

The Birmingham Food System Strategy Consultation - Responses

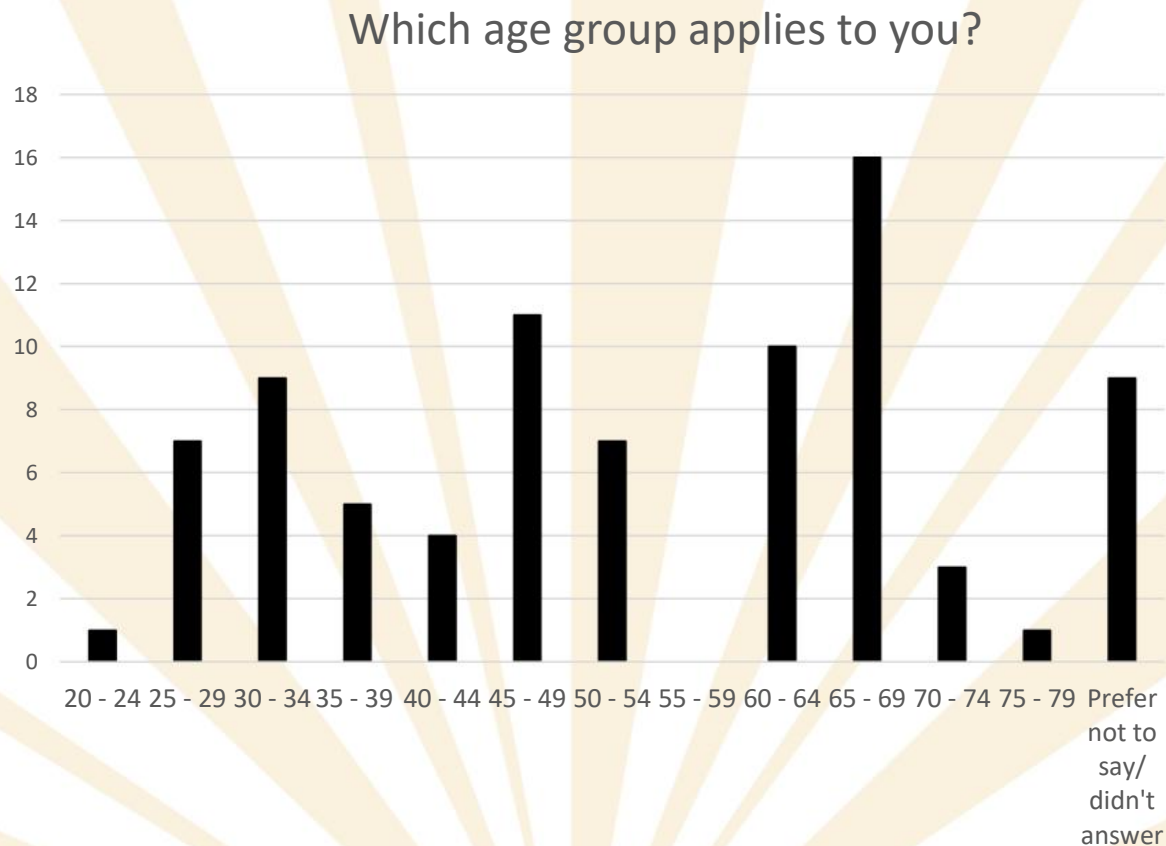


Who took part in the consultation?

- 87 respondents on BeHeard and >10 consultation events (schools, presented to networks, Lunch and Learn, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, community events)
- Key National Organisations including The Food Foundation, NFU, Sustain, Sustainable Food Places, BiteBack 2030, Sorted Food, Feeding Britain, the Mandala Consortium and the Urban Agriculture Consortium
- Key Regional Organisations including The Trussell Trust (Midlands), FareShare Midlands,
- Individuals from Birmingham organisations including BCC, Birmingham FoodCycle, Slow Food, Aston University, Clean Cuisine, Pip's Hot Sauce, Minor Weir and Willis, Birmingham and District Allotments Confederation, Fircroft College of Adult Education, Bring it on Brum
- Members of the public!

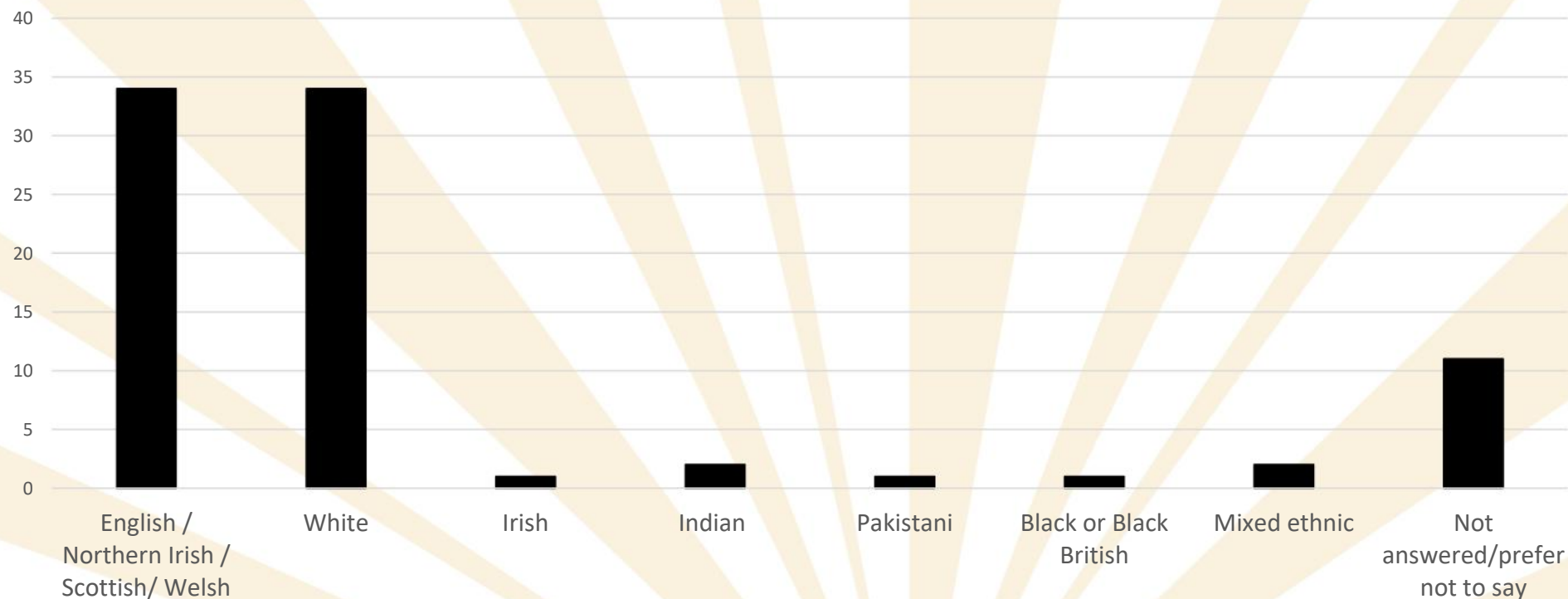


Who took part in the consultation?



Who took part in the consultation?

What is your ethnic group?

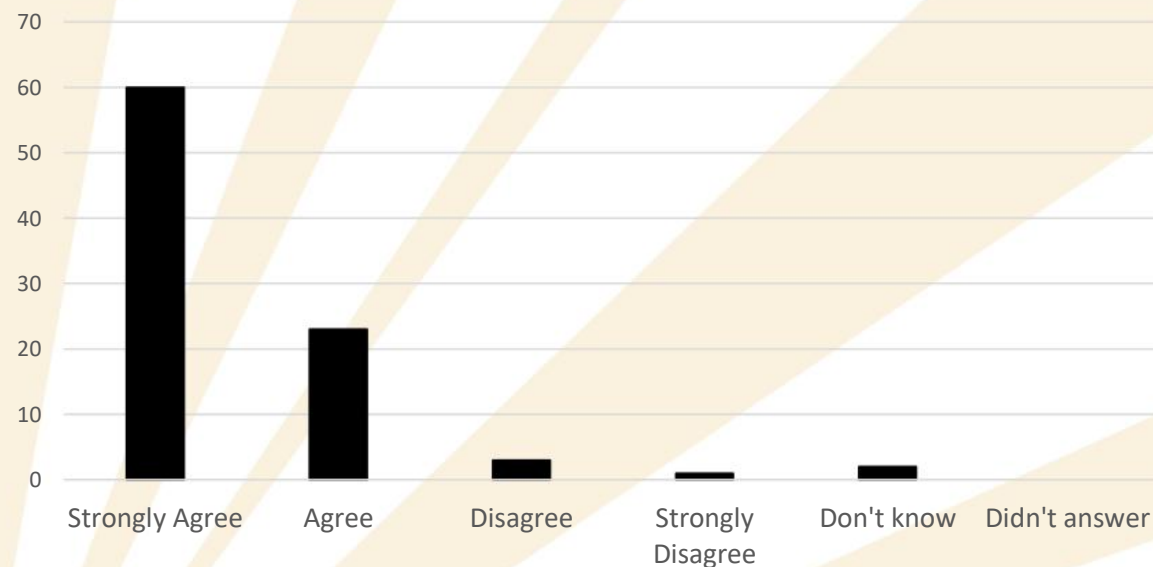


Vision

Vision

Create a bold, fair, sustainable and prosperous food system and economy, where food choices are nutritious, affordable and desirable so all citizens can achieve their potential for a happy, healthy life.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the vision statement?



Vision

- “An excellent goal, articulates all key elements necessary for change and for success.”
- “It's great to see the vision statement includes the need for a fair system and the focus on nutritious and affordable food. It's also great to see the reference to 'all citizens’.”
- “We welcome the opportunity to contribute to Birmingham City Council’s food strategy, and we strongly agree with the vision statement
- “It is ambitious & inclusive”
- “Let's make it happen!”



Vision – Key Feedback

- Ambitious – possibly too ambitious!
- Too long
- Specific suggestions for the statement e.g.
 - Food should be accessible and ethical as well as nutritious, affordable and desirable,
 - Citizens and visitors,
 - Change food choices to food options
- Requires multi-agency approach
- Define some of these terms e.g. what is good nutrition?



Key Principles

Key Principles

Three principles are key to the development of this strategy and action plan:

Collaborate

Strengthen partnerships and build on existing good practice.

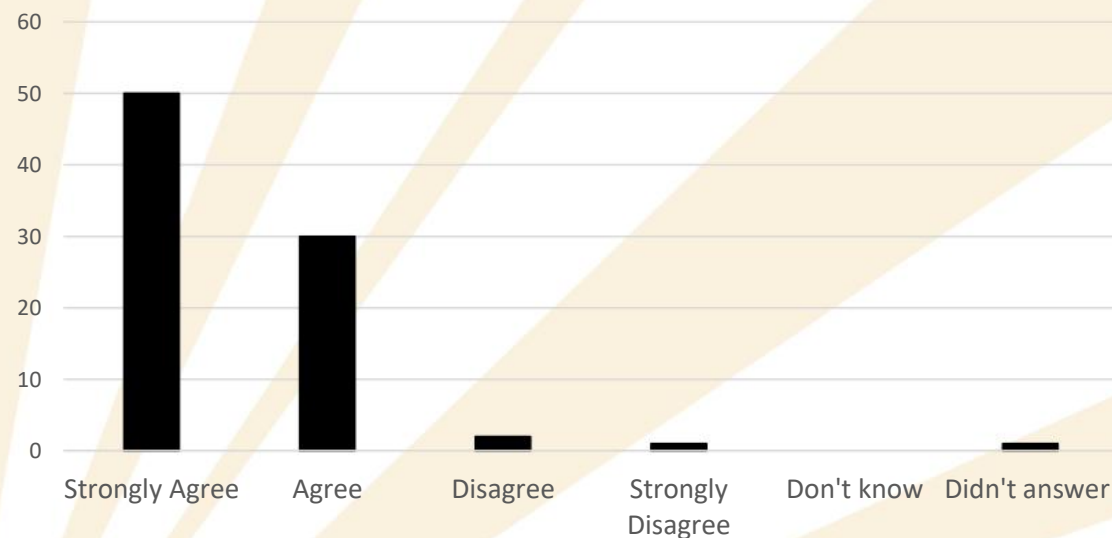
Empower

Remove barriers and facilitate solutions.

Equalise

Focus actions where they are needed most to reduce inequalities.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with these principles?



Key Principles

- “Great list ... let's make it real in the mind of every decision maker, officers and elected. Really get out and engage with citizens and groups. BCC can be very conservative. Be bold!”
- “We agree with the principles of empower, collaborate and equalise.”
- “Three very well chosen principles, especially empower, which will be key moving forwards”
- “In our experience working in a partnership and collaboration is significantly more effective than companies working individually.”
- “...As for empower... 100%... give the ability to the citizens by teaching/showcasing.”

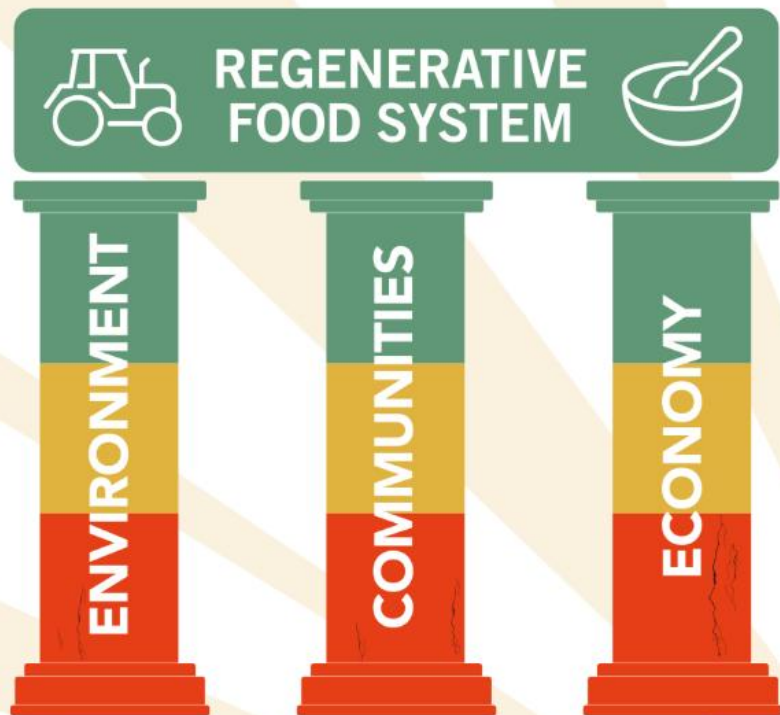


Key Principles – Key Feedback

- Regarding the existing three principles (collaborate, empower, and equalise)
 - Be clear the principles are for actioning of the strategy not writing it
 - Need to make it clearer how these will achieve the vision, aims, etc.
 - Generally agree, some say principles are too vague – provide examples of principles in action?
- Suggestions of additional principles
 - Local
 - Education
 - Decentralisation
 - Bigger picture



Ambition

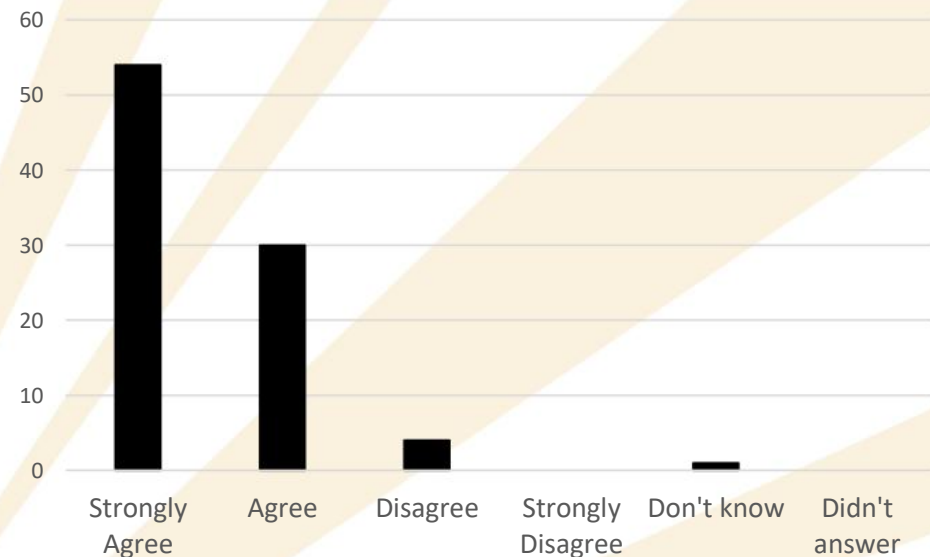


**UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES DAMAGE THE FOUNDATION
OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY.**

A thriving food system is built on a strong foundation where we regenerate and improve our environment, communities and economy.

It is no longer enough to reduce negative outcomes by being sustainable or neutral. If we do this nothing will improve so we must aim higher.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this ambition?



Ambition

- “Fantastic - this should be a UK wide objective with the investment, leadership & partners to deliver.”
- “I agree with the ambition but think it will be very difficult to achieve”
- “If it works then this strategy is a win-win for everyone and the environment.”
- “Regenerate is so powerful. We are not going to let climate change rip, we are no going to manage decline, we are going to work positively, together, to improve our environment, our communities and our economy.”
- “We agree with these ambitions, particularly a future where every citizen, no matter their circumstances, can eat an affordable, healthy, and sustainable diet. This is not currently the case. “
- “The ambitions of the Birmingham Food Strategy go hand in hand with the ambition to end the need for food banks. “



Ambition – Key Feedback

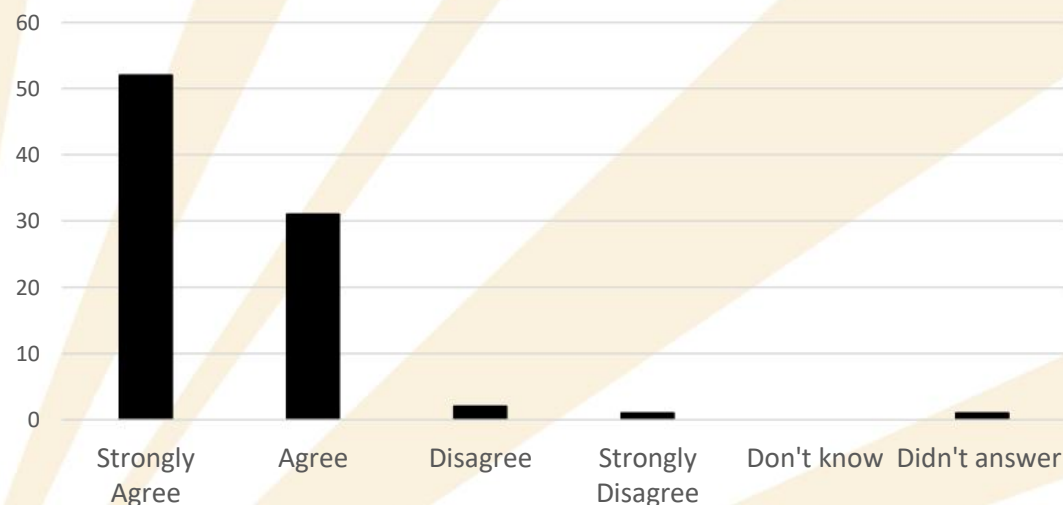
- 8 years is a short timeline for these changes → very aspirational
- Need to manage expectations. Give context re. plan and timeframes
- More clarity on how ambitions will be achieved; greater links/signposting between vision, principles, ambitions and aims
- Recognise the limitations of the strategy due to the importance of central government
- Use objective not subjective language e.g. “fair salary”



Aims

- Grow the Birmingham Food Revolution
- Build a sustainable, ethical and nutritious food system and a thriving local economy
- Build stronger resilient communities that support those who most need it, and mitigate food insecurity
- Empower citizens to consume a sustainable, ethical, healthy and nutritious diet

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the aims?



Aims

- “Generally the aims highlights the main areas of the city’s food system that need improving from production to waste/reuse, education and greater involvement in it.”
- “All excellent aims- glad to see life course emphasis - from birth onwards.”
- “All great points, the link to both diet and a healthy lifestyle including exercise is such a critical link which can support nutrition in itself.”
- “With everyone on-board, a win-win situation will be created.”
- “If people are able to access good healthy local food and receive support the quality of life in Birmingham will be even better than it is now.”
- “Yes, sustainable, ethical and nutritious are the right values to put at the heart of these aims. An empowering City Council can do so much to help make a reality of these values.”



Aims – Key Feedback

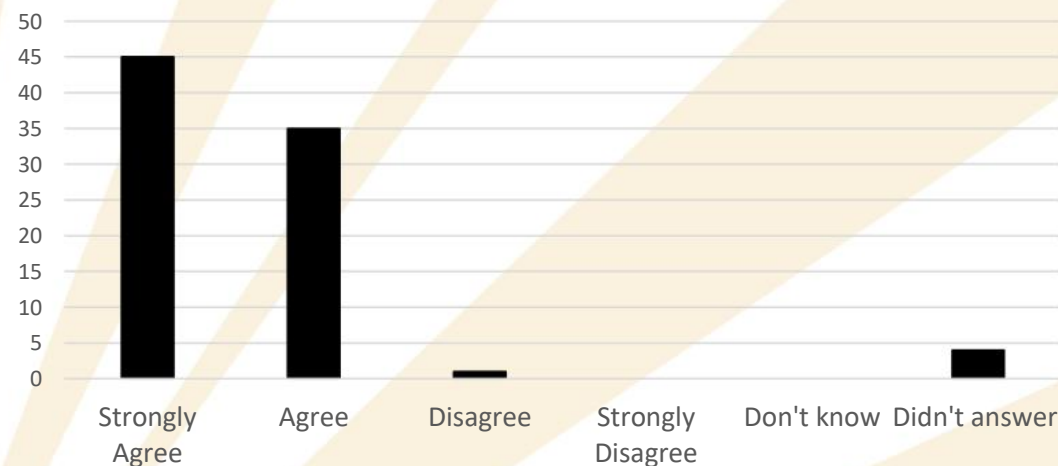
- While ambition is good, the process will rapidly lose momentum if there are not the resources and investment needed which is commensurate with achieving the aims.
- Be realistic about how big the challenges are and how long it takes to make changes on the scale needed.
- Importance of monitoring and measuring impact
- National and international food businesses seem quite key in this area
- Co-design plans and resources with communities not to communities
- Framing that it is good to build stronger and more resilient communities, but people shouldn't have to rely on their communities for support
- Need to mention growing/allotments and education in aims



Big Bold City Approach

- Across people and communities
- Across the life course
- Across the city
- Across settings – food businesses, supply chain, third sector & not-for-profits, community & faith settings, education settings, further education settings.
Birmingham City Council, public services, research and innovation, workplace and employers, industry networks, home.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Big Bold City approach?



Big Bold City Approach

- “Be fabulous if everyone got on board.”
- “It is certainly Big and Bold. This makes it essential that the City Council makes a reality of the collaboration and empowerment and partnerships that will be needed to make a reality of the vision.”
- “We agree with this approach as it cannot be just the City Council's responsibility to bring about change.”
- “There is a lot we can link together here, and will take a lot of dedicated resource and management to do this, but if done effectively, it will be very powerful and impactful.”
- “Yes, this cannot work in at the absence of collective effort”
- “The Bold City approach correctly recognises that to achieve a revolution in attitudes then active engagement with the citizens of Birmingham is essential to ensuring the proposed actions are accepted and acted on.”



Big Bold City Approach - Key Feedback

- Consensus that health should be listed as a separate partner - health visitors, community & school nurses, dietitians, nutritionist, dentistry and other therapists could be key in encouraging and supporting change.
- Hard to see the impact that the council can have on some of these settings
- Comprehensive approach but would it be wiser to focus on a few settings and do them well?
- What role will citizens play?
- Lifecycle of PRODUCE
- More details on childcare settings – childminders, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, leisure centres
- Include: homeless shelters, refuges, care homes, food banks, slaughter houses, factories, incinerator
- Lobby central government?



Framework for Action

Food Production

Empower citizens and local producers to grow and preserve food and connect to the city's food system.

Food Sourcing

Increase sourcing of local, environmentally sustainable, ethical and nutritious foods across the food system.

Food Transformation

Transform diets to contain more diverse and nutritious ingredients, and less fat, salt and sugar.

Food Waste and Recycling

Maximise the repurposing and distribution of surplus food and minimise waste and unsustainable packaging.

Food Economy and Employment

Create a thriving local food economy for all and maximise training and employment opportunities.

Food Skills and Knowledge

Empower citizens with knowledge and skills in relation to the food system from farm to fork.

Food Behaviour Change

Ensure the capability, opportunity and motivation for key behaviours that will enable long term change.

Food Security & Resilience

Ensure all citizens in every community, at every age, have access to sufficient affordable, nutritious and safe food.

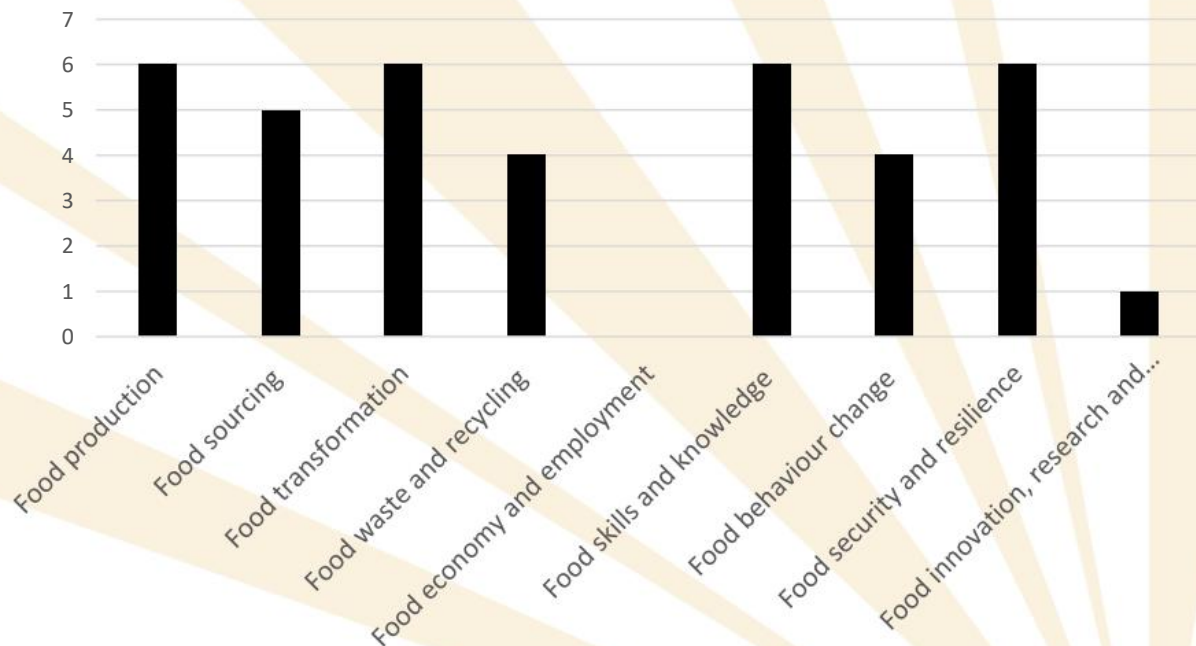
Food Innovation, Partnerships & Research

Gather insights and facilitate innovation, collaboration, learning and research across the food system.

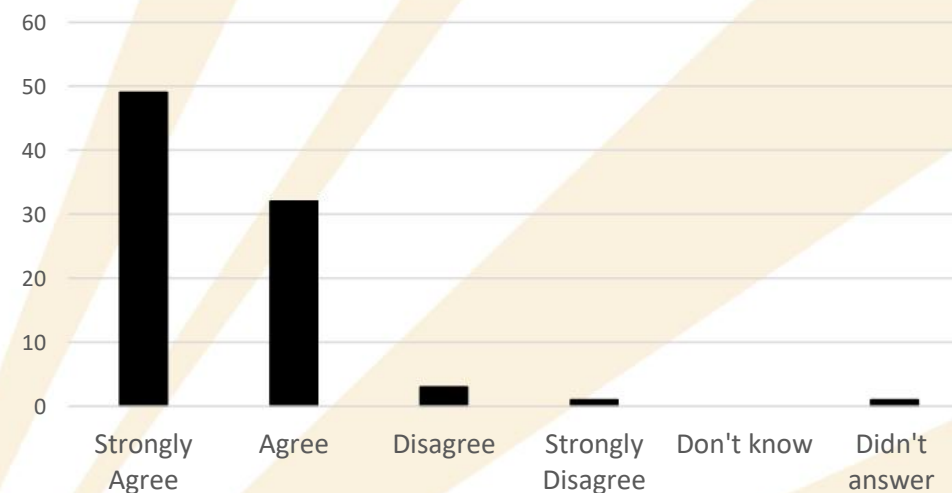


Framework for Action

Which of the nine workstreams do you think is the most important to improve the food system in Birmingham?



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the overall Framework for Action?



Framework for Action

- “The 9 workstreams complement each other and hopefully there will be cross-workstream collaboration too. I would choose food skills and knowledge as the key underpinning basis for making progress across all 9 workstreams.”
- “I strongly support the 9 workstreams proposed.”
- “I think it’s really comprehensive.”
- “Outstanding list. Valuable guide to concerted local community action. people are passionate about grow and their environment. How can we best build from that.”



Framework for Action - Key Feedback

- Nine is too many workstreams – not making strategic choices/prioritise. Could shorten and/or prioritise?
- Some workstreams framed as outcomes, some as actions
- More explicitly link to vision, ambitions, aims etc. – which workstreams will address which aim?
- Perhaps cross-cutting streams: behaviour change, skills & knowledge, innovation, data (?) etc.
- Additional suggested workstreams
 1. **Preparedness for food shortages and scarcities** – early warning system for supply disruption and reference to local resilience forum (*could go under workstream 8*)
 2. **Food safety, assurance and integrity** – promote FHRs scheme, tackle food crime, monitor data submitted to the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System

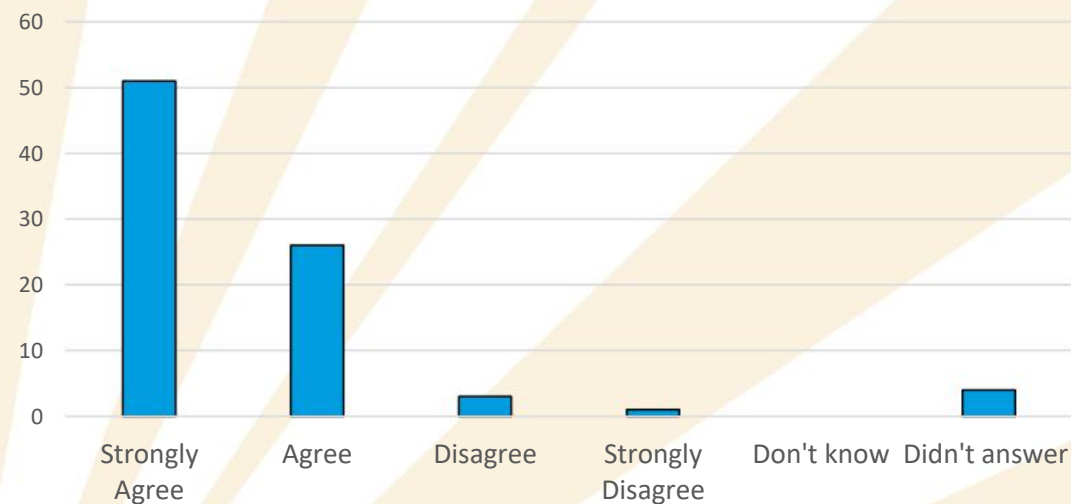


Food Production

Food Production

Empower citizens and local producers to grow and preserve food and connect to the city's food system.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Production workstream?



Food Production – Key Feedback

- Importance of food growing in improving lifestyles generally – where food comes from
- Consider spraying of pesticides and herbicides by council, especially on allotments
- Protect allotment sites and improve BCC allotment service
- Identify space that can be used for growing and enable use of that land (make it easy!) – allocate additional land for growing and protect it (long term)
- Initiatives to empower people to grow food
- Consider soil quality solutions
- Get people into farming e.g. apprenticeships, colleges
- Workstream – more specific focus on fruit and vegetables?

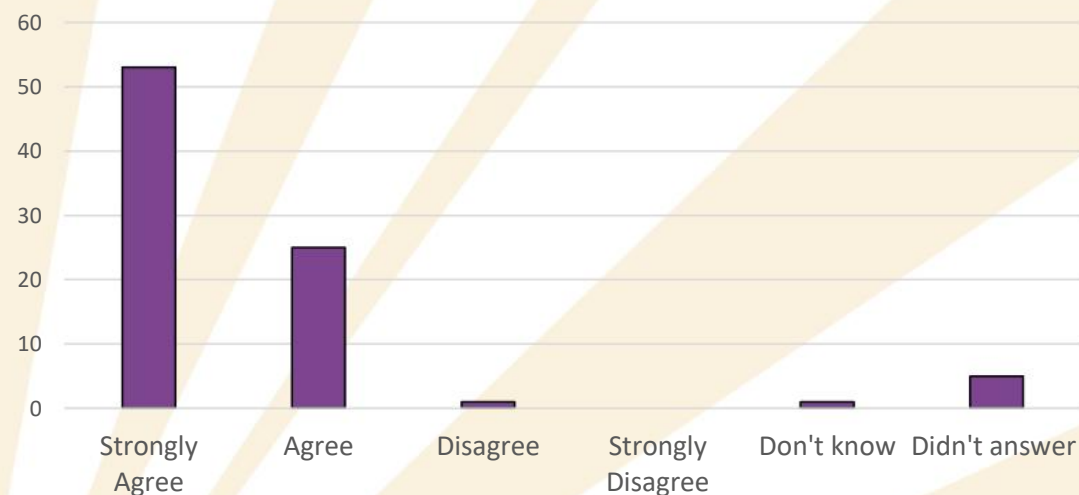


Food Sourcing

Food Sourcing

Increase sourcing of local, environmentally sustainable, ethical and nutritious foods across the food system.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Sourcing workstream?



Food Sourcing – Key Feedback

- Need more explicit and proactive engagement with the Shires around us
- Use hyperlocal partners to help people access good food (including community centres for youth)
- Bring back local markets!
- Do something about gluts – gleaning?
- Allow people with allotments to sell to public or encourage to donate to food projects
- Use procurement to enable local suppliers
- Highlight importance of food/farming to climate emergency
- Use empty lots for local markets
- Develop visitor actions with a positive impact
- Vertical farming

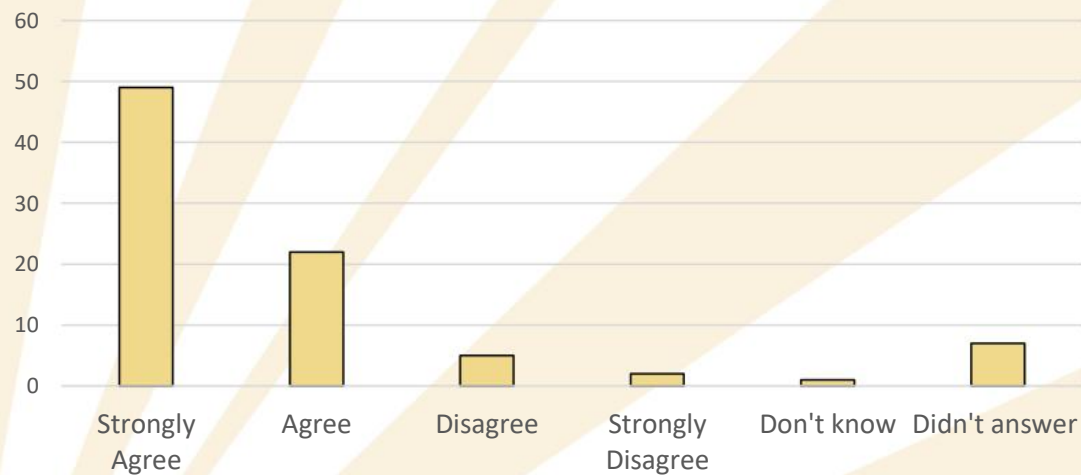


Food Transformation

Food Transformation

Transform diets to contain more diverse and nutritious ingredients, and less fat, salt and sugar.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Transformation workstream?



Food Transformation – Key Feedback

- Need to define what healthy eating is (and focus on positive as well as negative)
- Restrict development of more cheap fast food outlets and promote healthy food offer
- Greater publicity of local good food e.g. where is my nearest greengrocer?
- Local HFSS (or based on VAT) advertising restrictions
- Working with Birmingham based businesses and in public settings in using a range of strategies to help these companies move towards a better health profile of their food sales, e.g. healthy catering commitment, implementation of school food standards, creating incentives and support packages for small retail settings
- Recognise importance of central government in this area
- “Diverse” not a good thing, want to reduce no. of ingredients (“fewer and more nutritious”)
- Solutions need to be the easiest option or change won’t happen

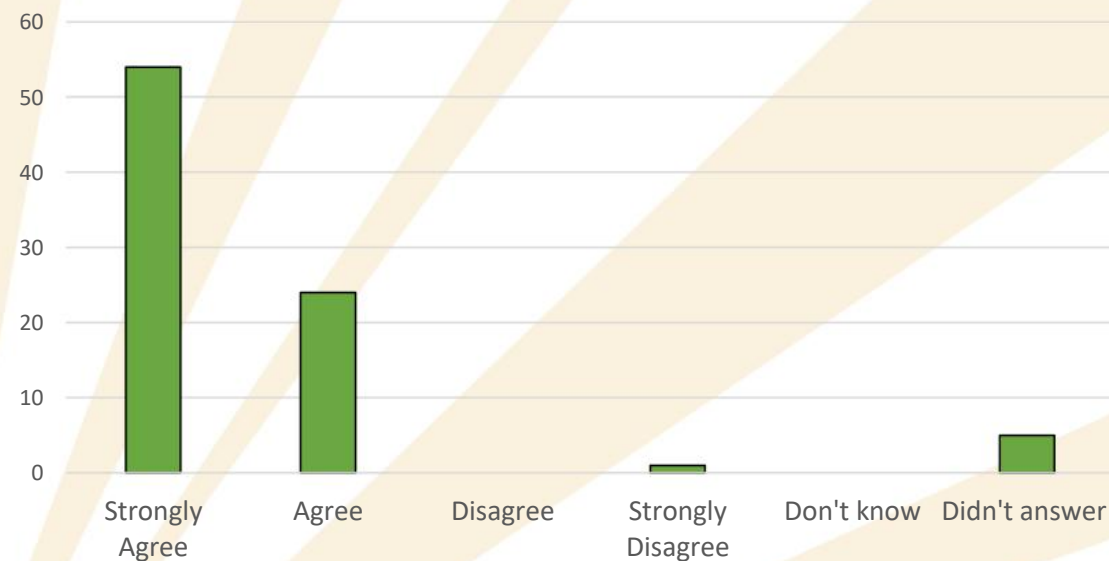


Food Waste & Recycling

Food Waste and Recycling

Maximise the repurposing and distribution of surplus food and minimise waste and unsustainable packaging.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Waste and Recycling workstream?



Food Waste & Recycling – Key Feedback

- Redistribution of surplus food – BCC, businesses, volunteer schemes, food pantries
- Educating people about not wasting food
- Facilitating composting + household food waste collection for all of Birmingham
- Promote energy saving in food preparation
- Address single use plastics and packaging
- Needs buy-in from communities and represents major shift in habits
- Help zero waste food businesses
- Embed zero waste throughout food's lifecycle (not just when utilised by consumers) - secondary markets

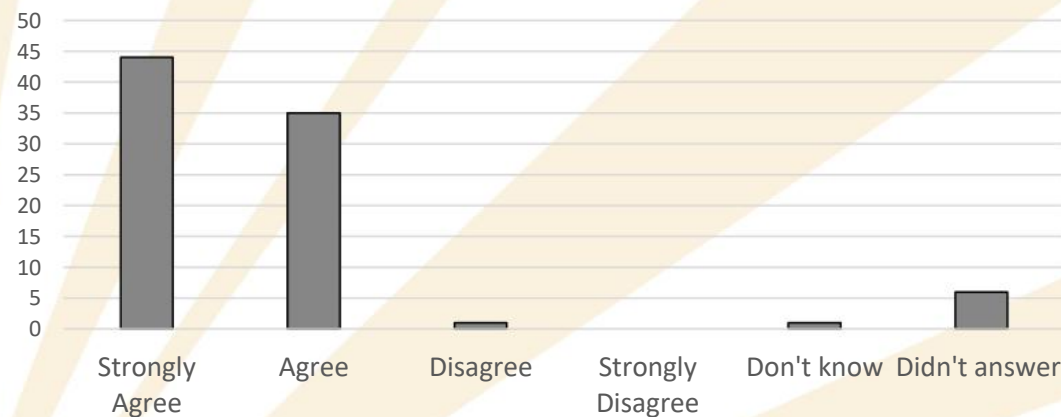


Food Economy & Employment

Food Economy and Employment

**Create a thriving local food economy
for all and maximise training and
employment opportunities.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree
with the Food Economy and Employment
workstream?



Food Economy & Employment – Key Feedback

- Funding for positive food businesses/CICs
- Living wage (!) - including apprenticeships
- Change narrative around farming as skilled work
- Development of sustainable food systems can help boost social employment by offering training and creating jobs at restaurants and with producers. Access to start-up support could enable new enterprises to develop and innovate, increasing the number of food-related jobs and training opportunities.
- Entrepreneurial approach to brands like the Balti Triangle
- Greater links between food industry and universities/colleges
- Businesses doing well in certain areas to be celebrated

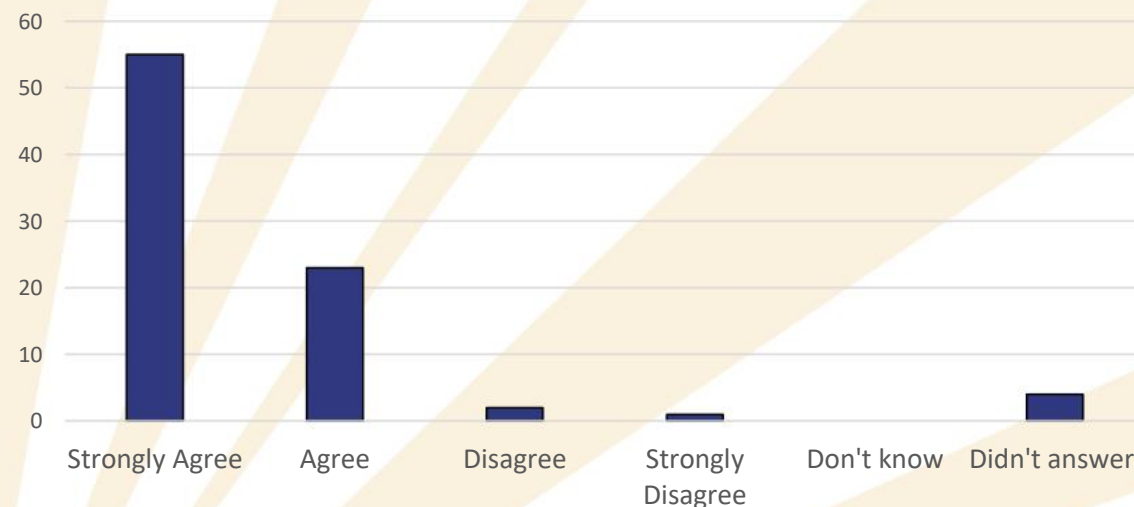


Food Skills & Knowledge

Food Skills and Knowledge

Empower citizens with knowledge and skills in relation to the food system from farm to fork.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Skills and Knowledge workstream?



Food Skills & Knowledge – Key Feedback (1)

- Make workstream clearer including how implemented and what it could be measured against.
- The focus seems to be primarily on citizens and there is a risk of adopting victim blaming and individualistic behaviour change approaches that may be marginally effective and widen inequalities. Thinking more upstream suggests that a greater focus is needed on upskilling food professionals in food skills to better support human and planetary health and ensures addressing systemic barriers which frame & dictate behaviour
- Lots of responses around schools and children's education
- Helpful comments around what skills/knowledge to improve
- Cooking lessons for Birmingham citizens (online/in person)
- Consumers' knowledge and skills will underpin the achievement of a great deal of the ambition set out in the consultation document.



Food Skills & Knowledge – Key Feedback (2)

- Emphasis on enjoyment of learning new skills & keeping it fun
- Establishing positive food relationships from birth
- Treading careful balance between providing enjoyable, non-patronising opportunities for skills development without assuming all of the problems we face regarding our food choices and consumption are due to poor awareness/lack of skills
- People don't look to the council for skills and knowledge!

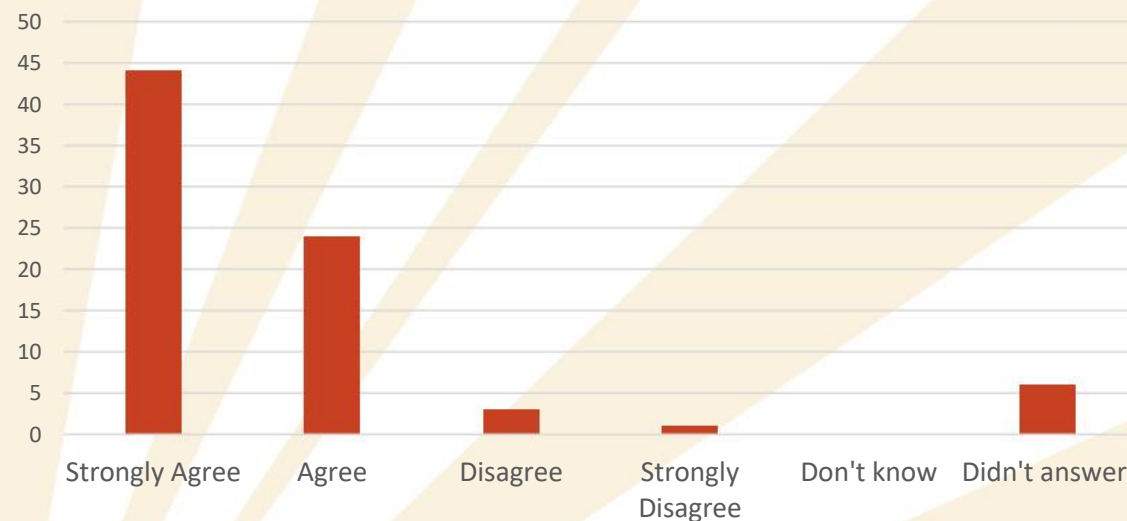


Food Behaviour Change – Key Feedback

Food Behaviour Change

Ensure the capability, opportunity and motivation for key behaviours that will enable long term change.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Behaviour Change workstream



Food Behaviour Change – Key Feedback

- Social determinants of health are a key consideration for this in particular
- If behaviour change is achieved, support is needed to maintain the changed behaviour.
- Education and behaviour go hand in hand e.g. schools play important role in children's behaviour
- Social prescribing is a good idea but yet to deliver
- Robust planning is important in behaviour change
- Remove easy access to and advertising of junk food.
- Consider peer pressure!
- Social campaigns
- Difficult given food environments

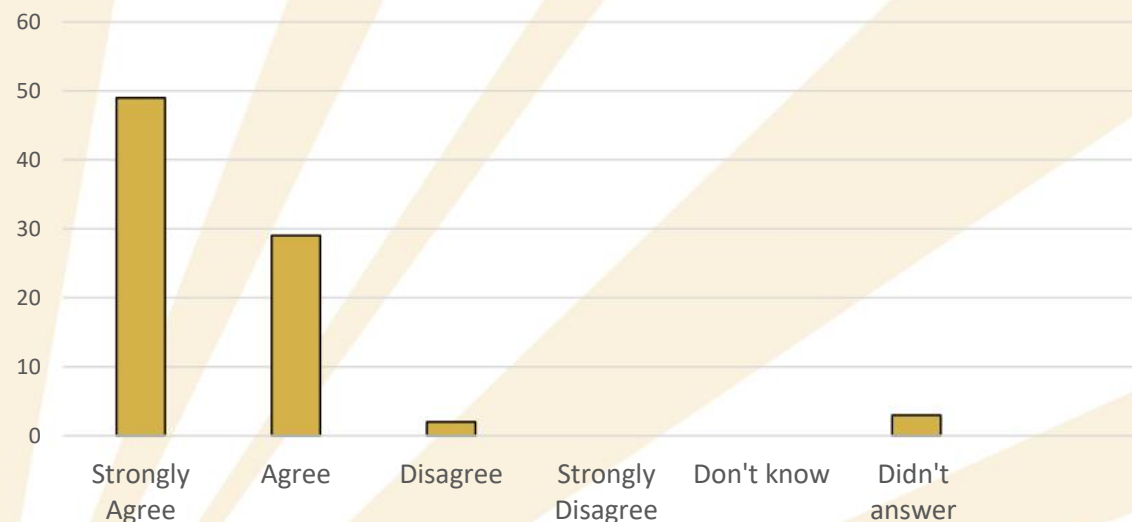


Food Security & Resilience – Key Feedback

Food Security & Resilience

Ensure all citizens in every community, at every age, have access to sufficient affordable, nutritious and safe food.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Security & Resilience workstream?



Food Security & Resilience – Key Feedback

- Need to mention direction of travel – reducing reliance on foodbanks!
- Need to integrate plan with living wages
- Support for people on fringes who e.g. don't qualify for HS vouchers, experiencing in-work poverty
- Importance of income, benefits, wider determinants
- Stigma reduction is important
- Invest in community initiatives
- Need to mention the climate emergency
- A clear acknowledgement of where, and how, this strategy interacts and intersect with other strategies and workstreams would be hugely beneficial.



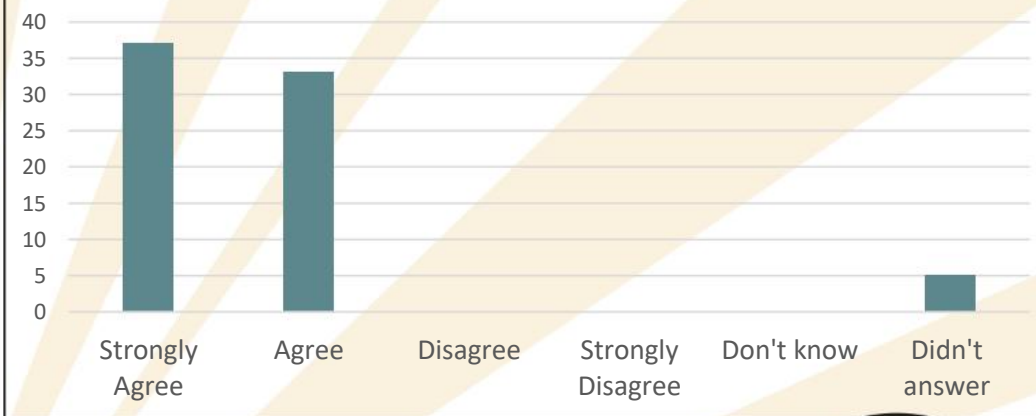
Food Innovation, Partnerships and Research

Food Innovation, Partnerships & Research

Gather insights and facilitate innovation, collaboration, learning and research across the food system.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Innovation, Partnerships and Research workstream?



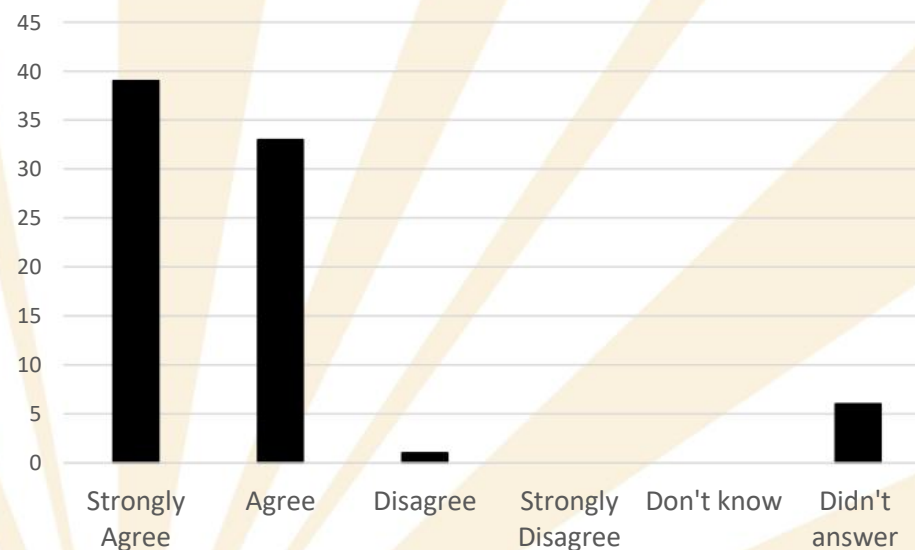
Food Innovation, Partnerships and Research – Key Feedback

- Explicitly mention technology
- Hospitality industry as key innovators and partners (currently overlooked)
- “has previously all been said” & “this workstream seems to be primarily about learning rather than innovation. I would suggest that this doesn't warrant being a standalone workstream, but rather learning should be built into the whole strategy “– *cross cutting theme?*”
- Right to focus on research as a key driver of understanding, innovation and seizing future opportunities to achieve the strategy's goals and go further.
- It is not clear whether/how citizens will be involved in this initiative – include citizen science and involve all of our citizens communicating regularly with transparent accountability and expenditure



To what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach to involving food system partners and aligning to other strategies and priorities?

- Be clear how people can engage
- Transparency of decision-making
- Don't use alienating language
- Specify funding attached
- **Top down – needs to be bottom up**



Who should we be communicating with?

- Charities that offer food
- Allotment owners & BCC allotment department
- BDAC
- PAN-UK
- Soil Association, Bee-friendly Brum, Wildlife trusts
- School food suppliers (including Cityserve)
- Food businesses including Digbeth Dining Club
- Planning and Transport → holistic vision
- Children & Young People's Services



Any key priorities missed?

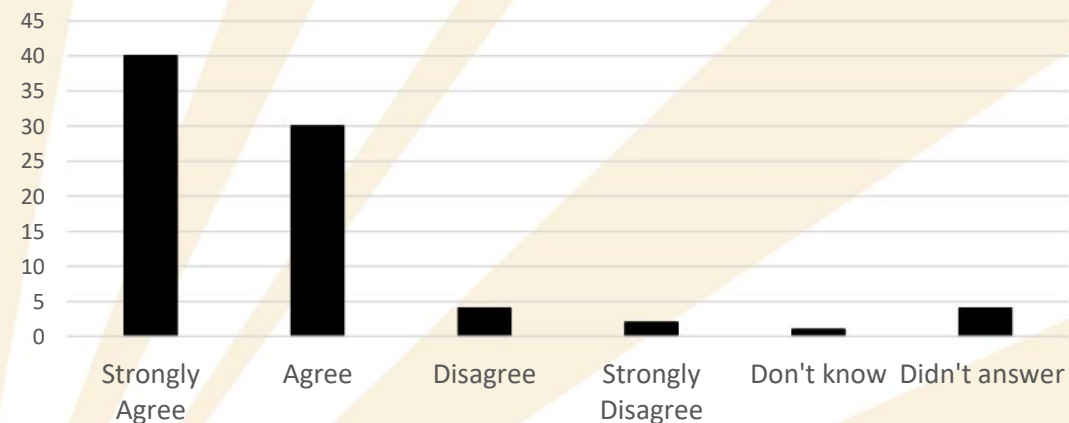
- Reference to Net Zero action plan
- Aligning to grass roots approaches already happening
- Consult PAN-UK re. other cities moving towards organic food growing
- Transparent key performance indicators
- Allotments as priority
- Strong links with government departments (lobbying?)
- Keep scientific literature under constant review
- BAME businesses
- Eating disorders



FADMAP Tool



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Food Action Decision-Making and Prioritisation tool?



FADMAP Tool – Key Feedback

- Need to be more precise about who FADMAP is for and what it is – some people struggled to understand what the tool is, who it's for, what it's for etc.
- Very wordy & lots of considerations – may not help prioritise!
- Need to be clearer about order – is there a hierarchy? Are they equally weighted? People disagree with order. Eg. top 3: 1. Cost effective; 2. Environmentally sustainable; 3. Evidence based
- This initiative is built around a top-down approach that claims looking at benefitting individuals with centralised decision-making. Change to a bottom-up approach.
- Need to focus on long term achievable initiatives.
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment of success – how will you know which aspects have been effective?
- Prioritise effectiveness over minimising spending
- Need to put actual nutrition at heart of strategy



Key Changes following feedback

- Making the vision, ambition, aims etc more coherent
- Added “Food Safety and Standards” workstream
- Changing to 6 core workstreams and 4 cross-cutting themes
- Lots of suggested actions collated
-



Full responses can be found here:

[Final BeHeard Responses.xlsx](#)

Feedback amalgamated for when rewriting the strategy
can be found here:

[Consultation Results for Actioning 2.docx](#)

