



(Draft) Brent Food Action Plan

*for a healthier, fairer, and more
sustainable local food system.*



2026-2029

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 1: We will improve access to healthy and affordable food, and address diet-related ill-health.

Objective	Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority
1.1 Improve access to healthier food options across all communities, particularly in areas with higher levels of health inequalities and deprivation.	1.1.1 Scale “cash-first” and “food-based” models linked to fresh produce access.	Cash-first support and the guaranteed access to fresh produce can raise purchasing power and remove affordability barriers, enabling routine consumption of healthier foods. This can also directly improve diet quality and can help in preventing and manage diet-related illness, especially among clinically vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase uptake of fruit and veg among children and young people, e.g. through the Healthy Start Scheme and other local welfare assistance, while destigmatising this type of support: • Explore cash-first interventions that deploy fruit & veg vouchers and low-cost produce bags through Best Start Family Hubs (f.k.a. Family Wellbeing Centres), food charities, and community pantries, working to reduce dependence on foodbanks • Integrate food-based approaches into social prescribing and care planning for older adults and residents living with, or at risk of developing, diet-related illnesses (hypertension, type 2 diabetes, overweight and obesity) 	Year 1
			Engage with faith, community, and resident groups to test the feasibility of setting up “collective buying schemes for food” , which can better promote choice and agency. Focus on IMD 1–2 areas and housing estates, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food co-operatives (co-ops) • community shops • resident-led buying clubs • food hubs 	Year 1
			Review the uptake of Free School Meals across schools in Brent and work with partners to better understand stigma barriers in uptake and auto-enrolment, as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost Free School Meal enrolment for secondary schools • Encourage child registration for FSM to support schools in receiving additional funding through the “pupil premium” 	
	1.1.2 Build a dignified, inclusive food support network that respects culture and lived experience.	Choice and cultural relevance increase dignity, uptake, and sustained engagement. Joined-up pathways tackle root causes of food insecurity and enable consistent access to healthy food, improving equity and wellbeing over time.	Work with food organisations, community kitchens, pantries etc. to engage residents in the co-design of improved food offers that support dietary inclusivity, ensure cultural and faith appropriateness, enable choice, and promote dignity.	
			Work with cross-sector stakeholder to standardise warm referrals (i.e., trusted introductions made by a mutual connection who directly connects a resident to a professional or a service) between food support services, advice services (e.g., welfare, debt, housing), and community health and wellbeing programmes such as Brent Health Matters.	
			Work with cross-sector partners to engage residents to better understanding practical barriers to healthy and affordable food access, and strengthen interventions that reduce stigma and enable more residents to access healthy and affordable food (e.g., provide translated materials, invest in interpreter support, and offer accessible hours and locations).	
	1.1.3 Use data and place-based planning to target provision where the need is greatest.	Data-led planning targets resources efficiently and ensures services reach those with highest health inequalities, driving measurable improvements in diet quality and community health.	Work with cross-sector partners to map existing gaps in fresh produce access, and plan for improved provision and the alignment of interventions that increase uptake of fruit and veg in priority LSOAs (e.g., IMD 1,2 and 3) and target groups (e.g., children and young people, clinically vulnerable residents etc.).	Year 1
			Improve data collection and combine datasets where appropriate and feasible to enhance the quality of the insights. Develop a standardised set of social and health indicators that support evaluating the impact of “cash-first” and “food-based” interventions (e.g., fruit & veg on prescription, Healthy Start, Free School Meals etc.)	Year 1
			Monitor participation, uptake, and impact of interventions aimed at improving dietary outcomes and healthy and affordable food access, including indicators such as fruit and veg consumption, fibre intake, reduction in HFSS, changes in affordability, and other health-specific metrics.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

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Objective		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
1.2	Support food-focused health promotion initiatives across school, healthcare, and community settings.	1.2.1	Integrate food into prevention, treatment, and recovery pathways.	Making food part of routine healthcare ensures timely, trusted interventions. Consistent messages and easy referrals convert advice into practical action, improving behaviours and outcomes across families.	Work with cross-sector partners to further embed evidence-based food and nutrition advice in social prescribing, maternity and early years support, healthy weight management, and the prevention and management of diet-related illnesses by engaging professionals including GPs, Social Prescribers, Health Visitors , and other frontline services and community-facing colleagues (e.g., Best Start Family Hubs, Brent Hubs, Brent Health Matters etc.).	Year 1
					Work with frontline services, community-facing colleagues, and clinical professionals to co-design a MECC approach to deliver consistent, brief interventions in community and healthcare settings that are focused on food and nutrition and that support the ongoing wellbeing of residents and families.	
					Establish simple and standardised referral protocols that support frontline services and community-facing colleagues in connecting residents and families to the NHS, Council services, and VCS food support as required.	
		1.2.2	Scale food education and cooking confidence across all life stages.	Hands-on, age-appropriate education builds self-efficacy, turning knowledge into daily habits. Early intervention shapes lifelong preferences and behaviours, reducing the risk of diet-related illness.	Work with cross-sector partners to expand food education to both adults and children and young people, through evidence-based interventions that support the early acquisition and retention of overall food literacy including practical cooking skills, knowledge of basic nutrition principles, and budget-friendly meal planning.	Year 1
					Work with colleagues and cross-sector partners, including Early Years, Public Health and Health Visitors, to build on existing public health-funded commissioned services by using data and insight to enhance infant feeding guidance and culturally inclusive recipes that support early development and ongoing wellbeing (e.g. oral health, healthy weight management).	Year 1
					Support the scaling of community interventions and school-based programmes that build long-lasting positive attitudes towards fruit and vegetables from a young age , thus contributing to improved nutrition and long-term health outcomes (e.g., by linking learnings to school lunch choices where possible).	
		1.2.3	Run relatable, community-led campaigns that make healthy eating actionable.	Relatable content and community voice increase trust and relevance. Visible, low-cost actions make change feasible and rewarding, shifting norms toward healthier, balanced meals.	Work with cross-sector partners to engage residents in the co-design of simple healthy eating awareness campaigns and resources , sharing best practice and local knowledge through simple storytelling tools (e.g., short videos, visual stories, social media etc.) that highlight simple swaps that match families' budgets and local food cultures (e.g., From Brent to Bowl cookbook).	
					Build trusted relationships with local food retailers and market traders that excel in the provision of healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food, and work with them to promote produce and recipes that support good nutrition and wellbeing.	
					Utilise relevant community forums and Council events as an opportunity to promote healthy, affordable and climate-friendly eating, by sharing stories, tips, and advice by residents, schools, and community groups , that help build social proof and peer motivation.	Year 1

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

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Objective	Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority
1.3 Shape healthier local food environments through planning, policy, and public procurement.	1.3.1 Use planning, licensing, and town centre management to rebalance local food offers.	Structural and policy levers reshape the default environment, reducing exposure to unhealthy options and increasing everyday access to nutritious, culturally relevant food, especially in high-need areas.	Work with Town Centre Managers, Licensing, and Regulatory Services colleagues to develop and implement an approach to moderate the density of unhealthy food outlet and hot food takeaways in areas of high deprivation and within proximity of schools.	<i>Year 1</i>
			Work with Town Centre Managers, Licensing, and Regulatory Services to attract and retain healthier, culturally diverse food businesses, strengthen food markets, and food retailers that improve the offer of healthy and affordable produce, especially in resource-poor neighbourhoods.	
			Work with cross-sector stakeholders to formalise a commitment to develop systemic approaches that focus on creating healthier food environments , especially in the proximity of schools and in neighbourhoods with higher levels of deprivation.	<i>Year 1</i>
	1.3.2 Embed nutrition and sustainability standards in public procurement and school food culture.	Procurement and school culture influence thousands of daily meals. Standards and positive mealtime experiences normalise healthy eating and create consistent cues across education and care settings.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to further improve the availability of healthy food across schools, hospitals, care homes, community kitchens, asylum hotels, and other settings by reducing the prevalence of ultra-processed foods and prioritising plant-rich menus where possible.	
			Utilise frameworks, such as the London Food Purchasing Commitment (LFPC), to influence how publicly procured food can improve dining environments and increase the social value of mealtime in schools, hospitals, care homes, community kitchens etc.	<i>Year 1</i>
			Work with cross-sector partners to monitor and evaluate the impact of sustainable food procurement on health and climate outcomes , particularly around fruit and vegetables consumption, food waste reduction, and cultural inclusivity of food served through public services.	
	1.3.3 Build resilience through connected local food systems and data-led improvement.	Connected systems can adapt quickly, maintain access during crises, and continuously improve using real-world data—supporting sustainability and community wellbeing.	Encourage partnerships between local producers, and foodbanks, pantries, schools, community kitchens, to improve access to fresh and seasonal food , helping to shorten local food supply chains while also working towards improved health and climate goals.	
			Work together with cross-sector stakeholders to streamline the gathering and sharing on data that links food insecurity, neighbourhood food environments, and diet-related illness , to better develop targeted interventions and track their impact.	<i>Year 1</i>
			Work with colleagues to better support the crisis response integrated into existing emergency-planning frameworks , and coordinated actions to maintain essential access to affordable and nutritious food (e.g., procedures to rapidly expand healthy food access during crises, shocks, or disruptions).	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 2: We will help reduce food insecurity and ensure everyone can access affordable and healthy food with dignity.

Objective		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
2.1	Tackle the systemic and structural drivers of food insecurity — such as poverty, unemployment, housing instability, and limited access to culturally appropriate food.	2.1.1	Develop integrated, place-based community hubs and shared governance.	Co-locating multiple services around trusted food settings reduces friction and stigma, tackles root causes in one place, and creates a seamless system that prevents repeat crises.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to identify opportunities for place-based solutions that integrate dignified food access with wrap-around support , by co-locating welfare and debt advice, housing early help, employment and skills development opportunities, and mental health support.	Year 1
					Work with Council and VCS frontline services and other community engagement colleagues to appraise and strengthen existing consent-based, shared referral and data protocols to improve the efficacy of warm referrals and avoid duplication.	
					Strengthen the collaborations between food organisations and the Council and other cross-sector stakeholders, to align towards the delivery a borough-wide coordinated effort to address food insecurity , set shared goals and convene to review progress, and troubleshoot challenges.	Year 1
		2.1.2	Strengthen “cash-first” pathways, housing stability, and employer participation.	Stabilising income and housing directly reduce pressures that drive food insecurity. By engaging employers and advocating for improvements in pay and working conditions, we can increase household resilience and reduce the need for food aid.	Work with cross-sector partners to strengthen “cash-first” support , as well as access to crisis grants, and other wrap around support into social care and community settings (e.g., by checking Healthy Start and Free School Meals eligibility).	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to further integrate or expand housing early-help in community hubs (e.g., arrears mediation, energy/fuel support, homelessness prevention) and support residents to connect with skills development opportunities and apprenticeships.	
					Encourage large employers across Brent to improve their participation in initiatives and pledges that support fair pay, decent working conditions, secure contracts, and enable partnerships to improve the wellbeing of their workforce while facilitating referrals to community services and resources.	
		2.1.3	Advocate and plan for affordable, culturally appropriate food access.	Harnessing local levers for change can reshape environments quickly while advocacy efforts can support in addressing upstream determinants. Finally, culturally appropriate, choice-based provision increases uptake, dignity, and equity.	Work with Town Centre Managers, Licensing, Planning, and Regulatory Services to influence the local offer of affordable and culturally appropriate food , especially in neighbourhoods with unequal access. Focus on solutions such as social supermarkets, pantries, and local food markets.	
					Where appropriate, work with partners to align Brent with broader advocacy and campaigning efforts to call for improved regional and national policies that alleviate poverty .	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to engage residents in the co-design of local initiatives that improve access to affordable and healthy food , following principles that support choice, enable agency, and promote dignity (e.g., through collective buying scheme, and other resident-led interventions).	Year 1

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

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Objective	Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority
2.2 Establish a consistent approach to provide minimum levels of professional advice and support to residents accessing food aid.	2.2.1 Define, fund, and assure a Minimum Advice & Support Standard.	A clear baseline/minimum standard ensures that every resident receives essential support wherever they present, reducing variation and repeat crises, and building provider capability.	Engage with cross-sector partners and residents to appraise the current practices in wrap-around support provision, and co-design a Minimum Advice and Support Standard that integrates things like welfare checks, debt management and budgeting, housing and employment signposting, Healthy Start and FSM eligibility etc.	Year 1
			Explore trauma-informed and destigmatising approaches within food related support to reduce embarrassment, improve accessibility, and strengthen the delivery of the Standard through a person-centred model of care.	Year 1
			Work with cross-sector partners to implement quality assurance protocols to monitor the adherence the Standard and evaluate outcomes based on a set of shared KPIs (e.g., streamline collection of data, utilise existing dashboards, and seek resident feedback).	
	2.2.2 Embed advice where people already go.	Bringing advice to trusted settings removes access barriers and stigma, with warm handovers and simple, shared systems increasing uptake and completion of support pathways.	Improve coverage of Brent Hubs advisors and other advice services (e.g., welfare/debt/housing) that are co-located in community settings such as foodbanks, pantries, and community kitchens, to support the provision of information and advice as well as food support.	
			Facilitate access to training opportunities for volunteer navigators and other frontline staff that centres MECC-style signposting to improve warm referrals between services, and provide interpreter support as well as translated materials where appropriate.	
			Engage with relevant cross-sector partners to test the feasibility of developing and deploying a shared referral platform with simple triage and self-referral options, to streamline access to vital advice and services across the borough.	
	2.2.3 Integrate prevention, food education, and crisis resilience.	Pairing immediate aid with skills and prevention improves diet quality and health, reducing future need and strengthening both household and food system resilience.	Work with cross-sector partner to further support adult food education within community food settings , with a focus on cooking skills, nutrition, and budget-friendly planning, linking learning to the different food cultures of Brent residents.	Year 1
			Work alongside VCS partners, Adult Social Care, Radical Place Leadership, and Public Health colleagues to enhance referral pathways for residents experiencing food insecurity into social prescribing and other wellbeing support (e.g., smoking cessation advise, active wellbeing, diabetes and CVD prevention programmes etc.).	Year 1

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

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Objective		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
2.3	Ensure that all residents experiencing financial hardship can access high quality, nutritious food in their local community with dignity.	2.3.1	Expand dignified, choice-based food models and infrastructure.	Choice-based, high-quality provision respects autonomy, reduces stigma, and improves nutrition, making regular healthy eating feasible for low-income households.	Develop evidence-based recommendations to influence future investments in local food infrastructure and logistical approaches to guarantee quality, variety, and sustainability of food (e.g., integrated community hubs that offer refrigeration and storage, kitchen upgrades in churches and other disused community assets etc.)	
					Work with cross-sector stakeholders to streamline insights from equity mapping exercises that correlate access to healthy and affordable food with other social indicators (e.g., IMD, transport availability, retail food environments etc.) to identify geographic gaps in provision and improve access to food through place-based interventions.	
		2.3.2	Centre dignity, inclusion, and resident voice.	Resident leadership ensures services are relevant and trusted, increasing engagement and retention. Furthermore, inclusion reduces stigma and strengthens cohesion through shared, positive experiences.	Work with relevant partners to engage residents in developing solutions that centre dignity and choice in community food setting (e.g., the co-design of menus), and establish regular feedback loops to make improvements (e.g., resident panels, surveys, and listening events).	Year 1
		2.3.3	Improve navigation, coordination, and communication.	Clear, visible routes and coordinated referrals reduce confusion and delays, ensuring residents reach the right support quickly and can act on information to make healthier choices.	Use the Joy App to streamline the development and sharing of existing Food & Support Finder directories to include up to date information on eligibility, opening times, languages, self-referral options, as well as any other relevant services information.	Year 1
					Engage relevant partners and support residents to amplify local campaigns around food insecurity, calling for cross-sector collaborations and advocating for place-based solutions that support meaningful resident involvement.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 3: We will support the development of food literacy and skills in schools and in communities.

Objective		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
3.1	Embed food education and practical food skills in community learning settings (across all ages).	3.1.1	Expand community-based food education and skills programmes.	Skills acquisition increases confidence and reduces reliance on convenience foods. Budget-focused sessions that align healthy eating with financial realities make behaviour change more achievable across income levels.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to identify opportunities to scale community-based food education interventions that support residents to make small incremental shifts towards healthier diets (e.g., by better understanding nutrition needs across the life course), especially older adults, and residents in need of social care support.	Year 1
					Find opportunities to increase access to simple, healthy recipes with step-by-step visuals for all skill levels , that can support residents in maintaining healthier diets through simple and actionable advice (e.g., through digital tools, social media etc.).	
		3.1.2	Integrate food education into health and wellbeing pathways.	Linking education to existing support pathways ensures timely, personalised interventions. Consistent reinforcement from trusted professionals enhances adherence to advice and supports long-term healthy habit.	Wherever possible, work across the local authority and with NHS partners to improve the connection between food education and diet-related illness prevention and management (e.g., standardise advice and guidance, scale peer support etc.) especially for type 2 diabetes and hypertension.	
		3.1.3	Promote sustainability through food growing and waste reduction initiatives.	Growing and composting create tangible, hands-on experiences that ground learning in daily life. Understanding the full food cycle fosters stewardship, waste reduction, and more plant-rich eating.	Work with cross-sector partners to leverage opportunities to embed community food growing into food education programmes , to support the early acquisition of food-related skills and knowledge, share sustainability messages and encourage climate-conscious eating.	Year 1
Embed food waste reduction messages as part of food education delivered through community food growing initiatives (e.g., through composting), supporting residents to build confidence in reducing food waste at home, at work, in schools and in other community settings.	Year 1					

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 3: We will support the development of food literacy and skills in schools and in communities.

Objective	Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority
3.2 Improve the quality, healthiness, and sustainability of food served and sold in and around schools.	3.2.1 Strengthen food standards and accountability in school settings.	Clear food standards set expectations and encourage accountability. Continued participatory feedback also improves relevance and acceptance of these standards. Positive mealtime culture increases uptake of healthier food and reduces per plate waste.	Identify opportunities to monitor compliance with improved school food standards (e.g., through regular audits and feedback loops with school staff)	
			Strengthen the great work many early years settings and schools are doing around shared meal times being social, enjoyable, and valued.	
	3.2.2 Promote sustainable and plant-rich menus.	A regular plant-rich food offer builds familiarity and shifts norms and perception. School catering staff training ensures flavour, variety, and cultural resonance of the food served which is critical for pupil satisfaction and sustained change.	Work with school chefs and catering teams to influence the reduction of meat and some dairy served in school meals , and align this provision with climate and health goals (e.g., improve uptake of Meat-Free Days, focus on seasonal menu planning etc.).	Year 1
			Work with cross-sector partners to increase access to training and upskilling opportunities for school catering teams on creating culturally inclusive, plant-rich recipes that support good nutrition , as well as improving procurement practices that align with sustainability goals.	
			Where possible, find opportunities to encourage suppliers and caterers to prioritise local produce and reduce ultra-processed foods in menus.	
	3.2.3 Shape healthier food environments beyond the school gates.	Aligning the local food offer with school standards can reduce mixed signals and impulse purchases among young people. Increasing the availability of affordable healthier options supports more consistent healthy food habits.	Work with cross-sector partners to influence local food businesses in making affordable, nutritious, and healthier meal options largely available and incentivise this through recognition schemes (e.g., through the Healthier Catering Commitment).	Year 1
			Work with relevant partners to develop resident and student-led local campaigns that highlight the prevalence of unhealthy food environments , especially in the proximity of schools, and engage local food shops and takeaways to promote healthier choices .	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 3: We will support the development of food literacy and skills in schools and in communities.

Objective		Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority	
3.3	Shape healthier local food environments through planning, policy, and public procurement.	3.3.1	Embed food growing and sustainability into the curriculum.	Practical, cross-curricular learning about food and food systems builds curiosity and confidence. Early exposure to hands-on experiences, such as food growing, fosters positive attitudes toward fruit and vegetables and increases willingness to try new foods.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to increase equitable access to food growing opportunities in schools and early years settings across the borough , including gardening spaces and resources in schools, and link sustainability education with food growing where appropriate.	Year 1
					Find opportunities to influence the embedment of food systems learning, sustainability education, and healthy, climate-conscious eating as part of the curriculum (e.g., science lessons in the school garden etc.).	
		3.3.2	Build a strong food culture within schools and early years settings.	A coherent and celebratory school culture around food connects identity, learning, and healthy eating. Peer and staff role-modelling strengthens norms and can help making healthy choices socially rewarding.	Work with relevant partners to support the establishment of a School Chefs' Network , to share best practice and culturally diverse approaches to healthy meals.	Year 1
					Support opportunities to centre healthy food as part of schools and early years settings' celebrations and other social events (e.g., host harvest festivals, cooking competitions etc.), which celebrates the diversity of Brent's food cultures.	
					Work with school staff, including teachers and catering teams, to align menu design with classroom learning on nutrition and sustainability .	
		3.3.3	Ensure equity and inclusion in school food provision.	Removing financial and cultural barriers ensures vulnerable pupils benefit equally from school food. Parent engagement extends healthy practices into the home, reinforcing school efforts.	Align wrap-around support (e.g., nutrition advice, budgeting workshops) for parents alongside food initiatives in schools and early years settings., and find opportunities to make this support available through a whole-family approach .	
					Support schools in gathering feedback from pupils and families to support the co-design of menus that ensure cultural relevance, and support health and climate goals.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 4: We will promote good food jobs, skills training, and opportunities within the local food economy.

Objectives		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
4.1	Promote pathways into good food jobs through training, apprenticeships, and enterprise support.	4.1.1	Expand training and apprenticeship opportunities.	Recognised qualifications and on-the-job training build employability and progression routes. Employer co-design ensures skills match local demand, improving job placement.	Build partnerships between training providers, colleges, and employers to co-develop food sector curricula focused on sustainability and health , and focus on sharing knowledge and insights across organisations to create a local workforce which is equipped with the skills to have a workforce which is both climate and health conscious.	
					Work with local businesses to curate opportunities that support skills-bridging for underrepresented groups and that fit the upskilling needs of residents, including mentoring and work experience placements , and consider the inclusion of enhanced English language skills and confidence building, alongside hands on experience.	
		4.1.2	Promote food careers and enterprise development.	Visible pathways and low-barrier support unlock entrepreneurial talent and diversify the sector. Shared facilities reduce start-up costs, enabling inclusive participation.	Work with relevant partners, such as local schools, colleges, and youth organisations, to highlight exemplary food sector career stories and support the development of youth-focused campaigns that showcase food careers as pathways to secure employment that also develop purpose, creativity, and support community impact.	
					Work together with Town Centre Managers and food industry experts to engage stakeholders in the local food economy to understand how better support food enterprises (e.g., through business planning, marketing support, and access to shared kitchens).	Year 1
					Identify opportunities to support community-led food businesses in prioritising the cultural relevance and sustainability of the food they offer , meeting the needs of residents (e.g., through more sustainable catering practices, trialling the sale of vegetarian and vegan options etc.).	
		4.1.3	Embed food skills into education and lifelong learning.	Early exposure to good food jobs widens aspirations, while adult upskilling supports career transitions. Storytelling builds social proof and interest in sustainable food roles.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to advise and collaborate with schools to integrate food-related skills development into school curricula and career advice programmes , ensuring that school food learning activities are enriching, engaging, and culturally relevant, and that career advisors can confidently signpost opportunities available within the food sector.	Year 1
					Engage relevant stakeholders in drafting recommendations to expand the offer of adult education programmes that support the development of vital food literacy and skills , such as strengthening knowledge of nutrition, food preparation, sustainable food practices, and budgeting, and highlight pathways to industry relevant training (e.g., Food Safety Level 2 etc.).	
					Share success stories and promote opportunities in sustainable food careers utilising digital platforms and visual storytelling tools , working with cross-sector stakeholders to amplify local voices, highlight good food jobs across the borough, and capture social proof to inspire other residents in exploring food careers.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 4: We will promote good food jobs, skills training, and opportunities within the local food economy.

Objectives		Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority	
4.2	Champion fair pay, decent working conditions, and inclusion across the local food sector.	4.2.1	Establish and promote a Good Food Employer Charter.	Clear employment standards and their public recognition can help in shifting norms, improving worker wellbeing and retention. Living wage commitments from employers can reduce insecurity, supporting healthier, more productive teams.	Work collaboratively with employers, trade unions, and council staff, to co-develop a Good Food Charter outlining commitments to fair pay, dignity, and improved access to services for employees (e.g., outlining clear standards to ensure better job security, safer working conditions, and inclusive recruitment for all employees in the borough).	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to encourage Real Living Wage accreditation among food businesses and suppliers , through increased awarenesses of the importance of fair pay, and through targeted outreach highlighting to food sector employers how this type of accreditation can improve staff retention, recruitment, and wellbeing.	
					Find opportunities to recognise and celebrate employers meeting high standards (e.g., through public awards and accreditation schemes) to showcase workplaces that uphold best practices, and encourage other industry leaders to do the same.	
		4.2.2	Drive inclusion and workforce diversity.	Structured and deliberate inclusion raises representation and unlocks a broader talent base. Mentorship accelerates progression and helps retain underrepresented staff.	Engage with food businesses to strengthen access to mentoring and leadership programmes for underrepresented groups in the food sector to address inequities in career progression and build a more diverse and innovative workforce. (e.g., leadership training, shadowing and mentoring opportunities etc.).	
					Encourage improved links between community organisations, social services, and local food businesses to highlight employment opportunities in the local food economy as well as connecting employers to a more diverse pool of local talent who may otherwise face barriers to entry.	Year 1
		4.2.3	Align employment with wellbeing and social value.	Linking profit to social value creates shared benefits for workers and communities. Food councils / food partnerships provide coherent governance, sustaining improvements across the sector.	Encourage employers to invest CSR funds into staff wellbeing initiatives, as well as to local community food projects (e.g., projects including food growing, food justice campaigns, and community cafes).	Year 1
					Advocate for pricing reforms that reflect fair wages and sustainability in the food supply chain by embedding principles of fairness and sustainability , so that the local food system can provide equitable returns for producers, and better wages for staff.	
					Work with cross-sector stakeholders to explore Food Councils as a governance model to embed social responsibility and collective action in the local food economy (e.g., by involving key community leaders to establish ways to integrate these key principles into Brent's food system).	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 4: We will promote good food jobs, skills training, and opportunities within the local food economy.

Objectives	Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority
4.3 Support local, independent food businesses and enterprises to thrive and contribute to community wellbeing.	4.3.1 Provide tailored business support and resources.	Targeted support reduces operational friction and improves survival rates. Shared resources lower fixed costs, enabling small businesses to compete and reinvest locally.	Work with cross-sector stakeholders to leverage shared infrastructure that can benefit the local food economy by pooling resources and reducing costs (e.g., sharing community kitchens and storage facilities, widening access to equipment, creating training spaces, and encouraging more collaboration).	Year 1
			Engage local food businesses to better contribute to community wellbeing , by encouraging them to make their food offer healthier, and include guidance on how to shift to practices that adjust portion sizes, and reduce the amount of sugar, fat and salt included in meals sold (e.g., through the Healthier Catering Commitment).	Year 1
	4.3.2 Strengthen local supply chains and cultural relevance.	Culturally relevant offers that reflect community identity attract loyal customers and support businesses to thrive. Local sourcing keeps value within the borough and reduces food miles.	Find opportunities to support local food retailers and producers to highlight seasonal and culturally appropriate food , working to improve access to healthy food as well as supporting the local food economy (e.g. seasonal food eating guides, recipe cards, and seasonal food growing events).	
			Work with cross-sector stakeholders to support community food enterprises like bakeries and kitchens that combine training, employment, and social impact (e.g., through access to funding, sharing facilities and skills, and providing operational guidance etc.).	
			Engage cross-sector stakeholders to develop local campaigns showcasing Brent’s food diversity , linking them with healthy eating where possible, (e.g., collaborations between local chefs, community champions and businesses to produce culturally diverse recipes, content and stories that promote healthy diets).	
	4.3.3 Foster collaboration and community engagement.	Collaboration aligns efforts and fills gaps efficiently.	Work with cross-sector partners to establish a Brent Food Forum that connects businesses, residents, and public services to encourage shared learning, relationship building, skills sharing, and community-led action.	
			Encourage collaborations that bring together local businesses and community organisations, to design inclusive activities and joint initiatives that celebrate the food diversity of the borough (e.g., cooking clubs, food festivals etc.)	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 5: We will encourage growing food in the community and at home, and support access to resources.

Objectives		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
5.1	Increase access to land and spaces for food growing across communities, schools, and housing estates.	5.1.1	Secure and activate growing spaces.	Policy guarantees access, and small grants catalyse rapid activation of sites. Visible growing spaces create local pride and equitable opportunities across the borough.	Work with local authority and VCS colleagues to advocate for the development of approaches that support resident access to spaces for community food growing (e.g., food growing is integrated into housing estates, schools, and regeneration projects).	Year 1
					Engage residents, community growing groups, and schools to increase the use and availability of community growing spaces (e.g., community gardens, or to be utilised for school growing projects etc.).	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to improve access to funding (where appropriate), resources, and other technical support for residents and community groups looking to establish or scale community growing projects .	
		5.1.2	Improve visibility and participation.	Clear information and easy sign-up reduce friction, increasing volunteer engagement. On-site prompts convert casual interest into participation.	Ensure that clear and up-to-date information is available to residents through a simple directory of growing spaces (e.g. the Joy App), volunteer opportunities, and community gardens (e.g., develop an interactive online map that residents can also update).	
					Find opportunities to increase visibility and improve participation in community food growing , by collaborating with schools, libraries, and VCS organisations (e.g., leveraging existing community engagement infrastructures, improving signage and on-site information etc.).	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to improve resident involvement in community food growing through volunteering and other resident-led engagements , to enhance community ownership and stewardship of local green spaces.	
		5.1.3	Embed food growing into planning and regeneration.	Planning-led inclusion of food growing ensures long-term provision, rather than short-term pilots. Stewardship models sustain ongoing maintenance and community ownership.	Gather evidence and propose considerations to influence the integration of food growing into local planning policies , to ensure access to spaces for community food growing is a key consideration when delivering estate regeneration and other development projects.	Year 1
					Where possible, work together with developers, housing associations, and residents to influence the design of shared growing spaces in new housing schemes .	
					Work with residents, schools, and local community growing networks to establish shared approaches and models for long-term stewardship of local green spaces , improving the ongoing maintenance of spaces while encouraging community cohesion.	Year 1

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 5: We will encourage growing food in the community and at home, and support access to resources.

Objectives		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
5.2	Support food growing as a tool for education, wellbeing, and engagement with the environment.	5.2.1	Embed food growing into education and health programmes,	Combining food education and skills building with care pathways strengthens both participation and health outcomes. Practical experience builds confidence and positive attitudes towards healthy eating.	Work with schools and VCS organisations to advocate for the integration of gardening, food growing, and other nature-based activities into the school curriculum, after-school clubs, and early years settings to support the wellbeing of children and young people while instilling positive attitudes towards climate-conscious eating.	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to highlight the links between food growing and physical and mental wellbeing, and enhance integration of food growing opportunities into social prescribing pathways.	
					Engage cross-sector partner to develop interventions that link nutrition and climate education alongside practical growing sessions for all age groups , working together to promote simple shifts towards healthier and more sustainable eating.	
		5.2.2	Create inclusive, community-led growing initiatives.	Inclusive, resident-led projects build trust and social cohesion. Training and community leadership/ownership pathways grow local capacity, sustaining initiatives beyond initial funding.	Find opportunities to enable the co-design of resident-led, inclusive community food growing initiatives that bring together diverse groups and foster social cohesion.	Year 1
					Facilitate the sharing of simple, inclusive, and accessible resources, training, best practice, and other learning opportunities to facilitate resident involvement with community food growing. Encourage peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing.	
					Consider practical considerations to support community food growing projects to meet accessibility standards for older adults and people with disabilities, through adaptive tools and inclusive design of spaces.	
		5.2.3	Promote wellbeing and environmental awareness through engagement.	Celebrations and stories make participation enjoyable and meaningful. Peer networks diffuse skills quickly and create resilient, connected communities.	Use different storytelling tools to share real examples of how community food growing supports physical and mental wellbeing, boosts community cohesion , and encourages residents to increase consumption of fresh and seasonal foods .	Year 1
					Encourage and facilitate, where possible, the development of peer-to-peer learning networks and resident-led groups to share skills and build confidence in sustainable food growing practices that support climate and health goals.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 5: We will encourage growing food in the community and at home, and support access to resources.

Objectives		Solutions		Rationale	Actions	Priority
5.3	Promote community growing initiatives that build local food knowledge, resilience, and more connected growing networks.	5.3.1	Build capacity and skills for community-led growing.	Practical upskilling increases community participation, reduces waste, improving resource sharing. Mentorship accelerates learning and confidence across groups.	Engage with relevant cross-sector partners, networks, and communities of practice to remain abreast of current practices and advice linked community food growing, and to enable better learning and communication between VCS organisations and public sector colleagues with a remit in enhancing biodiversity and improving wellbeing through nature-based activities.	Year 1
					Work with relevant stakeholders to improve resident access to local projects and learning opportunities linked to horticulture, composting, and sustainable food growing techniques (e.g., identify and signpost opportunities for mentorship and peer-learning to upskill residents and volunteers).	
					Support a Brent Food Growing Network and other growing groups to facilitate the planning and delivery of knowledge-sharing events and workshops that bring residents together, strengthen partnerships, and improve the exchange of best practice and innovations in community food growing.	
		5.3.2	Strengthen local networks and partnerships.	Networks reduce duplication and amplify impact through shared resources. Collaboration connects growing to cooking, health, and community support.	Work with cross-sector partners to identify and back collaborative food growing projects that support positive health and climate outcomes, while also connecting these initiatives to the wider food systems to amplify impact (e.g., schools, and health and social care etc.).	
					Work with cross-sector partners to facilitate the integration and scaling of food growing activities into community settings that already support food insecurity and food literacy interventions through cooking and surplus redistribution (e.g., integrate food hubs, community centres etc.).	Year 1
		5.3.3	Link growing initiatives to local food systems and resilience.	Integrating growing with distribution and education builds local resilience. Micro-enterprise pathways create income and keep value in the community.	Engage residents and cross-sector partners to explore the feasibility of setting up (or scaling) local community food growing initiatives that support the local food system and build resilience (e.g., micro-enterprise opportunities such as selling produce locally, supplying community kitchens, schools, and foodbanks etc.).	
					Work with cross-sector stakeholder to develop a consistent approach to collect and share data from local food production through community growing projects, to inform planning and demonstrate impact on local food security.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 6: We will empower residents and institutions to reduce food waste, cut carbon emissions, and support more sustainable food choices.

Objectives		Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority	
6.1	Reduce food waste across households, schools, and businesses.	6.1.1	Build and standardise food waste infrastructure across all settings.	Consistent infrastructure makes participation easy and predictable, reducing contamination and increasing recycling rates. SMEs often face cost and space barriers, so removing these can accelerate adoption and cut waste.	Strengthen recycling infrastructure and behaviour across the borough by supporting residents, businesses, and schools to appropriately recycle food waste, especially in areas of low compliance (e.g., by appraising and improving segregation systems in schools and workplaces, and increase contamination checks).	Year 1
					Work with relevant stakeholders to develop and disseminate simple and effective resources to support businesses to reduce food waste and better comply with recycling guidance (e.g., provide starter kits and compliance support, incentivise food surplus redistribution, and improve space-saving solutions).	
		6.1.2	Drive positive behaviour change and encourage community ownership.	Behaviour change is most effective when reinforced through education and peer influence. Community-led initiatives build ownership and pride, making waste reduction a shared cultural norm.	Work with cross-sector partners to develop borough-wide campaigns to encourage the reduction food waste , through simple messages and advice that residents can implement in their homes (e.g., through meal planning and composting), and by supporting food surplus redistribution through local community organisations or digital apps (e.g., Ollo and Too Good To Go).	
					Work with community organisations, food charities, community kitchens, and pantries to create and share simple and effective advice that can help residents accessing food aid to maximise their groceries and reduce waste at home (e.g., through improved storage, portioning, and creative use of food leftovers).	
		6.1.3	Coordinate and share best practice across sectors.	Collaboration reduces duplication and accelerates learning. Toolkits and pilots provide practical models that others can replicate, scaling impact across the borough.	Work with cross-sector partners to develop and share a toolkit of best practices for schools and SMEs , including case studies and step-by-step guides, to improve their food waste practices.	
					Spotlight innovative community projects and other resident-led actions that creatively address food waste across the borough, and share useful learnings that other can take inspiration from.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 6: We will empower residents and institutions to reduce food waste, cut carbon emissions, and support more sustainable food choices.

Objectives		Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority	
6.2	Promote sustainable, climate-friendly diets and public food procurement.	6.2.1	Embed plant-rich, culturally inclusive food education and promotion.	<p>Practical, culturally relevant education makes sustainable eating achievable and appealing. Visible campaigns and peer-led initiatives normalise plant-rich diets and reduce resistance to change.</p>	Work with cross-sector partners to develop resources and raise awareness on the environmental impact of food choices , focusing on simple and effective shifts to more plant-rich diets and reducing consumption of ultra-processed foods to benefit individual and planetary health.	Year 1
					Work with cross-sector partners to integrate culturally diverse, budget-friendly recipes and practical skills into community cooking programmes , that support residents of all ages in making simple shifts in their food choices that support more plant-rich diets .	
					Work with schools and cross-sector partners to increase the uptake of initiatives like Meat-Free Days in schools and workplaces , with the support of simple resources and by engaging peer champions.	Year 1
		6.2.2	Set and enforce climate-friendly public procurement standards.	<p>Public procurement influences thousands of meals daily, making it a powerful lever for systemic change. Standards and training ensure consistency and quality while embedding climate goals into everyday practice.</p>	Work with cross-Council colleagues to take the necessary steps to embed climate goals into public food procurement, particularly by becoming signatories of the London Food Purchasing Commitment (LFPC) , which support local authorities in evaluating and reporting on the carbon footprint of meals served, food waste reduction, and sustainability of publicly procured food based on its provenance .	Year 1
					Encourage school chefs and caterers' borough-wide to share best practice on designing culturally inclusive plant-rich menus and utilising sustainable food procurement principles to achieve health and climate goals.	
		6.2.3	Create a learning network and replicate best practices.	<p>Peer learning accelerates adoption of proven approaches. Recognition and visibility motivate organisations to invest in sustainability and share knowledge widely.</p>	Develop a repository of case studies, stories, and local projects that document the impact of local food action which support the health of communities and the planet . Utilise these resources to support others in replicating these efforts and secure funding to scale interventions.	Year 1
					Utilise existing community-led events and Council forums to facilitate climate-conscious food education and support climate action through food , by showcasing innovative projects, sharing learnings, successes, and challenges pertaining to sustainable food.	Year 1
					Recognise and celebrate exemplar community action on food that supports climate goals (e.g., innovative waste reduction practices, local climate action and organising etc.) through awards and accreditation schemes to incentivise innovation and best practice.	

Annex 1. Draft Food Action Plan (2026-2028)

Mission 6: We will empower residents and institutions to reduce food waste, cut carbon emissions, and support more sustainable food choices.

Objectives		Solutions	Rationale	Actions	Priority	
6.3	Support environmentally responsible food production and distribution locally.	6.3.1	Grow local capacity and shorten supply chains.	Shorter supply chains reduce emissions and improve freshness, making local produce more competitive. Shared infrastructure addresses logistical barriers for small producers.	Work with cross-sector partners to support residents and community groups in initiating and scaling urban and community growing projects that strengthen local food production , through improved access to micro-grants and funding, co-designing a standard approach for better land access, and facilitating access to training.	
				<p>Appraise local distribution routes which connect producers, wholesalers and distributors to foodbanks, pantries, schools, and community kitchens, and develop recommendations to shorten supply chains.</p>	<i>Year 1</i>	
				Explore the feasibility and viability of investing in the repurposing of unused community assets to develop shared infrastructure such as food hubs , to reduce distribution costs, food waste, and environmental impact.	<i>Year 1</i>	
		6.3.2	Strengthen networks, partnerships, and volunteer engagement.	Strong networks enable collaboration, reduce duplication, and amplify impact. Volunteer engagement builds local ownership and sustainability for food projects	Test ideas to better connect food growers and local distributors with schools, food charities, and community organisations to enable better planning and maximise opportunities for resource sharing (e.g., through community food forums, volunteer engagements etc.).	
				Utilise regular community engagement opportunities such as gardening groups, cooking clubs, and shared eating spaces (e.g., Sharing Spaces programme) to enhance knowledge, skills, and social participation in local climate action linked to food growing and sustainability.	<i>Year 1</i>	
				Support the upskilling and retention of a cadre of community connectors and volunteers to support local food initiatives , and resident outreach to champion climate action.		
		6.3.3	Link growing initiatives to local food systems and resilience.	Connecting growing to cooking and redistribution creates a circular, resilient food system. Micro-enterprises generate income and keep value within the community, while data drives continuous improvement.	Engage with cross-sector partners to learn from local models that integrate food growing, cooking, and surplus redistribution . Utilise and disseminate these learnings to support the scaling of interventions that improve local food system resilience and social cohesion through community organising.	<i>Year 1</i>
				Learn from residents and community groups that grow food locally and supply fresh produce to schools, local foodbanks, and community kitchens, and explore opportunities for them to support the local food system (e.g., Let's Grow Brent and Newman Catholic College).		
				Work with cross-sector stakeholders to streamline the collection and sharing of data and insights on the reach of local food production and distribution to inform better inform planning, target interventions, and demonstrate impact.		

Feedback

If you have any feedback to share or general questions about Brent's Food Strategy, please email Shadi Ambrosini at shadi.ambrosini@brent.gov.uk



Get Involved

Please email FoodPartnership@brent.gov.uk if you are interested in joining our network.

If you are working on any food-related projects or initiatives, please share your activities with us through our survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/8HasJ0jXcA>

This will support our efforts to map and highlight food-related work across the borough and help us better inform the Food Strategy going forward.