

London Food Strategy implementation plan update

Introduction

The London Food Strategy was published in 2018. It set out the Mayor's ambition and plans for creating a city in which all Londoners can access healthy, affordable and sustainable food – regardless of their background and circumstances. The strategy provides a definition of 'good food', and sets out a framework that a range of partners could use to help adapt the city's food system to meet impending challenges. An implementation plan, published alongside the strategy, set out the actions that the Mayor would take to help implement the priorities set out in the strategy.

A huge amount has happened since those documents were published, much of it directly relevant to the aims of the London Food Strategy.

The links between living above a healthy weight and chronic disease – and the extra risks faced by those living in deprivation and some Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups – were well understood before the COVID-19 pandemic. Research subsequently showed that being above a healthy weight could result in more serious COVID-19 outcomes.

Food insecurity – already at unacceptably high levels before the pandemic – developed into an acute challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. It posed a fundamental challenge to all parts of the food system, and the risk of severe financial hardship prompted radical action by the government. The importance of London's catering and hospitality sectors was highlighted as the city's society and economy entered lockdown. As highlighted by the London Food Board on previous occasions, these sectors' knock-on impact on the wider food security of the capital is significant.

Spiralling cost-of-living pressures risk sending food insecurity to even higher levels, and global instability poses fresh threats to supply chains. As such, the resilience of London's food system, and the city's ability to meet the fundamental needs of its citizens, are once again of prime importance.

With London's recovery from the pandemic – and the threat of the cost-of-living crisis – shaping all aspects of the GLA's work, this updated plan sets out the focused set of priority actions that the Mayor will take during the remainder of his term. This work forms part of the London Food Strategy.

Of particular relevance are the work programmes being developed with partners under the banners of two recovery missions: Healthy Place, Healthy Weight; and A Robust Safety Net.

Healthy Place, Healthy Weight aims to ensure that, by 2025, all London's families will find it easier to eat healthy food and be active where they live, learn, shop, work and play. With nutritious food further out of reach for many families, the mission seeks to respond to the importance of the wider determinants of health. It does so by focusing on place-based interventions that make local environments healthier, rather than on individual behaviour change. The work associated with this mission is particularly relevant to the London Food Strategy's priorities of good food economy, shopping and eating out; and good food in community settings and public institutions.

The Robust Safety Net recovery mission's aim is that, by 2025, every Londoner can access the support they need to prevent financial hardship. The mission seeks to bring partners together around a common approach to supporting low-income Londoners and relieving financial hardship where it exists. It particularly focuses on the opportunity to build common approaches to support services (such as local welfare assistance) and the coordination of social welfare legal advice in London. It also seeks to consider what role the GLA and recovery partners can play in working with providers of emergency food aid to meet demand and address the root causes of food insecurity. This work has been given added salience by the emerging cost-of-living crisis.

In addition to the above, there is range of work taking place through the Green New Deal and Good Work for All recovery missions that is referenced in this implementation plan. This ensures that action is being taken to address the climate impact of London's food system as part of our commitment to net zero.

London Food Strategy chapter heading	
<p>Good food at home, and reducing food insecurity</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Community and Social Policy team City Intelligence Unit Resilience team</p>	<p>Aim: Help to ensure all Londoners can eat well at home and tackle rising levels of household food insecurity.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published the first regional measure of household food insecurity in Britain. • Convened a response to the risk of a catastrophic failure of London's food aid system posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. • Established the Robust Safety Net recovery mission to bring the GLA, London's boroughs, and its voluntary and community sector together around the same goal. This goal is to ensure that all Londoners have access to the support they need to avoid or escape financial hardship. • Launched the Food Roots Incubator programme to help food partnerships learn from each other and their pandemic experiences; and support those aiming to take 'cash-first' approaches to addressing food insecurity. • Provided short-term Food Roots capacity grants to food partnerships in 30 London boroughs. This work supports new and continuing best practice in partnership working and cash-first support. It does so in the context of acute capacity pressures that the cost-of-living crisis has caused for community organisations providing crisis support. The grants are currently in the delivery phase, with learning sessions for grantees held in May.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launched Food Roots 2, the next stage of the Food Roots Incubator programme, to provide continuing strategic support for the food aid sector. This will involve delivering a grant funding programme; procuring incubator support and an evaluation partner; and providing training and support to partnerships to help them increase the take-up of Healthy Start in their communities. <p>To continue to achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish and disseminate detailed statistics on the extent of food insecurity in London, through the second iteration of his Survey of Londoners.• Continue to convene the food aid sub-group of the London Food Board to monitor emerging issues relating to the supply of, and demand for, emergency food aid across London. The intelligence collected through this group will be fed into any relevant London-level resilience structures that may exist at any time.• Explore strengthening food supply resilience by looking at shorter and local supply chains that are not reliant on surplus, and other ways to strengthen food system resilience.• Explore with partners a vision to reduce reliance on food banks and create sustainable affordable healthy food retail as a long-term solution.• Continue London's membership of the Sustainable Food Places network, to help continue to learn from best practice across UK cities, informing London work and benefitting local food partnerships in London.
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<p>Good food economy, shopping and eating out</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Culture team Health team London & Partners (L&P)</p>	<p>Aim: Support good food businesses to improve London’s food environment, and to make healthy, affordable options more widely available to Londoners.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported Londoners to lead healthier lives through the roll-out of water fountains, and the introduction of a healthier food and drink advertising policy on the Transport for London (TfL) network.• The 2022 international and domestic ‘Let’s Do London’ tourism marketing campaign, led by L&P, included an early focus on the hospitality sector and has brought in £289m additional spending to London and attracted almost 585,000 visitors to the capital. It has seen a return on investment of £28 for every £1 spent (this refers to the combined contribution of GLA and industry funding to L&P to run the campaign).• The ‘Love London’ campaign, complementary to ‘Let’s Do London’, promoted free and affordable events in London over the summer, autumn and winter of 2022. It has continued to do so into 2023.• The Mayor’s Academies Programme is supporting Londoners access good jobs in sectors that are key to London’s recovery and long-term economic growth. This includes the hospitality sector, and consideration will be given to how to ensure that the potential for skills and food, and food growing, can be maximised.• Launched a Business Friendly Licensing Fund to make licensing more supportive of businesses across the capital.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed a retail specialist to work with convenience stores near the Lambeth School Superzones in Oval and Vauxhall. This aims to increase the range and sales of healthier products aimed at children; and gain a better understanding of the role that stores and wholesalers can play in encouraging children to make healthier food choices. The first phase was completed in October 2022. • Supported the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) scheme. <p>To continue to achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate findings from the evaluation of TfL's Healthier Food and Drink Advertising Policy. The evaluation, published in February 2022, found significant reductions, associated with the advertising restrictions, in average weekly purchases of products high in fat, salt and sugar. These reductions were equivalent to 385kcal per person per week. • Support two or three local authorities to implement healthier food advertising policies. This work includes understanding and tracking the progress of policies to restrict children's exposure to unhealthy food marketing in boroughs across London. • Consider opportunities to extend current restrictions to wider GLA assets. • Deliver the second phase of the convenience store work and share learning with councils. This is supporting five convenience stores in Oval/Vauxhall to implement action plans and further engagement with children. Impact on Urban Health (IOUH) is funding a second, parallel project in the Brixton Hill Superzone.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learning from the work will help to develop a systematic and practical approach to helping the sector improve the availability and appeal of healthier options.• The project is being delivered by Rice Marketing and is supported by IOUH and the Association of Convenience Stores.• An evaluation, jointly funded with IOUH, will provide recommendations that will help develop key practical messages and a model for rolling work out more widely across London.• Work with partners to help maximise the impact of the food wholesale market being developed in Barking and Dagenham, including its impact on skills provision.• Continue to support the HCC. Work includes the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of food hygiene training; and core work with food businesses to increase the number of healthy options available at takeaway outlets, including those selling food on delivery platforms.• Complete the review, which is being supported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, of the second-tier HCC criteria for larger chains.• Work with wholesalers to increase understanding of the HCC scheme; and encourage them to promote healthier options to businesses.• Extending ways businesses can apply for the scheme, including the option to apply for HCC online.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on HCC for local authorities, to increase the number of officers able to deliver the scheme. • Information on how premises within local authority School Superzone areas can be encouraged to participate in the scheme; and on the resources needed to support this.
<p>Good food in community settings and public institutions</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Health team</p>	<p>Aim: Work with public-sector partners to improve their food procurement for the communities they serve.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announced that he will provide emergency, one-off funding to ensure all primary school children in London can receive free school meals for the 2023-24 academic year. This is done through £130m of grants to London boroughs. • Launched the School Superzones programme to improve the health and wellbeing of London's young people. • Published his New London Plan, which included a new policy restricting the opening of fast-food outlets near schools. <p>To continue to achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to lobby government to fund universal free school meals beyond the 2023-24 academic year. He will also build the evidence base for the effectiveness of universal free school meals, as experienced in London; and develop models for longer-term sustainability, should funding from government remain unavailable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the expansion of the School Superzones programme. These are place-based interventions around schools in areas of the greatest disadvantage. They aim to protect children's health and enable healthy behaviours through the place-shaping powers of local authorities and local partnership working. We now have over 50 School Superzones across in 20 London boroughs. • Some boroughs choose to focus on improving the local food environment around their Superzones. Examples include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enfield: Working in partnership with Bite Back 2030 on a Youth Pod project where young people can hang out with friends, eat healthy food, and interact in a safe and unstructured social environment. Bite Back 2030 is a youth-led movement that is passionate about transforming local communities and regaining local high streets where healthier food is more affordable, accessible and appealing. ○ Croydon: Improve the food environment around the school using the HCC. ○ Barnet: work with businesses to: promote Barnet's Healthier High Streets Programme; create a good food retail plan; develop healthy eating behaviour-change interventions; and explore opportunities for food-growing spaces and community gardens. • Encourage schools to become water-only. Toolkits support primary and secondary schools to make water and/or low-fat milk the only drinks available. The programme will be promoted through the Healthy Schools London programme. Currently, there are 459 water-only schools across the 29 participating boroughs (this is 88 per cent of all boroughs). A rapid evaluation has been commissioned to look at how
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	the initiative can be strengthened to increase take-up of water-only policies.
<p>Good food for pregnancy and childhood</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Community and Social Policy team Health team</p>	<p>Aim: Use good food to help give Londoners the best possible start to life.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the London Child Obesity Taskforce to bring about a transformation in London – so that every child has every chance to grow up eating healthily, drinking plenty of water, and being physically active. • Commissioned a review of his Healthy Early Years London (HEYL) and Healthy Schools London (HSL) programmes. The review delivered recommendations for the programmes’ functionality and interface to support greater engagement, whilst retaining their focus on a wide range of healthy practices. These include improving food and drink practices and provisions. • Appointed the National Children’s Bureau as a delivery partner for HEYL and HSL to lead on the refresh of both programmes, aiming to ensure they are as effective as possible and are well aligned with regional efforts to tackle child health inequalities in London. • Continued to promote the Healthy Schools London programme. Nearly nine in ten London schools are now registered. • Undertook research, in 2022, that provided: a snapshot of current infant-feeding support services across London; a better understanding of the obstacles to validated data collection and of the reasons behind early cessation of breastfeeding in the first few weeks after birth, for

	<p>mothers who would have liked to breastfeed for longer; and some examples of good or innovative practice that can be shared and replicated to support progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivered an event in December 2022 for commissioners and service providers to identify the key actions and support required to increase breastfeeding levels across London.• Provided support for the Good Food for All Londoners report (coordinated by London Food Link and food poverty teams at Sustain) to celebrate and encourage action by councils on good food issues. The most recent report, covering 2022, includes a foreword by Dr Tom Coffey and Professor Kevin Fenton; and information on the School Superzones programme. <p>To continue to achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore how London's public spaces and workplaces can be made more welcoming for women who can and wish to breastfeed; support the development of a London breastfeeding strategy.• Fund UNICEF to support London boroughs that are not receiving the government's Family Hub funding for breastfeeding. This support will help boroughs on their journey to achieve or retain UNICEF UK Baby Friendly accreditation. It will be targeted at boroughs that are near the start of the process; are struggling to move forward with accreditation (especially post-COVID); or want to achieve a gold award. The Mayor encourages all London boroughs to become accredited to the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative in their maternity and community services.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing secretariat support to the Mayoral Advisory Group on Child Healthy Weight. The group will continue the work of the London Child Obesity Taskforce; and provide expert advice and insight into developing Mayoral priorities and wider policy supporting child health. At the group's first meeting in December 2022, it set out several priority areas with links to the food strategy. • Share and disseminate a theory of change on increasing uptake of the Healthy Start scheme. He will also consider what role the GLA can play in identifying and supporting a programme proposal with recovery partners, to promote the scheme across London and track impact.
<p>Good food growing, community gardening and urban farming</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Health team Green Infrastructure team Planning team Skills and employment team</p>	<p>Aim: Promote the benefits of food growing for individuals and communities.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published the new London Plan, which introduces a new policy (G8) around food growing. This policy requires boroughs' development plans to protect existing allotments; encourage space for urban agriculture and food growing; and identify potential sites that could be used for food production. • Provided grant funding to support Capital Growth, London's largest food growing network. <p>To help achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Capital Growth, a programme to increase the number of local community food-growing spaces across London. This is being delivered through Sustain. As with the HCC, investment will be focused on areas of London with the highest levels of deprivation and aligned where possible with School Superzone areas. Work will be

	done to consider how to utilise larger scale funding to help enable more food growing in London.
<p>Good food for the environment</p> <p>Teams responsible include:</p> <p>Environment team Green Infrastructure team Waste and Circular Economy team</p>	<p>Aim: Reduce the environmental impact of our food system by making it more efficient, more sustainable and less wasteful.</p> <p>Since the London Food Strategy was published, the Mayor has carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked through ReLondon, the statutory waste management partnership between the Mayor and London's boroughs, to reduce food waste. ReLondon has run recycling campaigns and targeted its advertising at areas with lower levels of recycling, including of food waste. Most recently he launched "Eat Like A Londoner", a campaign developed in partnership with London Councils' One World Living programme. The campaign aims to reduce food waste; encourages Londoners to transition to plant-based diets; and provides advice on how to save money on food costs. The campaign will run for two years (up to 2025). • ReLondon also provided financial and advisory support to the Felix Project, London's largest food-redistribution charity. • In partnership with Sustain and One World Living, ReLondon has developed a sustainable food-procurement commitment for London boroughs. This will govern the food they procure, including for councils that supply food to schools within their boroughs. Work to incorporate this commitment within the principles of the free school meals funding is being undertaken.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnered with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and ReLondon to establish London as one of three strategic partner cities working to accelerate the transition to a circular economy. This includes the Food Flagship Initiative, a three-year venture to demonstrate how a circular economy for food can be achieved in London. It also aims to meet the Mayor's target of reducing food waste per person by 20 per cent by 2025 and 50 per cent by 2030, as set out in the London Environment Strategy.• Published London's Food Footprint, a report that outlines the flow of food into London from production through to consumption; and analyses wastage across the supply chain, and food-related consumption-based emissions.• Launched Food Connect to provide immediate support to Londoners suffering from food insecurity through the redistribution of edible food waste.• Delivered a food waste minimisation pilot in Bexley with the food-waste apps Olio and Kitche.• Trained environmental health practitioners to support over 200 hospitality businesses in reducing their food waste.• Worked with boroughs through their reduction and recycling plans to set out key actions on cutting food waste and increasing food waste recycling.• Commissioned the production of a Food Waste Reduction Road Map, outlining a suggested pathway to achieve the Mayor's goals to reduce food waste, per person, by 50 per cent by 2030.
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	<p>To help achieve this aim, the Mayor will carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in partnership with boroughs, businesses and not-for-profits to reduce food waste and food related consumption-based emissions. The Mayor will convene a roundtable comprising representatives from food-sector organisations that have the largest impact on London’s food carbon footprint. The roundtable will outline commitments to reducing food loss and waste from the supply chain. The Mayor will also lead by example by using the purchasing power of the GLA and the wider GLA Group to reduce the consumption-based emissions of supply chains.• Seek to extend the reach of the sustainable food procurement commitment by signing up more London boroughs, and working with businesses and higher education institutions, to increase the number of less carbon-intensive menus and reduce waste.• In partnership with ReLondon and London Councils, continue to deliver the two-year Eat Like a Londoner campaign. He will seek opportunities to expand the campaign through partnering with business.
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