SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2024

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at sfpawards@soilassociation.org to discuss the process.**

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

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024.
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: SFP Awards - Activity and Impact 2024

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 you 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*:
Birmingham Food Revolution / Birmingham Food System Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Dr Rosemary H. Jenkins, Senior Public Health Officer, Food System Team, Public Health, Birmingham City Council (BCC) Sarah Newton, Service Lead, Food System Team, Public Health, BCC Please contact us on foodsystemPH@birmingham.gov.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Birmingham local authority area
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:

Birmingham is England's second city and the largest local authority in Europe, with a population of over 1.1 million plus more who commute in to work in the city. Therefore, our urban food system has a huge impact on citizens and the world around us. We are based in the West Midlands, in the centre of England! Our Council is Labour-run.

Birmingham is renowned for its young and diverse population. 37% of our population is under the age of 25[1]. The 2021 census revealed that Birmingham is one of the first 'super diverse' cities in the UK, where citizens from ethnic 'minorities' make up more than half of the population (51.4%). Birmingham is home to people from 187 different nationalities, with 31% of our population as Asian or Asian British and 11% of our population is Black, Black British, Caribbean or African[2]. Additionally, 70% of the population has a religious affiliation, with 34% of the population identifying as Christian and 30% identifying as Muslim in the 2021 census. Birmingham is also recognised as a Local Authority of Sanctuary, demonstrating our commitment to working to support asylum seekers, refugees and

[1] Birmingham City Observatory, 2023. Population Overview. Available from: Microsoft Power BI

[2] Birmingham City Observatory, 2023. Census 2021 Ethnicity and Religion Highlight Briefing. Available from: Census 2021 Ethnicity and Religion Highlight Briefing (birmingham.gov.uk)

migrants and helping them settle in local communities[3]. Therefore, Birmingham is a thriving collective of different people, ethnicities, identities, backgrounds, languages, and religions. Historically Birmingham was always seen as the city of 1,000 trades; and as we move forward as a diverse and bold city, we are now the city of 1,000 cuisines.

Whilst there is so much to celebrate, there are also significant economic and social challenges in the city. Birmingham has high levels of deprivation – 43% of the population, and over half of Birmingham's children, live in the most deprived decile of Lower Layer Super Output Areas in the UK, making Birmingham the 3rd most deprived core city nationally[4]. This, combined with other factors such as high unemployment and crime rates in some areas, has implications for food and lead to significant inequalities in diets and health – we have high levels of food aid use and 47% of our population struggle to afford a nutritious diet. We also have issues with food access – the Priority Places for Food Index revealed that half of our ten constituencies ranked in the top 15 English constituencies where people are most likely to struggle to access affordable food, with Birmingham Hodge Hill being the worst constituency in England by this metric. Two thirds of adults in Birmingham are overweight or obese, and a quarter of children are obese by the time they leave primary school, with higher obesity rates in more deprived areas[5]. Therefore, tackling inequalities is at the heart of the Birmingham Food System Strategy and our city-wide partnership.

How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership (not scored)*? Advisory word limit: 300 words

ANSWER:

Birmingham being a "majority-minority ethnicity city", with a thriving LGBTQ+ community, a large young population, and strong communities of all forms, means that considering EDI in our structure and Partnership is a priority. The Birmingham Food System Strategy clearly outlines this with our three key principles of Collaborate, Empower, and Equalise that are the foundation for all the activity and action that takes place across our food system. Furthermore, we undertook an Equality Impact Assessment for the Birmingham Food System Strategy as part of the approval processes for the strategy. We have also created and established tools such as the Big Bold City Tool and the Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) Tool which enable us to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into everything our Partnership does. For example, we review membership of our Partnership and the relationships we have built annually, using these tools to identify where there are gaps in representation. We also use these tools when setting up working groups for new projects so we can reach out to people from communities who are particularly impacted by the issue, recognised as underrepresented or facing inequalities, and proactively ensure diverse voices are part of conversations and decisions. This approach has also enabled us to target funding and opportunities towards priority community groups and geographic areas to address existing

[3] Birmingham City Council, accessed 2023. City of Sanctuary. Available from: Introduction | City of Sanctuary | Birmingham City Council

[4] Birmingham City Council, 2019. Deprivation in Birmingham Analysis of the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. Available from: Deprivation_in_Birmingham_2019.pdf

[5] Office for Health & Disparities, 2023. Fingertips public health profile https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/adults%20obesity#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000005/ati/102/are/E08000025/iid/93088/age/168/sex/4

inequalities, and helps ensure our plans and actions are developed in a way that ensures we continually reflect on and improve our approach to EDI across all stages of delivery. Furthermore, in the last year we have begun to utilise the Ecosystem for Change model to help our Partnership ensure that different voices and perspectives are involved with the development of initiatives. The voices required are:

1. Voice of intent: People with the passion or motivation to take action; people with the authority or mandate to drive change.
2. Voice of design: People who can broker, facilitate and coordinate; people who can connect diverse communities; people who can represent and document progress accessibly.
3. Voice of capability: People with resources to contribute (money, labour); people with specialist knowledge, skills and tools; people with access to the problem space (e.g. worksites).
4. Voice of experience: People with lived experiences of the issue, and ground-level context; people who will be a user of, or affected by, the intervention.

Thus, we are committed to embedding meaningful equality, diversity and inclusion in our Partnership. Including underrepresented voices ensures our strategy and actions actually reflect and meet the needs of the communities most affected by food insecurity and poor health.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024 **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: Birmingham food system strategy 2022 to 2030 | Birmingham food system strategy | Birmingham City Council
2. **How are you evidencing this action plan?**
    - Attachment as a Word, PFF, Excel document? No
    - Link to an only document? Yes
    - If a link place here as well under Key Issue 1
    - Action Plan link: https://airtable.com/app3ulhGBqcWjbSOT/shrPDIY9lyjMPcYYD
3. **Has the action plan less than 6 months to run?**
    - No
    - If less than 6 months to run what is happening after the action plan expires? (100 words): N/A

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

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

In Birmingham we have a broad, representative and dynamic local food Partnership which operates across several levels. First, we have the Birmingham Food Revolution. This is our city-wide Partnership at the highest level, consisting of more than a hundred food system actors and acting as the umbrella for all of our food system work. This approach facilitates both top-down and grassroots approaches to food system transformation and means our Partnership is increasingly outward focused and dynamic. For the purposes of this application, when we talk about our Partnership, we primarily mean the Birmingham Food Revolution.

Under the umbrella of the Birmingham Food Revolution, we also have our formal Partnership – The Birmingham Food System Partnership. This was initially established as the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum in 2019, a strategic subforum of the Health and Wellbeing Board responsible for the writing of the Birmingham Food System Strategy. Meetings are chaired by Councillor Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and are co-ordinated by the Food System Team at Birmingham City Council. Thus, the work of our Partnership is actively recognised and endorsed by the Local Authority and other strategic bodies. The formal Birmingham Food System Partnership meetings are for invited key city changemakers who are able to operate at the strategic level required to oversee delivery of the Birmingham Food System Strategy and its action plan and take place quarterly. The Birmingham Food System Partnership has clear terms of reference which were recently updated in May 2025 following agreement by its 68 members, and operates in an open, transparent and democratic way (e.g. all members receive the meeting minutes, even if they could not make the meeting).

In addition to our main strategic forum, we also run topic and stakeholder specific action groups. These include established subgroups on procurement and food insecurity, and we are in the process of setting up further subgroups such as a school food action group. These groups are made up of diverse stakeholders from our Birmingham Food Revolution city-wide Partnership. This means that in Birmingham we have both strategic, high-level steering and input on the Birmingham Food System Strategy but also the more specific, granular and operational discussions and work to tackle specific food issues, overcome barriers, enable collaborations and catalyse food system change.

We are also committed to enabling and supporting a diverse approach to Partnership engagement as we recognise that not everyone can attend meetings during the working day. These include one-to-one meetings and meaningful relationships, mailing lists and video updates. Where there are people that want to engage but aren't able to join meetings or topic networks on a regular basis, our Partnership supports them to engage on a one-to-one basis or in other ways to ensure their voices are heard.

Partnership Members

There are more than 200 members of the Birmingham Food Revolution, including:

- Third sector organisations (e.g. food aid, growing, surplus food, community projects, and other charities such as Islamic Relief, FareShare, Trussell Trust, the Food Foundation, School Food Matters and Chefs in Schools)
- The health sector (e.g. NHS, nutrition projects, community dietitians, dentists)
- Academics (e.g. in food safety, food systems, behavioural science, health economics, business and the Mandala Consortium)
- Businesses (fruit and vegetable distributors, restaurants, and business networks)
- The Holidays, Activities and Food (HAF) Programme (Bring it on Brum!)
- Citizens including young people
- Councillors
- Local Authority Officers (including Food System, Inclusive Growth, Procurement, Inequalities)
- Growers and food producers
- Local markets
- Networks and expert opinion groups
- West Midlands focused organisations

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

In April 2023, Birmingham City Council adopted the city's new Food System Strategy that spans 2022-2030. We launched the Birmingham Food System Strategy on the 12th and 13th of October 2023 with an online event attended by over 200 people.

Strategy & Action Plan Development

Our journey as a city to develop a comprehensive Food System Strategy began in 2018 by listening to the needs of our citizens. Through the Birmingham Food Conversation we were able to reflect upon and understand the lived experience of over 400 citizens from Birmingham's diverse communities, captured through 33 facilitated focus groups. In addition, we ran the Birmingham Be Heard survey and 10 consultation events taking place at different settings including schools, colleges and universities, resulting in over 700 citizens in total responding to the draft strategy. The now published Birmingham Food System Strategy is a testament to years of hard work, collaboration, and dialogue with partners and citizens. From schools and universities to food producers, dietitians and food system experts, everyone had a part to play in shaping this strategy, and the strategy continues to be a roadmap for the whole city with regard to food system transformation.

Following the publishing of the Birmingham Food System Strategy, we also developed the Birmingham Food System Strategic Action Plan. This consists of several elements – a delivery log where we capture work that has been done in the city, an action plan which details work that is underway or planned and an ideas bank which captures ideas from various sources that have been proposed to support the delivery of the Birmingham Food System Strategy. Actions have a range of actors assigned to them; they are actions for the whole city not just the Council. We used the Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation tool also co-produced by the Partnership to assess, compare, and strengthen potential

actions to ensure that they are as impactful as possible. Through this tool we were able to assess whether proposed actions in the action plan are:

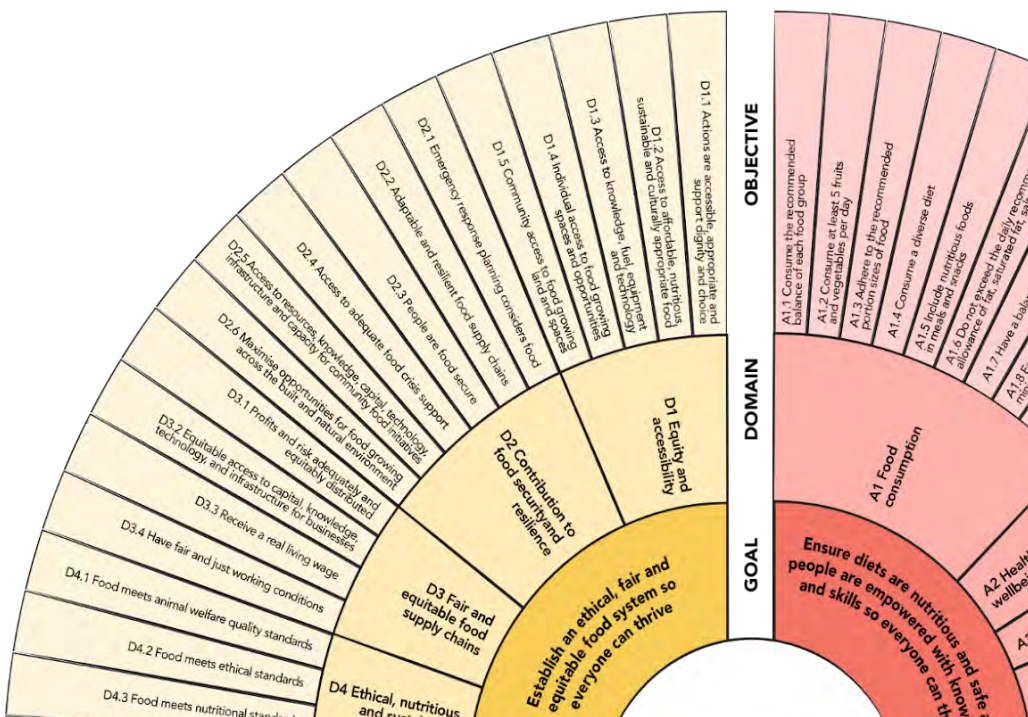
- People focused – putting citizens first, celebrating diversity, empowering.
- Working towards our ambition and addressing key priorities – addressing poverty and inequalities, healthy and safe, environmentally sustainable, economically sustainable.
- Effective and realistic – evidence-based, cost-effective, risk-aware and resilient, scaled and paced, learning and improving.

Our Brand - the Birmingham Food Revolution

The Birmingham Food Revolution works as both the overall Partnership but also as the brand and manifesto of our vision, ambitions, and principles as a food Partnership and movement. The Birmingham Food Revolution branding and community identity is a means to unite our city to deliver the change needed to improve our food system. The revolution has been building for years across the city with our Local Food Legends trailblazing inspirational actions such as community dining projects, composting initiatives, surplus food redistribution, cooking classes, behavioural science research into eating habits, growing projects, getting more local food into the supply chain and so much more. The Birmingham Food Revolution underpins our Food System Strategy.

Evaluation Framework

The Food System Partnership is responsible for delivering the action plan and measuring progress. As part of the latter, we have also developed the Transforming Urban Food Systems Outcomes Compass which helps ensure we are achieving our wide range of objectives. Here is our current version of the compass:



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

In 2024, we established the UK Urban Food Forum (UKUFF) as a national learning network for cities, aligned with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). UKUFF is designed for public sector officials working on food system transformation. It is not intended as a competitor to the SFP network; while SFP supports the development of effective local Partnerships and action, UKUFF provides a strategic, solution-focused space for officers to collaborate to overcome barriers to policy change in Local Authorities and to share best practice.

Since its launch in July 2024, the UKUFF has engaged over 30 officers from 15 local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. Six learning sessions have been held, covering themes such as food procurement, healthier advertising policy, urban growing, resilience, and dietary guidance. All the shared resources – including council strategies, motions, business cases and impact assessments – are stored in a closed Google Drive repository for all local government members to access on request. The network has now been handed over to The Food Foundation, who are well placed to lead it strategically in the long term.

We remain committed to international collaboration. The MUFPP is a European initiative supporting healthier food environments in urban areas, connecting 250 cities globally to exchange learning. In Autumn 2023, Birmingham was re-elected to represent Europe on the MUFPP Secretariat, alongside Barcelona. During our previous term, we launched the Food Justice Toolkit to help cities tackle food insecurity. In this new term, Birmingham is leading on food justice, cultural diversity, and governance. Our leadership plan has been published, and we've already contributed to one key aim—successfully submitting a collaborative proposal to Horizon Europe, resulting in the Bauhaus Bites initiative.

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. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver 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

The Birmingham Food Revolution is the umbrella brand through which all of our work happens, including inspiring and engaging the public about good food. Our brand also includes Local Food Legends, key figures in our Food System who can inspire and engage the public about good food. We have produced 7 videos showcasing our Local Food Legends, for example this video of Pip's Hot Sauce. Everything we do is focused on building our food revolution movement and supporting our citizens to thrive through good food.

Diverse Eating Guidance

A key way that our Partnership has been working in this area is through our Diverse Eating Guidance. The Diverse Eating Guidance project was initiated to address the limitations of the national Eatwell

Guide, which was recognised as difficult to understand, hard to follow for daily guidance, and not culturally diverse, which is especially a challenge for us given our super-diverse population in Birmingham. Following desk research, interviews, focus groups and other exploratory work, we have developed our core eating guide resources. These include guides on eating well, food groups, foods High in Fat, Sugar or Salt, and wider wellbeing, and we have also recently published guidance specifically for individuals to support behaviour change. Therefore, these aim to inspire and engage the public about good food in a way which honours and celebrates their ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. We are now working on developing and testing resources with professionals and communities in order to expand our suite of resources.

Campaigns

We have also sought to inspire and engage the public about good food through various campaigns, such as Fibre February, World Pulses Day, Growing Week and Fizz Free February. In particular, our Cook the Commonwealth campaign was part of our local good food movement and used the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to celebrate our diverse food heritage. We captured more than 800 recipes in total with at least 10 recipes for each of the 72 different Commonwealth countries - the majority of recipes were from the online scoping but more than 70 came from local chefs, members of the community, and tourist agencies. The recipes were uploaded to Whisk (now Samsung Food), an online recipe platform and app which is free to download and which was developed in Birmingham, making these recipes accessible to all citizens of Birmingham. In order to ensure that the recipes being shared were nutritious, we had a cohort of 19 dieticians test, tweak and photograph 267 recipes (a third of the recipes included in the project). Overall, the dietitians involved in this project gave very positive feedback about taking part, for example: "I really enjoyed cooking all the recipes and discovering new foods and techniques and others that felt quite familiar." They wrote a positive article for the BDA website, which can be found here. Overall, the dietitians increased the median health score of the 180 tweaked recipes from 5.1 to 7.3 out of 10. They also removed a total of 11,000 calories and 1,370g fat, whilst adding 380g of protein to these recipes.

We developed online recipe 'communities' e.g. recipes for gatherings, dietitians' pick (each dietitian gave their top two recipes following their testing, tweaking and photographing), and community picnic (created in partnership with the Birmingham Community Games, this consisted of recipes that could be cooked in advance and taken to a picnic). We also created resources for gatherings, cooking together as a family over the summer and picnics. The gatherings resource included medals which could be printed off following a cookery competition-style dinner party. We ran a social media campaign for Cook the Commonwealth. Minor Weir and Willis shared the cooking together as a family resource with 2,300 schools in the West Midlands. The Picnics resource was shared by the Community Games on their social media pages and they wrote a blog about Cook the Commonwealth. We also took the project into the community to engage with Birmingham citizens face to face. We shared the recipes – sometimes using an interactive "where in the world" game – at 12 different community events.

We evaluated this programme using data provided by Whisk. In total, the recipes in the Cook the Commonwealth communities were viewed 39,000 times. Views of recipes by people in Birmingham (5,000) made up 22% of total UK views (22,000), demonstrating a much higher level of engagement

with recipes on the app than normal where Birmingham views tend to only make up 2% of UK views. Overall, the recipes had a median health score of 7.2, and there was not much difference in healthfulness of recipes viewed in Birmingham compared to the rest of the UK – the average healthfulness of recipes viewed in Birmingham was 6.2. Birmingham's most viewed dishes were: bacon and egg pie, pumpkin soup, Grenadian chicken stew, family corned beef, cauliflower soup, coconut-baked chicken and khalay choley.

Citizen-Focused Initiatives

Throughout the Birmingham Food Revolution, we have sought to meet our citizens where they are at and engage and inspire them with the resources and information that they need. We identified that a barrier to people eating good food was confusion about how food is labelled. Therefore, we have developed a resource capturing different food awards, standards, badges and labels, scoping their strengths and limitations, and making it clear what they mean for different people including those in food procurement, food businesses, and in the home. This involved a complex analysis of sustainability food labels, certifications and schemes in the UK, combining a survey and desk research with direct outreach to key stakeholders from each of the 27 schemes in our extensive remit. As part of the project, we engaged with food policy experts from over 10 institutions including from City St George's (University of London), the Sustainable Food Trust, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to review the guide. We have also developed a Food Safety at Home platform which ensures that food safety resources for the home are accessible and practical. The platform provides direct answers to common food safety questions through resources that are engaging and informed by behavioural science.

Our Partnership has also worked to provide training and volunteering opportunities to develop food growing, cooking, processing, and enterprise. The Birmingham Food Revolution has catalysed many community initiatives which have led to more than 2000 people attending cooking classes in the city and a further 2000+ people being involved in growing projects. These have been attended by people from all social and cultural backgrounds, representing Birmingham's diversity. The Partnership has also run a project aimed specifically at increasing the number of volunteers at community food initiatives in Birmingham by piloting a new approach to capacity-building involving making volunteering in community food initiatives more accessible, with a particular focus on Birmingham's large population of university students. We are now in the second phase of this work which is a pilot programme of mentoring and upskilling young people to encourage a next generation of dynamic community food leaders in Birmingham. This has involved a series of training workshops delivered by a community dietitian with expertise in the third sector, combined with a mentoring programme supported by successful figures in Birmingham's community food sector. It is now providing part-time paid employment to support volunteers to transition from community food volunteering to employment. Thus, this demonstrates our commitment to inspiring and engaging the public about food by ensuring active participation in community food initiatives and the wider food system.

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

We have undertaken a range of actions to foster food citizenship and a local good food movement. The Food Justice Network who are part of the Birmingham Food System Partnership is a network of community food initiatives and leaders, established in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and now a key part of the community food infrastructure in the city. They have regular meetings to share inspiration and resources, and also have a WhatsApp group which helps support community food action in the city. They have also developed the Food Justice Network map of foodbanks, food pantries, community cafés and other groups; this has had more than 925,000 views since 2021. The Food Justice Network has buy-in from the Council who have provided funding for a Food Justice Network co-ordinator and support to validate the map and ensure it is updated as it is such a vital asset for the city. This map has also been used as the foundation to our food resilience map which adds the layer of growing spaces, composting sites and other resilience initiatives onto this. As Birmingham is so large, we have committed to having a hyper-local approach to fostering food citizenship as we expect that a city-wide campaign would not reach our diverse communities to the extent that we would want them to be reached.

This is reflected in our work on growing. As above, we have mapped growing sites and also put together resources to support growing in local communities. We undertook some work in 2021-2022 to explore the barriers and facilitators to growing locally including the processes involved with land-use and develop recommendations for action within Birmingham City Council. This has fed into work since; the Partnership has also financially supported the development of 13 new growing sites in the city and improved or added additional capacity to a further 23 existing growing sites. We have also developed a 'how to' growing guide for schools and community groups through a pilot project at a school in the Northwest of the city.

One really exciting new development for the Birmingham Food Revolution is the Birmingham Artisan Markets which were started in 2023 with the simple mission to create a space where local artisans could share their work with the community. These markets are run for producers by producers and celebrate the power of handmade, the beauty of small-batch production, and the importance of supporting local businesses. Since starting in just one location, the markets are now held in five locations across Birmingham, each one carefully selected to provide a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere. There is a high quality and diversity of market vendors, ensuring that every market offers something new and exciting. Artisan producers at the markets include fruits and vegetables, cheese, chocolate, meats, street food, baked items, and a wide range of other goods.

The Birmingham Food Legends Fund

Another key Birmingham Food Revolution initiative to foster food citizenship and grow our local good food movement is a small grants programme to support local community food initiatives. We ran the Birmingham Food Legends Fund Round 1 in March 2023 (to March 2024) and Round 2 in March 2025 (to March 2026). The grant schemes were run to celebrate the launch and ongoing work of the Birmingham Food Revolution respectively. The grants aim to support initiatives that align with the Birmingham Food System Strategy's vision of creating a fair, sustainable, and prosperous food system and economy where food options are nutritious, affordable, and desirable so everyone can thrive. 55 grants of up to £10,000 were provided in the two rounds in total and were for not-for-

profit organisations working within the Birmingham local authority area. The projects were expected to fit into one or more of the work streams of the Birmingham Food System Strategy: Food Production, Food Waste & Recycling, Food Economy & Employment, Food Safety & Standards, and Food Skills & Knowledge. Applicants also needed to demonstrate how their proposals followed the key principles and priorities of the strategy. This grant scheme was chosen as an exploratory way to fund different initiatives across the food system and build momentum for the Birmingham Food Revolution. Our open approach of asking organisations to submit proposals of potential activities that they had identified themselves meant that we were able to support local initiatives and enable a range of food system actions while making the most of local food system expertise. We feel that this quote from a recipient exemplifies the role of these grants in fostering a local good food movement: *"To be honest, I found this process and funding a breath of fresh air. Often, the process is so clunky and delayed that opportunities are missed. Small pots that are easy to access and deliver are a great way to sow the seeds of a movement."*

The Birmingham Food Legends Fund led to positive impacts reported by the grant recipients. Practically, the fund supported greater and wider access to resources, fruits and vegetables, and growing spaces. It enabled groups to purchase equipment and establish infrastructure that will have a lasting impact. As of summer 2024, all funded groups were continuing their work after the grant period, indicating a catalytic effect. The fund also provided opportunities for learning, testing, and reflection, which are expected to benefit Birmingham's food system beyond the individual projects. Socially, the projects fostered a sense of community and social cohesion, helped people get involved and build friendships, and provided welcoming environments for diverse groups. They also encouraged volunteering and raised awareness of local food issues. Organisations benefited from networking and building relationships within the food system. In terms of skills and knowledge, participants gained expertise in cooking, growing, foraging, and food hygiene, and also gained general employment skills. Knowledge was translated into practical application at home, potentially leading to long-term changes in dietary habits and increased consumption of nutritious food. Projects also inspired and motivated people, empowered them, and gave them hope for the future.

Good Food Citizenship in Young People

Another exciting development is our work on a good food movement in schools in Birmingham. We are in the process of setting up a school food action group as a subgroup of our Partnership, and several of our Birmingham Food Revolution members are doing work in this space. School Food Matters are running their Young Marketeers project in 11 primary schools; the project enables children to learn about local and environmental impacts of food, grow their own vegetables, engage in food marketing and sell their harvests at a community market in the Bullring in July. Seven schools are also involved in School Food Matters' Garden Gurus project, which works with primary schools to create food-growing gardens and gives staff the skills and confidence to lead gardening programmes independently. We have recently confirmed that Birmingham will be one of a handful of locations outside London involved in a new Nourish programme by School Food Matters. The programme uses a whole school approach, involving everyone across the school community - from parents and catering staff to school governors and students. There are workshops for staff and parents to build the skills and confidence needed to offer healthy alternatives and co-production with students to transform school food policy changes, recipes and menu design. Veg Power, also

part of the Birmingham Food Revolution, have also initiated work in 100 Birmingham schools to support children and families to eat more beans. Chefs in Schools are also working in 8 schools to support them with practical advice and training to improve their food and food culture. Finally, the Food Foundation are also undertaking work to improve early years food in the city and maximise the impact of family hubs on diets and nutrition. Birmingham Food Revolution members, the University of Birmingham and Aston University, are undertaking a collaborative project to map policies to improve healthy eating in primary schools, funded by the University of Birmingham's Policy Support Fund, which will lead to policy recommendations and further evidence-based action. Thus, while these initiatives are run by different organisations, they have been influenced and catalysed by the Birmingham Food Revolution, and we plan for the school food action group to ensure synergistic work in this space.

Furthermore, the Birmingham Food Revolution has also undertaken a considerable amount of work to support food citizenship among our youth population. Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe and so we believe that investing in the young people in our city is vital in fostering food citizenship and lighting the sparks of a local good food movement. We have engaged with Bite Back on food advertising and met with them during our strategy consultation to hear their views about the improvements needed to our food system. We undertook a co-production project called Harnessing the Youth Voice with young people as food system researchers, to establish how they see their local food systems and what changes they would like to see. This led to them developing several tools including an app to help improve their food environment. Additionally, the HAF programme has been working to support food citizenship in their young leaders – a need was identified that the young leaders working within holiday club settings didn't share the approaches and ethos to healthy lifestyle activities that would support the young children, who followed the young leaders as role models more avidly than adult staff. We developed a social action project whereby young leaders were supported to understand their role within HAF settings. They were encouraged to challenge their thinking and approach to food using recent research, Youtube videos and discussions. Each group was given a small amount of funding to design, co-ordinate and deliver a project to engage their local community with food as a core element. Projects have ranged from a charity bake sale to making soup to donate to a project supporting our homeless population.

Furthermore, in January 2023, we provided funding to ensure that each youth centre, run by Partnership members the Birmingham Youth Service, had access to an adequate and functional cooker, microwave, toaster, slow cooker, air fryer, sandwich maker, smoothie maker, water boiler and fridge freezer. The funding also ensured that there were enough pans, cooking trays, crockery, cups, and cutlery at each youth centre. The items provided varied across the different youth centres as what was purchased was based on need. This grant therefore supported the youth centres with more capacity to provide hot nutritious meals to the young people using their services – they provided 57,600 meals to young people over 2023. The grant also meant that Youth Centres could be places for people to develop new skills around food preparation, cooking and budgeting, and then share this knowledge and information to other young people and their families. Therefore, our work to improve the youth centre kitchen equipment has been successful in increasing the capacity of the youth centres to provide hot, nutritious food to the people using their services and has been part of our good food movement through upskilling young people around good food.

As part of our good food movement, we have also recognised the value that engaging with young people around future food system careers can have. The Villa Catering Club is an eight-week course designed to upskill young people in starting a food business, gaining qualifications in catering and hospitality, and providing real life work experience; so far more than 100 young people have done the course. To extend this further, a forensic vehicle has been transformed into a state-of-the-art street food catering and education facility, providing both food and education on Aston Villa match days. The Pump, a community café in the East of the city, also worked with young people to help them become food / culinary content creators on YouTube, Twitch and TikTok. Finally, we have collated a resource which captures the range of courses at local colleges and universities which relate to the food system. This will feed into a wider project that aims to raise awareness of skills pathways and routes into jobs in the food system and strengthen the skills and competencies of the food system workforce.

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

N/A

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. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

Tackling food poverty is embedded in the Birmingham Food System Strategy and a key aim of our Partnership. Our three principles for the strategy are collaborate (strengthen partnerships and build on existing good practice), empower (remove barriers and facilitate solutions), and equalise (focus actions where they are needed most to reduce inequalities). We believe that all of the actions listed in this application form help reduce inequalities in different ways, but we have a specific cross-cutting theme on food security and resilience, which seeks to increase access to sufficient affordable, nutritious and safe food for all citizens, all the time, in every community, and at every age. To facilitate work specifically on food insecurity, we have run a working group on food insecurity since Autumn 2022. This group consists of a range of key stakeholders including the Trussell Trust, Fareshare, foodbanks, community cafés, affordable food models, the HAF programme, researchers, Foodcycle, on-street feeding groups and Birmingham City Council; interventions have been co-created with this group and several of this group have also served as independent funding panel members for food insecurity grants.

Food Insecurity Measurement

It is challenging to measure food insecurity – there is some measurement at the national level but this does not have the granularity for us to explore food insecurity at the Birmingham level, so we tend to use foodbank use as a proxy measure for food insecurity. This leads to two challenges with the work we have done so far. Firstly, as we have increased access and capacity of food projects

through the various Cost of Living grants, this data would show that food insecurity is increasing. In actuality, these projects have been increasing the supply of food to meet the already existing demand. Second, food insecurity is a scale ranging from mild to moderate to severe. The proxies we use do not give us any sense of the severity of food insecurity, only the prevalence. It is possible that some of the actions we have taken may decrease the severity of food insecurity, which we cannot see in any of these measures. Thus, there are challenges with measuring the impact of actions on food insecurity. We have sought to overcome these in a number of different ways. First, we commissioned Dorset Public Health's department to do some food insecurity modelling using census data and the Eatwell Guide. This revealed as a conservative estimate that 2% of people in Birmingham are experiencing severe food poverty, 25% are food insecure and a further 20% do not have enough money to be able to eat a nutritious diet aligned to the national Eatwell Guide – this added up to ~546,000 people (47% of the population) struggling to afford a nutritious diet in the city. Secondly, the Partnership has run two rounds of the City-Wide Food Aid Count where we asked the community food sector to count the numbers of people utilising their food provision in one week in March, in 2023 and 2025. This provided a snapshot of food aid use. In 2023, 138 food projects reported that 13,604 people visited a foodbank or other food project, feeding at least 19,013 people (an average of 112 people per food project). In 2025, 22,367 visits were made to a foodbank or other food project (an average of 163 visits per food project). Taking food back to the household meant at least 30,240 people were fed from those visits. Thus, there may have been an increase in food aid Two thirds (66%) of organisations felt that the numbers of people using their project had definitely increased since the 2023 survey. One particularly useful finding of this was that Trussell Trust foodbank users accounted for less than 5% of food project users in the city, which means that when utilising Trussell Trust data as a proxy we know the level to which this data is an underestimation of total foodbank use.

Access to Food

Through Council reserves and the Household Support Fund, the Food Partnership has unlocked nearly £2.5 million in grants for more than 175 projects in the community food sector to purchase food and other consumables to support their food provision. These were through the Emergency Food Aid Fund (winter 2022-2023), the Supplementary Food Aid Fund (spring 2023), the Winter Food Aid Fund (winter 2023-24), and the two rounds of top-up grant funding (autumn 2024 and spring 2025 respectively). We have received a huge number of testimonials from grant recipients which suggest that these grant schemes have been vital in keeping food projects going during the cost-of-living crisis: "*The Emergency Food Aid Fund has given us breathing space. We provide 1300 meals a week on average through our foodbank and pantry-style provision, and so cost of food has really hit us. Supply issues, something we hadn't considered, have also meant having to buy food quickly which also costs more money. The fund has meant that we have time to build up our reserves and plan for the future, and think long term rather than from crisis to crisis."* We have also received qualitative evidence that the grants have facilitated getting food support to those in our city who are experiencing food poverty, for example: "*Before I found [the food project], I was struggling to survive on the streets. I often went days without a hot meal, which took a toll on my health and well-being. But now, thanks to you, I can count on a hot meal every week Friday night. It might not seem like much to some people, but to me, it's a lifeline."* This exemplifies the experience of the thousands of people who accessed the projects that we supported through the Food Aid Funds.

Members of the Birmingham Food System Partnership - the Mandala Consortium - have also undertaken a rigorous academic evaluation of these grant schemes. Qualitative interviews highlighted the importance of the funding to organisations. For some, funding was used to diversify their food offer and purchase a greater quantity of food. For others, the funding was viewed as essential for them to run their programme for an additional length of time, extending the supply of food they had to distribute. While some long-term outcomes such as being more networked in Birmingham's community food sector were identified, findings also highlighted the precarity of many organisations from year to year in the context of rising food insecurity. Our Partnership is involved in a wide range of research to ensure we are both exhibiting best practice and extending the research base in the area of food insecurity – this includes research on HAF, experiences of families with food insecurity, non-price costs of food that affect food purchasing, learning from emergency food aid responses during COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis and impacts of surplus food hubs on food insecurity.

In addition to supporting the community food sector, we have also directly supported citizens in need. In February 2024, we provided £20 supermarket vouchers to the families of 116,500 children living in deprived areas and / or on Free School Meals, as this is when children are most likely to experience holiday hunger. We used a universal approach for schools in deprived areas as evidence suggested an additional 30,000 children in Birmingham were living in poverty who were not eligible for Free School Meals, plus children on free school meals in other areas. This equated to 56% of children in Birmingham receiving a voucher through Birmingham's 441 schools. We have had feedback from schools that these vouchers were beneficial for the families that received them, which was also demonstrated by the high redemption rate by those who received vouchers. We have also provided 28,000 meals through the Holidays, Activities and Food Programme food parcel scheme over Christmas 2022 to provide food to families in need at the beginning of the Cost-of-Living crisis.

In addition to this direct support, we have also undertaken further work to ensure that people in Birmingham have access to the benefits that they are entitled to. Birmingham has undertaken in depth work to increase access to Healthy Start vouchers over the last few years through strategic investment, inclusive policy development, and robust partnerships within the community, such as increasing awareness amongst midwives. Our Healthy Start vitamins programme employs a universal approach by providing free vitamins to all pregnant women and families with children under four, regardless of income, thereby eliminating barriers and reducing potential stigma associated with targeted interventions. Access has been expanded via over 160 distribution sites, with a further aim to increase this to 200 by 2027. Furthermore, the city has invested in awareness initiatives, professional training, and engagement activities to promote participation and ensure the programme's ongoing success. Our food Partnership has also been working to co-locate Information, Advice and Guidance services in foodbanks; all 9 of the Trussell Trust foodbanks in the city have benefits and debt advice available for those using the foodbank and at least 15 further foodbanks run financial support and information, advice, and guidance.

Capacity of the Community Food Sector

In addition to our work to increase access to nutritious food, we have also sought to increase the capacity of the community food sector in Birmingham to provide high quality food provision for

people who might otherwise go hungry. We also ran the Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund, which aimed to increase the capacity of 67 food projects in Birmingham. Overall, organisations reported 6,650 more users following the Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund (across the 41 projects that reported numbers), representing a percentage increase of 65%. More than half of respondents also reported that the funding helped their project to reach more types of people. Grant recipients listed the ways that the grant had increased their capacity. Benefits of the improved infrastructure included: increased efficiencies and streamlined services; increased menu offerings and the ability to stock a wider range of products; wider opening hours and new sessions; increasing longevity for projects thanks to being able to fix or upgrade old equipment; increased opportunities for new streams of work; improved storage; and improved food safety. Grant recipients also noted positive impacts in terms of provision of culturally appropriate food and community connectedness. Here is an example testimonial for the grant: *"Overall, the Affordable Food Infrastructure [Fund] has played a pivotal role in the project's successes by enhancing food accessibility, expanding reach, fostering collaborations, improving frequency and consistency of support, and receiving positive community feedback. These achievements highlight the project's ability to effectively address food insecurity and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need."*

Following the initiation of six affordable food models through the Affordable Food Infrastructure Fund, we wanted to support more Affordable Food Models in specific areas of the city where there are high levels of food poverty and deprivation and no existing Affordable Food Models. Affordable Food Models are food pantries and clubs and social supermarkets – they offer food at a reduced price or through paid membership, thereby acting as a halfway house between a supermarket and a foodbank, and therefore are potentially effective at preventing severe food insecurity. We ran the Affordable Food Models grant scheme which took a targeted approach to increasing the number of Affordable Food Models in specified and targeted areas of the city. Guidance was provided to ensure funded organisations followed best practice in initiating their Affordable Food Models, while at the same time flexing to meet the needs of their local community. Through the Household Support Fund, the Affordable Food Models grant scheme supported the initiation of two brand new affordable food model projects, the addition of an affordable food model to an existing food bank in two locations, and the conversion of a foodbank to an affordable food model in one location.

The Partnership has worked to increase food provision capacity in the city by setting up a food hub to support third-sector organisations providing emergency food to individuals living in Birmingham. Narthex Foodbank, already Birmingham's largest foodbank hub, in collaboration with other organisations in Birmingham and supported by the Household Support Fund, set up a food distribution hub in three warehouse units in Tyseley, a deprived area in East Birmingham. The economies of scale created by centralising bulk sourcing and purchasing, effective storage, and reduction in distribution/collection costs are able to better support the needs of the other emergency food providers by ensuring a more robust emergency food supply chain. The hub provides £94,315 of total annual savings across its network of 30 food aid providers, representing a 25-30% reduction in food procurement costs for those organisations through bulk purchasing power; 70% of them also eliminated or significantly reduced storage expenses. Through these 30 food aid providers, the hub supports 87,984 households per year. Other benefits of the hub have included reduced transport costs, prompt delivery, collaborative network support and more reliable

supply chains. We have also supported setting up a surplus food hub to support with diverting fresh and cooked food to community food projects (see section 6B for more details).

In addition to supporting the capacity of food projects, we also sought to upskill them both to design and deliver their work in ways that uphold the dignity of service users and ensure they have access to nutritious food. We undertook a review of shame and stigma and foodbank use and co-created a Shame and Stigma Toolkit as a Partnership, drawing on the multitude of experiences of those in the Partnership. The Shame and Stigma toolkit provides recommendations for food projects around the themes of 1) creating a safe space for volunteers and clients, 2) creating a welcoming atmosphere, 3) decreasing shame associated with provision of food, 4) fostering dignity and choice through affordable food models, and 5) preventing foodbank use through holistic support. We have already received feedback from food projects that the toolkit has been useful, and we have used the principles of the review and toolkit to guide our work in this area (e.g. the value of affordable food models from the review / toolkit underpinned our affordable food models grant scheme). Furthermore, we have been aware throughout our work in this area that food insecurity is a lack of access to nutritious food due to a lack of money or other resources. Through our work with foodbanks and other food projects during the Cost-of-Living crisis, we identified that there was a need to upskill these organisations around how to provide a nutritious food parcel. We developed guidance on how to put together a nutritious food aid parcel for people experiencing food insecurity. This guide included details and lists of fruits and vegetables, carbohydrate-rich and starchy foods, protein-rich foods, dairy and dairy alternatives, and foods High in Fat, Sugar or Salt. It also included things to consider such as access to refrigeration facilities, access to cooking facilities, Healthy Start eligibility and dietary requirements and cultural preferences. Finally, the guidance included an example of a nutritionally balanced 3-day food parcel for a family of 4. We sent the guidance round to all food projects in Birmingham and we now require food aid fund grant scheme recipients to read the guidance and confirm that they will consider how to improve the nutritional quality of their food parcel.

Real Living Wage

Finally, Birmingham City Council has been accredited by the Living Wage Foundation since 2012, paying "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" to its employees. In its role as an 'anchor institution' in Birmingham, paying the Real Living Wage sends a key message to partners and local employers about the type of city we want to be. The Real Living Wage is an important aspect of the Council's Social Value Policy and the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility and forms part of all contracts. Organisations, subcontractors and partners are therefore encouraged to raise awareness of the Real Living Wage along with better health and wellbeing, better prospects and better lives. The Council promotes the Real Living Wage on its website and social media, on signage, at workshops and at 'Meet the Buyer' supply chain events.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

Full of Beans & the Holidays, Activities and Food Programme (Bring it on Brum!)

We have done lots of work to promote healthy eating, including the Diverse Eating Guidance and campaigns already described above. Furthermore, the Birmingham Food System Partnership has worked collaboratively to launch the "Full of Beans" campaign which aims to increase the supply,

demand and consumption of beans and pulses across the city. Beans and pulses have numerous benefits as they are great for the planet, affordable and nutritious. We created a large collection of recipes to be utilised in the campaign. We worked with the British Dietetic Association to capture 250 recipes, which use beans and pulses, on the online platform Samsung Food. All recipes were produced by registered dieticians and had to meet the criteria of being tasty, nutritious and culturally diverse to celebrate the diversity of Birmingham. The Full of Beans recipes were grouped into Samsung Food communities, such as affordable and low equipment recipes, which people could explore to find recipes which meet their needs. This provided communities and organisations across the city with access to healthy recipes at no cost.

We then delivered our pilot intervention, which was supported by the EU Horizon 2020 Programme Food Trails project, with children attending the Holidays Activities and Food (HAF) programme holiday clubs during the 2023 summer holidays. We chose children as our key population as childhood is an important time for developing food preferences and behaviours and early exposure to a variety of foods can encourage positive attitudes towards food. We decided to deliver our first intervention within the HAF programme as it supports the most deprived children and families in the city and has a track record of high levels of engagement with these children; plus Bring it on Brum (who run the HAF programme) are part of our Food Partnership. The intervention gave up to 4,200 children attending 70 of the Holidays Activities and Food Programme the opportunity to grow peas, taste four types of beans and pulses and take part in cooking activities. It also facilitated exploring approaches and interventions to increase children's acceptance and demand for healthy and sustainable food. There were three resource booklets created, including a Kids' Club Leader Guide, a Kids' Activity Pack and a Discover Beans and Pulses Booklet. Based on feedback from providers, we adapted the pilot resources for use at the Easter 2024 HAF programme and the Summer 2025 HAF programme, with the resources being made available online through their portal. By developing effective interventions with beans and pulses, we plan to apply this learning to other target foods in future projects, such as green leafy vegetables.

We are delivering two new projects as part of the Full of Beans campaign work to sustain the momentum of the campaign:

- Children and Young People Intervention and Resources: We are developing additional resources for use in various settings, such as education settings, to expand the Full of Beans resource collection.

- Business Intervention and Resources: We are working with the British Nutrition Foundation to create the initial tools, guides and resources to encourage food businesses to transform the food offer towards beans and pulses. These resources will aim to encourage the protein transition of Birmingham citizens, reduce the environmental impact of our city's food economy, and celebrate the diversity of the food offer in Birmingham (see section 4B).

- Investigating and scoping the current landscape for bean, legume and pulse cultivation in the UK: We are working on a feasibility study to scope out viability of local Beans Legumes and Pulses production (see section 5B).

In addition to the Full of Beans work, Bring it on Brum! has also been running the Hakuna Fruitata programme which aims to give children and young people interactive, low-pressure experiences

with fresh produce and food preparation. Developed specifically for Birmingham by HAF programme managers and food partnership members StreetGames, Hakuna Fruitata aims to create a "no worries" environment so young people feel comfortable exploring food with no judgement. Over the past three years, Hakuna Fruitata has provided support, training, resources and inspiration to over 300 organisations, helping them to offer increased opportunities for young people and their families to engage with healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The programme has been proven to increase the confidence and skills of both young HAF attendees and the local organisation provider staff delivering the HAF programme. Young people who were initially reluctant to try fruit or vegetables became more open to experimenting after the blindfolded tasting sessions which prompted them to re-think their food assumptions. A HAF programme provider said: *"We cannot thank the Hakuna Fruitata team enough for the energy, creativity, and impact they have brought to our summer camp. The programme has gone far beyond just "healthy eating", it has sparked genuine curiosity, laughter, and learning among our young people, who have embraced the sessions with open minds and open hearts."* We also have seen evidence that Hakuna Fruitata has created lasting change beyond the holidays. Parents have shared that after Hakuna Fruitata sessions, children began asking for fruit instead of sweets, got excited about trying new foods they'd never touched before, and were generally more positive at mealtimes.

Policy-Making to Promote Healthy Eating

Furthermore, as a Partnership we are exploring how we can utilise planning processes to ensure access to affordable healthy food where people live and work. The Healthy Place-Making Toolkit is part of a collection of documents leveraging the planning system to promote healthy neighbourhoods for all residents. It offers guidance and supporting information to assist in preparing Health Impact Assessments, as mandated by the proposed policy HN12 Healthy Neighbourhoods outlined in the Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Document. This work is still in draft format and we are continuing to shape the document to ensure the planning system is leveraged to promote healthy and affordable food in wider council processes.

We are also delivering a food policy exploration in order to shape effective public health policies to improve children's eating habits in schools and childcare settings. The key targets are (a) to explore existing and previous public health policies about children's healthy eating to identify effective characteristics, (b) to understand how co-designed policies to support children's healthy eating can be appropriately and effectively implemented into childcare settings, and (c) to triangulate shared knowledge into a strategy for developing future healthy eating policies. We are working with the council's Healthy Schools team to ensure the policy recommendations will be incorporated into their framework.

More widely, we have explored key issues debated within food system policy, such as consumption of animal products, plant-based diets and ultra-processed foods, in order to finalise the stance of the Birmingham Food Revolution. This included producing a document in response to queries surrounding the plant-based treaty. This has enhanced the Partnership's ability to make informed, evidence-based decisions and to align with national approaches. Furthermore, a clear stance has helped us to provide the rationale for actions when promoting healthy eating. This is demonstrated in the Birmingham Eating Guidance Exploration report where we summarised the evidence based to define what a healthy and sustainable diet looks like. We have also run a research-practice

collaboration project with a National Institute for Health Research School for Public Health Research PhD student who has been examining the evidence around Ultra-Processed Foods to develop evidence-based recommendations for Local Authorities as there is a gap in the literature here. we are also exploring and adopting novel approaches to promote healthy eating. The Birmingham Food System Partnership is also currently providing discounted recipe boxes to citizens to facilitate research into whether recipe box subscriptions can lead to healthier dietary patterns.

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

We are committed to supporting other organisations and cities in these areas. The Birmingham Food System Partnership launched the Global Food Justice Pledge in 2021 at the 7th Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Global Forum. The GFJP emphasises the need for cross-cutting policies to create and support an affordable, nutritious, and sustainable food system for all citizens, irrespective of social or economic resource. As part of this we have developed a large and comprehensive resource collating the range of actions cities can undertake to address food insecurity and justice. 85 of our foodbanks and community food projects demonstrated their support for Birmingham's signing of the Global Food Justice Pledge.

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. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver 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

The Birmingham Food System Strategy is clear about our need to support our city's economy and make the most of good food's potential for economic development. This is demonstrated by the three pillars of our strategy in creating a regenerative food system: communities, environment and economy.

Sustainable Food & Hospitality

The Council's tourism team are an active part of the Birmingham Food Revolution which helps us to ensure alignment of tourism work with the Birmingham Food System Strategy. Birmingham has been benchmarked using the GDS Index of the Global Destination Sustainability Movement. Birmingham has a score of 44% and has been using the index as a roadmap to improve our sustainability as a tourist destination, which includes a current rethink of how to embed sustainability across the visitor economy to support regenerative tourism that benefits communities, the environment, and the economy. As part of this we are also providing funding for attractions, hotels, and conference venues to get Green Tourism Accreditation and improve their approaches. To achieve accreditation, businesses need to be providing local food and drink, ethical and responsibly sourced food and drink, healthy and vegan / vegetarian options and also food for special or religious dietary requirements. They also need to be considering and addressing biodiversity, supply chains and energy, water use,

and waste including single use items and food waste. To date, five Birmingham businesses have received silver and bronze awards, and a further twelve have signed up to the programme. This demonstrates the breadth to which we are considering food as part of economic development and sustainability.

We have also been working to support food businesses to be sustainable in a way that is a tool for prosperity. We have developed Sustainability and Accessibility hubs on the Visit Birmingham website which provide resources to help upskill food businesses in these areas, framed in a way that helps their profit margins and economic sustainability. We've also put together a resource collating the full range of resources and support that is available to food businesses in a range of topic areas including food safety, sustainability, food sourcing, team management etc. Our city is also increasingly initiating and supporting local independent businesses, for example through a small food business mentoring scheme through the Birmingham Artisan Markets and Digbeth Dining Club who provide a platform for local street food traders to serve food in venues across Birmingham and the West Midlands. We are also making the most of the Shared Prosperity Fund to support food businesses and hospitality in the city by aiming to upskill 60 people in customer service, leading and supervising teams and working with volunteers for the tourism and hospitality sector.

Good Food Infrastructure & Engagement

As a Partnership we are committed to protecting vital sustainable infrastructure that supports good food enterprise in our city. Birmingham Wholesale Market, one of the largest integrated wholesale markets in Europe, is part of the Birmingham Food Revolution and we have been able to highlight and protect this vital part of our city's supply chain. The city centre also hosts two permanent food markets: the Bull Ring Open Market, which hosts 130 independent traders, and the Bull Ring Indoor Market, which is home to one of the largest fish markets in the UK. Also, members of our Food Partnership are University College of Birmingham (UCB) School of Food, a vital part of our food enterprise through training future food leaders in and for the city. The School of Food has recently invested £200 million into their facilities including nine industry-standard kitchens, baking and product development labs, a Food Science and Innovation suite, and an AA Gold-accredited training restaurant. As a Partnership we have catalysed UCB's Creative Dinner knowledge exchange series, hosting dialogue dinners with a wide range of food stakeholders to think collaboratively and creatively about food system problems and solutions.

The Midlands Hospitality Network is part of the Birmingham Food Revolution. The network, co-ordinated by Tonic Talent, facilitates collaboration between chefs, operators, suppliers, and local producers through regular events. The network also advocates for fair pay, flexible working, and long-term career sustainability to strengthen Birmingham's hospitality sector, and also supports inclusion and diversity in hospitality by working with organisations like Be Inclusive Hospitality. The network uses initiatives like Dine and Donate and Walk for Wellbeing to spotlight independent venues and raise funds for community-focused causes, and also led pandemic recovery initiatives in the city, including "Back to…" in collaboration with Switch Hospitality, spotlighting independent venues and driving footfall when support was most needed. This network therefore synergistically

brings together hospitality in Birmingham to provide a voice for the sector and work to strengthen good food enterprise in the city.

Good Food Enterprise – At Every Level

We believe that a key element of sustainability and good food enterprise is increasing citizen understanding of food providence and supply chains. We have found through our engagement with children at community events that there is a real lack of understanding around where their food comes from as they live in a city with no agricultural land. We sought to grow children's understanding of food provenance with a small scale project at one of the city's urban farms – the food chain was demonstrated through a pedigree pig giving birth on the farm and used as an opportunity to educate visitors on where meat comes from, animal welfare in food production, and how animals can be kept in large enclosures and still produce food – it sounds simple but even helping people understand that the items they buy are from an actual animal was quite powerful for the low income and/or SEND communities engaged with on the farm. We know that the 250 people who were engaged with this project is a drop in the ocean compared to Birmingham's population but we feel strongly that small-scale initiatives to meaningfully engage even small numbers of people can be valuable in putting sustainability at the heart of people's perceptions of food and subsequent food enterprise development.

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

Promoting Food Businesses

In Birmingham, we are working across multiple avenues to promote healthy, sustainable, independent food businesses to consumers. For example, The Birmingham Restaurant Festival is held throughout August to support Birmingham food businesses, including many independent eateries; this year 50 restaurants took part, each offering a special menu specifically for the festival. The Birmingham Restaurant Festival is an asset to the city and the Food Revolution as a celebration of Birmingham's hospitality scene. Last year, the festival was attended by thousands of people and the menus had over 450,000 digital views. Furthermore, throughout the year the Birmingham Restaurant Festival Instagram features foodie recommendations and content that promotes independent food businesses to consumers. Birmingham Cocktail Weekend is also held twice a year and brings a great buzz about independents to the city through bespoke cocktails and specific food offers. Each year the festival brings around 7,000 people to the city.

We are working to promote as many of these businesses who are serving healthy, sustainable and independent food. Visit Birmingham (part of the Birmingham Food Revolution) have shared a series of stories from the West Midlands, including food businesses such as Opheem, Ocha Café, West Midlands Jerk Centre, Grace & James, Shababs, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, and Eat Vietnam, all of whom are independent restaurants. Visit Birmingham are also increasingly promoting sustainable tourism, including sustainable places to eat in Birmingham and the West Midlands. The West Midlands tourism awards include awards for regenerative tourism, cafe / coffee shop of the year, restaurant of the year, pub of the year and outstanding contribution to tourism. All of these initiatives demonstrate to food businesses that we are a city committed to highlighting and celebrating healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses to customers.

The Birmingham Food Revolution also includes food businesses who are working to promote healthy and sustainable food to consumers. Chapter have worked to incorporate local and sustainable food in their restaurant, and are committed to taking their staff on farm visits and getting them to really experience and enjoy the food themselves in order to increase their ability to promote it to consumers. Chapter also run specific evenings celebrating local produce. The Hive is another business in Birmingham promoting nutritious sustainable food through showcasing the food that they have grown in their rooftop garden. ChangeKitchen, a vegetarian food business, event caterer, and Community Interest Company utilising surplus food, is currently piloting a 'healthy food takeaway' by selling food on a food delivery app and introducing a 'Pay it Forward' model in their café in Balsall Heath; this intervention is part of the Mandala Consortium's work (who are members of our Food Partnership). Grand Union CIO have developed a catering social enterprise that is community-led and provides sustainable lunch options in the city that include produce grown in their growing space. Birmingham Friends of the Earth runs the BRIG café, a vegetarian café serving simple veggie and vegan food and fairtrade coffee; they also utilise the space to run events focused around antiracism, climate justice, art and culture. These businesses form part of the Birmingham Food Revolution's movement towards a regenerative food system that works to support communities, the environment, and the economy.

Supporting Food Businesses to Provide Healthy and Sustainable Food

The Food Partnership has also been working with the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) to identify barriers and opportunities for food businesses incorporating more beans and pulses in their menus, as this would support people's health, the planet, and the businesses' own profits. The BNF produced a literature synthesis, business case, consultation report and a next steps and upscaling plan. They found that the food industry, particularly independent restaurants, faces commercial challenges that make innovation difficult, especially in promoting beans and pulses, which lack broad consumer demand outside of cuisines like Indian and Mexican. While large chains have health and sustainability goals, their slow menu cycles and past failures with similar dishes create hesitation, though there are examples which show that success is possible with clear targets and chef empowerment. To drive change, there is a need for consumer education and a national campaign to reposition beans and pulses as mainstream, supported by chef inspiration and public engagement. Proposed resources to support the initiative include digital recipe cards and video content showcasing trending dishes like salads and rice bowls, as well as science-backed insights and strategies for reducing meat in key dishes. These materials aim to inspire chefs and decision-makers while addressing cost, nutrition, and innovation. A Q&A resource was also suggested to guide stakeholders through implementation and decision-making processes.

The insights gathered through our work with the BNF will be amplified to a national scale by the Food Foundation, long term Birmingham Food System Partnership members and change catalysers in the city. They have received over £1 million of national lottery funding to prime people on the benefits of eating more beans, inspire them to cook and eat beans, and engage chefs, businesses and policymakers to create food settings with more bean dishes available. This will involve developing creative and impactful messaging for a campaign to drive demand, creating a community of action among Birmingham food businesses to shape engagement with businesses at a national

level, and sharing insights and learnings with policymakers. 15 businesses in Birmingham will be engaged with as part of this project.

Promoting Food to Consumers

There are also initiatives in Birmingham to sell local and sustainable groceries to citizens. We have already spoken about Birmingham Artisan Markets in section 2B, which are also part of our Partnership's commitment to promoting sustainable, local and independent food through their artisan traders. Similarly, the city has a platform to provide local food to consumers (operationalised by Slow Food through the Open Food Network); producers include honey from Digbeth, bread from Handsworth, salt from Droitwich Spa, pastries from Malvern, a local butchers, a small-scale fish co-operative from Plymouth and a farm shop in the Severn valley. Additionally, Clean Kilo are trailblazers in this space. Based in Bournville, they are a zero-waste supermarket who focus on ensuring a closed loop / circular economy and work to reduce packaging by encouraging customers to bring their own containers. They have done a lot of work to streamline local, low-waste supply chains into the city to get the products in their stores and also offer bespoke zero waste consultancy including suggesting retail solutions (e.g. dispenser walls and fruit and vegetable displays), and workshops.

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

N/A

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. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver 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

Public Sector Policy and Practice

The Birmingham Food System Partnership has been working to transform catering and procurement and revitalise local and sustainable food supply chains. Following collaboration between the Partnership and the Council's procurement and catering teams, the Council ratified a sustainable food procurement strategy in 2023. This has catalysed work with Brakes, the Council's multi-temperature food supplier, including the co-development of a reporting and monitoring framework to ensure that key metrics such as greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity, and sustainable food production practices, across suppliers' entire supply chain, are regularly included in the KPIs as part of the supplier's Social Value commitments to BCC. The initial 6-month report was submitted by Brakes in October 2024 and provided valuable information on their progress on the key objectives specified in the reporting framework. They were able to provide information on the Real Living Wage, fair trade, sustainable sourcing (palm oil and timber), and packaging. Brakes also documented

their policies for carbon reduction and net-zero targets, including a 19% reduction in food-related GHG emissions since 2019 - their baseline year. Sales data have also been used to calculate the carbon, biodiversity, and water impact of the Council's food procurement, which has allowed the Council to set a baseline from which future targets can be set to reduce the environmental footprint of its food procurement. We are working with Brakes and other council suppliers to ensure positive change in the future.

Furthermore, we have also been working on scoping existing good practice regarding sustainable food procurement policies and strategies in order to increase the supply and provision of nutritious, sustainable and ethical food. Through the work of the UK Urban Food Forum, we were able to scope out best practice on sustainable food procurement for local authorities. This included holding a 2-hour knowledge exchange workshop, attended by members from 6 different local authorities and through which over 15 relevant resources were gathered that have subsequently been shared with the wider network of local authorities for validation. In addition, we have unlocked a new relationship with Crown Commercial Services (CCS) UK and the NHS supply chain who are the leaders in dynamic procurement solutions. The NHS supply chain's dynamic procurement framework is now being used by BCC's catering services to source all fruits, vegetables, and baked goods for their schools. This demonstrates how the Birmingham Food Revolution has catalysed work, built momentum, and innovated to put good (i.e. sustainable, nutritious and local) food on people's plates as Birmingham City Council is the first local authority to use this dynamic procurement framework.

We have undertaken work to scope out national and international standards and KPIs on sustainable food procurement used by public sector buyers so that we can identify best practice for setting targets and reporting on health and sustainability metrics by food suppliers. We are now using this framework to develop a city-wide commitment to sustainable public sector procurement, modelled on the London Purchasing Commitment. We also have an intervention at Birmingham Children's Hospital to change the inpatient paediatric menus, which is designed to improve the sustainability of dishes, while optimising nutrition and appeal and not increasing cost. Dishes on the menu are being reformulated to increase the proportion of sustainable ingredients in favour of unsustainable ones, for example partially swapping beef for lentils. The impacts of the changes are being evaluated by a team from the University of Cambridge-led Mandala Consortium. Whilst this project is ongoing, early findings suggest that the reformulations introduced to date have successfully reduced the environmental impacts of the dishes, without negatively impacting on nutritional quality or cost. We hope that this example, when the full results and implementation toolkit are published, spearheads a protein transition in hospitals and other institutions in Birmingham, and beyond. There has been considerable interest - from caterers, dieticians, policy and researchers - in how the project's approach can support a shift to more plant-based food in hospitals and other institutions, both within the city, in the wider UK, and internationally.

School Policy and Practice

We are also working to improve food in schools – we have already mentioned the momentum around school food transformation in section 2B. The Birmingham Healthy Schools Approach aims to provide support to establish a 'healthy school culture' within primary, secondary and special

schools; empowering education staff to improve health and wellbeing across all staff and pupils. The approach consists of an online portal which hosts a self-assessment framework whereby schools RAG rate themselves against criteria in 7 areas including food and nutrition. Areas included in the food and nutrition section of the framework include highlighting food and nutrition policies including School Food Standards and Food For Life, improving food brought in by pupils, improving the eating environment, food waste, food providence education, addressing food and drink as rewards and at events, ensuring nutritious breakfast clubs, and improving food technology lessons and food-focused PSHE lessons. The Birmingham Healthy Schools Approach was designed with 11 mainstream schools and 4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools from across the city, as well as key stakeholders. A session on supporting 'fussy' eaters was attended by nearly 300 people. The approach includes Lunch and Learn webinars which are short sessions delivered to staff on a range of health and wellbeing topics, including food and nutrition. For example, a webinar was delivered on how to incorporate lentils into school lunches and food technology lessons. The approach also includes half-termly newsletters which will share key messages and opportunities around health and wellbeing. Each newsletter will have a theme with the January one being nutritious food and oral health. Along a similar vein, we are working with The Feeding Trust to pilot their Eating as Learning Curriculum at 4 SEND Schools in Birmingham; the curriculum supports children to develop food skills and knowledge, increase their ability to learn about a wider variety of healthy foods and begin to instigate meaningful food behaviour change, by increasing their confidence and motivation to learn about new foods, in a developmentally appropriate way.

Food Business Policy & Practice

We have also been working to change the practice of food businesses to put good food on people's plates. The Midlands Hospitality Network (mentioned in section 4A) recently ran a workshop for the hospitality industry on sustainability where there was a big focus on food. As stated in section 4B, we have also been working with the British Nutrition Foundation to identify barriers and opportunities in food businesses incorporating more beans and pulses in their menus, as this would support people's health, the planet, and their own profits. ChangeKitchen, a vegetarian catering service often used at events run by anchor institutions, is also part of the Birmingham Food Revolution. Thus, as a Partnership we continue to explore policy options to support more sustainable and local food in Birmingham.

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

Since 2023 we have run a Food Sourcing action group which brings together more than 20 local and national stakeholders, as a subgroup of our Food Partnership to enable more specific work in this area. The group meets quarterly to drive, track and promote better catering and procurement policy and practice. Members include the NFU, the NHS, five West Midlands producers, Birmingham Wholesale Market, universities, BCC procurement teams, Brakes, dynamic procurement technology solution providers, researchers, national subject-matter experts and expert third sector representatives and advocates.

Understanding our Supply Chains

We have been undertaking multiple actions to improve connections and collaboration across the local supply chain. This has included scoping out and mapping the healthy and sustainable suppliers already operating in the city and gathering information on production standards that they currently adhere to. To understand the barriers that independent and small producers face when supplying to the city, we contacted more than 100 organisations located within the Midlands and asked them about barriers and solutions regarding food supply through a survey. Following the initial scoping review, we recruited 5 local producers and a regional NFU manager to support Birmingham City Council in developing pilots for more local food sourcing via the Birmingham Wholesale Market. Through this we have facilitated a local supply chain solution at the Birmingham Wholesale Market which includes a producer directory. This will serve as a procurement hub for local businesses and schools looking to source from small, local and/or sustainable producers. We have also shared the directory for usability testing with the Birmingham Centre for Local Economic Strategies; this directory will be part of the food system dashboard as part of the Birmingham City Observatory which is currently in development.

In parallel, we have been working to scope out where sustainable and nutritious food can be purchased in the city through population survey and stakeholder work using a citywide Kantar population survey. We received 861 responses on a range of questions regarding: food purchasing habits, influences on their food choices, attitudes and knowledge towards food waste & environmental sustainability. This data will then be used to examine how these characteristics impact food purchasing. This work is still in progress with the expected completion date in March 2026. We have also been modelling the flows of food (sources and sinks) which pass through Birmingham and the environmental impacts and health consequences of these flows by people and place.

We are also undertaking a multi-year project exploring the barriers, challenges, and opportunities for a range of stakeholders across the city to increase supply of nutritious and sustainable food. An action plan will be developed that will support Birmingham on its journey to increase access to these foods for all residents. The project is also exploring how to facilitate economic growth in the city, by supporting SMEs and helping the low paid food sector to be economically stable, overcoming barriers which hinder nutritious seasonal fruits and vegetables being supplied to the city, enabling distribution of fruits and vegetables across the whole city including those who face inequalities, and reduce waste by redistributing food that would otherwise be thrown away. As this work is ongoing, so far its primary impact has been engagement with a wide number of actors in food sourcing. We have been able to identify and engage 119 primary producers and growers in the Midlands to understand their sourcing practices and identify opportunities for supplying into public sector procurement. Additionally, we have identified, using City Observatory data, over 130 community-owned assets that could be utilised to support access to healthy and sustainable food. In addition, we have mapped 19 regional logistics and distribution providers which might be able to support SMEs looking to supply the city. This mapping has been absolutely vital in laying the foundation for more sustainable local procurement in our city, especially in a city as complex and large as ours!

Streamlining our Supply Chain

We have been able to secure funding for the delivery of a research project with Our Food 1200, aiming to support Welsh crop farmers in Powys who grow agroecologically to supply Birmingham through a new supply chain. Through a rapid study we were able to understand which crops can be reliably and consistently grown agroecologically on farms in Powys, and what price and where do these match demand in the cities. Furthermore, to create further opportunities for increasing supply of local and seasonal food into the city two additional research projects have commenced in September 2025. The first one, led by our multiyear partnership member the Food Foundation, will be looking at scoping out the viability of local production of beans, pulses and legumes being stimulated via public procurement policies or supported by increased demand from local businesses or the out-of-home sector. The second one, led by a researcher at the Centre for Alternative Technology, will conduct a spatial and feasibility analysis of Birmingham's 'food belt' (which will include its green belt and peri-urban areas). The research will aim to produce a range of maps, tables and data visualisations that present a picture of historic, current and potential future horticultural production from this area, and analyse how much of Birmingham's fruit and vegetable requirements could feasibly be met from the area under a range of future sustainable diet scenarios and using different farming methods.

Furthermore, Birmingham City Council's Catering arm CityServe has localised its supply of fruit and vegetables through the NHS's Fresh Food Dynamic Purchasing System allowing for local and regional suppliers, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to join the public sector procurement. Through our Food Sourcing Action Group we have also been able to engage with NHS Net Zero management who are working with Trusts across Birmingham to achieve more direct pathways from farms to hospitals. Adding them as a stakeholder to our Food Sourcing Action group has helped us expand the network of key stakeholders who have levers to transform local supply chains through public sector procurement.

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

N/A

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

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

Birmingham demonstrated its dedication to combatting climate change when we declared a climate emergency in 2019. This included ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions as we committed to becoming net zero by 2030 or as soon as possible thereafter, and developed our Route to Net Zero Action Plan. In 2021, Birmingham signed the Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration, a commitment by subnational governments to tackle the climate emergency through integrated food policies. We

are also working to improve the resilience of our food system following Tim Lang's Just In Case report; we have been working with stakeholders to develop recommendations and actions to increase the resilience of our food system. We want to note that Birmingham was included as a case study in this report.

Food Production

Although we are a city in the middle of a Metropolitan area and so agricultural land is very limited, our Partnership has been exploring possibilities for sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency. One example of this is the High Rise Harvest proof of concept and exploration, which examined the feasibility of using an unused car park in the Jewellery Quarter as an urban farm including greenhouses, a mushroom farm, vegetable patches, a community green space and a space to develop a new, circular approach to local food systems that minimises waste and pioneers more sustainable logistics practices. A key element of this was "a never empty van" which exemplifies concepts of resource efficiency and sustainability. Due to the BCC Section 114 notice, the actual pilot project for High Rise Harvest was paused. However, this project is still impactful as the proof of concept and feasibility study findings have been shared within BCC and with international partners. Currently, we are seeking external funding to adapt this to create a rooftop garden on top of a café. We have also had a number of meetings to facilitate vertical farming opportunities in Birmingham. We are also undertaking work to support UK growers of beans including providing more streamlined pathways into the city.

In addition to these larger scale approaches, we also believe that supporting growing is a key way of promoting sustainable food production. Our City of Nature plan published in 2022 highlights our aspiration for Birmingham to be recognised as a city of nature where its parks and green spaces are sustainably managed and funded. One of the aspirations of the plan – A Green City – includes the outcome of supporting "opportunities to help citizens make better use of green space outside of their home for food growing or communal gardens". We have undertaken a myriad of actions to support local growing. The Birmingham Food Growing Map was launched in April 2024 highlighting active publicly accessible growing sites in the city. This evolved into the Birmingham Food Resilience Map which was launched in September 2024. Furthermore, to align with Sustain's Good to Grow week, dedicated growing pages were created for the Food Revolution site which provided signposting and resources for Growing in Schools, Accessibility in Growing and Growing in Small Spaces. We have also supported community initiatives to increase more growing in homes. We have also been working to strengthen the link between growing projects and food aid projects through catalysing several projects which aim to grow fresh produce to be given out to people experiencing food insecurity at foodbanks and food pantries.

Food Planning

Since 2012, we have had policies to avoid an overconcentration of A5 hot food take-away uses by restricting their number to no more than 10% of the total units in a centre or individual parade. Since April 2014, these policies have led to the refusal of 75 and the withdrawing of 44 planning applications for hot food takeaways and mixed-use developments (including any element of takeaway uses) in Birmingham within 400m of schools, or not within a designated local centre or

the City Centre (nearly double the 61 approvals). The Birmingham Food System Partnership is currently working with the built environment team to assess actions we can take to improve the effectiveness of these policies. As a city that comes under the WMCA area, our mayor has committed to the junk food ban proposed by Bite Back under the Ad Enough campaign and we are primed to support this.

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

We have undertaken an array of activities to reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging and related waste. Birmingham City Council is in the process of introducing separate food waste collection, although this has been delayed due to the waste service industrial action since January 2025 which led to a major incident being declared.

Reducing Food Waste

Firstly, we have been undertaking work to reduce food waste. For example, £10,000 of Food Safety Research Network grant funding has been awarded for a project titled Freeze with Ease: Developing a Home Guide to Safe Food Storage and Waste Reduction. This project aims to develop a comprehensive and accessible "Freeze with Ease" guide focused on safe food storage, particularly around freezing and reducing waste. The primary goal is to enhance household food safety by providing a practical, user-friendly resource that addresses high-risk practices associated with freezing, storing, and thawing food. By targeting unsafe habits that increase the risk of food contamination and spoilage, the project intends to lower the incidence of foodborne illnesses and boost consumer confidence in safe food management at home.

Secondly, with the funding secured from the Food Safety Research Network we were also able to create accessible and informative material including a guidance booklet and an educational video aiming to empower volunteers and staff within the food sector. Developed in collaboration with the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Food Partnership, and The Active Wellbeing Society, the guide offers best practices on safe food storage, transportation, allergen management, clear labelling and hygiene practices. The guide also includes checklists, food safety process recommendations, and links to Food Standards Agency guidance to support community food initiatives in handling food safely. With millions of people in the UK relying on food banks and other food aid initiatives, maintaining high food safety standards is essential to prevent contamination, reduce waste, and ensure that all food provided is safe to eat.

Reducing Packaging Waste

The Birmingham Food Revolution is also working to decrease the waste from disposable coffee cup usage through Brummie Cup, a reusable cup service in the city. The high-level objective of the project is to reduce the waste, litter and carbon footprint created by disposable cups, as the average lifespan of a disposable cup is 15 minutes and it is then difficult to recycle due to its plastic lining (only 1% of disposable cups are successfully recycled). Through the Brummie Cup community cup scheme, 2,000 reusable cups are available to be borrowed by organisations for events so that they do not have to use disposable cups: the scheme is free for charities, community groups and social enterprises, while there is a 5p-per-cup charge for other organisations. The scheme has had around

30,000 cup uses over the last two and a quarter years, with a great deal of variation in who is using the cups by age, geography and socio-economic status. Therefore, the scheme has reduced the litter created by disposable cups, and we have estimated that the Brummie cup reusable cup scheme has had a net carbon saving of around 500kg CO_2e.

Redirecting Surplus Food

We have also undertaken work to redirect surplus food. In the UK, nearly 3 million tonnes of food waste is produced by the manufacturing, hospitality and food service, and retail industries. This is a symptom of a disconnected food system that is built on the priority of profits, rather than the strong foundation of people, planet, and profits. We identified that there was the opportunity to redirect surplus. As a Partnership, we identified that work to facilitate the redirection of food to community organisations rather than landfill might be beneficial as a short-term measure while we seek to address the root causes of food waste and food insecurity through our longer-term actions under the Birmingham Food System Strategy. Therefore, the Birmingham Food Revolution undertook work to capture the barriers in relation to potential new sources of surplus food in Birmingham in order to identify solutions. At the same time, we also scoped which and how many community food sector organisations in Birmingham's Food Justice Network could receive surplus food.

The Birmingham Wholesale Market is one of the largest integrated wholesale markets in Europe, providing fresh fruit and vegetables, fish and meat, and dairy across an 18-acre site just north of the city centre. Scoping work in 2023 identified that as wholesale market traders don't want to throw food away, which would mean wasting it and losing profit, they tend to wait as long as possible until the food is mostly no longer edible. However, some edible food is still thrown away along with the inedible food as the tenants tend not to sort through the food and identify what is still edible – therefore, an opportunity was identified to prevent food waste at the markets.

So, in February 2024, The Active Wellbeing Society, with support from the Birmingham Food System Partnership and the Household Support Fund, set up a surplus food hub in a unit at the wholesale market. The hub works with wholesale traders and other organisations to repurpose and redistribute edible food waste, building and making the most of personal relationships with the traders which was identified as vital for the work to be successful. As the unit provides refrigerated space to store food, it has also had the additional value of being able to support the capture of other surplus food e.g. gluts from farmers. Because of the scale of the surplus food and its closeness to its use-by date, we identified that a surplus food kitchen would support prevention of food waste by cooking the produce into meals on-site – therefore a surplus food kitchen has been set-up to provide meals to Birmingham's vast community food sector.

The surplus food hub has meant that food that would have been wasted has been used to provide nutritious food to Birmingham citizens experiencing food poverty – to date (August 2025), more than 42,000kg of surplus food has been collected internally from the wholesale markets, with a further 36,500kg of surplus food collected externally (e.g. from farming surplus), made possible through the space that the hub provides. 1,000 food portions are currently being provided each week through the hub, including those cooked in the surplus kitchen. The food has been utilised to

support people across the lifecourse and from the variety of Birmingham's super-diverse community. The food has also been used to support people living in temporary accommodation which includes asylum seekers.

Also north of the city centre, the Sir Peter Rigby Coronation Food Hub has just been launched. It is a state-of-the-art warehouse facility in Birmingham tackling food insecurity and unemployment across the region. The Hub is run by FareShare Midlands, members of our Partnership who are already the largest food redistribution charity in the Midlands, and was made possible with a multimillion-pound investment from The Sir Peter Rigby Charitable Trust. The hub gives the opportunity to work towards ambitious targets: 1) support over 1,000 people into work through training and development, 2) reach over 30,000 vulnerable people focusing on children living in poverty, and 3) deliver over 7 million meals to communities in the West Midlands. They will do this with employability programmes in warehousing, catering and hospitality, the largest food redistribution facility in the country with over 23,000 sq ft of space, a community training kitchen for cooking and catering skills and conference and collaboration spaces for charities and businesses. We have also supported a second (smaller) surplus food hub in Balsall Heath; this along with the food hub in East Birmingham and Incredible Surplus in West Birmingham means that we now have a compass of sites that are able to distribute food to Birmingham's community food sector.

Composting

Finally, our Food Partnership has sought to encourage composting in Birmingham through a number of initiatives. Compost Culture is a project working to transform people's views around food waste and composting supported by the National Lottery Community Fund. The project aims to enable collaborative working to transform the way people think about food waste and composting in Birmingham. Birmingham-based organisations are working in partnership to develop a pioneering programme of composting initiatives across the city where citizens can learn about turning food scraps into beautiful compost which can then be used for growing fresh, nutritious food locally. Another project identified a specific opportunity to overcome a key barrier that prevents composting in Birmingham – they identified a simple, very effective method to rat-proof plastic compost bins that is cost effective and environmentally friendly. This project sought to upskill organisations and individuals around how to do rat-proofed composting and provide rat-proof mesh to facilitate composting across Birmingham. Finally, a pilot was also undertaken in the B16 area of Birmingham to increase composting and change people's views of food waste, funded by EU Food Trails Funding. The project involved linking individuals in the B16 postcode to compost sites and growing initiatives. Feedback from those involved in the group has demonstrated a positive impact on members of the community and benefits in terms of understanding of food and social benefits. Through this project, 43,127kg of waste was diverted from landfill, saving 30,189kg of Greenhouse Gases and creating 4,312kg of soil.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Mandatory word limit: 250).

N/A