

Next stop: food and chat

Social inclusion charity, Be Enriched, and key partners Feeding Britain, were recently joined by members of the Greater London Authority (GLA) to see how funding they provided for the country's first ever Food Bus was already helping to supporting the local community. The London Food Bus was a recipient of £120,000 of the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund, a £70 million regeneration programme supporting growth and community development, delivered through the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).



Pictured above (and attached): Kathryn (left), from the GLA, joins representatives from Feeding Britain

Members of the GLA joined Be Enriched's CEO and Founder, Kemi Akinola, along with team members of Feeding Britain, to see firsthand how the repurposed double-decker bus was bringing food to those who struggle to afford healthy items, whilst providing an opportunity to mix and meet others. As part of what will be its regular scheduled route through Stockwell, Kennington, Roehampton and Tooting, the bus parked at Allen Edwards School to allow individuals who struggle to access healthy food the opportunity to buy surplus produce donated by local suppliers. The group heard about how the bus had been specially converted to accommodate a cafe, and was powered by solar panels, to make it as sustainable as possible. They were also joined by representatives of

Hadley Property Group, who have recently started supporting the bus with an overnight secure parking space. The company will be providing volunteers at the charity's canteen, and are also discussing other potential ways it might support the charity further.

The Food Bus is just one of a number of projects Be Enriched organises to help connect people through food. It's Castle and Graveney Community Canteens hosts volunteers, who come together to cook a three course meal for locals, while its Healthy Holiday programme helps to ensure that youngsters have access to nutritional food, and development activities, when they aren't at school.

Kemi explained: "Our charity's focus is on enriching communities through food and we've already delivered a lot of benefit through our Community Canteens. The London Food Bus allows us to shift this to a whole new level, allowing us to take healthy food to people who may otherwise not have access to it. Getting to this point has not been without its challenges, especially after the bus was recently vandalised, but we are so thankful for the funding from the GLA, and everyone's support. It's such an exciting project for us and we hope that many people will stop by, use the cafe and pick up some good ingredients to cook with."

Feeding Britain added: "Feeding Britain works in partnership to tackle hunger across the UK. We support innovation, share great practice and push for systemic change. We are delighted to be working with Be Enriched on the Food Bus, bringing fresh, healthy food right into the heart of communities. The Food Bus is the first of its kind, and is now paving the way for other food busses across the Feeding Britain network."

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills said: "The Food Bus is a brilliant new project enabling access to affordable healthy food across the borough, made possible through the Mayor's Good Growth Fund. With wrap around support programmes, a café and on-board affordable supermarket, this is an example of successful partnership working across networks and communities."

The London Food Bus is open to anyone who can make use of its services

The Community Canteens are open on the following days:

Castle Canteen

Mondays, 1pm - 2:30pm

Graveney Canteen

Fridays, 1pm - 2:30pm

Volunteers are needed before, during and after each session and all are welcome. For more information on how to get involved, including sponsor The London Food Bus or other Be Enriched projects, see <https://www.be-enriched.org/>

Notes to Editors

About the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund

The Good Growth Fund is the Mayor of London's biggest regeneration fund and is delivered through the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP). It provides £70m of capital funding from sources including the Local Growth Fund and European Social Fund, as well as expert regeneration advice, design support and knowledge sharing opportunities. For more information on the Good Growth Fund, see: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/funding-opportunities/good-growth-fund-supporting-regeneration-london/good-growth-fund-supported-projects>

About the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP)

The London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) is the local enterprise partnership for London. The LEAP brings entrepreneurs and business together with the Mayoralty and London Councils to identify strategic actions to support and lead economic growth and job creation in the capital.