

Cabinet

18 April 2023

Draft Warwickshire Food Strategy 2023-2026

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the Warwickshire Food Strategy 2023-2026 as attached at Appendix A.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet about the proposed Warwickshire Food Strategy 2023-2026, highlight the engagement that has taken place and present the draft Strategy to Cabinet for its consideration.
- 1.2 There are national and local level drivers for the draft Warwickshire Food Strategy. The National Food Strategy 2020 highlighted the need to create a long-term shift in our food culture in order to reduce food inequality and insecurity and to protect our environment and our health. The Warwickshire County Council Plan 2022-2027 areas of focus include the need to:
 - ‘Support people to live healthy, happy and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities’
 - ‘To tackle climate change, promote biodiversity and deliver on our commitment to net zero’
- 1.3 The existence of the draft Strategy, which aims to promote an affordable, healthy, and sustainable food supply is an essential element in addressing these national and local aims.
- 1.4 The draft Strategy also links to and is mutually supportive of several other key Warwickshire Strategies, including:
 - The Tackling Social Inequalities in Warwickshire Strategy 2021-30
 - The Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-26
 - The Warwickshire Sustainable Futures Strategy
- 1.5 Recognition of national and local policy drivers have helped to form the vision, purpose, and priority areas for the draft Warwickshire Food Strategy. Until now Warwickshire has not benefitted from having an overarching approach to

healthy food supply. The Strategy addresses these issues, and the Warwickshire Food Forum partnership has contributed to its development and will be a key partner in its delivery. The draft Strategy is accompanied by a Delivery Plan (Appendix B) which will be robustly progressed by the Warwickshire Food Strategy Delivery Group. The Delivery Group will provide updates to the quarterly meetings of the Warwickshire Food Forum partnership. The draft Strategy seeks to bring a wide range of partners and businesses together to secure better access to healthy, affordable food for everyone in the County.

2. Developing the draft Strategy

- 2.1 The Warwickshire Food Forum partnership commenced the process of creating the draft Strategy in early 2021. The partnership consists of a wide range of organisations and voluntary and community sector groups concerned with the supply of food to vulnerable people. Membership includes, foodbanks, Citizens Advice, District and Borough Councils, Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action, the Equality and Inclusion Partnership, South Warwickshire Foundation Trust and more. The partnership also benefits from the support of key Warwickshire County Council teams specialising in health and wellbeing and supporting of families.
- 2.2 The draft Strategy has also benefitted from input and advice from practitioners across the field of health and voluntary and community sector support. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data has been considered from the Poverty in Warwickshire Dashboard, Warwickshire Public Health Annual Reports, The State of Warwickshire Report, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment findings, The Office of National Statistics, The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 and information and data from the Food Foundation.
- 2.3 An equality impact assessment (EIA) of the strategy has been completed (Appendix C). The assessment shows that the strategy has a positive impact in terms of benefits by protected characteristics and socio-economic group. The EIA will be reviewed and updated regularly, responding to findings, as a key part of implementing the draft Warwickshire Food Strategy.

3. Focus of the draft Strategy

- 3.1 The draft Strategy sets out a vision for a Warwickshire in which agencies and organisations from across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors work together consistently and effectively to ensure a supply of good quality, healthy and affordable food for everyone, leading to fewer people with diet-related ill-health, fewer people experiencing food insecurity and reduced levels of food-related waste and greenhouse gases related to our food system. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a shared, collaborative approach and a plan of action which agencies across the sectors can commit to with key priorities for the short, medium, and long-term. The Strategy aims to deliver a shared approach to better learning and understanding the root

causes of food poverty and the cultural needs around food. This will enable us to decide and implement the highest-impact interventions.

3.2 The draft Strategy has three priority areas each with its own objective:

Priority area 1. Affordability and access

Objective - All partnership member organisations to work together to help residents access affordable, local, healthier lifestyle food choices and at the same time promoting financial inclusion and support in order to help prevent food insecurity crises.

Priority area 2. Food education and choice

Objective - Warwickshire County Council supported by partnership member organisations to signpost people to education sources and help communities develop their own skills thereby enabling and encouraging them to make healthier food choices.

Priority area 3. Sustainability

Objective - The Warwickshire Food Strategy Delivery Group will work with and influence local supply chains to encourage locally sourced food choices, help reduce food miles and reduce food waste and reduce the need to travel further to make healthier lifestyle choices.

3.3 The key outcomes for the draft Strategy are to secure:

- A reduction in the percentage of households in Warwickshire experiencing food insecurity
- A reduction in the percentage of households with children experiencing food insecurity
- A reduction in the number of Warwickshire residents with diet-related ill-health
- Strengthened communities through more people engaging in communal activities around food
- An increase in the percentage of surveyed Warwickshire residents who have participated healthy choice and lifestyle education opportunities
- A reduction in the amount of food-related waste produced in Warwickshire
- A reduction in the level of greenhouse gas emissions related to the food system in Warwickshire
- Increased numbers of educational initiatives to raise awareness of the production of food and its role in supporting health, economy, and the environment

3.4 A draft Warwickshire Food Strategy Delivery Plan has been drawn up to implement the priorities in the draft Warwickshire Food Strategy (Appendix B).

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct costs resulting from the adoption of this draft Strategy. A one-year allocation of £120k has been made to support the development and

implementation of the draft Warwickshire Food Strategy. No other costs will fall upon the budgets from relevant services involved.

5. Environmental Implications

5.1 The draft Strategy has positive implications for the environment and is linked to the Warwickshire Sustainable Futures Strategy by having the following three outcomes:

- A reduction in the amount of food related waste produced in Warwickshire
- A reduction in the level of greenhouse gas emissions related to the food system in Warwickshire
- Increased numbers of educational initiatives to raise awareness of the production of food and its role in supporting health, economy, and the environment

6. Conclusion

6.1 In Warwickshire we have a challenge to tackle food insecurity, the consequences of which are being exacerbated by increased pressures on household budgets, the cost of living, and the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. There is a clear need not only to ensure access for all to affordable food, but to safeguard future supplies of local healthier food and encourage sustainability of supply.

6.2 Educational campaigns are needed to encourage more children, young people, and adults to eat more healthily and exercise more choice around having a good diet and accompanying healthy lifestyle habits. The Strategy aims to build on the many successes achieved so far through the work of the Food Forum, partner agencies and community groups. The strategy is targeted at areas of most need so that the principles and practice of Levelling Up drive our service delivery alongside the objectives of the Council Plan. It aims to provide a cohesive plan for the Council, together with partners, to promote better standards and approaches to achieving affordable healthy food for everyone.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Warwickshire Food Strategy 2023-2026

Appendix B – Warwickshire Food Strategy Delivery Plan

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

	Name	Contact
Report author	Mike Slemensek, Delivery Lead Communities & Partnerships	mikeslemensek@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Kushal Birla Assistant Director for Business and Customer Services	kushalbirla@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Rob Powell Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Heather Timms Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture	heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a – countywide matter.

Other members: Councillors Clare Golby, John Holland, Tracey Drew, Kate Rolfe, Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Jackie D'Arcy, Jenny Fradgley, and Jerry Roodhouse