

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 August 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Good Food Strategy Action Plan Update – Quarter 4 2020/2021
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:

- ♦ Update the Committee on the status of the Good Food Strategy actions and measures at Quarter 4 of 2020/2021

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation:

- (1) that the 2020/2021 Q4 position in respect of actions and measures within the Good Food Strategy action plan be noted.

3. Background

3.1. On 4 December 2019, the Executive Committee approved the Council's Good Food Strategy which covers a five year period from 2020 to 2025.

3.2. The vision of the strategy is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire through the development of a Good Food Council where food is celebrated, supports healthy life and wellbeing, is affordable and accessible to all, encourages a fair and inclusive food economy, has limited impacts on the environment and climate change, and promotes animal welfare.

3.3. The strategy sets out outcomes and actions organised around six themes and twelve objectives:

Good Food at Home and in the Community

- 1. Supporting good food education and culture
- 2. Reducing food poverty and insecurity

Good Food in the Public Sector

- 3. Improving food in schools and in council properties
- 4. Improving food in public places

Good Food Economy

- 5. Supporting a good food retail and catering environment
- 6. Encouraging a fair and inclusive local food economy

Good Food Growing

- 7. Providing food growing opportunities
- 8. Promoting good food growing and sustainability

Good Food for the Environment

9. Reducing waste and packaging

10. Limiting the impact of food system on the environment and climate change

Good Food Governance

11. Developing and strengthening food partnerships

12. Making good food a priority in the council's area

3.4. The strategy action plan sets out specific actions to be undertaken to deliver these objectives under each theme.

3.5. The action plan was approved by the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee on 17 September 2020 and is monitored using IMPROVe. Its progress is reported to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee at Quarter 2 and Quarter 4.

4. Good Food Strategy action plan 2020/2021 Q4 update

4.1. The action plan progress report, attached as appendix 1, is divided into two parts; the first part sets out performance/contextual measures against the strategy's themes and objectives and the second part outlines improvement actions against these themes and objectives.

4.2. The overall summary of performance measures at the end of quarter 4 is as follows:

Total number of performance/ contextual measures		51
Status – Green	The timescale or target has been met as per expectations	9 (17.6%)
Status – Amber	There has been minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target	1 (2%)
Status - Red	There has been major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target	14 (27.6%)
Reportable at a later stage/ contextual	For some measures, the statistics are not yet available to allow us to report whether the target has been reached or not. These will be reported when available	27 (52.9%)

4.3. The overall summary of improvement actions at the end of quarter 4 is as follows:

Total number of improvement actions		41
Status - Blue	Action Complete	0 (0%)
Status – Green	The timescale or target has been met as per expectations	19 (46.3%)
Status – Amber	There has been minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target	4 (9.8%)
Status - Red	There has been major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target	18 (43.9%)

Reportable at a later stage/ contextual	For some measures, the statistics are not yet available to allow us to report whether the target has been reached or not. These will be reported when available	0 (0%)
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4.4. Progress on the implementation of the strategy action plan was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Council having to reduce and suspend a number of services following government advice. This is reflected in the number of activities with measures showing a “Red”, “Amber” or “To be reported later” status. Instead, resources were diverted to challenges specifically related to food access which arose as a result of the pandemic. Detailed information on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on individual food related activities is set out in Appendix 1.

4.5. Despite the above slippage, some of the highlights from the report include the following:

- ◆ preparatory work to meet the new food and drink regulation in schools was completed, including the preparation and promotion of new menus and training for employees (new menus were introduced in April 2021)
- ◆ while many food education programmes were cancelled due to Covid-19, some of these activities were delivered successfully using alternative methods such as online courses (e.g., Kitchen Learning Hub for Unpaid Work service users – see case study in Appendix 2, and Foraging Fortnight online events)
- ◆ healthy school meals and healthy eating was promoted through social media and the Council website
- ◆ a council working group on Sustainable Food Procurement has been established to consider opportunities to source and serve more local and sustainable food
- ◆ with the cancellation of food events and workshops planned for the private sector, funding was diverted to support other activities in 2021/22 e.g. outdoor market events, the development of a new local network of food and drink businesses, and the consideration of promotional activities including online events and competitions through social media
- ◆ in 2020-21, 100% of fish, chicken and red butcher meat used by Facilities met with recognised standards (Marine Stewardship Council standards, Red Tractor standards, and Quality Meat Scotland standards respectively)
- ◆ an increased number of people participated in food growing; through newly created allotment sites (Fernbrae Meadows and Lammermoor) raised beds (Murray Recreation), and through the development of alternative food growing opportunities implemented in partnership with community organisations. Moreover, connections between individuals and community projects in relation to food growing have been encouraged
- ◆ further progress was made towards the reduction of single-use plastic items
- ◆ new relationships and partnerships with community and third sector organisations were developed in response to the food challenges caused by the pandemic. This led to the development of a network of organisations involved in emergency food provision, further information available in Appendix 2

5. **New actions and initiatives to tackle food access challenges arising from Covid-19 pandemic**

5.1. In addition to the above highlights, new actions required to be carried out in response to food challenges caused by the pandemic, and in particular food insecurity. These actions are not included in the action plan - which was prepared before the start of Covid-19 pandemic.

- 5.2. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people requiring food support has increased due to a range of circumstances such as changes in financial situation, self-isolation or limited availability of the support system with people being ill or having to self-isolate. Data collected from food banks in South Lanarkshire show that 27,750 households or 50,565 people were referred to receive emergency food provision from April 2020 to March 2021. The number of food parcels distributed by food banks has increased by 93.4% compared to last year. In particular, 16,133 children have received food from food banks in South Lanarkshire and this represents a 171% increase compared to the previous year.
- 5.3. Several Council services have been engaging in new food related activities in response to the pandemic, using funding from the Scottish Government (Food Fund - April to June 2020: funding for Free School meals - July to September 2020; grant to support people to access food and other essentials - July to September 2020; and Financial Insecurity Fund from November 2020 to March 2021).
- 5.4. This section provides an overview of these new food related activities as reported by officers and services, and includes initiatives delivered in partnership with community groups and the third sector. Examples and case studies of key council and third sector initiatives are also available in Appendix 2.
- 5.5. The Community Engagement Team supported the existing community and third sector by supplementing food banks and other community organisations (information on Healthy Valleys in Appendix 2). In total, 26,651 bags of food, the equivalent of 407,540 meals, were distributed by the council over the last year (March 2020 to April 2021) to up to 16 organisations in the four areas of South Lanarkshire.
- 5.6. People requesting support have also been able to reach help via the council Community Wellbeing Line which was launched at the beginning of the pandemic. Among other types of support, the wellbeing line helped to connect households in need of food aid due to health or financial problems to local community food organisations (more information about the role of the Wellbeing line is available in Appendix 2). In total, the Community Engagement Team has dealt with 3,099 food related requests over the last year, leading to an additional distribution of 4,720 bags of food to vulnerable groups, homeless people and sheltered housing residents.
- 5.7. With support from the Council, local organisations have also received food from FareShare. The charity takes good quality surplus food from the food industry to frontline charities and community groups. From April 2020 to March 2021, 140 tonnes of food surplus, the equivalent of 334,153 meals were redistributed in South Lanarkshire. This represents 132 tonnes of CO2 saved from directing this food to landfill.
- 5.8. A network of organisations involved in food distribution has been developed with support from the council and has met regularly to discuss challenges and share good practices around food insecurity. Projects undertaken by the network include the publication of the Good Food Recipe booklet which is distributed with food parcels, the publication of an online map to easily locate local food organisations, and the organisation of a workshop to discuss dignity principles in the context of emergency food provision (more information about the dignity workshop available in Appendix 2).
- 5.9. The Youth Family and Community Learning service (Education) has also played a role in supporting access to food (see more information about the initiative in St Paul's

Primary School in Appendix 2). They have distributed 786 food parcels to families in need. An additional 84 themed food parcels including utensils and kitchen electricals were distributed, as well as 200 boxes over the Christmas period.

- 5.10. Pupils eligible for free school meals received £3 per day. Cash payments were made on a fortnightly basis during both school closure and holiday periods. Approximately 9,300 pupils benefited from free school meals from April 2020 to March 2021. Moreover, pupils who were self-isolated or shielded also received a one-off payment of £30 to cover the cost of lunches from November 2020.
- 5.11. From April to July 2020, breakfasts, lunches and afternoon snacks were served in Community Hubs to marginalised groups and key workers' children (67,085 meals served). During the summer holiday period, different options were used to continue to deliver free school meals to children of key workers and eligible children: this included meals served in hubs (6,229 free meals in 10 locations), cash payment, vouchers and home deliveries.
- 5.12. The Community Meals programme, led by Social Work, aimed to support older people with the delivery of hot meals during the lockdown periods. This involved the development of meal hubs in council premises and support from 60 employees across the council and from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture. From April to July 2020, 21,527 hot meals prepared by Facilities Services were delivered on a daily basis with four meal hubs established. The service was then reintroduced from January to April 2021 with two meal hubs and 10,028 meals delivered to 73 service users. Social Work also delivered meals to vulnerable families through the Child and Family programme. From April to June, 26,113 meals were delivered.
- 5.13. Housing services organised the delivery of hot meals to sheltered housing tenants (1,218 tenants) and Cluster Homeless Projects (123 beneficiaries) and delivered food packs to those presenting as homeless (30 homeless presentations per week). In total, Facilities prepared 17,954 meals for homeless people through the year.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. Resources and Services involved in food related activities are required to contribute to the implementation of the Good Food Strategy to ensure that actions and targets are met. The Policy Officer (Food Development) monitors and reports the Council's progress.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Specific financial implications relating to the implementation of the action plan were reported on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.2. There were also a number of new actions which were not included in the action plan, but which were a necessary response to the food challenges caused by the pandemic and in particular food insecurity. The additional costs of these activities (as presented in section 6) were identified under COVID financial reporting.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. By promoting Good Food, food which is environmentally friendly and helps tackle climate change, the Good Food Strategy is aligned with the sustainable development and climate change objectives of the Council. It supports the outcomes of the current Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, in particular Outcome 1.2 stating that the Council is environmentally responsible in the procurement, use and

disposal of resources. The strategy encourages procurement and consumption of sustainable food, supports the reduction of food waste and food packaging, promotes the redistribution of food surplus and encourages food recycling. It also aims to increase connections with the community, partners and the private sector to reduce the impacts of the food system (from farm to fork) on the environment and its contribution to climate change.

9 Other Implications

- 9.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. An equality impact assessment was carried out on the Good Food Strategy.

11. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 11.1. Following the SEA pre-screening exercise and communication with the Scottish Government, it was concluded that no further action was required in relation to the SEA process for the Good Food Strategy.

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Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

6 August 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ♦ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ♦ Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for inclusive growth
- ♦ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration

Previous References

- ♦ Community and Enterprise Resources Committee 12 November 2019 - Good Food Strategy
- ♦ Executive Committee 4 December 2019 - Good Food Strategy
- ♦ Community and Enterprise Resources 31 March 2020 - Action Plan – 1st year of implementation of the Good Food Strategy
- ♦ Climate Change and Sustainability Committee 17 September 2020 – Action Plan for the first year of implementation of the Good Food Strategy
- ♦ Climate Change and Sustainability Committee 4 October 2020 – Good Food Strategy action plan: Quarter 2 Progress Report 2020/21

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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