

South and Vale Food Action Plan

The Oxfordshire Food Strategy sets out a vision where everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.

The five priority areas for action are:

1. Tackle food poverty and diet related ill health
2. Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together
3. Grow our local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation
4. Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chain
5. Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

Developing Local Food Action Plans

A critical part of implementing this strategy has been the development of local food action plans for each district, to ensure that the Food Strategy reflects local priorities and reflects the unique nature of the City and each of the Districts. These have been led by the Food Action Working Groups (FAWGs) which include representatives from across the food system.

This document presents the Food Action Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, however there are additional actions which sit at county-level and are therefore included in the Oxfordshire Country-level plan.

The South and Vale Food Action Plan is a multi-stakeholder plan, with a range of organisations taking responsibility for action. Through this 'collective action' approach we can achieve more, working collaboratively towards a vision for a better food system for South and Vale.

Tracking Progress, Theory of Change and Metrics

The plan identifies initial actions spanning 2025 – 2027. The plans have been developed following a Theory of Change to ensure that the actions will deliver the intended outcomes and impacts. Throughout this period, we will review progress against targets and metrics and refine the actions recognising that the issues we face are complex and happen within a context in which action owners do not always have control over externalities. We will take an iterative learning approach both to actions and metrics and whilst maintaining the integrity of our ambitions, be pragmatic about the most effective way to achieve these.

South and Vale Food Action Plan

In South and Vale, the FAWG met on six occasions to debate priorities, and develop, refine and test the local action plan. Fifteen FAWG members represented a wider range of stakeholders including food producers, food businesses, community food organisations, Town Councils and community organisations.

For the purposes of this plan, we have only included primary lead and support organisations involved in the development of these plans, however the named lead and support organisations for each action may be working with a range of delivery partners.

1. Tackle food poverty and diet related ill health

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Owner
1.1 Create food insecurity profile using the Priority Places for Food Index (PPFI) data and other data sources, for the two areas within Didcot that feature within the top 30% of priority places.	Profile of the two priority neighbourhoods, with main drivers of food insecurity being understood e.g., access, affordability, incomes.	Better understanding of the drivers of food insecurity at a hyper-local level enables targeted interventions and reduction in food insecurity.	Year 1: Local drivers of food insecurity understood. Year 2: If relevant, a case and funding for targeted interventions in the priority places. Interventions are happening and evaluation demonstrates a positive impact.	Lead: Good Food Oxfordshire Supported by: South and Vale District Councils
1.2 Review, update and re-promote resources on Councils' webpages on eating sustainably and free or affordable food support.	Signpost up-to-date resources to residents, council officers, voluntary and community groups.	More residents, council officers and voluntary and community organisations know where to access resources on healthy affordable food, nutrition, growing and cooking.	Monitor number of communications and engagement levels with communications activity on the topic.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils Supported by: Good Food Oxfordshire
1.3 Community Food Network (CFN) staff and volunteers participate in training and have access to resources to support people to access healthy food with dignity.	Training and resources for CFNs.	People receive support to help move them out of food insecurity.	Year 1: Audit of CFN staff and volunteers training needs. Training requirements plan put in place for member organisations, where required. Year 2: Monitor number of CFN staff and volunteers participating in	Lead: Good Food Oxfordshire Supported by: South and Vale District Councils

			training and qualifications gained.	
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2. Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Owner
2.1 Re-promote and add to Good Food Oxfordshire's online directory of cooking, growing, community food activities and facilities.	Expanded online directory and map of cooking and growing activities and facilities.	More people can access cooking and growing activities. Reduction in food insecurity.	Online directory cross-promoted on Council websites and other communications. Continued addition of profiles as new initiatives, activities, facilities take place.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils Supported by: Good Food Oxfordshire
2.2 Support of existing and delivery of new low-cost and healthy food cooking initiatives.	Existing initiatives supported and new initiatives established through funding.	More people have greater knowledge, skills and confidence and access to the equipment needed to cook and have healthier, more sustainable diets.	Year 1: Identify existing initiatives and community groups to deliver new initiatives, especially in priority places. Community groups and organisations provided with bid writing training, and access to data to support bids for additional external funding. Year 2: Continue to support community partners. Value of funding provided to support community partners.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils
2.3 Promote, maintain and increase community	Identify and support the delivery of	Suitable land made available, and groups supported to	Year 1: Designate a council officer as Community Food	Lead: South and Vale District Councils

growing spaces, including allotments and unused spaces.	<p>community growing spaces.</p> <p>Increase community growing spaces through the support of the community to enable growing opportunities.</p> <p>Scope potential for development of policy around growing food on council-owned land.</p>	enable community growing and edible landscapes.	<p>Champion, to be an advocate for growing in the districts.</p> <p>Community Food Champion to connect new spaces to community growing groups.</p> <p>Year 2: Support planning proposals for the provision of community food growing opportunities as part of new residential developments and in other appropriate locations (employment sites, new schools, community centres etc).</p> <p>Narrative and number of initiatives developed.</p>	
<p>2.4</p> <p>Share communications and resources with food businesses on waste reduction, transparency on waste and keeping food surplus local.</p>	Support businesses to reduce food waste in South and Vale.	<p>More businesses have access to food waste resources and services.</p> <p>Less food is wasted.</p>	<p>Year 1: Plan developed linking into South and Vale Visitor Economy Strategy to identify and work with a test cohort of small food businesses on food waste.</p> <p>Number of communications and promotions materials on food waste, produced as part of existing Environmental Services work (where also relevant to businesses), and from other sources that are shared with cohort.</p> <p>Year 2: Expand scope of activity to include more food businesses.</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p> <p>Supported by: Good Food Oxfordshire</p>

<p>2.5</p> <p>To scope a scheme to connect formalised growing communities (allotments, households, community gardens) to community groups (foodbanks/ fridges) to share surplus produce.</p>	<p>A database of communities willing to participate in scheme.</p> <p>More community groups/ people in need have access to more fresh local produce.</p> <p>Less produce is wasted.</p>	<p>Reduction in levels of food waste.</p> <p>More people accessing surplus healthy food.</p> <p>Community activity around sharing surplus food thrives.</p>	<p>Year 1: Potential for scheme fully scoped and decision made on whether to take forward.</p> <p>Year 2: Amount of produce shared.</p> <p>Narrative from community groups on stronger connections to growing communities.</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p> <p>Supported by: Good Food Oxfordshire</p>
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3. Grow our local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Owner
<p>3.1</p> <p>Promote local food events and markets.</p>	<p>More people are aware of and engage with good food events and markets.</p>	<p>Consumers are better informed on where to buy local and sustainable food.</p>	<p>Research and identify current local food events and markets.</p> <p>Promotion of events on Visit Southern Oxfordshire website.</p> <p>Promotion of events in Experience Oxfordshire and Tourism Southeast newsletters.</p> <p>Scheduling of events and markets to support new opportunities at Arts Centres.</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p> <p>Supported by: Good Food Oxfordshire</p>
<p>3.2</p> <p>Promote grant schemes to support growing activities and access to food.</p>	<p>Community Food Network and other community groups organisations aware of grant schemes.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of grant schemes available for cooking and growing activities, with groups better equipped to apply.</p>	<p>Year 1: Scope and promote potential grant schemes which support access to food and growing.</p> <p>Community groups and organisations provided with bid</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p>

			<p>writing training, and access to data to support bids.</p> <p>Year 2: Value of funding secured.</p> <p>Narrative on outcomes of successful funding bids.</p>	
<p>3.3 Engage with farmers, and large-scale growers across the district and build a network to improve two-way communication and increase understanding of the challenge faced by the sector.</p>	<p>Challenges and opportunities faced by local farmers and growers are better understood.</p>	<p>Councils have stronger links with and better understand the needs of members of the rural economy.</p> <p>Farmers and growers have stronger links with the Councils.</p>	<p>Year 1: Identify a cohort of key representatives to engage with.</p> <p>Establish communication channels with key representatives of the local rural economy sector regarding food.</p> <p>Year 2: Informed by year 1 outcomes.</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p>
<p>3.4 Engage with local food businesses to identify challenges around supplying affordable, healthy and sustainable food.</p> <p>Scope piloting of the Good Food Retail Network scheme in identified priority areas.</p>	<p>Challenges faced by local food enterprises are better understood and plans are developed and implemented to deal with challenges.</p> <p>Increase availability of products that are healthier and help available for consumers to identify these to make healthier choices when buying.</p>	<p>More affordable, healthy and sustainable food is available for residents.</p>	<p>Year 1: 3 retailers consulted and engaged in priority areas.</p> <p>Year 2: If existing Oxfordshire County Council Good Food Retail Network pilot scheme is successful, scope potential to roll out a pilot scheme in district priority areas.</p>	<p>Lead: South and Vale District Councils</p> <p>Good Food Oxfordshire</p> <p>Rice Marketing (for Good Food Retail Network scheme)</p>

3.5 Increased signposting members of the rural economy sector and food businesses to relevant support resources.	Signpost resources to businesses in the rural economy sector.	More rural economy businesses know where to access resources.	Year 1: Utilise established communication links with rural economy businesses to publicise available support. Monitor number of communications and engagement levels with communications activity.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils
3.6 Promote to food businesses, farmers and growers the availability of funding for apprenticeships, and provide support during process.	Food businesses, farmers and growers aware of funding for apprenticeships and support available.	More businesses know where to access resources on apprenticeships. More apprentices working in the sector. Careers in the farming, growing and food sector are seen as a viable career.	Await updated guidance to be published around continuation of Apprenticeship Levy funding. Promote Apprenticeships Levy to businesses.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils

4. Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chain

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Owner
4.1 Research project to identify and map farmers and growers across both districts, with produce types.	Map of farmers and growers with produce types.	Evidence for case for local procurement.	Year 1: Baseline established for numbers of growers and type of produce grown.	Lead: Good Food Oxfordshire Supported by: South and Vale District Councils
4.2 Encourage local anchor institutions* to “think local” when procuring local goods and	Short local supply chain infrastructure in place to facilitate direct relationship between producers and buyers.	More locally produced food remains local as producers and less reliance on national/ international supply chains.	Year 1: Scope out parameters to determine if project is feasible. If feasible, develop project.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils Supported by: Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP)

services relating to food. (*Anchor institutions could include NHS; schools; colleges; universities; police etc).		Dietary shifts to more local and seasonal diets facilitated by closer connections to food provenance. Local procurement increases revenues of local firms.	Year 2: Dependent on Year 1.	Good Food Oxfordshire
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5. Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Owner
5.1 Support institutional settings (schools, nurseries, libraries, leisure centres, care homes) to participate in good food campaigns to encourage healthy, sustainable eating. (Examples include: Eat Them to Defeat Them; Switch Up Your Lunch; Sugar Smart; Veg Power; Healthy Start).	Year on year increase in the number of participants involved in campaigns to increase healthy and sustainable eating.	More residents are connected to good food campaigns on cooking and growing. More residents eat healthy and sustainable food.	Year 1: Baseline and set targets. Year 2: Meet targets.	Lead: South and Vale District Councils and Good Food Oxfordshire Supported by: Oxfordshire County Council Public Health
5.2 Implement a communication campaign focused on educating institutional consumers (students, parents, children, patients) in the districts about the benefits of	Communications and resources aimed at institutional consumers.	Consumers demand more sustainably produced local food via their institutions. Institutions respond to consumer demand.	Year 1: Communications reach 50% of consumers at 5 institutions. Evidence of the increase in importance of sustainable local food among 10% of institutional consumers. Year 2:	Lead: Good Food Oxfordshire Supported by: South and Vale District Councils

local and sustainable food.			<p>Communications reach 50% of consumers at 10 target institutions.</p> <p>Evidence of the increase in importance of sustainable local food among 25% of institutional consumers.</p>	
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Conclusion

The actions contained in this plan set out a roadmap for how we will continue working together on food systems change across South and Vale, and the metrics determine how we will review and monitor progress.

The process of working collaboratively and iteratively, and across sectors, has been instrumental in bringing a wealth of voices, and experiences together. The Food Action Working Group engaged with a wider stakeholder group to share draft plans and test our thinking with those engaged in the food system, to ensure a wider variety of voices are reflected. We hope this plan will catalyse the incredible work of all the many organisations who are working to change the food system across Oxfordshire.



Listening Learning Leading

