

## **B&NES Local Food Strategy 2014 - 2017**

### **Councillor Foreword**

“Food is not only essential to survival and health but it shapes our environment and landscapes, underpins our economy, helps build resilient communities and is at the heart of our culture and society.

In Bath and North East Somerset food and farming has always been an integral and important part of our area. We have a diverse food and farming sector, and vibrant community, voluntary and business sectors that have long been active on food issues.

However, nationally and locally, we face some important food-related challenges, such as rising obesity levels, health inequalities, food poverty, food security and the impact of food production and supply on the natural environment, including its contribution to climate change. There are also economic challenges facing some local food and farming businesses.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) is committed to providing leadership through the B&NES Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) to support local action on these issues and to contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents, to supporting a thriving local food

economy, and to reducing our impact on the environment and climate. For these reasons, the B&NES ESP has overseen the development of the B&NES Local Food Strategy to help us to rise to these challenges.

The importance of healthy and sustainable food and the need for a food strategy is now greater than ever. We are confident that, by working in partnership, the delivery of the B&NES Local Food Strategy will help to drive significant change to improve the health of our communities, the environment, both here and more widely, and the local food economy.”

*Councillor Paul Crossley: Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council*

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

### i) Vision

***Bath and North East Somerset is a place where everyone can access good quality, safe, affordable food and enjoy a healthy diet, with more locally produced food that sustains the environment and supports the local economy.***

In particular we want to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality, reduce the local environmental impacts of food production and supply including its contribution to climate change, increase food security and support a strong and prosperous food economy.

We want Bath and North East Somerset to be a place where good quality food is widely provided, celebrated and promoted and where everyone has the opportunities to develop food related skills and to reconnect with food and where it comes from.

### ii) Purpose of the B&NES Local Food Strategy

The B&NES Local Food Strategy provides a framework for action that encompasses social, economic and environmental sustainability in a coherent and coordinated manner.

The strategy has been designed to bring together the full range of current food activities and to identify future opportunities within a single strategic framework, enabling greater co-ordination, cross-fertilisation and closer working between partners and stakeholders across the local authority.

It is the intention that this more integrated approach will increase the opportunities for our strategic ambitions to be realised, working in partnership with public sector organisations, food and farming businesses, the voluntary sector and local communities.

### iii) Why do we need a local food strategy: The Evidence

The negative impacts of food and diet on health, the environment and the local economy are well evidenced in local and national data:

#### **Health and wellbeing impacts:**

The B&NES JSNA tells us that:

- 56% of adults are obese or overweight.
- 23% of reception aged children are obese or overweight - higher than the UK national average.
- In 2010 overweight and obesity in B&NES cost the NHS £45.8 million - a figure set to rise to £49 million by 2015.

- Poor diet and unhealthy weight disproportionately affects children living in more deprived areas or from a black or ethnic minority background.

### **Environmental sustainability and food security impacts**

Local and national data tells us that:

- The global food sector accounts for between 14-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2013).
- The UK imports approximately 47% of total food products potentially leaving us vulnerable to disruptions in global food supply and contributing to carbon emissions associated with food transportation, refrigeration and packaging (DEFRA, 2013a).
- 70% of B&NES land is in agricultural use providing significant opportunities to upscale local food supply and reduce reliance on imports.
- Food supply in B&NES depends heavily on transport fuels and petroleum-derived agrochemicals and is therefore vulnerable to peak oil, and contributes significantly to climate change (Local Climate Impact Assessment 2011).
- A third of all food produced in the UK is wasted (FAO, 2013).

### **Economic impacts**

Local and national data tells us that:

- Full-time agricultural employment in B&NES has decreased by more than half between 2000 and 2010 (DEFRA, 2010).
- Domestic food expenditure in Bath and North East Somerset is around £382m/yr (DEFRA, 2013d). More of this could be retained in the local economy.
- Expenditure on local food generates an economic return of £3 for every £1 spent contributing to the local multiplier effect (Orme *et al.*, 2011).
- Public interest in healthy and local food is high with 81% of residents stating that they are willing to buy more locally-produced food to reduce carbon emissions (B&NES Council, 2009).

#### **iv) Local Food Strategy Delivery Themes**

The food strategy is structured around three delivery themes which have emerged from discussions across the key partnerships and with stakeholders across the community (See appendix 2).

The delivery themes are:

- Theme 1: Local food production
- Theme 2: Food provision and access
- Theme 3: Healthy and sustainable food culture

Theme 1 is about increasing opportunities for local and sustainable food production and supply to increase food

security, reduce carbon emissions and environmental degradation and to promote economic opportunities for local food and farming businesses.

Theme 2 is about increasing access to, and provision of, good food in B&NES including in public sector and private sector organisations, by improving the local food retail offer and by supporting low income residents to access good food. It aims to make the good food choice the easiest choice for citizens to make.

Theme 3 is about promoting and developing a healthy and sustainable food culture to increase the demand for healthy and sustainable food. It aims to raise the profile of good food, increase engagement in sustainable food behaviours and increase opportunities for people to cook from scratch, grow their own, celebrate food, and develop food related skills that enable them to make informed food decisions and to improve their diet.

v) **Meeting local targets**

The need for a B&NES Local Food Strategy arose from the synergy between the Environmental Sustainability Partnership objectives to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impacts from the food sector and the Health & Well-Being Board (HWB) objectives to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality. In addition, the importance of a thriving local food

economy to local economic well-being is included in the new Economic Strategy.

The B&NES Local Food Strategy will help to meet district wide targets set out in the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (See table 1):

- The Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy sets out a framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the district by 45% by 2026. It includes nine work-streams to help achieve this – one of which focuses on up-scaling local and sustainable food production and supply.
- The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out a framework to improve health and reduce inequalities including diet-related health and obesity. It includes eleven priorities including the “healthy and sustainable places” priority which includes objectives to increase the production and consumption of local food.

vi) **Table 1: Examples of how the local food strategy will contribute to priorities outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy**

<b><u>Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priorities</u></b>	<b><u>Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy Priorities</u></b>
<p><b>Improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting more people to access, afford and choose good quality, healthy food can enhance the consumption of good food and improve dietary health.</li> <li>Supporting more people to develop skills in food growing and cooking will equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to prepare healthy meals.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reduce B&amp;NES Contribution to GHG emissions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in local and sustainable food production can reduce GHG emissions associated with long-distance food transportation and energy-intensive food production.</li> <li>Reducing and recycling food waste reduces GHG emissions caused by the break-down of waste food in land-fill.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve jobs, skills and employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up-scaling local food production and supply can provide a fairer economic return for local producers and stimulate new jobs in food processing, distribution and retail sectors, contributing to income growth and containment and job creation.</li> <li>Supporting the establishment of direct-selling initiatives such as farmers markets, and seeking market opportunities for local food in a wider range of outlets provides economic opportunities to local food and farming businesses and contributes to the local multiplier effect.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reduce the impacts of emergencies likely to arise from climate change and peak oil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change and peak oil are predicted to impact negatively on global food systems. Local and sustainable food production and supply improves long-term food security and can enhance our resilience to shocks and shortages in global food supply chains.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create healthy and sustainable places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and sustainable food production, including community food growing can reduce B&amp;NES's contribution</li> </ul>	<p><b>Maintain and enhance our natural environment and wildlife and realise the wide benefits of green infrastructure.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of sustainable farming methods can reduce the</li> </ul>

<p>to GHG emissions, decrease negative environmental impacts, increases food security and generates an increase in community food growing and associated health benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>negative environmental impacts of farming, helping to increase biodiversity and improve the quality of natural resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving opportunities for community food growing can contribute to biodiversity, green infrastructure networks and enhance the natural environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase the resilience of people and communities</b></p> <p>Engaging people in communal activities associated with food such as cooking and growing can contribute to community cohesion and social engagement. There is a portfolio of academic evidence that associates communal food-related activity with mental and physical health benefits, including social activity.</p>	

## vii) Implementing the strategy

The B&NES Local Food Strategy sits beneath the high-level B&NES Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy 2012-2015 and is overseen by the B&NES Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) Board. The strategy has been produced at a time of financial uncertainty for many of the agencies involved. Effective implementation will only be achieved if we are clear about our priorities and about the best ways to support and facilitate action within resource constraints. The following delivery approaches are designed to enable coordinated and effective action within this context and will be applied to each of the three delivery themes.

- **Partnership working: Bringing together the right people to make things happen.** The successful delivery of the strategy will be dependent on co-ordinated action and strong working relationships across sectors. We will work with and facilitate partnership working between: public sector organisations, parish and town councils, food, farming and retail businesses, landowners and advisory groups, the voluntary and community sector and individuals and organisations working in the food sector.
- **Community enablement: Enabling residents and community groups to achieve their health and**

**sustainability aims.** There are existing examples of community action to build upon, including community food groups, cookery clubs and community food-growing projects. We will continue to support local community groups and individuals working on food issues that contribute to delivery of the strategy. We will facilitate coordination and the sharing of experience and resources to increase community capacity.

- **Leading by example: Bold action from the Council and our B&NES ESP & HWB partners.** The Council and other public sector organisations will provide the leadership to effectively deliver the B&NES Local Food Strategy. These organisations will champion the B&NES Local Food Strategy at a strategic level and will drive positive change within their organisations providing exemplars of good practice.

## viii) Action Planning

Action will be planned against the three delivery themes of the strategy. For each delivery theme, the action plan will include existing and potential future action points and will encompass the above delivery approaches. A proposed B&NES Local Food Partnership will further develop the action plan and provide the day to day monitoring of its implementation, overseen by the B&NES ESP Board.



ix) **Glossary of Terms**

**“Good food”** is the over-arching term used to describe the type of food that we are aiming to promote in Bath and North East Somerset. Our definition of good food is used widely across the UK and was coined by the Bristol Food Policy Council:

**Good Food:** “As well as being tasty, safe, healthy and affordable the food we eat should be good for nature, good for workers, good for local businesses and good for animal welfare.”

**Community:** The population of Bath and North East Somerset, including, but not limited to, distinct community groups and members of the population with a specific interest in food, farming and/or health.

**Direct Selling Initiative:** A form of direct food retail between food producers and consumers. Examples include farmers’ markets, box-schemes and farm-shops.

**Farmers Market:** A retail market at which farmers and food producers sell products directly to consumers.

**Healthy Food:** There is no legal definition of healthy food. When it comes to a healthy eating, balance is the key to getting it right. This means eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions, and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. The NHS guidance for a healthy diet is based on the “eat-well plate” which demonstrates the ratios for different food groups and suggests that the majority of the diet should be made up of fruit and vegetables, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods. The health benefits of fruit, vegetables and fish are particularly well-evidenced and therefore ample quantities should be incorporated as part of a healthy diet. It is important to note that the evidence around healthy diet is constantly evolving and the official NHS dietary guidance could be subject to change.



**Intensive farming:** Energy intensive farming systems based on a high-input- high output model. Intensive farming is

characterized by a low fallow ratio and the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides relative to land area.

**Local Food:** Food that is produced, processed, distributed, traded and sold within a 30 mile radius of Bath and North East Somerset.

**Local Multiplier effect:** The local multiplier effect refers to the greater local economic return generated by money spent at locally-owned businesses due to the retention and recirculation of money within local economies.

**Organic Food:** Food that is produced without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

**Sustainable production:** Agricultural and food production systems that enhance and sustain the agricultural resource base over the long term including air, water and soil quality, biodiversity, landscape character and climate. Examples of sustainable food production methods include low agro-chemical use, the provision of wildlife habitat space, improvements to energy efficiency, effective soil and water management and the practice of high animal welfare standards.

## Section 2: The need for a local food strategy: The evidence base

This section outlines the evidence that underpins and informs the strategic approach (as outlined by the strategy delivery themes; Section 3).

An outline of the key food related issues and causes, potential solutions and the recommended B&NES response are provided in relation to

- Health, wellbeing and equality
- Environmental sustainability and food security
- Strong and prosperous local food economy

### **i) Health, well-being and equality**

#### **What are the issues?**

After tobacco, diet and physical activity have the greatest impact on UK health (WHO, 2002). Unhealthy diets are characterised by high intakes of fat, sugar and salt, and low intakes of fruit, vegetables, fibre and oily fish. The consumption of unhealthy diets has contributed to a significant rise in obesity in B&NES and is a major risk factor for chronic

diseases including diabetes, stroke and some cancers (WHO 2002).

#### **Diet related ill-health and inequalities in B&NES**

In B&NES over half (55.7%) of adults are estimated to be obese or overweight, which is lower than the UK national average (B&NES Council, 2014). However B&NES has a higher than national average of reception-aged children who are obese or overweight (23%) and therefore addressing childhood obesity is a particular priority for our district (B&NES Council 2014). Elderly people are also vulnerable to diet-related ill-health and suffer disproportionately from malnutrition (B&NES Council 2012).

Diet-related health inequalities are apparent in B&NES with poor diet and unhealthy weight disproportionately affecting residents who live in areas of multiple deprivation and children who are from a black or ethnic minority background (See appendix 6). People living on low incomes in B&NES are also more likely to formula feed their babies and wean earlier than 6 months - a behaviour which is associated with elevated weight gain in infants.

#### **What are the key causes of unhealthy diets? Analysis of the evidence**

The reasons why people eat unhealthy diets are complex and are associated with issues relating to food *accessibility, affordability and culture*.

### **Affordability**

In B&NES people living on a low income tend to have diets that are less healthy than people living on higher incomes (JSNA, 2014). This trend is related to “food poverty” which is the inability to access or afford foods that make up a healthy diet (See appendix 6). Rising food prices, inadequate provision of healthy and affordable food options, and a lack of access to finance, transport, cooking skills and facilities are all factors that contribute to food poverty and unhealthy diets (Maslen *et al.*, 2013).

### **Accessibility**

The accessibility and provision of healthy and unhealthy food can also influence peoples’ dietary choices and their ability to easily access good food. Some rural and urban communities in B&NES have little or no food retail provision which could potentially affect residents’ ability to access good food, particularly if they have no means of private transport and infrequent bus links (See map: appendix 5).

Although research into the link between food availability and diet is relatively undeveloped some academic studies suggests that low healthy food retail provision and high unhealthy food provision (such as fast food takeaways) are associated with poor dietary behaviours (Caldwell *et al.*, 2009; Zenk *et al.*, 2009). In B&NES there are approximately 116 fast food takeaway outlets with an average of 52-63 outlets per

100,000 population (See map appendix 6). This is lower than the UK national average of 77 fast food takeaways per 100,000 population (See appendix 6).

### **Food Culture: Cooking, knowledge, skills**

The causes of unhealthy diets and obesity are also linked to shifts in food culture. Over the last decade there has been an increasing trend towards the consumption of fast food, pre-prepared, convenience food products and a decline in cooking from scratch (Grinnel-Wright *et al.*, 2013; Ute, 2013). Evidence from Change For Life suggests that 96% of households use pre-prepared foods (e.g. pizza, chicken nuggets) and only 16% cook from scratch every day (Ute, 2013).

This shift in consumer behaviour is not only associated with a rise in obesity, but it has contributed to a national decline in cooking ability, with 1 in 6 people lacking the skills, confidence and ability to cook and prepare meals from scratch affecting their ability to feed themselves healthily and affordably (Good Food 2011; Short, 2003). Evidence suggests that the reasons for these trends are associated with increased time constraints, shifting family priorities, the effect of food advertising, an increased availability of pre-prepared foods and decreased opportunities for cooking skill acquisition both within the home and public-sector educational organisations (Chenhall, 2010).

### **What are the potential solutions to improve diet-related health and equality? Analysis of the evidence**

Adopting approaches that address the key causes of poor diets, i.e. food accessibility, affordability and culture will act to improve diet-related health and equality.

#### ***Improve the accessibility and affordability of good food:***

Food accessibility and affordability can significantly influence food choice and dietary quality. For example, studies suggest that people living in areas with shops and markets selling a wide range of affordable, fresh produce eat more fruit and vegetables than those living in areas with a limited range or supply (Cadwell *et al.*, 2009). Ensuring that communities have access to healthy, fresh food within easy walking distance of where they live, and improving the retail offer of fresh, healthy and affordable food is important to improving food accessibility and to encourage people to eat healthier diets.

Enhancing the provision and availability of good food in a wider range of public organisations and businesses, such as schools, workplaces, catering and retail establishments can also help to improve the nutritional intake of their users and increase access to healthier food.

#### ***Encourage a healthy and sustainable food culture: Education, knowledge and skills***

Evidence suggests that raising awareness of good food and a healthy diet and improving opportunities for people to develop skills in cooking and growing helps drive positive behavioural change and enables people to make informed and responsible food choices, equipping them with the skills needed to prepare healthy and affordable meals (Hartmann *et al.*, 2012).

Cooking from scratch and food growing is linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption, skill development and cost savings and therefore further opportunities should be provided for food-related skill development to drive behavioural change and to address issues associated with food affordability (Grinnel-Wright *et al.*, 2013; Hartmann *et al.*, 2012; Reese, 2012). There is a clear need for education on healthy eating, food systems and cooking and growing skills to equip people with the skills and knowledge to make healthy and sustainable food choices.

### **The B&NES response to improving health and equality**

The B&NES Local Food Strategy will create the framework for action to reduce diet-related ill-health and inequality in Bath and North East Somerset by addressing the key causes of poor diet i.e. accessibility, affordability and culture. In particular, the framework will include action to enhance the

provision of good food in a wider range of organisations and businesses to improve food accessibility and will inform action to address food poverty to enable low income groups to afford good food. The strategy framework will include action to improve food culture by increasing opportunities for local people to develop food related knowledge and skills, building on existing work with families and schools and by co-ordinating communal events that promote good food to the public and by providing more community food growing space and opportunities for people to reconnect with local producers.

## **ii) Environmental sustainability and food security**

### **What are the issues?**

People are aware that the food they eat affects their health, but what is less well known is the impact producing, processing and distribution has on the world's resources and environmental quality. The global food system has a huge environmental impact. It accounts for between 14-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, generates an enormous amount of waste and pollution, and contributes to the degradation of natural resources such as air, water and soil quality, wildlife and biodiversity (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2012).

### **What are the key causes of environmental degradation and food insecurity?**

The key causes of food-related environmental impacts and food insecurity are associated with intensive food production methods, food transportation and food waste:

#### ***Food Production***

Although green-house gas emissions are generated from all stages of the food supply chain, the majority of emissions (80-86%) are associated with food production (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2012). Energy-intensive production methods including the use and manufacture of agro-chemicals, inefficient soil management that releases rather than absorbs greenhouse gas emissions, slurry storage and factory farming of animals are major causes of GHG emissions and contribute significantly to climate change, water pollution, soil erosion, biodiversity loss and poor animal welfare (Bellarby *et al.*, 2013; DEFRA, 2013b). Livestock's contribution to climate change is particularly significant accounting for up to 18% of food system GHG emissions (FAO, 2006).

As well as contributing to climate change, food production systems are, in turn, vulnerable to climate change impacts; The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (2014) predicts negative impacts on food production as a result of the increase in extreme weather events such as flooding and heat waves, threatening global food security (IPCC, 2014).

#### ***Food Transportation***

The impact of food transportation on the environment and climate change is also significant: The UK is heavily dependent on imported food, currently importing 47% of total food products, and 95% of fruit (DEFRA 2013a). The majority of this food is distributed via centralised supply networks and is processed, manufactured and retailed by large multi-national companies. Current food transportation contributes to air pollution, traffic congestion and GHG emissions with food transport in the UK, for example, accounting for 19 million tonnes of carbon equivalent emissions in 2002 (Vermeulen *et al.*, 2012). The UK's reliance on imported food threatens future food security as our ability to import sufficient quantities of food in the future is vulnerable to climate change, peak oil, rising world population, shifting dietary preference for meat and dairy and increased price volatility.

### ***Food Waste***

Other major environmental impacts of the food supply chain are associated with food waste and food packaging: In the UK approximately 30% of all food produced is wasted along various stages of the food supply chain (FAO, 2013). Not only is food waste a huge waste of money and resources, but food that is diverted into landfill produces methane - a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change (Bingemer and Crutzen, 1987; FAO, 2013).

### **What are the potential solutions to improve environmental sustainability and food security?**

Adopting approaches that address unsustainable food production, supply, consumption and disposal will act to improve environmental sustainability and food security. The following recommendations will inform the B&NES strategic approach as outlined in the strategy delivery themes (See section 3).

#### ***Encourage sustainable food production***

The use of sustainable production methods can significantly reduce environmental impacts associated with the local food sector (DEFRA 2013c). Approximately 70% of land in Bath and North East Somerset is in agricultural use and therefore environmental stewardship of land by farmers is incredibly important to provide environmental outcomes for the landscape such as climate regulation, flood mitigation, soil fertility and biodiversity provision. Sustainable food production methods, including low agro-chemical use, the provision of wildlife habitat space, improvements to energy efficiency, effective soil and water management and high animal welfare standards, will help to create farm systems that are healthy, robust and resilient to future changes in climate.

#### ***Encourage local food production and supply***

Up-scaling local food production and supply can contribute to local food security and resilience whilst decreasing GHG emissions, pollution and congestion associated with long-distance transportation. Increasing provision of community

food growing space, protecting local food infrastructure and seeking market opportunities for local food are all examples of action to increase local food production and supply.

### ***Reduce food waste and packaging***

Supporting residents, businesses and organisations to reduce food waste and food packaging will reduce GHG emissions and environmental impacts associated with food waste.

### ***Encourage a sustainable food culture***

Evidence suggests that many people in the UK are disconnected from food production systems and supply chains and as a result know very little about where food comes from, how it is produced and its impact on human health and the environment (Clonan *et al.*, 2010; Duffy *et al.*, 2005). There is a clear need for education on food systems to increase demand for local and sustainable food.

### **The B&NES response to improving environmental sustainability and food security**

The B&NES Local Food Strategy will create the framework for action to reduce the global and local environmental impacts of food production, supply and disposal and to increase food security within the context of climate change, through increasing local food production and supply, supporting sustainable food production in Bath and North East Somerset

and by continuing to support residents and organisations to reduce food-related waste including food packaging. Facilitating a joint approach to local food supply chain development, implementing environmental standards in public sector food contracts and increasing the provision of community food growing space are examples of action to improve environmental sustainability and local food security.

### **iii) Strong and Prosperous economy**

#### **What are the issues and key causes of economic decline?**

The agri-food sector, including food production, processing, manufacture and retail, is an important component of the UK economy, employing approximately 12.5% of UK workers (Food Ethics Council, 2009). However, current food system trends including food importation, rising agricultural input prices and a consolidation in food retail has had detrimental impacts on many small and medium sized food businesses across the UK as they face increasing pressure and competition from large and/or international businesses (Lang, 2009). As a result, the UK has seen wide-scale agricultural decline and the disappearance of local abattoirs, processors and independent food retailers.

In B&NES there are approximately 399 farm businesses and an estimated agricultural labour force of 909 people (Note: this data does not include businesses that fall below the VAT



threshold) (DEFRA, 2010). The health of the agricultural sector in B&NES has worsened over the past 2 decades with full time agricultural employment declining by more than half between 2000 and 2010 (See appendix 4). Agriculture has had a fundamental influence on the rural economy and the character of rural landscapes and its current problems raise long term implications for the food and farming economy as well as rural poverty.

### **What are the potential solutions to improve economic and job opportunities in the food and farming sector?**

Adopting approaches that support local businesses and enhance trade of local food will help to support a strong local food economy. The following recommendations will inform the strategic approach as outlined in the strategy delivery themes (See section 3.)

#### **Increase trade of local food**

Increased trade of local food could provide multiple economic benefits; It generates income growth for food and farming businesses, helps to create new jobs in local food processing and distribution and retail trades, and contributes to the local multiplier effect where money is retained and circulated in the local economy (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013; Orme *et al.*, 2011). In B&NES an estimated

An example of the economic benefits of local food is provided in the Food For Life 2011 report which found that increasing school meal spend on local, seasonal ingredients generated an economic return of £3 for every £1 spent, contributing to local income growth and containment and the creation and retention of jobs (Orme *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore there is strong community interest and engagement in local food with 81% of residents stating that they would be willing to buy more local food to help reduce carbon emissions (B&NES Council 2009).

Examples of successful initiatives to increase local food trade include: facilitating the development of the local food supply chain, networking and trading links and seeking market opportunities for local food in public sector organisations and private businesses.

#### **Support local food and farming businesses**

Championing and supporting local farming, distribution, processing, retail and catering businesses can contribute to income growth and enable them to prosper. Although supermarkets and multiple chain retailers have a Examples of successful initiatives to support local businesses include: championing local independent businesses, encouraging people and businesses to “buy local”, raising awareness of local food and influencing policy making to better support local business.

**The B&NES response to providing a strong and prosperous economy:**

The B&NES Local Food Strategy will create the framework for action to stimulate economic opportunities in the food and farming sector and to contribute to a prosperous food and farming economy in Bath & North East Somerset. In particular the framework will include action to seek market opportunities for local food in a wider range of businesses and public sector organisations, facilitate local food supply chain development, raise the profile of local food and contribute to skills, jobs and development opportunities in food, catering and farming sectors.

### Section 3: Strategy Delivery Themes

The B&NES Local Food Strategy is structured around three delivery themes. Each delivery theme identifies action needed to achieve our strategy vision. An action plan will be developed accordingly.



## Delivery Theme 1: Local Food Production

# Local Food Production

Encourage sustainable food production

Support the development of the local food supply chain

Improve opportunities for community food growing

### Introduction:

This theme sets out a framework for action to support and encourage more local and sustainable food production and supply in Bath and North East Somerset to increase food security, reduce the negative environmental impacts of the local food sector and to support local food and farming businesses.<sup>1</sup> An overview of the agricultural sector in B&NES is provided in appendix 4.

### Objectives:

- To increase the amount of food that is produced, within B&NES.
- To increase the environmental and ethical standards of locally grown food, particularly to reduce green-house-gas emissions.
- To increase the amount of locally produced food that is distributed and sold locally.
- To increase the amount of community food growing space across the district such as allotments, community gardens and communal orchards.

### Action:

#### (i) Encourage sustainable food production

Effective environmental stewardship of agricultural land is essential for good environmental outcomes for our landscape. In B&NES there are many examples of good farming practice, however there are some pockets of land, including in the Bath World Heritage Site, that are in poor condition and therefore co-ordinated action is needed to further support sustainable food production.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The distance travelled by food, whilst significant, is not the only measure of foods' environmental impact and other factors' such as production methods and storage are important. This delivery theme addresses ways in which we can localise food production and supply, but only where it provides environmental, social and economic benefits and contributes to a sustainable food sector that provides wide diversity and choice.

### **Current examples of good practice:**

- Approximately 62% of farmers in B&NES are enrolled in agri-environment schemes. These are funding schemes to support farmers to manage land to high environmental standards.
- There are a number of locally active advisory bodies, farming organisations, charities and government agencies that provide training, advice and support to farmers to adopt high environmental and animal welfare standards.

### **Potential future action:**

- Develop a B&NES Local Food Partnership to strengthen relationships with the agricultural community and to facilitate support from expert advisory groups that encourage local farmers and food growers to adopt high environmental and animal welfare standards and to enhance the agricultural stewardship of B&NES landscape (including the Bath World Heritage Site).
- Encourage more farmers to enrol in training and support programmes for environmentally-responsible farming and effective land management such as land management schemes, Linking Environment and Farming schemes and RSPCA freedom food animal welfare schemes.
- Support farmers to reduce carbon emissions (and minimise waste) by investing in cost-effective renewable energies such as anaerobic digestion and wind energy.

### **(ii) Support the development of the local food supply chain**

In 2007 B&NES council commissioned a report exploring the barriers to local food supply in Bath and North East Somerset. The key barriers reported include restrictive planning policies, inadequate food processing infrastructure, and a lack of time for food producers to identify retail markets (Belshaw, 2007).

Local food supply is reliant on local food infrastructure such as processing, storage, distribution and retail facilities as well as high-grade agricultural land. The protection of these facilities is needed, along with a co-ordinated approach to seek market opportunities for local food, to facilitate and enable local production and supply both now and in the future.

### Current examples of good practice:

- There are a number of local food marketing initiatives in place including three farmers markets, a number of home delivery veg-box schemes and an online local food distribution service.

### Potential future action:

- Develop a B&NES Local Food Partnership to facilitate joint action on local food supply chain development. Develop initiatives and projects to facilitate local food supply such as a local food directory and meet the buyer events.

Develop planning policies further to support the development and diversification of agricultural businesses and to protect high-grade agricultural land and supply chain infrastructure

- Facilitate an increase in the number, frequency and geographic spread of farmer's markets and direct food- selling initiatives throughout the district.
- Enhance market opportunities for local food in public and private businesses and organisations (see delivery theme 2).
- Continue to engage with West of England Partners to address gaps in local infrastructure and to co-ordinate opportunities for local food supply.

### (iii) Improve opportunities for community food growing

Community food growing provides people with a source of local and healthy food, contributes to physical activity, provides dietary and mental health benefits and can improve opportunities for community cohesion and social engagement (Davies et al., 2014; Litt et al., 2011; Van de Berg 2010).

#### Case Study: Bath Farmers' Market

Bath's Farmers' market was the first in the country to be set up in 1997. It is held weekly every Saturday and provides an important outlet for local farmers and producers to sell their food.



There are 42 allotment garden sites across Bath and North East Somerset. The Council is responsible for just the 23 sites in Bath. Elsewhere allotments are managed by other local bodies, such as Parish Councils and social housing organisations. There are a number of other community food growing projects in Bath and North East Somerset including community gardens, nutteries, orchards and agricultural projects.

In B&NES there is a high demand for allotments with nearly every site across the District now full with a waiting list (the Green Space Strategy research is due to be updated in Spring 2015). Further provision of allotments and community food growing space is needed to meet the demand for community food growing and to enable a wider number of people to benefit from the health and sustainability benefits of food growing.

### **Current examples of good practice:**

- Bath Area Growers and Transition Keynsham are amongst a number of networks and organisations to have set up community food growing projects in B&NES.
- Bath City Farm works with vulnerable people to develop skills in sustainable agriculture and food growing.

### **Potential Future action:**

- Support allotment provision and management via the delivery of the Allotments' Management Plan and by working in partnership with Parish Councils.
- Provide further guidance on local policies that support the provision and retention of allotments and community food growing space, including site criteria, through the forthcoming Place Making Plan (2016) and develop the work of regeneration to incorporate food growing space into new and existing developments.

#### **Case Study**

The Community Farm is a member-owned community supported agriculture project growing organic vegetables and fruit on 32 acres of land in the Chew Valley area. The social enterprise supplies local, organic vegetable and fruit boxes and wholesale to the Bristol and Bath area and works with a co-operative of Somerset growers to shorten food supply chains and provide an outlet for locally grown produce. The farm fulfils its social remit by providing opportunities for volunteering and learning agricultural skills, as well as school visits and traineeships for disadvantaged adults.



- Develop initiatives and guidance to support an increase in community and commercial food growing on public land.
- Continue to incorporate edible and fruiting plants into public spaces to provide residents with a source of fresh, local food.



## Delivery theme two: Food provision and access

# Food Provision and access

Increase the procurement and provision of good food in the public sector

Increase the procurement and provision of good food in the private sector

Improve the local food retail offer

Support everyone to afford good food

### Introduction

For people to make healthy and sustainable food choices good food options must be easily available and accessible. This theme sets out a framework for action to increase access to, and provision of, good food in B&NES by enhancing the procurement and provision of good food, by improving the local food retail offer and by supporting all residents to afford good food. It aims to make the good food choice the easiest choice for residents to make.

### Objectives:

- Improve the provision of good food in a wider range of organisations and businesses
- Improve the retail opportunities for good food, particularly in areas of low food accessibility.
- Increase the ability of all groups to access healthy, good quality food.

### Action:

- (i) Increase the procurement and provision of good food in the public sector

A third of all meals eaten outside of the home are in publically funded institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals, care-homes and staff canteens. The major public sector bodies in Bath and North East Somerset include B&NES Council, the NHS, Bath University, Bath Spa University and the Police Service. The provision and procurement of good food by these organisations can significantly influence and improve the nutritional intake of their users, including vulnerable groups such as ill,

elderly and low income groups, whilst creating significant economic opportunities for local food and farming businesses.

### **Current examples of good practice:**

- The Council's Food Forum has an important role supporting schools, colleges and early year settings to increase the quality and uptake of lunchtime meals and to reduce the amount of unhealthy food that children consume within educational settings. The Food Forum has also supported the implementation of the School Food Plan, including support to implement universal free school meals for all key stage 1 primary school children from September 2014. This will help to reduce cost for all families and help children to be healthy and ready to learn.
- B&NES Council have recently developed a "Think Local" procurement policy to help overcome the barriers that prevent local, small and medium sized businesses from tendering and winning contracts. The policy aims to create a more level playing field for small and local businesses.
- With Council support, Fairtrade status has been awarded to Bath and North East Somerset district, Bath City, Keynsham, Norton Radstock and Chew Magna.

#### [Case Study: Council Catering Service Food For Life Partnership Award](#)

The Council catering service which procures and provides meals for 61 primary schools in the district has received the Soil Associations' Bronze Food For Life Catering Mark for providing healthy meals sourced from fresh, local and organic ingredients, produced to high animal welfare standards.



### **Potential Future Action:**

- Continue to support schools, colleges and Early years' settings to improve the quality of food provided and eaten in educational settings by supporting the implementation of the school food plan, by developing the Director of Public Health Award and by developing initiatives to support secondary schools, academies and colleges to adhere to Food For Life Catering Mark Standards as a minimum.

- Include sustainability criteria in the use and award of all public sector food contracts including the use of local, fair trade and higher-animal welfare products.
- Support all public sector organisations to serve freshly prepared, nutritious meals that comply with an accredited quality and sustainable food standard such as the Food For Life catering mark.

**(ii) Increase the procurement and provision of good food in the private sector**

The provision of good food in retail and catering outlets and workplaces enables people to make healthy and sustainable food choices when food shopping, dining out and at work. By sourcing more good food, individual food businesses can positively influence the nutritional intake of B&NES citizens and provide significant market opportunities for the sale and provision of local food, contributing to the local economy

**Current examples of good practice:**

- Delivery of the “Eat-out, Eat-Well” award by the Council and Sirona supports food outlets and catering businesses to provide a wider range of healthy food options and to reduce the level of trans-fats, salt and sugar provided in their foods.
- Sirona delivers the “Work-Place, Wellbeing Charter” to support workplaces to promote healthy-eating practices.
- A “Baby Welcome” scheme has been established in B&NES to encourage and welcome breastfeeding in cafes and venues across the local authority area.

**Case Study: The Great Bath Breakfast**

There are 25 businesses enrolled in the “Great Bath Breakfast”- an initiative that recognises Bath businesses that supply locally-sourced breakfast items.

**Potential Future Action:**

- Identify market opportunities for good food in a wider range of retail and catering businesses including independent shops, supermarkets and convenience stores and facilitate trading links between relevant members of the food supply chain.
- Develop and promote suitable campaigns and communications to encourage the supply of good food by local businesses.

- Continue to monitor and advise on food safety and hygiene issues along with the food standards agency to support food businesses to provide safe and hygienic food.
- Continue to support workplaces to provide healthy food options, improve the dining environment and to provide staff with information about healthy eating and good food.
- Continue to support food-outlets and public environments to welcome breast-feeding.

(iii) **Improve the local food retail offer**

The nature and type of food retail has a significant influence on peoples' food choices and their ability to easily access good food. It is important that communities have easy access to affordable, fresh produce provided by a diverse range of retail outlets and markets.

Nevertheless there is a need to monitor the prevalence of fast-food takeaways to prevent potential over-clustering in the future.

**Current examples of good practice**

- Freshford community shop is built, owned and managed by the local community. It was set up following the closure of other local shops and serves the community with every-day household needs.

**Potential future action:**

- Support the establishment of more food markets, fruit and vegetable stalls, independent retail, buying groups and food CO-OPs to increase community access to good, affordable food.
- Provide further detail and guidance regarding essential retail provision in the Place-making Plan (2016) to complement existing policies in the Core Strategy.

**Case Study: South Side Food CO-OP**

Southside Food CO-OP offers people in the south & west of Bath an opportunity to buy fresh locally grown produce at affordable prices from their office in Twerton.



- Continue to encourage the provision of healthy street food such as fruit and vegetable stalls and healthy food takeaways.
- Continue to monitor the prevalence and distribution of fast-food takeaways in B&NES and inform policy making accordingly.

**(iv) Support everyone to afford good quality food**

In Bath and North East Somerset residents living in areas of multiple deprivation are more likely to suffer from poor diet and unhealthy weight than those that do not (See appendix 6). Rising food prices, high costs of healthy food and a lack of access to cooking and transport facilities are all factors that can make it harder for low-income groups to eat healthily and sustainably. Although there are a number of organisations working to tackle food poverty in Bath and North East Somerset including food banks, community kitchens and food re-distribution services further action is needed to reduce diet-related inequalities across the local authority area.

**Current examples of good practice:**

- The National Healthy Start Voucher and vitamin schemes providing free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamin supplements, are available for eligible low income families during pregnancy and with children under the age of five.
- There are a number of food banks and community kitchens that provide emergency food hand outs and meals to people in need such as the Bath Food Bank, Food Cycle and Julian House.

**Potential future action:**

- Prioritise low-income groups in the delivery of projects.
- Increase the use of healthy start vouchers by eligible families.
- Increase the acceptance of healthy start vouchers in retail establishments across B&NES including at fruit and veg market stalls, farmers' markets, convenience stores and independent shops.
- Continue to support the implementation of the school

**Case study: Bath Food Cycle**

Bath Food Cycle provides a weekly free three course meal to people in need using surplus food provided from numerous businesses including Bath Sainsbury's.



food plan to provide free school meals to all key stage 1 pupils.

- Continue to support the redistribution of fit-for-purpose waste food working with supermarkets, charities, food banks and community kitchens.
- Provide training opportunities for low-income groups to develop skills and knowledge in cookery, growing and healthy eating (See delivery theme 3).

## **Delivery theme three : Promote a healthy and sustainable food culture**

# Healthy and sustainable food culture

Provide enjoyable opportunities for residents to learn about food and nutrition and to develop skills in cooking and growing.

Increase public awareness of good food and the benefits that it provides

Support residents, businesses and public sector organisations to reduce and recycle food waste

### **Introduction**

This work stream sets out a framework for action to promote and develop a healthy and sustainable food culture, to increase the demand for and use of healthy and sustainable food.

### **Objectives**

- Increase the demand for local, healthy and sustainable food.
- Increase the number of people with the skills, knowledge, confidence and desire to create a healthy diet.
- Raise the profile of good food and the range of benefits that it provides.
- Increase the number of residents, businesses and organisations participating in sustainable food behaviours such as food waste redistribution, reduction and recycling.

### **Action**

#### **(i) Provide enjoyable opportunities for residents to learn about food and nutrition and to develop skills in cooking and growing**

Improving opportunities for people to learn about good food and to develop skills in cooking and growing is essential to promoting positive dietary behavioural change and to make cost-savings on food (Hartmann *et al.*, 2013; Reese 2012).

#### **Current examples of good practice:**

- The B&NES Council Food Forum delivers a range of programmes in schools and early year- settings to engage children in food-related activities such as cooking, growing, composting, farm visits and healthy eating. Targeted programmes include the Director of Public Health Award, SHINE and HENRY.

- The Council commissions the Cook-it Service; a five week programme teaching families in identified children's centre areas to cook affordable, healthy meals.
- A pilot model between Age UK and Chew Valley Secondary School has been launched to engage older people in schools to share knowledge and skills around cooking and food skills.
- There are a number of farms and community gardens that hold demonstration and engagement days for members of the public to learn about local agriculture and food growing,

**Case study: Food For Life Partnership in B&NES**

The majority of schools in B&NES are enrolled in the **food for life partnership** programme which raises food awareness amongst children and engages them in food growing, cooking and composting activities. A national evaluation of the FFLP programme showed that following their participation in FFLP programme, the proportion of primary school children eating 5 or more pieces of fruit and veg a day increased by 28%.



**Potential Future Action:**

- Continue to support schools and other places of education to embed food food-related skills and education into the curriculum using a whole-school approach.
- Seek further training opportunities for residents to develop cooking, hygiene and food growing skills.
- Seek further opportunities to engage the community with food and farming education opportunities including farm demonstration days and communal food growing activities.

**(ii) Increase public awareness of good food and the benefits that it provides**

Increasing communications and marketing, and supporting food events and festivals will help to raise resident awareness of good food.

**Current examples of good practice:**

- B&NES Council has set up a B&NES Environmental Sustainability Network website that includes a local food topic group for interested members to share information, projects and events related to good food.



- A number of communal food events and festivals are held in B&NES including the Great Bath Feast , the Keynsham Food Festival, and communal harvest celebrations.

**Potential Future Action:**

- Encourage more events, festivals and markets that appeal to a wider range of audiences and are accessible to all particularly those which celebrate the link between local food and the local countryside in which they are produced.
- Continue to develop the B&NES Environmental Sustainability Network website's food section to build membership across the community and to promote particular food related campaigns, events and projects
- Continue to co-ordinate and provide health and nutrition advice and communications specific to people at all life stages.

**iii) Support residents, businesses and public sector organisations to reduce, redistribute and recycle food waste**

Encouraging people to reduce their food waste will help them to save money, whilst reducing carbon emissions and diverting waste from land-fill (Wrap, 2012). Although great progress has been made in B&NES to reduce food waste, there are many households, businesses and organisations that continue to waste fit-for-purpose food and do not participate in food waste recycling.

**Current examples of good practice:**

- The Council has partnered with the national Love Food Hate Waste campaign to support residents to reduce food waste via educational road shows, events, competitions and door knocking.
- The Bath BID provide a collaborative trade waste and recycling service to support Bath-based businesses to recycle their food waste.

**Potential Future Action:**

**Case Study: FareShare South West**

Fare Share South West redistributes surplus fit-for-purpose food to 10 organisations in Bath, helping to address food poverty and reduce food waste



- Continue to deliver public awareness and engagement campaigns to support residents to reduce food waste.
- Continue to develop the waste collection service to support more schools, residents and businesses to reduce their food waste.
- Seek opportunities and initiatives to support retailers, businesses and residents to reduce food packaging waste.
- Continue to support the redistribution of fit-for-purpose waste food by farmers, supermarkets and retailers, charities, food banks and social enterprises

#### **Section 4: Next Steps for the strategy**

This strategy serves to communicate the ESP's strategic approach to local food in Bath and North East Somerset. A proposed B&NES Local Food Partnership will be established to oversee the development and implementation of the local food action plan. The strategy will be updated as needed to reflect any changes in our strategic approach, every three years.

For more information please contact the sustainability team at Bath and North East Somerset Council: [sustainability@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@bathnes.gov.uk).

The strategy will be made available upon request in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats. Please contact Sophie Kirk: Tel: 01225477932 or [Sophie\\_Kirk@BATHNES.GOV.UK](mailto:Sophie_Kirk@BATHNES.GOV.UK)

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