

Day of Celebration and Action 29 September 2021

Briefing for councils

Sustainable Food Places (SFP) is organising a Day of Celebration and Action 29 of September to celebrate local action happening across the network to reduce the impact of food on our planet and calling on councils to take action.

In the UK, food contributes up to 30% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, we waste 10 million tonnes of food every year and 90% of fisheries are fully exploited or overfished.¹ The Committee on Climate Change clearly stated that the way land is used must change and we must reduce levels of food waste and consumption of the most carbon-intensive foods to achieve the UK's climate and other goals and meet with the healthy eating guidelines.² To achieve sustainable food system transformation, actions must be aligned horizontally across policy areas and vertically between different levels of governance. This complexity, alongside the technical difficulties associated with measuring the impact of food systems' actions on GHG emissions, is resulting in a slow pace of change at the local, national and international levels.

At the local level, councils are already pioneering integrated food policies with actions in a number of domains, from food waste reduction, to healthy and sustainable procurement in schools and public canteens, to provision of food growing opportunities or support to short supply chains.

Now is the opportunity for the council to renew its commitment to tackle climate change in the run up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) that will take place in Glasgow in November 2021 and raise awareness with employees, residents and local businesses and organisations.

Step 1: Sign the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration

The Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration is a pledge and call to action by subnational, local and national governments from all over the world to accelerate the development of integrated food policies as a key tool in the fight against climate change with co-benefits for biodiversity, ecosystem regeneration, circularity, access to sustainable and healthy diets for all, and the creation of resilient livelihoods for farm and food workers. <https://www.glasgowdeclaration.org/>

It commits subnational governments to reduce GHG emissions from urban and regional food systems in order to fulfil the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. This relates to GHG emissions from food in the sub-national government area including those emitted by the institution. It was prepared in partnership between international networks of sub-national governments, UN agencies and non-governmental agencies working with food systems and in consultation with sub-national, city and region governments. This includes national organisations such as Sustainable Food Places.

¹ House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2019), [Our Planet, Our Health](#)

² Committee on Climate Change (2020), [Land use: Policies for a Net Zero UK](#)

The declaration was launched in December 2020 and was developed in preparation for COP26. It is for this reason called the “Glasgow Food and Climate declaration”. COP26 is seen as an opportunity to place food and local actions at the heart of the global climate response.

For now, the following UK local authorities have signed the declaration: Brighton and Hove, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Middlesbrough, however, we are expecting a number of local authorities to sign in the lead up to COP26. Furthermore, the leader of Glasgow City Council is writing to council leaders in all SFP areas inviting them to sign the declaration.

The declaration can be signed online on the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration webpage. By signing the declaration, the council would commit to:

- Commitment 1, Developing and implementing integrated food policies and strategies;
- Commitment 2, Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from urban and regional food systems;
- Commitment 3, Calling on national governments to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms.

After submitting the form, signatories receive a confirmation of the signature from the secretariat.

In the lead up to COP26, IPES-Food and Nourish Scotland along with the Glasgow Declaration partners will provide a platform for signatories to share best practices and insights on developing and monitoring sustainable integrated food policies and collaborate to promoting the Declaration. At COP26 the partnership and signatories will host events highlighting the values contained in the Declaration and the role of local and regional governments in building sustainable food systems.

Step 2: From declaration to action

Join the SFP Day of Celebration and Action by organising a ‘low carbon lunch’ for your staff, schools or residents and use the occasion to champion action on food and climate by celebrating local action that is already taking place and announcing your commitment to tackling GHG emissions from food in the run up to COP26.

SFP will launch a new campaign calling on organisations to pledge action to reduce the impact of food on GHG emissions. On the SFP Day of Celebration and Action 29 of September we will invite councils to join the campaign by signing up on the campaign website and start making pledges across five areas of action. To support councils, we will have an interactive online toolkit (summary below) with tried and tested actions, an estimate of GHG emissions saved associated with some actions, co-benefits associated with some of the actions, as well as resources and case studies of local action. By joining the campaign, the council will join a network of campaign participants and dedicated platforms to share best practices and insight from across the SFP network.

Sign up to our SFP newsletter at https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/get_involved/ to keep up to date with the progress of the campaign and be among the first councils to sign up.

Food partnerships are ideally placed to advise and ensure broad representation in processes leading up to pledges on food and climate. Therefore, it is vital to ensure the food partnership is a part of conversations and the decision-making process regarding food. We are asking the council to support and include the local food partnership in the next steps from declaration to action to help drive food system change and action on food, climate and nature.



Toolkit for local authorities (summary)

1) Policy, Strategy and Partnership

We are calling on councils to publish a cross-departmental action plan for tackling the climate nature emergency that includes specific actions to reduce GHG emissions arising from the food and farming footprint of your place, including:

- Improving the sustainability of the diets of citizens
- Increasing agro-ecological food production and distribution
- Improving soil health and nature-enhancing food production
- Reducing waste across the food waste hierarchy
- Committing to the creation of an equitable food system that tackles inequality

2) Land Use, Farming and Planning

- Publish and maintain an open data map of the council's landholdings.
- Provide training and ongoing support for agroecological farming, growing and processing.
- Protect existing food growing spaces - including county farms - in planning policy.
- Increase the amount of land used for agroecological food growing and production. Food growing spaces include allotments, community food growing spaces, smallholdings, small farms, county farms, composting facilities and similar infrastructure.
- Transition farms in your area to whole farm agroecological systems. We recommend starting with county farms and land owned by the council and other anchor institutions like universities, and requiring agroecological management when tenancy agreements come up for renewal. Whole farm agroecological systems can be made part of the business plan requirements for farm tenancies.
- Go 'Pesticide Free' for your council land, verges and parks.
- Create a planning designation for assets of value to farming, producing, transporting and selling sustainable food. A specific designation, for example 'land of food systems value', can prevent valuable food assets for a low-carbon food system being undermined or marginalised by other land-use decisions.
- Your local design codes should protect and encourage good local food growing, production and retail.
- Ensure sustainable and healthy food is grown and accessible locally as part of '20 minute neighbourhood' designs.

3) Food Use, Waste and Resource Efficiency

- Publish a council-wide food use strategy to minimise food waste according to the food waste hierarchy.
- Subsidise the cost of compost bins, water butts and kitchen caddies.
- Run food waste awareness-raising and reduction campaigns and events.
- Support community composting.



- Provide a food waste collection service for households, schools and businesses. The waste collected should be redirected from landfill to decentralised, local composting, energy recovery or animal feed.
- Reduce food waste in council-controlled settings through better purchasing, portion control and presentation. Council-controlled settings include schools, care services, museums, council offices, civic centres and sometimes leisure centres and other municipal buildings.
- Ensure edible surplus food in the area is collected and redistributed. Food surplus collection and distribution can be managed by the council or independent local organisations like FareShare.
- Surplus food redistribution should not be considered a solution to hunger and food poverty. Actions to tackle food poverty should combat the root causes, including low pay and insecure work, housing costs and lack of access to state welfare.

4) Procurement and sustainable diets

- Publish a sustainable procurement policy with specific commitments to serve meals that reflect a planet-friendly diet and source sustainable produce.
- Deliver public campaigns to encourage consumers to adopt a planet-friendly diet.
- Serve food that reflects a planet-friendly diet across the local area. Councils should start with the food they control through public procurement, including schools and care services, but you may be able to influence the behaviour of businesses, workplaces and other educational institutions through campaigns or business incentives. Achieving silver or gold Food For Life Served Here accreditation is an excellent way to demonstrate that food is freshly cooked, with some more ethical, environmentally friendly and local ingredients.
- Encourage local businesses and other venues to sell or serve food that reflects a planet-friendly diet.
- Ensure routes for independent, local and climate and nature positive food businesses to supply into council procurement contracts
- Adopt a sustainable food policy for festivals and events held on council land.
- Ensure you have a network of publicly accessible drinking water fountains.
- Support programmes that allow those on low incomes to access nutritious, local and sustainably produced food.

5) Supporting sustainable food businesses

- Adopt an economic strategy which includes supporting a local food economy
- Promote local climate and nature friendly food businesses to the public.
- Increase the total amount spent locally in small and independent food businesses. You could do this by supporting SMEs and using your buying power to increase spend.
- Introduce business incentives to cut their climate footprint, using the councils' powers and influence, for example differential business rates, local legislation, financial penalties, and/or licensing restrictions
- Cut the vehicle emissions from food deliveries sourcing using short supply chains and coordinated distribution hubs, and switching to electric or bicycle deliveries.