

DECISION TAKER: Councillor Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

REPORT TITLE: GOOD FOOD CHARTER

24 MARCH 2023

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Winchester Food Partnership has launched a Good Food Charter (see Appendix 1) and is asking local individuals, businesses and organisations to sign the charter and make a pledge.

The Winchester Food Partnership (WFP) was formed in 2017 when a range of stakeholders came together over the shared interest in the development of sustainable food practices across Winchester District. In 2019 the Partnership became a member of the Sustainable Food Places movement and is a supporter of its Veg Cities campaign.

The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan acknowledged that the challenge of being a carbon neutral council and district is something that needs to be met by all of us working and acting collectively. Therefore campaigns and collaboration form an integral part of the delivery approach and the council will support campaigns and initiatives across the district that deliver carbon saving and increase sustainability such as Sustainable Food City.

As an active member of the Winchester Food Partnership already delivering actions against a number of the Good Food Charter values, and in recognition of the need to collaborate with partners on campaigns if we are to be greener faster and achieve carbon neutrality, it is proposed that the council signs the Charter and makes a pledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To approve Winchester City Council signing the Winchester Food Partnership Good Food Charter

2. To approve the City Council's Good Food Charter pledge as:
"Winchester City Council pledges that when it offers catering at events and meetings it organises it will be on a vegetarian by default basis"

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The council has added to its Council Plan 2023 priorities the enhanced focus to be greener faster in recognition of the “climate emergency and the pressing need to reduce the Winchester district’s carbon footprint.” Being an active member of the Winchester Food Partnership helps achieve the overarching priority to tackle the climate emergency and create a greener district. Supporting local food growing, reducing food waste and considering our food choices will help reduce the council’s and district’s carbon emissions.
- 1.2 Access to healthy, affordable food supports the Living Well priority by addressing issues of health inequalities and supports the council’s enhanced focus on the Cost of Living crisis by increasing food security.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no costs to becoming a signatory of the Good Food Charter and it is free to be a member of the Winchester Food Partnership.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no legal implications for the council in signing up to the Good Food Charter. The pledge that the council is making at the time of signing is voluntary and places no legal obligation on the council. The council will undertake its best effort to deliver the pledge through its contracting and procurement procedures. Guildhall events where customers hire the rooms and pay for catering and catering facilities at Chesil Lodge will be excluded.
- 3.2 The council pledge “that when it offers catering at events and meetings it organises it will be on a vegetarian by default basis” can be achieved by specifying this in catering procurement tenders/quotes.

4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 As part of Food Waste Action Week the University of Winchester hosted an open event on the 8th March. The Winchester Food Partnership attended to promote a number of different themes, including food waste prevention and the official launch of the Good Food Charter. The event was for both members of the public as well as local businesses and was well attended. Information was provided on how to reduce or avoid unnecessary food waste and those present were encouraged to sign the charter with a commitment to one or two goals contained within.
- 4.2 The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sarah Grier, signed the Good Food Charter on behalf of the University of Winchester at the above event along with representatives of the Hampshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

4.3 Signing the Charter also addresses outcomes of the Winchester Climate Assembly held October 2020 which recommended eating local seasonal food and reducing food waste.

4.4 A route to advice staff of the approach will be mapped to communicate the change to the organisation. We can add this to the sustainable procurement guide as well.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The environmental benefits of supporting local food growing, retailing and eating includes reduced carbon emissions from transporting products shorter distances, reducing the need to travel to buy food, reducing water use by encouraging seasonal product consumption and reducing waste and packaging.

6 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

6.1 The Good Food Charter and the Winchester Food Partnership seeks to address issues of access to healthy and affordable food, regardless of income. The United Kingdom Food Security Report 2021: Theme 4: Food Security at Household Level, 22 December 2021 was published by DEFRA. It identifies that “92% of households in the UK reported they were food secure. However, 8% reported being food insecure, and of this, 4% reported low food security and another 4% very low food security. Food insecurity is not evenly spread across society, with age, disability, ethnicity, and geographical location all factors affecting household food security.”

6.2 The PSED assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Based on the risk assessment signing the Good Food Charter and making the proposed pledge both are considered low risk to the council.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure Very low risk that the cost of catering vegetarian food is more expensive than including meat and fish options.	Best value in selecting catering suppliers is part of the council’s contract procedure rules.	
Exposure to challenge Very low risk of challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the authority to sign the Good Food Charter. • from food producers at 	Formally taking the decision to sign the Charter in public is compliant with the council’s constitution and	Making this pledge would reduce the likelihood of challenge to the council’s commitment to reducing impact on climate change.

the exclusion of meat and fish from catering supply.	enables public scrutiny.	
Innovation	N/A	N/A
Reputation The council reputation is negative impacted by the actions of the Winchester Food Partnership and its campaigns and through its support of the Good Food Charter	The council is an active member of the partnership and a number of working groups which will help mitigate any actions or campaigns that are in conflict with council.	
Achievement of outcome The benefits arising the Good Food Charter are at risk if very few people or organisation sign-up, make pledges and implement them	The WFP will promote the Good Food Charter seeking as many pledges as possible and will monitor if these are realised.	The council becoming a signatory of the Charter will help in its promotion by demonstrating community leadership and support.
Property	N/A	N/A
Community Support See reputation		
Timescales	N/A	N/A
Project capacity	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 None

9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

9.1 **Winchester Food Partnership's Good Food Charter**

9.2 The WFP is asking organisations, including the council, to sign up to support the values and vision in its Good Food Charter, and make a pledge to help realise the vision.

9.3 The vision “is to create a healthy and sustainable food culture for people living and working in the Winchester District, regardless of income.” The values are grouped under three themes: Good for People; Good for Business and Good for the Planet.

9.4 Suggested pledges for businesses, organisations and groups are:

- a) Become a living wage employer
- b) Join a good food campaign
- c) Procure local sustainable and responsibly sourced food
- d) Encourage volunteering with local food projects as part of your community engagement
- e) Provide opportunities to grow food at work and in the community

9.5 We are already a Living Wage employer. We held a Carbon Neutrality Open Forum event in Winchester Green Week (Sept 2022) on Food and Waste (with Winchester Food Partnership & BIFFA). The emerging Local Plan contains policies to support allotments and growing and we also provide allotments. Through our small and project grants we have funded local groups to establish community gardens. Our staff Green Team collects food waste for composting and hope to start growing herb beds. We are members of the Winchester Food Partnership including its Food and Climate Working Group. Hampshire Farmer's Market trades regularly in the city and the council's weekly street market supports a number food traders.

9.6 As the council is already active across a number of the suggested pledges it is proposed that it makes its own pledge to provide catering at its events and meetings on a "vegetarian by default" basis. Special dietary or alternative options would be available on request.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 The option not to sign the Good Food Charter has been rejected as this prevents the opportunity of being part of a district wide campaign championed by a local partner and which helps with the council's greener faster ambition.

10.2 The option to sign the Charter but not make a pledge has been rejected. The pledge demonstrates commitment and ensure that the Charter achieve the outcomes and the benefits are realised.

10.3 The option to select a pledge from those suggested by WFP has been rejected. The council is already acting across a number of those identified, so to have real meaning a new pledge specific the council and using the lever of procurement it has available has been proposed.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

NONE

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Winchester Food Partnership's Good Food Charter

Appendix 2: Public Sector Equality Duty Impact Assessment