**Tameside Food Strategy Consultation**

**Partnership Engagement Network:** 15th October 2018, Hyde Town Hall.

Three workshops were held by members of the Tameside Food Strategy group for the ‘Big Tameside Food Conversation’ about how to create a healthier and sustainable food environment within the borough. Various common themes and thoughts came from the workshops, which has been outlined below. The most prominent themes which came from the workshops were the need for cooking sessions for communities and families, Tameside having more healthier food options within the borough and support for healthier food establishments and allotments and grow your own schemes from the authority to encourage a healthier and sustainable food environment from ‘farm to fork’ for example there needs to be encouragement and support for those right at the beginning of the food chain such as those growing food, through to procurement and catering of food which is passed on to the customer and finally food waste.

**The lost generation**

This theme relates to each group recognising that there is a culture within society today that people mostly do not cook from scratch any longer and will use pre-packaged foods or takeaways. It was discussed in detail in each workshop the need for cooking sessions for children, families and communities to be brought back to educate people on how to cook healthier foods with fresh produce like there was previously in place in settings like schools and community centres. People need educating on how to cook on a budget, this goes from working out the budget they have, knowing what to buy in shops/supermarkets and knowing what to make with these foods/ingredients. Due to modern life there is less time to cook and the value food can have of bringing people together and enjoying the cooking and eating experience has diminished within modern life and Tameside.

**Understanding food labels and what is healthy and nutritious**

This was a common theme across the workshops and highlighted the inconsistency there is about food labels and peoples understanding of food labels. Many people do not understand food labels and therefore struggle to eat healthy and nutritious food because of this. Food labels can be confusing especially around serving suggestions.

**Promotion of healthy food establishments and offerings:**

It was felt that local businesses that have a healthier food offering need to be promoted more to allow them to succeed in Tameside, particularly against the numerous amounts of fast food and hot food takeaways offering they will be competing against. Tameside needs to do more to positively promote these establishments and support them in any other ways possible e.g. discounted rent/rates. There are already a few healthy food establishments such as TOPAZ and Lily’s at ASM however these are not well known and could do with support to raise awareness and promote them further.

**Tameside Greenspace & the environment:**

It was discussed that the greenspace there is in Tameside could be better used by allowing people to grow fruit and vegetables on there, schools were recognised as good spaces for community growing and allotment space. Community growing and allotments would have a positive effect on the sustainability of Tameside, reduce air miles and promote community resilience. There needs to be good management of allotments in Tameside and good communication of allotments available and ensuring allotments are maintained as there is a waiting list of people wanting to have one. It was felt that mapping out community gardens and allotments would be beneficial for people to see what is available. People need more support from the council on setting up their own growing patch whether at an allotment or in their garden and educating on how to do this effectively. It was strongly suggested that work needs to be done in educating people to be more aware and conscious of what goes into the production of their food and the effect this can have on the environment.

**Food offer in Tameside:**

There was a common consensus across all workshop groups that the food offer in Tameside is not good enough and there is no encouragement for anyone living, working or visiting Tameside to eat healthier foods. It was agreed that there needs to be healthier food options particularly for lunchtime as currently there are only predominantly unhealthy, fast food take away options with lunchtime offers. Tameside would benefit from more vegetarian and vegan food outlets and for these to be promoted more to support to thrive in Tameside and supported through schemes such as discounted business rates, cheaper/free promotion and advertising.

**Shops and supermarkets:**

The cost of healthier foods was discussed as it was agreed that healthier food tends to be more expensive than unhealthy food. Shops and supermarkets should promote healthier foods more than they do currently as the promotions currently only tend to focus on unhealthy and prepacked food. A piece of work could be done about changing people’s perceptions on healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables and ‘wonky fruit/veg’ so that people will not be put off eating veg because it does not look perfect.

**Foodbanks:**

It was suggested that foodbanks and community pantries could offer education and support to people using the foodbanks to cook and eat healthy e.g. ideas and recipes about what people can make with the food, how they can make the meals stretch and how long food will last e.g. leftovers to prevent food waste and making meals go further by bulking meals out by including beans in a chilli/curry instead of just beans on toast.

**Be Well Tameside:**

More support available to Tameside residents and workers was brought up in one workshop as a way to further support people who are working towards changing their life and behaviours to be healthier instead of a short support period and set cut-off date.

**Schools:**

One workshop discussed the role schools can have in promoting healthier and sustainable environments in Tameside through banning food and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt, educating children and young people on what to buy, how to make healthy food and support them with this as well as schools providing a healthy food offering through school meals. It was discussed that school meals are currently inadequate and unacceptable as they come through contracting and do not support pupils to have a healthy school meal. Work needs to be looked into for the change over from Carillion and how we can ensure a new contractor offers a good, healthy, nutritious and sustainable food offering or bring school meals back in-house.

Workshop 1 (W1), Workshop 2 (W2) and Workshop 3 (W3)- Key themes:

**The lost generation:**

Cooking from scratch- education and teaching people how to cook from scratch, have family or community cooking lessons. People are brought up on unhealthy food, pre-packaged and often high fat, sugar and salt foods. Takeaway’s used to be a treat but people now have one often/every day and see takeaways as the norm for meals. The balance has been lost and there is an imbalance of unhealthier eating and options. (W1) (W2)

Time to cook- working life and people circumstances e.g. single working mum/dad may not have time to cook when they get in from work or may not be aware of how to cook healthy and nutritious food when they are time limited/making the most out of time and cooking products e.g. slow cookers. (W1)

Value of food- people no longer eat together as a family or community. Food used to be used to bring people together from preparing, cooking to eating and this needs bringing back. Food can bring people together again. (W1)

Support people to save money by teaching them how to cook healthy and nutritious food from scratch. (W1) (W2)

Understanding not all packaged ready meals etc. are servings for 1 person. (W2)

How to cook healthy for 1 person if this is a single person living alone (reduces over-eating and better portion control). (W2)

Portion control. (W2)

Food needs to be affordable for all and people need educating around budgets and what healthy food they can buy with their budget and making meals stretch. (W2)

People need educating and supporting about how to cook on a budget e.g. sessions going round a shop/market and working out what they can buy with the budget and what it could make (W2)

Basic food hygiene training for all (W2)

Job centre in Stockport do a project on teaching people to cook on a budget. 1-1 cooking session for people with learning disabilities (job centre funded). (W2)

Children need educating from a young age on healthy foods. (W3)

Cooking classes for children, families and communities need bringing back. This will also support with social inclusion. (W3)

**Understanding food labels and what is healthy and nutritious:**

There needs to be consistent messages about food and nutrition and promoted in a way which people can understand. (W1)

People need educating about food labels and what they mean and how to use these to make healthier choices. (W2)

Understanding not all packaged ready meals etc. are servings for 1 person. (W2)

**Promotion of healthy food establishments and offerings:**

Promote healthy and nutritious food establishments in Tameside to support the local economy and support residents and visitors health. Have healthier takeaway options available and support local businesses with a healthy food offering to thrive through promotion and support with rates etc. Promote and celebrate places like ASM and Lily’s. Tameside should do more to advertise and promote these healthier establishments. (W1)

**Tameside Greenspace & the environment:**

Utilise greenspaces in Tameside through allotments and community growing to support people to be more environmentally aware, grow their own and save money, reduce on food miles and pollution, support local economy and community resilience e.g. swapping veg grown by other allotment uses/ providing veg to people who cannot afford to buy it- supporting people in food poverty. Raise awareness of the issue within Tameside with plastic bottles and plastics in the food chain. (W1)

Map out allotments and community gardens. (W1)

Educate people in a way which will appeal to them on becoming more aware and conscious of their food, how it is made, the work that goes into it and the environmental effect the production of this food has had. (W1)

Reduce food waste in Tameside. (W2)

Manchester Cathederal run a Valishiam programme, we could replicate this. (W2)

Skills and training for growing your own fruit and vegetables, courses to run to help people do this. (W2)

There is no support for people to start up or any encouragement to grow your own food. People need support and encouragement, it needs promoting more. (W2)

Buddying up schemes and swap schemes so people can jointly work on allotments etc and swap their produce amongst themselves/ the community to support each other (W2)

Local Abundance Group to make use of surplus fruit and vegetables. (W2)

The availability of allotments and communication around allotments needs to improve so people are aware of spaces available. Many people are on the waiting list for years for allotments. They need to be maintained and developed properly. (W2)

Look into school allotments. (W2)

There are too many home deliveries of fast food, this is bad for the environment and also health of population. If home deliveries is the way forward, could there be healthier food choices for deliveries?

**Food offer in Tameside:**

Food offer is not good enough as it isn’t healthy from both shops, supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and fast food outlets. (W1) (W2) (W3)

Could the ‘weigh and save’ be brought back in Tameside as it has in other areas? (W1)

Pop-up food outlets/stalls which have a healthy food offering to show Tameside residents what healthy food they could eat instead. Pop-up food outlets/stalls to promote businesses in other towns within Tameside to raise their profile and increase promotion. (W1)

Vegetarian and vegan roadshow to promote healthier ways of eating and alternatives to meat through local businesses holding roadshow. This can look at increasing the health of population, reducing environmental impact, support the local economy and address issues like the living wage. (W1)

Not enough vegetarian or vegan food offerings. Hyde has ‘Vedic’ on Market Street, Lily’s/ASM, TOPAZ, Veggie Vibez is that all we have? (W2)

Lack of education and money in Tameside is reflected in the food offering. The food offering is mainly what people who are educated and can spend money would choose to each regularly. Chorlton and other areas have more healthy fresh produce and food offerings compared to Tameside. (W2)

Tameside’s lunch time offering for workers and students in the town is poor, it is all cheap fast food meal deals, there are no healthy pasta/salad bars with lunchtime offers. There is nothing to encourage young people to make healthier choices in our towns. (W2)

Unhealthy foods tend to be more appealing and attractive, Tameside needs to promote healthier foods and make them appeal to more. (W3)

Healthier catering tends to be more expensive. (W3)

**Shops and supermarkets:**

Customers only want ‘perfect’ looking vegetables leading to shops only selecting veg which will sell. Work to be done around changing perceptions of fruit and veg and ‘wonky veg’ to stop food being wasted which could be used. (W1)

Healthy food needs to be affordable for all. (W2) (W3)

Healthier food and options are always more expensive and in smaller quantities/sizes. (W3)

Supermarkets need to promote healthier foods more or have offers on healthier foods like they do for unhealthy foods. Tesco are good with their free fruit for children in store but this needs to be replicated across Tameside in all other supermarkets. (W3)

**Foodbanks:**

Foodbanks to support people receiving packages with cooking healthier foods with what they receive and how to cook them e.g. recipe cards in the food parcels. (W2)

Community pantries and foodbanks/food groups to educate people on cooking healthier with the foods given. (W2)

**Be Well Tameside:**

Be Well Tameside to work with clients for longer than they do now e.g. 12 months or longer as people can start to make change but need more support. (W3)

**Schools:**

All schools to ban pupils bringing in food and drink high in fat salt and sugars. (W3)

School catering in Tameside is very poor and has no nutritional value, this needs looking into especially now there will be a new contract to replace Carillion. Nutrition of school meals is bad when school catering is contracted as it is all down to cost. Catering needs to be brought back in-house. (W3)

Children need educating from a young age on healthy food. (W3)