



CABINET – 18 DECEMBER 2018

**LEICESTERSHIRE FOOD PLAN AND GOOD FOOD LEICESTERSHIRE
CHARTER**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PART A

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on progress concerning the development of the Leicestershire Food Plan and to seek approval for the Good Food Leicestershire Charter.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Good Food Leicestershire Charter be approved.

Reasons for recommendation

3. The County Council has a statutory responsibility to take appropriate steps to improve the health of people who live in Leicestershire.
4. The importance of food for Leicestershire's health, economy and sustainability is recognised through policies including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Strategic Economic Plan, Environment Strategy and Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The Good Food Leicestershire Charter and Leicestershire Food Plan will build on these policies towards an improved food system across the county.

Timetable for decisions (including scrutiny)

5. Subject to approval, the Good Food Leicestershire Charter will be adopted by the County Council and published on its website. The Charter will also be shared with partner agencies who will be encouraged to pledge to support it.
6. A report concerning the Good Food Leicestershire Charter will be considered by the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board on the 24 January 2019.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. The relevant policy framework includes:
 - Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan for 2018-22 – Working Together for Everyone, which describes the Council's overall policy framework and approach.
 - Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-22
 - Leicestershire Enabling Growth Plan 2018-19
 - Leicestershire County Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030
 - Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy – Update 2011

8. The Food Plan and Charter link closely with 5 of the 6 strategic outcomes of "Working together for the benefit of everyone: Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22" which was approved by the County Council in December 2017. The Plan and Charter both recognise the strong role that food plays across the economy, health and wellbeing, thriving localities and community strengths, planning future housing/communities and working towards more effective commissions and projects by working across departments.

9. Full Council was informed of the work on a Leicestershire Food Plan in the position statement of the lead member for health, Mrs Posnett on the 21 March 2018

Resource Implications

10. There are no resource implications arising directly from this report. The recruitment of a Sustainable Food Partnerships Coordinator has been funded via exiting budgets whilst support from the Public Health commissioned Soil Association 'Food for Life' programme has also been provided. Free national support from the Sustainable Food Cities has also been utilised.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. None

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PART B

Background

The food system: food and the economy

12. Local Policies including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Strategic Economic Plan, Environment Strategy and the Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy emphasise the importance of food for Leicestershire's health, prosperity and sustainability. Whilst considerable work is already being undertaken in each of these areas, ensuring the right types of food make it onto Leicestershire resident's plates is a complex process and its impact on health cannot easily be disentangled from its environmental and economic aspects, and vice versa. Leicestershire's food is part of a national and global network, and only an integrated, whole-systems approach can hope to be effective in this context. It is evident that a strong local food system will increase Leicestershire's resilience to global threats including climate change and rising food prices.
13. Leicestershire is establishing itself as an innovator and strategic leader in many food related areas and the Food Plan will provide a highly visible, national platform on which to expand these further.
14. The cost of overweight and obesity to the national economy was estimated at £16 billion in 2007, rising to £50 billion by 2050. The Department of Health has estimated that if diets matched nutritional guidelines, up to £6 billion could be saved in costs to the NHS and around 70,000 deaths could be prevented nationally each year – equating to in the region of 750 deaths a year in Leicestershire.
15. As an example of what could be achieved in Leicestershire, similar work in Nottinghamshire to ensure ingredients for school meals are sourced locally has led to a dramatic increase in spend on seasonal local produce, estimated to be around £1.65 million per year, and has produced an estimated return of £3.11 in social, economic and environmental value for every £1 spent.
16. In terms of food waste, research by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in 2013 suggested that the average UK household throws away the equivalent of £470 of food per year – increasing to £700 per year for a household with children. Estimated total food waste (from households, food manufacture, retail, hospitality sectors and so on) across the UK was 12 million tonnes, with a value of £19 billion a year, of which 75% could have been avoided.
17. Beyond the familiar health impacts of food and nutrition, food also has widespread economic implications. The food and drink sector in Leicester and Leicestershire economy is worth £600m – the second most important economic contributor after non-food manufacturing. It provides 2.7% of employment in the area – twice the national share – and this proportion is even larger in rural Leicestershire. For some areas, the food and drink sector is of particularly critical importance. In Melton Mowbray, for example, 13.6% of people are

employed in food and drink manufacturing – over 10 times the national average. Food and drink is also a significant tourism draw for the County.

18. A coordinated strategic approach that values and prioritises sustainability, local provenance and healthy food in policies and procurement, whilst also developing community capacity and assets in relation to food growing, cooking and eating can help to support all of these issues. As a major local employer and catering provider, the County Council is in a position to lead on policy change and influence other public sector organisations to follow suit. This alone could produce a major step change in patterns of food buying in the county. It would also be able to ensure existing work undertaken by departments within the council takes an integrated approach as part of an overall strategy.
19. In developing the Food Plan, the County Council has identified 5 ambitions which will be the focus for its initial activity. These are:
 - Facilitating partnership activity to tackle food poverty – including access to affordable (surplus) food, training and resources as well as developing volunteer opportunities.
 - Seeking opportunities to work across departments within the Council to develop a coordinated basic community based cookery skills programme
 - Business networking - linking local businesses, producers and farms with local customers, schools and caterers. Using these links to improve the local food economy and to influence healthy and nutritious food manufacture, options for employee health and wellbeing (across employers in Leicestershire) and food waste options.
 - Locality working – supporting localities to develop their own food plan ambitions.
 - Lead on promoting healthy and sustainable food through communications activities, e.g. develop a seminar series, food summit event and specific campaigns.
20. Examples of actions within the plan include;
 - Facilitate development of cook and eat sessions where participants are shown how to reduce food waste, cook an affordable, healthy meal and are supported to help overcome other barriers to cooking healthy meals through developing local community resources such as increased availability of fresh fruit and vegetable through a community shop.
 - Explore opportunities to link County Council owned farms (and other producers/suppliers) with community food needs, for example through school and early year setting work involving linked projects (e.g. Food for Life and Healthy Tots).

Sustainable Food Cities award

21. The County Council is working towards membership of Sustainable Food Cities (SFC). This national framework is managed by 3 national charities (The Soil Association, Sustain and Food Matters) and is a model to develop food 'systems' in an area as well as providing recognition through high profile awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold). Leicestershire aims to achieve a Bronze award within an 18-24

month period. Alongside this, it is supporting Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council to achieve the Bronze Award in a similar time period. An important part of this work is helping to develop the model for a County SFC - Leicestershire would be the first county to gain an SFC award.

22. The SFC framework focusses on 6 priority areas –
- Promoting healthy and sustainable food and drink to the public.
 - Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to healthy food.
 - Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.
 - Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.
 - Transforming catering and food procurement.
 - Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.

Leicestershire Food Charter

23. The Good Food Leicestershire Charter attached as the appendix to the report, is a critical part of securing Leicestershire's membership of SFC. The Charter would enable the Council to start work towards gaining a Bronze Award, demonstrating the Council's role as a place leader within the local food system whilst opening up funding and collaboration opportunities. The Authority would also use the Charter to generate support from partner organisations to improve the areas food systems.
24. The principles of the Leicestershire Food Charter are that:
- People are supported and encouraged to grow, cook, buy and eat good food through skills and training to help people gain the knowledge they need to eat well and affordably;
 - A thriving local food and drink economy works for people as much as they work for it;
 - The network of food and drink businesses and producers contribute to the local food chain and are supported and celebrated to strengthen the local economy and promote local jobs;
 - Local food and drink businesses and producers contribute to healthy lifestyles, healthy choices and actively support access to good food for all;
 - Food waste is prevented and reduced where possible
 - Food production, processing, distribution and disposal has a reduced environmental footprint
25. The Good Food Leicestershire Charter will be used to –
- Provide the over-arching ambition driving the future of food in Leicestershire
 - Form a public statement of intent from Leicestershire County Council leading the move towards a more sustainable local food system
 - Show local leadership towards supporting localities to develop locality partnerships (as with Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council)
 - Generate pledges from partners towards engagement in the Leicestershire Food Plan

- Support membership of SFC, and work towards gaining a bronze SFC award

Background Papers

Report to the County Council – December 2017 – Strategic Plan and Single Outcomes Framework

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5104&Ver=4>

Appendix

Good Food Leicestershire Charter