



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD PAPER FORMAL PUBLIC MEETING

Report of: Greg Fell, Director of Public Health

Date: 30th March 2023

Subject: Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield

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Summary: A new Food Strategy for Sheffield has been produced. It focusses on addressing the threats to people’s ability to access food that supports their own health and wellbeing and the health of our planet. These include having enough money to buy nutritious food, living and working in environments that support healthy and sustainable food choices, and a more localised and resilient food system.

The emphasis is on the levers that the council and our partners have to bring about system change. For example, through the food we purchase at scale or that is sold within our venues; through helping people to take up food related benefits such as free school meals or the Holiday Activities and Food Programme; or by working in partnership with community food initiatives that share our aims.

The council will implement our own commitments as outlined in the strategy and Health and Wellbeing Board partners should consider the role they can (or are already) playing.

In light of the new Food Strategy and due to some existing contracts coming to an end the council will review the initiatives it funds that focus on improving nutrition and/or preventing obesity. A new commissioning model will be developed during 2023.

Through working alongside Sheffield’s Food Partnership - [ShefFood](#), we will collaborate with others to further develop a shared vision and action plan based on the priorities set out within this strategy.

Questions for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

How can the board ensure the Food Strategy is delivered to achieve the greatest impact on improving health and wellbeing?

Food is a cross cutting issue that supports a range of priorities for the council and our city partners – sustainability, health inequalities, economic development, poverty. As with other cross-cutting issues this can pose a challenge to its implementation. How can HWBB member organisations ensure the role of food has sufficient prominence within their relevant plans?

Recommendations for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

1. Endorse Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield. Consider following formal approval routes within respective partner organisations and/or develop organisation specific food action plans using the framework that Fairer, Healthier, Greener sets out. Provide an update on this in 6 months.
2. As part of the above, HWBB member organisations to undertake a review of existing policy and activity that relates to the following strategy outcomes:
 - Increased access to affordable nutritious food. For example, through food that is provided or sold, through partnerships with community food enterprises, or through broader anti-poverty measures
 - Protection from harmful commercial influences on diet. For example, through food that is provided or sold, or through careful consideration of food advertising and commercial partnerships
 - Reduction in carbon emissions related to food and developing a stronger local food system. For example, through changes to food procurement practices or through food and packaging waste reduction strategies

The review should result in a number of actions or areas of work being identified and incorporated into policies/work plans and/or development of organisation specific food action plans. Facilitation for this process can be provided if requested.

Representatives to provide an update on this in 6 months.

3. Food procurement and provision is arguably the area where anchor institutions can have the greatest influence on our local food system. Can member organisations commit to ensuring catering meets the standards the public deserves on health and stimulates a more localised and sustainable food economy? This should include a specific commitment to work towards 30% of fresh food (fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy etc) coming from local suppliers (e.g. within South Yorkshire region) by 2030?

Background Papers:

- *Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield*
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Which of the ambitions in the Health & Wellbeing Strategy does this help to deliver?

This addresses health inequalities and determinants of health in their broadest sense. Specifically it contributes to the following:

- Every child achieves a level of development in their early years for the best start in life
- Everyone has a fulfilling occupation and the resources to support their needs
- Everyone has the level of meaningful social contact they want

Who has contributed to this paper?

Jessica Wilson, Greg Fell. The Food Strategy itself was contributed to by a broad range of stakeholders including the ShefFood partnership and relevant colleagues across the council.

FAIRER, HEALTHIER, GREENER – A FOOD STRATEGY FOR SHEFFIELD

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 A new Food Strategy for Sheffield has been produced. It focusses on addressing the threats to people's ability to access food that supports their own health and wellbeing and the health of our planet. These include having enough money to buy nutritious food, living and working in environments that support healthy and sustainable food choices, and a more localised and resilient food system.
- 1.2 The emphasis is on the levers that the council and our partners have to bring about system change. For example, through the food we purchase at scale or that is sold within our venues; through helping people to take up food related benefits such as free school meals or the Holiday Activities and Food Programme; or by working in partnership with community food initiatives that share our aims.
- 1.3 The council will implement our own commitments as outlined in the strategy and encourage HWBB partners to consider the role they can (or are already) playing
- 1.4 In light of the new Food Strategy and due to some existing contracts coming to an end the council will review the initiatives it funds that focus on improving nutrition and/or preventing obesity. A new commissioning model will be developed during 2023.
- 1.5 Through working alongside Sheffield's Food Partnership - [ShefFood](#), we will collaborate with others to further develop a shared vision and action plan based on the priorities set out within this strategy.

2.0 HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN SHEFFIELD?

- 2.1 Poor diet and unhealthy weight are two of the biggest contributors to ill health and early death in our city. The health consequences of poor diet include increased risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. The most deprived communities in the city are eating the least healthily and are more likely to experience the negative health consequences of this. For example:
 - 2.1.1 More than 1 in 5 Sheffield children were overweight or obese when they started school (age 4/5 years), this increases to more than 1 in 3 by the time they reach Year 6 (age 10/11 years). There is a strong social gradient in childhood obesity rates and the gap has been widening in Sheffield ([OHID](#))
 - 2.1.2 More than 2 in 5 Sheffield children experience tooth decay by age 5. Children in Sheffield are more than twice as likely to have teeth removed than the national average and rates are highest in areas of deprivation. ([OHID](#))
 - 2.1.3 22% of adults in Sheffield were estimated to have experienced a degree of food insecurity in 2021 ([Blake and Moretti, 2021](#)). The poorest 10% of UK households would need to spend 74% of their disposable income on food to

meet the Eatwell Guide costs. This is compared to only 6% of disposable income in the richest 10% ([Food Foundation, 2022](#))

2.2 The Food Strategy takes a systemic approach to removing the barriers people face in accessing good, nutritious food. By focussing predominantly on addressing affordability and availability of nutritious food (rather than on individual behaviour change) the strategy seeks to address the systemic causes of and therefore the systemic inequalities in diet related ill health.

3.0 FAIRER, HEALTHIER, GREENER – A FOOD STRATEGY FOR SHEFFIELD

3.1 Why Food?

3.2 The current food system in Sheffield (and across the UK) does not support human or planetary health and lacks resilience. Three key challenges which must be addressed in order to improve health, increase social justice and reduce CO2 emissions are:

3.2.1 **Many people in Sheffield can't afford a nutritious diet.** Food poverty is a key issue for the Cost of Living emergency response and the Tackling Poverty Strategy. It drives health inequalities and is a social justice issue that affects the ability of communities to be healthy and happy. Healthier food is more expensive per calorie than less healthy food. It is not ignorance or the inability to cook that is the root cause of poor diet and the associated health conditions, it is poverty.

3.2.2 **Processed food harms health and planet but is cheap, abundant, and heavily marketed.** Our food choices are heavily influenced by what's available. Commercial influence is the main driver of consumption (not choice or personal responsibility). Economically disadvantaged communities are most affected by poor food environment, and this drives health inequalities. We must therefore use all of the levers we have at local level to combat harmful commercial influence and to create healthier food environments.

3.2.3 **Our food system lacks resilience, harms the planet and could better support the local economy.** Recent food price inflation highlights the lack of resilience in the UK's food system. This is affecting people's ability to afford and access food now and the risk of future shocks will persist without mitigating action. Taking steps to support a more localised and sustainable food system will build resilience and will also support city aspirations for Net Zero and inclusive economic development.

3.3 A [National Food Strategy](#) was published in 2021. This government-commissioned independent review of the food system was a robust analysis of the UK food system. It covers health and inequalities, food security, climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, and trade. It is broadly accepted that implementing the 14 recommendations made by the National Food Strategy would make a substantial contribution to restoring food related human and planetary health.

3.4 The [Government Food Strategy](#) was published in June 2022 in response to the independent review, however, few of the recommendations are addressed by the government response. The government response represents a missed opportunity to tackle the underlying causes of a variety of issues, many of which will continue to be exacerbated during cost of living crisis.

3.5 The Sheffield Food Strategy attempts to rise to the challenge on a local level where national government has thus far failed to do so. It addresses the Nation Food Strategy's goals to create a food system that

3.5.1 Makes us well instead of sick

3.5.2 Is resilient to withstand global shocks

3.5.3 Helps to restore nature and halt climate change

3.5.4 Meets the standards the public expect on health, environment, and animal welfare

3.6 Why not obesity?

3.7 Many areas choose to develop strategies aimed at preventing overweight and obesity. Sheffield has a Food Strategy rather than a specific obesity prevention strategy for two main reasons:

3.7.1 Overweight and obesity are symptoms or conditions that are contributed to by modifiable health behaviours. The food we consume is the main modifiable factor in this, with physical activity also playing an important role. Sheffield has a Food Strategy and a physical activity strategy – “Move More”. Together these form our population level response to obesity prevention.

3.7.2 The food we eat makes a contribution to our health that extends beyond our weight. A healthy, well-balanced diet brings a range of health benefits for those of all body sizes. Food has a wider role in supporting our general wellbeing and also contributes to a wider set of goals in terms of sustainability, social justice and the local economy. This wider contribution may be lost with a focus primarily on weight and obesity.

4.0 Overview of Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield

4.1 Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield sets out a range of ways in which the council and our partners can begin to address these challenges. Although written by the council we hope that our city partners will endorse the strategy and consider what more each of their organisations can do to help meet its aims.

4.2 The strategy sets out priorities for action under three themes that link back to the three challenges outlined above. In practice much of work supports multiple outcomes.

4.2.1 **Implement the Food Access Plan so people can afford nutritious food:**
The Food Access Plan has been approved by the council's Strategy &

Resources committee. It continues to be developed and implemented and connects to the citywide cost of living emergency response.

4.2.2 Create environments where healthier and more sustainable food choices are accessible and abundant

4.2.3 Feed tomorrow as well as today - increase the sustainability and resilience of our food system

4.3 Specific actions under each theme are set out in the strategy document itself which accompanies this report.

5.0 Existing initiatives focussed on improved nutrition and obesity prevention

5.1 In addition to implementing policy change relating to the areas described above, the council funds or delivers a range of initiatives that support the implementation of the food strategy. These services have a particular focus on improving nutrition and preventing obesity and include:

- 5.1.1 **Eat Smart Sheffield**, Learn Sheffield has been commissioned to develop and deliver a Whole School & Settings Approach to Food and Nutrition Programme. Named 'Eat Smart Sheffield', the programme focuses on encouraging and supporting pupils, their families and the wider community to adopt healthier eating behaviours. The programme has two main aims: 1) To give schools the tools they need to make long term changes to their food culture and their curriculum to support healthy behaviours 2) To give pupils and their families the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to cook, grow and enjoy good quality affordable food, as well as increasing understanding of important food issues such as food sources and sustainability. To date 48 schools have enrolled for a Food For Life award which celebrates a whole school approach to food, a further 8 schools have achieved their FFL Bronze Award and one school has achieved their FFL Silver Award.
- 5.1.2 **Start Well**, delivered by the council this parenting programme helps parents with pre-school age children to adopt and maintain healthy habits primarily focussing on diet and physical activity. This will be aligned to Family Hubs and the wider range of support that is offered to families in the city.
- 5.1.3 **Healthy Early Years award**, delivered by the council the award scheme for early years providers helps them to ensure their setting promotes good health and wellbeing.
- 5.1.4 **Food Access Plan**, a range of schemes are funded to support those on low incomes to access good food including advice in reach into food banks, schemes to encourage uptake of food related benefits such as free school meals and healthy start vouchers, and schemes to ensure food relief projects have access to sufficient food.

5.1.5 **Holiday Activities and Food**, this DfE funding programme provides holiday clubs with nutritious food for children eligible for benefits related free school meals during the school holidays.

5.1.6 **Weight Management support**, delivered by Zest. Structured programmes are offered for children and young people and for adults to support them to improve their diet, increase activity levels and reach weight related goals.

5.2 In light of the new food strategy and some existing contracts coming to an end the above programme of work is being reviewed during 2023. A new commissioning model for improved nutrition and obesity prevention will be developed. This will be informed by the latest evidence on what works, service evaluation and community feedback and consultation and will reflect the priorities and approach set out within the new Food Strategy.

6.0 WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS AREA?

6.1 The challenges our food system faces are significant. National and international action is certainly needed to make an impact at the level that is required to address the full scale of the public health and environmental crises we are facing. Nevertheless, sound local food policy that recognises the importance of holistic, joined up thinking across the food sector can make significant progress towards a more sustainable food system for everyone in Sheffield.

6.2 Furthermore, Sheffield has a strong foundation from which to respond – e.g. a thriving local food economy; universities specialising in sustainable agriculture, food security, food production and technology; a diverse and vibrant range of community food initiatives; hospital trusts recognised nationally for good practice in catering etc.

6.3 **Working collaboratively:** ShefFood is a cross-sector partnership of organisations across the city formed of anchor institutions, businesses, individuals, academic and community organisations that are committed to working together to create a more sustainable food system for Sheffield. Sheffield City Council has been working closely with ShefFood to develop the new Food Strategy.

6.4 ShefFood is currently bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to support collaboration and develop a shared action plans that support the food strategy's implementation beyond the council's commitments. This work is already underway via 5 working groups: nutrition and obesity; food growing and composting; good food economy and procurement; food ladders (focus on food access/poverty); good food movement. HWBB member organisations are encouraged to ensure appropriate representation on/engagement with these working groups.

7.0 QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD

7.1 How can the board ensure the Food Strategy is delivered to achieve the greatest impact on improving health and wellbeing?

7.2 Food is a cross cutting issue that supports a range of priorities for the council and our city partners – sustainability, health inequalities, economic development, poverty. As with other cross-cutting issues this can pose a challenge to its implementation. How can HWBB member organisations ensure the role of food has sufficient prominence within their relevant plans?

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Endorse Fairer, Healthier, Greener – A Food Strategy for Sheffield. Consider following formal approval routes within respective partner organisations and/or develop organisation specific food action plans using the framework that Fairer, Healthier, Greener

8.2 As part of the above, HWBB member organisations to undertake a review of existing policy and activity that relates to the following strategy outcomes:

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8.3 The review should result in a number of actions or areas of work being identified and incorporated into policies/work plans and/or development of organisation specific food action plans. Facilitation for this process can be provided if requested. Representatives to provide an update on this in 6 months.

8.4 Food procurement and provision is arguably the area where anchor institutions can have the greatest influence on our local food system. Can member organisations commit to ensuring catering meets the standards the public deserves on health and stimulates a more localised and sustainable food economy? This should include a specific commitment to work towards 30% of fresh food (fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy etc) coming from local suppliers (e.g. within South Yorkshire region) by 2030?

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