



Food Chains 4 EU Action Plan for Greater Manchester



Produced by each region, the **action plan** is a document providing details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any). If the same policy instrument is addressed by several partners, only one action plan is required.



Table of Contents

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Part I – General information.....	4
Part II – Policy context	5
Part IV – Details of the actions envisaged	7
ACTION 1: Strengthen strategic leadership for whole food system development in Greater Manchester.....	7
ACTION 2: Establish a Food Innovation and Enterprise Fund in Oldham that supports Northern Roots project.....	12



Executive Summary

This Action Plan has been developed through Interregional Learning with partners in the Food Chains 4EU project along with detailed consultation with stakeholders in Greater Manchester.

The overall objective of this project in Greater Manchester (GM) is:

- To improve governance and opportunity around the food industry in GM in order to enable the development of innovation in the food value chain that capitalises on emerging opportunities.

The plan aims to support this process through the following two Actions:

ACTION 1: Strengthen strategic leadership for whole food system development in Greater Manchester

The impact of this work will be the development, publication and implementation of a food strategy and associated series of work plans that supports the strengthening of regional innovation policies to build sustainable food chains.

As a result, we expect to see food included to a greater extent in allied GM policies and stronger integration of innovation and economic development policies with social and environmental goals associated with food.

ACTION 2: Establish a Food Innovation and Enterprise Fund in Oldham that supports the Northern Roots project

The number of grants to be awarded will be determined as part of the development of the governance arrangements in milestone 2.

The purpose of the fund is to support the creation of a thriving network of food and growing businesses in Oldham and to lay the foundation for developing and delivering the ambitions of the large-scale 160-acre 'Northern Roots' project.



Part I – General information

Project: Strengthening regional innovation policies to build sustainable food chains
(Food Chains 4 EU)

Partner organisations: Oldham Council and Manchester Metropolitan University

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: United Kingdom

NUTS2 region: Greater Manchester

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Part II – Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Greater Manchester European Structural Investment Fund 2014-2020 (GM ESIF)

Background

Greater Manchester (GM) is a devolved city-region with a population of 2.78 million¹ within ten metropolitan boroughs: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. Governance of GM has changed in recent years as part of the transition towards the devolution of power from central government. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) established the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011 and as part of the devolution process, GM elected its first Mayor in 2017. Devolution has given GM additional powers relating to public transport, skills, housing, regeneration, waste management, carbon neutrality and planning permission.

GM is the UK's largest city-regional economy outside London and attracts over one million international visitors annually. With a rich history of industrial innovation, initially stemming from the growth of its textile industry, GM has become an economically diverse city region that is not heavily dependent on any single sector. While the manufacturing industry is in decline, the service sector has been at the forefront of recent growth, with the business, finance and professional services driving employment and output growth over the past 10 years. Retail, hospitality & tourism, and health & social care are large employers in GM²; however, the sector faces new challenges with the prospect of higher tariffs for international trade, particularly in respect to food imports following the UK's exit from the European Union.

¹ [ONS](#) population estimates, 2016

² [New Economy](#), Deep Dive research report



The [GM Strategy](#) (along with the Local Industrial Strategy) is effectively one of the implementation documents of our policy instrument, the GM European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF). The Strategy, which was refreshed in 2017 in line with the election of the new Mayor, outlines ambitions for the future, highlighting ten priorities for the city-region.

While the food industry is economically, socially and culturally significant for the city-region, the 73-page strategy document refers to food only twice, both times in relation to the industrial strategy and manufacturing. The Strategy also makes no mention of food in relation to environmental or social sustainability. Food manufacturing alone employs around 20,000 people³ and over three-quarters of the world's top-25 food companies have bases in the borough of Wigan.⁴ There were 5,625 food and beverage service firms in Greater Manchester in 2014 and at a UK level, the food and beverage sector contributes to over three quarters of the revenue in the hospitality sector and employs 80% of the employees.⁵ We see this omission as a substantial gap in strategy and leadership, particularly given the important role of food in our economy, for our environment and for the health of our population.

³ [New Economy](#), Deep Dive research report

⁴ [New Economy](#), Deep Dive, Manufacturing report

⁵ [New Economy](#), Deep Dive, Hospitality report

Part IV – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Strengthen strategic leadership for whole food system development in Greater Manchester

1. The background

Learning from partner regions during the course of the project has underscored the importance of strategic and political leadership that is supportive of the food agenda. We have observed this through the role, responsibility and influence of leadership and political representation from partner regions, particularly Flevoland and Emilia-Romagna, where political leads have supported and sponsored the project and broader policy development in this area.

The GM peer review report, which was authored by project partners and invited experts from the partner regions, included a series of recommendations related to strategic policy leadership that cuts across the food system in GM. The specific recommendations included:

- Develop a regional food strategy and a focused action plan.
- Support better coordination of partnerships, networks, consortiums, charity initiatives, associations, and researchers.
- Develop a joint strategy addressing food poverty, sustainability and health.
- Develop a unique joint public-private regional working group to address this issue.
- Support the need of a specific office/person with responsibility for this agenda at the regional level.

The FC4EU Greater Manchester peer review took place during an important period for the city-region, feeding into a food-themed consultation event (GM Food Listening Event) in February 2018. The recommendations of the peer review were considered and refined by regional stakeholders, with the resulting recommendations being submitted to the GM Green Summit in March 2018. These recommendations included:

- Recognise the importance of food by establishing a cross sector, GM-wide, strategic governance mechanisms:
 - I. Endorse and resource a Greater Manchester food board, building on existing work, based on open and inclusive principles.
 - II. Sign up to the Milan Food Policy Pact.
 - III. Appoint a Chief Food Officer along with a political lead/s.
 - IV. Establish a road map that leads towards a cohesive food policy.

At the summit, the Mayor of Greater Manchester endorsed the stakeholder network 'Good Food Greater Manchester' as the official strategic food policy board for the region. This commitment was included in the resulting 'springboard' report from the summit that formed the basis for further development of strategic food policy leadership in the region, supported by FC4EU. This initial stage of development is represented in the figure below.

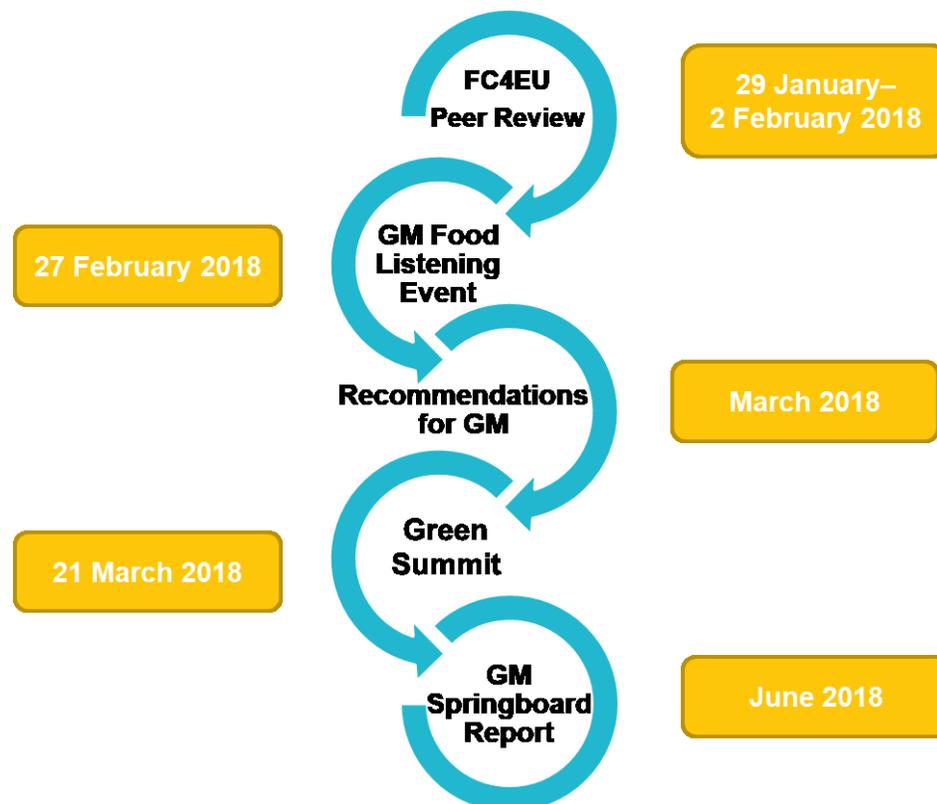


Figure 1. Initial project activities and strategic food work in Greater Manchester



This formative phase for FC4EU's work in GM provided the cornerstone for the development and refinement of this action. This has been achieved iteratively, through engagement both with learning and expertise from partner regions and by working with key stakeholders and institutional partners in GM. Through this work, the project team has continued to work to raise the profile of sustainable food at a strategic level.

In particular, we have taken inspiration from exchanges during project events, which illustrated how regions can make commitments to build sustainable food systems. One example was the benefit of becoming a signatory to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). In Bologna (Emilia Romagna) and Almere (Flevoland), we discussed how both regions had adopted the MUFPP. As early signatories to the MUFPP, both principal urban areas in the partner regions have benefitted from access to a robust framework for strategic policy action. Through subsequent work with FC4EU stakeholders in GM, the GM Mayor signed the pact in October 2019. This development has been key in providing the leadership platform to improved governance through the actions points below.

The Good Practice from Emilia Romagna "Support the food chain innovation through integrated approach" was instructive for us as it provided guidance and inspiration to aim for better coordination and resource optimization between different programmes related to food in our region. Their approach to involving food chain stakeholders and ensuring a joined up approach to policy implementation impressed our regional stakeholders and provided impetus to work towards similar goals in GM.

Interregional learning exchanges with project partners, and in particular, the recommendations of the GM FC4EU peer review (which identified food enterprise as one of four guiding themes), also led to the identification of the need for greater coordination between business support in the region and the development of strategic leadership for whole food system development in GM. The GM Business Growth Hub were key partners in this area.

In the summer of 2018, Good Food GM entered into a partnership with the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSCP), which comprises the 10 local authorities in GM alongside the region's National Health Service organisations, with the aim of enhancing food system leadership and strategic capacity in the region. This led to the commissioning of an Independent Strategic Review of Food Policy in the region that reported in May 2019. FC4EU supported the development of the review and the subsequent implementation of its findings, alongside our own learning from the project. As a consequence, both stakeholders: Good Food GM and GMHSCP are the key partners who will lead the implementation of the action.



2. Actions

- a) To develop a strategic approach to building sustainable food chains in GM led by the Good Food Greater Manchester cross-sectoral partnership in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.
- b) To support the development of a 'Food Leadership Team' involving key strategic leads from across the Greater Manchester policy arena.
- c) To use the MUFPP framework to guide the implementation of strategic action in this area.
- d) To involve the business community in strategic food work in Greater Manchester through collaboration between the Good Food Greater Manchester partnership and the Business Growth Hub.

3. Players involved

- **Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)** – The HSCP is a partnership between National Health Service organisations and Local Authorities in Greater Manchester. The HSCP signed an historic devolution deal with the UK government that allows it to take charge of its own health and social care spending, working together to improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of the 2.8 million people living in Greater Manchester.
- **Good Food Greater Manchester** – This is the cross-sectoral food policy partnership that seeks to support and enhance sustainable food activities across the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. It is endorsed by the Mayor and works closely with HSCP on developing and implementing food strategy development in GM.
- **Business Growth Hub** – the Business Growth Hub provides business support for SMEs across Greater Manchester. They have been heavily involved in the FC4EU project, with representatives attending learning events and peer reviews in Varna (BG), Maramures (RO), Emilia Romagna (IT) and Flevoland (NE). Their work is co-funded by the ERDF.



4. **Timeframe** (please indicate the schedule of activities to be accomplished)

1. August 2020 – The Food Strategy for Greater Manchester will be produced.
2. October 2021 – A Food Leadership Team will be established to support strategy implementation.
3. December 2022 – a Work Plan, along with monitoring framework (aligned with MUFPP), to support the implementation of the food strategy will be produced.
4. December 2023 – an evaluation of the Strategy and Action Plan impact to be produced and included in the Food Chains 4EU final report.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

Approximately £200,000 has been allocated by the GM Population Health Board to support this work through GM HSCP.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):

The cost above has been drawn from the NHS England Transformation Fund.

7. **KPIs and/or Expected impact and results of the policy improvement** (to be used for monitoring and evaluation)

The impact of this work will be the development, publication and implementation of a food strategy and associated series of work plans that supports the strengthening of regional innovation policies to build sustainable food chains.

As a result we expect to see food included to a greater extent in allied GM policies and stronger integration of innovation and economic development policies with social and environmental goals associated with food.

ACTION 2: Establish a Food Innovation and Enterprise Fund in Oldham that supports Northern Roots project

1. The background

This action has emerged as a key priority for the Food Chains project in Oldham and Manchester. At our peer review it was noted by the partner group that there will be considerable disruption to the support of businesses in the City Region. Irrespective of BREXIT and the implications from that we are currently at a crossroads in terms of funding the support offer. The current structural fund programme is ending, and this supports a huge proportion of the Business Growth network.

The peers recommended that some level of support be offered in the interim to food businesses.

During the course of the Food Chains 4EU project there were a number of initiatives that have helped inspire this action.

Oldham's ambition for our 'Northern Roots' project were partly helped by the work that is happening in Almere. We learnt about the ambition of the Floriade International Horticultural Expo in the Region of Flevoland and the focus on 'Growing Green Cities'. We also observed through the Peer Review, Learning Event and the Action Plan Development Session the role of the Floriade and focus on innovative enterprise including the Urban Greeners and FlevoFood entrepreneurs. We felt positive about the links between the Floriade and the Urban Greeners and the willingness/ability of the Province of Flevoland to make land available for entrepreneurs to strengthen enterprise through innovation and to generate income.

During the peer review in Flevoland, we also visited De Kemphaan, the most popular urban farm in the Netherlands. The farm's diverse approach focused on food production, education and training, sustainability and food enterprise within a metropolitan area. The initiative, which strives to support local entrepreneurship (including an on-site brewery) inspired the Greater Manchester partners to consider the links between the urban farm and Northern Roots and the broader potential of the development.

Regional representatives from the Province of Flevoland attended a special 24-hour workshop on the Northern Roots project (large scale eco-park) which directly informed the concept and development. A further exchange allowed



representatives from Greater Manchester to visit the Floriade site and to learn about the process of turning a large area of land into a 'green city'.

The creation of a Food Innovation and Enterprise Fund would aim to support the creation of a thriving network of food and growing businesses in Oldham and lay the foundation for developing and delivering the ambitions of the large-scale 160-acre 'Northern Roots' project.

At the Bologna peer review and study visit, we visited the FICO project, the world's largest, sustainable agricultural food park. The FICO site is over 8 hectares, and includes open fields for livestock and growing crops (olives, vineyards, vegetables etc), it hosts an education centre, restaurants and farming manufacturing centres. It anticipates employing around 3,000 in the future when operating to full capacity.

We drew obvious comparisons to the Northern Root proposal currently in development with Oldham Council. Northern Roots is an ambitious regeneration project that will initially focus on a 65 ha site adjacent to publicly owned Alexandra Park. It is hoped that the development will offer ways to enhance the sustainability and biodiversity of the site, to offer even greater opportunities for recreation and leisure for local people, and to promote growing and green enterprise projects. The lessons learned from both FICO and FLORIADA will help us shape the design of Northern Root.

2. Action: Oldham Council will establish a Food Innovation and Enterprise Fund that will help support local innovative food businesses in advance of the Northern Root project

At the GM Peer Review one of the main recommendations was to ensure continuity in Government support for food enterprise. However, given the current levels of uncertainty around future funding, this will be difficult to ensure in the short term.

One of the elements of the work undertaken in Almere was the commitment of Almere municipality given to community social enterprise. This involved the provision of land to help support young food entrepreneurs, providing facilities, growing spaces etc.

Whilst in Oldham the timing is not right for the Northern Root project due to current planning restrictions we do want to begin the process of identifying and supporting young food businesses.

We will therefore establish this the fund gives an opportunity to help develop the sector ahead of the development. The fund will be established initially with £60,000. It will be create a local fund that both social enterprises and businesses in Oldham can access to invest in strengthening the local food and growing



sector and increase income generation for businesses and community enterprise, linked to the development of Northern Roots.

3. **Players involved** – Northern Roots, Action Together, Oldham Council, Business Growth Hub

- **Northern Roots** – Northern Roots is a wide-ranging project in a 160-acre site led by Oldham council. Northern Roots is a powerful example of what the currently fashionable idea of a Green New Deal might look like in practice. Their aim is to demonstrate an approach to environmental, health and social problems which integrates the solutions rather than simply shifting them from one silo to another. The project is a visionary response to the pressure of austerity on local authority budgets that will help to fill the gap left by the retreat of the state as well as addressing a raft of environmental issue.
- **Oldham Council** – Joint lead partner for Food Chains 4 EU, leading on the Northern Roots project.
- **Business Growth Hub**
- **Action Together**
- **Manchester Metropolitan University** – Joint lead partner for Food Chains 4 EU

4. **Timeframe**

1. January 2020 – Social Enterprise listening event held in Oldham to understand the needs of the food sector, and better understand what businesses currently exist in Oldham
2. May 2020 - Establish an initial working group to develop a funding programme, governance and terms of reference.
3. July 2020 – First call for proposals
4. September 2020 – First allocation of grants.
5. September 2021 – evaluation of grant impact to be included in Food Chains 4EU final report.

5. **Costs** The initial grant funding programme will award £60,000.



6. Funding sources :

£60,000 – from Local Funding from the Well North Programme for Oldham Council, delivering through the Growing Oldham: Feeding Ambition programme.

7. KPIs and/or Expected impact and results of the policy improvement

The number of grants that will be awarded is yet to be determined and this will be determined as part of the development of the governance arrangements in milestone 2

The fund would aim to support the creation of a thriving network of food and growing businesses in Oldham and lay the foundation for developing and delivering the ambitions of the large-scale 160-acre 'Northern Roots' project.



Date: 25/03/2020

Signature: *Amoduz*

Stamp of the organisation (if available):
