**Healthier and Resilient Food Systems - Case Study**

The YH Healthier and Resilient Food Systems Network is creating a repository of case studies from different local authorities and organisations to showcase how they have approached development of a local sustainable food system, or any single aspect of one, including tackling food insecurity. In creating and promoting the repository, we want to give local authorities and wider stakeholders the opportunity to learn from each other by sharing good practice and lessons learned in relation to developing a sustainable food system.

Please use the case study template below and return to Nicola.smith@dhsc.gov.uk

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| **Your Details** |
| **Organisation** | Bradford Council  |
| **Name** | Ameela Iles |
| **Job Title** | Public Health Specialist |
| **Contact details****(if happy to be contacted by other organisations)** |  |
| **Case Study** All case studies should be written with a view to share learning that would benefit any organisation looking to carry out something similar. |
| **Background/Context**What was the current situation? What is the problem/issue? What is the reason for the change? |
| * The need for a food strategy came into place mainly due to the food crisis and inequalities sharpening at the height of the pandemic. Local research conducted by The University of York to map community food assets in Bradford district during the first lockdown showed that food aid services experienced multiple challenges in responding to increased demand during the first lockdown
* Unhealthy food and rising obesity levels were also key drivers.
* There was no food partnership in place, other than our local ‘Feeding Britain’ partnership, focused on food poverty.
* We didn’t have a clear idea of who are the full range of key partners across the food system were
* Our first step was to engage with partners across the system to agree a vision and strategy on how we can make food more accessible, affordable and sustainable for all people across the District
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| **Solution: how does it work? What was involved?**Please explain what changes you have implemented, core activities and who is involved.  |
| * We invited key players from the Council (Revenues and Benefits, Policy, Education, Economic recovery, Asset management) and across the system (Credit Union, Social Housing, OHID, Food Bank Network, Academic partners, VCS Assembly, Nutritionists, Dieticians) to join our Bradford Good Food Strategy Group
* Through a series of meetings (scheduled every 5 weeks) we discussed and agreed guiding principles, a shared vision and key objectives for the District and had presentations on existing projects at some meetings.
* Meetings were led by the Public Health Consultant with a lead for nutrition, healthy weight and the broader ‘Living Well’ remit, and chaired by the member of the Council Executive with the lead for Food who has a keen interest in tackling food insecurities, and also chairs our Living Well Health and Wellbeing Board.
* One Public Health Specialist and one Senior Public Health Specialist supported with reviewing minutes and actions, engaging with stakeholders on the importance of the food strategy, and gathering local insights and knowledge to help inform key needs and serve as a starting point for discussions and developing draft material based on discussions.
* One Admin colleague supported with the minutes, action tracker and calendar invites
* Upon agreement of 4 key objectives, it was agreed to separate members into 4 task and finish groups to help work through a high level action plan of how we were going to achieve our objectives. We agreed whole-group touchdowns between workshops to ensure the necessary links were made
* It was agreed that external chairs were needed for each group to help raise the profile, minimise bias and bring a wider perspective to discussions. We managed to secure a Public Health Consultant from OHID, a principal dietician from Bradford Teaching Hospitals, a senior manager from our largest social housing provider and a member from the Sustainability Development Partnership
* We worked with an Evaluation Officer to understand how to work through a logic model in our Task and Finish workshops and facilitate discussions
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| **What has been the impact of this work?** Please summarise any outcomes/outputs or the intended objective of this work. |
| * Through partnership working, we have developed a draft Good Food Strategy for the District which is about to go through a wider round of engagement
* We have built and strengthened existing relationships with key stakeholders from across the food system
* We have developed high-level plans on how we will achieve our key objectives: creating an creating well culture, tackling food insecurities, community led growing and a sustainable food system for all
* This work has helped drive the next stage of the strategy and its implementation
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| **What has helped this work to be successful?** Please highlight any success factors relevant to an organisation looking to implement something similar.  |
| * Local (but senior) Councillor to chair meetings and help raise the profile of food system issues across the District
* External chairs to challenge ideas/processes and bring different perspectives and opportunities
* Following a framework (logic model) to guide discussions and help get us from A to B
* Virtual meetings to allow for national colleagues to join
* We arranged speakers/presentations for the meetings of what is happening across the district to better our understanding of current projects and mapping work
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| **Were there any challenges? If yes, how were these mitigated?** Please highlight any challenges and ways to overcome, minimise these or avoid from the outset. |
| * Engagement with stakeholders: Public Health Specialist and Senior Public Health Specialistheld multiple drop-in sessions and requested 1-1 20-min virtual meetings to discuss the aims of the strategy, we sent a mass email out to partner organisations asking for suggested contacts to join the discussions
* Data around food is limited: turned this to one of our key actions > exploring ways of measuring and standardizing data around food. Did not let this hinder discussion
* Limited knowledge/networks on how to take some actions forward: Viewed the Strategy as a live document that we will come back to and update as we undertake further engagement and build our implementation board
* Attendance at meetings: scheduled meetings in advance and was realistic about periods like summertime when attendance would be low
* Virtual meetings proved tricky at times when brainstorming/building relationships/asking for feedback: Arranged a face to face workshop (with refreshments) with the Chairs of the groups when we were legally allowed to.
* Used a Miro board to help capture tricky ‘all-over-the-place’ conversations
* Calling in experts from the field when needed, e.g. evaluation officer to help guide us through the workings of a logic model
* Representation from food producers including farming was low- keep engaging and promoting the work being done through all networks
* Agree from the start the TOR with members and what level of strategic-ness/operation your food partnership aims to be…if you don’t have many people round the table may be worth having a hybrid till it gets going
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| **Any other advice or information?** Is there anything else you would like to share that others might learn from? |
| * Avoid using jargon and ‘council language’ at meetings with stakeholders from across the food system
* Ensure colleagues who are not from a strategic background feel valued and listened to
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