SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2026

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application.

If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at info@sustainablefoodplaces.org to discuss the process.



Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx

Please also review our approach to Representation & Justice, including REDI for Change and the FAIR food framework. This approach has been co-designed with SFP members across the four nations of the UK. SFP expects that applications present a considered approach to diversity and representation.

In 2026, a new **FAIR food** dimension has been applied across the SFP awards criteria to embed representation and justice across the SFP awards and to identify best practice. FAIR food recognises activities that facilitate, encourage, support and embed action on representation and justice in your food partnership and your food system work.

You will notice a greater emphasis on representation and justice across the SFP framework key issues and at all award levels: we have embedded representation and justice at the core of the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards.

In addition, you'll notice **FAIR food STAR** criteria highlighted for each relevant Key Issue on this form. These describe additional, significant work on Representation and Justice, over and above the standard expectations for the Bronze or Silver Awards. These criteria are not compulsory, but where you do evidence exemplary work in these areas, this will be recognised and celebrated through SFP awarding a **FAIR food STAR** *in addition to* the Bronze or Silver Award.

Please do not alter the formatting of this form or redesign it and only return as a Word document not a PDF. This is essential for your application to pass the initial eligibility check.

SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (*= mandatory):

Name of your partnership*:
Devon Food Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Sushila Moles Sushila.Moles@devon.gov.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay)
Award you are applying for*:
Silver

Please provide us with background information about your place (not scored)*: Advisory word limit: 400 words

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

ANSWER:

Located in the South West, Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) is England's fourth largest county. Most of the county is covered by a two-tier local authority with eight district councils and a county council. Plymouth and Torbay, however, are unitary authorities. Devon is beginning to go through Local Government Reorganisation which will affect all the councils in the area, however this is paused at time of writing.

This application is taking a whole ceremonial county approach and so Devon will include Plymouth, Torbay and Exeter. The county is home to two National Parks (Dartmoor and Exmoor), the UK's first National Marine Park (Plymouth Sound), five National Landscapes, and a UNESCO Biosphere (North Devon), collectively reflecting the unique diversity of Devon's marine, coastal, and terrestrial landscapes.



Devon is home to more than 1.2 million residents, more than double the population of either Bristol or Somerset. The county has a £33 billion GVA economy, compared with £21 billion in Bristol and £15.5 billion in Somerset. Devon's population is older than the UK average, and 96% of residents identify as White.

Plymouth, Exeter, and Torbay are the main population centres, although large towns exist across the county. However, Devon is a predominantly rural area with agriculture accounting for 73% of land use and forming a vital part of Devon's economy, history, and cultural identity.

The South West agricultural sector generated approximately £5.2 billion of agricultural output in 2024, with dairy and beef being the largest contributors. Devon is one of the region's principal agricultural counties. However, food processing infrastructure remains

limited in some areas and transport connectivity can present challenges for the processing and distribution of food, particularly for smaller producers.

Over 50,000 businesses are based in the county, of which the majority are micro, small, or medium sized. The proportion of these smaller businesses is much higher than the national average. Devon has a range of nationally recognised food and drink businesses including Riverford Organics, Luscombe Drinks, Burt's Crisps, and Ambrosia, as well as a myriad of artisan producers, farm shops, and farmers' markets. There is a strong and growing market for local, sustainably produced food.

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

While Devon is one of the less deprived counties in England overall, significant pockets of deprivation persist in coastal communities such as Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Bideford, Torquay and Paignton. Food insecurity has risen since 2020, evidenced by increased demand for community food provision services. The Food and Fuel Insecurity in Devon 2023 report, commissioned by Devon County Council, revealed that around 16% of Devon households were experiencing very low food security compared with 10% in 2021. Feedback from VCSE partners suggests that these levels have remained persistently high. Devon's ageing population, rural geography and dispersed communities can create additional challenges in accessing affordable, healthy food and support services.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact:* SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx. This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

Only submit additional documents for food action plans and strategies related to Key Issue 1 mandatory criteria. All other additional documents will not be assessed. You may add links to online documents but always check the links and permissions as we will not be requesting changes from you after submission.

Key Issue 1 Mandatory Criteria Checklist

NB failure to provide Key Issue 1, Action area B mandatory criteria will result in rejection at the eligibility stage.

- Bronze applications require a one year action plan
- Silver applications require a three year action plan

1. **Have you submitted a current food action plan or food strategy with an action plan?** Yes our food strategy is from 2023-2028. We are starting to write a new strategy for post 2028 Food strategy - Devon Food Partnership.

2. **How are you evidencing this action plan?** (delete as appropriate)
    - Link to a document?
    - If a link place here as well under Key Issue 1 Food strategy - Devon Food Partnership
        - Action Plan link: DFP Action Plan 2027-30.pdf. Please note that in addition to this each of our three working groups develop their own Action Plans, developed to meet the Strategy aims. These are reviewed every 6 months, please see these here:
        - Local Economy working group Action Plan
        - Food in Schools Action Plan
        - Food Insecurity Action Plan

3. **Has the action plan less than 6 months to run?**
    - No (delete as appropriate)

- If less than 6 months to run, what is happening after the action plan expires? (100 words)

Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

NB *At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has taken proactive steps to genuinely represent your place and its diverse communities in its work and activities*

Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

The Devon Food Partnership (DFP) was launched in February 2021, hosted by Devon County Council. The DFP Steering Group is made up of a range of stakeholders from across Devon covering the whole food system including Devon County Council departments (Economic Development, Public Health, Communities, Waste, and Climate Emergency), academia, VCSE organisations, farmers, SME food producers and other local food partnerships.

A full list of the organisations with representation on the steering group is on the Partnership Structure webpage. The steering group is broad and inclusive with a wide range of perspectives represented. It operates in an open and amiable way in accordance with clear terms of reference to ensure all voices are heard. The group updated the terms of reference in July 2026. A PHD paper 'Building Inclusive Food System Governance' used the DFP as a case study and concluded ***'the Devon Food Partnership has accomplished what many collaborative initiatives struggle to achieve: creating a sustainable, trusted, and effective space where diverse stakeholders genuinely want to participate'***. The research found high levels of satisfaction with participation and representation, with participants highlighting the welcoming culture, trust-based relationships and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration within the partnership.

The steering group is committed to addressing the key food issues identified by Sustainable Food Places and delivering the aims of our collaboratively produced Food Strategy. Steering group meetings are held online every month, and, occasionally in-person to include a visit to learn more about a particular project or organisation. The meetings provide updates on the activity of the DFP's three working groups and the opportunity to explore food activity across the county, ideas for collaboration, make decisions on partnership activity, and to ensure the DFP continues to meet the aims of the strategy. Decision-making is documented and follows a consensus approach, whereby members are invited to raise objections to proposals within an agreed timeframe, usually three weeks where possible.

Beyond the steering group, three working groups have been established: Devon Food Insecurity (household); Food in Schools and Devon's Local Food Economy. Each of the working groups have two co-chairs and meet online every eight weeks. Each of the groups

has between 20-25 active members at this point in time. Anyone is welcome to join the working groups with no requirement for commitment other than agreeing to our values. The vision and values on this website page were co-developed at the inception of DFP and underpin the network.

The Devon Food Insecurity working group was established following post-pandemic research which identified the need for a strategic forum to inform policy and strategy while sharing information, evidence and opportunities with frontline organisations. This group has representation from a variety of community food organisations (VCSE's), Devon Community Foundation, academia and council officers from different local authorities (Public Health, Communities). The Co-chairs are from Public Health and from a VCSE food provider.

The Food in Schools working group advocates for improved school food and food education through research, collaboration, project development and knowledge sharing. This group has representation from academia, school caterers, educators, nutritionists, farmers and council officers (Public Health, Climate Emergency, Waste) from across the county. The Co-chairs are academics who specialise in planetary food health and in food policy.

Devon's Local Food Economy working group focuses on strengthening Devon's local food system by supporting sustainable farming, ethical food businesses, and circular economy practices. The group has representation from SME food producers, farmers, food-focussed VCSEs, town and district councillors and Devon County Council officers (Economic Development and County Farms Estates). The Co-chairs are a farmer and a farm advisor.

Across the steering group and working groups, members are encouraged to participate fully and bring forward agenda items or areas of interest. DFP facilitators and working group Chairs have taken proactive steps to broaden representation within the network. In the Food Insecurity working group, following our inaugural event designed to support front line staff and volunteers in food support organisations, the number of VCSE group members increased from four to eight. Whilst these organisations may not directly represent all lived experiences of food insecurity, they work closely with households experiencing food insecurity on a daily basis and are therefore able to bring frontline insights into discussions. Likewise in our Local Food Economy group, we invited Basic Income for Farmers to present and shared the invite on our social media channels. This proved successful to increase group membership, recruiting a young person looking for work, a surplus food distributor and two farmers.

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

Progress continues to be made against the objectives set out in Devon's Good Food Strategy 2023-2028. The Strategy was approved by Devon County Council, the local authority that hosts the DFP. The strategy is structured around Sustainable Food Places' six key themes and identifies the strategic priorities for Devon's food system for 2023-2028, as well as who needs to be engaged to take action. Each year, the DFP produces an Annual Report to highlight some of the work that has taken place across that year that contributes to the aims of the Strategy. These are available for reading on our website. To celebrate three years of the strategy, stakeholders were invited to an event in March 2026. The day consisted of short presentations addressing each of the themes, followed by table discussions. The presentations were chosen to reflect the breadth of work taking place and serve as illustrative examples of where focus points and working groups overlap. For example, one of the Chairs of the Food in Schools working group presented about a pilot, FEED, to create a venison x legume (both UK sourced) product that we hope will supply schools. The Food in Schools working group has acted as advisory to this pilot project and is supporting the development where possible. This pilot demonstrates how activity within one part of the food system can influence others, with potential benefits for local procurement, farming and processing, while also supporting access to healthy school food. Another example is the pioneering surplus food processing plant established by Food in Community CIC, which gleans organic vegetables from local farms and distributes them to households and community food providers across Devon.

Discussions took place in small groups following each presentation and attendees were invited to feedback on which strategic priorities they felt were most important and offer ideas for future action and collaboration. This feedback, together with notes from the discussions, was collated and presented to the DFP Steering Group and is being used to inform the Partnership's priority actions. Already implemented is the request for better understanding of food policy. At our steering group and working group meetings we now have a standing agenda item to update on this, inviting anyone in the room to contribute.

In addition to the Strategy, each of the working groups has their own Action Plan to allow for a higher level of detail. These Action Plans are different to one another in structure as each has been led by the distinct working group. The Action Plans are reviewed collaboratively every six months to ensure activity remains aligned with the overall aims and structure of the Strategy.

Work is already beginning to shape the post-2028 Strategy, with the intention that it will provide a more comprehensive framework for coordinated action across Devon's food system.

Currently, the Food Insecurity working group acts as an advisory group to the Food Hubs programme, that is half-way though the two-year delivery, and, the Food in Schools working group acts as an advisory group to the FEED project mentioned above. These

funded projects are examples of how the DFP supports delivery against strategic priorities. Each project has clearly defined objectives, with outcomes monitored and reported by the lead organisation. For a working group to become an advisory group to a particular project, the decision making process will be followed in the same way as it is for the steering group as outlined in Key Issue 1:A.

DFP members also work with other stakeholders to support delivery of the Strategy's priorities. For example, the recent Dartmoor Food Plan intends to showcase the fantastic produce from Dartmoor, to shorten supply chains and build the local food economy.

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

The DFP maintains close connections with other food partnerships, including having regular catch ups with Sustainable Food Cornwall and Devon's urban food partnerships Food Plymouth, Food Exeter and the Torbay food Partnership. This Peninsula group has collaborated on the Peninsula Food Plan, commissioned by Sustain and due for publication in 2026 (see Key Issue 5.c). In July 2026, this Peninsula collaboration became regional with food partnerships Dorset, Bridport and Sustainable Food Somerset joining the monthly meetings. DFP will continue to facilitate this regional working and together we will explore which aspects are better together and which are better rooted in local places.

Key Issue 1 FAIR food STAR:

We will look for evidence that you have:

- **Reflected on representation and justice** e.g. regular REDI Review, FAIR food Action Plan.
- **Demonstrated commitment to anti-racism and justice** e.g. statement of commitment, code of conduct, proactive steps

Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

***NB** At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. Simply mapping activity is not sufficient: the 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food

Since launching the Devon Food Strategy in 2023, improving the Partnership's outward-facing communications has been a priority. The Devon Food Partnership (DFP) has developed a recognised and accessible brand identity, including a logo, colour palette and communications standards, which are used consistently across all channels. The Devon Food Partnership website acts as a central source of information for residents and organisations seeking to engage with Devon's food system, providing information about the Partnership, its activities and wider good food initiatives across the county. In 2027, DFP will launch a new standalone website with enhanced functionality, including the ability for organisations to submit and promote their own events, helping to widen participation in the local good food movement.

The DFP publishes a monthly newsletter reaching over 2,200 subscribers. The newsletter shares news, events, funding opportunities, educational content and examples of good practice from across Devon's food system. It is aimed primarily at members of the public while also supporting businesses and community organisations. Each edition features a different VCSE organisation, helping to raise awareness of local action and encouraging volunteering and community participation. Past editions are available on the DFP website: Newsletter - Devon Food Partnership.

The DFP maintains active Instagram and Facebook channels, using these platforms to engage the public, promote events and share opportunities to become involved in Devon's food system. As well as publicising Partnership activity, DFP regularly promotes and amplifies the work of community organisations, producers and local networks. Sharing content through local interest groups and community pages helps extend reach into rural and often underrepresented communities across Devon.

Through these communication channels, DFP actively promotes opportunities for residents to learn about, celebrate and participate in good food activities. These include farmers' markets, food festivals, agricultural shows, community growing projects, cooking activities and volunteering opportunities. By providing a county-wide platform for promotion and information-sharing, DFP helps increase the visibility of local food initiatives and strengthens connections between organisations and communities.

These pages and the newsletter are also used to promote a diverse range of opportunities for everyone to participate in the Good Food Movement including farmers markets (such as Exeter Quayside), food festivals (such as Tomato Fest at Trill Farm Garden), agricultural

shows, and other events and activities for people to get involved with such as Exeter Food Action.

Across Devon, a wide range of organisations provide opportunities for people to learn more about local, sustainable and healthy food while becoming actively involved in growing, cooking and food-related community activities. For example, St Sidwell's Community Centre and Zero Mile Gardens in Exeter deliver community food growing, agroecological education and public events. St Sidwell's annual Sidwella Day, celebrates food, culture and community through a free event showcasing international cuisines alongside local growing activities.

The DFP Food Insecurity working group acts in an advisory capacity to a two-year Food Hubs programme that launched in 2025. Six Community Food Provider organisations were funded to participate, helping improve understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of communities experiencing food insecurity. Learning from Food Hub partners directly informed the co-production of a county-wide event in 2026, which addressed identified support needs and included workshops on beneficiary engagement, communication approaches and behaviour change techniques.

Further opportunities for food citizenship are provided through initiatives such as FarmWise, an initiative to provide an opportunity for primary school children to understand more about farming in Devon and how food is produced. Through an Autumn Schools event, an area at Devon County Show and an outreach van, Farmwise engages thousands of children each year. The outreach van prioritises school visits to areas of deprivation. Community-led initiatives such as Exeter Seed Bank encourage seed sharing, biodiversity conservation and public education, attracting more than 500 attendees to its annual seed swap in 2026.

Devon also has a growing network of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes, including Chagford Community Market Garden. These initiatives provide opportunities for residents to participate directly in food production through volunteering, educational activities and membership schemes. Collectively, these activities encourage people to become active participants in Devon's food system through growing, learning, seed saving, volunteering and supporting local food producers.

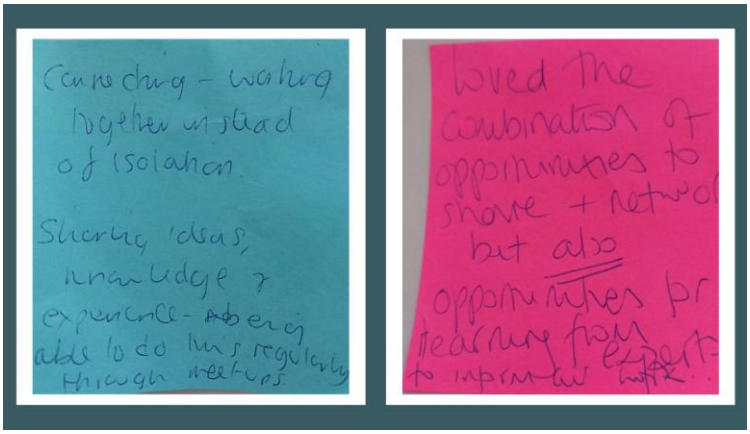
Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement

Established in 2023, the Devon Food Partnership (DFP) Food Insecurity Working Group brings together frontline community food providers, funders, voluntary sector organisations and public sector partners to strengthen support for residents experiencing food insecurity. The group provides a mechanism for community voices and frontline

experience to inform local action, programme development and strategic decision-making across Devon. It also facilitates information sharing, partnership building and peer support between organisations working directly with communities.

The Working Group acts in an advisory capacity to a number of projects and programmes, helping ensure that activity is informed by the experiences of both providers and beneficiaries. Through the Food Hubs Programme, community food organisations have shared learning around barriers to food access, community engagement and food-related support needs. This learning has informed ongoing programme development and enabled local intelligence to influence wider discussions around food insecurity and community resilience.

A key focus of the group is supporting those delivering grassroots food initiatives. In 2026, the Working Group co-produced the *Nourishing the Nourishers* event with VCSE practitioners. The event brought together food access workers and volunteers from across Devon to share experiences, build networks and develop practical skills. Sessions included reducing stigma, engaging beneficiaries, improving wellbeing and exploring the Alliance for Dignified Food Support's Dignity Charter. The success of the event has led to planning for a larger county-wide event in 2027.



Feedback was gathered from attendees at Nourishing the Nourishers

Grassroots food organisations play a significant role in fostering food citizenship across Devon. For example, Project Food in Axminster supports families, young people and adults through practical cooking programmes that build confidence, food skills and social connections. DFP also helps strengthen the local good food movement by promoting and connecting community-led initiatives. In 2026, members of the Partnership supported and attended Roots & Routes: Nourishing Diasporic Food Entrepreneurship, a free cross-community event hosted by the University of Exeter. Organised by Harry G West, Olya Petrakova and Bryan Brown, the event brought together food entrepreneurs, community organisations, academics and residents from Ukrainian, Hong Kong, West African, Syrian, Kurdish, Caribbean and Latin American communities across the South West. Through food

sharing, storytelling, markets and panel discussions, participants explored food as heritage, identity, enterprise and cultural resilience. By promoting the event and maintaining relationships with organisers through the wider DFP network, the Partnership helped amplify opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and engagement within Devon's food system.



The event also provided an opportunity to highlight the role of food in celebrating cultural diversity and strengthening community connections. Discussions explored how diasporic food enterprises contribute to local economies whilst preserving cultural heritage, and how organisations across Devon can better support participation from underrepresented communities. This aligns closely with the Partnership's ambition to create a more inclusive food movement in which a wider range of voices and experiences are represented.

Community action extends beyond food access. CAG Devon supports a wide network of community groups involved in growing food, composting, sharing resources and reducing waste. Their programme helps connect residents with practical opportunities to participate in positive environmental and food-related action within their communities. Across the county, community gardens, orchards and growing projects provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn about food production whilst contributing to local food resilience.

Many grassroots growing initiatives are volunteer-led. Dig and Donate enables local residents to participate directly in food production through volunteering. The food produced is then donated to community food providers. At Chagford CSA, a proportion of harvest shares are made available at reduced cost to low-income households, helping improve access to fresh local produce whilst strengthening community participation.

Similar volunteer-led growing projects operate throughout Devon, creating opportunities for learning, social connection and engagement with sustainable food systems.

The wider enabling environment for community food action is supported through a range of grant programmes, including Devon County Council's Growing Communities Fund, Locality Budgets and Food, Fuel and More grants. These schemes have helped fund community growing projects, food initiatives and activities that build community resilience and reduce inequalities. Together with council planning policies that protect and support allotment provision, these initiatives help create the conditions for grassroots food action to flourish.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate a growing county-wide good food movement in which residents are not only consumers of food but active participants in growing, learning, sharing, volunteering and shaping Devon's food system. Through convening partners, facilitating collaboration and amplifying community voices, DFP has helped strengthen connections between grassroots organisations and supported the continued development of food citizenship across Devon.

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

Key Issue 2 FAIR food STAR:

We will look for evidence that you:

- **Celebrate diverse food culture** e.g. events, festivals, celebrations
- **Embed representation and justice action** e.g. FAIR food Action Plan, facilitating representation and engagement

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

NB *At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. Simply mapping activity is not sufficient: the 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

Across Devon, community food providers are increasingly adopting person-centred, community-led approaches that promote dignity, reduce stigma and improve access to healthy food. Research commissioned by Devon County Council identified groups at greatest risk of food insecurity and informed the Devon Food Partnership's Food Insecurity Action Plan, helping to ensure that activity is evidence-led and targeted towards those most at risk.

The DFP helps connect the network of organisations and initiatives working to support households experiencing food insecurity across Devon, sharing learning and identifying opportunities for collaboration. The Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly connects VCSE organisations, champions the voices of people with lived experience and helps ensure these perspectives are represented within strategic discussions. Complementing this work, the DFP Food Insecurity Working Group brings together representatives from Public Health, Communities and Economic Development teams across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, alongside community food providers, including FareShare South West and South West Refugee Support at the British Red Cross. By bringing together operational, strategic and lived-experience perspectives, the group helps shape local action and influence decision-making across Devon.

In June 2026, a member of the DFP Food Insecurity Working Group volunteered to begin outreach visits to community food providers that do not have the capacity to participate directly in working group meetings. From June-September, six organisations have been visited with many more on the horizon. Emerging themes, barriers and support needs are reported back to the Working Group, helping to ensure that organisations unable to attend meetings can still influence priorities and future activity. This intelligence has already been used to improve the sharing of information across the network, including opportunities to access surplus food, and is helping to inform future funding priorities and support for the sector.

In 2026, Devon County Council launched the Healthy Start Ambassadors campaign to increase awareness and uptake of the Healthy Start scheme among eligible families. Devon also became the first two-tier local authority in the country to introduce Free School Meals auto-enrolment, helping ensure children entitled to support receive it.

The DFP Food Insecurity Working Group acts in an advisory capacity to funded programmes. Through Public Health a £200,000 Food Hubs Food Insecurity Grant Research Programme, six organisations have been supported over a two-year period to develop local responses to food insecurity. Activity includes affordable food clubs, social supermarkets, community larders, food growing projects, cooking activities and community cafés. These initiatives provide not only access to food, but also opportunities for choice, skills development, social connection and community participation. Learning gathered through the Working Group and wider network continues to inform the delivery

of future Crisis and Resilience funding, helping ensure investment reflects local need and supports the sharing of good practice across Devon.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

Promoting healthy eating is a shared priority across Devon's food and public health systems. Devon County Council Public Health is working with partners to deliver a whole-systems approach to obesity, recognising that healthier weight is influenced by a wide range of social, environmental and economic factors. The Devon Food Partnership contributes to this agenda through its working groups, which bring together organisations from across the food system to share learning, strengthen partnerships and influence local action.

The Devon Food Insecurity Working Group brings together community food providers, funders, local authorities and other stakeholders to improve access to healthy food and ensure that food insecurity responses support dignity, nutrition and wellbeing. Similarly, the Food in Schools Working Group convenes school food stakeholders from across Devon to improve access to healthy and sustainable food for children and young people. Both groups facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative action, helping partners identify barriers and opportunities to improve diets and food environments.

Recognising the relationship between healthy eating and physical activity, Devon also delivers the integrated strategy *Devon Moving Together*. This whole-system approach aims to reduce inequalities, support positive experiences of movement and align resources across the county to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Alongside this work, Public Health teams in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have collaborated to develop a compassionate approach to healthier weight., seeking to reduce stigma while supporting healthier lifestyles.

Improving food environments within schools is a key area of activity. In 2025, Devon hosted its first Sustainable Schools Conference, bringing together more than 100 school leaders and education professionals. Sessions included healthy and sustainable school food, food provenance and reducing food waste. The conference is scheduled to return in 2026, reflecting growing interest in the role schools can play in supporting healthy environments.

The Devon Food Partnership actively supports and promotes school food improvement initiatives across the county. Through its communications channels and networks, DFP has helped raise awareness of the school food transformation work led by Chefs in Schools in Devon, including innovative approaches that improve meal quality and encourage children to engage positively with healthy food. This work is supported by Devon-based

food business Riverford, with whom DFP continues to collaborate through wider food system activities and business engagement events.

School caterers are also taking action to improve the nutritional and environmental sustainability of meals. South West Norse, a Food for Life Silver certified caterer and partner of Devon County Council, has registered all of its schools on Cool Food Pro to monitor carbon emissions and has committed to reducing meat content within recipes through the use of alternative proteins. Through the Food in Schools Working Group, DFP continues to engage with caterers, schools and policymakers to promote local procurement and support implementation of improved school food standards. During 2026, the Working Group advocated to Devon MPs for increased school meal funding, stronger monitoring arrangements and greater recognition of the challenges faced by Devon's many small rural schools.

Looking ahead, Devon County Council is developing a Whole School Food Approach programme focused on schools in priority areas. The Devon Food Partnership Food in Schools Working Group has acted in an advisory capacity during programme development, helping to ensure that the initiative reflects the needs and opportunities identified by partners across the education, health and food sectors. The programme will take a holistic approach to food within schools, recognising the links between food education, healthy eating, sustainability and wellbeing.

Understanding where barriers to healthy food access exist is also critical to promoting healthy eating. The Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Public Health teams have developed a Devon Cost of Living Dashboard that combines multiple indicators to identify neighbourhoods experiencing higher levels of vulnerability. This includes the Priority Places for Food Index, which highlights areas where residents face challenges accessing affordable, healthy and sustainable food. The publicly available dashboard is used by public sector and community organisations to inform local interventions and target support where it is most needed.

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

Key Issue 3 FAIR food STAR:

We will look for evidence that you have:

- **Embedded accountability in representation of marginalised communities** e.g. engage with representative organisations and groups, establish new representative groups and panels, embedding lived experience

Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy

NB *At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. Simply mapping activity is not sufficient: the 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development

Food and drink are strategically important sectors within Devon's economy. The Devon County Council Strategic Plan 2025-29 identifies agri-food as a sector with significant growth potential and highlights the need to support SMEs to invest in infrastructure, innovation and skills. Likewise, the Devon & Torbay Combined County Authority Local Growth Plan identifies agri-food as a bedrock sector, recognising the importance of farming, fishing, agritech and food production in supporting economic growth, food security, biodiversity and high-quality employment.

The Devon Food Partnership (DFP) helps bring together public, private, academic and community stakeholders to ensure food is recognised within wider economic development activity. Hosted within Devon County Council's Economic Development Team and funded jointly by Economic Development and Public Health, DFP provides a bridge between economic, environmental and health priorities. Through its Local Food Economy Working Group, DFP creates opportunities for businesses, support organisations, local authorities and food system stakeholders to identify barriers, share intelligence and develop collaborative solutions aligned with Devon's Good Food Strategy.

The Working Group focuses on themes including local food infrastructure, sustainable procurement, regenerative agriculture, food hubs, skills development and market access. Through this work, DFP helps ensure that the needs of food producers, processors, retailers and hospitality businesses are represented within wider economic development discussions.

A key example is the *People Planet Profit* business support programme. Delivered by DFP in partnership with Food Drink Devon and aimed specifically at food and drink SMEs, the programme supports producers, retailers, manufacturers and hospitality businesses to

improve sustainability and resilience while remaining commercially successful. Since launching in late 2024, seven events have been delivered, each attracting between 30 and 50 businesses, with a further four events planned for 2026-27. Topics have included carbon reduction, waste minimisation, sustainable supply chains and responsible business practices. The events also create valuable opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration.

DFP works alongside wider economic development programmes operating across Devon. The Economic Development Team hosts initiatives including the Devon Agri-tech Alliance, SW Agri-tech, and Growth Hub, which provide specialist support and innovation opportunities for farms and food businesses. Through its communications channels and networks, DFP helps food businesses access these opportunities and promotes collaboration between support providers and the food sector.

Skills development is another important element of Devon's sustainable food economy. Through the Train4Tomorrow, programme, Devon County Council has supported regenerative agriculture training delivered by the Apricot Centre. In 2026, Devon County Council and South Hams District Council supported the development of a new Regenerative Hospitality course delivered by No Bull Learning and The Apricot Centre. The pilot programme supported 16 learners and has subsequently expanded through additional cohorts, helping develop the knowledge and skills needed to support a more sustainable hospitality sector.

Across Devon, a range of local authorities support food and drink businesses through economic development initiatives, tourism strategies and business support programmes. South Hams District Council has developed a particularly strong focus on sustainable food and farming, supporting initiatives such as community composting, local food markets and the Amazen platform, which helps residents purchase from independent businesses while retaining wealth within the local economy.

Supporting the next generation of food producers is also a priority. Devon's County Farms Estate continues to provide opportunities for new entrant farmers to establish viable agricultural businesses. In addition, DFP and Devon County Council's Environment Team have strengthened engagement with County Farms, with representatives now participating in the Local Food Economy Working Group. This helps ensure that the experiences and challenges faced by new tenant farming businesses are reflected within wider food system discussions.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate how Devon's food economy is being supported through strategic investment, collaborative working, skills development and business

support, with DFP playing an important convening role in connecting stakeholders and championing the contribution of good food businesses to Devon's economy.

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



Devon has a vibrant food culture supported by independent producers, food and drink businesses, farmers' markets, farm shops, food festivals and agricultural shows. Together, these initiatives help consumers connect with local food producers and make informed choices that support local economies, sustainable production methods and healthier diets.

The Devon Food Partnership contributes to this through its ongoing *#EveryBiteCounts* campaign, which encourages residents to consider the social, environmental and economic impact of their food choices. Through newsletters, social media, events and public engagement, DFP promotes local food businesses and encourages consumers to support independent producers, retailers and hospitality businesses across the county.

One of the Partnership's most significant public engagement opportunities is the annual Devon County Show. With record attendance of more than 106,000 visitors in 2026, the Show provides a major showcase for Devon's food and farming sector. DFP attends annually to promote the #EveryBiteCounts campaign and engage residents in conversations about local food, sustainability and food production. The Show also provides opportunities for visitors to learn about regenerative farming, fisheries, soil health, sustainable land management and local food businesses.



DFP Devon County Show activities in the Farmwise family area in 2026

DFP works closely with organisations that promote and champion Devon's food businesses. Food Drink Devon and Taste of the West both play an important role in supporting producers, retailers and hospitality businesses through marketing, awards programmes, training and networking opportunities. Through the wider DFP network, these organisations contribute expertise, help promote good food businesses and support greater recognition of sustainable food production among consumers.

Food festivals provide another important route through which residents can discover local food and independent businesses. DFP regularly promotes festivals and events through its communications channels, helping increase awareness and attendance. These include events such as Taste East Devon festival, Dartmouth Food Festival, and the multiple Eat Festivals held across Devon. DFP also shares the many smaller festivals and farm days that are often free or low cost. All of these provide consumers opportunities to meet producers directly, learn about provenance and sustainability, and support local businesses.

Several initiatives have sought to improve accessibility and opportunities for smaller businesses. For example, Dartmouth Food Festival introduced a Retail Bursary Scheme in 2026 to help smaller artisan producers participate and reach new customers. Such initiatives highlight the importance of ensuring that micro and small food businesses are able to access promotional opportunities alongside larger operators.

Devon's strong network of farmers' markets, community markets and farm shops creates year-round opportunities for consumers to purchase directly from producers. Businesses such as Darts Farm and Strawberry Fields have developed successful models that combine retail, hospitality, food education and visitor experiences, helping consumers better understand where food comes from and how it is produced.

Devon is also a nationally significant centre for organic and agroecological food production. Riverford Organics operates one of the UK's largest organic vegetable box schemes and works closely with a network of growers to supply customers while supporting sustainable farming practices. Beyond food production, Riverford contributes to research and innovation around regenerative agriculture, supports community food initiatives through food redistribution, and works with Chefs in Schools to improve access to high-quality food for children. Through DFP's networks and events, Riverford has also contributed expertise to discussions on sustainable food systems and business resilience.

Alongside larger businesses, Devon is home to many smaller independent producers selling directly to consumers through vegetable box schemes, farm shops and collaborative marketing initiatives. Examples include Shillingford Organics, Trill Farm and Do Good Things Farm. The Good Food Loop initiative in South Devon further supports agroecological producers by creating shared routes to market for both household and wholesale customers.

Through its communications channels, events and partnerships, DFP helps raise awareness of these businesses and initiatives while encouraging residents to support local food enterprises. Together with the wider activity taking place across Devon, this contributes to a food economy in which consumers can readily identify, access and support healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses.

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

Devon's County Farms Estate continues to play an important role in supporting the next generation of food producers. The Estate comprises 65 dairy and mixed livestock holdings covering almost 10,000 acres and provides opportunities for new entrant farmers to establish viable businesses. The Devon Food Partnership (DFP) and Devon County Council Environment Team have strengthened engagement with County Farms tenants, with two representatives now participating in the Local Food Economy Working Group. This helps ensure that the experiences and challenges facing new and smaller tenant farming businesses are represented within wider food system discussions.

In 2025-26, the DCC Agri-Innovation Farming Support Programme supported 50 farming businesses, building on support delivered in previous years, including County Farms tenants. Participating businesses received small grants and tailored agri-advisor support

to trial innovations such as carbon footprinting and greenhouse gas capture from slurry stores. DFP members administered the grants and promoted the programme through partnership networks, helping improve access to support and encouraging uptake across the sector.

Devon also continues to invest in promoting local food businesses through initiatives such as Eat Festivals, which hosted 14 free food festivals across Devon during 2026. Supported by local authorities, these events provide opportunities for independent food businesses to engage directly with consumers and strengthen local food economies.



Key Issue 4 FAIR food STAR:

We will look for evidence that you:

- **Facilitate and support representation of food producers** e.g. establish working groups, representative forums, or engagement with existing associations/groups

Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains

NB *At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. Simply mapping activity is not sufficient: the 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

Improving the quality, sustainability and provenance of food served through public sector settings is a priority within Devon's Good Food Strategy. However, the school food landscape across Devon is complex, with individual schools and academy trusts able to choose their own catering arrangements, resulting in a diverse and continually evolving system of provision.

To help address this challenge, the Devon Food Partnership (DFP) has established a dedicated Food in Schools Working Group. The group brings together school food stakeholders to increase free school meal uptake, encourage a whole-school approach to food, improve access to healthy and sustainable food, and strengthen opportunities for local procurement. The Working Group provides a forum for schools, caterers, public bodies and food system partners to share learning, identify barriers and develop collaborative solutions.

The Working Group has acted as an important voice during recent developments in national school food policy. Ahead of the School Food Standards consultation, the group heard directly from Devon caterers and The School Food People, enabling local perspectives to inform discussions. Throughout 2026, the Partnership has continued to advocate to Devon MPs for robust monitoring of the revised standards, increased school meal funding and greater recognition of the challenges faced by small rural schools in delivering high-quality food provision.

The Partnership also supports efforts to increase the proportion of locally sourced food served through public sector settings. Through its Food in Schools Working Group and wider Local Food Economy Working Group, DFP continues to promote the Government's Good Food Cycle ambition of increasing local food procurement and strengthening links between schools, caterers and local producers.

Progress is also being made within catering provision. Devon County Council's catering partner, South West Norse, holds Food for Life Served Here Silver accreditation and has committed to improving both the nutritional and environmental sustainability of school meals. As outlined in Key Issue 3, South West Norse has registered all of its schools on Cool Food Pro and is working to reduce the carbon footprint of menus through recipe reformulation and alternative proteins.

Looking ahead, Devon County Council is developing a Whole School Food Approach programme focused on priority areas across the county. The DFP Food in Schools Working Group has acted in an advisory capacity during programme development, helping to ensure that healthy eating, sustainability, food education and food culture are considered together rather than as separate issues. This programme has the potential to create a more consistent and strategic approach to food across Devon's schools.

Devon also continues to demonstrate its commitment to ethical procurement through its longstanding support for Fairtrade. Devon County Council first achieved Fairtrade County status in 2008 and has successfully renewed this commitment since then, helping to promote dignity, sustainability and fair payment throughout global food supply chains.

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

Improving collaboration across Devon's food supply chain is a key priority for the Devon Food Partnership (DFP). As a county characterised by many small and medium-sized food businesses, fragmented supply chains can present a barrier to increasing the amount of local food supplied into public sector and commercial markets. DFP therefore plays an important convening role, bringing together producers, processors, distributors, caterers, buyers and public sector stakeholders to identify opportunities and overcome challenges within the local food system.

In 2026, DFP hosted a roundtable to explore opportunities to increase the proportion of Devon-produced food purchased by the NHS. The event brought together NHS procurement teams, local food producers, farmers and industry representatives to better understand the barriers and opportunities associated with local sourcing. Recommendations were developed collaboratively and shared with NHS partners, central government and Devon County Council officers. The roundtable has acted as a catalyst for ongoing discussions, and DFP continues to explore opportunities to support greater localisation of public sector food procurement.

The DFP Food in Schools Working Group also plays an important role in strengthening supply chain connections. The group brings together school caterers, suppliers and wider food system stakeholders, creating opportunities for innovative local food initiatives to engage directly with potential buyers. Through this forum, organisations including FEED (see Key Issue 1b), Food in Community and the Plymouth Fish Finger project have been able to build relationships with school caterers and procurement professionals.

These initiatives demonstrate the potential for local supply chain innovation to support both sustainability and community outcomes. For example, Food in Community has developed processing facilities that convert gleaned vegetables from Devon farms into products suitable for catering markets, while the Plymouth Fish Finger project is seeking to increase the use of locally landed fish within public sector food settings. DFP is helping to raise awareness of these initiatives and facilitate connections with organisations that may be able to incorporate such products into their supply chains.

Building on this work, Devon County Council hosted a series of agri-food events during 2024 and 2025 partly designed to connect farmers and producers with potential retail markets. Planning is now underway for a larger *Routes to Retail* event in 2027. The event

will bring together producers, wholesalers, retailers, farm shops, hospitality businesses and public sector procurement representatives, further strengthening relationships across the supply chain and creating opportunities for local businesses to access new markets.

DFP's supply chain work also extends beyond county boundaries. Devon is a partner in the South West Peninsula Food Partnership collaboration, bringing together Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay to strengthen regional food systems. Working together over the past two years, the partnerships have explored how the proportion of locally supplied food could be increased from a current baseline of 1-5% towards 30%, improving food resilience and supporting healthier and more sustainable diets.

Research undertaken through the Peninsula Food Plan found that production capacity is not the primary barrier to increasing local food consumption (see Part C for more detail). Instead, challenges exist within processing, distribution and routes to market. In response, the Peninsula partnerships worked with Sustain to model the infrastructure needed to strengthen regional supply chains, including investment in food hubs, processing facilities and distribution networks. The resulting *Investing in the Missing Middle* framework highlights the importance of collaboration between local authorities, food partnerships, investors and anchor institutions to create the conditions needed for local food businesses to scale and access larger markets.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate how DFP is helping to strengthen relationships across Devon's food system, improve communication between buyers and suppliers, and create opportunities for more locally produced food to reach schools, hospitals, retailers and consumers. Through convening partners and facilitating collaboration, the Partnership is supporting the long-term development of more resilient, sustainable and locally rooted food supply chains.

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

The Peninsula food partnerships cover Cornwall, Devon, Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay and have been working together for over two years in a cross-boundary collaboration to scale local and regional food systems. Their aim is to move towards delivering 30% of local food supply from within the region, up from a baseline of 1-5%, for greater food resilience and healthier, more sustainable diets.

The Peninsula Food Plan 2025 found that over 80% of local nutritional requirements could be met with food produced sustainably within the region, using less than 60% of the land currently farmed. Production capacity is not therefore the main limiting factor, but local market structures are. To address this, the peninsula food partnerships worked with Sustain to model the regional food infrastructure needed to enable more local food to

reach local people, including food hubs, processing and distribution infrastructure. This work, soon to be published as 'Investing in the Missing Middle', sets out a framework for how this infrastructure should be established and financed, bringing together early-stage catalytic capital from public and philanthropic sources, to open up concessionary loans and eventually crowd-in private finance.

The Missing Middle report calls for closer cooperation of local, regional and national government and underlines the importance of anchor institution demand. Together the Peninsula Food Plans represent a trailblazing example of leadership towards regional food resilience.

Further information on the wider project with a slide deck for the PFP 2025 can be found here The Local Food Growth Plan

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

***NB** At Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. Simply mapping activity is not sufficient: the 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

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

Devon has adopted a partnership approach to tackling the climate and nature emergency, recognising the important role that food systems play in reducing emissions, supporting biodiversity and improving resilience. Devon Climate Emergency brings together local authorities, emergency services, businesses and voluntary organisations to coordinate action across the county. Since declaring a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, partners have committed to achieving net zero, reversing nature loss and preparing communities for climate impacts.

Food is embedded within Devon's strategic climate response. The Devon Carbon Plan includes a dedicated food goal, "Everyone Can Choose a Healthy and Sustainable Diet", recognising the environmental and health benefits of sustainable food production and consumption. The Plan highlights the role of the Devon Food Partnership, local food hubs, sustainable retail provision and horticultural growing close to communities in delivering this ambition.

These priorities are reflected regionally through the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Strategy, which includes action to stimulate demand for locally

produced, environmentally sustainable food in order to strengthen food system resilience and reduce food miles.

The Devon Food Partnership contributes to this agenda by convening stakeholders, supporting sustainable food businesses and championing shorter supply chains. Through initiatives such as the Local Food Economy Working Group, People Planet Profit business support programme and its involvement in the Great South West's Food Security Place Board, the DFP helps connect climate, nature, health and economic development priorities.

Across Devon, practical action is also taking place to support more sustainable land management. Devon County Council has undertaken carbon flux studies across its landholdings, including the County Farms Estate, to better understand land-based emissions and opportunities for carbon sequestration. The County Farms Estate continues to support new entrant farmers, creating opportunities to embed sustainable farming practices within the next generation of farm businesses.

Nature recovery and food production are increasingly being considered together. The Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy recognises the importance of food-producing landscapes, including arable land, improved grassland and traditional orchards, in delivering both food security and biodiversity outcomes.

The Partnership also supports innovative projects that demonstrate how climate, nature and food objectives can be delivered simultaneously. For example, the Plymouth Fish Finger project is exploring opportunities to increase consumption of locally landed fish while engaging both fishing communities and consumers. Similarly, Devon residents and businesses can access training in regenerative agriculture and regenerative hospitality through programmes delivered by The Apricot Centre and its partners (see Key Issue 4.a), helping build the skills required for a more sustainable food system.

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

Reducing food waste and making better use of resources is an important part of creating a more sustainable food system in Devon. Activity is taking place across the county through businesses, community organisations, local authorities and voluntary groups to prevent food waste, redistribute surplus food and encourage more circular approaches to food production and consumption. All Devon households have weekly food waste collections that goes through the anaerobic digestion process to generate electricity, provide gas for the grid and fertiliser for agriculture.
The Devon Food Partnership (DFP) contributes to this agenda through its working groups, communications channels and business engagement activity. Waste reduction is a recurring theme within the People Planet Profit event series, where food and drink

businesses are supported to explore practical approaches to reducing waste, improving resource efficiency and lowering environmental impacts. DFP members from DCC Waste Management share innovations such as a recent project with WRAP that is testing and expanding interventions with residents who fail to participate in food waste collection. Through the Partnership's networks, examples of good practice are shared widely to encourage learning across the sector.

A key example is Food in Community CIC. By creating an additional market for produce that may otherwise go to waste, the initiative supports farmers, reduces food waste and increases the availability of local produce within schools and community food settings. Food redistribution plays an important role in Devon's response to food waste. Community food organisations across the county work with retailers, producers and distributors to redirect surplus food to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. Riverford Organics, for example, donates surplus vegetables to community food providers including Food in Community CIC (see Key Issue 1b), ensuring good-quality food remains within the food system rather than becoming waste. This initiative supports farmers by paying for their surplus, reduces food waste and increases availability of local produce within community settings.

The county also benefits from a strong network of community organisations promoting repair, reuse, composting and waste reduction. CAG Devon supports community groups involved in composting, growing, sharing and reducing waste, helping residents to take practical action within their communities. Through volunteer-led projects and local events, residents are encouraged to reduce household food waste and make better use of resources, for example via community fridges: Community Groups Map - Recycle Devon,

Many food festivals and public events across Devon are also taking steps to improve sustainability. Organisations such as Eat Festivals have adopted the Sustainable Festival Framework, which includes actions relating to waste reduction, recycling and resource management. These events provide opportunities to showcase sustainable approaches to food and event management while engaging thousands of residents and visitors each year.

Through partnership working, innovation and community action, Devon is helping to move towards a more circular food system in which food is valued, waste is prevented wherever possible and unavoidable surplus is redirected to benefit people and communities.

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

Through the Recycle Devon project, Devon County Council raises public awareness of issues around food waste. This includes providing advice on using leftovers, portion control,

composting and fridge management to residents. Events like agricultural shows and environmental days further support public engagement on food waste. Targeted campaigns are aimed at specific ages or Acorn groups and times like Halloween, engaging 35,000 social media followers. Subsidised compost bins and advice on the composting process are available; schools are supported through a contracted team who visit schools assemblies (e.g. Monster Bins) and workshops and whole school engagement is delivered to improve food waste management: Resources for Teachers & Parents - Zone. The Devon Food Partnership supports these campaigns and the team behind Recycle Devon are members of DFP.