

GLASGOW SCOTLAND

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTEGRATING FOOD SYSTEMS

This food policy snapshot is based on an interview with Riikka Gonzalez, Sustainable Food Cities Coordinator at the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership

GLASGOW FOOD AND CLIMATE DECLARATION

The Glasgow City Food Plan (GCFP), launched in June 2021, was shaped to respond to the City's current needs and circumstances. With 1/3 of Glaswegian children living in poverty, a 60% adult obesity rate, and 78% of adults reporting eating fewer than five portions of fruits and vegetables a day, the city's food plan aims to address socioeconomic and health inequality as much as the climate crisis. Indeed, Glasgow City Council's decision to examine its food system was through its Food Inequality Inquiry Report (2019). The Declaration of a Climate Emergency released by Glasgow City Council that same year only raised ambitions to work towards more climate-friendly food policies, and cleared a path for a progressive new strategy.

ENABLERS

FROM CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION TO AN INTEGRATED CLIMATE AND FOOD PLAN

When Glasgow City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, it accelerated a process of collaboration both within and beyond the City Council to adopt more climate-friendly policies. For example, in 2020, the Climate Emergency Declaration contributed to the drafting of the Sustainable Glasgow Charter where the Food Policy Partnership successfully included an action to prioritize sustainable and locally sourced food.

Glasgow's increasing focus on climate change also shows up in the City Food Plan. Across its six themes (procurement, poverty, economy, children and young people, the environment, and community food) several actions integrate climate change and food sustainability. These include: working with food businesses and restaurants to choose sustainable food and adopt circular economy principles; improving training on food waste; increasing the land available for food growing; using vacant land in the city to develop urban and peri-urban growing; promoting production and consumption of agroecologically grown food; increasing the proportion of locally sourced and low carbon produced food used in public sector catering including school meals; and improving learning about the food system in the education curriculum in schools and colleges.

A WHOLE CITY PARTNERSHIPS APPROACH

The Glasgow City Food Plan team partnered with over 80 organizations across Glasgow in a process that led to the final Glasgow Food Plan in June 2021. A participatory process allowed the Food Partnership to hear from residents and ensure the Plan's relevance to Glaswegians, while allowing for the City to take ownership of the Plan's content. For example, because of high levels of poverty in Glasgow, it was an active choice to improve access to fresh fruit and vegetables as part one of the Plan's action points, rather than asking residents to change their behaviour and reduce meat consumption. Further responding to residents' concerns, the Plan integrates a wide range of issues from food poverty, to health, climate change, biodiversity, and jobs in food.

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR FLOURISHING LOCAL FOOD POLICIES

Like many municipal governments, the City of Glasgow holds many levers to enable food systems transformation, but some policy areas require multi-level cooperation. Political support from the Scottish Government (also a Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration signatory) and an enabling policy environment have been important factors in the development of City's integrated food plan. The Scottish Government's new Good Food Nation bill and Local Food for Everyone consultation help set the scene for Glasgow and other local authorities in Scotland to put sustainable food policies into practice. With demonstrable leadership at the local level, it is important that these national initiatives integrate and coordinate with local authorities across Scotland.

The consultation process for the Glasgow City Food Plan pointed to other areas where multi-level governance is needed, including the availability of organic food across the city. The Food Partnership looks up to Copenhagen where almost all food served in public canteens is organic. However, Copenhagen's success was part of a wider push to make organic food available in Denmark, whereas Scotland does not currently have the same supply of organic foods. The Food Plan therefore includes a statement on increasing the consumption of organic food, and Glasgow City school catering worked to receive the Soil Association Food For Life Bronze Award in September. However, the Partnership is aware that greater availability of organic foods can only be achieved over the longer term, and requires action and support from the Scottish Government, the Scottish agricultural sector, and other parts of the food system over a number of years.

FOOD POLICY FACT BOX

- Glasgow City Food Plan was launched in June 2021 with three pillars: equity, health and sustainability. Over the next 10 years, 76 action points will be implemented across 6 themes. Many of these themes relate to climate change or sustainability more broadly.
- The Glasgow Food Policy Partnership is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. They will publish annual public progress reports alongside an annual review and revision of the plan's actions points.
- The Glasgow City Food plan is the outcome of the city plan team (GFPP, GCC, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Glasgow Community Food Network, NHSGGC and Glasgow City HSCP) drafting a plan with city-wide partners followed by a 3-month long consultation process with more than 600 responses from residents.

BARRIERS

BREAKING THE SILOS

One of the success factors for Glasgow's food plan is that it represents an ongoing collaboration between the City Council and businesses, community organizations, and residents across the City. Including the council in food policy partnerships is one of the requirements of the Sustainable Food Places Network, which gave Glasgow a Bronze award for its work in 2021. However, the Council has many departments working with food-related issues, making it challenging to identify who to talk to. This is why the Council Policy team and the Councillor acting as City Convener for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction represent GCC at Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP) meetings. They have played an integral part in developing the Glasgow City Food Plan (GCFP) and helped the partnership connect with the right council departments for food-related issues including Financial Inclusion (helping those experiencing food insecurity), Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (food growing), Education (early years, schools), Planning and Economic Development (funding and support), Catering and Facilities Management (food in schools and other local authority premises). In addition, in the lead up to Glasgow hosting COP26 in November 2021, the COP26 stakeholder manager helped connect relevant council officers looking at food policy actions specifically related to climate and elevate food systems as an overall priority of the city locally and at the climate conference in line with the Glasgow Declaration.

The City of Glasgow, the proud and welcoming host of COP26, has taken an important step to adopt a City Food Plan that builds on the City's Declaration of a climate emergency. Taking an integrated approach, the Plan aims to span the entire food system. Its participatory approach and commitment to ensuring 'good food for everyone' is aligned with Council leader Susan Aitken's message for COP26 that "climate justice and social justice are inseparable" in tackling the climate emergency.

“ My dream for 2050 is that in all areas of the city people can access food; they have enough money to buy healthy fruits and vegetables and they have the knowledge to cook a meal with them, regardless of their circumstances and regardless of their income. That's my dream.”

