

Subject:	Refresh of the Brighton & Hove Food Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	8 December 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Thurstan Crockett	Tel: 29-2503
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Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This paper is to inform Cabinet about the refresh of the city's Food Strategy, building on the success of the 2006 original. It sets out how the city can work towards a healthier, more sustainable food system. The refresh has been led by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and is due to be approved by the Food Partnership Board shortly.. Council targets have been developed with support from the Sustainability Team.
- 1.2 The Food Strategy is a document produced by the Food Partnership but is also owned by strategic partners including the City Council and NHS. The City Council is being asked to endorse the strategy and as one of the partners involved in delivery of actions within the plan.
- 1.3 The aims and objectives of the strategy are ambitious and long term, and the action plan covers a four to five year period. Food is a cross cutting issue and a focus on food will help the Council achieve other city wide priority outcomes.
- 1.4 The Food Strategy assists the delivery of targets for: the Sustainable Community Strategy, the draft City Plan; the Draft Climate Change Strategy; the Childhood Obesity Strategy; and the Adult Weight Management Strategy.
- 1.5 Key areas where it can make a real difference include:
 - tackling obesity and health inequalities
 - supporting a strong and more sustainable local food economy that enhances the city's reputation
 - further increasing participation of residents in community food growing schemes and individual food growing

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet supports the overall strategy (Appendix 1) and commits to the actions identified under the remit of the city council. (See Appendix 2)

- 2.2 That Cabinet acknowledges the role that food plays in meeting the citywide outcomes outlined in the strategy (see Appendix 3).
- 2.3 That Cabinet recognises the importance of the Food Partnership as the organisation that drives forward the delivery of the food strategy and action plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 At the time of publication in 2006, the Brighton & Hove Food Strategy was the first of its kind, celebrated nationally and considered the most far reaching UK local food policy of it's time. It brought together work from the public, private and community/voluntary sector to enhance health, social, environmental and economic benefits through the food system, and minimize the many negative impacts of food.
- 3.2 Some big successes have been achieved as a result::
- We are the first place in the country to introduce planning guidance on food growing for developers, and this has received national recognition
 - We are one of the few places in the country that help their childhood obesity levels from 2009 – 2010 according to the national child measurement programme
 - All the city's schools achieved Healthy School status, which includes having a whole food approach to food
 - The Scores on the Doors scheme implemented for food hygiene across the city
 - Community based cookery and nutrition programmes are addressing health inequalities associated with poor diet. There is a programme of training for people who want to deliver cookery support for vulnerable adults.
 - The Food Partnership is funded by the PCT to employ three community based dieticians to reduce obesity in adults and children – over the last three years they have delivered services to 2500 residents who were above their ideal weight
 - The Universities and Sussex Partnership trust have introduced procurement policies that favour healthy and sustainable food.
 - The new City Council school meals contract meets Food for Life Bronze Standard
 - A "love food, hate waste" community outreach programme (joint work Cityclean and Food Partnership) has worked with 3000 residents over the last two years on food waste reduction..
 - A comprehensive training programme for BHCC health and social care professionals on nutrition and obesity issues.
 - Small grants (up to £1000) totalling £112,000 haven been given by the Food Partnership to 137 school and community projects to work on food over the last five years.
 - There is now a network of 60 growing and 40 other types of food projects across the city playing a role in education, community cohesion, reducing anti-social behaviour, providing opportunities for physical activity as well as offering healthy affordable food to residents.
 - We have established a 'one stop shop' for weight management referrals that takes 1000 referrals a year from GPs and other health professionals for adults and children who are overweight/ obese and places them onto appropriate weight management programmes.

- New allotment sites have been open including community plots and easy access plots and waiting lists are better managed.
- The introduction of the Healthy Choice Award to enable easy identification of healthy options when eating out and enables places serving food to vulnerable adults and children to take a menu planning approach. There are currently 88 award holders divided between: 40 cafes & restaurants, 20 care homes, 14 nurseries, 4 school breakfast clubs, 4 workplace restaurants, 6 other
- Three new community kitchens have been developed
- In the last year a small network of community compost sites (10) has been established and interest in this community response is growing all the time.
- Harvest Brighton & Hove set up as a result of lottery funding is a partnership project to get the city growing more food has helped thousands of people in the city to grow their own; with a high local and national profile – last year 22,000 people visited the Harvest website and 1,700 are signed up for the fortnightly bulletin.
- Through the food partnership food issues are considered at a policy and planning level in the city.
- Food Matters and the Food Partnership were recently invited to give evidence to the House of Commons select committee on sustainable food in particular on the approach taken here of a food partnership approach to delivering a food strategy

3.3 Other places have looked to learn from Brighton & Hove and the approach taken here to developing a food strategy and Food Partnership. The city council was a key partner and wrote around 50 targets for the original Action Plan, which was endorsed by the then Policy & Resources Committee 9 November 2009, with cross party support.

3.4 It was agreed at the start of 2011 that the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership would undertake a refresh of the strategy and action plan. This was because whilst many of the actions within the plan had been achieved there is still much to be done in working towards a healthy and sustainable food system for the city. Some of the main areas are:

- rising food prices leading to food poverty
- obesity
- world food shortages/ climate change affecting global food production
- what ecological foot-printing tells us about the food system
- food miles : local fish sold to the continent, local cereals not used within the local food system
- Food waste – clear links to the revised Waste Strategy
- Allotments oversubscription

There have also been changes to the wider policy context locally and nationally around food hence the decision to refresh the whole strategy not just the action plan. The refresh has involved setting the food strategy within the context of the current policy environment and meeting with stakeholders to agree a new action plan.

3.5 At the council's Sustainability Cabinet Committee meeting on 25th March 2011 the success of the last strategy was acknowledged. It was also agreed that relevant Council departments should commit time to being involved in reviewing the strategy and work with staff at the Food Partnership to identify new targets and areas of partnership work.

- 3.6 Over the last 10 months Vic Borrill Director of the Food Partnership has led on a consultation with the Council and various other stakeholders to produce a draft strategy and action plan. This is now being taken back to those involved in the delivery of the strategy for endorsement with a view to it being adopted by the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership.
- 3.7 Food is a recurrent theme in the council's new Corporate Plan. The Food Strategy supports current and planned work programmes and the majority of actions agreed by the Council are to be delivered within existing Council resources. Commitment of Officer time (at an appropriate seniority) to ensure that actions within the plan are delivered is essential if the strategy is to succeed. Council departments that have signed up for actions have agreed to their inclusion (see Appendix 2).
- 3.8 There are however a number of recommendations that would need additional resources to go ahead. These resources do not necessarily need to come from BHCC although input (along with other partners) into identifying finance, skills and other inputs to enable these to happen will be needed.
- 3.8.1 Procurement / client contracts** – additional officer time to set up a working group to look at food procurement issues with a view to implementing minimum buying standards (learning from good practice from elsewhere in the country and locally from procurement of the school meals contract) has been agreed. Experience from other parts of the country suggests that introducing minimum buying standards for food does not always lead to an increase in cost however it should be noted that implementing minimum buying standards may well have a cost implication. Any recommendation from the working group would need to come back to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.8.2 Mapping of land as an asset** – under the localism agenda Local Authorities are encouraged to map their assets that could be suitable for community ownership. The Food Strategy recommends that land suitable for small scale food growing (including livestock) is mapped (alongside other open space, landscape and biodiversity needs) so that communities are aware of potential sites in order they can come forward with proposals (as in the case of buildings). A cross departmental Council team would need to be identified to undertake this work.
- 3.8.3 Research.** There is a problem of a lack data on the food and diet behaviours of residents, especially across diverse equalities groups, which means that planning appropriate interventions and measuring effectiveness is challenging. It also means that it is hard to quantify the value of sustainable food to the local economy, measure the number of people involved in the sector or demonstrate the long term impact of prevention measures (such as teaching cooking to adults) over intervention measures (such as health inputs for diabetes or heart disease). Partners (including health, BHCC and universities) will be asked to come together to identify research priorities and submit joint funding bids to undertake work where gaps have been identified. As a holder of data and experts in this area BHCC will be asked for involvement.
- 3.8.4 Food Centre / Food Hub / Community Kitchen / Stanmer Farm Buildings.** There are a number of potential capital projects included in the food strategy which currently do not have financing. As and when these projects get progressed they will be brought back to Cabinet (and other partners) to discuss financing.

3.8.5 Training. There are a number of actions with recommend delivery of training to health, education and social care professionals. Whilst funding for these programmes is confirmed for 2011/12 staff will need to be allowed the time to attend training. Recent experience has been that due to staff shortages and budget cuts staff are finding it hard to come away from the 'frontline' to attend sessions. BHCC and NHS Brighton & Hove are asked in principle to commit to continuing to allow staff to attend training as approved by their in house programmes.

3.8.6 Public Health. The Food Strategy (and the Food Partnership) relies on the continued financing of public health initiatives around diet and nutrition which currently comes via the PCTs public health commissioning structure.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 The community engagement framework has been used by the Food Partnership and various types of consultation have taken place with stakeholders. These include:

- Engagement with the community and voluntary sector at a CVSF conference
- consultation with Food Partnership members (750 individuals and organisations interested in food issues in the city) at meetings and via email
- involvement of the City Sustainability Partnership in determining the high level aims and outcomes,
- in depth work with attendees at the One Planet Framework workshop on 13th July on reduction of GHG emissions associated with the food system,
- meetings with public health specialists and meetings with officers from BHCC.
- Some farmers have been consulted and there is a need for further consultation with council tenant farmers.

4.2 There were also two public consultation meetings on 5th October 2012 attended by more than 50 representatives of organisations and communities. The consultation day was facilitated by specialists in participatory consultation and has been a key tool in developing the priorities for action. Using the same process as at the event, an online consultation process is now also being used and targeted consultation is taking place with groups identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment as not having engaged in the process so far.

4.3 In developing the draft strategy and action plan results of the various consultations have been brought together and linkages made. Feedback is being given to those who participated and commitment to the strategy from relevant stakeholders is being obtained.

4.4 A wide range of council staff and teams have been consulted: School Meals Manager, Healthy Schools Manager, School Nurse Manager, Lead Commissioner Obesity and Sports and physical development, Public Health; Clinical Commissioning group PCT, Deputy Director Public Health, Head of Customer Access and Business Improvement (Housing), Food Safety Team / Environmental Health, Sustainability Officer and Head of Planning and LDF, City Planning; Childcare Strategy Manager, Head of City Infrastructure, Access Manager, Head of Tourism and Leisure, Economic Development, Head of Projects and Strategy, Cityclean; Housing Strategy Manager,

Corporate Procurement, Countryside Team, Estates, Equalities Manager, Ecologist, Brighton & Hove Adult Learning Group, Director of Place, Head of Sustainability & Team.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are significant revenue and capital financial implications associated with the implementation of actions to fulfil the city council's responsibilities within the 5 year Action Plan (Appendix 2) which have not yet been fully quantified or funding identified. Paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.6 of this report outline some of the areas where commitments cannot be made without further resources being identified. Reports will be brought back to Cabinet as required to progress those actions which link to other strategies (e.g. Waste Strategy Review) or require additional funding. Decisions to commit to these actions will need to be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.2 Funding of £2,900 was provided to Food Partnership to undertake a review and strategy revision work.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 14/11/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 In agreeing recommendation 2.1 above, Cabinet must ensure the council complies with relevant aspects of the public sector equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010. In relation to the Food Strategy, this entails the council having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between those with and without certain 'protected characteristics'. For present purposes, the 'protected characteristics' of most relevance are probably age and disability. The duty would, in particular, require the council to remove or minimise food-related disadvantages suffered by persons by reason of their age or disability.

Lawyer Consulted:

Oliver Dixon

Date: 14/11/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. The strategy seeks to address health inequalities associated with poor diet, increase employment in sustainable food businesses and improve access across diverse communities (both geographical and communities of identity) to nutritious, safe, affordable, sustainable food.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 The strategy addresses the issue of the unsustainable nature of our current food system and sets out steps to address this. Food is one of the priority areas identified in the One Planet Framework both in terms of the impact of the food

system on our carbon footprint and the wider ecological issues such as water use, soil erosion, waste and deforestation. The food strategy is being recommended for adoption by the City's Sustainability Partnership.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 A significant contributor to the increasing rate of crime, aggression, depression and poor school performance is poor nutrition. This was the conclusion of the 2008 inquiry held by the Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum (an all-party independent forum for the exchange of views and information on food policy in the UK Parliament). Raising awareness of the links between diet and behaviour and improving the nutrition of residents is a key strand of the food strategy.
- 5.7 Establishing community food projects in areas with problems such as fly tipping can reduce the problem as has been seen in the area around Moulsecomb Forest Garden as project users and volunteers both look out for and look after the area.
- 5.8 The experience of current food projects across the city is that they experience minimal crime or vandalism. Many people believed that the open nature of the demonstration growing garden in Preston Park would lead to theft and vandalism which two years later has not been the case.
- 5.9 There is anecdotal evidence that the conservation grazing projects around the city, with trained volunteer shepherds ("lookers"), reduces antisocial behaviour such as joyriding and fly tipping.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.10 Risk – that the Food Partnership does not secure long term funding to continue to be the driving force behind delivery of this strategy
- 5.11 Risk – that funding for work on food that currently comes into the city from a variety of sources including public health, Big Lottery, education and BHCC is reduced to such an extent that it is not possible to deliver on the actions
- 5.12 Risk – that work to address the current unsustainable nature of our food system is not undertaken and the city has to deal with the long term costs of poor health to residents, ecological and economic impacts.
- 5.13 Opportunity – that Brighton & Hove continues to pioneer food work and other places continue to look to learn from us. The recent experience of the interest and support nationally for the Planning Advisory Note on food growing is an example of this.
- 5.14 Opportunity – through partnership working on food issues additional resources from outside the city continue to be brought into the city. More than £700,000 has been brought into the city by the Food Partnership over the last three years.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.15 Spade to Spoon addresses both health and sustainability issues and delivery of actions within it is a key way in which the city is addressing public health issues associated with a poor diet. Improving public health is central to this strategy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.16 The Food Strategy has extensive corporate and citywide implications – see “Food Strategy Outcomes” (Appendix 3) for a summary.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The existing 2006 strategy could have been retained and just the action plan updated – rejected due to changing policy backdrop.
- 6.2 The council could have created its own strategy and action plan – rejected as the council’s food work is integral to work across the city.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To confirm Cabinet’s commitment to this city strategy. Its endorsement will provide a strong factor in the strategy’s successful implementation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Food Strategy
2. What is the Council being asked to sign up to
3. Strategy structure overview

Documents in Members’ Rooms

None

Background Documents

None