SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2025

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

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

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

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

SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (*= mandatory):

Name of your partnership*:
Food Vale
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Louise Denham, Food Partnership Coordinator louise.denham@wales.nhs.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Vale of Glamorgan
Award you are applying for*:
Silver Award

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:

****Please see Appendix 1 at end of document for a list of acronyms and references****

The Vale of Glamorgan (henceforth; 'the Vale' or 'VOG') is the southernmost county in Wales, with a population of 133,492. It borders Bridgend County Borough to the west, Cardiff to the east, Rhondda Cynon Taf to the north, and the Bristol Channel to the south. There are three main settlements, comprising the coastal towns of Penarth and Barry in the east, the market town of Cowbridge in the centre, and Llantwit Major in the west. The Vale falls within the footprint of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

Community and health

According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 3 **Lower Super Output Areas** (LSOAs) in the Vale are in the top 10% most deprived areas in Wales, with 7 more in the next 10% (all of which are in Barry). A further 13 LSOAs are in the 30-50th most deprived, including areas typically considered rural such as Dinas Powys 3, St Athan 1 and Llantwit Major 6[i]. A combination of inflation, wage stagnation and real-terms cuts to benefits is increasing deprivation levels, further exacerbated by the global Covid-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis. One in five children in the Vale (nearly 5,000) were reported to be living in relative **low-income households** in 2022/23[ii], and the level of adults aged 16+ living in households in **material deprivation** doubled between 2019-2023[iii].

In the 2024 Vale Food Insecurity survey, 4% of adults reported going hungry because they did not have enough to eat; 14% struggled to have enough food; and 12% worried about having enough food. 33% cited high food cost as the biggest challenge when accessing food, followed by location/distance of places to get food (17%), availability of food (17%), budgeting priorities (17%) and availability of preferred foods (16%)[iv]. Amongst the top responses to 'what would help them access, cook and eat good food' was 'more opportunities to grow your own food' and 'cooking workshops'. The Priority Places for Food Index[1] identified that many areas in the Vale are high priority for supermarket proximity and accessibility, indicative of **food deserts**[v]**.**

There are about 20 food banks/community food initiatives offering free or low-cost food in the Vale[2]. Between 2023-24 the number of food parcels distributed in the Vale increased by 2,064 (24%) to 8,662 - the highest increase across Wales. Many initiatives report that they are struggling to meet demand – with Trussell Trust Food banks experiencing a 64% increase in demand in 2023. Because healthier foods tend to be more expensive than foods that are high in fat, sugar or salt (HFSS)[vi], we are seeing a rise in diets lacking diversity, with excess or inadequate nutrients and dietary components, or a high proportion of ultra-processed foods. In the Vale, 35% of adults aged 16+ report eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day[3], and worryingly 46% of 11-16-year olds report that they eat no fruit and veg at all each day[vii]. The percentage of children aged 3-7 reported to eat at least one portion fruit and veg every day is 89% and 70% respectively[viii].

There are a range of far-reaching adverse health outcomes associated with poor diets, contributing to lower life expectancy and earlier onset of ill health. Approximately 17% of 5-year-olds are overweight and 57% of adults are overweight or obese in the Vale; conditions which in turn are strongly associated with several other health risks and which are projected to cost the Welsh NHS over £465 million per year by 2050 - a cost to society and the economy of £2.4 billion[ix].

<u>Local Food Economy</u>

The food sector in Wales has grown rapidly in recent years, valued at £9.3billion in 2023[x]. Food-related economic activities in the Vale include farming and other primary production, manufacture, retail, catering and hospitality. In 2023 there were 5,000 employed in the Accommodation and Food Services industry in the Vale. The local retail sector is seeing a shift away from retail towards leisure (food, beverage, and entertainment).

The bulk of livestock production from commercial farms in Wales (likely representative of the Vale) comes from Cattle (Beef and Dairy) and sheep, followed by arable with a smaller concentrated production from poultry (meat and/or eggs) on some units. Agriculture is also important culturally, with the majority of farms being small-scale family-run farms which support the prosperity and well-being of rural communities.

Food and farming businesses have faced many challenges relating to the 'triple challenge' of Covid-19, climate change and Brexit. The associated changes to trade deals, regulations and immigration policies resulting from Brexit have caused staffing and skills gaps, challenges related to increases in

[1] Identifies neighbourhoods that are most vulnerable to increases in the cost of living and which have a lack of accessibility to cheap, healthy, and sustainable sources of food

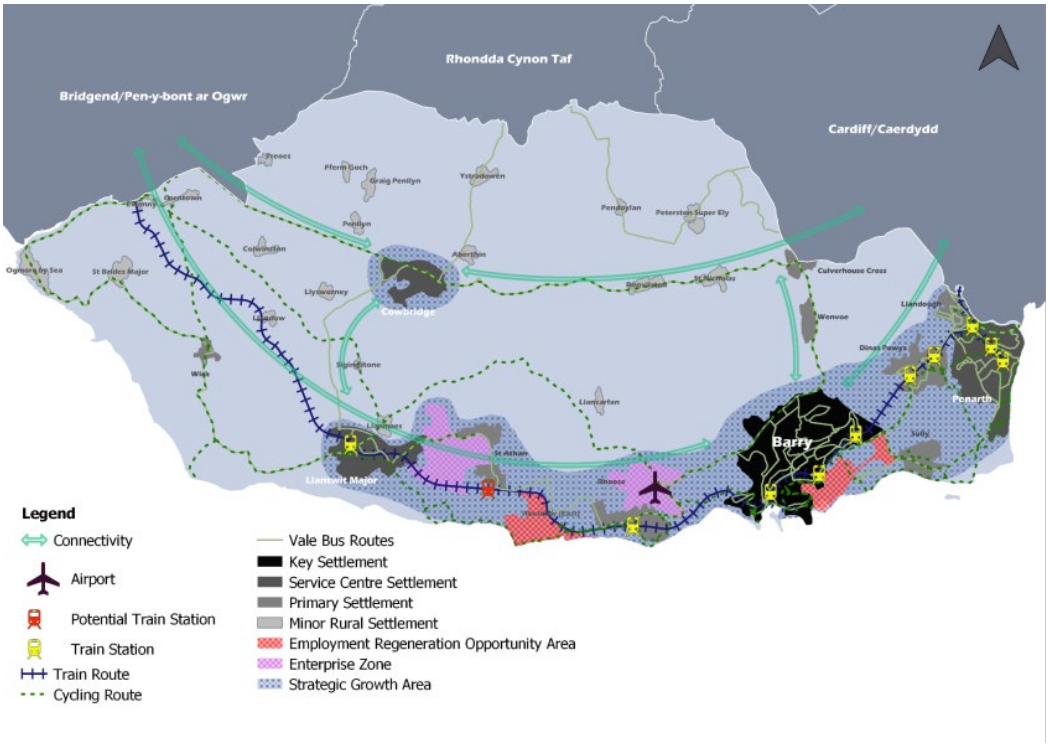
[2]A directory of these schemes is available on the Food Vale webpage 'Where can I get support?'.

[3]National Survey for Wales, data combined from 2021-22 and 2022-3

the costs of energy[xi][xii], supply chain gaps, as well as challenges around access to markets and lack of local supply chain infrastructure for primary producers.

Land Use, Waste and the Climate and Nature crises

It is a predominantly rural county and possesses a rich agricultural heritage, with 75% (24,788Ha) of its land being farmed (in 2020)[xiii]. Whilst recent local data for the breakdown by usage is not available, national data for across Wales is likely to be a fair representation, which in 2024 was: permanent grassland 62%, rough grazing 14%, new grassland 9%, arable crops including horticulture 6%, and other land (including farm woodland, buildings and land not for agricultural purposes) 9%[xiv]. Only 0.1% of land in Wales is used to grow fruit and vegetables – enough to supply one quarter of a portion per person per day. To produce '5 a day' for the Welsh population would need 29 times more land[xv].



The suitability of agricultural land for food production depends on climate, site and soil factors, and is categorised into different grades, with Grade 1 indicating high-yielding land with little or no limitations for agricultural use, to Grade 5 as very poor, low quality agricultural land. In the Vale, 7% of our agricultural land is classed as Grade 2; 14.2% is Grade 3A, 35.7% as 3B and 17.8% is Grade 4 (with negligible Grand 1 and Grade 5)[4].

National Context

Wales has devolved political responsibility and accountability for a number of food-related areas of legislation and policy, including: education, environment and planning, economic development, public health, and agriculture. Since 2022 Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty team have been supporting the cross-sector, systems-led work of food partnerships across Wales.

[4] Under Paragraph 4.10.1 of Planning Policy Wales states that land of grades 1, 2 and 3a is the best and most versatile, and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future

As a partnership located in Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act underpins all of our work, and is articulated at a local level through the Vale's Well-being Plan developed by our local Public Services Board. The food system is vital for the delivery of the Well-being of Future Generation's (Wales) Seven National Well-being Goals. Food has been identified as a priority area of focus in the Future Generation Commissioner's Well-being of Future Generations strategy 'Cymru Can', stating that "from farm to fork, food is critical to achieving Wales' well-being goals from the health of our people and our planet". The Commissioner plans to work with public bodies to integrate sustainable food policies within their well-being plans, including developing community food plans, to make improvements at a local, place-based level.

The Welsh Government have also recently published the Wales Community Food Strategy (CFS) as their commitment to encourage the production and supply of locally-sourced food in Wales. Welsh Government has recognised food partnerships in Wales, such as Food Vale, as key *deliverers* of the Strategy, and as such have committed to fund them through to the 26/27 financial year.

An overview of the priority Welsh Government policies and activities which directly support the agri-food industry, natural resource management, and wider food related policies across the span of its work for health, education, sustainability, communities and the economy are outlined in the 2024 Food Matters: Wales publication. The Welsh Government's ambition to shift the population's diet closer to the Eatwell Guide is captured through their 10 year-strategy Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales, focussed on preventing and reducing obesity. Additionally, the new High Fat Salt Sugar (HFSS) Regulations which are expected to be implemented from 2026 will restrict the ways in which HFSS foods can be promoted.

Public procurement is recognised as a powerful tool with two pieces of legislation introduced in 2023 to provide opportunities for change: the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act (Wales) and the UK Procurement Act. The Net-Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 2021-2025 is shaped by its statutory reporting commitments, IPCC and CCC recommendations and includes policies and proposals related to Public Sector, Waste Management, Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), Agriculture, Industry and Business, Residential Buildings, Transport, Electricity and Heat Generation.

The Welsh Government recognise the importance of agriculture and sustainable food production as well as the important interlinked social and cultural aspects of farming in Wales. The Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives were established in the Agriculture (Wales) Act. The Sustainable Farming Scheme will help achieve these objectives and will reward farmers for actions which align with them.

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

ANSWER:

Careful consideration is given to equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout our work in the Vale, and examples of this in practice (also included in the evidence of local activity and impact under Section 2) are:

- We actively seek input and collaboration from diverse stakeholders, for example in our recent shift to how we run our quarterly network gatherings we have expressed priority to engage with those who work with underserved or seldom heard communities.
- VOG Council are in the process of becoming a member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network, a testament to their commitment to create a culture of welcome, inclusion and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary.
- Alongside their work to formally adopt the Real Living Wage, the Council are also working to reduce inequalities in pay and have actively reduced the gender pay gap to 2.26% and our ethnic minority pay gap to 6.85%.
- To ensure resources are directed to where we see areas of greatest need, this year we have collaborated with partners to run a small grant scheme specifically targeting people with Protected Characteristics as listed under the Equality Act 2010.
- Inclusive practices are embedded in our events and activities, and we ensure that venues are fully accessible, as well as paying attention to timings of events to facilitate participation from those who may have caring responsibilities. We ensure that catering arrangements consider any dietary or cultural needs.
- All information and resources are provided bilingually in compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, with additional translations of certain resources into other community languages such as Ukrainian and Farsi.

Importantly, as a partnership, we acknowledge that there is still significant room for improvement in terms of ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to participate and benefit from sustainable food practices, and there is still a lot of work to do in order to address the systemic barriers that people face.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

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

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

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

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

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

Key Issue 1 Mandatory Criteria Checklist

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

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

1. **Have you submitted a <u>current</u> food action plan or food strategy with an action plan?**
    - Yes
2. **How are you evidencing this action plan?**
    - Link to a document? Yes
    - If a link place here as well under Key Issue 1
    - Action Plan link: Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030.
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)

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

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

Food Vale has established a strong, cross-sector Steering Group:

Food Vale was established in 2017 when Senior Officers in Public Health brought together key partners to discuss forming a partnership. The partnership has had strong support from the public sector from the very beginning, and has since worked hard to gain similar support from across other sectors as well as community and business representatives.

An official Steering Group was established in 2017 to direct and progress the development of the Food Vale initiative in the Vale of Glamorgan. The group developed Terms of Reference in 2017, (revised in 2021), to establish the purpose of the Steering Group and set out expectations of members. In 2020 the Public Health team recruited a dedicated Partnership Coordinator and the Vale became an official member of the Sustainable Food Places network. The coordinator is funded through the Health Board's Prevention budget – a testament of their commitment to the food partnership model and our ability to deliver long-lasting and meaningful population health outcomes.

The Steering Group meets once every 6 weeks (alternating in-person/online) to discuss progress on *delivery* of the Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030 as well as other strategic issues. Topics of recent meetings include updates on the development of a new Agri-Hub, the direction of ongoing food insecurity work, the county's place-making plans and alignment with key strategies such as the Public Health team's Good Food & Movement Framework.

Its current membership includes representatives from the following cross sector organisations:

- The Glamorgan Smallholders
- Creative Rural Communities
- Cywain
- Glamorgan Voluntary Services
- Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team
- Cardiff and Vale Dietetics
- FareShare Cymru
- Big Fresh Catering (catering for Vale schools)
- Natural Resources Wales
- Various directorates within the Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Vale of Glamorgan PSB

Membership and diversity

The wider Food Vale network – comprising a wide range of community members, activists, local business owners and more from across the Vale, including those with lived experience of food issues – now has a membership of over 153 individuals. The Food Vale Network meet quarterly to provide a platform for people to connect and create a collective voice for positive change in the local food system. Through a recent shift to co-hosting these events with other local initiatives, we hope to be able to invite people who have often been left out of mainstream conversations.

Key institutions, including the local authority and other strategic bodies recognise and endorse the local food partnership and actively support its efforts, often as a direct result of influence from Food Vale:

- The Good Food and Movement Framework and Implementation Plan 2024/2026 (of which Food Vale is a key *deliverer*) includes priorities around healthy food environments, spaces for growing and building skills**,** and healthier food settings.
- Project Zero (the council's climate emergency plan) commits to "*work to improve the green infrastructure in the Vale and to promote sustainable food systems*"
- The Council's Corporate Plan, commits to "*Deliver* a Food Strategy for the Vale and work with local food producers and the agricultural sector to support local supply chains and actions which underpin the sustainability of our rural communities"
- The local Public Service Board's Wellbeing Action Plan includes steps that focus on improving health and well-being, tackling health inequities and food poverty, and promote positive behaviour change and a greater understanding of our impact on the environment with a focus on food.
- The Vale of Glamorgan's Local Development Strategy and its Replacement which is in the process of being developed includes objectives around sustainable use and management of land and restrictions on hot food takeaway outlets.
- The CAVUHB Shaping Our Future Well-being (2023-2025) plan includes the priority to focus on minimising inequity in healthy behaviours, preventative services, access to

clinical services, and health outcomes, to reduce current unfair, unjust differences experienced by people in the Health Board's communities

- Since 2023, funding has been provided by Welsh Government specifically to support the development of food partnerships in Wales.
- Wider Placemaking workshops have included considerations of co-designing food-integrated public spaces), aligning with Welsh Placemaking Charter's emphasis on ongoing community dialogue to build shared place identity.
- Local Food Partnerships have been identified as key delivery partners for place-based, systems-led action in the Welsh Government's Wales Community Food Strategy.

Working Groups have been established to allow partners to collaborate on issues of expertise and interest:

In addition to this, further networks are coordinated by Food Vale partners that feed into the Steering Group:

- Vale of Glamorgan Food Insecurity Working Group (meets every 6 weeks).
- The Llantwit Major Exploratory Group (meets quarterly) oversees the implementation of the lottery-funded Llantwit Food Access Project.
- A Food in Schools Working Group, including representatives from Healthy Schools, Eco schools, the Local Nature Partnership and Vale Council.
- At a recent Project Zero Board Meeting Senior Officers in the Council agreed to support the forming of a Vale Community Growing Network following findings from the recent Community Food Growing Mapping and report.
- Food Producers network (28 businesses) giving the opportunity for people to share concerns etc

Regional working

Food Vale also works with partners at a regional level:

- Food Vale is working with RCT, Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot food partnerships to develop a project establishing more learning opportunities on farms and growing sites across the region.
- Food Vale worked with Food Cardiff to bring together public sector partners around the development of a new Health & Sustainable Food Procurement Toolkit.
- Following recommendations in the Future Generations Commissioner's Report 2025, conversations have begun around developing a Local Food Resilience Plan across Cardiff and the Vale.
- To inform ongoing plans to establish some vital new infrastructure in the form of a new Agri-Hub in the Vale, partners have consulted with partnerships across South Wales to ensure regional needs are being considered.
- Food Vale participates in the monthly Food Partnerships Wales Communities of Practice; bringing together local food partnerships in Wales to share best practice and lend support to each other.
- Food Vale participates in a UK-wide Rural Food Equity working group, convened by the Real Farming Trust.

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

Early asset mapping workshops, scoping studies, visioning exercises and stakeholder events helped develop the partnership and our shared goals.

Vale Food Strategy

Following the expiry of the Food Vale Action Plan, partners have co-developed a five-year Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030. The process began in 2023 with community and stakeholder engagement. Over 60 people joined together at an initial event, followed by an event aimed at younger generations and another that brought together 12 local farmers and food producers. Discussions utilised the Three Horizons (3H model) to help people think and better plan for an uncertain future, and the vision was rooted in a 100-year timeframe to ensure the needs and lives of future generations were considered. The vision is:

"By 2125, the Vale of Glamorgan will be home to a thriving, healthy, fair and sustainable local food system—restorative to nature, resilient to global shocks, and rooted in community wellbeing".

The outcome of these events, alongside the findings from additional engagement with over 500 people on their experiences of accessing food in the Vale, informed the first draft of the strategy, refined through conversations within the Food Vale Steering Group. Particular effort was made to engage with Senior Officers and Practitioners across partner organisations to ensure that the Strategy aligned with wider strategic priorities, thus supporting strong stakeholder buy-in (please refer to Appendix 1 of the Strategy document for an overview of Strategic Alignment).

The Strategy includes 3 Good Food Goals, 9 Desired Outcomes, and 30 actions to take us up to 2030. The 3 Good Food Goals are:

1. **Fair and Healthy** –Everyone should be able to access and enjoy nourishing food that supports their well-being.

2. **Circular Food Economy** – We want a food system that reduces waste, protects nature, and responds to the climate emergency.

3. **Community Resilience** – Our communities should have the tools, skills, and spaces to grow, cook, and share good food.

Through further workshops, partners have identified appropriate indicators and baseline data to ensure progress is measured. The Vale Food Strategy is owned by the Food Vale partnership and Steering Group members report against each action on a quarterly basis. Members have agreed to produce an annual report to highlight key indicators, and are due to conduct more in-depth systems mapping to track change against some of the indicators which we expect will be slower to change.

The Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030 was approved by VOG Council's Senior Leadership Team in May 2025 and later at the CAVUHB's Strategic Leadership Team and Quality Committee in June 2025. A foreword was co-authored by the Director of Public Health in CAVUHB and the Chief Executive of the Council as a gesture of our continued partnership working. The Strategy was presented at the Vale's PSB meeting on 24th September, and is launching at the Vale Fairtrade Breakfast event scheduled for the 10th October in Barry.

Food Vale branding/Logo

The Food Vale branding developed in 2017/revised 2020 has continued to be used in all campaigns and publications to facilitate easy recognition. Food Vale members also took part in Framing and Messaging training in early 2025 to improve coherency of our messaging and communications about who we are/what we do.

FOOD Vale BWYD Y Fro

Additional Vale Food Trail logos/branding were developed to give the trail distinct identity and recognisability by participating businesses and attendees of the trail. And branding has also been developed as part of the #discoveratasteofthevale campaign.

vale food trail llwybr bwyd y fro

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

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

Food Vale raises public awareness of food, health and sustainability issues through a variety of communication channels:

All public facing communications are published bilingually in accordance with Welsh Language Standards. These include:

Digital communication

Food Vale

- **Website:** www.foodvale.org launched in 2020, receives an average of approximately 280 visits per month. All content is published bilingually. Resources include:
  - Community Growing Map
  - Food Insecurity webpage and Llantwit Food Project webpage
  - Community Kitchens Report and Toolkit
  - News and Events
- **Social Media:** 290 Facebook followers and 240 Instagram followers. Social media campaigns include:
  - #goodfoodvale pledge campaign
  - #llantwitaccesstofood project
  - #discoverathetasteofthevale campaign
- **Newsletter:** 154 subscribers (example)

Vale Food Trail

- **Website:** Additional website and comms channels have been set up for the Vale Food Trail which specifically seeks to connect residents and visitors with local producers of good food:
  - The Vale Food Trail Website received 3,600 unique visits over the past year, a 4% growth from previously year.
  - 302 Facebook followers and 960 Instagram followers
- **Media mentions:** Olive, The Times, Wicked Leeks, local media, etc.

Building on the strong foundations from our early work, Food Vale continues to *deliver*, *coordinate*, and *support* a wide range of free opportunities for people to learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food:

- Through our quarterly network gatherings, residents of the Vale are invited to share learning on different topics relating to healthy and sustainable food (more info in 2B).

- Since 2023, Food Vale has hosted free, community-led activities at Cowbridge Festival as part of the annual Vale Food Trail. Activities have included foraging walks, healthy cooking demos, microgreen workshops and exhibitions of foodie-related art. In as part of the 2024 Vale Food Trail delivery, Food Vale also collaborated with the Vale Local Nature Partnership to host a screening of 'Six Inches of Soil' (60 attendees).
- Every year, Food Vale promotes the programme of activities run by local Fairtrade groups as part of Fairtrade Fortnight (e.g. youth competitions, exhibitions, talks etc).
- Food Vale attends ad hoc events to inspire and engage the public around food e.g. recent Zero Carbon Future event in Penarth, community growing event, presentations delivered to students at UWC Atlantic College,
- Our small grant schemes have supported a range of projects which seek to engage different groups across the Vale e.g. the Big Bocs Bwyd – a Wales-wide model for supporting authentic learning experiences around cooking and growing food which first developed in the Vale

In addition to this, our partners also *deliver* and support a number of training and volunteering opportunities to develop food growing, cooking, processing, and enterprise skills.

- Our small Grant Schemes have supported food growing and cooking projects which have allowed people to gain new skills and find new volunteering roles – see 2B for more info.
- As part of the Community Growing Mapping coordinated by Food Vale, an interactive digital map was produced to signpost people to their local growing spaces offering volunteering opportunities.
- Food Vale partner GVS offers signposting to volunteering opportunities with food-related projects, including their own two community gardening projects (22 volunteers) and two food pantries (33 volunteers).
- Included in the Nutrition Skills for Life™ (NS4L™, see Section 3B) suite of training is the 8-week practical Get Cooking programme, aimed at building confidence and skills in preparing healthy, affordable meals. Between April 2022 to March 2025, 39 Get Cooking programmes were successfully delivered to 127 participants.
- Additional ad hoc opportunities are delivered by partners e.g. as part of the Llantwit Food Project a Food Festival provided a fun opportunity for pantry customers to build skills and confidence in cooking from scratch, with demos, free recipe cards and be inspired, learn some new skills through health cooking demos and the chance to win kitchen equipment such as slow cookers; local CIC Urban-Vertical were funded to set-up tabletop microgreens farms in libraries and run creative arts workshops themed around local sustainable food production.
- The Vale Local Nature Partnership provide practical land-based training courses such as scything, orchard care, hedgelaying, etc, reaching over 200 people in total over the years. Their Vale Orchard Project supported and enhanced 10 community orchards, ran 35 engagement events.
- Coed Hills also runs a variety of training courses and workshops such as Permaculture Design and Forest Gardening courses through the Ediculture project.

- Residents can access support and training for enterprise skills through Food Vale partner Cywain (more info in 4A), and local food and beverage consultancy ZERO2FIVE provide industry training around processing, product development and certifications.
- More formal learning opportunities are also available:
    - Cardiff and Vale College Barry Campus offer a suite of apprenticeship training programmes and professional courses for obtaining qualifications in catering, with financial support available to those who course fees may be a barrier.
    - The Vale of Glamorgan Adult Community Learning Service provides a range of educational opportunities including cookery, and the 'Get Back on Track' courses which offer a range of courses including Hospitality Food and Drink Service fully-funded by the Welsh Government and designed to support eligible individuals to return to employment and maximise their job opportunities.

Food Vale ensures opportunities to actively participate in community food initiatives are promoted to people from all social and cultural backgrounds:

The Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030 includes the action '*Continue to create spaces where people can connect with one another and form a collective voice for wider change in their local food system, with attention paid to voices from our younger generations and groups who may be underserved/frequently unheard*'.

The partnership is exploring ways to address this through conversations with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, who in 2024 approved an application to the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network (seeks to create a movement of local councils who are working to create a culture of welcome, inclusion and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary). In addition to this, equity audits conducted by the Council's Placemaking work have sought to ensure that food initiatives are acting as inclusive placemaking anchors.

Food Vale also complies with the health board's Equality and Diversity policy and is seeking to shift how the quarterly network gatherings are run by reaching out to local partners who can help us better connect in a meaningful way to groups who may have may have been excluded from conversations around healthy and sustainable food.

In 2025 Food Vale partners launched a small grant scheme designed to assist the delivery of interventions around healthy and sustainable food aimed specifically to enable and amplify participation of members of groups with one or more Protected Characteristic

Examples of where opportunities are reaching people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds include:

- Food Vale recently *delivered* a practical cooking course (Get Cooking) to seven local women from resettled Ukrainian families (part of the Llantwit Food Project).
- Local initiative Fieldwork CIC, based at Slade Farm Organics, ran a series of workshops aiming to reconnect people with food a farming specifically targeting seldom heard groups e.g. a session for local resettled Ukrainian families, and customers of local food pantries (59 volunteering opportunities created, 5 local

events, 61 people engage through community initiatives and 660 visitors to the site; example pantry from Llantwit Major saw 23 customers visiting the farm. Case study here).

- Vale Plus, a recipient of multiple small grants from Food Vale, runs cooking and growing workshops for young people with additional learning needs, including a session every Thursday where students use produce grown to learn to cook healthy meals, producing meals for up to 12 people every week. Quote from service user Jade: "*I love working in the garden with the other volunteers. I have made some new friends and it is nice to see what we have grown and use the vegetables in our cooking sessions to make tasty and healthy meals*".
- Innovate Trust run the Field Days Organic horticultural training environment at Amelia Trust Farm (certified by Soil Association) and the Porthkerry Park Project in Barry, both aimed at adults with learning disabilities.
- Local youth project Hive Guys, also a recipient of small grants from Food Vale, runs intergenerational cooking and growing sessions as a way to promote physical and mental health.

The earlier pledge campaign proved to be ill-suited to our place and resources, and the partnership has instead chosen to utilise the 3 Good Food Goals articulated in the new Vale Food Strategy as a basis for a call-to-action to encourage food citizenship to both individuals and organisations across the Vale.

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

There are a number of opportunities for food activists across the Vale of Glamorgan to share inspiration, ideas and resources:

Since 2021 Food Vale has been hosting regular (approx. every 3-4 months) online and in-person opportunities ('network gatherings') for people to connect, share ideas, and form a collective voice for positive change. Recent topics include discussing specific local food activism projects (e.g. with Llantwit Climate Conversations); and local food mapping and visioning exercises. In the 'Let's Talk about Life in the Vale' residents survey 2023, 68% of respondents were concerned with the climate emergency and 65% were concerned with the nature emergency[5]. The next gathering (due 10th October) will be on the theme of Fairtrade in the Vale, inviting people to join together and discuss what they would like to see supported around Fairtrade food locally.

In addition to this, a new WhatsApp group (22 members) has also been established to connect activities and encourage dialogue.

Recent examples of where food activists have been able to input on and shape specific projects include:

[5] Either 'very' or 'fairly' concerned

- Our Community Food Growing mapping engaged with 17 out of the 22 Town and Community Council wards, along with 9 different community growing groups, and the associated workshop on 21st March 2025 brought together over 20 delegates from across the Vale attended to discuss the main challenges and opportunities around community food growing in the Vale.
- Following discussions held within network gatherings around needs for more community kitchen spaces, Food Vale was able to secure Shared Prosperity Funding to conduct a Community Kitchen Feasibility Study. Over 40 people were engaged in person and a further 22 through a survey to inform the development of what became the Community Kitchen Toolkit.

Local community initiatives can access support through a small grants programme and access to tools and resources, as well as through advice and training on project planning, raising money and working with volunteers:

Since 2022, Food Vale has been working closely with partners in the Council as well as local county voluntary council GVS to utilise grant funding awarded by Welsh Government for the purposes of tackling food insecurity to offer a number of small grants programmes for community food initiatives, including a 24/25 small grant scheme specifically designed for projects which support people with protected characteristics.

Financial Year	Amount distributed	Example programmes/services
2025/26	£14,000 distributed for 'Food, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Grant'.	Provided support for food projects directly reaching residents with protected characteristics, utilising grant funding from Welsh Government. Funded projects included community cooking classes around culturally appropriate foods, intergenerational cooking activities and more.
	£20,388 revenue and £20,000 capital distributed for 'Improving Access to Food Grant'	Provided support for food projects including pantries, community cafes, food parcels, food vouchers, and community cooking classes for families on a budget. £20,000 was also made available to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank across the Vale from 8 locations, recognising the crucial emergency food support they provide.
2024/25	£31,856 revenue £12,221 capital distributed for 'Improving Access to Food Grant'	In total 24 food related projects/services supported during this period supporting projects including food pantries, local food growing, cooking skills, breakfast clubs and community hot meal provisions. An additional £4,000 was made available to support food access in more rural areas.
	£30,150 capital £6,000 revenue	Supporting the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank across the Vale from 8 locations. Funding included both capital and revenue to not only support access to essential stock but to improve to improve accessibility and ability at their premises for wider wrap around support and food growing.

2023/24	£46,971 revenue for 'Tackling Food Insecurity' Small Grant Scheme	11 food projects/services supported with food pantries being able to purchase additional stock at a time where there were reports nationally of trends where projects were experiencing growing demand and reductions in donations. Funding also utilised to support food access projects in the rural Vale where there are additional challenges to accessing healthy, affordable food.
	£3,500 revenue	Grant funding provided to the Trussell Trust Vale foodbank to continue their hot meal partnership with the probation service where foodbank users can receive a cooked hot meal with their food parcel. This project has since gone on to receive national recognition and win awards as a successful probation partnership project where people continue to volunteer past their probation service.

Welsh Government have confirmed funding for Food Partnerships through to the 27/28 financial year, ensuring that our small grant schemes can continue to be delivered.

The Keep Wales Tidy Local Places for Nature scheme offers pre-paid packages (including native plants, tools, resources and other materials) to help projects establish food growing spaces, as well as support in installing raised beds etc. 4 food growing packs/fruit tree packages were distributed to growing sites across the Vale in 23/24; 11 in 24/25. Recipients include local allotments, residential homes, schools and charities.

The Local Nature Partnership have supported numerous sites with food growing tools and infrastructure, including primary schools, community gardens, social housing estates and Cowbridge firestation.

As part of the Lottery-funded Llantwit Food Project, to date approximately £3000 has been distributed to community growing projects across Llantwit and St Athan, and over £12,000 to support local food pantries.

Voluntary groups, including those relating to cooking and food growing projects, can access advice, training and support around aspects such as fundraising, managing volunteers, health & safety, marketing, digital skills and safeguarding through local partners Glamorgan Voluntary Services.

Cooking and gardening equipment is available to loan through local 'library of things' initiatives Benthyg, operating from two premises across Penarth and Barry. Additionally, across 2024-2025 Fareshare Cymru developed and made available 11 sets of pop-up kitchen equipment to community food projects across the Vale.

The aforementioned Community Kitchen Toolkit, funded by Shared Prosperity Fund and coordinated by Food Vale following conversations held in our quarterly network

gatherings, provides best-practice guidance around setting up and running shared-use kitchen spaces.

The innovative business model of school meal provider Big Fresh, which operates as a commercial entity, allows them to reinvest profits into schools and communities. £281,068 has been reinvested so far, with £114,220 going towards school and community projects. Examples of projects receiving funding include a Worm Pilot Project, school outdoor cooking and dining initiatives, breakfast and afterschool clubs; a homework and enrichment club including offering a healthy afternoon snack; the nutrition pod (a converted shipping container that allows children to concentrate on their health and wellbeing); the healthy snack shack (run by year 4-6 pupils during breaktimes, offering the chance to create a menu, source and prepare the food while also learning about profit and loss and enterprise skills); and the 'fabulous food project', where pupils prepare and cook healthy food based on the Eatwell Plate.

Communities are supported to access unused buildings & land to be used for enterprises/ community food projects:

Community groups across the Vale can access support from Social Farms and Gardens to find land for growing food, and the Community Mapping Toolkit produced by VOG Council Creative Communities team helps communities map their local assets, including land, buildings, people and skills (case studies here).

In 2025, Food Vale secured funding from Shared Prosperity Funding to commission a piece of work to map existing community growing spaces (including allotments, orchards and community gardens) and explore the barriers and additional needs relating to these. A digital map plotting the community growing spaces, as well as a report summarising the findings of the project, are now available on Food Vale's Community Growing Webpage. The report identified 54 community gardens, allotments and orchards across the Vale. Community growing spaces (excluding allotments) were found to cover a combined total of approximately 7,500 square meters, and received visits from an estimated average of 240 people every week.

Following the launch of the Community Kitchens Toolkit, Food Vale has secured additional funding from the Lottery (including approximately £50k capital) to run a small grant scheme (expected to launch in the 26/27 financial year) which will enable community groups utilising the toolkit to then gain funding to refurbish existing spaces with the necessary infrastructure and facilities so that they are fit for the purposes of a community kitchen.

Community food growing, and participation in such activities, is supported:

There is an increasing number of exciting food growing projects run by a mixture of community groups and organisations across the Vale, a selection of which were included in our short video celebrating Community Growing in the Vale.

Consenting community growing sites and allotments are plotted in our Community Growing Digital Map as part of the Community Growing Mapping work. The recommendations from the report that emerged from this piece of work included i) develop a community growing network to connect growers and enhance knowledge sharing and awareness; and ii) set up efficient and effective processed for accessing land and obtaining leases/permissions for community growing. These recommendations were recently presented and discussed at the Board Meeting of the Council's Climate Challenge Plan Project Zero, and Food Vale is now working with Board members to develop a suite of mechanisms to address the identified barriers and mechanisms. Whilst we are still early on in the process, discussions so far have included measures to bring more allotments into use, streamline processes for accessing food compost, and explore utilising land formerly used as garages for food growing.

Of the five key new housing developments approved as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan, the largest has requirements for food growing spaces integrated into it, and Food Vale is currently in discussion with the Planning team to roll this requirement out to all future housing developments. There are ongoing instances where edible landscapes are being embedded in new developments via Section 106, creating multifunctional green spaces for biodiversity and social ties.

In addition, many of the growers that Food Vale has supported through the Welsh Veg in Schools scheme (henceforth 'WVIS' - see 5B for more information) have expressed an interest in making some land available for community growing purposes once their enterprises have matured.

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

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

A multi-agency partnership collaborates to identify and tackled the full range of issues relating to food poverty.

Partnership work to tackle food poverty began in 2022 with the Lottery-funded Llantwit Food Pilot Project. Since beginning, the project has helped set up two new pantries regularly reaching 85 households at risk of food poverty, distributing over 300kg of food weekly and invested £2,500 in local community food growing initiatives which in turn

supply into the pantries. The project has gone on to receive the Ystadau Cymru Award. The pantries have a team of 33 volunteers at present, and internal training around food safety and food hygiene have been delivered to all volunteers, plus safety training to 8 drivers.

Thanks to further funding from Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Team, this partnership approach is now being rolled out to the rest of the Vale. In 2023 the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group was established to allow partners to work collaboratively to address household food insecurity in a joined-up, strategic way, as well as sharing advice around practical topics such as project planning, fundraising and managing volunteers. The Group meets every 6 weeks, and representatives include FareShare Cymru; local community food pantry projects Baobab Bach, FoodShare, Family Action FOOD Clubs and projects run on school premises; FareShare Go; Vale of Glamorgan Council. By working closely with the Council's Placemaking team, we are also able to draw on work which has incorporated lived-experience in co-design for poverty hotspots, subsequently mapped onto Priority Places for Food Index as equitable placemaking tool.

Across 2023-24 the Food Vale Project Support Officer carried out research and community engagement which informed the Vale Food Insecurity Report. Through in-person events and an online survey (translated into Welsh, Ukrainian and Farsi), over 500 people were engaged with on their experiences of accessing food, and the findings were published in the Vale Food Insecurity Report available on our website.

A further Lottery application was made by Food Vale in early 2025, drawing on the success of the earlier Llantwit Food Project 5-year Pilot and the findings from the Vale Food Insecurity Report. In July 2025 we were informed that our application was a success, and we will have approximately £380,000 across 3 years to implement the recommendations from the Vale Food Insecurity Report.

Through the Vale Food Strategy, partners have committed to "*Explore options to adopt a **cash-first approach** to tackling food insecurity: providing financial assistance directly to residents in crisis, including to people without recourse to public funds*".

High quality social food provision targets those most in need through a variety of schemes and initiatives:

Free School Meals (FSM)

- After Welsh Government (WG) announced the roll out of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to all primary school-aged children in Wales in 2021, local school meal provider Big Fresh Catering - thanks to proactive futureproofing in the run up – was able to roll out UFSM to all pupils in May 2023 ahead of September (when it was due to happen according to WG commitments), making them the best performing LA in Wales.
- 1707 of 2,905 eligible pupils (74%) took free school meals (census day 2024/2025).
- The company's performance was celebrated at the 2022 Eat Them To Defeat Them catering challenge.

- Primary schools in the Vale offer healthy Free Breakfasts as per the standards set out under sections 88–90 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the breakfasts provided in primary schools must be healthy. As of census day January 2025, 2,371 primary school pupils accessed free breakfasts under the Welsh Governments Free School Breakfast initiative.

Food & Fun

Food and Fun is an award-winning, quality-assured scheme school holiday programme offering a range of food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals through schools to children in areas of social deprivation during the school summer holidays.

- 3 schools participated in Food and Fund in 2024, with 239 children attending at least one session and 3866 meals served to attendees across the summer holidays.
- Whilst we are still awaiting for data for the 2025 delivery, we know that delivery expanded significantly to 10 cohorts across six schools
- All Food & Fun coordinators complete level 2 Community Food and Nutrition and Food Hygiene qualifications.
- Example feedback from participating children in 2025 is here.

Food Poverty Projects

There are about 20 food banks and community food initiatives offering free or low-cost food across the Vale[6], with many of these receiving direct financial support from Food Vale through our small grant schemes (see 2B). Schemes operating free/membership/pay-as-you-can models seek to ensure emergency food is a last resort. Between 2023-24 Trussel Trust distributed 8,662 food parcels across the Vale.

The local authority promotes fair wages Promote for all staff and for contractors:

Through the Vale Food Strategy, partners have agreed to "*Encourage partners to sign up to become Real Living Wage and Real Living Hours Accredited employers for all staff and agency workers*".

The Council has long been an advocate of the promotion of fair wages and working practices to promote financial stability, reduce poverty and food inequality and has taken a considered and measured approach to this to recognise the impact of fair pay on staff and the wider commissioned sector.

In 2019 the Council removed the lowest pay grade, increasing the minimum to Spine-Point , the first authority in Wales to agree to the pay structure. During the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced payments were made to the Council's front-line, mainly lower-paid

[6]A directory of these schemes is available on the Food Vale webpage 'Where can I get support?'.

staff. Shortly after, in 2022 as part of a cross-functional Council working group considering the emerging position in relation to the cost of living crisis and the impact on communities and colleagues, the Strategic Leadership Team recommended the informal adoption of the Real Living Wage. Cabinet formally resolved to adopt the recommendations in February 2023, backdated to December 2022, and the Council is now working with the Real Living Wage Foundation to become a Living Wage Accredited employer by the end of 2025. The Council also supports and funds the adopted of the Real Living Wage with our social services commissioned sector.

The Council are working to drive inequalities in pay and have actively reduced our gender pay gap to 2.26% and our ethnic minority pay gap to 6.85%. The next reiteration of the People Strategy[7] seeks to take this approach further developing a series of social metrics linking local employment opportunities to the reduction of inequalities and the impact on the most vulnerable in our communities.

In addition, the Council's wider benefits were reviewed in consultation with staff in 2023 which saw the creation of 'My Vale Rewards' centred around key themes which mattered to staff, including the introduction of 'shop local' initiatives with a focus of food sustainability and local quality food producers. Recent benefits have included discounted seeds at a local garden centre to support 'growing your own' over the summer period and discounts a local farms shops and kitchens.

Since 2022, all social workers in Wales have received the Real Living Wage as part of a package from Welsh Government.

Relevant health professionals, welfare advisers, housing, and voluntary organisations are trained in food poverty issues:

The Food-Related Benefits Awareness Resource, developed by the Public Health team, provides frontline staff with an overview of the various schemes that support families on a low income to access a healthier diet, such as breakfast clubs, free school meals, Food & Fun and Healthy Start:

- In addition to 33 frontline staff from key organisations trained in-person 2019-2021[8], 28 staff members registered on training since it was migrated to an online resource in late 2023.
- Partners have developed a digital campaign to promote the scheme (due to launch in Autumn 2025), including a digital poster summarising the variety of support available across Cardiff and the Vale in relation to food and income maximisation for citizens.
- 632 people are registered on the digital Healthy Start scheme as of July 2025.
- The Nutrition Skills for Life™ Level 2 course (see below) includes modules on food poverty issues.

[7] Currently out for consultation

[8] Vale Council, Hafod and Newydd Housing Associations, Foodbank, Schools.

Food Vale partners have also been working with the Independent Food Aid Network to co-design the 'Worrying about Money' leaflet (final draft due October 2025) to support people facing money worries as well as support workers. Once finalised, a test-run of 500 copies will be printed and distributed across the Vale via the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group.

Food access providers are supported and encouraged to deliver work in a way that upholds the dignity of their 'service users'/community:

The new Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030 includes the outcome 'There are more opportunities for more voices to be heard in the local good food movement, with more opportunities to influence the food system'.

The aforementioned Vale Food Insecurity work is underpinned by the Food Ladders approach which seeks to create household and community resilience by capitalising on the capacity of food to bring people together. Community engagement has been a crucial part of developing this work in the Vale, to ensure that the views, ideas and live experience of communities are being taken into account.

Through the Vale Food Insecurity Working Group, a plan has been agreed which aims to take a holistic, joined-up and dignified approach to tackling food insecurity. Thanks to Lottery funding secured by Food Vale partnership, these will be implemented across the 26-29 financial years. These include, but are not limited to:

- Engagement work to explore which foods are desired across food pantries, where there may be opportunities for better supporting needs around more culturally appropriate food, supporting healthy diets for those with neurodivergence and encouraging food that supports wider wellbeing.
- Wider signposting to multi-agency services that address challenges people may be facing related to food-adjacent issues to ensure that they are able to enjoy a happy and healthy life regardless of their financial situation.
- Funded opportunities to gain skills in cooking and growing food to improve community resilience and nurture a love of good food.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

Preferential treatment is given to healthy food advertisements and junk food ads are restricted:

In September 2025, following collaborative research/engagement between the University Health Board and local Councils, the VOG Council was congratulated by the Future Generations Commissioner after agreeing to restrict unhealthy food advertising at bus stops or on boards along the Vale of Glamorgan's highways, making them the first local authority in Wales to do so. The policy is due to come into effect in October 2025. Within the Vale Food Strategy, partners have also agreed to extend this by working together explore an agreed definition of 'sustainable' advertising. Partners are due to meet in

November 2025 to begin this work and explore opportunities to build additional campaign work around healthy, sustainable and local eating.

A wide range of healthy eating and healthy weight support services and initiatives are provided and promoted throughout the Vale:

The Public Health Dietetic Team work with partners to deliver a range of targeted programmes designed to promote healthier lifestyles and reduce nutritional inequalities, working across the life course and with a particular focus on underrepresented populations in the Vale of Glamorgan:

- Nutrition Skills for Life™ (NS4L™) is an All-Wales, dietitian-led, quality-assured programme providing training for professionals, community workers, and volunteers, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to cascade healthy eating messages to those they support. The programme is structured across two levels: the first level designed for professionals, community workers, and volunteers who work directly with the public; the second involves direct delivery to individuals and families within communities, helping them to achieve a healthy and affordable diet tailored to their needs. 11 Community Food and Nutrition level 2 courses have been delivered to 94 partner participants across the Vale between April 2022 to March 2025.
- Nutrition for Your Little One (NYLO) nutrition programme is for families with children 5 and under, designed to equip families with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to provide a healthy, balanced diet for their child. Between April 2022 to March 2025 the Public Health Dietetic team have delivered 9 courses reaching 60 families and supported 7 families through the home-based support in the Vale.
- Foodwise is an eight-week programme led by the Public Health Dietetics team and designed to support participants in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight through sustainable lifestyle changes. Between April 2022 to March 2025, 34 Foodwise groups were successfully delivered to 199 participants, providing accessible and supportive environments for individuals seeking to improve their health. To enhance flexibility and reach, the Foodwise app has also been developed to use alongside group sessions or independently.
- Foodwise in Pregnancy is a five-week programme delivered by the Public Health Dietetic team, designed to support individuals throughout their pregnancy in making informed, healthy lifestyle choices. 1 Foodwise group was successfully delivered in the Vale to 5 participants. To enhance accessibility, the Foodwise in Pregnancy app has also been developed to use alongside group sessions or independently.

The Vale's Healthy Living Team deliver the National Exercise Referral scheme which supports residents with medical conditions referred by health professionals to increase their health through exercise, as well as running a range of school based, family and community based physical activity projects, including two social prescribing projects:

- Energise YOUth targets young people to increase their confidence, wellbeing and health through physical activity (62 young people supported in 24/25);

- Golden Pass helps older residents explore local activities, build confidence, increase social connections and encourage long-term participation in a more active lifestyle, offering a free 8-week membership to their local leisure centre or 8 free physical activity sessions delivered by community organisations (in 24/25 139 residents used their Golden Pass with 97% planning to continue attending sessions, 92% reported an increase in confidence in taking part in physical activity and 79% reported an increase in social connections).

As part of Making Every Contact Count (MECC) (programme training professionals to deliver healthy lifestyle messages to individuals) 198 members of staff were trained to level 1 in 24/25)[9].

Thanks to a successful funding application made by Food Vale to The National Lottery, the existing Get Cooking course (currently limited to delivery in Central Vale) will be rolled out to the whole county, with additional dietetic capacity supported for delivery of healthy cooking and nutrition interventions in schools and communities across 2026-28.

Access to healthy food has been mapped and measures are being taken to address the proliferation of unhealthy food outlets:

In 2023, CAVUHB Public Health colleagues mapped Fast Food Outlet Density across the whole of Wales, comparing this to deprivation data. This was presented at the 2023 European Public Health Conference and a peer-reviewed paper is due to be published in 2026.

This has also been used as evidence for the ongoing development of the Vale's Replacement Local Development Plan 2021-2036, and Vale Council is now developing Supplementary Planning Guidance to address the proliferation and concentration of hot food takeaways, with consideration of location in relation to deprivation levels, which will be submitted for approval along with the Deposit Plan in early 2026.

Healthy food culture transformation programmes are promoted in a range of settings:

PSB members and CAVUHB Public Health Team recently published a six-year regional framework and two-year implementation plan entitled 'Good Food and Movement', the vision of which is '*to create environments, settings and opportunities that enable good food and movement for everyone'*. The Council's new Corporate Plan, titled 'Vale 2030: Strong Communities with a Bright Future' commits to 'create a Vale of Glamorgan with strong, happy and healthy communities'.

Hospitals: CAVUHB was the first Health Board in Wales to implement healthy eating standards for all non-patient food – requiring that at least 75% of food and drink is healthier and supports healthy eating at work (impacting the 50,000 meals served annually). Latest

[9] See above.

audit scores[10] found that UHL Restaurant was 85% compliant; UHL Café 66%; Barry Hospital Café 65% compliant. In addition, significant work has been done to encourage on-site vending machines to meet this same standard.

Workplaces: The Healthy Workplace Principles, developed by public health in partnership with Vale PSM, has been distributed to all public partners along with bilingual digital assets to promote Healthy Eating.

Care homes: In the Vale, the aforementioned NS4L™ programme focuses particularly on upskilling the older adult care workforce to ensure that nutrition support is embedded into everyday practice across residential homes, day centres, and community-based services. In addition, work is underway to develop and implement the Gold Standard Care Home Snack Award in care homes across the Vale - an initiative designed to enhance the quality of food and drink snack provision in order to improve the overall food environment, uphold high standards of food hygiene, and promote engagement with food-related initiatives. Delivered in line with Welsh Government food and nutrition best practice guidance, the award recognises care homes that offer a comprehensive snack menu catering to healthy eating principles, nutrition support, and modified texture requirements. Settings which successfully complete the Community Food and Nutrition Skills Level 2 training are eligible to achieve the Plus Award, acknowledging their commitment to furthering nutritional excellence in care provision.

Schools: One of the key system priorities identified in the Good Food and Movement framework is 'Social norms, culture and community values', and actions around embedding a 'whole-school approach to food'. The Vale's Healthy and Sustainable Pre-Schools scheme (HSPSS) and Healthy Schools (HS) scheme are part of the pioneering Welsh Government Healthy Schools Scheme initiative.

- HSPSS actively promotes health in pre-school settings, including criteria for serving local/seasonal/healthy food, reducing food waste and growing food. As of July 2025, there are 43 settings on the scheme, of which 37 have completed the Nutrition and Oral Health topic accreditation (+4 working towards this).
- HS works with local/national partners to ensure a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to health within schools. 60 schools on the scheme, each with dedicated co-ordinators. 'Food and Fitness' is 1/7 topics. 10 schools have completed the prestigious National Quality Award (NQA), demonstrating a strong whole-school approach to all areas of health. 1 school has even completed phase 6 of the scheme.
- Settings follow Welsh Government nutrition guidance (includes 1+ meat-free days, tap-water only, responsibly sourced fish, unprocessed foods) and FSA scores are marked on all school entrances to ensure premises are safe.
- Welsh Government funded all Vale primary schools to participate in Veg power and *Eat Them to Defeat Them* bilingual assets have been sent to 25 schools.
- Through these schemes, a number of initiatives have been run to positively impact school food culture:

[10] From October 2024

- In 2024, 21 pre-school and primary school staff received training from a local producer on how to grow food, including information on what to grow and when and how to embed it in the curriculum.
- Potato-growing kits have been provided to all pre-school settings and many primary schools to promote learning around growing, sustainability and health.
- Public Health Dietitians worked with pre-school settings to co-design 8 bilingual recipe cards for children to take home with them. Further recipes are hoped to be added to those already available.
- 25 preschool settings and 9 after-school clubs have achieved the Gold Standard Snack Award showing that healthy snacks/drinks are provided, guidelines on hygiene and eating environment are met, and demonstrating a commitment to children's health and encouraging good eating habits.
- Related activities include Healthy Halloween initiative.
- Bilingual healthy lunchboxes resources and lists of other training opportunities distributed amongst all Vale schools/preschool settings.

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

A note on Planning measures:

There are important differences between planning policy in Wales and England in how use classes, permitted development rights, local plan policy etc work, which make it harder (or at least more complex) in Wales to use planning policy to control, for example, proliferation of hot food takeaway outlets. In Wales, hot food takeaways are grouped under Use Class A3 (Food and Drink) along with restaurants, cafés, pubs etc, which makes it difficult to implement measures to restrict unhealthy food outlets which wont also impact cafes and restaurants. Despite this, some local authorities in Wales (the Vale included) are making progress in this area.

A note on Healthy Start:

An issue has been identified with the source data that is used to calculate uptake of the Healthy Start scheme since January 2023. Therefore it is not possible to know percentage of uptake, and difficult to draw insights from current uptake levels.

Transition to new Healthy Schools Scheme

The National Quality Award (NQA) Healthy Schools scheme has been replaced by a more flexible and school-led framework that allows institutions to set their own priorities based on their needs. The new National Standards for Health and Well-being Promoting Schools in Wales focus on embedding well-being across every aspect of school life, moving away from rigid health topics and instead placing greater emphasis on leadership, workforce well-being, and school culture.

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

Local retail, tourism, planning and economic development strategies, policies and services actively support the development and long-term success of healthy and sustainable food businesses and a circular food economy:

The Circular Food Economy is enshrined as one of our 3 good food goals in the Vale Food Strategy. In addition, the PSB's Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028 commits to "Promote positive behaviour changes and enable a greater understanding of our impact on the environment[…]with a focus on energy, the circular economy, food, biodiversity and travel". The Vale's Climate Change Challenge Plan 'Project Zero' commits to '*put in place the necessary facilities, services and awareness raising for a more circular economy*'. The Destination Management Plan aims to '*Be a place that has strong local supply chain links, celebrating local food.* The Council's new Corporate Plan, titled 'Vale 2030: Strong Communities with a Bright Future' commits to "Deliver a Food Strategy for the Vale and work with local food producers and the agricultural sector to support local supply chains and actions which underpin the sustainability of our rural communities"

Partners are actively working to re-establish new, and support existing sustainable food infrastructure to support shorter and value-based supply chains:

Food/farmers markets

The Vale Farmers Market takes place in Cowbridge every Saturday morning (holding markets for 25 years), offering a hub of local food enterprises. The same group also organises a food area at the annual Vale Show - the largest one-day event in the Vale, attracting 20,000+ people and 200+ trade stands. A new monthly farmers market was also established in 2024 in Wenvoe attended by Glamorgan Smallholders - a group of farmer crofters selling agri-related food, drink and craft produce. As part of the Vale Food Trail, Glamorgan Smallholders also ran a pop-up farmers market in Ystradowen for local farm produce.

Livestock markets/wider supply chain infrastructure

Following the 2018 Livestock Market feasibility study Vale Council are continuing efforts to establish a Green Agri-food hub, incorporating a Livestock Market and Rural Hub with a co-located Food Centre. A site has been identified and necessary surveys are being undertaken, and conversations are taking place to explore the possibility for the Food Centre to act as a hub for distribution, providing demand is established. Whilst this project is still in its relatively early stages, partners are actively seeking funding opportunities to put this plan into option (with ongoing conversations around investment from Cardiff Capital Region (CCR)). The hub has huge potential to serve as vital infrastructure for more local supply chains across the region, and will have a significant impact on food miles in the Vale particularly where farmers currently face an 80-mile round trip to sell at the nearest market. See above for a concept illustration of the anticipated layout.

Distribution networks

Food Vale partners, particularly Vale Council's Economic Regenerations, have been supporting the on-the ground delivery of Welsh Veg in Schools (WVIS) and engaging with local growers as well as wholesalers Bishops and Castell Howell to establish a distribution network for local produce into Vale Schools. For the 2025 delivery of WVIS, Food Vale offered small grants of up to £2,500 to the three participating local growers to help de-risk their participation in the scheme and support investment in vital infrastructure such as irrigation tanks, weighing scales etc. Growers are also supported through physical meetings and a WhatsApp group. The intention is to build on this for future deliveries of the scheme, with the potential to use food partnership capital funding to support more infrastructure and machinery shared amongst participating growers.

Grants and pilots

In 2024 Food Vale awarded £7,500 capital to a local farm to pilot a new a sustainable model of food production that could be replicated on other farms. The pilot involved establishing a new polytunnel growing system on-site combined with an agroforestry system to produce biomass which will create enough thermal energy to heat the polytunnel over winter. A life-cycle assessment is due to take place shortly to demonstrate reduced/sequestered carbon.

Due to wider pressures for asset sales, the Vale no longer has any Council-owned farms, with the exception of the site near Hensol which has been earmarked for the proposed Agri-

Food Hub. As indicated above, Senior Officers in the Council are committed to ensuring this facility meets local needs for sustainable food production and support for local enterprises.

Sustainable farmers, retailers and other food businesses are supported through vocational training, business planning advice, grants and financial advice, and access to land and premises:

Vale Council provides practical support for businesses e.g. identifying investment sites, accessing grants funding, with many examples of support to independent food businesses e.g.:

- Helped set up smallholder networking group Glamorgan Smallholders (60+ members, meet twice/month)
- Invested £500,000+ in Pride in our Farming Families project – inc. £40k to support 13 farms to diversify business, introducing non-agricultural initiatives to help sustain farms e.g. Fablas Ice Cream.
- Supported establishment of Local Food Court at Vale of Glamorgan Annual Show showcasing local producers.

The Vale Council's Business Development Grants provided small, medium and large grants (<£300k, all offered at 50% match funding) for businesses who have been trading for more than one year, as well as Business Start-Up bursaries of up to £5k. The former scheme is now closed and successful applicants are progressing to delivery, and for the latter: at least two Food Business start-ups have been supported in the last 12 months.

More recently, Vale Economic Regeneration team have been working with Shared Regulatory Services to provide support to existing and prospective businesses around start-ups, recruitment, planning, business rates, licensing and more (example – recent in-person Business Advice Surgery in Barry saw 6 businesses receiving face to face 1:1 advice from members of the SRS Team to help support their business development.).

Food Vale partner Cywain provide training, business and financial planning to food and drink producers within the county. Zero2Five is the food industry centre in South Wales, providing technical advice, expertise, insight and research to support food and drink businesses.

Support is also available for Wales-wide initiatives:

- Farming Connect work with farmers on all aspects of training, business and financial planning and grants as well as speciality technical support for horticulture, red meat, and dairy support. They have also run a variety of accredited e-learning modules designed to enhance learning and experience in the context of the new Sustainable Farming Scheme.
- Social Business Wales supports social food businesses with expertise, funding, resources and a virtual network.
- Local farmers and can access training, support and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange through Landworkers' Alliance on access to land, business support and finance.

Partners are working to improve the diversity of the retail offer locally:

The Vale Council's Business Development Grants provides grants of up to £300k for businesses who have been trading for more than one year, with a focus on themes including *innovation, diversification and decarbonisation*, and in addition to this Business Start-Up bursaries of up to £5k.

In addition to this, the recently completed Shared Prosperity Funding scheme invested in local independent businesses to help them establish themselves and expand into more sustainable operations. Supported businesses included artisan bakery Ground Bakery, food venue Bafflehaus, local indie Foxy's Deli, Ewenny Garden Centre, Zios Gelateria, Welsh Coffee Co, milk-vending enterprise The Milk Shed. A local food producer was also supported to increase on farm renewable energy generation (solar) and to further diversify through the purchase of new equipment in order to for them to be able to offer new products and accelerate new product development opportunities to build resilience.

The Glamorgan Smallholders (supported by Vale Council, see above) operate in a model that allows them to share a stall at the Cowbridge Farmers Market (and wider farmers markets) – sharing costs, risks and responsibilities for staffing.

The Vale Food Trail offers small independent businesses a chance to test new ideas. For example, Glamorgan Smallholders wished to test a pop-up Farmers Market in Ystradowen as part of the trail in 2025.

The aforementioned Vale Producers Directory and #discoveratasteofthevale campaign also of course encourages a shift to more values-based consumption, favouring local, seasonal and sustainable food over convenience and price.

Through our food partnership small grant schemes (see 2B) partners are investing in more social-value based models such as the Pantry model, and ongoing work is being carried out to explore the case for supporting a food-buying cooperative amongst food pantries.

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

The council's Climate Change Challenge Plan 'Project Zero' includes commitments to '*promote businesses that have sustainable practices*'.

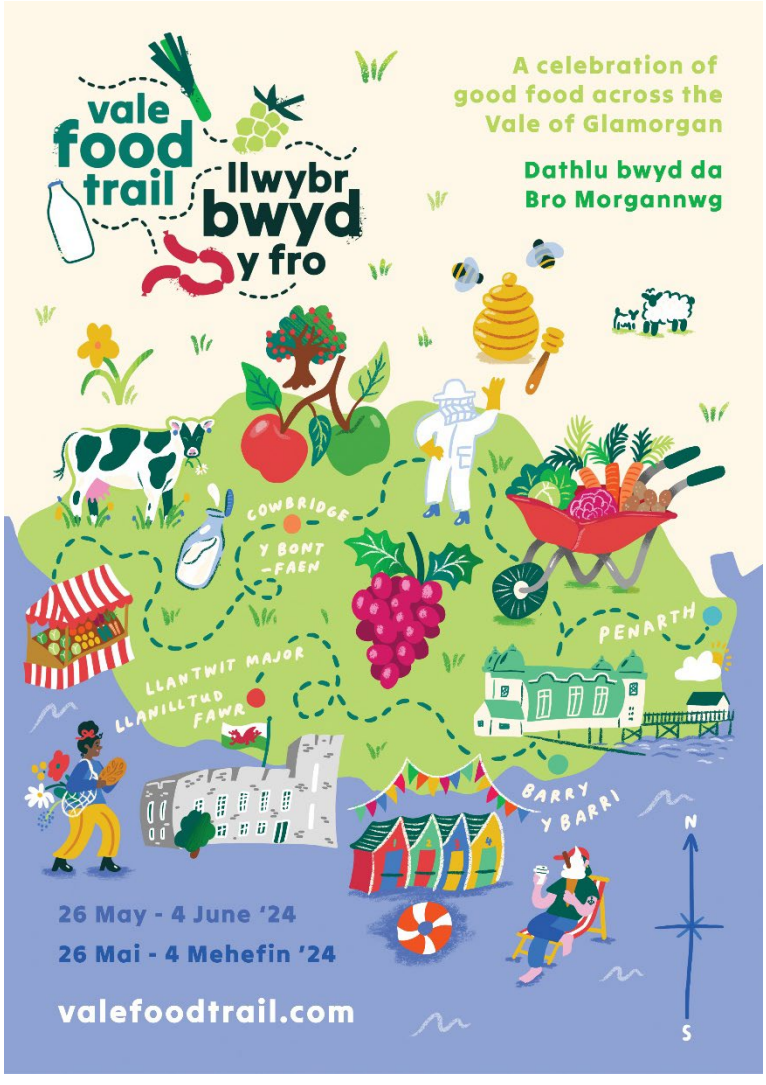
Consumers are supported to find local good food businesses via a well-promoted, easy to use on-line directory.

In 2025 the Vale Council's Economic Regeneration team, in collaboration with Visit the Vale, launch the Vale Food Producers Directory to promote the local producers, shops, markets and cafes that make up the Vale's rich food and farming scene (28 local food and drink businesses registered so far). Statistics for the Directory for the last 6 months are:

- Views: 628
- Active users: 350
- Views per user: 1.79
- Avg. engagement: 30s
- Events (interactions): 2,273

Other directories with a strong presence of Vale-based food businesses include: Discover Delicious, Open Food Network, Food Innovation Wales (51 Vale-based businesses, FIW also enables businesses to redistribute surplus), Big Barn (13 Vale businesses), Shopappy (22 food & drink businesses in Penarth).

Local good food businesses are promoted to the public using a range of communication tools:



Since 2023 Food Vale has worked with partners to deliver the Vale Food Trail: a ten-day trail showcasing the wide range of local businesses who are growing, making, selling and serving food that is good for people, place and planet. Example activities include fermentation workshops; farm tours, farm-to-fork and 'no-dig' demonstrations; special menus featuring local, seasonal ingredients; and tastings and tours of vineyards/orchards/tea plantations.

It's most recent delivery in 2025 saw 20 participating businesses, 46 activities and an estimated 1000 attendees. Media mentions tracked here and included interviews with participating businesses on the BBC Country Focus programme. Participating in the trail has had a variety of positive spin-off effects, including guest blog pieces through Business Wales for three businesses here, here and here.

The VOG Council's Economic Regeneration team also recently sponsored a new category of Food and Farming in the 2025 VOG Business Awards. The Category received a higher number of applications than any other category in the 2025 Awards, and colleagues hope to be able to support the category again at future Awards. At the regional level, Vale-based producers and suppliers are often celebrated through the Food Awards Wales.

People are encouraged to support and spend in local independent and sustainable food businesses through a variety of promotional campaigns:

The Vale Food Producer's Directory is supported by a #discoveratasteofthevale branding and communications campaign designed to promote local, independent food businesses to local consumers. The Council's Economic Regeneration team are now working on a festive campaign to encourage consumers to support local food producers via Christmas gifting and meal occasions – planned to launch late October 2025.

In addition to this, a series of 'Food Inspo posts' to showcase specific local food businesses. An example post include 'A Taste of the Vale: Award-Winning Dairy Delights | Inspiration from Visit The Vale' – detailing local dairy producers who had won awards at this years Royal Welsh Agricultural Show 2025 (Post stats to date: Views: 68, Users: 24, Views per user: 2.83, Events: 221)

The Vale Food Trail, which is essentially a promotional campaign for local, independent and sustainable food businesses sees approximately 25 local businesses promoted through the trail every year.

Opportunities are provided for local producers to promote and sell their produce directly to consumers:

Food Vale Steering Group member Cywain support food businesses with technical mentoring on how to create online outlets for their produce as well as promotional guidance through social media and marketing training, B2C social media marketing and case study exposure as well as opportunities with press and media.

Cywain also provide support and mentoring expertise on box scheme initiatives and meet the producer events.

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

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.* Healthy and sustainable food catering is becoming the norm across a full range of institutions, supported by strong local authority leadership.

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

Sustainable food procurement is embedded in local Council policies and strategies, promoting healthy and planet-friendly diets:

Through their Climate Challenge Plan 'Project Zero' launched in 2021, the VOG Council committed to revise procurement policies and train staff on more sustainable procurement.

The Council's Procurement Policy and Strategy (2022/23 – 2026-27) includes a section on sustainable food, committing to promoting sustainable and ethically sourced food, and setting out the minimum, expected and preferred expectations of suppliers. These include minimum standards on cage free eggs, MSC or equivalent certification for fish, meat and dairy which satisfy UK welfare standards, and a consideration of food miles. A number of additional certification schemes are listed as expected, including Fairtrade.

An analysis of the Council's spend profile and carbon footprint across procurement categories including food was conducted and a task and finish group was established to review of the Council's Procurement Policy and Strategy in order to fully understand current practice, challenges, and areas which may need improvement, with particular considerations around decarbonisation, social value and equitable procurement in alignment with wider national policy e.g. the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act (Wales) and the UK Procurement Act.

These recommendations will be considered in a forthcoming update of the current Procurement Policy and Strategy. A report summarising the findings of the review went to Cabinet in July 2025, including recommendations to develop a Social Value Policy, to train staff on the Circular Economy, and establish a Community of Practice to bring together directorates from across the Council.

Local public sector bodies have adopted healthy and sustainable food policies, and comply with national nutrition standards:

The Corporate Health Standard **(CHS)** food standards, aimed at large public and private sector organisations, include high nutrition standards, reducing meat, offering drinking water. In the Vale, Newydd Housing Association is accredited Gold, CAVUHB is accredited platinum.

CAVUHB Restaurants and Retail Food Standards has transformed catering. Minimum standard of 75% healthy products, freshly prepared food serving 50,000+ meals annually. They are also working to extend the standards to include all vending machines.

All school meals provided through Big Fresh Catering comply with Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Regulations) (Wales) Regulations, and Big Fresh has worked hard to create allergen-free menus, increased vegan and vegetarian options, with more meals made from scratch.

Following conversations with pupils from St Joseph's Primary School, Big Fresh have been working with Size of Wales to begin addressing deforestation in their ingredients.

In addition to this, the Council is working with procurement partner Ardal to raise awareness of sustainable procurement. This has included working with WRAP to deliver a workshop on the circular economy within food on 10th December 2024, a Size of Wales webinar to spotlight the 'Deforestation Free Champions' approach in September 2025, and an Ardal sustainable procurement animation which was circulated to staff. Big Fresh have also been working with suppliers Castell Howell and Size of Wales to audit their most high-risk products leading them to work with dairy suppliers to address this, and continues to work with Size of Wales to explore joining their deforestation free champions initiative.

In recognition of their progress, in 2022 the Vale was recognised as one of the top 21 performing councils in the UK in the 'Every Mouthful Counts' Report from Sustain, and won the Catering Management Team of the year award at the 2023 LACA Wales Awards.

There has been a concerted effort both locally and wider in Wales to ensure healthier, more sustainable and local food is served on the public plate: with a number of Welsh-specific healthy and sustainable food accreditations (which does mean less take-up of UK schemes e.g. Food For Life). Many have a stronger health focus, but incorporate environmental/ethical elements:

Schools

60 schools are on Vale Healthy Schools scheme. Food and Fitness is an integral section (minimum nutrition standards, drinking water, certification schemes e.g. Fairtrade). 10 schools completed National Quality Award and a further 4 are working towards this. Council-owned school meal provider Big Fresh Catering Company conducted a Supply Chain Feasibility Study and switched to sourcing all milk from a local dairy, using only MSC-certified fish, and removing all plastic cutlery/straws and reducing other plastics.

Local organic produce is supplied into school meals as well as meals served as part of the 2025 Food & Fun school holiday scheme via the Vale's participation in the WVIS scheme (more info in 5B). Whilst we are awaiting figures for the amount of veg supplied into schools at the local authority level as part of WVIS, we understand that across the 2025 delivery of

the scheme it is expected that 60 tonnes of veg (1 million portions) will be heading into school meals across the 12 participating local authorities in Wales.

Childcare Settings

The Healthy and Sustainable Pre-Schools scheme includes criteria for serving healthy food, increasing local, seasonal, reducing food waste and growing food on site. 35 settings are on scheme, of which 31 have completed the Nutrition and Oral Health topic accreditation and a further 4 settings working towards this. 25 also have Gold Standard Snack Award.

Healthcare and other schemes

All NHS hospitals in Wales now serve sustainable fish thanks to a pledge by NHS Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP), which manages procurement on behalf of Welsh hospitals - an estimated 850,000 meals per year. They serve only sustainable fish such as hoki, cod, mackerel and wild caught salmon, and have completely removed fish which is considered 'Fish to Avoid' by the Marine Conservation Society.

Smaller-scale food businesses also demonstrate commitments to improving their food offering through national accreditation schemes:

- There are a number of food businesses certified organic by the Soil Association, including local veg box schemes Coed Organic and Slade Farm Organics. Organic certification is also a key requirement for local producers participating in the WVIS scheme – seeing another two businesses achieving certification: Celtic Roots and Goldsland Farm.
- Local organic tea plantation Peterston Tea have demonstrated strong capacity innovation and diversification but also commitments to sustainability by being certified organic by the Soil Association.
- Big Fresh Catering Ltd.'s commercial entity – which runs two cafes across the Vale – sources exclusively Fairtrade ingredients (where applicable).
- 2 Vale businesses have achieved prestigious Silver Healthy Options Award.

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

Across 2022-24, organisations across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan worked together to explore how they can shift to more healthy and sustainable food procurement:

Bringing together procurement officers, caterers, suppliers and other decision-makers from across Vale Council, Transport for Wales, Cardiff Council, Cardiff and Vale Health Board, Cardiff Uni etc (Terms of Reference). Through regular meetings, the group agreed to commission a piece of work exploring opportunities for more healthy and sustainable procurement, and in March 2024 an event was held to launch the Healthy and Sustainable Food Procurement Toolkit. A series of videos sharing best-practice examples from across the region accompanied the launch, including one which showcased progress made by Food Vale partner Big Fresh Catering when they switched to a local dairy supplier.

Since then, organisations have continued to drive better procurement practices, particularly within the public sector. Public health colleagues attend the regular Commodities Action Group (CAG) of the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) to influence future contracts for food and drink nationally and put ownership on suppliers to source more healthy options. And senior officials in VOG council have committed to test and monitor more sustainable, local procurement models through their participation in the WVIS scheme.

Procurement officers and catering businesses are supported to better access local suppliers through events and directories:

Food Vale partner Cywain runs ad hoc 'meet the buyer/supplier' events designed to provide networking opportunities between buyers and local producers. A Meet the Buyer event is being planned for January 2026 and has secured attendance from local buyers Castell Howell, Big Fresh and Llanerch Vineyard.

In addition to this, the aforementioned food producers directory offers a digital directory for public and private sector buyers to search for local producers, and and the plans for the aforementioned Agrihub will aim to provide a physical space through which local buyers to better access local suppliers.

In turn, local producers and sustainable food businesses are also supported to access large scale procurement markets:

The Council, in collaboration with Big Fresh, Procurement, and Ardal, embedded local supply chain clauses into the fruit and veg tender, awarded to WR Bishop & Son, who committed to working with local growers through the Welsh Veg in Schools (WVIS).

The scheme, coordinated by Food Sense Wales, provides organic vegetables to schools and strengthens routes to market. The Vale has participated in the scheme across two years of delivery since 2024 (1 grower and 10 local schools participating in 2024, growing to 3 growers and 10 local schools participating in 2025). In both cases, the participating schools were hand-selected by Big Fresh based on the high-volume of meals served.

As part of the scheme this year, local growers in the Vale provided lettuce, cherry, tomatoes, cucumbers and beans. Whilst figures are not yet available for the ongoing 2025 delivery of WVIS, the total volume of produce collected and supplied into Bishops by Vale producers for the Food & Fun school holiday scheme exceeded 450kg.

This year, over £5,000 of small grants were made available to growers by Food Vale in an effort to de-risk their participation in the scheme. One local grower, Celtic Roots, has also been working with Food Sense Wales to build an integrated IT Platform to support dynamic procurement operations for future delivery of the WVIS project.

The project has had media coverage on Radio Cymru and BBC Wales Today.

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to work with procurement and supply stakeholders at a wider regional level to develop a more strategic approach to healthy and sustainable procurement:

Since 2023 the Vale has been working with Cardiff Council along with Monmouthshire and Torfaen County Council as part of their collaborative procurement partnership Ardal, giving them access to specialist procurement expertise within a centralised team along with alignment of processes and tender documents, with particular focus recently on integrating the new Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act (Wales) and the UK Procurement Act. Procurement partners Ardal are members of a number of WG Carbon Reduction Groups including the Local Government Climate Strategy Panel - Procurement Group, and the Welsh Government Energy Service pilot of a Net Zero Reporting Tool.

The Vale of Glamorgan also works with supply chain stakeholders across the whole of South Wales through the WVIS scheme: two members of the Food Vale Steering Group sit on the WVIS Steering Group, and the three participating growers from the Vale attend a Wales-wide WVIS Growers Group to explore opportunities for greater aggregation and smoother operations. To prepare for the 2025 season, Big Fresh and the Regeneration Team engaged with WVIS stakeholders and growers, with seven Vale growers attending a national summit—the highest county representation in Wales.

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

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

NB at Silver *we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. 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: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency

The Vale has declared a climate and nature emergency and partners are working to reduce the climate and nature impact of the local food system:

Following their declaration of a climate and nature emergency, the PSB produced their Climate Emergency Charter, setting out their key actions for managing and limiting the impacts of climate change, this has been revised and in 2025 a new Climate and Nature Emergency Charter published. The Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2022 'Recall of the Wild' acknowledged the importance of biodiversity for human health.

The Council's plan to achieve net-zero by 2030 is captured through the Climate Change Challenge Plan Project Zero. Examples of how partners have reduced their climate and nature impact include:

- Two fully electric vehicles have been added to the kerbside recycling fleet, part-funded by a Welsh Government grant supporting the shift from diesel to electric. Their introduction is expected to deliver a 74% reduction in carbon emissions and a 49% saving in fuel costs.
- The Council's new Tree Strategy commits to increasing canopy cover by 7.5% on Council-owned land by 2039, including fruit trees.
- A number of habitat and nature restoration programmes are seeing the creation of new species-rich environments e.g. Rhoose Point, and Restore the Thaw project (for the latter, over 12,000 trees and 1.5km of hedgerow planted to support local wildlife and plants[11])

The Vale's Biodiversity Forward Plan (which all local authorities are duty-bound to produce in order to set out proposals in relation to the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act) includes commitments to go pesticide-free[12] in all 8 Green Flag parks across the Vale. In addition to this the Councils new 'Making Space for Nature' initiative commits to shifting to grassland management practices which favour biodiversity, support pollinators and reduce mowing.

Under the Council Climate Scorecard Initiative, VOG Council was identified as a top performing Council in relation to waste reduction and food with a score of 88%.

Local strategies concerning land use and management protect, enhance and make available land for both community growing and commercial sustainable agriculture:

The Green Infrastructure Plan (forthcoming) provides a strategic framework for the planning, design and management of Green Infrastructure (GI) across the Vale. The draft strategy has identified agricultural land, as well as allotments, community gardens and urban farms as key assets, and promotes the multifunctionality of GI with specific mention of food producing spaces.

This, along with the ongoing conversations with development of the Replacement Local Development Plan (detailed later in this section) and the Council's Placemaking work, shows that the Council is thinking in a holistic, spatially informed way, and builds strong foundations for future progress in this area.

To translate this into a more strategic set of actions, and building on our earlier community growing mapping work (see section 2B), Food Vale is currently working with partners to develop a suite of mechanisms to support more community growing across the Vale. Whilst this is unlikely to take the form of a standalone strategy, it is expected to establish and integrate processes across multiple Council directorates to ensure land and resources are made available for community food growing. Through the aforementioned Lottery application, Food Vale has already secured funding to develop this across 26/27.

[11] Between 2023-2024 – awaiting updated figures for 2025.

[12] Excludes: Bowling greens and cricket pitches Excludes: Treatment of non-native invasive species (e.g. JKW) where no alternative methods of treatment are available or effective.

Farmers, growers and land managers can access training, advice, and support on how to adopt agroecological production and management techniques:

Wales' new Sustainable Farming Scheme (coming into effect 2026) aims to support sustainable agriculture while addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Many organisations are now supporting farmers to meet the new requirements.

Farming Connect run a variety of accredited e-learning modules designed to enhance learning and experience around practices such as soil health, hedgerow/tree planting, habitat management, nutrient management in the context of the new Sustainable Farming Scheme. Farmers can also access specialist advice on a 1-1 or group basis through Farming Connect.

Under Farming Connect, Lantra leads on the delivery of the Lifelong Learning and Development Programme, including a horticulture programme which all 3 Vale-based growers in the WVIS scheme have accessed.

Local farmers and can access training, support and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange through Landworkers' Alliance around shifting to agroecological practices.

Specific examples where on-the-ground support has been provided include:

- Sealands Farm received support on improving soil health, crop planning and more via Farming Connect.
- Slade Farm supported by various orgs to carry out surveys and maintain their high standard of animal welfare/organic practices.
- INCC (Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru) supported farm with habitat surveys and reducing chemical input.
- Monitor Farm (3000 acres) supported on sustainable crop planning and livestock integration (Farming Connect and AHDB).
- The Restore the Thaw project has worked with landowners and farmers to help them work towards certain requirements such as hedgerow management, habitat creation and tree planting.

Food businesses can access support to improve their resource efficiency and sustainability across all aspects of their business:

- Free business advice on carbon and waste & resource management is available for all food businesses in the Vale from Vale-based consultancy Circular Resource Specialists (CRS). Their recent project showed small businesses could save £1,000 annually, cut carbon emissions by 2.8 tonnes and boost recycling by 30%.
- The Circular Economy Innovation Community (CEIC), funded by Shared Prosperity Funding, helps organisations rethink their processes and practices through the lens of the circular economy.

- Zero 2 Five, Wrap Cymru also support with this initiative to reduce waste and to encourage efficiency and sustainability across business.
- Food Vale partner Cywain have provided support to several local businesses on a range of issues such as reducing food miles, waste and plastic packaging (e.g. Vale Cider, Peterston Tea, Llanfrynach Farm) and have now partnered with AMRC on the 'Walk The Line' project which seeks to helps food and drink producers to access smart technologies, de-risk innovation and adopt sustainable practices.

Businesses also have access to the range of support offered at a National (Wales-wide) level:

- Mentera works in collaboration with Cynnal Cymru and Eco Studio to offer Sustainability Training to equip food and drink companies with the skills and know-how to build practical plans that respond to climate change and the nature crisis, and satisfy customer needs.
- Food & Drink Wales run a number of free training webinars and courses on topics including sustainability training, climate resilience in food manufacturing, producing a carbon reduction plan and product carbon footprinting.

Food Vale partners have delivered and supported a variety of place-wide campaigns to promote a mainstream shift to sustainable food:

Through the Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030 partners have committed to *"Reaffirm the Vale of Glamorgan commitment to being a Fairtrade County and support local towns and communities and work with Town and Community Councils in achieving Fairtrade status".*

To launch this area of work, Food Vale is hosting a Vale Fairtrade Breakfast on October 10th 2025 to bring together key stakeholders as well as local Fairtrade groups from across the Vale to identify local priorities and encourage buy-in. Attendance has been secured from local political figures including the Mayor, the Member of Senedd and the Member of Parliament for the Vale, and the Leader of the Council.

Cowbridge, Barry, Llantwit Major and Dinas Powys have been accredited as Fairtrade communities, Vale is home to 5 Fairtrade schools. Active local fairtrade community groups across Dinas Powys, Penarth, Llantwit Major and Barry, engage their local communities during Fairtrade Fortnight.

Food Vale has engaged with the Food For the Planet Campaign, and at present has completed 10 actions within the Every Mouthful Counts Toolkit, saving an estimated 181560.65 tonnes of CO_2 per year.

The aforementioned Vale Food Trail is, in essence, a communications campaign to promote more healthy and sustainable local food to residents in the Vale, whilst appealing to other local businesses to adopt more sustainable practices.

Planning policy is harnessed to protect food production and consumption:

The Vale of Glamorgan is in the process of producing their Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2021-2023. At the time of writing, the Preferred Strategy has been approved (2024), the food partnership has fed into its Health Impact Assessment (2025) and continues to liaise with the Planning team to explore opportunities for protecting and promoting food related land infrastructure. It is expected to go through final consultation in January 2026.

Progress to date includes:

- The Preferred Strategy recommended that 'climate change should be at the heart of all policies and their compatibility in terms of pollution should be considered'.
- An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) Scoping Report has been completed to communicate the likely social, economic, and environmental effects of the plan.
- The Best and Most Versatile Land Background Paper (2023), in line with Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (which requires that grades 1, 2, 3a land be 'conserved as a finite resource for the future') stipulates that where sites under consideration include these grades, loss of such land should be minimised, and development should only proceed exceptionally if there is overriding justification.
- Of the 5 key new housing developments outlined for the Vale in the RLDP, the largest one includes requirements for growing spaces. Conversations are currently taking place to explore rolling this out to all new residential developments.
- Strategic Priority #6 'Creating Healthy and Inclusive Places and Spaces', acknowledges this will be achieved by enabling opportunities for access to healthy food choices, inclusive of spaces for growing food (6.86-6.87).
- Strategic Priority #18 'Green Infrastructure' acknowledges the role of this in enhancing local food production.

The impact of agriculture is assessed and managed:

Although the Vale has a rich agricultural history, the majority of farms are small-scale family-run farms, and levels of contamination remain relatively low. Despite this, partners acknowledge the role that agriculture plays in achieving the targets set out in the Environment Act.

The impacts of agriculture, and suggested measures to address these, have been assessed in Natural Resources Wales' SoNaRR202 chapter on Enclosed Farmland ecosystems, as well as associated chapters on cross-cutting themes including air quality, water quality, land use and soils, waste and biodiversity.

These concerns are being considered in a variety of policies, plans and projects at the local authority level:

- In the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan, agriculture is one of six key habitats included, with a variety of related actions including protecting and restoring habitats through sustainable farming schemes and raising awareness of agricultural pollution.

- The Vale's Biodiversity Forward Plan includes commitments to work with ecological consultants to ensure biodiversity benefits for the land, appropriate to the farm, are incorporated into each new Tenancy agreement.
- Landscape-level river restoration projects have been set up to address water quality and biodiversity challenges, including the Nant Dowlais project and Restore the Thaw project. The latter is a 3-year programme of work running until March 2026.
- Water quality is being addressed through regular testing to establish a baseline for pollution management, which is of particular concern on coastal beaches. Vale Council were awarded over £530,000 through Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics funding to support sustainable improvements including digital water quality displays at Barry Island.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan Waste Management Strategy (2022-2032) has been developed according to guidance from the National Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy which in turn is rooted in the Waste Hierarchy:

The local strategy commits to "*Create network of Community Recycling Champions in schools, Council Buildings and local businesses*". And in their Climate Challenge Plan 'Project Zero' the council commits to '*Reduce waste and put in place the necessary facilities, services and awareness raising for a more circular economy with a strong emphasis on reuse, repair and recycling'.*

Additionally, through the Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030, partners have committed to minimise food waste and manage it according to the waste hierarchy. Actions to achieve this include Engage with residents, businesses, organisations and settings such as schools to raise awareness of food waste and recycling via social media campaigns and Community Recycling Champions. Work with key partners to review waste contracts and identify key opportunities for reducing, reusing and recycling more food and packaging waste in the Vale according to the Waste Hierarchy. Develop a mechanism for food waste to be redistributed as compost to community food growing projects.

The Council has established a food waste collection scheme for both homes and businesses, redirecting food and food-related waste for composting and energy recovery (AD), as well as working towards a series of key targets in relation to waste:

These include a 60% reduction in avoidable food waste by 2030. In 2024/25 the Council continued to exceed the national statutory domestic waste recycling target of 70% by recycling 71.73%[xvi] of municipal waste up from 70.35% in 2023/24[xvii]. In 2024/25, the amount residual waste that is not reused, recycled or composted generated per person reduced to 116kg, improving on last year's performance of 117kg, and below the 2023/24 Welsh average of 168kg per person. All comingled recycling has been removed from all household collections and commercial premises (with some exceptions in some isolated

flats and apartments for logistical reasons), supporting a reduction in the amount of black bag waste collected from our residents by 27.25% from 24,684 tonnes in 2018/19 to 17,878 tonnes in 2023/24[xviii]. An additional nine-month soft-plastics recycling trial is ongoing since April 2025 in Dinas Powys, Penarth, Llandough, Sully, funded by Welsh Government.

In response to community feedback, the Council is also installing on-street recycling bins across 24 locations in the Vale, featuring 3-4 separate compartments to make it easier for residents and visitors to recycle whilst out and about.

Food waste services are offered as standard for residents and have been launched to businesses and schools[xix]. 63,197 domestic properties are eligible for food waste collection, including 106 places of worship and 22 community centres, with 170 commercial customers currently benefitting from the service. Food waste tonnage therefore continues to increase, and a 2,000t incremental increase projected between 2021/22 and 24/25. We are seeing a growth in uptake from businesses and schools.

2.29 Table 3 below, displays the food waste tonnage for the last 4-years in detail month by month.

Table 3.

Month	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
April	479.26	425.52	545.84	649.82
May	437.34	392.94	586.86	606.46
June	442.76	413.84	579.34	521.10
July	449.54	403.22	562.12	645.32
August	443.92	601.82	621.46	608.96
September	448.00	595.28	567.32	601.08
October	436.70	563.74	589.02	646.40
November	461.18	627.06	632.82	621.80
December	478.50	630.28	609.44	676.60
January	477.56	658.80	705.22	
February	395.98	534.86	589.86	
March	450.44	605.44	567.10	
Total (tonnes)	**5401.18**	**6452.80**	**7156.40**	**5577.54**

2.30 In 2021/22, food waste arisings were 5,401.18 tonnes and this year (2024/25) it will exceed 7,000 tonnes which demonstrates positive growth.

All collected food waste is processed through an Anaerobic Digestion Organic Waste Treatment Facility run by Welsh Water and established as part of broader partnership Prosiect Gwyrdd. The recovered biogases are captured and converted into green energy, including electricity, heat, and transport fuels. It also produces bio-fertiliser, which supports farming and land regeneration.

Communications have been sent to encourage increased recycling and reduce black bag waste: we are seeing a positive impact as black bag waste is reducing and recycling increasing. Recycling officers have attended a number of schools to promote recycling activities.

Since 2023, all businesses and organisations now have to comply with the Environmental Protection (Single Use Plastic products) (Wales) Act which makes it a criminal offence to supply or offer certain single-use plastic products to consumers[13], with VOG Council SRS regulating business compliance.

Community composting is promoted through resources and sites for community use:

In addition to sustainable uses for food waste through the aforementioned Prosiect Gwyrdd, approximately 40 tonnes of compost is made available every month for communities to collect from the central depot in Lamby Way. Through the Vale Food Strategy 2025-2030, partners have committed to '*Develop a mechanism for food waste to be redistributed as compost to community food growing projects*'.

Composting is promoted as part of the Project Zero 'What can you do' pages, and is also a integrated part of the considerations following our community food growing mapping work (2B).

The Worm Pilot Project 2025 introduced vermicomposting to three primary schools in the Vale, aiming to reduce food waste and promote environmental education. Funded through the Learning and Skills budget and supported by Big Fresh Catering Company, the initiative engaged pupils as "Worm Warriors" through interactive lessons, hands-on wormery care, and optional workshops. Schools successfully maintained wormeries, producing nutrient-rich compost for school gardens and reporting increased student understanding of soil ecology. The project demonstrated strong potential for behaviour change, with schools eager to expand participation. Since the initial project, two more schools have installed wormeries, with many other expressing interest. Partners are now exploring funding options to support further roll out of this project.

There is a network of publicly accessible drinking fountains across the Vale:

Following its initiative in 2019 that saw £40,000 invested to install 14 drinking fountains across popular sites in the Vale, the Council has installed further water fountains and has partnered with MIW Water Cooler Experts to maintain and expand the network of bottle filling stations. There are several Refill schemes operating across the Vale and 97 locations signed up to offer water bottle refills.

[13] Unless an exemption applies.

Comms resources have also been developed and circulated to PSB partners to promote refill stations and hydration as part of World Refill Day.

The local Public Health Team developed a Refill workplace toolkit developed including information, social media assets, posters and a drinking chart to support organisations, and have distributed hygiene advice guidance created by Refill Wales to all public partners locally.

Consumable surplus food is able to be redirected from various stages within the supply chain and redistributed to local community food projects:

Food Vale and partners have worked to reduce the waste of consumable surplus food and redistribute it to areas of highest need whilst ensuring healthy choice and dignity. The Llantwit Food Access Project helped establish the first membership-based food pantry in the Vale based at the CF61 centre in 2022, which has since been replicated in St Athan, and both pantries continue to receive financial support through the Lottery-funded project.

Food Vale partner FareShare Cymru supports 7 food surplus projects across the Vale, and redistributed 44 tonnes of surplus food in 2024-25. This is the equivalent of over 103,000 meals. Of the surplus food redistributed in 2024-25, 22.25 tonnes was fruit and vegetables.

Local businesses (including farms) are also able to access FareShare's Surplus with a Purpose fund to cover any costs incurred for diverting surplus food, which one supplier in the Vale has been able to take advantage of already. Another community food project was also a recipient of over 141.5kg worth of ready-meals as part of FareShare's Redistribution Kitchen pilot project which sought to use local produce and catering surplus to cook and distribute healthy meals (using recipes developed in in partnership with public health dietetics).

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

Appendix 1

Acronyms:

CAVUHB – Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

CCR – Cardiff Capital Region

GVS – Glamorgan Voluntary Services

HS – Healthy Schools (scheme)

HSPSS – Healthy and Sustainable Pre-Schools Scheme

LSOA – Lower Supra Output Area

NS4L – Nutrition Skills for Like (programme)

NYLO – Nutrition for Your Little One

PSB – Public Services Board

UHB – University Healthy Board

VOG – Vale of Glamorgan (also sometimes just 'the Vale')

WVIS – Welsh Veg in Schools (scheme)

References:

[i] Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019

[ii] VOG Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030

[iii] Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation by local authority

[iv] Vale Food Insecurity Report 2024

[v] https://mapmaker.cdrc.ac.uk/#/food/?m=pp_dec_domain_nonsupermarket_proximity&lon=-3.5114&lat=51.5501&zoom=11.48

[vi] The-Food-Foundation-64pp-A4-Landscape-Brochure-AW-V32.pdf

[vii] The School Health Research Network (SHRN) Survey Data Children's Health & Well-being Dashboard

[viii] Data for the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board 2020-2021 Lifestyles of children aged 3-7 by health board

[ix] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-01/consultaton-document_0.pdf

[x] https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink/sites/foodanddrink/files/documents/Food%20and%20Drink%20Economic%20Appraisal%202023%20_%20EN.pdf

[xi] Business deaths by area and year

[xii] Recent challenges faced by food and drink businesses and their impact on prices - Office for National Statistics

[xiii] Agricultural small area statistics: 2002 to 2020 | GOV.WALES

[xiv] Survey of agriculture and horticulture: June 2024 [HTML] | GOV.WALES

[xv] Tyfu Cymru, Welsh Fruit and Veg production hort-baseline-tc-final-1252020-read-only.pdf

[xvi] Recycling and Waste Management Service Changes

[xvii] Annual reuse/recycling/composting rates by local authority

[xviii] Vale 2030 English-Interactive

[xix] Project Zero Update Report