

Item

GOOD FOOD FOR CAMBRIDGE: SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY STATEMENT & MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD CITY

To:

Councillor Rosy Moore, Executive Councillor for Environmental Services and City Centre

Environment Scrutiny Committee 28/06/2018

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey,

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report responds to issues raised by Councillor Gillespie's motion to Council on 19 April 2018, which was referred for Executive Councillor decision. It proposes the council adopt a Sustainable Food Policy Statement, and sets out the wide range of projects, policies and initiatives in place across the council to support sustainable food and tackle food poverty.
- 1.2 The report also acknowledges the innovative work that is taking place across Cambridge to help the city become a leader in sustainable food practice. It highlights the emergence of Cambridge Sustainable Food from the community and voluntary sector and the role it is now playing in gaining further national recognition for sustainable food work that has been carried out locally and in delivering local projects.

- 1.3 The council's contribution is highlighted in the report, particularly around food poverty and climate change. It recommends that we now formally recognise Cambridge Sustainable Food as the lead body for sustainable food in the city and help support its work, where we can, and look at our own food practice to ensure that we, where practical, apply sustainable food principles.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Recognise the role of Cambridge Sustainable Food in acting as an umbrella organisation in Cambridge that brings together a range of organisations with an interest in promoting sustainable food within the National Sustainable Food Cities Network
- 2.2 Ask officers to work with Cambridge Sustainable Food in submitting a bid to the national Sustainable Food Cities Network for their Silver Award, contributing to the action plan where appropriate.
- 2.3 Adopt the Sustainable Food Policy Statement set out in draft at Appendix A.
- 2.4 Report these decisions to Council at its July meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 Councillor Gillespie tabled a motion regarding Good Food for Cambridge to the meeting of Council on 19th April 2018. The motion was referred to the Executive Councillor under procedure rule 13.8. This report provides advice to the Executive Councillor on the motion.
- 3.2 It is generally recognised that food can play a role in dealing with some of the most pressing problems that confront us, such as food poverty, diet related ill-health, food waste, climate change and biodiversity loss. At present there are many valuable food initiatives taking place in the city across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors in Cambridge led by organisations committed to building local sustainable food systems. Some of this local activity has received national recognition and symbolises the strength of the sustainability movement in Cambridge.

- 3.3 Cambridge Sustainable Food (CSF) was established in 2013 and seeks to bring activity in these different sectors together and act as an umbrella organisation, as a part of the national Sustainable Food Cities Network, to achieve recognition for what is currently being done in the form of a “Silver Award” and in partnership to help “unlock” potential in the city to do more to achieve a vision for Sustainable Food in Cambridge.
- 3.4 Council officers were involved in helping to establish CSF, which is led by the community and voluntary sector, and have since worked within the Steering Group to help shape a vision, expressed as a “Food Charter”, and the development of an action plan setting out sustainable food achievements in the city.
- 3.5 The “Food Charter” for Cambridge is shown in Appendix B. It is presently an expression of what the partnership wants to achieve in an idealised future for the city and provides a “rallying point” both for individuals and local organisations wanting to make a difference. The Council supports the aspirations set out in the Charter.
- 3.6 In 2016 CSF achieved the “Bronze Award” from the national Sustainable Cities Network, on behalf of the city, which was the culmination of work by a number of different organisations. It seeks to join-up approaches to sustainable food and is a recognition of the positive changes brought about in a range of key food health and sustainability issues.
- 3.7 It should be noted that the City Council’s food activities, especially its anti-poverty and sustainability work, formed part of the achievement of the “Bronze Award”. Further information about the national Sustainable Cities network and the award are shown in Appendix C.
- 3.8 The “Silver Award” carries with it tougher requirements and asks that the local authority in whose boundary the sustainable food partnership falls to formally recognise the cross sector food partnership in place in its area, support the vision of that partnership and its application for the award, which it will contribute to where it can.
- 3.9 CSF is presently gathering evidence of action and outcomes of relevant food work that is taking place in the city to look to cover six of the nine points available within each of the following key themes:

- Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.
- Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable 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.

3.10 There are a number of points that pertain to local authorities (some would be within the remit of upper tier local authorities). Cambridge City Council officers will engage with CSF to clarify what it might be able to contribute, within its existing capacity and resources. For a number of the points the council is already making a contribution, such as in its anti-poverty projects, but it should be born in mind that the award is intended to provide a framework to capture most sustainable food activity taking place in the area and so some of the points will not be relevant to us and will be for others to pick up.

3.11 The award scheme fits best with the remit of unitary local authorities so it may not be possible, within the City Council's existing powers and resources to satisfy all these points. CSF appreciate the constraints that the council is under and once the City Council has clarified what it can do, will look to negotiate a way forward with the national Sustainable Food Cities body that will take into account the fact that we are a district council area.

3.12 The national Sustainable Cities Network recognises the innovative projects that are emerging from Cambridge and there have been some discussions about how these, such as the Business Pledge and Food Hub models could be rolled out nationally – so there is a lot of goodwill towards CSF and appreciation of the good work that that is taking place within Cambridge and support provided so far by the Council.

3.13 Indeed, recently, when Food Power, a national body looking to reduce food poverty, examined the developing Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance, which is led by CSF, they were impressed by the level of our commitment to tackling food poverty, something they said they had not seen in many other local authorities.

4. Cambridge City Council's own contribution to sustainable food

4.1 The council is pursuing a number of key policies set out in its Anti-Poverty Strategy and Climate Change Strategy, which make a contribution to food health and sustainability issues, and is supporting additional evidence based projects carried out by our services and others that will make a difference through the funding streams attached to them.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

4.2 Our first Anti-Poverty Strategy (2014/17) included an action to support CSF to achieve the "Bronze Award" for the city, which was achieved, as part of a priority to "improve the health outcomes for people on low incomes". The current Anti-Poverty Strategy has carried forward this priority and also refers to the provision of cookery skills for low income families. A Poverty Conference bringing together agencies involved in tackling poverty in Cambridge has been held annually since the launch of the strategy and included a workshop led by CSF to discuss joined up working around food poverty issues on each occasion. One outcome of bringing together people to discuss food poverty has been the establishment of the Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance.

4.3 The Council's Sharing Prosperity Fund has funded the Community Development service to:

- Provide, or support voluntary, community and faith sector partners to provide, a programme of free lunches in community facilities and other venues for low income families during school holidays, to reduce costs for families when free school meals are not available, reduce social isolation and provide opportunities for families to access other services. During the past year nearly 3,000 people received the lunches.
- Commissioned CSF to deliver cookery skills workshops for individuals and families on low incomes, with the aim of supporting people to prepare and cook low cost, nutritious meals – accepting people referred from community development from the lunch programme and other activities. During the past year 40 workshops have been run involving nearly 200 people.
- Provide rental support for Cambridge City Foodbank

4.4 Allocations from the Sharing Prosperity Fund directly expended on food based projects for the period of the first strategy and committed during the second total **£106,740** to date. Other projects will also have a bearing, increasing incomes for local people, helping to alleviate the need to use Foodbank services.

Climate Change Strategy 2016 – 2021

4.5 The Council's Climate Change Strategy, under Objective 4 (Reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste) has a number of food related objectives. The actions in this section cover:

- Sustainable Food City status achieved for Cambridge and that council led actions in the Sustainable Food Action Plan are delivered – a number of our initiatives featured in the achievement of the “Bronze Award” that provided accredited Food City status
- Existing allotments continue to be fully occupied and new allotments taken up in growth sites (clay Farm and Trumpington Meadows) – full occupation of our 300 sites continues and 450 plots at new developments have recently been transferred.
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document is adopted, which will include local growing spaces – work on the SPD following approval of our Local Plan. Food features as a part of the North West Cambridge Sustainability Statement, which includes references to the provision of fruit trees in specific areas and encouragement of on-site catering facilities to source local produce.
- Developing a programme of local cookery skills session – please refer to anti-poverty section for further details
- Promoting healthy and sustainable produce to food businesses through the Healthier Catering Commitment for Cambridgeshire (HCCC) project - we continue to support the Cambridgeshire Healthier Options Programme and advise businesses during routine inspections to gauge interest, and then support them in applying.

- Increasing food waste collections from commercial properties – monthly tonnage has been increasing but figures are now displayed as a part of the new shared waste service
- Continuing to carry out targeted recycling and waste reduction awareness campaigns, including promoting national Zero Waste week and Love Food Hate Waste, and campaigns to encourage greater recycling by Houses in Multiple Occupation – working with our Recycling Champions and CSF to promote recycling and waste reduction at various events. We have also helped promote the Pumpkin Festival and Recycle Week and Zero Waste Week.

4.6 An annual update report on progress with the council's Climate Change Strategy and the use of our Sustainable City grants is provided, usually in October. The Sustainable City grants have been used to support food related projects that:

- Help local people become aware of emissions from food production, processing, packaging, transport and waste,
- Reduce food waste-related greenhouse gas emissions
- Develop skills and spaces for residents to grow their own food.
- Grow fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables.

4.7 Over the past three years allocations from Sustainable City grants for food based projects total nearly £40,000 to date.

4.8 The council's role in improving public health crosses a wide range of our mainstream activities, such as housing and community development services, improves and influences the wellbeing of local people. Our front line services deal with vulnerable people on a daily basis, some of whom find it difficult to buy good food for their families because of their low incomes, and these services have sought to respond to this pressing need, such as issuing Food Bank Vouchers and providing lunches.

4.9 Food has also been found to a means of bringing people within the community together and has been used as a basis of celebrating the cultural diversity of Cambridge in events such as the Cambridge Mela. Our environmental health service has specific duties to ensure food hygiene and food safety practices are followed by local businesses.

- 4.10 Our direct catering activity to the public is limited and in the services where commercial catering is provided it is usually incorporated in a larger contract for the running of a facility, swimming pools and sports facilities and community centre, and involves delivery by third parties. Sheltered accommodation (Ditchburn Place) and at the Meadows Community Centre also have small catering outlets. Other catering in the council is more “ad hoc” and involves catering at some civic events, some training events, manager briefings and network events and other larger community events and celebrations of diversity in the city.
- 4.11 Guidance to officers already asks that tap water is used where possible to avoid use of bottled water, that food waste is kept to a minimum and that Fairtrade products are used where possible.
- 4.12 A draft Sustainable Food Policy Statement will help in reinforcing this guidance. A draft statement is shown at Appendix A. Adopting the draft Sustainable Food Policy Statement will bring together the various strands of our food-related policies in one place for the first time, and give a clear indication to those working in the council and to our partners, of the council’s commitment and ambition on sustainable food.

5 Response to the specific suggestions in Councillor Gillespie’s motion

5.1 *To draft and begin consultation on a Sustainable Food Policy, which can incorporate the Food Poverty Action Plan being worked up by the Food Poverty Alliance.*

A draft Sustainable Food Policy Statement has been prepared to accompany this report that incorporates a vision of a Sustainable Food City, shown in the Sustainable Food Charter prepared by Cambridge Sustainable Food, which the council has previously supported.

The Statement acknowledges the need for all of the actors in the city to play a role in achieving the food issues and objectives set out in the National Sustainable Food Cities award criteria to promote healthy and sustainable food, not just the council, and indicates that the council will help in the achievement of these objectives where it can.

The Food Poverty Alliance is scheduled to report on its assessment of need in the city and present arrangements for responding to that need – identifying where improvements can be made – in an event to be held in the autumn. It is expected that an action plan will emerge at this time, which the council will have helped shape, and will have contributed to its delivery.

- 5.2 To reduce catering and hospitality spend on food where possible by offering simple plant-based food from a local social enterprise rather than lavish fare, and donate any savings found this way to the Food Poverty Alliance and to adopt a framework for food and cafe procurement, like Preston Council, which asks questions about food sustainability and fairness. (current ITT framework is not detailed or strong enough: "The successful operator will be encouraged to provide "healthy eating", locally produced, Gluten Free and Fairtrade options.")**

Most hospitality spend occurs in connection with civic events. Officers generally look to achieve the best value for money supply of good food and try to minimise waste by only ordering food that is required.

The Council's catering spend is limited to some outlets at swimming pools, community centres and sheltered housing, and other ad hoc/one off events, such as training, briefings and some community events.

There is not currently a single contract for catering. Catering is sometimes wrapped up into wider service contracts. Officers will explore whether a framework contract could be put in place, and if so whether sustainable food requirements could be incorporated into that and into the relevant contracts as and when they come up for renewal.

- 5.3 To pledge to seeking gold standard accreditation from Sustainable Food Cities**

As set out in paras 3.3 – 3.10 above, the Council will work with CSF to support its bid for the silver award, contributing where it can.

At present no city has been awarded "Gold" status by the Sustainable Food Cities Network. The points requiring a response within the award's food issues cross different sectors and require a number of players, beyond the local authority, to contribute in a given geographical area.

The council is looking to support points within the "Silver" award where it can make a contribution and help influence others to deliver certain

requirements but the “Gold” award can only be a long term aspiration at present and it is difficult for the council to “pledge” that this will happen given the level of uncertainty over those points that can be realistically achieved and the degree of control we have.

5.4 To reaffirm its commitment to being a fair trade city, and examine whether the resolutions made regarding fair trade in 2002 have been fully held up.

There continues to be a considerable amount of support within the city for the work of the Fairtrade Foundation and the campaigns it runs, since the council adopted its Fairtrade Resolution. Currently the Leys School is a member of the Fairtrade School Network and colleges in Cambridge University and others have supported national campaigns as well a number of local businesses stocking Fairtrade products. Within the “Silver” award it is asked that individual public bodies have adopted a range of food related policies, including a Fairtrade policy, which our resolution satisfies.

In recent years the Cambridge Fairtrade Steering Group has struggled to maintain the momentum that was built up during the last successful renewal of Cambridge’s Fairtrade Town status in 2012 and over the past year has met infrequently or not at all to discuss Fairtrade issues and help initiate or coordinate local campaigns. Cambridge’s Fairtrade Town status has now lapsed, although the city continues to be a part of the Fairtrade Network. There is no steering group in the city to take this forward at this stage, and there is not the capacity or resource in the City Council to contribute to this.

5.5 To support the Refill scheme to encourage reusing bottles for drinking water, to provide drinking water fountains in city parks to support this, and to ask Visit Cambridge, Cambridge Live and Cambridge BID to assist with this.

The Council is currently working on developing and launching a water bottle refill scheme in Cambridge with Cambridge Bid and Cambridge Live later in July. The scheme will look to identify, assess and promote a network of public water bottle refill points across the city, using our own premises and other participating outlets, including cafes, shops and other establishments, initially as a trial for the summer 2018. The scheme will also look to provide water stand pipes on event sites where a safe water supply is serviceable – event specific – as required.

As part of our Office Accommodation Strategy we are providing glasses and crockery in staff kitchens together with water dispensers to restrict single-use plastic cups in offices.

5.6 To adopt a strategy for community centres, which ensures all new kitchens have adequate cooking facilities for local community groups to prepare food and teach cooking skills.

At present there are five of our community centres where food preparation can take place for varying numbers of people.

The council funds Cambridge Sustainable Food to run cookery classes from our suitable community centres and other facilities, such as church halls. Last year 40 cookery classes were run. Community Development staff helped coordinate the project making referrals from projects involving low income families and those attending events such as the free-lunch holiday programme, where nearly 3,000 warm lunches were provided to families who may not otherwise have received one.

Where our community centres have existing commercial catering provision to the public, it is not possible to share this space with others, to teach and cooking skills and prepare food, for contractual and regulatory reasons. Where space and health and safety requirements permit, viable kitchens could be made available to support this activity providing there is an assessed community need and competent delivery that ensures good practice is followed.

As part of the Community Centres Strategy, we have approved priorities to re-provide community centres at a further three sites where community cooking could take place. There are also a new community facilities being planned and developed across the city to address growth, which won't all be directly managed City Council, which include: Mill Road Depot – kitchenette only (but fully equipped kitchen and teaching space in the YMCA building next door), East Barnwell, and Darwin Green – fully equipped kitchen which could be used for teaching.

In planning the space and facility requirements for a new community centre building we always complete a community needs assessment and undertake a consultation process with the community and local groups to identify the highest needs to accommodate, however, we are often given a very tight footprint within which to plan for viability reasons, and incorporating a fully equipped kitchen for teaching isn't

always possible and may lead to a reduction in meeting space. Where this is a high priority need identified through consultation, it will be included if feasible.

It should be born in mind that there are often other community facilities in an area that have fully equipped kitchens available, which can be hired for food preparation and teaching.

The community review identified 107 facilities across the city of which, the council only manages eight, so we are a very minor player. The council has funded numerous s106 grant improvements to equip and refurbish community kitchens where there is a demand for these facilities, and some of these are better located for this purpose.

5.7 To consider planting more fruit-bearing trees in sites where they would help to relieve hunger.

The council has created a number of community orchards in recent years and is supporting an on-going Southern Connection Wayfinding Project that is specifically aimed at planting apple trees in South-West Cambridge.

Our Free Tree for Babies scheme includes both fruit and nut bearing trees and around 200 trees have been given away annually to date. The scheme has recently received additional funding and it is expected this figure will double next year. These projects enable the planting of fruit and nuts trees that are both publically and privately accessible in the city.

If additional resources were available, community orchards could be increased in number, provided suitable land could be found; and other activities to promote fruit and nut growing and sharing could be delivered.

It should be noted that the council has adopted the “right-tree-right-place” principle and will not plant fruit trees and will consider removing existing ones where fallen fruit causes a significant health and safety issues (e.g. adjacent public highways).

5.8 To appraise the sustainability of food in the city market stalls, and close the loophole which allows disposable cardboard cups with polyethylene linings to be used.

The City Council changed the Charter Market Regulations (CMR) in April so that they have kept pace with current environmental concerns,

but do not place an onerous burden on the many small businesses that operate. The regulation reads “All Traders selling take away hot food or drinks must use cardboard or paper based cups, trays, dishes or other biodegradable/re-usable packaging for their products.”

As it stands, there is no legislation that can enable us to demand market traders use recyclable coffee cups/packaging. Nor would it be appropriate to try and impose restrictions on local market traders that do not apply to nearby coffee shops (including multinationals). As the industry adapts and provides solutions to this issue, it is anticipated that the CMR will be revised to reflect these improvements.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service’s Commercial Team is working to begin trials of the collection of coffee cups and used coffee grounds separately, thus diverting more waste from disposal treatment in favour of recycling/ reuse. The service is looking to develop a Cup Club <https://cupclub.com/> plan to facilitate a city-wide network of recognised cafés and “on-the-go” food shops.

- 5.9 To ask Cambridge Live and the events team to introduce a sustainable food framework, which aims to guide event organisers toward sustainable food procurement, offering healthy options, and minimising plastic use. Biodegradable food packaging should only be encouraged when there is a waste pathway in place for it to actually biodegrade. (current guidance: "All events should minimise waste, maximise recycling, use where possible sustainable resources and manage and mitigate ecological/biodiversity impacts with clear guidance on how these will be achieved set out in the Event Management Control Document" - however, many MCDs are highly vague and superficial).**

Cambridge City Council encourages all caterers working on city commissioned events to approach their event in as sustainable a way as possible. Officers seek, within our Events Policy “Proactive management by event managers during events to reduce their environmental impact and reduce the need to tidy up afterwards. For example planning to cook less food to reduce waste, and avoiding single use trays.”

Cambridge Live have a Greener Festival award for the Folk Festival and have been leading the way, certainly for smaller scale festivals, in terms of recycling, waste management, etc. They also ensure that any food left with the food traders at the end of the festival suitable to do so is distributed via community lunches etc.

5.10 To empower environmental health officers to award a sustainable food rating to food outlets which they can choose to display alongside their food hygiene rating, and to warn outlets about the environmental consequences of food waste and over-packaging.

Environmental health officers promote the Cambridgeshire Healthier Options award, which aims to increase healthier food and drink choices when eating out in Cambridgeshire, during inspections. Local takeaways and food outlets with a food hygiene rating of three or above are targeted for the award.

Environmental health officers do not presently have capacity or the training to offer advice about sustainability issues during inspections. However, they could potentially leave leaflets promoting food sustainability on site after a visit and were involved in giving advice during the setting up of Cambridge Sustainable Food's Business Pledge Award scheme, supported by a City Council Sustainable City grant, which encourages sustainable practice within local food businesses. The local food business that sign-up and can demonstrate good practice are given a sustainability rating that can be displayed in the premises, alongside the hygiene rating if appropriate.

5.11 To offer support to local businesses in reducing their waste overhead and environmental damage from food and packaging, and seek to build more partnerships around sustainable food.

All business is required to use a commercial waste service. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service works with over 2,500 businesses in the local area providing them an integrated waste management solution, including dry recycling and food waste collections.

Staff within the service work closely with the businesses using a range methods including provision of waste audits, education and training to help them follow the Waste Hierarchy.

By following the Waste Hierarchy local businesses can reduce the amount of waste the business they generates through good

procurement, accurately estimating need and reuse / share items that they no longer require.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service are continuing to work to develop a strategy for Zero Waste Cambridge which will be brought to Environment & Community Services Committee within the next year.

This strategy will include public information campaigns and working with local schools, businesses, organisations and the universities to reduce waste across the whole of Cambridge.

6. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Some CSF projects are presently funded from different grant streams and this funding is not guaranteed into the future and will depend on the quality of the offer and other competing priorities.

(b) Staffing Implications

Many staff across the council are involved in delivering the range of projects and initiatives set out in section 4 above. Strategy Officer Graham Saint has developed a close working relationship with Cambridge Sustainable Food, and will continue to liaise with CSF to take this work forward.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been prepared and is attached as Appendix D to this report.

(d) Environmental Implications

(e) Procurement Implications

Officers will explore the opportunities to use the council's procurement activities to specify sustainable food principles in catering and hospitality purchasing and contracts. This *may* involve amendments to the Council's standard terms and conditions in due course.

(f) Community Safety Implications

None.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Officers across the Council have been consulted on the issues in this report. The report authors met with Councillor Gillespie during the drafting phase too.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Sustainable Food Cities Network and its Award at <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/>
- (b) Cambridge Sustainable Food, Food Charter and Action Plan at <https://www.cambridgesustainablefood.org/what-we-do/>
- (c) Cambridge Anti-Poverty Strategy at <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/anti-poverty-strategy>
- (d) Cambridge Climate Change Strategy at <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/climate-change-strategy>
- (e) Anti-Poverty Strategy Review 2017 at <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?Ild=19287&PIanId=0&Opt=3#AI18934>
- (f) Climate Change Strategy Actions Delivered 2016-17 at https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/climate_change_strategy_actions_delivered_in_2016-17_3.pdf

7. Appendices

- Appendix A: **[Draft] Sustainable Food Policy Statement**
- Appendix B: **Cambridge Sustainable Food's Vision for Cambridge**
- Appendix C: **Background on Sustainable Food Cities Network Awards**
- Appendix D: **Equalities Impact Assessment**

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Graham Saint, Corporate Strategy officer, tel: 01223 - 457044, email: graham.saint@cambridge.gov.uk.