

# WIRRAL SHADOW HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

<b>Meeting Date</b>	13 March 2013	<b>Agenda Item</b>	6
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<b>Report Title</b>	Wirral Food Plan – A proposal
<b>Responsible Board Member</b>	Director of Public Health

Link To Shadow HWB Function	Board development				x		
	JSNA/JHWS				x		
	Health and social care integrated commissioning or provision						
Equality Impact Assessment Required & Attached		Yes		No		N/A	x
Purpose	For approval	x	To note		To assure		

<b>Summary of Paper</b>	The purpose of this report is to outline the rationale for, and to propose the development of, a Food Plan for Wirral.		
<b>Financial Implications</b>	Total financial implication	New investment required	Source of investment (e.g. name of budget)
	£ N/A	£	£
<b>Risks and Preventive Measures</b>	The impact of food on the health of the local population and environment is significant. Proactively and positively addressing the food system and culture is complex. This proposal adopts a broad perspective which advocates infrastructure and policy as a means to influence outcomes rather than a reliance on services or issue led responses.		
<b>Details of Any Public/Patient/Service User Engagement</b>	Any subsequent development of a Wirral Food Plan would need to engage representatives from across Wirral including the community, partner public and third sector organisations as well as relevant private commercial interests in Wirral.		
<b>Recommendations/Next Steps</b>	The Board is asked to consider endorsing the development of a Wirral Food Plan.		

<b>Report History</b>		
Submitted to:	Date:	Summary of outcome:
<b>List of Appendices</b>		

<b>Publish On Website</b>	Yes	x	<b>Private Business</b>	Yes	
	No			No	x

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# **Wirral Food Plan – A proposal**

## **1. Background**

Food is an intimate and integral part of daily life. However, there are long standing concerns about environmental inefficiency in the food system, economic vulnerabilities, the role of food in health and inequalities; and most recently the integrity of food production. Access, availability, quality and cultural attitudes to food impact unequivocally on both the health of the population and the local environment. Furthermore since the start of the global recession, food poverty has increased significantly resulting in the emergence of a UK wide network of food banks. It is anticipated that the imminent programme of welfare reform will further exacerbate the problem.

This paper outlines a proposal for the development of a Food Plan for Wirral. It advocates a broader perspective to food issues linking health, health inequalities, the local environment and local economy; focusing on addressing 'upstream' causes rather than issue led responses and treatment services.

## **2. Introduction**

A poor diet is directly related to coronary heart disease, obesity and some cancers (e.g. bowel, oesophageal, gastric, oral and breast) and the food system is a major environmental threat locally and internationally. In Wirral, CVD is a major contributor to premature deaths and is a leading cause of health inequalities. Rates of overweight and obesity amongst children and adults in Wirral are higher than the England average and of the six main causes of death in Wirral, cancer accounts for the most deaths in both men and women.

Older people and young families, especially those on low incomes, are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impact of food culture on health. In Wirral, the local food bank has supported 6177 residents since its inception last year. Just over one in three of these recipients are children, providing real evidence of the levels of food poverty locally.

Food, and its relationship to the population and environment, is however multifaceted and requires an approach which appreciates this complexity. A local food plan can transform food culture, enabling economic growth and prosperity as well as improving population health.

## **3. Wirral Food Plan - Principles**

The Wirral Food Plan would focus on fostering a healthy food culture built on a sustainable local food system. This ambition relates to the priorities of the HWB and contributes to the aspirations of key stakeholder organisations including the Local Authority and Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group. Approaches to achieving this include:

- Increasing awareness of healthy and sustainable food, including food growing, budgeting and cooking skills.
- Increasing community food enterprise models.
- Increasing the availability of sustainable food with local enterprise.

- Ensuring the Public Sector leads by example.
- Transforming food culture through the role of planning in food access, retail food diversity and the creation of new growing spaces.
- Protecting key infrastructure for local food supply.
- Increasing markets for local food producers.
- Redistributing, recycling and composting food waste.

Mirroring the broad perspective of such a plan, and recognising the challenges inherent to the current economic climate, a wide range of local stakeholders would be engaged to develop the plan, its vision and to deliver its objectives.

#### **4. Next Steps**

The Board is asked to consider this proposal and endorse the development of a plan sponsored by all Board representatives. In taking forward the principles of this plan, a consultation event is proposed and will engage with a wide range of stakeholders from across Wirral working with neighbourhoods to identify gaps and action tailored to local communities.