

## **FOOD DISTRIBUTION REPORT CHELTENHAM**

This report is based on survey responses we have received back regarding the current COVID-19 crisis and the support being offered to communities within Cheltenham. It summarises the work that we are aware support agencies and Parishes (collectively hereby referred to as organisations) are conducting but is not exhaustive and focusses predominantly on food distribution efforts.

### **Key Findings**

#### **1. Funding/Donations**

- Continued funding is essential for all the services to continue, and to be sustainable within the community post-lockdown.
- There doesn't appear to be an equal distribution of funding resources at present.
- Broad support is offered and there are a wide variety of differing food donations schemes across all organisations.
- Restrictions supermarkets have made it harder for food donations to be sought by agencies. They have established methods with certain supermarkets or providers and have different processes for incoming donations.
- Food donations continue to be a vital necessity and greater stability and coordination in this area would greatly benefit the organisations.
- Some concerns over health requirements not being met in food parcels.

#### **2. Publicity**

- A key necessity for all agencies is the continued need for publicity to both make sure that those who need to reach out know where to go and those who want to assist know how they can help.
- Particular concerns over the fact that those without access to the internet may not be able to find the right support or be aware of the services available.

#### **3. Volunteers**

- Volunteers seem to be in good supply and no shortages at present. Some agencies handle vast numbers of volunteers/resources and are happy to provide support where needed if numbers run low.

#### **4. Gaps/Areas of concern**

- Most organisations seem confident that they are supporting their communities to a good degree and that they have the resources to do so.
- Potential gaps in support have been highlighted in the elderly vulnerable categories whereby they might not have access to the technical information repositories. Leafletting has occurred in some areas but even within these areas some households may have been missed and therefore it is unclear whether the current methods of information dissemination has got through to these groups.
- Concerns over not knowing whether all those in need of support in the areas are being targeted. The unknown unknowns.

- Some groups are helping out where they can, covering areas outside of Cheltenham so it would be interesting to find out whether alternative support mechanisms do exist there or whether there are gaps.
- Some areas or households may be receiving a duplication in assistance from food donations and support agencies.
- PPE is something that could be in short supply for some community volunteers and agencies.
- Mental health is a factor which may need further investigation, to establish whether the needs of the community are being met.

## **5. Communications/Relationships**

- Most organisations expressed the desire for greater strategic coordination and more effective and inclusive communications channels between all organisations.
- Furthermore, a need for a central view of services offered across the providers would be really useful for signposting and triaging.
- The level to which agencies operate independently or in partnerships varies depending on the type of service being offered.
- Many of the agencies dealing with food distribution have partnered with or express the wish to communicate with other organisations to coordinate actions.
- There have been strong platforms established for community support on social media.

## **6. Resilience**

- Most surveyed seem prepared for now to continue at the current pace.
- Furthermore, most see this as an enduring service, not just crisis support.
- Recognition of a need to have a planned transition to normal services. People have become reliant on food banks for example to make ends meet and will struggle if the additional support were to be removed.
- The need for strong communication channels between the organisations for this resilience and sustainability was voiced.

## **Recommendations**

7. Greater clarity on the types of services and schemes in place would help as the process for donations, via vouchers, meals, food items, can be confusing.
8. A central place for this information to be amalgamated so people know where or how to donate could go some way to assist the longevity and stability of food donations.
9. Coordination with respect to approaching supermarkets could help take full advantage of what they are each offering by way of monetary funding, food donations or special access hours etc. For example, Tesco have released another £15m of funding across the UK, information on how groups can get access to this could assist in this.
10. Increased publicity for the services offered in the communities within Cheltenham which is accessible to all.
11. A method for central communication or a forum for groups to come together would benefit the organisations. This would increase understanding of different groups and

their actions within the community and also help coordinate the food distribution efforts. This would likely assist in the sustainability of the services.

12. There are seemingly limited possibilities to request support via post, there was a strong uptake in one area where this was implemented, this could go some way to supporting vulnerable groups without access to technology if implemented on a wider basis.
13. Localised letters with key information on local support was voiced could also assist with this gap.
14. Several parishes and some distributors have suggested building on the local hubs concept, managed by each local community with central support. Fits with #FeedCheltenham model, and also the concept of local food pantry memberships.

## **Synopses of organisations and parishes**

### **15. Springbank Community Group**

Springbank food bank have expanded during the crisis and are working with organisations across the community. They are delivering food parcels, responding to all requests but proactively working with partners to support individuals and families known to be vulnerable across all demographics. As of 24 April, there had been deliveries of over 830 food parcels since the start of the crisis. The service is accessed through referrals, Facebook or phone.

### **16. Caring for Communities and People (CCP)**

CCP are continuing their support in the areas of homelessness, family support and debt advice even if methods of support may have adapted during the crisis. They have ramped up the support offered by way of food donations during the crisis. In addition to food delivery support to those to whom they already provided assistance they are taking in new GP referrals.

### **17. Cheltenham Guardians**

The response that Cheltenham Guardians are offering is fluid and responsive. For example, they are fundraising and supporting key workers with PPE and welfare items. When requests come in they either signpost where people can go for help or respond on a case-by-case basis where their expertise or connections can help. The Facebook page created by the group for the crisis has around 11,000 followers and has been a great platform for those needing or offering support and if an organisation can take this on if more can be done with it.

### **18. Long Table**

The Long Table have been providing both free and paid for freshly cooked, frozen meals for the vulnerable and those unable to pay. Every four meals bought gives one away for free and have partnered with the initiative #FeedCheltenham. They have a capacity for 200 meals a day which they are providing through deliveries to individuals or through referrals, NHS, community groups, churches, charities and partner initiatives.

### **19. Cheltenham Food Bank**

Cheltenham Food Bank provide support, through a voucher referral system, to provide emergency food boxes to those fitting into the specific criteria.

#### **20. Family Space (Feed Cheltenham)**

Cheltenham Family Space have crowdfunded an initiative #FeedCheltenham during this crisis to support families struggling to buy food. Supermarket vouchers are distributed through charities and schools to families in need of this support.

#### **21. P3 – People, Potential, Possibilities**

P3 are continuing to provide support to homeless and those at risk of homelessness predominantly through delivering services and providing supported accommodation. A small number of food parcel deliveries were made previous to the crisis, however this has now greatly increased both to those in sheltered accommodation and the street homeless staying in hostels and hotels.

#### **22. Cheltenham Mutual Aid**

Cheltenham Mutual Aid are primarily acting as a high-level coordinating service with a database of volunteers. They are mainly offering food shopping/delivery but are also handling prescription collection/delivery and general errands alongside providing on-off support to other schemes. Furthermore, they are developing a 'calls against loneliness' scheme for those in self-isolation.

#### **23. St Peter's and The Moors (SPTM)**

SPTM started as a food project to limit waste four years ago, however the support has been ramped up during the crisis. The demand is mostly through drop-in sessions however deliveries have also started. They also support the community through other initiatives, distributing resources across the community when opportunities arise.

#### **24. Friends of Charlton King's (FoCK)**

FoCK are offering support on everything apart from front line roles. Mainly; food supplies, phone contact, buddy systems, facilitating free gardening supplies and care parcels for those in isolation, secure social media groups, identification of and cleaning up second-hand IT for those without. They also provide support to hospice and care home staff working in and around Charlton Kings or those in isolation or otherwise needing assistance. Furthermore, they work in partnership with the Co-Op to support deliveries locally.

#### **25. Swindon Parish Council**

Swindon Parish are working with volunteers to carry out and deliver invoiced food shops for those unable to get out, medication and prescription pick-ups and transport to hospitals for routine appointments in the area. Volunteers are also contacting those who have reached out every few days to check up.

#### **26. Prestbury Parish Council (PPC)**

Prestbury Parish Council have set up a community support group for volunteers to assist primarily with deliveries of food and medicine.

#### **27. Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish**

The aim of the Parish has been to target the elderly and vulnerable. The parish has leafletted the area highlighting the CBC Hub, Parish website and Facebook page and providing information on Co-Op and other local deliveries. The Parish is sending out a newsletter to their subscriber list (over 300) and asking them to share, in the hope that it reaches the right people. St Christopher's church in Warden Hill are helping to distribute food to those in need, and some residents in Leckhampton are collecting food for the foodbanks in Cheltenham. The Parish has also allocated £10000 of funding to support some Cheltenham charities: The Mayors fund (supporting food banks) The Cheltenham Samaritans, The Cheltenham Animal Shelter, The CCP, Winston's Wish, Maggie's and Sue Ryder Leckhampton Court hospice.

### **28. Charlton Kings Parish Council**

Charlton Kings Parish efforts are being co-ordinated by the community support group Friends of Charlton Kings (FoCK). The Parish's role is mainly in the facilitation of other groups and dissemination of additional information. They are providing room space and some financial support to FoCK as well as providing an information page on their website and a contact list on noticeboards, newsletter and social media.

Organisation	Area Covered	Food support offered*	Key points	Publicity methods/platforms
Springbank Community Group (Springbank food bank)	Predominantly cover West Cheltenham but not exclusively and have covered borough wards; Springbank, Hester's Way, St Peters, St Marks, Benhall and The Reddings, Swindon Village, St Pauls, All Saints, Leckhampton, Charlton Kings, Prestbury, including locations outside the borough	Food parcels delivery.  Respond to all requests but ensure vulnerable families supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support from key local charity partners, collaboration with a wide range of community organisations and relationship building are on-going and have been vital.</li> <li>Current volunteer capacity is exceeding demands for the service.</li> <li>Social distancing and safety of volunteers is a continued risk but safe working practices are in place.</li> <li>Lack of funding means inability to buy from wholesalers currently.</li> <li>Donations vital. Stability of food supplies are being monitored as donations fluctuate.</li> <li>Funding required for costs for key infrastructure and personnel. Grant funding opportunities being explored but seem restrictive. Support with funding in the medium-term post lockdown would be greatly appreciated.</li> <li>Possible emerging vulnerable groups of residents who may be accessing multiple services.</li> <li>Assistance with strategic coordination across the town to reduce duplication and maximise resilience.</li> </ul>	Partner agencies, referrals, Facebook, Phone
Caring for Communities and People (CCP)	Predominantly across Cheltenham but offered across Gloucestershire	Deliveries for vulnerable (previous customers and new referrals)  Currently feeding 90+ households a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need publicity - reliant on monetary and food donations to keep going.</li> <li>Difficulties in people getting to supermarkets means less donations in food. This is a constant challenge for CCP as due to the supermarket restrictions, it's difficult to buy in bulk.</li> <li>Safety is a concern but equipment has been ordered. Long wait for PPE delivery.</li> <li>Useful to advertise the other areas of CCP are currently recruiting for roles in supporting key homeless services.</li> </ul>	Using social media and established connections with businesses to publicise for donations, word of mouth, partner agencies
Cheltenham Guardians	Predominantly Cheltenham but do not turn anyone away	Signpost incoming requests and assist on a case-by-case basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook group with around 11000 members is a great platform reaching the community. Could another organisation take it on if more can be done with it?</li> </ul>	Social media, website

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the vulnerable elderly may not be/know how to be reaching out.</li> </ul>	
Long Table	People based within 30 minute drive of central Cheltenham	Paid/unpaid meals for vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential gap - want to make sure that those who are in contact with the hidden vulnerable have access to provisions to feed them.</li> <li>Partnering with organisations has gone some way to assisting with this but keen to create long-term strategies for sustainability after the crisis.</li> <li>Need - extra funding to supplement the free meals, and extra publicity to push the paid meals. And longer term, extra financing would mean being able to open up more kitchens and help with sustainability in the community.</li> <li>Longer term also need more streamlined ways to refer.</li> <li>Volunteer drivers always helpful.</li> <li>Would like to connect with any local farms/shops giving away surplus food.</li> </ul>	Partner agencies/initiatives
Cheltenham Food Bank	People in Cheltenham who fit the specific criteria	Referrals through agencies for food donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need an ongoing flow of food donated or access to food through supermarkets and suppliers.</li> <li>It would be helpful to gain any special access to the supermarket overflow, food supplier stock or the ability to buy certain non-perishables in bulk.</li> </ul>	Referrals/partner agencies
Family Space (Feed Cheltenham)	Whole of Cheltenham	Initiative #FeedCheltenham set up and administered by Cheltenham Family space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would be good to have more join up longer-term - hoping that more agencies will partner to bring together local community knowledge in Cheltenham.</li> <li>Funding needed for sustainability.</li> <li>Publicity needed – both to increase donations but also to reach people who need support.</li> <li>More consistent approach to referrals needed.</li> <li>Good level of resilience.</li> </ul>	Partner agencies, churches, schools, leaflets, crowdfunding, website

P3 – People, Potential, Possibilities	Gloucestershire area. Wide coverage in Cheltenham.	Food deliveries to street homeless, those in sheltered accommodation and other vulnerable categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently the small core team is resilient.</li> <li>Need publicity – advertisement of the Freephone number and advertisement of food drop off points.</li> <li>Shortage of hand sanitiser and also of PPE for hotel staff in hotels/hostels being used for temporary accommodation.</li> </ul>	Partner agencies, referrals, Freephone number
Cheltenham Mutual Aid	All GL50, 51, 52 postcodes. Mostly Cheltenham but have travelled wider.	Food shopping/delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key gap is awareness – need to get the contact details out in further press releases</li> <li>Have a vast database of volunteers’ details and therefore good capacity. Happy to put calls for volunteers from other organisations to those in their databases.</li> <li>Would appreciate better communication channels with organisations would increase resilience and ability to support other organisations.</li> <li>Significant loss in volunteer willingness or significant (200%+) rise in requests for assistance could affect their ability to support.</li> </ul>	Previously leafletted, aid request form, Facebook group, Hotline number, working on using community newsletters
St Peter’s and The Moors (SPTM)	St Peters, The Moors and St Pauls. Deliveries made across Cheltenham.	Drop in service and deliveries of food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food supplies are sporadic as it depends on the supermarket stock. Currently no fresh food or tins.</li> <li>Discussions with Fare Share Go regarding expansion into fresh produce were cancelled due to the crisis. This limits what the service can provide.</li> </ul>	Social media (Facebook), flyers, work with partner agencies
Friends of Charlton King’s (FoCK)	Parish of Charlton Kings, but also gone out along the A40 to Dowdeswell and the A417 as far as possible. And those living in Battledown Park	Volunteer assistance with supermarket shops and food deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More food sent back to food banks than they take out due to people being supported by multiple channels or not being able to switch off services they don’t want</li> <li>Have 5x more capacity in the system than they have demand. Happy to help beyond parish boundaries (would have to seek alternative parish funding if this was the case).</li> <li>Need acceleration of charitable status. Without that, getting a bank account sorted is difficult. Anything that enables them to bank as a community organisation or get</li> </ul>	Two leaflet drops in area and to care homes, PO Box been set up for six months, call centre solution, call centre technology, website (not live), liaison with partner organisations, social



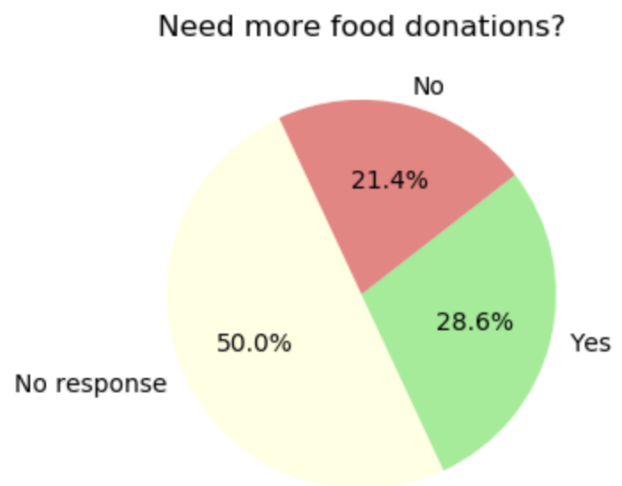
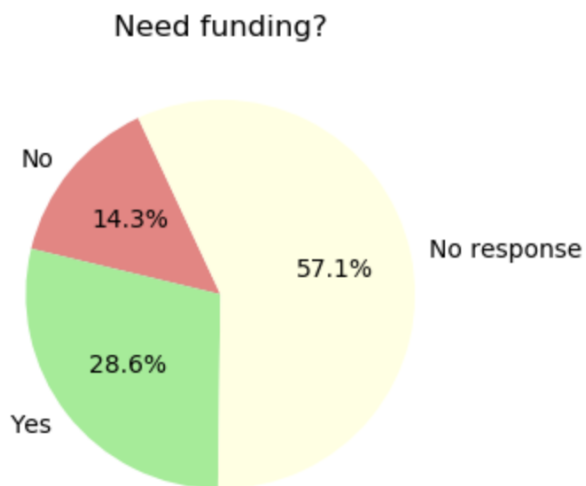
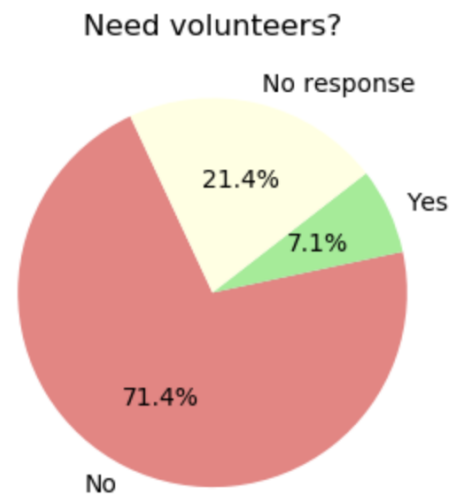
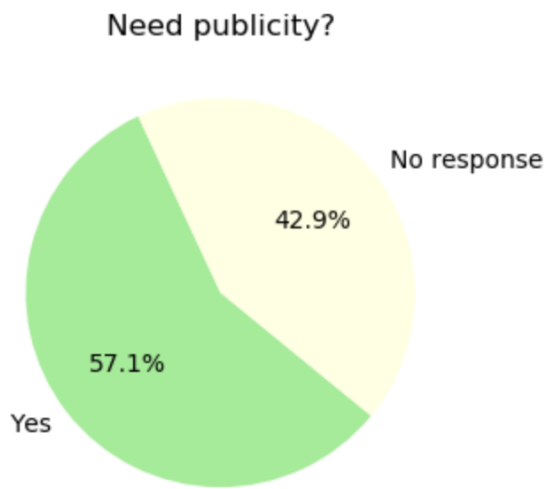
			<p>costs paid would be helpful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus for resilience in the community beyond lockdown, building a better connected community at all levels.</li> </ul>	media
Swindon Parish Council	Swindon Parish	Working with volunteers to carry out and deliver invoices food shops for those unable to get out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can't be sure who they are not reaching, the unknown unknowns</li> <li>Hopefully be able to refer some people to partner agencies. Some issues with the community hub and regular deliveries and customisation of food parcels for people with illnesses.</li> <li>Are able to continue at this pace for 6 weeks further, then would have to re-evaluate.</li> <li>Predominantly vulnerable categories are unsure about regular hospital visits and appointments.</li> <li>A central mechanism to distribute funding from would help</li> <li>More explanation needed about how the community groups and organisations are all working. It would be useful to have a weekly/fortnightly briefing for all the community groups and/or a communication channel.</li> </ul>	Phone number distributed through village news, website and dedicated email address, community Facebook page
Prestbury Parish Council (PPC)	Prestbury Parish	Food delivery/shopping assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to know how effective communications have been and how many residents are aware of the service – could be gaps.</li> </ul>	Have advertised through website, leaflet drop, local church and local radio
Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council	The parish area and neighbouring unparished areas.	Signposting to places to go for help, distributing information about local deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicity needed - localised letters including parish clerk or community support points of contact would be good.</li> <li>Better method of communication with those without internet access – something to provide those people with information on food and services available.</li> <li>Clearer information on support services available.</li> <li>Central communications links to local sources of help.</li> <li>Mechanism for sharing information and ideas across</li> </ul>	Leafletting in the Parish area but may have missed some homes, second leaflet being planned, Parish website, Facebook page

			different parts of the community (channel of communication for parish clerks and support agencies). This is important in the long run as well for sustainability of community support for the elderly, vulnerable and isolated people and they are happy to assist with this.	
Charlton Kings Parish Council	Charlton Kings Parish	Disseminating information on how to help and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts in the Parish being coordinated by FoCK.</li> <li>• Do not have the staff resource to do any direct work.</li> </ul>	Website, noticeboards, newsletter and social media

\*Other support offered but this report focussed on the food support.

## Appendix:

### Charts representing survey results for key responses

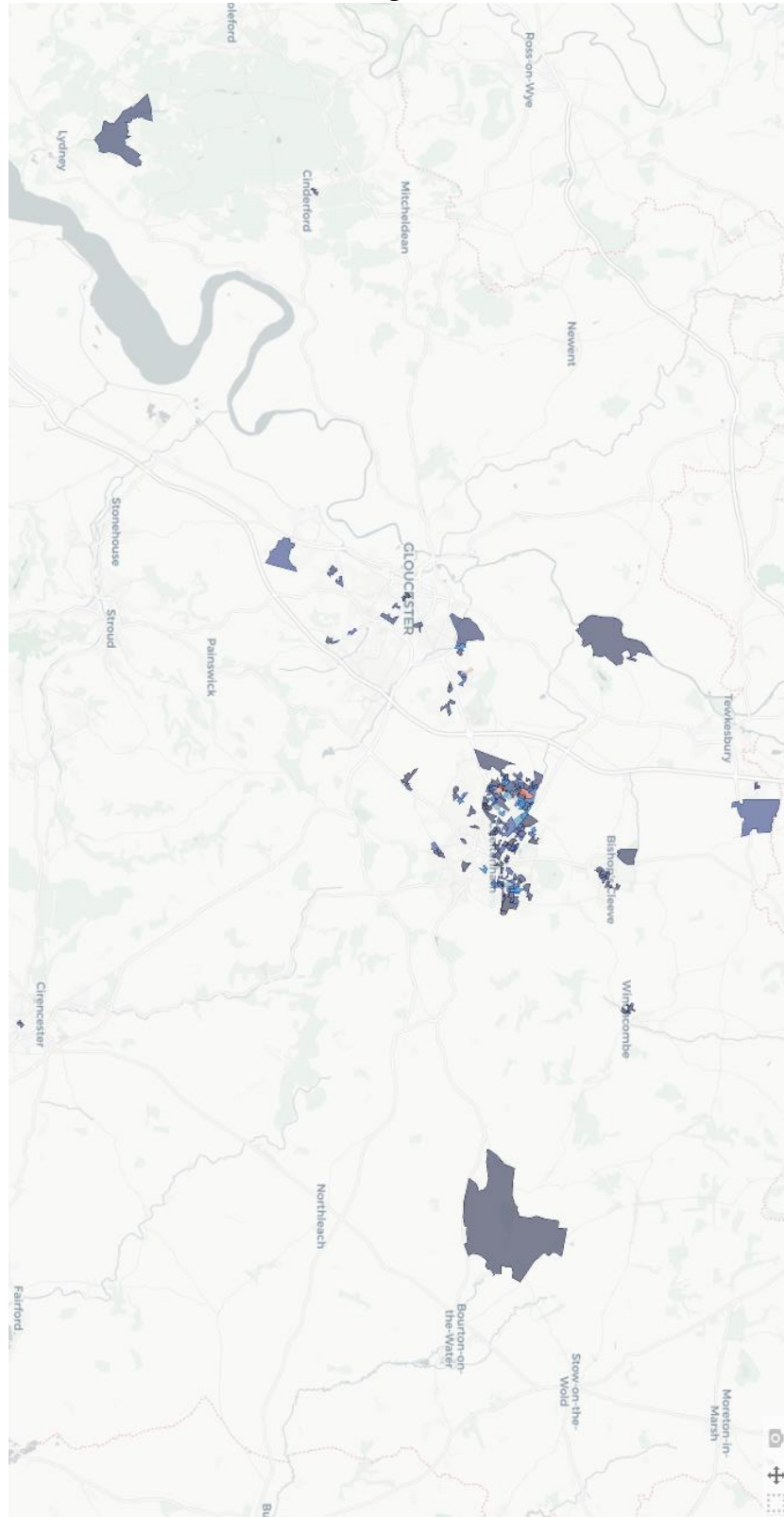


## Maps showing food parcel data from Springbank and CCP

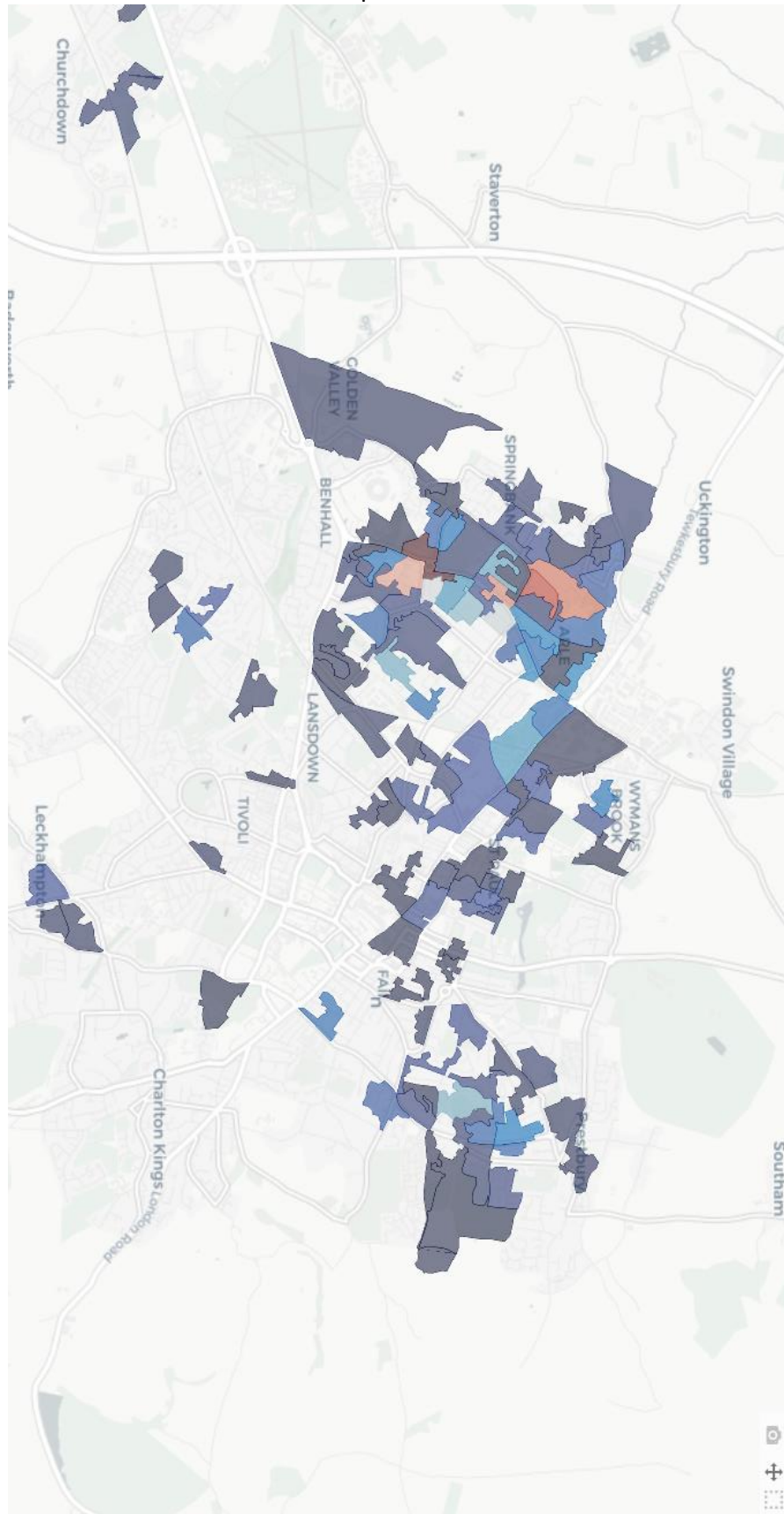
Based on deliveries/collection in March & April

Colour scale – Dark grey (low), Dark blue, Light Blue, Yellow, Orange (high)

Map 1 – shows total area covered – extending as far as Forest of Dean and Cirencester



Map 2 – shows Cheltenham area with hotspots



Map 4 – potential gap in data/coverage?

