

Cabinet



Date of meeting: 10 March 2020
 Title of Report: **Food Justice Select Committee**
 Lead Member: Councillor Mrs Aspinall (Chair of Food Justice Select Committee)
 Lead Strategic Director: Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)
 Author: Amelia Boulter (Democratic Advisor)
 Contact Email: amelia.boulter@plymouth.gov.uk
 Your Reference: N/A
 Key Decision: No
 Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

Following a Motion on Motion that went to the City Council on 24 June 2019, the Council **notes** that there are 8 million people in the UK who have trouble putting food on the table according to the UN. Over 500,000 people used food banks in the UK last year. The Trussell Trust alone distributed over 1.3m three-day emergency food supplies of people in crisis in the financial year 2017-2018. 3m children are at risk of hunger during the school holidays. Around 10% of the NHS budget goes on treating diabetes and up to 1 million people live in food deserts in the UK.

The Council further **notes** that in Plymouth,

- Plymouth Foodbank has reported year on year increases in the number of people (adults and children) receiving a food parcel over the last 4 years. In 2018/19, the foodbank provided food parcels to 8,509 recipients, including families with children.
- Over 26,000 meals were given out by the city's soup runs in 2018 – this has increased each year for the last six years with more women and children using the service than ever before.
- 14,000 people in Plymouth had Diabetes in 2016 with the number expected to grow by 6% each year.
- Our Cities of Service volunteer programme, Grow, Share, Cook has given over 40,000 free meals to over 3,000 individuals. The project delivers free fruit and vegetables at people from disadvantaged households and people at risk of developing type 2 Diabetes due to diet.
- 1 in 5 (Plymouth's recently adopted Child Poverty Action Plan) includes specific actions to increase take up of free school meals.

The Council **recognises** that the Government's commitment to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) which apply internationally and domestically, through Goal 2, commits governments to ending hunger by 2030.

It was requested that the Scrutiny Management Board to establish a Select Committee to investigate the extent and causes of hunger in Plymouth and make recommendations about what can be done to tackle it.

Recommendations and Reasons

The Food Justice Select Committee recommend that the following recommendations are approved by Cabinet –

1. to request that the advertising of fast food within the city centre is restricted to encourage children and young people to make healthier food choices.
2. following evidence given to encourage convenient stores and supermarkets within the city to promote healthier foods, such as fresh fruit near the tills and to encourage less plastic packaging to support Plymouth City Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
3. to encourage school kitchens and catering companies to provide facilities to those families living in temporary accommodation to enable them to have access to a kitchen to cook and provide a hot meal for their family following evidence given that families were living in temporary accommodation with only a kettle.
4. to explore a programme similar to the pots and pan amnesty to provide families living in food insecurity with basic cooking utensils.
5. Health and Wellbeing Hubs to provide information and signposting to the various organisations across the city that can help and support people living in food poverty, such as the Cash Smart Courses and nearest food bank.
6. To identify any surplus/redundant green spaces within the city to be used for community growing.
7. To include in the Plan for Trees the planting of fruit and nut trees within community spaces to encourage responsible and sustainable foraging.

Scrutiny Management Board:

1. to request that Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the potential within the curriculum to provide education on food, nutrition and cookery as well as encouraging schools to grow fresh fruit and vegetables.
2. the evaluation of Plymouth Community Homes New Home New You project is shared with the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee when available.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This fits with the Council's Corporate Plan values of being co-operative. The recommendations made by the Committee will also support the Council's priority of 'a caring council'.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Not applicable.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

This supports the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There are no direct implications associated with the recommendations set out in this report.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	pl.19. 20.24 3	Leg	lt/343 05/20 02	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ruth Harrell, Director for Public Health											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes by email											
Date agreed: 20/02/2020											
Select Committee Chair approval: Councillor Mrs Aspinall approved verbally											
Date approved: 25/02/2020											

1. Context

- 1.1 Following a Motion on Notice which went to Full Council on 24 June 2019, it was resolved that the Scrutiny Management Board to establish a Select Committee to investigate the extent and causes of hunger in Plymouth and make recommendations about what could be done to tackle it.
- 1.2 On the 30 October 2019, a Select Committee was convened to look at Food Justice. The Committee was chaired by Councillor Mrs Aspinall and included Councillors Mrs Bridgeman and Tuohy.
- 1.3 The Committee considered reports as outlined in the agenda and heard from a panel of witnesses.

2. Evidence

- 2.1 Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development) reported that:
- the United Nations sustainable development goal was to ensure that people were not going hungry and the Fairness Commission addressed food issues which raised awareness of the food issues beyond hunger;
 - organisations such as the Food Bank and Soup Run were providing a valuable service but a sticky plaster because of austerity and benefit changes;
 - there was a need to think wider than getting people food when they were in a crisis such as a fairer food system. This was about making long term changes to the food system so those living in areas without access to good quality low cost healthy food can get that access they need to impact on their health outcomes;
 - there were ways to tackle food poverty and the lessons we can learn were really positive. We can grow more food in the city but was not the total answer, however, there were innovative projects all across the city such as Food Plymouth talking to people at grass root level;
 - the Fairness Commission highlighted the fact that food was cheaper to purchase in the more affluent parts of the city and that there should be a fairer system in place for better access to reasonably priced food as well as access to fresh fruit and vegetables;
 - people that need fresh food most have less access to it. This needed to change because having more fresh fruit and vegetables available helps with health inequalities and improves diets and finances. How do we achieve this and will this council take this forward to address these issues?

2.2 Dr Clare Pettinger (University of Plymouth) reported that:

- this Select Committee looking at Food Justice was timely and badly needed. There was food hunger on our doorstep and how the system continues to fail marginal groups;
- Food: On the margins in Plymouth video was shown to the Committee.
- fair access to healthy and affordable food was not happening and this was evidenced by the increase in numbers of people accessing food banks and soup runs;
- we do not have an accurate measure for food insecurity, however, the western part of Plymouth was most at risk from food security and an area to concentrate on and target activity;
- a new measure on food security has been introduced but would not have the findings until 2021. At the University of Plymouth, a small group of students have undertaken a small pilot project in conjunction with Plymouth Community Homes and the following data was collated:
 - food insecurity was experienced by one in two people from socially deprived communities;
 - more than half of the respondents live in low or very low food security;
 - the highest risk group were females aged 18 – 24 years old, not working due to poor mental health;
 - those claiming benefits were 3.5 times more likely to be food insecure.
- food deserts or areas that tend to have poorer access to healthy affordable food and in Plymouth students conducted a healthy food basket survey. They compared Honicknowle and St Budeaux to Plympton and Plymstock and it was clear that food access was different in the areas of deprivation. They also found that in more deprived areas there was a higher density of shops that sold higher cost products;
- hot food takeaways were found in more deprived neighbourhoods which leads to obesity issues. In London they banned fast food advertising in the London underground but this had little effect on the purchase of fast food;
- need to work with food retailers to support them in offering healthy foods, engaging with convenience stores with healthier practices and the food environment really important;

- small scale study carried out targeting individuals in more marginal end of the social spectrum and surveyed 66 people accessing emergency food aid, found that healthy eating was lower but also discovered that mental health was high and a big issue. It was highlighted that one size does not fit all and there were complex individuals that require targeted support;
- there was a need to be more creative to access and engage with the hard to reach groups and the important first step to have the conversation which in turn improves wellbeing. Communicating and promoting food which in turn promotes self-care and enhances health and wellbeing;
- they have created the Food Poverty Alliance to combat food poverty in Plymouth. The alliance comprises of various partners and felt it was important to listen to the 'lived experience'. They have carried out community level consultations around food and themes that have emerged around availability of healthy foods, shopping habits, budgeting, holiday hunger and changes to food habit. They have also been successful in identifying champions within these communities to undertake further work;
- how we make a difference and by joining forces and working collaboratively we can effectively move forward to food justice and equality for Plymouth.

Member's questions related to:

- advertising of fast foods and the effect on public health;
- surplus food and when food outlets decide what was surplus or waste food.

2.3 Ian Smith (Food Plymouth CIC) reported that:

- Food Plymouth works with various organisations across the city and each of the organisations bring a lot to the table in how we connect people to the food system, narrowing the gap and inequalities;
- they were awarded the Sustainable Food City Bronze Award in 2015 and successfully renewed this in 2019. However they were striving to achieve the silver award;
- the Sustainable Food Cities Network and the hope was for Food Plymouth to be one of the cities to become part of this network. They would continue to promote healthy and sustainable food and sharing good practice and were in a very strong position to hopefully achieve this;

- they have good international links and attended an event in London recently regarding urban farming with amazing advances in technologies that we could bring to Plymouth;
- they regularly review the Joint Local Plan, have joined the Plymouth Thrive Network, engaged with the RSA Food Farming Countryside Commission and have links with Devon New Economies and Heart of South West;
- they have pledged support to the work with the initiatives from CaterEd in 2020 and the fantastic work around holiday hunger and big lunch events;
- how we narrow the gap to meet some of the social needs and inequalities and the opportunities around the economic and environmental factors around food businesses and connecting people to food. Food Plymouth were essentially a central hub for food across the city and how we connect communities.

Member's questions related to:

- Poole Farm and whether this was the only social farm in Plymouth;
- education of children and visits to the social farms;
- older housing with larger gardens now being replaced with smaller new builds.

2.4 Tess Wilmott (Dig for Devonport) reported that:

- in 2008 was invited to tour Devonport and saw the potential to grow food in Devonport which resulted in Dig for Devonport;
- health, wellbeing and mental health were key things to address and to support people when they are going through a crisis and how we change the downward spiral to an upward spiral;
- Dig for Devonport have worked with the housing association and managed to obtain match funding for a growing project which resulted in working with residents to grow food for the community. They were building on and improving on this and has been really exciting;
- they were working with the communities in Devonport and North Prospect and giving these communities the confidence and the skills to take projects forward;
- they were looking at how they share with different communities and worked with the Plymouth Community Homes in Efford Valley;

- health and wellbeing was the key and how we help people deal with stress and lack of time to do things that were good for ourselves and how do achieve a more balanced lifestyle and to make the future more beneficial for all;
- they have fantastic growers within the community with real successes and an example of community initiative;
- there was a lost generation buying food in the supermarket that can be foraged such as blackberries and how we reconnect people. There were various events along the Tamar Valley to reconnect people with fruit and vegetables, valuing food and reconnecting with the seasons.

Member's questions related to:

- whether the friends of Ham Woods had been approached to grow fruit and vegetables and to plant trees?
- Forder Valley and the planting of trees to include fruit trees.

2.5 Hannah Fleming-Hill (Transforming Plymouth Together) reported that:

- there were 11,500 children in Plymouth living in Poverty with more than 10,000 under the age of 16 years;
- Feast of Fun was a city wide initiative enabling Plymouth churches to make a difference for those in need which included fun activities, games, crafts as well as a good meal. This was great opportunity to connect the church into the local community;
- in year 1 (2017) – Hope4Summer, 5 events were held in the St Budeaux area and meals were provided for 600 children and families;
- in year 2 (2018) – Hope4Summer, 26 events across the city, feeding between 1,500 - 2,000 people;
- in year 3 (2019) – Feast of Fun, 40 events across the city involving 18 churches of different denominations serving just under 2,500 meals;
- they were providing support to children and families within their own communities.

The Committee commended Transforming Plymouth Together for Feast of Fun and the work they have done in the city.

2.6 Adam Stockman, Sue Shaw and Steve Ford (Plymouth Community Homes) reported that:

- housing associations can help make the changes, to peoples' experiences in the most disadvantaged parts of the city;
- food was important as they were dealing with people living in poverty, with health inequalities and lack of education around budgeting and health and wellbeing;
- following the fairness commission in 2015 they developed the New Home New You as part of a wellbeing project;
- New Home New You offered at pre-tenancy stage and they decide to take up the offer provided with a goody bag at the start of the tenancy agreement along with a baseline of physical and mental wellbeing assessment. This would be followed up with a visit at 4 weeks, 3/6/9 months with trained wellbeing staff;
- the goody bag contains household essentials along with dental items, information on local GP, dentist, smoking cessation (if applicable) support and signposting for self-set health goals and free local veg bag for 3 months;
- they have had 414 participants joined the New You New Home initiative and have provided 2,346 vegetable bags and issued 53 vape vouchers;
- they recognised that food was vital to physical and mental health;
- they also provided cooking on a budget course;
- the University of Plymouth were undertaking a robust study of the New Home New You programme and results were expected in Spring 2020.

Member's really supported the New Home New Year initiative especially the cookery classes offered alongside the vegetables bags.

2.7 Brad Pearce (CaterEd) reported that:

- Catered was schools led jointly owned by the PCC and a number of schools with the ethos that all children can access fresh food at an affordable price;
- they employ 300 staff with a full production kitchen feeding roughly 12,500 children a day with fresh nutritional food;

- they fed 600 people across the summer and have taken Ed's Big Summer Food Tour to different parts of the city over the summer period since 2015. They have also started to introduce hot food as well as cold food;
- they work with the library service for various venues and the sports development unit as part of fit and fed;
- they were also considering the Christmas period, but had primarily focused on the summer because of the long break. Staff had volunteered their time and some of their suppliers had provided free food.

2.8 Caroline Paterson and Bridget Buckley (Plymouth City Council) reported that:

- they found that good hydration and nutrition was very much the root to support 'living well' within care homes;
- in January 2017 they launched the Health and Wellbeing Champion Programme and asked front line workers across care homes and domiciliary care to work with the QAIT team, clinical commissioning group, public health and Livewell SW to attend workshops to become a champion;
- across England, seven vanguards were developed to improve the quality of life, healthcare and planning for people living in care homes and ensuring that they had the support wrapped around them;
- 100 staff have received dysphagia training which was facilitated by David Brailsford from Dining in Dignity and they have developed an NVQ 2 catering qualification with City College Plymouth for culinary care teams within care homes;
- they were also developing a culinary care cook book with nutritional, seasonal and celebratory recipes and also outlines the important of hydration stations.

2.9 Robbie Nairn OBE (Elder Tree) reported that:

- they support 1,400 people and deliver 86 separate activities in 49 different locations;
- they support people from 50 to 102 years old and have 85 volunteers. They also supported a large number of people with dementia and other long term medical conditions but wasn't aware of food poverty as an issue, however they run lunch and supper clubs which helps with social inclusion;

- they work with the University of Plymouth and Livewell SW to provide healthy eating courses and nutrition;
- they have been social prescribing for last 9 years. They take referrals all year with loneliness being the biggest problem which then leads to depression and the early on-set of dementia and were working hard to combat this.

Member's questions related to:

- how the elderly accessed healthy food;
- support provided for lonely in particular elderly men?

The Panel would like to give special thanks to Claire Turbutt, Public Health and to the witnesses that attended the Select Committee. It was evident following the interviews with the witnesses, the fantastic work taking place within the community to help and support people living in food poverty. The Panel also openly support the work being undertaken to achieve the Sustainable Food Cities Silver Status.

3. Recommendations

The Food Justice Select Committee recommend that the following recommendations are approved by Cabinet –

1. to request that the advertising of fast food within the city centre is restricted to encourage children and young people to make healthier food choices.
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Scrutiny Management Board to request:

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