



Birmingham Surplus Food Exploration

Identifying recommendations to facilitate more coordinated sourcing and receipt of surplus food in Birmingham

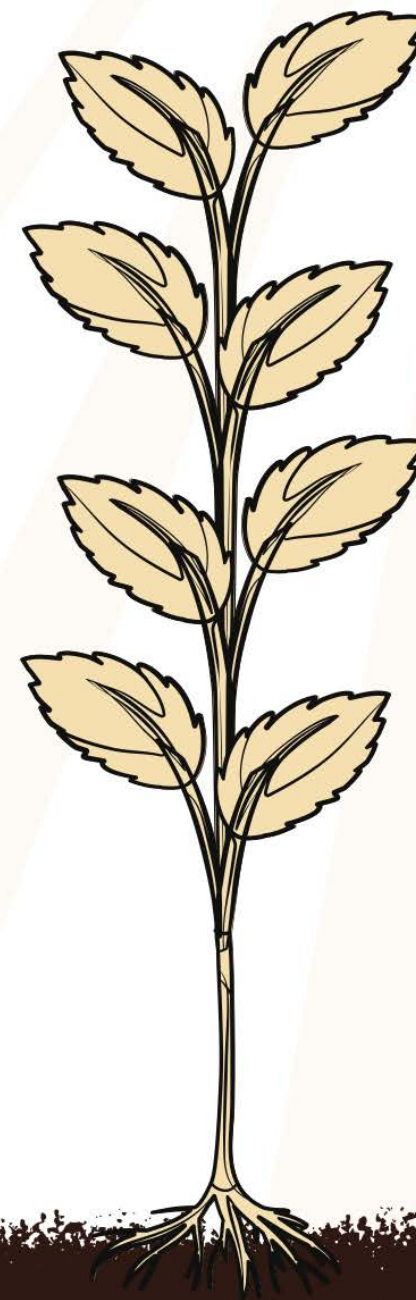


Project carried out March 2023 to March 2024

Report published March 2025

Contents

Context	3
Sources of surplus food	5
Recipients of surplus food	16
Recommendations	22
Sourcing surplus food	22
Receiving surplus food	23
Authors and special thanks	24



Context

In the UK, nearly 3 million tonnes of food waste is produced by the manufacturing, hospitality and food service, and retail industries. This is a symptom of a disconnected food system that is built on the priority of profits, rather than the strong foundation of people, planet, and profits. There is a cost-of-living crisis and people are experiencing food insecurity - food insecurity modelling commissioned by Birmingham City Council (BCC) in 2022 revealed, as a conservative estimate, that 545,988 people in Birmingham (47% of the population) do not have enough money to be able to eat a nutritious diet aligned to the national Eatwell Guide.

At the same time, food is going to landfill rather than onto people's plates, and we are damaging our planet. Redirecting surplus food is not a solution to poverty or profit-driven food supply chains: we need national policy changes to address the systemic issues that drive poverty and the issues in our food system. However, at the same time, we also need to also address the urgent need for nutritious food across our city. Many food projects have become adept at utilising surplus food to support their communities, and thus we identified that there was the opportunity to redirect surplus food to community organisations rather than landfill as a short-term measure, while we seek to address the root causes of food waste and food insecurity through our longer-term actions under the Birmingham Food System Strategy.

During the cost-of-living crisis, food projects across Birmingham have experienced decreased food supply at a time of increased demand. It has become harder for the community food sector to source surplus food for a number of different reasons. The cost-of-living crisis has meant that businesses have tighter margins and are therefore working to reduce their food waste, for example by streamlining product ranges and finding ways to identify production issues early on in the manufacturing process so food is not wasted. There are also more and more channels opening up for businesses to sell surplus food rather than giving it to the community food sector. Additionally, climate change means that farmers are experiencing more challenging growing conditions and crop failure, which increases barriers to surplus food as shops compete for farmers' crops. This causes challenges as much of the community food sector has become reliant on the increasingly erratic surplus food redistribution channels to ensure they have enough food for people accessing their food provision.

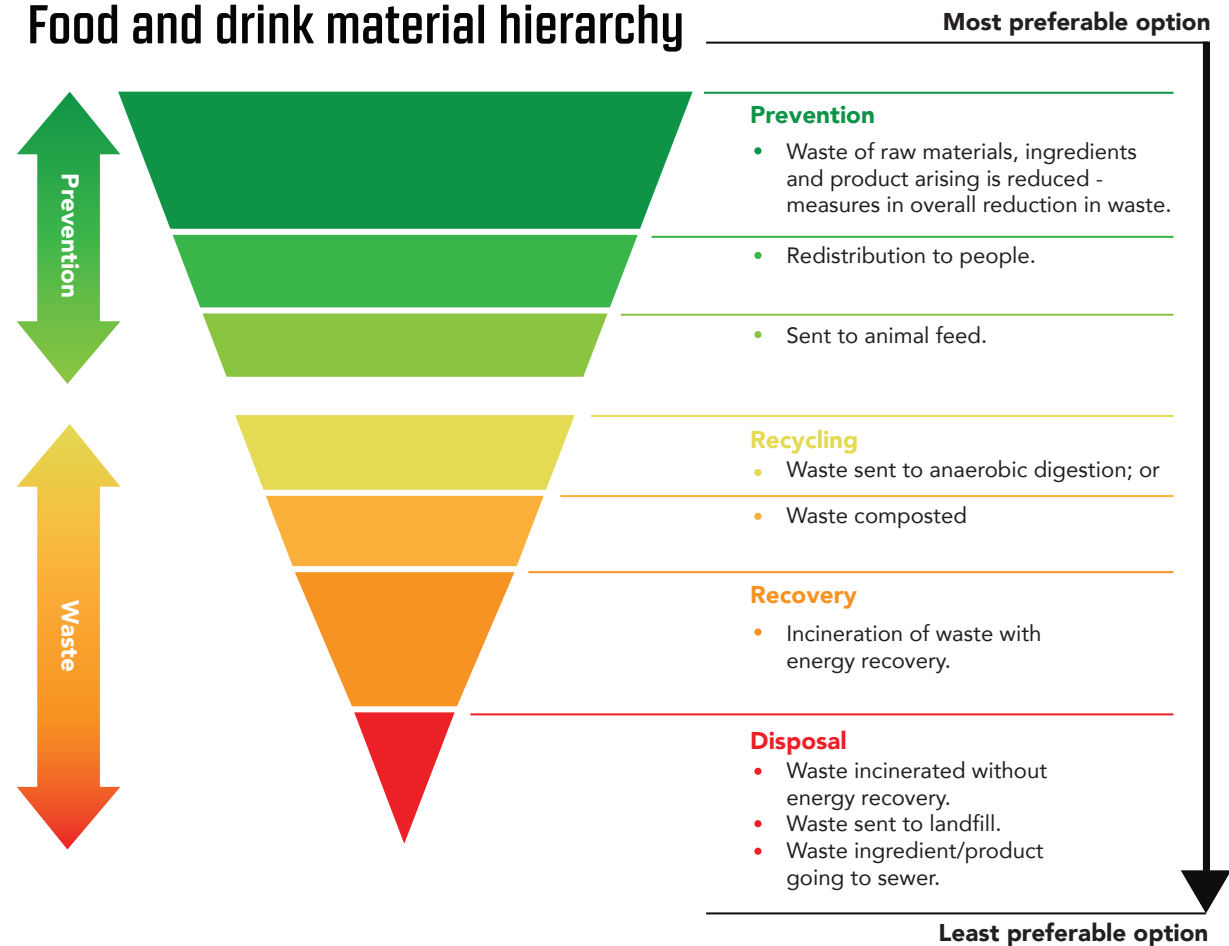


Despite this, there are still unexpected events that cause food to become surplus, such as crop gluts, supply chain errors, pub refits, menu changes or unexpected drops in demand, and there are certain types of food businesses that have untapped potential in terms of sourcing surplus food. At the same time, work is required to identify which members of the community food sector might be able to receive this additional surplus, as processes can be quite ad hoc on the recipient side. Therefore, the Birmingham Surplus Food Exploration was commissioned by the Food System Team in the Public Health Division of BCC and was delivered by The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) between March 2023 and March 2024.

The project aimed to facilitate more coordinated sourcing and receipt of surplus food in Birmingham, in line with the WRAP's food and drink material hierarchy (Figure 1).



Food and drink material hierarchy



Sources of Surplus Food

The first element of this project involved capturing the barriers in relation to potential new sources of surplus food in Birmingham in order to identify solutions. Utilising a list of current food businesses from the Environmental Health team at Birmingham City Council, potential sources of surplus were categorised and then those businesses were approached.

This work identified that there are still businesses who are not aware that surplus food can be redistributed, or of the food waste hierarchy; indeed, the term 'surplus food' is not recognised by all and therefore defining what surplus food is, and ensuring a wide understanding of this, may increase availability of surplus food.

Furthermore, surplus food redistribution efforts have tended to focus on supermarkets, and there is untapped potential for surplus from manufacturing, farming and cooking surplus. Therefore, businesses need simple processes for redistributing surplus food that are quick to follow and ensure food safety.

Established relationships and trust are key in facilitating surplus food donations, especially as there is a stigma attached to admitting food goes to waste. TAWS found that the best opportunities for surplus food donation came from where there were budding or established connections rather than from emailing or phoning without an introduction.

Therefore, there are opportunities to increase surplus food availability through:

1. Increasing understanding of what surplus food is
2. Facilitating and clarifying processes to ensuring safe and easy food donation
3. Improving relationships between different actors in the food system such as farmers, manufacturers, retailers and the community food sector

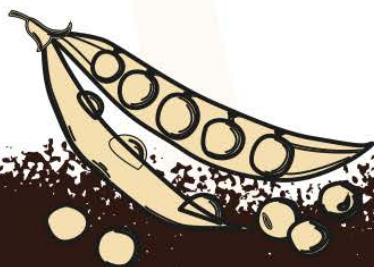


Table 1 captures the types and causes of surplus food, and existing redistribution mechanisms, barriers, opportunities and recommendations for different categories of surplus food.

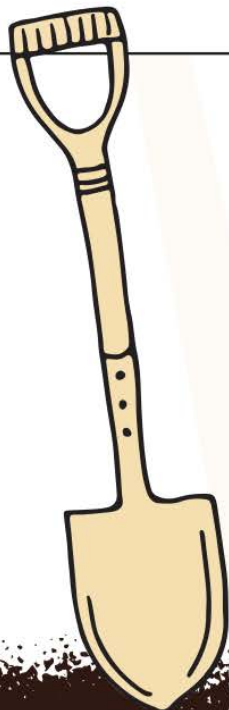
SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Supermarkets (independent and national chains including cash & carry and discounters)	<p>Type: Chilled, frozen and ambient - all products.</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: lower than expected rate of sale before hitting use-by or best-before dates.</p>	All the major supermarkets have routes for ambient and chilled donations. The donation process for frozen food is patchier, with some pickup from surplus food distribution organisations but few established pathways for this. Sometimes it is up to the individual store whether and how surplus food is distributed, but generally it seems that frozen food tends to be thrown away.	<p>As shops don't want to throw food away which would mean wasting it and losing profit, chilled food tends to be left until its use-by date (the last day it can legally be distributed), so often it goes to waste as organisations cannot distribute it in time.</p> <p>The lack of procedures or processes can lead food to go to waste.</p> <p>Cultural and language barriers can cause issues with some independent shops.</p>	<p>There are possible gaps in redistribution of frozen retail surplus.</p> <p>It is possible that supermarket food could be released earlier than its use-by date, but this is unlikely to be desirable for supermarkets who could lose sales.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Increase the capacity of the community food sector to collect and redistribute frozen surplus food.</p> <p>Consider national changes to surplus food procedures such as earlier surplus food release.</p>
2. Convenience stores and other retail chains offering food-to-go (independent and national chains)	<p>Type: Chilled, frozen and ambient - all products.</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: lower than expected rate of sale before hitting use-by or best-before dates</p>	Some national convenience store chains are linked to surplus food distributors.	It is unlikely that there would be much surplus food available from independent convenience stores, which would mean it is unlikely for it to be worthwhile for them to sign up to the current surplus redistribution organisations.	Surplus food donation processes might encourage convenience stores to donate locally to community organisations.	Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system, including to convenience stores, and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.

SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
3. Greengrocers	<p>Type: Fresh produce (fruit and vegetables).</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: Rate of sale not as expected, fresh fruit and vegetables not high enough quality to sell, or produce gluts.</p>	Some surplus may be picked up for composting, sold off cheap in store, or dealt with by an organisation that distributes it to charities.	There is a lack of consistent protocols and practice around surplus food.	<p>Surplus food donation processes might encourage greengrocers to donate locally to community organisations.</p> <p>Surplus food could be cooked to extend its life.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to greengrocers and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Community kitchens could prevent food wastage by cooking surplus food into meals or cooked ingredients (e.g. tomato sauce) and so extending its life and ability to be frozen.</p>
4. Butchers	<p>Type: Meat.</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: Rate of sale not as expected, supply chain issues.</p>	Butchers reported either freezing unsold produce, mincing it to make burgers etc, or selling it on cheap to a pet food factory. Generally, there are many routes to market so there would tend not to be much surplus food.	There is a lack of consistent protocols and practice around surplus food. Safety is particularly key for donating meat.	<p>Surplus food donation process might encourage butchers to donate locally to community organisations.</p> <p>Surplus food could be cooked to extend its life.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to butchers and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food system.</p> <p>Community kitchens could prevent food wastage by cooking surplus food into meals or cooked ingredients (e.g. tomato sauce) and so extending its life and ability to be frozen.</p>

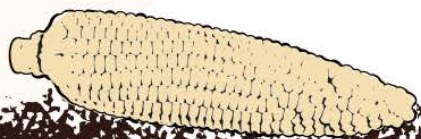
SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
5. Wholesale markets	<p>Type: Fresh fruit and vegetables, possibly meat and fish (though none identified in scoping other than fish heads and bones).</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: Rate of sale not as expected, fresh fruit and vegetables not high enough quality to sell, or produce gluts.</p>	Some community groups pick up surplus by going round tenant to tenant, however, food is still going to waste.	<p>Tenants are taking fewer risks with purchases and are finding more avenues to sell on lower graded products.</p> <p>As tenants don't want to throw food away, which would mean wasting it and losing profit, they tend to wait as long as possible until the food is no longer edible. However, this means that some edible food is thrown away along with the inedible food as the tenants tend not to sort through the food and identify what is still edible.</p> <p>Lots of the food needs sorting/cooking on the day and thus needs the attention of cooks with food safety training.</p>	<p>Potential to build relationships and work with the tenants to prevent edible surplus food from going to waste.</p> <p>Surplus food could be cooked into food to extend its life.</p>	<p>Set up a pilot surplus food hub at Birmingham Wholesale Market to recover and redistribute surplus from the markets. As the wholesale market has space, this could also be used to bulk purchase ambient food for the community food sector.</p> <p>Community kitchens could prevent food wastage by cooking surplus food into meals or cooked ingredients (e.g. tomato sauce) and so extending its life and ability to be frozen.</p> <p>Further work including innovative solutions is needed to overcome barriers related to preserving gluts and processing bulk produce that needs the swift attention of food-safety trained cooks.</p>



SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
6. Local markets	<p>Type: Fresh food and cooked food.</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: Rate of sale not as expected, fresh fruit and vegetables not high enough quality to sell, or produce gluts.</p>	Some redistribution practices in place e.g., surplus apples to apple juice, but unlikely to be consistent.	<p>Some of the stock is already very close to expiry and purchased from the Wholesale Markets.</p> <p>There is a lack of consistent protocols and practice around surplus food.</p> <p>There are also reports of food waste further up the food chain in the growing / production stage.</p>	<p>Surplus food donation processes might encourage local markets to donate to local community organisations.</p> <p>There may also be potential opportunities with stall managers who are able to make decisions about donating, unlike people who operate the stalls.</p>	<p>Continue to scope opportunities with markets and build relationships with those involved with making them happen.</p> <p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to stall owners and operators and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p>



SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
7. Hotels	<p>Type: Ambient and fresh ingredients and cooked foods.</p> <p>Cause of surplus food: Slow rate of sale, menu change, cancellations, refits, movement of ageing stock.</p>	There is some donation of ambient food to charities, and donation of breakfasts to individuals through surplus food apps.	<p>Food that has gone past the kitchen door (including in buffets) cannot be donated due to food hygiene and safety. Donating food that is not pre-packed is a barrier because of food safety risk.</p> <p>There is stigma about food waste which means that businesses are reluctant to admit that they have surplus food that could be utilised.</p>	<p>While hotels may not always have consistent procedures, their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies often include reducing waste as an objective so there may be opportunities there.</p> <p>There are opportunities to encourage hotels to put less food out onto buffets and top up the buffet when required. This means that less food would go past the kitchen door so could be donated if not utilised.</p>	<p>Continue to scope opportunities to change practices around buffets etc.</p> <p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to hotel owners, chefs, and kitchen staff, and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Encourage hotel operators to sign charters as part of their ESG commitments.</p>



SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
8. Restaurants, pubs and cafés	<p>Type: Ambient and fresh ingredients and cooked foods.</p> <p>Cause: Slow rate of sale, menu change, cancellations, kitchen refits and updates, movement of ageing stock, cancellations or fewer customers than expected, overproduction, products reaching their use-by or best-before dates.</p>	There is some donation of ambient food to charities, and donation of some food items (e.g., bread) to individuals through surplus food apps.	<p>Food that has gone past the kitchen door (including in buffets) cannot be donated due to food hygiene and safety. Donating food that is not pre-packed is a barrier because of food safety issues.</p> <p>There is stigma about food waste which means that food businesses are reluctant to admit that they have surplus food that could be utilised.</p> <p>Food businesses are often time poor and have small profit margins which means capacity and resources are limited and the potential impact on profits is important.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to encourage food businesses to put less food out onto buffets and top up the buffet when required. This means that less food would go past the kitchen door so could be donated if not utilised (and stored safely).</p> <p>Sustainability and reducing food waste is becoming more important for food businesses and there may be opportunities to harness this momentum. Some of the bigger chains have ESG policies often including reducing waste as an objective so there may be opportunities there.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation including cooked food and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to food business owners, chefs and kitchen staff and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Ask food businesses to sign up to a hospitality charter to say that they will donate suitable surplus food when and if it does become available.</p> <p>Link in with hospitality networks to encourage and support food businesses to improve their food waste practices. ESG policies could be leveraged to achieve this for bigger chains.</p> <p>Further work including innovative solutions is needed to overcome issues around donating cooked food.</p>

SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
9. Event catering	<p>Type: Ambient and fresh ingredients and cooked foods.</p> <p>Cause: Overproduction, cancellations.</p>	Ad hoc donation of some food items through surplus food apps and organisations.	<p>Concerns about safety and liability around food donation.</p> <p>Food that has gone past the kitchen door (including in buffets) cannot be donated due to food hygiene and safety. Donating food that is not pre-packed is a barrier because of food safety risk.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to encourage event caterers to put less food out onto buffets and top up the buffet when required. This means that less food would go past the kitchen door so could be donated if not utilised.</p> <p>Some cooked food can be redistributed by surplus food organisations; a potential avenue for future work could be supporting caterers to understand risk.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation including cooked food and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to caterers, chefs and kitchen staff and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Further work including exploring innovative solutions to issues around donating cooked food.</p>



SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
10. Manufacturing	<p>Type: Ambient and fresh ingredients and cooked foods.</p> <p>Cause: Overproduction and line cancellation, production errors.</p>	There are some links between surplus food redistribution groups and manufacturers, but these are scant and not consistent.	Often manufacturing surplus is in huge, bulk quantities which is a barrier for distribution to the community food sector due to lack of capacity, drivers, vehicles, and storage.	There are opportunities for manufacturing surplus to be cooked and turned into meals or broken down into more manageable formats for smaller kitchens to process. These opportunities are greater if organisations collaborate together to increase economies of scale.	<p>Community kitchens could prevent food waste by cooking bulk surplus food into meals or cooked ingredients (e.g. tomato sauce) and so extending its life and ability to be frozen.</p> <p>Support opportunities for collaboration and exploration of innovative solutions to issues around donating bulk food.</p> <p>Consider storage solutions for bulk surplus.</p>



SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
11. Farming surplus from the surrounding shires and counties around Birmingham	<p>Type: Fresh fruit and vegetables, possibly meat and fish.</p> <p>Causes: Overproduction, cancellation of orders (including timing changes due to weather), or produce being rejected because it doesn't meet specification of intended customer.</p>	There is some large-scale redistribution by Oddbox. There are also middle-chain actors such as wholesalers who buy up remaining produce from farms and then sell it on a gleaning network and to surplus food redistribution organisations.	<p>The current climate has supermarkets fighting over crop yields, but surplus crops will still arise.</p> <p>Farmers are resource- and time-poor. They need to be reimbursed for produce and they don't have the capacity to deal with small scale surplus redistribution. Cost of picking, packing, and transporting is a barrier so farmers would prefer to plough produce back into the field, or feed animals, than shoulder the above costs for no or little financial gain.</p> <p>Storage solutions for bulk surplus produce are needed.</p>	<p>Gleaning networks provide opportunities to pick surplus farm produce at a low cost.</p> <p>Paying picking and packing costs, and then collecting the surplus or paying transport costs, would also open doors for farming surplus.</p>	<p>Co-produce guidance on surplus food donation including cooked food and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is sent around the food system including to farmers and farmers' networks and seek to have a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector.</p> <p>Develop guidance on reimbursing farmers for picking and packing crops (ascertain rates per crop per hectare) and options for transportation.</p> <p>Build relationships with farmers and farmers' networks to increase opportunities for accessing farming surplus.</p> <p>Community kitchens could prevent food wastage by cooking bulk surplus food into meals or cooked ingredients (e.g. tomato sauce) and so extending its life and ability to be frozen.</p> <p>Consider storage solutions for bulk surplus.</p>

SETTING	TYPE AND CAUSE OF SURPLUS	EXISTING REDISTRIBUTION	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
12. Community growing spaces	<p>Type: Fresh fruit and vegetables.</p> <p>Causes: Gluts and food production being higher than demand</p>	Produce is often shared with fellow 'allotmenters', family and neighbours and local community groups.	It is easier to compost gluts if there is no known local solution.	Potential to engage more with allotment associations, and other local growing groups, with information and clarity on which local food provision projects can accept fresh produce.	<p>Share information (e.g., on a flyer) with allotments.</p> <p>Promote the concept of donation through growing networks.</p>

The delivery of the Birmingham Surplus Food Exploration project has supported identification and connection with organisations who may have surplus food. This project also facilitated two opportunities for The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS):

1. Food Safety Guidance for Surplus Food in the Community Food Sector: TAWS were involved in the Ensuring Safe Transitions project in collaboration with the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City Council and funded through the Food Safety Research Network. This project sought to pioneer a transformative solution by developing comprehensive guidelines in response to an identified gap - that there is a lack of guidance for surplus food recovery, transport, distribution and service for the community food sector. These guidelines were created in collaboration with both surplus food sources and recipients. and are available to view on the [Birmingham Food Revolution](#) webpages.

2. Birmingham Surplus Food Hub: TAWS are piloting a surplus food hub at the Birmingham Wholesale Market to make the most of opportunities described in point 5 of the table above. This follows a two-week exploration at the Wholesale Market which identified ~2.5 tonnes of edible food that could have been donated but instead went to waste. This hub is being piloted from February 2024 to provide wholesale market tenants with the opportunity to drop off surplus food rather than dispose of it, which involves building relationships with the tenants and ensuring processes meet regulatory requirements. Establishing a process through relationships and support is likely to increase the availability of surplus food and prevent food waste.

Further details about these projects will be made available on the Birmingham Food Revolution pages of the BCC website, and outcomes of the Birmingham Surplus Food Hub will be reported as they emerge.

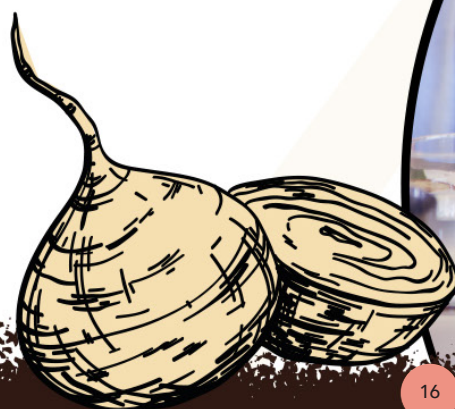


Recipients of Surplus Food

The second part of this project involved scoping work to identify community food sector organisations who could receive surplus food. This was done by utilising TAWS's existing links with the Birmingham Food Justice Network (FJN). As of March 2024, there were 289 organisations in the FJN hosting food provision in 325 locations across the city. There is variation in the type of food offered by these groups, for example:

- Projects that provide only ambient foods in a food bank style e.g., food parcels
- Projects that provide both ambient and fresh foods
- Outreach projects that deliver food parcels or meals
- Community cafés and community dining projects which serve hot food
- Affordable food models which provide access to groceries at a fraction of the retail cost

Many projects provide food for free; some projects have a 'pay what you can afford' model, or food can be given in exchange for in-kind support such as volunteer time or skills. Others have introduced a 'pay it forward' model where someone can prepay for some food so it can be given to someone who needs it. This does not cover the running costs of the projects, however. Birmingham's food provision is around 80-90% volunteer led and relies primarily on the availability of charitable funding, and a number of projects have become reliant on surplus food to provide for the people using their services.



FJN groups were surveyed about their experience of surplus food and what the perceived barriers to them using surplus food were. Of the 82 respondents, 45 had no perceived barriers to utilising surplus food. Barriers noted by respondents are shown in *Figure 2*.

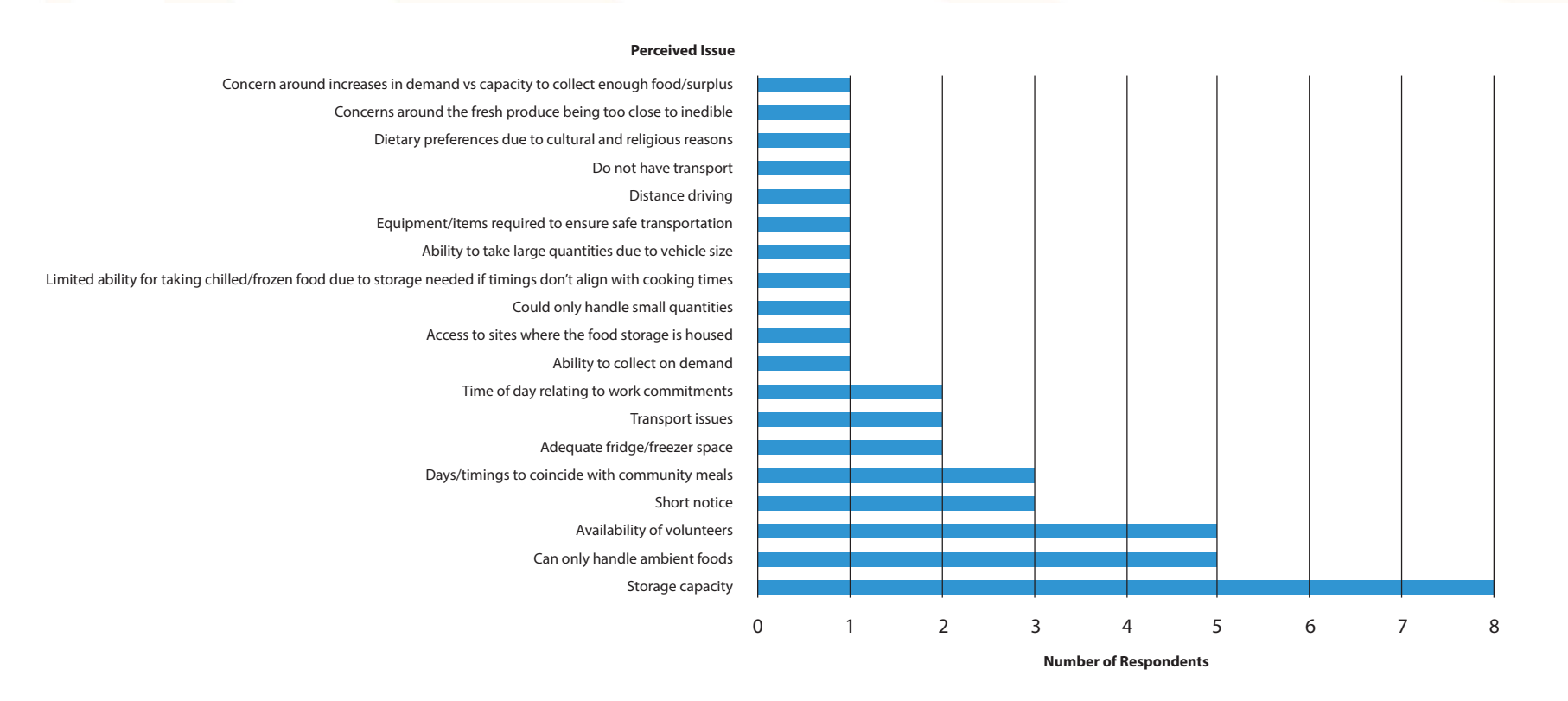


Figure 2. Perceived barriers to utilising surplus food in food projects in Birmingham.

This reveals that the key issues around organisations receiving food are storage capacity, lack of people to collect / receive / utilise surplus food and timings. These could shape areas of future work to support organisations to receive food (e.g., providing funding for organisations to have greater storage space).

In addition, this phase of the project involved scoping organisations and initiatives that connect surplus food with the community food sector. The findings are described in Table 2.

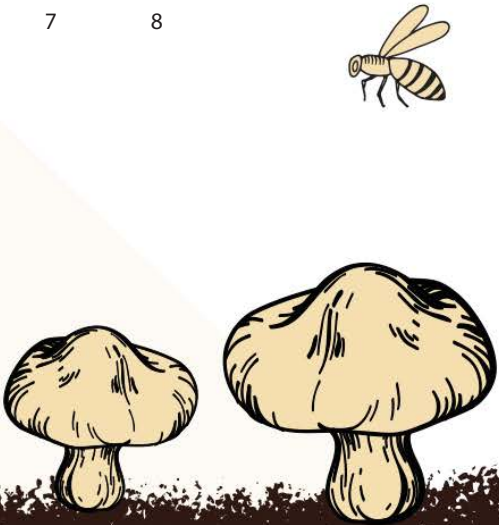
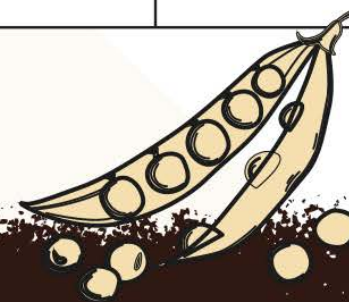


Table 2. Organisations and initiatives that connect surplus food with the community food sector

ORGANISATION / INITIATIVE	WHAT DO THEY DO?	TYPE OF SURPLUS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHO CAN ACCESS?	EMAIL	LINK TO SIGN UP
1. FareShare	Source surplus food from the food industry that would otherwise have gone to waste and sending it to frontline charities and community groups across the UK. FareShare work with all sectors of the supply chain: producers, manufacturers and retailers.	All categories	<p>Annual membership fee: FareShare Midlands is a non-profit charity. To remain sustainable, they charge a nominal fee to cover operational costs.</p> <p>This includes warehouse space, chillers, administration, maintenance of delivery vehicles, all fuel costs and any associated staff costs.</p>	Community and Charitable organisations	enquiries@faresharemidlands.org.uk	https://www.faresharemidlands.org.uk/getting-food/
2. FareShare Go!	Collect free food from your local supermarket when it becomes available. Once you're signed up, FareShare Go will match you with your local store or restaurant where you can collect food every week.	Ambient and chilled collections from Asda, Tesco, Waitrose, Booker, Nandos and KFC.	Free	Community and Charitable organisations	N/A	https://www.faresharemidlands.org.uk/fareshare-go/



ORGANISATION / INITIATIVE	WHAT DO THEY DO?	TYPE OF SURPLUS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHO CAN ACCESS?	EMAIL	LINK TO SIGN UP
3. Incredible Surplus	A Birmingham-based not-for-profit that intercepts food and other usable materials that would otherwise go to waste from supermarkets, restaurants and other sources, and provides them to individuals and community organisations on a pay what you can afford basis to cover operational costs.	All categories	Pay what you can afford at one of their venues (this can be with money, skills or time).	Individuals, families and community organisations	Incredible surplus@ gmail.com	https://incrediblesurplus.org/
4. His Church	<p>Mixed pallets of nutritionally balanced surplus food, depending on what is available.</p> <p>Ambient or frozen.</p> <p>Will consider requests for certain foods but no guarantee of specifics. They may be able to provide baby food depending on type of need.</p>	Ambient or frozen.	<p>Sign up to order food by the pallet. The cost is £400 per pallet to pick up food worth £1,500 - £2,000 plus £75 for delivery.</p> <p>Frozen food pallet, delivery only: £550 to ensure safe cold chain. Collection from Lincolnshire or delivery. No commitment or subscription required.</p>	Community and charity organisations	hisfood@hischurch.org.uk	https://www.hischurch.org.uk/contact



ORGANISATION / INITIATIVE	WHAT DO THEY DO?	TYPE OF SURPLUS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHO CAN ACCESS?	EMAIL	LINK TO SIGN UP
5. Olio	<p>Olio is an app which facilitates two types of surplus food redistribution:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To enable people to share surplus household food on the app. 2. To facilitate collections from food businesses. <p>You can sign up as a volunteer to collect surplus food from food businesses to share on the app. Volunteers are called Food Waste Heroes (FWHs) who rescue unsold food from businesses to share with their local communities.</p>	<p>All categories from businesses such as Amazon Fresh Boots, Tesco, Iceland, Holland & Barratt, Coop, One Stop, Booker.</p> <p>Cooked food from companies that use catering businesses, e.g., Compass, Aramark and Amadeus e.g., ICC.</p>	Sign up on the app to be able to donate and collect food from households or via the Volunteer Hub to become a Food Waste Hero.	Anyone	N/A	Olio app only
6. Too Good To Go	Enables the purchase of discounted unsold food from restaurants, grocery stores, cafés, and shops.	Mainly cooked food and food-to-go (pre-packed) but some grocery products too (e.g., grocery products from some Co-op and Aldi branches).	Sign up to the Too Good To Go App to see what is available. Prices are set by the food businesses and available on the app.	Anyone	N/A	To Good To Go app only

ORGANISATION / INITIATIVE	WHAT DO THEY DO?	TYPE OF SURPLUS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHO CAN ACCESS?	EMAIL	LINK TO SIGN UP
7. Caboodle	App to enable collection from Co-op stores (with potential to expand to include other retail stores).	Ambient and Chilled.	Register your community group to share food through Caboodle. Book regular or ad hoc collection dates with local retailers. Pick up food from your local retailer. Food is free.	Community and Charitable organisations (not-for profits)	foodshare@coop.co.uk	https://group.thecaboodle.co.uk/
8. Costco and Morrisons	Surplus donations agreed individually by stores: Costco - contact your local store Morrisons - contact your local store's Community Champion. N.B. Café food-to-go surplus sold via Too Good To Go app.	All categories	Free.	Community and Charitable organisations (not-for profits)	N/A	Contact your local store
9. Neighbourly	Connects you with local stores and distribution centres that have quality surplus to give.	Ambient and chilled collections from Lidl, M&S, Aldi and Sainsburys.	Sign up to Neighbourly and they will be in touch regarding collections within a 6-mile radius of your organisation. Free.	Community and Charitable organisations (not-for-profits)	N/A	https://www.neighbourly.com/goodcause/new



Recommendations



This work has led to the following recommendations:

Sourcing surplus food

1) Ensure there is a clear and consistent definition of surplus food that can support a wide understanding of what surplus food is. This work is already in progress through the Ensuring Safe Transitions project.

2) Coproduce guidance on surplus food donation, including cooked food, and translate this into different languages. Ensure it is shared across the food system, including farmers, farmers' networks, manufacturing, hospitality, retail, markets, allotments, growing networks etc. to support having a co-ordinated approach across the community food sector. This work is already in progress through the Ensuring Safe Transitions project.

3) Establish more of a culture of donating surplus food through relationships with local sources of food including farmers, farmers' networks, manufacturing, hospitality, retail, markets, allotments, growing networks etc. Consider tools such as a hospitality charter or a campaign to make surplus food donation 'business as usual', and leverage Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments where possible. Utilise the city's industry and hospitality networks more optimally to facilitate this.

4) Develop guidance on reimbursing farmers for picking and packing crops (ascertain rates per crop per hectare) and options for transport.

5) Pilot a surplus food hub at the Birmingham Wholesale Market to capture surplus food. This work is already in progress.

6) Consider what national solutions are needed (e.g. earlier surplus food release) and lobby for national changes.

7) Undertake further work to identify and implement innovative solutions to overcoming barriers to surplus food donation including how to use gluts, changing practices around buffets, solutions for cooked food donation, and storage solutions for bulk surplus.

8) Initiate further work including identifying innovative solutions to overcome barriers related to preserving gluts and processing bulk produce that needs the swift attention of food-safety trained cooks.

Receiving surplus food

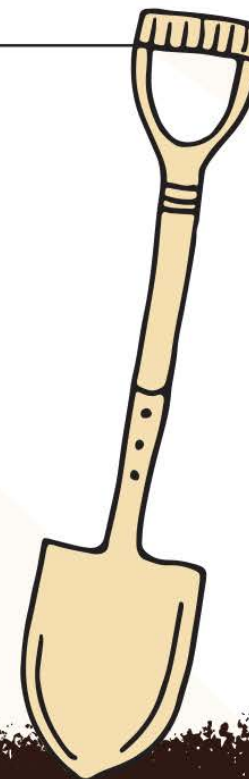
1) Develop guidance on surplus food transport, receipt, storage and distribution for the community food sector. This work is already in progress through the Ensuring Safe Transitions project.

2) Embed processes for surplus food receipt into the Food Justice Network; consider approaches which would support the Food Justice Network in this, including food hubs in different parts of the city, improved storage options, and solutions with regards to volunteer and timing issues.

3) Increase the capacity of the community food sector to collect and redistribute frozen surplus food.

4) Support the safe transport of surplus, including operationalising solutions such as transport networks, more vehicles including vans and bikes, and potential sharing and rotas for these vehicles – including drivers.

5) Increase access to community kitchens where surplus food can be cooked into meals and ingredients to increase its longevity. This work is already in progress through the Birmingham Surplus Food Hub project.



Authors

Dr Rosemary H. Jenkins, Senior Public Health Officer,
Food System Team, Public Health Division, Birmingham City Council

Sarah Newton (previously Pullen), Food System Lead, Food System Team,
Public Health Division, Birmingham City Council

Exploration project delivered by The Active Wellbeing Society



Find out more at birmingham.gov.uk/FoodRevolution

Special thanks to:

Special thanks to members of the Food Justice Network, food businesses,
organisations and initiatives that supported with this exploration.