

THE CASE FOR FOOD-INFORMED POLICY



WHY MUST LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS BE AT THE HEART OF FUTURE GROWTH IN EASTBOURNE?

Healthy communities: local food systems help support community health and well-being

- 26.7% of reception year children are overweight in Eastbourne, a figure that increases to 30.9% in year 6 and 65.8% in adulthood. Nationwide, diets low in legumes and veg are responsible for at least 31,000 avoidable premature deaths a year ([source](#)).
- Poor diets and their adverse health effects are unevenly distributed, with the highest income groups consuming 1.5 more daily portions than the lowest ([source](#)).
- Healthy food is much less accessible than unhealthy food. Foodstuffs high in fat sugar are calorie for calorie 1/3 the price of veg ([source](#)). Eastbourne has a density 96.1 of fast food outlets per 10,000 population, which is higher than the regional average of 72.6.
- Community growing spaces such as allotments support low income households to access affordable fruit and vegetables. [Source](#). Community gardening is associated with higher fruit and vegetable intake, positive psychosocial and community outcomes ([source](#)), whilst Community Supported Agriculture schemes are associated with more cohesive communities ([source](#)).
- Food grown with regenerative growing systems have a higher nutritional value than conventional systems ([source](#)), and increased diversity associated with better gut health ([source](#))

Healthy local economy: investments in local food systems support a thriving local economy and diverse, high quality job opportunities

- 94.3% of groceries are sold through the top nine multiples in the UK ([source](#)). Meanwhile, smaller independent local food outlets create a job for every £46k turnover, which is three times the jobs of supermarkets ([source](#)).
- Producers involved in the local food economy employed on average 3.4 full-time workers compared to the regional average of 2.3 per farm, and employment per hectare in Community Supported Agriculture Systems is five times higher than the agricultural average. ([source](#))
- Expenditure on local food generates an economic return of £3 for every £1 spent contributing to the local multiplier effect ([source](#)). This is in addition to savings associated with increased health and environmental outcomes. For example, Brighton and Hove allotments save the local authorities an estimated £166 minimum savings per plot (not including rental income) ([source](#))

Healthy planet: local food systems are key to reducing GHG emissions and restoring nature

- Global agri-food systems were responsible for 31% of anthropogenic GHG emissions in 2019 ([source](#)), and there was no decrease in GHG emissions associated with agricultural production in the UK from 2008-2018 ([source](#)).
- Conventional supply chains are associated with 3x the GHG emissions of a small scale box scheme. ([source](#)) because of refrigerated transport and storage needs.
- Farm-level waste due to cosmetic standards is ~7.4%, and due to supermarket overproduction demands is 10-16% ([source](#)). Local food systems enable more responsive farmer-focussed supply chains which reduce waste.

Future resilience: changing global climatic conditions make local food production the key to food resilience

- In 2013, 32% of the UK's fruit and vegetable imports came from areas defined as "climate vulnerable", and 54% of fruit and vegetable supply came from countries likely to face high to extremely high water scarcity in the near future (2040). [Source](#). Local food systems increase self-sufficiency and small-scale, agro-ecological growing systems are more resilient in the face of changing climatic conditions ([source](#))
- With over 6million hectares of soil at risk of degradation, and a 40-60% loss of organic carbon in arable soils ([source](#)), agricultural soils are also at threat from developments: In the South East, over 3,000 (1.25%) hectares of Best/Most Versatile agricultural land has been developed since 2010, and 1.22% of the highest class (Grade 1) has been developed since 2010. ([source](#)).
- Preserving fertile land for regenerative growing systems is essential to building future growing capacity, supporting community health and vibrancy of the local economy. ([source](#))

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WHAT CAN EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL DO TO BUILD LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS?

Strategic direction:

- Co-develop a Food Strategy with relevant stakeholders & community involvement, including actions towards developing a thriving local food system. This involves the integration of food/nutrition security into other strategic documents ([example](#) Bath and North East Somerset)
- Declare Eastbourne a "right to food" town ([example](#) Cambridge)
- Engage with Eastbourne Food Partnership to offer 'food systems' training for councillors & council officers to enable a holistic food-informed approach to local policy

Planning policies:

- Co-develop a TAN and/or PAN around food security to support food-informed planning and development ([example](#), Brighton & Hove)
- Incorporate food security and dietary health in Eastbourne's Local Plan
 - e.g. inclusion of sustainable food supply in infrastructure requirements ([example](#) Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea)
 - e.g. incorporation of nutritional security in Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document ([example](#) Blackburn with Darwen)
- Develop Good Food Advertising policy restricting advertising on ultra-processed food & drink and promoting healthy food and local retailers in council-owned spaces ([example](#) Transport for London)
- Develop a policy for street-trading, licensing and vending machine requirements that incorporate climate-friendly, affordable and healthy food options and restrict the density of fast food outlets
 - Vending machine contracts that stipulate an increase in healthy food provision ([example](#))
 - Street trading policies that guarantee healthy options for vendors or restrict vans in school vicinity ([example](#), Warrington Street Trading policy)
- Develop policies (e.g. in the form of SPD) to restrict the proliferation of fast food outlets and prevent food deserts
 - e.g. Section 106 agreements that require financial contributions from hot food takeaways to fund public health ([example](#) London Borough of Barking and Dagenham)
 - e.g. clauses on use-types in the Local plan to reduce unhealthy uses, and to ensure presence of essential grocery shops ([example](#) Hackney, Policy 13)
- Adopt policies that increase allotment provision, promote edible landscapes and access to land
 - e.g. promoting food growing in Local Plan ([example](#) [Lambeth Council](#), section 9)
 - e.g. developing an allotment strategy in partnership with EAGS to increase allotment accessibility ([example](#), Brighton and Hove)

Policies to support local food system actors:

- Create business rate reliefs for local food businesses and/or food business with an affordable, sustainable and healthy offer ([example](#) Oldham, [example](#) Bristol)
- Give rent reductions to local food businesses and community in council-owned properties ([example](#) Preston)
- Promote local community composting initiatives by offering small start-up grants & support ([example](#) South Hams District Council providing match funding of up to £7500 for community composting schemes)

Policies to fight poverty in Eastbourne

- By paying the Living Wage to employed staff and contractors ([example](#), Lambeth Council)
- By supporting local Living Wage employers through business rate reductions ([example](#) Brent Council) or supporting business accreditation ([example](#) Cardiff Council)
- By reviewing Council Tax arrangements to protect those on lowest incomes from poverty-related food insecurity