

STOCKPORT FOOD PLAN 2023

Report of the Director of Public Health

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Previous work around food in Stockport was aligned to The Stockport Healthy Weight Strategy (2010). This work brought together a wide range of public sector organisations in Stockport and although focused specifically on reducing levels of excess weight in the borough, it had a strong focus on food and diet. Specific work associated with that strategy lapsed around 2014 due to funding pressures across the public sector.
- 1.2 In the context of that strategy, a comprehensive Sustainable Food Action Plan – “Feeding Stockport” was developed in 2013. The action plan was to be co-ordinated by a Feeding Stockport Board representing public service, the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise), and the private sector. The action plan was very ambitious – pre-empting many of the themes that would become core to the emerging priorities in the development of this new Stockport Food Plan.
- 1.3 In 2015, due to the reduced resource to deliver the ambitions set out in the Stockport Healthy Weight Strategy, ‘Food Sync’ were commissioned by Stockport Council to develop a blueprint framework and set of recommendations for tackling obesity using food systems thinking. This work made several recommendations targeting both physical activity and the food systems. Work on physical activity is now being led through the ONE Stockport Active Communities Strategy 2022-2030.
- 1.4 More recently, the food system in Stockport has experienced a range of challenges, including profit losses to the hospitality industry due to the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and energy price increases over the winter of 2022/23. The Stockport Food Plan aims to provide a set of co-produced priority actions, with measurable outcomes, which can support the work of all stakeholders in the Stockport food system. The stakeholder representatives involved in the development of the Stockport Food Plan will become the Stockport Food Plan Partnership.
- 1.5 This new food plan is a broader approach, which considers food as part of the wider determinants of health and identifies the role of food in the prevention of long-term health conditions. It is important to recognise the wider benefits of both food & activity e.g. social, economic, education, employment, climate change etc and how these factors impact each other.
- 1.6 At this time, we would like to use the plan to build a strong food partnership. That work has been coproduced alongside people in the Stockport food system. Once a strong partnership has been formed and work is strong, a full strategy could be developed if this matches the priorities for Stockport. To support coordination, an application to the National Lottery Fund is being produced. This funding application is for the ‘Partnership’ fund, to create a food coordinator post in

Stockport, this would be for a third sector so they would be protected from funding changes which can happen in public sector.

- 1.7 Food networks and food partnerships took off as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They brought together emergency food providers in communities but also wider food system partners. In Stockport we have the Stockport Food Network, consisting of over 30 community groups, supermarkets, charities, council partners and food growers. This brought better coordination of people and resources but due to ever increasing demands, it is difficult for this group to grow further than being an emergency response network. The Food Plan would allow the Network to meet with wider food system partners, work together, build actions which can add some sustainability to their work.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Food is core to Stockport's ambition for the health of the population, the challenge of health inequalities, the response to the climate emergency, the motivation for vibrant town and district centres, the opportunity for communities to take greater control of their lives and circumstances, employment opportunities and economic productivity. Food is a thread which runs throughout the Stockport Borough Plan. The Borough Plan refers to the Stockport Food Network, which coordinates the emergency food offer, food as part of tackling climate change and Stockport becoming a food destination, boosting our local food economy.
- 2.2 The Food System is a global system and the impact of actions at a local level is limited by the components of the system that are internationally, nationally, or commercially determined. The Stockport Food Plan looks to focus on the Stockport Food System and what we can influence locally to improve the lives of people in Stockport through a food lens.
- 2.3 We need to work across the food system to avoid silo working, maximise the use of scarce resources and support evidence based working. Food affects every person who lives, works and spends time in Stockport. When speaking to partners, most projects or ideas span across multiple parts of the Stockport food system so it is beneficial to bring these people together to share their expertise. Bringing resources and knowledge from different sectors together to work on the same priorities can create better long-term working relationships, a pooling of resources and sustainable projects. Systems working aligns with the Council Plan and Borough Plan, where Stockport understands that partnerships and networks are an enabler to priorities. "No single organisation, whether public, private or third sector, holds the powers, remit, or insight to change the local food system alone".
- 2.4 At a national level Henry Dimbleby was invited by the Government to lead the development of a national food strategy by the summer of 2020 – the first in 75 years. The context for this work was provided by Brexit, which created an opportunity for the British Government to reform the incentives for farmers and other food producers to produce healthy, high quality and environmentally sustainable food.
- 2.5 The Dimbleby National Food Strategy Review (Part 1, 2020 & Part 2, 2021) set out a series of recommendations for Government on how the UK could create a food strategy delivering sustainable food production and tackling other issues related to

food, such as poor health outcomes. The Government Food Strategy, launched in June 2022, included some of the Dimbleby recommendations, with a narrower focus on supporting UK farmers rather than a wider systematic approach to food nationally. Recommendations on diet were deferred to be considered as part of 'The Health Disparities White Paper' which was then dropped by the Government.

- 2.6 Good Food Greater Manchester is the regional strand of food work. It aims to work with organisations, groups and individuals across the city-region to make the vision for good food a reality. A "good food future" brings together theory, policy and best practice around the issues of food sustainability, food security, health and accessibility, a thriving and positive food economy, food citizenship and food democracy, and equality and participation in food systems.
- 2.7 At the time of publication, the Good Food GM Network is restructuring to work more closely with food security, health, diet and inclusion focused action groups across Greater Manchester. This includes linking with GM Food Security Action Network (GM FSN) which aims to bring together residents, communities, businesses, partners and organisations to work collaboratively to improve fair access to fresh, local, affordable healthy food with dignity and to work to end food insecurity in GM.
- 2.8 The Stockport Food Plan was developed on the foundations of Feeding Stockport and the Stockport Healthy Weight Strategy following the principles from the Active Communities Strategy. The work on the Stockport Food Plan is strongly influenced by and aligned to the vision and mission of ONE Stockport. This development took place in three workshops, which are described in detail below.
- 2.9 Stakeholder Workshop 1 – Overview of the Greater Manchester food strategy approach and gave participants an opportunity to identify current work in Stockport. We presented the Feeding Stockport priorities (2013) and checked their relevance for inclusion in a revised Food Plan. There was also an opportunity to identify any missing priorities and stakeholders as well as beginning to identify key words to be used in the vision statement.
- 2.10 Stakeholder Workshop 2 – Review of the feedback from Workshop 1 and provided an opportunity to agree on the approach, vision, and priorities. It progressed to participants deciding on the components that would be relevant for the Stockport local food system, adapted from an academic evidence-based example. Finally, participants suggested some outcome measures for each component of the food system as well as actions to enable the functioning of the system.
- 2.11 Stakeholder workshop 3 – Review of the previous workshops to ensure support for the work carried out so far. This included agreeing on definitions and the outcome measures. The amended document was presented as the draft Stockport Food Plan framework. To ensure participation, the information was sent out to all stakeholders after the workshops to allow the opportunity to comment and propose any further changes.
- 2.12 This work has been positively welcomed by a wide range of people involved in the food system in Stockport, with attendance from 40+ people in the November 2023 meeting. We have 14 people/organisations put themselves forward to lead on pieces of this work.



3. FOOD PLAN

- 3.1 The **vision** of the Food Plan is to empower all Stockport residents to access and eat a diverse range of affordable, healthy, nutritious, sustainable and culturally appropriate food.
- 3.2 The **approach** of the Food Plan and its implementation framework as supported by the Stockport Food Plan Partnership will be collaborative, supported by leaders and enablers across the Stockport food system. It will build on and seek to scale up successful existing projects. The work will be informed by learning, insight and evidence which will produce work which is ambitious and innovative. We will be clear in our communications and ensure that our work is inclusive of all.
- 3.3 The Stockport Food Plan is based on an adaptation of the components of the [food system](#) which can be influenced locally. The food system and the local Stockport adaptations and their definitions are shown below.

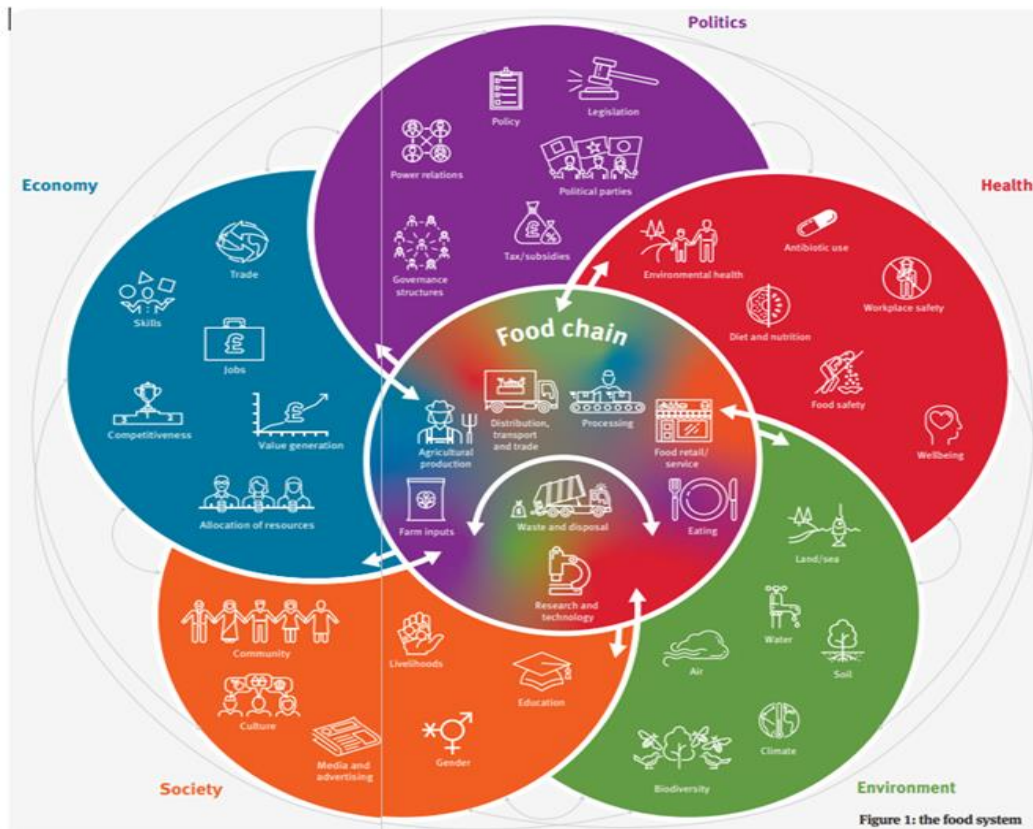


Figure 1: The Food system

- **Policy:** Local priorities, principles and practice that affects the food system positively, including local legislation, guidance, taxation, charters, and subsidies.
- **Local Food Economy:** The diverse mixture of food businesses that vary in size and type. These businesses are providing healthy, affordable food options that reduce impact on climate and nature, celebrating local and cultural food choices. These businesses also offer education and employment for residents.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** The actions of the people and organisations in Stockport who seek to positively influence our food decisions to promote health and wellbeing and prevent food related ill health. Food related ill health includes cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes, most cancers and poor oral health.
- **Community:** Food bringing communities together through culture, beliefs, interests, and social cohesion. This includes the work of the Stockport Food Network, providing affordable and diverse food options in communities.
- **Environment:** Food enhancing the environment through sustainable food production, distribution, and availability in the locality. This includes local food growing and environmental projects.
- **Education:** Access to opportunities to learn about healthy, low carbon diets and essential food skills for all Stockport residents across the life course.

3.4 Additionally, the Food Plan defines local implementation priorities for the food system, drawn from the 2013 Feeding Stockport project. These priorities are highlighted below.

- **Resilient food businesses** – Create a prosperous, fair, resilient, and dynamic food industry in Stockport by supporting existing and emerging food businesses.
- **Sustainable supply chains** - Generate jobs, protect the environment, trade fairly and strengthen the local economy through shorter supply chains and values-driven food procurement practices.
- **Community food growing** - Increasing community food growing across Stockport and working with residents in a co-ordinated way to facilitate innovation and development.
- **Food equality and diversity** - Increase in the provision of local, culturally diverse sustainable food to enhance and expand access to affordable and healthy food across Stockport.
- **Food knowledge and skills** - Improve people's practical ability to make healthy and affordable buying decisions and enhance awareness of food cooking and growing across the food sector.
- **Healthy and sustainable diets** - Improve the health and wellbeing of all of Stockport residents by offering and promoting healthy and sustainable food choices.
- **Effective partnerships** - Be a responsive and effective partnership which engages and supports all elements of the food system to improve the lives of all Stockport residents.
- **Action on food poverty** - Increasing food security among Stockport residents by helping to maximise income, signposting and improving access to viable food resources in the community.

3.5 The components for the Food Plan are illustrated in the diagram below:



Figure 2: Stockport Food Plan: Stockport Food System components and food priorities

- 3.6 Every resident in Stockport is part of our Stockport Food System. This can be as consumers, buyers, workers, growers, educators, and business owners. The Stockport Food Plan will be aligned to the Marmot principle of 'proportionate universalism.' This recognises that certain groups in the population would require greater support to have access to healthy food and achieve a good diet.
- 3.7 During the workshops, the following groups were identified as our priority groups and are show in figure 3. The workshops identified numerous groups and while they all need support, it would be unachievable to focus on everyone all at once. The strategy therefore would be for the Stockport Food Plan partners, working individually or in sub-groups to reference the priority groups as they develop projects and action plans. Successful implementation of the Food Plan would mean that those people who fall into multiple priority groups and are further from being able to eat a healthy nutritious and culturally appropriate diet make greater progress towards this vision.

Geography	Life stage	Priority populations	Supply Chain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Central Stockport •Reddish •Brinnington •Lancashire Hill •Bredbury •Woodley •Cherry Tree •Romiley •Offerton •Adswood •Bridgehall •Edgeley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pregnant and breastfeeding •Children and families •Young people (16–25 years old) •Single adults •Older people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poor mental health •Digitally excluded •Accessing free school meals / HAF •SEND •Asylum seekers •Homeless •Socially isolated •Carers •Care leavers •Overweight / underweight •Unemployed / Job Seekers •People in receipt of benefits •Long term health conditions •People accessing culturally appropriate food and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •VCFSE groups with a food offer •Growers and farmers •Wholesalers and retailers •Restaurants and hospitality

Figure 3: Stockport Food Plan: Priority groups

- 3.8 The attached Food Plan outlines the approach, principles, implementation priorities, success criteria and wider outcomes that we propose to adopt. Providing universal support for all residents across Stockport, but in a way that supports residents most where need is greatest, is likely to have the greatest impact.
- 3.9 Extensive engagement with stakeholders provided clear feedback to ensure that there are clear, tangible links to other Stockport priorities within the ONE Stockport Borough Plan. We also are proposing engagement with residents to ensure that the Food Plan successfully addresses their needs.
- 3.10 In addition, inclusion of case study examples of the positive impact already seen through the current strategy programme work, highlights some of the foundations on which to build at greater scale.
- 3.11 The proposed outcomes recognise that whilst an integrated and collaborative local food system are at the heart of the objectives, the Food Plan can bring far wider benefits for both individuals, communities, and the wider population of Stockport.
- 3.7 The implementation plan aligned to the action priorities is currently being developed and will adopt an action research methodology to allow ongoing impact review. Lead responsibility for finalising and ongoing monitoring of the plan will sit with the Stockport Food Plan Partnership Steering Group.

3.8 The Working Groups will be regularly updating their progress on the outcomes via Smartsheet. This will be monitored by members of the Stockport Food Plan Partnership Steering Group. Once a year, a progress report will be developed and shared with all stakeholders.

4. CHALLENGES

4.1 Through the workshops, we have identified a wide range of challenges which the food partnership will work to address:

- Current emergency food offer is unsustainable – a reduction in donations, less variety in the donations, expensive to be culturally appropriate
- Income maximisation to reduce food poverty
- Rebuilding and sustaining the food and hospitality economy
- Food growing – more space to grow and distribution
- Climate change – reducing food waste, creating smaller food chains and promoting climate friendly diets (which align with a more balanced diet)
- Obesity, CVD and cancers - Global Burden of Disease (Stockport level)
- Oral health – preventing tooth decay in children at a time where it is very difficult to access routine dental care
- Improving catering and procurement practices in the area

4.2 Existing measurable outcomes have been developed with support from the stakeholder workshops and achievable pieces of work have been identified. This is in the ‘Stockport Food System Action and Outcomes’ document. All the outcomes have been chosen as they have a way of being measured. Once the working groups come together, timelines can be attached to the actions identified. Please see Appendix 2.

4.3 A recent study shows that households which grew their own fruit and vegetables ate on average 6.3 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, as well as having less fruit and vegetables waste than the UK average . Local food growing is a priority for the food partnership, working towards getting more people into allotments and growing in their spaces could help increase intake of fruit and vegetables in Stockport. Currently, only 27.3% of Stockport residents consume their 5-a-day.

4.4 Some good examples of existing food partnerships include:

- Sheffield <https://sheffood.org.uk/>
- Liverpool <https://www.feedingliverpool.org/>
- Glasgow <http://goodfoodforall.co.uk/>

Timeline

September 2023	Present the draft food plan to Public Health SMT and CLT
	Contact all stakeholders with proposed working groups – identify leaders
October 2023	Arrange an event for all stakeholders to attend
November 2023	Present to Health and Wellbeing Board

	Encourage first meetings of the working groups / Partnership launch event
December 2023	Launch the Stockport Food Plan to public

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT

The Food Plan is expected to produce a positive impact by narrowing inequalities across age, race, religion, and social economic status. The assessment is detailed in the appendices.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Food Plan is expected to produce a positive impact with respect to the environment by increasing local food production and sources and reducing the length of supply chains. The assessment is detailed in the appendices.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 We know from evidence that the availability of a balanced diet as well as a diversity of healthy food choices are important for the health and wellbeing of a population. A balanced diet is important all through the life course of a person and can aid both in maintaining good health and getting people back to health during the recovery process.
- 7.2 Engagement with stakeholders within Stockport have highlighted the challenges facing families in obtaining both healthy and diverse food options, due to factors such as cost or local availability. There are also additional factors such as limited food preparation skills and the availability of allotments for community food growing.
- 7.3 The Food Plan aims to bring all stakeholders together, pulling resources together to improve the availability of healthy, local, and diverse food sources, whilst also providing opportunities for people to be equipped with food preparation skills.
- 7.4 An increase in the availability and diversity of food sources in Stockport will also help achieving carbon reduction targets and improve sustainability across the borough. It could also have the added advantage of boosting the local economy and fostering greater community cohesion.
- 7.5 A Stockport population that is healthier and more locally sustainable has the potential to play a fundamental role in supporting the delivery of the 'ONE Heart, ONE Home, ONE Future' ambition of the ONE Stockport Borough Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note and endorse the approach of the Stockport Food Plan to support Stockport residents, which is in line with the ONE Stockport Borough Plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Stockport Food Plan on a Page 2023
2. Stockport Food Plan Equality Impact Assessment 2023
3. Stockport Food Plan Environmental Impact Assessment 2023
4. Appendix 1: Food work in existing council policies, and examples of important existing food projects in Stockport.
5. Appendix 2: Actions and Outcomes

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Charlee Fitzgerald, SMBC Public Health team
charlee.fitzgerald@stockport.gov.uk 07890 035241.