

Greater Brighton Economic Board

Agenda Item 8

Subject: Greater Brighton Food Plan

Date of meeting: 19 July 2022

Report of: Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board

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General Release

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document presents the findings from scoping existing policy and partnerships in the Greater Brighton city region. The scoping findings offer the basis of a future Greater Brighton Food Plan, a clear approach to collaborative work and a pathway to implement Government Food Strategy. The outcome of the next phase of GBEB work will be city region food system investment plans.
- 1.2 Key contacts in each local authority area and the South Downs National Park Authority were interviewed and economic strategies and growth plans were studied. Key priorities, interests and ambitions emerged for each local authority area and case studies of food system innovation were followed up.
- 1.3 The recommendations arising from this scoping work are focused on unlocking the next phase of work to develop a Greater Brighton Food Plan. This will depend on collaboration through partnerships and LAs and the coordination of activities to build the investment case to transform the city region's food system.
- 1.4 Food system transformation will drive sustainable economic development and growth across the city region if co-ordinated economic development activities and investment are planned at city-region level.
- 1.5 The urgency for this work cannot be overstated. Scoping began before the cost-of-living crisis, rising food prices and a concerning increase in UK food poverty. "No Poverty" and "Zero Hunger" are two primary goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and pre-requisite to economic development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board agrees to the next phase of work which includes:
 - Identification of a mechanism to co-ordinate action and feed progress into the GB10 pledges

- Advice on alignment of policies, metrics and action focused on food system transformation by LA areas
- Budget allocation to create investment plans for infrastructure, business support and training (£15,000 allocation from GBEB). This would cover specialist support to properly cost and develop investment plans for the city region food system
- A call to business, education and food partnerships to support food system transformation
- Seeking partner updates on how food system innovations are being embedded into practice

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Food systems and food security are a key economic issue, as well as food related industries being key sectors in and of themselves. The cost-of-living crisis and the war in Ukraine have shown how vulnerable to shocks the food economy is. All Local Authority areas are at different stages in food system transformation. The board can facilitate commitment and ambition by encouraging and supporting the development of local food strategies. Sustainable Food Places (national) and Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (global) already provide evidence-based frameworks. These are the leading frameworks providing a form of governance, clear metrics, networking and support, as are the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration and Barcelona Challenge.

- 3.1 Coordinated economic development activities and investment planned at city region level are required to deliver Government Food Strategy objectives:

Food security and sustainable production - To deliver a prosperous agri-food and seafood sector that ensures a secure food supply in an unpredictable world and contributes to the levelling up agenda through good quality jobs around the country.

Healthier and sustainable eating - To deliver a sustainable, nature positive, affordable food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and homegrown diets for all.

The UK as part of a global food system - To deliver export opportunities and consumer choice through imports, without compromising our regulatory standards for food, whether produced domestically or imported.

- 3.2 To ensure that the direction of travel links up to GB10 pledges connecting frameworks were studied. The CDP framework does not cover the full range of metrics Food Strategies and Partnerships develop, but it illustrates the convergence of activities and how we can report them locally and as a city-region. What it does make clear is how we can co-ordinate food system action to produce various co-benefits.

- 3.3 Coast to Capital strategic economic plan 2018-2030 analysis revealed that future economic strengths lie in a range of economic sub-sectors in distinct, localised areas, rather than a smaller number of broad sectors across the whole area.
- 3.4 Coastal West Sussex White Paper 2021 highlights horticulture as a flourishing West Sussex industry in tune with the environment. Skills gaps in the horticultural industry include not only seasonal pickers and packers after Brexit, but also STEM skills as well as leadership and management, HR and other business skills, energy management, supervisory skills, technology and digital business growth.
- 3.5 Focusing in on sub sectors allows us to see where investment is most needed and to learn how to couple investment with active food system planning and achieve progress for the GB10 Pledges.
- 3.6 Food system infrastructure is considered in the following sub sections:
- Horticulture and viticulture
 - Livestock and dairy farming
 - Fishing and the marine economy
 - Supply chain mapping in East Sussex
 - Business, education and food partnerships
 - Moving from food system insecurity to opportunity
- 3.7 Data for all 7 local authorities is a valuable resource to inform and drive targeted policy action at the local level in order to improve food security and deliver on many agendas. Not all data was available. Higher level data and specialist support would be required to create an economic summary infographic for the city region food system.

As an absolute minimum the city region needs to:

- Know the percent of population that is food insecure.
 - Have food partnerships developing local food strategies.
 - Monitor the key policies relevant to food systems transformation.
- 3.8 If well maintained, this information would be very useful for emergency planning and Local Resilience Forums when required in the future e.g. to find a range of solutions to help the most vulnerable. At the same time, this data will provide intelligence for food system infrastructure investment decisions.
- 3.9 Food system innovation and food sector growth potential is also considered, e.g. food systems will play a key role in discussions and decision-making about climate change in the run up to COP27; more large-scale farms and corporations will begin to adopt regenerative farming practices; the European alternative proteins market will see further growth in 2022; the role of young people as food activists and agents of change will increase; and more brands will adopt front of pack environmental labelling in 2022.
- 3.10 Case studies of innovation are collated in the appendices section of the report. Greater Brighton will not struggle to find more case studies of innovation. Greater Brighton businesses, whether food retailers, caterers, vegetable box schemes,

school caterers, farmers, allotment holders, workplace canteens, festival and event teams will all have reportable data about creating these (and other) nutritional changes, and how they are contributing to a circular economy, or social value, or to tackle climate change.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Do nothing and wait for the Government Food Strategy to affect local policy.
- 4.2 Local Authorities make food plans independently with no strategic leadership.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Community engagement and consultation will be through existing or new food partnerships and networks. This work contributes to building social resilience.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The recommendations from this scoping offer a process to work systematically across these connected agendas, simultaneously, to face the food system challenges and turn them into solutions.
- 6.2 Covid, Brexit, war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis are the most recent challenges but external shocks are increasing and layering up. Mitigating the most immediate harms to populations is the top priority for policymakers, but failure to keep long-term objectives in mind, climate change mitigation in particular, can lead to bad decisions that further embed existing fragilities in economic and social systems.
- 6.3 The next phase of this work moves from the 'scoping' stage to considering current financing and the 'proper costing of food system infrastructure requirements'. As part of the development of a Greater Brighton Food Plan this second phase will create investment plans for city region infrastructure, business support and training in alignment with Government Food Strategy and GB 10 pledges. Larger projects will require feasibility work and impact assessments before project structuring. The focus will be on growth areas and supply chains. Growth opportunities will also be identified for smaller projects that may move quickly into implementation phase, depending on local capacity and resourcing.
- 6.4 All LAs in the city region are working on transition plans to achieve resilience and adaptation through Sustainable Development Goals, Circular Economy, Carbon Neutral or Community Wealth Building.
- 6.5 The existing business, education and food partnerships clearly form the strongest foundation as they cover the breadth of the city region food system and LAs. It is their combined creative potential through the businesses, communities and institutions that will make the next phase of work a success.

- 6.6 Risks need to be taken to create transformational change and one of those risks is to welcome in new ideas and partners.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 A budget of £15,000 will be allocated from the Greater Brighton Operational Budget 2022/23 to create investment plans for infrastructure, business support and training to support the Greater Brighton Food Plan.
- 7.2 This budget allocation will pay for specialist support to properly cost and develop investment plans for the city region food system. A consultant's brief will be developed and shared with organisations capable of providing this support.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date: 5 July 2022*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland, Head of Commercial Law
Date: 8 July 2022*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.2 It is important to create equal opportunities to access affordable, healthy food. Barriers link to inequality and systematic biases embedded within our society.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.3 Major transformations in the global food system are required in order to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition. The global food system currently contributes to the climate crisis by producing a third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Food Economy Resilience: Greater Brighton Food Scoping June 2022 (attached)
2. [Greater Brighton Economic Board 20th July 2021, Agenda Item 10](#)

Background Documents

1. [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN 2015](#)
2. [National Food Strategy July 2021](#)
3. [Government Food Strategy June 2022](#)
4. [UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food. FSA June 2022](#)

