

Good Food Southwark: Sustainable Food Strategy 2023-2026



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Executive Summary

Our vision:

We want a sustainable food system in Southwark to improve health and wellbeing for our population, to reduce inequalities and to protect the planet.

Context

Food has been described as “the single biggest lever to optimise human health and environmental sustainability on earth.”ⁱ In Southwark, there are opportunities to change our food system to make it more equitable for local people. This strategy sets out how we will create the conditions for a sustainable food system.

This strategy has been developed by Southwark Council in partnership with Southwark Food Action Alliance. It describes our long-term ambitions for our food system. To deliver this strategy, we will develop a joint action plan which sets out the actions we will take as a partnership to achieve these ambitions.

Our core principles

Our strategy is underpinned by three core principles.

1. Collaboration as food partners –Our work is strengthened by working collaboratively to achieve a shared vision. We want to make best use of our individual strengths as food partners and learn from each other.
2. Sustainable, affordable food as a shared goal – Food is a core part of how we can improve the lives of residents in Southwark. We will continue to identify opportunities to work with people and organisations who may not traditionally see themselves as part of the food system.
3. Social justice and fairness - We will take a social justice approach in our work, recognising that we need to reduce inequalities and address equity if we are to achieve our ambitions.

Our strategy

There are five priorities in our strategy.

- 1) **A good food partnership** – A good food partnership can help us to join up our efforts to improve the local food system.
- 2) **Strong and connected communities** – A sustainable food system should bring communities together, helping people to build connections through food.
- 3) **Food security and the Right to Food** – A sustainable food system should deliver food security and nutrition for all. The principle of Right to Food advocates access to food as a basic human right and a statutory obligation.
- 4) **Healthy people, healthy planet** – A sustainable food system should enable access to good nutrition for health and wellbeing and have a neutral or positive impact on the natural environment.

- 5) **A good food economy and affordable food offer** – A sustainable food system should benefit the local economy, through good jobs, affordable food, community-led enterprises and healthy businesses.

Underpinning each of these priorities is the ambition to reduce inequalities and close the gap in life chances in Southwark.

How you can help

Everyone in Southwark can help contribute to achieving a sustainable food system. As an organisation, you can take action such as joining Southwark Food Action Alliance, paying the London Living Wage or making your food provision healthier and better for the environment. As an individual, you can take action by eating a more sustainable diet, reducing waste or joining a local or national food campaign.

**GET INVOLVED ● MAKE A PLEDGE ● SIGN
UP TO BE A FOOD HERO**

[Southwark Food Action Alliance](#)

Our vision for Sustainable Food in Southwark

We want a sustainable food system in Southwark to improve health and wellbeing for our population, to reduce inequalities and address equity and to protect the planet.

What is a sustainable food system?

A food system includes all of the organisations and people that are involved with the production, distribution, consumption and disposal of food, and how they do it.ⁱⁱ A sustainable food system is a system that delivers food security and nutrition for all, tackles inequity whilst benefitting society and the economy, and protecting the planet.ⁱⁱⁱ

Introducing our partnership

This strategy has been developed by Southwark Council in partnership with Southwark Food Action Alliance members.

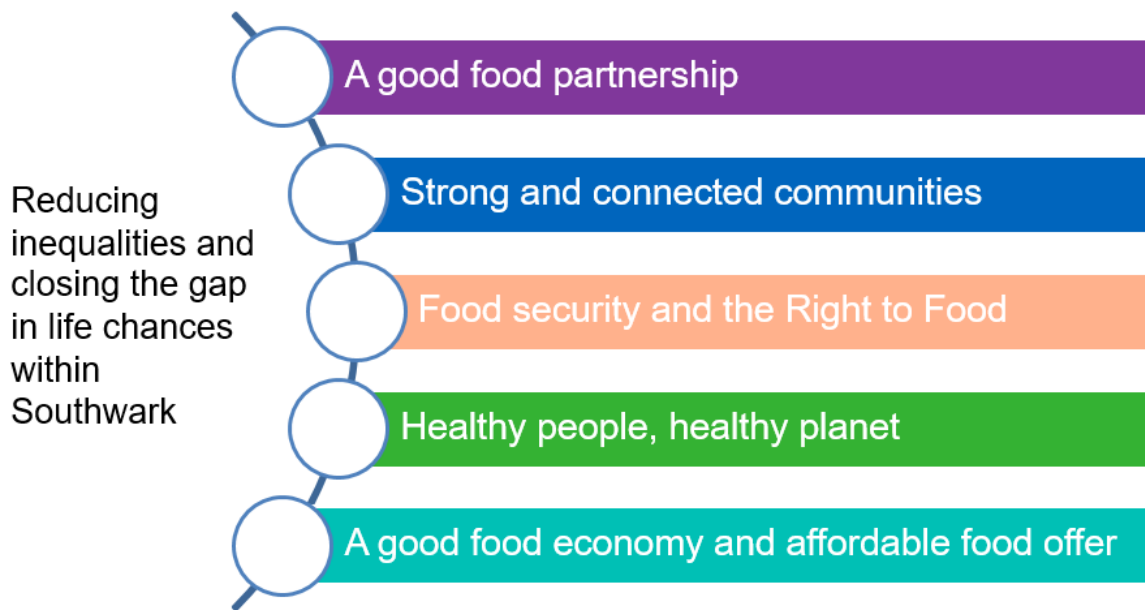
Southwark Food Action Alliance

The Southwark Food Action Alliance (SFAA) is an independent collective of local food providers and distributors, charities and community partners, residents, businesses, and public sector representatives, coming together to deliver a joined-up holistic food systems approach that increases food security and reduces food inequity in Southwark. The alliance was formed as a direct response to an increase in demand for services tackling food insecurity, a need for a strategic approach and oversight, and an understanding that improved food security is linked to building more resilient communities with improved health outcomes.

Southwark Council

Southwark Council has long recognised the importance of food for the wellbeing of Southwark's residents. The council has a number of programmes focused on reducing food insecurity in the borough, and was one of the first councils in the UK to roll out provision of free healthy school meals to all children in primary schools and is now piloting targeted approaches for free secondary meals. In many of the council's functions – from waste collection to urban planning – there is potential to shape the food system in the borough. Southwark Council is a member of the Southwark Food Action Alliance and has an independent role to play in the delivery of this strategy.

What do we want to achieve through our sustainable food strategy?



- 1) **A good food partnership** – A good food partnership can help us to join up our efforts to improve the local food system.
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Underpinning each of these priorities is the ambition to reduce inequalities and close the gap in life chances in Southwark.

The Southwark Context

Food in Southwark

Southwark is an inner London borough situated on the south bank of the River Thames, with Lambeth to the west and Lewisham to the east. Southwark is home to over 307,000 people^{iv}. It has a young population; the average age in Southwark is 32.4 years.

There is a diversity of food cultures within Southwark's communities. Southwark is home to a large number of residents born outside of the UK. The top country of birth

outside the UK was Nigeria, with people being born in Italy, Jamaica, Spain and Ghana making up a notable proportion of Southwark's population. Provision of culturally appropriate ingredients is important in Southwark.

There is a culture of food growing in Southwark; over 200 food growing plots have been created on social land since March 2021. Nevertheless, Southwark is a densely populated urban area, which limits the amount of food produced in the borough. Most food consumed in Southwark is imported from out of the borough.

Southwark benefits from a multitude of people and organisations working on improving Southwark through food. There are groups in the borough focused on reducing waste, building community networks through food and tackling food insecurity. Southwark's food partnership, SFAA, was established in 2017 and has been growing ever since.

Southwark has a diverse food retail environment, comprised of 82 supermarkets, five regular street markets selling fresh food, 325 convenience stores and five food pantries. Many local food retailers are actively trying to improve the food environment for people in Southwark, for example over 35 convenience stores have signed up to a pilot to increase stock of healthier products. Nevertheless, in some parts of the borough, there are limited options to buy affordable, healthy products.

According to the Survey of Londoners (2022), almost one in six of Southwark residents are food insecure^v. Being food insecure means that, at times, a person's food intake was reduced and their eating patterns were disrupted due to a lack of money and other resources for obtaining food. Food insecurity is often driven by having insufficient income to access a healthy, nutritious diet. This can be caused by low wages, rising costs of living and debt.

The inequalities related to food insecurity are stark, disproportionately affecting those on low incomes, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities or isolated. For more detailed information on how food insecurity is affecting our different communities, please see [Wider determinants of health - Southwark Council](#)

<p>Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those on benefits (particularly transitioning to Universal Credit) • Low income workers (part-time, zero hours, seasonal) • Those in debt and/or with little savings 	<p>Household Type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single people, particularly men • Single parents • Large families 	<p>Ethnicity & Legal Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic minorities • Migrants • Refugees and asylum seekers • No Recourse to Public Funds • Those without English as a first language
<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income school-age children and their families during school holidays • Children of parents age 16-24 • Young people leaving care • The 50-65 age group • Older adults 	<p>Lifestyle Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Chaotic lifestyles • Those in poor housing 	<p>Health Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with disabilities • Those with mental health conditions • Those with chronic health conditions

Figure 1: Summary of groups at higher risk of food insecurity in Southwark, Household Food Insecurity JSNA – Southwark Council, 2021.

Our work to tackle food insecurity

This strategy builds on previous work in the borough to increase household food security and a fairer food system. The food partnership have worked together for six years and have successfully developed a range of complementary services.

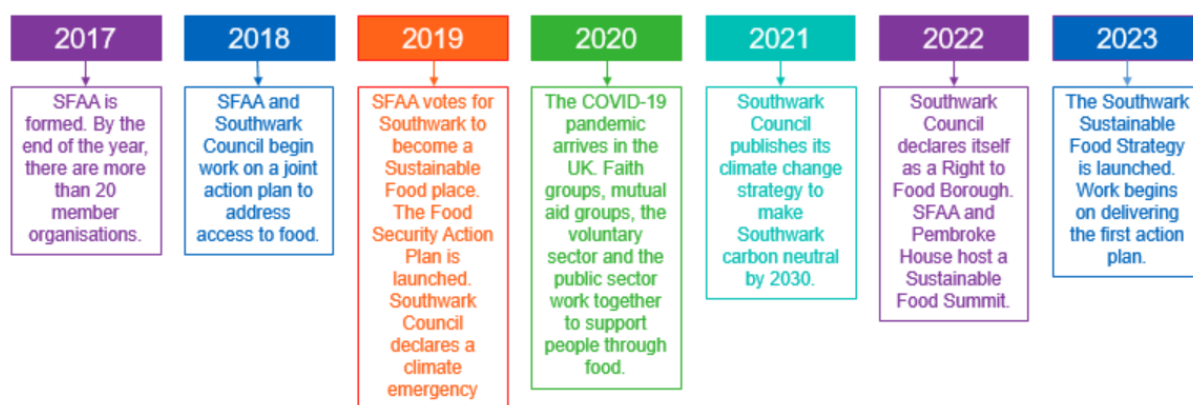


Figure 2: Timeline of food milestones in Southwark.

Key achievements of our local food partnership

- **Affordable food**
 - 5 pantries selling healthy foods at subsidised prices
 - 8 community cafes offering low-cost meals in social environments.
- **A network of dignity champions to cascade training**
 - Enhancing food support to promote dignity, choice and involvement.
- **Taking a 'cash first' approach alongside emergency food aid**
 - Signposting cash support, income maximisation and money advice.
- **Free, healthy school meals**
 - For all nursery and primary pupils to benefit from a hot and nutritious lunch.
- **Holiday food and activities programme**
 - Offers nutritious meals and enriching activities to children over Easter, summer and winter. In 2022, over 90,000 meals were provided.
- **Providing more opportunities to grow food**
 - The Council's Allotment Expansion Guarantee has created over 200 new food-growing plots in the borough.
- **Saving over 500 tonnes of surplus food from going to waste each year**
 - Working to establish low emission, cost saving logistics for redistribution.
 - Established 5 community fridges to share surplus food and support.
- **Engaging businesses to develop a healthier offer**
 - 35 convenience stores now stock healthier affordable products.
- **The neighbourhood food model**
 - Establishing better food systems at a neighbourhood level, connecting markets, growers, cafes, schools and pantries.
- **Southwark is a designated Fairtrade borough**
 - The council and local communities have committed to coming together to promote the use and sale of Fairtrade products.

Developing our Sustainable Food Approach

We recognise the need to evolve our food response to have a greater focus on sustainability. This acknowledges the need for long-term strategy to address the root causes of food insecurity, protect the planet and improve health for people in Southwark. Food has been described as “the single biggest lever to optimise human health and environmental sustainability on earth.”^{vi}

This strategy has been developed following a series of workshops with Southwark Food Action Alliance members and wider stakeholders, including a Food Summit in early 2022, an engagement series for anchor institutions involved in food procurement, and a Strategy Development workshop with Sustain in summer 2022. As food is such a cross-cutting issue, a wide range of Council teams have been involved in discussions on the strategy including public health, climate change, markets, events, procurement, communities and local economy. The strategy draws on evidence and best practice to help us understand more about our challenges and how best to address them. The strategy also reflects other food commitments we have in Southwark, London, the UK and internationally.

Delivery

Delivering the strategy

This strategy will be delivered by Southwark Council in partnership with Southwark Food Action Alliance members.

Action plan

As a partnership, we will develop a Sustainable Food Action Plan to set out the actions each partner will take to move towards this long-term vision. This action plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

Timeframes

Our vision of a sustainable food system is a long-term ambition. Transforming our food system will take time and in some areas, change will be gradual. This strategy will help us to create the conditions we need to move towards a sustainable food system. We will refresh our strategy in 2026 and develop new actions, building on what we have already achieved.

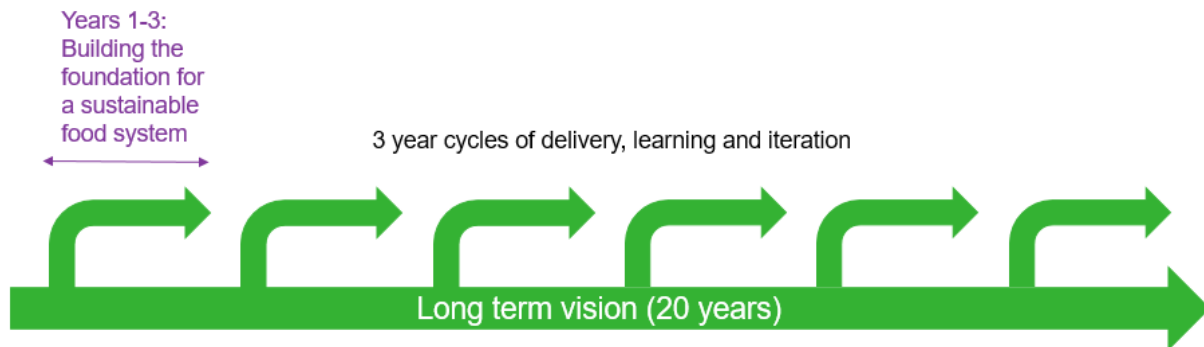


Figure 3: Timeframes for Sustainable Food Strategy – Southwark Food Action Alliance Steering Group, 2023

Governance

The Council are the lead organisation responsible for delivery of the strategy and it is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board take an overseeing role, given the strong relationship to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy demonstrated in its objective 4.1 'Improve food security and access to healthy and sustainable food'.

We will also establish an executive advisory group in the first year of this strategy to ensure:

1. That all partners are able to monitor delivery of our commitments;
2. That we can bring in new partners that we need to achieve our aims, such as education colleagues and healthcare providers.

The Sustainable Food Strategy

Our strategy is underpinned by three core principles:

1. **Collaboration as food partners** – Food is an opportunity to bring people, communities, and organisations together. Our work is strengthened by working collaboratively to achieve a shared vision. We want to make best use of our individual strengths as food partners and learn from each other.
2. **Sustainable, affordable food as a shared goal** – Food is a core part of how we can improve the lives of residents in Southwark. We will work alongside those working on other agendas (for example, climate, education, health, the local economy) recognising that we have shared goals. We will continue to identify opportunities to work with people and organisations who may not traditionally see themselves as part of the food system.
3. **Social justice and fairness** – Food insecurity is shaped by unfairness in the distribution of wealth and opportunities within our society. We will take a social justice approach in our work, recognising that we need to reduce inequalities and address inequity if we are to achieve our ambitions. For the food system, this includes paying a fair price for food production, paying fair wages and making healthy food more accessible to our communities, considering affordability and cultural needs.

A good food partnership

Aim 1 - Create a strong local food partnership that brings people together and builds connections across sectors.

A local food partnership is a place for collaboration where we come together across organisations, sectors and communities to work as partners to create a better food future for everyone in Southwark. Our strategy involves creating the conditions for a sustainable food system. This starts with building the mechanisms that support and underpin a sustainable food partnership.

Southwark Food Action Alliance currently has over 90 members, including voluntary organisations, community centres, the Council, foodbanks, faith groups, food growing groups, food businesses, housing associations, the NHS, national charities and campaign groups, Citizens Advice Southwark, academics and more. A strong food partnership will require involvement of a broader cross-section of partners, including local food businesses, procurement professionals, schools and local residents.

We want food to be a key consideration when decisions are taken at a local level. Our food system is shaped by multiple factors, including national and global policy. There is plenty of work that takes place locally which affects the food system – from the delivery of Southwark's markets to community food composting. Developing a way to embed sustainable food in all policies will help people working on other agendas to improve the food system through their work.

How will we achieve this

- Build good governance processes so that Southwark Food Action Alliance is accountable, transparent, democratic and representative of local communities
- Strengthen the existing partnership, identifying opportunities for collaboration and addressing gaps in the membership, in particular from under represented communities who are most affected by food insecurity to shape solutions
- Develop guidance to help colleagues across the Council embed sustainable food in their work.

Strong and connected communities

Aim 2 – Use sustainable food to strengthen our communities and sense of belonging

We want to use food as an opportunity to build connections and celebrate our culture. We can learn together how to grow, cook, eat sustainably and nutritiously and reduce our food waste. Coming together around food is good for our emotional, social and community wellbeing. It can also help us to improve our physical health, improve the environment and build stronger community ties.

The environment in which we eat our food is also important. We want to ensure that all people in Southwark have easy access to welcoming and safe spaces to eat food in the local community.

Community approaches that can bring us together include:

- community cooking
- community growing
- inclusive community meals and community cafes that provide a safe space
- celebrating foods from different cultures.

How will we achieve this

- Develop active and thriving food networks at the neighbourhood level which connect residents with local sustainable food activities
- Protect and increase food growing spaces in the borough through planning policy and the new land commission
- Strengthen the voice of local and diverse communities in the work that we do
- Identify opportunities to develop and test community approaches to sustainable food, particularly intergenerational approaches that reach across communities and to those at higher risk of isolation, in particular engaging with and providing opportunities for older people
- Develop a stronger culturally appropriate food offer for the diverse communities in Southwark.

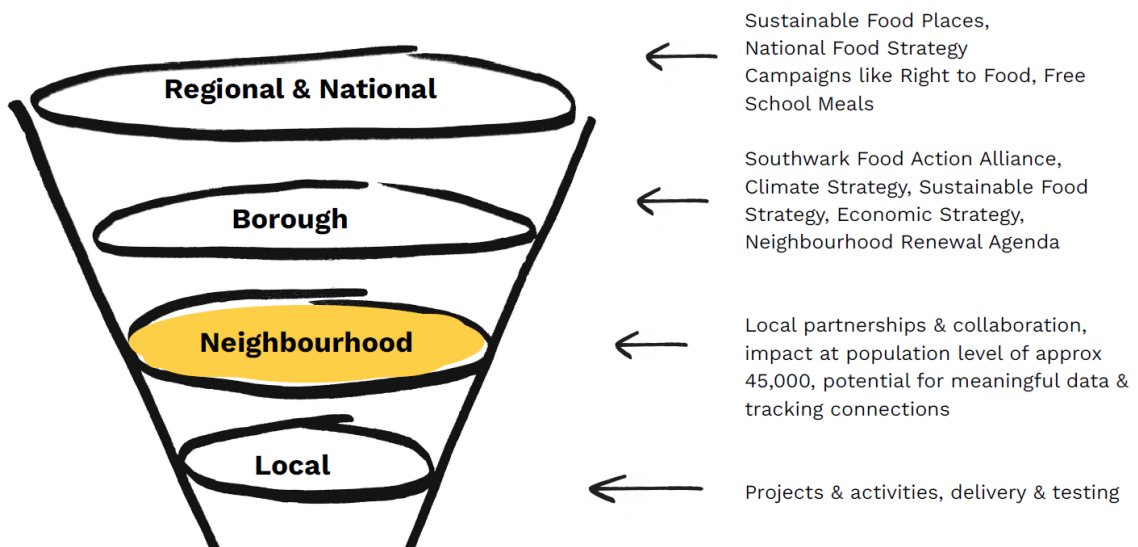
Case study: Neighbourhood Food Models

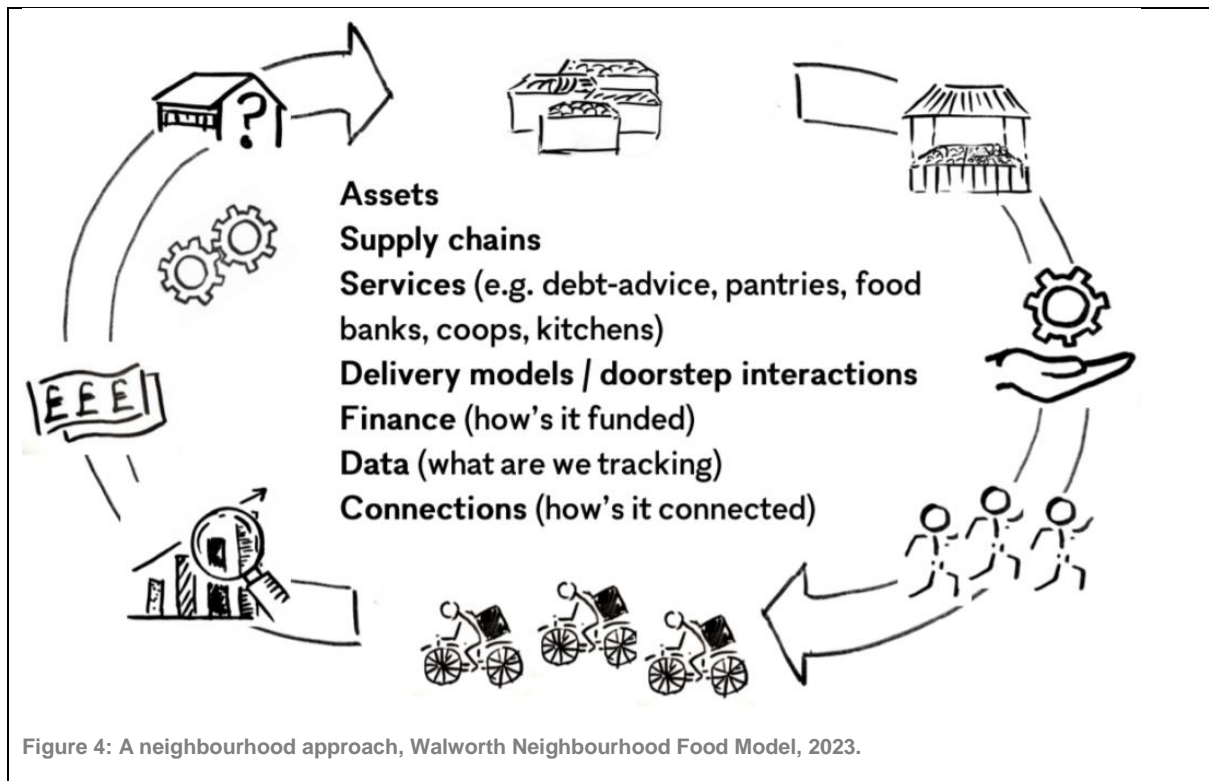
Neighbourhood food models work to build a better food system in the local neighbourhood.

The approach involves capacity building for local food organisations, building social connections through food, creating a network of neighbourhood assets and improving the neighbourhood economy.

There are three neighbourhood food models in Southwark, operating in:

- Walworth
- Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and North Bermondsey
- Kingswood Estate and Dulwich Wood ward.





Food security and the Right to Food

Aim 3 – Make Southwark a Right to Food Borough

We want to work together to address the structural and policy issues that cause food insecurity and underpin inequity, such as low incomes, with the long-term aim of seeing a Southwark where people are not reliant on charitable food aid.

Almost one in six of Southwark residents are food insecure^{vii}. The Southwark Foodbank receives 10 times more referrals now than it did in 2009^{viii}. Over time, wages and benefits have failed to keep up with London living costs. The need for foodbanks in one of the richest countries in the world is unacceptable. The national Right to Food campaign advocates for the right to food to be enshrined in UK law.

Being a Right to Food borough means that we take hunger seriously and want all of us to be able to put enough nutritious food on the table for ourselves and our families. At the moment, there are large differences in diet and health between the best and least well off among us and we need to narrow this gap to give everyone a chance for a longer, healthier life.

Affordability of food is a key aspect of food security. We want everyone to be able to buy healthy, affordable food close to home. Southwark has areas where there are no affordable shops within an easy walk offering fresh, healthy foods. This limits food buying options to convenience stores where it can be up to three times more expensive to buy a weekly shop and there may not be fresh, healthy food on offer^{ix}. There are also areas with a high density of establishments selling fast and junk food in relation to healthy options. In Southwark, there is a north-south divide in the borough in terms of obesity levels and numbers of fast food outlets, with the north having high levels of both.

A separate Right to Food action plan has been developed focused on actions Southwark Council will take in this area. This is included at Appendix 1.

How will we achieve this

- Take a 'cash first' approach to food insecurity, by championing the London Living Wage and signposting people to income maximisation services.
- Focus in particular on priority groups for Right to Food:
 - Children and young people (including low-income families – especially lone parents – and young people aged 11-25 years)
 - Food insecure adults (including adults entitled to benefits and adults in working poverty and debt)
 - Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
 - Older people and those with long-term conditions (including older adults, those unable to leave their homes and people with long-term conditions and disabilities)
- Campaign for national action to address the causes of poverty and mitigate the impact of the rising cost of living.

- Enable local convenience stores to expand their offer of fresh and healthy food by becoming Good Food Retailers
- Explore opportunities to increase access to affordable food models such as food pantries in the borough
- Provide pathways to advice and practical help by having key professionals and volunteers trained in:
 - [The Dignity Principles](#): This framework supports good mental health for those in crisis by emphasising kindness, respect, humanity, choice and empowerment
 - Screening for risk of hunger and malnutrition and developing improved referral pathways for access to food, financial and employment advice, and wider support.

Case study: Food vouchers for low-income families

Food vouchers increase access to healthy food for low-income families. A pregnant parent with a nine-month old and a two-year old could receive up to £31 per week to spend on healthy food.

Rose Vouchers

The Council and partners are investing in Rose vouchers. Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg is an initiative from Alexandra Rose charity to support families on low incomes, including those with no recourse to public funds, to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

Families receive £4 of Rose Vouchers for each child every week, or £6 if the child is under one year old. Vouchers are redeemable at local markets and greengrocers. Rose Vouchers are distributed at children and family centres within Southwark, linking families to existing health and wellbeing activities in the borough.

The Rose Voucher model increases access to healthy foods and maintains local markets as important sources of healthy, low-cost food.

For further information, see the [Alexandra Rose Charity website](#)

Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a national scheme. Pregnant women and families receive a pre-paid card that can be used to buy healthy food and milk. Families in receipt of certain benefits receive £4.25 each week from the tenth week of pregnancy and for children between the ages of one to four, and £8.50 per week for children under the age of one. We are working to improve uptake of Healthy Start in Southwark.

For further information, see the [Healthy Start website](#)

Healthy people, healthy planet

Aim 4a – Improve health through our food response

We want to provide a whole-person response to food insecurity, recognising the link between food insecurity, financial worries, mental ill-health and isolation.

Those of us with mental health conditions, long-term conditions and disabilities may have reduced ability to work and may receive lower pay for our work. People with pre-existing health conditions and disabilities may also have to spend more on essential goods such as heating and food. These factors contribute towards people with mental health conditions, disabilities and long-term illness being at high risk of food insecurity. Social isolation can also drive food insecurity, particularly for older people, who may lose interest in food or struggle to access and prepare food. Food insecurity can also affect mental health and isolation. The experience of being unable to access healthy, nutritious food can lead to anxiety, depression and isolation.

We want to prioritise healthy diets and nutrition in the food system. Food insecurity is often associated with overweight and obesity. Explanations include the higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity, and physiological adaptations to food restriction.

In the UK, 1 in 3 of us are obese^x which increases our chances of having heart attacks, strokes, cancer and diabetes. Levels of excess weight in childhood in Southwark are consistently above London and national levels. Diets which are healthier for us, including more fruit, vegetables, nuts, lentils, beans and peas and less red meat and processed foods, are also better for the planet, so it is a win-win^{xi}.

How will we achieve this

- Promote a 'no wrong door' approach to those reporting food insecurity, signposting and referring appropriately to food help and other relevant support and advice. These would include financial wellbeing, energy, mental health and access to social services
- Ensure weight management and diabetes programmes are in place for target groups and that these promote healthy, sustainable eating and signpost people to food support services
- Engage with early years settings and community nutrition to support everyone's understanding of the importance of nutrition in the early years, raise young children's awareness of food origins and transportation through existing curricula, and promote growing food on site where possible
- Through the School Meals Transformation programme, encourage schools to adopt a whole school approach to food: supporting pupils to make healthy food choices throughout the day, serving nutritious food in social and welcoming dining rooms, championing food knowledge, cooking and growing on the curriculum.

- Pilot an extension of the Council's Free Healthy School Meal offer to secondary school pupils in families receiving benefits but not entitled to the Government's Free School Meals.

Aim 4b - Promote and provide planet-healthy diets

We know that diets need to change to prevent catastrophic damage to our planet. Food is the second largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions (with energy being the largest).^{xii} Climate change impacts the health of people in Southwark by contributing to air pollution and rising food prices, and harms the natural environment.^{xiii}

In Southwark, we have set a target to be carbon neutral by 2030^{xiv}. Eating seasonal, planet-healthy diets and reducing food waste can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. More than half of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by food come from farm animals, with beef and lamb responsible for half of these^{xv}. Plant-based proteins, such as beans and lentils, create 70 times less greenhouse gas emissions than beef and use 150 times less land^{xvi}. We can link the extinction of 33 species in the UK to food production^{xvii}. Finally, 70% of the land in the UK is used for producing food^{xviii}, with 85% of that land used to either graze animals or produce animal feed^{xix}. Freeing up land for rewilding can help to store and capture more carbon, to protect against global warming.

To achieve planet friendly diets, we can focus on:

- Fruits and vegetables – ideally up to 50% in every meal
- Eating seasonal food where possible
- Favouring plant-based proteins, such as nuts, peas, lentils and beans
- A less and better (better meaning higher welfare) approach to meat and dairy products.
- Eating sustainable fish and seafood
- Avoiding ultra-processed foods, particularly meat
- Reducing food waste.

How will we achieve this:

- Use procurement, education, campaigns and cooking skills to move towards better and less meat and dairy and increase vegetables, nuts and pulses in diets
- Use our connections to businesses and markets to facilitate shorter supply and distribution chains
- Promote diets which will lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve health
- Deliver targeted campaigns to individuals and organisations on reducing food waste and explore opportunities to reduce waste with our local markets
- Trial community food composting schemes
- Encourage schools to offer climate-friendly meals

A good food economy and affordable food offer

Aim 5 – Champion sustainable and affordable food, through using our buying power and helping to develop community-led and local enterprises

We want our sustainable food sector to be thriving, keeping wealth in the borough, minimising food miles and creating good jobs. To increase the uptake of sustainable food, we need a strong local ecosystem of community-led initiatives such as food cooperatives, community cafes and kitchens, as well as opportunities for new and emerging small businesses, market stalls, suppliers, cafes, takeaways, and restaurants.

One of the ways to accelerate building wealth at the local level is through procurement. Through the process of buying supplies and services, there is an opportunity to support sustainable food priorities. For example, Southwark schools serve 3.3 million meals per year. By insisting on minimum sustainable food standards in public sector contracts and to use local suppliers whenever possible, we can ensure that public money from taxes is well spent and will benefit our health, local people and the health of the planet.

We can also shape the affordability of food in our local area through the Council's work on planning, markets and commercial property. This can help us to improve access to local, healthy affordable food for Southwark residents.

How will we achieve this

- Provide advice and access to funding opportunities for the creation of new community-led and local enterprises
- Create opportunities for more sustainable food as part of Southwark's Thriving High Streets work
- Pilot the effectiveness of place-based buy-local campaigns
- Ensure markets and Council commercial property supports access to healthy, affordable food
- Ensure affordable food retail is built into the Council approach to planning and regeneration
- Work with food retailers to increase access to a range of healthy, affordable food
- Develop a shared Council approach to sustainable food procurement for contracts, sub-contracts and arms-length commissioning. This will include commitments to reduce and monitor food waste and have a benchmark for shared food standards.
- Through the School Meal Transformation Programme, to provide training and support to School Business Mangers on healthy sustainable procurement practices.

Case study: Access to healthy, good quality food

The quality of food that we consume matters. We have increased access to healthy food in Southwark through our school meals transformation programme, the “Good Food Retail” work, our Holiday Activities and Fun programme and Rose vouchers.

We will build on this work by focusing on environmental changes. The food environment is known to influence the food choices of individuals, the quality, and quantity (portion sizes) of the food and eating patterns. This involves exploring what is in the direct control of the Council, including planning and our commercial properties. We can also explore how we can influence retailers, working with colleagues across London to achieve change.

How you can help

Everyone in Southwark can help contribute to achieving a sustainable food system by taking the following actions:

As an organisation

- Join Southwark Food Action Alliance. Get in touch with us at sfaa@pecan.org.uk
- Commit to paying the London Living Wage to all employees
- Offer up physical space you are not using. Our food partnership members are always looking for venues to help them deliver their activities. Get in touch with us at sfaa@pecan.org.uk and we can match you to an organisation
- Offer training to our members. Key training needs include health and safety, food hygiene, project management, collating and monitoring impact, database management. Get in touch with us at sfaa@pecan.org.uk and we can discuss further.
- Train professionals in [The Dignity Principles](#) and screening for risk of hunger and malnutrition.
- Talk to local people about what food would be culturally appropriate for them and find ways to make this available.
- Recognise the interconnectivity between food insecurity, financial worries, isolation and mental health and learn where to signpost people to additional support.
- Consider how you might be able to make your food provision healthier for people and the planet.

As an individual

- Eat a more sustainable diet where you can. This involves reducing meat consumption and food waste. The [Eatwell Guide](#), [Planetary Health Diet](#) and the [One Blue Dot](#) can help with this.
- Opt for food options with limited packaging which leads to less waste.
- Get involved with a local or national food campaign.

**GET INVOLVED ● MAKE A PLEDGE ● SIGN
UP TO BE A FOOD HERO**

[Southwark Food Action Alliance](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following groups for helping to develop this strategy:

- Southwark Food Action Alliance members, who have helped to develop ideas through five events held since October 2021
- Food Matters, who provided mentoring and workshop facilitation
- Sustain, who spoke with local food business owners and key local institutions to develop recommendations on procurement and building a good food economy
- Researchers who helped us to understand the food support needed by older people and housebound adults, and 11-25 year olds
- The London College of Communications Climate Studio, who worked on an innovation project with 100 young people to design ideas for a preferred sustainable food future

Glossary

Food insecurity - “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways [e.g. without resorting to emergency supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies].”^{xx}

Food system – A term used to describe all of the organisations and people that are involved with the production, distribution, consumption and disposal of food, and how they do it.

Procurement – The name of the process that businesses and organisations use to buy supplies, such as food, or services, such as catering.

Sustainable food system – A food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all whilst benefitting society and the economy, and protecting the planet.

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- ⁱ Food in the anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. The Lancet. Willet et al 2019
- ⁱⁱ Sustainable Food Systems: Concept and framework. Food and Agriculture Organisations of the United Nations: 2018. ([Accessed February 2022](#))
- ⁱⁱⁱ Sustainable Food Systems: Concept and framework. Food and Agriculture Organisations of the United Nations: 2018. ([Accessed February 2022](#))
- ^{iv} [Southwark Council, Census 2021 First Results: Population on Census Day, 2022](#)
- ^v Greater London Authority 2019. Survey of Londoners
- ^{vi} Food in the anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. The Lancet. Willet et al 2019
- ^{vii} Greater London Authority 2019. Survey of Londoners
- ^{viii} Household food insecurity joint strategic needs assessment. Southwark Council. 2019 (refreshed 2021). With additional internal 2022 data from Southwark Foodbank.
- ^{ix} Southwark Healthy Basket Study (commissioned by Southwark Council) - Reid, 2020
- ^x Health survey for England, 2019: Adult and Child Overweight and Obesity. NHS Digital, 2020
- ^{xi} Food in the anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. The Lancet. Willet et al 2019
- ^{xii} National Food Strategy Independent Review: Part Two. DEFRA [www.gov.uk](#). July 2021.
- ^{xiii} Southwark Council, Tackling the Climate Emergency Together, July 2021.
- ^{xiv} [Tackling the Climate Emergency Together. Southwark Council, July 2021](#)
- ^{xv} Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Science. Poore and Nemecek, 2018
- ^{xvi} National Food Strategy Independent Review: Part Two. DEFRA [www.gov.uk](#). July 2021.
- ^{xvii} Sustainable Food Systems for a Healthier UK: A discussion paper. Faculty of Public Health. Bash and Donnelly, 2019
- ^{xviii} National Food Strategy Independent Review: Part Two. DEFRA [www.gov.uk](#). July 2021.
- ^{xix} Total global agricultural land footprint associated with UK food supply 1986–2011. Global Environmental Change, 43. de Ruiter, et al, 2017
- ^{xx} Food Standards Agency – Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey. 2007

Appendix: Right to Food Plan

Priority 1: Ensuring good nutrition from conception and throughout childhood

1. **Action:** Improve uptake of Healthy Start by 65% to 85% by 2026

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: Annual Measure

Indicator of Success: Uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers (%)

2. **Action:** Uphold the quality of meals served in nurseries and schools by (i) embedding stronger oversight of meal standards through better monitoring and clearer accountability, supported by conditions of grant, (ii) providing council led support for school food commissioning with an emphasis on quality and sustainability, Alongside, **encouraging schools to take a whole school approach to food.**

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: Stronger oversight - Ongoing

Council-led support for school food commissioning - Q3 23/24 and beyond

Indicator of Success: MI on settings inspected and by survey shows quality provision

Grouped commissioned contract taken up by 60% of primary schools; 25% secondary schools

High take up of meals for all stages of education

3. **Action:** Deliver pilot expanding offer of free secondary school meals to children of families claiming Universal Credit

Who will deliver this: Education, Public Health

Timeframe: September 2023 – July 2024

Indicator of Success: Successful evaluation of impact of secondary school meals pilot and programme continued beyond Y1.

4. **Action:** Scope opportunities for securing long-term funding for existing programmes (Holiday Activities and Fun Programme, Rose Vouchers, free healthy school meals)

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: June 2024

Indicator of Success: Recommendations developed

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5. **Action:** Explore the feasibility of a council led 'opt out' application process for benefits related Free School Meals (FSM)

Who will deliver this: Education, Benefits, Public Health

Timeframe: December 2023

Indicator of Success: Southwark Council has determined what is feasible (or not) for a local 'opt out scheme'

Priority 2 – Ensuring good access to help, support and advice for food insecure adults

1. **Action:** Support frontline and Council staff to identify food insecure people, provide signposting and act as champions for dignity

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: November 2023

Indicator of Success: Delivery of training to 100 front line Council staff

2. **Action:** Work with SFAA members to ensure they offer 'no wrong door' to residents experiencing food insecurity, including homeless people, asylum seekers, refugees and people with no recourse to public funds. Work with partners to identify and promote pathways into health and social care, income maximisation and employment services

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: Ongoing

Indicator of Success: Number of community food groups trained and committed to a 'no wrong door' approach, including referrals to partners in the 'Worrying about money' leaflet

3. **Action:** Sign up 20 more convenience stores to be "Good Food Retailers" offering healthier lines of food and a point of sale for Healthy Start benefit cards

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: March 2024

Indicator of Success: Number of convenience stores signed up as good food retailers (target: 20)

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4. **Action:** Use planning policy and area action plans to create better access to affordable food through markets, shops and transport links

Who will deliver this: Sustainable Growth

Timeframe: October 2025

Indicator of Success: Opportunities identified to increase access to affordable food

5. **Action:** Champion the London Living Wage across the borough

Who will deliver this: Southwark Cabinet

Timeframe: On-going

Indicator of Success: Increase in number of London Living Wage employers in the borough

6. **Action:** Develop plan to increase access to affordable food models such as pantries in the borough

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: December 2023

Indicator of Success: Plan in place with target groups and geographical areas identified

Priority 3 – Reducing inequalities and closing the gap in food security for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups

1. **Action:** Map emergency food provision in the borough for different food cultures and identify how to fill in gaps

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: March 2024

Indicator of Success: Map Established

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2. **Action:** Increase use of 'Worrying about money' leaflet within faith groups in the borough

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: End December 2024

Indicator of Success: Increase in number of faith groups using cash first responses to food insecurity

Priority 4 – Improving provision for older adults and those with health conditions and disabilities

1. **Action:** Implement recommendations from needs assessment on older people's food security

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: October 2023

Indicator of Success: Implementation plan in place

2. **Action:** Implement malnutrition screening programme in the community for older adults

Who will deliver this: Public Health, Adult Social Care

Timeframe: March 2024

Indicator of Success: Malnutrition screening programme in place in 5 new settings

Priority 5 – Awareness raising across the system

1. **Action:** Campaign for Right to Food issues such as the Right to Food enshrined in national law, universal school meals, free school meals auto-enrolment, holiday hunger, food standards for asylum seeker accommodation centres

Who will deliver this: Southwark Cabinet

Timeframe: On-going

Indicator of Success: Council statements acknowledge issues and set out clear asks of national government

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2. **Action:** Increase the voice of people with lived experience of food insecurity and financial hardship by establishing an advisory panel that is representative of our local communities.

Who will deliver this: Public Health

Timeframe: December 2023

Indicator of Success: Lived Experience Advisory panel established