

**Policy 7.22 Land for food**

b) Should the policy include implementational measures?

**1. Argument and Evidence**

**LSDC Response to London Plan  
Policy 7.22 Land for Food**

The Commission welcome the inclusion of Policy 7.22, Land for Food, in the London Plan. However, it is unclear what measures and guidance will be in place to enable delivery, particularly in regard to Strategic Policy A (encourage and support thriving farming and land-based sectors in London). Further consideration should also be given to how this policy relates to other sections of the Plan.

For example, section 4 'London's Economy', recognising the economic contribution of this sector, and section 5 'London's Response to climate change', given the known environmental impacts of the food supply system.

The Commission particularly welcome the push to encourage food growing in urban communities through protecting existing spaces and identifying new ones. There is currently inconclusive evidence on the *direct* environmental benefits of people growing their own food (for instance our Capital Consumption report indicated that the increased use of water in food growing had a carbon load higher than normal agriculture and was harder to manage); however, the Commission recognise that there are many other benefits. For example:

1. Re-kindling the connection to food educates people on where food comes from, its seasonality and encourages people to try a wider variety of fruit and vegetables. For example, all participants in a Well London Grow, Cook & Eat project at Phoenix High School farm in White City recognised the importance of a balanced diet and eating 5 portions of fruit & vegetables every day, and cooked more meals at home.
2. Growing your own food has physical and mental health benefits associated with increased exercise, as demonstrated at the project at Lansbury Gardens where 85% of the participants indicated that the gardening session has improved their mental well being and are now involved in weekly physical activity.
3. Community food growing is likely to improve community cohesion. As demonstrated at Lansbury Gardens, people actively enjoy working together, swapping seeds and recipes.
4. Food growing may help people adopt behaviours that move towards living within our environmental limits, such as reducing food waste.

**In order for these benefits to be realised and fully expressed in the London Plan, the commission recommends that this is referred to explicitly in paragraph 7.55.**

The development of urban agriculture however would benefit also London's carbon footprint and the commission are delighted that the Mayor consider this sector appropriate for support. **In order for the Mayor to see his vision realised, we feel that there should be a direct connection between the ambition in the London Plan, and the policy in paragraph 2.34 and proposals 2A, 2B and 2G in the Economic Development Strategy, and a reference in paragraph 7.55 would be helpful.** It is clear that urban agriculture businesses could be effectively supported through the EDS proposal set out in paragraph and proposal 2B. In particular those elements in the Food Strategy that relate to Local and diverse foods and London Farmers. In particular:

- Implementing a brokerage service to improve inter and intra regional links between farmers and consumers
- Develop producer collaboration schemes and ensure farmers are able to access and use water supplies in a sustainable fashion.

The Commission welcome the Mayor's Capital Growth scheme, which is clearly encouraging more people to engage in this agenda and highlighting innovative uses of urban space for food growing. A good example of these programmes that demonstrate the holistic benefits of food growing are set out in the **Well London case studies (Ref: RD128, RD129, RD30)**

In addition to this scheme, there are many good examples of schools in the capital embracing food growing or gardening clubs. For example Barking Abby Secondary School, Barking and Dagenham, established a gardening club and a school allotment, where composted waste from the school kitchen could be used. Gunnersbury Catholic School, Hounslow, established an eco-garden where students and staff have planted vegetables and fruit trees. The harvested produce was used to make soups which were bottled and sold to parents with the help of a local chef. Chesterton Park Primary School, Wandsworth, has made the most of its limited outdoor space in a built-up area of Battersea to develop growing activities for the children with raised beds and pots and also keep chickens.

Work is also being done on a Borough level to support and encourage people growing their own food. For example Croydon has a "Can We Dig It?" urban gardening project which encourages people to grow their own food, whether they have a garden, balcony or just a small window sill. As part of the project Croydon held a vegetable show this autumn.

For this reason we would support inclusion of 'hidden' urban areas for growing. For example, in the Well London Blooming Basement project in Tower Hamlets, local residents have created food growing space in raised planters and tubs in a basement where 15 adults and 6 children take part in weekly gardening sessions. Produce includes an apple tree, tomatoes, spinach, coriander, various kinds of pepper, pumpkin, carrots, strawberries, ornamental petunias, potatoes and beans.

From reviewing the boroughs that have operational food strategies (see Figure A), it is apparent that whilst some boroughs have effective food strategies, there are others, at least 30%, who have yet to commence work in this area. The commission consider that the development of borough food strategies to complement the London food strategy would be important. **To this end we recommend that the 7.22**

**should encourage boroughs to produce a food strategy as part of their LDF preparation.**

### **Conclusions on Policy**




The Commission suggests that there should be the following changes to Policy 7.22:

Under LDF Preparation after the existing paragraph C a:

b. The Boroughs should prepare operational food strategies in order to identify the opportunities in their area and how specific schemes can be supported at Borough level

LSDC would also like to see included in paragraph 7.55 references to:

- Use of surplus space in the built environment such as window boxes, balconies and grey spaces
- The full range of benefits that can be achieved through local food growing such as improving health and well being, and uptake of healthier lifestyles
- The relevant support being provided in the EDS that actively supports businesses and civil society to engage in urban growing.

Key	
	Food Strategy within the last 2 years
	Food strategy within the last 5 years ( or rewriting it now)
	Food Strategy within the last 10 years

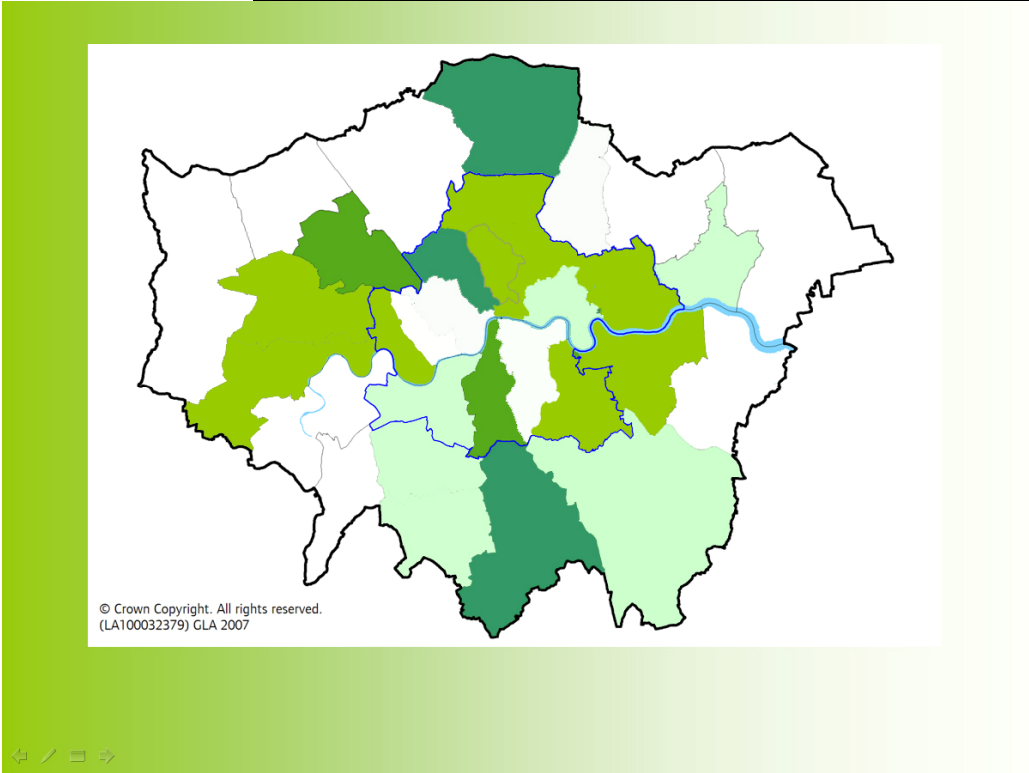


Figure A