
7. Eat Well



Defining a Vision for 2030

We have a problem with our food. We are moving less and eating more. As a result 63% of adults in the UK are overweight or obese, while 30% of food produced in Europe is wastedⁱ. A diet focused on meat and dairy creates a massive emissions problem, and because much of our food is imported, further emissions are created during transportation. Industrial agriculture, through reliance on chemicals and general land degradation, is one of the primary causes of environmental breakdown world-wide. Processed food is typically low in nutritional quality. By addressing our dietary issues (both in terms of volume and balance), reducing waste, and growing more of our food locally we can dramatically reduce the carbon impact of our food supply.

Of course, issues of choice and cost need to be addressed. However, we need to challenge the perceived advantages of supermarket-dominated food supply chains. We have never been more disconnected from the source of our food. Food education and awareness remain relatively low, and the ease with which some foodstuffs can be produced and sold relatively cheaply masks the global injustice of international food production. Despite this focus on cheap produce, many in the UK still suffer food poverty, a situation exacerbated by the pandemic, with many families facing the winter deciding whether to put food on the table or heat their homes.

By 2030...

Across Dorset no one lives without access to sufficient, affordable, good-quality food. Our diets are more balanced and food waste is virtually non-existent.

Through awareness raising and education there is no longer a disconnect between town and country; our food chains are transparent, and much more of our food is produced locally. Within urban areas, common land is extensively used for community gardens, carbon management or biodiversity improvement. Market gardens are flourishing. Abandoned land has been brought into one or more of the above programmes. The farming community has been supported to make the necessary changes to practices and land use. The decline in species and ecosystems has been halted. More people grow their own food, many through community garden schemes, supported by the provision of common land for vegetable plots. Every neighbourhood has a co-operative scheme where growers share ideas, experiences, seeds and produce. Farmers markets are commonplace and open to community garden producers.

Consumption of beef and lamb has been reduced by 92%, pig and chicken products by 58% and dairy consumption by 59%. Locally, with appropriate support, farmers have been able to transition, growing more vegetables or to repurpose land for nature-based solutions.

Assessment Framework

How are we performing currently?

The framework below sets out the criteria against which the current status can be assessed. Aspirational objectives are then set to encourage progress towards the vision. Like land use, diet is a much more complex area than, say, renewable energy provision (which can be measured as a specific percentage of requirements). For this initial assessment we have taken the Zero Carbon Britain model (explained further below) and set out a rough set of steps towards achieving this. Further work will be needed to set out clearer goals and expectations.

Category	Assessment Criteria
1	Little evidence of any attempts to improve diet or local food production
2	Localised initiatives being undertaken but little evidence of any coordinated action across the county.
3	Detailed plans of what improved diets and food production could look like (broadly aligned with the ZCB vision) have been created at Council or other stakeholder level. Specific initiatives in support of this are in design, development, and implementation.
4	Progress towards the county plan / ZCB vision is clear with notable changes in the provision of local food and improved diets. Plans are being designed and implemented to complete the shift.
5	Food production and diets across the county align with at least 90% of the ZCB vision (or an enhanced version developed with local input). Plans are in place to close the remaining gaps.

2021 Assessment

2	Localised initiatives being undertaken but little evidence of any coordinated action across the county.
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2022 Assessment

2	We have not been made aware of any significant developments in this area during 2022 to change our assessment.
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2022 Observations

Most of the analysis in our original report remains valid at the end of 2022. However, we have noted the following developments during the year.

Connecting communities with growing their own food.

Planet Doctorsⁱⁱ is working with ABRI Housing Association to engage with residents of the 82 homes on Beaufort Road estate in Southbourne to encourage them to grow their own fruit and vegetables in small neighbourhood hubs in a Grow your own rainbow garden project. A new community kitchen garden designed to teach disadvantaged adults about growing different types of seasonal produce has been officially launched by The CRUMBS Project in Bournemouthⁱⁱⁱ. Seed2Plate^{iv} is re-purposing plots of land to grow FREE fresh fruit and veg

for local low-income families. The idea for Seed2Plate came from a group of unemployed people who recognised a need within their own communities for a growing space to provide free fresh fruit and veg for low-income families unable to afford a healthy diet. There are currently two main growing plots, in Weymouth and Wimborne, and plans for community growing gardens in Ferndown, Turlin Moor and Somerford.

Reducing food waste.

Southern Co-op has partnered with Too Good to Go^v, to allow customers to buy surplus food and drink products which are near to their expiry date at three of Southern Co-op's 16 stores in Dorset. The Magic Bags contain a range of products from sandwiches, pizza, fruits, dairy, baked goods or desserts and will be available for customers to buy via the Too Good To Go app.

Food poverty & the cost-of-living crisis.

More people are having to rely on food banks as the cost-of-living crisis bites. The number of people using Poole's food banks rose by 77% from January to October 2022^{vi}. Wimborne Food Bank^{vii} supports on average 30 local families a week with food as well as offering financial and money debt advice. It also helps fund essential home appliances such as fridges and cookers. More than 250 children and adults came together to enjoy Wimborne Food Bank's first Family Fun Day on the Wimborne Rugby Club pitch.

Sustainable food.

The Hive Beach Café^{viii} is located on the beach at Burton Bradstock on the Jurassic Coast. Sustainability is top of their agenda, using locally sourced, sustainable ingredients and supporting local suppliers wherever possible. In 2022, they introduced Notpla seaweed-coated takeaway boxes and won Bridport's Plastic Free Champion award^{ix}.

Vegan food festivals.

In September 2022, the Bournemouth Vegan Festival^x celebrated everything vegan from food and toiletries to pet products and shoes. Visitors found more than 60 stalls showcasing "the best of the vegan lifestyle".

Jurassic Feast

The 'How to Thrive and Survive' restaurateurs forum, hosted by Tom Robinson at Tom's Lyme Regis, Jurassic Feast^{xi} brought together local food and drink businesses including a number of Jurassic Feast partners to share their experiences and discuss ideas for addressing the challenges they are currently facing. Tom shared with fellow food and drink business owners the cost savings arising from a comprehensive audit of every aspect of their business.

Future of Food.

Two cameras have been installed to live stream footage of seaweed at Jurassic Sea Farms^{xii}. The data will provide a better understanding of seaweed growth and biofouling and to optimise harvest scheduling. With further research, such a system could have big benefits for the wider industry – not only maximising the economic benefit seaweed could offer, but also the environmental and social contributions it can bring through carbon capture and as a healthy food source.

One Health 22 conference.

In March 2022, Dorset LEP hosted the Sustainable Agri-innovation and Foodtech^{xiii} conference at Kingston

Maurward College, bringing more than 60 senior decision makers from academia, industry, and government together for a day of advice, knowledge sharing and planning. The focus was on the design of sustainable, low carbon food technology (including sustainable agri-tech, aquaculture, and transformative food production solutions in farming, etc.) that optimises food security and maximises the production of a good quality, safe and sustainable food supply for humans and animals.

What do we need to focus on in 2023?

- Continue to support ways to connect people with their food, such as through community and school growing initiatives.
- Continue to invest in, and celebrate Dorset produce.
- Support communities' access to affordable, nutritious and plant-based food to all who need it.

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ⁱ <https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/research-reports/zero-carbon-britain-rising-to-the-climate-emergency/> p85

ⁱⁱ <https://yourplanetdoctors.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.crumbs.org.uk/news/community-kitchen-garden-highlighting-food-cycle-from-seed-to-plate-is-officially-launched>

^{iv} <https://www.dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk/seed2plate/>

^v <https://www.grocerygazette.co.uk/2022/02/04/southern-co-op-cuts-down-on-food-waste-with-too-good-to-go-partnership/>

^{vi} <https://www.dorsetview.co.uk/dramatic-increase-in-poole-food-bank-users/#.Y674rHbP23A>

^{vii} <https://stouravonmagazine.co.uk/food-banks-first-family-fun-day/>

^{viii} <https://www.hivebeachcafe.co.uk/about>

^{ix} <https://www.grocerygazette.co.uk/2022/02/04/southern-co-op-cuts-down-on-food-waste-with-too-good-to-go-partnership/>

^x <https://www.notpla.com/2022/04/29/bringing-sustainable-seaweed-coating-to-the-diners-of-dorset-notpla-and-the-hive-beach-company/>

^{xi} [https://mailchi.mp/facef90c22af/bridport-food-matters-20247872?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/facef90c22af/bridport-food-matters-20247872?e=[UNIQID])

^{xii} <https://5gruraldorset.org/2022/06/14/5g-connected-underwater-cameras-capture-seaweed-growth-in-dorset/>

^{xiii} <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/one-health>