

Cambridge City Council



[Draft] Sustainable Food Policy Statement

Introduction

Cambridge City Council (the council) in its community leadership role wants, alongside its partners, to promote sustainable food in Cambridge and understands the key role food can play in dealing with some of the most pressing problems in our city, such as food poverty, diet related ill-health, food waste, climate change and biodiversity loss.

This *Sustainable Food Policy Statement* looks out beyond the council's own statutory responsibilities surrounding food hygiene and food safety into this wider role food can play.

The council recognises that there are many valuable food initiatives already taking place in the city across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. The Council values the work of the umbrella organisation Cambridge Sustainable Food, which is seeking to bring these initiatives together as a part of the framework provided by the national Sustainable Food Cities Network and their award scheme, to achieve recognition for what is currently being done and to help “unlock” potential in the city to do more.

The council has adopted a number of policies set out in its Anti-Poverty Strategy and Climate Change Strategy that make a contribution to food health and sustainability issues. The Council is supporting evidence based projects that will make a difference through the funding streams attached to these strategies and its community grants programme.

The Council through its mainstream activities promotes public health, for instance through encouraging healthy lifestyles and providing opportunities to bring its diverse communities together through events involving food.

The Council recognises that it cannot cover all the requirements of the national award scheme for sustainable food – some aspects fall within the remit of other agencies or are beyond the current powers or resources available to the Council.

The following policy aims show what the council wants to achieve, with its partners, and through its own practice.

Policy aims for council and partners

- To continue to support the ambitions set out in the Food Charter¹ for Cambridge, which sets out a broad vision of the issues that should be addressed to help create the conditions for a Sustainable Food City in the future
- To recognise the role of Cambridge Sustainable Food in acting as an umbrella organisation in Cambridge that brings together a range of organisations with an interest in promoting sustainable food within the National Sustainable Food Cities Network

Policy aims for the council

- To increase awareness of the council's support for Cambridge as a Sustainable Food City
- To explore the potential to incorporate, where possible, sustainable food principles in council catering contracts and food procurement
- To develop and promote a water bottle Refill scheme in the city
- To encourage providers at events in Cambridge, where we have an influence, to use sustainable food practice, where appropriate.
- To promote sustainable food practice to local food businesses
- To work low with low income households to help reduce food poverty and promote sustainable food practice through the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy
- To promote food sustainability through our Climate Change Strategy
- To bring our diverse local communities together to share good food, as appropriate
- To encourage local food employers to adopt the national Living Wage and become a part of the accreditation scheme of the National Living Wage Foundation
- To explore other opportunities to promote sustainable food principles within the Council and with partners, as they arise.

¹ Food Charter shown in Appendix B.

Cambridge Sustainable Food's Vision for Cambridge expressed as a Food Charter



Background on Sustainable Food Cities Network awards & Cambridge Sustainable Food

There are presently 49 cities that form part of the Sustainable Food Cities Network. Cambridge City is one of only nine cities who have secured the “Bronze Award” from the Network. Only three have achieved silver and none have achieved gold to date.

Since CSF’s establishment it has grown to incorporate 84 organisations under its umbrella and has achieved 4,000 followers on social media and seen 132,000 visits to its website.

(<https://www.cambridgesustainablefood.org/>). It has recently become a Community Interest Company with four Directors who report to a Partnership Board. This new structure allows CSF to apply for a wider range of funding sources.

CSF’s work presently includes:

- Running and promoting local food projects such as an annual Pumpkin Festival
- Creating a Sustainable Food Directory which showcases sustainable, local food businesses, and a Community Food Map that shows community growing, food provision and food waste projects
- Running and managing local campaigns, currently the Sainsbury’s Waste Less, Save More campaign and Sugar Smart UK
- Running public awareness raising activities including stalls, talks and cookery workshops
- Operating a Sustainable Food Pledge and Award Scheme for local businesses, encouraging them to reduce food waste
- Establishing the Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance and carrying out a needs assessment, and
- Working towards the creation of a Cambridge Food Hub
- Working towards obtaining the “Silver Award” for Cambridge City

The “Silver Award” is currently held by three cities - Bristol, Brighton and Hove and the Greater London Authority. It should be noted that these cities are unitary and the partnerships are led primarily by the public health functions within them.

Cambridge City is one of the few Sustainable Food Partnerships led by the community and voluntary sector within the Sustainable Cities movement, which offers both a number of strengths in encouraging local community activism and volunteering, fostering innovation and extending the scope of what can be done, but also some constraints in the traction it may have with some agencies.

Whilst health inequalities in Cambridge are marked, with a nearly 10 year gap in life expectancy between some wards, the level of deprivation is higher in areas in the north of the county, which attract more public health resources as a result. Cambridgeshire Public Health is a part of the CSF Partnership Board and its work in this field is guided by the Cambridgeshire Healthy Weight Strategy.