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**Citation:** Yap, C., Tiwari, C. & Vogel, C. A. (2025). Informing a People-Centred Food Strategy for the London Borough of Hounslow (10.25383/city.30833849). .

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**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/36416/>

**Link to published version:** <https://doi.org/10.25383/city.30833849>

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# Informing a People-Centred Food Strategy for the London Borough of Hounslow

A report prepared for the London Borough of Hounslow's Public Health Team

By

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September 2025



# Executive Summary

Food systems are influenced by intersecting health, social, economic, and environmental factors. Hounslow's food system faces several challenges, including high levels of childhood obesity, frequent food bank usage, and low-paid jobs alongside increasing housing costs and unhealthy everyday food settings. Growing inequalities, pressure on local services, and the climate crisis highlight the urgent need for ambition and action to develop fairer, healthier, and more sustainable food systems.

The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) has co-developed this report in partnership with Hounslow residents and partners, facilitated by the Centre for Food Policy at City St George's, University of London. The report outlines a vision for a local food system that enhances access to nutritious food for all residents, promotes community well-being, and contributes to climate resilience and economic prosperity.

In developing this report, the perspectives of a wide range of residents, organisations, businesses, networks, and officers in the local authority have been harnessed. The excellent activities already in action by passionate people and professionals have been built upon and integrated into this report, highlighting important work already underway and where future action can be strategically targeted. The voices and stories of individuals and community groups across LBH have been incorporated throughout to ensure this report meets its aim of being by the people and for the people of Hounslow.

## A vision for Hounslow's food system

This report sets out a clear vision for LBH's food system, including:

- **Healthy food accessible to all** – ensuring affordability, availability, and convenience of fresh and nutritious foods.
- **Healthy communities** – reducing diet-related ill health, enhancing wellbeing, and decreasing demand on healthcare services and ensuring a healthy workforce.
- **Empowered and cohesive communities** – enabling residents to shape food systems, celebrate cultural diversity, and strengthen civil society.
- **Resilient and circular local food systems** – promoting local production, reducing waste, and integrating climate and biodiversity objectives.

## Twelve pathways for food systems change

In this report, twelve interconnected pathways towards achieving this vision are outlined. Central to all of these pathways is the importance of integrating equity, inclusion, and fairness into every food-related policy, programme, and activity within LBH. We categorise the pathways into five themes.

1. Creating healthy food environments
  - **Pathway 1: Promote healthy food out of home** – support takeaways and retailers to provide and promote healthier options; enforce limits on unhealthy advertising; expand “Healthy Retail Hounslow”; and limit the density of fast-food outlets.
  - **Pathway 2: Promote healthy school food environments** – expand best practices such as family-style lunches and Grow for the Future; incorporate food education and ensure free school meal participation.
2. Ensuring healthy food is accessible to all
  - **Pathway 3: Enhance community food provision and redistribution services** – invest in community pantries, community meals, and voluntary sector storage capacity; and explore establishing a local Meals on Wheels service.
  - **Pathway 4: Improve mobility across LBH** – decrease transport barriers to accessing healthy food; facilitate active travel; pinpoint areas with limited access to healthy food for targeted intervention.
3. Supporting healthy communities
  - **Pathway 5: Increase awareness and link services** – enhance signposting and referrals across NHS, local authority, and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector services; boost promotion of Healthy Start uptake.
  - **Pathway 6: Support families and family hubs** – enhance food skills programmes, breastfeeding support, and holiday food provisions through family hubs and Children’s Centres.
4. Supporting and celebrating empowered, cohesive communities
  - **Pathway 7: Deliver inclusive programmes to develop food-related employment skills** – expand adult food education, green skills, and professional cooking training, targeting low-income and migrant groups.
  - **Pathway 8: Champion community events, meals, and culturally appropriate cooking sessions** – support demand-led cooking classes, community kitchens, and cultural food festivals.

- **Pathway 9: Improve food and health education** – incorporate culturally appropriate health resources, promote school-led programmes, and broaden nutrition outreach.
5. Supporting a circular and resilient local food system
- **Pathway 10: Support sustainable local food enterprises** – establish local public procurement channels, market assistance, and affordable commercial kitchens for start-up, small and sustainable food businesses.
  - **Pathway 11: Reduce food waste** – public campaigns to reduce household food waste, support food redistribution and local composting
  - **Pathway 12: Support urban food production** – expand community gardens, school allotments, and green infrastructure to bolster local food resilience.

## Key opportunities for LBH

- Utilising planning and licensing powers to reshape food environments to be healthier.
- Incorporating health and sustainability objectives into public procurement and catering contracts.
- Providing the voluntary sector with space, equipment, and modest funding.
- Expanding food-related education, training, and employment to develop skills and resilience.
- Enhancing transport and digital connectivity to reduce inequalities in food access.
- Celebrating cultural diversity through food as a unifying community asset.

## Recommendations and next steps

1. **Forming a food partnership** – bringing together LBH departments, residents, businesses, and civil society in governance and implementation.
2. **Aligning with wider policy landscape** – linking the food strategy with Hounslow’s Climate Emergency Action Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and Grow for the Future initiatives.
3. **Sustaining community engagement** – ensuring the strategy evolves with lived experience and continues to be co-produced with residents.

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## **Acknowledgements**

This report was produced by Dr Christopher Yap, Chesta Tiwari, and Prof Christina Vogel at the Centre for Food Policy, City St George's, University of London, with guidance and inputs from Buvana Ailoo and Liza Ctori at London Borough of Hounslow. It draws on desk-based research conducted by Chesta Tiwari and Lyds Leather and fieldwork and community engagement conducted by Chesta Tiwari. All errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

This work was funded by the London Borough of Hounslow's Public Health team.

We are very grateful to every individual and organisation across Hounslow that contributed to the development of this report.

# 1. Introduction

In this report we outline a vision for a food strategy for the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) that aims to create a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable local food system. Our goal is to showcase the excellent work being carried out both within and beyond the local authority, while also highlighting opportunities for future initiatives.

Throughout 2025, LBH has partnered with the Centre for Food Policy at City St George's, University of London to co-develop a food strategy that is ambitious, practical, and people-centered. This document is intended for departments working across LBH, as well as civil society and community-based organisations, service providers, and food enterprises that are already working, or intending to work, towards a local food system that benefits people living in LBH and our planet.

We are publishing this report amid the climate emergency, increasing inequalities in health and society, and fiscal restrictions that influence and are influenced by our food systems. These crises require an urgent response from all levels of government and society. However, in this report, we focus on the tangible changes that can be implemented within LBH and experienced by its residents.

Our goal has been to inform a people-centred food strategy. This means, firstly, a strategy that benefits EVERYONE living in LBH. It recognises and celebrates the diverse backgrounds of individuals, communities, and neighbourhoods across LBH, aiming to deliver positive results for all. Secondly, it involves adopting a people-centred approach to creating the strategy; listening to residents, businesses, service providers, and local authority staff across LBH and building the strategy based on those conversations.

We have visited, met, heard from, and worked closely with numerous individuals and organisations over several months. This work has deepened our understanding of people's lived experiences of food systems in LBH and helped ensure this document reflects a diverse range of views, values, and experiences from across LBH. In other words, a people-centred food strategy is one created by and for the people of LBH. We are immensely grateful to every individual and organisation that shared their insights during the development of this report.

This project builds on previous participatory research conducted by the Centre for Food Policy, funded by the NIHR Policy Research Programme. It involved working closely over eight months with ten parents of young children living in Hounslow on low incomes. These parents identified a range of factors affecting how they feed their children, including living in unhealthy food environments, being unable to afford healthy foods, and seeking greater transparency about where food comes from. Ten policy recommendations were co-

developed by parents and local policymakers, with the first being to establish a food partnership or strategy for Hounslow. LBH acted upon this recommendation by funding additional engagement activities to develop the plan outlined in this report.

### **Food systems and food strategies**

In this report, we use the term food systems to encompass food supply chains from farm to fork to waste, including food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste. It also considers the broader social, economic, and environmental factors that influence how food supply chains operate. By adopting this 'systems approach', our goal is to make visible the complex factors that affect what and how people eat. Taking a systems approach involves recognising the interconnectedness of the economy, public health, and the environment.

In recent years, local food strategies have become a key tool for local authorities to reshape their food systems to achieve health and environmental sustainability goals, while also generating economic benefits. There is no standard model for local food strategies, and their form and content vary greatly between locations. However, they all share a clear goal of ensuring that local food systems support fairer, healthier, and more sustainable outcomes for people and planet.

This report integrates a vision for Hounslow's food system with a series of strategic pathways to realise this vision. We assess a broad range of existing activities, programmes, and initiatives against these pathways. Additionally, we have considered approaches by other local authorities that provide learning and insights for LBH in achieving this vision.

A Food Strategy for LBH in action will support ALL residents to be able to have access affordable, healthy, and sustainable choices, enabling them to make decisions that benefit their health, civil society, and the environment they live in.

It is beyond the scope of this report to present a detailed action plan with regards to each of these pathways. We recommend that a local food action plan, building on this report, should be developed through collaboration among various organisations in LBH, representing future work.

This report builds on existing work, knowledge, and mechanisms for change, while also activating synergies that are only achievable through cross-cutting efforts. In environments with limited resources, both for local authorities and residents, it is essential to optimise interventions and support mechanisms to achieve systemic, long-term change. We have

aimed, in other words, to be ambitious while remaining practical; to maximise the value of current initiatives and demonstrate how food systems can contribute to a wide range of policy priorities.

Below, we outline our three-phase approach to developing this report. In Section 2, we present a vision for LBH's food system. In Section 3, we provide a snapshot of LBH's current food system, highlighting challenges and opportunities relevant to the food strategy. In Section 4, we set out twelve interconnected pathways for food system change in LBH. In Section 5, we conclude with recommendations for the next steps.

## 1.1 Our Approach

To develop this report, we took a three-phase, mixed methods approach:

1. **Desk-based research**
2. **Community engagement**
3. **Theory of Change workshops**

**Phase 1, desk-based research**, was carried out from March 2025 to June 2025. Building on work from Sustain's Good Food London Reports 2024 and 2025, and the Feeding Our Families report produced by the Centre for Food Policy as part of the NIHR Policy Research Funded Obesity Policy Research Unit study. The desk-based research involved identifying existing LBH policies, strategies, plans, and other documents published from 2020 onwards. All findings were mapped onto a policy timeline to highlight relevant policy commitments in LBH (see Section 3.7).

**Phase 2, community engagement**, was carried out from May 2025 to July 2025. This phase involved site visits, workshops, semi-structured interviews, and more informal conversations with a diverse range of food system stakeholders. We heard from LBH staff, residents, community organisers, service providers, and food enterprises across all wards in LBH. Ethnographic research, which included visiting locations and writing detailed field notes, complemented the interview findings.

We visited various food settings, including food distribution hubs, food network meetings, and community meal events. Engagement took place both in person and online, including with LBH's community-led Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Partnership groups. These different forms of engagement maximised participation from a wide range of people in developing this report.

Our aim in phase 2 was to engage with communities across the Borough. The team from the Centre for Food Policy was guided by the LBH Public Health team towards some organisations and independently identified a diverse range of individuals and organisations by reviewing publicly available information, consulting Hounslow Connect, and using a snowballing approach, where interviewees suggested further contacts. The focus was on engaging with service providers and visiting locations where existing actions related to health and food were taking place. This approach helped to build on existing trust, relationships, and activities.

Throughout this phase of work, we actively engaged with groups at risk of poor diets, including asylum seekers, migrant workers, adults living with neurodiversity, residents with long-term health conditions, people living with dementia and their carers, and residents in supported housing. When direct contact was not possible with some individuals, supporting groups, such as the Brentford FC Community Sport Team Young Carers provision, were engaged instead.

We recognise that our engagement process could only provide a brief and partial snapshot of people living and working in LBH, and that some groups, such as children and young people, were not well represented. We acknowledge these limitations and highlight that engagement and consultation with the LBH community is ongoing.

### **Community engagement in numbers**

31 semi-structured interviews each lasting 30-60 minutes with service providers, residents, and food businesses.

8 workshops were conducted with between 3 to 24 participants (median: 13.5 participants) with the following groups:

- Hounslow Food Network
- Adults living with neurodiversity at Speak Out Hounslow
- Afghani women with young children attending English for Speakers of Other Languages in a CORE20 area
- Patients living with dementia and their carers at a Dementia Café
- Adults living with long-term diseases including respiratory diseases
- Women from migrant and diaspora communities (predominantly South Asian) at SheWISE Hounslow

**Phase 3, Theory of Change workshops** were held in July 2025. These workshops use a participatory approach to facilitate collective discussions on how change occurs. Their objective was to draw on insights from phases 1 and 2 and to identify priorities for the specific strategies outlined in this report.

These workshops brought together 33 individuals representing nine local authority departments and eight other organisations, along with members of the public. The first workshop was exclusively for people working within LBH. The second workshop was attended by a broader group, including residents.

## 2 A Vision for Hounslow’s Food System

This vision for LBH’s food system builds on insights from Phases 2 and 3 (community engagement and theory of change workshops). Our goal was to expand on existing activities and collectively define ambitious long-term objectives and future strategic pathways.

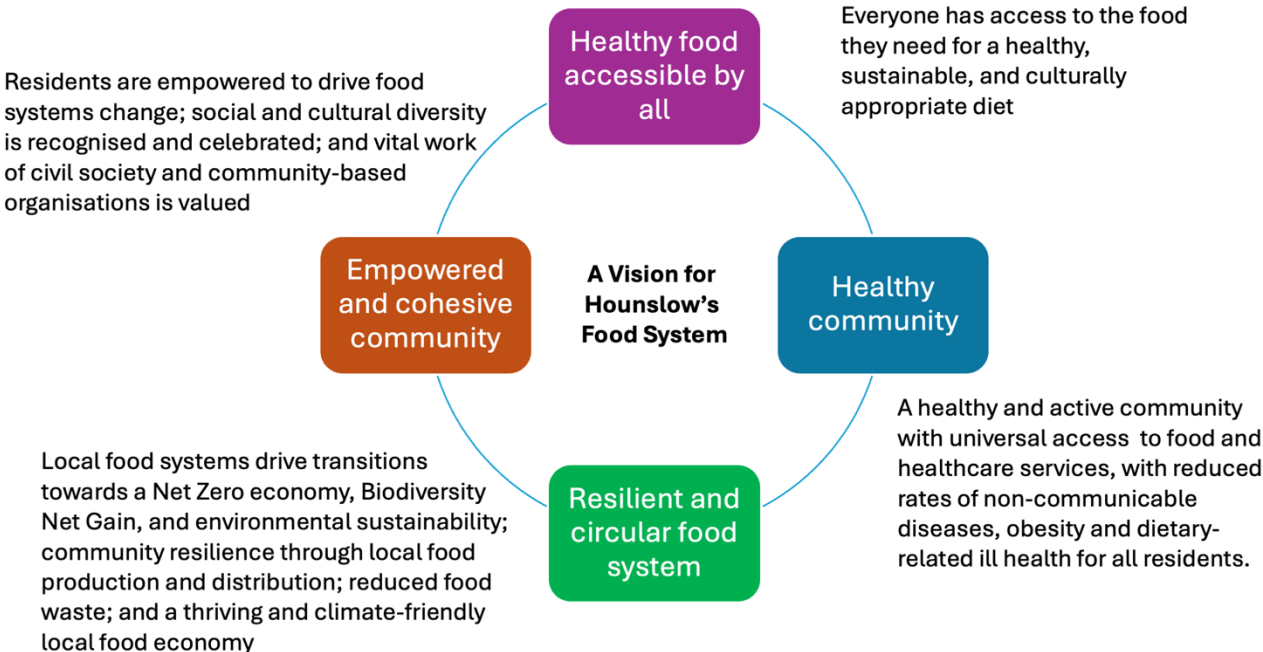


Fig. 1 A vision for Hounslow’s food system.

### **Healthy food accessible by all**

- A LBH where everyone can access the food they need for a healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate diet.
- A LBH where healthy and fresh food is available and convenient in everyday settings.

### **Healthy community**

- A healthy and active community with universal access to food and healthcare services, with reduced rates of non-communicable diseases, obesity and dietary-related ill health for all residents.
- Residents benefit from a healthier diet leading to lower demand on healthcare services and greater productivity across LBH.

### **Empowered and cohesive community**

- A LBH in which residents are empowered to drive food systems change through community-led initiatives.
- A LBH in which residents are knowledgeable and confident in accessing affordable, healthy food when in need, engaging with service providers, and advocating for themselves.
- A LBH in which social and cultural diversity are valued and celebrated.
- A LBH which recognises and values the vital work of civil society and community-based organisations towards achieving fairer and more sustainable food systems.

### **Resilient and circular food system**

- A LBH in which local food systems drive transitions towards a Net Zero economy, Biodiversity Net Gain, and environmental sustainability.
- A LBH that supports local food production and distribution, reduces food related waste, and supports community resilience.
- A LBH with a thriving, sustainable local food economy from which everyone can benefit.
- A LBH that ensures that groups most at risk of poor diet can weather economic shocks, and still be able to access healthy food

## 3 Profile of Hounslow's Food System

This section presents current evidence on LBH's food system. Adopting a food systems approach, we describe the social, economic, and political contexts that shape food supply chains. In Section 3.7, we position this report within the wider local policy framework.

### 3.1 Population

LBH is a rapidly expanding, diverse borough, home to nearly 300,000 residents and strategically situated within the "Great West Corridor," a designated Opportunity Area in the Mayor of London's spatial plan.

The median age in LBH is rising. While a quarter of residents (25.1%) are aged between 0 and 19 years, the number of residents aged 65 and above is projected to grow significantly over the next two decades. By 2041, LBH is expected to have 58,000 elderly residents (a 71% rise from 2020 levels), reflecting a broader trend of an ageing population across London. This shift has implications for food provision, as older residents are more likely to face mobility issues, fixed incomes, and changing dietary requirements.

LBH is ethnically diverse, with 52% of residents identifying as Black, Asian, or from another minority ethnic background. This diversity is reflected in LBH's food culture, offering a wide variety of cuisines and food traditions that enrich the local food landscape. There are 188 languages spoken throughout LBH. The most common languages after English are Punjabi, Polish, Romanian, Urdu, and Nepalese. There is also a significant Somali community. This diversity underscores the importance of providing food and nutrition information, along with public campaigns related to food and health, in multiple languages and formats to overcome communication barriers and account for cultural differences.

LBH has prioritised civic participation, offering multiple opportunities for residents to voice concerns and influence local decision-making. Seven Area Forums, held quarterly, enable residents to meet councilors face-to-face, raise local issues, and receive updates on actions taken. Let's Talk Hounslow, where many consultations are promoted, alongside the newly launched digital platform, Resident's Voice, broaden this engagement online, making it easier for a diverse cross-section of the community to get involved. This infrastructure provides a valuable channel for engaging residents in shaping and delivering a future food strategy, ensuring it reflects local priorities and experiences.

### **Designated areas of deprivation in Hounslow**

In order to target interventions towards areas of deprivation, LBH's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Department has designated [Equality Opportunity Areas \(EOAs\)](#) clusters. EOA clusters are areas characterised by economic inequality. There are currently ten areas designated EOAs.

LBH's Public Health department has followed NHS England guidance and pioneered the use of the CORE20PLUS5 approach, which focuses on the 20% most deprived areas of the national population as identified by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Currently, there are twelve CORE20 areas in LBH that largely correspond with the ten EOAs.

## **3.2 Economy and labour**

LBH's economy features a relatively high share of low-paid jobs. Currently, 22.9% of residents are in low-paid employment, compared to the London average of 17.8%. Economic activity levels in LBH are slightly below the London figure, with 74.7% of the working-age population recorded as economically active between April 2024 and March 2025, versus 79.6% across London.

In the most economically deprived areas, such as North Hyde and Cranford, one-third of households have a median income below £25,000. This economic hardship directly affects food security. Households with lower incomes are more likely to experience food poverty, depend on cheaper calorie-dense foods, and/or rely on food banks or other sources of community food provision.

Housing costs intensify these financial pressures. Average private rents in LBH take up 44.8% of median household income, compared to 24.9% across England. From 2024 to 2025, private rents in LBH increased by 11.1%, surpassing London's average rise of 7.3%.

LBH hosts several major employers, including international companies with local offices and Heathrow Airport, the UK's largest single-site employer. However, there are currently only five accredited Living Wage employers in LBH, including the local authority.

Income inequality in LBH has decreased recent years. The 80:20 hourly wage ratio, which indicates how much higher hourly pay is for those at the 80th percentile compared to the 20th percentile, dropped from 2.63 in 2019 to 2.35 in 2024, just below the London average.

Income inequality in LBH exhibits a west-to-east gradient, with the most deprived wards mainly in the western part of the borough. In the wealthiest neighbourhoods, only 3% of

residents are income-deprived, whereas in the most deprived areas, the figure increases to 33.1%.

The persistence of low wages in many sectors continues to limit household spending power. Rising costs of food and rent, coupled with low wages, contribute significantly to food poverty across LBH.

### 3.3 Public health, food, and nutrition

The Annual Public Health Report 2023-24 highlighted significant health inequalities within LBH. More than 25,000 residents live in CORE20 areas where multiple deprivation factors, including poverty, housing quality, long-term ill-health or disability, and transport limitations, intersect to undermine health outcomes. LBH has adopted a proactive approach by pioneering the NHS CORE20PLUS5 framework to specifically support underserved areas and population groups.

In 2023/24, 60.2% of adults were classified as physically active, which is below the national average of 67.4%. Physical inactivity can increase the risk of chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and obesity, all of which have considerable dietary risk factors.

The proportion of adults who are overweight or obese in LBH, at 58.1%, is lower than the England average of 64.5% and only slightly higher than the London average. Obesity among Year 6 pupils (aged 10–11) is 24.5%, which is higher than the national average of 22.1%. The Children and Young People’s Plan highlights that 43% of Year 6 children in LBH are obese or overweight, exceeding the England average. However, almost two-thirds of children believe their weight is “just right.”

LBH programmes such as ‘Healthy Hounslow’ target obesity amongst children by combining fun, active sessions with cooking classes, which are free for eligible children and adults. This dual approach builds food skills and nutritional knowledge at the household level, increasing the likelihood that healthy eating habits are maintained outside the programme environment. Such initiatives can be particularly important in addressing intergenerational patterns of poor diet and improving food literacy, ensuring that both children and adults develop the skills and confidence to prepare affordable, healthy meals and understand healthy portions.

Early years data indicate that 2.8% of reception-age children are underweight, exceeding the national average, highlighting that both over- and under-nutrition are issues requiring

attention. Breastfeeding rates in LBH start high, with 92% of mothers breastfeeding from birth, but decline to 61% by 6–8 weeks postpartum.

Dental health presents a further challenge: 33.9% of five-year-olds show visible tooth decay. Tooth decay more heavily impacts children from Black and Asian ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Poor oral health in early childhood is often associated with high sugar intake and limited access to dental services, both of which are influenced by wider socio-economic factors, health outreach, and the food environment.

Despite these challenges, innovative approaches by the local authority, such as the mobile Health Outreach Team (HOT), have gained national recognition for their role in addressing health inequalities. This service, partly operated from a mobile outreach bus, delivers health and wellbeing services directly into communities, focusing on areas of deprivation and marginalised groups. By going out to meet communities where they are, the HOT is able to build trust and is well-placed to listen to and understand residents' needs related to food and health, especially for communities facing barriers to accessing traditional healthcare settings, such as the Traveller Community.

### 3.4 Food Access and Food Security

Like other London Boroughs, food insecurity in LBH rose sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and remains significantly higher than levels before the pandemic. In 2024, [Hounslow Community FoodBox](#) supplied 3,215 food parcels to assist over 7,200 adults and children. This represents a five-fold increase compared to pre-pandemic levels.

The Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector plays a vital role in reducing food insecurity, particularly for vulnerable residents. Initiatives such as [Maswell@Home](#) provide free, in-person community meals once a week, creating both nutritional support and social connection. Other examples include, [The Open Kitchen](#) run by Muslim Hands, which offers free takeaway meals every day, and the [Hounslow Multi-Cultural Centre](#) that provides “international” lunches, catering largely to the borough's South Asian population, with options for delivery or collection four days a week.

Besides financial barriers to accessing food for some groups, employment patterns like shift work at Heathrow Airport and other sectors with unsocial hours can create extra obstacles to obtaining healthy food. Workers on night shifts, for instance, may rely more on convenience stores or takeaway foods, which are often less healthy and more costly.

### 3.5 Transport and Mobility

The geography of LBH significantly affects access to food and services. Much of LBH has poor public transport accessibility, as indicated by the Public Transport Accessibility (PTAL) Index. Residents in areas with low PTAL scores may face lengthy journeys to reach shops and markets that sell affordable, healthy, and culturally suitable food. Higher PTAL scores are typically found along train and underground lines. The placement of food outlets, including supermarkets and fresh food markets, is uneven, and residents in low PTAL areas often depend more on smaller convenience stores that offer a limited, costly and frequently less healthy range of food products.

LBH also spans multiple TFL tube fare zones, from Chiswick (in Zone 3) to Feltham (in Zone 6), which can affect residents' mobility to cross zones and lead to higher travel costs.

The perception of crime is much higher than actual crime levels in LBH (Public Attitude Survey, September 2023). Nonetheless, residents involved in developing this report raised concerns about safety in LBH, describing how their worries affected their autonomy within the food system; from reducing their access to green space to parents' considerations when deciding whether to allow their children to participate in evening activities, including sports activities and cooking classes.

### 3.6 Natural Environment

LBH benefits from a relatively high proportion of green space, with around 40% of the area consisting of parks, gardens, and open spaces; more than 160 separate spaces in total. This green infrastructure provides significant opportunities for expanding community food-growing initiatives, allotments, and school gardens, which can improve access to fresh produce and boost food literacy.

LBH's Climate Action Plan commits to planting 20,000 trees by 2030 as part of a wider goal to reach Net Zero emissions. This environmental agenda aligns well with local food strategies that encourage low-carbon diets, local supply chains, and climate-resilient growing methods.

### 3.7 Hounslow policy timeline 2020 – 2030

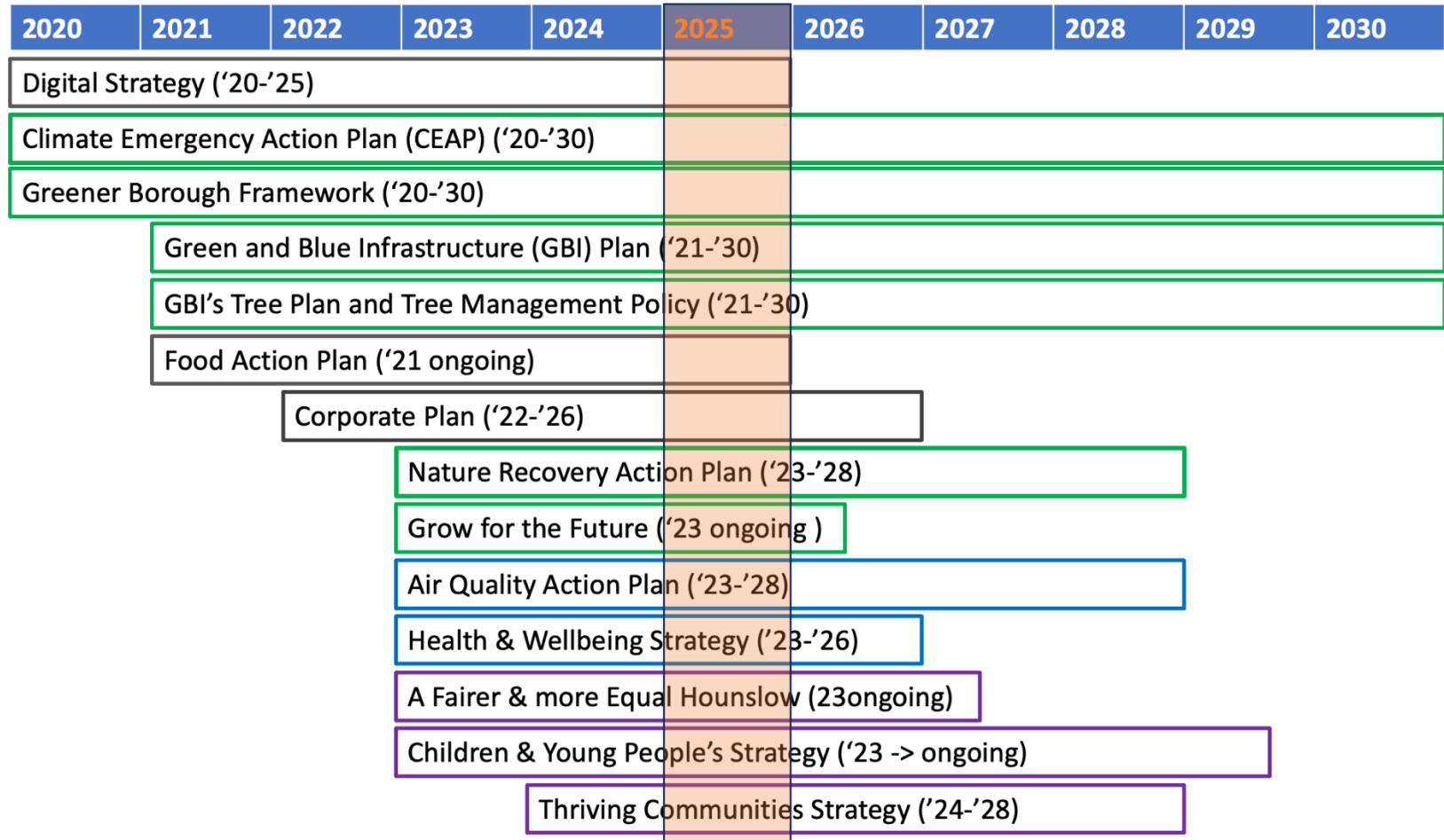


Fig. 2 A timeline of current policies that relate to the food strategy.

To create impact, it is crucial to recognise how the food strategy connects to the broader local policy environment in LBH. While developing this timeline (fig. 2), we identified key links between the food strategy and the wider local policy landscape. Our goal is not to be comprehensive but to emphasise some ways the food strategy may be influenced by and may contribute to other policy priority areas. Key policy links include:

- [LBH's Business Case for Growth in Hounslow](#), which highlights that *“a stable job promotes financial security, reduces stress and helps people afford decent food and quality housing”*, and aims to *“support families through universal and targeted services – helping children develop emotionally and physically and creating the conditions where parents can re-enter the world of work”*. It also aims to *“develop a comprehensive network of green skills provision.”*
- LBH's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), which identifies the importance of reducing waste as one of four key areas for reducing overall emissions to achieve Net Zero by 2030. The [CEAP update for 2025](#), also recognises the importance of public procurement as a means to deliver Net Zero.
- [LBH's Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), which includes a priority area to *“support people to maintain independence.”*
- LBH's [Transport Strategy 2025](#), which aims to *“develop Healthier Places so people can live well”*, and reduce *“barriers to all modes of travel, regardless of age, ability, location and income.”*
- LBH's [Digital Strategy](#), which highlights the role of partnerships and holistic approaches to ensure that older and more vulnerable residents in LBH are supported to access the benefits of services accessible via digital platforms.
- LBH's [Baby Feeding Plan](#), which aims for breastfeeding to be *“widely accepted and accommodated in all public spaces”*.
- LBH's [Children and Young People's Plan](#), which is structured around the six outcome areas from LBH' Corporate Plan, highlighting that *“a Healthier Hounslow allows all children to get the healthiest start in life, and remain active and in good health.”*
- LBH's [Grow for the Future](#) strategy, which proposes transforming unused council land into new food growing spaces.
- [LBH's Allotment Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#), which highlights *“an aspiration to create more capacity particularly working with developers in view of future planned developments.”*

## 4 Twelve pathways to food systems change in Hounslow

In this section, we outline twelve mutually supportive pathways for transforming the food system in LBH. We use the term pathways to refer to strategic directions aimed at specific outcomes. In this case, these outcomes are the visions for Hounslow's food system, as described in Section 2 above.

We have concentrated on how existing strengths, commitments, and areas of activity can be effectively connected and utilised to achieve better outcomes and a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable food system for LBH.

These pathways are designed to support strategic decision-making throughout LBH, including fostering stronger alignment of policies created across various departments. They can also assist in identifying key areas for action to be undertaken by LBH and other organisations.

We group these pathways under five headings:

- Create healthy food environments
- Ensure healthy food is accessible by all
- Support healthy communities
- Support and celebrate an empowered and cohesive community
- Support a circular and resilient local food system

For each pathway, we outline its potential importance for LBH's food system. We explain how each pathway can build on existing strengths and commitments in LBH, as well as how they can be improved and expanded. Lastly, drawing on experiences across the UK, we suggest some specific actions that could be undertaken within each pathway.

Cutting across each of these pathways is a commitment to improving equity, fairness, and inclusion in LBH's food system. This will require all organisations to actively engage with historically under-represented groups; ensure that diverse needs and capacities are considered at every stage of policy and programme development and implementation; and make sure that efforts to make LBH's food system healthier and more sustainable do not worsen existing inequalities.

### 4.1 Create healthy food environments

Ensuring access to healthy food for everyone starts with creating healthy food environments. We refer to food environments as the physical and social settings where people make daily choices about what and how to eat. Healthy food environments support better decisions by providing foods that are minimally processed and not High Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS), while also being accessible, affordable, and appealing.

The prevalence of HFSS outlets, as a factor of an unhealthy food environment, is higher in more deprived areas such as Heston and Cranford, and in Hounslow High Street, where we also observe increased rates of obesity and non-communicable diseases compared to other parts of the borough.

Through our engagement, unhealthy food environments emerged as a barrier to healthier eating for both adults and young people. Parents discussed the difficulty in discouraging their children from consuming fast food, and many adults described the challenges they face when making healthy choices amidst an abundance of cheap, convenient fast food. Families participating in the Feeding Our Families study (2023) also reported the difficulties of living in unhealthy food environments. One mum said:

*“I might want to eat something healthy but then I walk past a chicken shop with my kids...”* (workshop participant, female, May 2025).

Promoting the availability of healthy and sustainable food in everyday settings, while limiting the availability of HFSS foods, can contribute significantly towards dietary shifts and breaking unhealthy food habits.

### Pathway 1: Promote healthy food out of home

Two-thirds of meals purchased out of home exceed the recommended calorie intake for a single meal. About 30% of fast-food meals account for more than half of the suggested daily calorie allowance. Children and adults living in deprived areas are disproportionately exposed to advertisements for high fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) products, as well as a higher concentration of fast-food outlets.

Food outlets on high streets across LBH influence how residents buy and eat food. Supermarkets, independent grocery stores, culturally specific shops, lively markets selling fruit and vegetables, restaurants offering cuisine from various nations, and fast-food venues all line the high streets. Therefore, they are key food environments where targeted actions can help make healthier choices easier and more attractive.

LBH’s Public Health Team are engaging fast food take away businesses to support them to implement the [Healthier Catering Commitment](#) (HCC), a voluntary scheme rolled out across London that encourages business to meet mandatory criteria and offer healthier food options. The HCC encourages food businesses to switch to healthier cooking oils, offer smaller portion sizes, and promote healthier menu options. LBH Public Health is focusing particularly in deprived areas and near schools, and [34 businesses](#) have signed up and are meeting the Healthier Catering Commitment to date.

LBH has also taken action against unhealthy food advertising by adopting a pioneering [Healthier Food Advertising](#) policy, a landmark non-compliance scheme on unhealthy food advertising. The policy is the first of its kind in the UK to specifically restrict the marketing of

unhealthy foods to children under the age of three and to incorporate [WHO guidance](#) on restricting the inappropriate marketing of infant formula.

The variation in foods available and promoted in Hounslow High Street compared to those in Chiswick High Street demonstrates how local food environments can differ widely across the borough, impacting dietary health and inequality. As one resident described:

*“Chiswick high street is completely different to Hounslow High Street. Hounslow is just full of fast-food places and it’s so dirty and the bins are overflowing. It’s not like that in Chiswick”* (workshop participant, female, June 2025).

LBH has taken a significant step in addressing this imbalance. [Healthy Retail Hounslow](#), for instance, is a pilot programme led by LBH’s Public Health Team that launched publicly in Summer 2025. Initially partnering with ten small convenience stores in Feltham and Bedfont, areas of higher deprivation, the scheme encourages stores to trial healthier foods that are culturally appropriate and made visible to shoppers through strategic product placement and signage. The programme has expanded to include oral hygiene products, responding to high levels of poor oral health within the borough.

Food environments for shift workers can be more challenging than for those working regular office hours, as they may have only access to fast food outlets or may have to rely on convenient, often unhealthy, food to go. This issue is especially significant for individuals working in environments lacking adequate cooking or canteen facilities.

*“We’re on our feet all day, and we only get a short break, which isn’t long enough to go back to the staff room and reheat our food. The canteen is terrible, it’s expensive and the vegetarian options are really poor, despite the fact there is a large south Asian workforce and quite a few vegetarians”* (Conversation, Male, June)

Unhealthy food environments are also linked to a variety of issues beyond public health, including public safety and the environment. Through Area Forums and the online “Talk Hounslow” platform, residents have associated some fast-food outlets with anti-social behaviour. In Chiswick, a pizza outlet's application to extend their licensing into late night hours was rejected, partly due to [objections](#) from local residents that highlighted potential issues such as “noise nuisance” and “public nuisance caused by customers littering”.

Extending and improving existing programmes to encourage healthy eating outside the home is a vital opportunity to make healthy food available across various retail, workplace, and high street settings.

#### **Policy levers to explore towards Pathway 1: Promote healthy food out of home**

- Leverage the local plan, Supplementary Planning Documents and licensing regulations to ensure that new units support healthier, convenient food provision, whilst restricting the densification of HFSS and unhealthy food provision. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, for example, introduced a

[Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) that leverages Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to levy a £1,000 charge on hot-food takeaway businesses when they are granted planning permission. The funds go exclusively to the Borough's actions on obesity. Elsewhere, in 2015, Gateshead Council passed a "[Hot Food Takeaway](#)" [Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) to limit the concentration of unhealthy hot food takeaways to address childhood obesity. This SPD restricts planning permission for new hot food takeaways in wards where over 10% of year 6 pupils are classified as obese, or where clustering of the same use may have an adverse impact on the character, vitality or viability of the local area.

- Draw on the [West London low carbon procurement toolkit](#) to develop healthier and more sustainable catering menus within local authority-managed premises. This toolkit can be used both to address packaging and packaging waste, as well as to support businesses to provide more climate-friendly healthy menus.
- Develop free online healthier catering course. See for example, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' [Food4Health Online Healthier Catering Course](#) for food businesses that encourages the use of healthier portion sizes in ways that do not impact customer satisfaction. LBH could explore the possibility of integrating the healthier catering commitment within environmental health monitoring for food-related enterprises.
- Develop detailed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between the Public Health team and wider LBH departments such as Planning and Environment. See, for example, how Public Health England's Spatial Planning for Health evidence review informed MoUs between Planning and Public Health in the Borough of Southwark and in [East Sussex](#). These MoUs set out how the teams will work together to deliver public health outcomes. Elsewhere, Hertfordshire Council has produced [Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance](#), that aims to inform planning decision-making and promote healthy developments.

## Pathway 2: Promote healthy school food environments

School food environments offer an important opportunity to positively impact diets and eating habits among children and young people. They are a crucial food environment over which the government and its agencies hold significant influence. Some schools are already supported by LBH to develop healthier school food environments, but there is potential to learn from these examples and expand these approaches throughout LBH.

Some schools in LBH are already demonstrating best practice in creating positive food cultures. Reach Academy, for example, has introduced '[family-style](#)' lunches where teachers and pupils eat together, creating a sociable dining experience. The school separates playtime from lunchtime, ensuring children do not have to choose between eating and play. Children living with SEND are carefully accommodated, and most children eat the same meal, reinforcing a sense of shared experience. Similarly, Rivers Academy West London was nominated for "Best School in the World for Supporting Healthy Lives,"

partly through its involvement in LBH's [Grow for the Future](#) scheme. Elsewhere, [Victoria Junior School](#) piloted [Britebox](#), a meal-kit box containing all ingredients and illustrated family-friendly recipes in 2023, with positive feedback from parents and children. LBH's Public Health team also supports schools to take part in the [Healthy Schools London Awards](#). Cranford Primary School, for example, located in a CORE20 and EDI Cluster area, has achieved a Gold award, which means it has gone beyond healthier policies standards and included pupil participation.

Although LBH has successfully integrated various London-wide food-related programmes into some schools, challenges persist regarding food procurement – which the local authority does not control – and the limited emphasis on food education within the national curriculum. Tackling these issues will be vital to ensuring that all children in LBH can access healthy, affordable, and culturally suitable food in their daily school routine and foster a positive relationship with fruits and vegetables to enhance health outcomes in the future.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 2: Promote healthy school food environments**

- Utilise [Veg Power resources specifically designed for Public Health teams](#) in local authorities to encourage growing, eating, and engaging with fresh food amongst school children.
- Promote uptake of the Healthy Schools London awards, a London-wide scheme, through understanding barriers to participation, enabling best practice sharing from existing winning schools, and support actions that contribute towards the award, so there are more positive healthy school environments across LBH.
- Explore the potential for auto-enrollment of eligible pupils for Free School Meals in secondary schools, and remove any visual cues that pupils are accessing FSM to reduce stigma.

## **4.2 Ensure healthy food is accessible to all**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns had a severe impact on LBH's residents, with many placed on furlough and those in lower-paid roles disproportionately affected. In response, a variety of community food provision and redistribution services emerged to support food security across the borough. Many of these services continue today, often run by volunteers, reflecting the strength and dedication of LBH's community. There are no Trussell Trust food banks in LBH, but established local food banks and other services, such as [Hounslow Foodbox](#), work closely with social and healthcare services to provide for those most in need.

The term 'access' refers to social, economic, and physical factors that affect whether and how a person or group can eat healthily. Affordability can be a crucial part of food

accessibility. Instead of concentrating on the broader economic environment that shapes affordability – much of which is beyond the control of local actors – we emphasise the importance of community-managed food provision services and physical mobility as key factors influencing food access in LBH.

### Pathway 3: Enhance community food provision and redistribution services

LBH's vibrant Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector provides a wide range of essential services supporting access to healthy food for the most vulnerable groups. In LBH food provision services cover a wide spectrum, from hot meals and food parcels for those unable to afford to eat, to social eating and shopping experiences. The demand for these services has continued at the high levels first seen during COVID-19. Despite limited funding, the VCSE sector is delivering a huge impact on the lives of Hounslow's most vulnerable residents. LBH has recognised the importance of the VCSE sector, supporting in multiple ways through the [Thriving Communities Strategy](#) (2024-2028) and [Thriving Communities Fund](#), amongst other forms of support.

[Hounslow's Food Network](#), established in 2021 during COVID-19, plays an important role, supporting collaboration within LBH's VCSE food sector. It provides a quarterly space for groups to meet and share best practice, concerns and requests to the local authority and of each other in relation to community food provision. Key barriers identified by Hounslow Food Network participants to improving food provision included access to space, storage facilities, transport solutions, volunteer retention and feedback mechanisms to improve their services (Workshop Discussion, April 2025).

Across LBH, redistribution schemes, such as [Surplus to Supper](#), supply large quantities of surplus food and meals cooked from surplus, to VCSE organisations across LBH. This approach reduces the logistical burden of picking up and transporting surplus food from multiple locations. The [Holy Trinity Church](#) provides free food support for more vulnerable residents on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, including [wraparound support for homeless people](#), as well as dedicated food and wraparound support for [victims of domestic abuse](#). The café in the church provides consistent volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers across the borough, and in return they have access to free, tasty and nutritious food, and training to support them into meaningful work once granted status. [Feltham FoodCycle](#), at Bedfont Lane Community Centre, offers weekly, three-course vegetarian meals on Thursdays in a welcoming café-style setting, supporting residents in CORE20 and EOA Cluster areas, with no referral required.

LBH's faith-based organisations also play a key role in food provision. LBH's Gurdwara, for example, provides free hot meals to residents every day. Maswell Park Church's "@Home" also offers free meals to anyone as part of the wider food support from the church's "Café Together." These meals provide an important social opportunity, but not all food interactions allow residents to stay afterwards.

*“It’s great to have this food, but I wish we could sit around and have a cup of tea or something afterwards” (conversation, male, April 2025)*

Community pantries also play a vital role by providing access to healthy and affordable food in a dignified, shopping-style environment. There are several community pantries in LBH, all operating differently. For example the [pantry](#) in the [Bridgelink Community Centre](#) in Isleworth provides affordable access to healthy food for local residents on Thursdays. Most of the produce is surplus fresh fruit and vegetables, but this also includes tinned food and processed items, and residents can access sanitary products as well. Residents pay £5 per week and take home at least 15 items, equivalent to approximately £30 worth of retail food shopping. As some residents described:

*“I couldn’t afford fruit and vegetables if I didn’t come here” (Conversation, female, May 2025).*

Food distribution services have the potential to offer a wider range of support services. [Clayponds Food Distribution](#), for example, invites local authority staff to volunteer with the distribution operation, to provide opportunities for residents to ask questions about housing or other local authority-related issues.

For those who are less mobile, especially the elderly, home deliveries of food from by voluntary sector are key for them to access nutritious home-cooked meals. [Food with Love CIC](#) is one example of a LBH based organisation that delivers free cooked meals to vulnerable residents on referral, and in over five years of service has delivered 495,000+ free meals helping to reduce isolation as well as food insecurity. Volunteers play a crucial role in delivering LBH’s food support, particularly in meeting the needs of the elderly, as there is no local authority-funded Meals on Wheels programme in place. Some individuals involved in their community will also drop off items to elderly residents, some of whom feel there is still stigma attached and “don’t want to be seen to be needing free food” (interview, female, Bedfont)

However, many of these services operate on a very limited budget, rely on volunteers, and in some cases function in spaces that restrict their activities. Funding and supporting organisations that provide healthy meals to LBH’s population offer an opportunity to contribute to a broader range of objectives, such as community building, as well as signposting a wider array of support services in LBH.

Finally, food provision needs are significant for vulnerable residents in Supported Housing and for those with full-time carers, as they depend on their food environment. Their overall health may often improve with a healthier diet. As residents explained:

*“I’m so glad you’re asking me about food. No one has really asked me about food before. It’s so bad. The food is cold. The portion sizes are too small. I’ve had food issues in a few different places” (Interview, male, June 2025).*

*“There isn’t enough paid time for my carer to help me to cook food, and I can’t cook food on my own. So, I have to eat ready meals” (Workshop, male, May 2025).*

The food provided to asylum seekers staying in several hotels in LBH has been described as being of poor quality, low nutritional value, and lacking the necessary diversity for a healthy diet. One older asylum seeker explained that his dietary needs were not met by the hotel, so he could only eat very simple food.

*“I’m vegetarian, gluten-free and can’t have rice due to sugar. There is almost nothing I can eat there” (Conversation, male, April 2025).*

Some asylum seekers have been given access to church spaces to learn, cook, and prepare culturally significant dishes to share. These are often healthier and more nutritionally diverse than the food offered in most hotels. Support for initiatives like these could lead to better health outcomes and foster community building and the integration of new arrivals. The poor quality of hotel food has been linked to negative health effects, prompting some asylum seekers to seek food elsewhere. However, with less than £10 in disposable income and no right to work, asylum seekers cannot afford to buy food for themselves, so some volunteer with community meals, which both improves cohesion and enables them to eat better food this way.

These food provision initiatives often operate under financial strain, making ongoing support essential. Strengthening and sustaining these services presents a key opportunity to improve access to healthy food and build resilience for LBH’s most vulnerable residents. Access to meanwhile spaces and improvements to kitchen facilities, particularly cold storage and skills to extend the shelf life of fresh surplus produce, could enhance the ability of VCSEs to make the most of the surplus food available. Additionally, relatively small investments in food storage facilities such as fridges and freezers could support and broaden the range of food offered to residents by community-based and other civil society organisations.

### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 3: Enhance community food provision and redistribution services**

- Develop a business case for a LBH Meals-On-Wheels service in LBH. A [cost-benefit case for Meals-On-Wheels prepared in East Brighton](#) found that *“Community based Meals on Wheels Service are cost effective and reduce health and adult social care costs whilst improving physical and mental health outcomes.”*
- Explore the potential for underused local authority assets to be used for community-managed food activities. Map and make available council owned food assets including cooking, eating and growing spaces. [The proposed Treaty Centre development](#) represents an important opportunity to make space available for community food provision and other healthy and sustainable food initiatives in an area with very good access via public transport.

- Explore the possibility of funding capital grants to VCSE organisations for food storage, such as fridges and freezers, for community-managed to enhance capacity and reduce food waste
- Publish a list of free food provision across LBH, showing what is available every day of the week.
- Use a [Food Ladders](#) approach to community food provision to increase household and community resilience. [ShefFood](#), the local food partnership for Sheffield, convenes Community Food Provision Working Group quarterly meetings, which involve visiting a food provider, promoting horizontal peer-to-peer learning and facilitating collaboration within the sector within a Food Ladders framework.
- Explore the potential of Food Clubs as model that support dignified healthy food provision through bulk purchasing and community organizing. Examples include [The Bread and Butter Thing](#) (predominantly in action in the North of England) and [Cooperation Town Food Cooperatives](#). These can help ensure food is accessible, build community cohesion through bringing people together, and make healthier food more affordable through economies of scale.
- Embed dignity in food distribution and meal services. See, for example, training for [“Dignity in Practice”](#) co-produced with food bank users by Nourish Scotland and the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN).
- Advocate for the [London Living Wage](#) to be paid by all Hounslow businesses, targeting specifically those in contract with the local authority in order to reduce demand for community food provision. See the approach in Southwark, for example, which became the first London borough to become a [‘Living Wage Place’](#), and which has supported 126 businesses to become accredited London Living Wage employers over 18 months, resulting in [over 400 local employers](#) paying the London Living Wage in the borough.

#### Pathway 4: Improve mobility across LBH

Accessing healthy food requires residents to be able to physically reach locations where healthy and affordable food is sold. This means residents must be able to easily travel to shops offering healthy options, whether by walking, wheeling, or using public transport. Improving mobility across LBH is crucial for enabling residents to access healthy and affordable food. Enhancing mobility can also increase access to open spaces and leisure venues, supporting a healthy and active lifestyle.

In LBH, supermarkets are a convenient source of healthy and affordable food, especially fresh produce. However, travel times to the closest supermarket vary greatly across LBH, with some residents enduring lengthy journeys by public transport. These disparities restrict choice and elevate inequality in access to healthier foods. As one resident described:

*“I make my decision on where to buy food based on buses. It’s hard for me to stand for very long, so I avoid the markets and mostly order food from supermarkets”*  
(Conversation, Female, June 2025).

Parking is available at some supermarkets, but parking provisions have been reduced across LBH. The cost of local authority parking is reported to be the same throughout LBH; however, the costs of public transport options vary significantly by area. We heard from many residents who described how transportation influences where and how they buy food.

*“It’s hard for me to get to any real shops and the buses are terrible here... I’d have to get two buses to get to the FoodCycle in Feltham [from North Feltham]”*  
(Conversation, Female, May 2025).

*“I struggle to use those digital parking meters; I have to get my daughter to do it for me. I don’t understand all this app business”* (Conversation, female, May 2025).

Active travel, such as walking and cycling, can increase physical activity while lowering CO2 emissions. However, [the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#) highlighted that LBH was the third lowest scoring borough in the “Healthy Streets Index” (2021). Although this has [improved by 2025](#), LBH is still the worst borough for pedestrian casualties (per 100,000 journey stages). [This metric](#) reflects the actual road danger in the area, and Healthy Streets reports that risk is the most often cited reason why people do not walk or cycle more.

Several residents we spoke to said they avoided travelling in the evening due to poor lighting. Poor lighting levels were associated with feeling less safe because of an increased perception of crime, as well as feeling less safe because reduced visibility made walking at night more difficult. Improving public transport during evenings and at night could lessen one of the barriers to participating in out-of-hours activities, such as training events, area forums, and community meals.

Service providers, including [Healthy Hounslow](#) providers, identified travel costs as a key barrier to participation in food and health-promoting activities such as cooking classes. For digitally excluded residents, especially the elderly and some adults with SEND needs, improved physical mobility is even more crucial.

Overall, improving mobility across LBH presents a significant opportunity to enhance access to healthy food and increase residents’ independence in food shopping, community meals, and growing spaces. By reducing transport barriers and promoting active travel, LBH can make food more accessible for everyone, while also encouraging healthier, low-carbon, and more active lifestyles.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 4: Improve mobility across LBH**

- Identify and map neighbourhoods and areas across LBH that have low levels of access to fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables and poor transport networks.

- Explore the potential of using the PTAL index to identify locations for community-managed food provision in so-called ‘[meanwhile spaces](#)’, locations that may be available for a fixed period of time.
- Explore the potential of working with retailers to [use vans to provide mobile retail of fruit and vegetables](#) in areas with lower levels of access to public transport. Mobile fruit and veg vans can be particularly effective when combined with [social prescribing](#) of fruit and vegetables, which has been trialed in both Lambeth and Tower Hamlets.

### 4.3 Support healthy communities

Healthy food is vital for a healthy population. The health requirements of a large and diverse population demand a broad range of healthcare programmes and interventions, from education and awareness campaigns, preventative measures and screening, to monitoring, treatment, and outpatient care. Food can also serve as a means to communicate and deliver healthcare programmes and interventions.

Healthy diets are essential for reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and Type 2 diabetes. Integrating food systems and food-related services across LBH’s healthcare settings presents an important opportunity to provide coordinated services and maximise the preventative healthcare benefits of healthy and sustainable diets.

#### Pathway 5: Increase awareness and link services

Integrating food and health related services and support can healthy population in LBH. LBH has a wide range of services and organisations, both within and beyond the local authority, that support families to eat well and live healthier lives. For example, [Healthy Hounslow](#) offers several services including Health & Wellbeing Coaching, Body Mass Index (BMI) Weight Checks, Healthy Weight Management, [Cook & Eat Sessions](#), and Exercise on Referral. Residents can self-refer for some services but need to be referred by GPs or other local services, including the VCSE sector, for others.

In recent years, significant progress has been made towards delivering more connected services in LBH. LBH’s Health and Wellbeing Service, [Healthy Hounslow Partnership](#), for example, acts as a single point of access to a wider range of health and wellbeing services, and with direct referrals and feedback going to GPs. Healthy Hounslow brings together local authorities, Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust (HRCH), Feltham & Bedfont Primary Care Network, MoreLife, Maximus’ BeeZee Bodies and Lampton Leisure, and is a great example of working together to share data, expertise and improve signposting across services. Elsewhere, [the Borough Based Partnership](#), brings together health, social

care, and wider local authority services working across traditional organisational boundaries to share expertise, data and coordinated interventions. These structures provide a strong platform for embedding food-related health initiatives, from screening for food insecurity to offering healthy cooking classes and promoting active lifestyles.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) also play a vital role in linking services in LBH. For instance, Feltham and Bedfont PCN ensures that any issues identified during free health checks offered across LBH or at Healthy Hounslow events are directly communicated to GPs for follow-up, as well as to other relevant organisations within the partnership. An effective system of signposting and referrals depends on increased awareness of existing services across both food and health sectors. This includes not only services managed by the local authority or NHS but also the diverse range of food-related support services managed by the VCSE sector.

[Hounslow Connect](#) is a website which brings together services for communities in one place, including a long list of food provision across LBH, from free sit down meals such as [Al's Diner](#), to places where you can pick up free food (such as [Holy Trinity church's Fridge Food Distribution](#)) to community pantries. The local authority website also provides a valuable service to identify the nearest allotment, food bank and healthcare provision for each postcode.

The local authority also undertakes various activities to disseminate information about the wide range of services it offers. The Health Outreach Team, for example, distributes physical leaflets, including leaflets in Easy Read format for ease of access for the visually impaired, the elderly and SEND needs. HOT travels to CORE20 and historically underserved areas, raises awareness, provides advice on diabetes, high blood pressure and mental health support, and signposts services to residents who may struggle to access content online. The HOT team is also often present at community events and participatory spaces such as [Area Forums](#), to help highlight what health advice is on offer to residents in person.

LBH's Primary Care Networks (PCNs) also organise food-related outreach, awareness sessions, and free basic health checks and screening at central locations such as the Arts Centre in the Treaty Shopping Centre, with high participation levels. Public Health is producing leaflets in various languages to ensure that the linguistic diversity in LBH and limited access to free English classes do not prevent residents from obtaining food and health information. However, more can be done to ensure that service providers, especially staff who engage directly with the public, are aware of and confident in signposting available services, including Healthy Start, and resources in LBH.

**Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 5: Increase awareness and link services**

- As recommended in the [Feeding Our Families](#) report, LBH could maximise promotion of Healthy start through existing healthcare outreach services. Participation in Healthy Start can have lifelong benefits for eligible families and

increasing participation through active promotion in healthcare settings is a key opportunity in LBH.

- Explore the potential of integrating signposting and awareness raising of existing food support and provision services within the Healthy Retail Hounslow programme.

## Pathway 6: Support families and family hubs

[Family Hubs](#) provide essential support to families across LBH, especially in CORE20 areas. Accessible to all families with children aged 0 to 19 years, or up to 25 years for those with special educational needs, disabilities, or neurodiversity, they are strategically located in or near deprived areas such as Feltham, Hounslow Central, and Brentford. Most activities are aimed at parents and younger children; however, they also offer youth outreach sessions, family navigators for advice and support—including on food and nutrition—and social prescribing (on referral) to assist young people. Family Hubs serve as a crucial infrastructure for delivering a variety of food-related interventions. Beyond existing services, they could further provide food skills training, community meals, events, and health outreach initiatives.

During school holidays, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, provides important support for families in LBH. This includes physical activity and food for children. LBH currently has approximately 35 HAF providers. The [feedback from HAF provision in 2023](#) found that 67% of parents and 77% of children thought they ate healthily over the holidays due to HAF.

Family Hubs and Children’s Hubs also play a key role in supporting breastfeeding. The [breastfeeding rate](#) at 6-8 weeks has increased by 20% since the Family Hubs initiative began. Breastfeeding plays a crucial role in reducing the risk of childhood obesity, diabetes, hypertension and delayed cognitive development. It also helps improve oral health outcomes and long-term educational attainment.

Continuing to 6 months, as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO), would have positive effects on child health, including reducing the rate of obesity by up to 25%. Investing in services that support the best start in life can be both cost-effective and lead to better health outcomes compared to later interventions.

Baby Feeding Friendly spaces, as part of the [Hounslow BFF network](#) launched in 2023, which meets the accreditation standards of [UNICEF’s Baby Friendly Initiative](#). The HOT shop in the Treaty Centre, amongst other spaces including all 11 libraries, Lampton Leisure Centres and the Family and Children’s Hubs across LBH are promoted as “BFF”.

LBH also offers a wide range of digital resources that aim to enhance breastfeeding and infant health outcomes. For example, LBH has a free resource on [50 Things to do before](#)

[you're 5](#) which suggests activities to improve readiness for school as well as free-to-access events such as “Great Hounslow Baking”, “Growing, Little People, Plants and Things.” Additionally, [Hounslow's Start for Life](#) offer covers support for the first 1001 days, with an online guide including over 100 free services, and printed copies which can be found in LBH Family Hubs.

However, there are still significant inequalities in breastfeeding outcomes across LBH. 2024/2025 data from the LBH Breastfeeding report on the 6-8 weeks dashboard shows a 20% gap in breastfeeding rates between Feltham West (an area of deprivation with 64.3%) and Chiswick Riverside (a wealthier area with 85.7%). Providing resources for infant feeding support can help improve health and unlock residents’ potential, including contributing to LBH’s future workforce, regeneration, and economic growth.

Increasing the visibility and public acceptance of breastfeeding by expanding supportive environments for mothers and improving promotion and provision of breastfeeding support can encourage mothers to breastfeed for longer with greater confidence.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 6: Support families and family hubs**

- Support Family Hubs to integrate their Jamie Oliver’s Ministry of Food training into their service provision to support vulnerable families to cook healthy, affordable, convenient meals that are climate-friendly.
- Learn from breastfeeding ‘Trailblazers’ such as Sheffield and Kent councils. As part of Trailblazer Kent County Council’s “[Nourishing our Next Generation](#)” [infant feeding strategy \(2024-2029\)](#), for example, they monitor the number of infants fully and partially breastfed at 10-14 days, responding to mothers feedback that difficulties often happen early on.

## **4.4 Support and celebrate an empowered and cohesive community**

An empowered community has the skills, confidence, and knowledge to help residents make healthy and sustainable food choices and take a more active role in their local food system. A cohesive community can enable “mutual aid” initiatives, which assist vulnerable community members and those in need. An empowered and cohesive community promotes a thriving civil society sector, volunteerism, active engagement in civic life, and the local food economy.

Civic participation can be facilitated by ensuring that residents are aware of avenues to engage (and lodge grievances) with local authorities, and that consultation responses, complaints and concerns are responded to by local authority staff and councillors. LBH has developed a number of different means by which residents can feed into local authority

strategies, including [Area Forums](#) which are in person, after usual office hours, [Let's Talk Hounslow](#), an online engagement platform, used to promote surveys, consultations and engagement activities, and newly formed [Resident's Voice](#), which aims to promote diverse voices from across LBH.

LBH's [Transport Strategy](#) and actions towards [Vision2050](#), for example, included significant resident engagement, using a variety of creative means; to empower residents to highlight their issues and actively feed into policy change. Not all policy areas have successfully had such high levels of community engagement however, so this could be improved in certain fields.

## Pathway 7: Deliver inclusive programmes to develop food-related employment skills

The local food economy presents a significant opportunity to create skilled jobs that promote healthier and more sustainable food systems. Developing expertise in food production, processing, and cooking can boost local employment, increase incomes, and aid transitions to a green economy.

Formal training pathways are already in place. For example, [Learn Hounslow](#) provides LBH's [Adult and Community Education \(HACE\)](#). HACE is funded by the Greater London Authority's Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and includes several free courses related to health and cooking. Elsewhere, [Meadowbank Adult & Community Education](#), located in a CORE20 and Equal Opportunity Cluster area, has free courses for those earning under the London Living Wage threshold (currently at £23,642.50 annually), including a series of courses on health, fitness and wellbeing, such as "Eatwell for Better Health, Cooking for diabetes prevention and management, and Cooking for a healthy microbiome.

LBH has also identified and supported teachers and outreach workers, working with children in areas of deprivation, to be trained through Jamie Oliver's [Ministry of Food programme](#). This enables them to be able to train others in their organisations and wider community about essential cooking skills, food safety, nutrition, budgeting and food waste, and promote holistic food literacy. Extending and upscaling these types of initiatives can support local economic growth in addition to beneficial food and health related outcomes.

Beyond these specific food-related pathways, there are several programmes supporting career development that could more explicitly incorporate food. These include "[Young Hounslow](#)", which offers career advice for 16-19-year-olds and also for those with an Education, Health and Social Care Plan (EHCP), which may include young people with neurodiversity needs up to age 25. For individuals over 19 years old without an EHCP, Work Hounslow is available to assist with entering employment, increasing earnings, transitioning out of low-paid work, or re-skilling and up-skilling.

For those over 18 years old with a disability, Employment Opportunities Service and the West London Careers Hub both provide support for people with disabilities to find and retain employment. The latter provides [SEND Career Path Posters](#), which includes a pathway to [working in Environment and Agriculture](#).

Additionally, [Work Hounslow](#) runs free [Green Skills bootcamps](#) which provide skills including chainsaw handling, and on-the-ground placements with partners including Lampton 360 and Hounslow Highways. The programme removes barriers to access by providing transport or a TfL travelcard where needed, and includes a guaranteed interview at the end, and 1-1 mentoring on future job opportunities to support unemployed residents into landscaping and other green jobs. While a range of training pathways exists, the food sector remains underleveraged as a source of local economic growth that enhances access to healthy and sustainable food.

**Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 7: Deliver inclusive programmes to develop food-related employment skills**

- Work with Asylum and Refugee provision, adult education organisations working with refugees including Learn English At Home (LEAH), Meadowbank Adult Education and Work Hounslow to identify, expand on, and deliver cooking training and skill-shares, targeted towards those with low levels of English.
- Explore the potentials of raising funds for food-related training through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. Hackney Council, for example, has leveraged £60,000 in funding through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) contributions for a Green Skills Hub training facility in partnership with the London Legacy Development Corporation.

**Pathway 8: Champion community events, meals, and culturally appropriate cooking sessions**

Freshly cooked meals are linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption, unlike ready-meals, which often have poorer nutritional quality, greater greenhouse gas emissions, and cost more. Tapping into the existing desire to cook and eat together in community settings across LBH can lead to a variety of positive health and social benefits.

Community events and meals can unite the diverse communities in LBH while celebrating the cultural diversity of individual groups. Community meals can serve as an essential opportunity for residents from different backgrounds to socialise, raise awareness about local authority programmes and services, and enjoy healthy food.

Cooking sessions for people of all ages, backgrounds, and health conditions can also help address the skills gaps that may arise from limited practical food education in UK schools or from growing up in cultures where women are more likely to be the sole cooks. This can promote independence for people of all demographics, including men who may not have had the opportunity to develop their own cooking skills.

LBH's VCSE sector runs regular cooking and healthy eating skills sessions for various age groups and demographics, provided by organisations such as [Speak Out Hounslow](#) for borough-wide SEND adults, the Bridgelink Youth Club in Ivybridge (CORE20 area and EOA Cluster 2) with separate sessions for 8-11 years and 11-16 years, and [C-Change West London](#) for those living in Heston and Cranford (CORE20 area and EOA Cluster 4), as well as one-off and infrequent events such as [Deaf Unity's Healthy Eating](#) workshop with sign-language.

Cooking and eating skill sharing sessions across LBH were described by both service providers and users as "oversubscribed", and when the Cook and Eat service was initially advertised, it was said to have been overwhelmed with requests before it was clarified that it was a referral-only service. This indicates a need to expand provision for all demographics to meet demand.

Despite high demand, barriers persist. The prevalence of non-English speakers means that language can hinder participation in adult education, such as cooking classes. Likewise, nutrition advice is often unavailable in non-English formats and not well tailored for culturally diverse diets. The Healthy Hounslow Cook and Eat programme requires a six-week commitment, which parents or adults with caring responsibilities identified as a barrier.

Meeting demand for cooking and eating sessions offers an important chance to encourage healthier cooking techniques, culturally suitable ingredient replacements, and shared advice on healthy portion sizes of culturally appropriate foods for all ages, in a way that promotes autonomy and community building.

LBH's Thriving Communities fund enabled "Changing Suits" to offer Wellbeing Workshops for the South Asian community, including Healthy Eating Workshops at LBH Gurdwara (Sikh temple), which involved a Punjabi-speaking dietician. Hosting the workshop sparked a response and reflection on the cooking practices within the Gurdwara itself, which serves "langar", a free community kitchen providing food for anyone, regardless of faith.

Community events and meals are contingent on communities having long term access to appropriate and accessible spaces. This represents an opportunity for local authorities, who typically control a vast portfolio of properties, and may be supported by the national [Pride in Place strategy](#). Providing long term access to cooking and eating spaces can help to unlock the potential of community-run events and meals to provide healthy food, build relationships, and celebrate diverse food cultures.

Many residents we spoke with remarked on the empty shops across LBH, as well as the vacant units in the Treaty Centre. Some communities we engaged with do have access to

community eating spaces with small kitchen facilities. They emphasised the importance of being able to cook food specific to their culture and not widely available, as well as the potential benefits for the wider community if they could scale up their activities, for example, to cook and share more food, and access freezer space to reduce wastage.

### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 8: Champion community events, meals, and culturally-appropriate cooking sessions**

- Explore models for providing free-to-access healthy cooking classes. [Made in Hackney](#), for example, offers both free and paid cooking classes of various lengths whilst mainstreaming climate-friendly plant-based meals within their services. Made in Hackney also offers corporate team building days revolving around food, which improve food literacy for professionals, and which subsidise the other offerings.
- Learn from projects that have engaged older residents in cooking classes. [Time for Tea](#) in Brighton & Hove, for example, is a dementia-friendly food project, for those living with mild to moderate dementia, who would enjoy cooking in a sociable atmosphere.
- Explore the possibility of sponsoring community food events and festivals. See for example the Power of Food Festival in Tower Hamlets, which celebrates the diversity of the Borough while showcasing local projects that are contributing to a more sustainable food system.
- Explore the possibility of developing a 'Hounslow cookbook' to make visible and celebrate LBH's diverse food culture.

### **Pathway 9: Improve food and health education**

Building knowledge and capacity about healthy and sustainable diets, as well as the environmental impacts of the food system, can help residents make more informed choices about what and how they eat. Extending and improving existing services presents a valuable opportunity to empower residents to influence the food system.

LBH already provides a broad range of health education and prevention programmes. These include initiatives centred on cooking, such as Jamie Oliver's [Ministry of Food](#) training. Targeted services are also in place to tackle obesity and related health inequalities. For instance, Healthy Hounslow's Cook and Eat programme offers culturally suitable, family-based education, and the BeeZee Bodies programme combines cooking lessons for children and adults with physical activity, both accessible via referral from health professionals. These initiatives are free for eligible children and adults, boosting accessibility and increasing the chances of sustained behaviour change by fostering healthier cooking and eating habits within households.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) deliver tailored outreach to patients. [Great West Road PCN](#), for example, has run gendered health sessions that combine interactive quizzes and Q&As to address misinformation, physical exercise sessions, and provide culturally relevant resources such as a nutritionally dense South Asian meal plan. Such approaches ensure health education is accessible, engaging, and relevant to diverse communities.

Finally, integrating food education into the curriculum can empower children and young people while supporting the development of healthy and sustainable eating habits. Identifying opportunities to include practical and nutritional education in schools for all ages can be part of a whole-school approach to food, where changes to what and how children eat, and in what food environments, are complemented by educational methods that foster curiosity and appreciation of food and food cultures.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 9: Improve food and health education**

- Enhance opportunities for school children to be exposed to fruit and vegetables more in school from the canteen to the classroom. See, for example, work by Islington Council to delivering training to support early years settings and schools to offer adapted [TasteEd](#) sensory food resources.
- Provide culturally appropriate food education. Wandsworth Council, for example, has partnered with a local organisation the Community Brain, to co-create culturally specific, accessible healthy eating resources that are simple, resonate with the target communities, and work towards improving culturally appropriate food education. These include a South Asian healthy eating guide, [Caribbean healthy eating guide](#), [East African healthy eating guide](#) and [West African healthy eating guides](#).

## **4.5 Support a circular and resilient local food system**

Food systems offer a vital chance to meet various environmental targets, including moving towards a Net Zero economy, enhancing Biodiversity Net Gain, and reducing climate change effects such as heat and surface water issues. Tackling these challenges requires collaboration and support across all government levels; environmental concerns go well beyond administrative borders. Nevertheless, place-based initiatives are at the forefront of efforts to lessen climate change impacts, with local authorities (and other local organisations) able to lead changes in local food systems that also support broader societal aims related to sustainability and the natural environment.

A resilient and circular food system supports local food production, distribution, biodiversity, reduces waste, and enhances community resilience. Building a circular and more resilient local food system involves integrating food supply chains within LBH, from production through to distribution and preparation.

## Pathway 10: Support sustainable local food enterprises

While supermarkets generally offer lower prices, they do not usually provide the same economic advantages in terms of job creation and multiplier effects as local food businesses. Supporting and developing jobs through new food enterprises, as well as helping existing local businesses to continue, diversify, and expand, can lead to a range of positive food outcomes when combined with the approaches described above.

Local food businesses promote diversity in production and distribution, which reduces systemic risk. A network of small, diverse food producers is more adaptable than a few large-scale suppliers. By supporting them, communities encourage farming practices that prioritise soil health, biodiversity, and regenerative methods, which enhance long-term productivity and environmental resilience. Food enterprises can also help migrant and diaspora populations to celebrate their food cultures, provide space for culturally significant and traditional foods to be shared by their own communities outside of the home, and develop income streams.

Local food businesses, with proper guidance, can provide economic, social, cultural, health, and environmental benefits to residents. Local independent retailers and social food enterprises often have stronger local multipliers, help circulate income within the community, create jobs—including entry-level roles—and enhance local economic resilience. The local authority plays a vital role in supporting sustainable local food businesses through food procurement for local authority kitchens and events. Hounslow's Food Network co-developed an action plan to promote procurement pathways for smaller suppliers, business support, micro-grants, and partnerships with community food initiatives.

LBH's local authority provides a broad range of support services for local food businesses. For instance, West London Chambers in Hounslow assists international companies and those seeking to export within LBH, through regular meetups and breakfast events. Previously, Hounslow Business First (2023-24) was a partnership between LBH local authority, Smarter Society, and CPG to offer business support and training aimed at scaling up businesses and enhancing digital skills, such as social media use, digital marketplaces (including JustEat), and Google profiles.

LBH also has several vibrant street markets that vary greatly in what they offer and their opening hours. For example, Hounslow Central and Feltham street markets sell fresh fruit and vegetables, including produce used in various cultures. Produce is often sold in larger quantities, such as by the bowl, and tends to be relatively affordable, comparable with supermarket prices.

What's available varies with the season, but in late Spring and early Summer 2025, much of Hounslow Central's market produce was reported to be sourced from Spain or Morocco. Feltham Market is smaller but offers a diverse range of fruit and vegetables, including gourds

and herbs commonly used in South Asian cooking, which are harder or impossible to find in many large supermarket chains.

Chiswick, a generally wealthier part of LBH, has two farmers' markets: the weekly Food Market Chiswick, a social enterprise where proceeds help maintain Dukes Meadows Park, and the monthly Duck Pond Market. The Food Market Chiswick attracts artisans from across the country (for example, a plant nursery from Norfolk), whereas the Duck Pond Market focuses on local, ethical, and sustainably produced products, and encourages street food vendors to at least use British eggs and meat.

By supporting local food enterprises in all their forms and utilising all the levers available to the local authority—such as streamlining licensing processes for street markets and healthier food stalls, providing affordable commercial cooking and processing spaces for testing ideas, and promoting climate-friendly and healthier local food businesses when catering internal events—the local authority can foster the economic development and growth of food enterprises that meet environmental and social criteria.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 10: Support sustainable local food enterprises**

- Create a directory of sustainable local food suppliers that can be made available for LBH public procurement and disseminate to workplaces that offer food to employees. Look to examples such as [Good Food Oxfordshire's Local Supplier Directory](#).
- Make healthy and sustainable food available at community engagement events such as Area Forums, community consultations, and councilors' surgeries.
- Learn from local authorities that are directly supporting local food enterprises to become more sustainable. Tower Hamlets and Westminster councils, for example, received support from Inclusive Growth London to run "Start Up to Scale Up", which supports SMEs to run carbon audits linked with funding for energy saving technologies.
- Explore the possibility of supporting cooperative food enterprises. Draw on the experience of [Cooperation Town](#), which has catalysed and supported local food cooperatives across the UK, through providing practical resources, webinars, and training.

#### **Pathway 11: Reduce food waste**

Reducing food waste is essential for creating a more circular and resilient local food system. When food is thrown away, not only are edible resources lost, but also the energy, water, labour, and land used to produce it are wasted. Food waste causes both financial and environmental issues. In London, the average family wastes around £470 worth of food

annually. Food-related emissions now make up over 10% of London’s consumption-based greenhouse gases. Overall consumption-based data shows that the impacts for the wider borough amount to 1,490 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, based on emissions from the production of food and other household items.

In a circular system, outputs are reused as inputs. Surplus food can be redistributed to food banks or community kitchens, ensuring nourishment reaches people instead of landfills. Inedible scraps can be composted to enrich soils, “closing the nutrient loop”. This keeps value circulating locally. Ultimately, tackling food waste is more than a sustainability measure: it transforms inefficiency into opportunity, supporting a regenerative, self-sufficient, and adaptable food system that benefits both people and the environment.

LBH launched a campaign in 2023 called “No Time to Waste” to encourage residents to recycle more and reduce waste. Recognising that 40% of food waste still ends up in landfill bins, the local authority revived the campaign in 2025 by first conducting a five-minute survey through the Talk Hounslow online platform, as well as distributing copies of the survey in local libraries.

In 2019, LBH was involved in integrated campaigns that included events, digital, and print marketing as part of a series of initiatives to raise awareness about food waste. In 2017, the council hosted a “Food for Thought” festival at Turnham Green (formerly within LBH boundaries)—allowing residents to speak with experts about nutrition and food waste recycling, and they engaged “Social Sidekick” to help develop content and a social media plan for Facebook and Instagram.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 11: Reduce food waste**

- Develop public campaigns on reducing food waste. See the [Eat Like a Londoner \(ELAL\) campaign](#), for example, which aimed to encourage Londoners to both reduce their household food waste and switch to a more plant-based diet, using “media bursts”, Facebook, Instagram, and a website. See also North London Waste Authority’s “Bin Less Save More” behavior change challenge.
- Support a campaign with community focused events. Haringey’s Community Cook Up, for example, organised a “[Waste Not Want Not Zero Waste Culinary Fair](#)”, where residents could learn about how to make the most of their ingredients and reduce waste.

#### **Pathway 12: Support urban food production**

Supporting urban food production is a powerful way to foster a circular and resilient local food system. As cities grow, so does the demand for fresh, affordable, and sustainable food. Urban food production is closer to consumers, reducing the environmental costs of long supply chains while improving local food security, and provides a space for communities to

meet each other, learn skills, and develop relationships with food that can encourage increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.

*“My grandchild wouldn’t touch vegetables. Then I took him to the Pick Your Own, and he couldn’t believe he could pick them, and now he’s excited about carrots”*  
(Conversation, male, April 2025)

Organic waste from households, restaurants, and markets can also be composted and returned to fertile soil for urban gardens, which has been shown to increase the chances that food waste is “recycled” rather than disposed of in landfills.

Local food production can help improve food literacy, including understanding what produce is in season at different times. The aim to enhance knowledge of seasonality to assist residents in finding cheaper fresh produce was discussed both with SheWISE participants (mainly south Asian and global majority women) and within ILAYS (focused on the Somali community) regarding access to healthy food.

LBH has several schemes to support food growing, including the pioneering “Grow for the Future” programme and the new “Go Grow for the Future” programme to promote food cultivation across LBH, championed by Councilor Shaheen, the portfolio holder for Food. As part of this, two new orchards have been established in Heston West and Feltham West. Community orchards offer a reason for LBH residents to access green spaces, enjoy free fresh fruit, and serve as community assets that celebrate heritage and promote diversity through various types of apple trees.

*“I think the council should plant fruit and nut trees, so that people can gather it themselves”* (Workshop, Female, May 2025).

*“I have an apple tree that produces lots of green apples that go to waste that I haven’t time to harvest but I don’t want to go to waste”* (Workshop, Female, May 2025).

Key barriers to growing food identified by residents included a lack of space, time, confidence, and practical skills. Barriers to growing food on allotments included the small size of plots, long waiting lists, and cultural barriers.

Abundance London is very active in Chiswick, with cultivated “pocket parks” on unused land, and they harvest and distribute surplus produce. However, it has not been as active across LBH, and only two apple trees are mapped on its fruit tree map further east in LBH (as of September 2025).

LBH provided a grant to [Cultivate London](#) to enable them to provide food growing sessions, targeted in areas of deprivation, where they worked both with schools and the housing estates in which many of those school children live. This scheme has reached 900 children and adults, and rebuilt a connection to fresh fruit and vegetables, across both school and home environments, supporting longer-term behaviour change and improving the likelihood of children and youth living in areas of deprivation to eat healthier diets.

Urban farming also diversifies food sources, making the local system more resilient to shocks such as climate events, transportation disruptions, or global market fluctuations. When part of a city’s food is grown locally, communities become less dependent on distant supply chains. Additionally, urban farms can serve as green infrastructure, cooling cities, absorbing stormwater, and enhancing air quality—all of which aid climate adaptation.

Beyond environmental advantages, urban food production enhances social resilience. Community gardens and cooperatives strengthen local networks, promote education about sustainable practices, and empower residents to take control of their food systems. By reconnecting people with how food is grown, these initiatives foster a culture of stewardship and collaboration.

Although significant commercial urban food production is unlikely within LBH, even small-scale cultivation can help increase the availability of culturally appropriate, fresh, and healthy foods, while also providing other ecosystem services. While LBH lacks a specific policy for urban food production, it does have various initiatives that promote urban greening. For example, the “Save it Don’t Pave It” campaign aimed to encourage more residents to use their gardens instead of paving over them. As part of LBH’s Corporate Plan pillars supporting a “greener” LBH, the use of chemicals to treat weeds was discontinued in 2020 to foster biodiversity and support wildlife.

#### **Policy Levers to explore towards Pathway 12: Support urban food production**

- Explore the potential of leveraging the Tree Plan and Tree Management Policy could be used to support community orchards.
- Promote inclusion of food growing spaces within new developments, and co-locate these where possible, to promote positive interactions with outdoor environments
- Raise awareness about food growing spaces including allotments especially the new allotments, community gardens such as Salopian Garden, and Pick Your Own schemes such as those at Garsons Farm in Esher.
- Learn from successful examples of urban food production across the UK. Bristol Food Network, for example, promotes urban food production linked to veg box schemes and volunteering opportunities.
- Explore innovative financing options. Waltham Forest’s “[Food Innovation Fund](#)”, for example, is a grant programme co-designed with members of the “Food Resilience Network” and “Food Growers Network”, which funded seven collaborative projects involving eleven organisations across the borough. One initiative which secured funding is “[Time to Grow](#)”, which supports people to turn disused private gardens into community food growing sites, with all produce being distributed amongst participants, garden owners and community food providers, including a café which offers sliding scale hot, nutritious meals.

## 5 Conclusion and next steps

This report has set out twelve strategic pathways towards achieving the vision for Hounslow's food system described in section 2. In isolation, each of these pathways will comprise a range of actions, activities, commitments, and collaborations, within and beyond the local authority. The specific steps that can be undertaken within each of these pathways will be determined by a range of factors relating to political support, institutional processes, and the accessibility of resources, not least knowledge, skills, and finance.

It is beyond the scope of this document to prescribe specific actions within each of these pathways. This conversation needs to be on going and undertaken across sectors and organisations within LBH.

It is important at this point to return to the concept of the food system in order to emphasise how these pathways can enable and support one another: empowered citizens will only be able to make healthier food choices (pathway 9) if fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods are convenient and accessible (pathway 1); developing food-related employment skills (pathway 7) requires new opportunities in sustainable food enterprises (pathway 10). Food systems change requires actions to be taken in relation to the economy, environment, and society. Realising the vision set out in this report will require new forms of partnership and cooperation between across LBH, and this report is an important step on that journey.

We conclude with some specific suggestions for next steps:

### **Circulate and disseminate this report for LBH**

Many organisations, individuals, and networks have helped develop this report. Sharing the report demonstrates how the local authority has listened to Hounslow's residents and included their views. Dissemination is most effective when various means are used to share the outcomes of this process including, but not limited to, posting on the local authority website, webinars, printed copies, and face-to-face events. Wide dissemination, discussion, and critical engagement with this report is an important part of ensuring transparency and accountability in local food policy.

### **Develop a local food action plan to accompany the LBH Food Strategy**

Local food action plans are a complementary form of food policy that accompany local food strategies. While food strategies generally focus on creating a vision for a local food system and identifying strategic steps to achieve that vision, local food action plans outline specific actions and activities. Typically, these actions and activities specify who is responsible for implementing them, how they will be carried out, within what timeframe, and what will indicate that the action has been completed. Some local food action plans include an ongoing programme to monitor progress. Local food action plans need to involve local

authorities, but also a wider range of organisations and stakeholders across the local food system. Developing an action plan is a crucial step in enacting a food strategy and a vital opportunity to build momentum towards its delivery.

### **Explore options for establishing a local food partnership in LBH**

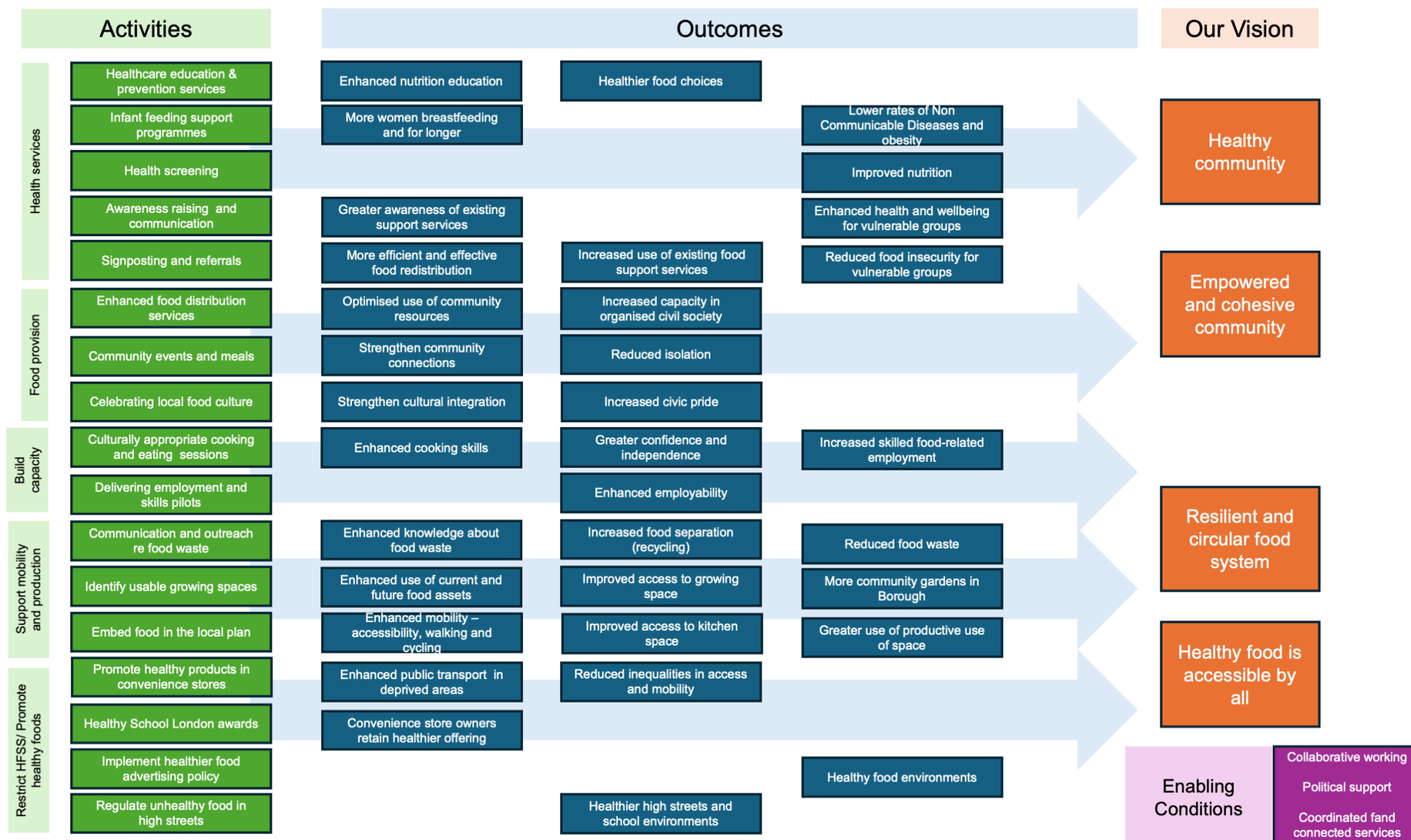
Local food partnerships are cross-sector organisations that influence local food systems change. Currently, there are over 100 local food partnerships in the UK affiliated with the Sustainable Food Places Network. These partnerships take various forms – some are within local authorities, others are registered as Community Interest Companies or other not-for-profit entities, while some are hosted within VCSE organisations. They can provide essential local leadership and coordination for local food policy and programmes. For more information on setting up a local food partnership, visit the [Sustainable Food Places website](#). Local food partnerships play a vital role in convening local stakeholders, connecting and adding value to important work already underway, and taking ownership of local food action to ensure that food systems change remains a critical local priority.

## 6 Appendices

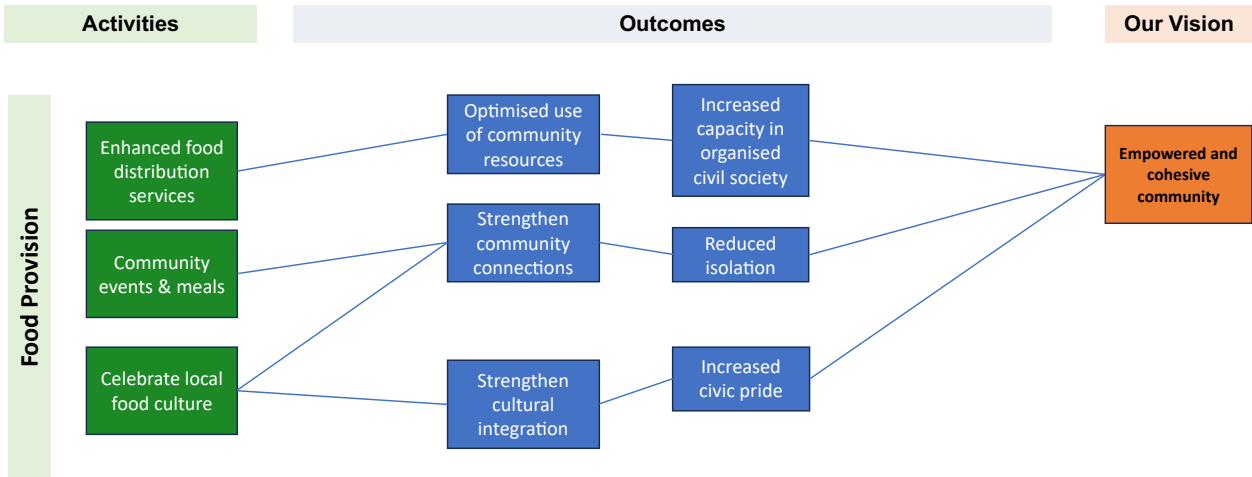
### 6.1 Engagement activities

<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>	<b>Month</b>
1	Hounslow Food Network	Food Network	6	April
2	SpeakOut Hounslow	SEND Adults Group	15	April
3, 4	SheWISE	Migrant Women's Group	12, 7	May, June
5	ESOL Class	Women with young children	15	May
6	Dementia Café	Dementia patients and carers	20	May
7	LBH Respiratory Support Group	Long-term diseases group	24	June
8	Hanworth Methodist Church Pantry	Church Pantry	4	June

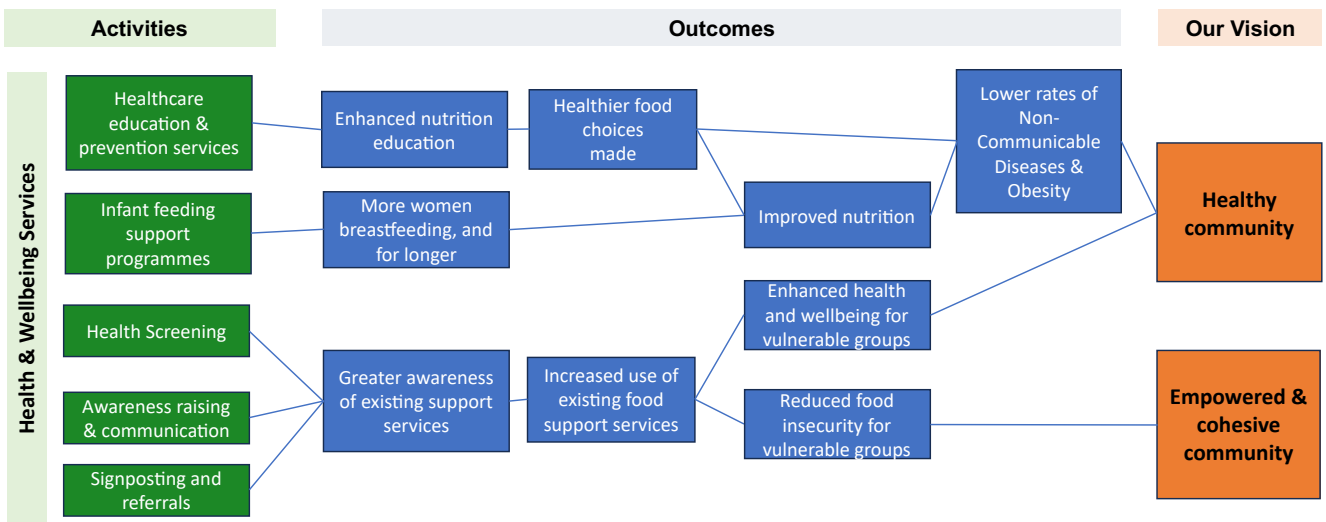
## 6.2 Outputs from Theory of Change Workshop, July 2025



**A) "Food Provision" Related Workshop Outputs for Hounslow Borough:**  
*Summary of 15<sup>th</sup> July outputs - please note this isn't the final version*

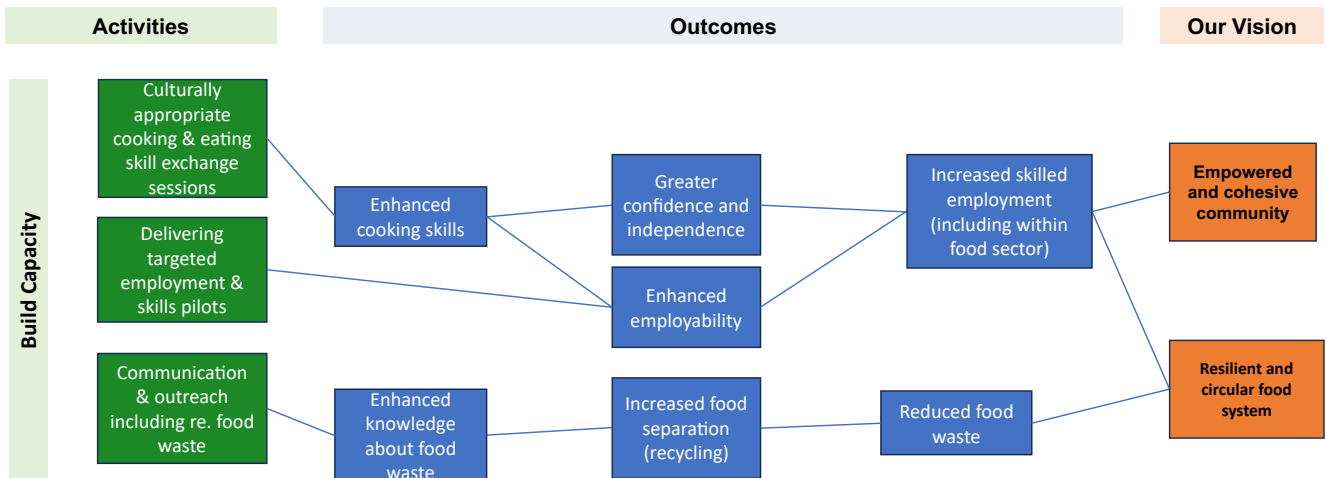


**B) "Health & Wellbeing" Services Related Workshop Outputs for Hounslow Borough:**  
*Summary of 15<sup>th</sup> July outputs - please note this isn't the final version*



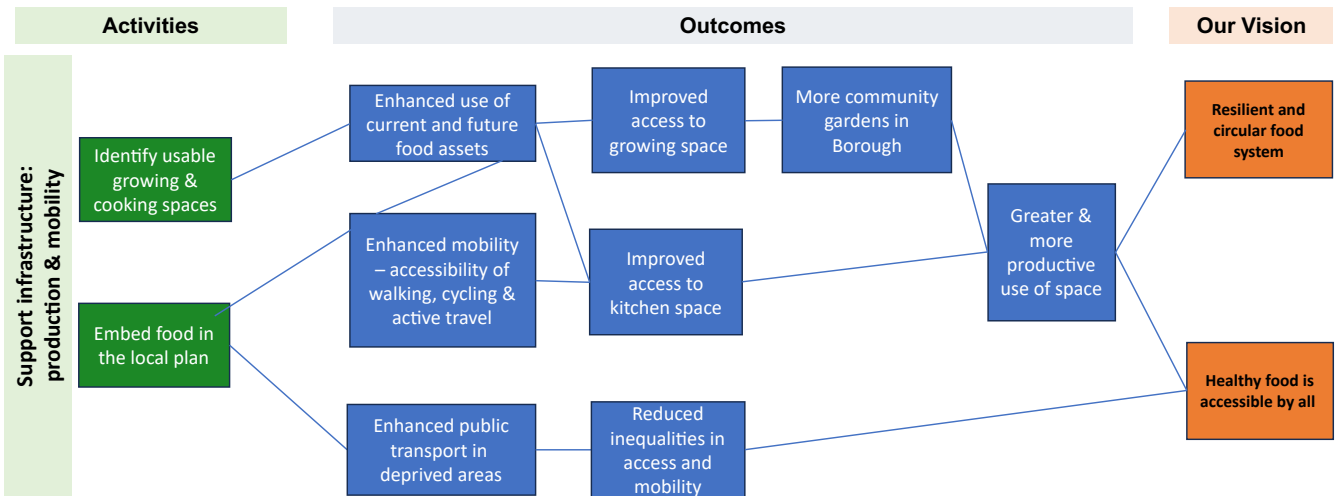
### C) “Building Capacity” Related Workshop Outputs for Hounslow Borough:

Summary of 15<sup>th</sup> July outputs - please note this isn't the final version



### D) “Support infrastructure, including production & mobility” Workshop Outputs for LBH:

Summary of 15<sup>th</sup> July outputs - please note this isn't the final version



E) “Restricting High Fat Salt & Sugar foods / Promoting healthy food choices” related

**Workshop Outputs for Hounslow Borough:**

*Summary of 15<sup>th</sup> July outputs - please note this isn't the final version*

