

MINUTES

Meeting: London Food Board
Date: Friday 31 January 2020
Time: 10.00 am
Place: Westminster Kingsway
College, Vincent
Square, London, SW1P 2PD

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Present:

Members:

Claire Pritchard (Chair)
Helen Crawley
Helen Evans
Kemi Atjosan
Laura Wellesley
Anna Taylor
Dee Woods
Lindsay Boswell
Melanie Smith
Sarah Williams
Katie Nicholls
Andrew Opie
James Lowman
Stephanie Wood
William White

GLA Officers:

Liam Weeks, Principal Policy Officer – Food (minutes)
Mark Ainsbury, Principal Policy Officer – Food
Ciara Litchfield, Project Officer – London Child
Obesity Taskforce
Matt Bailey, Senior Policy Officer – Skills

City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA

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1. Introductions, apologies and declarations of interest (Item 1)

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kath Dalmeny, Angela Malik, Jo Ralling, Professor Corinna Hawkes and Professor Tim Lang.
- 1.2 The Chair invited new members representing four organisations recently co-opted to the Board to introduce themselves and briefly outline the priorities they would like to support during their tenure.
- 1.3 Kate Nicholls, CEO of UK Hospitality, outlined the organisation's diverse membership ranging from large hotel and pub chains to small independent coffee shops. UK Hospitality represents 700 members, approximately 70,000 outlets and 3.2 million employees in the sector. Hospitality is the second largest employer in London and the third largest in the UK. As UK Hospitality's nominee to the Board, Kate will seek to further her understanding of Mayoral policy development, establish connections between national and regional policy and positively influence the delivery of relevant Mayoral initiatives and programmes including the Healthier Catering Commitment.
- 1.4 James Lowman, CEO of the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS), explained the organisation represents 5,000 members in London and 46,000 nationwide. Members offer a broad range of services across the convenience sector, including post offices and convenience food retail. James will seek to gain an operational and practical understanding of which interventions relevant to the sector are having an impact in London. The ACS sits on the advisory board for the Food Foundation's Peas Please project, has been actively involved in promoting the Healthy Start scheme to members and wants to sustain and improve the food offer in member stores.
- 1.5 Stephanie Wood, CEO of School Food Matters, established the charity 13 years ago with the aim of ensuring every child could access fresh, sustainable food at school and understand where their food comes from. Stephanie and her colleagues have campaigned tirelessly to embed food education in the curriculum and improve school food standards. The charity also delivers an extensive programme of funding and support to help schools deliver food education. The charity's experience in procurement influenced the development of the School Food Plan and it continues to influence the agenda at a national level through its position on the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food. Stephanie will seek to share her experience of procurement to help the Board navigate the complexity of school food in London and improve access to schools and their networks.
- 1.6 William White, South East Regional Director of the National Farmers (NFU), highlighted the opportunities for London to support local farmers to access new markets and influence the skills agenda as many agricultural colleges have diversified to offer upstream courses for processing, hospitality and food preparation. The NFU will nominate a farmer based in or around London's peri-urban fringe to bring more technical expertise to the Board, provide better access to other farmers and challenge the narrative that food must be organically grown to be sustainable.
- 1.7 Each nominee will be supported in their role by a deputy. So far, Jim Cathcart (Policy Director, UK Hospitality), Edward Woodall (Head of Policy, ACS) and Dela Foster (Development Manager, School Food Matters) have been nominated.

1.8 The Chair confirmed the Board's terms of appointment require members to attend a minimum of two Board meetings and two London Boroughs Food Group meetings each year.

1.9 **DECISIONS:**

(a) Food policy officers to circulate register of interests to new and existing members to complete or update as necessary.

2. Chair's update (Item 2)

2.1 The Chair confirmed all decisions from the previous meeting had been actioned.

2.2 The Chair informed members that the GLA Food Policy team has moved from the Economic Development team to the Equality and Fairness team as part of a wider restructure and will be managed by Daniel Drillsma-Milgrom, Equality and Fairness Team Manager. She thanked Jamie Izzard (Senior Manager, Economic Development) for his support of the team and the Board's work, particularly in relation to the development and implementation of TfL's Healthier Food Advertisement policy.

2.3 The Chair explained that as a result of the team's restructure, food policy now falls directly under the remit of Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement. The Chair met the Deputy Mayor on 23 January for an introductory meeting in which they discussed the Board's composition, its role in supporting the development and ongoing implementation of the Food Strategy and its input into the London Food Programme and priorities for 2020.

2.4 For her first food policy engagement, the Deputy Mayor gave a keynote speech at the [London Children's Food Insecurity Summit](#) on 13th January, hosted at City Hall and organised by the Mayor's Fund for London in partnership with the GLA and Food Foundation. The Mayor's Fund for London presented a series of recommendations for holiday provision based on the findings from Northumbria University's evaluation of the Kitchen Social programme. The Food Foundation launched a [London Children's #Right2Food Charter](#), which sets out calls to action for central Government, the Mayor and local authorities to tackle children's food insecurity.

2.5 The Mayor's Fund for London's [recommendations for holiday provision](#) (slide 27-38) include calls for sufficient, sustainable, long-term funding from central Government; dedicated holiday provision coordinators that work at a borough level; year-round access to holiday provision for all children and young people; inclusive and accessible holiday provision to all children including those with additional needs; and food sourced that meets the School Food Standards.

2.6 Anna Taylor, CEO of the Food Foundation, explained the London Children's #Right2Food Charter forms part of the [Children's #Right2Food Campaign](#) and follows the [Children's Future Food Inquiry](#) to focus on the issue in London. Based on the GLA's [measure of food insecurity](#) published in the Survey of Londoners, the Charter explores the scale and nature of children's food insecurity in London, profiles the

views and experiences of young people and identifies policy recommendations to address the issue. These include reiterating the national Charter's call for a new, independent Children's Food Watchdog, introducing and devolving statutory holiday provision funding and investing in universal free school meals for all primary and secondary school pupils.

- 2.7 In her keynote speech, the Deputy Mayor highlighted the Mayor's support for Kitchen Social, the programme's [impact in London](#) and wider work taking place across the GLA to tackle poverty and support low-income Londoners. The Deputy Mayor also called on central Government to listen to the research and findings on children's food insecurity, back Kitchen Social's recommendations for holiday provision and consider the calls to action within the Food Foundation's London Children's #Right2Food Charter. In the afternoon session, the Chair hosted a panel discussion on the long-term impacts of children's food insecurity and a workshop at the summit.
- 2.8 On 12 February, the Deputy Mayor appeared before the London Assembly's Economy Committee for a [session](#) investigating food insecurity in London. The Committee also invited a number of external stakeholders to attend and provide evidence, including Dr Helen Crawley in her capacity as a member of the London Food Board and Chair of the Boroughs Food Group. During the session, Committee members addressed the scale, drivers and impact of food insecurity in London and scrutinised the Mayor's progress in helping to tackle it.
- 2.9 On 10 October 2019, the Chair presented at the *Westminster Food & Nutrition Forum policy conference* for a session on *Policy initiatives to reduce HFSS consumption from across the UK*. Her presentation highlighted the impact of TfL's Healthier Food Advertisements policy and the Healthier Catering Commitment.
- 2.10 On 18 November 2019, the Mayor hosted a London School Food Conference at City Hall, which was chaired by Stephanie Wood. Stephanie stressed the importance of monitoring School Food Standards and incorporating food in the curriculum to help meet the Government's target to halve child obesity by 2030. A range of frontline professionals, campaigners and experts presented to outline the frameworks and initiatives that can help embed a whole school food approach.
- 2.11 On 4 December 2019, the Chair stepped in to chair a Boroughs Food Group meeting in place of Dr Helen Crawley. Focusing on themes within the second chapter of the London Food Strategy, the meeting included updates on: the implementation of the TfL Healthier Food Advertisements policy and local authorities' efforts to replicate the policy on their own advertising estates; the development and implementation of Good Food Retail Projects; and the development of the Healthier Catering Commitment Tier 2.
- 2.12 On 18 December 2019, the Chair met with Nick Bowes, Director of Mayoral Policy, to provide an update on: plans to convene a discussion on skills at City Hall in January focusing on how to address issues around perception, recruitment, progression and retention within the food sector; the Food Team's decision to commission further research into the food needs of older and disabled Londoners following the publication of the Survey of Londoners; and the potential to collaborate with the GLA

Culture Team to identify and support food related activities taking place in the Borough of Culture.

- 2.13 Sarah Williams, Programme Director at Sustain, announced nominations will close for this year's [Urban Food Awards](#) on 20 February. The awards, run in partnership by the Mayor and London Food Link, recognise individuals, organisations and enterprises using good food to improve Londoners' lives and empower communities. This year's headline category, *Food for Good Champions*, will recognise a multitude of people and small volunteering organisations using good food to bring communities together, promote social integration and celebrate diversity. Eight other categories are open to a range of entrants, from charities, caterers and market traders to climate friendly cafés and urban farms.
- 2.14 The Chair invited members to attend a peri-urban farming event on 14 February delivered by Capital Growth in partnership with the Mayor, which will explore the ways in which London can support agro-ecological food production through fringe farming.
- 2.15 The Chair invited Helen Evans to provide an update on behalf of the London Markets Board. Helen confirmed the Board's last meeting prior to the Mayoral pre-election period will take place at the end of February and informed members that the Boroughs Food Group has proved to be a model for effectively engaging relevant council officers on relevant issues, something the Markets Board may seek to replicate to increase its engagement at a grassroots level.

3. AEB devolution, the skills landscape in London and investing in apprenticeships (Item 3)

- 3.1 On 9 January, the GLA Food Policy team convened an initial discussion to explore the support needed in London to address the skills deficit in the food sector and opportunities for recruitment, retention and training. Several key stakeholders including the University of West London, London South East Colleges, the Sustainable Restaurants Association, Countertalk, Helen Evans and the GLA Skills and Economic Fairness teams attended. The Chair attended to oversee discussions and gather relevant intelligence and evidence to inform the London Food Board's agenda and help scope its potential approach to key issues.

AEB Devolution and the skills landscape in London

- 3.2 Matt Bailey, Senior Policy Officer for the GLA Skills Team, explained that the Adult Education Budget (AEB) has been devolved to London and the Mayor is now responsible for London's allocation and the GLA is responsible for commissioning AEB-funded provision to Greater London. The Mayor and GLA are exploring which policy changes can make funding more effective in future years and want to understand how the AEB could be more responsive to meeting the skills gaps and shortages faced by employers in London's key sectors.
- 3.3 The AEB supports a wide range of skills provision for adults aged 19 years and over. It is delivered by a range of different providers including general Further Education

(FE) colleges, local authorities, independent training providers, sixth form colleges and universities.

- 3.4 Unlike funding for those aged 16-19, not all students and courses are eligible for full funding, only those covered by statutory entitlements. Statutory entitlements include English and Maths up to and including Level 2 for 19+ individuals who have not previously attained a Grade C/ Level 4 or higher; the first full qualification at Level 2 for 19-23 individuals; and the first full qualification at Level 3 for 19-23 individuals. From 2020/21, essential digital qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1 for individuals with no or low digital skills will also be included.
- 3.5 The AEB budget is worth approximately £311m each year, representing 23.7% of the national budget. The Mayor set out his priorities and vision for skills and education for London in the [Skills for Londoners Strategy](#) and outlined how he plans to deliver these ambitions through the [Skills for Londoners Framework](#), which will be subject to an [annual consultation](#) as changes are made to AEB policies.
- 3.6 For year 1 (2019/20) of AEB delegation, the GLA made very few changes to funding allocations, recognising the need to provide stability to the sector throughout the transition to devolution. Broadly, the AEB is targeted at individuals with lower level skills, younger adults (19-23) and unemployed learners. This means the majority of AEB funding is currently delivering qualifications below Level 2, with just 2% of the AEB delivering level 3 courses in London. If a learner is over the age of 23, they have to fund their studies through an Advanced Learner Loan to take a course at Level 3 or higher.
- 3.7 One of the Mayor's priorities include supporting people in low pay and he has already raised the financial eligibility threshold for those earning less than the London Living Wage. This means up to 150,000 Londoners will now be eligible for fully-funded courses who would not have been under the national entitlements.
- 3.8 Improving access for the most disadvantaged Londoners is also a priority for the Mayor and he has introduced two new policy changes for the AEB 2020/21. The first is to increase the funding available to teach English and Maths qualifications by up to £2.7m annually. This change will aim to boost participation and achievement rates by providing London's education and training providers with additional funding to support learners to gain these skills. The second change is to give London's further education providers greater flexibility to train their staff to better support learners with SEND, with the intended benefit of improving the participation, retention, and achievement rates of SEND learners.
- 3.9 Going forwards, the Mayor is keen to take a more outcomes-focused approach to AEB funding and has commissioned a new London Learner Survey to be piloted and collect data on the impact learning has on all AEB funded learners.
- 3.10 Earlier this year, City Hall consulted with education and training providers and other key stakeholders on the value in fully funding or part-funding level 3 qualifications (funded through the AEB) to either train new staff or upskill the existing workforce in key sectors.

- 3.11 The next version of the Skills for Londoners Framework is currently [open to consultation](#). The team is also proactively engaging with businesses through the Mayor's Business Partnership to inform how AEB can be more responsive to meeting skills gaps in key sectors including hospitality and retail.

Investing in apprenticeships – the London Progression Collaboration (LPC)

- 3.12 Rob Singh, Senior Account Manager for the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), presented on the London Progression Collaboration (LPC). The LPC is an initiative being delivered in partnership between the GLA and IPPR to address skills gaps in London's key business sectors by addressing the fact London has the lowest level of apprenticeship starts in the UK and Londoners have amongst the worst in-work progress rates.
- 3.13 61% of businesses in London have identified at least one type of skills shortage amongst their current work force and the same number reported challenges in recruiting new staff over the past 12 months.
- 3.14 There were 44,220 apprenticeship starts in London in 2016/17, representing a 3% decline since 2014/15. 42% of apprenticeship levy payers in London reported that they did not expect to use any of their funds this year. An additional 40% reported that they expected use less than half of their funds.
- 3.15 The LPC was informed by a feasibility study based on interviews with over 60 employers in the construction, hospitality and retail sectors. The study explored the need for and characteristics of an intervention to support employers to better utilise the apprenticeship levy within the current system.
- 3.16 The research revealed a range of competing priorities often leaves businesses with a lack of resources to engage in the complex apprenticeship system. It showed businesses are willing to engage in many instances but need more support from an account management service, guidance and one to one engagement to overcome many of these barriers.
- 3.17 Therefore, the LPC offers a fully funded business support service to employers to increase investment in apprenticeships, facilitate the levy transfer process and enable SMEs to access apprenticeships successfully. A team of account managers provide a tailored package of support to address the needs of each business. The programme is aiming to help over 1,000 Londoners progress into work, and from low-paid, low-skilled work into better quality, higher paying jobs.
- 3.18 The offer of end-to-end support helps businesses to become apprenticeship ready, identifies the skills gaps where an apprentice could add value and provides advice on the most appropriate providers to establish relationships with.
- 3.19 The programme also advises levy payers on how to spend their levy effectively and facilitates the levy transfer process, matching levy payers who are willing to transfer their levy with SMEs who need funding and support.

- 3.20 Overcoming many of the misconceptions and myths about apprenticeships is a challenge. Many hospitality and retail organisations have concerns about the stipulation for apprenticeships to spend 20% of their time on off the job training. Organisations that use part time and flexible contracts on a regular basis also struggle to plan and accommodate a 30 hours a week apprentice position.
- 3.21 However, there is growing evidence to demonstrate the value of investing in apprentices. Starbucks have reported apprenticeship retention rates range between 65-70% compared to an average staff retention rate of between 30-35%. The higher levels in staff retention, satisfaction and progression opportunities that have been reported are all benefits that can help address some of the biggest issues facing the hospitality and retail sector.

4. Supporting hospitality career pathways (Item 4)

- 4.1 Louise Wolsey, Group Executive Strategic Director at London South East Colleges (LSEC), outlined the group's Further and Higher Education offer across eight campuses, seven schools and two training providers as well as its growing multi-academy trust which is supporting Londoners with additional learning needs as well as those who have been excluded. The group receives a total of 13,000 enrolments which includes 4,000 full time 16-18-year-old learners, 6,000 adults, 1,500 apprentices and 1,500 Higher Education and Professional learners.
- 4.2 LSEC has over 100 strategic partners and as part of the London & South East Education Group, the College is transitioning to become a social enterprise so that it can record and promote the additional social value it delivers to local communities through more opportunities for disadvantaged people, healthier communities and improved staff wellbeing.
- 4.3 By engaging with Employment & Skills Advisory Boards, LSEC have been able to help shape skills provision alongside other providers and partners and ensure that students are qualified for the current and future jobs market. This is particularly important as 70% of young people currently enter the workforce in jobs that will be affected by automation.
- 4.4 LSEC is also one of the Mayor's seven Construction Academy Hubs. The [Mayor's Construction Academy](#) scheme was established in 2019 to help address the growing construction skills shortage and better connect Londoners to training in the skills they need to access vacancies in the capital's developments, in trades, professions and management.
- 4.5 The LSEC Mayor's Construction Academy Hub coordinates construction provision across Greenwich, Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham and Southwark. It works with employers to co-design the curriculum through employer boards and students learn on fully operating construction sites. The model has allowed LSEC to coordinate employer responsive training to address skills deficits and better meet employer demands and changes in the sector.

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- 4.6 Tania Sumner, Head of Faculty for Hospitality and Catering at LSEC, informed members that the Orpington campus has replicated an employer-led model through its onsite 'BR6' restaurant.
- 4.7 The Bromley College of Further and Higher Education merged with Orpington College in 2011 and opened the UK's first hospitality career college in 2014 in response to the sector's growth, the fact there are over 19,000 hospitality jobs in the five boroughs the college covers and it is common for there to be more than 100,000 vacancies in the sector at any one time.
- 4.8 The college opened the BR6 restaurant in 2015 and received £850,000 funding from the GLA FE Capital Investment Fund to develop an onsite 'Bakehouse' facility. The model allows the college to tackle some of the unique challenges facing the industry, including the sector's image, the perception staff have of their roles as transitional or temporary posts, a high turnover rate and a reliance on EU workers (32% of the industries employees are from the EU).
- 4.9 Delivering a curriculum co-designed with employers, the college ensures students moving into the industry are productive and valued by employers from the moment they enter the job market. Providing a platform for employers to engage with students also exposes them to a multitude of opportunities available in the industry.
- 4.10 BR6 offers immersive, experiential and practical learning opportunities which allow prospective students to witness the value and diversity of the sector. 25% of the college's students are SEND meaning a diverse and practical learning curriculum is key.
- 4.11 The college delivers a range of projects and events focused on displaying breadth of opportunities and diversity within sector too. These have included a 'takeover' of Blueprint café, fundraising supper clubs, and Orpington's first food festival in 2017.
- 4.12 The BR6 model has promoted the college's visible sector specialisms that are aligned to the local area's business needs, established closer partnerships and relationships with schools, other colleges, local authorities and employers and provided greater opportunities for students to progress from Level 1 to Level 4 qualifications and above.

Discussion

- 4.13 The Chair invited members to comment on the presentations, discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the food sector in London and propose ways in which the Board could support work to help deliver the skills and high-quality apprenticeships the sector needs to thrive.
- 4.14 Members agreed the importance of distinguishing between the challenges and opportunities various parts of the sector face, from processing, production and horticulture to retail and hospitality.
- 4.15 Sarah Williams emphasised the need for the sector and providers to respond to the climate and nature emergency. The industry must help embed sustainability,

seasonality and locality throughout the supply chain and qualifications must match this ambition. Matt Bailey confirmed the GLA Skills Team are looking to embed green skills in provision through its inclusion in the Skills for Londoners framework.

- 4.16 Sarah Williams also stated social enterprises in London's food sector are playing an important role in employing and training vulnerable and disadvantaged Londoners. Embedding social value in the delivery of skills and progression opportunities for those further from the labour market is therefore key.
- 4.17 James Lowman confirmed the barriers identified by the LPC feasibility study were consistent with those expressed by the convenience retail sector. There is currently a deficit in packaging and logistical skills in the sector and an increasing number of convenience food retail stores need food preparation skills but don't have confidence in new starters.
- 4.18 Stephanie Wood confirmed that many school caterers are considering apprenticeship opportunities and initiatives such as [Chefs in Schools](#) are using careers in public sector catering to help address some of the industry's issues which are affecting perception and retention. The initiative's impact suggests there's a role for education and earlier interventions in schools to change the reputation and perception of the food sector.
- 4.19 Members agreed that the perception of low pay, long hours and poor progression opportunities across the sector is a major barrier to recruitment and retention.
- 4.20 Andrew Opie explained that the British Retail Consortium has launched '[Rethink Retail](#)' to address misconceptions regarding the sector and demonstrate the breadth of career opportunities on offer in sector.
- 4.21 Members agreed that the apprenticeship levy's structural issues are very difficult to overcome, which is resulting in millions of pounds of unspent levy. Andrew Opie confirmed many large retailers are creating and tailoring their own courses and programmes.
- 4.22 It was suggested the Mayor should join businesses in lobbying central Government for changes to the apprenticeship levy's structure to make it more flexible.
- 4.23 Kate Nicholls identified an opportunity to replicate the Mayor's Construction Academy model and hub approach for the food sector. She also expressed the hospitality sector's frustration that many roles are inaccurately described as 'low-skilled' as opposed to semi-skilled and stated many organisations would identify a labour shortage as opposed to a skills shortage as a key challenge.
- 4.24 Andrew Opie stated the need for an alliance of businesses or representative organisations to back any new model or proposal for the sector. The Mayor's Construction Academy model has been successful as it has tasked lead organisations with engaging partners and obtaining commitments to support the Mayor's vision from the outset.

- 4.25 Members agreed the apprenticeship programme is compromised by the fact training opportunities don't all fit into the apprenticeship model. A full, one-year programme is too long for many employers to commit to and many would prefer to offer shorter, immersive experiences.
- 4.26 Sarah Williams suggested it is important to understand how many jobs across the sector are paid the London Living Wage or above in order to be able to challenge the narrative that low-pay is rife and damaging the sector's perception. Kate Nicholls confirmed that pay across the sector is tracking at 40p to 50p above the national minimum wage and that whilst many staff don't stay on entry level pay rates for long, progression within the sector isn't adequately rewarded.
- 4.27 Members moved on to discuss some of the other potential opportunities to tackle some of the sector's main challenges on skills.
- 4.28 In Jun 2019, the Government announced the launch of a Tourism Sector Deal, which marked its recognition of the sector as a key driver of future economic growth. The deal will see the creation of a Hospitality and Tourism Skills Board, promoting hospitality as a career of choice, supporting and funding a three-year industry-led skills and recruitment campaign. In addition, the deal has committed to local Tourism Zones, a new Business Events strategy and significant investment in infrastructure and connectivity.
- 4.29 Stephanie Wood and Kate Nicholls agreed that schools could have a greater role to play in promoting further education opportunities to students in tandem with higher education opportunities as the current focus is unbalanced.
- 4.30 Members suggested exploring the potential to replicate best practice in other sectors to address misconceptions undermining the sector's ability to recruit new entrants. For example, the creative industry successfully markets and promotes the breadth and diversity of learning opportunities across the sector.
- 4.31 Finally, following the Centre for London's [Kitchen Talent](#) publication which explored the skills gap in London's culinary sector, its new advisory group provides an opportunity to steer recommendations for the sector and help influence other key stakeholders.

4.32 **DECISIONS:**

(b) The Chair and Food policy officers to progress discussions and scope proposals to support recruitment, skills and apprenticeships across the food sector.

5. Good Food Retail projects (Item 5)

- 5.1 Sarah Williams Programme Director at Sustain, explained six boroughs (Bexley, Camden, Croydon, Kensington & Chelsea, Newham and Southwark) received £5,000 each to develop Good Food Retail Projects in 2019, five of which were funded by the GLA whilst Guy's and St Thomas' Charity funded Southwark. All six boroughs have

received ongoing support from Sustain in developing and beginning to implement projects.

- 5.2 Good Food Retail has evolved as a term to address the food sold by outlets that is eaten at home. This applies to outlets including convenience retailers, markets, box schemes, food co-operatives and small-scale production kitchens and bakeries that have retail outlets. The definition of good food refers both to the quality of the food sold and the wider activities of a values-driven enterprise. Good Food Retailers should therefore focus on contributing to a healthier, more sustainable and resilience food supply that is affordable and accessible to all in addition to their sales.
- 5.3 Having evolved as a result of the GLA and Sustain's work to support boroughs to produce Food Poverty Action Plans, the programme is also part of a strategic approach to address health inequalities and tackle child food insecurity.
- 5.4 The primary focus of the first Good Food Retail Projects has been improving access to healthy, affordable food in the convenience retail sector, increasing uptake of Healthy Start vouchers, increasing healthier options at markets and enabling a more strategic approach to good food retail at a borough level. Each borough's approach has differed depending on local issues, intelligence and priorities.
- 5.5 Southwark, Croydon and Bexley have focused on improving awareness and uptake of Healthy Start. The Department for Health and Social Care are currently exploring options for digitising the Healthy Start scheme to make it more convenient and flexible for users, but several other barriers still exist. Therefore, the councils held focus groups and interviews with eligible parents to learn more about barriers of use, set up multi-departmental 'task and finish' groups to better coordinate action and developed promotional plans.
- 5.6 Bexley also relaunched the Healthy Start scheme locally, engaging eligible parents as well as BIDs and retailers to better coordinate actions and promotional activities. All three councils found varying amounts of engagement among large retailers and smaller independents, but in all cases a tangible, coordinated approach and scheme proved useful in beginning to build relationships between public health teams and the convenience retailers.
- 5.7 Camden, Kensington & Chelsea and Southwark all partnered with independent retail experts including [Rice Marketing](#) to trial different approaches to improve the healthy food offer in a small number of convenience stores. They engaged retailers to show health is a key trend and has potential for increased sales, trialling different approaches to improve the healthy food offer in stores. Each store was given tailored suggestions and action plans based on an initial assessment of their product lines, layouts and promotions. Changes included stocking fresh fruit at the counter as healthier and more profitable snack options, changing the layout of cereals and drinks to move high sugar options away from eye-height and remerchandising specific product lines such as bread to increase the proportion of wholemeal products on offer.
- 5.8 Croydon and Newham used funding to embed a more strategic approach across the council to Good Food Retail and developed good food alliances and borough-wide action plans respectively. They recognised the importance of aligning Good Food

Retail projects with other related agendas or initiatives in the borough, such as Croydon's Good Employment Charter and Newham's Climate Now and Community Wealth Building initiatives. Whilst it proved challenging to secure the buy-in and input of other council teams, using the funding to coalesce colleagues on Good Food Retail allowed public health teams to embed food policy in other agendas.

5.9 Having been commissioned as external retail experts by Kensington & Chelsea, Rice Marketing partners with the council's Food Safety team and demonstrated an opportunity to maximise the contacts and relationships Environmental Health officers establish with local businesses during their routine food safety inspections. Rice Marketing developed a toolkit and supporting guidance that formed a natural extension to the Food Safety team's delivery of the Healthier Catering Commitment and provided a clear, measurable way of tracking improvements and an increase in overall sales for participating retailers.

5.10 **DECISIONS:**

(c) Food policy officers to meet Rice Marketing and Sustain to discuss the potential to replicate the work with Environment Health Officers in Kensington & Chelsea and scope proposals for a Good Food Retail equivalent of the Healthier Catering Commitment.

5.11 In Southwark, the council's partnership with Rice Marketing highlighted an appetite amongst retailers to make changes to their stock and display as well as a demand from local communities for healthier options. Guy's & St Thomas' Charity have subsequently embarked on a pilot project [to engage wholesalers](#) as part of their Good Food Retail project.

5.12 The Mayor will fund a further five local authorities to develop and begin to implement Good Food Retail Projects in 2020/21. The programme will incorporate learning from Sustain's [briefing](#) on Good Food Retail and its report on '[Six London boroughs taking action](#)', which reviewed the development, implementation and impact of Good Food Retail Projects in 2019.

6. The Healthier Catering Commitment Tier 2 (Item 6)

6.1 Liam Weeks, Principal Policy Officer for the GLA Food Policy team, explained the [Healthier Catering Commitment](#) (HCC) was developed in 2010 as a response to the demand from a core group of London boroughs wishing to help local businesses offer healthier options. It was designed by environmental health teams in London boroughs with support from primary care trusts, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the GLA and the Association of London Environmental Health Managers. It's delivered in partnership by public health and environmental health teams in 22 boroughs across London.

6.2 The scheme was designed to help address rising levels of child obesity and associated health inequalities, driven by the proliferation of fast food outlets in more deprived areas and near schools as well as the trend of food bought and consumed from the Out of Home sector.

- 6.3 HCC accreditation is open to all foodservice businesses, including hot food takeaways, restaurants, cafés or sandwich bars. In order to become accredited, businesses must achieve a food hygiene rating of 3 or above meet a minimum number of criteria, seven of which are mandatory. The criteria address several key areas including of healthier frying, healthier promotions, reducing salt and sugar, and access to fruit and vegetables.
- 6.4 Since the scheme's introduction, councils have increasingly explored synergies between public health and planning issues and the need to address them strategically has grown. HCC has therefore been viewed as a lever available to boroughs that represents a viable investment. In the Examination in Public (EiP) for the new draft London Plan, many of the arguments put forward for the 400m restriction on new A5 takeaways near schools extend and apply to the case for investing in the delivery of HCC. For example, the fact that the health of London's children shouldn't depend borough boundaries. Hence, the Mayor proposed the restriction on new A5 outlets opening within 400m of schools and included the requirement for any new outlets to be HCC accredited in the draft new London Plan.
- 6.5 In the London Food Strategy, the Mayor committed to continue working in partnership with local authorities to deliver the HCC.
- 6.6 This year, GLA funding has been used to fund the development of a [new, dedicated website](#) which provides background on the scheme, a map of accredited businesses, contact details for each borough's lead officer, links to partner organisations and details of how to join the scheme. The HCC working group has also developed a new set of branding guidelines which have contributed to a more professional, universal, joined up approach across the 22 boroughs delivering the scheme. A free, CPD accredited, online training course is also being developed for EHOs currently delivering the scheme and those who are new to the scheme.
- 6.7 HCC has also featured as an indicator of progress in the [Good Food for London](#) report since 2011. This year, 22 councils are delivering the scheme and a further 2 are exploring its implementation. Furthermore, Sustain have recently published a [report on hot food takeaways](#) which calls for stronger powers for local authorities to combat obesity amidst the new way of hot food takeaways and also recommends that they use tools such as HCC in addition to planning policies.
- 6.8 Since 2018, a small HCC working group consisting of EHOs and nutritionists, ALEHM, GLA colleagues and colleagues in public health has been developing HCC Tier 2. The decision to develop a second-tier accreditation was taken following the interest of large foodservice outlets in response to the draft new London Plan's requirement for new A5 food outlets to comply with the scheme.
- 6.9 As the existing HCC criteria are not fit for purpose for larger food businesses, the criteria included within the second tier are more ambitious and robust. A breadth of new criteria focusses on key issues such as product reformulation, product marketing, promoting healthier alternatives, the availability and promotion of free drinking water, animal welfare and sustainability.

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- 6.10 Tier 2 includes 39 criteria in total which incorporates 10 essential criteria. The non-essential criteria are scored and weighted according to their relevance and impact. In addition to meeting the essential criteria, the score each business achieves will determine whether it is awarded a bronze, silver or gold accreditation.
- 6.11 HCC Tier 2 builds on some of the first tier's foundations but goes further in many areas. For example, it stipulates free drinking water must always be available and displayed in central, accessible locations and businesses must sign up to Refill London. It will also require 50% of all products displayed at the front counter to be low in fat, sugar and salt according the front of pack calorie labelling guidelines. A new section on sustainability requires businesses to commit to meeting the London 2012 food vision standards, sign up to Courtauld 2025 and establish a food waste reduction target.
- 6.12 As part of a consultation, the HCC group has received feedback from members of the London Food Board, London Child Obesity Taskforce and food businesses that have expressed interest in receiving accreditation.
- 6.13 In terms of next steps and the scheme's implementation in 2020, the GLA has engaged the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) as HCC Tier 2 will be relevant to many SRA members.

7. AOB

- 7.1 Andrew Opie informed members that as part of the work taking place under the [Better Retail Better World](#) initiative, members of the British Retail Consortium have been discussion what collaborative, strategic action the industry could take to address climate change as part of a Climate Change roadmap. Food Policy Officers confirmed the GLA is considering work to coincide with the 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, which may include a focus on the food system's environmental impact.

8. Date of next meeting

- 8.1 20th March 2020 – 10am

8. Close of meeting

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