

Appendix 1 – Creating a Healthy Food City Forum Highlight Report

1.1 Context

While the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum has been cancelled until at least January 2021, work continues to be delivered on the work programmes as detailed below. We note that progress has been slower than intended; there has been a significant impact on local Public Health capacity, as well as the capacity of key partners, due to the developing and ongoing COVID-19 situation in Birmingham. We have engaged a 12-month seconded Service Lead to dedicate a substantive part of their time to the food portfolio. We have also created and recruited to several fixed term posts dedicated to the local COVID-19 response and free up capacity across the division to focus on core Public Health “business as usual” outcomes.

We will be recruiting to a Graduate Role as a dedicated support to the Community Obesity Trailblazer workstreams. (N.B. The initial proposal from Birmingham City Council included part of the funding to be directed to project manager capacity; the recent partnership arrangements with the Food Foundation have meant this capacity has been resourced elsewhere; we will redirect these funds so there is no budget implication).

1.2 Current Circumstance

The **Childhood Obesity Trailblazer** is a national project to encourage Local Authorities to focus their efforts on becoming healthy food places. In Birmingham we have three workstreams to enable this ambition.

- Workstream 1 - Creating a health food planning and economic climate through creation and implementation of a developer toolkit. The content of the toolkit is for the most part created, and we will shortly enter the design phase. The substantive delivery of this work has been moved to the Place Service Lead within the Wider Determinants Team of Public Health to enable better resource capacity to deliver, and to ensure that benefits of the toolkit are maximised by considering as many Public Health place based development outcomes as possible and also be complementary to a healthy food city environment. The developer toolkit will be signed-off by the end of November 2020 and piloted on a project in quarter 1 of 2021.
- Workstream 2 - Creating a better understanding of food in the city through the Birmingham Basket. Through initial market scoping we have identified at least one supplier capable of delivering the required data, information and insight to understand how the people of Birmingham purchase food. However, we have decided a full competitive tender process should be utilised to ensure we commission the most innovative, and value for money solution. The full tender process will be initiated before the end of October 2020 for delivery of baseline data by end of December 2020.
- Workstream 3 - Creating a healthy apprenticeship workforce that understands health, healthy eating and can support a healthier food economy. We are using our leverage through the corporate management team and health and wellbeing board to ensure that commissioning specifications for employment, skills and apprenticeships services for Birmingham City Council employees

carry a health and wellbeing spiral curriculum. A spiral curriculum is an approach to education that involves regularly re-visiting the same educational topics over the course of a student's education. Each time the content is re-visited, the student gains deeper knowledge of the topic. Base line data collection commenced 12 October 2020 having agreed the evaluation process and methodology. As part of a workshop with employment, skills and apprenticeship providers on 15 October 2020 we gauged interest of providers and all providers who attended agreed that they would support the development and implementation of a practical solution. Potential barriers were identified and have led to a need to vary the approach, we can however still commence final design / implementation of spiral curriculum content. It is intended this will be in place for end of May 2020 to allow for meaningful collection of baseline data in the interim.

The **Sustainable Food Places Award** is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined-up, holistic approach to food and that have achieved significant positive change across six key food issues. We have held discussions with the awarding body to finalise the application and be accredited as a food partnership that is making healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of Birmingham. The deadline for final submission has now been extended to 15 April 2021.

The **Food Foundation Partnership contract** has now been finalised to assist with implementation of national and international food policies and guidelines, and specialist advice, support and management of Birmingham's international relationships launched on 01 July 2020. The partners have been in ongoing conversations to discuss:

- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact's planned Milan Pact Talks event and the videos that Birmingham City Council submitted to highlight the work in Birmingham.
- The BINDI project (Birmingham Public Health partnership with Pune, India). How we can maximise sharing knowledge on food systems and work together towards Commonwealth 2022 legacy.

It has been agreed that Birmingham City Council can directly commission **WHISK to gain access to proprietary software for Nutrition and Taste profiling** to allow ingredient substitution and portion scaling. We propose to deploy this software within a pilot with Cityserve and nine small/medium enterprise (SME) food businesses in Birmingham; as part of this pilot utilising WHISK software, the food businesses involved will provide Birmingham City Council with nutrient profile recipes and portion scale.

Public Health has been liaising with the **Food Trails** project management group, and the emergent strategy to explore interventions around food and nutrition. We will continue to support and engage to ensure Public Health food portfolio and the Food Trails project remain complimentary to one another.

There has been some preliminary discussion on creating an **Emergency Food Plan** as an interim measure during the ongoing COVID-19 response to ensure that parts of the Birmingham Food Strategy that have been placed in hold, but would be of assistance to the response, can be strategically shaped and implemented. Initial

thoughts are that the plan would focus on communications around eating well and healthily despite current restrictions, the resilience of the food system, and food transport logistics. For each of these we intend to review the learning from the crisis response so far in Birmingham and wider and suggest actions for next wave, “new normal”, and consider the additional pressures that may result from the UKs upcoming exit from the European Union.

1.3 Next Steps and Delivery

- Finalise developer toolkit by end of November 2020.
- Commission a Birmingham Basket data solution by December 2020
- Commence design of Spiral Curriculum content for implementation in May 2021
- Redraft the Sustainable Food Places application by December 2020
- Continue to engage with Food Foundation and international partners on an ongoing basis
- Commission Whisk software trial by end of November 2020
- Continue to engage with Food Trails project group on an ongoing basis
- Scope the Emergency Food Plan ASAP