

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance Policy and Resources
DATE	16 February 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Sustainable Food Cities
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/003
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the Sustainable Food Cities approach and decision 5.9 (ii) from the Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 to instruct officers to investigate the benefits of Aberdeen City Council joining the community of Sustainable Food Cities, becoming Scotland's third sustainable food city, assessing whether such a move will support /tackle obesity, ill-health, waste, climate change and food poverty within the city.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to note the report and a detailed proposal will be developed and brought back to the committee in six months.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications at this time.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Food Cities approach will contribute positively to social outcomes by helping tackle inequalities through addressing household food insecurity and diet related health issues. The project will contribute to sustainability and environmental objectives by developing local food supply and minimising waste and help contribute to the development of the local food economy. Where joint working is considered with the private sector, this be put on a brief, formal basis, so that everyone is clear about objectives and responsibilities.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Partners are currently involved in a significant number of food-related projects and services. These range from food banks addressing food insecurity, provision of meals to alleviate social isolation, the development of cooking skills and promotion of healthy eating, to improvements in procurement and catering and tackling food waste.

The Sustainable Food Cities approach involves developing a cross-sector partnership of local public agencies, businesses and academics committed to working together to make healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of where they live.

The Sustainable Food City model brings together key partners and organisations to develop a city wide approach for sustainable food and, while there is flexibility to determine the priorities for Aberdeen, activities can be broadly grouped under six key headings. These are described below and to illustrate current levels of activity, examples of projects are listed under each heading (this is not fully comprehensive and some projects will contribute to more than one priority):

1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.
  - Community Food Outlets
  - Aberdeen City Food Network – a partnership project led by NHS Grampian through Food in Focus which supports the development of food skills through eg Confidence to Cook and will continue to develop both the network and community asset base.
2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to healthy food.
  - Food Bank Partnership Aberdeen
  - Cfine
  - School breakfast clubs
  - Free Meal Monday
3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.
  - Food, Lifestyle, Money – Total Northfield
  - Families Nurture Project – Total Northfield
  - ACC Environmental Health and Food Trading Standards – the Food Service Plan includes the provision of advice, education and information to both businesses and consumers on a wide range of food matters, including safe food handling and the interpretation of food labelling to help make informed choices.
  - Aberdeen Ecocity Awards has included projects using food growing for wellbeing, reducing food waste, building community gardens and teaching children gardening.

#### 4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.

- The recently published *Regional Economic Strategy – securing the future of the North-East economy* includes food and drink as a key sector in the North East and includes the development of a distinctive food and drink proposition
- Grampian Food Forum supports industry in the area including a programme which includes an award for companies committed to developing health and wellbeing through their products
- The Allotment Market Stall (TAMS)

#### 5. Transforming catering and food procurement.

- Aberdeen City Council Catering Service has already achieved the Bronze Food for Life Bronze catering award for primary schools: work is underway to extend this to secondary schools and achieve the silver award. The Food for Life Catering Mark sets standards for freshly prepared food, healthy eating, ethical and environmental sourcing and championing local producers.
- Fairtrade City: Aberdeen has been a Fairtrade City since 2004, being the first in Scotland.
- The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that a procurements strategy be written which describes the authority's approach to procuring food provision to improve the health, wellbeing and education of communities and promotes the highest standards of animal welfare.

#### 6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.

- Powering Aberdeen - sets the agenda for reducing carbon emissions and includes specific actions to promote sustainable food consumption and recycling of food waste

In addition to the above projects there are a number of related developments including the development of a Community Food Hub approach from the Scottish Government's short life working group on Tackling Food Poverty and the consideration of measures to continue the provision of meals for children during school holidays.

This proposal has been discussed in brief with some services and partners including ACC Environmental, Food and Catering services, NHS and Community Food Initiatives North East (Cfine). Many others will be involved in developing the detailed approach.

From those discussions, there is sufficient evidence that an overarching strategic approach would support work on obesity, ill-health, waste, climate change and food poverty within the city. The approach would be beneficial in developing improved collaborative working, increasing the scope and scale of good practice across communities and improving the use of resources. Some of the projects

are small scale and operate to an extent in isolation and would benefit from over-arching support to improve impact and outcomes.

It is clear from the above that Aberdeen has the opportunity to build on this extensive range of developments and activities and the process of developing a detailed Sustainable Food City strategy to bring back to the Committee will involve:

- establishing an effective cross-sector food partnership
- embedding healthy and sustainable food in policy
- developing and delivering a food strategy and action plan

The approach is supported in Scotland by the Soil Association which has a development officer that will provide support to develop and implement the approach in Aberdeen.

In due course there will be the opportunity for the City to gain recognition through the Sustainable Food Cities Award programme which is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food and that are achieving significant positive change on a range of key food issues.

One further advantage is that this will provide a context for developing the citywide Food Growing Strategy which the Council are required to develop under the Community Empowerment Act.

## 6. IMPACT

### **Improving Customer Experience –**

Aberdeen becoming a Sustainable Food City will deliver benefits for our customers on a range of levels including reduced food insecurity and food poverty, improved access to healthy and sustainable food, an improved local food economy and increased opportunities to grow food. This will contribute to improved health outcomes by tackling obesity and diet related ill-health as well as improving social inclusion through development and provision of meals.

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

This development will support staff in the extensive work that is already being by helping improve co-ordination and co-operation across related activities, supporting work to secure resources for what are often very local, small scale projects. In addition, achieving the available accolades will provide public recognition for the work of staff and teams.

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

A Sustainable Food City approach will help improve the use of resources by identifying areas of duplication, making best use of existing resources across communities, helping with more effective

rollout and scaling up of good practice. Reduction in waste will also improve use of resources as will success in developing the local food economy and supply chain through procurement developments. This will include increased community food growing.

### **Corporate -**

This proposal contributes to Aberdeen: The Smarter City through:

#### Smarter Living (Quality of Life)

- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience
- We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city

#### Smarter Environment

- We will manage waste effectively and in line with UK and European legislative requirements by maximizing recycling and reducing waste to landfill, thereby reducing our costs and carbon footprint.

Aberdeen as a Sustainable Food City will align with the revised single outcome agreement and Local Outcome Improvement Plans to be developed for localities across the City and aligns with developing plans for both the Inclusion and Welfare service and Housing and Communities and Partnerships service.

### **Public –**

This report is likely to be of interest to the public on the basis that there is considerable interest in all aspects of food, the wide ranging nature of the proposed project and the environmental and sustainability considerations.

There is no requirement for an EHRIA.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

There is a medium financial risk to the Council to develop and maintain a Sustainable City Approach. Given the broad nature of the proposal it is likely in due course to require staff resource to co-ordinate and develop the initiative. There may also be requirement for resource to support the development and operation of projects within the proposal. These risks will be further identified and quantified with the Finance team and brought back to the Committee in due course. The aim will be to manage this within existing resource. In mitigation, given the partnership nature of the proposal, partner and external funding sources may be available and will be fully explored.

There are expected positive impacts on the environment through reductions in food waste and better management of that waste and more sustainable food economy through improved production and use of local food. The coordination of a Sustainable Food approach for Aberdeen as the third city in Scotland to do so and potential achievement of an award is expected to enhance the Council's reputation.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers to consider.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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