



GOOD POLICY FOR GOOD FOOD

A toolbox of local authority food policy levers



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Published September 2018

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Introduction

Policy change, and the development and implementation of strategies and plans to achieve it, is fundamental to building sustainable local food systems and is a core pillar of the [Sustainable Food Cities \(SFC\) approach](#). Local authorities have a wide range of policy levers at their disposal that can be used to drive positive social, economic and environmental change related to food and to embed that change for the long term. Policy is, however, an area that many local food partnerships struggle with as they often lack the time, resources, expertise and/or will to navigate what tends to be a complex and cumbersome policy-making process.

This guide provides a toolbox of potential food policy levers, along with clear practical examples of where these have been successfully used. We hope it will help SFC Network members to engage more effectively with local policy-making and to reap the full benefits that doing so can bring.

Our parallel '[Engaging Local Authorities](#)' guide will further support you to: understand local authority decision-making processes; identify who to engage with and how; and make the case for how the SFC agenda is important to achieving local priorities.

Evidence of the contribution that action on healthy, sustainable food can have in achieving local priorities can be found in our draft '[Making the Case and Measuring Progress: Towards a systems approach to healthy and sustainable food](#)'.

Toolbox structure and limitations

We have used the Sustainable Food Cities framework of [6 key issues](#) to group the policy levers in this document. As the first key issue, 'Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public', is less relevant to policy-making, this has been omitted.

The case studies in this toolbox have been compiled from the SFC Awards applications, Grant reports, webinars, email discussion group as well as more generic online research.

Although we have included inspiring examples from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the majority of examples in this guide relate to local authority policy levers in England and in many instances may not be directly relevant to the policy landscape in the devolved nations.

This toolbox is far from exhaustive, but we hope that it covers most key areas and we will update it with new policy levers and case studies as more local authorities take on the food agenda.

Key issue: Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable healthy food

Policy lever 1 – Developing a Whole Systems Approach to Obesity

The local authority can use a 'whole systems approach' to obesity to deliver on a range of key local priorities, in addition to reducing obesity levels, such as improving workforce health, contributing to a stronger local economy and helping reduce social care costs.

[London Borough of Haringey's](#) ambitions to reduce obesity have led to the adoption of an 'Obesity Whole Systems Delivery Plan' which 'aims to embed health at every level of policy making across the Council and encourages a collaborative approach across Council departments and with community partners.' 'The Council has employed a healthy public policy officer dedicated to pursuing the approach in a systematic way across departments and with key partners.' (p24)

Oldham Council's Obesity Improvement Strategy 2017-19 calls for action at every level and across all sectors including cooking skills; healthy recipes; reducing sugary drink consumption; raising awareness on positive eating and drinking habits; making healthier options available in the public sector; limiting availability of low quality food and increasing access to affordable, healthy options (via Healthy Start Vouchers, promotion of breastfeeding etc).

It supports a 'social movement for change' (p6) by 'creating the conditions for the development of a positive social movement for healthy food and drink by taking an asset-based approach - build on the knowledge, skills, interest and enthusiasm of people who want to make a difference.'

<http://committees.oldham.gov.uk/documents/s77988/Appendix%20%20-%20Obesity%20Improvement%20Strategy%20March%202017.pdf> (copy link to browser)

Policy lever 2 - Developing Food Poverty Action Plans

The local authority can work with local partners to adopt a Food Poverty Action Plan. [Food Power](#) have collated a range of food poverty action plans and needs assessments from across the UK.

[Belfast City Council](#) initially funded Belfast Food Network (BFN) recognising the role it could play in tackling food poverty. BFN subsequently set up the multi-agency Food Poverty Working Group, including the Council and other key stakeholders, to coordinate action locally. This included undertaking a baseline study and developing a strategic response to food poverty through the Enough is Enough initiative. (p7)

[Tower Hamlets Council](#) ran a whole systems stakeholder event to explore the challenges around food poverty and opportunities to address them across five key areas of the local food poverty action plan: integrating food poverty into the corporate action plan, food growing, access to more fresh food, education and tackling hunger. (p9)

Policy lever 3 - Including food poverty and healthy food access in strategies and plans

The local authority can recognise and respond to the issue of food poverty and access to healthy sustainable food in a range of local plans and strategies.

Aberdeen City Council's - '[Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)' (LOIP) (p.50-51) includes:

Driver: 'Sustainable food provision in Aberdeen, tackling food poverty, developing community food skills and knowledge and delivering sustainable food provision.'

Improvement Measure/Aim(s):

- Increase holiday meal provision for children entitled to free school meals
- Reduce number of people affected by Household Food Insecurity.

Bournemouth Borough Council's [Environment and Regeneration Service Plan](#) (p2) includes food stating that: 'Environment and Regeneration Services are working closely with the Council's Public Health function to reduce health inequalities caused by fuel poverty and lack of access to healthy sustainable food'.

The [Environmental and Regeneration Services Equality and Diversity Plan](#) (2015-2016) includes as a target: 'Preventing food poverty and increasing community food security' (p4) through the development of food growing and designates the Sustainable Food City Manager as the responsible officer in charge of delivery.

Brighton and Hove City Council's [Financial Inclusion Strategy](#) includes food poverty with a focus on how to support financially excluded residents. It designates the Food Partnership as its primary partner in the delivery.

Food poverty, obesity and food are all included within the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has recognised the role of Food Cardiff in bringing about positive change to residents' health through food in the [What Matters Strategy](#): 'Access to affordable healthy food helps tackle challenges ranging from obesity to food poverty and the work undertaken by Food Cardiff and other partners has helped to inform policy within the Cardiff & Vale UHB'. (p39)

In Northern Ireland, the Public Health strategy 2013-2023, [Making Life Better](#) (p109) has a substantial healthy food component, with a specific emphasis on interventions to tackle food poverty in the city.

[Oldham Council's Local Plan](#) (p18) includes 'fair access to healthy food' as a key strand through a commitment of Oldham institutions to improve living standards.

Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes sections on fast food outlets, food banks, food poverty and healthy eating:

http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s41390/HWB_MAR2218R15%20-%20Joint%20Strategic%20Needs%20Assessment%20JSNA.pdf (copy link to browser)

Oxford City Council's Health Plans for Regeneration Areas incorporate plans for accessing healthy food and addressing food poverty: e.g. Barton Healthy New Town project places healthy eating and food poverty at the centre of its priorities.

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3670/barton_healthy_new_town_health_plan (copy link to browser)

Policy lever 4 - Local authority adopting healthy and sustainable food policies

Declaration on Healthy Weight / Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food

A local authority can sign up to Food Active's [Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight](#) or to the [Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food](#) and commit to promoting healthy weight.

[Blackpool Council](#) (p8) was the first local authority to sign up to the [Declaration](#) and to join forces with Food Active – a collaboration of Public Health Directors in the North West tackling obesity. The Council has since then been working on procurement and revising vending arrangements to reduce the amount of sugary drinks available; linking to other strategies across the Council; working with other public sector organisations; working with schools to improve packed lunches; organising staff health events; relaunching the Healthy Catering Award; and linking with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council and all seven district councils have signed up to Food Active's Declaration on Healthy Weight making the County the first to sign all three tiers to the declaration.

<http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/documents/s73052/Cumbria%20Healthy%20Weight%20Declaration.pdf> (copy link to browser)

[Oxford City Council](#) was the first local authority outside London to sign the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food. After local consultation, the Council has pledged to increase access to free tap water; display sugar content information next to leisure centre vending machines and for drinks sold in Council cafes; reduce advertising of sugary drinks at Council facilities; and encourage businesses to sign up to Sugar Smart commitments.

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Standards

A local authority can sign up to the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards, which support public services to follow current policy to protect and promote breastfeeding.

In 2010, [Bristol](#) was the first city in England and Wales to achieve UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative [BFI] best practice standards for breast and bottle-feeding. Public Health Outcomes Framework data show a Bristol breastfeeding initiation rate at 82% for the past four years, compared with England average of 74%. At the 6-8 week check, 58.6% of mothers are still breastfeeding compared with an England average of 47%.

Sustainable and Healthy Food Policy

A local authority can adopt a Sustainable and Healthy Food Policy for staff, clients and visitors.

Durham County Council adopted a [Healthy and Sustainable Food Policy](#) in January 2018 to build on previously adopted policies such as the County Durham Food Charter initiated by the local food partnership.

The policy covers four main areas:

- Assisting staff, clients and communities they serve to access healthy and sustainable food.
- Offering and promoting good food when catering for any public events or functions held by the Council.
- Embedding good food into Council policy and practice to demonstrate its commitment to staff wellbeing and the promotion of local food supply chains wherever possible.
- Engaging the Council's influence to lead by example, encouraging others to participate, and directly support good food across County Durham and the region.

Workplace Wellbeing Charter

By signing up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter the local authority shows its commitment to ensuring the health and wellbeing of its staff. The Charter includes several priority themes including healthy eating. Within this theme, support is given to help workplaces implement effective interventions including promotion of healthy options, improvements to dining environments and the development and adoption of corporate healthy food plans. The local authority can also become a Charter provider and support members to get the most from the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

[Bath and North East Somerset Council](#) launched the Workplace Wellbeing Charter scheme in Autumn 2014 and has supported over a dozen large businesses to sign up to the charter so far.

[Hampshire County Council](#) has become a Workplace Wellbeing Charter provider, meaning that they encourage and support local employers to improve the health and welfare of their staff. Several Hampshire local authorities have adopted it.

Policy level 5 - Planning: Core Strategy protecting healthy food shops and markets

[The Royal Borough of Greenwich Core Strategy](#) (p154) provides for the easy access of healthy food by protecting shops in local centres and neighbourhood parades, protecting existing markets and encouraging new ones.

Policy level 6 - Planning: Supplementary Planning Documents / Health Impact Assessments

[Supplementary Planning Documents](#) (SPDs) can be used to restrict the development of hot food takeaways (A5). SPDs are not systematically produced but build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on the policies in the Local Plan. For planning decisions to be successfully upheld they need to be able to demonstrate a link to sound evidence and clear local policy. There needs to be good linkage between any SPDs or neighbourhood planning policies, health strategies (Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the JSNA) and, most importantly, the local plan. Local plans need to refer to these health strategies and vice versa.

A Health Impact Assessment can be undertaken to help determine whether the planned development is likely to negatively impact upon health and wellbeing.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's ['Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document'](#) requires Health Impact Assessments (HIA) from all developments with potential impact on health, especially obesity, and includes School Exclusion Zones for hot food takeaways. (p10)

Cardiff Council's 'Planning for Health and Well-being Supplementary Planning Guidance' (Nov 2017) provides guidance to developers on public health and access to health care services issues. It includes a 'Food Environment' section covering access to food growing spaces, the provision of retail units selling fruit and vegetables and the restriction of the positioning of hot food takeaways. (p14)

<http://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18483/Cabinet%2016%20Nov%202017%20SPGs%20App%203.pdf> (copy link to browser)

[Gateshead's Supplementary Planning Document](#) (p23), which limits the proliferation of takeaways, builds on the Gateshead and Newcastle Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (2015) which sets out to improve access to healthier food and control the location of and access to unhealthy food outlets. The SPD states that planning permission will not be granted in the locations where:

- Children and young people congregate.
- High levels of obesity (using NCMP data) are observed.
- There is an over-proliferation of hot food takeaways.

- Clustering of hot food takeaways will negatively impact on the vitality of the local area.

All future hot food takeaway applications must be accompanied by a health impact assessment.

In determining planning permission for new A5 outlets:

- Information on nutritional quality and portion size were collected from takeaway outlets.
- The concentration of hot food takeaway outlets within each ward was measured by checking the local Food Premises Register.
- Academic evidence on the link between obesity and exposure to takeaway outlets was reviewed.
- Ward level prevalence of obesity among Year 6 children was obtained from the NCMP.

The conditions set out in the SPD mean that there are currently no locations where opening a new hot food takeaway would be within the policy, as all wards have Year 6 obesity levels above 10%. As a result, no new A5s have been granted planning permission since the SPD was implemented and the number of applications has dropped. The number of successful appeals has also decreased from 5/9 in 2013 to 0/5 in 2016.

London Borough of Islington adopted a [Location and Concentration of Uses Supplementary Planning Document](#) (p36) that makes planning applications for new hot food takeaways conditional on achieving and operating in compliance with the [Healthier Catering Commitment standard](#) (London only) within six months.

[London Borough of Waltham Forest](#) has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance to deny planning permission to new fast food outlets within 400 metres of schools.

Policy lever 7 - Planning: Licensing / Street Trading Policies / Advertising

Street Trading Policies set out the Council's approach to street licensing and its standards for those engaged in street trading.

Where food outlets operate from their property (vending, cafes in Council buildings, parks, leisure and sport centres and children's centres, Council-operated markets or mobile trading activities), Councils can use their licensing powers to restrict the selling of unhealthy food.

Local authorities can "control" fast food vans by designating streets as requiring a 'consent' to trade under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (LGMP Act) Sch. 4 Sect 2. (1) and introduce a policy refusing consent for unhealthy food vending and/or restricting location and hours of operation.

The provision of hot food or drink (beyond certain exemptions) after 11pm and before 5am requires a premises licence (Licensing Act 2003). If public health can be brought into the licensing objectives, a licence to sell unhealthy late-night takeaway food may be refused or restricted on these grounds. Otherwise, late-night food can only be restricted in line with the current objectives.

It is worth noting that as far as we are aware local authorities have no means of restricting static advertising on health grounds.

Guilford Council requires in its [Street Trading Requirements and Application Form](#) (p7) that “at least one healthy meal choice should be provided”. The document gives examples of such menus, though these could be updated to reflect current nutritional guidelines.

[Hillingdon Council](#) has passed a resolution under Section 37(2) [London Local Authorities Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#), prohibiting itinerant ice cream trading in certain areas in the vicinity of schools and in streets falling in listed major retail areas.

[Leicester City Council](#) introduced a Street Trading Policy to restrict trading (ice cream vans, burger vans) outside schools. It applies a ‘general presumption against street trading, particularly in the vicinity of schools’.

[Warrington Street Trading Policy](#) (p25) includes clauses banning trading at, or within 100m of, schools between 12-2pm and 3-5pm on school days. Street traders applying for, or renewing, a licence are offered a £100 discount on the standard licence fee if they meet criteria regarding the use of salt, fat and sugar and portion control.

Policy level 8 - Planning: Section 106 Agreements

[Section 106 Agreements](#) are legal agreements between the developer and the local authority, negotiated development by development, for money or in-kind support for additional services or developments that relate to the proposed development. S106 is restricted to be used to directly mitigate the impact of a proposal. These can be used to require financial contributions from hot food takeaways to support the Council’s initiatives to tackle obesity. These can also be used to create more food growing spaces or to encourage retail diversity by supporting independent retailers. (see also Community Infrastructure Levy).

The [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham](#) introduced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that calls on Section 106 to levy a £1,000 charge on hot-food takeaway businesses when they are granted planning permission and assigns the proceeds exclusively to the Borough’s fight against obesity. This adds to the SPD’s further restrictions imposed in terms of the appropriate location (not in proximity of schools) and concentration of hot food takeaways.

Policy level 9 - Planning: Developing clauses on use-types in the Local Plan

Specifying food shops as ‘essential retail’ in the Local Plan can enable local planners to restrict applications for a change of use from this specific shop type to one less essential (within A1 retail and service outlet category) which would normally not require planning permission. It could, for example, prevent a greengrocer being replaced by a hairdresser.

[London Borough of Hackney's Core Strategy Policy 13 'Town Centres'](#) (p79) states: 'Shops that provide essential day-to-day needs for the local community such as baker, butcher, greengrocer, grocer, specialist ethnic food shop, post office, dispensing chemists and primary care facilities, launderette, newsagent and post office in the borough's town, district and local shopping centres as well as shopping parades and corner shops will be protected from changes of use away from retail.'

The Council can develop a clause to reduce the overconcentration of any use-type in order to restrict the development of hot food takeaways.

The [London Borough of Tower Hamlets](#) developed clauses in its local plan stating that the Council will: SPO3 "Support opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles through, d) seeking to reduce the overconcentration of any use-type where this detracts from the ability to adopt healthy lifestyles". (p50) Such a clause in the local plan provides the basis for the development of specific local policies designed to limit the profusion and/or concentration of unhealthier eating outlets.

Policy level 10 - Planning: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

[CILs](#) are a planning charge introduced to contribute towards the infrastructure which is needed in an area as a result of development taking place, for instance, to support the local authority's objectives in reducing obesity rates. A CIL schedule is agreed and published by the local authority stating the conditions under which developers must pay the levy.

Policy level 11 - Living Wage

The local authority can pay the Living Wage to its staff employed and contractors. Promoting it to local employers and suppliers can make a significant impact on residents' income and prevent in-work poverty.

[Brent Council](#) offers business rate reductions for businesses signing up to Living Wage.

Cardiff Council is a Living Wage employer with an ambition to [make Cardiff a 'Living Wage City'](#) and to this end announced in early 2018 that they are financially supporting employers by offering to pay up to three years of accreditation fees.

[Lambeth Council](#) became a living wage employer in November 2012 and estimate that this could mean an increase of £86.55 for a standard working week for those aged 21 or over whilst being good for employers because of increased staff performance. The Council encourages other Lambeth employers to adopt the living wage by listing them on a local map and giving them discounted advertising rates in the local magazine.

For more information

- [Sustainable Food Cities resources](#)
- [Food Power](#) resources on 'Mapping and measuring food poverty', 'Developing food poverty action plans', 'Meals on Wheels: Good practice case studies' and more
- Public Health England have undertaken a [systematic review](#) of the evidence-base to make the case for local authority interventions to encourage healthier out of home food provision (PHE, 2017).

Key issue: Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects

Policy lever 12 - Making available community assets to support food growing

The local authority can encourage community food growing by adopting policies that increase allotment provision, promote edible landscapes and make available green and brownfield sites.

Aberdeen City Council (ACC)'s ['Local Outcome Improvement Plan' \(LOIP\)](#): (p50-51) includes:

Driver: 'Sustainable food provision in Aberdeen, tackling food poverty, developing community food skills and knowledge and delivering sustainable food provision'.

Improvement Measure/Aim(s): 'Increase provision of allotments and community food growing spaces'.

ACC is also developing a [Food Growing Strategy](#) for the city. This is in line with the [Community Empowerment Act \(2015\)](#) which requires that each local authority in Scotland prepares a food growing strategy for its area to identify land that may be used as allotment sites, identify other areas of land that could be used for community growing and describe how the authority intends to increase provision for community growing, in particular in areas which experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Belfast City Council has led the development of a [Growing Communities Strategy 2012-2022](#) which aims to ensure that all parts of the community in Belfast have the opportunity to participate in and experience the benefits of growing. This includes as a key action the identification of new, sustainable sites for growing and the integration of green space provision in planning.

In Brighton & Hove, a 10 year [Allotment Strategy](#) was agreed and signed off by both the City Council's Environment Committee and the Allotment Federation in 2014. Key actions included: introduction of choice in plot size including new micro plots; support for people on the waiting list to volunteer on community plots or become co-workers; development of a package of support for new plot holders and education for plot holders on water management. Closer management of the waiting list for vacant plots reduced the average waiting time for a plot to two years.

[Lambeth Council](#) promotes food growing in its [Local Plan](#) (p9): 'The use of land and buildings as new allotments, orchards and for local food growing spaces and production will be supported, including the temporary use of vacant or derelict land or buildings and the use of incidental open space on housing estates and other open space areas, where this does not conflict with other policy objectives or land use priorities.' The Council also provides small grants, tools, capital and officer mentoring in support of this.

Policy level 13 - Meanwhile Leases

Local authorities can introduce meanwhile leases to facilitate the use of derelict land or buildings in order to provide multiple economic, social and environmental benefits such as opportunities for green jobs creation, community action and cohesion.

[Cardiff City Council](#) and other public sector organisations are contributing to increased public access to community growing spaces by leasing land and providing meanwhile use of land to local growing projects. (p16)

[Manchester City Council](#) (p53) and partners granted residents free use of a previously derelict site for a meanwhile growing project. The site has since won awards for: its social and environmental value; improved relationships between the community and public and private organisations; improved social cohesion; development of residents' skills and increased fruit and vegetable intake as well as physical and mental health.

Policy level 14 - Planning: Core Strategy promoting food growing spaces in developments

The local authority can encourage developers to incorporate food growing into planning policies.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's [Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document](#) increases the protection of existing allotments and community food growing space and provides for the creation of new spaces (p15) arguing that they 'provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing' and 'provide a place for people to interact and to produce healthy locally grown food, which can help to improve the diet of residents.'

Croydon Council applies a presumption in favour of development provided applications assist in the delivery of a [Green Grid](#) which includes:

- Protecting and enhancing allotments, community gardens and woodland.
- Supporting food growing, tree planting and forestry, including the temporary utilisation of cleared sites; and encouraging major residential developments to incorporate edible planting and growing spaces at multiple floor levels.
- Ensuring landscaping is flexible so that spaces may be adapted for growing opportunities.

The policy derives from the [London Plan](#) (p323) which includes several strategic policies promoting productive landscapes and encourages boroughs to identify other potential spaces that could be used for commercial food production or for community gardening, including allotments and orchards.

Hull City Council's [Local Plan Policy 46](#) (not yet adopted) supports the use of land for local food growing. This covers the temporary use of vacant or derelict land or buildings as well as housing estate greenspace and any new development.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has included food growing in the Climate Change section of their [Core Strategy 2010](#) (p219 *Consolidated Local Plan – Complete Document*) stating that: 'The Council will require development to incorporate measures that will contribute to on-site sustainable food production commensurate with the scale of development'.

Policy lever 15 - Planning: Planning Advice Notes

Planning Advice Notes offer technical advice on good practice in a local area and guidance on the sort of development that is encouraged.

Brighton & Hove City Council adopted a [Food Growing and Development Planning Advice Note](#) in 2011. The PAN, the first of its kind nationally, made provisions for the incorporation of community food growing into new commercial and residential developments.

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership was instrumental in the negotiation and drafting of the Planning Advice Note intended to be used by developers and planning officers as a guide to what might be achievable depending on the specific context of the development.

The response from developers has been positive overall and the percentage of all residential developments proposing food growing has increased from 1% to over 40% since its adoption.

Policy lever 16 - Planning: Sustainability Checklist for planning applications

A Sustainability Checklist for planning applications can be used to include food growing and the protection of green spaces in the provisions required to comply. Section 62 (3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows local planning authorities to require certain 'evidence in support' to be submitted with planning applications. Failure to comply will result in the application being declared invalid.

Brighton and Hove City Council have called on Section 62 (3) to make it compulsory for developers of residential buildings (new and conversions) to complete a [Sustainability Checklist for Planning](#) which includes a section on food growing.

Policy lever 17 - Whole-school food policy

A school food policy encouraging holistic food education and engagement programmes including growing, cooking, farm visits and improvements to meals and dining culture can be developed.

Glasgow City Council adopted a [school food policy for Glasgow schools](#) in January 2016. The recommendations include the establishment of School Food and Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) in all schools and nurseries responsible for implementing the policy. Schools should discourage the consumption of takeaway food in school premises and promote school lunches; the caterer should increase its offer of fresh, local produce; and food growing and cooking skills should be encouraged.

[Hull City Council](#) commissioned Soil Association Food for Life (FFL) to run the City's Whole School Food and Nutrition Programme for 3 years. The programme is currently working with 26 schools in the city on the FFL programme which includes engaging children in healthy eating, cooking, growing and farm visits as part of national programme involving over 10,000 schools.

For more information

- [Sustainable Food Cities Resources](#)
- Sustain have developed a very useful [step-by-step guide](#) to ensuring food growing is present in your local plan.

Key issue: Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy

Policy lever 18 - Economic and tourism policies supporting a sustainable food economy

The local authority can adopt retail, tourism, planning and economic strategies and policies that promote and support the development and long-term success of healthy and sustainable food businesses.

In Brighton & Hove the development of 'more local food processing, more jobs and better quality food' has been included as an action in the City's [Economic Strategy 2013/2018](#) under the overall objective 'To grow quality jobs and business opportunities in higher value and low carbon sectors'.

The importance of a strong, viable food economy is included within the [Bath & North East Somerset Economic Strategy](#): 'Increase local food production & consumption to raise the local multiplier effect, create income and job growth and enhance the cultural offer' (p8).

[Bath and North East Somerset's Local Food Strategy](#) (p16) includes as a core pillar: 'to support and encourage more local and sustainable food production and supply'. It aims to achieve this by providing expert advice on environmental standards; supporting the reduction of agriculture's carbon footprint by investing in renewable energy; developing planning policies to support the development and diversification of agricultural businesses; and addressing gaps in local infrastructure.

[Carlisle Plan 2015-2018](#) under 'Healthy City Programme' includes:

'Continue to support and develop the Food City Partnership: Local Healthy Eating Options; Carlisle Food Charter; food sector supply chain development; food skills; education and tourism.'

[The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Environmental Economic Investment Plan \(SEEIP\)](#) suggests that 'farm shops, farmers markets and other initiatives to promote local food sourcing have the potential to add value to farm produce' whilst recognising that 'the scale of most of the agricultural operations in Oxfordshire and the lack of a local supply chain for processing and distributing food limits the potential at present'. It names local food partnership Good Food Oxford as a partner in exploring solutions. (p26)

Policy lever 19 - Business rate reliefs

The local authority can support new independent healthy and sustainable food start-up businesses by giving business rate relief. Local authorities are gaining [increasing powers](#) in this area, such as keeping 100% of local taxes generated from business rates and, since Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998 was amended by the Localism Act 2011, Councils can give a locally

determined discretionary discount on business rates (for example to businesses that provide fresh fruit and vegetables). Since April 2017, small businesses that occupy property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less pay no business rates and there is a tapered rate of relief on properties worth up to £15,000.

In September 2015, [Bristol City Council](#)'s Business Rates team issued over 8,500 applications to business ratepayers believed to be entitled to up to £1,500 relief from April 2015, including a large proportion of food and drink businesses. To date, just over 1,400 ratepayers have responded, meaning an approximate total of just over £2m business rate relief has been claimed. (p35)

Lambeth Council offers [business rate relief](#) to support high streets and [supports start-ups](#) in Brixton Village by offering zero rent to take over empty shops.

[Oldham Council](#) provides business rate relief for small businesses and food retailers (including shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants).

Policy lever 20 – Invest in and protect local food infrastructure

The local authority can protect/re-establish vital food infrastructure, such as Grade 1 and 2 land, local processing and wholesale businesses, small independent retailers, food hubs and distribution networks.

[Breckland Council's Core Strategy](#) (p52) aims to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land: 'Development should nevertheless avoid the unnecessary loss of high-grade agricultural land which is a finite resource and is important to the rurality of Breckland'.

The Brighton and Hove City Council-owned [Open Market](#) has been redeveloped and handed over to a community interest company, with a commitment to "local, Fair Trade, free range and organic produce and other goods that demonstrate a considerate approach to the environment". The investment in this space re-establishes a market for independent producers.

[Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk's Joint Core Strategy Policy 5 \(The Economy\)](#) (p47-48) states that 'opportunities for innovation, skills and training will be expanded through [...] the development of a flagship food and farming hub serving the needs of Norfolk and supporting the agri-food sector in and around greater Norwich.' It further adds that 'a food and farming hub will support local agriculture by providing opportunities for local producers to coordinate activity and access larger markets, provide a focus for ancillary supporting businesses and suppliers and an opportunity for the relocation of the livestock market.'

[Leicester's Indoor Market redevelopment](#) has regenerated an award-winning historic market and created new business opportunities for local producers and processors.

[North Norfolk Core Strategy \(2008\) Policy EC5](#) (p94), Location of Retail and Commercial Leisure Development protects small independent retailers by stating that: 'Proposals that would have an adverse impact on the operation of established weekly or farmers markets will not be permitted unless appropriate replacement provision is made as part of the proposal.'

For more information

[Sustainable Food Cities resources](#)

Key issue: Transforming catering and food procurement

Policy lever 21 – Council adopts Sustainable Food Procurement Policy

The local authority can adopt a Sustainable Food Procurement strategy or policy incorporating specific health and sustainability commitments. Local authorities typically procure primary school meals, community meals and food for leisure centres, local authority-owned care homes and local authority staff canteens and events.

[Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and The Highland Council's Joint Procurement Strategy \(2017 – 2022\)](#) includes health, reduction of packaging, food poverty, ethical trading and reduction in emissions/road miles as standard themes. 'C&PS commit to offering assistance in terms of the procurement strands of the Sustainable Food Cities'. (p25)

[Brighton & Hove City Council's](#) procurement policy requires all Council food procurement contracts to meet minimum health and sustainability standards which mirror those of the Soil Association's Bronze Food for Life Served Here. Contracts over £75k will be required to apply for the accreditation within the first year of their contract. [Case study](#) (p10).

Brighton & Hove's [Primary School Meals Service](#) serves all 64 Primary schools and has been found to not only improve lunch experience with a sustainability accreditation (Silver Food For Life Catering Mark) but has increased spend in the local economy; helped schools to meet Ofsted criteria; created 118 new jobs since 2011 with no zero hours contracts; helped address food poverty; and led to pledges to increase vegetable consumption amongst pupils via the Peas Please initiative.

Bristol City Council's [Good Food & Catering Procurement Policy](#) involves a hierarchy of good food standards that support health and sustainability. This includes less sugar/salt/saturated fat and more fruit/vegetables/fibre as well as access to drinking water. It contributes to reducing the environmental impact of food/catering the Council provides/contracts/allows. The policy also supports Bristol's Fairtrade City status and works towards the Soil Association Food for Life Served Here award criteria.

Durham County Council has adopted a [Sustainable and Healthy Food Policy](#) for its staff, clients and visitors embedding good food into Council policy. It builds on [Durham County Council Buying Standards for Food](#) which include ethical and local sourcing with minimum animal welfare standards (free-range eggs and Red Tractor for meat, poultry and dairy); preference for seasonal produce; specifying fairly-traded or ethically-sourced for a range of foods; facilitating access to procurement contracts for small local producers; and maintaining Sustainable Fish City standards.

[Greater London Authority \(GLA\)](#) adopted a healthy and sustainable food policy for catering provided to London's police, transport workers, fire brigade and GLA staff.

London Borough of Lambeth's [Responsible Procurement Policy](#) (p26) highlights the various accreditations that the Borough is striving for or wishes to maintain and that procurement officers should consider in all food contracts. These include Fairtrade, RSPCA Freedom Food, Compassion in World Farming's Good Pig, Good Chicken and/or Good Dairy standards.

South Lanarkshire County Council's [community meals service](#) was the first in the UK to achieve the Bronze Food for Life Served Here. As well as meeting national nutritional guidelines for care settings, menus are seasonal and clear information is provided about where the food is sourced.

West Sussex County Council has introduced [new healthy catering stipulations](#) into catering contracts for school food, staff cafeteria and meals on wheels. These come into place when contracts are extended or re-tendered. Changes have been made in the display and offer of food.

Policy level 22 - Other public sector bodies adopt healthy and sustainable food policies

NHS Trusts are responsible for procuring hospital food, both for patients and for staff & visitor restaurants. A [Sustainable Development Management Plan](#) is a requirement of the Sustainable Development Unit's Sustainable Development Strategy for the Health and Social Care System 2014-2020. The NHS Standard Contract requires all NHS trusts to develop and maintain a food and drink strategy. Universities can also develop their own policies.

[Bournemouth & Poole](#) has become the first Sustainable Fish City thanks to commitments from the local authority, schools, hospitals, universities, restaurants and workplaces.

Brighton University's [sustainable food policy](#) covers Fairtrade, tap water, seasonal fruit & veg, organic milk, free-range eggs, sustainable fish and meat and dairy reduction.

The work of Food Cardiff through the Sustainable Fish Cities campaign has led to a change of policy for procuring fish within City of Cardiff Council Education Catering service, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Cardiff University ([see here](#)) and NHS Wales Shared Services ([see here](#)). It is now having an impact on wider procurement policy within NHS Shared Services with the development of sustainability criteria on a contract by contract basis.

The Royal Liverpool Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust reviewed its [Sustainability Plan for 2017-2018](#) which includes sustainable procurement, promotion of healthier food and a social

value approach. Their [Food and Drink Strategy](#) includes ambitions to encourage healthy eating via staff restaurants, pricing and positioning, vending machines and communication with food contractors.

The [Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#) has achieved the Soil Association Food for Life Served Here Silver Award, recognising its use of fresh, healthy, ethical and locally sourced food for patients, staff and visitors at the Freeman Hospital.

The [Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#) has been recognised for its outstanding work to provide good local and nutritional food for people using its mental health services. The Trust's policies result in high levels of traceability, menus which use less common cuts of meat and sourcing 'wonky' fruit that doesn't meet supermarket standards. 85% of food is sourced locally, yet the Trust has cut its fruit and vegetable bill by 20% and meat bill by 10%.

[Tameside hospital](#) is the first in Britain to stop selling sugary snacks and fizzy drinks, to remove all added sugar from the meals it prepares for visitors and staff and to provide low-carb options.

Policy lever 23 - Hospital food CQUIN

Health and Wellbeing Boards can recommend to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS Trusts that they take up the [hospital food Commissioning for Quality and Innovation \(CQUIN\)](#). The CQUIN framework allows CCGs to make hospitals' annual income conditional on achieving locally agreed goals to improve quality, among which is improving hospital food (CQUIN 1b '[Healthy food for NHS staff, visitors and patients](#)').

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust and South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust agreed with their CCG to use the CQUIN framework to [improve hospital food](#) for staff and visitors through Food for Life Served Here and to improve the mealtime experience for patients by improving their ward level foodservice practices.

Policy lever 24 - Healthier food and drink in vending machines

Local authorities can promote healthy diets by improving the quality of food and drink available in leisure centres, sports centres and children's centres' vending machines. Existing vending contracts may mean that less healthy options cannot be phased out completely, but this should not prevent healthier ones being made more prominently available. Local authorities can begin by consulting with the vending operator to see what changes can be made and be ready to specify nutrition standards when contracts come up for renewal.

Cardiff and Vale UHB hospital restaurants and retail catering outlets' [vending machines](#) must be 100% compliant with [Welsh Government Guidance](#) which provides for healthier/reduced sugar options and health-promoting branding.

Health Promoting Hospital Vending Charter

1. All foods and drinks supplied / sold from vending machines must be the healthier option within its product range – Good for your health.
2. Foods and drinks supplied / sold from vending machines must not be damaging to dental health – Safe for your teeth.
3. Methods of storing and handling food and drink supplied / sold from vending machines should comply with a food safety management plan, based on principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) – Safe to eat and drink.
4. Branding on vending machines must support health promoting messages – Promoting good health.
5. Healthy vending in hospitals will support the concept of the Health Promoting Hospital – Hospitals leading the way.

Central Bedfordshire Council's [Excess Weight Partnership Strategy 2015-2019](#) aims to achieve 'an increase in the provision of healthier food options in new and existing food establishments, for example, premises, workplaces and leisure facilities'. The Strategy includes a provision for 25% healthy snack options to be introduced in all vending machines in all six leisure centres from 2015. Progress against actions is monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

[Southwark Council leisure centres](#) are contractually obliged to provide healthy options for users. The new contract awarded to Everyone Active included the following clause: 'The Contractor shall provide a vending service suitable for its Users. There shall be an agreed range of vended snacks and beverages available at specified times, with items well stocked and within sell-by date. At least 50% of these items shall be healthy options. This will be reviewed annually with the Authority.'

The vending machines and leisure centre cafes have strict policies around the on-site food offer:

- All snack products in the vending machines are under 250 calories with a selection under 99 calories.
- 80% of drinks are sugar free and rest are low/no added sugar. There is an energy drinks range in place, but these are marketed for people who are doing intense workouts of over 60 minutes.
- No non-healthy promotions.
- Healthy range in prime area of vendor for both adults and children.
- Healthy branding to notify customer of the health range.
- Drinks marketing focusing on Zero calories and sugar free drinks.
- Kids drinks range with no added sugar.

For more information

[Sustainable Food Cities resources](#)

Key issue: Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system

Policy lever 25 - City-wide environmental sustainability action plan

The local authority can adopt a city-wide cross-sector action plan to reduce the ecological footprint of the food system.

Bath and North East Somerset's overarching [Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2016-2020](#) fully recognises food as a key issue and aims to secure and promote a local, healthy, sustainable and ethical food supply.

In Brighton and Hove, 'local and sustainable food' is one of the 10 principles of the city-wide [One Planet City action plan](#) for which the City Council is lead partner. This plan aims to reduce the ecological footprint related to food in the city and includes commitments on the Council's own health and sustainability issues.

Policy lever 26 - Incorporate the Food Waste Hierarchy into all relevant policies

The local authority and individual public sector institutions can incorporate the Food Waste Hierarchy into relevant policies, strategies and services to reduce food waste and ensure surplus food and food waste are diverted to the most appropriate purposes. In England, the waste hierarchy is a [legal requirement](#) (p11), enshrined in law through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. It requires that waste planning authorities apply the hierarchy wherever possible.

[Towards a Zero Waste Bristol: Waste and Resource Management Strategy](#) fully embeds the Food Waste Hierarchy. The strategy aims to prevent the amount of food wasted in the first place and, where there is inevitable food waste, encourages the composting of inedible food and the redistribution of good food that would otherwise be sent to a landfill. Work on this issue is co-ordinated with other plans and actions focused on reducing food waste, such as the work being undertaken as part of the [Good Food Plan for Bristol](#) and the priority to 'achieve a healthier, more sustainable, more resilient food system for the city to benefit the local economy and the environment' outlined in the [Bristol Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

[London Borough of Lambeth Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2011 – 2031](#) aims to reduce food waste, run Love Food Hate Waste campaigns, link with food growing projects to encourage community composting and subsidise home composting.

The [University of York](#) has developed a Food Waste Strategy based on the waste hierarchy to divert as much food waste away from landfill as possible.

Policy lever 27 - Introduce a local food waste collection scheme

The local authority can introduce a food waste collection or community composting scheme for homes, restaurants and other catering, retail and manufacturing businesses that redirects this waste for composting, energy recovery (AD) or animal feed.

[Bristol](#) was one of the first cities to introduce doorstep food recycling. As a result, the amount of domestic food waste recycled were 10,487 tonnes in 2012/13 and 10,555 in 2013/14. Processing from domestic collections uses anaerobic digestion technology to produce energy from biogas and a 'digestate' which is used for land remediation projects. Biomethane injected into the energy grid is used to supply local homes, schools and businesses and provides vehicle transport fuel for the nationally acclaimed Bio-Bus. (p51)

Joint working between Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council and members of the community has led to a successful [Community Composting scheme](#) being set up to divert food waste from landfill.

[Plymouth City Council](#) (p16) runs a food waste recycling service that takes food waste from the local authority, food processors, pubs, schools, hotels, restaurants and colleges to an anaerobic digester at Langage Farm outside the city. Energy and bio-fertiliser from this award-winning AD plant are then used at Langage Farm to create a 'closed loop' system.

Policy lever 28 - Ecological management of urban green space

The local authority can introduce a requirement in planning policy that all urban green space and productive land be managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.

[Islington Council](#) adopted sustainable policies for grounds maintenance which include increasing the use of ground cover planting to reduce weeds and water loss and to create habitats for wildlife; reducing the use of pesticides; increasing the use of organic mulch to increase soil fertility, improve soil structure, increase soil fauna and increase water retention; and protecting wildlife and biodiversity with the Parks Habitat Action Plan.

For more information

[Sustainable Food Cities resources](#)