

Public Report – January 2023

Good Food Plan

**Produced by Company Drinks and Sustain for
the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

Community-led research and policy-led recommendations



Good Food Research: Setting the scene

The planned relocation of 3 London wholesale food markets to Barking & Dagenham brings new, long-term funding opportunities to address some of the challenges faced by our communities. This major new development is supporting the council's food programme, which will include projects and support for residents and businesses and create a cross-sector food partnership and action plan. This is a really important moment to look at our current food system, and to imagine how we want it to work in future.

The cost of living crisis, climate crisis, and nature crisis are all placing extra pressure on council and voluntary-sector food services that seek to address the multiple challenges facing our borough and our local food systems and networks. This research has taken place alongside a piece of research carried out by HumDum, looking specifically at how our food banks can support people to be food secure. Together, these pieces of research will lay the foundations for a borough-wide, holistic approach to food, with the goal that everyone in the borough can access nourishing, tasty, affordable, climate-friendly and culturally-appropriate food.



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1.

Project

Summary

1.1 The Proposal

INGREDIENTS

Company Drinks
Sustain
Local residents
Local food organisers
Key knowledge holders

METHOD

Create three elements which will form the basis of your research and findings. Use **Company Drinks'** local connections to:

- 1. Form a Resident Research Panel** who will
 - Map existing resources and initiatives
 - Identify LBBD's diverse food cultures
 - Interview key knowledge holders: local residents, officers and food organisers

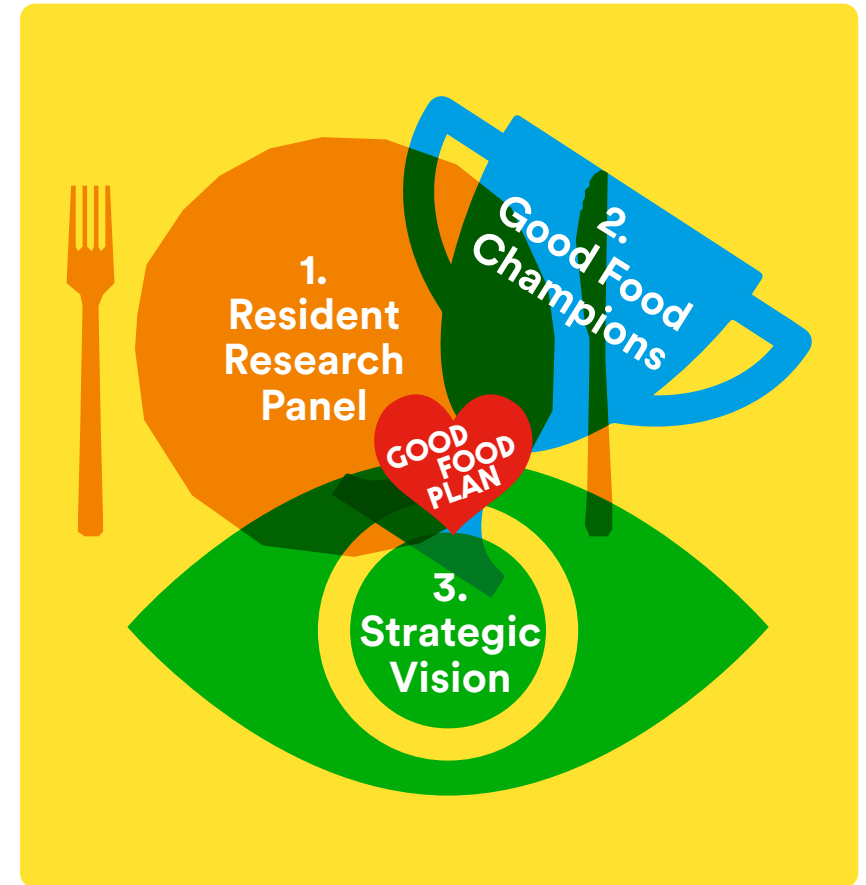
Use the Resident Research Panel to identify:

- 2. Good Food Champions**
 - Learn from them
 - Talking Food Lunches with them
 - Visit other comparable locations

Use **Sustain's** knowledge and experience to create a:

- 3. Strategic Vision** which will
 - Define research objectives and milestones
 - Have a strategic overview of food issues
 - Give a London-wide/national context
 - Report and Workshop presenting recommendations
 - Advise on Legacy Building

Mix all three elements together over a period of 6 months

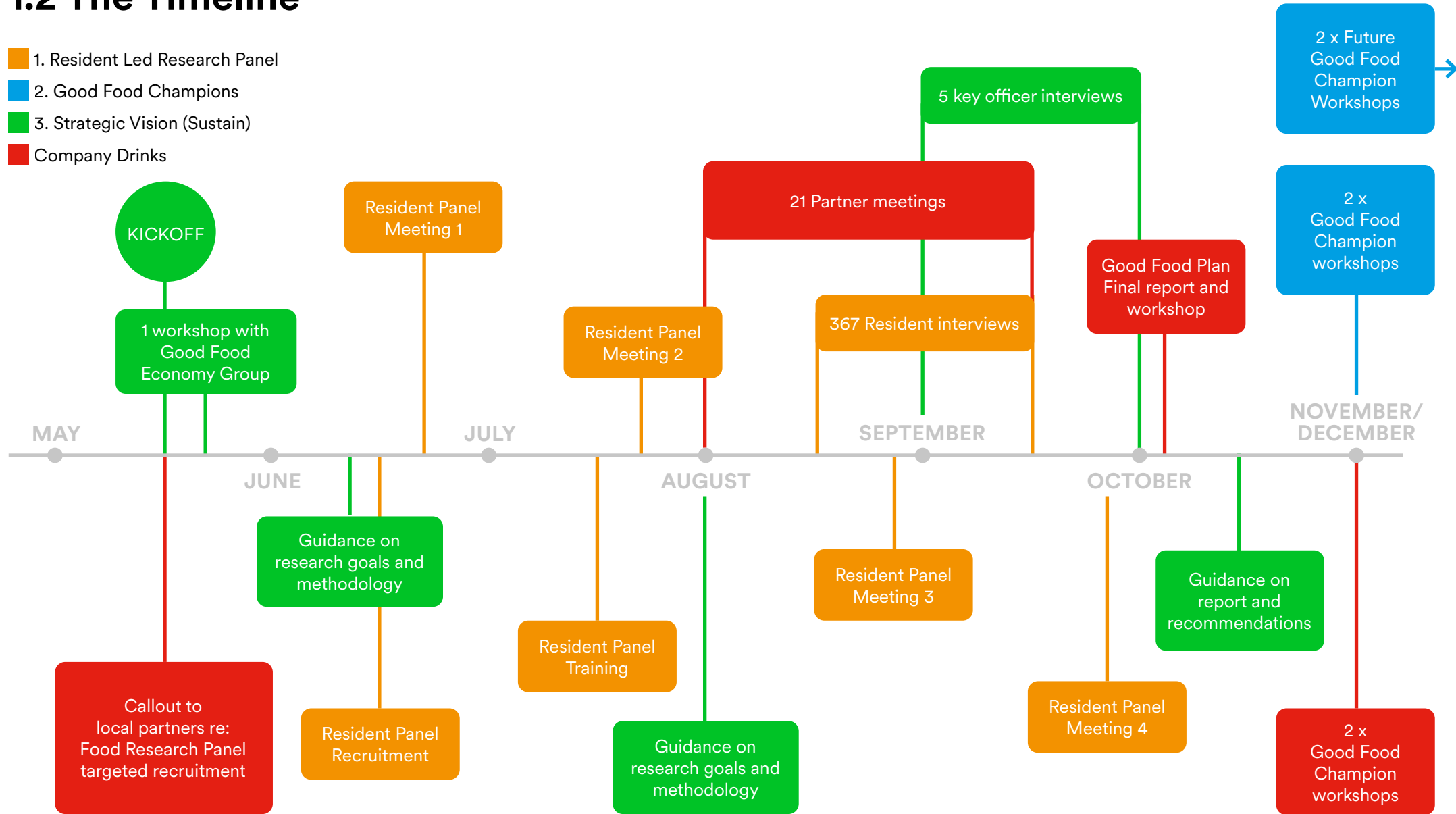


PROPOSED TIMELINE



1.2 The Timeline

- 1. Resident Led Research Panel
- 2. Good Food Champions
- 3. Strategic Vision (Sustain)
- Company Drinks



1.3 Who we spoke to

4 x Resident Research Panel Meetings

- Mide Allen
- Kamila Bourouiba
- Nia Lopez
- Elisabetta Nasta
- Emdad Rahman
- Andrew Williams

OUTCOMES

- Helping to shape the project, its focus themes and recommendations
- Ensuring better engagement across the borough
- Removing barriers to engagement
- Employing local residents to be involved

4 x 'Open Kitchen' Drop-In Consultations at Company Drinks

- 22 Local residents

OUTCOMES

- Raising awareness about the research
- Speaking to people about local food ideas, initiatives and issues

21 x Meetings with local partners / partner organisations

- BDCVS
- BD Giving
- BD Park Rangers
- BeFirst
- Couleur Cafe
- Dagenham Library / Church Elm Food Hub
- Elevate Her
- Every One Every Day
- Fruitful Orchard CIC
- Future M.O.L.D.S Communities
- The Good Food Collective
- Growing Communities Dagenham Farm
- John Smith House Consortium
- Kingsley Hall Community Centre
- Make Your Mark
- Skinny Cook / Jitterbug
- Soul and Sound / Healthy Mind, Healthy Grind
- Thames Life Community Development Trust
- The National Trust at Stoneford Cottage Garden
- The Osborne Partnership
- Woodward Arts & Culture Centre

OUTCOMES

- Understanding the local landscape of existing growing, cooking, health and wellbeing offers
- Identifying local challenges for groups wishing to provide healthy food/wellbeing activities
- Identifying opportunities to better support groups wishing to provide healthy food/wellbeing activities
- Identifying existing successful partnerships and collaborations
- Identifying gaps in funding, local support and awareness

Interviews with key officers

- Darren Tranter, CEO, BD Together
- Donna Thacker, Head of Service Development, BD Together
- Lily McSweeney, Food Education Partnership Coordinator
- Andy Johnson, Lead Commissioner of Parks
- Rebecca Nunn, Consultant in Public Health for Inclusive Growth

Engagement with / visits to local food businesses or food enterprises

- 11 businesses or food enterprises

Meetings with Good Food Champions

- 4 Good Food Champions

Resident Research: Individual Interviews with local residents – interviews conducted by the Resident Research Panel

- Approx. 367 Local residents

OUTCOMES

- Removing barriers for talking to local people about food issues, ideas and activities
- Understanding the needs and opinions of local residents
- Ensuring the research speaks for residents and is clear and transparent

Participation in Online Good Food Mailing List / Good Food Survey

- 143 Local residents

OUTCOMES

- Raising awareness about the research
- Inviting residents to have their say

2.

Resident-led
Research

2.1 Introducing: The Resident Research Panel

PERSON	INTEREST OR EXPERTISE	WHO THEY SPOKE WITH	WHAT DID THEY LEARN?
Mide Allen Dagenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local growing Allotment holder Beekeeper Founder of Fruitful Orchard CIC Permaculturist & Ecotherapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local growers and residents interested in cooperative models for sharing green spaces, skills and knowledge Some are seeking space to set up green enterprises, gardens, orchards or cafes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There's frustration at the clarity of information around local allotments People want to learn skills for setting up independent food growing cooperatives
Kamila Bourouiba Barking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Couleur Cafe Food Business Culturally appropriate food offers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local food businesses owners, including cafes and wholesale shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the board there was a reluctance to contribute to the research and surveys, and a lack of trust in the council's agenda Businesses cited a lack of business support and lack of sense of belonging to a community Both need addressing with any future business engagement
Nia Lopez Dagenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thames Life Community Development Trust Health and Nutrition Food growing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual local residents involved in community initiatives and with an interest in nutrition The Thames Life and Ripple Nature Reserve communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People responded well to the informality of the interviews and the offer of tea and cake
Elisabetta Nasta Barking Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barking Riverside resident Every One Every Day member Former Good Food Collective member Schools and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local residents in Barking Riverside, in particular families and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents in Barking Riverside don't feel connected to the rest of the borough and would like to integrate more
Emdad Rahman Barking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Service Lead Local voluntary sector Safeguarding Youth and community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of community sports clubs Voluntary sector groups Local homeless residents Residents of sheltered accommodation Community service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People were highly responsive to the resident-led approach and disclosed that they felt happier speaking with Emdad than they would to council staff
Andrew Williams Dagenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder of Hustle Eats Youth engagement and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local business owners in Barking and Dagenham Residents across the borough Youth organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also experienced strong resistance from local businesses and a need to build trust

2.2 Methodology: The Resident Research Panel

- Recruitment was done via targeted outreach through local food partners
- All 6 Researchers are local residents have experience of working / living in the borough
- All 6 are passionate about food issues relating to their community, and represent the cultural diversity of the borough
- Resident Researchers were paid for meetings and interviews, at above Living Wage rate of pay and receiving an additional materials budget for supporting outreach and incentivising interviewees
- There were regular check ins and milestones for making adjustments to the methods
- Resident Researchers were given basic training in conducting social research through interviews, and recording qualitative data
- Interviewing community members in familiar settings, listening to them, and **NOT GATHERING QUANTITATIVE DATA ON DEMOGRAPHICS**, ethnicity etc., built trust, removed access barriers, and made residents feel comfortable to speak freely to the researchers
- Care measures were incorporated into all methods and meetings, to safeguard both the panel members and the residents they interviewed
- The research outputs and **8 X COMMUNITY DEMANDS** were agreed together, as a group, in a final review workshop, with Sustain and LBBB present. This ensured maximum accountability and transparency in our research reporting



2.3 What is the community's favourite meal?

Quotes from the resident-led research interviews



2.5 What people told us online

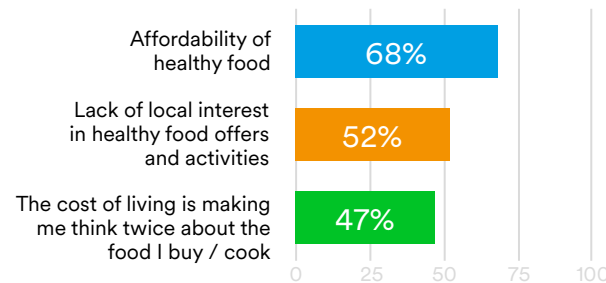
A selection of results taken from responses to the online Good Food Survey – 101 participants

Q. What one word comes to mind when you think of food in Barking & Dagenham?

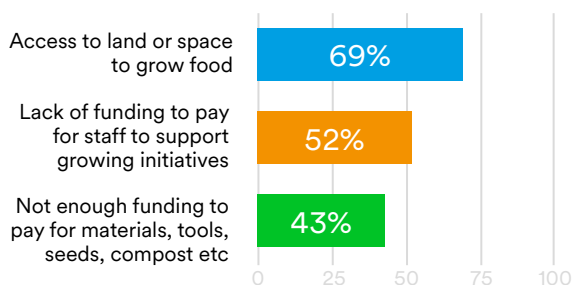


Only **19%** think that it is easy to access healthy food in Barking & Dagenham

Q. What do you think are the main challenges facing those wishing to eat healthier in Barking & Dagenham?

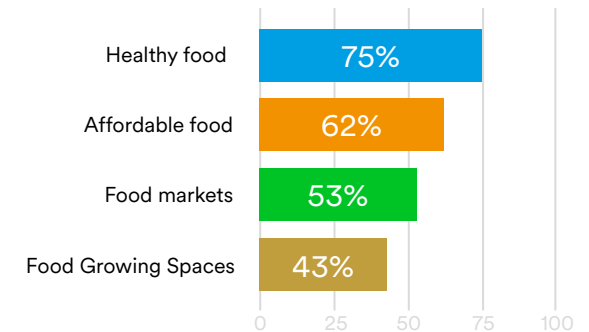


Q. What do you think are the main challenges in Barking & Dagenham, for people wanting to grow their own food? (tick all that apply)



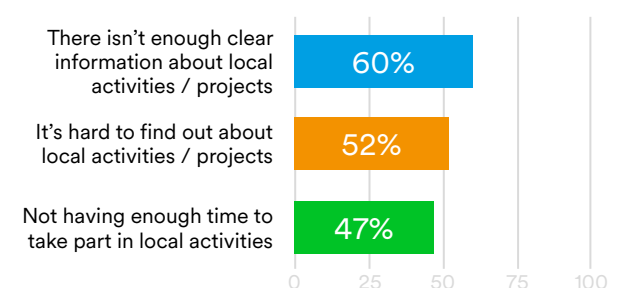
85% would like to see more food growing spaces, activities and training opportunities in their local area

Q. In LBB, what is missing in the local food offer, or what would you like to see more of? (tick all that apply)



Only **11%** think it's easy to access sustainable or planet-friendly food in Barking & Dagenham

Q. What do you think are the main challenges for those wishing to take part in community food activities in Barking & Dagenham?



2.6 Summary of Resident Research – What we found out

Between June and October 2022 – 6 Resident Research Panel members – 4 meetings – 367 people interviewed – one set of demands – a collective vision for a Good Food Plan

1.
We need access to healthier, fresher food
...in all settings. Improving access to fresher produce as well as supporting community groups to offer healthy activities + meals

2.
The plan must be inclusive
...ensuring that food offers, funding and programmes 'leave no one behind'

3.
We need to develop and celebrate Local Food Champions and Advocates
...uplifting and training local residents to be Good Food champions. Increasing awareness and helping educate their communities

4.
Affordability and the cost of living must be at the heart of the plan
...acknowledging that the community is deeply worried about the cost of living and that affordability of future offers will be key

5.
We need to nurture a culture of Good Food Businesses and Enterprises
.... growing a healthier food business sector. Improving food-sector specific support for new enterprises and existing local businesses

6.
It's essential to build trust, and grow long-term projects
...addressing the need to regain people's trust and invest in long-term, meaningful infrastructure and programmes

7.
We want more local food growing
...sowing seeds for better access to land, food growing skills and sustainably grown produce

8.
We want more choice and cultural diversity
...a food sector that reflects the borough's rich cultural diversity and makes residents proud of what's on offer

3.

Research
Findings

3.1 The Research Findings – A taste of what’s out there

FOOD BUSINESSES WE SPOKE TO

- 1 **Couleur Cafe**
Unit 5 Station Parade,
Barking Station, Essex IG11 8TU
- 2 **Barking Cafe**
13 East Street, Barking,
Essex IG11 8ER
- 3 **Dessert Studio**
Unit 50–51 Vicarage Field Shopping
Centre Barking IG11 8DH
- 4 **Grounded, (EOED) at the Wilds**
Northgate Road, Barking IG11 0AN
- 5 **Valence House Cafe**
Valence House Museum
Dagenham RM8 3HT
- 6 **Eastbrookend Country Park Tea Room**
Discovery Centre, Eastbrookend,
The Chase, Dagenham RM7 0SS
- 7 **Hustle Eats**
- 8 **Street Kitchen, at
Kingsley Hall Community Centre**
Dagenham RM9 5NB
- 9 **BeFirst / Future Food Hub**
10-12 East St, London IG11 8DU
- 10 **The Good Food Collective**
- 11 **Skinny Cook / Jitterbug**
Every One Every Day Warehouse
47 Thames Rd, Barking IG11 0HQ

FOOD GROWING OPPORTUNITIES WE IDENTIFIED

- 1 **Growing Communities Dagenham Farm**
Rainham Road North, Central Park
Nurseries, Dagenham RM10 7EJ
- 2 **Barking Food Forest**
Fielders Cres, Barking IG11 0FU
- 3 **BD Park Rangers**
Eastbrookend Country Park
- 4 **The National Trust**
Stoneford Cottage Garden, Rainham Road
South, Dagenham RM10 8AG
- 5 **The Osborne Partnership**
Osbourne Centre, Osbourne Square
Dagenham, RM9 5AU
- 6 **Every One Every Day, Warehouse**
Participatory City Foundation
47 Thames Rd, Barking IG11 0HQ
- 7 **Company Drinks Grow Club Garden**
Barking Park, Longbridge Road
Barking IG11 8TA



COMMUNITY PARTNERS WE INTERVIEWED

- 1 **Company Drinks (HAF team)**
Outdoor Bowls Pavilion, Barking Park
Lodge, Barking Park, Longbridge Road,
Barking IG11 8TA
- 2 **Future M.O.L.D.S Communities (FMC)**
- 3 **Elevate Her**
- 4 **BDYD**
- 5 **John Smith House Consortium**
John Smith House, Bevan Avenue
Barking IG11 9LL
- 6 **Dagenham Library, Food Club**
1 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham RM10 9QS
- 7 **Kingsley Hall Community Centre**
Dagenham RM9 5NB
- 8 **BD Giving**
Make It Barking, 15 Linton Road
Barking IG11 8HE
- 9 **Healthy Mind, Healthy Grind**
- 10 **Make Your Mark**
Thames Community Hub
Bastable Avenue IG11 0LH
- 11 **Every One Every Day**
Every One Every Day Warehouse
47 Thames Rd, Barking IG11 0HQ
- 12 **Every One Every Day, Ripple Road Shop and Kitchen**
55 Ripple Rd, Barking IG11 7NT
- 13 **Thames Life Community Development Trust**
Barking Riverside Office:
Thames Life, Riverside Campus,
Renwick Road, Barking, IG11 0FU
Thames View Office:
Thames Life, Thames Community Hub
Bastable Avenue, Barking, IG11 0LH

Research Findings #1

We need access to healthier, fresher food

What residents told us online



Residents think that the top 3 challenges

facing people trying to access healthy food are

affordability

a perceived lack of local interest

a lack of healthy options at local events and activities

What we learned from local partners

- Food grown locally is already being served at the **VALENCE HOUSE** and **EASTBROOKEND COUNTRY PARK** cafes, with help from the **LBBD PARK RANGERS**
- **BARKING FOOD FOREST** partnered with **CREATIVE BARKING & DAGENHAM** to share healthy food as part of the GROW creative commission in 2022
- At **JOHN SMITH HOUSE**, groups serve healthy food alongside all physical activities
- **GROWING COMMUNITIES** have piloted fresh produce stalls in the borough
- **COMPANY DRINKS** partner with food specialists **MADE UP KITCHEN** to offer healthy, interactive “feasts” as part of their HAF programmes

What residents told the research panel

The borough is perceived as unhealthy, with fast, fried food as a staple feature, and people would like to learn how to cook and eat healthier

Some local food growers told us that they wish to support farmers, learn where food comes from, how to eat more seasonally, and gain better understanding of the environmental impact of food

People want to get 'back to their roots', and eat fresh, locally sourced produce

It's felt that everyone in the borough should have access to fresh, tasty, nutritious food, and, while this needs to start with education in schools, it could also happen at public events and community activities, such as food festivals

The key findings....

- People want to see healthy food becoming integrated into other community activities
- Groups and organisations need access to training and better facilities before they can offer healthy food activities
- People feel there's a need for clearer signposting to existing health and wellbeing activities and training
- Groups want access to cross-sector collaborations to unlock existing knowledge and resources
- There's a frustration at not having access to the healthy produce already being grown in/coming through the borough

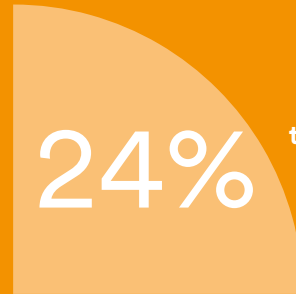
Research Findings #2

The plan must be inclusive

What residents told us online



responses referred to 'lack of time' as a barrier to accessing, growing or cooking healthy food



told us that the current community food offers aren't inclusive enough

What residents told the research panel

Most people can't take part in community projects. We heard about a lack of equality and opportunity across sectors, and of the importance of creating community spaces where everyone is welcome, regardless of their background, status, age or ability

It was raised repeatedly that lots of people face multiple barriers to taking part in community projects, ranging from time-poverty, lack of digital access and housing insecurity

People reported concerns about safeguarding in some of the existing shared community spaces and offers

We heard how important it is to raise aspirations for young people - especially those from [marginalised] backgrounds, and to offer the 'dignity of choice' to all

What we learned from local partners

- One of the most valuable services alongside the **FOOD CLUB AT DAGENHAM LIBRARY** is their **DIGITAL SUPPORT**
- **LOCAL YOUTH ORGANISATIONS** understand the importance of providing young people with leaders and mentors they can relate to
- **THE OSBORNE PARTNERSHIP** are growing food with people with learning/physical disabilities
- Several local partners have carried out work addressing the cultural accessibility of food offers and support

The key findings....

- People repeatedly referred to the borough as being 'divided.' This needs exploring and addressing.
- 'Time poverty' is a barrier for those seeking skills or wishing to cook/grow healthy food
- 4 x partner organisations/businesses mentioned an urgent need to support BIPOC (especially youth) in accessing funding, support and entrepreneurial opportunities
- There need to be more educational activities at weekends
- A key concern regarding existing shared spaces is the safeguarding of groups
- Existing food initiatives are often reliant on volunteers – local residents face multiple barriers to offering voluntary time. We need to be aiming to pay local people London Living Wage, 'valuing them beyond when the funding runs out'

Research Findings #3

We need to develop and celebrate Local food champions and advocates

What residents told us online

Resident panel interviews identified



existing local 'Food Champions' from across the borough

What we learned from local partners

- Multiple local residents were nominated as **GOOD FOOD CHAMPIONS** for their voluntary work with local groups, services and organisations distributing and sharing food locally
- There are a number of local, self-led groups already sharing and celebrating local food cultures through the diversity of their members
- **LOCAL YOUTH GROUPS** are already running empowerment, mentoring and citizenship programmes for young people, focusing on issues that are important to their community

What residents told the research panel

Many people said they want to see the borough investing in formally qualified food champions, educators and mentors: uplifting local people, rather than bringing in outside experts

Interviewees recognised that local people understand the local needs, so it benefits the health of the community to invest in them

It was pointed out that support for young people to become local food leaders needs appropriate resourcing and support

We heard that people would love to see more initiatives where local residents can come together and share stories and recipes with each other

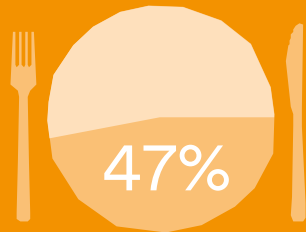
The key findings...

- Some local organisations worry about the effect of 'heroes' taking away from communal impact...
- ... however, residents wish to see more local people being developed and lifted up to become trainers, food champions, advocates and leaders in healthy change in their communities
- People aren't against outside specialists being brought in to deliver services, but they want to understand why it's necessary and to know that attempts were made to identify local expertise and skills
- Many local organisations are already delivering programmes around empowerment and citizenship. Supporting these groups will be key for developing local food champions

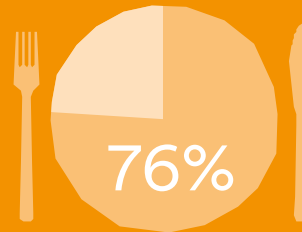
Research Findings #4

Affordability and the cost of living must be at the heart of the plan

What residents told us online



said the cost of living is making them think twice about what they eat and how they cook



think that affordability is the main challenge when switching to more sustainable food

What residents told the research panel

Local food entrepreneurs told us that they can't sustain themselves and their businesses unless invoices/ services are paid in advance

Several people mentioned cost effective cooking (ie 'bulk-cooking'), which could be taught at local events

While residents want to see a community-led approach to the Good Food Plan, they also recognise that cost is currently the most important barrier to be considered

We heard that many people see 'good food' as a luxury, which they can't afford to invest in

Many residents feel they have to set aside their own health concerns because of prioritising paying bills, care and work obligations

What we learned from local partners

- **THE EDEN STOREHOUSE** at Kingsley Hall runs a voucher system for buying food at their community supermarket
- Several local partners have established independent partnerships with supermarkets and local charities, for receiving and passing on free, donated food
- **GROWING COMMUNITIES** are trialling a series of 'Bridging the Gap' projects, looking at community procurement for community food projects
- **THE HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY GRIND** programme teaches people skills for eating healthily on a budget

The key findings...

- Across the board, the Cost of Living Crisis is perceived as a barrier to making healthy life choices
- Affordability is the main factor impacting people's choices around the sustainability of the food they buy and cook
- Residents want more educational opportunities and resources for teaching people skills to cook affordable meals that are healthy and culturally appropriate
- Affordable recipes and shopping guides would be helpful, but ingredients need to be available locally
- Local food startups / entrepreneurs also face multiple economic barriers to running their businesses and require reliable, regular trading opportunities and up-front payment for their services
- Local businesses, community organisations and food startups all told us they would be interested in having access to 'bulk ordered' healthier, organic or locally grown produce

Research Findings #5

We need to nurture a culture of Good Food Businesses and Enterprises

What residents told us online



What residents told the research panel

Local food growers told us that they'd love to see more sites across the borough where food growing is combined with community cafe offers, to bring people with different interests together over healthy food

Multiple interviewees mentioned a need for community bakeries and cafes

Local food business staff and employers showed a lack of trust in the council, and a frustration at the lack of opportunities offered to existing businesses

Food entrepreneurs told us that they would need affordable rates and better guided support to grow their food businesses. We heard repeatedly about a need for continuity in business training programmes, rather than one-off programmes or activities

We heard that pop-up opportunities, while common, aren't realistic for local people to establish a local business and often mean having to take financial risks when starting out

What we learned from local partners

- **THE STREET KITCHEN** at Kingsley Hall – provides food industry training and work experience
- Multiple partners told us they'd love to set up community cafes at their sites but don't have the resources or capacity
- **GROWING COMMUNITIES** do not rely on volunteers: 'good food needs good jobs'
- **COMPANY DRINKS** are a live, local drinks-making community enterprise
- **HUSTLE EATS** provide food sector entrepreneurial opportunities for local young people

The key findings...

- B&D residents are optimistic about the arrival of the wholesale markets, and want them to benefit the health, economy and aspirations of the community – especially for young people
- Food business support needs to address systematic barriers in the borough, and to respond to the needs of local residents
- Entrepreneurs want to see long-term solutions enabling them to work in collaboration (or consortium) with each other
- Existing local businesses feel excluded from new programmes, training and strategies
- Local people care about the quality of produce they buy and are excited by the prospect of healthy, new food enterprises.... For example bakeries
- People want to see more family-friendly food spaces and enterprises

Research Findings #6

It's essential to build trust, and grow long-term projects

What residents told us online



What residents told the research panel

We heard a lot of frustration at the lack of long-term food initiatives, leading to residents losing interest over time. People want to see change happen, but expressed a skepticism about whether or not it would/could happen

Multiple interviewees expressed a desire to see clear outcomes from this research process

One resident told us that they don't believe that healthy food is a priority in the borough

We heard repeatedly about the importance of sharing knowledge and resources across groups and services, instead of just replicating ideas

One interviewee explained that giving people a sense of ownership is crucial for keeping them engaged and invested

What we learned from local partners

- Several partners we spoke to are already co-designing their health and wellbeing programmes to ensure they respond to the needs of their communities, such as **KINGSLEY HALL, FUTURE M.O.L.D.S COMMUNITIES, MAKE YOUR MARK, BDYD, and BARKING FOOD FOREST**
- **GROWING COMMUNITIES** try not to rely on external funding, for project sustainability
- **THE LBB PARK RANGERS** have an understanding of the challenges facing long-term food growing projects from their experiencing of setting up the network of community orchards

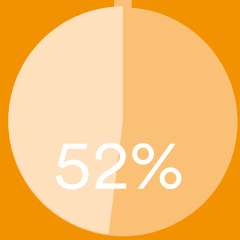
The key findings...

- The council needs to gain the trust of the local food business sector if it's to engage them in future Good Food programmes or initiatives
- People responded well to the Resident Research Panel. They said it broke down barriers and allowed them to feel heard, on their own terms. The Good Food Strategy should continue to work collaboratively with resident researchers on any future engagement or outreach
- Staffing (at London Living Wage), local socio-economic barriers, and people's capacity need to be factored into future Good Food funding for new, sustainable food projects
- Residents/partners identified a need for long-term, collaborative projects to make food / growing spaces more inclusive to marginalised communities – for example BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities

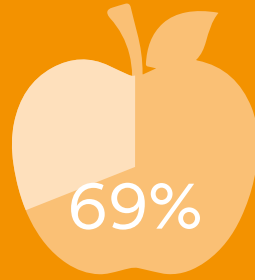
Research Findings #7

We want to grow more local food

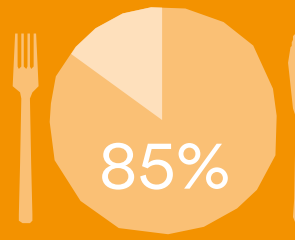
What residents told us online



said that the main challenge for residents wanting to grow food is a lack of funding to cover staff time



said that the main challenge for people wanting to grow their own food in Barking & Dagenham is access to land



want more food growing spaces, training opportunities and activities in their local area

What residents told the research panel

We heard from local growers that residents want to access land for food growing, but they face the challenge of long queue for allotments, or issues with organisational access

One interviewee told us that a common concern amongst those renting from private landlords is that they're not sure if they're permitted to adapt gardens and grow food at home

Local growers are interested in supporting farmers, but also want to gain knowledge and training for growing their own food and teaching their community to do the same

One grower identified a need for more culturally inclusive outdoor programmes, as well as initiatives to include the elderly and those with disabilities

What we learned from local partners

- There are already some partnerships in place across the borough to deliver food growing projects, including **COMMUNITY ORCHARDS**
- Several organisations would like to run food growing activities, but they need support and long-term partnerships for this to be viable
- **THE BARKING FOOD FOREST** is a learning space for those wishing to grow elsewhere and **GROWING COMMUNITIES** run traineeships and workshops on their farms
- **THE OSBORNE PARTNERSHIP** have an on site garden where they grow food for their cafe
- **LOCAL YOUTH GROUPS** are interested in running more projects relating to the environment and sustainability

The key findings...

- Local residents want to see more food growing, and food growing training, in their communities
- Across the board, residents and partners understand that food growing requires long-term investment in skills, maintenance and support for groups – not 'short-term garden projects'
- Land and access to land is a sensitive issue, both in terms of difficulty accessing allotments/green spaces and the frustration at green spaces being lost to development
- Local residents want to benefit from food growing already happening in the borough
- Organisations and groups with experience of delivering long-term food growing programmes should be consulted on planning future programmes

Research Findings #8

We want more choice and cultural diversity

What residents told us online



OUT OF STOCK

When asked what one word comes to mind when thinking of the local food offer, 38% commented on the lack of choice, using words like 'scarce', 'lacking', and 'limited'



In interviews, residents told us they have to leave the borough to access the food and ingredients of their culture

What we learned from local partners

- **HUSTLE EATS** train young people to cook culturally appropriate food for events
- Organisations like **HUMDUM** and **KINGSLEY HALL CC** focus on culturally appropriate food support services for their communities
- In 2020 the **GOOD FOOD COLLECTIVE** were commissioned by LBBD to deliver a series of talks, workshops and cooked meals celebrating Black History Month through Afro-Caribbean recipes
- One local partner told us that the 'food needs to taste [great] if we're going to get young people involved'

What residents told the research panel

We heard about the importance of seeing and sharing more cultural influences in the local food system, many pointed out how little choice there is currently

Barking Riverside residents would love to see shared cooking areas, such as communal BBQ areas

People don't feel represented by the local food offers, and go elsewhere to find their specific food culture or produce

Several interviewees talked about a lack of healthy food offers for families, not only in cafes and restaurants, but also at local leisure and entertainment venues

We heard that more and more people are choosing vegetarian and vegan diets

The key findings...

- People are frustrated by how limited and unhealthy the existing food offers are. They want to see more diverse, healthier offers on their high streets and at local events
- Many people aren't aware of the cultural diversity of local food and local food businesses, and were curious to find out more
- Many people don't feel like Barking and Dagenham's food scene represents them and their cultures
- Residents want to see new places to meet people and eat: spaces that feel welcoming and safe for people to come together and try new cuisines
- Many people mentioned the abundance of chicken shops in a negative light. This needs addressing sensitively so as not to alienate local residents from local healthy food strategies

4.

The Good Food

Research

Recommendations

The resident-led research revealed that....



In response, Company Drinks and Sustain have come up with a set of recommendations and helpful case studies to inspire and inform:



4.1 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY: Showing leadership and making connections across sectors

AIM

The council matches ambitious internal leadership with close collaboration across the private sector and voluntary sector to make healthy and climate-friendly diets accessible to everyone.

REPRESENTING AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Listening to, and amplifying, the community's voice

EXAMPLES FOR INSPIRATION, NOT REPLICATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP PRIORITY

Establish and enable a food partnership that:

- **closely engages across the public, private, and voluntary sector**
- **is inclusive and representative of the local community**
- **and seeks to build capacity for community leadership**

- Gain membership of the Sustainable Food Places network to support the food partnership's activities and learn from their network
- Ensure the food partnership is inclusive and actively opposes all forms of racism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia and sexism
- Continue building on and working with Resident Research Panel and cross-sector partners to develop a Food Strategy and Action Plan
- Train local residents (including young people) to be good food ambassadors
- Improve performance on the Good Food for All Londoners report

Valuing, and working with, the voluntary sector and local business

NEXT STEPS

Good Food Champion workshop

A food partnership visit and workshop to learn about Brent's Right to Food Campaign, with Granville Community Kitchen and Sufra.

In Brent, the council has declared itself a '[Right to Food Borough](#)', which aims to enshrine a right to food into legislation to "end the scandal of hunger and food banks once and for all". The council organised a right to food summit and is co-designing a food justice strategy with community organisations.

What makes a good Food Partnership?

Following on from the work already happening in the borough through funders such as BD Giving, it'll be essential to implement long-term, strategic and participatory processes, engaging organisations and residents, in making decisions on future funding, training and activities aligned with the Good Food Plan.

We have heard loud and clear that grassroots community groups and local businesses want a seat at the table in the development of a cross-sector, Good Food Strategy. We recommend forming a food partnership around equity and making space for those usually excluded from funding, opportunities and having a say on local strategic decisions.

4.2 LAND, PLANET AND PRODUCE: More local, climate-friendly food grown and eaten

AIM

Unlock land in Barking and Dagenham for horticulture and community food growing; and strengthen local supply chains to enable more healthy, climate-friendly produce to be eaten in the borough

Recognising and utilising the many benefits of food growing

NURTURING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

GOOD FOOD GROWING FOR A GOOD FOOD ECONOMY

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP PRIORITY

Employ or fund a Community Growing Officer who works closely with community groups to enable more residents to grow their own food

Realise the power of council procurement by forming an internal task and finish group and joining the London Circular Food Procurement Working Group

- Work with Growing Communities' Better Food Shed to procure fresh produce from climate-friendly producers in the region for school meals
- Support Growing Communities Dagenham Farm to resource their ambition to upskill local residents, recognising the potential of this asset to the borough
- Make community food growing a priority due to strong community need and recognise its value in relevant policies
- Partner with other local authorities to explore dynamic procurement practices that support sustainable producers and suppliers to bid for larger contracts
- Map all council owned land and buildings to identify underused /vacant spaces, and create a clear pathway for new growing spaces to be requested, building on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Ensure your local planning policy (including your Local Plan) supports a good food system including:
 - ensuring food growing is built into new developments
 - supporting sustainable farming
 - protecting and increasing assets such as markets and low-rent premises to support good food enterprises
- Create a vendor policy and guidelines to ensure all vendors serve healthy and climate-friendly food

NEXT STEPS

Good Food Champion workshop

A food partnership visit and workshop to learn about Growing Communities at the Dagenham Starter Farm.

Being a London borough, there are fewer opportunities to source directly from producers and growers. But Barking and Dagenham is uniquely placed, being host to a new not-for-profit wholesaler focused on climate-friendly produce: The Better Food Shed. The [Growing Communities Dagenham Farm](#) and [Better Food Shed](#) are assets to the community.

USING PUBLIC ASSETS AS COMMUNITY ASSETS

Making the most of existing projects, and supporting them to thrive

4.3 BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTHIER, FRESHER, CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FOOD: Holistic approach to nourishing our communities

AIM

Every person in LBBD is able to access healthy, climate-friendly, affordable food

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP PRIORITY

Maintain Food For Life Silver standard in schools, and support BD Together’s efforts to increase the proportion of protein from vegetables and pulses in meals they serve

NEXT STEPS

Good Food Champion workshop

A food partnership visit and workshop to learn about Company Drinks & Made Up Kitchen: HAF programmes.

Since 2021 Company Drinks has partnered with Made Up Kitchen to deliver their ‘Explore the Wild’ HAF programmes for young people in Barking and Dagenham. Based in Hackney, and working across east London, [Made Up Kitchen](#) offer a holistic approach to food provision and support. They foster long-term partnerships with community sector groups, for example their youth-led, [Covid-19](#) response, and have established a community food shop on the Kingsmead Estate.

**BUILDING
COMMUNITY
WEALTH**

**Recognising
dignity even
in crisis**

- Work with schools that aren’t already using BD Together to improve their menus, including advocating the adoption of the council-run service
- Build action to tackle unhealthy food environments into the obesity action plan, working with the council’s planning department and public health
- Sign up to a declaration on healthy food e.g. Sustain’s Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food
- Develop a Healthier Food Advertising Policy
- Implement borough-wide measures to establish access to food as a human right, to move beyond the reliance on food banks towards more dignified solutions
- Ensure the council champions the London Living Wage through its funding and supply chains, to ensure that people earn enough to buy healthy, fresh food
- Support communities to start their own coops, buying groups or other affordable food outlets through training sessions, seed funding, and access to space to store food
- Make healthy food the norm for community activity provision, for example through recipe books, or a good food charter
- Build on the Barking Dagenham Foodbank Network: Research and analysis 2022, being led by Humdum

**CREATING THE
CONDITIONS FOR
A HEALTHY
COMMUNITY**

**CENTRING
THE COMMUNITY
IN SOLUTIONS**

4.4 GOOD FOOD ENTERPRISE: Healthier, more diverse trade, training and enterprises

AIM

Ensure local residents can access the food, jobs and opportunities provided by a local food sector that implements climate-friendly, community-focussed, healthier practices

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY JOBS, HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEM

PUTTING A BOLD VISION INTO POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP PRIORITY

Develop a markets strategy or plan to ensure local residents can access food and job opportunities that are coming to the borough, and to ensure that access to climate friendly food is enhanced

- Map and consult existing local food enterprises in the borough to increase residents' awareness of available businesses and services and understand how existing businesses want to help provide access to healthy, fresh and climate friendly foods, and what support they require
- Organise working groups with members of the wholesale markets to identify opportunities for providing jobs to residents and build community wealth
- Establish a programme for training and mentoring local residents in market trading skills, potentially linked to a series of community run food stalls or coops
- Develop a food business engagement plan to connect local enterprises with the the council's ambitions on food
- Prioritise smaller local food enterprises in any Government grants or support
- Ensure existing food enterprises, including retail and markets, hospitality, community food organisations are aware of incoming markets and identify opportunities for accessing food (e.g. training days, pamphlets, guides) exploring a good food charter that would look to increase the sales of fresh healthy produce in the borough
- Create 'Buy Local' financial incentive schemes and promote 'Buy local' campaigns
- Give favourable treatment in planning guidance for local retailers and producers to have the space to produce, process, supply and sell good food
- Favourable treatment in the access to public land and premises for SMEs and local food enterprises for local food growing, infrastructure, logistics and retail initiatives

NEXT STEPS

Good Food Champion workshop

A food partnership visit and workshop to learn about GCDA business incubation and street food market.

In Greenwich, Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency (GCDA) run specific [business training and support](#) for existing and emerging food businesses in the borough, including a post-lockdown recovery course for businesses.

To encourage good practice in the borough, the partnership runs a [Good Food Business Charter](#), with actions enterprises can take to support health, the environment and the economy.

VALUING YOUR CHAMPIONS

Nurturing the next generation of food champions

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sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

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Public Report