

Visioning Manchester's Sustainable Food Sector in 2020

25th June 2010

In preparation for Manchester's Climate Change Sustainable Food Steering Group meeting in April 2010, The Kindling Trust brought together a small focus group of sustainable food practitioners to vision the City's food sector in a decades time. This initial draft vision was presented, discussed and refined by the thirty attendees of *FeedingManchester* #4 in June 2010.

Building on the priorities identified by the Sustainable Food Steering Group: Food Futures and Manchester Green City Team and *FeedingManchester*, we have looked at future aspirations and hope this will help inform our discussion about how the City reduces its CO₂ emissions by 41% and doubles the amount of locally produced food consumed by Mancunians by 2020.

Individuals from the following organisations have helped shape this vision:

Action for Sustainable Living.	Isinglass Restaurant.
Climate Friendly Foods.	Keep Chorlton Interesting.
Debdale Eco Centre.	Manchester Abundance.
Dig Food.	Manchester Climate Fortnightly.
Edge Lane Allotments.	MERCi.
EMERGE Manchester.	Moss Brook Organic Growers.
Glebelands City Growers.	Trafford Eco House
Groundwork Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside & Trafford.	Transition City Manchester.
Fairfield Materials Management.	Unicorn Grocery.
Hulme Community Garden Centre.	The Kindling Trust.

Our aspirations have been built on the following facts:

- A minority of Mancunians eat the recommended 5 portions of fruit & veg each day.
- Around 25% of the City's CO₂ emissions are due to food.
- Horticulture is the second largest food producing sector in the region after dairy and is larger than the meat farming sector.
- Meat and dairy have significantly greater climate change impact than other foods.
- Sustainable food encompasses: carbon reductions, community resilience and food democracy.
- A thriving independent producer and retail sectors has many social, environmental and economic benefits.
- There is significant opportunity to increase local and regional fruit and veg growing.
- The food industry makes significant profits, but a relatively small proportion makes it to small and medium sized growers and producers.

Strategic aim A: Increase education, skills and awareness among residents about sustainable food through local activity, campaigns and national programmes

Vision and aspirations for 2020:

- Greater Manchester has a '*food identity*' and a growing affinity from local residents, who seek out local produce and are aware of seasonal and local recipes.
- Manchester has become a leading Sustainable Food city within the UK, similar to its Fairtrade status.
- Manchester adopts *FeedingManchester's* definition of sustainable food, which in turn guides future aims and actions.
- A number of sustainable food hubs (geographically spread e.g. Hulme Community Garden Centre, Debdale Eco Centre [Gorton], Bridge-5 Mill [Ancoats], Parrswood Rural Education Centre [Didsbury], the Walled Garden [Wythensawey], Heaton Park etc.) are thriving and offer a range of resources, advice and training within their communities.
- An on-line one-stop-shop exists for all sustainable food information and advice for Greater Manchester.
- Majority of Mancunians are eating the recommended five portions of fruit & veg a day.
- There is a moratorium on take-aways, shopping chains and other food outlets that have a detrimental effect on our food choices, our health or the local economy. Existing outlets are actively encouraged to work towards achieving aspects of Manchester's Sustainable Food Policy.
- An active (ongoing) sustainable food campaign has resulted in a positive storyline in Coronation Street about sustainable food & climate change.
- Meat-free Monday is begun by 2015 in all schools and other Manchester City Council catering facilities.
- All pupils spend at least a day on a market garden or farm learning about sustainable food, as part of their education.
- All carbon literacy literature and training includes the issue of sustainable food.
- All streets and parks contain fruit trees and herb planters and residents have been informed of their presence, encouraged to harvest them and know what to use them for.
- All schools in Manchester have been awarded Food for Life Gold standard.
- All schools have a food growing project and food grown on-site is used in school meals.
- Examples of the recent history of food production in and around Manchester are utilised by numerous educational organisations (e.g. schools, museums etc.) to show what can be done today, with local food production.
- The growth in demand for sustainable food has been met by the increase in capacity through Strategic Aim (9): Develop the infrastructure to enable an increase in commercial local food production. (Create social enterprises to develop the growth of urban agriculture and market gardens).

Strategic aim B: Continue to work with the Waste & Resources Action Plan (WRAP) and support the Recycle Now and Love Food Hate Waste campaign

Vision and aspirations for 2020:

Could this aim be tweaked to be about reducing the amount of food waste to near-zero, from its present 30% level?

A food waste hierarchy is adopted:

1. Cooking courses integrate methods to reduce food waste including using scraps, composting and understanding best-before dates, food storage etc.
2. All commercial fruit & veg waste (from New Smithfield Market and other local markets etc.) is composted via Fairfield Materials Management.
3. All commercial surplus food waste is distributed via a project such as Fareshare.
4. All locally grown surplus is distributed by a project such as Manchester Abundance.
5. All food waste is dealt with as close to source as possible via garden and communal composting.

Strategic aim C: Create a baseline of sustainable food consumption and production and increase year on year to 2020 and beyond.

Vision and aspirations for 2020:

Increasing production to meet the growing consumption of local food was as equally important. We do not want to see Manchester simply buying local food destined for Salford for example.

- The research also captures information on: carbon reductions, community resilience and food democracy.
- The research looks at food provision with regard to:
 - Meals provided by the public sector.
 - Meals provided by take-aways, cafés and restaurants etc.
 - Percentage of food bought through supermarkets.
 - Percentage of food bought through independent retailers.
 - The rate of cooking within the home environment.
- The research also collates information on jobs and training, financial resilience and retained income.
- The research also looks at ways of measuring social and environmental benefits of sustainable food.
- The research itself is a collaborative effort between organisations who will continue to be involved in the research for a significant number of years.
- It is updated every two years.
- By 2015 the research has been carried out for the whole of Greater Manchester.
- Reflecting the fact that 25% of the City's CO₂ emissions are due to food, a similar percentage of the resources, investment and grants addressing climate change and its effects are focussed on sustainable food provision for the city.

Strategic aim D: Develop the infrastructure to enable an increase in local food production, within the community.

Vision and aspirations for 2020:

- Growing Manchester has grown significantly from its start in 2010, and is supporting several hundred community growing projects. It offers dedicated, practical support for community growing projects to overcome identified challenges like soil contamination, vandalism etc.
- Manchester City Council has in place a flexible and responsive mechanism which allows communities to secure land, whilst the authority continues to pay for the indemnity insurance and offers other practical support via Growing Manchester.
- Community growing projects and resident groups are given first choice to maintain public land, to establish food growing on street corners, pocket parks etc.
- Every person in Manchester is guaranteed a full-sized allotment within six months of applying. All those applying must take part in a day-long training course. All those on a waiting list are offered temporary growing opportunities like land-sharing, involvement in a nearby community project etc.
- Manchester City Council and Social Landlords have a mechanism in place to allow the sharing of land and gardens, bringing together those with land and those wanting to grow produce.

Strategic aim E: Develop the infrastructure to enable an increase in commercial local food production. (Create social enterprises to develop the growth of urban agriculture and market gardens).

Vision and aspirations for 2020:

It was felt strongly that the emphasis should be on sustainable food, not just local food, as this will bring about greater carbon reductions and social and environmental benefits.

- **Increased commercial food production.**

A majority of locally produced food is grown by social enterprises.

There is Greater Manchester co-ordination, with Manchester City Council working with other GM authorities to support and invest in projects outside of Manchester.

Access to land for food production and bio-mass energy is prioritised with land suitable for growing protected from development and other non-growing activities. A land audit has identified suitable commercial growing areas and Manchester adopts a soil strategy to support ongoing efforts to increase food production in the city.

Closed-loop systems are developed to capture the city's resources like heat and compost, making food production more viable and sustainable.

- **Encouraging more commercial growers.**

Business models which address the issue of seasonality have been developed: For example student placements could exploit the fact that university & college holidays coincide with peak-labour periods for growers. Additionally woodland management activity could take place in non-growing periods.

Resources are focused on capturing amateur gardeners to progress them into commercial growing.

Schools & further education colleges are playing an active role in encouraging people to consider horticulture as a career, through qualifications, placements and dovetailing with catering courses etc.

- **The infrastructure.**

A range of investment models have been developed: social investment, soft loans, bonds and share options, progressive grant programmes for start-up and growth.

'The right infrastructure to get sustainable food into communities is already there' and is being utilised (e.g. schools, community centres etc).

A majority of public sector organisations commit to buying in-conversion produce, offering secure markets for new and diversifying growers.

- **Secure markets.**

A strong independent retail sector exists, (as a result of a Manchester sustainable retail strategy) who are directly linked to local food producers.

There is a range of large independent buying and distribution groups (based at a re-invigorated New Smithfield Market), catering for the independent food sector.

Social enterprises are delivering food security for the public sector. *As food prices increase and the public sector struggles to compete with the private sector, the third sector plays an active role in delivering sustainable food to the city's schools, hospitals etc.*

Commercial growers have a mix of incomes, maximise social benefits (e.g. school visits, volunteers and other health & well-being initiatives).

All Manchester schools have the Food For Life Gold award - buying 50% local & 30% organic produce.