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A food strategy

for the City of Lincoln



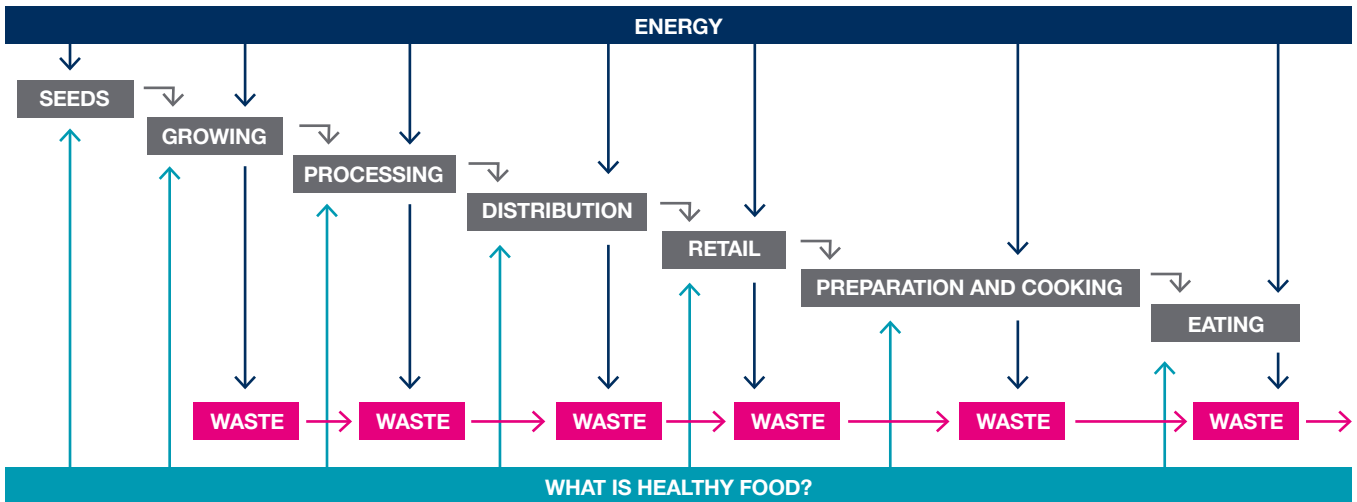
Based on research conducted at the University of Lincoln

October 2016

What can a local food strategy do?

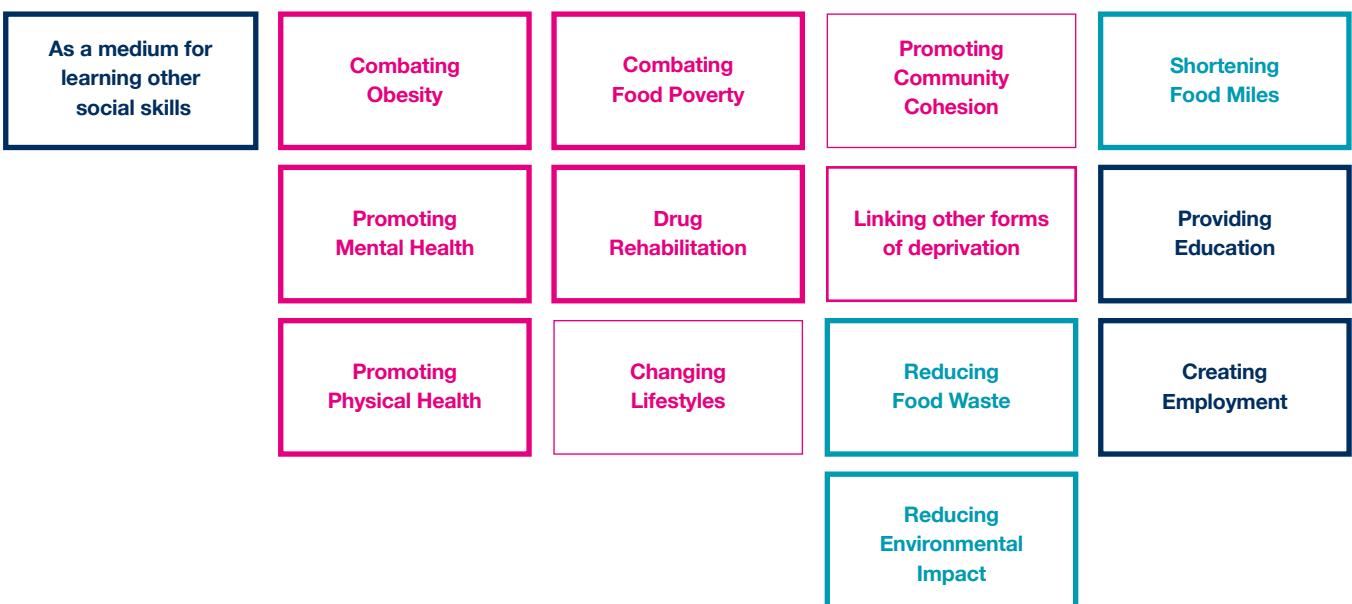
Much of the western world is becoming increasingly concerned about *threats to global food security*. These include crop failures; intensive animal production; soil erosion; climate change; water shortages; population growth and extreme weather. At the same time we are all becoming more aware of the role that food has to play in our *health* (from obesity and heart disease to food poverty).

A local food strategy for the City of Lincoln can make a positive contribution to both of these issues by developing local policies and actions not just about growing or eating food but about food seen *as a whole food system*, as depicted below.



A local food strategy can address food security and health *problems* whilst at the same time *helping local organisations* working in all parts of the food system. Local food

strategies also have developed a wide range of *benefits* for local populations which are summarised below.

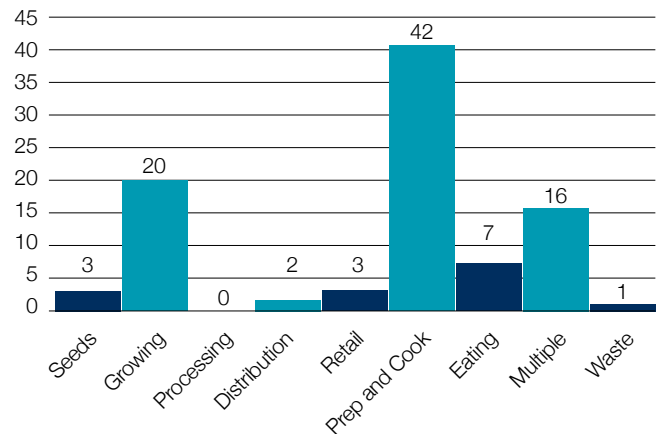


■ Health benefits
 ■ Food security benefits
 ■ Other local benefits

Local food in Lincoln

There are nearly a thousand *organisations* within the City of Lincoln that have an active involvement in one or more parts of the food chain. Those at the centre of creating benefits and solving problems around food tend to be found in the Public Sector (PS) and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), invariably community, welfare, environment or education groups. There are 94 of PS and VCS groups in the City, distributed across different parts of the food chain as in the graph.

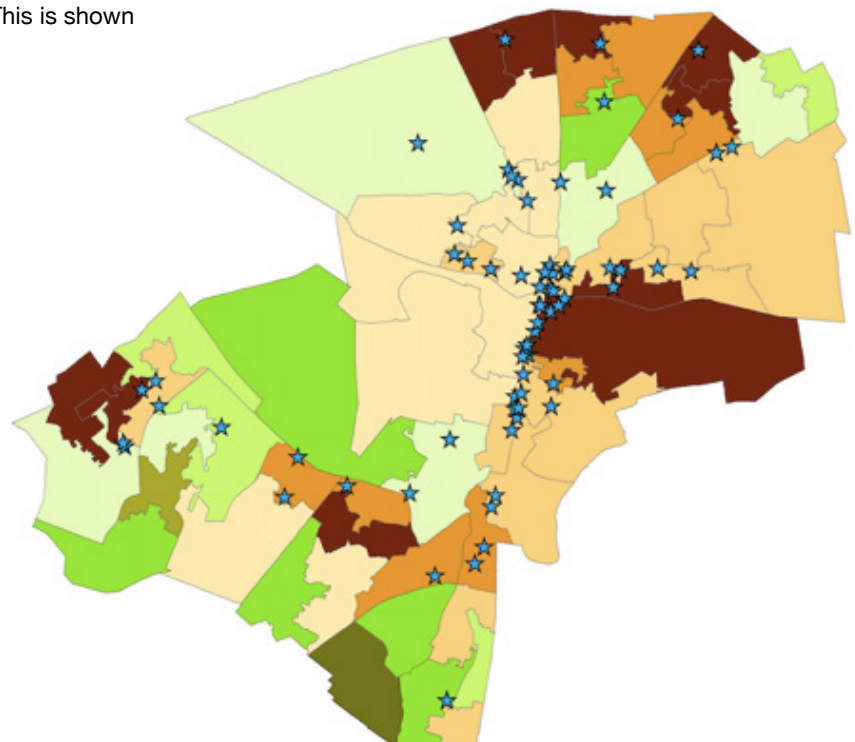
In terms of *health*, obesity is a key challenge for the City of Lincoln: nearly 58% of the City's adult population is overweight or obese, and only a slightly smaller proportion of year 6 children, and this problem is getting worse over time. There is some relationship between the accessibility of takeaways and the more deprived parts of Lincoln City, where obesity problems tend to be greatest. This is shown in the map below.



★ Takeaways

Multiple Deprivation

- 10% Least deprived in the country
- 20% Least deprived in the country
- 30% Least deprived in the country
- 40% Least deprived in the country
- 50% Most deprived in the country
- 40% Most deprived in the country
- 30% Most deprived in the country
- 20% Most deprived in the country
- 10% Most deprived in the country

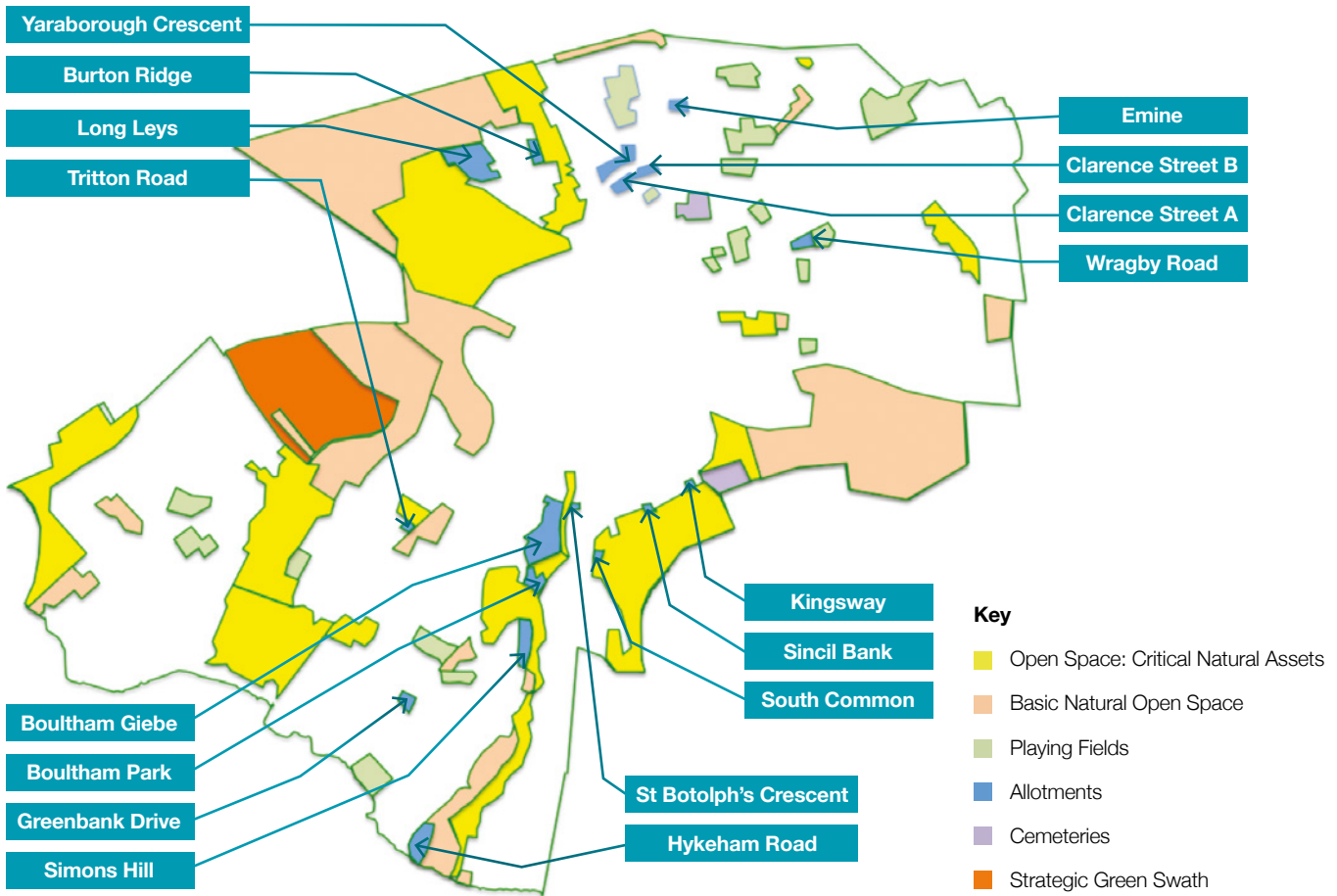


Local food *production* is a significant part of the local economy. The county has 10% of England's agriculture output and 53 large food processing companies. The food and drink sector also is growing and there is significant community agriculture within the City. There is potential, however, to grow much more food within the City of Lincoln. Taking allotments, principal open spaces, gardens and school lands together, could yield approximately 312 hectares of cultivable land in Lincoln City although this is unlikely all to come into cultivation. The location of these is shown on the map overleaf. Research suggests that this could yield a possible community food output of

46.25 million pounds of food with a 'garden gate' value of approximately £110 million a year.

Food *waste* also is a challenge for the City of Lincoln. In the UK we throw away 7 million tonnes of food a year and this costs the average household £470 annually. The City of Lincoln Food Strategy offers the potential to turn this waste to good use.

In general, much of the City of Lincoln local food strategy is about the finances, legislation and policy that support local food, and putting them into practice. These are discussed fully in the main report that underpins this summary.



Allotments named individually

Based on the open space representations contained in the City of Lincoln adopted Statutory Local plan, 2011 version and unpublished individual allotment location information from the City of Lincoln Council, dated 2009

Issues for the local food chain in the City of Lincoln

Research has shown that there are six main issues that merit attention in the development of a local food strategy for Lincoln.

Cultural attitudes to food: the City population in general is not very receptive to new food ideas: there is a small ‘green collar’ population and food is felt to be the business of rural areas. Education about food is important but often hard to implement.

Food infrastructure: there are some good local food chain initiatives in the City but they need co-ordinating more effectively as a whole food system, and there needs to be clearer public authority involvement. Land availability for food, food skills and food storage facilities are other important infrastructure issues.

Resources: lack of access to conventional agricultural subsidies means that local food chains will need to find independent income streams. As well as selling goods and services, the local food system might generate income from community energy schemes and providing a range of health benefits.

Food poverty: food banks in the City operate well but suffer from ‘peaks and troughs’ in demand. They would benefit from a mechanism for users to ‘pay back’ for their services by, for example, working on a food production scheme.

Food waste: strategies are needed at the City level to deal with increasing food waste.

Policy change: a clearer set of policies on public procurement of local food would stimulate the local food chain and attention should be given to the way in which ‘small’ regulations hinder or promote local food production.

Innovation in the local food chain in the City of Lincoln

This section provides simply a small number of case studies of good practice in the City of Lincoln Food Chain drawing from the 94 PS and VCS groups noted above.

Growing:

Alongside at least ten other projects in the City, Green Synergy uses community horticulture, city farming and broader environmental initiatives to enhance well-being and develop community cohesion, mental and physical wellbeing (including addressing dementia), life skills, training and education.



Retail:

It is not only the PS and VCS that are involved in the local food chain. Morrison's supermarket operates a 'let's grow' scheme for schools and also an academy of food: Let's Farm, Let's Fish, Let's Bake. It also has committed to give all of its 'safe' waste food to food projects.

Preparing and Cooking:

The Grub Club helps families in their own homes, to understand more about food and health. Whilst the club offers support for cooking eating and nutrition it also encourages families to grow their own food.



Eating:

Lincolnshire Businesses for Breakfast is a charity that supports local primary schools with breakfast food provision. They support all schools who ask for it in the City. It currently provides breakfasts in some 17 primary schools.

The University of Lincoln:

The University offers considerable potential to make a contribution to the development of a food strategy for the City of Lincoln. It has a farm at Riseholme campus that can assist with the development of community food growing and has a Lincoln Institute of Agri Food Technology (LIAT). There is much research on local food and students are active in a number of growing (for example fruit trees) and distribution projects.



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A Food Strategy for the City of Lincoln

These proposals address the local food chain issues outlined above directly, and are expanded upon in the full research report that underpins this strategy. The full report also details examples of good practice from elsewhere.

Cultural attitudes to food

- **Developing allotments at all schools** in the City will encourage parents and children to work together and could involve older people from local care homes.
- **Food education** about cooking and diets should become widespread across the City.
- **Food growing in public open spaces** teaches people about where food comes from.
- **Public procurement** of local food by local authorities and health organisations in the City will provide an economic base for local food and raise awareness amongst employees.
- **Helping the disadvantaged** through active involvement in the food chain can be therapeutic and recuperative and develop skills for work. Food projects have worked well, for example, for the deaf community, those with learning difficulties, the homeless, those in drug rehabilitation.
- **Reintegrating the armed forces** through food chain training both helps armed personnel reintegrate into 'civvy street' and provides a reservoir of skills to develop all parts of the local food chain.
- **Community service** (for example for young offenders) could use the food chain as its main vehicle. It could also provide skills for the unemployed.



Parents, children, teachers and older people working together can do a lot to educate everyone about food but also about social interaction.

Lincolnshire County Council



Working in different parts of the food chain can develop a wide range of skills amongst disadvantaged people and those with learning difficulties.

Botton Hall, North Yorkshire

Food infrastructure

- **Co-ordination** of the local food chain will be important through some form of Lincoln Food Council.
- **Back garden growing schemes** provide land for growing, jobs for growers and food for back garden owners, as well as a surplus income.
- **Vacant land gardening** could, where safe and with permission to do so, make the most of brownfield sites whilst waiting for more developed uses.
- **Novel housing schemes** can be developed that have requirements to cultivate part of the land for food.
- **Allotments** are very valuable at present but could be integrated more fully into a local food system in a number of ways.
- **A Fare Share** for Lincoln would provide a hub for waste food to allow it to be redistributed.
- **Rekindling 'meals on wheels'**, if linked with other parts of the food chain such as growing, Fare Share and cooking, could be economically viable as well as providing a social service.
- **Pay as much as you can afford cafés** would also provide an outlet for other parts of the food chain and have been seen to be commercially viable. They can be less of a stigma than food banks.
- **A food chain hub** at Riseholme and the Showground could provide a site for food processing schemes, a food garden centre, a local food café, a sustainable technology shop and a set of renewable energy schemes.

- **Novel food production** in terms of hydroponics, aquaculture and vertical gardening could be developed at the food chain hub.
- **Rainwater harvesting** can be developed at a range of key sites in the City.
- **Sustainable transport** can be developed to link all parts of the local food chain.

Resources

- **This food strategy** can be implemented without continuing subsidy from the local state, through a combination of service agreements, one off capital grants and commercial operations. One off capital grants that provide continuing income streams will be particularly important.
- **Systematic cross-subsidy** should be developed to allow commercial parts of the chain to support welfare elements.
- **A comprehensive bid-writing service** should be provided for all projects associated with the local food chain.
- **Developing a local currency** would allow a medium of exchange within the local food chain and allows money to circulate to a high degree within the local economy.

Food waste

This should follow the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) hierarchy. As a first priority it should be redistributed to those in need, then used for composting and anaerobic digestion (AD). The second of these two offers much potential for continuing income streams through renewable energy tariffs for supporting the local food chain.

Renewable energy

As well as anaerobic digestion, solar power can be developed within the City for community food uses. All of these proposals are capable of developing income and jobs in the City and the more local the activity, the more the money will circulate in the local economy.

An Anaerobic Digestion plant would be a useful first ‘big win’ for the Strategy as it would provide a continuing income stream for the implementation of other aspects of the strategy.



Housing schemes like this one in Stroud can make community food growing part of the rental agreements with tenants in a mixed tenure development.

Professional Images for Hab Oakus



Back garden produce can be sold commercially, to fund other food schemes.

Lincolnshire County Council



Anaerobic digestion plants can help to reduce food waste and provide energy (and income from the energy) simultaneously. In Europe, many of these are community owned.

Biogen

community
Lincs



This brochure summarises research undertaken by the Health Advancement Research Team of the University of Lincoln and an electronic version of the full report is at: eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/23505/

All enquiries: ncurry@lincoln.ac.uk



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