

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 27 September 2022

Wards affected: All Torbay wards

Report Title: Torbay Food Strategy and Partnership

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report shares with Cabinet the draft Vision and Charter for a “social movement” around Food in Torbay, which has been co-produced by the Partnership. This report seeks support from Cabinet for the Vision and Charter.
- 1.2 This report makes a set of recommendations, developed by Torbay Sustainable Food Partnership, and seeks a decision by Cabinet to pursue these.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 Since original intentions were set for the Food Partnership, a series of global events have made the need for systemic change even more important; and we are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in decades. This has impacted the poorest disproportionately; and has the potential to push many people beyond poverty into destitution.
- 2.2 Issues with global food and fuel supplies have also highlighted the need to reconsider how we get and use our food, with the need to shorten supply chains. These issues are likely to worsen in the long term as the impact of climate change is felt more keenly. We need to make best use of our assets and resources in Torbay to mitigate these effects; creating an environment that better supports local production.
- 2.3 Therefore, while we act to address the immediate cost of living crisis, it is vital that we take a longer-term, strategic view to address where possible the significant challenges ahead. Wider conversations on poverty will commence in September with a ‘Poverty Summit’ which will bring partners together to form a shared action plan.

- 2.4 Development of a 5-year Food Strategy for Torbay, and commitment to the Vision and Charter (see Appendix 1), would help to ensure that the future resilience of our communities and local food system is maximised.
- 2.2 The food workstream will be fundamental to delivering priorities within Public Health, Climate, Turning the Tide on Poverty, Family Hubs, and Economic Development (see Appendix 2).
- 2.3 However, its cross-cutting nature means that at present it is not owned in any one space, and therefore is given insufficient focus. A clear Food Strategy for Torbay would address this and help to bring cohesion to the food elements of multiple programmes.
- 2.5 Additionally, the current Food Partnership is facilitated by a Torbay Council officer, as is Torbay Food Alliance, and some of the community development work around the food agenda. This not sustainable in the long term and is not in line with our community-led approach.
- 2.6 Food Plymouth CIC (<https://foodplymouth.org/>), which has been operating since 2014, facilitates/resources the food partnership and network in Plymouth and is self-funding. A similar infrastructure organisation may be feasible within Torbay; a piece of scoping work is required to understand whether this model could work for us and what might be required to make it happen. Food Plymouth have offered support.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

1. That the longer-term commitment by the Council to the food workstream to 2028, as requested by the Torbay Food Partnership, be approved, namely to host and champion the Partnership, rather than a long term financial commitment.
2. That the Director of Adult Social Services be requested to work with the Torbay Food Partnership to undertake the following actions over the next year:
 - i. Co-produce a Food Strategy for Torbay for 2023 – 2028
 - ii. Scoping of the creation of a CIC similar to Food Plymouth, which would facilitate and resource the Torbay Food Partnership long-term.
3. That the Vision and Charter and identity “Food for Good Torbay”, which has been co-produced by the multi-sector Partnership, be supported and approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Food for Good Torbay Draft Vision and Charter

Appendix 2: The cross-cutting nature of the Food workstream

Appendix 3: Interim report on the Groundwork Edible Earth project

Appendix 4: Affordable Food Club model

Background Documents

The National Food Strategy:

<https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

Torbay Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

<http://www.southdevonandtorbay.info/media/1285/2022-2023-torbay-jsna.pdf>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2021, agreement was given by Members to pursue development of a Sustainable Food Partnership in Torbay. That Partnership is now established, meeting monthly since the autumn, and includes representation from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (including Torbay Food Alliance), Public Health, Torbay Development Authority, Adult Social Care, Commissioners, and Climate/Planning.
- 1.2 The Partnership's purpose is to take a collaborative approach to the following key priority areas:
 - Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
 - Supporting the creation of a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
 - Tackling the climate and nature emergency through an end to food waste locally
 - Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.
- 1.3 The Partnership has sought to engage with and influence community partners, so that thinking around food is more holistic and support is targeted in areas of greatest need. This has created a good foundation on which to build.
- 1.4 Grass roots projects focusing on growing and cooking have been developed and are beginning to flourish; new projects are emerging all the time. An example of this is the Groundwork Edible Earth project – a report is provided in Appendix 3. A longer commitment to the food agenda would help to ensure that this approach, and the relationships we have developed, can be sustained.
- 1.5 Torbay Food Alliance are, with our support, actively working to incorporate an affordable food club model into their provision, in order to make it more sustainable and resilient and to reduce dependency. Funding has been identified and agreed to support this (see Appendix 4 for more information on the model). We have developed a relationship with Feeding Britain (<https://feedingbritain.org/>) which supports a network of 50 anti-hunger partnerships across the UK, which may provide the clubs with access to peer support, funding, and advice.
- 1.5 The Partnership have developed a Vision and Charter for Torbay (see Appendix 1) which would be used as the foundation for a social movement around food. The document sets out a vision for the Torbay food system which can be used for the purposes of engagement, awareness, and influencing across all aspects of the community.
- 1.6 Torbay now has a presence in the wider Devon Food Partnership (<https://www.devonfoodpartnership.org.uk/>) and can influence development of a wider Devon Food Strategy. Having a clear strategy for Torbay, aligned with national and county priorities, will reinforce our position within the Devon Partnership whilst allowing us to focus on the unique challenges and assets within our area. It will also provide greater opportunities for collaborative working with other local authority areas within the County, such as Plymouth.

- 1.7 Inflation is predicted to surpass 13% by the end of 2022, and to remain high through 2023, with a recession predicted from the autumn. This will inevitably impact the health and wellbeing of our residents, particularly the most vulnerable.
- 1.8 Generally, due to the stress of living in poverty, those living in poverty are less able to prioritise health and therefore have poorer mental and physical health outcomes. One marker is life expectancy. The gap in life expectancy in Torbay between those living in the most and least deprived quintiles is 8 years according to the latest Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 1.9 Latest England data shows that 64% of adults and 40% of children are overweight or living with obesity. Excess weight and poor diets are correlated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. In Torbay, around 25.7% of reception age children and 34.6% of year 6 children are overweight including obese.
- 1.8 Additionally, the National Food Strategy, an independent report for government looking at the food system as a whole; sets out a number of recommendations to which we can align at a local level such as:
- Improving access to fresh produce for low-income families
 - Improving engagement of children with food, seasonality, cooking skills, eating a wider variety of foods especially fruit and vegetables
 - Increase engagement with Healthy Start
 - Mainstreaming growing and cooking as an activity which supports wider wellbeing
 - Making best use of land
 - Prioritising public procurement of food which is healthy and sustainable

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 The options considered by the Partnership were:
- (i) Continue to operate on a year-to-year basis with no long-term strategic planning
 - (ii) Discontinue the Partnership and assume that food-related issues would be adequately addressed within individual programmes/priorities
- 2.2 Neither were deemed to be a sustainable or suitable option. The scale and complexity of challenges within our local and national food system are significant, and therefore they will require a more strategic, joined-up approach to address them in any meaningful way. Many interventions needed are not within our gift locally, but those which are, will require longer to implement.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 No further funding is required at this stage; any monies associated with this workstream have already been identified and agreed by Cabinet.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications to undertaking the actions as set out in the recommendations.
- 4.2 The legal department have undertaken due diligence around use of the name “Food for Good Torbay” in any future communications or publicity, to ensure no breach of patent or trademark regulations.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 Recommendations have been developed by a multi-sector partnership.
- 5.2 The Food Strategy will be co-produced with partners across sectors, and residents, through a variety of formal and informal engagement channels. Our intention is that this is community-led, and we will work with VCSE partners to facilitate this.
- 5.3 No formal consultation is needed.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 Not applicable within this proposal.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 The Food and Climate workstreams are inter-dependent (as illustrated in Appendix 4). Torbay Council’s Climate Officer is a core member of the Food Partnership, which will ensure that the food workstream is aligned to and supports delivery of the Climate Plan.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The absence of a strategy will result in a lack of cohesion around food-related work, resulting in lost opportunities or duplication.
- 8.2 Without a strategy, there will be nothing to underpin and drive bolder changes which we may need to make as a Council in order to tackle challenges around climate change and inequalities in the future.

8.3 At present, the food workstream and Partnership is driven and co-ordinated by a Council officer. This is not sustainable in the long term; therefore a more sustainable structure is needed.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people			The recommendations within this paper will not, in and of themselves, have an impact upon residents.
People with caring Responsibilities			
People with a disability			
Women or men			
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			Once a Strategy has been developed, the impacts of its implementation would require further assessment at individual project level.
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			The scoping piece of work will not have an impact on residents. Any recommendations produced from that work will be put through the appropriate governance.
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			
People who are transgendered			
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general			

health of the population of Torbay)			
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None