Dear Secretary of State

Re: Supporting our communities, farmers and food businesses while addressing the cost of living crisis

The Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Network is a growing movement of 80 food partnerships across the UK that are driving innovation and best practice in all aspects of healthy and sustainable food. Through these cross-sector food partnerships, local authorities and other public bodies are working together with third sector, businesses and academic organisations to transform their local food system. Our aim is to tackle critical sustainability issues including access to healthy food, the climate and nature emergencies, and to create jobs, businesses and bring prosperity to local areas through the development of the good food sector.

On their behalf, we call on the UK Government to recognise the key role of food partnerships by supporting a Food Bill in every nation, underpinned by an independent body to champion action and scrutinise progress, and a food plan and food partnership in every local area to ensure collaboration working across the food system and progress in today’s most pressing social, environmental and economic issues related to food.

We are living through an unprecedented cost of living crisis and local authorities need backing from national governments to support those most in need through building resilient food systems. Food partnerships, alongside local authorities and other local organisations are playing a pivotal role in driving and coordinating effective community food responses to ensure nobody is left hungry in the face of ever rising food prices. But these local efforts need to be matched with action at the national level. We need a food system that enables everyone to eat well. Getting our food system right could help us not only reduce food insecurity but tackle obesity and disparities and meet our climate and nature targets. With
smart investment, and a joined up approach which food partnerships excel at, the Government could also unlock innovation, drive economic growth and provide jobs.

The Good Food Nation Bill in Scotland, the proposed Food Bill for Wales and the Food Strategy Framework for Northern Ireland will help shape more sustainable food systems across the nations in the UK. The Government Food Strategy for England includes a recognition of the value of food partnerships and we ask you as a matter of urgency to act on that recognition and initiate the process of “learn[ing] from their approaches and work to understand and identify best practice in addressing food affordability and accessibility to healthy food. As part of our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in healthy life expectancy, government will identify the areas most in need of this insight, and Defra will work with local authorities and food charities in these priority areas.”

We would be delighted to present the extraordinary work of our members in more detail and to work with government to fulfil the ambitions in the Government Food Strategy related to food partnerships.

Yours faithfully

Leon Ballin
Programme Manager, Sustainable Food Places

Sustainable Food Places is a partnership programme led by the Soil Association, Food Matters and Sustain - the alliance for better food and farming. The call on government outlined in this letter is supported by the food partnerships below:

Aberdeen – Granite City Food City
Aberdeenshire – Fair Food Aberdeenshire
Ards and North Down – Ards and North Down Sustainable Food Community
Arun & Chichester – Arun & Chichester Food Partnership
Belfast – Good Food Belfast
Birmingham – Creating a Healthy Food City Forum
Blackburn with Darwen – Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance
Blaenau Gwent – Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership
Brighton and Hove – Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
Bristol – Bristol Food Network
Buckinghamshire – Buckinghamshire Food Partnership
Bury – Bury Food Partnership
Calderdale – Calderdale Food Network
Cambridge – Cambridge Sustainable Food
Cardiff – Food Cardiff
Carlisle – Food Carlisle
Carmarthenshire – Bwyd Sir Gâr Food
Clackmannashire – Clackmannanshire Good Food Partnership
County Durham – Food Durham
Coventry – Coventry Food Network
Cornwall - Sustainable Food Cornwall
Derby – Sustainable Food Derby
Derry City & Strabane District Council – Acorn Food Network
Devon – Devon Food Partnership
Doncaster – Good Food Doncaster
Dumfries and Galloway – Sustainable Food Partnership Dumfries and Galloway
Dundee – Eat & Drink Dundee
Eastbourne – Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC
Edinburgh – Edible Edinburgh
Exeter – Food Exeter
Fife – Food4Fife
Glasgow – Glasgow Food Policy Partnership
Gloucestershire – Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership
Greater Lincolnshire – Greater Lincolnshire Food Partnership
Greater London – London Food Board
Greater Manchester – Good Food Greater Manchester
Greenwich – Good Food Greenwich
Herefordshire – Herefordshire Food Alliance
Highland – Highland Good Food Partnership
Hull – Hull Food Partnership
Islington - Islington Food Partnership
Lambeth – Lambeth Food Partnership
Lancaster District – FoodFutures
Leeds – FoodWise Leeds
Leicester - Leicester's Food Plan
Leicestershire – Good Food Leicestershire
Lewes District – Lewes District Food Partnership
Lewisham – Good Food Lewisham
Liverpool – Feeding Liverpool
Luton – Luton Food Plan
Manchester City – Manchester Food Board
Medway – Medway Food Partnership
Merton – Sustainable Merton
Mid & East Antrim - Mid & East Antrim Food Partnership
Middlesbrough – Middlesbrough Food Partnership
Monmouthshire – Monmouthshire Food Partnership
Newcastle – Food Newcastle
Newry, Mourne & Down – Newry, Mourne & Down Food Partnership
North Ayrshire – North Ayrshire Food Forum
North Lincolnshire – Food in North Lincolnshire
North Powys – North Powys Sustainable Food Places
Nottingham – Nottingham Good Food Partnership
Oldham – Oldham Food Network
Oxfordshire – Good Food Oxfordshire
Perth & Kinross – Perth & Kinross Good Food
Peterborough – Peterborough Food Partnership
Plymouth – Food Plymouth
Rhondda Cynon Taf – RCT Food
Sheffield – Shefood
Shropshire – Shropshire Good Food Partnership
South Lanarkshire – South Lanarkshire Good Food Forum
Southwark – Southwark Food Action Alliance
Stirling – Stirling Regional Food Partnership
Sutton – Sutton Food Forum
Tameside – Tameside Food Partnership
Tower Hamlets – Tower Hamlets Food Partnership
Vale of Glamorgan – Food Vale / Bwyd yfro
Wandsworth – Wandsworth Food Partnership
Wells – Wells Food Network
West Northamptonshire – West Northamptonshire Sustainable Food Place
Winchester – Winchester Food Partnership
York – Good Food York