



## Fair Food Aberdeenshire – A Sustainable Food Partnership





# Sustainable Food Plan 2023-2026

## About us

**Fair Food Aberdeenshire (FFA) believe everyone should have access to affordable and healthy food no matter where they live or how much they earn. Nutritious food is a basic right and a vital resource to everyone and changing the way we think about food can play a key role in transforming communities. From diet-related ill health to food waste, our food system provides challenges but also opportunities to reduce inequalities, increase employability and reduce the carbon footprint of our food system.**

Where we live plays a significant role in the food we choose to eat and our current environment contributes to inequalities we see between the most and least deprived areas. The poorest households spend a significantly larger proportion of their income on food with healthy, sustainable produce being more expensive and out of reach. Due to the vast area and rural nature of Aberdeenshire, access to affordable, healthy food is a challenge that is often unperceived when we think about food insecurity. Aberdeenshire has one of the

highest levels of people living in 'access deprived' areas in Scotland, contributing to higher fuel costs, reduced mobility and little or no access to affordable food. FFA aim to ensure that high quality food provision is accessible as well as identifying other key factors that contribute to food insecurity.

It is vital that we eat a nutritious and balanced diet to improve our wellbeing, but that food should not be detrimental to our environment or the people that produce it. We therefore will ensure that we work toward improving the sustainability of the food eaten in Aberdeenshire by promoting sustainable procurement and championing fair wages.

Aberdeenshire hosts a variety of groups and organisations who are passionate about sustainable food, the region, and its world-famous produce. We aim to celebrate the extensive larder Aberdeenshire has to offer and help to make good food a characteristic of the place we live. We will deliver our vision by building cross-sector relationships and bringing together everyone where a fair

and sustainable food system is their common goal. With a partnership approach, expertise from areas across the food system and those with direct experience, we will develop a holistic and community-led sustainable food plan for Aberdeenshire.





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## Our Partners

**Fair Food Aberdeenshire (FFA) was established in 2021 in response to the development of the Aberdeenshire Food Strategy. The group was broadened to include a cross-sector partnership with representatives from public, private and community sectors.**

The aim of the partnership is to develop a holistic approach to tackling a range of food related issues. By adopting a partnership approach, FFA will develop and implement a community-led action plan. The plan will cover the entire food chain, from field to fork: the production, processing, marketing, distribution, sale, and purchase of food and the consumer practices, resources and institutions involved in these processes.

Our partnership continues to grow with sustainable food at the forefront of conversations across different sectors. By working together, we can make a difference to the way we buy, eat and think about food, whilst boosting the local economy and protecting our natural resources.





## Sustainable Food Places

To support and enhance our vision, FFA became a member of the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) network in March 2022. With such a network already in place and place to support our vision and food policy now on the agenda at national and local levels, we see an opportunity to share and learn from best practice. Comprising over 70 cities and regions around the UK, SFP is a partnership founded by the Soil Association, Nourish and Food Matters. Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, this national framework will provide us with support and resources to help make a positive change to our local food system. Through sharing best practice, knowledge, and expertise, we believe that food can provide solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges we face. Through the support of the network, we will continue to work with other members to ensure that sustainable food issues are recognised at local and national levels.

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## Key Priorities

Due to the complex nature of our food system and to align ourselves with the Sustainable Food Places framework, we have taken a whole system approach and have split our plan into six key areas: Security, Environment, Procurement, Economy, Culture and Governance, all of which are interlinked. By adopting whole systems approach we aim to tackle social, environmental, and economic challenges, as well as understanding the landscape and barriers to developing a sustainable food system. Where relevant, working groups will be developed to deliver and develop actions and act as link between those with direct experience of the challenges we aim to address. Working with other strategies such as the HEAL LOIP, duplication will be avoided by aligning our plans so that we can help to deliver positive food policy change.

Food System Components, Processes, and Activities



<https://www.iisd.org/articles/visual-representations-food-systems>



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## Governance & Strategy

A vital aspect of our vision will be to ensure that FFA is committed to a people-centred approach, and we will continue to develop inclusive, transparent, and accountable relationships with all our stakeholders. We see this plan as an opportunity to bring together people and organisations from different sectors with a common interest in a collaborative way. By hosting consultations, workshops and surveys, we will ensure that marginalised voices and those with direct experience will have the opportunity not only to inform our actions but to participate in the development of the partnership and its agenda.

## Food Security

The evidence has long been clear that food insecurity is driven primarily by lack of income. Low pay, insecure work, and inadequate and unreliable social security provision mean that people are unable to buy nutritious, healthy food, if they can afford any at all. Tackling food-related inequalities is one of today's most urgent challenges if we are to stem the rising tide of hunger, obesity and diet-related ill-health. A range of different approaches is required to fully address healthy weight both supporting individual and wider environmental change. A collaborative partnership approach is required to deliver healthy, affordable food; regardless of where people live or how much they earn.





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## Food Culture

We want to inspire people and institutions through various events so a greater connection and relationship to our food can be developed. By engaging with the people on multiple platforms, we want to share the benefits of cooking, growing and sharing food. Through various activities, food can help to reduce social isolation, improve physical and mental wellbeing, provide skills and confidence and bring communities together.



## Food for the Planet

How food is produced, processed, packaged and transported is vital in managing the ecological footprint of our food system. With an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, depletion of natural resources, rising poverty, hunger and inequality, food production has been at the forefront of discussion in recent years, with an international consensus that anthropogenic activities are contributing to climate change. Almost a third of what we produce globally goes to waste, having an enormous impact on the planet and its resources.



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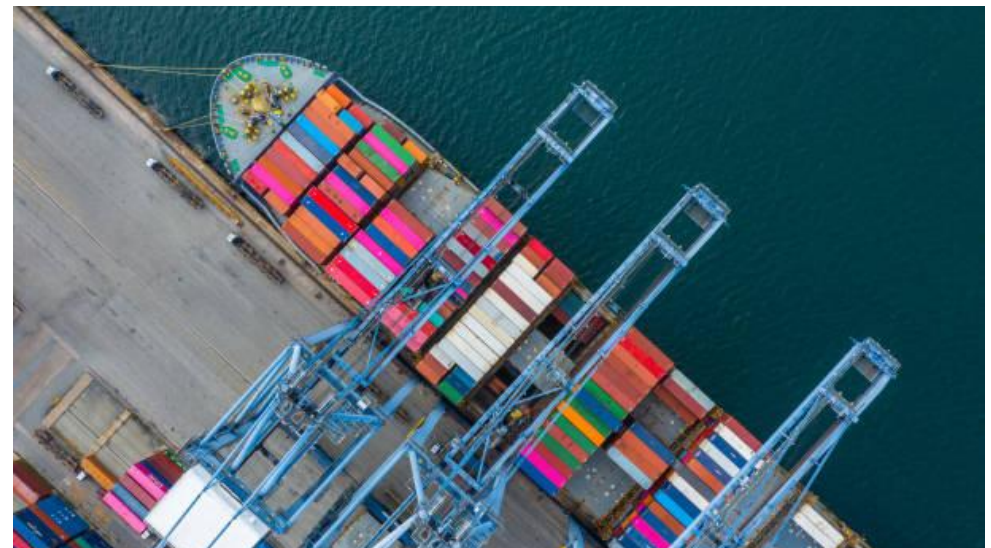
## Economy

Aberdeenshire has a diverse economy which like many has been impacted on because of the pandemic and Brexit, however there are opportunities which can be developed across the NorthEast. The seafood processing sector across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire already accounts for 32% of total food and drink sales and presents a significant growth opportunity for the region's economy. Its development can anchor quality jobs and value-adding activity in coastal communities for the long term.



## Procurement

To create a large-scale demand for healthy, sustainable, and local food, procurement can play a powerful tool in helping to reach large numbers of people. From schools, colleges, hospitals and caterers, procurement can not only help change our eating habits but is an important step to improving our system. We aim to build community wealth by helping to develop cooperatives and ensure that community's benefit social,







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## Policy Context

In recent years the way we think about food has been an increasingly popular topic and is reflected in the changing policies at a national level such as the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 and the Good Food Nation Bill. This presents an opportunity to align our own plans with current frameworks and act as a mechanism to deliver national good food ambitions. By participating in local and national networks, FFA will utilise and share knowledge, experience and expertise from other cities and regions facing similar challenges. FFA continue to consult through the SFP network who have direct links with the Scottish government. This mechanism will provide a route for voices that are often underrepresented and those with direct experience to be heard and listened to with the view of changing local and national food policy.

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

Driven by the United Nations, Sustainable Development (development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN)) has been at the forefront of policy debate in recent decades as governments and local authorities look to transition to a green economy. Sustainable Development can not only tackle environmental issues but can help to solve the world's other challenges such as inequalities, poverty and economic downturns; governments and local authorities have now embedded these goals in national and local policies. Each key area of our strategy will highlight how a sustainable food system can contribute to various Sustainable Development Goals.

### **The Good Food Nation Bill**

The Good Food Nation Bill ensures Scottish Ministers, and a range of public bodies produce 'good food nation' plans to support social and economic wellbeing, the environment, health and economic development. The Bill lays the foundation for Scotland to become a Good Food Nation where people from all walks of life take pride and pleasure from the food they produce, buy, cook and eat each day. The Fair Food Aberdeenshire Food Plan will align with the ambitions of the Good Food Nation Bill, and we will continue to consult with the Scottish Government on all food policies.

### **The Community Empowerment Act**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 will help to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services. The Community Empowerment Act requires every local



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authority to prepare a food growing strategy for its area to identify land that could be used to grow food and to set out provision for increased community growing, particularly in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Aberdeenshire Council has developed a food growing strategy which will accompany the FFA food plan.

## **Local Outcome Improvement Plan**

The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan is a ten year plan that provides a vision, based on agreed local priorities, to which partners work systematically and collaboratively to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. In April 2021, the HEAL Strategic Partnership Group was formed with the aim to support people living in Aberdeenshire to have a healthy weight. The group have adopted a 'Whole System Approach' (WSA) evidence-based method to identify and focus on action that will make healthy eating and active living possible and achievable for Aberdeenshire communities.



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## Food Plan

### 1. Food Governance & Strategy



3-Year Objectives	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Explore the use of national frameworks which will ensure positive outcomes are achieved using a coordinated approach which will deliver the aspirations for Aberdeenshire.</b></p>	<p>1.1 Strategic groups to align action plans/outcomes to the food strategy and national frameworks such as Good Food Nation.</p>	<p>Continue to participate and engage with the Sustainable Food Places (SFP), local authorities and health boards to help deliver Good Food Nation ambitions.</p> <p>Continue to link with the development of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (Healthy Eating &amp; Active Living) to align plans and avoid duplication.</p>
	<p>1.2 Obtain a Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award.</p>	<p>Collate all relevant information across key areas.</p> <p>Submit expression of Interest</p> <p>Attend guidance sessions for awards applicants.</p> <p>Submit final application</p>



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<p><b>Ensure a transparent, accountable and bottom-up approach is adopted and maintained.</b></p>	<p>1.3 Ensure a transparent reporting process is maintained and accessible.</p>	<p>Ensure relevant data is collected from all activities across key areas to aid monitoring, evaluation, learning and continued improvement.</p> <p>Produce a public annual report to be presented to Community Planning Board. Publishing data collected and how this is used to inform actions.</p> <p>Provide clear information to the public on funding, representation, objectives, reporting and agendas via webpage, social media and partner websites.</p>
<p><b>Deliver a Sustainable Food Plan for Aberdeenshire.</b></p>	<p>1.4 Ensure a strong partnership exists that will deliver and monitor a sustainable food plan.</p>	<p>Ensure representation from all key priorities in steering group.</p> <p>Coordinate and monitor activities/programmes and identify gaps/areas of improvement for each key area.</p> <p>Continue to use current and develop new research through academic partners to inform actions.</p> <p>Strengthen links between the partnership groups who are leading on the key elements by hosting joint events.</p>



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	<p>1.5 Embed a model of cocreation to ensure communities and those with Lived Experience are provided with opportunities to participate in both long- and short-term outcomes.</p>	<p>Ensure regular consultation and feedback are utilised in a responsive manner and inform any decision-making processes.</p> <p>Develop a strategy that identifies, then measures a pathway to enable people from all areas of Aberdeenshire and those that may not often have their voices heard to be members of the steering group.</p>
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## 2. Food Security



5-Year Objectives	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Develop fairer access to good quality low-cost nutritious food across Aberdeenshire.</b></p>	<p>2.1 To having a sustainable and holistic approach to the development of food co-ops, pantries, and outlets.</p>	<p>Explore collaboration around purchasing food.</p> <p>Make and strengthen links with the agricultural , fish , food &amp; drink sector to redirect surplus produce to community food outlets.</p>



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		<p>Database of local suppliers to be developed ensuring a coordinated approach is used for donations.</p>
	<p>2.2 To ensure people are provided with choice and treated with dignity whilst accessing emergency food provision.</p>	<p>Ensure those with lived experience informs services &amp; project developments.</p> <p>Empower communities to embrace a human rights approach to food security through developing a resource we can all use and help to provide.</p>
<p><b>Raise awareness of food initiatives &amp; services.</b></p>	<p>2.3 Ensure service providers and the wider public have knowledge of existing services.</p>	<p>Highlight and promote the local directories to increase accessibility to the range of community-based initiatives and identify areas of future development.</p> <p>Increase the number of projects that have signed up to ALISS.</p> <p>Develop an interactive map which identifies, food outlets, growing projects and food skills initiatives, to be embedded on to service websites.</p>
<p><b>A commitment to partnership delivery of a 'cash first' and preventative approach to maximise income.</b></p>	<p>2.4 To reduce the need for emergency food provision</p>	<p>Provide opportunities where financial inclusion advice is available at all community food outlets.</p>



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		Provide access to the Worried About Money Leaflet & training.
<p><b>Continued development of community-based food projects which are sustainable to meet the needs of communities.</b></p>	2.5 Ensure signposting is standardised across all services	Provide training to welfare advisors, housing officers and support workers so that the appropriate signposting and information is provided.
	2.6 Link evidence from research to action planning - Future Priorities from Practitioner Research with Aberdeenshire Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) During Covid19 in 2021	<p>Increase knowledge of lived experience of food insecurity to check for changes over time that communities and local government can effectively respond to.</p> <p>Revisit the concept of community hubs for wellbeing, resilience, growth and connectedness – the ‘food is glue’ concept.</p>
	2.7 Facilitate a joined-up collaborative approach amongst all stakeholders to increase shared participation in planning and delivery.	<p>Continue to plan and respond with individual communities in mind, harnessing local knowledge, assets and activists.</p> <p>Develop a delivery network which will support the local community based projects, inform strategic decisions and ensure those with lived experience is integrated in planning &amp; development of future services.</p> <p>Build a volunteer resource bank for access to key documents, how-to’s project videos etc</p>



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## 3. Food Culture



5-Year Objectives	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Raise public awareness of food, health and sustainability issues.</b></p>	<p>3.1 Develop an engagement and digital marketing plan.</p>	<p>Investigate funding, unemployment schemes and university placements to employ a part-time media and marketing officer.</p>
	<p>3.2 Raising awareness of support, services, initiatives, and best practice across all key areas.</p>	<p>Embed all maps identifying services, opportunities, training etc on local authority websites and partner websites.</p> <p>Upload regular updates across all social media platforms, encouraging healthy &amp; sustainable food choices.</p> <p>Develop a monthly newsletter.</p> <p>Develop and promote food charter, encouraging good practice.</p> <p>Develop a website.</p>
	<p>3.3 Implement a campaign such as 'Sugar Smart' or 'Veg Cities'</p>	<p>Identify areas of need to focus a campaign.</p>





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		<p>Identify partners to host/support a campaign.</p> <p>Apply to SFP for campaign funding.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate outcomes for campaign.</p>
<b>Increase cooking skills &amp; promote training opportunities.</b>	3.4 Understand the level of food skills training available.	<p>Continue to map available kitchen spaces across Aberdeenshire to identify suitable training facilities.</p> <p>Map all organisations currently delivering food skills training, identify gaps in provision.</p>
	3.5 Support, promote and develop current and potential training opportunities.	<p>Engage with community assets to create a sustainable model for the delivery of food skills classes.</p> <p>Promote NHS Grampian's Confidence 2 Cook Training \$ Trainer's program, Garioch Kitchen and other initiatives through all social media platforms.</p> <p>Link trainers with facilities and food growing initiatives.</p>
<b>Increase participation in food growing</b>	3.6 Understand the current provision in Aberdeenshire for community growing, sites and levels of demand.	<p>Continue to map current and potential food growing spaces.</p> <p>Review the allotment survey (2018), map areas of demand and potential sites.</p>



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		Engage with AC Housing to reduce allotment waiting lists by signposting community gardens.
	3.7 Encourage schools to develop food growing activities.	<p>Provide training opportunities to primary and secondary pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Promote and encourage participation in OSF Garden Schools programme.</p> <p>Identify funding to support OSF Garden Schools project so it can be widened across Aberdeenshire.</p>
	3.8 Promotion of best practice and where to access opportunities to train through web and local events for residents of Aberdeenshire.	<p>Share information to be promoted through FFA social media and webpage.</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of hosting a food growing event through campaign funding.</p> <p>Provide training for households.</p> <p>Formalise process for constituted groups made up off Aberdeenshire residents who wish to access land for food growing.</p> <p>Publicise the availability and opportunities for community groups to use council owned land for food growing.</p>



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		Develop a Facebook page for novice and expert growers to share advice and organise events.
<p><b>Support current food growing spaces to adopt a holistic approach to tackle environmental, social and economic challenges.</b></p>	3.9 Support and encourage local food growing businesses to aid the circular economy.	<p>Create an email list to provide info and regular updates to food growing businesses.</p> <p>Deliver food growing training to food businesses.</p>
	3.10 Targeting of resources to alleviate food poverty and social isolation.	<p>Make links with emergency food providers and growers to distribute surplus and promote available food growing opportunities.</p> <p>Link mental and physical wellbeing services to food growing spaces and community gardens.</p>
	3.12 Encourage all current and future food growing projects maximise habitat creation and increase biodiversity.	Provide information to food growers through email, site visits, workshops and events.



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## 4. Food for the Planet



5-Year Objectives	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Ensure people and businesses are supported to reduce food and food related waste through a range of initiatives.</b></p>	<p>4.1 Encourage businesses and local authorities to adopt a food waste hierarchy.</p>	
	<p>4.2 Develop campaigns across multiple media platforms to encourage food waste reduction across households and businesses.</p>	<p>Identify potential projects, partners and funding and available campaigns from SFP.</p> <p>Collaborate with Zero Waste Scotland to investigate the feasibility of rolling out the Food Waste resource for businesses.</p> <p>Promote the use of food waste apps such as Olio.</p> <p>Regular updates on FFA social media and newsletters.</p>
	<p>4.3 Help to connect food waste ‘producers’ such as supermarkets with local food waste initiatives.</p>	<p>Make links with supermarkets to initiate discussions.</p>



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		Produce a poster with a QR code to be placed in food retailers to inform customers about food waste.
	4.4 Encourage households, schools and businesses to adopt and inform on the Circular Economy concept.	Provide information through newsletters, talks and campaigns.  Identify funding and support for schools to improve the efficiency of their food and food related waste such as recycling bins and upcycling.
<b>Support producers on how to adopt sustainable farming techniques.</b>	4.5 Understand where farmers access advice on sustainable farming methods	Establish links with local farmers with the aim of developing a network to share advice. Make links with NFU Scotland.  Make links with Landworkers Alliance.
	4.6 Understand the key issues producers face accessing local markets	



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## 5. Food Procurement & Economy



5-Year Objectives	Aims	Actions
<b>Increase community wealth building approaches.</b>	5.1 Make links with stakeholders to increase awareness and investigate the practicalities of community wealth building.	<p>Identify key procurement officers and organisations, producers and suppliers.</p> <p>Explore a workshop for stakeholders to investigate cooperative building.</p> <p>Scope gaps in local food production, identifying potential markets, skills gaps and routes to employment.</p>
<b>Increase sustainable food accreditation.</b>	Promote sustainable food procurement goals, procurement policy, best practice and Good Food Nation ambitions.	<p>Promote and track progress of Fair Trade, Real Living Wage, Food for Life and other schemes.</p> <p>Share information to be promoted through FFA social media and webpage.</p> <p>Develop events for those involved in the food supply chain to gather input.</p>
	Support local independent and sustainable businesses and start-ups to increase their offering of sustainable produce.	Develop a scheme where local businesses can register to learn how to make their food healthier.



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		<p>Develop free training and information for food entrepreneurs on procurement, promotion, finance and planning.</p> <p>Develop a joint Fish City campaign with Aberdeen City partnership.</p>
<p><b>Promote Aberdeenshire as a food destination.</b></p>	<p>Develop and promote campaigns and events focused on increasing consumer spending in local independent food businesses.</p>	<p>Develop and promote food trails with local businesses and organisations.</p> <p>Promote local food business adopting sustainable and ethical practices, sharing best practice.</p> <p>Attend network events between suppliers, buyers and producers.</p> <p>Develop a producer event focusing on each administrative area.</p>