

**CARDIFF FOOD STRATEGY**

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**Reason for the Report**

1. To provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the development of the Cardiff Food Strategy that is due to be received by Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

**Background**

2. Cities are defined by the quality, availability and affordability of their food. Cardiff has a commitment in Capital Ambition to develop a Food Strategy for the city that encompasses the wide range of sustainable food matters and addresses all the key issues including:
  - Food poverty;
  - Inequalities;
  - Well-being;
  - Food supply;
  - Tourism; and,
  - Economic development.
3. As the capital of Wales Cardiff has a role as a tourist destination and part of this tourism attraction is based on the food on offer across the city. The Council wants Cardiff to be seen as a vibrant tourist destination that is recognised for its food offer and the associated economic benefits. Due to the cities multicultural history and diverse demography, food outlets cover all tastes and budgets from ethnic independent outlets on City Road, pop up Street Food Circus's, the award winning

Riverside, Roath and Rhiwbina Farmers Markets and upmarket options in more affluent wards such as Pontcanna.

4. The work that has been undertaken to create the draft Cardiff Food Strategy has identified a number of good practice examples of cities and nations that have embraced their food offer potential, for example, Failte Ireland's Food and Drink Strategy; Portland Oregon's street food; Copenhagen's food destination and culture; and Lyon's fair and sustainable city label.
5. There is still work to be undertaken for the Council to achieve its aspiration of becoming a 'Gold Sustainable Food City'. Like many cities Cardiff has an abundance of fast food outlets serving unhealthy options. Research undertaken in 2018 (source: FXTM) gives Cardiff the questionable title of being the 'Fast Food Capital' of the UK, having more outlets per head of population than any other UK city. Overall Cardiff has 30.50 fast food franchises for every 100,000 population which is more than any other UK city, and in comparison more than London (9.39) and Edinburgh (23.91).
6. The UK is in the grip of an obesity crisis. It is estimated that 1 in 4 UK adults and 1 in 5 children aged 10-11 are obese (source: NHS). These figures are higher in more deprived areas. Obesity leads to a number of serious and potentially life threatening conditions such as type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, stroke plus psychological problems such as depression and low self-esteem. Poor diet is the main cause of obesity along with lack of exercise. Those in deprived areas are less likely to be able to easily access or afford good food.
7. Additionally there is a significant difference in life expectancy between those in the least deprived areas of the city and those in Cardiff's Arc of Deprivation. For men this is 11 years and for women 9 years, rising to 24 years for men and 22 years for women in relation to healthy life expectancy (source: Cardiff Well-being Assessment). Diet, both in terms of food options available and food consumed, has a part to play in this life expectancy.
8. Cardiff has a local food partnership, Food Cardiff, and Cardiff Council sits on the steering group of this partnership. Food Cardiff is a member of the Sustainable Food

Cities network. Under the steerage of this network, Cardiff has already achieved status as a Bronze Sustainable Food City and is well on the way to achieving Silver status. In June 2018, Cardiff hosted the UK Sustainable Food Cities conference at City Hall, where the Leader gave the welcome speech and stated that Cardiff has an ambition to achieve Gold Sustainable Food City status.

9. When comparing Cardiff to other UK cities there are three cities currently at Silver Sustainable Food City status – Brighton & Hove, Bristol and Greater London Authority & London Food Board. These cities have got to this status by a combination of partnership working, strong local and cultural identity, and numerous sustainable grassroots projects and networks. Cardiff has this potential and the Council developing the Cardiff Food Strategy demonstrates leadership and places us further on the path to our aspiration of Gold Sustainable Food City status.
10. There is good practice already underway across the Council such as the provision of allotment and community garden space, the Youth Foods initiative, the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), the Council's Veg Pledge commitment and our long-term support to the Food Cardiff partnership.
11. Development of a Food Strategy will help the authority fulfil its obligations around the Well-being of Future Generations Act, contributing positively to all seven National Well-being Goals and utilising all five Ways of Working advocated in the Act.
12. Sustainable food is a broad ranging agenda that covers:
  - **Local Food** – reducing food miles and supporting the local economy;
  - **Healthy Food** – promoting a diet in line with the Government endorsed Eatwell Guide and disincentivising unhealthy options;
  - **Affordable Food** – helping to understand and address affordable food and food poverty issues for those in need;
  - **Environmentally Friendly Food** – growing, processing and transporting our food whilst minimising environmental impact;
  - **Food for All** – access to good food in all areas of the city and across all demographics, especially those in deprived areas.

This is the basis for a Sustainable Food Framework that the Council will look to develop in conjunction with partners.

13. The draft Cardiff Food Strategy seeks to identify the main opportunities and interventions for the Council across the city to enable and encourage growth of sustainable food programmes and businesses.

### **Issues**

14. The Council's influence on food in the city is wide ranging. It includes:
  - Catering (internal and external);
  - Procurement;
  - Provision of growing spaces;
  - Events;
  - Licencing;
  - Food hygiene;
  - Welfare and benefits advice;
  - Economic development support;
  - Planning; and,
  - Schools.
  
15. There is considerable opportunity, therefore, to make positive changes and build upon the good practice already in place. In recognising this opportunity a study was commissioned in autumn 2018 to help the Council to clarify the Council's role and to determine the most effective points of intervention for us in addressing the issues. The study was supported and funded by a successful bid to the Welsh Government's 'Smart Living' programme. The study delivered:
  - **Best Practice** - research examining ideas on policy and practice from the UK and wider;
  - **Stakeholder Engagement** - with internal and external stakeholders to understand and assess the issues and opportunities for change; and,
  - **Advisory Report** – a report distilling the findings of this research into a series of key recommendations for action.

16. The reports are available as background papers to this report and their findings have helped to steer the recommended actions in the Cardiff Food Strategy.

### **Why the Council needs to act**

17. In addition to the issues of obesity and inequalities in the city outlined above, there are a number of other key concerns and motivations for Council action in moving towards greater food sustainability. In particular:
- Only 1 in 4 adults are eating their '5 a day' which is significantly lower than the '7 a day' recommended target for health (source: NHS). A diet poor in fruit and vegetables leads to poor health and malnutrition, and is highly linked with obesity and other illness. Worryingly these are self-reported statistics and are therefore likely to be over reported, as people tend to overestimate good behaviours whilst minimising more negative traits.
  - Half of all food bought by families in the UK is now 'ultra processed', that is, made in a factory with industrial ingredients and additives that bear little resemblance to a fresh cooked meal made of vegetables, fruit, meat or fish. These highly processed foods are also generally high in sugar and fat, and have a higher carbon footprint than fresh cooked. People purchase such processed foods for convenience, but also due to a lack of cooking confidence and / or cooking facilities. A survey of social housing providers undertaken by Food Cardiff found the cost of cooker connections (average cost £80) when tenants moved property a barrier to tenants having adequate cooking facilities in the short to medium term.
  - Foodbank use is on the rise across the UK, particularly since recent welfare reforms and especially since the roll out of Universal Credit. Cardiff has the second largest foodbank network per person in the UK, which is bad in terms of high need across the city and good in terms of demonstrating a positive response locally to this food poverty crisis.
  - There are areas of the city without adequate food shops, markets and healthy food providers. These food deserts tend to be in more deprived areas, with low car ownership levels, that in turn may have an abundance of fast food outlets

(food swamps). Anecdotally we hear that in some areas it is easier, and sometimes cheaper, to buy a bag of chips than a bag of potatoes.

- The vast majority of food consumed in the UK is a product of the intensive farming model which includes growing high yield crops, and using fertilisers and pesticides, all of which contributes to environmental degradation. Organic farming bans chemical inputs and puts considerably higher standards on animal welfare; however, it often produces less yield and therefore more expensive food. The organic market has had six years of steady growth but organic sales account for just 1.5% of the total UK food and drink market (source: Soil Association).

### **Strategic Vision**

18. We all need to eat, and therefore it is possible to engage with everyone at some level around food issues. Food has the potential to be a focal point, both as a positive transformer and also as a tool to promote community cohesion in the city. The quality, availability and affordability of food is an issue that is central to the ways in which towns and cities are defined and branded.
19. The studies and discussions that have guided the draft strategy have identified a series of opportunities for the Council to grasp. Many of these are direct actions that can be undertaken as part of service delivery, but it is also clear that the Council has a wider leadership role that could help to stimulate change across the city. The strategic vision is therefore for the Council to 'lead by example' in proactively addressing sustainable food issues, demonstrating and illustrating best practice to our partners across the city. The area of particular focus are on:
  - **Tackling Food Inequalities** – in areas of deprivation households spend a high percentage of their disposable income on food. Deprived areas also have a prevalence of food deserts and food swamps. Households with children where family income is less than £15,869 per annum would need to spend 42% of after housing income to afford the Eatwell Guide diet that is recommended for health (source: The Food Foundation). Recent welfare reforms have further amplified existing issues seeing a sharp rise in the number of food bank referrals.

- **Increasing Local Food Production** – whilst it is unattainable for a city the size of Cardiff to be totally self-sufficient in its food production there is a clear opportunity, and an emerging ambition for Cardiff to increase the volumes of food produced locally. This ambition is being expressed both from grassroots community projects and larger scale commercial organisations. Local food production initiatives could offer multiple benefits in skills development, physical and mental health, along with the potential for social cohesion. There will also be need to consider alternative approaches to food production especially where they can link with other systems such as waste or energy to optimise impact, for example hydroponics.
- **Eating Out Well** – modern work patterns and lifestyles mean that we eat out of home more often than ever. Whether grabbing lunch on the go, sitting down for a meal with friends and family, or business entertaining, we want everyone to be able to access good, healthy and sustainable food options that are within their budget, and for Cardiff to be a ‘foodie destination’.
- **Food as a Driver for Prosperity** – we want to optimise the value from the food economy for Cardiff, both in terms of enabling local, sustainable food businesses to thrive, and by using food, and a rich and diverse food economy, to drive positive change, create an identity for Cardiff around food that can deliver tourism benefits, economic prosperity and broader social value.
- **Fostering Food Partnerships** – the Council’s leadership role includes the need to engage with our key partners, in terms of learning from their best practice and sharing ours, seeking to influence food initiatives where we have input, and joining up works streams to avoid duplication and to benefit from synergies where appropriate. Key partners include the Cardiff Public Services Board and the Food Cardiff partnership. Liaison with community groups and the public can in turn be undertaken via our position within Food Cardiff.

20. There are also issues that cut across these five areas of focus:

- **Council Leading by Example** – within the Council’s wider leadership role there is need to promote the good practice already in evidence around the city and to

understand the lessons learned by the services and organisations that have led the way, including our public sector partners. Promoting the Cardiff Food Strategy and the initiatives contained within it will be key to this and will offer a cohesive and supportive framework to grow and add to these initiatives.

- **Supporting & Enabling Community Initiatives** – including promoting community group opportunities on the Volunteer Cardiff portal. There is potential to explore how the purchasing power of the Council could be used to support local community food initiatives.

21. The Draft Cardiff Food Strategy which works as an action plan is being developed to steer the Council's work in this area and is based on the five key areas set out above. The Draft Cardiff Food Strategy is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.
22. The Draft Cardiff Food Strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders both in the Council and across the city. The document reflects these internal partners' responsibilities within the Council.

### **Way Forward**

23. Councillor Michael Michael, Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment has been invited to attend for this item. He will be supported by officers from the Planning, Transport & Environment Directorate.

### **Legal Implications**

24. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and

properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

25. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Consider the information in this report and the information presented at the meeting;
- (ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter; and,
- (iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

**DAVINA FIORE**  
**Director of Governance & Legal Services**  
**26<sup>th</sup> June 2019**