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| Subject: | Greater Brighton Food Plan |
| Date of Meeting: | 18 July 2023 |
| Report of: | Chair, Greater Brighton Programme Board |
| Contact Officer: Name: | Angela Blair |
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| LA(s) affected: | All |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This document updates the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board) on the development of a Greater Brighton Food Plan.
- 1.2 The findings from scoping existing policy and partnerships in the Greater Brighton city region were presented to the Board in July 2022. In line with the recommendations in that report, work has now been undertaken on preparing an investment plan for infrastructure, business support and training. This assessment of the areas requiring investment will help to shape the final Greater Brighton Food Plan.
- 1.3 The next step is to co-ordinate writing the food plan using and updating these investment plans for infrastructure to transform the city region’s food system.
- 1.4 The recommendations arising from this costing work require Local Authorities to start to align policies, metrics and action focused on food system transformation. An active communications campaign is also required to call business, education and food partnerships to support food system transformation and to gather partner updates on how food system innovations are being embedded into practice.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board agrees to the potential project pipeline included in the Food System Investment Plan at Appendix 1
- 2.2 That the Board agrees to initiate the final phase of work which includes completion of the Greater Brighton Food Plan, overseen by the Task and Finish Group and aligned with leading food policy frameworks.
- 2.3 That the Board allocates £20,000 follow-on GBEB funding to increase capacity to deliver the work necessary to progress the systems approach and the pipeline of costed projects.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Greater Brighton region has many pre-existing assets that set it up towards being a leader in local food economy development.
- 3.2 All Local Authority areas are at different stages in food system transformation, as both the cost-of-living crisis and action on climate change remain in sharp focus.
- 3.3 Coordinated economic development activities and investment planned at city region level are required to deliver Government Food Strategy objectives i.e.:
 - Food security and sustainable production;
 - Healthier and sustainable eating;
 - The UK as part of a global food system.
- 3.4 City region food systems are the future, being a scale large enough to make an impact, yet small enough to drive local changes. They have a central role to play in strengthening the viability and resilience of regional economies through collaboration and coordination of resources. Food systems transformation requires cooperation, infrastructure and governance to deliver change and affect policies.
- 3.5 The city region needs to co-ordinate food system action to produce various co-benefits and to shape this through a Greater Brighton Food Plan. A first step in co-ordinating the actions we take is to identify the areas where there is further investment needed, and the projects that will be a means for making that investment. The Investment Plan at Appendix 1 is not a list of funded projects, but it forms a pipeline of projects the Board can seek to support. Actual delivery of the projects might be through government funding, considering the best use of public money to deliver public health outcomes, private sector investment, or the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy. The report identifies potential sources of funding for each project.
- 3.6 The Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan 2018-2030 highlights how 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. This plan identified that further work was necessary with partners to understand what the specific opportunities are for growth in each of these sub-sectors, and what kind of investment is needed to unlock their potential and boost our overall productivity.
- 3.7 This work offers the opportunity to focus on food and drink. For example, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) highlights where investment is most needed and this shows where we could couple investment in skills with active food system planning to achieve progress for the GB10 Pledges, particularly around innovation.
- 3.8 **Investment Plan Summary**

The following projects have been costed as part of a whole system approach:

- Dynamic food procurement system - A dynamic food procurement system streamlines the procurement process for local food businesses by connecting them with local suppliers and providing real-time information on availability and pricing.

- Food hub (depot) - This project is modelling a food depot, whose primary aim is to give local producers a route to local markets, increasing the accessibility of local food, and the sustainability of the food supply in the region. It is modelled as a purpose-led commercial business.
- Training and support programmes - This modelling looks at potential training and support programmes for businesses around circular economy practices.
- Community supported agriculture - A partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, including financial and other risks are shared.
- Large scale community composting - Community composting diverts household and/or business food waste to produce compost for use locally.

3.9 To achieve broader systems change and economic, health, social, environmental, equity and place-based benefits, these projects are seen as individual elements of one systems change project. Full details and costings are provided in Appendix 1.

3.10 Key economic returns on investment include:

- Increasing local SME revenue generation through opening up access to previously inaccessible contracts
- Reduction in public sector food and catering procurement costs
- Linked job and entrepreneurship creation
- Reduction in Local Authority waste collection
- Revenue generation – compost, subscription fees
- Circular benefit of additional money invested in local economy
- Capitalisation through licensing of the system may be possible should Greater Brighton become an early adopter. Further exploration is needed to look at viability of this income stream
- Job and entrepreneurship creation
- Additional investment in local economy

3.11 Additional health, social, environmental and equity benefits, with the secondary economic benefits that these provide include:

- SMEs converting to sustainable practices in line with system requirements
- Improved employee engagement
- Improved consumer satisfaction
- Improved soil and ecosystem health
- Reduction in food waste
- Reduction in food miles travelled
- Carbon reduction through shorter supply chains, consolidated deliveries, and a shift in production practices
- Increase in healthy food being eaten in public sector institutions
- Reduction in diet-related disease
- Behaviour change impact on dietary choices
- Increase in availability of healthy, local and sustainable food
- Community development and increase in connections
- Increased partnerships and collaboration

- Improved resilience of the local food system, to prevent shocks

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Do nothing and wait for the Government Food Strategy to affect local policy. This is not desirable because we need to increase pace and draw investment in now.
- 4.2 Local Authorities make food plans independently with no strategic leadership, leading to missing opportunities and benefits of working across wider geographies.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group membership includes South Downs National Park Authority, University of Sussex, Plumpton College, University of Brighton, Local Authority representation (Arun District Council and Brighton and Hove City Council), local Food Partnership and the Greater Brighton Economic Board Business Manager.
- 5.2 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 All local authorities 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.
- 6.2 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 poor decisions that further embed existing fragilities in economic and social systems.
- 6.3 As part of the development of a Greater Brighton Food Plan we have created investment plans for city region infrastructure, business support and training in alignment with Government Food Strategy and GB10 Pledges on the Environment. Larger projects will require feasibility work and impact assessments before project structuring. The focus is on growth areas and supply chains. Growth opportunities have been identified for smaller projects (quick wins) that may move quickly into implementation phase, depending on local capacity and resourcing.
- 6.4 The recommendations from the Food Systems Investment costing report are to start to attract investment for a Food Hub (Depot) and Dynamic Procurement System whilst advancing interconnectedness of systems investment as a whole.
- 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 Business cases and costings are provided for all five of the shortlisted projects. Business, Education and Local Authority Economic Development Teams are invited to work collaboratively to build upon the food system infrastructure costings and bring into focus the investment required across the City Region.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The recommendation of this report is to allocate £20,000 to support the next phase of work in developing the Greater Brighton Food Plan. This funding will be met from the existing workplan budget and therefore will not require further funding from Board Member organisations.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld, Head of Finance
Date Consulted: 07/07/2023*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications.

*Lawyer Consulted: Wendy McRae-Smith, Senior Lawyer
Date Consulted: 05/07/2023*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 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:

- 7.4 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. Greater Brighton Food Systems Investment Costings Project. Final Task and Finish Group Report. Five Shortlisted Project Initial Business Case and Indicative Costings. 15th June 2023

Background Documents

1. [The Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\) | Sussex Chamber of Commerce](#)
2. [Brighton & Hove City Council - Agenda for Greater Brighton Economic Board on Tuesday, 19th July, 2022, 10.00am \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)

