on food within the council’s climate change strategy, or an area of health.
  - Your organisational requirements e.g. equal ops, ICT skills (sometimes website design), confidentiality, health & safety, welcoming applications from under-represented groups.
- **Salary:** Food partnership coordination is not an administrative role – it requires relationship building, partnership development, project management, and a strategic approach. Salaries vary but are generally at upper ‘officer’ level - or above. We recommend considering salary carefully – don’t go too low! A coordinator must be able to take a strategic view and have the confidence to engage diverse stakeholders – from community to very senior level.
  - **Hours of work:** As a guide, while full time is ideal, a food partnership typically starts out with a post for 2-4 days a week. The role may be combined with another role(s).
  - **Recruitment:** As well as local networks, don’t forget to share your vacancy through the SFP email discussion list (sign up [here](#)). Many partnerships also use national sites such as [www.environmentjob.co.uk](http://www.environmentjob.co.uk), [www.charityjob.co.uk](http://www.charityjob.co.uk) and especially [www.rootstowork.org](http://www.rootstowork.org) which promotes sustainable food jobs in the UK.

Across the country, food partnership coordinators do tend to come from very different backgrounds, most often a third sector and/or community services background, and in some cases have an academic background in food, but this is by no means essential to deliver the role. Limited funding can mean that food partnership coordinators are on the pay scales of junior staff within organisations, but the role can be delivered at all levels of seniority, and we’d recommend it not being an entry level role (or, at least not without significant support).

**Practical Tool: Food partnership delivery areas**  
 Head to our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#) to see SFP and SFP member advice on food partnership delivery areas, including what delivery could look like across areas, how big a part of the role they are, and further training and resources.

d) Food partnership delivery areas				
Role area		What this could look like	How big a part of the role	Further training and resources (alongside SFP’s Toolkit)
Project management	SFP insights - do not edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of partnerships structures and governance</li> <li>• Development of operational systems for the smooth running of the partnership, e.g. shared documents, Google Group</li> <li>• Management and delivery of specific projects funded through the food partnership</li> </ul>	Central to the success of the food partnership. Will be a large part of the coordinator’s role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NCVO training</a> e.g. project management in the voluntary sector</li> <li>• <a href="#">PRINCE2 training</a></li> </ul>
	Your insights - please add			
Partnership management	SFP insights - do not edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping and research to understand your local area and stakeholders</li> </ul>	Central to the success of the food partnership. Will be a large part of the coordinator’s role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NCVO training</a></li> </ul>

You can read more on the role in our [Employing a Coordinator](#) guide.

## Food partnership chair

Most food partnerships will also introduce a chair role, and many SFP members identify ‘having a strong chair’ as a key factor contributing to their success.

A chair may be fulfilled by a volunteer, i.e. a member of your steering group, or a paid staff member, e.g. from the organisation the partnership is housed in, or another closely involved member. Food partnerships have found success with both models.

A **volunteer chair** may allow you to receive guidance and support from someone senior in a sector you know less well, and open more doors than your organisation could do. However because it is a volunteer role, you may not have much of their time, and will be subject to their personal commitment.

A **paid chair** (commonly the CEO, department lead or senior staff member of the organisation housing the partnership) can support you with internal buy in and (potentially) more capacity than a volunteer chair. This can also be extremely valuable in your ‘divide and conquer’ approach – for example, the coordinator can be someone with expertise and/or lived experience to focus on grassroots community engagement, whilst the chair focuses on senior stakeholder engagement. This will usually be the most effective approach, since a CEO will (unfortunately) have much more luck knocking on the door of another CEO or senior stakeholder than a coordinator.

## Additional paid roles

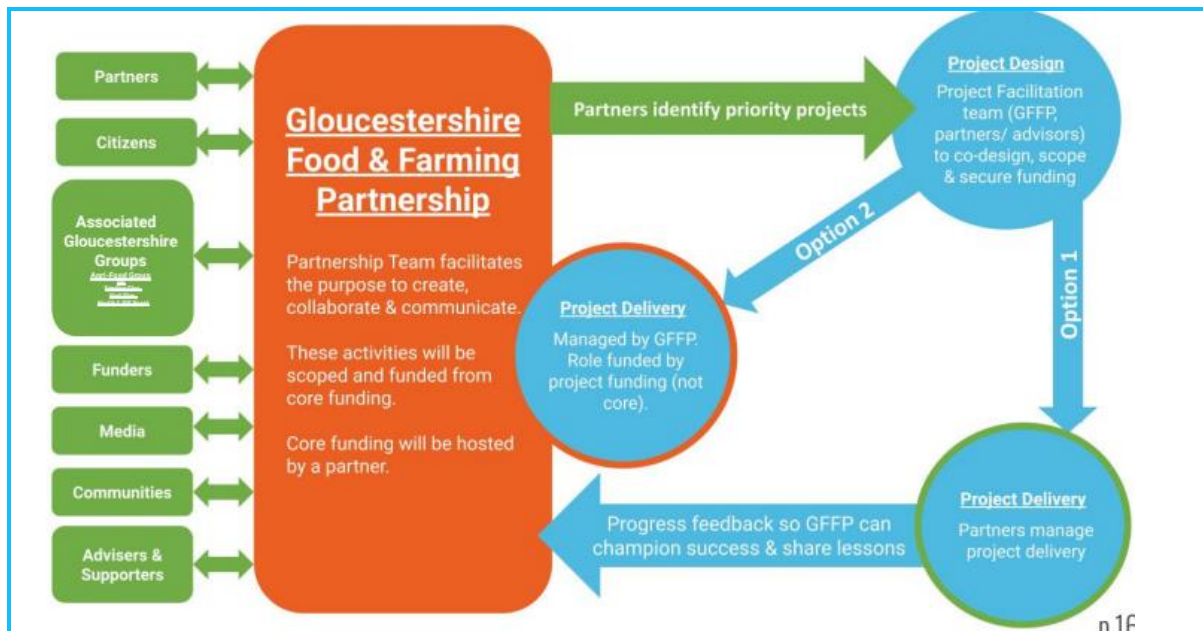
As you develop and grow, you may be able to add additional paid roles to your partnership, either by introducing new roles, or by adding food partnership delivery to the work of other colleagues in the organisation.

This will usually either be:

- Project delivery roles – to deliver on funding received for a specific project
- Targeted delivery roles – to deliver on specific aspects of the coordination of the partnership, and/or your strategy and action plan. For example, a policy officer, a fundraiser, a marketing and communications manager

### A structure example: Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership

Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership structures itself around its projects and funding, rather than having a centralised governance structure. They visualise this in the below diagram.



### Leads, working groups and delivering the work

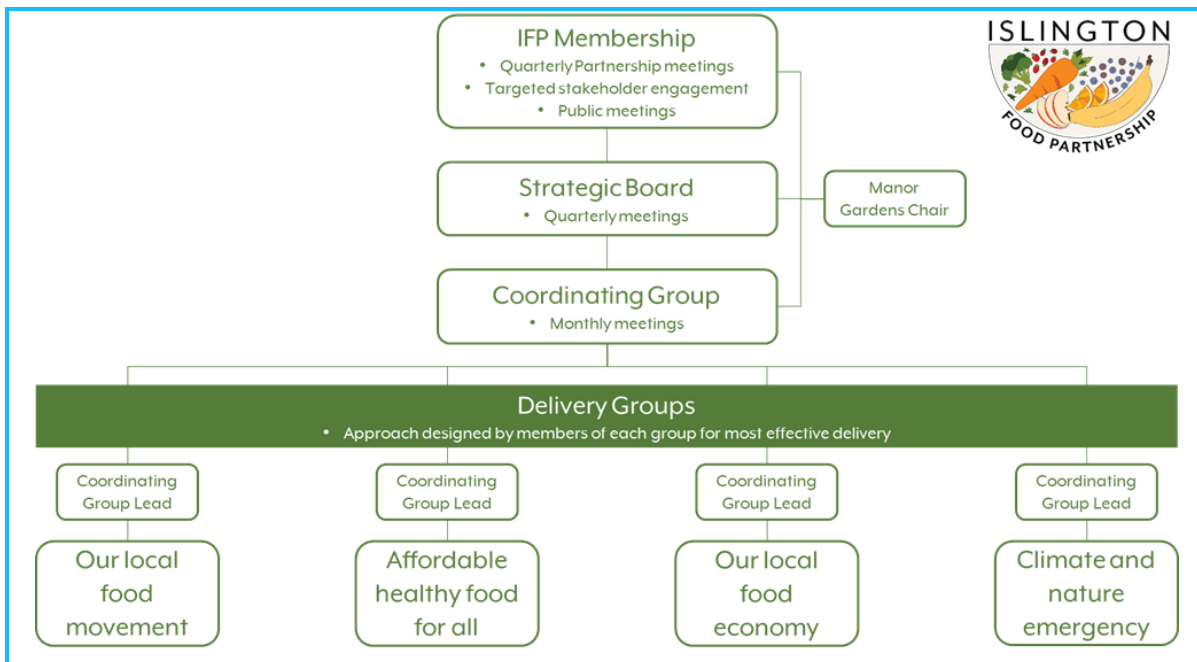
Once you have your priorities, strategy or action plan in place, you will need to look at what capacity and expertise is needed to fulfil different aspects. Many SFP members have found it most effective to have leads or working groups assigned to each priority or strategy area, or a task and finish group for a specific action or group of actions.

It's quite an ask to people, as you're essentially adding more to their workload, sometimes outside of the specific remit of their day job. So, you need to have an already engaged audience passionate about the work, or you need to have a clear benefit in taking part. In the latter case, it can be helpful to title and frame the partnership work around existing strategies, goals and remits of your stakeholders, so it does clearly fit into the remit of their day job. This, for example, is why a lot of food partnerships are funded and/or housed within public health teams, because they have statutory responsibilities for public health and wellbeing, and will often have Healthy Weight or Obesity strategies – food partnership work has clear benefits in helping them to meet their goals.

#### A structure example: structuring Islington Food Partnership

Islington Food Partnership (not a county food partnership, but still applicable to county working) is a relatively mature partnership, that is lucky to have high levels of engagement across different sectors. This has allowed them to have a wide range of engaged members. They are housed by Manor Gardens Welfare Trust, a local health and wellbeing charity, and have multiple staff members contributing to the partnership. They also have a coordinating group, mainly consisting of Local Authority Officers and charity staff, who each take a lead on one of their four strategic aims. They also have a strategic board with senior members, including local funders, Local Authority department leads, charity CEOs, local businesses, and academics. You can read more and see the membership of their board and coordinating group [on their website](#).

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### Power dynamics

Getting the balance of power right, particular across the community and the Local Authority, is crucial to a successful partnership. Unfortunately there isn't really a one size fits all approach to this, as it depends on the individuals involved, the local context, the tier system in the county, and more.

As a general rule, its best to think as food partnership work as for and led by the community – the community is our most important stakeholder. Wherever possible, food partnership work should be embedded within and connected to the local community, and other stakeholders are there to support on behalf of community members, for example the local authority.

However, it can be really hard to engage with the community, and often community members and organisations don't have the capacity to lead a lot of the work. This is where a food partnership comes in to support and streamline the work.

As with everything else in life, relationship building is key. You should spend time getting to know people with a stake in the local food system, building trust and understanding the local context, which are the most important things to achieve a good balance of power dynamics.

### Supporting those involved

Food Partnership work can be demanding – the capacity needed and scope of work is significant, and it is centred around topics that can be emotionally affecting, especially for those that may have lived experience of food poverty or poverty. The host organisation and/or the steering group should think about what support structures to put in place to ensure the wellbeing of those involved, both in paid and volunteer capacities. This could include access to wellbeing support, a coach or therapeutic support.



## Legal structures

At some point you may need to consider a legal structure for your food partnership, for example if you don't already have somewhere to "house" the work, or if you are expanding and see the benefit of making your food partnership an independent organisation. You can read guidance on this in our [Organisational Structures and Legal Status guide](#).

### Case study: Devon

The Devon Food Partnership was set up in February 2021 and is facilitated by the county council. They have a steering group of about 20 members, which includes council representatives from the waste, climate emergency, economy, communities and public health teams, as well as members from Food Plymouth, Food Exeter, and the Torbay Food Partnership; local food banks and the VCSE sector; local farmers and producers; and the National Farmers Union.

In 2023, the Partnership's steering group produced Devon's Good Food Strategy 2023-2028, which is structured around the SFP's six key themes and identifies the key priorities for Devon's food system. Following this, the Partnership has worked to undertake, facilitate, and encourage actions to address these priorities and to develop an action plan. For example, in May 2023, the Partnership worked with partners at Devon Community Foundation to host a Devon Food Insecurity Summit, aimed at showcasing recent community research projects and innovative approaches to household food insecurity.

The Partnership has three active working groups each with their own workstreams focused on different themes: food insecurity, food in schools, and the local food economy. These working groups regularly report back to the main steering group on progress. Another key area of work is Every Bite Counts – a local food campaign launched in May 2024 aimed at encouraging the public to make small, convenient changes to local food.

Although the Partnership has received funding from SFP in the past, in recent times it has been funded from across council departments with small amounts of funding from external sources for specific pieces of work, such as events. The Partnership has been key in joining up work across Devon County Councils and works closely with other food partnerships in the region.

# WHAT NEXT?

This guide is part of the broader SFP Food Partnership and Strategy Toolkit, which you can find in the [menu bar of our website](#). We refer to relevant other sections in the toolkit throughout this guide. It's also worth looking through the [SFP Evidence Database](#), where you can learn about the work of other food partnerships.

You can see our [map of Sustainable Food Places members across the UK](#) to find similar food partnerships, and get in touch with them. Sustainable Food Places also has an active mailing list and counties cohort group that meets regularly to discuss county specific topics.

If you're not already a member of Sustainable Food Places, you can [see our process here](#). If you're just starting out or have any questions, you can get in touch at [info@sustainablefoodplace.org](mailto:info@sustainablefoodplace.org) – we're always happy to help.

### Practical Tool: Open advice and sharing

Is there anything else you're thinking about that this document hasn't covered? Head to the Open Section on our [Shared Insights collaborative document](#) to add any thoughts, questions, comments, or find other people to get in touch with across our counties group.

**e) Open section**

Is there anything else you would like to share? Please add to the table below if so.

Topic	Notes	Your details - Food Partnership, contact details if you'd like others to get in touch

### Case study: Oxfordshire

Oxford has been a Sustainable Food Place for a long time, and right at the start of Covid, we started looking at what a county wide partnership could look like. We had a food services map for the city, and so we decided to map it county wide, i.e. using the food poverty and food access angle as a starting point.

We then started working with each of the district council to set up community networks, initially every two weeks. We just talked about who was doing what, and covering which areas. What this work did was make the councils realise how important food is, and all councils said they were interested in working together, although still from a food poverty angle at that point.

So, we formed a county wide steering group, with representatives from each of the district councils, and then public health and the corporate strategy team became very interested and involved.

It's been a natural journey moving beyond food poverty – thinking about cooking, sharing and growing in communities, community cohesion, and building from there. We've then been able to make links with the climate teams – public health was quite instrumental in this. We saw that the climate action framework had nothing on food, either on the production or consumption side, and so we had a foot in the door to start conversations.

The culmination of the county expansion work has been signing off on a food strategy for Oxfordshire. The governance discussion has been interesting. We initially wanted it to be multi-stakeholder led, because it would be easier to get it through the council processes, but then we weren't sure who was approving it. We had consultation with everyone, and multiple departments still see it as their strategy. So far we've had three district councils approve it, one is looking a little tricky, and the other had recent political changes, so have been delayed.

Our next stage is setting up working groups within each district to make the strategy a reality in each district, developing food action plans for each of the districts. We recognise this has been a bit of a top-down approach, but this has been what's worked for us, because of the context of the county. We've learnt that the district councils are all quite different, and we needed to be sensitive to each of their contexts to engage with them. Something feeling "led" by the county isn't necessarily something district councils have positive experiences with.

We do have existing community networks, but we need to do more on this. We know where the existing networks are, so will just be a case of building strong relationships and work through them, for example the West Oxfordshire farmers' network.

Our funding has been piecemeal, including from public health, SFP and Oxford city funding for specific projects. We have European funding as part of a bigger project, and Lottery (NCLF) funding through one of our partners. Our funding is mostly project based, and we have to be smart around making projects align. We are county funded for the food strategy, alongside public health, taking a food justice angle.