

## **Consultation response to the Glasgow City Council, General Purposes City Policy Committee Food Inequality Inquiry from Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Glasgow Food Policy Partnership**

Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Glasgow Food Policy Partnership welcome and endorse Glasgow City Council's establishment of a Food Inequality Inquiry and we are pleased to be given an opportunity to contribute at this early stage.

Food insecurity is one of the key pathways through which income inequality is translated into the inequalities in health outcomes, such as the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, which remain challenges for the city. The stress and anxiety associated with all forms of material insecurity (food, income and fuel) prevent individuals from realising their full potential in their community, education, work and the economy and as fully engaged citizens. The need to find more effective ways of ensuring Glasgow's citizens have access to good quality healthy, affordable food is urgent and given the scale and direction of food inequality in the city, Glasgow City Council's establishment of this Inquiry is timely. We commend the Inquiry as a substantive beginning to setting the city on a path to eradicating all forms of insecurity in response to the call for action embodied by the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty's 'Dignity' report<sup>1</sup>.

We also note that the focus on food aligns with key strategic themes nationally and locally such as the national Public Health priority of diet and healthy weight<sup>2</sup>. However food as an issue cuts across strategic objectives wider than health, nutrition and poverty, touching upon priorities to ensure we use economic growth to maximise the opportunities and benefits it creates *for all* in the city; that we engage more Glaswegians in decisions that affect them; that our communities and neighbourhoods are attractive, well-connected and resilient; and that the city takes the lead in creating a more environmentally sustainable future. Such a range of outcomes can be achieved through action to reduce food insecurity through a focus on addressing income and power inequalities. We urge the Inquiry to simultaneously take action to ameliorate the immediate food crisis in the city while taking a longer term view that transforms the deeper lying drivers that produce not only food insecurity but shape experiences of poverty and disempowerment.

### **The scale of food inequality in the city**

The document produced by the Inquiry to support this consultation highlights the available data on food inequality in the city citing evidence from the NHSGGC Adult Health and Wellbeing survey and the Trussell Trust. We would also highlight findings from the GoWell research and learning programme surveys on the health experiences of communities undergoing regeneration. This covers data and analysis from deprived communities in Glasgow. The GoWell report *Food and Beyond: exploring the food bank experience* highlighted rates of food bank use in the city's regeneration areas and explored rates of food insecurity short of food bank use. The analysis shows the characteristics of food bank users compared to non-users<sup>3,4</sup>

This evidence indicates that food insecurity is a much larger issue than food bank use alone would indicate. Four percent of respondents reported using a food bank compared with the larger figure of 18% of respondents who experienced food insecurity, which includes worrying about or having difficulty paying for food. The Voices of the Hungry Food Insecurity Scale conceptualises food insecurity as a continuum running from 'mild', 'moderate' to 'severe' food insecurity. Experiences indicating positions on the scale include 'worrying about ability to obtain food' ('mild'), 'compromising quality and variety of food' ('moderate'), 'reducing quantities, skipping meals' ('moderate-severe') to 'experiencing hunger' ('severe'). Given stress and anxiety is itself a negative health outcome we should

---

<sup>1</sup> Independent Working Group on Food Poverty. *Dignity: Ending hunger together in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2016. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independent-working-group-food/>

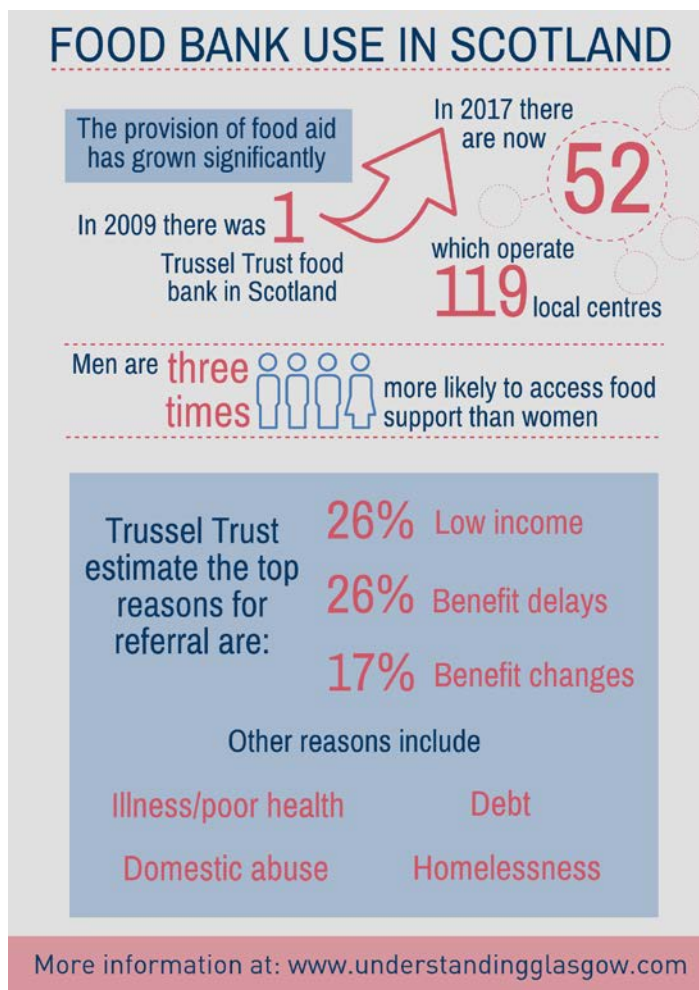
<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government & COSLA. *Public Health Priorities for Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2018. Available at: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-health-priorities/>

<sup>3</sup> Lawson L, Kearns A. *Food and beyond: exploring the food bank experience*. Glasgow: GoWell; 2018. Available at: [http://www.gowellonline.com/assets/0000/3956/Food\\_and\\_beyond\\_-\\_exploring\\_the\\_foodbank\\_experience.pdf](http://www.gowellonline.com/assets/0000/3956/Food_and_beyond_-_exploring_the_foodbank_experience.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> MacLeod MA, Kearns A, Curl A. *Briefing paper 28: Food bank use among residents of Glasgow's deprived neighbourhoods*. Glasgow: GoWell; 2016. Available at: [http://www.gowellonline.com/publications/425\\_briefing\\_paper\\_28\\_food\\_bank\\_use\\_in\\_glasgow\\_s\\_deprived\\_areas](http://www.gowellonline.com/publications/425_briefing_paper_28_food_bank_use_in_glasgow_s_deprived_areas)

view all points on this continuum as negative outcomes in terms of Glasgow being a place where all its residents can flourish.

Figure 1: Food bank use in Scotland.



In terms of who experiences food insecurity, GoWell cites associations with households impacted by welfare reform (one-in-ten households were impacted by reform of a single benefit and one-in-six of those were impacted by reform of two or more benefits). Forty-four percent of food bank users report longstanding illness or disability, and two-thirds reported a mental health problem.

Research from Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre on food bank use at Glasgow South East Foodbank – the largest in the city – found solicitors worked directly with 246 clients, providing debt casework and welfare advice, between October 2014 and September 2015. Their findings are published in the report 'Why people go to foodbanks'. Ninety percent of their clients had resolvable problems. Over 70% of the cases they took on were from clients who were sick or had disabilities, 72% had benefit problems, and 20% had housing problems<sup>5</sup>. Further research and monitoring of food banks in other parts of the city would be helpful to see if these findings are consistent with the city-wide picture.

It is important to understand how forms of food aid are perceived by those who use them to shape responses in a manner that enables people to maintain dignity and ensures uptake by those most in need. Models of assistance to individuals and families in times of emergency food need should be designed to reach those who require it and to understand processes that shape unmet need. GoWell participants who experienced food insecurity identified feelings of shame and stigma in using food banks. Stigma will be a factor in shaping the decisions of the larger

<sup>5</sup> Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre. *Why people go to Foodbanks. A year of advice giving at Glasgow South East Foodbank*. Glasgow: CLMAC; 2016. Available at: <http://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CLMAC-Foodbank-Report-V3-2016-final-lowres-1.pdf>

number who self-described as food insecure but did not access food banks (referred to as non-accessors). The researchers cite the gender composition of need as 8.9% of men in deprived areas being users or 'non accessors' and 6.9% of women. The highest rate of food bank use in terms of age profiles was the 25-39 and 40-54 year old age groups (1 in 10 across the age ranges). This contrasted with 2.4% for the over 65 highlighting the protective effect of pensions.

**Figure 2: Summary of Go Well food bank findings.**



powered by  
**Piktochart**  
 make information beautiful

A summary of GoWell food bank findings with residents revealed that shame and emotional distress could stem from food insecurity particularly when it was a new experience, challenging the foundations of individual pride and self-respect. The surrendering of choice and control over food received alongside self-perceptions of ineligibility and 'un-deservingness' were highlighted in accounts of those food insecure who did not use food banks. In relation to these accounts, the GoWell researchers conclude:

*"These findings also highlight the extent to which narratives of the 'undeserving poor' have been internalised by individuals. ... Such evidence also builds on wider debates about the stigma of poverty and how this is played out within the social security system."* (pages 14-15)<sup>4</sup>

*The relationship between food insecurity and income insecurity*

The findings from the GoWell work accord with Scotland-wide estimates reported by the Trussell Trust (see Figure 1) that need is strongly driven by low income and exacerbated by benefit delays and changes. Given that low income and income insecurity are key factors in shaping food insecurity, a number of trends evident in Glasgow would indicate a continuing upward trajectory of need. These trends relate to not only benefit changes, but experiences of

in-work poverty, increasing rates of child poverty and the characteristic patterning of poverty and low income in Glasgow.

### *Child poverty*

Alongside single adults under 40, numerous surveys have found being a single parent in a low income neighbourhood increases risk of food insecurity. The developmental impacts of poor nutrition for children highlight the longer term impacts of food poverty on this group including negative effects on development and learning, impaired disease management and increased likelihood of developing asthma, depression and other chronic conditions.<sup>6</sup> This makes preventing and mitigating child poverty as a key priority in preventing food poverty. The *Understanding Glasgow* website provides estimates of the number of children living in poverty, as well as measures that indicate a risk of being in poverty, within Glasgow<sup>7</sup>. According to the 2018 child poverty map of the UK, 34% of children in Glasgow City live in poverty (compared with 17 % for Aberdeen, 22% for Edinburgh and 28% for Dundee) and, according the Scottish Household Survey, 41% of children live in families with limited resources<sup>8</sup>. With child poverty in Glasgow higher than the national average and other Scottish cities we can expect food insecurity to exhibit a similar trend highlighting an important area of preventative and mitigating activity.

### *In-work poverty*

Analysis of data by the Scottish Government of families experiencing relative poverty indicate that of all children in Scotland living in relative poverty, 70% live in households where at least one adult is in work. The trend is upward from 49% in 1995. This highlights how work is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty and how the benefits of economic growth are not shared fairly. The Council ambition to promote inclusive economic growth is therefore strongly aligned and consistent with strategies to reduce food poverty through addressing the economic vulnerability that produces food insecurity.

Despite the research described above, we do not know the true scale of food inequality across the city. Further research is needed in order to understand this better. Peer- and community-led research, such as that carried out by the Central and West Integration Network in partnership with Community Food and Health Scotland can yield a better quality and depth of information<sup>9</sup>. This work clearly shows that people experiencing food poverty feel happier and more comfortable speaking to others in a similar situation. We believe that this kind of work should be supported in order to have a better understanding of the scale of the problem in the city and to find appropriate solutions grounded in local context, assets and community strengths. Such an approach is consistent with the Council's vision in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 to create more opportunities for citizens to become involved in local decisions that affect their neighbourhoods, on how money is spent and how services are developed.<sup>10</sup>

## **What steps can we take to prevent food poverty?**

We agree with the statement made by the Independent Working Group that income insecurity is the root cause of food insecurity as experienced by individuals and families. Consequently, responses must support a transition away from emergency food aid as the primary response, in a manner that enables dignity, choice and control for citizens as a longer term aim. We recognise that there will still be a need for emergency food provision as a first response. However, there is also an opportunity for city-wide activity that removes vulnerability through maximising incomes and increasing the availability of and access to well-paid and meaningful employment in the city. This will involve a wider scope of organisational actors and decision-makers in the city, aligned around a vision to eradicate income insecurity and poverty. Actions can be conceptualised as ranging from emergency short-term food relief through to longer term, involving more deep-rooted strategies to transform the conditions that produce vulnerability to food poverty.

---

<sup>6</sup> Tarasuk V. *Learning from population survey data on food insecurity: Learning from Canada*. Presentation given to Understanding Food Insecurity in Scotland: using evidence for policy and practice change meeting. October 4 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Understanding Glasgow. *Children's poverty*. <https://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/children/poverty/overview>

<sup>8</sup> Understanding Glasgow. *Children's poverty, Comparisons, Scottish cities*.

[https://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/children/poverty/scottish\\_cities](https://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/children/poverty/scottish_cities)

<sup>9</sup> Central and West Integration network. *Food Security for All: Community led research project*. Glasgow: CWIN; 2016. Available at: <https://www.cwin.org.uk/assets/Uploads/CWIN-research-report-2016.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Glasgow City Council. *Glasgow City Council Strategic plan 2017-2022*. Appendix, para 3.3

### Emergency support

Scottish Government activity to mitigate the effects of welfare reform have been introduced including the Social Welfare Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments, free school meals and school clothing grant. These existing activities provide the backbone of available financial instruments to mitigate the income poverty that underpins food poverty. The 'Dignity' report highlights the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) as an existing resource which can be utilised to reduce dependence on food banks. The campaigning group Menu for Change was established to reduce the need for emergency food aid by ensuring people in Scotland have access to the cash, rights and food they need before they are in crisis. They highlight that SWF crisis grants can be used to ameliorate food insecurity in a manner that maintains dignity, choice and control<sup>11</sup>. Given that welfare reform has been accompanied with the removal of significant amounts of money spent by benefit claimants in Glasgow's poorer neighbourhoods<sup>12</sup>, the use of cash payments to mitigate food insecurity would also have an economic impact in communities where food provision is an issue<sup>13</sup>.

Evidence from Menu for Change has also shown that welfare advisors are unaware or slow to refer people experiencing hardship to the SWF. Further, Glasgow has been slow to respond to applications from people in crisis, with many applications taking 48 hours to process, twice that of some other local authorities. Improving Glasgow's delivery of this useful instrument would be an easy step to providing emergency support.

The SWF crisis grants will also be a key instrument in ameliorating the transition to Universal Credit, which itself has the potential to create vulnerability. Further, there are creative ways in which cash transfers can be utilised to stimulate the sustainability of the urban food landscape. An example comes from the United States where the campaign against hunger, *Just Harvest*, lobbied for and runs the *Fresh Access* programme where food stamps can be reimbursed for fresh fruit and vegetables when exchanged in local markets or stores. This not only provides access to fresh food for those who require it, but also provides a predictable revenue stream for shops and suppliers to ensure the provision of shelf space for fresh fruit and vegetables remains a viable option. Although food stamps are not something we would want to see introduced in Scotland, innovations such as a 'local pound' or vouchers as part of an existing cash transfer scheme could be used to foster incentives to stimulate the local food economy and wider economic activity (see the Glasgow Pound Working Group<sup>14</sup>).

There are currently *Healthy Start* vouchers available in Scotland for low-income families; these are meant for pregnant women and parents with children up to four years of age. Health visitors will refer families for the vouchers (worth £3.10/week) that can be used to purchase milk, formula and/or fruit and vegetables<sup>15</sup>. The uptake of these vouchers is currently quite low partly due to lack of knowledge about the scheme (by those qualifying for the scheme as well as shop owners) and partly because of stigma associated with the use of the vouchers. In April 2018 the Scottish Government launched a *Welfare Food* consultation which, among other things, covered *Healthy Start* vouchers, *Healthy Start* vitamins, and the *Nursery Milk* scheme. The government proposes to reform the *Healthy Start* vouchers system and rename it *Best Start Foods*. It has been proposed that the vouchers will be replaced by a 'smart card' usable in any shops selling groceries and that the value of the vouchers will increase to £4.25/week<sup>16</sup>. This scheme, which is due to come into effect in summer 2019, has the potential to improve the diet of people from the most deprived backgrounds if publicised more widely. *Best Start Foods* will be delivered alongside *Best Start Grant*, which provides lower-income families with financial support during the key early years of a child's life<sup>17</sup>. The scheme is supported by the food poverty working group *Food Power* run by *Sustain*<sup>18</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Scottish Welfare Fund: Evidence for A Menu for Change

<sup>12</sup> Beatty C, Fothergill S. *The impact on Scotland of the new welfare reforms*. Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament; 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Cummins S, Smith DM, Aitken Z, Dawson J, Marshall D, Sparks L, Anderson AS. Neighbourhood deprivation and the price and availability of fruit and vegetables in Scotland. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* 2010;25(5):494-501.

<sup>14</sup> Glasgow Pound Working Group. <http://www.glasgowpound.org/>

<sup>15</sup> Healthy Start. <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Government. *Welfare foods consultation summary*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2018.

<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/10/2133/1>

<sup>17</sup> Scottish Government. *Social security, Best Start Grant*. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/best-start-grant/>

<sup>18</sup> Sustain. *Food power*.

<https://www.sustainweb.org/resources/files/reports/Food%20Power%20Children's%20access%20to%20food%20toolkit.pdf>

### *Transitioning beyond emergency food aid*

The Menu for Change briefing on the SWF highlights its important role as a gateway to other support that can prevent future crisis by considering the support people need and building connections to local services. Joint JRF/GCPH work on similar referral approaches located in job centres highlighted a role for financial advice and income maximisation that can ensure citizens receive the benefits they are entitled to for debt management which again reduces vulnerability.<sup>19</sup> Similar referral pathways are also available through social prescribing as demonstrated through the Deep End Practice's advice worker project<sup>20</sup>. Initiatives such as the Foodbank Support Project, and the North West Citizen's Advice Bureau Community Food Project place independent welfare advisors in community cafés and alongside food banks, providing much needed joined-up services<sup>21</sup>.

We note the Inquiry's accompanying paper highlights other avenues by which cash transfers can be used in an emergency and preventative manner through reducing overall household costs. In particular, we commend the Council for activity such as G Heat (home energy advice), the extension of the provision of free school meals and approaches to reduce holiday hunger and costs associated with school attendance.

Glasgow City Council is already supporting the Scottish Living Wage campaign as a step to reducing in-work poverty and related food insecurity. Further work could be done to promote the uptake of the Living Wage among employers in Glasgow. In addition, we welcome Glasgow City Council's commitment to exploring and researching the feasibility of a Citizens' Basic Income. Strategies like this have the potential to tackle income inequality and economic insecurity.

### *Supporting food availability, access and affordability in communities*

Providing access to food, either directly through food parcels or through cash payments, does not ensure consumption of a balanced and healthy diet, nor guarantee adequate nutrition in the longer term. The individual experience of food poverty can be understood as food *insecurity* however we should also include in the scope a wider issue of food *security* that involves understanding how as a city Glasgow can ensure "all people, at all times, have physical, economic and social access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"<sup>22</sup>. A focus on food security would involve supporting activity which sought to make high quality, healthy food more plentiful in the city in a manner which considers benefits to individuals, communities and the city in terms of health, social, environmental and economic gains. Such an approach would align with Glasgow City Council's Community Plan<sup>23</sup> including the Resilient Communities project and Fairer More Equal Glasgow campaign.

Various models for this already exist, such as *Your Local Pantry*<sup>24</sup>, set up by *Church Action on Poverty*<sup>25</sup>. Your Local Pantry helps to set up community co-operative stores, providing a membership scheme that enables people's money to go further by reducing shopping bills while also providing support and advice.

Focusing on food security also involves a widening of scope away from the purchase and consumption of food to its production, transportation and procurement through the considerable public sector food spend in the city. One of the city's assets is the large and expanding number of food producers, growers, farmers and projects currently on the margins of the food economy but which have led the way in operationalising more sustainable, local and holistic approaches to the food system. In doing so, such projects provide not only solutions to hunger but also to employability and inclusive economic growth, remediation of vacant and derelict land, community and connectedness and options for the city to utilise in facing and addressing environmental challenges.

---

<sup>19</sup> Sinclair J. *Building Connections: co-locating advice services in general practices and job centres*. Glasgow: GCPH; 2017. Available at: [https://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/745\\_building\\_connections\\_co-locating\\_advice\\_services\\_in\\_gps\\_and\\_job\\_centres?&&aq=building+connections](https://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/745_building_connections_co-locating_advice_services_in_gps_and_job_centres?&&aq=building+connections)

<sup>20</sup> Sinclair J. *The Deep End Advice Worker Project: embedding an advice worker in general practice settings*. Glasgow: GCPH; 2017. Available at: [https://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/728\\_the\\_deep\\_end\\_advice\\_worker\\_project\\_embedding\\_advice\\_in\\_general\\_practice](https://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/728_the_deep_end_advice_worker_project_embedding_advice_in_general_practice)

<sup>21</sup> Citizens Advice Bureau Glasgow North West. *Woodlands community food development project*. <http://www.gnwcab.org.uk/projects/community-food-development-project>

<sup>22</sup> Defra. *Food Security and the UK. An Evidence and Analysis Paper*. London: Defra. 2006

<sup>23</sup> Glasgow Community Planning Partnership. <https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40944&p=0>

<sup>24</sup> Your Local Pantry. <https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/about-us/>

<sup>25</sup> Church Action on Poverty. <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

*Blackhill's Growing* is an example of a holistic project, which runs a large community growing space developed on a vacant or gap site. Here they teach people how to produce their own food. Alongside this, the project also runs a 'Veg Barra' – providing low-cost produce to local people and selling some of their own produce. They host a weekly community meal feeding up to 50 people, and also facilitate cooking workshops, pizza nights and a host of other food-related activity. They have further aspirations to develop a much larger area of disused local land into an urban farm, providing local employment and training opportunities, as well as increasing local food security. Other organisations around the city operate similarly, including *Urban Roots* and the *Concrete Garden*.

## How can we make best use of existing approaches?

### *Community sector*

The *Dignity* report<sup>26</sup> highlights the need to develop the community food sector. The Inquiry paper also picks up on the idea of community food hubs as a longer term solution to emergency food provision with a focus on asset-based community development, healthy sustainable and fair food, resource sharing, dignity and inclusiveness and 'additionality'. We welcome this approach and include with this response a proposal previously submitted to the Council for a north Glasgow Food Hub (see Appendix). This is a means of illustrating what a food hub might look like if responding to issues of food insecurity as a complex issue grounded in poverty but exacerbated by limited availability of affordable and nutritious food in areas of the city not well served by existing food provision.

The Food Hub seeks not only to get food to people where it is needed in an affordable and accessible way but would also support:

- reducing inequality while promoting dignity
- opportunities for skills development (e.g. cooking), volunteering and connections to other services
- re-distribution of surplus food to help reduce food waste
- links between growers and local producers and promoting a sustainable economy and low carbon city
- increasing opportunities for citizens to lead healthier lives, reducing inequalities in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

Up and running examples of this kind of Hub already exist around the city, led by local people and grassroots organisations. *Moogety Grub Hub* in Govan comprises a community shop where local people can access affordable healthy food, a training kitchen with regular food and health workshops, a weekly community meal and a community garden. The Hub is a partnership between two local organisations and Elderpark Housing Association. North Glasgow Community Food Initiative also runs Food Hubs in Royston, Springburn and Milton. Their model covers all aspects of healthy food, growing, purchasing fruit and vegetables, cooking skills, enjoying and choosing a healthy diet. It is focused on community empowerment across all aspects of food poverty and health inequalities collaborating with partners wherever possible<sup>27</sup>.

A meeting on food resilience as part of a European Commission funded URBACT project in Possilpark in November 2016 highlighted some key areas in terms of making the area more food resilient including:

- Use food produced locally – regulated food production to utilise all food produced
- Food co-ops run by the community
- Food education
- People having greater control over what they grow, buy, eat and having the skills to lead a healthy life for them and their families
- Understanding of need and opportunities
- Involvement of people
- Knowledge of how to create healthy meals from raw ingredients

---

<sup>26</sup> Independent Working Group on Food Poverty. *Dignity: ending hunger together in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2016. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independent-working-group-food/>

<sup>27</sup> North Glasgow community food initiative. <http://www.ngcfi.org.uk/our-vision-values/business-plan-2016-19/>

Key challenges identified relating to the food environment included:

- Vacant and derelict land is an ongoing problem due to ownership issues and the need for land remediation. The policy rhetoric of supporting community-led use of land can be at odds with the reality of making it happen.
- The quality and mix of local shops. Bookmakers, off-sales and payday loan companies have emerged at the expense of good quality food providers.
- Supermarkets tend to only sell in bulk –this is not in keeping with the needs of a population with more single person households. The area is not well served by supermarkets and people need to travel long distances to reach food.
- Consultation remains an issue – with local people cautious after past experiences.
- People want more control over the food choices and what they eat.

The report *Weathering Change* published in April 2018 was based on a research delivered by the GCPH, Sniffer, greenspace scotland and Glasgow City Council (GCC). Project partners explored how people and organisations in north Glasgow can work together to become more resilient in the face of climate change and other future challenges. Three neighbouring areas were chosen as the geographical focus of the project: Lambhill; Possilpark; and Milton. The research highlighted the fact that food options were seen to be quite limited and the concept of buying local was often not considered to be important, as generally there were few options to do so. People expressed that supermarkets tended to cater for families by offering bulk deals, which were not useful to people living alone. Local fruit and vegetable barras or stalls provided by North Glasgow Community Food Initiative were well attended, but were not seen to be representative of local shopping habits. Cost and convenience were the main concern for most people, although some expressed an interest in growing food locally or were already doing so. The issues are likely to be similar in other areas of Glasgow and this report further highlighted the need for a more community-based interventions.

Making such visions a reality (and this can include aligned approaches such as community growing initiatives, food waste capture and community cooking projects) involves working across the food and food policy landscape to support the principle of ‘additionality’ as outlined in the Inquiry paper and to produce larger gains from a joined-up approach to a shared outcome. The Glasgow Food Policy Partnership is an existing forum in the city where such organisations across the sector can come together.

Propagate’s “Roots to Market” report<sup>28</sup>, commissioned by Glasgow Community Food Network highlights areas where bodies such as the city council can act to support the nascent local food economy in the city aligned to fair and sustainable economic growth in the city. Such actions include:

- Connecting growers and suppliers to locations where produce is sold and consumed to support the sharing of logistics and facilities such as storage, refrigeration and transportation
- Fostering the city’s food culture by creating strong business relationships between growers, customers and consumers so there is a strong understanding of what food is available and when to support planned use. This could include ‘subscription’ approaches to food consumption. This works not only for businesses but for people on low incomes also to even fluctuations in income and outgoings and ensure year round access to healthy food. Subscription approaches could work in a Food Hub model.
- Supporting community ownership to facilitate new growers and producers, utilising the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, helping with the navigation and attainment of asset transfer and community buy-out which could assist communities to enhance their food security and promote the city’s food economy.

Glasgow Community Food Network exists to provide support to the city’s community food organisations. This includes those providing emergency food provision including community run food distribution and meals, growing projects, training and volunteering opportunities. The Network’s mission is to connect and support the people and organisations of Glasgow who grow, produce and eat food. They do this by campaigning and lobbying, building connections and nurturing collaborations. This vital network should be supported and resourced by the city.

---

<sup>28</sup> Propagate. *Routes to Market: Towards a Local Sustainable Food Economy in Glasgow*. Glasgow; Propagate: 2017. Available at: <https://glasgowfood.net/assets/images/roots-to-market-FINAL-low-res.pdf>



Existing initiatives such as breakfast clubs are a good example of a way the city can continue to provide a nutritious start to the day for some of the city's most vulnerable young people. These should be further resourced and rolled out in Glasgow's low-income areas.

We commend the Council for the running of Voluntary Action Fund to support children's food provision over the holidays in various community settings. It would be interesting to find out the number of children and young people who have benefited from this scheme.

#### *School involvement*

Schools have an important role to play to ensure children get a healthy meal during a school day. For many children qualifying for free school meals this is their main meal of the day and often the only warm meal they receive in a day. The Scottish Government launched a consultation in June 2018 to amend its *Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in School regulations 2008*<sup>29</sup>. This includes revised recommendations of energy, carbohydrates and iron in school meals, as well as food provision outwith lunch (snacks and tuck shops). The new standards will meet 30% of the recommended nutritional requirements/day/pupil and different standards will be set for primary/secondary schools.

*The Food Policy for Glasgow Schools 2016* includes recommendations by *The School Health Promotion and Nutrition Act 2007* and *Better Eating Better Learning 2014* and addresses the importance of a whole-school approach in food education. The policy recommends that all schools in Glasgow set up a School Food and Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) comprising staff members, student council representatives, parent(s), Cordia and local business representative(s). The SNAG teams are recommended to address issues such as purchasing food *beyond the school gate*<sup>30</sup>, an improved dining experience, engagement with local food outlets and sustainability of school food. After the 2016 policy came into effect, GCPH worked with some Glasgow schools to see how this could be implemented in individual schools. Our engagement with teachers and staff showed that schools required some encouragement and that staff required more support and resources to implement the actions. Perhaps this consultation would provide a good platform to revisit the policy and find ways to implement it in more schools in order to reach a larger number of pupils.

*Food for Life* runs an evidence-based programme providing support and ideas for schools and the wider community to create long-term change in food education and sustainability. The programme might be helpful for Glasgow schools needing help implementing the policy<sup>31</sup>. *Chefs@School* also runs cookery courses in Scottish schools emphasising the importance of local, seasonal vegetables and waste reduction as part of its Soupathon, which teaches children cookery skills as well as budgeting<sup>32</sup>.

### **What can the city do to invest in long-term sustainable solutions?**

Glasgow Food Policy Partnership welcomes the city's commitment to becoming a Sustainable Food City. Six tenets underpin Sustainable Food Cities:

1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.
2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable food.
3. Building community food knowledge, skills resources and projects.
4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse local food economy.
5. Transforming catering and food procurement.
6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.

---

<sup>29</sup> Scottish Government consultation hub. *Consultation on amendments to the 'Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008'*. [https://consult.gov.scot/support-and-wellbeing/food-and-drink-in-schools/user\\_uploads/00536079.pdf](https://consult.gov.scot/support-and-wellbeing/food-and-drink-in-schools/user_uploads/00536079.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Scottish Government & COSLA. *Beyond the school gate: improving food choices in the school community*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2014. Available at: <https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/4143>

<sup>31</sup> Food for Life <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk>

<sup>32</sup> Chefs @ School. *Soupathon 2018*. <http://www.chefsatschool.org/news/soupathon-2018/>

We believe taking practical action on all the above will significantly help to tackle food inequality by creating a fair and just food system in Glasgow.

The public sector spend on food in the city is considerable, ranging from catering for staff and events, school meals, meals in care homes, hospitals and prisons. Clearly, not all these sites of purchase, sale and consumption of food are in the purview of the local authority but there is considerable potential for using small-scale procurement as an opportunity to establish the capacity and links in the city to invest and grow the local food economy and infrastructure. Jobs and skills, rooted in the local community are an economic benefit of such an approach which can provide opportunities for people to become income secure.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Public Health Strategy 2018-28<sup>33</sup> includes a focus on its role as an organisation in reducing the income and power inequalities that lead to health inequalities. The Strategy recognises the Board's role as a procurer of services as one that puts it in a position to invest to transform the conditions underpinning inequality. This can be achieved through supporting communities to use social benefit clauses, to advocate for the living wage in external contracts and to ensure the NHS supply chain supports good work and fair employment practices. The Council will do much of this routinely already. However in the area of food procurement, all public sector procurers could go further through seeking to support and use local producers and distributors who can show commitment in their approach to producing and maintaining a fair, just and sustainable food system. This could support employability through alignment with the Glasgow Guarantee. Another example from the United States is the Healthcare Anchor Network where healthcare providers strive to harness their economic power as purchasers and procurers of services and infrastructure to inclusively and sustainably benefit the long-term health and wellbeing of the communities they serve<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>33</sup> NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. Turning the tide through prevention. Public Health Strategy 2018-2028. Glasgow: NHSGGC;2018. Available at: <http://www.stor.scot.nhs.uk/ggc/bitstream/11289/579831/1/Public+Health+Strategy+2018+-+2028+A4+-+Landscape+-+10-08-18-01.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Healthcare Anchor Network. <https://www.healthcareanchor.network/>

## **GCPH POLICY BRIEFING**

### **A FOOD HUB IN THE NORTH OF GLASGOW**

October 2017

#### **Background**

Food poverty and food insecurity have greatly increased in recent years as demonstrated in the dramatic rise of emergency food aid and food banks. However, food poverty and insecurity are wider problems than food bank use. Food insecurity, while rooted in poverty, can be exacerbated by limited availability of affordable and nutritious food in areas of the city not well served by existing food provision. This proposal for a community food hub in the north of the city, where some neighbourhoods have very limited provision of food outlets, would build on and extend the impact of existing work there to help alleviate issues associated with food insecurity, poverty and wider experiences of deprivation. In doing so, it would help deliver on a number of local and national commitments to moving 'beyond food banks', and a number of strategic priorities at a Council and national level.

#### **Delivering on strategic ambitions**

A community food hub founded on the existing knowledge, experience, resources and assets of the communities, and developed with established community food organisations and initiatives would have potential for benefits in relation to key strategic aims of the Glasgow City Council leadership:

- Reducing inequalities through improving access to affordable food and incorporating more dignified principles into the city's response to food poverty.
- Providing opportunities for skills development (such as cooking and budgeting), volunteering and provision of a range of support services.
- Empowering citizens by creating a space for communities to connect with one another, share information, build skills and confidence and access networks of support and opportunity.
- Supporting a locally developed and led service which is empowering and strengthens local assets.
- Incorporating re-distribution of surplus food to help reduce food waste.
- Building links between growers and local producers and promoting a sustainable economy and low carbon city through the potential to reduce food miles and stimulate sustainable growth in local food production and distribution.
- Increasing opportunities for citizens to lead healthier lives with longer-term impacts on reducing the gap in life expectancy.

# GCPH POLICY BRIEFING

## A FOOD HUB IN THE NORTH OF GLASGOW

October 2017

A hub would also meet the national strategic ambitions established in the Programme for Government of:

- A future-proofed, low-carbon economy through increasing community resilience to unanticipated shocks and disruptions in the food distribution network and reducing food miles through promoting locally-sourced and produced food.
- Building a fairer Scotland through developing local capacity for communities to take more decisions and plan, shape and deliver services they require and use.

### **The recommendation: a North Glasgow Food Hub**

The north of the city, and particularly the areas covered by the Possil/Ruchill and the Milton/Lambhill Thriving Places, have particularly poor access to supermarkets and other sources of affordable, nutritious food. We therefore propose that this is a good location for a community food hub and that locating it within, and targeting it to, the Thriving Places areas provides opportunities for co-ordination, synergy and sustainability. Furthermore, if the two Thriving Places were to work together on a hub that would serve them both, this provides further opportunities for relationship building between the areas.

Primarily, the hub would provide access to affordable, nutritious and fresh foods, as well as providing advice for local people on a variety of food-related issues (e.g. waste, foodbanks, cooking on a budget, healthy eating and volunteering opportunities) but should also link to emergency food provision to ensure that the support and prevention agendas are complementary. Information, advice and support for healthy eating would be provided through cooking workshops and demonstrations, with recipes card and meal packs being provided. The hub should also be responsive to the local needs beyond food to the community it serves, for example, provision of information and support on issues such as benefits and money advice, mental health, employability and information about opportunities for participation in the community.

There is a range of community food work already taking place in parts of the north of Glasgow to varying degrees. This proposal is therefore one of consolidating this work, building on established effective networks and good practice in order to expand their reach and extend their impact. The specific model, location and communities to be served by the hub would need further consideration: a series of meetings will be required develop the detail of this proposal. Importantly, it must be developed with existing local organisations and it should respond to identified gaps in service provision and unmet local need, as defined by the communities themselves. Learning from the various examples of community food hubs in other parts of the UK, which is being brought together by the Sustainable Food Cities network, would help inform the project.

# **GCPH POLICY BRIEFING**

## **A FOOD HUB IN THE NORTH OF GLASGOW**

October 2017

### **Model**

The food hub could be a physical space, such as a shop or commercial premise or mobile in order to serve several communities in the north. An alternative approach is to develop a partnership with local (private) convenience stores so that, rather than compete with them, the community food hub develops a relationship and provides supplies of low cost fresh food for their sale. Financial sustainability will also be important for the hub and co-operative or social enterprise models could be considered, or approaches where one or two income generating strands of work help fund the core activities. If successful the model could be adopted in other parts of the city.

There is an opportunity under section 11 (non-domestic rates) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act which provides a new power for all councils (not just those in rural areas) to create and fund their own localised business rates relief schemes, in addition to existing national rates relief, to better reflect local needs and support communities.

### **Complementary projects**

As part of a joint initiative between the Thriving Places in Milton/Lambhill and in Possil/Ruchil, the Community Organiser from Milton/Lambhill is being funded for one extra day per week from November 2017 to March 2018 to build an understanding of, and relationship with, the range of community organisations in the two areas. This will provide an important and timely foundation for the development of this community food hub proposal should it proceed. In addition, a temporary 'pop-up' community food space is being planned in Possil as part of a project funded by URBACT and led by Sustainable Glasgow. This could serve as an important test site.

### **Resources required**

This would depend on the model and approach agreed once this proposal is worked up. However, it is likely that the hub would require premises and/or a mobile van, a manager and access to an existing network of community food provision and production. The North Glasgow Community Food Initiative estimated that £135,000 would be required to purchase and run a mobile community food van for a year which could serve a number of communities.

**Prepared by: Jill Muirie**

## **CONTACT**

Pete Seaman  
Acting Associate Director, GCPH  
peter.seaman@glasgow.ac.uk  
0141 330 2744