



# **Birmingham Food System Strategy: *Creating a Bolder, Healthier and More Sustainable Food City***

**2022 - 2030**

## **Vision**

Create a bold, fair, sustainable and prosperous food system and economy, where food choices are nutritious, affordable and desirable so all citizens can achieve their potential for a happy, healthy life.

Draft Strategy  
January 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

*“I think we’ve got an amazing food culture in Birmingham. We’re blessed with great cultures and blessed with great chefs in the city...”*  
**South Asian Adult (Birmingham Food Conversations)**



# Birmingham Food System Strategy

## *Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

The new Health & Wellbeing (HWB) Strategy, establishes a clear vision for the health and wellbeing of Birmingham “*Creating a Bolder, Healthier City*”.

A city-wide partnership of stakeholders from across the food system are building upon this foundation to establish the **Birmingham Food System Strategy: Creating a Bolder, Healthier and More Sustainable Food City**.

### Vision

Create a bold, fair, sustainable and prosperous food system and economy, where food choices are nutritious, affordable and desirable so all citizens can achieve their potential for a happy, healthy life.

### Key Principles

Three principles are key to the development of this strategy and action plan:

#### Collaborate

Strengthen partnerships and build on existing good practice.

#### Empower

Remove barriers and facilitate solutions.

#### Equalise

Focus actions where they are needed most to reduce inequalities.

# Birmingham Food System Strategy

*Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

## Ambition

**A regenerative food system where our environment, communities and economy thrive**

Our city-wide partnership's ambition is to develop a regenerative food system, which continuously evolves and improves our environment, communities and economy.

It is no longer enough to reduce negative outcomes from unsustainable practices, and our eight year strategy aims higher, and will seek out regenerative practices wherever possible. We will tackle the biggest barriers we face to achieving regeneration, and partners across the city will collaborate to overcome them, and develop a thriving city.

### Regenerate our Environment

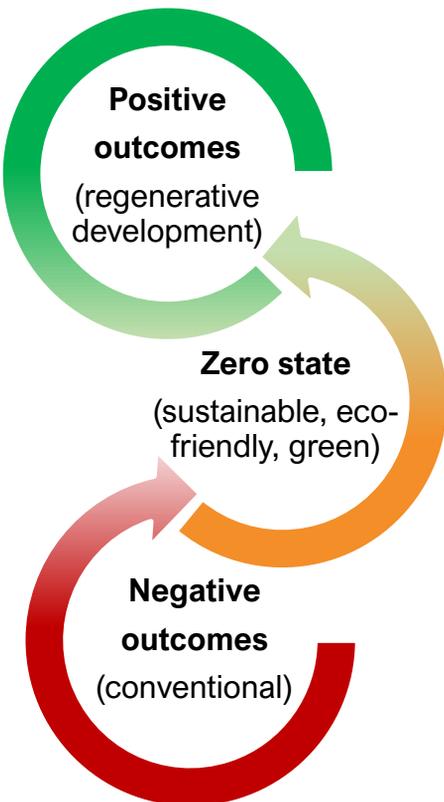
A future where our response to the climate emergency is visible through our collective urgent action to mitigate the impact our urban food system has on the environment. Seasonal and local produce is in high demand, and the carbon footprint and negative environmental impact from food miles, processing and unsustainable packaging is minimised. There is a strong culture of reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle, and regenerative farming and food production practices are supported.

### Regenerate our Communities

A future where every citizen, no matter their circumstances, can eat an affordable, healthy, and sustainable diet. Communities are resilient and empowered, and people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds develop meaningful connections when they come together and share food. Citizens live in communities where life has a fulfilling purpose and people are valued, and those who need it most are supported.

### Regenerate our Economy

A future where our city has a circular economy and we attract innovation and investment. Our culturally diverse food offer is celebrated and our city is a food destination. SMEs and independent businesses are celebrated and supported and they thrive and grow. A nutritious, ethical and sustainable food offer is an economically sustainable business choice. Employment opportunities are plentiful, and workers are treated well, receive a fair salary, are upskilled and have opportunities for development.



# Birmingham Food System Strategy

## *Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

### A Co-Produced Strategy

The Birmingham Food System Strategy is the city's ambitious eight-year approach to creating a bold, sustainable, healthy and thriving food system. This strategy is the outcome of three years of collaboration with partners and citizens; with the key aim of creating a whole-system strategy that demonstrates what we need to enable radical change locally, and shape a food system for all.

The Birmingham Food System Strategy marks the beginning of our Bold Birmingham Food Movement. The strategy is owned by the city and is driven by every citizen, organisation, and business in Birmingham collectively leveraging change, innovation, and development to create a future food system that every citizen is proud to be part of. Partners who have contributed include:

- Citizens and community groups
- Creating a Healthy City Food Forum with stakeholders from across the city
- Food Poverty Core Group
- Food Justice Network
- Third sector organisations
- Community groups
- Schools and nurseries
- Public sector services
- Training providers
- Universities and academics
- Food system innovation projects
- Food producers and distributors
- Caterers
- Food businesses
- Business Improvement Districts
- Dietitians
- Primary care organisations including hospitals
- Technology and innovation experts

"We now need to create and discover a process to enable those on the ground to feed back into the system and system change." (Birmingham Food Dialogues - public sector, third sector, citizenship and private sector)

31% of 387 Birmingham citizens said increasing the availability and affordability of locally grown food should be the number one priority as a food policy. In the Seldom Heard Food Voices focus groups, individuals had a desire to grow their own food but lacked access to allotments or growing spaces.

"I have never liked tomatoes but then one day we did a pasta dish with the tomatoes we grew and oh my goodness they were so lovely and now I love them." Vulnerably housed adult (Birmingham Food Conversations)

#### **Case study:**

Fruit and Nut Village Project

This partnership focuses on tree-based edible landscapes. The first village is based in Stirchley and currently has around 21 sites in the area. The next village is planned for Brew's Heath.

# Birmingham Food System Strategy

## *Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

### A Co-Produced Strategy

#### **Citizens tell us they want:**

- Food that is affordable.
- Culturally diverse food (and that messaging around food and initiatives that take place account for, and celebrate, the diversity of Birmingham).
- We need to improve the health of diets and the food offer available.

#### **Community organisations have told us:**

- Too many people struggle with getting enough food to feed themselves and their families, and this is getting worse as food and fuel prices continue to rise.
- Too many people lack the knowledge and skills to cook a healthy meal.

#### **Businesses have told us:**

- It is challenging to make environmentally sustainable and healthy food an economically sustainable business choice.
- They also recognise that there is too much food waste.
- Existing challenges across the food system, including labour, fuel and material shortages, have been exacerbated by Covid-19 and Brexit, leading to food shortages and increasing food prices.

In addition, the pandemic has revealed how fragile food security is, and it has exacerbated existing inequalities in many communities. Therefore, we are striving to create healthy food city where everyone can access and afford healthy, sustainable, safe and delicious food everyday.

Birmingham Food Conversations were undertaken to reflect upon and understand the lived experience of over 400 citizens from Birmingham's diverse communities captured through 33 facilitated focus groups hosted by 24 commissioned providers.

"You can be enticed - it's enticing - pasties, pies and sausage rolls and things like that. It's the salt, processed food and like sweet things with the sugar in them." Working age adult with a mental health condition. (Birmingham Food Conversations)

"You can't go for a 15minute walk anywhere without seeing a fast food shop or advert." Care Leaver (Seldom Heard Food Conversations)

"We used to call it Naulakha... get a big pot and chuck it all in, like a stew, a pot of leftovers. A Pakistani/South Asian tradition." South Asian adult (Birmingham Food Conversations)

"As a producer, we want the population to be taught more on health and nutrition to make more informed buying habits." (Producer, Summit Group)

# Birmingham Food System Strategy

*Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

## Aims

**8 year journey together 2022 - 2030**

### **Aim 1: Grow the Birmingham Food Movement**

A cultural shift is emerging across our city, and insight work shows that demand for environmentally sustainable, ethical, nutritious and local food is increasing. Birmingham is leading the way with innovative projects to build this cultural change further. Through this strategy and action plan we will shine a light on the amazing initiatives taking place in our city, and inspire others to join the Birmingham Food Movement.

Birmingham is known for our culturally diverse food offer, many small and independent businesses, and award winning food, and we will celebrate and support our local food economy and build our reputation as a food destination.

### **Aim 2: Build a sustainable, ethical and nutritious food system and a thriving local economy**

A thriving local food economy that is resilient and responsive to changes, and where sustainable, ethical and nutritious food choices are an economically sustainable business choice is our aim for the future.

In addition, by developing our food system as a major employer, where businesses and citizens benefit from the high-quality food sector education and skills development opportunities on offer, our food system will be a core part of our city.

# Birmingham Food System Strategy

## *Creating a Bolder, Healthier & More Sustainable Food City*

### **Aim 3: Build stronger resilient communities that support those who most need it, and mitigate food insecurity**

Communities, third sector and voluntary organisations play a vital role in supporting citizens, mitigating the impacts of poverty on food security, and maximising the uptake of support programmes such as healthy start vouchers and free school meals.

Our city-wide partnership will facilitate coordinated local action and this will be key to our success, and we will support and build on existing initiatives and community assets. The future will include strong communication, opportunities that are maximised, and responsive and tailored signposting to services and support.

### **Aim 4: Empower citizens to consume a sustainable, ethical, healthy and nutritious diet**

Reduce the systemic structural inequalities of food and nutrition by improving the availability, affordability and access to safe, nutritious foods across Birmingham in every community, for every citizen.

Work across the life course to support people to make healthier and more sustainable food choices, from weaning to moving into independence in adulthood, and staying healthy in later life.

Identify the barriers, facilitators and drivers of behaviour change across the food system, and utilise behavioural science and other evidence-based methods to shape action that will bring about immediate and long-term change.

# CONTEXT



*“How land is used, access to healthy food, advertising, local transportation, income, employment opportunities - all of this is interconnected and impacts on what food people access and eat.”*  
*Birmingham Food Dialogues*  
*(Public sector, third sector, citizenship and private sector)*



# Creating a Bolder, Healthier City Strategy

**Heathy and affordable food is a key work stream in the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and this strategy builds upon this.**

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Creating a Bolder, Healthier City, addresses some of the critical challenges Birmingham faces. It focuses on the needs of service users and communities and tackles the factors that impact upon health and wellbeing across service boundaries. Delivering this strategy requires input from many organisations across the city across multiple areas. A core theme of the strategy is Creating a Healthier Food environment across the city.

- Too many citizens face challenges accessing affordable, healthy and sustainable food.
- Eating healthily underpins much of our physical and mental health.
- The food economy should be vibrant; reflect the diversity of our communities; and be financially successful and sustainable.
- System should contribute to a circular economy for food which reduces waste, increases valuable employment opportunities for local people, minimises environmental harm and maximises the local assets.

## **Key Actions**

We will achieve our ambition through a matrix of activity across the partnership of the Health & Wellbeing Board, this will include:

1. Implementation of Healthy City Planning Toolkit.
2. Consultation and implementation of Birmingham Food System Strategy.
3. Embed seldom heard voices and other citizen voice into the activities of the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum.
4. To strengthen and build upon local, national and international partnerships i.e. BINDI, MUFPP, Delice Network and Sustainable Food Places.
5. Maximise the healthy food benefits of the East Birmingham Corridor development.
6. Maximising the benefits of the Food Poverty Core Group and Food Justice Network.
7. Continue to develop working relationships with University partners and explore how we can better work in partnership to explore the needs of Birmingham citizens.
8. Understand what a healthy food system looks like and how this can be measured within Birmingham's diverse communities.

## **Strategy Theme Ambitions**

By 2030 we will work together to:

- Increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers in eligible families to at least 80% by 2027.
- Reduce the % of 5yr olds with visually obvious dental decay to below 20% by 2030.
- Reduce the prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) in children in Reception and Year 6 by 10% by 2030.
- Increase the % of adults regularly eating '5-a-day' to more than 55% by 2030.
- Ensure that the Healthy City Planning Toolkit is utilised in 90% of developments in the City.

# Food Systems: Birmingham leading the way

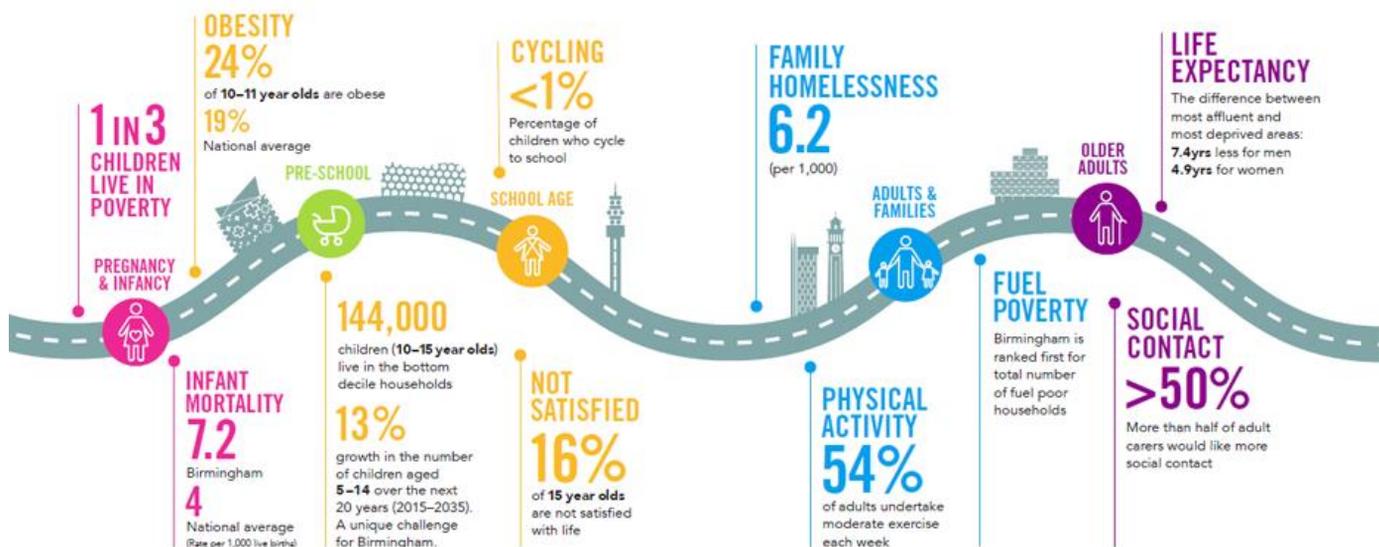
Cities have a major role to play in food system regeneration, and Birmingham is leading the way.

## About Our City's Food System

Our city feeds over 1.1 million residents every day. With such a dense population, our urban food system has a huge impact on the people and world around us. Food systems are complex and interconnected. Many factors play a role in what we eat, including farming, growing and production; food transformation; distribution, logistics and transportation; storage; sales and marketing; food businesses including retail, restaurants, takeaways and delivery services; recycling and waste; and many other areas. The diagram depicting the Milan food system demonstrates how complex food systems are, and why a coordinated partnership approach is essential to achieve regeneration.

The food system plays a role in the environment, health and the economy, and addressing priorities across the system is key to ensuring all Birmingham citizens thrive. Our city faces many challenges, but just as the food system can place a strain on people and the planet, creating a regenerative food system also has the potential to bring about many solutions.

Birmingham has committed to 'Be Bold', and is leading the way with the national food movement. Birmingham has a history of innovation across the food system, and working with national, international and research partners. This journey began in 2018 with the Food Conversations, joining the Delice Network and the BINDI Partnership, and has continued to grow. This Food System Strategy and Action Plan brings together the broad array of work that has taken place in our city, and sets out how our city-wide partnership will build on these actions for the future.



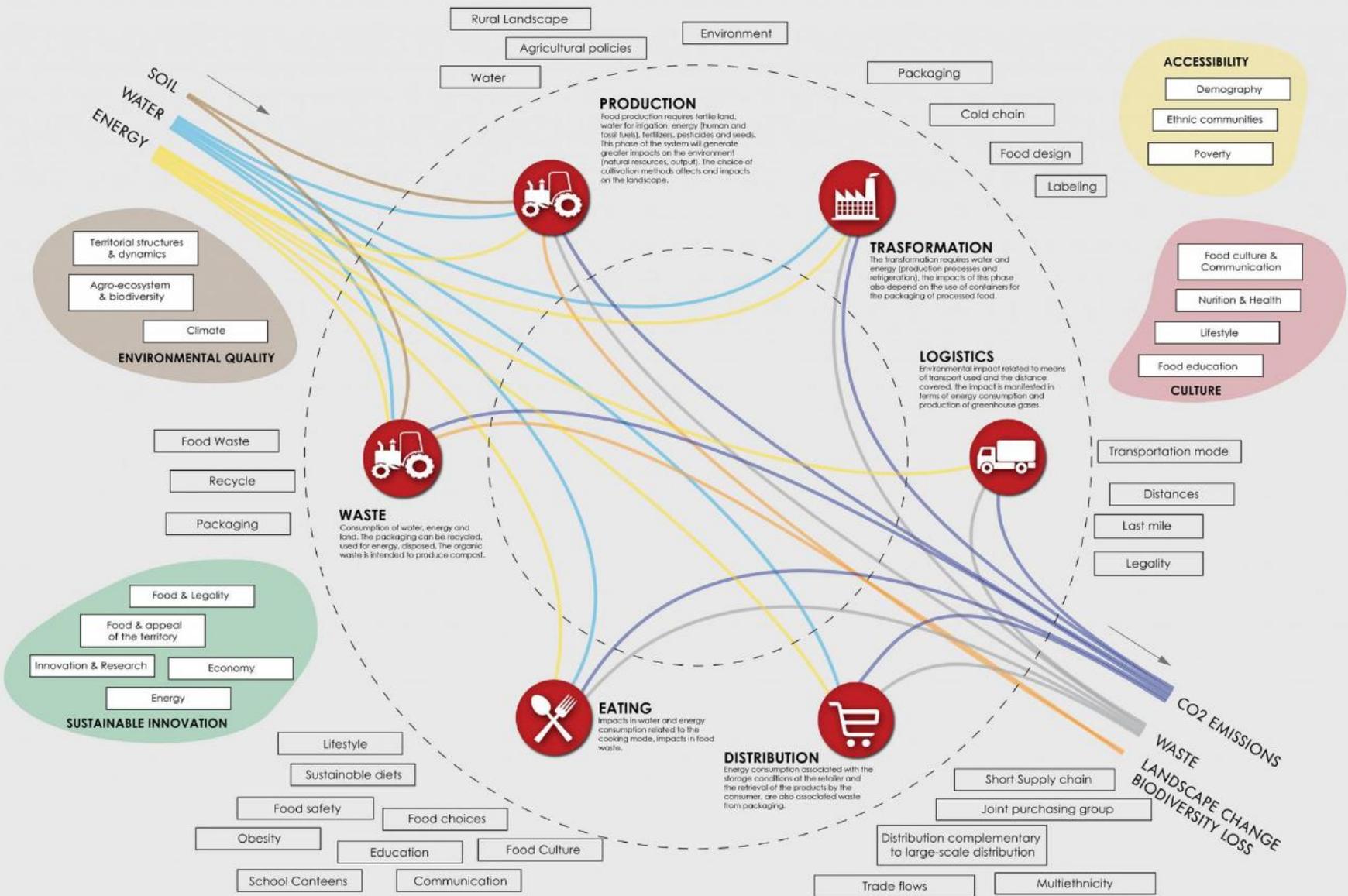


Figure 1. Diagram showing the Milan food system's main elements (Andrea Magarini, 2015)

# Key Projects in Our City: Birmingham leading the way

Birmingham has a history of developing innovative solutions to tackle major public health challenges.

## Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme

The Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme (COTP) seeks innovative action to tackle childhood obesity at local level. The programme is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and managed by the Local Government Association with support from Public Health England. It is intended to test the limits of existing powers and developing solutions to local obstacles aiming to enable ambitious local action and to achieve change at scale.



Through this programme, Birmingham has developed projects in the following work streams:

- A Healthy City Planning Toolkit has been developed to support Health Impact Assessments of planning applications, and Birmingham City Council is exploring ways to embed it into planning policy and the Birmingham Development Plan.
- Work has also taken place to explore the Birmingham food system, and to capture data and insights about citizens' food habits and behaviours which will be used to guide the Food System Strategy Action Plan and priorities. This contributes to a series of insight projects that have taken place across the city including Seldom Heard Voices, Food Conversations and other research projects.



# Key Projects in Our City: Birmingham leading the way

**Local, national and international projects and partnerships are shaping the future of the Birmingham food system.**

## Local Action

There are many organisations and networks who are leading the way with work across Birmingham, including the Food Justice Network, many community and voluntary organisations involved with food aid, affordable food and food surplus distribution, community cafes, growing and other food projects, and the Growing Network. A key part of the Food System Strategy Action Plan is to capture and share these organisation's incredible achievements, and to build on the approaches they have found successful.

## Research and Innovation in Birmingham

- Mandala Consortium, whose focus is on transforming urban food systems for planetary and population health, and their project is centred on the city of Birmingham.
- Living Labs from Food Trails funded through the EU Horizon 2020 Programme and is addressing the call "Food 2030 - Empowering Cities as agent of food system transformation".
- NIHR School for Public Health Research of which the University of Birmingham is now a member.
- Centre of Economics of Obesity at University of Birmingham.
- Aston University and Psychology of Eating in Adults and Children (PEACH).
- University College Birmingham has launched a partnership, UCB Institute of Urban Food Systems, to create an academic nexus to bring together academics across disciplines and higher education institutions to support work to improve food systems in Birmingham and the West Midlands.
- Academics, professors and researchers from universities and colleges across Birmingham leading other innovative projects.

## International Networks and Innovation

- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) This is a European partnership for action on creating healthy food environments in cities and towns, with a network of 217 cities across the world. In 2021, Birmingham was elected by other cities to represent Europe in the Pact alongside Barcelona. Birmingham is leading the pan-city thinking on cultural dimensions of the food system and the political narrative around Food Justice.
- The BINDI project Birmingham Public Health partnership with Pune, India which aims to maximise sharing knowledge on food systems and supports working together on creating food smart cities.
- Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership is an initiative that supports cities to develop and implement city led food policies and action plans.

# National Food Movement: Birmingham leading the way

**Birmingham is working towards national standards and best practice to ensure our food system thrives.**

## National Food Strategy

The National Food Strategy, published in July 2021, contains recommendations and Birmingham City Council is committed to implementing those that are applicable on a local level. The recommendations include having clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change. It also highlights the importance and need for cities to have established food strategies that reference national targets as well as addressing the needs of local communities.

The Birmingham Food System Strategy, with its scope of eight years, is in a prime position to enable real change at a time where the power, energy, and drive for food system change is at its highest.

The National Food Strategy also recommends actions to escape the junk food cycle and protect the NHS, reduce diet-related inequality, and make the best use of our land: recommendations which are encompassed in the Birmingham Food System Strategy.

## Working Towards a Sustainable Food Places Award

The Sustainable Food Places Award is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined-up, holistic approach to food and that have achieved significant positive change across key food issues.

Birmingham is working to achieve this award by meeting the following criteria:

- Establish a broad, representative and dynamic local food partnership
- Develop, deliver and monitor a food strategy/action plan
- Inspire and engage the public about good food
- Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement
- Tackle food poverty
- Promote healthy eating
- Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development
- Promote healthy, sustainable and independent food businesses to consumers
- Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates
- Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain
- Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency
- Reduce, redirect and recycle food, packaging and related waste

# National Food Movement: Birmingham leading the way

**Birmingham is committed to tackling the climate emergency through our integrated Food System Strategy.**

## The Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration

Birmingham has signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration; a commitment by subnational governments to tackle the climate emergency through integrated food policies and a call on national governments to act. The declaration recognises how fragile our food systems are, and integrated food strategies are needed at a local level to reduce environmental footprint, drive positive food system change, to ensure greater resilience to shocks and to reduce inequalities. Food partnerships and involving everyone across the food system in decision-making is key. It is necessary to develop sustainable food systems that are able to rebuild ecosystems and deliver safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and sustainable diets for all.

### Building on existing success

#### Case study:

The University of Birmingham has 30,000 students and 7,000 staff, and has embedded sustainable food procurement into its culture.

It works with staff and students to promote good nutrition and healthier food choices, using local suppliers and seasonable produce where possible and reducing food waste, while also ensuring value for money.

It works with suppliers and contractors to reduce the environmental impact of commodities provided and working with SMEs and contributing to sustainable economic growth where possible.

Winner - "Best Sustainability Project of 2020", CIPS Excellence in Procurement Awards

#### Case study:

Birmingham has incorporated healthy food criteria into their advertising policy, which includes meeting national Advertising Standards Agency restrictions on advertising food for children the distance from schools and colleges

#### Case study:

There currently exists a 10% restriction on hot food takeaways. This was adopted in 2012 as part of the Shopping & Local Centres Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and then modified in the 2017 Birmingham Development Plan. The 2020 monitoring report shows a significant reduction in planning permissions for hot food takeaways since the policy has been in place.

# Right to Food and Food Justice: Birmingham leading the way

**Birmingham is leading the way with our dedication to reducing inequalities in the food system, and ensuring the right to food.**

The experience of the pandemic has shone a harsh and hard light on the fragility of food security within cities exacerbating existing inequalities in many communities. Food justice is an important issue for Birmingham and for cities across the world and it is one where we want to make a united stand.

Birmingham City Council supports the right to food for all. In addition in 2021, a pledge was launched by Birmingham City Council at the 7th Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Global Forum as a response to the lessons of food insecurity learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the pledge is to collaborate and put political weight into the voices of cities in national and international arenas. It emphasises the need for local, national, and international policies which create and support an affordable, nutritious and sustainable food system for all citizens, irrespective of social or economic grouping.

Birmingham is encouraging cities of all sizes across the world to pledge and work together collectively to consider how cities can politically commit to the right to food and work to improve the whole food system, opposed to individual issues, so that it is fairer, healthier and more sustainable. We need to work together to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” and ensure that the right to food is enshrined in city food policy.

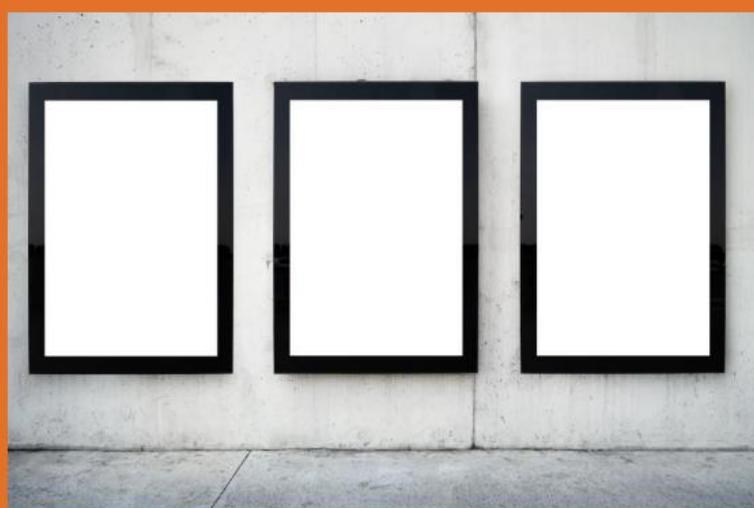
## **Global Cities Pledge on Food Justice**

*“As city mayors, we are committed to addressing food justice by acknowledging that all our citizens irrespective of status are entitled to safe and nutritious food at all times. We recognise the benefits of a collaborative partnership to address the global challenge of food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and disaster displacement.”*

This emerging network will help us better address food justice issues in Birmingham as well as providing a national and international platform for the voices of cities to be heard in this space.

Cities that pledge will be invited to work with us as part of a learning and sharing network to build political networks between cities as we work together to ensure food justice for our citizens across the world.

# BIRMINGHAM'S FOOD SYSTEM CHALLENGES



*The Birmingham Food System Strategy 2022-2030:  
1.1m citizens working collaboratively to enable a bold food  
movement that improves the lives of every Birmingham  
citizen, enables a regional invigoration, and inspires  
international innovation.*



# Visualising: *Birmingham Food Landscape*

In areas where there are less supermarkets, the food offer available is often less healthy and more expensive.

## Density of Cafes and Restaurants

- A quarter of adults consume a meal out once a week in the UK (Adams, 2015)
- Eating out of home is associated with higher energy intake, higher energy contribution from fat in the diet and lower macronutrient intake (Lachet, 2012)
- 835 food outlets in the city only reach 2/5 for food hygiene standards

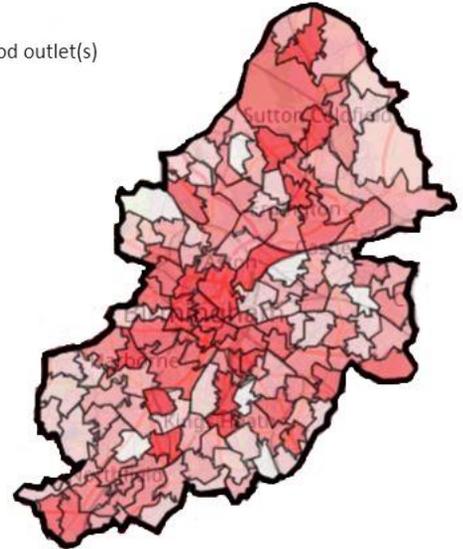
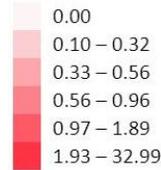
## Density of Convenience Stores

- Convenience stores tend to be smaller and have lower availability of healthful foods (Black, 2012)
- Small stores also tend to have more expensive foods (e.g. a healthy food basket was £37.38 in a large store vs. £47.83 in a small store) (Dawson, 2007)
- Therefore, shopping in convenience stores may be expensive and have limited healthy food options

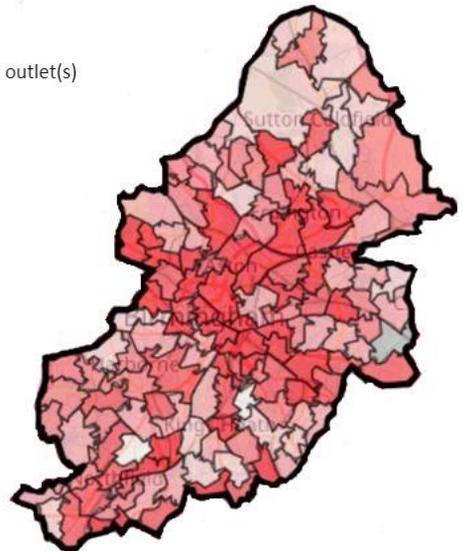
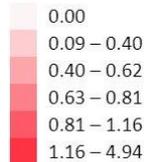
## Density of Takeaways

- Higher exposure to takeaways in work and home environments in the UK has been associated with higher consumption of takeaway food (Burgoine, 2014)
- 40% of Birmingham citizens had used hot food delivery services in the last month, and of these, 16% said 1-3 times a week.
- The most popular hot food takeaway choices were Indian, followed by Chinese and Pizza (Birmingham Food Survey)
- Takeaways tend to have larger portion sizes and greater energy and salt content than UK dietary recommendations (Mills, 2018)

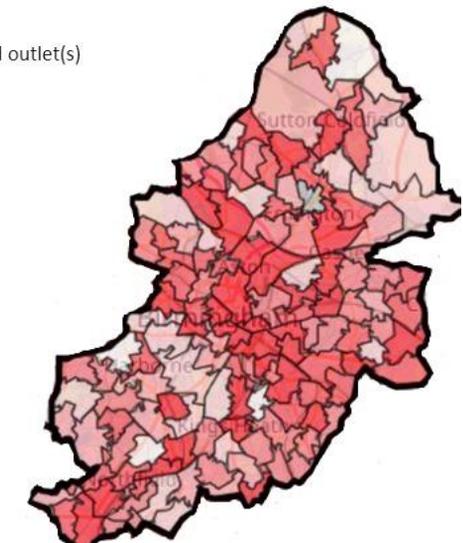
Number of selected food outlet(s)  
per 1,000 population



Number of selected food outlet(s)  
per 1,000 population

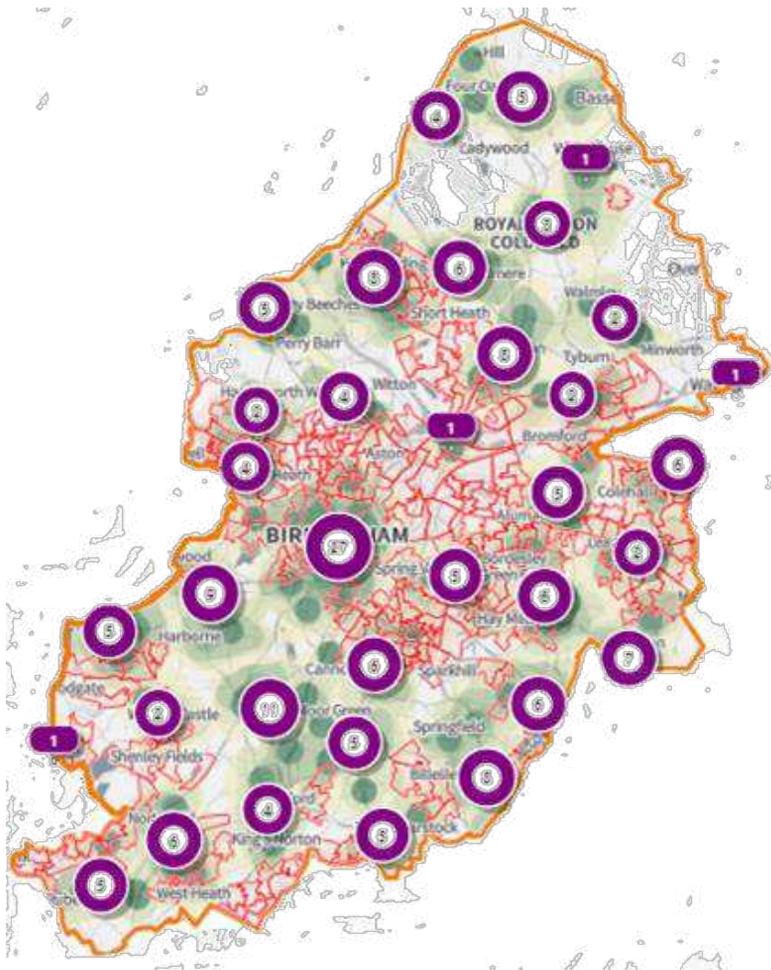


Number of selected food outlet(s)  
per 1,000 population



# Visualising: Supermarket Access

Birmingham's food system faces many challenges, including inequalities in access to healthy and affordable food.



This map shows areas with and without a supermarket within a 15-minute walk (supermarkets indicated by the purple markers; green indicates living within a 5-minute walk and yellow means living within a 15-minute walk). The red areas indicate a LSOA in the top 10% most deprived in England.

This map shows that while many areas have supermarkets within walking distance, there are some areas - which tend to be the more deprived areas in the city - which do not have a supermarket within 15 minutes walk.

In Birmingham there are 0.97 supermarkets/convenience stores per 1,000 citizens.

A greater number of and shorter distance to supermarkets has been associated with better diets in UK children and a dose-responsive decrease in likelihood of being overweight or obese (Barratt, 2017; Burgoine, 2017).

Approximately 3,100 people in the city are employed in the food sector (Birmingham Employment Update 2019)

Birmingham citizens are estimated to spend ~£3.37bn per year on food, drink and catering services (Birmingham Food Council).

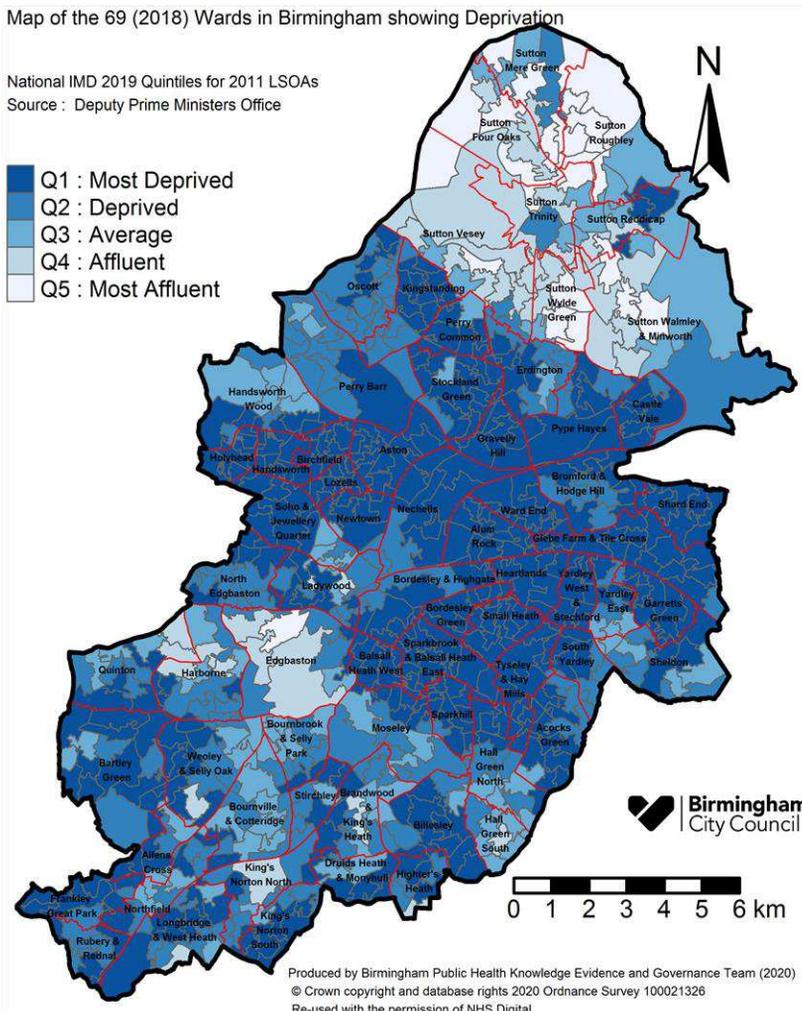
In December 2019, there were 98 businesses registered with the Food Standards Agency involved in food production or transformation, including processing plants for meat, fish and dairy products.

In January 2020, there were over 8,500 food businesses registered with the Council and on the Food Standards Agency national database for food hygiene rating in Birmingham.

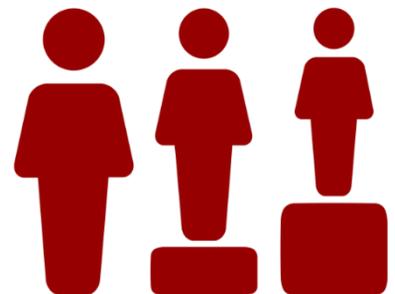
# Visualising: The Challenge of Deprivation

The most deprived areas of our city have less supermarkets, and less healthy affordable food available.

- Deprived areas tend to have fewer healthy foods available and lower variety and quality of fruits and vegetables (Williamson, 2017; Black, 2012)
- Exposure to both TV and outdoor advertising of unhealthy foods is greater in more deprived areas in the UK (Adams, 2011a; Adams, 2011b)
- Financial hardship is associated with lower fruit and vegetable intake (Conklin, 2014)
- Poverty and deprivation have very important consequences for diets and health
- In the UK, 15 million people live with a long term health condition - deprived areas have a 60% higher prevalence of long term conditions (Department of Health, 2012)
- One in three deaths in England between 2003-2018 were attributable to socio-economic inequality (Lewer, 2020)
- Birmingham suffers from high levels of deprivation, with 43% of the population living in LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in England



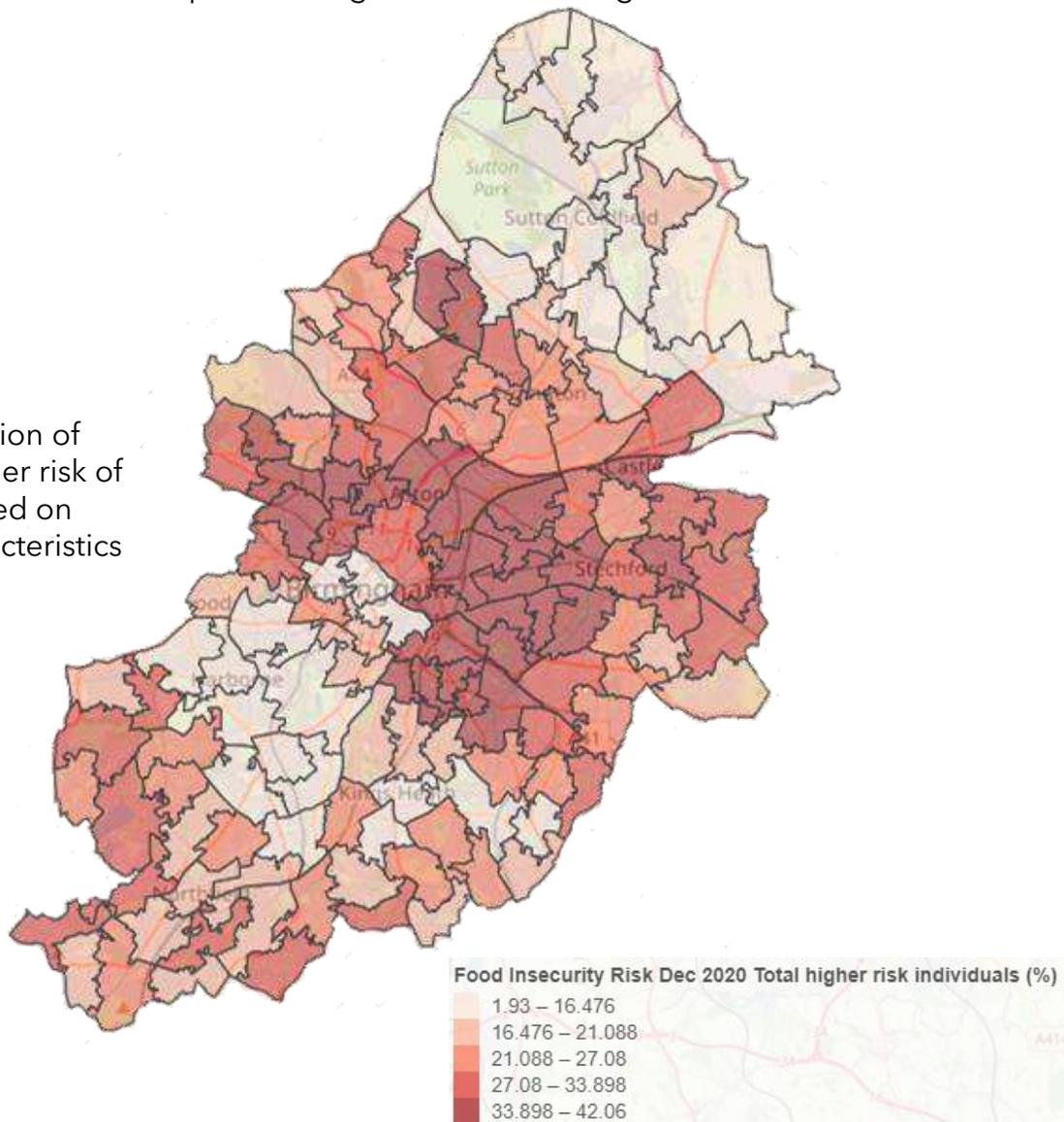
“I can’t afford five a day for my son; a multi bag of crisps costs £1”  
Adult with a mental health condition (Birmingham Food Conversations)



# Visualising: *Food Justice & Insecurity*

Citizens living in the most deprived areas, where there are fewer supermarkets and less healthy affordable food available, also suffer the most food insecurity.

- Food insecurity is defined by the FAO as “limited access to food... due to a lack of money or other resources” (FAO, 2017)
- The UK has the highest rate of food insecurity in Europe (FAO, 2018)
- 19% of children in the UK live with a moderately or severely food insecure adult (The Food Foundation, 2017)
- Food insecurity is associated with poor diets and health outcomes
- 16% of households in the West Midlands are food insecure
- 1,557,116 adults given a food parcel by Trussell Trust from April 2020 - March 2021
- 980,082 children given a Trussell Trust food parcel from April 2020 - March 2021
- 6.8% Birmingham citizens reported using food banks during lockdown.



Right: Total population of Birmingham at higher risk of food insecurity based on demographic characteristics (%)

# Impact: *Eating habits*

**Our city's population does not eat enough fruits and vegetables, and ate even less during the pandemic, and eating healthily is beyond some citizen's budgets.**

**54%**

Of 15-year olds ate 5 or more portions of fruit or vegetables every day (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic)

**49%**

Of adults ate 5 or more portions of fruit or vegetables every day (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic)

**24%**

Of adults ate 5 or more portions of fruit or vegetables every day (during the COVID-19 lockdown, COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Impact Survey)

**74%**

Is the amount of disposable income required to be spent by the lowest income decile of people in the UK to eat healthily, with the proportions recommended in the Eatwell Guide

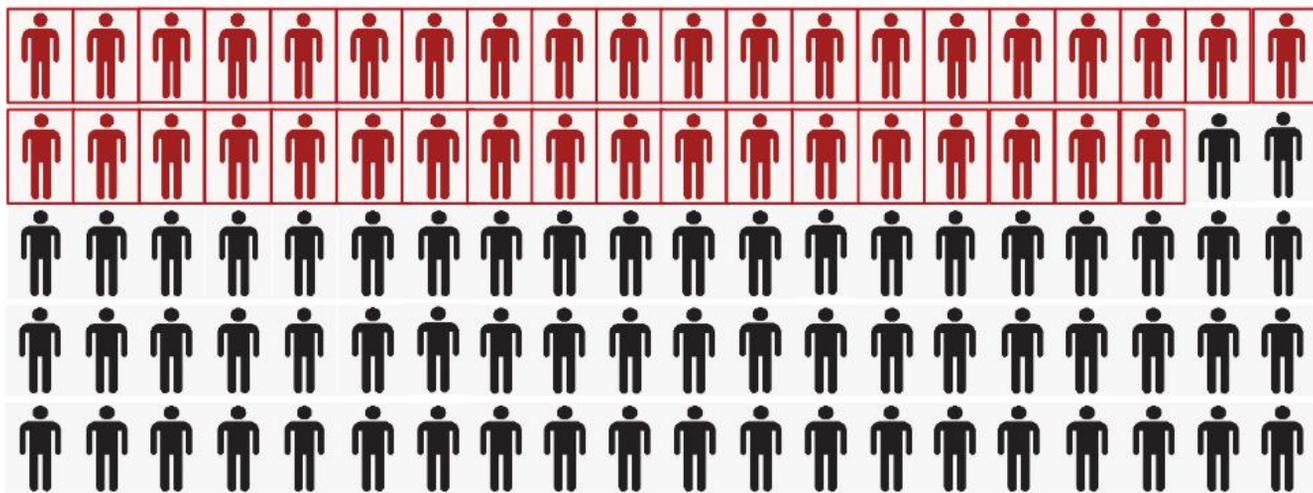
30% of all food outlets in Birmingham are takeaways compared to 26% in England. (Living Costs and Food Survey, [James et al](#))

Spending on takeaways was 6.2% of food and drink expenditure for Birmingham citizens, higher than the national average of 5.5%. (Living Costs and Food Survey, [James et al](#))

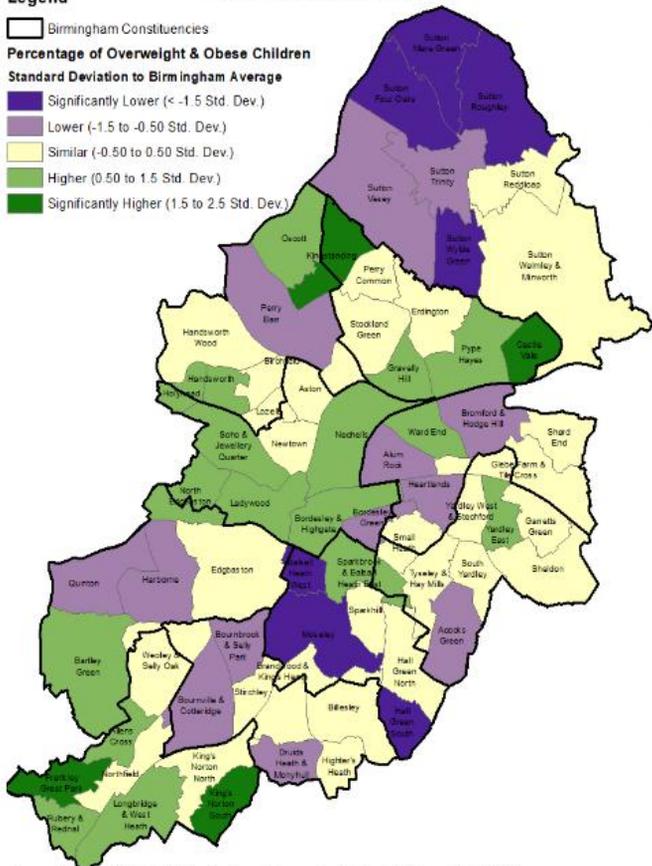
There are 114 allotment sites, with over 7,000 plot holders in the city, enabling citizens to grow fruit and vegetables in the heart of the city if they don't have their own garden.

# Impact: Childhood Obesity

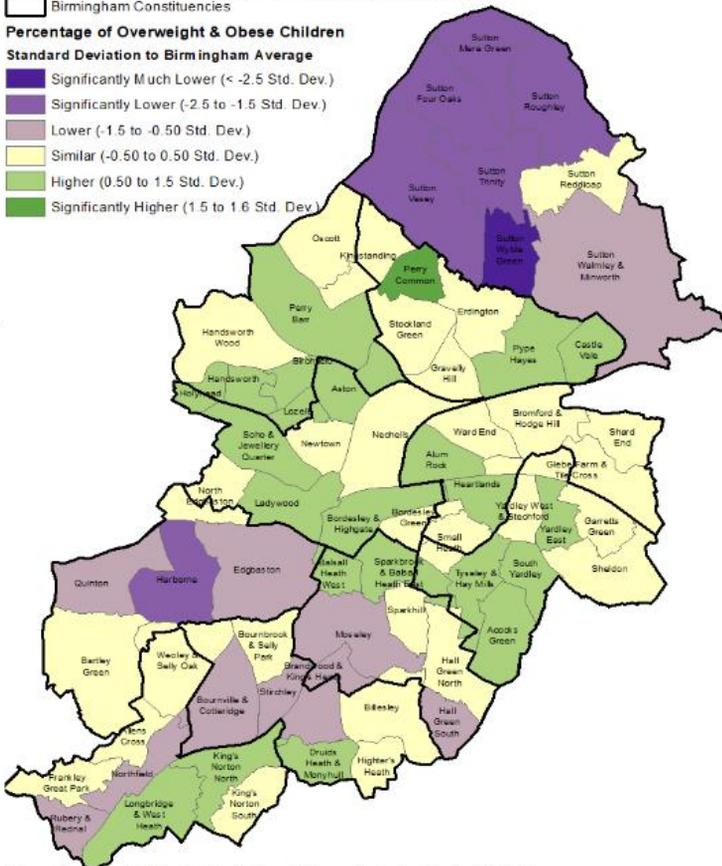
38 in every 100 Birmingham year 6 children are overweight or obese, and 26 in 100 are obese. This increases from 11 in 100 children being obese in reception, so numbers more than double between reception and year 6.



**NCMP Percentage of Overweight & Obese Children in Reception Year (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020) by Birmingham Ward**



**NCMP Percentage of Overweight & Obese Children in Year 6 (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020) by Birmingham Ward**

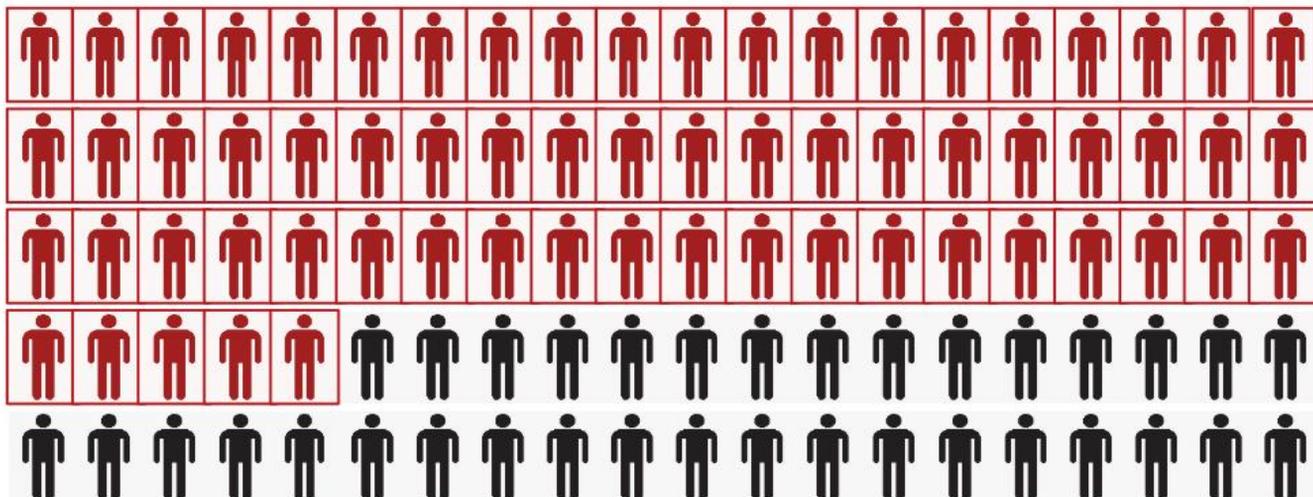


Source: Birmingham NCMP school obesity data collection exercise for Reception Year pupils in 2017/20  
Produced by Birmingham Public Health Division (17th March 2021)  
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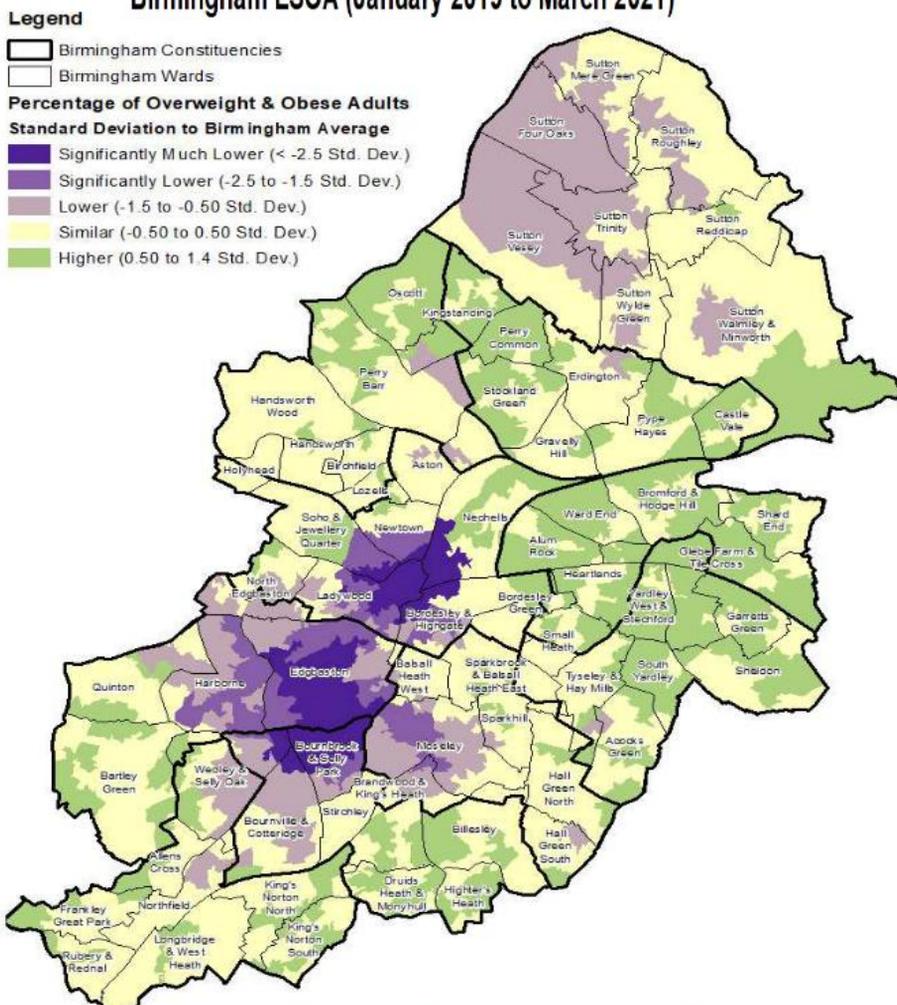
Source: Birmingham NCMP school obesity data collection exercise for Year 6 pupils in 2017/20  
Produced by Birmingham Public Health Division (17th March 2021)  
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# Impact: Adult Obesity

Two thirds of all adults in Birmingham are overweight or obese.



Percentage of Overweight & Obese Adults by Birmingham LSOA (January 2019 to March 2021)



Source: GDPPR (GP extracted data) for Birmingham & Solihull CCG and Sandwell & West Birmingham CCG (Birmingham patients).  
 Produced by Birmingham Public Health Division (29th March 2021)  
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# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



**The Birmingham Food System Strategy 2022-2030. Our future city:**  
Gives more to the environment than it takes  
Has healthy and resilient communities  
Has a thriving food economy  
2030 will be the food system that the citizens of Birmingham deserve and need



# Big Bold City Approach

The work streams and actions will be developed through a city-wide lens, with an understanding of how different elements of the food system interact.

In addition, the impact the food system has on different people and places, and the impact those people and places have on the food system will be considered, including capturing what drives the decision-making, food behaviours and choices...



- **Across people and communities** including different demographics, life circumstances and those with protected characteristics
- **Across the life course** including early years, children, young people, adults, older adults
- **Across the city** including areas of deprivation, access to supermarkets
- **Across settings** - the food system in Birmingham operates across a diverse range of settings. We will work to ensure a joined-up, city-wide approach by undertaking the actions for work streams across the following settings:
  1. **Food businesses** e.g. catering, restaurants, cafés, canteens, takeaways, farm shops, food delivery services, markets, supermarkets, convenience stores and other food retailers
  2. **Supply chain** e.g. food producers and growers, logistics, delivery
  3. **Third sector and not-for-profits** e.g. charities, not-for-profit and voluntary organisations
  4. **Community and faith settings** e.g. community centres, allotments, churches, mosques, temples, shared spaces
  5. **Education settings** e.g. early years, nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools
  6. **Further education settings** e.g. colleges and universities
  7. **Birmingham City Council** e.g. Council services such as lifestyle services, education, regulation and enforcement and others
  8. **Public services** e.g. medical settings, libraries, commissioned services
  9. **Research and innovation** e.g. knowledge hubs, innovation companies
  10. **Workplace and employers** e.g. onsite food offer, workplace policies and initiatives
  11. **Industry networks** e.g. industry organisations and networks
  12. **Home** e.g. the wide variety of living situations that reflect Birmingham citizens

The Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) tool will ensure we prioritise actions including those that are citizen-first, celebrate diversity, and address poverty and inequalities.

# Work Stream Objectives

## Framework for Creating a Bolder, Healthier and More Sustainable Food City

Our Framework for Action is focused on delivery through nine themed work streams, based on the international evidence-base and learning from networks such as Sustainable Food Places and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact<sup>1</sup>.

The nine themed work streams are:

### Food Production

Empower citizens and local producers to grow and preserve food and connect to the city's food system.

### Food Sourcing

Increase sourcing of local, environmentally sustainable, ethical and nutritious foods across the food system.

### Food Transformation

Transform diets to contain more diverse and nutritious ingredients, and less fat, salt and sugar.

### Food Waste and Recycling

Maximise the repurposing and distribution of surplus food and minimise waste and unsustainable packaging.

### Food Economy and Employment

Create a thriving local food economy for all and maximise training and employment opportunities.

### Food Skills and Knowledge

Empower citizens with knowledge and skills in relation to the food system from farm to fork.

### Food Behaviour Change

Ensure the capability, opportunity and motivation for key behaviours that will enable long term change.

### Food Security & Resilience

Ensure citizens in every community at every age have access to sufficient affordable nutritious safe food for health.

### Food Innovation, Partnerships & Research

Gather insights and facilitate innovation, collaboration, learning and research across the food system.

<sup>1</sup>The MUFPP declaration lists a set of 37 recommended actions for cities wishing to develop their urban food policy. As an internationally recognized tool, the purpose of the MUFPP monitoring framework is to enable cities to develop their own urban food monitoring system.

# Prioritisation Tool

## Ensuring we move effectively and efficiently

### *Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) Tool*

Through the work streams, there are key considerations to compare proposed action to in order to aid decision-making and prioritisation, and to strengthen proposed plans. This tool will enable effective prioritisation of different actions to improve the food system. More detail is available on the tool in the appendix section.



# Action Plan Work Streams

The purpose of this document is to lay out the strategic approach required to regenerate our food system.

## What this strategy is...

- A document that provides strategic direction that will guide the development of the Food System Strategy Action Plan which will be a living document.
- Developed by city-wide partners from a variety of backgrounds across the food system.

## What this strategy isn't...

- An action plan. This document does not define what actions will be taken over the next eight years, only guides them. This is the role of the Food System Strategy Action plan, which will expand each of the work streams.
- Something that can be delivered by one organisation alone. It is essential that this strategy is delivered in partnership by stakeholders across the food system, as meaningful change can't be achieved by any one organisation alone.

"Promote sustainable and environmentally-friendly food choices: educating people on what food is seasonal, on how to reduce food waste, on how to grow your own, how to eat less meat and more vegetables etc. Health and environment go hand-in-hand."  
(Birmingham Food Conversations)

# Food Production - How Food is Grown and Produced

**Our objective is to empower citizens and local producers to grow and preserve food and connect to the city's food system.**

Food is produced mainly through growing plants or raising animals, and is then sometimes transformed through a manufacturing and packaging process into the products we see on shelves and market stalls. How we produce food has an impact on the nutritional content of what we eat, the environment around us, and the price we pay for food.

The act of growing food individually and as a community can benefit health through bringing people together, reducing isolation and supporting both physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The science of food production is always evolving and this generates new opportunities for urban food production, both commercially and domestically. As a result, this creates opportunities for job creation, as well as more environmentally sustainable food supply chains. The nature of the food production cycle is that it is seasonal which can create surplus crops at peak times of the year. Innovation and partnership is required to maximise opportunities and avoid waste so that we don't lose food that could feed our city.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## **Grow More in Birmingham**

- Support more community growing across the city with community champions leading growing campaigns across the city, and increase growing in parks, community spaces, schools and window boxes. Inspire and enable people to get involved and try growing.
- Empower communities to utilise unused public spaces for temporary growing co-operatives and support a city-wide Growing Network of learning and sharing.
- Inspire targeted evidence-based initiatives across the public sector that maximise the potential benefits of growing for health and wellbeing to reduce inequalities.
- Work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to enable innovative urban farming opportunities as part of the growth strategy for the city, maximising the potential of the East Birmingham growth corridor.
- Utilise the tools for planning and licensing, including the Healthy City Planning Toolkit, to maximise the potential to create growing spaces across the city.

## **Grow for Good**

- Use the levers of procurement to support environmentally sustainable and ethical food production as a fundamental part of the food system of the city.
- Develop competencies within training opportunities so citizens are upskilled to work in agriculture and food production, and increase apprenticeship opportunities to develop the future workforce.

# Food Sourcing - Where Food Comes From

**Our objective is to increase sourcing of local, environmentally sustainable, ethical and nutritious foods across the food system.**

Food sourcing is important as it has a huge impact on people and the planet. Better food sourcing can reduce harm to the environment, mitigate climate change, reduce pollution, support the ecosystem, improve animal welfare, and support the health, wellbeing and life circumstances of people. It can also enable thriving economies and businesses that, in turn, support communities.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## **Local First**

- Increase demand and expectation of seasonal, local, sustainable food sourcing with ethical supply chains.
- Support businesses, especially those in the public sector, to explicitly consider local sourcing in their food procurement.
- Support more rural-urban connection, especially through local markets that help connect independent and small producers with local communities.

## **Local For All**

- Address the challenge of food sourcing for at-risk groups and develop solutions for those who are unable to purchase in bulk, or afford minimum order amount required for deliveries, and implement solutions.
- Where there are gluts that farmers can't sell, explore solutions so it is still harvested and can connect into the food system and benefit those who need it most.
- Explore how local food hubs can connect surplus foods with those who need it, and how surplus food can be transformed into meals.

## **Understand Local Food**

- Support schools and adult education providers to work with local food producers to help citizens understand the food journey and be more aware of the farmers and producers in the Midlands.
- Identify the farms and producers across Central England, and what food they produce and when. Increase awareness of what local foods are available, when they are in season, and where they can be purchased.

# Food Transformation – How Food is Made

**Our objective is to transform diets to contain more diverse and nutritious ingredients, and less fat, salt and sugar.**

The process of transformation of food is about turning raw ingredients into food primarily to sell either through shops or in restaurants. Ingredients like apples can be transformed into foods ranging from apple pies to baby food, or can be sold in their raw form with simple cleaning and limited packaging.

The transformation journey can involve adding ingredients like salt, fat and sugar to create flavour as well as structure, texture and longevity to products. Although some of these are essential to the final product, there are often ways to make this better for our health and the environment.

We want to see a city where food is transformed in ways which are delicious, include diverse ingredients, are nutritious and healthy and are environmentally sustainable. This will involve working with industry locally, regionally and nationally.

## **The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

### **Make Food Healthier, Sustainable and Delicious**

- Encourage industry to create more affordable nutrient dense healthy food in ways that are attractive and engaging to our diverse communities.
- Inspire food technology innovation through our higher education partners across the city, and the industries of the city and wider West Midlands, to improve food formulation.
- Challenge the status quo through open and authentic discussion of our food system and its impact on our lives and our future.
- Empower citizens and communities to understand more about food transformation and create an environment that creates demand for healthier food.

# Food Waste and Recycling

**Our objective is to maximise the repurposing and distribution of surplus food and minimise waste and unsustainable packaging.**

Food waste is bad for citizens, for communities and for our city. It means we spend more on food than we need to, and it creates environmental burdens through the need to dispose of excessive packaging, and uneaten or unsold food. Food waste happens at every stage of the food system and much of this is avoidable, and to put this in numbers (Love Food Hate Waste, 2021):

- In the UK, 70% of UK food waste (post-farm gate) comes from households, equivalent to a value of over £14 billion a year and 20 million tonnes of GHG emissions.
- An average family of four can save £60 per month by reducing food waste.
- While food waste in households reduced by over 40% in 2020 during the pandemic, it rebounded back in 2021 to pre-pandemic levels.
- Higher food waste is associated more with working age adults, use of ready made meals, time pressures, dietary restriction and lack of skills and confidence.

Reducing food waste and packaging conserves energy and resources, and reduces waste in landfill, it is better for our pockets as well as for our planet.

## **The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

### **Be Waste Wise**

- Create and support a culture in households and across the food system that avoids waste at every stage.
- Work to understand the barriers that stop people avoiding waste, such as lack of access to a fridge.
- Support citizens to be waste wise and support better and easier food management for households.
- Encourage food businesses to be waste wise by using best practice models and repurposing, and food sharing and recycling food surplus in partnership with community organisations.
- Explore models of community collaboration with food production, and support access to affordable nutritious food, and utilise surplus or near waste food.

# Food Economy and Employment

**Our objective is to create a thriving local food economy for all and maximise training and employment opportunities.**

Food is produced, transformed, sold, and disposed of by people as part of their jobs and volunteer roles, and this is underpinned by a broad range of training and skills development.

The food economy is a significant part of the economy of Birmingham, and one which reflects our diverse and vibrant global heritage, and the interconnection of hundreds of small and medium enterprises (SME). As we come through the pandemic the resilience of the food economy is a key issue for the future.

We want Birmingham to have a vibrant and sustainable food economy that is a world leader in innovation, diversity and healthy food. Our food economy will create jobs that attract and support talent, and by working with our education providers we will position our citizens for these opportunities and take this ethos across the world.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## **Good Food Jobs and Businesses**

- Develop Birmingham as a food destination with a flourishing, vibrant, diverse food scene that celebrates the cultural diversity of the city, and our excellent local produce and independent businesses.
- Celebrate businesses that innovate and lead healthy, sustainable, ethical and affordable food approaches across the breadth of the city.
- Encourage all businesses in the food system to become Real Living Wage employers and model good workplace practices so that the sector becomes known for good jobs.
- Support innovation opportunities in the food sector.
- Utilise the tools for planning and licensing, including the Healthy City Planning Toolkit, to maximise the potential to create healthy food retail environments.

## **Good Food Skills**

- Work with the food sector to understand the interventions needed to support an education and skills pipeline that will support a healthier and more sustainable food city across the food system.
- Work with education providers to understand the needs of the food system, and encourage and support local people to enter the sector.
- Maximise the potential of national schemes, such as apprenticeships, to enable entry to the food sector employment for disadvantaged groups.

# Food Skills and Knowledge

**Our objective is to empower citizens with knowledge and skills to make the most of food in our city**

Confidence and knowledge of how to make the most from food comes through loudly from citizens, and through research, as being a significant issue. Food is part of our social structure, it is how we celebrate, grieve, commiserate and congratulate and it is a fundamental part of many cultures of heritage and identity.

Although it is often seen as simple many people don't feel confident in making healthy choices when it comes to food, and too few of us understand the food system and the impact it has on our lives and our communities. Knowledge isn't enough, it has to be supported by skills to use this knowledge, and empowering individuals to ask for what they want, and ensuring they have the equipment and access to put the knowledge and skills into action.

## **The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

### **Grow Smart**

- Support citizens to understand where food comes from, how it is farmed and transformed so they can make informed choices.
- Support citizens and communities to grow local, individually and collaboratively.

### **Shop Smart**

- Support greater understanding of food labelling and how food transformation impacts on nutrition and health.

### **Cook Smart**

- Support greater understanding of how to prepare and cook food, especially in the context of limited time and finances.
- Create opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-generational cooking to share learning and experiences as part of the work on social cohesion.
- Utilise online platforms such as Whisk to develop communities where recipes and ideas are shared.
- Explore how to expand access to cooking equipment in communities.

### **Eat Well**

- Support parents, families and those who work with children to develop skills for a lifetime within children and young people, and help them build healthy relationships with food as they grow into adulthood.
- Support citizens and businesses to understand healthy food, and its impact and benefits, in the context of their culture, heritage and the wider city.

# Food Behaviour Change

**Our objective is to ensure the capability, opportunity and motivation for key behaviours that will enable long term change.**

The choices we make about food aren't just about knowledge and skills, as they are influenced by lots of factors around us every day. These factors include culture and social influences, and also environmental barriers such as lacking equipment or access to affordable food. Helping people to make better choices about the food they eat, buy and throw away needs to consider these factors. We also need to use evidence-based behaviour change approaches to understand and enable both immediate and long-term change that are effective in the context of real lives in our city.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## Supporting Individual Change

- Utilise scientific methods to identify what type of interventions and techniques are most likely to support behaviour change for different groups of people.
- Consider how we can make sure behaviours we want people to do are perceived as desirable, enjoyable, exciting or social, and avoid the off-putting term "healthy".
- Co-produce behaviour change interventions with local people and partners using scientific and evidence-based approaches and deliver targeted and tailored social marketing campaigns, such as those using 'nudge' techniques.
- Develop evidence-based 1 to 1 interventions, delivered through social prescribing and other programmes, to support individual behaviour change.

## Communities of Change

- Enable community led behaviour change programmes that use peer support and culturally competent approaches, and are embedded into communities, including those of identity and experience.
- Identify key levers for behaviour change in communities, including building on the strengths of existing assets, initiatives and relationships, and harnessing the potential of respected and trusted people and leaders in the community.
- Support and empower the community and voluntary sector to use evidence-based behaviour change methods, and to exchange knowledge and best practice.

## A City of Change

- Working with the universities of the city, we want to expand the understanding of applied behaviour change science in the context of our global city, to support healthier and more sustainable food choices at an individual, community and food system level, and to ensure solutions are sustainable and maintain momentum.
- Support businesses to shape their environments to nudge customers towards nutritious and sustainable choices, make changes to the food offer available, and share tips on how to introduce people to new menu items in a way that increases uptake.
- Continue to develop and deepen our understanding of the barriers to a healthy and sustainable food system in Birmingham through insight and research and co-production with citizens, communities, industry and our wider partnerships.

# Food Security and Resilience

**Our objective is to ensure citizens in every community at every age have access to sufficient affordable nutritious safe food for health.**

Too many citizens, including too many families, have to make difficult choices every week in our city between buying healthy food or paying bills. These choices are the result of wider policies on welfare and living wage employment, but the impacts are clear to see on people's plates and through the impact on their health.

We have to be proactive in applying evidence-based approaches to addressing food poverty and insecurity to mitigate the impact of deprivation, and support citizens to feed themselves and their families in the context of the national policy landscape.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## **Talk about Food Poverty**

- Through our city-wide partnership we will build a big city-wide conversation to shine a light on the reality of food poverty, and try to reduce the stigma and isolation created by being unable to feed yourself or your family.

## **Mitigate Food Poverty**

- Use evidence-based approaches to increase awareness and uptake of initiatives across the city, for example Healthy Start vouchers, networks such as Food Justice Network and Growing Network, and community initiatives.
- Support knowledge, skills and access to initiatives that enable individuals to eat healthy and delicious diets on low incomes.
- Identify what drives unaffordable food across the city, and develop evidence-based solutions to bring about change that will create more affordable food businesses, and increase healthy affordable options on offer to citizens.

## **Reduce Food Poverty**

- Continue to work towards truly being a Living Wage City and influence, on a national level, the welfare and employment practices that lead to food poverty.

## **Be a Food Resilient City**

- Use our global city position to collaborate and influence regional, national and international policy to increase the food security of cities, which are uniquely vulnerable to disruption to the global food supply chain.

# Food Innovation, Partnerships and Research

**Our objective is to gather insights and facilitate innovation, collaboration, learning and research across the food system.**

Birmingham is a thriving hub of innovation and best practice and is a centre for urban food system innovation. By bringing together city-wide, national and international partners to solve food system challenges we increase partnerships, communication, maximise opportunities and reduce duplication. Collectively we are on a mission to better understand food systems, and develop innovative solutions supported by research and technology. We want to create a bolder city, maximise the future trends and opportunities in food for all our citizens, and ensure our food system is healthy, fair and sustainable.

**The aspirations below will shape the Food System Strategy Action Plan:**

## **Our Diverse and Engaged Food City**

- Through the Creating a Healthy City Food Forum and our city-wide partnership, we will strengthen and expand the engagement across the city to inform and collaborate towards our shared ambition of a creating a healthier and more sustainable food city for Birmingham.
- In communities of place, identity and experience across the city we want to build networks and collaboration for change and impact.
- Through our international partnerships, such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, Delice Network, Food Cities 2022 and BINDI partnership, we will learn and collaborate to be a better city food system.
- Through the opportunity of the Commonwealth Games and the Food Cities 2022 network, we will form new partnerships to support healthier food choices and empower healthy food business linked to our Commonwealth partner cities and nations.

## **Our Innovative Food City**

- Working through economic growth and innovation partnerships, we must maximise the potential of the food system of our city to be at the cutting edge of affordable, ethical, healthy and sustainable food.
- Through the vibrant and diverse food scene of the city, we will continue to develop and innovate sustainable, healthy, delicious and ethical food that celebrates our diverse and evolving culture and heritage.

## **Our Learning Food City**

- Working with the Urban Food Systems Collaboration, hosted by Birmingham City University, we can develop a cross-institutional approach to research and insight that drives change through science and research.

# MEASURING SUCCESS

*“We need to make sure that everything we use has a purpose, and that we use everything to its complete ability.”*  
**Food System Summit Dialogues 2021**



# Indicators for Change: *Outputs and Outcomes*

**Our city-wide partnership will develop a Food System Dashboard of indicators to measure outputs and outcomes.**

The National Food Strategy and other international papers have recognised that measurement tools need to be developed to effectively assess and monitor the food system. A wide range of indicators are needed to the outputs and outcomes of this strategy in line with the Framework for Action.

## **Outputs of implementing this strategy will include**

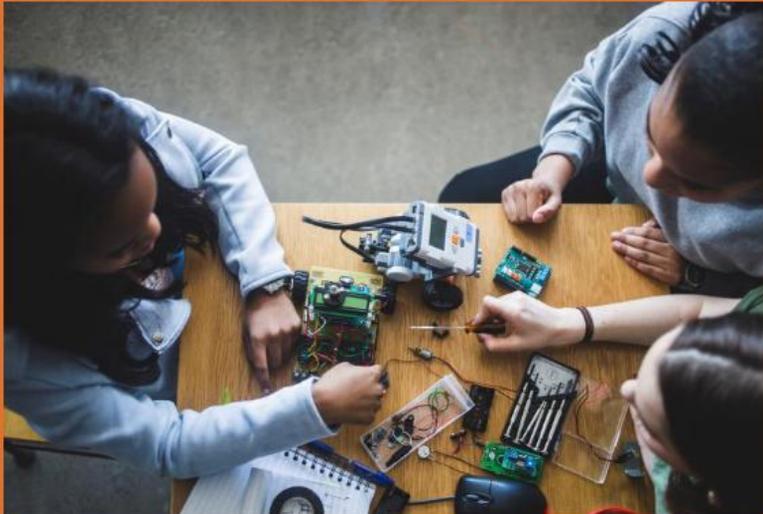
- An evidence bank of effective approaches to tackle issues across the food system, through reviews, insight gathering and pilots.
- Evidence translated to make recommendations for stakeholders using the Big Bold City Approach, so our city is empowered to make a difference and implement meaningful change.
- A Food System Dashboard of indicators and metrics developed with partners so we have insight into the breadth and severity of food system challenges and can monitor whether our actions are making a difference.
- An ever-evolving dynamic needs assessment informed by the Food System Dashboard of indicators that will shape the decisions within the Food System Strategy Action Plan and ensure we make a difference.

## **Example outcome measures**

- Impact on Health
  - Percentage of 5yr olds with visually obvious dental decay
  - Prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) in children in Reception and Year 6 (NCMP)
  - Prevalence of overweight or obese adults aged 18+
- Impact on Production and Transformation
  - Number of food growers/ spaces to grow food
  - Diversity of foods offered by food providers
  - Marketing of food (e.g. Percentage of BOGOF offers that are HFSS)
  - Use of Healthy City Planning Toolkit
- Impact on Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
  - Percentage of adults regularly eating '5-a-day'
  - Percentage of HFSS consumed
  - Participation in food classes
- Impact on Food Security and Resilience
  - Activity at food banks and other food security support initiatives
  - Uptake of healthy start vouchers in eligible families
- Amount of food waste collected

# GOVERNANCE

*Creating a future proof, robust, and thriving food system that will position Birmingham to be a bold, ambitious, and sustainable international trailblazer.*



# Bringing the Birmingham Food System Together

Birmingham is the largest local authority in Europe, with many moving parts, strategies, leaders, and change-makers. A key driver for success in making Birmingham's food system bolder, healthier and more sustainable is bringing the many moving parts together.

The Birmingham Food System Strategy will aim to connect, empower, and inform strategic plans from across Birmingham in two key ways:

## Embedding Cross-Matrix Working

The Creating a Healthy Food City Forum, has established a working collaborative of key organizations and change-makers from across Birmingham with influence on many key sectors such as health, economy and business, research and innovation, education and skills, communities, food justice, and many more.

We will continue to grow and develop the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum to ensure that we are able to establish a cross-matrix working approach to leveraging change in Birmingham's food system.

We will achieve this aim by creating the Birmingham Food System Strategy Action Plan that will outline the actions needed across the city to achieve the outcome and outputs of the Birmingham Food System Strategy. The action plan will be the responsibility of the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum.

Through this approach we will be able to maximise our impact across the complex and multifaceted food system, as there are most often interconnected issues and we can't treat one priority in isolation.

## Aligning with Strategies and Priorities

The city's strategies and priorities are constantly evolving to meet the needs of Birmingham citizens and to develop a better city for all. The Birmingham Food System Strategy considers all current strategies and priorities; and our aim will be to ensure that all future developments within Birmingham will be influenced by the aims, objectives and approaches within this eight-year plan.

"Issues are multifaced - system change needed... what we grow, land use, access to healthy food, advertising, local transportation, income, employment opportunities"  
(UN Food System Summit Dialogues)

"Scalability, loads of great initiatives, need to be joined up to have real impact."  
(UN Food System Summit Dialogues)



# Strategic Oversight

The Food System Strategy will be overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board, as a statutory committee of Cabinet.

The Framework will be driven by the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum and delivered in conjunction with partners and key players from across Birmingham. The Creating a Healthy Food City Forum reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, under the leadership of the Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care.



# Delivery

The ambition of a Bolder, Healthier and More Sustainable Food City can only be achieved by setting a clear direction, establishing pivotal actions for all, and working across organisations and the system to lever long-term effective change. The Birmingham Food System Strategy will therefore be supported by the Birmingham Food System Strategy Action Plan, which will develop and evolve to deliver the objectives of the Birmingham Food System Strategy by 2030. This will be delivered through a broad, representative and dynamic local food partnership.



- Statutory Board with key city leaders.
- Sets the very high strategic goals with all elements of Health and Wellbeing for Birmingham until 2030.

**Health & Wellbeing Board Strategy**

- Creating a Healthy Food City Forum, with strategic leaders from across Birmingham Food System – sub-forum of the HWBB.
- Sets specific objectives regarding the Food System for Birmingham until 2030.

**Birmingham Food System Strategy**

- Key partners, organisations, grass root leaders, and city system change makers committing and delivering key actions for change.
- Live working action plan, that is assessed and reinforced by the CHFC Forum and the HWBB.

**Birmingham Food System Strategy Action Plan**

# Citizen Focused and Citizen Led

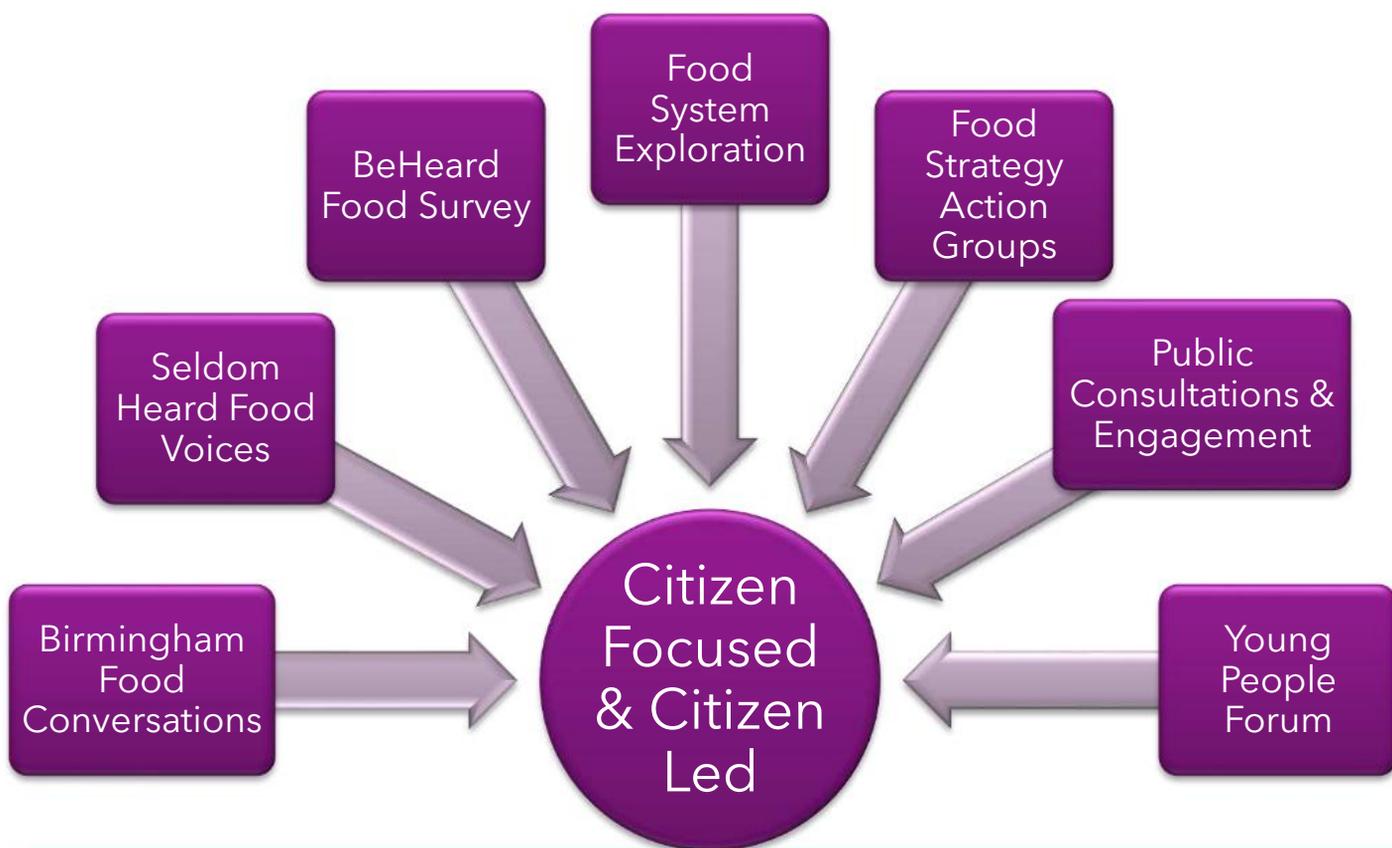
The journey in creating the Birmingham Food System Strategy began by listening to the citizens of Birmingham. We have commissioned and curated a variety of focus groups, engagement sessions, workshops, seminars, and so much more to ensure that we hear the voice of Birmingham.

We have received the input of over 500 citizens from all stages of life, from all backgrounds, and with differing interest in our city's food system.

We intend to continue our endeavour of hearing and championing the voices in Birmingham, by committing to replicate and repeat the food system dialogues held during the development of the strategy at key intervals during the eight year period.

This will ensure that we:

- Continue to meet our citizens needs;
- Build stronger evidence and support for leveraging change;
- Capture the voice of our seldom heard citizens;
- Develop and deliver effective actions that citizens can see, feel, and are aware of;
- Are guided by those most affected by the food system in Birmingham.



# Next Steps

## *Citizens Leading the Birmingham Food Movement*

By consulting on the draft Birmingham Food System Strategy we are continuing the journey of co-production and collaboration with citizens and communities.

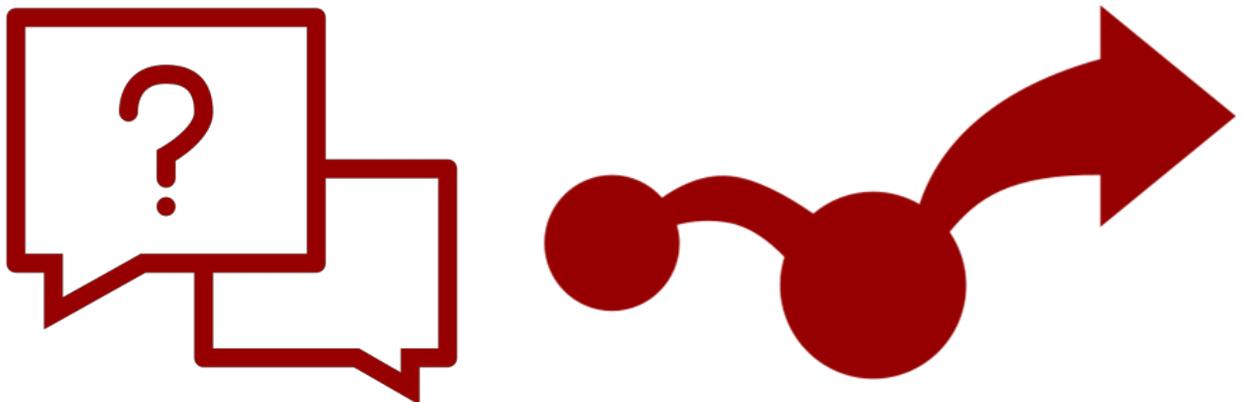
We want to hear your views and feedback on our ambition, our objectives and the workstreams for action.

In listening to your views we will refine and update the Birmingham Food System Strategy, continuing to build our city and citizen owned strategy.

All your contributions will also shape and influence the Birmingham Food System Action Plan, which will be a living document outlining how we as a city will achieve our aims for 2030. The Birmingham Food System Action Plan will be taken forward through the Creating a Healthier Food City Forum, which is a sub-group of the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board, and other partners from across Birmingham.

The Birmingham Food System Strategy consultation is part of our Birmingham Food Movement, which aims to grow the food conversations in Birmingham. The Birmingham Food Movement mission is to celebrate our city food landscape, learn how to thrive collaboratively, and speak out about how we want our city's food system to work for us. This is why the Birmingham Food System Strategy consultation will be live for five months and include the Commonwealth Games.

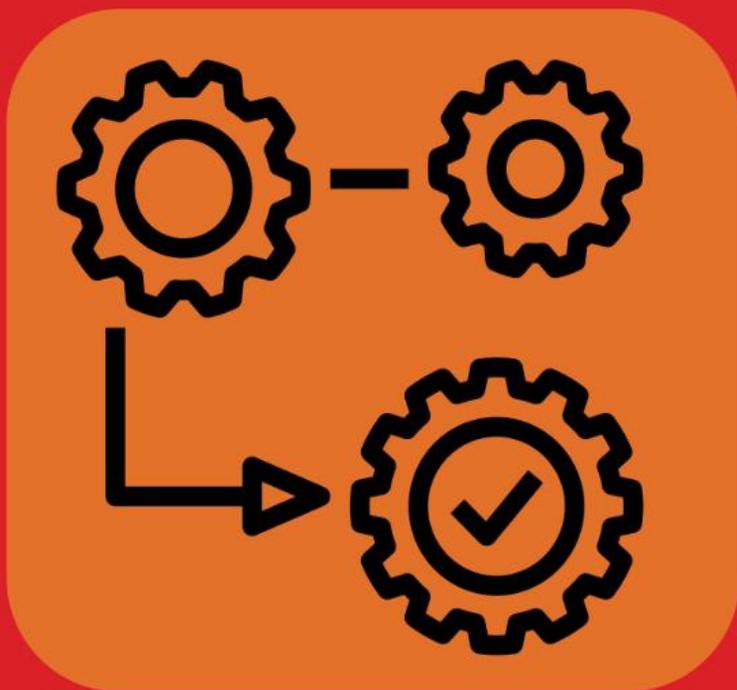
We aim to complete the consultation on the Birmingham Food System Strategy by **19 August 2022** and to present the final strategy to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September/October 2022.



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# APPENDICES



Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation Tool (**FADMaP**)  
*Enable effective prioritisation of different actions to improve the  
food system.*



# Appendix 1

## *Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) tool*

### **1. Citizen-first**

We will consider whether proposed action will benefit Birmingham citizens and whether we are acting on what the citizens want and need. We will put the citizen at the heart of our approach, working with citizens across the city to help co-produce a healthy, sustainable, economically viable food environment that is accessible to everyone.

### **2. Celebrate diversity**

We know that there are significantly different relationships with food in different cultures and communities across the city and our action needs to work with, and for, these communities to find solutions and approaches that work in the context of celebrating this diversity. In addition, we will consider accessibility of proposed actions and reduce barriers, e.g. language, delivery method or context. We also consider the diversity of food requirements and choice, without judgement e.g. religious or ethical food choices. Food is a big part of how we express our culture, diversity, heritage and experiences.

### **3. Address poverty and inequalities**

We aim to prevent food poverty and help people survive it and recover well. Birmingham citizens should have access to food, and the means to cook and prepare meals. Food, and nutritious fulfilling food, in the city of Birmingham should be a right of all its people, not a luxury. We will consider whether proposed action benefits those who need it most in a way that will work. Beyond food and fuel, we will consider accessibility of proposed actions in terms of equipment, technology, internet access, literacy, transport and more.

### **4. Healthy and safe**

All citizens should have access to nutritious and safe food. We want to support retail, businesses, and public sector to provide nutritious and safe food, whilst following hygiene guidance, and make the most of the everyday contact between food regulation and enforcement authorities in the city and the region to support businesses to work towards our shared ambition of a healthy, safe, and affordable food system in Birmingham.

### **5. Environmentally sustainable**

Local, national, and global environmental sustainability will be a key driver for all actions. The impacts of Birmingham's food system on the environment will also be considered. We want to support individuals, retailers, businesses, the food supply chain, and the public sector to be environmentally sustainable, and ultimately move beyond this and support regenerative practices.

### **6. Economically sustainable**

The food system is intrinsically connected to the economy of our city and citizens, so all our actions must be economically sustainable for consumers, businesses, and enterprises. Our actions must create incentives and/or opportunities for benefits, be aligned to their priorities, and avoid perception of damage or deficit.

# Ensuring we move effectively and efficiently

## *Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation (FADMaP) tool*

### **7. Empowering**

This strategy aims empower the citizens, communities, businesses, and organisations of Birmingham. Our actions must strive to overcome barriers faced by individuals and organisations to establish positive food system change. We should also use our actions to enable citizens to do what they are driven and motivated to do, to create a healthier, bolder food city.

### **8. Evidence-based**

Our actions will be high impact, embedded, and sustainable. Actions will be developed in line with the best current evidence, and where evidence is lacking, we will seek to undertake research. We will use evidence from our national and international partners to learn from their experience, research, and best practice.

### **9. Cost-effective**

We will ensure cost-effectiveness through cost-benefit analyses and being evidence-based in order to be effective. We will work to make the relative benefits greatest to those who need them most.

### **10. Scaled and paced**

Birmingham is a large city with a diverse community, and it is important that we keep a focus on moving at pace and scaling to reach every part of Birmingham with our work, building on successes and finding ways to scale across the city to ensure that every citizen benefits. Horizon scanning will be a part of every action, including actively exploring how the resulting resources could be developed to ensure they are future-proofed and can be utilised in future larger-scale action.

### **11. Learning and improving**

We know we need to listen and be humble in our approach, learning in true partnerships with cities, in the UK and across the world, learning from research and practice-based evidence and from citizens. We will be open and honest in our conversations about the challenges as well as the opportunities and successes.

### **12. Risk-aware and resilient**

The food system is subject to potential significant challenges nationally, due to the currently unknown long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the exit from the European Union. We need to ensure that the impacts of these risks are understood, and that Birmingham is as prepared as it can be. The potential risks that could impact the delivery of planned actions will be considered, and mitigations proposed.



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