East Sussex Food Systems Project

Final Report

November 2022

A food system that works for **our people**, **our economy** and **our environment**.

Contents

Project Overview

This is a report by [Food Matters](#), as part of the short term consultancy project commissioned by East Sussex County Council ESCC (the procuring agency) in collaboration with the four food partnership host organisations: 3VA (Voluntary Action in Eastbourne, Lewes District and Weald), SCDA (Sussex Community Development Association), HVA (Hastings Voluntary Action) and Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC to explore opportunities to develop the food system in East Sussex at a county level.

The overarching aim of this work is to identify county-level mechanisms for food system working, which supports the work being undertaken in local food partnerships. The aim is to do this by shifting elements of the food system which occur at county level, so enabling the local partnerships to develop district level policies and interventions that produce food system transformation.

Background from Public Health

The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated how insecure our food system is, with more and more people needing to turn to food banks to avoid going hungry. ESCC is providing some financial support to foodbanks to enable them to respond to increases in demand. However, in the long term, we need to move away from a reliance on food banks and move towards a more sustainable approach to tackling food poverty and assuring food security in the county.

Food Security means that all people, always have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Achieving it could deliver a range of benefits for the population of East Sussex. Alongside a reduction in malnutrition and improved health and wellbeing, secure access to food could drive economic growth and job creation, a reduction in the environmental impact of food production and distribution, a reduction in food waste and even an increase in food tourism through promotion of local produce.

As a result, Public Health is working with voluntary sector organisations across East Sussex to develop local food partnerships which are focused on building food security and sustainability in the longer term. These food partnerships are taking a place-based approach and have made great progress in developing strategies/action plans based on the local needs and context.

To support this local work, we need to identify how best to work on the elements of food security which need to be dealt with at a county level. This includes food waste and catering and food procurement. So, we commissioned Food Matters to undertake exploratory work to identify a range of options that could enable this work to take place, without undermining the work that is going on through the local partnerships.

Food Matters Project

The project has been split into three phases. As part of the first phase of this project, extensive desk research, including a policy, strategy and research review and stakeholder mapping, was undertaken by Food Matters. Food Matters also conducted a wide range of interviews with East Sussex stakeholders and others from across the UK to gather best practice recommendations. The goal of this phase was to identify key leverage points and opportunities to bring about food system transformation at a county and regional level. The findings from this phase of the project are summarised in [Food Matters Initial Report - East Sussex Food Systems Project](#).

The second phase of the project involved five workshops with existing food partnership members in each of the districts and boroughs. The workshops were attended by 117 people overall. The objectives of the workshops were to:

- Galvanise more support for food partnerships work at a county level
- Understand the key change that food partnerships want to see at a county and regional levels
- Understand the skills, interests and opportunities for change that sit within the districts and boroughs
- Understand the best ways to engage local stakeholders on a practical level
- Understand how we can develop a comms approach towards a collective vision for food systems work at a county level

The findings from the workshops are summarised in [Food Matters Local Workshop Report - East Sussex Food Systems Project](#).

The second phase then culminated in a county wide Feed Into East Sussex event, attended by 40+ people. The objectives of the session were to:

- Develop a shared vision for East Sussex, from food security to food systems
- Develop our key priorities and actions at a county and regional level
- Develop an emerging approach for the structure and governance of county wide work

The structure of the session was as follows:

- Introduction - introductions in the room, an overview of the project and an introduction to what we mean by food systems work
- A shared vision for East Sussex - an overview of research findings from the first and second phases of the project, and a suggested shared vision and framework for county wide work
- Our key priorities and actions - splitting into working groups across the eight strategic areas and discussing the potential key priorities and actions identified by this project
- Making it work: an emerging approach - an overview and discussion of the suggested approach to county wide food systems work

The session outline is in the [Feed Into East Sussex slides](#), and the summary notes provided by the Food Matters, Public Health and Food Partnership facilitators is in [Food Matters Feed Into East Sussex - Summary Notes](#).

The third and final phase of the project brings together all these insights into this final report and recommendations to be taken forward.

This project was led by Food Matters, in particular [Victoria Williams, Director](#), [Alex Britten-Zondani, Consultant](#) and [Ben Messer, Community Engagement & Participation Lead](#), alongside other colleagues. Food Matters can be contacted at info@foodmatters.org.

This project was delivered in collaboration with each of the five local food partnerships, across many individuals. For brevity, these are fully outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

At East Sussex County Council Public Health, this project was delivered in collaboration with Anna Card, Health Improvement Specialist – Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Obesity and Nicola Blake, Health Improvement Principal (Health Behaviours and Health Checks).

Together, these formed the steering group which oversaw the delivery of this project.

Project Recommendations

A. Key insights informing recommendations

This project has identified a number of key gaps and functions that county wide food systems work should prioritise. Most contributors saw a key role for East Sussex County Council in performing the following functions, although some will sit across many different stakeholders.

Overall, across East Sussex, there is an identified need:

- To develop understanding across all stakeholders of **what is meant by food systems work**, and therefore what their role might be in this work
- For further clarity across food partnerships on **where power and leverage opportunities exist**, within East Sussex County Council and other county wide stakeholders
- For better **awareness and understanding of local food partnerships**, and in particular recognising they are not solely focused on food poverty and emergency food responses
- To develop **cohesion between county and district and borough level work**, to ensure both work undertaken and messages communicated are aligned
- For a mechanism and capacity to **gather and share data, evidence, information and best practice** from across East Sussex and beyond to further food systems work
- For a mechanism and capacity to **convene, connect and champion the work happening across the county**, providing spaces for stakeholders to come together for collaborative planning and thinking. This includes outreach and engagement across council departments and other anchor institutions, and engaging with council senior management and local councillors to ensure buy-in.
- For **investment in resourcing of food systems work**, through the providing of both funding to food partnerships and members, and capacity within key roles to bring about systems change. This includes investing in system wide solutions, and minimising red tape involved accessing funding.
- To **lobby and influence policy and practice** locally and nationally. Given that many key systems change levers sit at a national level, it is particularly important that capacity be found to ensure East Sussex citizens' voice be heard in lobbying national government and other national stakeholders.
- To co-develop and distribute **public messaging and campaigns**, both at local and county level
- For food systems work to **continually reflect on the root causes** of many of the issues faced in food systems work, and ensure tackling root causes stays at the forefront of all work

In our experience, there are four key elements of success for systems and partnership work.

Resource	Opportunity	Accountability	Insight
• To support local VCSE based food partnerships • Within institutions to affect policy and practice change	• Access to key stakeholders • Autonomy to deliver on priority actions	• Board and departmental responsibility for achieving goals • Senior buy in	• Cross sector discussion and learning • Best practice and evidence based interventions • Community understanding for asset based approaches

The following recommendations look to build the strongest structure possible, within a limited funding and resource environment, to ensure both these four elements and the identified needs above are met.

B. Recommendations for Structures and Approaches

Our recommendations are provided in two sets. The first is a set of recommendations for how county-wide food systems work can be effectively progressed through the introduction of new structures and approaches. The second set of recommendations outlines the resourcing recommendations for how this could be delivered.

- **Recommendation 1A:** Creation of a Good Food for East Sussex network

Overview: There is a clear need for the formation of a network of stakeholders involved and interested in food systems work at an East Sussex level. It is recommended that this is initiated as a loose network that is able to develop organically and without implementing further layers of governance to begin with. This will essentially serve two functions:

- **A brand** - to be used for public facing messaging, and for allowing food partnerships to collaborate and work with key stakeholders at county and regional levels
- **An alliance** - through which key information can be shared, and events and collaborations can be coordinated

This network is for the broad group of stakeholders interested in East Sussex food work. The existing Sussex Food Partnerships Google Group, which consists of Sussex Food Partnership Coordinators and similar roles, is already established and successful in connecting the coordinating functions of food partnerships across East Sussex, and this should continue to be utilised for this function.

In practice: A Gmail address and Google Group has already been set up (see Appendix 1), through which any member can email the network. Most of those involved in this work were very positive about having regular events similar to the Feed Into East Sussex summit, perhaps once or twice annually.

Key benefits: This is the most low resource option to create a network, and allow a space for key stakeholders to communicate, and feel part of a coordinated movement towards food systems work.

Potential risks and mitigations: Beginning as a loose network that can develop organically means not having formal structures. A small amount of capacity will be needed to ensure the network keeps momentum, meets its objectives, and manage any issues that may arise.

Resource required: Small amount of ongoing capacity to manage and monitor use of the network. A small amount of additional resource could be used to develop a logo. Further resource will be needed to organise events and undertake other network activities.

Timeline for implementation: Already set up and ongoing

Key stakeholders: All stakeholders

Resourcing scenarios: Food systems work could still continue without this network, but it would be less connected and collaborative. If this were to continue without the resourcing of other recommendations, it would still have benefit, and its flexibility will allow it to develop and ebb and flow as required.

- **Recommendation 1B:** Adoption of shared vision for East Sussex, strategic areas and initial action plan

Overview: The following shared vision for East Sussex was presented at the Feed Into East Sussex event, and subsequently agreed by the project steering group.

> A food system that works for our people, our economy and our environment

Similarly, the following split of eight separate strategic areas for county wide food systems work was presented at the Feed Into East Sussex event, and subsequently agreed by the project steering group.

In practice: This project has gathered a wide variety of insights and feedback to inform a set of key priorities and actions, presented in more detail in the [Recommendations by Strategic Area](#) section of this report below. It is recommended that this be used as an informal county wide action plan from which work can be taken forward, and work is divided using this framework.

Food Matters have created a draft one pager as part of the communications plan, that can be shared to enhance understanding of the Good Food for East Sussex network and its vision and goals.

Key benefits: All food partnerships and food systems work uses a similar framework to split and focus work. A significant amount of research and insights gathering has been completed as part of this project, and this is there to be utilised as an action plan that can allow practical actions to be moved forward in the coming year.

Potential risks and mitigations: As with all food systems frameworks, all areas are interconnected, and so communication needs to be maintained between stakeholders, so that there is no duplication of work.

Resource required: N/A

Timeline for implementation: Immediate

Key stakeholders: All

Resourcing scenarios: N/A

- **Recommendation 1C:** Pilot a co-chair approach, partnering a local food partnership and a council officer to co-chair a set of two strategic areas

Overview: Given the strategic areas and key priorities and actions within them, it is recommended that a co-chair approach be piloted over the coming year, taking a test and learn approach, to facilitate the practical progression of the actions. The success of this approach can then be reflected on throughout the pilot, and the intention is that this model can lay the groundwork for further investment in food systems work, as described in recommendations 2A and 2B. The model of having identified council officers from different departments as co-chairs for specific strategic areas has been successfully implemented in many other areas, including Bristol, the second place to receive a Sustainable Food Places Gold Award.
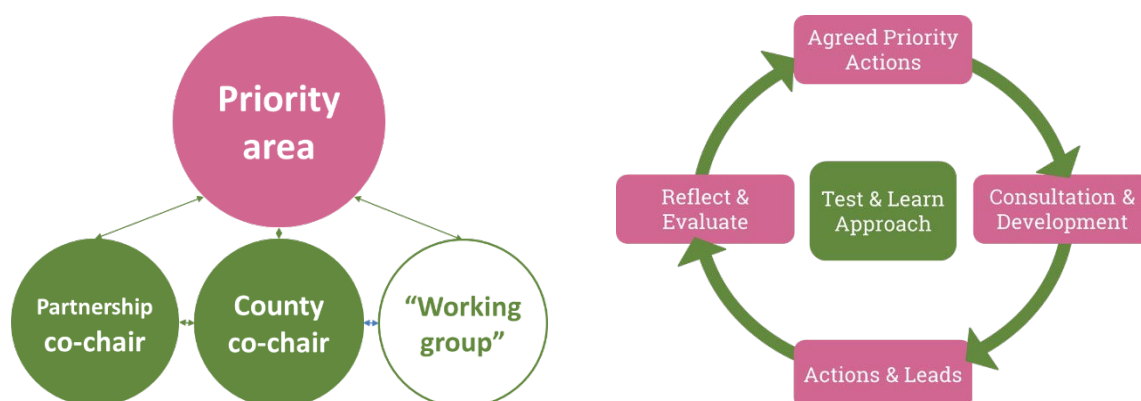
In practice: This co-chair role is intended as a convening role. It should not mean that the co-chairs necessarily need to lead the actions or be an expert within the strategic areas, their aim is to ensure that work is being progressed, and bring together key stakeholders to guide the work where necessary. This may take the form of working groups or task and finish groups, but can be flexible depending on the particular strategic areas and actions.

The test and learn approach is described in the diagram above. An initial set of priority actions can be agreed collaboratively between the local food partnerships and co-chairs. Each set of co-chairs can then take these away for further consultation and development where necessary, then agree on the practical actions to take forward, and who leads on these. A continual process of reflection and evaluation allows the further shaping of these priority actions. Below is outlined an idea of how this might work in reality, using a specific priority action as an example.

Key benefits: This approach provides a convening function and autonomy to the co-chairs to be able to make progress on identified priority actions, something that is currently a gap in this food systems work. It is intended to utilise the existing local food partnerships and the council officer contacts made through this

project, whilst also not requiring significant capacity from them. The model is flexible, and will allow each co-chairs to spend only the capacity they have available on this work, and piloting this test and learn approach. It also provides opportunity for developing further links between food partnerships and council departments.

Potential risks and mitigations: There is a risk that the local food partnerships and potential council officer co-chairs may not have the capacity to deliver this. The model can be flexible to this however, and so it is feasible that whilst one food partnership may decide to take forward three priority actions, another may decide to only focus on one. There is a risk that the recruitment of council officer co-chairs may prove difficult, this will be something to be tested and reflected upon. This project has identified a number of potential co-chairs who have expressed interest in being involved in this work, and it is also hoped that the introduction of an advisory board in recommendation 1D below will support in the recruitment of council officer co-chairs. It is recognised that there are different funding circumstances, salaried hours, organisational strategies and priorities across each local food partnership, and therefore this approach will need to allow for appropriate flexibility and communication in order to manage any particular complexity that may arise due to this.

Resource required: Flexible dependent on availability

Timeline for implementation: Immediate

Key stakeholders: Local food partnerships, identified council officers, Public Health commissioners

Resourcing scenarios: It will be difficult to progress any coordinated food systems work without some resource being put towards this convening function, and so it is hoped that at least some capacity can be given to pilot this approach in the coming year, whilst additional resource is sought. If this were to continue without the resourcing of other recommendations, it would still allow for the progress on priority actions, and would continue to build awareness and momentum across key stakeholders.

- **Recommendation 1D:** Introduction of advisory board, with lead members for food or food systems

Overview: It is recommended that to develop senior support and cross stakeholder work, an advisory board be set up. The membership of this should aim to include:

  - A CEO / Director from each local food partnership
  - A senior staff member from each ESCC department
  - A senior representative from healthcare, education, land management authority, business
  - A councillor from each district and borough, who would then essentially act as a lead member for food or food systems
  - If not already fulfilled by the above, at least one member who is able to provide expertise in each of the eight strategic areas

In practice: The board would operate to provide practical advice and support for furthering the priorities actions within the eight strategic areas, being a direct point of contact for the respective co-chairs. As long as this aim is fulfilled, there would only be need for the whole board to meet occasionally, suggested 6 monthly. The board could initially be set up with only a 12 month time commitment, alongside the final year of local food partnership funding, for future review based on progress. The board should also serve to provide accountability for the delivery of the work, including advising on the introduction of a future accountability mechanism, for example reporting into the health and wellbeing board.

Key benefits: An advisory board is recommended as the best way to further engage and improve buy-in from senior stakeholders across the council and other key institutions. It is a model that is replicated across many food partnerships across the country. It will provide a valuable opportunity for food partnerships to get further support from the board, and the capacity ask of the board is designed to be minimal, and flexible dependent on their availability.

Potential risks and mitigations: There is a risk that recruitment and ongoing engagement of the board may prove challenging, however we have already engaged with a number of potential members through this project. A small amount of resource provided to the secretariat function should ensure that enough members of the board can be found.

Resource required: The board would require a basic secretariat function, either fulfilled or resourced by ESCC.

Timeline for implementation: The development of a board should begin immediately, to ensure there is enough time for it to be established within the food partnerships current final year of funding.

Key stakeholders: As listed above.

Resourcing scenarios: Food systems work can still progress without an advisory board function, however this is seen as a low resource way to engage the senior stakeholders who hold many of the levers to progress this work. An advisory board should only be developed alongside a practical function for progressing the work, as outlined in recommendation 1C above, and 2B below.

- **Recommendation 1E:** Introduction of data and monitoring approach

Overview: Once sign off has been given for the taking forward of these recommendations, and agreement on the initial priority actions, these should be drawn together and a data and monitoring approach set up to record the progress against these. This is a central component to any work being taken forward, particularly given that work over the next year will form a pilot from which to build food systems work across East Sussex, and make the business case for further investment.

Where additional capacity can be given, it is recommended that the coordinating partners ensure that data and evidence from across the country be collected to inform and demonstrate the value of food systems work. Food systems work benefits from a wide network of individuals and organisations working at all levels across the country, and new research and evidence is regularly published. This includes the Sustainable Food Places and Feeding Britain networks.

When delivering this project, the most valuable evidence towards making the business case for investment has come from pre-existing research and reports, including Freedom of Information requests, and these could be utilised in future when progressing priority actions.

In practice: A simple potential framework is suggested below, which could be updated and reviewed at quarterly coordinating group meetings.

Agreed action	Outcome by Oct 2023	KPI(s)	Nov 22 Baseline	Oct 23 Target	Co-chairs	Action lead	Linked evidence / research
C. Local food business and jobs							
Explore offer from Katy Thomas to look at peer to peer network project for food businesses	Food sector peer to peer business network piloted	Peer to peer networks set up	0	1			
		Number of businesses participating in peer to peer networks	0	20			
		% of participating businesses reporting positive impact on business		90%			

Key benefits: A data and monitoring approach is required to measure the success of the pilot model, and refine the approach. It is integral to demonstrating the value and return on investment of food systems work. If the findings could be shared across the food systems networks mentioned above then it would also provide much opportunity for national engagement and being recognised as a leader in this space.

Potential risks and mitigations: The key risk is ensuring there is enough capacity to be able to measure ongoing work alongside delivering it, but the above framework is suggested as a low resource approach to this.

Resource required: Small amount of resource from co-chairs to research and collect data, and additional resource needed centrally to collate, manage and share. The specific resource required will vary across priority actions.

Timeline for implementation: Immediate

Key stakeholders: Co-chairs, ESCC Public Health, steering group

Resourcing scenarios: Food systems work can still progress without a data and monitoring approach, however it should be a part of any ongoing work, even if this needs to be in a very low resource way. It will also be a critical element of securing new funding and resources to the work.

C. Recommendations for Resourcing

- **Recommendation 2A:** Continued funding of district and borough food partnerships, with expansion opportunities through project funding

Overview: It is clear from the research conducted in this project that the East Sussex food partnerships have achieved a number of successes in their relatively short time of being active. There is also much national evidence to show the value of local food partnerships, for example The Value of Local Food Partnerships March 2022 report by UWE Bristol, and the recently published Every Mouthful Counts Sustain report exploring council progress against climate goals.

It is also clear that these local partnerships would not currently be able to continue to function and grow without the support of ESCC Public Health's core funding. Across the country, many food partnerships in the UK are dependent on council funding to operate. Therefore it is strongly recommended that the food partnerships be provided ongoing funding to build and develop on their successes, as well as implement the recommendations from this project. It is recognised however that ESCC Public Health cannot currently commit to this ongoing funding, and therefore plans should be put in place to explore other potential funding streams.

After council funding, the next most common type of funding for food partnerships, as explored in more detail in the Initial Report, is project based grant funding. A core reasoning for the following Recommendation 4 is for local food partnerships to have scope to apply for and access additional funding within their strategic areas, to move towards greater diversity and sustainability in their funding.

It is relatively rare across the UK for food partnerships to operate at a district and borough rather than county level. Whilst this model is not common, this project's findings have highlighted the value in an East Sussex context. It has allowed for work to be grassroots led, ensured responses to increasing food insecurity have responded to local needs, and brought in a wider range of membership to food partnerships and therefore food systems work.

In practice: It is recommended that funding continue within the existing specification and within the Healthy Weight Partnership, which is seen as a valuable network. For further project funding, each local food partnership and its host organisation would be free to design and apply for project work within their strategic area, developing relationships with their respective key stakeholders and potential additional funders. One of the overall aims of these recommendations is to allow each food partnership opportunities to access additional funding, reducing the reliance on public sector funding.

Key benefits: The Value of Local Food Partnerships report summarises the key benefits of food partnerships as providing effective approaches to complex food systems change work, ensuring resources are efficiently used, increasing engagement across key stakeholders, and ensuring equity in the delivery of the work. There is a wealth of diversity and expertise in the East Sussex local food partnerships, and significant experience in asset-based community approaches. Independent food partnerships, whether based within VCSE organisations or as independent businesses such as CICs, allow for flexibility and independence to be able to move work forward, and also allows additional funding opportunities to be sought.

Potential risks and mitigations: Alongside the gap in county wide systems work that this project was commissioned to understand and highlight, the key risks of this model are (i) competition across food partnerships for limited funding (ii) potential duplication of work and (iii) additional complexity of collaborative working. The recommendations of this report are intended to minimise the impact of these.

Resource required: In a resource limited environment, we believe the current level of funding provided by Public Health is sufficient for them to be able to continue, and hope that additional funding can be secured through grant funders such as Sustainable Food Places and Feeding Britain.

Timeline for implementation: Funding extended beyond current term, with additional funding opportunities explored in the upcoming year.

Key stakeholders: ESCC Public Health, local food partnerships, grant funders.

Resourcing scenarios: Food systems work could still progress with resourcing elsewhere, for example a Food Officer as in recommendation 2B, however it would be very difficult to ensure this work was collaborative and community focused without local food partnerships. Angela Blair, Food Policy Officer at Brighton & Hove City Council, stated that her role would be extremely difficult to deliver without working alongside Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. If the funding of food partnerships were to continue without

the resourcing of other recommendations, it would still have benefit, as highlighted in this project's findings.

- **Recommendation 2B:** Creation of Food Officer role

Overview: The most unanimously agreed recommendation throughout this project has been the need for a Food Officer role that provides capacity to the current gaps in food systems work identified by this project, and outlined below. The role should have appropriate seniority to be able to deliver strategic work, feasibility studies, budget assessments, and provide support to local food partnerships.

In practice: This role would provide capacity to the key gaps in functions needed for food systems work to take place, specifically:

- Support the work of the local food partnerships, alongside Public Health
- Lead on agreed priority actions, for example the introduction of a dynamic procurement system, or supporting the investment in new infrastructure for producers
- Stakeholder outreach and engagement, i.e. building connections and opportunities for change, and developing understanding of food systems work and awareness of local food partnerships
- Gather and share data, evidence, information and best practice from across East Sussex and beyond
- Convene stakeholders and organise a wide variety of engagement opportunities
- Advise and support the resourcing of food projects and food systems work
- In partnership with the local food partnerships, lobby to influence policy and practice both locally and nationally
- Co-develop and distribute public messaging and campaigns, both at local and county level
- Track the priority actions contribution to East Sussex County Council and other relevant policies and strategies

This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all the role would hold, but the key potential tasks that have come from this research.

There are a number of potential options for where this role could sit, with different potential benefits and challenges for each. There could also be an opportunity to offer a role as a secondment.

- East Sussex County Council, preferably within a department other than Public Health, for example Communities, Economy and Transport. Hosting the role at ESCC would allow for collaboration and leverage across key council departments, but the role would need to ensure it operates collaboratively with local food partnerships in the delivery of the work.
- A VCSE organisation, most likely one of the current food partnership organisations. This would align with the Partnership Plus approach of cross sector working, and would benefit from the flexibility and independence offered by VCSE organisations in food systems work. It would however need to be ensured that appropriate commitment and buy-in be provided by key institutions, including ESCC and NHS Sussex, which is a current gap in this work. Similar to the above option, dynamics would need to be managed to ensure that the VCSE organisation hosting this role are still seen as an equal partner across each of the local food partnership organisations, rather than the lead across East Sussex.
- Co-hosted across ESCC and another organisation, for example a VCS organisation, NHS Sussex, or similar. This approach could potentially bring the benefits from both of the above two options, but would introduce more complexity to be managed.

Key benefits: This project has gathered evidence showing the vast importance of the local food system to the local economy in East Sussex. Almost 3 out of every 10 employees in East Sussex work in the food

sector, and East Sussex has a disproportionately large amount of food businesses compared to other areas of the country. There is the same amount of food businesses as East Anglia, an area with a population 5 times that of East Sussex. The potential economic benefits for a whole food systems approach and lead in the Council are therefore significant. The key benefits to investment in food systems work are outlined in more detail in the [Vision](#) section below.

A Food Officer role would bring knowledge and vision to food systems work in the council, alongside dedicated resource and focus to catalyse change. Their strategic oversight can identify new opportunities and deliver cross-departmental and institutional solutions with social, economic and environmental benefits. This role would hold work that isn't and can't currently be led elsewhere, and will provide additional support to food partnerships that could build their impact and long term financial sustainability. It also provides an opportunity to prove the value of a whole systems approach, and be seen as a leader nationally. There are a number of UK LAs that already host similar roles and teams, in particular highlighted in The Food Foundations' July 2022 Making the business case for a city council food policy team or lead report, provided in this project's research documents folder [online here](#).

Potential risks and mitigations: This role would need to continue to work collaboratively alongside local food partnerships, supporting and enhancing their work. The intention of this role is not to introduce a top-down structure, but rather provide capacity to the functions that are currently missing in the current local food partnership structure.

Resource required: The recommendation is that this is a full-time role at a management grade. There is potential for this role to be co-funded across other key institutions, for example NHS Sussex, and this should be further explored.

Timeline for implementation: It would be expected that securing the investment for this role may take at least a number of months.

Key stakeholders: ESCC Public Health, Communities, Economy and Transport, district and borough councils, NHS Sussex, local food partnerships

Resourcing scenarios: Food systems work could still progress with resourcing elsewhere, for example with the co-chair approach as in recommendation [1C](#). If a Food Officer role were to be funded without the resourcing of other recommendations, food systems work could still progress, however it would be very difficult to ensure this work was collaborative and community focused without local food partnerships being resourced alongside this.

- **Recommendation 2C:** Adoption of interim approach to maintain momentum

Overview: The securing of a Food Officer role will take time, and there is a clear need to maintain the current momentum and value of the investment in this work so far. An interim approach will be needed, providing a small amount of resource to the ongoing functioning of the above recommendations. These recommendations have been designed to be as low resource as possible. Given the need for immediate continuation of work, there are perhaps three realistic options for who could provide this function:

1. Public Health commissioners, as part of their ongoing support to food partnerships and food systems work
2. An external individual or organisation. This is something that Food Matters could offer, or a different provider could be chosen if preferred
3. A local food partnership, although this is the least recommended option, for the same reasons that it was not recommended that a single food partnership lead on East Sussex wide work (see [Appendix 3](#))

In practice: The interim approach will need to fulfil the following functions:

1. Good Food for East Sussex network

    o Manage and monitor network
    o Share key communications
    o Convene meetings and engagement opportunities as required
    o *Gather and share data, evidence, information and best practice from across East Sussex and beyond (optional)*

2. Advisory board

    o Initial outreach and formation of board, including development of Terms of Reference
    o Ongoing secretariat function, including convening meetings

3. County wide strategic priorities support

    o Initial support to piloting co-chair approach, including securing of Council Officer co-chairs
    o Ongoing stakeholder outreach and engagement
    o Ensuring alignment across development in each strategic area, including data and evidence collection, and tracking contribution to key policies and strategies
    o Support the ongoing resourcing of food systems work
    o *Lead or support with specific priority actions (optional)*
    o *Lobby to influence policy and practice both locally and nationally (optional)*
    o *Support the development and distribution of public messaging and campaigns (optional)*

Key benefits: An interim function will allow the momentum from this work to continue in a low resource way, and build the foundations for developing the business case for a Food Officer role. It will also provide necessary ongoing support to food partnerships as they pilot these recommendations, and evaluate the success of these.

Potential risks and mitigations: The interim function will need to maintain the collaborative and equitable approach essential to the success of work.

Resource required: A minimum of 0.5-1 days per week, increasing to 1-2 days per week for optional functions also.

Timeline for implementation: Immediate

Key stakeholders: Good Food for East Sussex network, ESCC Public Health, local food partnerships

Resourcing scenarios: It is unlikely that effective and coordinated food systems work could still progress without this interim function, and the value of this project would be lost without ensuring ongoing capacity to food systems work. If funding of a Food Officer role were not secured, effective food systems work could still progress with this interim function approach.

D. Overview of the Recommendations

The following diagram visualises how we see these recommendations working together. At the core of the work, we have sets of regional priorities and county wide strategic priorities. Both of these have a wide network of contributors - at regional level, this is the pre-existing local food partnerships, and at county level, this is the newly created Good Food for East Sussex network. There is then the convener level - those who provide the coordination function to ensure work progresses. At regional level this is the local food partnership coordinating organisations. At strategic level, we are recommending the co-chair model, alongside an interim function to support the convening of the network. Finally, we have support and oversight, currently provided by Public Health commissioners (and any other funders) and the CEO/Directors of each food partnership. At county level, we recommend this being provided by an advisory board and Food Officer role, with an interim function in the time needed to set these up.
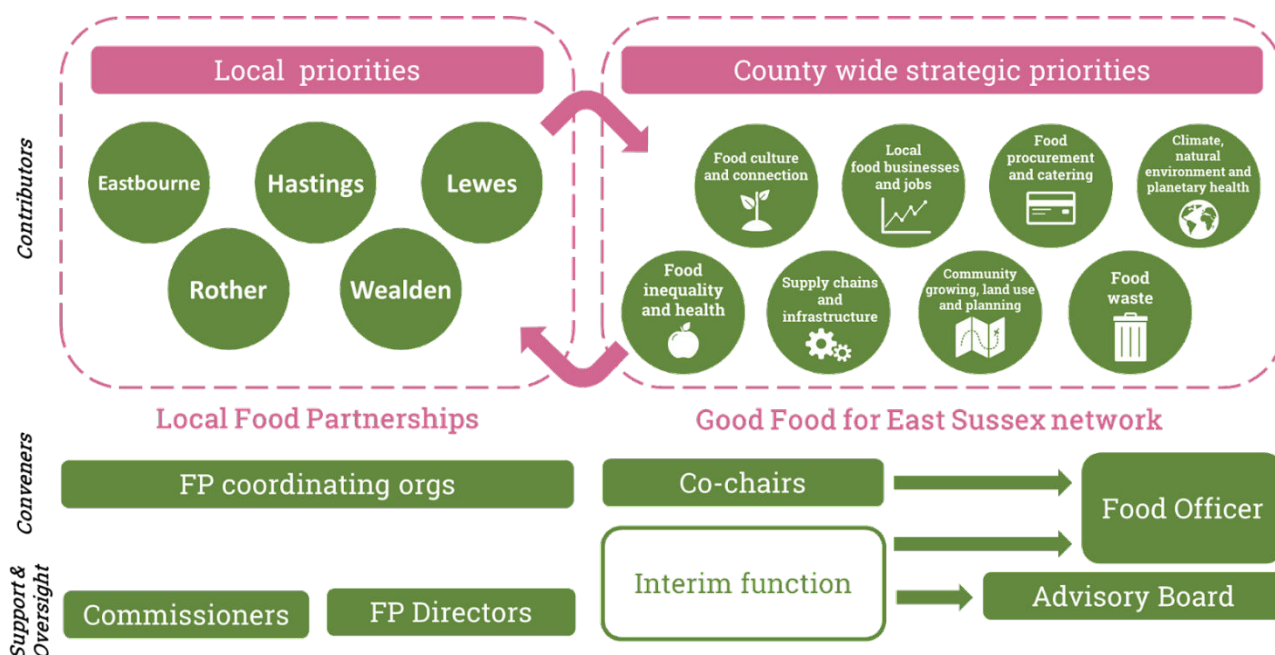
The following table summarises the suggestion resource required for this model.

Delivery Area	Convener	Support & Oversight	Wider Contributors
Good Food for East Sussex network	Who: Food Officer / Interim function What: Manage and monitor network, share key communications, convene meetings as required Resource required: 1-2 hours per week	Who: Advisory board What: Provide oversight to the successful delivery of the network Resource required: 1-2 hours per quarter	Country wide stakeholders
Advisory board	Who: Food Officer / Interim function What: Initial outreach and formation of board, ongoing secretariat function, mainly convening meetings Resource required: 1-2 hours per month (initially more for formation)	N/A	N/A
Local priorities	Who: Local food partnerships What: Development and delivery of regional priorities, already ongoing Resource required: Existing food partnership resource	Who: Public Health What: Provide advice, capacity and support, already ongoing Resource required: 1-2 hours per week	Local food partnership members, other regional stakeholders
County wide strategic priorities	Who: Food partnerships and council officer co-chairs What: Within an initial pilot approach, take a few identified key priority actions, and convene key stakeholders to facilitate progress. The approach will be tailored depending on the requirements for the particular actions. Resource required: Flexible based on time available	Who: Food Officer / Interim function and Advisory Board What: Provide advice, capacity and support with securing resource and input (Food Officer / Interim function), provide expert advice to facilitate progress (Advisory board) Resource required: Flexible based on time available (Food Officer / Interim function), 1-2 hours per month (advisory board)	Good Food for East Sussex network

Key priorities and actions in each strategic area

This section consolidates our findings by each strategic area, for ease of taking forward by each set of co-chairs. We have hosted these on separate documents, so they can be separately shared with other stakeholders. In the below table we summarise the priorities and actions that we would see as potential quicker wins, that progress could be made on in the coming year of piloting and testing this approach.

Strategic Area	Potential Initial Priorities and Actions
Food culture and connection	• Exploring potential funding opportunities for East Sussex wide food education and skills projects • Creating an East Sussex food system focused lesson plan and testing the uptake within local schools • Building connections to engage with the next iteration of the Excellence for All strategy • Convening a comms discussion between county and district and borough communications officers to explore the potential of a cross county food messaging campaign
Food inequality and health	• Developing connections with Adult Social Care to explore potential projects improving independence, social connection, mental and physical health through food and land-based projects • Developing connections with Childrens Services to explore potential projects of food education programmes, in particular targeting disadvantaged pupils and looked after children • Connecting with the Healthy Start voucher leads to collaborate on increasing uptake across East Sussex • Build connections with NHS Sussex through further focus on mother and baby health across the food partnerships • Developing county wide standards for emergency food services - something already being discussed at Lewes District Food Partnership • Targeted planning for rural emergency food services
Local food businesses and jobs	• Explore offer from Katy Thomas to look at peer to peer network project for food businesses • Link into Hastings & Rother skills and employability work to see how this could be replicated elsewhere in the county • Share key messages around the size and importance of the food sector in East Sussex. Almost 3 in 10 workers in East Sussex work in the food sector. We have more food businesses than East Anglia, an area with 5 times our population. What if we were able to maximise the potential of our food sector? • Connect with Penny Shimmin to see how the Good Food for East Sussex network can best link in with the key economy groups and strategies across East Sussex • Support the expansion and promotion of the Buy Local Stay Local website directory

|	
	• Develop connections between local suppliers and local retailers by hosting meet up events • Ensure food sector employees earn living wages and have appropriate working conditions and contracts, and opportunities for development • Collect existing data on food sector employees earning real living wage and share findings
Supply chains and infrastructure	• Improve infrastructure for local producers to be able to manufacture and sell directly in East Sussex by taking forward recommendations in A Tale of Two Counties report - see steering group presentation overview
Food procurement and catering	• Connect with Hannah Jones on the next school meals contract • Connect with Ali Ghanimi from Brighton & Hove Food Partnership on regional dynamic procurement system work • Connect with DPUK and arrange a meeting to share the potential of a dynamic procurement system approach with key stakeholders • Encouraging uptake of healthy, sustainable and ethical food accreditations, e.g. Food for Life Served Here • Engage with structure and review of School Health Check through Andy McKechnie, East Sussex School Health Service Manager • Select a potential public sector sustainable food policy (e.g. nutrition standards, tap water only, Fairtrade standards) and advocate for the adoption of this • Develop case studies of good practice schools across East Sussex sourcing their own food and taking a whole school approach, and share with schools network
Community growing, land use and planning	• Connect with Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott and Ellen Reith on how the Creating Healthy Places team and food partnerships and food systems work can collaborate • Engage with Adult Social Care and Health on the development of a methodology for understanding the natural capital, social and health and wellbeing value of publicly owned green spaces • Undertake exploration piece on the availability and accessibility of meanwhile leases in East Sussex • Connect with Brighton and Hove current land use project across Greater Brighton • Explore the leases offered to council owned farms in East Sussex, and the opportunity to develop these to further benefit local communities • Explore potential funding applications for more community growing opportunities in East Sussex • Connect with Julia Hilton on the development of Hastings as a garden town

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

20

Climate, natural environment and planetary health	• Connect with the leads of each of the three strategies form the basis of the climate and environment goals and action plans for the county, to ensure food partnerships are linked in with the work happening, and can be contributors to the key goals and targets • Link into the development of the latest Local Nature Recovery Strategy • Connect with Ruth Westcott from Sustain on the [Every Mouthful Counts toolkit for Local Authorities](#) and recent report, and explore the key actions that could be developed from this
Food waste	• Connect with Justin Foster and Anthony Pope to begin building a coordinated communications plan for the rollout of food waste collection across East Sussex in the coming years • Support businesses in food waste collection practices, for example encouraging use of WRAP tool

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

21

Vision: A food system that works for our people, our economy and our environment

This section outlines the key outcomes and benefits that could be seen across East Sussex with further investment in food systems work, in particular for use when making the business case across key stakeholders.

What is a food system?

The suggested shared vision for East Sussex is a food system that works for our people, our economy and our environment. The below diagram from the Mapping the UK Food System report visualises what we mean by a food system. It is the inter-connections between how we: produce, process, transport, buy, consume & dispose of the food we eat and the way this affects us as individuals and communities. It is driven by economic, social, policy & regulation, technological and environmental factors, and has significant impacts on health, social, economic, equity and environment outcomes.

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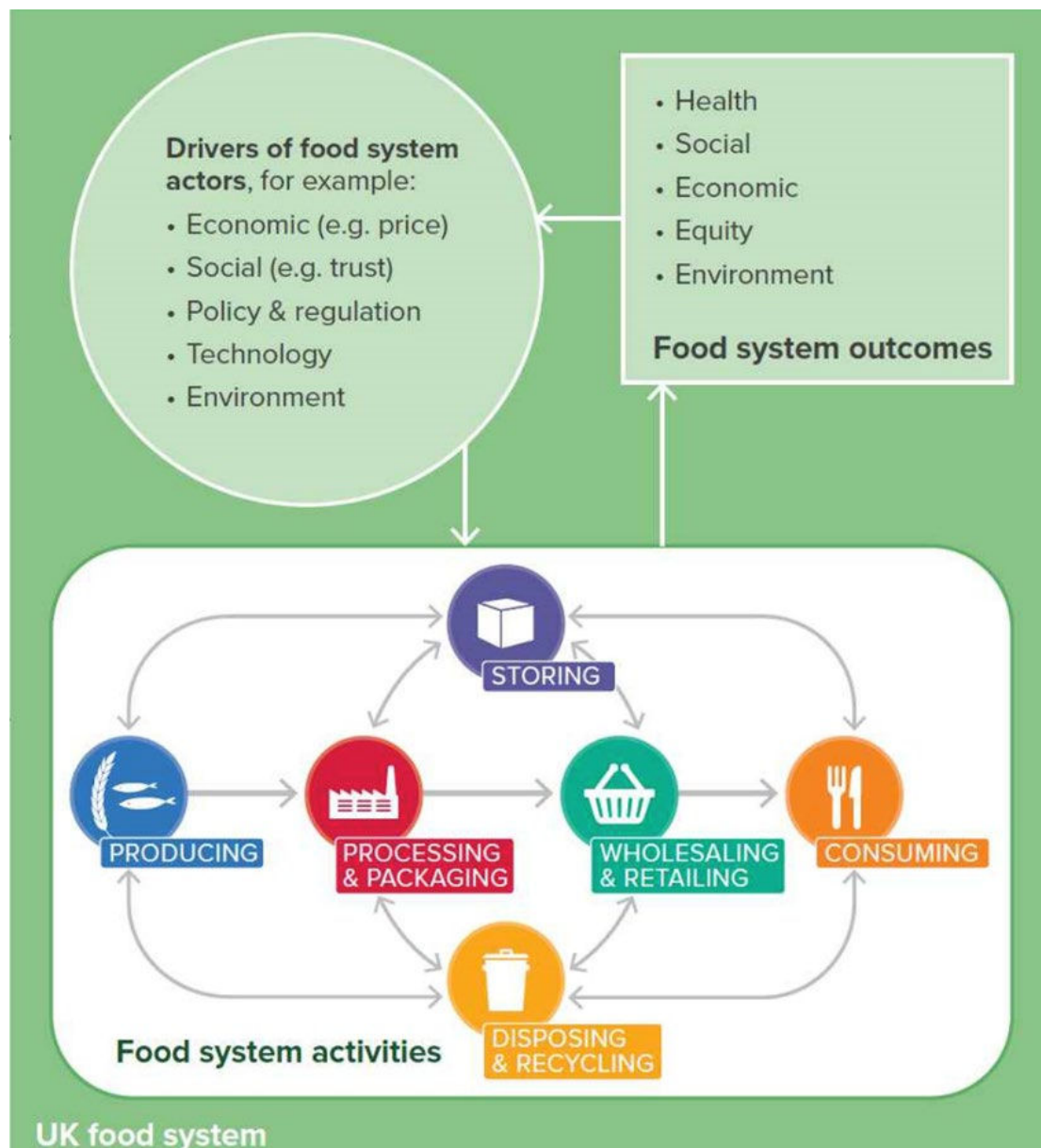
The case for East Sussex

There is much about East Sussex uniquely that further increases the potential benefit of investment in food systems work, and food systems work is integral to each of East Sussex County Council's four overarching priority outcomes:

- **Driving sustainable economic growth**

  This is a county with a large tourism and food sector at the core of economic growth. Almost 3 out of every 10 employees in East Sussex work in the food sector, and East Sussex has a disproportionately large amount of food businesses compared to other areas of the country. There is the same amount of food businesses as East Anglia, an area with a population 5 times that of East Sussex.

  The majority of food businesses are SMEs and locally owned, and investment in their sustainability is investment in a circular economy. There are an estimated 1,500 jobs available in hospitality and catering in East Sussex, and the sector and local population will benefit from investment in skills and training.

  We also know there is currently a limited amount of infrastructure for local producers and manufacturers to be able to process and sell their produce without exporting it out of the county. Investment in local infrastructure will open up access to new markets, create new business and employment opportunities, and significantly contribute to net zero targets.

  The potential economic benefits for a whole food systems approach are therefore significant.

- **Keeping vulnerable people safe**

  Food insecurity is a symptom of complex poverty and health issues that can affect a family, and have a wide variety of root causes. Food support services are often the first to see people who are struggling and need to reach out for help, and they should be utilised as an entry point for providing wrap-around support to ensure vulnerable people are safe and provided long term support.

  People's diet and nutrition is integral to their overall mental and physical health and wellbeing, and investment in improving access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food across the county will provide a wide variety of benefits.

- **Helping people help themselves**

  Food, from growing to cooking and sharing, is something that brings together communities and is at the core of many social activities and community based support systems. During the pandemic, mutual aid societies were mainly set up to ensure neighbours were accessing the food they needed. In order to be able to maintain their independence, people must be able to access adequate food, and asset based community approaches can be utilised to ensure this. Food projects that support vulnerable and older adults to grow and cook their own food have been shown to increase independence.

- **Making best use of resources now and for the future**

  Put simply, investment in our local food systems is essential in order to ensure we have food resilience for the future. East Sussex has significant natural assets that can be utilised through building a more local and sustainable food system, with both agriculture and aquaculture production, and with pockets of both high wealth and high poverty that can all be positively impacted through a targeted and focused approach to food. The council and other public sector institutions have power within procurement, planning and other contracts to utilise the local food sector and build a more sustainable local food environment. Changes to procurement and catering policy can meet Social Value requirements, have circular economy benefits and deliver increased value for money. The local food

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

23

partnerships are a pre-existing asset to maximise opportunities to work in partnership and deliver truly community led solutions to food systems issues.

We have envisioned some of the impact that could be made across the eight strategic areas in the visual below.

Evidence for return on investment

The July 2022 Food Foundation report *Making the business case for a city council food policy team or lead* evidences some of the potential return on investments from food systems resourcing through case studies.

- **The Transport for London junk food ad ban**
  In February 2019, then Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, launched a junk food advertisement ban on all Transport for London services. This radical and internationally recognised policy was delivered by the Greater London Authority food team as part of their work to refresh London's world-renowned food strategy.

  Researchers from the [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)](#) found that this resulted in a decrease in unhealthy food purchases equating to a reduction of about 385 calories a person a week.

  Extrapolating data from the Institute for Fiscal Studies *[The impact of a tax on added sugar and salt](#)*, this one simple policy has potentially resulted in economic benefits of over £12 billion over the next 25 years for Greater London. This policy would not have been put in place if it were not for the food team.

- **Newham food redistribution during the pandemic**
  During the pandemic, the expertise within the food team in Newham Borough Council led to £7.5m worth of food being rescued and redistributed to residents rather than having to be purchased from council budgets to meet need. This was possible due to the expertise within the team regarding surplus

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

24

food within the local supply chain and relationships the food team had developed with local charities and support services, as well as redistribution charities such as Fareshare.

- **Newham Eat for Free scheme**

    The Eat For Free scheme from Newham Borough Council entitles all children at Key Stage 2 to free school meals in all primary schools in the borough. Since the scheme began there has been a 90% uptake of school meals at KS2 compared with 45% before the scheme was introduced.

    The borough council invests £5.889 million into the scheme (£3m from Public Health Fund and £2.889m from General Fund). This is combined with the £8.5 million from Central Government towards FSM at KS2 and UFISM at KS1. Through the scheme, the money that primary schools spend on food is kept anchored in the local area through wages and local activity.

    To receive the EFF grant, the schools must adhere to grant conditions set by the food team through this scheme. This includes paying all workers the London Living Wage. 86% of people who work in school meals are Newham residents. Without the stipulation of the London Living Wage there would be £2 million less in the local economy from these local wages. There is also £1 million more in wages generated through the increased uptake of school meals. The schools must also participate in a whole school accredited programme on food and health and meet bronze standards for the Food For Life Programme (see below).

    Attainment at the school is higher than in neighbouring boroughs and the societal impact of improved nutrition and education will play out for the borough for the decades to come.

- **Food for Life programme**

    The Food for Life programme is an initiative from the Soil Association that aims to transform food culture through a whole-school approach to food. They also operate in care homes, hospitals and other educational settings. The programme and award system sets out standards relating to health, sustainability and welfare in procurement, provides resources and guidelines for integrating food education into the curriculum and training and support for providers. It was shown to have a SROI (Social ROI) of £3 to every £1 invested by the New Economics Foundation.

- **Local food programmes**

    In 2007, as part of the Big Lottery Fund's 'Changing Spaces' programme, the Local Food funding programme distributed £59.8 million from the Big Lottery fund (BIG) to a variety of food-related projects to help make locally grown food accessible and affordable to communities. In 2013, the University of Gloucestershire's Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) were commissioned to assess the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the programme with three case studies. They found that every £1 invested in Local Food generates a return of between £6 and £8 to society in the form of social and economic outcomes including health and wellbeing, training and skills.

    The types of projects funded and outcomes achieved through this programme are within the remit of the strategic work of a food team. These returns could be achieved by food teams that invest time, expertise and budget into local food.

Local and national food networks

Food systems work benefits from a wide network of individuals and organisations working at all levels across the country, and new research and evidence is regularly published. This includes the Sustainable Food Places and Feeding Britain networks. This means that a relatively small amount of investment in food

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

25

systems work can draw upon the wealth of pre-existing knowledge and evidence-based solutions, to ensure a strong return on investment.

Finally, food is something that millions of us are passionate about, and all of us have a role in our local food system. East Sussex, through the local food partnerships, already has a wide network of passionate and experienced people who are ready and willing to contribute to building a food system that works for our people, our economy and our environment. This is a significant asset that can be harnessed through relatively small further investments in the work.

Communications plan

This section contains links to the resources generated for further communications of this work. As discussed above, the key goals for the communications plan are:

- To develop understanding across all stakeholders of **what is meant by food systems work**, and therefore what their role might be in this work
- For further clarity across food partnerships on **where power and leverage opportunities exist**, within East Sussex County Council and other county wide stakeholders
- For better **awareness and understanding of local food partnerships**, and in particular recognising they are not solely focused on food poverty and emergency food responses
- To develop **cohesion between county and district and borough level work**, to ensure both work undertaken and messages communicated are aligned

The resources are as follows:

A. Good Food for East Sussex: Recommendations and Findings - a presentation for East Sussex stakeholders
B. Learnings from East Sussex Project - a presentation for those outside East Sussex interested in learning from this project
C. The Gmail account goodfoodforeastsussex@gmail.com and Google Group Good Food for East Sussex
D. Good Food for East Sussex Vision and Strategic Areas - communications content for sharing

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

26

Appendix 1: List of Contributors

With thanks to all those who gave their time to contribute to this project.

A Gmail account goodfoodforeastsussex@gmail.com and Google Group Good Food for East Sussex were set up as part of this project, and handed back to the collaboration partners for ongoing ownership. Contact Food Matters for the password.

The Gmail account was initially used to set up the Google Group, and could potentially be used for ongoing shared access by each of the food partnerships and other co-leads as relevant. The Google Group acts as a mailing list and forum for all those interested in ongoing food systems work in East Sussex. All those Food Matters has spoken to that are interested in remaining involved have been added to this Google Group.

The following is a list of all those who were interviewed by Food Matters to feed into the project. A non-exhaustive list of those who attended local workshops is found in this spreadsheet of responses to our local workshop questionnaires, and the attendees at each Feed Into East Sussex working group discussion can be found here.

East Sussex Local Food Partnerships

1. Caroline Tradewell, CEO, Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC - eastbournefoodpartnership@gmail.com
2. Nancy Wilson, Food Partnership Coordinator, Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC - eastbournefoodpartnership@gmail.com
3. Andy Durling, Director, Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC - andy@ecoactioneb.co.uk
4. Karen Stewart, Director, Eastbourne Food Partnership CIC - charlie41dimmock@yahoo.co.uk
5. Helen Graham, Food Partnership Officer - Wealden - helen.graham@3va.org.uk
6. John Williams, Director, 3VA - john.williams@3va.org.uk
7. Lee Shepherd, Community Development Manager, 3VA - Lee.Shepherd@3va.org.uk
8. Debby Anderson, Age-Friendly Project Worker/Food Partnership Officer, Hastings Voluntary Action - debby@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk
9. Steve Manwaring, Director, Hastings Voluntary Action - steve@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk
10. Stef Lake, Lewes District Food Partnership - stef.lake@sussexcommunity.org.uk
11. Penny Shimmin, Chief Executive, Sussex Community Development Association - penny@sussexcommunity.org.uk

East Sussex County Council

12. Peter Aston, Health Improvement Principal, Public Health - peter.aston@eastsussex.gov.uk
13. Nicola Blake, Health Improvement Principal (Health Behaviours and Health Checks), Public Health, East Sussex County Council - nicola.blake@eastsussex.gov.uk
14. Anna Card, Health Improvement Specialist – Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Obesity, Public Health, East Sussex County Council - anna.card@eastsussex.gov.uk
15. Justin Foster, Waste Team Manager   East Sussex County Council - Justin.Foster@eastsussex.gov.uk
16. Darrell Gale, Director of Public Health, East Sussex County Council - darrell.gale@eastsussex.gov.uk
17. Lucy Harbor, Communications Team, East Sussex County Council - Lucy.Harbor@eastsussex.gov.uk
18. Laura Harris, Marketing Communications Account Manager, Adult Social Care and Public Health - laura.harris@eastsussex.gov.uk
19. Terry Hume, Programme Manager – Community Resilience, terry.hume@eastsussex.gov.uk

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

27

20. Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott, Public Health Strategic Lead: Creating Healthy Places, East Sussex County Council - Lourdes.Madigasekera-Elliott@eastsussex.gov.uk
21. Anthony Pope, Waste Senior Technical Officer, Communities, Economy & Transport - Anthony.Pope@eastsussex.gov.uk
22. Ellen Reith, Healthy Places Specialist, Public Health & Planning, East Sussex County Council - ellen.reith@eastsussex.gov.uk
23. Katy Thomas, Team Manager Economic Development, East Sussex County Council - Katy.thomas@eastsussex.gov.uk

Other East Sussex stakeholders

24. Rosina Borrelli, Food Systems Researcher and Eastbourne Food Partnership member - rosinaborrelli@gmail.com
25. Kate Drake, Health and Wellbeing Manager, South Downs National Park - Kate.Drake@southdowns.gov.uk
26. Romy Gue, Adviser to East and West Sussex and Surrey, National Farmers Union - romy.gue@nfu.org.uk
27. Julia Hilton, Cabinet Lead Climate Change, Natural Environment and Active Travel, Green Group Leader, Old Hastings Ward Borough Councillor, Tressell and Old Hastings County Councillor - cllr.julia.hilton@hastings.gov.uk
28. Andy McKechnie, East Sussex School Health Service Manager, Kent Community Health Trust - a.mckechnie@nhs.net
29. Julie Middleton, Consultant, Sussex Local Nature Partnership - middletonjulie0@gmail.com
30. Emily O'Brien, Sustainable Food Places Development Lead, Food Matters and Lewes District Councillor - emily@foodmatters.org
31. Stuart Ramsbottom, Partnership and Integration Manager, Brighton and Hove / East Sussex, NHS Sussex - stuartramsbottom@nhs.net
32. Lorna Ford, Deputy Chief Executive, Rother District Council. Lorna.Ford@rother.gov.uk
33. Linda Griffiths, ESHT (East Sussex Healthcare Trust), Catering Lead, linda.griffiths8@nhs.net

Insights from other areas

34. Angela Blair, Food Policy Coordinator, Brighton & Hove City Council - Angela.Blair@brighton-hove.gov.uk
35. Rose Bray, Project Manager, Feeding Britain - rose.bray@feedingbritain.org
36. Sarah Davenport, Food Partnership Development Coordinator (Adur & Worthing), Brighton & Hove Community Works - Sarah@bhcommunityworks.org.uk
37. Dr Daphne Du Cros, Director, Shropshire Good Food Partnership CIC - hello@shropshiregoodfood.org
38. Joe Dunn, Senior Projects Manager, Food Partnership & Food Power Alliance Coordinator, Middlesbrough Environment City - Joe.Dunne@menvcity.org.uk
39. Ali Ghanimi, Senior Manager, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership - Ali@bhfood.org.uk
40. Kathy Holmes, Public Health Support Officer, Public Health Nottinghamshire County - kathy.holmes@nottscc.gov.uk
41. Megan O'Brien, Economic Development Project Assistant, Business Support & Innovation (Projects & Programmes), Devon County Council - Megan.OBrien@devon.gov.uk
42. Rich Osborn, Director, DPUK - rich.osborn@emfood.io

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

28

43. Beth Parry, Development Officer, Arun & Chichester Food Partnership - b.parry@arunchichestercab.org.uk
44. Fiona Steel, GFO Manager, Good Food Oxfordshire - fiona@gfo.org.uk
45. Graeme Tolley, Community Development Manager, Norfolk Community Foundation - GraemeTolley@norfolkfoundation.com
46. Ruth Westcott, Climate and Nature Emergency Co-ordinator, Sustain - ruth@sustainweb.org
47. James Woodward, Sustainable Farming Officer, Sustain and co-author of A Tale of Two Counties - james@sustainweb.org

Appendix 2: Research Documents

A folder with key documents utilised and referenced in this research can be found online here.

Appendix 3: Options Appraisal

The below table is a summary of other options suggested and considered, but not recommended, as part of this project.

Option	Appraisal
Local food partnerships lead on stakeholder group relationships rather than strategic areas	This option was considered as a potentially viable one, and suggested by a couple of those we consulted with as part of this project. However overall it is felt that splitting by strategic area is the structure that will allow the most systemic and cross sector work to take place. There is potential for this work to evolve and take on a version of this approach in future however.
The formation of a separate East Sussex Food Partnership	This was universally agreed as not the best way forward, and that any recommendations need to utilise and support the existing food partnerships, rather than create a structure that sits above them.
One local food partnership is uplifted to also operate as an East Sussex Food Partnership, potentially on rotation	This option was suggested by a small minority, but it was generally agreed that any responsibility for county wide work should be co-held across the local food partnerships, rather than uplifting any one partnership. A rotation approach would be impractical, add complexity, and not allow for ongoing relationship building.
Development of East Sussex Food Strategy and follow on action plan, with leads for each action	We recommend that the key priorities and actions brought together by this project be used as an informal action plan for the coming year, used to pilot and test the recommendations. There has been a substantial amount of research and consultation through this project, which provides a strong evidence base from which to progress.
Introducing accountability mechanism through external evaluation, e.g. Good Food for Sussex / East Sussex report, similar to Good Food for Londoners report	This idea is one that has been discussed by the Sussex Food Partnerships Network for some time now, and we spoke to a number of key individuals involved in the Good Food for Londoners report for their insights into how replicable a model this could be. The overall goal of the London report is to provide transparency and healthy competition amongst the 32 Boroughs, whose contexts

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

29

	are much more comparable than the districts and boroughs across East Sussex / Sussex. Any external evaluation would need to be designed with specific goals in mind, and these would differ significantly to that of the Good Food for London report. The Good Food for Londoners report is resourced by one 0.2FTE staff member, with small additional costs for printing and events.

With limited resources available, it is recommended that capacity be put towards progressing the key priorities and actions identified by this project, and that external evaluations only be explored once county wide work has been more fully embedded.

Ruth Westcott, Sustain and Emily O'Brien, Food Matters, are two key individuals to speak to further if this route should be further explored. |

Food Matters | Title*: Subtitle. (Optional – author/month/year)*

30