

Cardiff Food Strategy

A strategy and action plan for sustainable food in Cardiff

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Introduction:

Food in Cardiff

Cities are defined by the quality, availability and affordability of their food. We all need to eat and it is therefore possible to engage with everyone at some level around food issues. Food has the potential both as a positive transformer and to promote community cohesion in the city.

Food issues are wide ranging from poverty and health, through to supply, tourism and economic development, and to ethical and organic production. In this strategy we are defining sustainable food as covering:

- Local food – reducing food miles and their associated carbon footprint, 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 demographics, especially those in deprived areas and vulnerable residents

The Cardiff Food Strategy sets out 5 key areas for action, each of which is intended to stimulate action on sustainable food and lead us towards a more sustainable food city:

- Tackling food inequalities
- Increasing local food production
- Eating out well
- Food as a driver for prosperity
- Fostering food partnerships

Why we need to act

The Council's influence on food in the city is wide ranging. We provide catering services (internal and external), procurement of food, growing spaces across the city, major events, licencing, food hygiene, welfare and benefits advice, economic development support, planning and schools. We also have close relationships with other key players in the city via the Food Cardiff partnership and Public Services Board.

Health and inequalities are key drivers of our sustainable food work.

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 (NHS statistics). These figures are higher in deprived areas. Obesity in the UK is rising and yet at the same time we have malnutrition in the population. Poor diet is the main cause of obesity along with lack of exercise. Only 1 in 4 adults are eating their '5 a day' which is significantly lower than the '7 a day' recommended target for health (NHS statistics). This is a self-reported statistic and therefore the true figure is likely to be less as people tend to overestimate good behaviours when self-reporting.

Additionally half of all food eaten in the UK is '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 food for convenience, but also due to a lack of cooking skills and / or cooking facilities and equipment.

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 (Cardiff Wellbeing Assessment). Diet, both in terms of food options available and food consumed, has a part to play in this life expectancy.

Foodbank use is on the rise across the UK, corresponding with welfare reform timings, and particularly with the roll out of Universal Credit. Cardiff has the second largest foodbank network per person in the UK, which demonstrates both the high level of food poverty in the city and the positive response locally to this food poverty crisis.

Those in deprived areas are less likely to be able to easily access or afford good nutritious food. 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 may in turn have an abundance of fast food outlets (food swamps).

The public supports work on healthy food options. In the 2016 Ask Cardiff survey 9 out of 10 residents responded that they would support healthy food options in Council venues, workplaces and schools.

As well as these social benefits around health and equalities work on sustainable food also has environmental benefits as local and fresh food has a lower carbon footprint than processed food and food transported longer distances. 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 chemical fertilisers and pesticides, all of which contribute 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.

Finally a strong and diverse local food economy that enables local sustainable food businesses to thrive brings multiple benefits to the city increasing prosperity, local jobs and skills along with creating an identity for Cardiff around food that can deliver tourism benefits and broader social value.

Policy drivers

Cardiff has a commitment in Capital Ambition to develop a Food Strategy for the city. The development of such a strategy will help the Authority fulfil its obligations around the Well-being of Future Generations Act, contributing positively to all 7 National Well-being Goals and utilising all 5 Ways of Working advocated in the Act. The Cardiff Well-being Plan has evidence, narrative and action around food related issues, in particular food poverty.

Support and key partners

Cardiff has a local food partnership, Food Cardiff, and Cardiff Council sits on the steering group of this partnership. Food Cardiff seeks to enable 'good food for all' and is comprised of public, private and third sector organisations. 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.

Appendix 1

Sitting above Food Cardiff is a newly established national body, Food Sense Wales, and Cardiff Council sits on this steering group as the leading Welsh local authority on sustainable food issues.

The other key partnership in the city is the Cardiff Public Services Board which brings together the city's public service leadership and decision makers to improve the well-being of Cardiff.

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Strategic vision:

This strategy has been based on a series of background studies and discussions with key stakeholders on food issues. This has helped to identify the main opportunities and interventions for the Council across the city to enable and encourage growth of sustainable food programmes and businesses.

Many of these are direct actions that the Council can undertake 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 areas of particular focus are on:

- **Tackling food inequalities**
- **Increasing local food production**
- **Eating out well**
- **Food as a driver for prosperity**
- **Fostering food partnerships**

Along with the cross cutting issues of:

- **Cardiff Council leading by example**
- **Supporting and enabling community initiatives**

Five specific areas for action to support this vision are identified in the action plan below.

Action Plan:

<i>Short term</i>	<i>within 1 year – immediate and easy actions</i>
<i>Medium term</i>	<i>within 3 years – actions requiring more work</i>
<i>Long term</i>	<i>within 5 years – challenging actions</i>

1 - Tackling food inequalities

There are stark differences of deprivation between those in Cardiff’s ‘Southern Arc’ and the least deprived areas of the city.

If the ‘Southern Arc’ of Cardiff was considered a single local authority it would be far and away the poorest in Wales. Nearly a third of households in Cardiff, that’s over 41,000 homes are deemed to be living in poverty.

In areas of deprivation households spend a high percentage of their disposable income on food. Deprived areas also have a high 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 on food to afford the Eatwell Guide diet that is recommended for health (The Food Foundation). Recent welfare reforms have further amplified existing issues seeing a sharp rise in the number of food bank referrals.

Key action	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>Food deserts and food swamps</p> <p>Action: To map food deserts and food swamps - using findings to implement and inform planning policy, and direct location of community projects to increase access to food (eg community pantries, growing projects).</p> <p>Food deserts are areas, usually in deprived communities, lacking food shops, markets and healthy food providers. Conversely food swamps are areas oversaturated with unhealthy dining options, such as fast food outlets.</p>		✓	

<p>SHEP</p> <p>Action: Roll out of programme across more Cardiff schools and over more holidays - building upon this successful pilot review SHEP delivery model to enable roll out of programme and to make more self-sustaining (link to sustainable food framework).</p> <p>The School Holiday Enrichment Programme, also known as Food and Fun, is an award winning holiday hunger programme that started in Cardiff and has now been rolled out across Wales.</p>	<p>✓</p>		
<p>Community pantries</p> <p>Action: Support strategic roll out of community pantries in Cardiff - by mapping provision vs. need and co-hosting schemes in community access buildings (eg Hubs, schools).</p> <p>Community pantries move beyond the foodbank and are a membership scheme run by local communities to provide affordable and healthy food for all. They are particularly important in food desert areas.</p>		<p>✓</p>	
<p>Support options promotion</p> <p>Action: Promote and encourage uptake of support options available – continue to promote via Hubs, benefits advice, schools and social services support.</p> <p>There are a variety of free support options available to households in food poverty such as Healthy Start vouchers, Free School Meals, Free Breakfast Clubs. However uptake of these schemes is generally low partly due to people not knowing they are available or that they qualify for assistance.</p>	<p>✓</p>		

2 - Increasing local food production

How close to self-sufficiency could Cardiff get? Could we produce one portion of veg per day per person? Two portions?

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 us 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.

Key action	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>Food growing plan</p> <p>Action: Develop a clear plan for food growing - in spaces where the Council has control (eg parks, Hubs, schools, 'meanwhile use' land), advertise space to interested partners (community groups, social enterprises, businesses), link to existing community initiatives and groups to provide support to kick start growing activities, share skills and optimise community benefits.</p> <p>The Council own land across the city that community groups and others could potentially utilise for food growing projects to optimise Cardiff's 'edible landscape'. There needs to be a map of these spaces along with a simple process for advertising and accessing land. Land earmarked for future development could be utilised on a time bound 'meanwhile use' basis.</p>		✓	
<p>Planning policy</p> <p>Action: Integrate policy / standards on expected space for local growing within planning policy - link to development plans, masterplans etc. and specific planning guidance to support this as appropriate.</p>	✓		

<p>Planning policies can support local food growing by providing space for growing within new developments, including edible plants and trees in planting schemes in new developments, protecting open space under threat from a proposed development and encouraging local groups to start a community food growing space.</p>			
<p>Urban food growing</p> <p>Action: Increase commercial food growing and production opportunities in the city - by actively engaging with organisations seeking to invest in Cardiff, considering alternative approaches to food production and how these can link to other food / waste / energy systems to optimise impact (eg hydroponics, aquaponics).</p> <p>To work towards a self sufficient food city requires growing projects of all magnitudes from small scale community projects through to commercial production within the city. These commercial level projects have added benefits of skills training and employment opportunities. Additionally there is potential for this fresh produce to be sold at main Council buildings in pop up stalls.</p>			
<p>Food park</p> <p>Action: Develop a hub for food – to include local food production businesses, food growing space, food pantry, local skills training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Food parks bring together advocates for local food in a spatial location, from farmers to food entrepreneurs to chefs to business leaders.</p>			

3 - Eating out well

The UK spends over £49 billion on eating and drinking out per year.

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'.

Key action	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>City centre food plan and street food</p> <p>Action: Develop a city centre food plan - with a focus on providing a vibrant and diverse food economy including street food, establishing goals for daytime and into night time economy, identifying locations where street food will be hosted, revamping Cardiff Market as a sustainable food market (eat in, takeaway and cook at home options), setting standards, ambition and expectations of local businesses and their participation – link to promoting Cardiff as the 'Capital of Welsh Produce', the world's First Fair Trade Capital City and sustainable food framework.</p> <p>Cardiff is a key tourist destination in Wales with more than 18 million visitors each year. These visitors plus Cardiff's own residents and workforce need feeding when out and about.</p>		✓	
<p>Sustainable food framework</p> <p>Action: Develop a sustainable food framework to define and integrate sustainable food goals, thresholds and targets across all Council operations (to include staff canteens, internal and external catering, schools catering, vending) – including provision and promotion of healthy, local, environmentally friendly, and good animal welfare food options; corporate commitments; as well as de-centivising and limiting non-healthy options.</p>		✓	

<p>The Council provides catering services for its own staff, schools and events. The Council is already committed to the Veg Pledge to promote increasing vegetable consumption across Council operations and serving Fair Trade options. These corporate commitments can be built upon to develop a more comprehensive sustainable food framework. This framework can also be used for street food in the city and working with partners.</p>			
<p>Sustainability Mark</p> <p>Action: Develop a ‘sustainability mark’ for local food businesses - which can be used to assess local businesses and confirm their status as a sustainable business in Cardiff, looking at both process and product, including consideration of incentive options for sustainable food businesses.</p> <p>Local businesses and organisations have expressed interest in the development of a Sustainability Mark to promote local sustainable food businesses.</p>			
<p>Major events pilot</p> <p>Action: Trial a pop up ‘sustainable food option’ street vendor selection for major events – utilising the sustainable food framework / mark and rolling out to all major events, consider giving priority to or incentivising sustainable food businesses.</p> <p>Cardiff is host to a variety of major events every year from sports such as rugby and football to leisure and cultural festivals. Street food is a key element to these events and is highly visible to events attendees.</p>			

4 - Food as a driver for prosperity

Cardiff is the UK's fastest growing Core City and all our residents, workforce and tourists need to be eat.

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, and deliver economic prosperity and broader social value.

Key action	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>Local skills development</p> <p>Action: Support local skills development in the food sector – link to Youth Foods initiative, hydroponics project etc.</p> <p>Food businesses of all sizes offer the opportunity to provide skills development to residents of Cardiff and the city region, particularly targeting those from disadvantaged groups. One such example is the Council's Youth Foods, a catering and food service where NEET youth apprentices and employees fill the vast majority of posts. Youth Foods acts as a holistic youth development venture based on social inclusion, addressing isolated and disadvantaged groups.</p>		✓	
<p>Procurement</p> <p>Action: Review and agree actions to maximise benefits from food procurements to ensure food options are healthy, local and low environmental impact – link to framework / Mark, include ways of integrating local and sustainable procurement options where required and appropriate (may be outside of NPS), consider whole life approach to addressing potential impact.</p>		✓	

<p>The council's procurement of food covers staff and schools catering as well as events and street food.</p>			
<p>Economic development support</p> <p>Action: Review and agree actions for economic development support including incubator support, business skills training, business promotion, food waste and food packaging collections – to support local sustainable businesses and healthy / diverse / sustainable food economy (and deprioritise non-healthy / limited diversity / unsustainable options).</p> <p>Cardiff has a prosperous, thriving and diverse economy which includes food businesses. We need to explore how we can support such businesses to ensure they thrive and deliver additional social, environmental and cultural benefits to the city.</p>			
<p>Food tourism</p> <p>Action: To investigate how best to support the food tourism sector (hotels, venues, restaurants and bars) – utilising the Framework / Mark and linking to the city centre food plan where appropriate.</p> <p>As the capital of Wales Cardiff has a role as a top tourist destination and part of this tourism attraction is around the food on offer across the city. We want Cardiff to be seen as a 'foodie destination' and 'vibrant capital' with the associated economic and tourism benefits to the city.</p>			

5 - Fostering food partnerships

Cardiff Council has a key leadership role across the city from policy formation through to provision of services and support of local residents.

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 work 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.

Key action	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>Food Cardiff</p> <p>Action: Integrating the Council's food strategy actions into the wider Food Cardiff partnership - utilising Cardiff Council's role in the partnership to influence food initiatives across the city where we have input, joining up work streams to avoid duplication and benefit from synergies where appropriate.</p> <p>Cardiff Council sits on the Steering Group of the city wide food partnership Food Cardiff. Cardiff is a Bronze award Sustainable Food City which is currently working towards Silver with an aspiration to become a Gold Sustainable Food City.</p>	✓		
<p>Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB)</p> <p>Action: Working with PSB partners to benchmark partner organisations sustainable food frameworks, target set and report regularly on progress - learning from sharing best practice with our PSB partners and joint working, encouraging PSB partners to participate in food initiatives if not already doing so, joining up work streams to avoid duplication and benefits from synergies where appropriate.</p>		✓	

Cardiff's PSB brings together the city's public service leadership and decision makers to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Cardiff by strengthening joint working across the city's public services. The Leader of the Council chairs the PSB.			
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Monitoring:

Monitoring the progress of the action plan is essential to measure progress towards the end goal of enabling good food for all. A Board will be established to monitor progress quarterly and the outcomes reported to the Cardiff PSB as part of the Council's partnership arrangements.

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