

Benchmarking local authority commitments to food: impact analysis

Tender form for research partners

May 2024

Sustain is looking for a researcher (or researchers) to conduct an impact analysis on our work to benchmark local authority commitments to good food. For over 10 years, Sustain has mapped and reported on Greater London's borough level commitments to healthy and sustainable food through the Good Food for All Londoners annual survey and report. It is an effective tool for improving good food practice and policy among London councils, by raising awareness of proven good food policies, projects and activities, and providing an incentive for London councils to take action. Now with additional support from Impact on Urban Health, we are rolling the approach out through the Good Food Local project. We have begun piloting the approach in the North East region, and are working towards developing a benchmarking tool available to all local authorities in the UK. To inform this process, we would like to better understand the impact of our benchmarking tool and understand which measures may currently lack more formal supportive evidence. We are seeking to commission an evaluation that will collate and review existing evidence relating to the measures in the survey and use this evidence to estimate the impact of the tool across London.

1. Project brief

Our Good Food Local approach involves mapping and reporting on local authority commitments on a range of fundamental good food measures. Over the last decade of benchmarking, we have seen 31 out of the 33 London councils doing more to improve the food available to their residents, workers and school pupils. As we now begin work to develop a national benchmarking tool for local authorities across the UK, we are seeking to better understand the impact of the measures included in the tool, and by extension, the impact of actions undertaken by councils using the tool.

We are seeking to commission an impact analysis, including the following steps:

- Scope existing evidence of the impact of measures we use in the survey. For example, we suggest a literature review of academic and grey literature as an exhaustive approach to mapping existing data on equivalent measures. However, we welcome innovative proposals that take different approaches, as long as they have a strong rationale backing up the approach.
- Use this evidence to estimate the impact of the project – or components of the project, where possible - in London over the last 12 years.
- Identify gaps in the evidence base, as well as areas for local action not included among the existing measures where there is significant evidence of positive impact, and priority areas for analysis in future research.

Please see the associated document, '[Good Food Local benchmarking tool sample](#)' for a sample chapter of survey measures included in the project. The survey is a detailed and relatively exhaustive list of actions councils could be taking on food and has been informed by our own research, partner organisations, and feedback from the councils involved over the last decade. We invite proposals that discuss the granularity of the planned approach, acknowledging where some specific measures may have more literature available than others, and proposing where actions would be best analysed in composite.

We also welcome discussion in the proposal of what types of impact will be studied, for example health outcomes (physical and mental), financial outcomes or income generation, efficiency of service provision, accessing hard-to-reach communities, etc. We would like to see included a specific assessment of the tool's effectiveness in increasing access to healthy, affordable, sustainable food for communities most at risk of food poverty and health inequalities, such as older and disabled people; vulnerable groups, for example those who are claiming asylum; and minority ethnic groups.¹ For example, whether any measures may particularly benefit these communities and to what extent, or where measures could be better targeted.

2. Budget and timescales

Sustain has a total budget of up to £30,000 (inclusive of VAT) available to commission a researcher or researchers to undertake this project. We welcome proposals from researchers or research groups who can acquire match funding and/or who would intend to integrate this within existing research projects. We are grateful to Impact on Urban Health for their funding and support to make this work possible.

We anticipate work commencing over the summer of 2024 and being finalised by January 2025. However, we invite you to suggest a timeline in your proposal.

3. Proposals and decision process

We would like proposals of 3-5 sides including:

- The name(s), email address(es) and contact number(s) of lead investigators and other researchers involved
- An outline of previous and current research and how it relates to this project, including links to and relevant papers, reports and projects
- A research proposal to fit the project brief above
- A budget summary, detailing:
 - Who would be delivering the work, their day rate, and how many days the funding would cover
 - Any additional costs foreseen
 - Any match funding or in-kind contribution that could support this work

Proposals should be sent to Isabel Rice by **24th of May 2024**. After an initial shortlisting stage, you may be invited to attend a call with the Sustain team to discuss your proposal. You will be sent a

¹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0686/POST-PN-0686.pdf>

sample chapter of the survey ahead of this call to have a more detailed understanding of the survey content. Following these calls, we will appoint a research partner and arrange an initiation call.

Please direct any questions to Isabel Rice and do get in touch if you'd like to book in a call ahead of the submission date to discuss requirements further.

Contact: Isabel Rice, Food Poverty Campaign Coordinator, Sustain.

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