

Summary

This report is a call to action for everyone involved in catering for the London 2012 Olympic Games, to ensure that the food served before, during and after the Games is local, seasonal and organic as was promised in London's bid.

The London 2012 Olympics offers a unique opportunity to mark the relationship between physical fitness and healthy food, to transform the food available at all major events, and to showcase the benefits of local, seasonal and organic food on a world stage.

The Olympic movement recognises that it has a special responsibility to implement sustainable development. While other Olympic Games have attempted to be 'green Games', London 2012 is aiming to be "the greenest Games in modern times". The London bid uses the concept of a 'One Planet Olympics' – recognising that continuing unsustainable practices would in effect mean that we would need three planets to support our current way of life. A strategy was created in order to achieve this, which was submitted with the London 2012 bid. One of the ten principles relates to food, and pledged to "support the consumption of local, seasonal and organic produce".

Feeding London 2012 is a significant but achievable challenge. For example, around 1.3 million meals could be required over the four-year period of the construction phase. Over the 60 days of Games time approximately 14 million meals will be needed – equivalent to around 2% of the number of school meals served in the UK over a year.

Research is already demonstrating what an important role our current food system is playing in causing climate change, and how better food choices could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Around 20% of the UK's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions are caused by our food and drink. A growing body of evidence is showing that emissions from the food sector can be reduced if we all shift towards eating organic, local, seasonal food, and less but organic meat and dairy products. The Games could also raise awareness of the crisis in

worldwide fish stocks, and ensure that imported food meets Fairtrade standards.

Food systems have changed profoundly since the Olympics was last held in London in 1948. As public unease over food scares, and levels of obesity have risen, a second food revolution has begun: organic food has moved into the mainstream, and there has been a rise of interest in local and sustainable food initiatives amongst the general public and policy makers.

Most of the food at major events and tourist attractions in the UK, particularly food aimed at children, is currently poor quality – with low nutritional, environmental, animal welfare and social standards. Given the London 2012 emphasis on inspiring the young to embrace healthy living and physical achievement, it is particularly important that the Games sets a good example. Despite the poor standards of much food at tourist attractions, there are plenty of examples of good practice, serving healthy, local, and freshly produced food. Many schools across the country are already meeting the Soil Association 'Food for Life' standards of 50% local, 30% organic, and 75% unprocessed food.

It is important that local food businesses are included within the Games, so that the much hailed regeneration benefits can be gained. Previous Games have shown that this will take a great deal of effort to achieve. However, there is real potential for small businesses, run by people from a diversity of backgrounds, to work together to supply catering for the Games if they are helped with the relevant information and support to enable them to bid for contracts. The Games also provide an opportunity to provide training for local people, to fill the skills gap within the catering trade.

The legacy of the Games offers significant opportunities to the boroughs that will be most affected by the Games, which are amongst the poorest in London, and which have been identified as suffering from food poverty. Though significant development for the area has been planned, there are fears that the reality will not live up to the ideals

of sustainability and regeneration, and there has been criticism of a lack of community consultation. Specific promises about access to healthy food for the new communities that will be developed, and the sustainable food that would be available as a result, were made in the 2012 bid. There have been few signs that these pledges are going to be honoured. Indeed the most significant food development so far is the loss of the Manor Garden allotments site.

Two of the key sponsors for the Games are McDonalds and Coca-Cola, which have extensive rights to operate outlets within the Olympic village and park. The companies aim to associate their brands with the ethos of the Games. All caterers for the Games should be required to 'promote local, seasonal, healthy and organic produce', and the sponsors must take the lead in doing this.