

The Sustainable Food Places Award

Guidance & Application Form

**Section 1: Guidance**

The Sustainable Food Places Award is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined-up, holistic approach to food and that have achieved significant positive change across six key food issues. The Award is open to any place that has an established cross-sector food partnership in place, is a member of the Sustainable Food Places Network and is implementing an action plan on healthy and sustainable food. This document covers our standard award. We run slightly different awards for counties and greater cities. We therefore encourage all applicants to get in touch before starting to complete an award application. It is also worth checking out the awards section of the Sustainable Food Places website. If you are interested in applying please email tandrews@soilassociation.org

There are three tiers to the award - bronze, silver and gold - each requiring an increasing level of achievement in terms of action and outcomes. Details on how to apply for the bronze and silver awards are presented below and are the focus of this document. The gold award involves a different benchmark and application process to bronze and silver, details of which can be provided on request. You must achieve a bronze award before applying for silver and a silver award before applying for gold.

Award decisions are made annually by a national panel of experts. To help places navigate the award process, applications are facilitated by Sustainable Food Places staff. This normally involves an initial discussion, reviewing and providing feedback on draft applications and attending a meeting of the local food partnership. The award panel’s decision is final, but feedback is given on both successful and unsuccessful applications.

Places achieving an award can use an award badge that recognises their achievement in their communications and marketing materials. Each award is given for a three-year period. If the award holder has not made an application for a higher award or successfully renewed their existing level award by the end of that period, they will be expected to stop referring to themselves as awards winners in all communications and promotional activity.

One condition of receiving the award is that all successful applicants agree to their application being made available to other members of the Sustainable Food Places Network on our web site. We also expect applicants to provide short case studies on selected areas of their work that other members of the Network can learn from. We will help you to identify the most suitable case studies during the final stages of the application process.

The awards aim to recognise both the totality of food-related activity and continuous improvement year on year. So, while a bronze award may be given based primarily on evidence of overall food-related activity and achievements to date, silver and gold awards will only be given where there is clear evidence that such activity and achievements are building progressively year on year. While an award is attributed to a place and recognises any and all food-related activity in that place, there must be clear evidence that the local food partnership and its members have helped to instigate, drive and/or connect a good proportion of that activity, particularly for the silver and gold awards.

**Section 2: Application Form**

**Name of food partnership applying: ………Tower Hamlets Food Partnership………………………………………………………**

**Name of person leading application: …………Jo Wilson ……………………………………………………**

# Key Issue 1

# Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

We believe that to transform a place’s food culture and food system requires a joined-up strategic approach and committed long-term collaboration between individuals and organisations across every sector and at every level, from community grassroots and third sector organisations to businesses and council leaders. Key to achieving this are: a strong cross-sector food partnership and an inspiring and ambitious food vision backed by a clear strategy and action plan. At bronze we would expect to see a cross-sector partnership in place; a 12-month action plan covering all key food issues; and some recognition of healthy and sustainable food in local policies, strategies and plans. At silver, we would expect your partnership to be robust, embedded and sustainable; a 3-year strategy and action plan that is endorsed and supported by the local authority; and for local policies, strategies and plans to be actively and effectively promoting healthy and sustainable food.

**What success might look like:**

**1A) Establish a broad, representative and dynamic local food partnership** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Establish a local cross-sector food partnership involving public and third sector, business and community representatives that meets regularly and is committed to working together across all key food issues (mandatory at bronze).
* The partnership has clear terms of reference and operates in an open, transparent and democratic way. Members represent a wide range of sectors and communities including those with lived experience of food issues as well as organisations and institutions (mandatory at bronze).
* Key institutions, including the local authority and other strategic bodies recognise and endorse the local food partnership and actively support its efforts through policy, strategy and planning and by providing funding and/or other support (mandatory at silver).
* Establish working groups linked to the core food partnership to enable those with specific interests, skills and remits to lead on and work together to more effectively tackle key food issues, supporting them and others to be effective ambassadors for the partnership’s work.

**1B) Develop, deliver and monitor a food strategy/action plan** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Your food partnership develops, publishes and regularly reviews a food strategy and/or action plan (mandatory 12 months at bronze and minimum 3 years at silver) that covers all key food issues and is based on an open consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
* The food strategy/action plan is being delivered, with the food partnership helping to coalesce and coordinate action as well as measuring progress in terms of both activity and outcomes (mandatory at bronze and silver).
* Develop and promote a food charter, manifesto or equivalent that encapsulates the food vision, principles and ambitions for your place and get individuals and organisations to commit to action that will help to achieve those ambitions.
* Develop and promote an identity (brand/logo/strapline) for your initiative and use this as an umbrella to connect and promote all the inspiring work on healthy and sustainable food happening in your place.

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| **Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action** |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Establish a broad, representative and dynamic local food partnership**
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| * The Tower Hamlets Food Partnership (THFP) brings organisations and individuals together to take action for a better food system in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. It was co-established by LB Tower Hamlets and Women’s Environmental Network (Wen) in 2018, following extensive community engagement around the challenge of food poverty in the borough. Wen is the lead organisation, building the vision and action plan for food in the borough, and coordinating cross-sector activity.

**Governance*** In January 2020, we established a **steering group**, which meets quarterly, and includes representatives of the council, registered social landlords, community groups, social enterprises, food distribution organisations and an academic. Our co-chairs are Sarah Williams, Programme Director, Sustain and Cllr Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion.
* The partnership’s responsibilities, outlined in a **terms of reference** agreed by the steering group, include community, knowledge, action, communication and accountability.
* The council **endorses** the partnership, which was established following a recommendation in the council’s Food Poverty Action Plan. It provided £20K establishment funding in 2018/19. The partnership is now considered as a key player locally. Representatives sit on the council’s Holiday Hunger steering group, and the THFP was commissioned to support the summer 2020 voluntary-sector and school delivery partners. Council representatives Katy Scammell, Deputy Director of Healthy Environments, and Ellie Kershaw, Tackling Poverty Programme Manager, sit on the Partnership steering group, and Natalie Lovell, Healthy Environments Programme Manager, co-chairs the Fair Food for All group.

**Membership*** Any organisation or individual can join the Partnership, and we encourage people to formally sign up by filling in an [online membership form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeaWCcbNsUmNqDIkqvfDgAeu6iKtN3Ue62Lzw42FfNJFY_YbA/viewform). Over 150 people from 100 organisationshave become members or attended an action group meeting. Around 50% of these organisations are from the voluntary sector, 40% are from the public sector and 10% are from the private sector. Wen also runs a **food-growing network**, with regular mailings to over 1,000 residents, including those with lived experience of food insecurity.

**Action** * We have established several action groups to tackle key food issues more effectively, supporting them to be effective ambassadors for the partnership’s work.
	+ **Fair Food for All** was established in May 2019 to coordinate work on food insecurity. The group is a Food Power alliance and meets quarterly.
	+ **The Community Food Network** is building the collective power of growers, community food projects and social enterprises by sharing knowledge and skills and working collaboratively to harness funding and influence policy. It first met in September 2020.
	+ **Just FACT (Just Food and Climate Transition)** is our 5-year programme to co-create a just transition to a low-carbon food system with communities, which began in 2021. In March, the **Blueprint Architects**, the community group building the vision and strategy of the programme, met for the first time. In May, we will hold our first **Just FACT forum**, bringing together food and carbon reduction specialists, and local policy-influencers, to discuss how this blueprint can be put into practice, both in Tower Hamlets and other parts of the country.
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| 1. **Develop, deliver and monitor a food strategy/action plan**
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| * We focused the first 18 months of the Partnership developing an [action plan](https://www.wen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Tower-Hamlets-Food-Partnership-Action-Plan-Apr-2020.pdf), which outlines our vision for food in Tower Hamlets, our priorities for 2020-2022, and how we will measure success. The Plan is reviewed annually by the steering group. We extensively engaged our network using several engagement methods:
	+ Engagement and knowledge sharing – before the Food Partnership was set up, the council worked with Wen to organise a ‘World Café’ to share knowledge with residents. Findings were used to co-develop two strategic documents: the [Food Poverty Action Plan](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s115754/APPENDIX%201%20-%202%20Draft%20Food%20Action%20Plan%20v7%2026.10.2017.pdf) and [Food Poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Public-Health/JSNA/Food-Poverty-JSNA-accessible-07-09-20.pptx).
	+ Extensive desk-based research of the local food system - our academic partnership member Dr Elaine Swan guided six postgraduate students through a detailed assessment of Tower Hamlets’ food system across the six Sustainable Food Places themes. The six papers they produced have are a valuable summary and baseline.
	+ Community research into food insecurity – the council commissioned its Community Insights team to investigate how communities respond to food insecurity through focus groups and interviews. The Food Partnership supported this work and is taking forward recommendations.
	+ Member survey – our [membership form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeaWCcbNsUmNqDIkqvfDgAeu6iKtN3Ue62Lzw42FfNJFY_YbA/viewform) invites perspectives on the borough’s biggest opportunities and challenges related to food. Over 70 people have filled it in.
* Our **vision for good food in Tower Hamlets** encapsulates the findings of our engagement and analysis:
	+ AVAILABLE AND CELEBRATED - Neighbourhoods are brimming with opportunities to buy, sell, grow, share and celebrate tasty, healthy and sustainable food.
	+ FAIR FOR ALL - Everyone can access nutritious, culturally-appropriate and affordable food with dignity.
	+ COMMUNITY-LED - Communities are inspired and empowered to develop good food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.
	+ HEALTHIER FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET - The food system nurtures human health, supports environmental sustainability and designs out waste.
* We **promote the Partnership** through our [Food Partnership webpage](https://www.wen.org.uk/foodpartnership/), which includes the strapline: “We are a cross-sector network building a better food system for everyone in Tower Hamlets”. We also use the hashtag #TowerHamletsFood on Wen’s Twitter feed, which has over 5,000 followers.
* In addition to this overarching framework, each action group develops its own more detailed set of **goals and activities**, on which **progress is monitored**. For example, in October 2019, Fair Food for All agreed its own projects and priorities at a group workshop. Each project has a lead, who reports progress back to the group at each meeting. Progress is recorded using a RAG rating.
* In summer 2020, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, we developed [Principles for a Just and Sustainable Food Recovery](https://www.wen.org.uk/2020/09/10/reimagining-our-food-system/), to focus specifically on the Partnership’s response to the pandemic. Partnership members agreed to work towards these collective aims and include them in policy-making and operations.
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# Key Issue 2

# Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

We believe that to drive a shift towards healthier and more sustainable food requires high public awareness of food issues and widespread participation in food-related activity, by both individuals and institutions, as part of a growing movement of active food citizenship. Key to achieving this are: communications and events that can inspire people about the role, importance and joy of good food; practical engagement opportunities such as growing, cooking and sharing food in every community; and a facilitated network through which food actors of every kind can connect and collaborate on-line and in person as part of a local good food movement. At bronze, we would expect to see a range of public events and engagement opportunities and the beginnings of a local food network. At silver, we would expect to see widespread public participation in food-related activity and a dynamic and connected local good food movement involving people from all walks of life.

**What success could look like:**

**2A) Inspire and engage the public about good food** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Raise public awareness of food, health and sustainability issues through a variety of communication channels, ideally including a regular newsletter, websites, social media, magazines, film shows and radio and press pieces.
* Provide a wide range of free opportunities for people to learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food - e.g. through talks, challenges and competitions, demonstrations, intercultural and intergenerational events, food festivals and town meals.
* Ensure opportunities to actively participate in community food initiatives are promoted to people from all social and cultural backgrounds through print, broadcast and on-line media and/or via open days, food trails and volunteering programmes.
* Develop a public facing umbrella-campaign to encourage individuals and organisations to take (and register) direct action in support of healthy and sustainable food, for example through the development of an on-line platform such as Bristol’s Going for Gold or FoodWise Leeds.

**2B) Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Establish a network for community food activists that provides on-line and face to face opportunities to share inspiration, ideas and resources and to work together on a range of food initiatives (mandatory at silver).
* Ensure communities can access and take control of green, brownfield and unused building spaces that can be used for food social enterprises and community food projects, for example by mapping available assets or offering special lease options.
* Support local community food initiatives 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.
* Increase participation in food growing and related activities through increased allotment provision, the incorporation of growing sites into new and existing developments, the development of edible landscapes and through initiatives such as Incredible Edible and The Big Dig.

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| **Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement** |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Inspire and engage the public about good food**
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| * Food Partnership members promote food, health and sustainability issues on multiple platforms:
	+ Wen **raises public awareness** of food, health and sustainability issues through a monthly **THFP newsletter**, including a summary of action group activities, member updates and relevant local workshops and cultural activities such as film screenings.
	+ Our monthly [**Tower Hamlets Food Growers newsletter**](https://www.wen.org.uk/2010/04/15/sign-up-to-the-food-growers-newsletter/)reaches 1,500 grassroots growers.
	+ In March 2021, we made a short film introducing the [Just FACT programme](https://www.wen.org.uk/just-fact/).
	+ Poplar HARCA created their [HARCA centres unlocked](https://www.facebook.com/groups/503772610302609/) Facebook group in 2020. With over 500 followers, the channel offers daily content, including short films of healthy recipes, exercise workouts and family activities.
* Residents access opportunities to **learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food**:
	+ Pre-Covid, Wen ran **four free seasonal gatherings** a year, attracting around 100 grassroots growers. Events comprised talks, workshops, and skill shares focused on growing, cooking and eating healthy sustainable food.
	+ In November 2018, Wen ran a **sustainable food banquet**, where 120 intergenerational people shared a meal from local food coops, local community gardens and cooking projects.
	+ Tower Hamlets Recovery college runs courses for people with mental ill health about cooking for wellbeing,
	+ Tower Hamlets has **three local farms** that run regular activities around food, health and sustainability:
		- [Mudchute farm](https://www.mudchute.org/) offers cookery classes and growing activities, twice a week.
		- [Spitalfields City farm](https://www.spitalfieldscityfarm.org/) offers gardening, farm work and healthy eating activities.
		- [Stepney City farm](http://stepneycityfarm.org/) is home to “the allotment cafe”, using food grown on the farm. It runs regular activities with schools, young volunteers and families.
	+ Over the years, Wen has focused much of its **food and health activities** on the Burdett Estate in Poplar, an area with a predominant British Bangladeshi population. Activities include:
		- Poplar HARCA organise annual Cook Offs at Limborough Garden and healthy cooking workshops at Limborough Training Kitchen.
		- [**Live Well**](https://www.wen.org.uk/2019/10/23/live-well/) **–** two series of weekly cooking skills workshops. Recipes are plant based and focus on reducing food waste.
		- The Food Store – the borough’s first community pantry (see S3)
	+ From spring 2021, we are developing a community food hub, with **a wide range of free opportunities for people to learn about, share and enjoy healthy and sustainable food**, working with local partners. Activities will be free and promoted to local residents through leaflets, door-knocking and estate noticeboards. In September 2021, we will launch the food hub with a weekend of talks, tastings and a photo exhibition.
* In 2020, Wen began Keep Growing, a **public-facing campaign** encouraging people to grow their own food.
	+ In 2020, over 700 people signed up to receive growing packs (seeds and coir pellets), and were supported at all stages of the growing process through [videos, blogs and four Growers’ Question Time events](https://www.wen.org.uk/2009/05/04/food-growers-resources-hub/).
	+ In 2021, the campaign is supporting 20-30 champions to grow 50 seedlings on their windowsill or balcony, to be shared with the wider community at events in June.
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| 1. **Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement**
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| * [**Tower Hamlets Food Growers**](https://www.wen.org.uk/foodgrowers/)(THFG) is a thriving network of local community gardens, city farms, community organisations and individual food activists, supported by Wen. The network is invited to four seasonal gatherings, and a wide range of **practical training**, such as 'Get Growing' training for new gardens, and training for speakers of other languages to build their confidence in becoming garden leaders.
* As the local lead organisation for **Capital Growth,** network lead Wen supports organisations and communities to create their own garden spaces:
	+ In 2019, Wen cocreated an accessible garden for older residents at **Phoenix Court**, a supported housing scheme for Somali women. Wen offered an initial four-week course to kick start the garden (14 participants).
	+ Wen also worked with migrant and support organisation [Praxis](https://www.praxis.org.uk/) to build a garden with their users. The council ran a three-week construction course, and a follow up four-week gardening course (25 participants).
* Wen continues to work with the council, landlords and community organisations to identify **underused spaces** suitable for food growing:
	+ The Housing Open Spaces scrutiny review brought together housing associations and community gardens to outline best practice in relation to providing space for new gardens.
	+ Seeds for Growth’s Greening Communities project identifies waste land on social housing estates and working in partnership with the tenants and the landlord we create new community gardens which include fresh food growing.
	+ Poplar HARCA transformed 15 unused/idle spaces into thriving community gardens, engaging 1,338 individuals in food growing activities on land and balconies, and partnering with 23 organisations. It is working on a strategy to coordinate activities across these spaces.
	+ Eastend Homes has Grow Your Own spaces in 13 locations in Tower Hamlets.
	+ [Tower Hamlets Homes](https://www.towerhamletshomes.org.uk/my-neighbourhood/community-food-gardens), has supported 19 community food gardens across the borough.
	+ LBTH worked closely with community groups to encourage **Barts Health Trust** to lease land to a meanwhile [community gardening project](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=68538&PlanId=498&RPID=0) for people with mental health issues.
* The council develops and funds food growing initiatives:

LBTH encourage registered social landlords to support food growing initiatives for residents including through recommendations in the recently co-produced Food Poverty Action Plan.LBTH Public Health worked closely with community groups to encourage Barts Health Trust to lease land to a meanwhile community gardening project for people with mental health issues. Tower Hamlets has **funding and grant schemes** accessible to local community food initiatives. * Local food initiatives can apply to local authority Mainstream Grants, Community Cohesion and events fund.
* It offers [Biodiversity Grants](https://www.towerhilltrust.org.uk/fund-whenapply.php) to fund community organisations, which have been used for a number of school community orchards, for example.
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# Key Issue 3

# Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food

We believe good food is a right not a privilege and that everyone should be able to eat healthily every day, no matter who they are, what they do or where they live. Key to achieving this are: ensuring all those in danger of going hungry or suffering malnutrition are able to access nutritious food while working to address the underlying causes of food poverty; raising awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and giving people the skills, resources and support needed to feed themselves well; and changing people’s food environment - from institutional settings to high streets - to ensure affordable healthy food is available and accessible to all. At bronze we would expect to see a wide range of initiatives that are working to make this a reality and are having a measurable impact on people’s lives. At silver, we would expect to see evidence that this is becoming a reality across most social groups, settings and neighbourhoods in your city, particularly amongst those groups most at risk.

**What success could look like:**

**3A) Tackle food poverty** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Establish a multi-agency partnership involving key organisations as well as people with lived experience, to identify and tackle the full range of issues that contribute to food poverty in a joined-up strategic way, ideally as part of the Food Power, End Hunger UK or Feeding Britain initiatives.
* Ensure high quality social food provision for people who might otherwise go hungry or suffer malnutrition, for example through the Healthy Start voucher scheme; Rose Vouchers; free school meals; breakfast, after school and holiday meal provision; lunch clubs and meals on wheels.
* Promote fair wages through local authority adoption of the real Living Wage for its own staff and for contractors and via campaigns to raise other employers’ awareness and adoption of the Living Wage and the benefits this brings.
* Train health professionals, welfare advisers, housing and voluntary organisations in food poverty issues so they can effectively direct those experiencing food poverty to welfare support and local hardship funds, as well as to emergency food aid at times of crisis.

**3B) Promote healthy eating** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Run healthy eating and drinking campaigns including Sugar Smart, Veg Cities, Change4Life, Baby Friendly and the 50 Fountains Challenge; and give preferential treatment to healthy food ads, for example by offering them free advertising space, while restricting junk food ads.Foo
* Provide and promote a wide range of healthy eating and healthy weight support services and initiatives, including diet and nutrition advice and support, cooking skills training, exercise and social prescribing programmes.
* Promote the adoption of holistic healthy food culture transformation programmes - such as those developed by Food for Life - in a range of settings such as nurseries, schools, colleges, hospitals, care homes and workplaces.
* Map access to healthy food against transportation routes, income, health data, proximity to schools etc. and work to prevent the proliferation of unhealthy food outlets as well as to ensure people can access affordable healthy food/drink near to where they live, work and play\*.

\* *This could include working with caterers (cafes, takeaways and restaurants) and retailers (supermarkets, local convenience stores, markets, food coops) to increase the availability, affordability, variety, quality and display of fruit and vegetables, particularly in deprived areas; introducing or reinstating public drinking fountains; and/or including access to affordable healthy food in your Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents or other planning policy.*

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| **Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food**  |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Tackle food poverty**
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| * **Fair Food for All, a multi-agency action group** of the Tower Hamlets Food Partnership, was created in May 2019 with the aim of enabling everyone in the borough to access good food. The group is a Food Power alliance and meets quarterly. While it is open to all, core members include council public health and tackling poverty teams, registered providers, primary schools and Felix Project. During the pandemic, the number of meeting attendees rose sharply from an average of 15 to 35.
* Some recent successes include:
	+ During the first Covid lockdown, the council supplemented the food parcels provided to people who were “shielding” with fresh fruit and vegetables. The council worked closely with a nutritionist to ensure the content of the box was in line with national Eatwell guidelines. It recruited volunteer chefs to develop healthy recipes with food box items. Recipes were available in English and Bengali.
	+ Supporting and promoting 30 community food banks, many of which have emerged out of Covid-19. Most of these organisations receive food from the London Food Alliance (Felix Project and City Harvest) via the council’s VCS food hub, which collectively supports 5,000 residents per week.
	+ Supporting an increase in Healthy Start voucher uptake by targeting invitations to residents using demographic data, sign-up days and advertising healthy start in shops.
	+ Taking part in a cross-sector steering group to supporting the council to provide free school meals during the holidays:
		- Summer 2019 - provided meals at six schools for 18 days, as well as 9,000 healthy packed lunches at holiday clubs.
		- Easter 2020 holidays - distributed 12,750 in partnership with A Plate for London.
		- In 2020 – ran a larger summer holiday programme providing activities and food to children, prioritising children who receive Free School Meals. 30 VCS organisations and schools ran clubs over five weeks.
		- Easter 2021 – the council commissioned local Bangladeshi women’s collective Oitij-jo to provide 50,000 ingredient boxes and recipe booklets to children eligible for Free School Meals. They also created [instructional videos](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health__social_care/health_and_medical_advice/Coronavirus/Schools/Healthy-Holidays.aspx).
		- Summer 2021 – the group is planning another multi-club activities and food scheme.
* An objective of Fair Food for All is developing a network of community food pantries. Since summer 2020:
	+ Clarion Housing organised an event to inform registered providers of the benefits of opening food pantries on their estates.
	+ Fair Food for All group workshop for community food banks on the benefits of moving to a pantry model. One organisation, Women’s Inclusive Team now runs a pantry in addition to their food bank.
	+ Poplar HARCA, Wen, Burdett FC and the council opened [The Food Store](https://www.poplarharca.co.uk/about-us/news/article/the-food-store-tower-hamlets-first-healthy-affordable-food-store-is-open-for-families-in-need/), a community pantry. Within three months, the service supported 60 households per week with access to low-cost healthy and culturally appropriate produce (fruit and vegetables are free) and welfare support. Staff also help clients access Healthy Start vouchers.
	+ Family Action has opened three pantries with local organisations.
* The Council is an accredited **Living Wage Employer** and promotes London Living Wage accreditation. Agency workers are paid London Living Wage as a minimum.
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| 1. **Promote healthy eating**
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| * Tower Hamlets was one of the first boroughs to sign the **Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food**, making a **public commitment** to improve the availability of healthier food and drinks and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy options.
* In 2018, it ran a [SUGAR SMART campaign](https://www.sustainweb.org/news/mar18_sugar_smart_tower_hamlets_big_half/). 21 schools in the Borough have made a **Sugar Smart** pledge. Five schools have achieved a Healthy Schools London Silver Award in Sugar Smart, two have achieved Gold and one school is working towards Silver. The Healthy Lives Team has delivered 10 primary and one secondary school assembly on Sugar Smart, exploring the effects of sugar, dental health and hidden sugars.
* In 2021, the council is organising a series of meetings with a cross-sector Healthy Weight for Tower Hamlets strategy group. Meetings are chaired by council CEO Will Tuckley and are aimed to reach collective agreement on approaches to complex issues, such as influencing fast food outlets and advertising and media. The programme manager will work with the group to agree collective and individual actions to influence this agenda.
* A wide range of healthy eating and healthy weight support services are available in Tower Hamlets:
	+ The [Healthy Families Programme](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=tHPVfZUHabY) is a six-week course on healthy eating and active lives for parents of under 11s.
	+ Bromley by Bow Centre runs a successful **social prescribing** programme. The service received 583 referrals between April 2018 and March 2019 from six GP practices within the network. Of these 80% were actively engaged by the Social Prescribing service.
	+ [**Bags of Taste**](https://quakersocialaction.org.uk/we-can-help/improving-your-wellbeing/bags-taste), which takes participants from eating unhealthy food to enjoying better diets and healthier finances. Bags of Taste’s behavioural change programme shows an 85% drop in takeaway & ready meal consumption by the end of the course.
* The borough is accredited as [Breastfeeding Friendly](https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/tower-hamlets/), an accreditation programme which supports maternity, neonatal, health visiting and children’s centre services to transform their care.
* Tower Hamlets is the top performing borough for [Healthy Schools London](https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-schools-london/awards/get-award/schools-taking-part?borough=00BG), an awards programme that works with schools to improve children’s wellbeing through their school lunch choices and habits. 93% of schools engaged in the programme (84 Bronze awards, 97 Silver awards and 55 Gold awards, the highest figures in London). Results at the end of the programme include:
	+ At Chisenhale School, 25% pupils reported they ate salad by the end of the project; 69% of pupils reported they “always drink water” and 100% of packed lunch pupils now drink water with their lunch.
	+ At William Davis School, 50% pupils reported they ate vegetables and 61% ate fruit with their lunch.
* The council use **maps access to analyse need and target services**. For example:
* mapping children in receipt of free school meals is helping to prioritise where to aim for greater provision of summer holiday hunger activities.
* mapping distance of takeaways to schools to target business engagement in Food for Health, the borough’s programme to improve the health ratings of hot food businesses.
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# Key Issue 4

# Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy

We believe that to make good food a defining characteristic of where you live depends, ultimately, on ensuring healthy and sustainable food businesses - from producers and processors to retailers and caterers - are mainstreamed as part of a revitalised local food economy. Putting good food entrepreneurs and enterprises at the heart of local economic development and promoting them to consumers not only ensures that buying healthy and sustainable food becomes the easy choice but also creates jobs, businesses and prosperity while regenerating high streets and city centres. At bronze, we would expect to see evidence that the local authority and other key bodies recognise the role and importance of sustainable food enterprises and are actively working to support their development and success. At silver, we would expect such enterprises to have become a significant part of your local food economy and to be positively reshaping the high street and wider food environment.

**What success could look like:**

**4A)** **Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* 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.
* Protect and/or re-establish vital sustainable food infrastructure to support shorter and value-based supply chains, such as local processing and wholesale businesses, city centre and other food markets, food hubs and distribution networks.
* Support sustainable food entrepreneurs and enterprises by providing vocational training, business planning advice, grants and financial advice, and access to land and premises through special loan and lease options and business rates reductions and holidays.
* Work to improve the diversity of the retail offer by supporting more independent retail and market stalls and more value-based retail, such as Better Food Traders and the Pantry model.

**4B) Promote healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses to consumers** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Enable consumers to find local producers, shops, markets, cafes and restaurants selling healthy and sustainable food via a well-promoted, easy to use on-line directory of local good food businesses.
* Promote local good food businesses to the public using a range of communication tools, including media features and promotions, ‘restaurant weeks’, food awards and other marketing, branding and business recognition schemes.
* Promote greater consumer spending in local independent and sustainable food businesses through the introduction of local currency and loyalty schemes and via promotional campaigns.
* Provide local producers with increased opportunities to promote and sell their produce direct to consumers through on-line platforms and the creation of new regular or permanent markets, box schemes, meet-the-producer events and other initiatives.

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| **Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy** |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development**
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| * **Council policies that support a healthier food economy include:**
	+ [Local Plan](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/planning_and_building_control/planning_policy_guidance/Local_plan/local_plan.aspx), adopted in January 2020, restricting the number of hot food takeaways and does not support applications within 200 metres of schools or leisure centres (DTC5 p122). It also encourages new markets, including farmers’ and ‘streetfood’ markets, provided they enhance the centre’s existing offer and contribute to vitality and cohesion. (Policyt C.TC7).
	+ [High Streets and Town Centres Strategy 2017-2022](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s137159/6.6a%20-%20App1%20-%20High%20Streets%20Town%20Centre%20Strategy%202017-2022.pdf), which encourages retailer and market trader participation in council campaigns Buy Well and Food for Health to improve the health credentials of their offerings (HP13).
	+ **Health Impact Assessments, which are compulsory for new developments, will soon ask specific questions about the food environment**. The council will ask whether sites will grow, promote and sell healthy or unhealthy food; and explore measures developers can put in place to reduce the number of fast food outlets.
* Other **vital sustainable infrastructure** includes:
	+ Tower Hamlets College Hub supplies surplus food to around 30 community organisations running food banks.
	+ In April, The Felix Project will launch a new depot on the Thomas Road Industrial Estate in Poplar, facilitating the supply of surplus produce to organisations across the borough.
	+ Five of Tower Hamlets iconic and internationally renowned street markets sell fruit, vegetables and fish. Most traders source from nearby New Spitalfields market and stalls are often run by families for generations.
* Tower Hamlets Council is **helping local enterprises, including:**
	+ service to improve marketing skills and set up or improve click & collect services for their customers.
	+ e-cargo bike trial to increase small businesses’ capacity to deliver affordably and sustainably.
	+ In 2020, parts of Brick Lane, a busy retail street, were pedestrianised to provide safe spacing for walking and outdoor seating for restaurants. In March 2021, a consultation process went live to implement permanent road closures and parking bay suspensions in evening and weekends.
* **The borough’s retail offer is increasingly diverse:**
	+ [St Hilda’s East Food Co-op](https://sthildas.org.uk/projects/food-coop/) offers fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices to the local community and provides a lifeline for housebound older people using the centre. Fresh produce comes from Community Food Enterprise, an award-winning social enterprise in East London, and Sarah Green Organics, an organic farm in Essex. They also stock Fairtrade, organic products from Zaytoun, the social enterprise that supports Palestinian farmers, and pulses and grains from workers’ cooperative Suma.
	+ Family Action opened three [Food on our Doorstep](https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/food-club/) clubs in the borough in January 2021. Members, who must live or work within 15 minutes of the shop, can access £15 worth of food for £3.50 weekly.
* There is also a movement of innovative and exciting enterprises in the pipeline, including:
	+ Silas Yard, a network of food enterprises on the Dorset Estate, including a mushroom farm, restaurant and shop selling flowers, herbal teas and tinctures
	+ Centre for Innovation and Voluntary Action, GROW and Edible Utopia are collaboratively looking into starting a commercial mushroom farm serving restaurants in Tower Hamlets.
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| 1. **Promote healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses to consumers**
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| * Listings and blogs that **promote good food businesses include:**
	+ [Roman Road London](https://romanroadlondon.com/) is a news and culture magazine for Roman Road in East London. During each lockdown, it has featured directories of local businesses offering takeaway and delivery services, and recipes from local chefs. The magazine publishes regular round-ups of independent [cafes and restaurants in the area](https://romanroadlondon.com/best-lunch-places/).
	+ [Spitalfields Life](https://spitalfieldslife.com/) is a blog about London’s East End to which The Gentle Author has contributed daily for over a decade. It features many of the borough’s most enduring and endearing culinary heritages, such as the curry houses of Brick Lane, Leila’s food shop on Calvert Avenue that champions local and seasonal produce, and E Pellici, London’s a celebrated family-run café that has been in business for over 100 years. It has over 28,000 Twitter followers.
	+ Food Partnership lead Wen has been sharing fortnightly [local food updates](https://www.wen.org.uk/2020/03/30/https-www-wen-org-uk-2020-03-30-information-on-local-response-to-covid-19/) since the first lockdown. This includes a list of local restaurants and cafes offering takeaway and delivery services. This information is promoted on the Food Partnership web page, as well as the council’s [Local Offer](https://www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk/) microsite, which has 5,00 to 10,000 users every month.
	+ In spring 2021, Wen will turn overlay maps of food aid, food growing and good food retail into a public resource to promote food services across the borough and to help those in similar geographical areas to connect. We are guided by our Partnership vision of good food, encompassing local, sustainable, nutritious and culturally appropriate.
* Some of the borough’s farms and larger community gardens **sell their produce directly to consumers**:
	+ [Stepney City Farm](http://stepneycityfarm.org/) is a three-acre working farmthat sells produce and meat box schemes to the community. At its May 2020 peak, the scheme sold 203 veg boxes and donated 27 boxes to 11 vulnerable communities.
	+ [Cranbrook Community Garden](https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookCommunityFoodGarden/) is a community garden in Bethnal Green. In 2020, it produced 184 kilos of organic vegetables. Volunteers sell fresh produce and preserves at local events such as Wen’s Seasonal Gatherings.
	+ Wen’s 2021 [Keep Growing campaign](https://www.wen.org.uk/2020/04/23/keepgrowing/) is committing to establishing more of these connections. The map we are developing will help to link up community gardens and community food projects in the same area. In addition, the newest Tower Hamlets Food Partnership action group – The Community Food Network – will take action to raise the profile of community food groups’ value to the local economy.
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# Key Issue 5

# Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local and sustainable food supply chains

We believe that catering and procurement provide a uniquely powerful lever for promoting good food. By transforming catering across a wide range of settings - including nurseries, schools, colleges, hospitals, care homes, workplace canteens and smaller scale catering outlets - it is possible not only to improve the eating habits of many thousands of people but also to create the large scale demand for healthy, sustainable and local food needed to underpin a fundamental shift in the food production and supply system. At bronze we would expect to see examples of sustainable food procurement policy and accredited practice in a range of institutions. At silver we would expect to see healthy and sustainable food catering becoming the norm across a full range of institutions, supported by strong local authority leadership as well as significant changes to how the procurement supply chain operates, so that it is more accessible to local, sustainable, independent and smaller scale producers and other food businesses.

**What success could look like:**

**5A) Change policy and practice to put good food on people’s plates** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* The Council develops and formally adopts a Sustainable Food Procurement policy and strategy that promotes healthy and planet friendly diets and incorporates specific commitments to source sustainable, local and ethical products.
* Individual public sector bodies adopt healthy and sustainable food policies, including nutrition standards; healthy catering and vending; ‘tap water only; local, organic and other climate/nature friendly produce; responsibly caught/farmed fish; less but better meat and ethical standards such as Fairtrade.
* Public sector organisations and large private caterers achieve recognised healthy, sustainable and ethical food accreditation, such as Food for Life Served Here, Marine Stewardship Council and Compassion in World Farming awards.
* Restaurants and other small-scale catering outlets improve their food offering as part of national accreditation schemes such as Food for Life Served Here and the Sustainable Restaurants Association or through local schemes such as the Healthy Catering Commitment and Bristol Eating Better.

**5B) Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Establish a local cross-sector sustainable food procurement group or equivalent forum to bring together procurement officers, caterers, suppliers and other decision-makers to drive, track and promote better catering and procurement policy and practice.
* Enable procurement officers and catering businesses to source more of their ingredients from local and sustainable producers and processors, for example via local supplier directories and through meet the supplier events.
* Enable small scale local producers and other sustainable food businesses to better access large scale procurement markets, for example through the introduction of dynamic food procurement and facilitated cooperative supply initiatives.
* Work with procurement and supply stakeholders over a larger geographic region to develop a more strategic approach, including taking advantage of opportunities for greater aggregation and integration of local producers.

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| **Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local and sustainable food supply chains**  |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Change policy and practice to put good food on people’s plates**
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| * The Council’s [Procurement Strategy 2016-2019](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=6749) references working with local suppliers and third sector voluntary organisations to stimulate the local economy. Recently, the council selected Bangladeshi women’s collective Oitij-jo to deliver recipes and videos for this year’s Easter Healthy Holidays scheme.
* The borough has had Fairtrade status since 2007, bolstered by a cross-sector Tower Hamlets Fairtrade Group, comprising councilllors, residents, community leaders, the local London Metropolitan University and the council’s Head of Procurement. Efforts include:
	+ The council has a Fairtrade Procurement Policy and Fairtrade status. It sources Fairtrade bananas, orange and apple juice, cocoa, tea, coffee and sugar, and requires suppliers to ensure an ethical and child and slave labour-free supply chain.
	+ Tower Hamlets-based **London Metropolitan University has Fairtrade status**. Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar is now served at all meetings and events.
* [Food for Life](https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/) recognises **food services relating to** **food quality, leadership and culture**. In Tower Hamlets:
	+ Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel and Mile End Hospital in Bethnal Green are Gold;
	+ London Metropolitan University is Bronze
	+ The council’s contract caterer, used by 82 schools and 9 early years settings to produce 17,240 meals per year, is Silver. In practice, the council’s three main suppliers are small, local businesses (East London, Essex and Suffolk). Additionally:
		- All the fish is MSC-certified.
		- It favoursFairtrade and RSPO certified products
		- 5% goods are organic, such as milk
		- Only free range eggs are served – it has a [Good Egg Award](https://www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/award-winners/public-sector/london-borough-of-tower-hamlets/).
* [Food for Health](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/business/health_and_safety/food/healthy_food_awards/healthy_food_awards.aspx)is the council’s programme to improve the health of food in cafes and fast food outlets, running since 2011. Businesses are awarded for making changes to their cooking, such as grilling over frying, reducing salt and including healthier options, such as wholemeal bread and vegetarian dishes. Notable success include:
* Currently 50 food businesses hold bronze, silver or gold awards.
* 30 of these have been with the scheme since it began in 2015, continuously improving their offer.
* 30% are fast food businesses that have improved their healthier options and encourage customers to make healthier choices by ensuring that water and zero sugar drinks are stored at eye level. They now report higher sales of these drinks.
* Many restaurants are part of the Sustainable Restaurant Association's [Food Made Good](https://www.foodmadegood.org/) programme, committed to improving their environmental, societal, and sourcing sustainability. These include:
* [Emilias Pasta](https://www.emiliaspasta.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Emilias-Sustainability-report-2020_digital.pdf), which selects small suppliers focused on sustainability, regenerative and organic agriculture
* [Ozone](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fozonecoffee.co.uk%2Four-locations%2Femma-street%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cjo%40wen.org.uk%7C011587d7f42348ac77f808d8f8ec29d0%7Cfefde40f48f246d4b00e9269a82a8882%7C0%7C0%7C637533040502317426%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=1i7p77uj%2BO3f08Pq1ngLxs2AXxLUWiw5%2BLVdIo0XvUA%3D&reserved=0), which visits and audits all its coffee producers against environmental, social and economic targets
* [Pizza Pilgrims](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pizzapilgrims.co.uk%2Fvenues%2Fwest-india-quay%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cjo%40wen.org.uk%7C011587d7f42348ac77f808d8f8ec29d0%7Cfefde40f48f246d4b00e9269a82a8882%7C0%7C0%7C637533040502327385%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=5rX%2BZdLbZFmmTftbOqHtAiZ8B0AKQJcKyJUih1MA3M4%3D&reserved=0), which sources its basil from [Harvest London](https://www.harvest.london/), a hydroponic herb and salad business in East London.
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| 1. **Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain**
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| * Tower Hamlets is an active member of **joint procurement group** [Procurement Across London (PAL)](https://www.sustainweb.org/gffl/london_catering_group/#:~:text=Procurement%20Across%20London%20(PAL)%20was,value%20for%20joint%20contracts%20awarded), buying group alongside six other local authorities. As a group they tender for the various supply groups – frozen, fresh, meat, fruit and vegetables. This is effective because:
	+ it enables the parties to leverage more value-added pricing, service, and technology from their external suppliers than could be obtained if the party purchased goods and services alone.
	+ by pooling demand, the parties increase their collective purchasing power which gives them economies of scale, of process, and of information. By increasing the volume of the intended contract award, the parties are generally able to negotiate (much) lower prices for the good or service being awarded than any single member organisation in the collective.
	+ PAL members are encouraged to participate in the tender process and influence the specification to ensure that local requirements are delivered. For example:
		- Prescott Thomas, Spitalfields market, Leyton sources 50% of their products from the UK during the English produce season from local growers and farms. They work with the school catering teams to support them in providing seasonal produce, provide information on produce origins and ensuring that their ‘Field to Fork’ philosophy is implemented. This helps the council’s contract catering service to maintain its Food for Life silver award status.
		- WW meats, a small, family-owned supplier in Purfleet, Essex, supplies Halal and carried Red Tractor farm assurance for all its meat. WW goes the extra mile in sourcing specialist products if requested to by a PAL partner. For example, it makes bespoke organic Halal lamb burgers for Tower Hamlets.
* The council runs a School Meals Working Group. The group is composed of head teachers, school reps, dietician, healthy lives team and contract services managers.
* Recently, the council demonstrated enthusiasm to **work with suppliers and partners across Tower Hamlets and further afield** to improve food procurement. In 2021, CEO Will Tuckley has chaired a number of high-level meetings with divisional directors in public health, procurement, children’s services and leisure, as well as representatives from the Tower Hamlets Food Partnership, THCVS, schools and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Participants have discussed taking collective action towards a healthy food environment for the borough. In April 2021, the first group discussed developing a borough-wide commitment to healthier food procurement and provision across different settings. Other ideas were improving the broader food environment, such as a focus on vending machines and discounts at cafes and canteens, and continuing to work with schools to improve school meals. It is genuinely encouraging to see food being discussed in these high level and collaborative settings.
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# Key Issue 6

# Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste

We believe that tackling the climate and nature emergency is the single greatest challenge of our time and will require a radical shift in our food and farming system towards agroecological production, sustainable diets and an end to food waste. By changing what we, as individuals and institutions, choose to eat, we can transform what, how and where food is produced and thus help to minimise any negative impacts on climate and biodiversity. At the same time, by tackling the tragedy of food waste, we can balance the need to feed a growing global population while remaining within planetary boundaries. At bronze, we would expect to see significant action on promoting and supporting sustainable food production and consumption, improving resource efficiency throughout the food chain and tackling food and food-related waste. At silver, we would expect to see an effective strategic and systemic response to the negative climate and nature impacts of the local food system.

**What success could look like:**

**6A) Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Declare a climate and nature emergency and work with public sector institutions, businesses and citizens to deliver a joint strategy to drastically reduce the climate and nature impact of your local food system, as outlined in the ‘Every Mouthful Counts’ Declaration and Guide.
* Develop and deliver a land use and management strategy that protects, enhances and makes available all Grade 1 and 2 urban and peri-urban land for both community growing and commercial sustainable agriculture.
* Provide farmers, growers and land managers with training, advice and support on how to adopt agroecological production and management techniques and food businesses with support to improve resource efficiency and sustainability across all aspects of their business.
* Deliver city-wide campaigns to promote a mainstream shift to sustainable food - including fresh, unprocessed, seasonal, local, organic, less and better meat and dairy, high animal welfare, Fairtrade, Sustainable Fish Cities and the Real Bread Campaign.

**6B) Reduce, redirect and recycle food, packaging and related waste** - this could include but is not limited to the following:

* Ensure the Food Waste Hierarchy is incorporated into and shapes an integrated city-wide food waste policy and strategy that minimises food and packaging waste, eliminates food waste from landfill and ensures surplus food and food waste are diverted to the most appropriate purposes.
* Establish a food waste collection scheme for homes and businesses that redirects food and food-related waste for composting, energy recovery (AD) or animal feed (where permitted); and promote community composting through the provision of resources and sites for communities to use.
* Raise public, business and institutional awareness of food waste and encourage them to measure and reduce it via campaigns and events such as Love Food Hate Waste, Feeding the 5000, The Pig Idea, Disco Soup, No Loaf Lost, Your Business is Food and Guardians of Grub.
* Ensure the effective collection of consumable surplus food from all stages in the supply chain, from farms to retail, and redistribute it to organisations feeding people in need while working to raise the nutritional standards of the food aid being offered.

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| **Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste** |
| Please present your evidence of action and achievement for the two action areas under this key issue below. Please note that there is a strict 500 words limit for each action area. If you exceed this limit your application will not be forwarded to the panel.  |
| 1. **Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency**
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| * In March 2019, Tower Hamlets was the first London borough to declare **a** [**Climate Emergency**](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/environment_and_waste/Sustainability/Climate_emergency.aspx) in March 2019. Its [Zero Carbon Action Plan](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=165906) commits the council to being zero carbon by 2025, and the wider borough by 2030.
* [Tower Hamlets Just FACT](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wen.org.uk%2F2020%2F08%2F11%2Fjustfact%2F&data=04%7C01%7Clocalfood%40wen.org.uk%7Cc2ac1f6301004228c8cd08d8d98bea92%7Cfefde40f48f246d4b00e9269a82a8882%7C0%7C0%7C637498544226613741%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=pvBV67sAVCibNs2OQWi4u4hhJNvtQdDp2xvc6rEv4j4%3D&reserved=0) is a multi-partner project developing an environmentally sustainable, resilient and socially just food system in Tower Hamlets. Led by Wen, the project builds on the fantastic work of its partners:
	+ [R-Urban](https://wickcuriosityshop.net/) offers classes on environmental and civic practices. It provides shared facilities to support local community groups and entrepreneurs who share the ethos of the circular economy.
	+ [Sunny Jar Eco Hub](https://www.facebook.com/sunnyjarecohub/) are local leaders in low waste living. Working alongside [Plastic Free Roman Road](https://twitter.com/plasticfreerord) and the council, they launched a Borrow-a-Bag programme in October 2019, engaging with over 500 local residents, businesses, schools and other community organisations to create a reusable bag borrowing scheme. They have also run food buying group workshops, sharing ideas and information with local residents and initiating a buying group with participants.
	+ [LiC (Leaders in Community)](https://www.licprojects.org/) is a local youth-led organisation. They run a bee-keeping programme aimed at helping young residents increase and protect the bee population in East London. In 2019, it served 20 adults and over 50 young people.
	+ [PACCT (Parkview And Cranbrook Climate Task Force)](https://www.wen.org.uk/2020/11/10/pacct-communities-taking-climate-action/) is a hyperlocal community climate action group based on two housing estates in Bethnal Green. One estate is the home of the Cranbrook Community Food Garden, which has held a weekly garden club for the last decade. It is part of the European Food Energy Water (FEW-meter) project.
	+ [St Hilda’s](http://www.sthildas.org.uk/) East Community Centre is a local food cooperative (see 4A)
* The council is exploring developing a local policy to support the **temporary use of land for community growing** as part of development and regeneration work; making greater use of unused green space for growing; encouraging property developers to include food growing or cooking space through local planning; and greater use of local infrastructure funding to support development of new food growing opportunities.
* Wen’s seasonal gatherings for local growers focus on **agroecological production and management techniques**. Topics have included:
* seeds, small scale seed saving, and the issues around corporate ownership of seed stock;
* soil and compost, both the issues around soil degradation globally, and incorporating food and garden waste into healthy soil;
* biodiversity, including training on improving the biodiversity value of food growing spaces.
* The **Tower Hamlets Fairtrade group** engages communities through **sustainability campaigns and events**. At this year’s Fairtrade fortnight, which focused on Fairtrade and climate justice, Year 7 pupils from a local school were involved in [‘Choose the World they Want’](https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/take-action/share-your-vision-of-the-world-you-want/) activities showing their vision for a more equitable world. Local MP Apsana Begum sent a statement of support for the campaign.
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| 1. **Reduce, redirect and recycle food, packaging and related waste**
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| * **Tower Hamlets’ climate and food waste strategy**:
	+ Its Zero carbon strategy targets zero organic waste to landfill by 2025. Since 2008, it has collected food waste from 20,000 street level properties. The council also offers £5 compost bins and wormeries. Schools and commercial businesses are provided with a free collection of food waste. It has helped high street businesses to reduce waste, such as offering a free waste cooking oil collection service to restaurants on Brick Lane.
	+ The council’s [Draft Waste Management Strategy 2018-2030](https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=128934) commits to expanding the food waste recycling service to blocks of flats where practical and cost effective.
	+ To meet the requirements of the council’s Food for Life accreditation, school meals are served on reusable crockery, not plastic flight trays. All council run food outlets have also removed all single use plates and cutlery.
* [Quantum Waste](https://quantumwaste.com/), R-URBAN and Poplar HARCA are developing a **local food waste strategy** for the Teviot Estate to collect household organic waste to power a local anaerobic digester, produce biogas, compost and fertiliser for local community gardens and allotments. This replicable model of sustainable management of organic resources aims to engage residents, support local economic activity and build the circular economy from the ground up.
* **Food waste campaigning** includes:
	+ Tower Hamlets council supports and promotes the [Love Food Hate Waste](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/environment_and_waste/recycling_and_waste/waste_reduction_tips.aspx) campaign.
	+ R-URBAN partnered with local youth service [Spotlight](https://wearespotlight.com/) on several projects helping raise awareness about food waste among young people in Tower Hamlets. For example:
		- Too Good To Go was a five-week online cooking club in December 2020 and January 2021. Facilitated by food social enterprise [Eat Clu](https://eat-club.org/)b, the course focused on reducing food waste at home. 12 young people took part between December 2020 and January 2021.
		- Maturation Box Workshop was a three-day workshop with 11 young people in October 2019. It focused on designing and building a box that accelerated the composting process.
* [London Food Alliance](https://fareshare.org.uk/news-media/press-releases/charities-form-pan-london-alliance-to-feed-vulnerable-londoners-during-covid-19-lockdown/) organisations distribute surplus food to those who need it via CVS organisations and the council. They are very active in the borough:
	+ [The Felix Project](https://thefelixproject.org/)  is the lead organisation in Tower Hamlets, distributing surplus food to local food banks, community projects as well as schools [for example](https://thefelixproject.org/news/three-new-routes-launched-to-reach-16-inner-city-primary-schools). In 2020, they helped distribute 284 tonnes of food to 52 organisations.
	+ In 2020-21, City Harvest has delivered over 103.1 tonnes of food to 22 food charities in Tower Hamlets, equating to over 245,000 meals. By rescuing and redistributing 103.1 tonnes of surplus food, City Harvest has offset 391.78 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.
* The Fair Food for All partnership action group is about to set up a What’s App Group to help community food projects share surplus produce, in order to reduce waste. Partnership member Burdett FC, which manages The Food Store food pantry, collects surplus food from local businesses, and leftovers are redistributed to a neighbouring community kitchen.
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