

# **FOOD: A STRATEGY FOR ISLINGTON**

**Making healthy and sustainable food accessible to all**



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## Preface

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Not only is food essential to our health and survival, it is at the heart of our economy, shapes our environment and helps form our culture and our social lives. It is hardly surprising therefore that there are a wide range of issues about food that impact significantly on our lives: its availability, production, distribution, preparation, consumption and waste generated. Some of these have, in recent years, been making headlines; whether campaigns about school dinners, concerns about food safety and obesity, or the growth of farmers' markets.

The Council and its partners in NHS Islington and in the voluntary and business sectors have long been active on food issues in the borough. Initiatives have included driving up hygiene standards in restaurants and shops, running healthy eating and nutritional programmes, promoting breast feeding, procuring a new school meals contract and achieving official Fairtrade borough status. Most recently the Council has committed £1 million to promote food growing projects in Islington, providing tools and training and developing new growing sites across our schools and housing estates.

Our new Food Strategy draws together all this work, placing it within a strategic framework that will ensure partners work more effectively together, recognising each other's contribution and fully complementing each other's efforts. It will also enable us to build on the strong work that is already taking place and increase and expand our efforts wherever these are most needed.

In doing this, the Strategy links three themes: the overlapping issues of food and health, food and poverty and food and the environment. Overall it aims to ensure that healthy, environmentally and socially sustainable food is affordable and accessible to all. Through the Strategy, and through the detailed Action Plan that supports it, the Council and its partners are demonstrating their determination to tackle the issue of food poverty in the borough, to promote the good health of all our residents and to ensure that the way we produce, consume and distribute our food has minimal negative impacts on the environment.

Councillor Ruth Polling  
Executive Member for Leisure and Equalities  
Islington Council

## Executive summary

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The overall aim of the Islington Food Strategy is to improve individual, community and environmental well-being by making healthy and sustainable food available and accessible to all.

With this in mind, it sets out to provide a strategic framework around food issues that will help partners work more closely together by building on work to date, identifying priorities and focussing resources.

Three complementary themes are used to explore the key issues: Food and Health looks at the importance and composition of a healthy and safe diet at different stages of life; Food and Sustainability summarises key environmental impacts of our food system, from production to consumption and disposal; and Food and Poverty introduces levels and consequences of food poverty and issues around access, affordability, appropriateness and awareness.

There is a great deal of work already underway in the borough, from initiatives to reduce obesity and encourage breastfeeding and healthy eating through to food growing projects and programmes promoting hygienic and safer food and waste minimisation and composting. Advice is also provided on a wide range of subjects from oral health to sustainable and ethical procurement. Some projects and policies are targeted at specific sectors of the community such as businesses and local retailers, workplaces, schools and Children's Centres.

To build on this work and to deliver its overall aim, the Strategy identifies ten key objectives:

1. Promoting a healthy diet
2. Making healthy food accessible
3. Making healthy food affordable
4. Promoting safer food
5. Reducing our environmental footprint
6. Promoting local food
7. Promoting ethical food
8. Reducing food waste
9. Celebrating food and diversity
10. Reducing inequalities in health

An Action Plan, focused on addressing each of these objectives, accompanies the Strategy and will be delivered by a range of organisations from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors. Progress is being overseen by a Food Strategy Partnership drawn from these organisations.

Appendix A sets out key information about Islington that has helped shape the strategy and Appendix B lists some of the key strategies, at national, regional and local level, that are related to the Islington Food Strategy.

## SECTION 1: Introduction

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The Islington Food Strategy has been drawn together by a wide range of partners across the borough, committed to ensuring that healthy, environmentally and socially sustainable food is accessible to all. It is apparent to all of the agencies involved that such a broad and ambitious aim cannot be achieved by any one organisation working in isolation but depends on the efforts of many – including Islington Council, NHS Islington, and partners in the voluntary and the business sectors. The overall aim therefore is to provide a strategic framework around food issues that will help build on the good work already being undertaken, enabling partners to work more closely together, complementing each other's approaches and targeting those areas where further work is most urgently needed. To achieve this, the Strategy is based on three complementary themes:

**Food and Health** This section of the Strategy looks at the critical importance of a healthy, well-balanced diet for our physical and mental well-being, and at the relationship between diet and a range of illnesses and conditions. It considers what actually constitutes a healthy diet and uses the concept of a life-time journey to understand the impact of diet at every stage from preconception to old age. It also looks at the importance of food hygiene, both in the home and through the thousands of outlets in Islington that prepare and distribute our food.

**Food and Sustainability** Food and the way that we produce it impacts not only on our personal health but on the health of our environment. This section looks at how our food system contributes to the emission of large quantities of greenhouse gasses, to climate change, to the loss of species and habitat diversity and to the depletion of our natural resources – especially our precious and dwindling supplies of fresh water. Adopting, again, the concept of a journey the section looks at these issues at every stage of the 'food journey' from production to plate. It also looks at the startling fact that nearly one third of all the food we produce is eventually thrown away.

**Food and Poverty** In the year 2000, according to the Joseph Rowntree Trust, four million people in the UK could not afford a healthy diet. The affects of the current recession will undoubtedly mean that this figure is now significantly higher with the working poor being food compromised. The issue of food poverty is a very real one in Islington, one of the areas in the UK with the highest levels of overall deprivation, and further compounds the health and environmental issues discussed above. This section considers all aspects of food poverty, including accessibility, affordability and appropriateness, all of which contribute to the fact that those who live in food poverty lose, on average, 30% of their lives to early death or disability.

The three themes summarised above are set out in detail in Sections 2 to 4 of this strategy document. They are clearly inter-related and influence each other, but provide a framework in which to consider the multiple impacts of food issues within the borough. It is clear, however, that there is already much work going on in the borough and Section 5 summarises this and reviews the contribution of a number of agencies are undertaking to tackling food issues in Islington.

All of this sets the scene for Section 6 which seeks to build on this work by setting out a number of key over-arching objectives that will help shape the delivery of the Strategy and the work going forward. The Strategy document will therefore be supported by a more detailed Action Plan, based on these objectives. It will set out actions in every area, specifying the intended outcomes, the available resources, timescales and, crucially, who will lead on each. The Action Plan will be subject to regular review and updating by a multi-agency Food Strategy Partnership, itself building on the partnership already established through the production of this Strategy.

Whilst the Strategy provides a framework for food issues in Islington, it has also been written to help raise awareness on the issues surrounding food in Islington. It is therefore designed to be used by all who have an interest in food and food issues in Islington, including Council and NHS staff, community organisations and those who work in food and drink businesses, schools and Children's Centres.

The intention, through the publication of a Strategy and related actions and through setting up a Food Strategy Partnership to ensure its effective implementation, is to make a real difference to food poverty and the availability of affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly food for all.

## SECTION 2: Food and Health: Food for a Healthy Life

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### The importance of a healthy diet

The importance of a healthy, well balanced diet cannot be underestimated. A healthy diet is a critical factor in preventing illness and maintaining good health and wellbeing. A well-balanced diet plays an important part in preventing many commonly occurring diseases including heart disease, osteoporosis, tooth decay, high blood pressure and diabetes and mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Approximately one third of cancers occur as a consequence of poor diet, and with smoking rates decreasing in many countries, obesity may soon become the biggest cause of cancer in women. Physical activity also plays an important role in reducing the risk of these diseases. A healthy diet is also vital for mental health.

Weight gain and obesity occur when excessive calories are consumed over time. A person is considered overweight if they have a Body Mass Index (BMI: weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared) between 25 and 30, and obese if they have a BMI above 30. Being overweight and obese are associated with a range of conditions that reduce life expectancy, and obese individuals generally spend a greater proportion of their lives in poorer health. The consequences of being overweight and obese include:

- 10 % of all cancer deaths amongst non-smokers are related to obesity
- The risk of heart disease increases 3.6 times for each unit increase in BMI
- 85 % of high blood pressure is associated with being overweight
- The risk of developing type 2 diabetes is about 20 times greater for people who are very obese (BMI over 35) compared to individuals with a BMI between 18 and 25
- Social stigmatisation and bullying of overweight and obese individuals are common and can, in some cases, lead to depression and other mental health conditions. This is especially true for children
- Severely obese individuals are likely to die on average 11 years earlier than those with healthy weight.

### What is a healthy diet?

A healthy, balanced diet contains a variety of foods including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day; starchy foods, in particular wholegrains, such as bread, pasta and rice; protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs and lentils; and dairy foods. A healthy diet is one that is low in fat (especially saturated fat), salt and sugar. Eating a wide range of foods to ensure a balanced diet is one of the two keys to healthy eating; the other is eating the right amount of food for how active you are.

The components of a healthy diet are best illustrated by the 'Eatwell Plate' (Figure 1). The Eatwell plate shows how much of what you eat should be from each food group. This includes everything that is eaten throughout the day. The Eatwell Plate is applicable to all and recognises that people eat different diets due to religious, cultural or lifestyle reasons.

Figure 1: The Eatwell Plate (Food Standards Agency)



Whilst eating the right balance of foods is important, the amount of food we consume is also significant. For example, frequent consumption of added sugar causes tooth decay which affects chewing ability and so limits healthy food choices. Added sugars include the type of sugar bought in shops and the sugars that are added to some foods and drinks, including cakes, fizzy drinks, biscuits and sweets.

The exact requirements and impacts of a healthy diet vary by life stage. The following sections look at various dietary requirements by life stage from preconception and pregnancy through to older people.

### a) Preconception and pregnancy

Eating a balanced diet for at least four months before trying to conceive can help address possible underlying nutritional deficiencies. Certain nutrients, such as folic acid, have a particular role to play in pregnancy. Folic acid, which is found naturally in citrus fruit, leafy green vegetables and some fortified breads and cereals, significantly reduces the risk of spina bifida (where the baby's spine does not form properly). A daily supplement of 400mcg of folic acid should be taken for at least three months before becoming pregnant and until the 12th week of pregnancy.

There are some food restrictions during pregnancy, as certain foods can either make the mother ill or cause the baby harm. Pregnant women are advised to limit their vitamin A intake, avoiding liver and liver products such as pâté. There are also a few types of fish that should be avoided during pregnancy due to the high mercury levels, which can in turn harm the development of the baby's nervous system. These fish include shark, marlin and swordfish. The amount of tuna consumed also needs to be limited due to mercury levels. Cheeses such as Camembert, blue cheeses, Brie and other soft cheeses should be avoided as they contain listeria, a type of bacteria which can harm the baby. Women should also ensure all foods are cooked thoroughly and avoid raw foods such as eggs, shellfish and meat.

## **b) Early years**

The foundations of healthy eating need to be laid from the beginning of life. For this reason, the World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breastfeeding (i.e. breastmilk alone, with no other foods or fluids) for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding for 2 years or longer, along with the introduction of solid food. The UK government, in the national obesity strategy 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives', have stated their aim of 'making breastfeeding the norm', and have set targets encouraging women not only to start breastfeeding, but to continue for as long as possible.

Breastfeeding makes a significant difference to the health of both mother and baby: mothers who have breastfed have lower levels of breast and ovarian cancers, lower risk of diabetes and obesity, rheumatoid arthritis and cardiovascular disease, whilst benefits for babies include significant protection against common childhood infections, such as chest, gastro-intestinal, ear and urinary infections and also against diabetes, sudden infant death and childhood leukaemia. There is also evidence to show better cognitive development. Longer-term benefits include lower blood pressure and cholesterol and protection against obesity. Exclusive breastfeeding reduces the risk of childhood obesity by 20%. The difference breastfeeding makes is dose-related – the longer and more exclusive the breastfeeding, the greater the benefit.

Infants should be introduced to solids when their nutritional needs are no longer met completely by breast or formula milk, and when the baby's development gives them the skills and body processes to cope well with solid foods. This is around the age of 6 months. However, milk continues to be a very significant part of the baby's diet in the first 2 years and breast milk, continues to increase immunity. When introducing solid food to a child's diet it is important to avoid salt, sugar and low fat foods. The introduction of solid food is not only important for growth but also for speech development and social skills.

## **c) Children**

Toddlers are unable to eat large amounts of food at a single sitting, and therefore should eat little and often. By five years, young children should be eating the same types of food as the rest of the family but it is important that they are given the correct meal size for their age.

Around the time they start school, children start to experience periods of rapid growth and become more active. Although children's energy and nutrient needs are high in relation to their body size, many children begin to consume greater than the recommended amount of calories, fat, sugar and salt but consume low intakes of important nutrients such as iron, calcium, fibre and zinc. These nutrients play a vital role in the development of children and being deficient in them can impact upon health, wellbeing and learning.

Obesity levels have doubled among six year olds over the past ten years. The main long-term risks of obesity in children and young people include high blood pressure, diabetes, the worsening of existing conditions such as asthma, and negative psychological impacts. Overweight and obesity often continue into adulthood.

## **d) Teenagers**

Teenagers tend not to grow as quickly as in childhood, but will experience some increase in height along with muscle growth. Bone density increases quickly during adolescence, especially with boys who need more calcium than girls. Due to the onset of menstruation (periods) and the subsequent blood loss, teenage girls often have a high iron requirement.

Adolescence is a time of growing independence and this particularly influences food choice. Teenagers tend to consume high levels of sugar, particularly from soft drinks, whilst fruit and vegetable intake often reduces (19% of teenagers' total energy intake comes from added sugar, compared to the recommended 11%). Exercise and food consumption patterns tend to change during adolescence, with boys exercising more and girls less. Girls also tend to "graze" compared to boys, who eat according to their appetite. Obesity rates are increasing amongst teenagers.

## e) Adults

Eating a balanced diet is important to maintaining good physical and mental health, and helps reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Table 1 outlines changes an adult can make to their diet to reduce the risk of several commonly occurring diet-related illnesses.

Table 1: Dietary contributions to the prevention of major medical conditions

Disease	Evidence	Ways to reduce risk
Cancer	About one third of cancers are due to poor diet and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> <li>• 5 a day (or more) fruit and vegetables</li> <li>• Fewer calories and less fat</li> <li>• Less red meat</li> </ul>
Heart disease	An increase of one portion of fruit and vegetables a day lowers the risk of coronary heart disease by 4% and the risk of stroke by 6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> <li>• 5 a day (or more) fruit and vegetables</li> <li>• Low saturated fat</li> <li>• Low salt</li> <li>• Consume oily fish once per week or plant rich sources of omega 3 *</li> </ul>
Osteoporosis	Healthy bones need a diet incorporating minerals and vitamins from different food groups, specifically calcium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High calcium diet e.g. milk and cheese</li> <li>• Increased Vitamin D intake</li> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> </ul>
Diabetes	In obesity the risk of developing diabetes is increased. A healthy balanced diet helps with blood glucose control, weight management, blood pressure management and the control of blood fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> <li>• As for heart disease</li> <li>• Reduced sugar</li> </ul>

High blood pressure	Obesity multiplies the risk of developing hypertension about fourfold in men and threefold in women The evidence also strongly suggests an association between salt intake and elevated blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding</li> <li>• High fruit and vegetable intake</li> <li>• Low fat diet</li> <li>• Low salt diet</li> </ul>
Mental health problems	One in four people will have a mental health problem at some point during their lifetime. Evidence shows that high fat diets interfere with brain structure and function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low saturated fat</li> <li>• High essential fats</li> <li>• Higher intake of wholegrains</li> <li>• Higher intake of good quality protein</li> <li>• Higher intake of zinc, selenium and magnesium</li> </ul>

\* Plant rich sources of omega 3 include: rapeseed (canola), walnut, soya, flax (linseed) oil, ground or crushed linseeds, flax or pumpkin seeds, unsalted nuts - walnuts, pecans, peanuts, almonds, soya beans and tofu and dark green leafy vegetables, sweet potato & whole grains

## f) Older people

Dietary recommendations for fat, fibre and carbohydrate are the same for older people as for the rest of population. However, as people get older, they often start eating less due to becoming less physically active, or as a consequence of mobility issues or experience difficulty in preparing or purchasing food. Poor dental health can also affect nutrition due to problems with chewing. Adults over the age of 70, who often have a high risk of falls, have high dietary requirements of calcium and vitamin D to preserve bone health and prevent fractures. It is important that older adults continue to consume a balanced diet.

## The importance of a safe diet

A healthy diet should also be a safe diet; this applies to all food and drink consumed at all life stages. Currently there are 70,000 cases of food poisoning reported within the UK every year. It is important that foods are labelled, prepared, stored and cooked correctly both commercially and within the home. Everyone within the community is at risk of becoming ill due to food-borne illness, so it is important the consumer is aware of food labels, personal hygiene and basic food hygiene.

### Health and the sale of food

Food purchased in all food businesses, such as supermarkets, retailers, cafes, restaurants, sandwich shops and fast food outlets needs to be safe. These businesses need to comply with both European and UK law with respect to importation, hygiene, pricing, weights and measures, labelling and storage of food.

A high turnover of businesses and a large number of small and medium sized businesses means that food safety is not always straightforward to enforce. The need to maintain high standards require continuous education and promotional activities. Food businesses are regularly inspected by Environmental Health Practitioners from the local authority who have a duty to ensure safe provision of food.

**Food safety at home**

As well as food purchased from businesses, food prepared at home also needs to be safe. This includes the actual standard of the food being prepared, safe storage of food and the hygienic preparation of food. For example, spoilt food or food that has passed its use by date should not be consumed and all food should be stored correctly at the appropriate temperature. People preparing food should also wash their hands before handling it. All raw fruit and vegetables should be washed well before consumption - however raw meat and fish should not be washed as this may spread bacteria to other foods and surfaces.

## **SECTION 3: Food and Sustainability: From Production to Plate**

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### **The environmental impacts of food**

Whilst many people have a general awareness of the impact of diet on personal health and wellbeing, there is less awareness of the impact of food production on the health of the planet. The European Commission, however, has demonstrated that what we eat has a greater impact on climate change than any other aspect of daily life, with the food sector emitting more greenhouse gasses than any other element of domestic consumption. This is equivalent to 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum in London alone.

Food is central to our social, industrial and economic structure, and consequently has a wide range of environmental impacts arising from every stage of the food production process; from how we grow, transport, process and sell and buy our food, through to the way we dispose of food waste. What we eat (or fail to eat) affects biodiversity, water resources, land erosion and the acceleration of climate change. The food sector in London is said to represent 41% of London's overall ecological footprint; a footprint which already exceeds that of several small nations.

Section 2 described the importance of a healthy diet at different stages of a standard life journey. This section follows another journey, and considers the environmental impacts of the food we eat at every stage from production to plate - and beyond. These same impacts, and the issues explored in the following Section 4, also affect our future food security, how we get the safe, nutritious and affordable food that we all need to eat.

#### **a) Farms and fisheries: food at the point of production**

For most of our food the environmental impact of food production begins in farms and fisheries, both within this country and across the globe.

Food production processes have been subject to rapid intensification and expansion over the last century, with the aim of cutting costs, reducing seasonal impacts, and meeting new markets arising from population growth, increased affluence and changing taste - including our demand to eat whatever we want whenever we want it. This has involved increasing annual crop tonnages, the cultivation of more marginal land and, in particular, the application of pesticides, herbicides, growth inducers and inorganic fertilisers. In the UK alone, 350 different types of pesticide totalling 31,000 tonnes were applied to the land in 2003.

Meat and dairy production make the highest environmental demands; responsible for 38% of all emissions from the food sector. Livestock rearing, and the production of animal feed, requires higher levels of fertiliser, pesticide, and water and energy resource and gives rise to significant waste, greenhouse gases and other pollution. Whilst it requires an average of 6kg of plant protein to yield every 1kg of meat protein, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the worldwide consumption of meat quadrupled, requiring 40 to 50% of the world grain harvest to be fed to livestock.

The same level of intensification applies to the fishing industry, with modern fishing methods having devastating impacts on the marine environment. The UN's (United Nations) Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that 75% of world fish stocks are now fully exploited,

over-exploited or depleted. In this country, the Government estimates that half the fish landed by the UK fleet comes from sources that are no longer sustainable or are borderline at best. Meanwhile, some 30% of global fish production is now accounted for by fish farming, the fastest growing of all animal food-producing sectors. This has significant impacts on marine environments, arising from the production of industrial fish-meal, the effects of parasite control and other chemicals on surrounding waters, and the impacts of escaped fish competing or cross-breeding with wild stocks.

Three main environmental issues arise from all of this:

- The first is the impact on **biodiversity**. The intensification and expansion of farming has led to the decimation of habitats and the serious decline, sometimes to the point of extinction, of a wide range of plant, animal and invertebrate species, including those which provide natural pest control and crop fertilisation. The decline in biodiversity and abundance of natural insect pollinators, such as bees, represents an undermining of the complex ecological fabric on which our agriculture, and ultimately our lives, depends. The Stern report summed this up well, calling ecology and economics 'sister sciences' and describing ecology as one of the 'externalities' that eventually, and crucially, will have an economic impact.
- Reductions in biodiversity are being further accelerated by **climate change**, to which agriculture is contributing. The high levels of carbon emission described above are added to by our increasing demand for out-of-season fruit and vegetables, creating higher levels of energy demand. Modern agriculture is the main producer of methane gas (CH<sub>4</sub>), which arises from the decomposition of both animal and landfill waste as well as from animal digestion, and which has a global warming potential far greater than that of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) arises from soil cultivation practices and also has significant global warming potential. The huge amounts of nitrogen fertilisers added to our fields are a main contributor to this.
- Almost four billion hectares of the world's land surface is used for cultivation and pasture, and the deforestation that has accompanied this contributes to climate change. It also exacerbates dwindling **water resources**. The changes in rainfall pattern that accompany climate change are having a serious impact on global food production. In the course of 2008, drought emergencies were declared in both Spain and California, both places regarded as 'grocery baskets' for their respective continents, whilst Africa is expected to undergo a 50% decline in cereal production by 2050. Whilst the UK appears to be insulated from this, our food imports contain huge quantities of 'virtual' water, a resource that is becoming increasingly scarce in the countries of origin. Meanwhile we have significant problems of water pollution in the UK arising from agrochemical use, soil erosion, nutrient enrichment from fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide run-off and leachate from slurry and soil sediment. In 2000 the cost of water pollution from agricultural sources was put at £347.5 million.

In addition to these environmental concerns there are two ethical issues that need to be considered:

- The first is the issue of **animal welfare** and the squalid, restrictive, overcrowded and often inhumane conditions that arise from some conventional approaches to the production of meat, eggs or milk; the so-called 'factory' farming.
- The second is our dependence on **cheap labour** to keep us in affluence and to artificially reduce food prices. As the One Planet movement has pointed out, if everyone on the planet had the same standard of living as those of us in the UK, it would require

the resources of three planets to sustain us. In fact, our consumption –and our food prices- are subsidised by the fact that other countries use less than their proportionate share and the global trading system maintains this by being heavily loaded against developing countries. In short, the cheapness of much of the food we eat is dependant on the fact that people who produce it elsewhere, do so on subsistence wages and under very poor environmental and health conditions.

## **b) Transporting food: the measurement of food miles**

There is a growing debate on the environmental impacts of the distances food has to travel to our plates. Whilst there has been considerable discussion about the accurate measurement of food miles, it remains a useful concept in understanding the contribution of a distinct phase of the food production process to both climate change and to other environmental issues.

The overall transportation of food is growing as we become accustomed to an ever-wider range of products, and take advantage of cheaper labour and production costs in other parts of the world. On average, our food now travels 25% further than it did in 1980 with an increasing proportion imported from abroad; including 50% of all our vegetables and 95% of our fruit. Although the greater part of international food transport is by ship, air freight is now the fastest growing way of moving food around the world. Transportation by air generates 177 times more greenhouse gasses than shipping. Although air freight currently represents less than 1% of UK food miles, it constitutes 11% of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from this source.

Between 1988 and 1999, there was a 90% increase in the transportation of food between Europe and the UK by road freight and, within the country, food is now responsible for 30% of all goods carried by road. As well as contributing to carbon emissions and climate change, this brings with it a range of other environmental problems including road congestion, increased traffic accidents and noise and air pollution. A DEFRA (Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) report in 2005 put the direct environmental, social and economic costs of food transport in the UK at over £9 billion a year, the largest part of this being attributable to traffic congestion.

Finally, at the end point of many food journeys, our supermarkets make two further contributions to the issue of food miles. First, because supermarket chains have centralised distribution systems there are occasions when, even though produce is locally produced, it is transported to a centralised distribution point before being transported back again to the same locality. Second, the general trend in the growth of large supermarkets, at the expense of smaller high street or corner stores, has led to an increased dependence on car travel to and from the shop. It is now estimated that cars carrying food shopping home from the supermarket are responsible for 20% of all food mile carbon emissions.

## **c) The final stages: processing and sale**

Before food reaches its final retail outlet it is often subject to one or more intermediate stages of processing through which the raw materials are turned into packaged products. Since there are a multitude of products, there are many different approaches to processing involving either, or both, interventions in the product itself or the addition of various forms of packaging. This might involve one step or many, and be as simple as the addition of a plastic wrap to vegetables or as complex as the complete reconstitution of meat or fish products, including many of the best-selling brands which we feed to our children. Some of these processes reduce the vitamin content or nutrient value of the food, but what they all

entail is increased energy use and carbon emission, increased usage of water and other natural resources, and increased elements in the waste stream.

In 2007, Islington Council introduced a policy against the purchase of bottled water for council catering and events. In preparing for this decision it undertook research which provides an interesting case study of the impact of processing of one of the simplest of products. According to this work, the bottling of natural spring water involves 'an intensive process requiring industrial plant and high energy usage. The great majority of bottles are made from polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic derived from crude oil. Whilst also depleting our ground water supplies, it is estimated that the production process requires 162g of oil and emits 100g of carbon for every single bottle. Paradoxically, it also requires large quantities of water just to run and maintain the plant –twice as much in fact as actually goes into the bottles.'

At the final stage in the distribution process, the food service and retail sector is a very important part of the London economy incorporating more than 60 different national cuisines and accounting for £1.6 million of consumer spending. Around 25% of London businesses sell food, with the great majority of them small or medium sized enterprises. This both supplies a particularly important part of the employment market whilst posing significant problems around regulation. This general picture is reflected in Islington, which is itself home to nearly 2,000 food and drink businesses, with 1 in 10 of all businesses in Islington being a café or restaurant. Food outlets in the borough come in a great variety of forms including 'corner' shops, street markets and trading sites as well as mainstream shopping venues. Overall they represent a further contribution to energy use and climate change with the GLA (Greater London Authority) estimating that 4% of all carbon emissions from the London food chain come from the retail sector. Much of this comes from methods of storage and refrigeration. Whereas storage at the wholesale end tends to be highly practical, in the retail business it needs to combine the preservation of food with the presentation of attractive and accessible display, an approach which inevitably increases energy usage.

#### **d) And after ... the issue of food waste**

Alongside climate change, biodiversity and the depletion of natural resources, the issue of waste must be considered as one of the great environmental impacts of the overall food journey.

Apart from the often toxic waste products arising from the agricultural process and described above, there are two main sources of waste from the rest of the process: the packaging applied to food, and the food itself. Both of these form significant portions of our overall waste stream at a time when London is facing a growing waste 'mountain' with landfill sites running out and both public opposition to incineration, and the cost of waste disposal, rising.

Unnecessary packaging is a problem with many products having as many as four different layers of wrapping added to the raw material, including the plastic bag it is finally dispensed in. Some 5% of the weight of the 'average' shopping basket in supermarkets is estimated to consist of packaging, around 727 grammes, while the overall contribution of packaging to the waste stream was estimated at 10.7 million tonnes in 2008. This underemphasises however the use of one of the most ubiquitous forms of packaging: the plastic bag. Despite contributing little in weight terms they are used in numbers which are hard to grasp. Current estimates vary but begin, at the conservative end, at between 500 million to 1 trillion globally a year. As with bottled water, it is not only the quantity of waste generated that is a cause of concern but the non-degradable and even toxic nature of some of the substances, particularly, this high proportion of plastics. A range of different types of food packaging such as biodegradable, recyclable, or containing recycled content can become confusing or

be treated in an unsustainable way if the consumer is not aware of the best disposal method or if a reprocessing facility is not in place.

To the quantity of waste arising from packaging, we must add the even greater quantity of food that is thrown away from our homes every year - 6.7 million tonnes of food from UK households. Most of this could be eaten and not wasting it would have the equivalent CO<sub>2</sub> impact of taking 1 in 5 cars off the road. To this must be added the quantity of fresh produce discarded by supermarkets because it fails to meet 'display' standards. There is however now some progress on this issue at an EU level, with new rules resulting in 26 types of fresh fruit and vegetables no longer being subject to Specific Marketing Standards relating to details such as size and shape. Confusing labelling systems often exacerbate the problem. Whilst foods that have passed their 'use by' date should never be eaten, 'best before' dates refer to quality rather than food safety and are therefore usually safe to be eaten. The one exception is eggs which should never be eaten after the 'best before' date. Shoppers are often confused by varying labelling systems and this often leads to the unnecessary disposal of food that is still fit for consumption.

It is one of the most shocking statistics that in a world where 923 million people suffer from undernourishment - that is, consume less than the recognised minimum amount of food energy - and at the end of a long and costly journey from production to plate, approximately one third of all the food we buy is simply thrown away.

## **SECTION 4: Food and Poverty: Making Good Food Affordable**

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The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimated in 2000 that four million people in the UK could not afford a healthy diet, and that one in ten children and one in five adults go to bed hungry because they do not have enough money for food. People living on low incomes or who are unemployed, households with dependent children, older people, people with disabilities and members of black and ethnic minority groups are more likely to experience food poverty than the rest of the UK population. Those who experience food poverty are likely to have poor diets and in turn have a higher risk of diet-related diseases.

Those families and individuals who experience food poverty are more likely to consume a diet, characterised by a high intake of saturated fat, salt and sugar with low intake of fruit, vegetables and dietary fibre. More processed foods tend to be consumed as they are seen to be more filling and energy dense. Low income families also tend to have less variety within their diet due to fear of potential food wastage. Those in low income groups are more unlikely to access a healthy variety of safe foods.

A Food Standards Agency report of 2007 showed that 39% of those on low incomes reported worrying about running out of money for food and 36% indicated that they could not afford to eat a balanced diet. There are also wide inequalities in the proportion of income spent on food. The Office for National Statistics which charts patterns in Britain's spending and food consumption found that in 2007, high income households spent only 6% of their total budget on food compared to 26% of the total budget of a low income household.

The Department of Health defines food poverty as the inability to afford or to have access to foods that make up a healthy diet. The rest of this section examines the main factors limiting the availability of nutritious food amongst low-income households; access, affordability, appropriateness and awareness.

### **Access**

Food access refers to the ease with which an individual can buy a range of healthy foods and get them to their home and consume them. This is a complex issue and factors such as lack of time, physical ability, transport, or difficulties around childcare/caring for a relative, all impact on a person's ability to shop for food. Older people may find carrying heavy shopping and managing on a pension makes healthy eating difficult.

Access also refers to the purchasing of foods. There are areas where people have poor or restricted access to healthy food within a reasonable walking distance and in the UK approximately four million people have difficulty in obtaining a healthy diet. Within London - where 39% of households have no car and up to half of children in inner London live below the poverty line there are real concerns around food access. In 2004, more than two thirds of residents in parts of East London were found to be living more than 500 metres from a shop selling an adequate range of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Even if somebody can get to a shop, they may not be able to buy healthy food. Local shops may not stock healthy options, such as fruit and vegetables, due to a shorter shelf life, lower profit margin, a perceived lack of interest or a shortage of storage options. For those who have to rely on small local convenience shops they may need to pay anything between 6%

to 13% more for a more nutritionally balanced diet than if they shopped in a large supermarket

Whilst there has been no formal mapping of food deserts in Islington, there is some evidence of pockets of 'limited' availability - for example in the EC1 area where, close to the business district, there are several stores selling fresh fruit and vegetables. These stores tend, however, to be supermarket chains designed for people wishing to buy ready-made meals, salad packs and ready chopped vegetables, much of which is not affordable to many of the local residents. The rest of EC1 has few dedicated fruit and vegetable retailers and just one street market, with a single remaining fruit and vegetable seller.

Access can also refer to the actual preparation, cooking and correct storage of food. Residents living in temporary or inadequate housing or on low incomes are at particular risk. For example, some hostels within the borough actively discourage cooking on the premises, whilst homeless shelters often lack cooking facilities, and where these are offered there is limited space for food storage, further discouraging healthy eating. Theft is commonplace in communal living settings, so that for many residents in these settings it is better to spend their money on fast food which does not need to be kept.

## **Affordability**

Affordability refers to whether the range of foods within reasonable access to an individual falls within their price range. Research has shown that a healthy diet can cost over 50% more than an unhealthy one, with expenditure on fruit and vegetables accounting for most of the difference.

Islington is the fourth most deprived borough in London and, with all wards experiencing deprivation, food poverty is likely to be distributed across the borough. However the borough also sees a large daily influx of often wealthier people arriving for both work and leisure and many of Islington's wide range of food businesses primarily cater to this market. This can result in expensive organic butchers and vegetable sellers sitting beside low-price stores selling foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

The cost of food can be exacerbated by lack of confidence and skills in shopping for, preparing and cooking food, which may lead to reliance on ready-made meals and may lead to further deskilling. In the 40 years since the first ready meal appeared in the shops, their popularity has grown so that a third of the population in the UK now use them at least once a week. Processed foods are bulked out with cheap fats and sugars, with the taste disguised with additives, flavourings and colourings.

A food sector committed to reducing inequalities needs to be resilient, providing employment opportunities for local people whilst remaining accessible and affordable.

## **Appropriateness**

It is important that people can buy a culturally appropriate balanced diet. Cultural habits of eating can be difficult to follow when there are no local sources available, often leading to a poorer substituted diet. Many people follow strict dietary principles due to religious beliefs and should be able to purchase and consume foods which meet their needs, for example halal or kosher foods. Islington is unusual in that the large number of different ethnic groups are spread out across the borough rather than concentrated in distinct areas. This adds to access issues, making it less economically viable for retailers to open shops catering for specific needs. A lack of local knowledge can make it difficult to access food at affordable prices. On the converse side, in some parts of the borough there are small shopkeepers

who do sell a range of affordable fruit and vegetables. London-wide, there is an abundance of fresh produce from many different ethnic groups giving individuals opportunities to adapt food cultures, but with respect to food poverty it is important that a culturally appropriate diet is accessible and affordable.

## **Awareness**

Many individuals lack the knowledge or skills needed to buy and cook foods. If people are unable to purchase foods which they recognise, they may lack the confidence to cook and prepare the food. There is also a lot of misinformation about nutrition and healthy foods in the media meaning many people do not know where to start. There is also some evidence to suspect that lower income groups may be more exposed to unsafe foods. Food of poorer quality is more likely to be on sale at lower prices, attracting those with a tight budget. Low income families may also be more motivated to keep left over foods to eat the next day but the food needs to be chilled and stored correctly to keep the food safe. Individuals who have poor literacy, numeracy or do not read English may not be able to fully understand the food storage, food preparation and heating instructions on food packets.

## SECTION 5: What are we Already Doing?

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In the last three sections we looked at some of the issues that are associated with our food; the impacts on our health, the impacts on our environment and the issues surrounding food poverty. In this chapter we provide a summary of action already underway in Islington.

### 1. Reducing obesity

NHS Islington runs a wide range of programmes and activities addressing the issue of obesity in Islington. These include:

#### **Mini-MEND (2 - 4 years)**

Mini MEND is an obesity prevention programme targeting families who are at risk. The overall aim is to prevent toddlers from becoming overweight or obese by teaching families parenting skills and educating them about nutrition and play techniques in order to encourage children and families to be physically active. Mini-MEND is delivered through children's centres in Islington.

#### **MEND Programme (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition – Do it!) (7 – 11 years)**

The aim of MEND is to tackle childhood obesity by getting children and their families fitter, healthier and happier. The programme is for children aged between 7-11 years who are overweight or obese, and for their families. It is designed to deliver sustained improvements in families' diets, fitness levels and overall health. Currently two programmes run in Islington every term, one at the Sobell Leisure Centre and the other at Cally Pool.

#### **Stepping Stones (16+)**

Stepping Stones provides free community based weight management courses for overweight and obese individuals focusing on weight loss and maintaining a healthy weight. The course includes education on healthy eating, cooking sessions, gentle exercise classes and discussion on behaviour change. Stepping Stones is run from Manor Gardens Centre by the Community Kitchens Project and is held at various venues throughout Islington

#### **Islington Specialist Dietitians for Schools**

The specialist dietitian who is part of the Islington Health Schools Programme Team provides professional development for school staff on a range of issues, including whole school food policies and work with targeted groups of pupils.

#### **Specialist Clinics**

NHS Islington also provides a number of specialist clinics aimed at clinically obese children, young people or adults, including those with additional medical conditions. Some of these services are aimed at groups for whom other interventions have proved either unsuccessful or inappropriate. They provide a range of services including dietary and lifestyle assessments, dietetic and psychological advice and goal setting – with families as well as with individual clients.

The clinics include:

- **Children and Young People's Specialist Weight Management Clinic (0-19 years)**
- **General Paediatric Dietetic Clinic (0-18 years)**
- **Children and Young People's Weight Management Dietetic Clinic (0-18 years)**
- **General Dietetic Clinic (18+ years)**

### **Obesity care pathways**

Currently there are three obesity care pathways in place i.e. Early Years, Primary Schools and Adult. These pathways provide health professionals with clear guidelines about the identification, assessment and classification and management of obesity. Maternal Obesity Care Pathways and Secondary School Pathways are also underway. Health professionals are provided with training about obesity and the care pathways on a regular basis. Resource packs supporting the pathways were also produced.

## **2. Social marketing**

Social marketing involves the use of marketing to influence health behaviours for social good. NHS Islington's social marketing interventions target those at highest risk and respond to current market needs. Currently, there are two projects underway developing interventions to increase healthy eating and levels of physical activity amongst secondary school children and their families and to promote healthy weight amongst pregnant mothers in Islington.

### **Change4life**

Change4Life is a nationwide movement that aims to prevent people from becoming overweight by encouraging them to eat better and become more active. The primary target group is families, focusing on parents with younger children with the objective of instigating healthier behaviours among their children. NHS Islington is registered as a local supporter of Change4Life and seeks to use the power of the Change4Life branding and messages in its programmes.

## **3. Programmes in the workplace**

### **Workfit**

NHS Islington leads on the delivery of a workplace health and wellbeing programme called Workfit Islington, aiming to encourage and support public sector staff to engage in health promoting behaviours. Initiatives conducted with a wide range of partners included opportunities for employees to increase physical activity levels, develop healthy eating skills, foster positive mental well-being, and improve oral health. Smoking cessation support is also provided. The healthy eating opportunities included lunchtime talks on healthy eating and after-work cookery classes.

### **Health Champions**

This pilot programme builds on the Workfit programme to support further local engagement with staff, to motivate, encourage and support healthy behaviours. A local Health Champion will be identified to serve each partner staff building in Islington and will be responsible for ensuring that staff is aware of opportunities to engage in physical activity, healthy eating and other wellbeing initiatives.

Training is offered to NVQ Level 2 and twenty Health Champions have so far achieved the qualification. The Champions also meet regularly to discuss ideas for promoting healthy behaviours at specific worksites as well as ways to develop collaboration.

The workplace has been found to impact both directly and indirectly on a person's ability to maintain a healthy weight. Employers can directly support staff to reach and maintain a healthy weight through the provision of healthy food options and opportunities to engage in physical activity in the workplace. This has implications for vending machine and catering contracts held by public sector employers as well as the content of food offered at onsite canteens. Employers also have an indirect role in influencing healthy food choices through

workplace policies, incentive schemes, and the overall organisational culture. Management support (or lack thereof) can either encourage or hinder employees' efforts to make health-promoting choices such as getting away from their desk to eat a healthy lunch.

## 4. Healthy eating

### **5-a-day / Community Kitchens**

NHS Islington works in partnership with the Community Kitchens Project to promote healthy eating and the 5-a-day message and to support and encourage people to make healthier choices. The project provides cooking skill courses that cover healthy food messages, reading and understanding food labelling, shopping on a budget and food safety. The courses train people to be Community Nutrition Advisors who continue to pass the messages on to the local community.

### **Healthy Start Scheme**

The Healthy Start scheme provides those with a child under 4 years and who qualify for one of the categories (income support, job seekers allowance, child tax credit, income less than £16,050, income related employment & support allowance, or pregnant and under 18) with vouchers which can be used to buy milk, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and infant formula. It also provides free vitamin supplements for pregnant mothers and children up to their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Eat Your Market**

Run by the Council's Environmental Health Team, in partnership with the Community Kitchens Project, the monthly 'Eat Your Market' events at Whitecross Street market include a recipe demonstration offering passers-by a chance to sample a simple, healthy dish and providing advice on food hygiene and healthy eating. The ingredients used for the preparation of this food are purchased from the market itself.

## 5. Breast feeding and weaning

### **Baby Friendly Initiative**

NHS Islington and Islington Council have together registered their intent to achieve Baby Friendly status - UNICEF's world-wide gold standard for ensuring effective support for women to breastfeed and wean their children well. This accreditation process takes 3-5 years. It involves assessments covering policies and training materials, staff skills and knowledge and what Islington mothers experience in terms of information and support, with ongoing re-assessments thereafter to ensure maintenance of the standard.

### **Programmes to encourage breast feeding**

An on-going programme of training all health visiting teams in breastfeeding management is in progress to enable them to offer effective information and support to breastfeeding mothers. Awareness training is also being provided for children's centre staff. In conjunction with the Breastfeeding Network, 44 Islington mothers have been trained as breastfeeding helpers to offer support to drop-in groups, antenatal and baby clinics, Stays and Plays in children's centres and through home visits. Mothers may be referred to the programme by health visiting teams, midwives or may contact the programme directly. Two of these volunteers have now been employed to provide extra support in the areas of Islington where breastfeeding is currently at its lowest.

### **Weaning support and advice**

Leaflets have been produced in a range of languages on weaning ('Milk and More') and on drinks, snacks and vitamins for under fives. A pack of lesson plans and teaching materials

covering weaning, healthy eating for children and simple cooking has also been prepared and is being piloted in three children's centres.

## 6. Dental programmes

NHS Islington funds an oral health promotion team which works with children's centres and associated partners to ensure that oral health is considered in healthy eating policies and leaflets. The team have been training staff and parents in oral hygiene instruction and reduction of sugar intake, as well as distributing fluoride toothpaste and toothbrushes. They are now broadening the scope of their work to include vulnerable adult groups and are currently working to improve oral health in older people in residential care homes.

## 7. Food growing

### Edible Islington

With such a high population density and limited amounts of open space, land for food growing in Islington is scarce and largely concentrated in the borough's four small allotment sites and a few community gardens. Edible Islington was set up by Islington Council in response to the growing interest in food growing and to address the lack of opportunities. The £1m community food growing programme is aimed at realising the potential of forgotten spaces across Islington for food growing and providing residents and community groups with the resources and skills they require to grow food locally. The programme is being delivered through a partnership of Islington Council, Homes for Islington, Cambridge Education Authority and voluntary sector organizations.

### Islington Organic Growers Network

The Islington Organic Growers Network is run by local residents and hosted by the Council's Green Living Centre. The Network supports people in learning about organic gardening and food growing and is open to all Islington residents, including those who feel they have little space to grow anything. Members meet on a regular basis to share their horticultural knowledge and experience and to encourage each other. In partnership with Islington Council, they also organise a Grow Your Own Food scheme, beginner workshops, and an annual horticultural show.

### Food Growing Workshops and Courses

Islington Council runs free food growing workshops to help residents get started, growing vegetables, fruit, salads and herbs in small spaces. Participants do not need to have access to a garden to attend these workshops. The council also runs an introduction to organic food growing course. A number of other local organisations also run courses on a range of related issues, such as bee keeping, permaculture and composting.

### Food Growing Sites

As well as a number of allotment sites in the borough, several of Islington's housing estates have their own growing and gardening clubs. The borough also hosts several community gardens. These include:

**King Henry's Walk Garden** in the Mildmay area is run by volunteers with support from the council. The garden has plots for cultivation by local residents where the use of organic gardening methods will help to promote a diversity of plants and wildlife.

**Culpeper Community Garden** is a public open space located in the heart of Islington near Angel. It serves both as a city park and an environmental community project. It is managed by local people and includes 50 vegetable plots and two raised beds for disabled gardeners.

**Sunnyside Community Garden**, in the north of the borough, was created using an area of wasteland. A number of projects run within the garden including horticultural therapy sessions. It also promotes healthy eating and organic food and holds a weekly organic food market in partnership with Eostre Organics.

**Olden Garden** is a community garden and woodland located off Whistler Street, Highbury. Several projects are run within the garden which hosts a vegetable patch created from an area of brambles and a vegetable garden run by children from a nearby school.

**Freightliners** is a small city farm in Islington that provides the opportunity for local people to learn from, and interact with, the environment and each other through animal care, horticulture and sustainable practices. It also runs a kitchen garden, with a wide selection of herbs, fruits and vegetables, an apiary and its own café.

## 8. The Green Living Centre

Islington Council's Green Living Centre offers free advice on seasonal food, where you can buy it and how you can use it, and on sustainable food, affordable food and planning healthy meals. It also provides access to and distributes a range of information leaflets. The centres' team also provides support on food waste and packaging as part of their schools programme.

## 9. Ethical food

### **Fairtrade**

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. Islington has been a Fairtrade Borough since 2005 and is committed to supporting Fairtrade locally. Islington Council uses only Fairtrade tea and coffee and works with partners across the borough to ensure that Fairtrade products are freely available.

### **Animal welfare**

As part of the Council's sustainable food policy for its school meals it encourages the use of 'environmentally caring' foodstuffs including free-range eggs, tuna fish caught in dolphin-friendly nets and meat reared to appropriate animal-welfare standards.

## 10. Food and planning

### **Food in the Local Development Framework**

The Council is currently developing its Local Development Framework (LDF), which sets out the future planning strategy and policies for the borough. It contains policies to protect and promote a diverse retail offer and support local shops. It also seeks to protect existing open spaces, including food growing sites. New opportunities for food growing are also being explored.

## 11. Safer food

The Council's Environmental Health Team runs a wide range of programmes promoting food hygiene and safer food. These include:

### **Safer Food, Better Business Training**

This training course, based on the Food Standard Agency's Safer Food, Better Business model, enables businesses to develop and document their own food safety management systems. Over 300 businesses have now received training.

### **The 'How to Wash Your Hands' campaign**

This campaign was developed to raise public awareness of the importance of personal hygiene in reducing the spread of illness in Islington. It uses a variety of fun and interactive exercises to illustrate how the correct washing of hands at the right times can stop the spread of germs. The scenario was originally developed for primary school use but has since been delivered to mother and toddlers groups, Sure Start workers, the Healthy Schools Project, young mums groups, young offenders groups and as a regular part of Junior Citizens week. It has also been used to get the message across to workers in the food industry.

### **Increasing the rate of compliance with food safety legislation**

An increasing number of Islington businesses are broadly compliant with food safety legislation. Islington's Environmental Health teams ensure strict enforcement of food hygiene in Islington and the use of food action zones, short sharp inspection approaches and the development of alternative interventions.

Education and awareness activities include Safer Food, Better Business courses, an information pack which is sent to all new businesses registering in Islington, education on the effects of climate change, continuous development of the website and promotion of the London 'Scores on Doors' Scheme. This scheme enables consumers to access information on the latest inspection of a business in a 5 stars scoring system. Zero stars indicates a poor performing business while 5 stars indicates excellence. As well as consumer confidence, it also provides an incentive for businesses to maintain good standards and thus increase their star rating.

### **Enforcement of labelling legislation**

The Environmental Health Team enforces labelling regulations including language on the label, pricing, weight marking, allergen labelling and nutritional labelling enabling members of the public to make informed choices about the food they are buying. Food standards inspections are carried out where appropriate and formal enforcement action is taken where there is a continuing breach of legislation.

### **Enforcement of imported food legislation**

Sampling of imported food and surveillance of premises known to sell imported foods is regularly undertaken and includes the routine seizure and destruction of illegally imported products of animal origin. Routine enforcement action is also in place for illegally imported foods of non-animal origin such as chilli powder.

Education and awareness raising seminars are regularly conducted on these subjects for businesses in Islington.

### **Promoting good food hygiene to older people**

A Food Standards Agency funded project promoting good food hygiene in the home to older people is currently being implemented in the borough. The programme is being delivered using a game of bingo specially designed around hygiene to older residents at community centres, lunch clubs and day groups. Participants also receive goody bags including fridge thermometers and cleaning products.

## **12. Business projects**

### **Street Markets**

There are currently 7 regular street markets and a farmers' market in Islington. Street markets and farmers' markets are a great source of good food and often provide an

invaluable social experience – an opportunity to meet food producers as well as neighbours. Markets also leave a smaller carbon footprint contributing to reducing environmental impacts on the borough. The Council's Street Trading Strategy aims to create a dynamic street trading and market experience that is diverse and vibrant and adds value to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Islington.

## **13. Food and waste**

### **Love Food Hate Waste**

Islington Council is a partner in the "Love Food, Hate Waste" campaign which aims to raise awareness of the need to reduce the amount of food that is thrown away, and how doing this will benefit both consumers and the environment. This project is also supported by a number of local and regional partners including the Community Kitchens Project and the North London Waste Authority.

### **The Plastic Bag Campaign**

Several local communities in Islington, including Newington Green and Highbury Barn, have launched their own campaigns to 'ban' the use of plastic bags in their local area. These communities have encouraged local shops to stop using plastic bags and promoted the use of reusable bags by customers.

### **Composting**

To help Islington get composting the Council holds free composting workshops throughout the year and has established a network of 'Master Composters', trained volunteers who share composting knowledge and expertise. Islington's residents and schools can also purchase a range of composters including Green Cone food digesters, Green Johanna hot composters, and wormeries, at subsidised prices.

### **Residential Food Waste Recycling**

Food and green waste are collected for recycling from all street properties. Cooked and uncooked waste can be recycled in the brown food container provided and special biobags are also available for use in the food waste scheme. The scheme collects meat and fish scraps, fruit and vegetable peelings, dairy products, cut flowers, tea bags and coffee grinds.

### **Business Food Waste Recycling**

Islington Council worked with the London Development Agency (LDA) to pilot an innovative food waste recycling project with businesses. This developed convenient and cost effective services to make it easier for businesses in Islington to recycle cooked and uncooked food waste and divert this waste from landfill, reducing greenhouse gases. Islington Council provided participants with biodegradable bags, kitchen caddies and wheeled bins and the waste was collected by the Council's contractor. Following the success of the trials in 2009, the Council is now rolling out a commercial food waste service to other businesses across the borough.

## **14. Schools and Children's Centre programmes**

Cambridge Education, NHS Islington and Islington Council are jointly involved in running a number of food-related programmes in schools and children's centres in Islington. These include:

### **The healthy school and healthy children's centre programmes**

These programmes support schools, pupil referral units, children's centres and other early years settings to become healthier places for staff, children and young people to work, learn and enjoy. They also develop projects and activities to address specific health priorities.

Both programmes incorporate a range of healthy eating standards including a whole school food policy, opportunities to learn about healthy eating and cooking, easily available drinking water, availability and promotion of healthier food options, consultations with children and young people about food choices, support for Unicef's Baby Friendly Initiative and targeted work with more vulnerable individuals and families.

### **Healthy eating and cooking project with children's centres**

Funded by the Food Standards Agency, University College London is carrying out an action research project with children's centres. The project will look at factors influencing preschool children's diets, the promotion of healthier eating practices in the family environment, dietary problems, food policies, activities and training in the centres. In addition, the project will seek to promote healthy eating in the centres and in the family setting and conduct a pilot study to assess its feasibility, acceptability and impact.

### **Get Cooking! Islington Healthy Schools Recipe Book**

A comprehensive recipe book containing recipes in line with healthy eating messages, and including guidance on practical food education has been published and distributed to all schools, pupil referral units and children's centres.

### **Whole school food policy**

59 out of 61 schools in Islington have developed a whole school food policy as part of their work within the Healthy School programme. A programme of support is provided to help schools review their policy. This support includes professional development, audits of current practice and advice on policy.

### **Water in schools**

The 'Water in Schools' project encourages schools to provide easy access to drinking water including 'water on desks' through staff training, information for parents and children and support for water provision.

### **Cooking outside the curriculum**

There are several ongoing programmes in secondary schools and pupil referral units working with children to encourage cooking outside of time-tabled lessons. Work has also been carried out with the Whittington hospital class and with school cookery clubs.

### **Family kitchen**

'Family kitchen' is an after school cookery club for parents, carers and their children. The club provides activities on learning to cook and shop for nutritious, affordable meals. Eleven primary schools will have carried out the six week 'family kitchen' programme by 2010.

### **Packed lunches**

Training and support is provided to all primary school staff on running practical sessions for parents on how to make up a healthy packed lunch. A web-based package for schools has also been created to provide guidance for parents on what to include in their child's packed lunch.

### **Licence to cook**

Islington Healthy Schools team supports secondary and special schools to deliver the national 'Licence to Cook' programme. This enables students to learn to cook and to understand the principles of diet and nutrition, health and safety and wise food shopping.

### **School meals and meals on wheels**

Islington Council has adopted a sustainable foods policy for its school meals and meals on wheels catering contract. The Council works in partnership with Caterlink to continually increase the use of raw, unprocessed ingredients and, where the price is comparative, to

purchase organic options. The Council is committed to working towards the targets of the Food for Life programme including a minimum requirement of 50% of fresh produce to be purchased from sustainable, local sources. In addition, the criteria also specify that 75% of dishes are freshly prepared and high welfare chicken, eggs and pork products are served (at least Freedom Food or Free Range). Non-meat dishes are also being promoted as part of a balanced, climate-friendly diet. Caterlink has now achieved a Bronze catering award from Food for Life Catering Mark and are working towards the silver catering award. Islington is also actively working to encourage the uptake of school meals and is providing free school meals for all. All school meals within Islington currently adhere to the National Nutritional Standards.

### **Growing and nature projects**

Work is underway with two secondary schools and twelve primary schools to promote growing and gardening in school grounds. Workshops have been conducted on topics such as seed planting and how to grow and use herbs with over 1,500 pupils engaged.

### **The Garden Classroom Project**

As part of the Edible Islington initiative local social enterprise, the Garden Classroom is working with three schools to create food growing spaces within their grounds and link them to food growing in local community spaces. The scheme delivers workshops which enable pupils to explore where their food comes from, with hands on experience and trips to local farms and markets.

### **Sustainable food training**

In collaboration with the Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency the Healthy Schools Team and Food for Life Partnership are developing training for teachers around the "Food and Drink" doorway of the Sustainable Schools Framework. The training will enable attendees to lead workshops most appropriate to their schools, exploring issues such as food growing in schools, sustainability and the social and economic impacts of food choices.

### **Working with the Duke of Cambridge**

Both Thornhill Primary School, a flagship Food for Life School, and Kate Greenaway Nursery School and Children's Centre have worked with the UK's first and only gastropub to be certified by the Soil Association to develop menus based around seasonal, fresh produce that is mostly organic and locally sourced. This approach which promotes sustainable, healthy diets also involved re-thinking the role of food in school life.

## SECTION 6: What we will do Next

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In developing the three themes set out in earlier sections, the Islington Food Strategy has set itself the overall aim of:

'Improving individual, community and environmental well-being by making healthy and sustainable food available and accessible to all.'

This Strategy will be accompanied by an Action Plan setting out detailed actions towards this aim, to be delivered by a partnership of organisations across the borough including the statutory, voluntary and business sectors. Further work is needed to engage local people and empower smaller organisations to help deliver change within our local food system. However, the intention is to facilitate and guide joint working between community and statutory initiatives to address problems and find solutions. Drawn from the different sectors, a Food Strategy Partnership will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Strategy and the regular monitoring and updating of the Action Plan.

Building on the extensive work already under way in Islington, and detailed in Section 5, the Food Strategy and its Action Plan will encompass ten key objectives. It is recognised, of course, that many actions will address more than one objective: a local food growing project for example can contribute simultaneously towards the provision of a healthier diet, the supply of affordable food and a reduction in environmentally damaging food miles. Nonetheless, the ten objectives summarise the outcomes that partners across the borough are seeking to achieve through the adoption of an integrated approach to food issues. The ten objectives are summarised below.

### **Objective One: Promoting a healthy diet**

This objective centres on the targeted and appropriate dissemination of information and good practice on what constitutes a healthy diet and its relationship to health and wellbeing and on making this meaningful to people. It involves addressing the appropriateness of diet at different stages of life and seeking to overcome cultural and behavioural obstacles to healthy eating. It incorporates work on obesity, breast feeding and on food labelling, and encompasses the social marketing approach being developed across Islington. The '5-a-Day' and 'Change 4 Life' campaigns are among many examples of work already under way in this area.

### **Objective Two: Making healthy food accessible**

The promotion of a healthy diet needs to be accompanied by efforts to ensure that both the ingredients and processes of eating healthily are available to all. This includes tackling the issue of 'food deserts' and ensuring access to fresh food and vegetables across the borough as well as tackling obstacles such as a lack of knowledge on the preparation of healthy meals. It also involves ensuring high standards in the food that partner organisations themselves provide, whether in school dinners, meals on wheels, residential establishments, day centres or workplaces. The 'Family Kitchen' programme and the 'Eat Your Market' demonstrations are examples of ongoing work in this area.

### **Objective Three: Making healthy food affordable**

Healthy foods need not only to be available but to be affordable. This objective addresses the issue of food poverty and the fact that unhealthy, energy dense processed foods can often be more affordable than healthy ones. It will contain both actions to develop and promote affordable outlets and food-based income support measures. The 'Healthy Start Scheme' and "Manor Gardens community cafe' are examples of ongoing work in this area.

**Objective Four: Promoting safer food**

Healthy food must be safe food. This objective tackles the issue of increased standards of food hygiene and a reduction in the incidence of food poisoning. This will be done through promoting good practice in personal food preparation and developing good hygiene practice in both public and private sector food premises. The Older people's food hygiene campaign, Eat Your Market and Food Action Zones are examples of innovative work under way in this area.

**Objective Five: Reducing our environmental footprint**

To reduce our negative environmental impacts, on energy use and climate change, on biodiversity, on the wastage of water and other natural resources, we need, first to disseminate the information that will enable people to make informed choices. We need, too, to set an example in our own organisations and in the way we manage our procurement. And finally, we need to demonstrate practical alternatives to environmentally harmful over-packaged and over-processed foods, whether through organic food projects, the promotion of seasonal foods or through specific campaigns such as Islington Council's stand against bottled water. The schools Sustainable Food Policy and the Green Living Centre's seasonal food advice are examples of work already under way in this area.

**Objective Six: Promoting local food**

A major environmental impact can arise from the distance travelled by our food from production to plate. Though the issue of food miles is complex, as the way food is grown stored and displayed also determines its carbon intensity, there is no doubt that promoting more locally produced food is a significant environmental benefit. This entails encouraging retailers to stock, and consumers to purchase, more local food but also the exploration of alternative outlets such as the recent rapid growth of Farmers' Markets. Most of all, it entails enabling and promoting the direct experience of growing your own food and the many benefits which arise from this. The 'Edible Islington' campaign and the Islington Organic Growers Network are examples of ongoing projects in this area.

**Objective Seven: Promoting ethical food**

The food we eat impacts not only on our own health and that of our environment but on the living conditions and life chances of those who produce it. Islington has already demonstrated partnership working in achieving its borough-wide Fairtrade status. This objective seeks to ensure that we renew and extend our involvement in ethical trading, embedding fair trade in our own organisation and promoting fair trade outlets and events across the borough. It also includes an increased awareness of the impacts of food production on animal welfare, whether it is the conditions of factory farming, battery production or unsustainable approaches to fishing. The programme of Fairtrade events in schools and the Council's stand on ethical food within its own catering are examples of work in these areas.

**Objective Eight: Reducing food waste**

The wastage of food is an ethical, an environmental and, increasingly, a financial issue. This objective builds on the 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign to highlight the scale and the impacts of this problem and to promote waste reduction and recycling, both from domestic usage and from business. It will include practical actions such as the local campaigns on food packaging and plastic bags, projects to encourage composting and the extension and promotion of food waste collection schemes. Innovative projects already under way in this area include the Business Food Waste Recycling Pilot and the 'Master Composter' volunteers.

**Objective Nine: Celebrating food and diversity**

Islington has a great diversity of cultures and is home to a huge variety of national cuisines. It is a London centre for good restaurants. It has several thriving street markets and a

growing Farmers' Market. This objective seeks to celebrate and promote a vibrant food sector in the borough, highlighting Islington as a centre for good food – and particularly for healthy food – and sharing awareness of the great diversity of food cultures in our borough.

**Objective Ten: Reducing inequalities in health**

Those groups who tend to consume a poor diet such as low income households, BME communities, children and young people and people with mental health, physical or learning disabilities also suffer from health inequalities. This objective seeks to reduce inequalities in health caused by unhealthy diets by identifying and targeting the groups in Islington that are at greatest risk. It is a reminder that our strategy needs to combine both universal and targeted interventions, aiming to achieve equitable access to healthy food and uptake of healthier options by all.

## APPENDIX A: The Islington Context

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This appendix sets out key information about Islington that has helped shape the strategy.

### 1. Islington's people

- More than 195,500 people live in Islington. The population is expected to further increase by around 9% between 2009 and 2019, to 231,371.
- Islington's population is very transient with over 20,000 people moving in and out of the borough each year. This movement does not affect the overall number of people in the borough.
- Of those who reside in the borough 51% are female while 49% are male.
- Islington has a relatively young population with 45% of Islington's population being between the ages of 25 – 44.
- The population of Islington is ageing with the greatest increase in population by 2026 estimated to be in the 45 – 64 age group and the greatest decrease estimated to be in the 15 – 29 age group.
- Islington has a very diverse population with 50,000 or so Islington residents identifying themselves as being from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group.
- At the end of March 2009, 95 asylum seekers were supported by Islington Council.
- 40,728 Islington residents were on the disability register in Islington in August 2009.
- Only 79.1% of men and 64.7% of women of working age are economically active, far less than the average for London. The increased need for workers in Islington has largely been met by employing people from outside the borough.

### 2. Islington's health

- 86% of mothers in Islington breastfeed their babies at birth, compared to an average of 84% in London and 70% in England. Three-quarters (74%) of mothers in Islington are still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks after birth, consistent with the figure for London (72%) but higher than England (49%)
- An estimated 27% of adults in Islington consume five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, broadly similar to the estimated 26% of adults in England as a whole.
- Islington has the second lowest life expectancy rate for men in London and the sixth lowest for women. Lowest life expectancy for men is in the Tollington ward (72.6 years) and for women in the Finsbury Park ward (78.1 years).
- Circulatory diseases are the major killer in Islington accounting for 35% of all deaths in 2005-07.
- Cancer accounted for 27% of all deaths in Islington in 2005-07 and 33% of premature deaths. About one third of all cancers are caused by poor diets. A higher proportion of men die prematurely from cancer which is associated with historically higher levels of smoking amongst men.
- Approximately 7,530 people in Islington are estimated to have diabetes. Diabetes is however a significant risk factor for deaths from other conditions such as coronary heart disease and stroke.
- It is estimated that almost 17% of Islington adults are obese compared to 20.5% across London and 21.4% in England.
- Islington has higher rates of infant mortality than the average for both London and England. A higher proportion of babies are born with low birth weight in Islington compared with London and England.

- Disabled people in Islington experience significant health inequalities and reduced health outcomes, with mortality rates amongst some groups five to 10 years below that of other residents.
- The rate of mental health problems is estimated to be high compared to the rest of the country with risk factors such as deprivation, refugee status and being a looked after child significantly higher in Islington.
- 17.9% of Islington's residents reported that they have a long term limiting illness, higher than 15.5% of London's residents. Adjusted for Islington's age and sex structure, this is 24% higher than the national rate.

### **3. Islington's environment**

- Islington has the second highest population density in England and Wales with 80% of its households in flats.
- Islington has low levels of public open space and is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest Area of Natural Deficiency in London with 33% of the borough currently defined as deficient in access to nature (more than 1km walking distance from a publicly accessible Site of Nature Conservation Importance).
- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in Islington increased by 4.2% between 2005 and 2006. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person also increased by 3% between 2005 and 2006. Around 54% of Islington's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were from commercial energy use while 32.5% was from domestic energy use and 15.5% from road transport. Islington has a target to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 6 tonnes per person from the current 6.5 by 2011.
- Islington households create an average of one tonne of waste per annum. 20% of this is organic waste and can be recycled or composted. A monitoring pilot concluded that Islington Council collects 22.28 kg of food waste from each household per annum through the door to door recycling service. Nearly 2900 tonnes of food and garden waste were collected for composting between April 2008 and March 2009.

### **4. Deprivation in Islington**

- Islington is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in England and 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived in London. 115 out of 118 of Islington's Super Output Areas (small geographical areas) fall into 40% of most deprived in the country.
- 30% of Islington households have an income of less than £10,000 per annum.
- Islington has a high level of worklessness with a higher proportion of working age residents than the national average at 67%, but a lower proportion of those who are in employment or actively seeking work at 72%. Unemployment in Islington at 9% is higher than in London, 7%, and the UK 5%.
- Islington has a very high overall rate of benefit recipients and a very high number of children in families where the parents are on out of work benefits.

### **5. Education in Islington**

- Islington contains 45 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and three special schools as well as five Pupil Referral Units.
- There are sixteen children centres in Islington. Every family in the borough is no more than walking distance away from a Children's Centre.
- There are an additional 70 private, voluntary and independent children's centres in the borough.
- Three Universities and Colleges have their main campuses in Islington: City University, London Metropolitan University and City and Islington College.

## 6. Food and drink in Islington

- The food and drink business sector in Islington is significantly large with nearly 2000 outlets located in the borough.
- 10% of businesses in Islington are restaurants. However, they only employ an estimated 5% of the entire Islington workforce.
- Two thirds of all restaurants are located south of Highbury Corner.
- Retail (food/drink) accounts for 4% of all businesses in the borough and employs an estimated 4% of the entire Islington workforce. More than 90% of retail (food/drink) businesses employ 25 or less staff.
- This sector includes some of the big employers such as Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Waitrose.
- Bars account for nearly 4% of all businesses in the borough and employ an estimated 3% of the entire Islington workforce. Two thirds of bars in Islington employ between 2 and 25 people, making them bigger employers, on average, than restaurants. This sector is concentrated in the south of the borough with 70% of bars located south of Highbury Corner.

## APPENDIX B: The Policy Context

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The Islington Food Strategy is related to a number of other strategies at national, regional and local level. These are:

### National

- **Healthy Weight Healthy Lives**

A cross-government strategy for England outlining the Government's response to tackling child obesity and introducing a target that aims to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels by 2020.

- **National Child Measurement Programme**

An element of the Government's work programme on childhood obesity, operated jointly by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families and established in 2005.

As part of the programme, children in Reception and Year 6 are weighed and measured each year to inform local planning and service delivery and gather data to allow analysis of trends in growth patterns and obesity.

- **Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

This report by the Cabinet Office released in 2008, provides a new approach by national government to incorporating sustainability into the national food system. It shifts the focus from a traditional farming focused strategy to increasingly recognising the role of the consumer and wider issues of sustainability.

- **Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy**

Published in 2002 this sets out how industry, Government and consumers can work together to secure a sustainable future for the farming and food industries. The strategy concentrates on the farming and food industries as viable industries contributing to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities.

- **Sustainable Schools Strategy**

Sustainable Schools is a Department for Children, Schools and Families strategy which builds on the commitment of care for oneself, for each other and for the environment. All schools are expected to be sustainable by 2020. The sustainable schools framework has eight 'doorways' through which schools may begin or extend sustainability activities and operations within any aspect of school life, including 'food and drink'. All criteria of the healthy eating strand in healthy schools can be linked to the food and drink doorway in sustainable schools and can be used to enhance the healthy eating strand.

### Regional

- **Healthy and Sustainable Food for London: The Mayor's Food Strategy**

The Food Strategy for London, launched in 2006, sets out a practical framework to help deliver a food system that supports London to become a world-class sustainable city by 2016. The London Food Strategy focuses on five themes; health, environment, economy, social/cultural and security and incorporate the cross-cutting themes of health, equality and sustainability. The broad objectives of the London Food Strategy are to:

- improve Londoners' health and reduce health inequalities via the food they eat

- reduce the negative environmental impacts of London's food system
- support a vibrant food economy
- celebrate and promote London's food culture
- develop London's food security.

- **London Food**

The London Food Board leads on food matters in the capital and was set up in 2004 by the Mayor of London. London Food represents the diversity of London's food system and helps develop and deliver the London Food Strategy.

## Local

- **Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Islington Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) develops a vision of a safer, stronger and more sustainable community. Led by the Islington Strategic Partnership, in consultation with residents and local organisations it sets out objectives and actions to achieve this vision. The objectives of the Sustainable Communities Strategy are to:

- reduce poverty
- improve access for all
- realise everyone's potential

- **Local Area Agreement (LAA) Indicators**

Local Area Agreements (LAA) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and key partners at a local level. Islington's current LAA sets out targets between 2008 – 2011 and covers a range of key areas of priority. These targets are measured against national indicators and local indicators.

Whilst the targets cover a breadth of areas, many of these can be related to the food system in Islington. These include:

Theme	Action	National Indicator
Health	Reduce mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	NI 121
	Reduce obesity amongst primary school age children in Year 6	NI 56
Environmental	Reduce per capita carbon dioxide emissions	N1 186
	Adapt to climate change	NI 188
	Increase the percentage of businesses that recycle	Local
Economic	Reduce number of working age people on out of work benefits	NI 152
	Increase participation in volunteering	NI 6
Social/Cultural	Increase the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.	NI 1

- **Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)**

The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is the new statutory inspection and assessment framework, by which annual assessments of local public services are made. It is a joint assessment by a group of six independent watchdogs including the Audit Commission, Care Quality Commission and OFSTED.

CAA provides a snapshot of quality of life in a local authority area; a judgement about how well public services are together addressing local priorities now and with a view to the future; and an assessment of each individual public service. In part, this draws on an analysis of the performance of local public services against the 189 national indicators and looks for how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve and deliver sustainable improvements.

- **Islington Council's Corporate Priorities**

Islington Council's corporate priorities and its One Islington Vision aims to build a borough that is:

- a greener, cleaner and safer place to live and work
- a borough of strong, thriving and active communities, where people are involved in the decisions that affect their lives
- a place where people of all backgrounds are able to achieve their full potential.

- **NHS Islington's Strategic Objectives**

For 2008/09 NHS Islington set out the following strategic objectives:

- improve the health of local people especially targeting those with the worst health experience
- improve the quality of the patient experience
- design and deliver the best care pathways
- improve and expand services delivered closer to home and commission acute and specialist hospitals to provide only those services that they do best
- achieve financial balance and free up resources to deliver the key objectives

- **Local Development Framework**

Islington is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF), a portfolio of documents that will set out the future planning policies for the borough up to 2025. The key document within the LDF is the Core Strategy, which sets out where and how change will happen in Islington in the future, what supporting infrastructure will be needed, and how we can reduce negative impacts on the environment, whilst protecting and enhancing it. It also contains policies on housing, employment, retail and open space. The Core Strategy will be supported by a range of accompanying documents that will set out in more detail potential development sites, policies to manage development and plans for specific parts of the borough. The core strategy is due for adoption in early 2011 with the range of other documents being completed up until 2012. There are policies emerging from these documents that will be relevant to the objectives of the food strategy. These include the provision of food growing spaces, the promotion of a diverse retail offer and support for local shops.

- **Health Inequalities Strategy**

This strategy brings together actions on the major lifestyle factors that cause health inequalities in Islington. These include diet, smoking, lack of physical activity, alcohol and drug use, mental health, sexual health and teenage pregnancy. The strategy sets out NHS Islington's and Islington Council's plans until 2012 to help local people and communities improve their health and wellbeing.

- **Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan**

The Sustainability Strategy draws together work from across the Council and sets sustainability targets for future action. It identifies specific local impacts of global changes and seeks to engage the whole community in responding to these, concentrating specifically on areas where local action can be effective. The Action Plan prioritises key areas: the environment and the economy, responding to climate change, managing our resources, minimising negative impacts, the ecology of Islington and sustainability and food.

- **State of the Environment Report**

This report, updated annually, provides a snapshot of the health of Islington's built and natural environment and covers diverse issues from climate change and waste to air quality and biodiversity. It also includes a section on public opinion and provides a framework to monitor and understand environmental trends, celebrate successes and prioritise action.

- **Islington's Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan**

The annual Waste Minimisation and Recycling Action Plan for Islington sets out practical measures to reduce overall waste levels and increase recycling in the borough. It aims to provide excellent recycling services that meet the needs of residents and businesses and to reduce the amounts of municipal waste sent for disposal via landfill or incineration. The action plan includes the reduction of food waste and recycling/composting as a key area of focus.

- **The Pro-Active Strategy**

Pro-Active, the borough's physical activity partnership provided a previously tried and tested model which was adapted for the development of the Islington Food Strategy. The Pro-Active Strategy and Action Plan aims to raise physical activity levels across the borough and covers ten key objectives.

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