

# A Sustainable Food Agenda for Greater Manchester (DRAFT)

Over one hundred community groups, charities, small businesses and public sector partners have been exploring the benefits of, and actions required, to transform Greater Manchester into a Sustainable Food City. Here is our ambition:

Improving the health and lifestyles of individuals across Greater Manchester is necessary to ensure good quality of life. Therefore, supporting healthy diets and access to healthy food across Greater Manchester is identified as a priority by the sustainable food sector, with actions detailed below of how this could be achieved through effective actions by various actors across Manchester.

| 1. Support <i>Healthy Diets</i> for all   |  |
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| Priority Outcomes:  | Possible Actions:  |
| <b>Raise public awareness about healthy eating</b>  | Sport and leisure sector develop encouraging food messaging about healthy food. The NHS implements healthy food campaigns to encourage healthy eating. Support the implementation of a sugar tax and obesity strategies across GM.   |
| <b>Increase healthy life expectancy</b>   | Public sector bodies and businesses adopt progressive food policies to provide healthy and sustainable food to their staff and visitors. Doctors & Clinical Commissioning Groups commission or signpost services which improve nutrition to reduce diet-related ill-health. Health authorities promote food growing to improve physical and mental health. Doctors 'prescribe' or self-refer volunteering with food growing projects DNQMS                                 |
| <b>Improve child health and wellbeing and associated positive effects on the wider family</b> | Include healthy eating as part of primary and secondary school curriculums i.e. Priestnall School Stockport School food menu. Following Oldham Council's lead, all schools achieve Food for Life Gold standard. All schools and colleges adopt a Meat-free Monday like Manchester Fayre. Implement school holiday meal programme and free breakfast clubs for all.   |
| <b>Increase the availability of healthy food</b>  | Encourage the establishment of healthy food outlets as a viable food choice for all. Restrict the expansion of take-aways around schools, colleges, hospitals & parks, building on the work of Salford Council. Councils identify fresh 'food deserts' & take action to address them through progressive retail strategies. Develop volunteer community time banks where time spent on a growing project can be exchanged for goods/services/assistance amongst neighbours |

A key goal of the sustainable food strategy is to promote equitable access to healthy food for all and address the underlying inequalities that lead to food poverty and inequality across Greater Manchester. Some priority outcomes to achieve this are detailed below as are potential actions for implementation.

| 2. Ensure <i>Food Equality</i> and tackle Food Poverty  |   |
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| Priority Outcomes:  | Possible Actions:   |
| <b>Make healthy food more accessible and affordable</b>   | Support communities to establish food bulk buying groups. Encourage food sharing and eating projects as part of community meals. Ensure sufficient distribution of food banks to meet need across GM. Promote the adoption of the Living Wage across Greater Manchester especially in the public sector to reduce income poverty  |
| <b>Support people to establish &amp; participate in community food-growing projects</b>                             | Create publicly accessible orchards i.e. Helping People Blossom. Businesses encourage & support staff to volunteer at community food projects. Make the sustainable food movement more inclusive. Council to prioritise under-utilised public land for permanent growing space. Create an online land identification scheme to determine sites with potential for food growing like New York's 569acres.org   |
| <b>Encourage greater co-ordination between foodbanks and community growing projects to increase mutual benefits</b> | Enhance the Feeding Manchester website to publicise & link projects online. Community food growers supply food banks by providing fresh local produce. Move beyond food bank integration to address food poverty, promote a Living wage across GM as a standard and promote the banning of zero hour contracts. Develop a means of measuring and documenting household food insecurity across GM. Promote End Hunger UK campaign across GM to ensure access to healthy food |
| <b>Increase food education and cooking skills</b>   | Food growing projects incorporate cooking & food preservation courses & facilities. Engage with children through food education to address food related issues. Deliver standardised health and safety training to organisations which would like to enable their service users to learn how to cook/provide cooked food. Support food banks to have cooking facilities & run community classes to spread knowledge   |

Encouraging the sharing of sustainable food knowledge across Greater Manchester both within the food sector and more broadly as well as building skills and resources in sustainable food is vital to ensure that we become a sustainable food city.

| 3. Build Sustainable food <i>Knowledge, Skills and Resources</i>                                   |   |
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| Priority Outcomes:   | Possible Actions:   |
| <b>Raise public awareness of food sustainability</b>   | Develop & spread positive messaging to engage people in sustainable food issues. Develop a food campaign involving local celebrities. Garner cross-party political support for increased sustainability in the food sector. GM Mayor to sign up and commit to the pledges of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and for Greater Manchester to become first Northern UK city to sign and work towards its aims.  |
| <b>Improve food knowledge and skills</b>   | The buying, cooking & growing of food is added to school curriculums. Caterers develop sustainable school food menus. All Schools start food-growing projects & use food grown on-site in school meals. Support schools to become a sustainable food hub that engages both pupils and the wider community to learn growing and cooking skills. Create a demonstration edible street to show the public benefits of food growing in our communities. Work with Sustain to host an annual Urban Food Fortnight for Greater Manchester.  |
| <b>Increase understanding and empathy between Greater Manchester's urban and rural communities</b> | Expand and scale-up the Greater Manchester Land Army to get more volunteers onto local farms. Develop sustainable food trails and food heritage stories. Develop community projects exploring our local food provenance and the city's food history. Enhance Manchester Food & Drink Festival to be even more accessible & sustainable  |
| <b>Increase purchase and consumption of Fairtrade food</b>   | Increase awareness around ethical consumption. Promote & work with local groups to encourage ethical and sustainable purchasing. Hold open and free workshops about ethical purchasing i.e. Fairtrade Fortnight.  |
| <b>Facilitate access to land for people wanting to grow food</b>                                   | Create many more allotments and facilitate a City-wide plot sharing scheme. Social landlords develop a scheme to share land & gardens for growing activities. Knowledge, skills, resources, tools and machinery are shared through a growers' 'trading post'. Support Incredible Edible groups to introduce food growing in public spaces. Establish a Greater Manchester 'seed bank' to store and exchange seeds & plants. Organise commercial grower's gatherings to facilitate the sharing of knowledge. Develop neighbourhood projects to educate on beekeeping. All new homes are built with good-quality growing spaces |

Providing support to sustainable food enterprises is a priority for this strategy, as it will enable entrepreneurs to develop and make a fledging impact as part of a sustainable food movement whilst also benefiting the local economy. Specific priorities for achieving this are detailed below.

| 4. Support <i>Sustainable Food Enterprises</i> and a diverse and resilient food economy                                 |  |
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| Priority Outcomes:  | Possible Actions:  |
| <b>Support artisan, domestic &amp; young food entrepreneurs to start or scale-up a food enterprise</b>                  | Create food business support hubs offering business start-up advice & services. Local authority to prioritise community enterprises & co-operative start-ups   |
| <b>High Streets and civic centres made resilient &amp; diverse with a strong independent local food sector presence</b> | Local authority needs to develop supportive retail strategies that back family-run/independent shops and businesses i.e. Unicorn Grocery in Chorlton and The Kitchen Bolton. Create a 'Meanwhile' strategy to allow pop-up enterprises in vacant buildings. Local Authority to provide rate relief to local healthy food enterprises. Create community-owned shops, mobile shops & market stalls for neighbourhoods. Focus economic strategies & structural funds on sustainable food priorities. Start a campaign to institute a supermarket levy |
| <b>Greater collaboration is created between farmers, growers, food processors, distributors &amp; retailers</b>         | Support agricultural and supply-chain co-operatives (see for example Preston councils support of co-ops as a model of economic development). Promote supply chain co-operation, drawing on experience of Manchester Veg People. Create a Farm Belt encircling Greater Manchester which protects & supports peri-urban horticulture and agriculture. Provide grants for for not for profits to assist with growth and development of food enterprise.   |
| <b>Food production &amp; farming to become a viable career choice.</b>  | Increase apprenticeships in local/organic growing. Enhance access to the FarmStart incubator farms. Support enterprises focused on urban horticulture and peri-urban agriculture. Facilitate market access for local food growers through the promotion of smart distribution networks, food hubs and an enhanced New Smithfield Market. Improve bureaucracy to facilitate market access for local growers DNQMS   |

Businesses and the commercial food sector have an essential role to play in promoting sustainability across Greater Manchester and should be supported to implement best practice sustainability policies. To achieve this, this strategy recognises these key outcomes and actions as necessary steps.

| 5. Transforming Catering and Food Procurement   |  |
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| Priority Outcomes:  | Possible Actions:  |
| Procurement processes in the public sector support locally grown sustainable food.                    | Create a multi-sector working group that encourages and supports the public sector to purchase sustainable food.<br>All local authorities adopt a Sustainable Food policy and develop a resourced and supported Sustainable Food Action Plan for their borough<br>The sustainable food sector to lobby the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities to adopt a Sustainable Food Strategy for Greater Manchester<br>Increase greater autonomy in the public sector of procurement contracts that allows locally grown food for meals<br>The sustainable food sector to shift the perspective in procurement from cheapest bidder to local benefits and sustainability. |
| Local authorities to implement procurement standards for sustainable food in public sector catering   | The GMCA should draw on EU best practice policies which protect food safety standards<br>Implement surcharges on certain products like water bottles<br>Schools should adopt ethical standards of food procurement   |
| Community growing projects & allotment holders are enabled to commercially sell their produce locally | Trial ways that community groups can generate income by selling grown produce<br>Identify and address barriers to allotment holders selling their surplus produce<br>Enable fresh produce to be sold in markets across GM, waiver stall fees to encourage this for community groups and local produce.   |
| Create an integrated sustainable food sector  | Greater use of social media apps such as Olio to redistribute otherwise wasted food.<br>Promote and fully utilise applications and technologies to network and create an integrated sustainable food sector.   |

The environmental impact of our current food system is overwhelming, contributing to climate change, soil depletion, water pollution, congestion due to transportation, bio-diversity loss as well as generating a huge amount of food waste. It is essential that we as a city develop practices that addresses these environmental problems head on, which is why the sustainable food sector have identified several key outcomes and actions to be taken that will promote environmental sustainability and reduce the ecological impact of our current food system.

| 6. Reducing Waste: The Ecological Footprint of the food system.  |   |
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| Priority Outcomes:   | Possible Actions:   |
| Promote Zero tolerance of Genetically Modified (GM) Food   | Sustainable Food Sector to develop a media campaign focused on the science and economics of GM food<br>Support a campaign on banning GM products, whilst continuing to demand accurate labelling of GM products.  |
| Promote sustainability standards, particularly for products with a large ecological footprint i.e. meat and fish | Local authority to incentivise local businesses to implement sustainability standards<br>Greater Manchester becomes a Sustainable Fish City<br>Encourage businesses across Manchester to bring in meat free Mondays<br>Introduce ecological footprint charter that commercial businesses can sign up to   |
| Reduce packaging waste and food waste in food procurement  | Enable greater commercial recycling and composting across Greater Manchester<br>Inform suppliers of best practice waste management and packaging standards<br>Promote less packaging on fresh products<br>Sustainable Food Sector and Local Authority to increase knowledge on food storage through improved labelling and campaigns<br>Food businesses to offer doggy bags and encourage smaller portion sizes<br>Encourage widespread knowledge of food waste hierarchy |

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| Reduce the carbon footprint of the food sector                             | Promote seasonal and local diets – increase supply and demand of local food.<br>GMCA to implement policies that promote seasonal menus/diets<br>Invest in infrastructure enabling sustainable food transportation<br>Engage Transport for Greater Manchester to reduce the impact of 'food miles'<br>Campaign to increase legislation on food labelling i.e. origin grown & packed and ecological foot print value.<br>Encourage businesses to reduce their ecological footprint i.e. using a rating system like food hygiene certificates.<br>Support anti-fracking campaigns across Greater Manchester.<br>Reduce the impact of food provided at arts and cultural events via MAST |
| Tackle commercial food waste and encourage composting.                     | Local Authority to enforce the sustainable disposal of waste in the commercial sector<br>Sustainable Food Sector to lobby government to increase landfill tax<br>Sustainable Food Sector to encourage businesses to offer wonky veg and consumers to purchase it.<br>GMCA to commission research on food waste across Greater Manchester<br>Local Authority to insist on disclosure of food waste data among food businesses, which should be externally audited and regulated.<br>Food redistribution organisations to record and report on volumes of food waste redistributed.  |
| Promote a symbiotic approach to the management of wildlife and agriculture | Promote permaculture systems across local GM food production networks to reduce the environmental impact of the food system.<br>GMCA to enhance its biodiversity plan for Greater Manchester with special emphasis on pollination and species conservation and conservation of soil.<br>Carry out an independent review of the use of pesticides and herbicides used by local authorities.   |

*No one organisation can achieve all of the aims of this ambitious strategy, but we can agree that this is the food system that we aspire to have in Greater Manchester. We can support each other to work towards some of the aims, and work together to push for them all. This is just the start – a foundation to build on and act on to transform Greater Manchester into a Sustainable Food City.*

## Why Sustainable Food?

**Imagine a Greater Manchester where *Sustainable Food* is at the heart of policy and action to create: jobs & training opportunities; good health & well-being; green neighbourhoods; diverse high streets; and strong local economies.**

Good food means different things to us all, but sustainable food can help make our City more resilient to climate change & help address our present & future health and economic challenges.

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| Support <i>Healthy and Sustainable Diets</i> for all  |  | Support <i>Sustainable Food Enterprises &amp; a diverse &amp; resilient food economy</i> |  |
| Build community food <i>Knowledge, Skills and Resources</i>   |  | Develop <i>Sustainable Food Supply Chains</i> in all sectors                             |  |
| Ensure <i>Food Equality</i> by tackling food poverty & increasing access to healthy affordable food |  | Create a strong foundation for <i>Sustainable Food Production</i> at all scales          |  |

## Why a Strategy and what next?

Many volunteers & organisations have created this Strategy as inspiration and as a guide. It is a work-in-progress and will be refined & improved again in the future.

Over the coming months we will be developing an action plan to promote this strategy in association with the Peoples Plan, who will be using this strategy to influence the Peoples Plan for devolution in Greater Manchester.

Loads of great ideas and priorities for Greater Manchester have been discussed by members of the sustainable food sector, many of which have influenced the latest version of this strategy developed in December 2016. For a full breakdown of all the ideas and suggestions discussed at our Feeding Manchester event in December, please see our Feeding Manchester Conferences tab on the Feeding Manchester website.

If you'd like to get involved or know more information, please contact us at: [mail@kindling.org.uk](mailto:mail@kindling.org.uk)

For more information please visit: [www.feedingmanchester.org.uk](http://www.feedingmanchester.org.uk)

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