

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	5 April 2023
Subject:	Food Equalities Strategy (Nourishing Gloucester Project)		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Leanne Purnell, Community Wellbeing Officer		
	Email: leanne.purnell@gloucester.gov.uk		Tel: 39-6069
Appendices:	1. 2023-2024 Gloucester City Council ED&I Action Plan		
	2. 2022 Gloucester City Council Equalities Awareness Calendar		
	3. O&S Update on Calls to Action Resulting from The Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To outline the activity in relation to food inequality and seek support for the partnership strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the approach as outlined in the strategy in appendix 1 be supported.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 As people across the city struggle to cope with the enormity of the cost-of-living crisis following from the pandemic and its impact on their daily lives, the strength of community spirit in Gloucester, and the willingness of people to help and support their neighbours, continues to shine through like a beacon of hope.
- 3.2 During traumatic times such as the current crisis, community organisations have worked together in their neighbourhoods and across the city to ensure the delivery of essential food - and so much more besides - for individuals and families in need. Supported by an army of volunteers, their rapid response in a period of extreme adversity is proof positive that these organisations, with their grassroots knowledge and strong, trusted, local connections, are best placed to deliver services both quickly and effectively within their communities.
- 3.3 The primary aim of this strategy is to ensure that in future everyone in Gloucester has access to nutritious food and no one goes hungry, whilst also acknowledging that there are broader issues affecting our neighbourhoods which are closely interlinked with food insecurity. If we are to create sustainable long-term solutions, we must better understand and address the root causes of both food insecurity and the social,

health and wellbeing inequalities that exist in some of our communities. This can only be achieved through developing and supporting good relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector, Retailers, Food Producers and other relevant partners.

- 3.4 Gloucester's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). The Gloucester HAF programme, funded by the Department for Education, offers a range of activities for children and their families including family play days, football camps, music workshops, arts, and craft, with many providing nutritious food, sometimes for the whole family.
- 3.5 A HAF pilot, under the guise of the Holiday Kitchen, was first delivered in Gloucester in 2020 when the impact of COVID-19 on families was considerable, ranging from economic instability to lack of opportunities to connect with family and friends during lockdowns, and resulted in many experiencing mental health issues. HAF offered people the opportunity to come together over food, connect with their local communities, and access much needed support in challenging times.
- 3.6 Since the initial pilot project, now led by [The Venture: White City](#), is a collaboration of 20 community and other organisations in Gloucester, each well-known and trusted in their neighbourhoods and having shown during COVID-19 their ability to respond more quickly, more effectively, and in a more targeted way than external service providers.
- 3.7 The Gloucester HAF Programme was by all measures a stunning success, both in terms of the families supported and the effective organisation of high-quality diverse fun activities at 17 separate locations across the city, all underpinned by the provision of healthy and nutritious food. The community organisations responsible for the delivery of HAF responded to the needs of local communities, listening to the challenges of local neighbourhoods to support households with school children.
- 3.8 In October 2021, the government announced a further investment of over £200 million per year over the next three financial years for the HAF Programme following its successful roll out across England in 2021.

4.0 Proposed arrangements

- 4.1 Conduct a comprehensive assessment that includes analysis of food production, distribution, consumption, waste management, and policy gaps.
- 4.2 Engage stakeholders: Engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, including farmers, food businesses, community organizations, consumers, and policymakers. Seek their input and feedback on the food system assessment and use this information to develop a shared vision for the future of the food system.
- 4.3 Set goals and targets: Based on the assessment and stakeholder input, establish specific, measurable goals and targets for the food system. For example, the council might set a target for increasing the availability of fresh, locally grown produce in underserved neighbourhoods, or reducing food waste by a certain percentage

- 4.4 Once goals and targets have been set, develop a comprehensive set of actions to achieve them. This might include promoting urban agriculture, supporting local food businesses, improving access to healthy food, and reducing food waste.
- 4.5 Communicate and engage with the community: Communicate the food strategy to the wider community and engage with stakeholders on an ongoing basis to build support and momentum for the food system transformation. Use a variety of channels to share updates, solicit feedback, and showcase success stories.
- 4.6 Overall, a successful food strategy requires collaboration, commitment, and ongoing engagement with the community. By adopting these recommendations, we can take important steps towards creating a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food system.
- 4.7 Consider the possibility of establishing a permanent role of Food Inequalities Officer.

5.0 Social Value Considerations

- 5.1 A council having a food strategy can bring numerous social value benefits to the community. Some of these benefits include:
- 5.2 Improved public health: A food strategy can focus on increasing access to healthy and nutritious food options, which can lead to improved public health outcomes. This can include initiatives such as increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in local markets, promoting healthier eating habits, and reducing food insecurity.
- 5.3 Increased economic opportunities: A food strategy can support the development of local food systems, which can create economic opportunities for local farmers, food producers, and businesses. This can include initiatives such as promoting local food procurement and supporting the development of community gardens and urban farms.
- 5.4 Enhanced community cohesion: A food strategy can bring together individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds around a shared interest in food. This can include initiatives such as community kitchens, cooking classes, and food festivals, which can help to build social connections and foster a sense of community.
- 5.5 Reduced environmental impact: A food strategy can promote more sustainable and environmentally friendly food production and distribution practices. This can include initiatives such as reducing food waste, promoting sustainable farming practices, and supporting local food production to reduce the carbon footprint of food transportation.
- 5.6 Increased access to food: A food strategy can address issues of food insecurity by ensuring that everyone in the community has access to nutritious and affordable food. This can include initiatives such as food banks, meal programs, and community kitchens, which can help to ensure that no one in the community goes hungry.

Overall, a food strategy can have numerous social value benefits for a community, including improved public health, increased economic opportunities, enhanced community cohesion, reduced environmental impact, and increased access to food.

6.0 Environmental Implications

- 6.1 There is a positive impact on the environment to reduce waste going to landfill through encouraging the redirecting of surplus food supplies (waste food) into communities in need.

7.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 7.1 None

8.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 8.1 A commitment to continued staff involvement will ensure the collaboration between Feeding Gloucestershire and the Countywide work which is working towards a Sustainable Food Place Award for the County.
- 8.2 Much of the success of a local food partnership can be dependent on gaining recognition, buy-in and support from key local institutions, especially the local authority. Local authorities have levers, planning, land ownership, procurement), infrastructure, policies, and the leadership position to significantly influence local food systems.
- 8.3 An effective cross sector food partnership is therefore likely to involve the engagement of a variety of local authority departments (e.g. public health, economic development, planning, environment, communities and waste) alongside collaborations with VCSE organisations, businesses and food growers and producers to ensure a whole systems approach.

9.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 9.1 None

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The current programme is funded until 31 March 2024 through external grants provided by the Integrated Locality Partnership, Household Support Fund (HSF) and the Holiday and Activities Funds (HAF).
- 10.2 Funding from 1 April 2024 will be subject to successful grant applications, if applications are not successful and the programme is to continue, the Council will need to budget a grade G role from April 2024.

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 Officers to liaise with One Legal and Procurement for advice on grant funding arrangements.

12.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 12.1 None

13.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

13.1 Completed no adverse impacts identified

14.0 Community Safety Implications

14.1 None.

15.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

16.0 Documents:

16.1 Nourishing Gloucester Draft Strategy Attached for Review.