

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Health Scrutiny Committee – 20 July 2022

Subject: Climate Change - Food and Health

Report of: Director of Public Health

Summary

This report presents the strategy and actions of the Manchester Food Board (MFB) to achieve a positive alteration in the food system within the city and, at the same time, address climate change, alongside an update of recent actions and priorities for 2022.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report and the MFB's strategy and action plans.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Food is included as one of the 6 key themes in the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25. Reducing carbon emissions from the food system is a priority for the Manchester Food Board, and this report outlines the actions we have taken, and are planning, to support this.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

The future of ethnically diverse food supply chains in Manchester report, highlighted in the past actions, is aware of many people of ethnic minority backgrounds experience inequality, economic insecurity, and systematic barriers when accessing support services. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of ethnic minority backgrounds has brought to light these long-term challenges and raised serious questions about how we ensure an equitable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.

Therefore, the report was set up with the aim to complete an exploratory study into shortening the supply chains of food used by people of ethnically minority backgrounds in Manchester and investigating the improvement of sustainable sourcing for ethnically diverse foods.

The recommendations from the report will be built into a revised strategy across the areas of food security, production, and economy for the Manchester Food Board.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>The MFB’s strategic priorities include: “Build a more inclusive food and beverage economy, creating a more skilled and efficient workforce.”</p> <p>Nevertheless, projects like the Sustainable Food Week on the Oxford Road Corridor (ORC) are designed to promote businesses with good practices in terms of sustainability. This promotion could help them drive and create new opportunities and collaborations.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success</p>	<p>The MFB’s strategic priorities include: “Build a more inclusive food and beverage economy, creating a more skilled and efficient workforce.”</p> <p>The ORC is the hub of innovation and we aim to join our work on sustainability with the work we are doing around food and technology. Through knowledge sharing and innovation in food systems we are looking to create new opportunities and therefore support the growth of jobs in this area.</p> <p>Furthermore, the public sector procurement project has the potential to increase local spend, deliver enhanced value and efficiency, increase sustainability, and improve the nutrition of meals commissioned by the public sector.</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>The MFB’s strategic priorities include: “Preventing malnutrition and hunger in vulnerable groups” and “Building a shared, sustainable food culture across society engaging our ethnically diverse population”.</p> <p>Additionally, the media enhancement project would allow communities to interact with the board and coproduce the solutions that will bring the board closer to meeting its objectives.</p> <p>We have recently concluded a project on ‘The future of ethnically diverse food supply chains in Manchester’ – the recommendations that came out of this research piece will be included in the MFB strategy refresh.</p>

<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	<p>The MFB’s strategic priorities include: “Reduce the carbon impact of the food system by elimination of avoidable food waste, excess packaging and ineffective utilisation of natural resources.”</p> <p>This report discusses the recent Food for the Planet strategy, behind the above-mentioned priority, which was prepared with the Manchester Climate Change Agency and Manchester City Council.</p>
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>The MFB’s strategic priorities include: “Support innovation which drives more sustainable food systems through the use of data, research and technology.”</p> <p>The food hub development workstream has the potential to support local food production, reduce supply chain length (food miles), increase healthy provision of food for the city, improve logistics and packaging efficiency.</p>

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

[Food for the Planet](#) – Manchester Food Board Climate Change Strategy Re-fresh

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Like many other food partnerships and boards in the UK, the Manchester Food Board (MFB), had to refocus its objectives during the COVID-19 pandemic's peak; now, they have been broadened to reinforce the recovery of the food system in the city. These objectives are to improve food security, promote a vibrant food culture and grow a dynamic and robust food sector, create resilient supply chains, reduce environmental impacts throughout the food system, and facilitate collaboration, research and innovation in the food system.
- 1.2 Many of the city's policies and strategies are similarly being refreshed and, where possible, MFB aims to ensure that they complement one another and support shared aims. MFB have worked with the Manchester Climate Change Agency (MCCA) and Manchester City Council (MCC) to define the food and climate policy for the city. This has resulted in developing the draft 'Food for the Planet' objective for the MFB and partners. The remaining MFB strategic objectives will be updated in this new format later this year.
- 1.3 The actions outlined in this report align with the MCC Action Plan developed to support the MCC Resolution on Declaring a Climate Emergency (July 2019) to support and influence the city in reducing its emissions to protect the city's residents from the impacts of climate change.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The current MFB was set up in 2019 as a multi-sectoral partnership capable of driving systemic, strategic change in the food system for Manchester. The board is chaired by Cllr Tracey Rawlins (MCC Executive Member for Environment and Transport), with members from a range of key organisations including Manchester Climate Change Agency, Bruntwood, CityCo, the National Farmers Union, Manchester BME Network, Manchester Metropolitan University, Organic North, Great Places Housing Group, Healthy Me Healthy Communities and MCC (Policy and Partnerships, and Public Health Teams).
- 2.2 The coordination of MFB was commissioned to FoodSync, a food focused social enterprise business based in Manchester, after a previous consultancy in 2018 to review the board's structure at that time. More about the establishment of the new structure of the board can be found in the MFB report for Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee on 13.01.22.
- 2.3 The MFB has updated the environmental aim within the action plan, with the work tasked to FoodSync, MCCA and MCC. Feedback from MFB members on his update is currently being collated.

3.0 New Environmental Strategy for Food

- 3.1 In 2019, the MFB assessed three significant challenges for the city's food system: the departure of the UK from the European Union (EU), the impact of COVID-19, and climate change. The key over-arching priority for MFB is now

addressing the environmental and climate change issues related to food production and consumption.

- 3.2 As a result of this the new food strategy for the city included a specific aim to address this issue:
Reduce environmental impacts throughout the food system with a focus on food waste and a shift to more ecological practices.
- 3.3 The Food for the Planet Strategy, prepared by FoodSync and the MCCA, sets out the role and contribution of all sectors co-ordinated through the MFB. The food system requires consideration of local, regional, national and global issues.
- 3.4 The Food for the Planet Strategy is aligned with the Manchester Climate Change Framework (MCCF), with food included as one of the MCCF six priority areas. This strategy and the MCCF identify the following priorities:
- Reduction of food waste
 - Reduction of unnecessary product packing and single-use plastic
 - Increase consumption of more sustainable diets
 - Development of shorter food supply chains which translate to the promotion of British products and supporting British farmers
- 3.5 The MFB aims go beyond the MCCF aiming to increase the diversity and sustainability of food and drink operations, and support agroecological food production from farmers, growers, and suppliers.
- 3.6 To create a sustainable food system for the city that can help us to reduce greenhouse gas, Food for the Planet promotes:
- increased consumption of vegetables
 - improve the quality and sustainability of meat and fish
 - encourage local seasonably produced food

all of which would positively impact on the health of those who live in the city where we have 63% of adults who are overweight or obese (Manchester Healthy Weight Strategy), and 10% of older people in Greater Manchester who are undernourished (Age UK).

4.0 Actions in 2022

Food Security Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

- 4.1 MFB have supported the Population Health Team to develop a JSNA on Food Security. This will outline the challenges associated with poverty and hunger, and provide a comprehensive, integrated overview of the ways in which food insecurity poses a threat to health and wellbeing. This approach has helped to identify barriers to change and make recommendations on how food security can be addressed in Manchester. The first draft will be shared with MFB in September 2022.

Food Active! Healthy Weight Declaration

- 4.2 The Health Scrutiny Committee will also receive a report today on Adult Weight Management Services referring to the above which will be signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Oxford Road Sustainable Food Week

- 4.3 This event, planned for autumn 2022, aims to open up a long-term conversation about sustainable food with key anchor institutions, and other partners, located on the Oxford Road Corridor. Many of these partners are leading the way in sustainable procurement and practices that can educate and inspire others. This event will showcase their actions towards a more sustainable food future.
- 4.4 The feasibility of replicating this in other areas of the city is being examined.

School Food

- 4.5 Improving school meals is a priority for the MFB, to support a reduction in child obesity, malnutrition and to promote more sustainable solutions to reduce the impact they have on the food system.
- 4.6 To support this, MFB was invited to participate in a conference for Manchester schools, "Bee Green Education Summit", organised by MCC, to promote actions that address climate change within the school sector.
- 4.7 This included an opportunity to support ten student leaders to formulate their own proposals for school representatives and promote career options linked to the area of sustainability.
- 4.8 During the event MFB presented a workshop to representatives from schools and MCC, briefing them about the impact of school meals, and presenting potential solutions to improve school meals.

Website and Media

- 4.9 Manchester Food Board launched a new website in early 2022 (www.manchesterfoodboard.co.uk) to promote the purpose and work of the board.
- 4.10 One of the initial pieces of work has been a presenting a response to the cost-of-living crisis, utilising board members from the farming and wholesale food co-operative communities, to explain the reasons behind the unprecedented increase in prices for consumers.

The future of ethnically diverse food supply chains in Manchester report

- 4.11 In this exploratory study into shortening the supply chains of food used by culturally diverse communities in Manchester, the direction of travel in terms of

innovation and technological investment in the agricultural sector lends itself to increased production of ethnically diverse produce in the UK. This is not without its complications, including growing these products in the UK requires increased inputs of nutrients and power, but with adaptations and increased use of low-carbon energy, solar panels, and waste heat from industrial processes these economic and environmental costs could be mitigated.

- 4.12 Recommendations from the report focus on ways to support local farmers who would be interested in diversifying their crops, on reducing the cost of production for ethnically diverse foods in the UK, and on facilitating better engagement between UK farmers and local residents from diverse communities. With this approach, MFB think it would be possible to further explore the creation of a viable market for UK-grown produce suitable for different cultural communities.

5.0 Future actions

Reducing commercial food waste

- 5.1 MFB are working with WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) and their Guardians of Grub food waste reduction programme aimed at Manchester's Hospitality and Food Service Sector. WRAP offers a range of tools, resources, and training opportunities to help businesses understand how to measure, monitor, and reduce their food waste.
- 5.2 Working with business representatives has shown that it is impossible to request the application of measures and innovation without offering support to achieve the proposed changes. MFB is currently developing an approach to support Manchester businesses in utilising the existing resources produced by WRAP.
- 5.3 Work is underway to review and test our methodology before full release of the project. Good practice will be showcased on the MFB website.

Manchester Food Board strategy 2022-2025

- 5.4 Manchester Food Board is now well established in the city and the importance of food has risen exponentially in the last 2 years from the increasing amount of food poverty, increase in diet-related ill-health, the climate emergency and instability caused by Brexit, the impact of COVID-19, and the war in Ukraine.
- 5.5 Through engagement with MCC's Policy Team, and other partners and agencies across the city, it has become apparent that there are greater opportunities to develop cross-sector food policy and strategies. This was highlighted through developing the 'Food for the Planet' strategy.
- 5.6 The action plan is being re-drafted to clarify how MFB members, and other partners and stakeholders in the city, can contribute to this work. This will include highlighting MFB's co-ordination role and how the work can engage regionally and nationally to help transform the food system for Manchester.

- 5.7 This workstream will aim to deliver against health, local economic and environmental priorities. It will seek to integrate food into broader policies and provide a clear direction to Manchester City Council's various committees, from health to environmental scrutiny. The new strategies will be presented to MFB for approval later in the year.

Media, communication, and education

- 5.8 The promotion of vibrant food culture and grow a dynamic and robust food sector is one of the aims of the Manchester Food Board, and to archive this a set of blogs and vlogs would be created to stimulate conscious consumption and celebrate and champion good practices.
- 5.9 The MFB wants to improve the general knowledge about how to reduce the carbon impact of diets and how to make them healthier. This can be possible by creating a targeted campaign featured on the MFB website and social media channels, with the support from MFB members and partners to create informative and engaging content.
- 5.10 Fresh, stimulating content will be released monthly from July 2022 onwards.

Public sector procurement project

- 5.11 Public sector food procurement in the UK is worth £2.6bn and is a significant driver for change. At a time when we have increasing amounts of childhood food poverty and approximately a third of global greenhouse gas emission comes from the food system, we support this sector to improve its economic, environmental, health and social outcomes. The vast amount of public sector food is no longer provided by the public sector and instead is increasingly diverse in its provision and method of contracting. Developing policy therefore, is significantly more complex.
- 5.12 The Manchester Food Board recognises that due to the varied nature of public sector catering provision, there is a need to expand the collective understanding of how a more sustainable, healthier food system can be achieved across all sectors. Stakeholders across contract catering businesses, procurement partners and facilities will be engaged across all public sector institutions to ascertain best practice in this area, share knowledge and build a collective movement to provide more nutritious, sustainable food for all.
- 5.13 This project when completed will be integrated into the main workstreams and strategy for MFB moving forward. It is essential that this work is carried out to aid food security for the city's residents, reduce the dietary impact of the cost of living crisis, reduce emissions and ultimately to reduce inequalities across the city.
- 5.14 This work is due to be concluded early 2023.

Food Hub feasibility and development

- 5.15 Progressing to a more sustainable, equitable and healthy food system across Manchester has many challenges. Local food production infrastructure across the city is not adequate to enable this vision to be realised, especially for small, independent businesses. The Manchester Food Board is well connected to many elements of the supply chain and has gathered a significant amount of insight into the challenges and opportunities a more sustainable future presents.
- 5.16 To create a food secure future, local producers and businesses need to be enabled to thrive across the whole supply chain from farm to fork. A number of areas in the UK have 'Food Hubs' of many different forms and functions. These food hubs enable co-operation and collaboration of assets, resources and knowledge. This reduces the base costs of business operation, drives efficiency and reduces the barriers to business entry and entrepreneurship. Ultimately, increasing food access to healthier, sustainable food whilst building local food security.
- 5.17 A feasibility study has been undertaken to understand the needs of stakeholders across the city (and beyond), what functions it should offer and how these may be best implemented to maximise outcomes. The feasibility work is drawing to a close and the report will be ready late summer.

City Centre Good Food Retail

- 5.18 The City Centre Good Food Retail project has highlighted that many city centre residents are not consuming a diet that is healthy or sustainable.
- 5.19 Working with partners, including Bruntwood and CityCo, the aim is to develop guidance for new residential and commercial developments in Manchester to support residents to have better opportunities to access more healthy and sustainable food. This work is in progress.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and the MFB's strategy and action plans.