

URBACT NETWORK: Sustainable Food in Urban Communities

Developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems,
by focusing on three areas:
growing, delivering and enjoying food.

Bristol's sustainable food journey Local Action Plan 2015





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City context

Introducing Bristol

Bristol is located in the South West region of England. It is a dynamic and rapidly growing city with a population of 450,000 people and is part of a city region with Bath of 1.1 million. Bristol is diverse with 13.5% black and ethnic minority residents and over 91 languages are spoken in the city.

Bristol is European Green Capital 2015. Bristol was awarded this prestigious title because of many years of pioneering environmental efforts. Bristol has achieved real success in creating a happier and healthier city, through improvements in areas like energy, waste, food and travel. Bristol also has a willingness to take risks and look at new ideas, and has ambitious plans for the future.

Action on creating a sustainable food system for Bristol has been taking place for many years. Bristol City Council was one of the first in the UK to establish a 'Food Links' project in the mid-1990's. One of the legacies of that work is the Bristol Farmers' Market, which began in 1997.

Currently there is a surge of interest in food growing in the city with oversubscribed allotments and smallholdings. New projects include several multi acre community food growing sites set up to both produce food, re-skill people in horticulture, and to generate more community based activity for health and wellbeing. The local food newsletter produced by the Bristol Food Network links and inspires food interests around and beyond the city.

Bristol has a thriving local economy of shops, cafés, restaurants and markets selling a diverse range of food from around the world and from local producers. However parts of the city are recognised food deserts with poor access to fresh food, adversely affecting more vulnerable groups of people. Some of the more thriving neighbourhood shopping areas are at risk, as large multi chain retailers plan a greater number of supermarkets in Bristol compared to other UK cities.

There is also the longer term and larger scale challenge of creating more market opportunities - eg street markets, public sector meals in schools and hospitals, local shops, community shops and buying groups - within Bristol for farmers in the surrounding regions and developing new logistical routes to these markets.

Timeline for food in Bristol

The following table highlights some of the more recent steps in Bristol's journey. It illustrates the types of action on creating a sustainable food system for Bristol that has been taking place for many years.

Year	Some steps in Bristol's journey
1980s and 1990s	Several projects began to reconnect people to where their food comes. Some examples include the Hartcliffe Environment and Health Action group with its community kitchen and market gardens and Bristol's many Community Orchards and City Farms and one of the UK's first modern farmers markets. Bristol Food Links was formed to bring together interested organisations.
2008	'Bristol Food Network' is formed, bringing together hundreds of people who care about a better food system, and sharing information through the regular newsletter called 'Bristol's Local Food Update'. Bristol creates a new environment partnership for the city - the Bristol Green Capital Partnership. The first Love Food Festival is held at the Paintworks.
2009	Bristol City Council and the Bristol Green Capital produce Bristol's Peak Oil report to help the city respond to this challenge, including action on food. Bristol Food Network prepares its Sustainable Food Strategy. Food is Everyone's Business conference takes place at Bristol's City Hall, and Bristol receives a National Food Champion Award from the Food Standards Agency.
2010	New food growing ventures are forming - Sims Hill Shared Harvest, The Community Farm, Feed Bristol, The Severn Project and many more. A second Food Conference is held in City Hall.
2011	The No Tesco in Stokes Croft campaign attracts national media interest. The Who Feeds Bristol research report is commissioned by National Health Service Bristol and Bristol City Council and launched at the annual Food Conference in City Hall. The Bristol Food Policy Council is formed, bringing together the different parts of the food system onto one influencing forum. The Get Growing Garden Trail is held for the first time, and becomes an annual event.

Year	Some steps in Bristol's journey
2012	<p>The Bristol Pound is launched, attracting media interest around the world, and enabling people to support local food businesses through using the £B.</p> <p>Bristol's first Big Green Week takes place, starting with a huge street food market.</p> <p>The first Feeding the 5000 event happens in Bristol, serving almost 5000 hot meals from food that would otherwise have been thrown away.</p> <p>The Bristol Food Charter is launched, with the aim of uniting food campaigners from all angles under a single definition of Good Food.</p> <p>The inaugural meeting of the UK Sustainable Food Cities Network is hosted in Bristol.</p> <p>Bristol teams up with 9 other European Cities that are also working to transform their food systems; this leads to an EU URBACT funded learning and exchange programme 'Sustainable Food in Urban communities'.</p>
2013	<p>Food Poverty hits the headlines, and Bristol publishes its own report on Food Poverty.</p> <p>Bristol hosts a Sustainable Food Summit to launch the 'Eat Drink Bristol Fashion' two-week programme of food events held in the tipis in Queen Square.</p> <p>Bristol wins the European Green Capital Award 2015.</p> <p>Good Food is included as a priority in Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p> <p>The catering service for Southmead and Frenchay Hospital achieves Silver on the Soil Association's Food for Life award.</p> <p>The Bristol Good Food Plan is launched at City Hall along with a 3 minute animation to illustrate the Bristol Good Food Charter.</p>
2014	<p>Bristol hosts the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards in May. A fortnight long new 'Food Connections Festival' accompanies the awards event.</p> <p>The Mayor's Healthy School Awards take place.</p>

The following page shows two examples of materials that have been produced in order to convey the 'Good Food' message to a wider audience:

Uppermost is a postcard promoting sign-up to the 'Good Food Charter'. It condenses the Good Food message into some easy bullet points for both Individuals and Businesses.

Bristol good FOOD

Bristol good food is the key message of the Bristol Food Policy Council. We believe **good food** is vital to the quality of people's lives in Bristol. As well as being tasty, healthy and affordable, the food we eat should be good for nature, good for workers, good for local businesses and good for animal welfare.

To find out more visit the **Bristol Food Policy Council** website: www.bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org

What you can do The Bristol good food charter

As an individual

- ☒ Sign the charter
- ☒ Cook great meals from scratch using fresh, seasonal, local and organic produce
- ☒ Ask your school or workplace to serve only **good food**

www.bristolgoodfood.org/individual

As a business or institution

- ☒ Sign the charter
- ☒ Buy healthy and sustainable food that supports local economic prosperity
- ☒ Serve only **good food** to your students, or employees, patients or customers

www.bristolgoodfood.org/business

To keep up-to-date with food news in the city, sign up for **Bristol's local food update** newsletter at: www.bristolfoodnetwork.org

Below is the front face of one of 16 recipe postcards, produced to promote Bristol's independent food retailers through the Bristol Independents campaign <http://bristolindependents.co.uk/> working alongside the Bristol Pound <http://bristolpound.org/>. Each card highlights a different high street or shopping area in the city, of which there are 50 in total. The reverse side features a recipe that can be cooked from scratch using ingredients bought in the area, contributed by a local organization or business.



Description of the Bristol URBACT food journey process (2012–2015)

The Starting Point: Bristol began the URBACT phase of its journey with some strong foundations including:

- The Who Feeds Bristol report (2011) which provided a pioneering baseline audit, analysis of the city's food system and a framework for development of future plans.
- The Bristol Food Policy Council and Bristol Food Network which were able to become the "Local Support Group" for the URBACT project.

The 'travellers': URBACT participants have been drawn from the Food Policy Council and from the wider network of groups working on food in Bristol. The Bristol City Council project coordinator has participated in every visit and each time has brought different people from Bristol's network of food organisations. These participants have helped to make more connections and links within the Bristol food community.

The Green Capital Partnership Food Action group, chaired by Bristol Food Network is a particularly significant part of the city's action planning process thanks to Bristol's success in achieving the Green Capital award 2015 and the funding that this has attracted. Participants are working on collaborative project ideas for 2015 and beyond that link back into the food systems planning framework.

The challenges and our responses on the URBACT journey: There have been four main challenges, which we have addressed during the project:

1. **Increasing the number and range of people involved in sustainable food planning and action.** The URBACT Project has assisted this through the opportunities which Bristol people have had to visit and learn from experience in partner cities and through the outreach which the Local Support Group (i.e. the Bristol Food Policy Council, Bristol Food Network and other partners) have been able to achieve – for example, through a Local Food Newsletter supported by the project.
2. **Encouraging co-ordination of existing and new food initiatives.** The “Local Support Group” has provided forums for collaboration, for example annual conferences at City Hall and co-ordination of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership Food Action group, chaired by Bristol Food Network. The creation of the Bristol Good Food Plan has provided the framework for this collaboration.
3. **Securing resources to support community led initiatives.** Bristol was successful in securing funding for a grant programme for its year as European Green Capital and food was identified as one of the five priority areas. This has led to an unprecedented level of funding for community led initiatives that form a key part of this action plan. The Good Food Plan enabled the food community to clearly present its case and be successful in securing funding.
4. **Engaging the wider public** in Good Food issues and practical activities like cooking well and making good eating choices. Bristol has been successful in securing new partners to help promote Good Food. Two highlights are:
 - *The Bristol Food Connections Festival*, initiated by the BBC in 2014, it has provided a great way to showcase existing inspirational initiatives and involve much bigger audiences in enjoying food, and is now being led by the Bristol Food Network.
 - *The focus on Good Food as a key theme for Bristol's year as European Green*, bringing communication opportunities and a network of over 750 organisations in the Bristol Green Capital Partnership.

The URBACT achievements: Bristol faces many challenges in creating a sustainable food system, including food poverty in parts of the city, limited local food planning powers and competition for land in and around the urban area. Thanks to the hard work of many people in the city, Bristol has made good progress in the past three years putting Good Food firmly on the agenda in Bristol. The URBACT project has helped to support local co-ordination and collaboration, to link the climate change and city food system agendas and to take inspiration and learning from the action of partner cities.





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Comments from URBACT visit participants (the ‘travellers’)

A small number of people had the opportunity to visit some of the other cities. There was much general inspiration and positive experiences from the URBACT visits:

- The local food itself! Saw places that were much more connected to food unlike us, which highlighted that we need to advocate for a degree of control over the local market.
- Helped to affirm that Bristol is making good progress towards becoming a sustainable food city and gave us the confidence to go home and continue this work.
- Building relationships and sharing experiences with people in other sustainable food cities

City	The Travellers	Highlights
Oslo	Dorothy & Gus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Culinary courage • Cookery school which does week long courses for children • Huge mature school allotments • Oslo café working with young people who had been excluded from mainstream education
Messina	Dorothy & Gus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong political support • Active Slow Food movement • Creating jobs in food through social enterprise
Brussels	Dorothy, Joy Kristin, Steve & Tor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greencook - reducing food waste in kitchens • URBACT exhibition
Vaslui	Adrian, Dorothy & Joy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaslui local food market • Networking opportunity meeting Swedish school cook who reduces animal protein in school meals • Low carbon food preservation - underground storage and bottling produce for year round supply of food
Gothenburg	Dorothy & Steve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massive public sector operation providing meals for the elderly and free school meals • An understanding of the huge carbon impact of livestock and how school menus are being decarbonised
Amersfoort	Dorothy, Gus & Kristin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local supply project ‘24/7’ • The energy of ‘bottom up’ food activity which is well supported by the council
Lyon	Bea, Chris, Dorothy, Joy & Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered pricing structure in social grocery • Pride of the farmer • Hearing about the Oslo buying group • ‘Les Halles’ producers managed cooperative • Meeting Mark and hearing about how the Mayor’s challenge is increasing social potential



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Content of the 2015 URBACT Local Action Plan for Bristol

The action plan has been developed on the framework created by the Good Food Plan for Bristol, taking a Food Systems Planning approach. **It identifies 8 distinct themes that Bristol needs to address in order to ensure that in the future the city has a healthy, viable and equitable food system that is as resilient as possible to any future shocks and challenges.**



The action plan's current focus is on new action which we can take in 2015 and 2016, in part supported by the additional resources provided for food activities from the Green Capital programme. It does not map much of the on-going food-related activity in the city nor does it show the on-going meetings, annual conference and communication activities planned for this year. Longer-term action will be developed during 2015 to carry forward the momentum created this year. The Food Policy Council is managing the development of this longer term action planning.

Funding

New funding of £450k has been allocated from Bristol European Green Capital 2015 funds for community-led food-related projects. These projects are summarised in the diagram below and more details can be found in the full version of this Local Action Plan. As illustrated in the diagram, the majority of new collaborative projects address the challenge of transforming food culture – through getting more people involved in growing food for themselves and in cooking from scratch with simple affordable fresh ingredients.

Framework for delivery

Each of the projects/initiatives on the plan have their own delivery arrangements. Progress will be reported and reviewed by the Food Policy Council. They will report on achievements that relate to the strategic outcomes listed below.

The 2015 strategic outcomes for sustainable food

- Promote healthy affordable and sustainable food to the public
- Increase access to affordable good food
- Make food growing/production visible across the city
- Encouraging healthy eating in schools and reducing school food waste
- Preventing /reducing waste of edible food
- Scaling up urban agriculture
- Transforming catering and procurement

Risk analysis/main challenges

The action plan represents a significant scaling up of activity during 2015. An important task will be to help support and coordinate the new projects and to keep a good information flow and networking opportunities for new and existing projects.

Details of the new projects and key on-going work

These projects all relate to key 2015 outcomes listed above. The diagram that follows this table at the end of this document illustrates how the projects relate to these outcomes.

Name of Project	Aims	Funding
Beacon Farms: Urban Food Producers	To scale up local food production in and around the city (growing, processing, distributing) by connecting up existing projects to collaborate on overcoming joint obstacles and seizing mutually beneficial opportunities. Creating an innovative and supportive hub that enables and promotes collaboration and peer support and resource sharing between existing and future urban and peri-urban community connected food enterprises.	£49,045 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Bristol Fish Project: Aquaponics	Extend the aquaponics trail to full production (urban fish farming).	£50,000 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Bristol Food Network: Food Connections	International Food Festival staging events across the city and engaging a range of community organisations, from 1-9 th May 2015	£50,000 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Fareshare Southwest: Food Route	Redistribute surplus food around the city using an on-line tool whereby communities/ businesses throughout the city can offer and request surplus food.	£43,880 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Incredible Edible Bristol: Urban Growing Trail	Bringing urban growing right into the heart of the city by creating an edible trail of demonstration gardens between Temple Meads and the FOOD exhibition at @Bristol. The gardens will illustrate a range of ways of growing, from high-tech hydroponics to low-tech guerrilla gardening.	£50,000 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Portland Centre of Integrative Medicine: Kitchens on Prescription	Make healthy eating and culinary approaches at Community Training Kitchens throughout Bristol part of mainstream healthcare. Will promote and increase access to healthy, affordable, sustainable food to the public and reduce food waste.	£50,000 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
The Prince's Trust: Young People's Programme – Get Started	To help disadvantaged young people gain initial qualifications in the catering and hospitality industry.	£37,600 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
91 Ways to Build a Global City	Making Bristol a more connected city by celebrating diversity and empowering citizens from all communities. Use language as a driver to engage people and the power of food to encourage dialogue and action to inspire citizens to lead more sustainable lives through 2015 and beyond.	£25,000 from Bristol European Green Capital strategic grant
Community FM Ltd	To produce a series of food related radio programmes in different languages.	£9,690 from Quartet small grants

Bristol Friends of the Earth: Good Food Tour – Let's all cook and eat	To provide outreach pop-up cookery events around the city, demonstrating attractive, simple, affordable, low carbon, healthy food, using basic equipment and seasonal ingredients from local suppliers.	£8,000 from Quartet small grants
Trinity Community Arts Ltd	To run a programme of permaculture workshops and events for local people.	£8,000 from Quartet small grants
Edible Futures	To build a sustainable Green Hub on the group's small holding.	£9,958 from Quartet small grants
Bristol Hospitality Network	To run a food growing project with asylum seekers and refugees.	£8,700 from Quartet small grants
Beebristol	To develop planting schemes and workshops to make Bristol more pollinator friendly.	£5,000 from Quartet small grants
AEOB Housepeople: Batterns Lane Housing Community Vertical Garden	To develop vertical gardening installations that will be a demonstration of what can be achieved in a compact space. To facilitate open-garden visits and workshop days to help others develop vertical growing in their own gardens.	£500 from Neighbourhood Partnership
Badock's Wood Primary Community School: Get Growing at Badock's Wood	To re-develop part of the school grounds into an allotment area, so fresh produce is grown all year round. This will be used to teach children and their families about the importance of growing plants, growing your own food; and promote healthy eating choices through using the food we grow in cookery lessons and after-school clubs.	£1,800 from Neighbourhood Partnership
Bristol Metropolitan Academy Gardening Club	To develop an all year round Gardening Club and to use the food when hosting a Primary School Picnic for about 120 students, and a luncheon for 20 elderly people.	£370 from Neighbourhood Partnership
Broomhill Junior School: Broomhill Green Shoots	To create an allotment with 8 raised beds (for 8 classes) for growing produce and to rear hens for eggs that every child will use in cooking activities. The aim of the project is to: - Improve levels of healthy eating for parents/carers and children of the school and reduce levels of obesity - Excite and educate all children of the school in learning about lifecycles through practical hands on involvement - Build parents/community partnership in the growing/cooking and celebrating/eating the produce.	£2,000 from Neighbourhood Partnership
Chester Park Junior School Vegetable Garden	To create space for each class to have its own vegetable patch to support the new curriculum cooking lessons, as well as linking with topics of sustainability and awareness of where food comes from, in an area of the city where few children have access to large enough gardens or allotments.	£3,584 from Neighbourhood Partnership

Easton Community Graden Greenhouse Project	To purchase a greenhouse to bring-on seedlings to be planted in Easton Community Garden, which grows vegetables, fruit and flowers naturally using permaculture principles on a previously derelict site.	£1,806 from Neighbourhood Partnership
Elmlea Junior School: The Elmlea Garden Project	To develop the current vegetable plots and do further landscaping to create a safe environment to promote healthy living and to educate the children about where their food comes from.	£2,345 from Neighbourhood Partnership
New Fosseway Special School: Grow your own	To encourage disabled students to eat healthy food by growing seasonal food to be cooked and eaten by the students and their families; and to teach basic cooking, carpentry and horticulture, giving parent and students opportunities they may have not had before.	£1,000 Neighbourhood Partnership
Oasis Hub North Bristol: Oasis Grows	To expand and build on current gardening clubs to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing areas for students and their families - Workshops for students and families on sustainable food growing - A wide range of “home-grown” fruit and vegetables which students and families can then use as part of cooking lessons at school and at home - To celebrate growing in the Oasis Hub North Bristol through joining the Food for Life Partnership “Big Picnic” in June 2015. To become self-sustaining by selling produce seeds and off-shoot plants. 	£1,256 from neighbourhood Partnership
Project Agora, Barton Hill Walled Garden: Growing Community Barton Hill	To promote workshops, which explore inspirational and motivating nature and food related, sustainable and healthy living practices, at the same time as building community health and cohesion.	£9,102 Neighbourhood Partnership
Rosemary Nursery School and Children’s centre: Time to Grow	To build on the existing Local Food project which turned disused overgrown communal beds into places to grow food giving the residents of St Jude’s easy access to the project and allowing them to contribute as they feel able to do so. There will be a combination of formal and informal workshops. This project will also provide a vital forum for a diverse community bristling with racial tension to share cultural histories and food traditions.	£1,610 Neighbourhood Partnership

Soil Association: Big Picnic	To hold a Big Picnic for schools in the locality to celebrate and raise awareness of how school food culture has changed using the Food For Life Partnership and the Bristol Mayoral award programmes. It will provide an opportunity for schools to demonstrate what additional skills and knowledge the young people have gained in food growing and food preparation. It will provide a platform for sharing school grown produce and encourage more schools to recognise the benefits of helping children understand and value of sustainable healthy food.	£9,913 from a variety of Neighbourhood partnerships
Southmead Community Association: Grow your own Starter Pack	To produce starter packs for residents interested in growing their own vegetables. Residents will also be offered a volunteer to till a small piece of land so as to get the person started.	£310 from Neighbourhood partnership
St Werburghs City Farm Cultivate: Weekend Family Drop-in Activities	To develop and deliver a series of bi-monthly weekend/ evening drop-in workshops for families across the neighbourhood that will be based around the Farm's three core aims of connecting people to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the story of their food – improving their knowledge of where food comes from, developing interest in growing and cooking, increasing skills in healthy cooking etc. • their local environment – improving access of local green spaces, involving them in conservation/ maintenance of green spaces, increasing knowledge and interest in wildlife and biodiversity, sustainable development, global citizenship etc. • a healthy, active community – through opportunities to meet others in the local area getting 	£2,056 Neighbourhood Partnership
The Haven Regeneration	To replace and update essential tools and equipment to improve upon the Haven's physical environment which is used to improve wellbeing and enhance recovery of people with mental health problems and/or alcohol and substance misuse, through connection to nature and wildlife.	£767 Neighbourhood Partnership
The Matthew Tree Project: Foodtues Design	To support people who are unemployed and their families by developing a market garden growing project. There will be short courses and apprenticeship programmes where local people will be able to learn and practice a range of ecological, horticultural, and environmental related skills which will encourage people to grow their own food, cook nutritious and tasty meals from scratch at home, waste less food, and enjoy the natural environment around them, and help them gain employment.	£4,000 Neighbourhood Partnership

Wessex Avenue Residents: Lockleaze Community Orchard	To develop a community orchard where schools and youth groups can become involved by helping to volunteer to create the orchard, and learn about different fruit trees, growing, pruning etc.	£2,000 Neighbourhood Partnership
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Next steps in 2015 and beyond

Part of the work that Bristol Food Network/Food Policy Council will carry out will be to develop this first stage Local Action Plan into a longer term Bristol Good Food action plan.

Further Information

Contact: Dorothy Greaves, BCC

URLs:

<http://bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org/>

<http://www.bristolfoodnetwork.org/>

<http://www.bristolfoodconnections.com/>

<http://bristolgreencapital.org/action-group/food/>



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