

MINUTES

Meeting: London Food Board
Date: Thursday 21 January 2021
Time: 12.00 pm
Place: Microsoft Teams Meeting

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Present:

Members:

Claire Pritchard (Chair)
Angela Malik
Anna Taylor
Dee Woods
George Young
Helen Crawley
Helen Evans
James Lowman
Jo Ralling
Kate Nicholls
Kemi Atijosan
Lindsay Boswell
Sarah Williams
Stephanie Slater
Tim Lang
William White

GLA Officers:

Lisa Bennett, Principal Policy Officer – Food
Mark Ainsbury, Principal Policy Officer – Food
Liam Weeks, Senior Project and Policy Officer – Food
Genevieve D’Souza, Senior Project and Policy Officer – Food (minutes)
Charlotte Hall, Principal Policy Officer – Health
Ciara Litchfield – Project Officer – London Child Obesity Taskforce
Ruth Morgan, Project Manager - Intelligence
Jamie Dean, Area Manager – Regeneration

1. Introductions and apologies (Item 1)

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kath Dalmeny (job share with Sarah Williams) and Melanie Smith.

2. Declarations of interest (Item 2)

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chair's update (Item 3)

- 3.1 The Chair has been chairing the food aid sub-group which has been doing incredible work over the last year and she thanked Liam and Lisa for their support.

- 3.2 The Chair attended the [launch](#) of the [London College of Food Report](#) which took place on 20th January. The Centre for London have done some interesting work on what exemplar practical food education could look like in London. The recommendations in the [report](#) could create interesting and cross cutting pathways.

Action – Board members should review the London College of Food report and consider its recommendations.

- 3.3 The Chair explained that the London Food Board was identified as an exemplar of multi-stakeholder mechanisms for delivering sustainable food systems (SFS MSM). The Board has been selected as one of ten SFS MSMs around the world to be included in a study commissioned by the [One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems programme](#). London Food Board members will have the opportunity to take part in this research.

Action – Food Policy Officers to circulate more information about the SFS MSM study to board members.

Action – Board members to complete the SFS MSM stakeholder survey by 7th February 2021.

- 3.4 The Chair had met with Nick Bowes, the Mayor's Director of Policy, in early January to give an update on the London Food Board and its work. The Chair suggested to him that food should be a cross cutting theme across the nine recovery missions. Nick completely agreed and was supportive of this approach. It was recognised that there would be considerable value in the London Food Board informing and advising on design of the missions and how food could cross-cut into them. Nick Bowes had tasked The Chair to use London Food Board to advise, and for her to report back to him. The Agenda for today's meeting had been designed as the first part in that process.

- 3.5 Nick had also noted the crucial contribution that food, and the LFB, could make across the GLA at, and in the lead-up to, COP26 later this year. He suggested that The Chair liaise with the GLA Environment team to maximise these synergies for the benefit of multiple City Hall agendas.

4. GLA Recovery Missions (Item 4)

4.1 To help the Board build upon the authority Nick Bowes had given The Chair, Ruth Morgan provided a comprehensive overview of the [London Recovery Programme](#), a framework of social and economic recovery missions for restoring confidence in the city, minimising the impact on communities and building back better the city's economic and social vibrancy.

4.2 Ruth explained how and why the [London Recovery Board](#) had arrived at a missions-based approach and outlined the cross-cutting principles.

4.3 Discussion

Following Ruth's presentation, board members discussed the following points:

- How the (not yet formed) Sustainable Diets Working Party might be able to help deliver some of the recovery and building back better agenda. This work was already factored into the Healthy Food, Healthy Weight mission.
- The work commissioned by the GLA Health Inequalities Team two years ago for UEL to deliver a community development approach to tackling health inequality at a community level should be considered in the missions.
- That we need to be radical and brave in how we use food when designing interventions to tackle the root causes of the problems the missions seek to solve.

5. Healthy Food Healthy Weight as an anchor mission (Item 5)

5.1 Mark Ainsbury referred to the Healthy Food Healthy Weight mission being thought of as an anchor mission to help frame how we use food to catalyse recovery across other missions, and give board members a better understanding of how we're working with colleagues and approaching the missions.

5.2 Ciara Litchfield shared a visual representation of the Healthy Food Neighbourhood concept and highlighted the pillars that the mission team see this work fitting under.

5.3 Board members discussed the following points:

- Whether the responsibility of healthy food schools would be delegated to Healthy Schools London or whether there is another mechanism within the GLA that will be delivering this.
- There is an opportunity now to have a deep dive into free school meal funding mechanisms and other school-based interventions.
- It was emphasised that there is a need to collect examples of both good and bad practice of FSM provision so that a balanced picture can be shown in media coverage.

- A Food Foundation letter has been sent to the Prime Minister and members were advised to get in touch if they would like to sign the letter.

Action – Board members should contact Jo Ralling if they would like to sign the letter.

- Other public settings that provide food should be considered if they have not been already, including in relation to supply of food to vulnerable groups such as older people and other people cared for in a supported setting.
- There needs to be infrastructure in place for communities to come together to create food solutions. As well as healthy food retail, there are other important things that need to be considered such as access to land as well as access to places where food can be grown, cooked and stored.

6. Discussion on embedding food into the missions (Item 6)

A Green New Deal

- 6.1 Mark Ainsbury explained to board members that we are interested in the contribution that reconfiguring the food system and making it work more efficiently can make to London's economic, social, community and environmental resilience and recovery. There is already work taking place on community food growing through our ongoing support of Capital Growth but what more could we do with a range of partners to maximise the impact of the Green New Deal mission from a food perspective?
- 6.2 Board members discussed the following points:
- Useful recommendations on food growing in the peri-urban fringe can be found in Sustain's [Fringe Farming in London](#) briefing.
 - The work of LWARB and the circular economy.
 - As well as supply chains, there is also a need to think about delivery services.
 - Supplying multiple retailer programmes means that farmers may have to produce more food than is needed as they don't know where orders will be. This was noted to be highly sub-optimal.
 - There needs to be a better model where surplus food can go to a market rather than serve as food aid. The first objective is to have a better route for surplus food production. The second objective is that the producers get paid for it. The third objective is that it's affordable, accessible, healthy food for a broad population of London. Maybe the fourth objective is that if it's surplus, it can be used for food aid.
 - Corporation for London plans to consolidate their wholesale markets in Dagenham may present opportunities to work innovatively with the wholesale markets sector.

High Streets for All

- 6.3 Jamie Dean, policy lead for the High Streets mission, gave a thorough overview of that mission, and explained how there is strong appetite to maximise the synergies between that work and the Healthy Food Neighbourhoods element of the Healthy Food, Healthy Weight mission. He invited board members to become part of the wider High Streets mission team.

Action – Board members should contact GLA Food Officers if they want to join the High Street mission team.

- 6.4 Board members discussed the following points:

- One of the biggest problems in London is the cost of rent on high streets being too high and causing businesses to collapse. This is a huge structural issue which might be beyond the scope of the mission.
- The Healthier Catering Commitment, Good Food Retail Projects and Healthy High Streets are obvious projects to consider in this mission.
- Community space is lacking. There should be ambitions for community use as a minimum proportion of the high street for example, provided by meanwhile use or provided by others. Could there be minimum targets over a period of time for this?
- Some local authorities have been trialling rates reductions with businesses that achieve HCC or healthy retail – could we make sure that mechanisms such as these are included in future funding bids?
- Retail loyalty programmes – the Sustainable Food Places Award Scheme identifies a lot of exemplars for high streets, business communities etc. They could be highlighted as good examples when looking at funding applications.
- Leading on from their Response, Recovery and Resilience Report, Sustain are writing a paper on what local authorities can do to support a good food economy. Some of that will be high street focused and there will be lots of London cases in there as well. This work would be useful to both the High Streets Mission and the Healthy Food Neighbourhoods mission, as well as potentially more broadly, such as in the Good Work for All, Communities for All, and Green New Deal missions.

Action – Sarah Williams to share draft ideas for this paper with GLA Food Officers to share with the High Streets Mission Team and other relevant mission leads.

- It was suggested that Sustain's Good Food for London maps could show the exemplar boroughs over the years that are trying to do everything they can in terms of trialling initiatives such as rate reductions.

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- The London Food Board has always championed the importance of street markets. It is important now to consider the role that affordable street markets could play in the recovery missions, for economic, health, environmental and community-building benefits.

Good Work for All

6.5 Board members discussed the following points:

- We have the London Living Wage (LLW) and the Mayor's Good Work Standard and these should be championed and extended.
- The food industry is often perceived as a poor employer. The GLA Skills Team, including in the context of the Good Work for All mission, were considering the Centre for London Report, as it proposes colleges as a network that can provide progression routes – which is missing on the culinary food side.
- Typically social enterprises will employ a more diverse range of people and will pay LLW. LFB (and GLA recovery missions) should highlight the real value of social enterprises. We also need to make the role of small businesses and entrepreneurial new businesses as a really important part of making the food sector more diverse and vibrant.
- There are lots of vacancies across the food sector and there is a lingering image problem or cultural issue around jobs in food. One of the recommendations from the Centre for London report was on specific London academies so we should go back to this mission, ask them to look at the report and think about how it works and links in.
- There's a huge momentum in the LLW but we shouldn't lose sight of the importance of decent working hours. The Living Wage Foundation also have the Living Hours Campaign. It would be useful to know what impact the pandemic has had on working hours in the food industry.
- There is a need to unpick the question around what we see as good and bad work in the context of food. Need to ask questions of this mission about what they mean, such as their position on the gig economy.
- There is a need to think about how this complements the Green New Deal mission in terms of thinking about green food jobs. We need to push for how we can create circular economy and climate transition jobs that are also giving people living wage, living hours etc.

Building Strong Communities

6.6 Board members discussed the following points:

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- When the Borough of Culture bids went in and there were community consultations, people saw culture as food. How people identified cultural activity was through food. Food is such a core part of culture and communities.
- The HFHW mission had caught the attention of the GLA Culture Team and they have since said that they want to embed food as a creative industry and as part of their cultural offer. This will help also with the Good Work for All mission. London could lead the way in changing the way that food is perceived and food being treated and valued as it is in other countries.
- We have a lot of evidence of the role food plays in communities and it overlaps with others from food growing to community food activities to big lunches.
- Sustainable Food Places has a huge amount on community engagement so this mission should consider what it says is exemplar for food places and reference that.
- The GLA's newly launched food routes incubator programme links in with building stronger communities, as well as with other missions. It's a fund to support food partnerships in London through an incubator programme and through growth grants. The objectives are broad around food insecurity and the GLA Food Team are working very closely with colleagues working on the building stronger communities' mission.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

- There was an acknowledgement of how strong food communities, and a healthy diet contributes to positive mental health.

Action – all board members should keep thinking about the existing London Food Strategy in relation to the missions and identify where there are gaps, keep asking questions and keep feeding in comments to the GLA Food Team.

7. Member updates and discussion (Item 7)

- 7.1 Tim Lang gave an update on his work on sustainable dietary guidelines. Next steps include meeting with the Chair and GLA Food Officers to consider terms of reference for the working party which can then be shared with board members. This work could contribute to COP26 and other international food systems initiatives, strengthening London's position amongst international food systems practitioners.

Action – GLA Food Officers to attend a meeting with Tim and the Chair to discuss and agree Terms of Reference ahead of sharing with board members.

- 7.2 Sarah Williams informed members that Nourish are organising lots of workshops called Farms for Dialogues in various places and cities. They approached Sustain to see if they might be interested in doing one in London. Sarah officially requested

involvement of the London Food Board subject to Sustain finding out more about what is involved.

Action – Sarah Williams to find out more about what is involved in the Farms for Dialogues workshop and to feed back to the Board.

8. AOB (Item 8)

8.1 There was no other business.

9. Date of next meeting

9.1 The next London Food Board meeting is scheduled for 22nd April.

10. Close of meeting

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