

## Moving beyond the foodbank: the local partnership approach to tackling food insecurity

### Purpose of report

For information.

### Summary

The government commissioned National Food Strategy Part 2 contains a recommendation to obligate all councils to have a local food partnership or strategy.

Although this requirement might not be picked up in the upcoming Food Strategy White Paper, we would like to use this opportunity to highlight the commendable efforts that councils and local food partnerships are taking to tackle the underlying causes of food insecurity in their places.

Members will hear a presentation from the [Soil Association](#) and [Sustain](#), who jointly run the [Sustainable Food Places](#) programme.

#### Recommendation/s:

Members to hear and discuss presentation from Sustainable Food Places.

#### Action/s:

Officers to work with councils to produce case studies that demonstrate partnership working on food policy and action.

#### Contact officer:

Charlotte Maguire

#### Position:

Adviser

#### Email:

charlotte.maguire@local.gov.uk

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### Background

1. [The National Food Strategy \(NFS\)](#) (Part 2) was released in July 2021 and the Department of Farming and Rural Affairs, who lead on this area, are due to respond with a Food Strategy White Paper in approximately one month.
2. The objective of the NFS is to make sure the national food system delivers healthy and affordable food, regardless of where people live or how much they earn. The strategy has two parts which look at the key problems of the system– the way in which it currently exacerbates the climate, nature, and health crises – and sets out a number of recommendations as to how the Government could instigate change in order to repair it.
3. Under recommendation fourteen, it is highlighted that local food initiatives and action are necessary for a national food strategy to succeed. It is therefore specifically recommended that all councils should be obligated to have a local food partnership or strategy in place that is designed to suit their local community and local needs.
4. The NFS states within this recommendation that “*only a handful* [of local food partnerships] *have the full backing of their local authority*”, but this report and presentation summarises the wide range of activity that is supported by councils.
5. It has not been indicated that this recommendation will be included in the upcoming Food Strategy White Paper.

### Local food collaboration

6. There are thought to be over seventy local food partnerships across the country, many of which include partners from the council that are taking a whole-systems approach to addressing food insecurity. Whilst many of these partnerships subscribe to the [Sustainable Food Places](#) programme, other independent models exist that have been created to suit the specific needs of local communities (such as [BCP council owned Access to Food Partnership](#)).
7. Effective local food partnerships bring together councils and partners across the public sector, voluntary community, and business sector, to help tackle the root causes of local food insecurity. Through place-based and collaborative approaches to food policy and action, these partnerships can help reduce diet-related ill health and inequality, reduce the local environmental impacts of food production and supply, increase access to healthy and affordable food, and support a prosperous local food economy.

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8. Despite the assumption in the NFS that only some local food partnerships are fully backed by the council, our research and conversations with councils indicate that this is somewhat inaccurate. Many councils are already actively part of an existing food partnerships or are currently in the process of joining one. We have also found examples of councils who are creating a new food partnership themselves, such as Bradford Council. Alongside this, we are seeing an increasing number of councils with a whole-systems food strategy to steer their work in this area.
9. We have found a small number of councils that are neither part of, nor actively engaging with, a local food partnership. We hope that by creating case studies and sharing best practice, sector-led improvement could be achieved in these areas.
10. The presentation from Sustain and the Soil Association will highlight the work of council backed local food partnerships and will illustrate how successful partnership can help to build a local food system that is better for everyone.

### **Implications for Wales**

11. There are no implications for Wales as the National Food Strategy only applies to England.

### **Financial Implications**

12. No financial implications for the LGA.

### **Next steps**

13. LGA to produce 5-6 case studies that demonstrate councils' efforts to tackle food insecurity through local partnership working.