



Islington Food Strategy: *One Year On*

The Islington Food Strategy was published in March 2023 by the Islington Food Partnership (IFP). The strategy outlines how we will work together, across sectors, to build a food system for Islington where communities can thrive.

In this leaflet, you'll find a snapshot of updates, successes and challenges during the first year of the strategy, as well as some upcoming work that we have planned.

There are so many organisations and individuals across the borough who are working towards the goals of the strategy. This is by no means an exhaustive list of all the work that's been done and this document is a work in progress. If you have suggestions for updates, successes or challenges to add to this leaflet, please email candice@manorgardenscentre.org

The updates have been colour-coded across the 4 main themes of the food strategy:

Healthy Affordable Food For All

Everyone should be able to eat the food they need to thrive

Sustainable Local Food Economy

Good businesses and entrepreneurs should be able to thrive in Islington

Climate and Nature Emergency

The way we live our lives should have a positive impact on nature and the environment

People-powered Change

People and communities coming together is the only route to achieving real change

More info: www.islingtonfoodpartnership.org.uk/islington-food-strategy/



Upcoming projects

- **Workshop: Food Projects + Culture.** Practical workshop on creating affordable access to food that reflects local cultures, traditions & tastes. Tuesday 23rd April, 11am - 12.30pm. **Register: tinyurl.com/yphxbaem or text 07543491311**
- **One-to-one support meetings with food aid providers looking to move away from the foodbank model.** For more info contact: kelly@manorgardenscentre.org
- **Community Navigators:** training residents who speak community languages in Level 3 interpretation, Safeguarding and Mental Health First Aid. They will be paid to be based in food aid providers and offer signposting to debt support and cost of living support services. Training begins in May and they are recruiting. For more info email secil@manorgardenscentre.org
- **Exploring options for a pilot project around collective food purchasing** for food aid providers and co-ops to increase affordable access to nutrient-rich, sustainably and ethically-produced food
- **Trainings and workshops for food activist network**, e.g. community organising, approaches to conflict in community work. For more info, or to join the food activist network contact candice@manorgardenscentre.org or text 07543 491 311
- The IFP coordinating group will work together to find ways of **embedding climate issues** in their work and to see how the Climate and Nature Emergency area can be taken forward
- **Creating a new action plan for people-powered change** for the year ahead, based on local needs and issues. Hosting local stalls and creating a community panel for input

www.islingtonfoodpartnership.org.uk

Key updates

- Islington Food Fund Round 2: funded 3 community food projects contributing towards Strategy Goals, including wraparound support, community well-being and culturally appropriate food
- Black Urban Gardeners Programme launched. The group will experiment with growing Afro-Caribbean produce in Islington

- Healthy Start Working Group: uptake rate of Healthy Start Vouchers Scheme rose from 64% to 70%
- Infant feeding support. Expansion of Breastfeeding Welcome scheme, e.g. pledge campaign on the theme: 'Everyone has a part to play in helping mums to breastfeed. What's yours?'
- IFP signed the 'Say yes to school food for all' campaign, which seeks to end means-testing by 2030

- Food Aid Demand, Supply and Nutrition survey and mapping project launched. Collecting detailed data on food aid across the borough

Business engagement policy finalised. This will guide the IFP in how to promote or engage with businesses in ways that supports the IFP's values

Business audit: spoke with over 80 local food businesses about their food waste, sustainability practices and the potential support the IFP could offer

- Islington Food Security Co-ordinator, Kelly Novak, hired. Working with VCS organisations, public health, the healthy start working group and residents
- 'Islington cares about' Information & Signposting leaflets on food & living costs
- Healthy start info sessions hosted for VCS staff/volunteers and residents
- Affordable + free food leaflet updated throughout the year
- IFP partnership with Help on Your Doorstep to create one signposting email and offer in-person signposting in foodbanks
- Action plans and measurement frameworks created for each strategy area

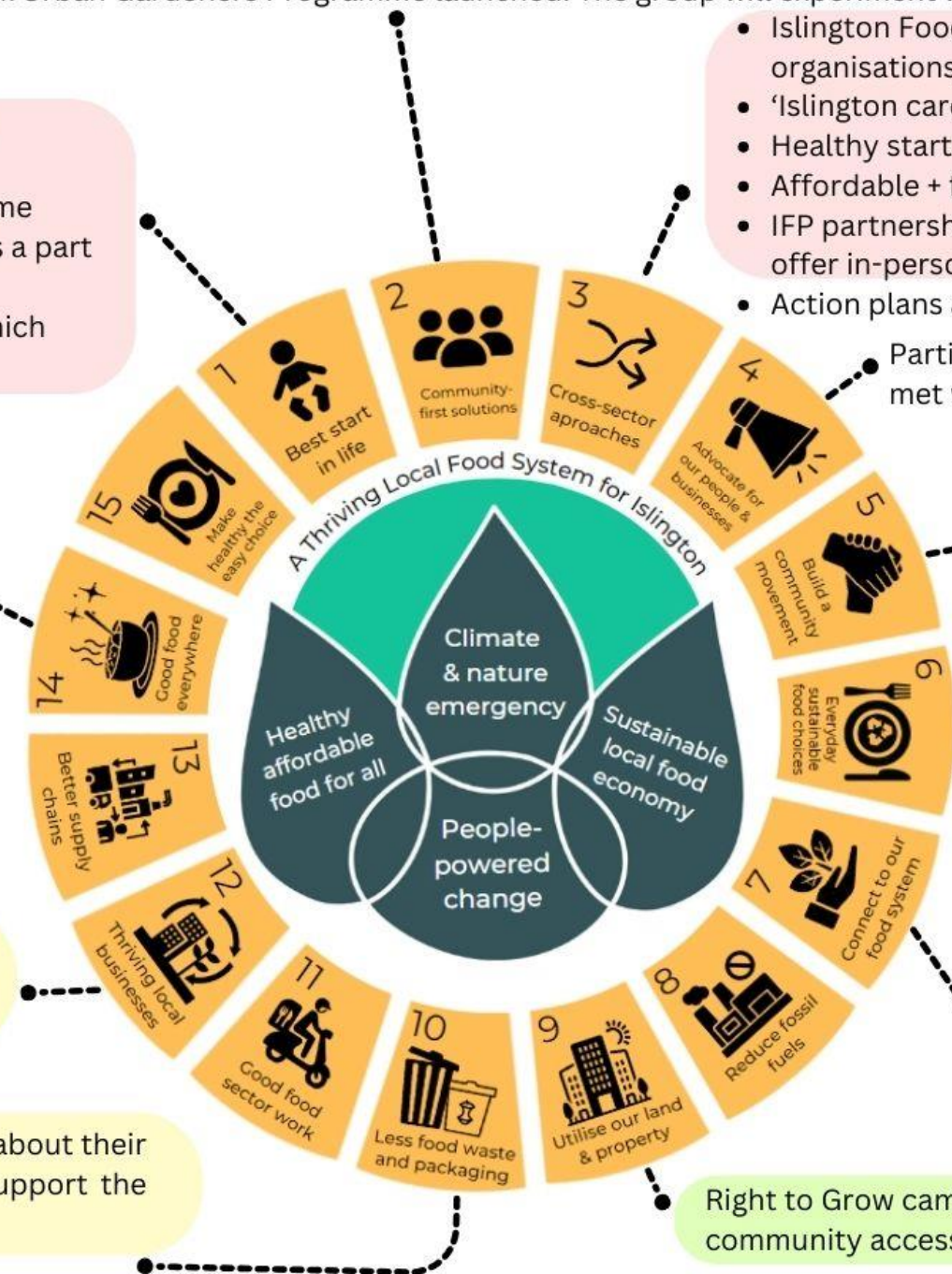
Participated in Sustainable Food Places' Day of Action in Parliament and met with Jeremy Corbyn MP about ways he could support our goals

- 2 x Campaigns workshops hosted to give activists, residents & VCS staff an intro to building a campaign strategy around an issue
- IFP volunteering directory created and IFP roles advertised through Voluntary Action Islington
- Resident-focused IFP newsletter launched. 6 editions sent out and mailing list grown to 40 subscribers
- Food activist network met 3 times. Advice and peer-support shared via meetings + active whatsapp group
- Resource list created for grassroots groups
- IFP grew by 40 members to 237

Climate charter drafted (a co-created list of commitments and goals for IFP members)

- Islington Food Stories collection published, with input from young people, community cooks and residents
- Islington Food Week events & discussion panels hosted

Right to Grow campaign signed by the IFP. The campaign aims to open-up community access to disused public land for growing and wildlife projects



Gaps

- Youth involvement and connecting with schools & youth projects
- Working directly with asylum seekers and refugees for perspectives, insight and ways to improve support
- Integrating Climate and Nature Emergency into all themes of the strategy
- Knowledge-sharing and campaigning around root causes of food insecurity: housing costs, renters' rights, working conditions etc.
- Resources & funding for coordinating group's time, with a focus on improving representation of the community, e.g. race, ethnicity, class & dis/ability
- Connecting with and advocating for food workers
- Campaigning as a partnership on local issues

Challenges

- Data collection for Food Aid Supply, Demand and Nutrition Survey
- Running Healthy Start info sessions in appropriate languages
- Growing the food activist network & low attendance at meetings
- Coordination time + resources for Climate and Nature Emergency work
- Rising food costs and challenges in sourcing food affordably, particularly imported foods that are key for tailoring to local food cultures
- Lack of funding and resources for VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) organisations
- Moving away from relying on supermarket surplus for food aid; improving affordability of food that is nutrient-rich, sustainably + ethically-produced