

## **Appendix 2 – Creating a Healthy Food City Forum Highlight Report**

### **1.1 Context**

The main purpose of the Forum is to work together to apply a whole system approach to understanding the food landscape of the city and improving the food behaviours at a population level across Birmingham by ensuring that a joint action plan is developed and delivered.

The forum last met 05 May 2021. Due to timing of the Forum and Board governance this report focuses on activity that does not include the discussion of the most recent Forum.

### **1.2 Current Circumstance**

#### **1.2.1 Food Strategy**

During late 2019 and early 2020 there were multiple rounds of consultation with partners on the Birmingham Food Strategy, with the intention of public consultation shortly thereafter. The COVID-19 response placed these conversations and the strategy itself on hold.

As part of the Forum held 14 January 2021 there was a call for volunteers to support the development of the Food Strategy into a robust, shared document that all partners can subscribe to. Several organisations present are willing to contribute, and a task and finish group was established to develop the draft.

The group met on 15 March 2021 and following this a briefing note was submitted to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing to detail the suggested revisions and reframing of the document through the lens of the Rome Declaration. The document is being revised and the intention is to consult in quarter three of 2021/22.

#### **1.2.2 Emergency Food Plan**

There have been some preliminary discussions 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 on hold, but would be of assistance to the response, can be strategically shaped and implemented.

A workshop was convened for 19 February 2021 with invitations extended to members of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Creating a Healthy Food City Forum, the Food Justice Network, and the Food Poverty Core Group.

The information collated was incorporated into the plan and shared. Subsequently some of the new actions identified now have potential lead organisations and conversations will continue to develop and implement the plan as a live document.

#### **1.2.3 Birmingham Food Conversation**

The Birmingham Food Conversation consisted of two substantial pieces of

primary data collection.

Firstly, the **Birmingham Food Survey**; although this was cut short to prevent the bias inherent on continuing the survey during the COVID-19 response there were 394 responses received and results highlights were provided to the previous Health and Wellbeing Board. We are using the findings of this report to frame and inform partnership work on the food systems approach to multiple strands of work. Most recently selected extracts were presented to national partners as part of COTP framing, and international partners as part of Emergency Food Plan conversations.

Secondly, thirty-one different organisations were commissioned to deliver **‘Seldom Heard Food Voices’ research**. The groups were facilitated by community research consultants, employees of organisations serving the needs of specific target groups, and occasionally a combination of organisations matching research expertise with organisational reach. All organisations reported details of scripts and resources used as well as the structure focus group. All groups covered the questions highlighted in the tender specification. The facilitators delivered these questions in a range of ways, adapting them where appropriate for the groups they were working with. We have completed draft version of the final report, and are in the governance process around the consensus opinions on what is required to create a healthy city (as well as some unexpected and unsolicited comments on how to engage better as part of future consultation processes) and how these can be best taken forward.

#### 1.2.4 Food Poverty

In November 2020 Birmingham City Council re-established the Food Poverty Core Group to better understand the systems level responses we can put in place across the local systems in Birmingham to ensure a robust and coordinated response to the various issues around food poverty. The three themes we need to focus on;

- 1) prevention of people going into food poverty.
- 2) crisis management – how do we get them out of it.
- 3) recovery – moving forward, long term impact.

A rapid evidence review will be completed on each theme for action / discussion by the group.

The April 2021 meeting focused on crisis management although the minutes are not yet available so an update on this will be provided to the next Board.

#### 1.2.5 International Partnerships

The **Food Foundation Partnership** contract assists with implementation of national and international food policies and guidelines, and specialist advice, support and management of Birmingham’s international relationships. We are now over a quarter of the way through the four-year contract and the benefits have already been notable.

The partners have been in ongoing conversations to discuss key project

deliverables by quarter over the life of the contract, and a draft delivery plan has been drafted.

Birmingham has been successful in securing membership of the steering committee for the next two years for the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**. This makes Birmingham unique as the only UK member of the steering committee, and one of only three European cities. On 14 April 2021 the newly elected Steering Committee virtually met for its first meeting. We look forward continuing our joint work in making our community stronger and contributing to shape a new, global role of cities, which today stand out as front-runners for sustainable development.

There has been agreement in principle that the **Delice network** will refocus from gastronomy to policy levers and as a result of this that lead organisation status for Birmingham will pass to Birmingham City Council. The DPH decision notice to formalise this has been approved by the Director of Public Health and Delice contacted via Food Foundation to formalise arrangements.

**Commonwealth Cities 2022** launch took place on 27 January 2021 and the initial conversation focused on the announcement of the plans to convene a meeting of the cities in Birmingham to coincide with the Commonwealth Games in the city. We have secured backing from Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and a full application will be submitted when they are able to be received.

#### 1.2.6 Sustainable Food Places Application

The decision has been taken to not apply for Sustainable Food Places Award in the 2021 round of applications. A submission will be made in 2022 when the food strategy has been consulted on and embedded, meaning we are better placed to meet the full criteria. The lessons learnt from this process will be used to inform improvement to the food partnership work that will enable a future application to be successful.

#### 1.2.7 Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Project

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 delivery been led by 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 has been well received and is now in the process of full public consultation.

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. A final draft of the invitation to tender documents was submitted to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director for Wider Determinants late April 2021.

**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. Following a workshop with employment, skills and apprenticeship providers in October 2020, where we gauged interest of providers, the project delivery has been reframed. A final draft of the invitation to tender documents to allow for content creation for the curriculum was submitted to the Director of Public Health and Assistant Director for Wider Determinants late April 2021.

### 1.3 Next Steps and Delivery

- Continue to develop the **Food Strategy** and provide regular updates on progress with a view to consultation in Quarter three of 2021/22.
- Continue to shape, refine and deliver the content of the **Emergency Food Plan**, ensuring named leads against each action.
- Finalise governance on **Seldom Heard Voices** report and begin to implement findings.
- Rapid evidence review on next area of focus for the **Food Poverty Core Group**.