



# ENGAGING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Stories, challenges and tips from the Sustainable Food Cities Network



Researched and written by Sarah Davies, Food Matters

September 2018

# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Current picture	3
1.2 What this guide covers	3
1.3 Limitations	4
1.4 Who is it for?	4
1.5 Structure	4
<b>2. Why engage local authorities?</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Levers	5
2.2 Strategic infrastructure and policy	5
2.3 Leadership	8
<b>3. Planning to engage</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Understand how local authorities work	9
3.2 The two-tier challenge	10
3.3 Making the case	11
<b>4. Multiple routes to engagement</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1 Building a relationship of trust takes time	12
4.2 Getting your foot in the door	12
4.3 Engaging councillors	13
4.4 Engaging at a senior level	14
4.5 Working with Scrutiny Committees	15
4.6 Get food written into top tier strategies	16
4.7 Council endorsement for food strategies	17
4.8 Creating a hook	17
4.9 Food partnership governance	19
4.10 Support from SFC	19
<b>5. Stories from the SFC Network</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen	20
5.2 Brighton and Hove Food Partnership	22
<b>6. Engaging Clinical Commissioning Groups</b>	<b>25</b>
6.1 NHS context	25
6.2 How should food partnerships respond?	25
6.3 Integrated health and social care – Plymouth	26
6.4 Working with the CCG in Liverpool	27
SFC Network members by local authority type	29

# 1 Introduction

The Sustainable Food Cities (SFC) approach involves developing a cross-sector partnership of local public agencies, businesses, academics and non-governmental organisations committed to working together to make healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of where they live. Much of the success of a local food partnership can be dependent on gaining recognition, buy-in and support from key local institutions, especially the local authority. Local authorities have levers (planning, land ownership, procurement), infrastructure, policies and the leadership position to significantly influence local food systems. An effective cross sector food partnership is therefore likely to involve the engagement of a variety of local authority departments (e.g. public health, economic development, planning, environment, communities and waste).

## 1.1 Current picture

The extent to which SFC Network members are embedded or engaged with local authorities varies considerably. Some food partnerships were initiated by, and are housed within, local authorities. They have substantial buy-in at all levels and report into statutory strategic partnerships. For them, the challenge is more about how to ensure that they are not *just* seen as a local authority initiative! For other SFC Network members; operating independently or housed in third sector organisations; achieving meaningful engagement can require consistent hard work over many years.

In the current climate of austerity and public sector cuts, some food partnerships are finding it more challenging than ever to engage local authorities. Restructuring and redundancies in public health and sustainability teams, has meant that some of the obvious allies are no longer there. Precious personal relationships have been lost and take a long time to be rebuilt. Staff that remain frequently have limited capacity to engage beyond delivery of core statutory services.

To maximise their effectiveness, food partnerships must not only engage, but also influence the policies of local authorities. Whilst achieving local policy change is a core part of the SFC awards criteria, we know that this is an area that some partnerships struggle with. Achieving policy change takes time, skill and confidence and is difficult to fund per se. It requires an in-depth knowledge of relevant local policies and an understanding of the decision-making processes within local government and how to influence them. It also helps to have a friendly insider who can negotiate and influence in a timely manner on the food partnership's behalf. We know that influencing local authority policy is often an add-on to the already busy role of coordinating the food partnership.

## 1.2 What this guide covers

This guide outlines the key mechanisms for engaging local authorities in the SFC agenda. It should help answer questions such as: With whom should we be seeking to engage and how? How do we get councillors engaged? Where should our food partnership focus our limited resources to best influence policy? The guide also includes a brief look at SFC Network member experiences of engaging their Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The guide reflects on the experiences of SFC Network members to date and draws out the stories, challenges and lessons learnt so far. Of those members that are deeply embedded in local authorities we ask, 'What advice do you have for those trying to gain traction from outside?' To

those operating independently or in third sector organisations we ask ‘What was the hook that drew the local authority into the partnership? What are the key drivers and motivations for engagement? What does good engagement look like? What challenges have you faced keeping the council engaged and how have you overcome them? What lessons can you share with others?’

### 1.3 Limitations

Most of this guide refers to local authority structures and policies in England. Whilst many of the lessons and insights are broadly relevant across the SFC Network (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) local differences mean that some points will not be directly transferable.

### 1.4 Who is it for?

This guide will be useful for food partnership steering groups/management committees exploring how to achieve meaningful engagement with local authorities. It is aimed at those food partnerships that are either set up independently or as part of third sector organisations.

### 1.5 Structure

- **Section 2** looks in more detail at the importance of engaging local authorities. It outlines their levers, strategic infrastructure and leadership function and how these are important to achieving food systems change.
- **Section 3** ‘Planning to engage’ outlines the importance of understanding how local authorities work, the nature of the two-tier challenge and how to ‘make the case’ for engagement.
- **Section 4** uses experiences from around the Network to describe multiple routes to engagement. These include ‘engaging councillors’, ‘getting food written in to top tier strategies’ and ‘getting council endorsement for food strategies’.
- **Section 5** captures the more in-depth stories of two food partnerships (Brighton and Hove, and SFC Aberdeen) and their approach to engagement.
- **Section 6** takes a brief look at how to engage Clinical Commissioning Groups using examples from Plymouth and Liverpool

## 2. Why engage local authorities?

### 2.1 Levers

Local authorities are well placed to influence the local food system. As institutions they have a wide range of levers. These are summarised here, but for detailed descriptions of levers, examples of food partnerships that have influenced them and how they relate to the SFC six key areas see our [Policy Levers Guide](#).

#### Planning

Local authorities can promote and protect land for food growing in the Local Plan: including allocation of land for 'starter farms' (e.g. London, Manchester, Sheffield); use of meanwhile leases to enable food growing to take place when development is stalled; and the promotion of food growing in public places. Planning Advice Notes (PAN's) can illustrate good practice including food growing space in new developments, whilst the Core Strategy can include provision for the protection of high grade agricultural land.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) can restrict the development of fast food near schools. Healthy food shops and markets can be protected and encouraged in the Core Strategy and through Street Trading policies; whilst Section 106 Agreements can be used to request funds from fast food outlets to contribute to tackling obesity.

#### Land ownership

Some local authorities own large areas of land, including farms, allotments and housing estates. These can be managed in a way that enhances their contribution to a sustainable local food system. This might include encouraging low ecological impact production such as organic or pesticide free, protecting grade 1 and 2 agricultural land or mapping green and brownfield sites and making them available to local communities.

#### Procurement

Local authorities procure large quantities of food across their settings including schools, parks, nurseries, care homes, community meals and leisure centres. This amounts to substantial buying power. With the adoption of minimum buying standards, this can drive demand for locally sourced, sustainable healthy food.

#### Food system infrastructure

Local authorities can maintain or create infrastructure such as processing facilities, storage facilities, wholesale markets, street trading, slaughterhouses etc. which can contribute to short food supply chains. Local authorities are responsible for waste management including food waste collections.

### 2.2 Strategic infrastructure and policy

Local authorities are responsible for strategic planning and as such have the means of organising and influencing the actions of a wide range of stakeholders. Embedding joined up food policies at the highest level will help create an enabling environment for food systems change.

## Health and Wellbeing Board

One of the most important strategic connections for many SFC Network members is with their Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). This reflects a strong public health focus in many food partnerships. The HWB operates as a partnership between the local authority, the NHS, communities and wider partners and serves to provide a joined-up approach to improving the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) looks at the current and future health and care needs of local populations to inform and guide the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the wider planning and commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within the local area.

- [Bristol Food Policy Council](#) secured strong references to food in the [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). The HWB has a key strategic aim to use 'our combined influence and commissioning to support work to tackle obesity, nutritional deficiency and food poverty'. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has 10 key priorities, one of which is food (page 5). The aim is 'to create a healthier, more sustainable, more resilient food system for the city to benefit the local economy and the environment'.
- [The Royal Borough of Greenwich](#) has recognised healthy and sustainable food in a number of city policies and strategies including the new [Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#) which highlights the role of food environments and commercial determinants of health (section 4.1). It commits to 'make the borough a place that provides an environment, services and support to enable people of all ages to eat good, healthy food and to be physically active as part of their daily lives.'
- [Brighton and Hove Food Partnership](#) has worked to ensure that food poverty, obesity, mental health and food are all included within the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#). Healthy weight and good nutrition are also seen as priority areas within the local [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

## Local Plans and Core Strategy

SFC Network members have been successful at getting food into their [Local Plans](#). These overarching development plans, which include the core strategy or vision for the development of an area, require public consultation and the planning authority is obliged to consider comments and take appropriate action. Within the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and this applies to Local Plans. The Framework also recognises the importance of access to shops, healthier food and allotments, support for the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, national policy protection for soils and the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

- [Bristol Food Policy Council](#) made persistent representations during consultations on Bristol City Council planning policies which have resulted in a number of references to food and food systems within the [Site Allocations and Development Management policies](#) (see page 28) as well as a requirement for Health Impact Assessment.
- [Carlisle City Council's Local Plan](#) includes a commitment to 'protect and promote the role of community food growing spaces including allotments, community orchards and community

gardens... as part of Carlisle's role as a Food City.' (p56.). Their [2013-18 Plan](#) also highlights their commitment to support and develop the Food City Partnership.

### **Council Strategic / Corporate Strategy**

Other SFC members have managed to get the SFC approach recognised in their local authority's corporate strategy.

- [Glasgow City Council Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022](#) includes a priority to 'Support the development of Glasgow as a Sustainable Food City' (p 19).

### **City wide initiatives**

In some cities, SFC Network members have successfully aligned themselves with city wide initiatives such as [One Planet City](#), [Healthy Cities Network](#), [European Green Capital](#) or the [Resilient Cities Network](#). These provide a useful ready-made infrastructure for bringing multiple stakeholders together to progress key issues.

- Bristol was European Green Capital in 2015 and [Bristol Food Network](#) coordinated the food action group as part of the initiative.

### **Food strategies**

A local food strategy and action plan is required for membership of SFC. Some SFC Network members have also managed to get their food strategy officially endorsed by the local authority. Not only does this add substantial support for the credibility and robustness of the strategy but it enables local authority officers to justify action.

- The Mayor of London together with the [London Food Board](#) has recently published a consultation on the draft [London Food Strategy](#). This high-profile strategy backed by the Mayor acknowledges the impact that cities and Mayors can have in leading food system change. The introduction to the strategy references SFC Silver Award whilst later on all local authorities are encouraged to join the SFC Network (p20).

### **Other strategic partnerships**

Based on the interviews for this guide, there is some engagement by SFC Network members in [Local Nature Partnerships](#) but very limited engagement with [Local Enterprise Partnerships](#). The latter predominantly focus on driving private sector growth and job creation and were largely seen to be about big business and export markets. Furthermore, they tend not to correlate to city boundaries. There are seventeen [Food Enterprise Zones](#) across the country to forge closer links through the entire food chain from farmers, manufacturers, retailers and researchers to help businesses realise the full value of our food and drink. We are not currently aware of any SFC members that have engaged with these.

Local authorities are also working together in strategic partnerships on specific topics e.g. procurement and waste.

- In the West of England, the four local authorities have established the [West of England Food Procurement Group](#), to provide leadership on healthy and sustainable food procurement. Membership includes procurement, catering and public health staff.

- [Aberdeen's Joint Procurement Strategy 2017-2022](#) includes commitment to 'offering assistance in terms of the procurement strands of the Sustainable Food Cities Network' (p25).

## 2.3 Leadership

Local authorities play a critical leadership role in food systems change. This might include adopting sustainable food procurement policies; becoming a living wage employer; adopting sustainable agricultural practices on council owned farms or promoting Sugar Smart messages to council staff for example. As a large employer and visible strategic leader, getting their own house in order and communicating about their own commitment to sustainable food can encourage others to follow. Achieving recognition and publicity of food systems work at a senior level in the local authority, for example by the Mayor or Leader of the Council can be a big boost to the credibility of the local food partnership.

- In [Greater Manchester](#), the Mayor recently held a Green Summit to consult and gather priorities on issues in the city. A food workshop was held as part of the consultation and the Mayor has now backed the creation of a cross-sectoral strategic food partnership for Greater Manchester.
- Mayors across the globe are coming together to sign the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) in recognition of the strategic role that cities play in developing sustainable food systems.
- In [Bristol](#), the Mayor and cabinet have explicitly stated their support for a programme of work over the next two years leading to the SFC Gold award, together with a commitment to the Milan Pact.



## 3. Planning to engage

### 3.1 Understand how local authorities work

The first step to engagement is building your understanding of how your local authority works. Spend time getting to grips with the organisational structure to understand the key departments and levels at which you need to engage, together with an appreciation of the decision-making processes. The Local Government Association's '[Quick Guide to Local Government](#)' might be helpful if you are new to this area. Their website is also full of useful information to build your background knowledge. Reading local authority strategies, discussing existing work with officers, attending local authority events and consultations will all help to build your awareness of how your local authority operates.

#### Key questions to ask yourself

- Which departments / directorates are likely to engage?
- Are there key individuals within these departments that already understand sustainable food systems?
- What are the strategic plans and priorities that the council is working towards?
- Which local authority strategies are particularly relevant to food - Allotments strategy? Climate change strategy? Health and wellbeing strategy? Healthy weight strategy? Waste strategy?
- What is the local authority already delivering that contributes to the sustainable food agenda?
- What is driving council delivery? Pressure from the public? Corporate Plan? Targets?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What is the hook that is likely to draw the local authority into the food partnership?
- Are there any quick wins?
- Which councillors are particularly keen on this agenda?

#### Who to engage

You may want to consider taking a different approach for engaging different tiers within the local authority:

- Chief executive and senior leadership team
- Officers planning and delivering services
- Leader of the council / cabinet members / portfolio holders
- Mayor
- Local councillors

#### Work culture

As well as understanding the basic structure of local authorities you need to understand the culture of working and why progress could take time. It is also wise to have a handle on local circumstances, such as the impact of austerity and budget cuts and how these are playing out.

*'You need to understand and empathise with the difficulties council staff are currently facing. You need to appreciate what their priorities are and look at how you can help them*

*meet them. You need to go through a thought process that takes you from their agenda back to your own, so you have a joint vision.*' (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)

## 3.2 The two-tier challenge

Most SFC Network members are in unitary authority areas where there is one tier of local government providing services. Unitary authorities include metropolitan boroughs and London boroughs. However, a small group of SFC members: Oxford; Exeter, Cambridge, Cork, Carlisle, Lincoln City and Lancaster cover district council areas where responsibility for services is shared with county councils. There can be no doubt that if you are in a two-tier local authority then the task of engaging both local authorities is somewhat more complicated. It is essential that food partnerships understand the political context of their local area at an early stage as this can impact on how they set up their governance arrangements and what their focus will be. (For a full list of SFC Network members and their local authority type, see Appendix 1)

Issues particular to two tier authorities:

- **Split functions** – local authority responsibilities and services are split between county councils and district or city councils. Public health for example is a county level function whereas parks, street trading and communities are district level functions. Some functions can have split responsibilities so for example waste disposal is a county level function whereas waste collection is a district level function. If the food partnership wants to work at a county level, they will almost certainly have to knit together 5 or 6 district councils as well as the county council.
- **Cities within counties** – there are a few examples of city councils that are lower tier councils within otherwise rural counties (e.g. Exeter, Oxford and Cambridge). This may cause particular difficulties for food partnerships if they are focused on a city scale. For example, public health being a county-wide function will need to have a wider geographical focus than just the city.
- **Political tensions** – depending on the local politics, there may be long standing political tensions between county councils that are controlled by different political parties to district councils, or between district councils that are not politically aligned. This can make the challenge of joining up the food system even greater.
- **Who to engage in the lower tier authority** – The areas of interest to SFC partnerships are fragmented across a whole variety of functions and officer roles. Food partnership interests tend to be a very small part of any given officer's role and they therefore can't dedicate much time and attention to it. It can be difficult to find anyone whose job it is to focus on food poverty for example.

### Tips for tackling the two-tier challenge!

- The Health and Wellbeing Board tends to operate across the county and could prove a useful strategic group to coordinate food strategies across the two tiers.
- Find out where the energy is and your city/district council's policy commitments and start there. Even if it means coming at the SFC agenda from a slightly oblique angle!

### 3.3 Making the case

You may want to spend some time considering how to frame your work so that it is clear how it contributes to key local priorities. You may need to make the case for why it is important and worth investing in. SFC has produced draft guidance on [Making the Case](#) and is looking at how this can be made more accessible for SFC Network members.

A key audience for 'Making the Case' are public health departments. You might find the results of our [study](#) to capture senior public health professionals' views on their local SFC partnership and programme helpful. Responses from interviewees suggest that SFC can make a key contribution to achieving public health goals.

Key findings:

- 100% of interviewees saw value in having a broad cross-sector food partnership and in taking a holistic approach to food issues.
- 96% of interviewees found value in having a dedicated local SFC coordinator in place to help coordinate and drive their local programme.
- 63% of interviewees scored a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 0-5) for the degree to which their local SFC initiative contributed to 'Improving access to affordable healthy food'.

#### Public Health England

Public Health England (PHE) could be a useful ally for making the case locally. In 2015, they commissioned Leeds Beckett University to pilot a [whole systems approach to obesity](#) with a range of local authorities across England. This approach has many parallels with the SFC approach and is soon to be supported by a 'pathway' and toolkit for local authorities. Together with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) they have produced a [briefing for elected members](#) on the whole systems approach. To further support local authorities the Healthy Places Team at PHE has worked with Department of Health and Department of Communities and Local Government to revise the [Health and Wellbeing Planning Practice Guidance](#) to include a section on healthy local food environments.

#### PHE East Midlands

As well as facilitating a supportive national policy environment PHE East Midlands has been actively supporting regional networking of local food partnerships. This has included hosting events, conferences and providing officer time for regional coordination. This has led to the creation of one of SFC's latest members [Good Food East Midlands](#) as an independent organisation. GFEM now supports a wide range of projects and programmes across the region in all the SFC six key areas. It sees itself as the equivalent of a regional food board, like those in London or Manchester.

## 4. Multiple routes to engagement

There are many ways of engaging with the local authority, ranging from the more formal style consultations and workshops to broader public engagement events, individual meetings with officers, or quiet coffees with the chief executive. Underpinning all the above, however, is the slow process of establishing trust. This came up in virtually all the interviews with SFC Network members undertaken for this guide.

### 4.1 Building a relationship of trust takes time

Building trusted relationships with the public sector can be a long process. This is particularly the case if you are an independent food partnership. It can take a long time to gain credibility and the respect of the public sector. It also requires a conciliatory, diplomatic approach that comes with a level of understanding of the issues facing local authorities. If you take an oppositional approach, this will just alienate councillors and officers.

*'Our approach has always been to work cooperatively alongside the council. It's not going to happen overnight, there is no quick fix. Building trust takes years. It's not just about trusting us to deliver, it is also important that the council trust us not to ambush them. If there are issues, we would address them quietly and diplomatically. Sometimes you hear of food partnerships really having a go at their local authority, we would never do that. We would never go to the press over an issue or stand up in a public meeting and have a go at them.'* (Middlesbrough Food Partnerships)

Food partnerships talked about the need to create safe spaces in which to have sometimes challenging conversations.

### 4.2 Getting your foot in the door

The hardest task of all might be how to persuade a council to take the prospect of a 'food strategy' seriously. Here are some top tips from an insider's point of view provided by Brighton and Hove Food Partnership.

- Make sure you have a champion who has some influence or power. This could be a senior officer e.g. Director or Chief Executive or a Councillor with a portfolio. This is important when trying to get a foot in the door.
- Identify the key issues of the day and identify where you can bring in the food agenda. This might be around public health or community engagement for example. Whilst all councils are different, many regard community engagement as important. For example, with the present cuts to the parks budget they are having to find alternative ways to manage greenspaces and are looking for communities to take over management.
- Take a business-like approach to demonstrate the benefits that you can bring. What are the challenging policy areas that the council currently must deal with? Demonstrate how food can help solve these.

- Local councils are likely to be working on food-related issues in virtually every department, but they may not realise that they could be doing things differently or may not be joining it up with other areas e.g. waste, health.
- Realise that officers best understand their services and want them to be the best they can be and to be recognised strategically. The food strategy can be a way for them to both enhance their services and to gain recognition at a strategic level.
- A conference can be a good mechanism for enhancing understanding. Bring in external voices including academics.

### 4.3 Engaging councillors

Many food partnerships recognise that engaging and educating councillors about the SFC agenda is crucial to securing local authority engagement. Getting political buy in from councillors can be a bit 'hit and miss' though and depends on whether a particular councillor 'gets food' as well as their degree of popularity! Will they bring clout to the food partnership? Are they part of the inner circle that holds real power? Or are they tokenistic? It's not necessarily helpful if a controversial / unpopular councillor starts to champion your cause!

#### Which councillors to engage

Start by researching which councillors have relevant responsibilities. There will usually be portfolio holders for health and wellbeing or communities, for example. These councillors have responsibility at cabinet level. Sometimes councillors with a keen interest will have already been involved in the early stages of setting up a food partnership. Alternatively, you may wish to go directly to ward councillors in areas where there is food partnership activity happening. Use the activity in their ward as a way of raising awareness and engagement. Whilst most councillors don't have portfolios, they still have influence on their own party and leadership.

*'We were fortunate that the Deputy Mayor, a county councillor, was really interested in our work. Even though he wasn't in the cabinet he was really useful for us, attending launch events and generally putting his name and face to it.'* (Food Durham).

*'The Bradford Food Strategy was initiated by 2 green party councillors back in 2011/12. They wanted to update an existing strategy. There was a good strong partnership with maybe 30-40 stakeholders involved. The food strategy sat with the Department of Regeneration; was adopted as a strategy by the council and endorsed by all parties.'* (Bradford Council)

#### Making an approach

Introduce the work of your food partnership and explain that you would welcome their involvement. If you already have good relationships with senior officers, you may want to ask them to approach councillors on your behalf. If you wish to create a formal relationship with a councillor, for example by allocating a space on your food partnership's board or management committee, then you will need to find out how councillors are allocated to partnerships in your area.

The formal allocation of councillors to partnerships will be agreed after every election, usually by the Democratic Services Department or equivalent. Make sure that the Democratic Services Department is aware that there is a food partnership that would like a councillor representative to

sit on their board/management committee. You may need to put in a description of the role and the time commitment required and make sure that you are on the list every time there is a change of administration or if a councillor leaves. Even if you are going through this route, it is still worthwhile building a direct relationship with a councillor first, as they may be able to express an interest in being placed with the food partnership and it helps to have the right councillor! However, note that in some areas a direct approach to councillors would not be welcomed by the local authority and you may be expected to go through the right channels.

### **Communicating with and educating councillors**

Keep communication simple and to the point, use easily to understand diagrams and pictures to get your point across. Take time to explain things and provide them with regular briefings.

*'We have set up and delivered seminars for elected members. We initiated them by speaking to the portfolio holder. Even though the seminars were only attended by seven or eight councillors, all those that attended were very enthusiastic.'* (Food Durham)

*'We always make sure we invite councillors to our events. For example, all the councillors are aware of and invited to our 'town meal'. It is important that we know our ward councillors in areas where we work. Similarly, we have built a good relationship with the elected Mayor. We invited him to our recent food summit and he stayed the whole morning.'* (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)

### **Remain politically neutral**

Any perceived bias could undermine public trust in your food partnership. The Charity Commission provide extensive guidance on what this means in practice – see their [guidance on campaigning](#) and political activity. Whilst no SFC Network members are currently charities, political neutrality is important for securing long term local authority engagement.

*'Always take care to remain politically neutral and to state it regularly.'* (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership)

Whilst remaining politically neutral you can still play to the political story of your council. Focus on aspects of your agenda that sit well with their politics.

*'You have to be terribly pragmatic and lure them in by playing their game.'* (Food Exeter)

## **4.4 Engaging at a senior level**

The most successful food partnerships have good relationships at a senior level in the statutory sector. Think about where you can get opportunities to talk to people at a senior level.

### **Strategic partnerships**

Time invested in networking and representing the interests of the sector on strategic partnerships is time well spent as it brings you face to face with decision makers and gives you a strong understanding of the latest developments. Brighton and Hove Food Partnership holds a seat on several strategic boards in the city (see case study in section five below).

- Food Durham chairs the Environment in Your Community subgroup of the Environment Partnership Board. Chairing the subgroup gave them a seat on the Environment Board which was chaired by the Durham County Council Chief Executive at the time. Being on the

board provides an opportunity to influence and has raised Food Durham's profile significantly. They got support for sustainable food production methods written into the County Durham Environment Partnership Strategy. Now that they are better known, they feel that they can speak out on issues and take a stronger stance.

### Personal interests

Several food partnerships talked about the ability to tap into the personal interests of key individuals.

- In Bradford the food partnership was chaired by the Deputy Leader as some of their work streams were of particular interest to her. It was more that she had a personal interest rather than alignment with her portfolio which was Planning, Housing and Transport! She did later become Health and Wellbeing portfolio holder.
- Food Durham found that it was the specific interest of a Director who had a background in food that was the key to getting a meeting.

### Involve academics

If you are an independent food partnership and you want to be taken more seriously it might help to get academics on your management group or set up an 'advisory panel' of experts that can be called on at opportune moments.

- Bristol Food Network has set up an advisory panel to the Bristol Good Food Alliance involving 14 high profile academics/professionals. These may be called upon to lead a workshop, provide advice on research projects, collate evidence, or to make the case for action for example.

*'Having a professor on board helps give us credibility.....if we were a different make up we would be written off as just the usual suspects'. (Food Exeter)*

### Personal relationships

Quiet face to face meetings and diplomacy can make for quicker progress.

*'Influential people have cosy coffees with the chief executive! Some food partnerships have written to their local authority Chief Executive or Mayor to request meetings to talk through how their goals match those of the local authority. (Food Exeter)*

### Plan your pitch

When you do get to talk to senior staff make sure you are well prepared. Know who you are talking to; what you want to talk about; and what you want them to do. Don't forget the importance of attitude, language and tone. Consider who will speak, it doesn't have to be the coordinator or chair; it could be an academic or other management committee member.

*'Use your 'ask' wisely – don't try and say all the things you want at once. Keep it really short and sweet.'* (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership)

## 4.5 Working with Scrutiny Committees

All local authorities must establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the power to examine any aspect of local service delivery and report back to the council. These committees are

particularly well placed to assess cross sector issues such as obesity. Some food partnerships that are well embedded with local authorities or where the council has endorsed the food strategy have been invited to present reports on progress at scrutiny committees. These can be a useful promotional mechanism.

- In Bradford the food partnership reported to the Regeneration and Economy Scrutiny Committee. If the implementation is going well then this can be a positive experience. Luckily for them the green councillors that helped write the strategy, the portfolio holder and the deputy leader were already very supportive and so it was a positive experience.

*'If you can get scrutiny committees on your side it is a really beneficial way of promoting your work, as those councillors will inform others.'* (Bradford Council)

- In Middlesbrough, the food partnership has benefited from doing presentations to scrutiny committees.

*'We have been invited in to do presentations for various scrutiny committees. Each year they ask for topics to focus on. Every couple of years we give them a presentation on the work of Middlesbrough Environment City. We see this as an opportunity to raise awareness amongst councillors. We are not frightened of engaging with the political process.'* (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)

## 4.6 Get food written into top tier strategies

Getting food objectives written into top tier strategies can open doors for food partnerships and enable local authority officers to support the SFC approach. For example, Sustain found that:

*'Many planners who were consulted .... mentioned that in order to create a planning policy (an SPD), or to support a planning decision that directly addresses a specific issue, such as hot food takeaways or community food growing space, there would need to be a reference to it (however broad) in the core strategy of that local authority'.<sup>1</sup>*

There are several examples of food partnerships that have been successful in getting food objectives written into top tier strategies. Whilst it can involve substantial time invested over months or years, it could be that some concise suggestions at an opportune moment is all it takes. Don't forget to submit responses to consultations too, as these formal channels do carry weight.

- Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen – managed to get food objectives written into their Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (see case study in section 5 below).
- The Mayor of Bristol is leading the creation of a Bristol One City Plan – a collaborative and place-based approach to resolving issues in the city. Bristol Food Network has contributed to and collated results from food roundtables and has suggested headline metrics on food in the city.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sustain. Jan 2011. 'Good planning for good food. How the planning system in England can support healthy and sustainable food'. Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.  
[https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/good\\_planning\\_for\\_good\\_food/](https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/good_planning_for_good_food/)



- [Brighton and Hove Food Partnership](#) submitted in October 2016 a comprehensive response to the City Plan aiming to secure Council support for a sustainable food systems planning approach, recognition of the need of land for food growing (especially on the urban fringe), space for food infrastructure and the importance of urban design that encourages healthy behaviour. This response is the culmination of [8 years of work](#) with the Council to put food at the heart of the city's planning and policy work. A food section was also included in their [Sustainable Communities Strategy](#) for the first time in 2014 because of the Partnership's work and reference was also made to achieving the Sustainable Food Cities Gold Award.
- [Hull Food Partnership](#) - were successful at getting a section on local food growing included in the final draft Local Plan. The [case study](#) has been written up as part of Sustain's Planning Food Cities programme.

The [Planning Food Cities](#) programme includes information and guidance on how the planning system can support healthy and sustainable food. The webpages include an online toolkit which will help local food partnerships to use the planning system to support community food growing.

## 4.7 Council endorsement for food strategies

Some food partnerships that are independent or housed in third sector organisation do manage to get their food strategies endorsed by the local authority, but it is not necessarily an easy task.

### Getting council endorsement of the Durham Food Strategy

The completed Food Durham Strategy went to the council for endorsement, but there was a long period when they couldn't decide which department it should sit in and who should endorse it. The council wanted it to fit neatly into one department, but it didn't. As it didn't fit with their system, one directorate couldn't sign it off. As it was taking a long time to endorse the strategy, Food Durham produced a 'food charter' which was in essence a summary of the strategy. A cabinet member then signed the council up to the charter. This was achieved via Food Durham's contacts at the council and didn't need to go through the committee structure. This essentially signed them up to the strategy and it meant that Food Durham could now refer to the Charter as being endorsed by Durham County Council. This was a first step to getting change at a policy level.

### Council endorsement of the SFC approach in Aberdeen

The case study in section five, below, gives details of the approach taken to securing council endorsement in Aberdeen. It is particularly interesting to see these two reports which were approved by their Finance, Policy and Resources Committee in 2017.

- [Sustainable Food Cities](#) – making the case for council endorsement of the SFC approach. (See link to SFC committee paper 2 at the bottom of the page)
- [SFC – Tackling Food Poverty](#) – making the case with a particular focus on food poverty (look at public reports pack pp181-192)

## 4.8 Creating a hook

SFC Network members work across a wide range of issues that are relevant in some way to almost every department of the local authority. This provides you with plentiful opportunities to engage the local authority in a particular angle of your work.

## **Innovative projects**

If you have a particularly innovative or successful project on the ground, this could be used as a route in. This might be a food waste initiative that is a win-win for health and environment; a model of integrated working to tackle food poverty; or a high profile campaign such as [Sugar Smart](#) or [Veg Cities](#) which can help achieve public health outcomes. Making links to international initiatives such as the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) and demonstrating how local authorities are engaging with food elsewhere may also be a way to stimulate discussion. Have a look at our [Policy Levers Guide](#) for examples of what others have done.

## **Your ability to raise funds**

The ability of a food partnership to access additional resources may be an attractive prospect to the local authority.

*'We were involved in delivering the food strand of the 'Healthy Town' programme back in 2008-2011. Following the end of the Healthy Town programme Middlesbrough Environment City was a useful mechanism for the local authority as we could access external funding (e.g. Local Food Fund from the Lottery). We were able to bring in additional resources at a time when the local authority resources were being cut significantly. (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)*

## **Achieving an SFC award**

Focusing on the achievement of an SFC award has proved to be a useful way of galvanising activity across the local authority. In the Plymouth example (section 6 below), food is this year's theme for public health across the city with a focus on working towards the silver SFC award. In Bristol the 'Going for Gold' initiative launched by Bristol Food Network has sparked broad strategic buy in from the local authority. Getting an SFC award will both recognise your achievements and provide a 'good news story' for the local authority

*'Anything that will improve the reputation of the area is going to be welcomed....for example, achieving Bronze or Silver Sustainable Food City. Any good news story that can make a splash will be well received. (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership)*

## **We can help you deliver your objectives**

To a large extent the goals of the food partnership are likely to overlap with many of the objectives of the local authority. It's important to make it clear that what you are doing is helping them achieve their own objectives.

*'We emphasise to senior politicians how what we are doing contributes to what the town is trying to achieve. For example, in the town centre, the council has a vision to change it so that more independent shops, bars and restaurants are encouraged. Our local food offer is part of making that a success.'* (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)

## **Provide a delivery mechanism**

Your local authority may also be looking for solutions to programme delivery.

*'The local authority was looking for a partner to deliver a programme tackling type 2 diabetes and was struggling to find a suitable local organisation. This was not an area that we had previously engaged in, but we investigated how we could help deliver this. We had*

*to make changes to our governance structures and staffing, but we managed to deliver it and make a strong link with our wider food agenda.’ (Middlesbrough Food Partnership)*

*‘Our main approach has been to think ‘how can we make their life easier?’ ‘How can we help them to deliver?’ (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership)*

## 4.9 Food partnership governance

If you are an emerging food partnership or wish to refresh your governance structure, you might want to consider building local authority engagement into your steering group / management committee structure. Many food partnerships have allocated spaces on their steering groups for councillors or local authority officers. Some food partnerships are chaired by a councillor and have found this to be a very useful mechanism for engagement. See the [SFC Food Partnerships Structures Guide](#) (p.34) for further examples and information.

## 4.10 Support from SFC

SFC core team may be able to work with you to engage / re-engage local stakeholders. This might take the form of facilitating a ‘food summit’ style event or action planning workshop for example. We may be able to attend a steering group meeting or support you in ‘making the case’ to your local authority. If you feel that you could benefit from our help, please get in touch with the SFC Network Manager, Leon Ballin, who can discuss your support needs [lballin@soilassociation.org](mailto:lballin@soilassociation.org).

## 5. Stories from the SFC Network

### 5.1 Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen

#### Early days

Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen (SFCPA) was initiated by a local councillor who was enthusiastic about the sustainable food agenda and attended a Sustainable Food Cities annual conference. She returned to Aberdeen and suggested that this was something that Aberdeen should engage in. The hook that really got the council on board was food poverty, and in particular the links that could be made with Aberdeen City Council's (ACC) existing priorities in this area. Two city-wide events were organised over the next two years, largely driven by officers at ACC together with [Community Food Initiatives North East](#). These were promoted to a wide range of stakeholders and successfully captured the interest and engagement of other ACC departments such as Community Planning and Sustainability as well as the NHS Grampian public health team.

#### The role of councillors

When the food partnership steering group set up, the councillor became chair. Having a councillor as chair has enabled the partnership to pass reports through the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee in the Council more easily. This secured council backing and financial support for the recruitment of a coordinator.

#### Getting food into top tier strategies

A significant step for us was getting food poverty and food growing recognised in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). These plans are the mechanism by which Community Planning Partnerships deliver improved outcomes for their communities. In Aberdeen specific outcomes from the plan are then attributed to 'Outcome Improvement Groups'. One of these groups is the 'Sustainable City Group', which has a broad sustainability remit including food. SFCPA sits on this group and is tasked with delivering and reporting on the improvement measures outline below.

#### Key driver:

Sustainable food provision in Aberdeen, tackling food poverty, developing community food skills and knowledge and delivering sustainable food provision.

#### Improvement measures:

- Increase provision of meals provided during school holidays to children entitled to free school meals
- Reduce no. of people affected by Household Food Insecurity
- Increase provision of allotments and community food growing spaces.

(Aberdeen City Council's - ['Local Outcome Improvement Plan' \(LOIP\)](#): (p.50-51))

This gives SFCPA a direct link to the City Council and has led to access to funds. Looking back, we were fortunate to get the outcome into the plan via a Locality Manager. He had been very involved with us and was aware of the lack of reference to food poverty and sustainable food in the plan and so suggested some outcomes which were accepted. In retrospect this was a critical mechanism for support.

ACC has also published the following reports, approved by their 'Finance, Policy & Resources' Committee in 2017:

- [Sustainable Food Cities](#) – making the case for council endorsement of the SFC approach (see link to committee paper2)
- [SFC – Tackling Food Poverty](#) – making the case with a particular focus on food poverty (look at Public Reports Pack pp 181-192)

ACC's [Fairer Aberdeen Fund 2016-17 Report](#): includes priority themes and actions including: food poverty, skills and access to food including: improving health & wellbeing; reduce health inequalities; improve mental health and wellbeing; and increase access to affordable healthy food (p.2)

### **Supportive national policy framework**

The strong link between ACC and the SFC agenda is facilitated by the supportive national policy framework in Scotland. The Community Empowerment Act (2015) places a requirement on local authorities:

*'to develop a food growing strategy for their area, including identifying land that may be used as allotment sites and identifying other areas of land that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, herbs or flowers.'*

In Aberdeen, the City Council is working in partnership with Greenspace Scotland to develop the [Food Growing Strategy](#) for the city.

### **Key lessons**

- Having a councillor as chair has enabled us to make connections and access funding that we would not otherwise have heard about. It has enabled us to approach the right person at the right time.
- Make sure you engage with top level city strategies. Getting outcomes written in at the right level can open up funding and support.
- Try and find where the enthusiasm is, not the right job title. You need someone who has an open mind about the concept of food being related to all areas within the council. We were lucky that people round the table are genuinely enthusiastic.

## 5.2 Brighton and Hove Food Partnership

### Understand the local authority

At the outset, Food Matters went through every strategy and policy document that existed in Brighton and Hove and pointed out areas where the council could include things about sustainable food. We developed a thorough understanding of the local authority's priorities and targets by doing this.

### Build strong personal relationships

It is important to take time to build strong relationships with individuals. It could take two years to build personal relationships before you have your foot in the door, so you must be patient. Having good personal relationships and being trusted as a partner has sometimes led to funding being offered to us and even an annual budget.

When we first started out there was a Sustainability Officer in the council who was tasked with writing a Sustainability Strategy. The only section she hadn't written was on food. Food Matters turned up to talk to her about the Food Shed (local food system mapping) and she managed to sell this idea to the council on the back of the Sustainability Strategy. When we had drafted a food strategy with targets, aims and objectives, the Sustainability Officer then sat down with officers in all the relevant departments of the local authority to look at how they could write the targets into their work plans. It took time and was a lot of leg work, but it was important to translate the targets in a way that was acceptable to them and enabled them to commit to it. This laid the foundations for very strong local authority engagement that has stood the test of time.

### Engage at a senior level

We have always sought to engage with the purse holders or those with the clout to make the decisions on policy. We either had them directly represented on the partnership or engaged with someone who had their ear, so to speak. We have had very good relationships for example with our Director of Public Health, Head of Sustainability and Head of Community Services. Our relationship with the Head of Community Services led to us managing to get a food poverty indicator into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This then spurred strategic level buy in to our food poverty strategy that was endorsed by over 50 stakeholders. In this way we have sought to ensure that food work is kept as a high priority on the city council agenda.

### Getting food into core strategy

It can feel like quite a distant process, but if you can get 1 or two sentences into your Core Strategy for example on food growing it can act as a hook upon which all sorts of things happen. Having it written into a top-level strategy enables officers to act. It's like having it written in a tablet of stone, rather than just on paper!

### Councillor engagement

As well as engaging with officers, we have also worked with local councillors and made sure there was always a councillor representative on our board. The councillor is always picked by the incumbent party, so they change when the political landscape changes. We take an approach of quiet back door diplomacy and wouldn't seek to overtly highlight issues amongst officers via councillors as we know this would not go down well. We don't rant and rave to the local press about issues; we are playing the long game. It might look like we are being weak on certain issues, but we need to be politically astute and tread carefully.

We have always been careful to ensure that we are politically neutral in all that we do. Otherwise we would be out in the cold when a new administration comes in.

### **Strategic infrastructure**

Brighton and Hove Food Partnership is involved in the strategic partnerships that help determine what the priorities for the city are and oversee policy implementation. This has given us a great understanding of the political landscape. We sit on the following strategic partnerships:

- Brighton and Hove Connected (formed when LSP ended)
- Biosphere Board - City region discussions on land and land management
- Financial Inclusion Partnership
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership Subgroup – Weight and Food
- Community Works (Council for Voluntary Service)

Having seats on key partnerships has helped us build personal relationships - being in the room is quite important. For example, Brighton and Hove Connected are about to do a 2030 visioning exercise. They have approached our Director to do a food strand of it. This probably wouldn't have happened if they hadn't had a good personal relationship with her.

Strategic partnerships are a gateway to other things. We used to respond to consultations, but by being on the partnership it means we have strong personal relations and people know our organisation because of it. We get good 'intelligence' through our participation. It might be what is going on in welfare reform, or housing etc. They get presentations on all the big developments in the city so it's great from that point of view. It's not all relevant but occasionally it's really useful, like an opportunity for partnership working or a bid going in.

It's important to place a value on networking and building strategic relationships. Even if you are a food partnership that is just starting out, if you value the time taken attending events, meetings etc., you will reap rewards later.

### **Challenges**

One of the biggest challenges to maintaining the engagement of the local authority in recent years has been restructuring and the high level of staff turnover. It takes a long time to rebuild relationships, trust and the case for funding when key staff leave. To alleviate this, we are proactive to build relationships before any restructuring to make sure we keep contact with key departments.

Another challenge is the slow pace at which change happens, especially when dealing with local authorities. Whilst we know that we need to be pragmatic and take a patient approach, many voluntary sector stakeholders get driven crazy by the slow grinding processes of the local authority. However, you need to carry people with you. There can be a big gap between the ambition of the early stage food partnership and the role of the local authority officer, responsible for delivering statutory services.

## Top tips

- Building engagement with local authorities takes time. If you try to do too much too quickly you may well fail.
- Don't worry too much about which department you get into first. If you find someone who understands the sustainable food agenda work with them and work sideways if you have to. If you have a door that is slightly open, then go with that. Once you have a good reputation, other doors will open more easily.
- It helps to have something visible happening on the ground. This could be community growing, feeding hungry people or running a festival. If you just focus on long term policy goals e.g. changing procurement policy, many stakeholders will get frustrated.
- You need to interpret what you want into a language that an officer can see is of value to them and their work programme. It needs to be clear that it will help them achieve things that they have to do.
- Take time to understand the constraints faced by local authority staff. Don't ask them to pay for things that they have no statutory responsibility for unless it will also help them deliver their targets.
- You need to take people with you by adopting a diplomatic and pragmatic approach. Charging in with an ambitious agenda could easily put people's backs up and get nowhere.
- Seek to bridge the gap between anarchic groups on the ground and the local authority. For some people you won't be radical enough, but this is a careful path to tread.
- Try to read the political landscape of an area - not just what the local authority structure is, but also what is happening nationally. Be politically astute and smart.



## 6. Engaging Clinical Commissioning Groups

When interviewing food partnerships for this guide, several mentioned that they had limited, or no engagement with their Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). A call out to members for examples of good partnership working with CCG's gave rise to the examples below in Plymouth and Liverpool. Before looking at these examples though, it might be helpful to provide some context around current changes happening in the NHS.

### 6.1 NHS context

The publication of '[NHS Five Year Forward View](#)' (2014) set out three priorities for the NHS:

- Increasing focus on prevention
- Giving patients more control
- Introduction of new models of care.

Whilst there hasn't been a great deal of activity around prevention yet, there has been a significant focus on developing new models of care. In particular, the focus has been on the integration of health and social care to develop better support for people with complex long-term health conditions. In December 2015, NHS providers, CCGs, local authorities and other health care services came together to form 44 Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs). These focused on the coordination of health care planning and delivery with an aim of improving the health of the population in their area.

Ten of these have now evolved into Integrated Care Systems (ICS) whereby commissioners and providers assume responsibility for a budget to deliver integrated services for a defined population. Within any single ICS there may be several locally focused Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). These are alliances of NHS providers that have agreed to work collaboratively rather than compete. These providers might include hospitals, mental health services, community services, GPs and social care, as well as independent and third sector organisations.

Other noticeable developments:

- A move towards fewer, larger CCGs in some areas
- Contracts for delivery are getting bigger
- Emergence of Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) - established when commissioners award a long-term contract to a single organisation to provide a range of health and care services. This organisation may subcontract with other providers to deliver the contract.
- New models of care are being shaped in collaboration with communities and patients.

### 6.2 How should food partnerships respond?

ICS will not be successful at preventing people's need for care or reducing demand for services unless they engage with the voluntary and community sector. But how can food partnerships engage? Is engagement to be left to large national charities or is there a place for individual food partnerships? There is currently limited experience within the SFC Network and the extent to which

the sustainable food agenda is on the radar of ICS is unknown. This goes beyond the remit of this report but would be an interesting area to explore.

Experience of SFC members to date highlights that in some cases the geographical remit of the new structures is so vast that any sense of meaningful voluntary sector engagement was felt not to be possible.

*'The new mega CCG...seem to be using all the worst in health engagement techniques...invite you to a big event, dictate the agenda, don't listen, throw a big report at you!'*

The restructuring of the NHS infrastructure has led to multiple challenges on the ground:

*'We have found it difficult to work with our CCG as they seem to be in constant turmoil'.*

*'They failed to send a representative to our facilitated meeting on food and hospital discharge and have failed to respond to either large or small recommendations that have come out of it'.*

Network members regularly referred to the CCG as having a very clinical focus with a prime focus on treatment rather than prevention.

Some individual projects such as food growing, community gardens or horticultural therapy have managed to gain traction with their CCG. Successful examples of these are highlighted by Sustain's [Growing Health](#) initiative. However, whilst there are pockets of good practice, the picture is very varied across the country. With contracts for service delivery getting bigger, there are collaborations of voluntary sector delivery partners coming together in some areas, for example around social prescribing. However, in other areas it was reported that projects are turning their back on the public sector and looking for funds from the commercial world!

### 6.3 Integrated health and social care – Plymouth

In Plymouth there is already substantial integration of CCG staff with local authority social care and public health teams. They work alongside each other in the same office, have pooled budgets and an integrated commissioning process. Their 10-year public health strategy focuses on a different theme each year and from October 2018 the theme will be food. The local authority, VCS, CCG and social enterprise sector will all be geared towards achieving the silver SFC award. Whilst the engagement with Food Plymouth is still predominantly via the public health team, they represent the whole integrated care agenda.

Plymouth City Council currently commissions Food Plymouth, Food is Fun and Tamar Grow Local to deliver the [Grow, Share, Cook](#) programme. They have also just commissioned a diabetes programme in collaboration with GPs and the voluntary sector. GPs refer people who are on the cusp of having Type 2 diabetes to receive a fortnightly delivery of fruit and vegetables. Early indications from the pilot were that families receiving free fruit and vegetables were visiting their health care professional less. The economic benefit of this can be calculated. They now have a target of engaging with 50 families per year on the programme.

## 6.4 Working with the CCG in Liverpool

Liverpool Food People was originally set up in 2011. One of the people behind it was responsible for the social value agenda at the CCG. She wrote a policy for the CCG which focused on the need to work with small voluntary and community sector organisations and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Alongside this, the CCG adopted a preventative model of support with a focus on reducing the amount of money spent on hospital and aftercare and increasing support for community initiatives. As a result, there was some funding available from the CCG to match fund the SFC coordinator role for 3 years in Liverpool.

In return, the SFC coordinator was asked to tackle food in hospitals in the city. This was particularly pertinent as they were about to put out a new catering tender. The coordinator worked together with the Head of Sustainability at one of the city hospitals to bring in Food for Life standards and pursue sustainability goals. Reports on progress were made to the CCG along with the NHS Sustainability Conference. The CCG were not part of the board for Liverpool Food People, but they were active in the wider steering group.

### Top Tips

- CCGs often have a Neighbourhood Management Team that is the conduit between policy makers on the one hand and the front-line staff in the community e.g. midwives, GPs, health visitors etc. The Neighbourhood Manager can be a good place to start. In Liverpool he was recruited onto the steering group for delivery of the Alexandra Rose Voucher scheme.
- Join the [NHS Sustainability Network](#) - whilst this is mostly made up of NHS staff, they do welcome others in the field too. There is a network group for the North and South of the UK. This is a useful forum for finding out what is going on and getting to know people. There are sustainability workshops and regular communications via e-news.
- Go hyper-local. Start with building relationships with individual GP surgeries in your local area where you are delivering work. Make sure your local councillor with responsibility for health and wellbeing is aware of your work. In Liverpool we have delivered the Alexandra Rose Voucher scheme in two wards, the council know about it and other councillors are now asking for it in their ward. By delivering a successful scheme locally you can attract broader strategic interest.
- Research the interests and background of CCG board members and senior staff. Look for individuals who are likely allies.
- Network, network, network - It's all about networking.
- Don't just send emails, you've got to get to know people.

## Contributors

The richness and relevance of this guide is largely down to the generous contributions of the following SFC Network members and beyond:

Lucy Antal	(previously) SFC Liverpool Coordinator
Pam Bhupal	Bradford Council
Vic Borill	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Liz Charles	Food Durham
Maria Deveraux	Sustain (Growing Health)
Amanda Donnelly	Soil Association Food for Life
Mark Fishpool	Middlesbrough Food Partnership
Darin Halifax	Plymouth City Council
Francesca Iliffe	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
Alizee Marceau	Soil Association (Sustainable Food Cities)
Laura Penny	Sustainable Food City Partnership Aberdeen
Lynn Wetenhall	Food Exeter
Victoria Williams	Brighton and Hove Food Partnership / Food Matters
Vera Zhakarov	Sustain (Sugar Smart)

# Appendix 1

## SFC Network members by local authority type

SFC Member	Local Authority Type	Tiers	Directly Elected Mayor
Cambridge	District Council	Two	No
Carlisle	District Council	Two	No
Cork	District Council	Two	No
Exeter	District Council	Two	No
Lancaster	District Council	Two	No
Lincoln City	District Council	Two	No
Oxford	District Council	Two	No
Croydon	London Borough	One	No
Greenwich	London Borough	One	No
Hackney	London Borough	One	Yes
Islington	London Borough	One	Yes
Lambeth	London Borough	One	No
Lewisham	London Borough	One	Yes
Merton	London Borough	One	Yes
Sutton	London Borough	One	Yes
Wandsworth	London Borough	One	No
Birmingham	Metropolitan District	One	No
Bradford	Metropolitan District	One	No
Calderdale	Metropolitan District	One	No
Doncaster	Metropolitan District	One	Yes
Kirklees	Metropolitan District	One	No
Leeds	Metropolitan District	One	No
Liverpool	Metropolitan District	One	Yes
Manchester City	Metropolitan District	One	No
Newcastle	Metropolitan District	One	No
Oldham	Metropolitan District	One	No
Sandwell	Metropolitan District	One	No
Sheffield	Metropolitan District	One	No

<b>SFC Member</b>	<b>Local Authority Type</b>	<b>Tiers</b>	<b>Directly Elected Mayor</b>
Stockport	Metropolitan District	One	No
Aberdeen	Unitary Authority	One	No
Bath (B&NES)	Unitary Authority	One	No
Belfast	Unitary Authority	One	No
Bournemouth	Unitary Authority	One	No
Brighton	Unitary Authority	One	No
Bristol	Unitary Authority	One	Yes
Cardiff	Unitary Authority	One	No
County Durham	Unitary Authority	One	No
Edinburgh	Unitary Authority	One	No
Glasgow	Unitary Authority	One	No
Herefordshire	Unitary Authority	One	No
Hull	Unitary Authority	One	No
Leicester	Unitary Authority	One	Yes
Luton	Unitary Authority	One	No
Middlesbrough	Unitary Authority	One	Yes
Moray	Unitary Authority	One	No
Nottingham	Unitary Authority	One	No
Peterborough	Unitary Authority	One	No
Plymouth	Unitary Authority	One	No
Portsmouth	Unitary Authority	One	No
Stoke on Trent	Unitary Authority	One	No
York	Unitary Authority	One	No
Bridport	Town Council	Two	No
Wells	Town / city council	Two	No
Greater Manchester	Combined Authority		Yes
London	Greater London Authority		Yes