

CABINET MEETING: 21 NOVEMBER 2019

CARDIFF FOOD STRATEGY

**CLEAN STREETS, RECYCLING & ENVIRONMENT
(COUNCILLOR MICHAEL MICHAEL)**

AGENDA ITEM: 3

Reason for this Report

1. To approve the Council's Food Strategy and proposed action plan.

Background

2. Cities are defined by the quality, availability and affordability of their food. Sustainable food can help progress the Council's Climate Emergency agenda, social and financial inclusion work, economic and cultural sustainability.
3. Food is a fundamental issue for all our citizens and visitors and has far-reaching influences on health, wellbeing, the economy and the environment. Cardiff Council has a commitment in Capital Ambition to develop a Food Strategy for the city that encompasses this wide range of sustainable food matters and addresses all the key issues including:
 - food poverty,
 - Inequalities,
 - well-being
 - food supply,
 - tourism and
 - economic development.
4. As the capital of Wales Cardiff has a role as a top UK tourist destination and part of this tourism attraction is around the food on offer. We want to celebrate and grow Cardiff's strong food culture, and recognise its contribution to our vibrant Capital with the associated economic and tourism benefits it brings to the city. Our multicultural history and diverse demography supports food outlets that cover all tastes and budgets from ethnic independent outlets on City Road, pop up street food, the award winning Riverside, Roath and Rhiwbina Farmers Markets, to upmarket options in more affluent wards such as Pontcanna. Together, these form a key part of our local economy and our cultural offer as a city.

5. However, set against this, there are also significant issues of concern in this regard. The UK is in the grip of an obesity crisis. It's 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.
6. In addition, similarly to many UK urban areas, Cardiff also has an abundance of fast food outlets many of which serve 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).
7. In March 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and is developing a One Planet Cardiff strategy in response to this. Lowering the carbon footprint of food produced and consumed in the city will help contribute to this important but challenging climate change agenda. Locally sourced healthy food options generally have lower carbon footprints than food that has travelled further food miles and been processed, so can provide a win:win solution to both the climate change and obesity crises. Additionally a move towards a more plant based diet would also further lower the city's carbon footprint. Actions in the Food Strategy that contribute to lowering the city's carbon footprint will inform One Planet Cardiff.
8. Cardiff has a local food partnership called Food Cardiff, and Cardiff Council sits on the steering group of this partnership. Food Cardiff is also 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. When comparing Cardiff to other UK cities there are 3 cities currently at Silver Sustainable Food City status – Brighton & Hove, Bristol and Greater London Authority & London Food Board. These cities have achieved this status through a combination of mature partnership working, strong local and cultural identity, and numerous sustainable grassroots projects and networks.
9. 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. The Council's commitment to developing a Cardiff Food Strategy demonstrates leadership and places us further on the path to delivering this important commitment.

10. Furthermore, 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. In this regard, the Council is developing good practice of other urban areas, both nationally and internationally, who are embracing food culture and strategic action for food. These include Failte, Ireland's Food and Drink Strategy; Portland Oregon's street food project; Copenhagen's reputation for its food culture; and Lyon's fair and sustainable city label.
12. Development of a Food 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.
13. 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 we will develop in conjunction with partners.
14. The Council's 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

15. The Council's direct 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.

There is considerable opportunity therefore to make positive changes and build upon the good practice already in place.

16. In recognising this opportunity a study was commissioned in autumn 2018 to help us to clarify the Council's role in food 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 has 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
 - A final Advisory Report distilling the findings of this research into a series of key recommendations for action.
17. 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 we need to act

18. 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 more sustainable food. In particular:
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. Foodbank use is on the rise across the UK. 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.

22. 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, which in turn may have an abundance of fast food outlets. Anecdotally we hear that in some areas it is easier, and sometimes cheaper, to buy a bag of chips than a bag of vegetables.
23. The vast majority of food consumed in the UK is a product of the intensive farming model that 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

24. The studies and discussions that have guided this strategy have identified a series of opportunities for the Council to consider and feed into an overall new strategic vision and action plan. Many of these are direct proposals 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.
25. In delivering this strategy the Council will 'lead by example' in proactively addressing sustainable food issues, demonstrating and illustrating best practice to our partners across the city. In this regard the strategy is targeted at actions the Council and partners can directly lead on and influence.
26. There are five key priorities in the proposed vision:
 - A. 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 work streams to avoid duplication and to benefit from synergies where appropriate. Key partners include the Cardiff Public Services Board, the Food Cardiff partnership, our schools, PHW Move More, Eat Well team, and For Cardiff. Liaison with community groups and the public can in turn be undertaken via our position within Food Cardiff.
 - B. 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 fast food outlet saturation areas. 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). Due to these high levels of deprivation in some areas, we have seen a sharp rise in the number of food bank referrals.

- C. 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 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.
- D. 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 develop a strong reputation for its sustainable food offer
- E. Food as a driver for prosperity – we want to optimise social and economic value of the food economy for Cardiff. This is 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.
27. An action plan has been developed to steer our work in these five key areas for action (see Appendix 1). The strategy and action plan have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders both in the Council and across the city. The action plan reflects these internal partners' responsibilities within the Council.
28. The key actions to prioritise in this plan are:
- Growing plan for the City – a clear plan of available space for community groups, social enterprises and businesses.
 - Sustainable food framework – defining what we expect from public food providers and rolling out to all food provision outlets and our partners.
 - Improving Schools food Culture – whole school approach to food, potentially including the communities they are located in.
 - Controlling Fast Food: mapping outlets and pilot using planning and other policies to control premises and advertising.
 - City centre food plan and street food – assess opportunities with the BID (For Cardiff).
29. Project governance is essential to measure progress towards the end goal of enabling good food for all, and we need buy in of internal services and external partners to deliver the action plan. We will establish a Board to monitor progress internally within the Council and work with the Cardiff PSB as part of the Council's partnership arrangements.

30. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Food Strategy (Appendix 2).

Reason for Recommendations

31. To approve actions to set a stronger focus for the Councils responsibilities and influence around food, to help improve the health and well-being of our residents, and tackle our Climate Emergency.

Financial Implications

32. No financial implications are expected from the implementation of the Food Strategy. Any actions arising from the strategy will need to be funded either from existing resources or from additional external funding such as grants and sponsorships.

Legal Implications

33. This report does not raise any specific legal implications other than those set out in the general legal advice that follows.

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. standing orders and financial regulations;
- (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.

34. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible. The Council have taken into account the impact of the report recommendations on people living their lives in Wales in the future, having regard to:

- Looking to the long term
- Focusing on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
- Delivering an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
- Working in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions

- Involving people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them

35. The Council is satisfied that the proposed recommendations accord with the above principles.

HR Implications

36. There are no HR implications for this report.

Property Implications

37. No immediate property implications are expected from the implementation of the Food Strategy. Any future requirement to use Council land or property to deliver the objectives of the strategy should be done so in accordance with the Corporate Property Strategy, Council’s Asset Management process and in consultation with Strategic Estates and relevant service areas.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommend to approve the Council’s strategy and proposed actions for sustainable food in the city

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Andrew Gregory Director of Planning, Transport & Environment
	15 November 2019

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix 1 – Cardiff Food Strategy
- Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

The following background papers have been taken into account

- Cardiff Food Strategy – Workshop Report
- Cardiff Food Strategy – Advisory Report