

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 23 January 2025

Wards affected: All Torbay wards

Report Title: Torbay Food Strategy

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report shares with Cabinet the Torbay Food Strategy which aims to encourage and support a “social movement” around food in Torbay. The strategy has been informed by consultation and engagement with colleagues working in and around food in Torbay including the Torbay Food Partnership.
- 1.2 This report seeks support from Cabinet on the Food Strategy which is hosted by the Torbay Food Partnership of which the Council is a key partner.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 For the last few years we have seen high levels of inflation and in turn the worst cost of living crisis in decades.
- 2.2 While the inflationary highs of the last couple of years are starting to subside, food remains unaffordable for many people. In addition, the instability of global food supply chains and fuel supplies have highlighted the need to reevaluate how we access and consume food.
- 2.3 To make our communities more resilient, we need to shorten food supply chains and equip local communities with the ability to grow their own food where this is appropriate. We also need to continue to ensure emergency food provision for those experiencing food insecurity.
- 2.4 We must make best use of our assets and resources in Torbay to ensure effective systems change within our food system; creating an environment that better supports local food consumption and production. These issues are likely to worsen in the long term as the impact of climate change is felt more intensely.

- 2.5 Therefore, while we continue to support our most vulnerable residents to meet the immediate cost of living crisis through the Torbay Food Alliance, we must take a longer-term, strategic view to address the challenges within our local food system. We must however recognise that many issues within the food system are out of our control. It is important that we harness our resources and energy into those areas where we will have a local impact.
- 2.6 Adoption of a five-year Food Strategy for Torbay (see Appendix A), will help to ensure a strategic and focused approach to promoting positive change within our food system locally and will support the future resilience of communities.
- 2.7 The food workstream will be fundamental to delivering priorities within Public Health, Climate, Turning the Tide on Poverty, Family Hubs, and Economic Development.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

As the Council is a key member of the Torbay Food Partnership, the Cabinet;

- 1) Endorses the Food Strategy for Torbay for 2025 – 2030;
- 2) Instructs the Director of Public Health and the Partnerships and Inclusion Manager to develop a food action plan for Torbay Council to deliver against the aims of the strategy and present it to the Cabinet for approval within three months.

Appendices

Appendix A: Torbay Food Strategy

1. Supporting information

- 1.1 In September 2022, agreement was given by Members to pursue development of a Food Strategy for Torbay. There was an understanding that developing a strategy with a clear commitment to the Vision and Charter would help to ensure the future resilience of our communities and local food system.
- 1.2 There was also an acknowledgement that the food workstream is fundamental to delivering priorities within Public Health, Place, Turning the Tide on Poverty, Family Hubs, and Economic Development.
- 1.3 Cabinet also agreed to support the Torbay Food Partnership. This has been meeting throughout 2024 and includes representation from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, Public Health, Economic Development and Climate/Planning.
- 1.4 The Partnership's purpose is to take a collaborative approach to the following key priority areas:
 - Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
 - Supporting the creation of a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
 - Tackling the climate and nature emergency through an end to food waste locally
 - Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.
- 1.5 Since 2023, the Torbay Food Partnership has been hosted by Local Motion, Torbay, which is facilitated by Torbay Communities. This has been a positive, neutral space for collaboration, connecting different departments and sectors to amplify work already underway and think creatively about the future.
- 1.6 In 2024, the Partnership took its next development step and become a member of the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) network – a national partnership programme led by the Soil Association, Food Matters, and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.
- 1.7 The Partnership have developed a Food Strategy for Torbay (see Appendix A) which aims to set out the blueprint for the approach to sustainable food systems change in Torbay. The document sets out a vision for the Torbay food system which can be used for the purposes of engagement, awareness, and influencing across all aspects of the community.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 The options considered by the Partnership were:
 - (i) To not progress with a food strategy
- 2.2 This was not deemed to be a sustainable or suitable option. The scale and complexity of challenges within our local and national food system are significant, and therefore they will require a more strategic, joined-up approach to address them in any meaningful way. Many interventions needed are not within our gift locally, but those which are, will require longer to implement.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 No further funding is required at this stage.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications to undertaking the actions as set out in the recommendations.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Recommendations have been developed by a multi-sector partnership and informed by engagement.

5.2 A formal consultation survey was shared with partners between October and November 2024, however the strategy was largely shaped by the extensive consultation and engagement which has taken place across the food system in Torbay over many years.

5.3 The Strategy was discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 11 December 2024, they made the following recommendations to Cabinet;

5.4. That Cabinet be recommended to approve the Torbay Food Strategy subject to the following:

5.41. that the Food Strategy Action Plan be presented to the Board and partners involved be invited to contribute;

5.42. that the Food Strategy Action Plan be presented to Community Partnerships to help reach out to community groups especially around community growing fruit and vegetables;

5.43. to explore how the Director of Public Health can work with the Managing Director of SWISCo on food waste and why people are throwing food away and how we can support initiatives in communities who want to grow things in their community;

5.44. to encourage growers with excess food to join up and help share it with those who are in most need in their community; and

5.45. to encourage Councillors to reach out to community groups on community growing projects.

5.5. In response to the recommendations from Scrutiny Cabinet provide the following response;

Cabinet thank the Board for their input and contributions to the Food Strategy. Cabinet agrees with the recommendations that the Board made and will action as appropriate. A Council action plan will sit alongside the Strategy and will be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Board and partners for their input in due course.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 Not applicable within this proposal.

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 The food and climate workstreams are inter-dependent. For example, Torbay Council's Climate Officer is a core member of the Food Partnership, which will ensure that the food workstream is aligned to and supports delivery of the Climate Plan. Colleagues in Public Health are also leading on a local community growing initiative, recognising the importance of good quality food to good public health.

8. Associated Risks

8.1 The absence of a strategy will result in a lack of cohesion around food-related work, resulting in lost opportunities or duplication.

8.2 Without a strategy, there will be nothing to underpin and drive bolder changes which we may need to make as a Council to tackle challenges around climate change and inequalities in the future.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

The Council has a public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have 'due regard' to equality and to advancing equality of opportunity between those persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Act also seeks to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promote cohesion. It is important that you carefully and thoroughly consider the different potential impacts that the decision being taken may have on people who share protected characteristics.

It is not enough to state that a proposal will affect everyone equally. There should be thorough consideration as to whether particular groups or individuals are more likely to be affected than others by the proposals and decision. Please complete the table below. If you consider there to be no positive or negative impacts state 'there is no differential impact'.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

	these provided 50 hours or more of care.			
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			

Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None