

Food Strategy in Bradford

A local perspective



Jackie Loach

Chief Community Dietitian

Bradford Nutrition and Dietetic
Services

Jackie.Loach@bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk

www.bradfordfoodnetwork.org

Bradford Metropolitan District



- 141 sq miles
- Pop 477,775
- Young ...26% 0-17
- Ethnically diverse (22%) 64 languages spoken
- 4 PCTs, 2 acute, 1 care trust...
- Economy historically based on textiles/engineering – collapsed in 70's/80's
- Economic growth in telecommunications, food and drink sector, financial services, health/social care
- Unemployment lowest since early 1980's



- 9 wards in 'most deprived' category
- Significant disparities ..
 - ↓ % economically active
 - ↓ Average pay
 - ↑ % no qualifications,
 - ↓ life expectancy
- Infant mortality almost 2x national average
- 29% households claiming benefits
- 25% children entitled to free school meals
- 20 % children from households with no earner

66 % Bradford Metropolitan District is rural



- Farming
- Tourism
- 20% population live in rural areas



Food and Nutrition Legacy...

- First school meals 1906
- Curry houses 1950's
- 1985 'Nutrition and Health Policy – a chance to choose' Bradford Health Authority
- 1988 Food Policy Bradford MD Council
- 1994 Bradford and Airedale Joint Nutrition Policy (Health organisations and local authority)
- FLINT –European £ for Community food work
- 1999 Council (LA21)/ HAZ - Food Network..





Challenges...have included...

- Reforms and reorganisations
- Compulsory competitive tendering
- Deregulation
- Growth of supermarket culture, fast food
- Decline in local shops/food/farming
- Short term resourcing
- Relentless march of poor health and poor diet



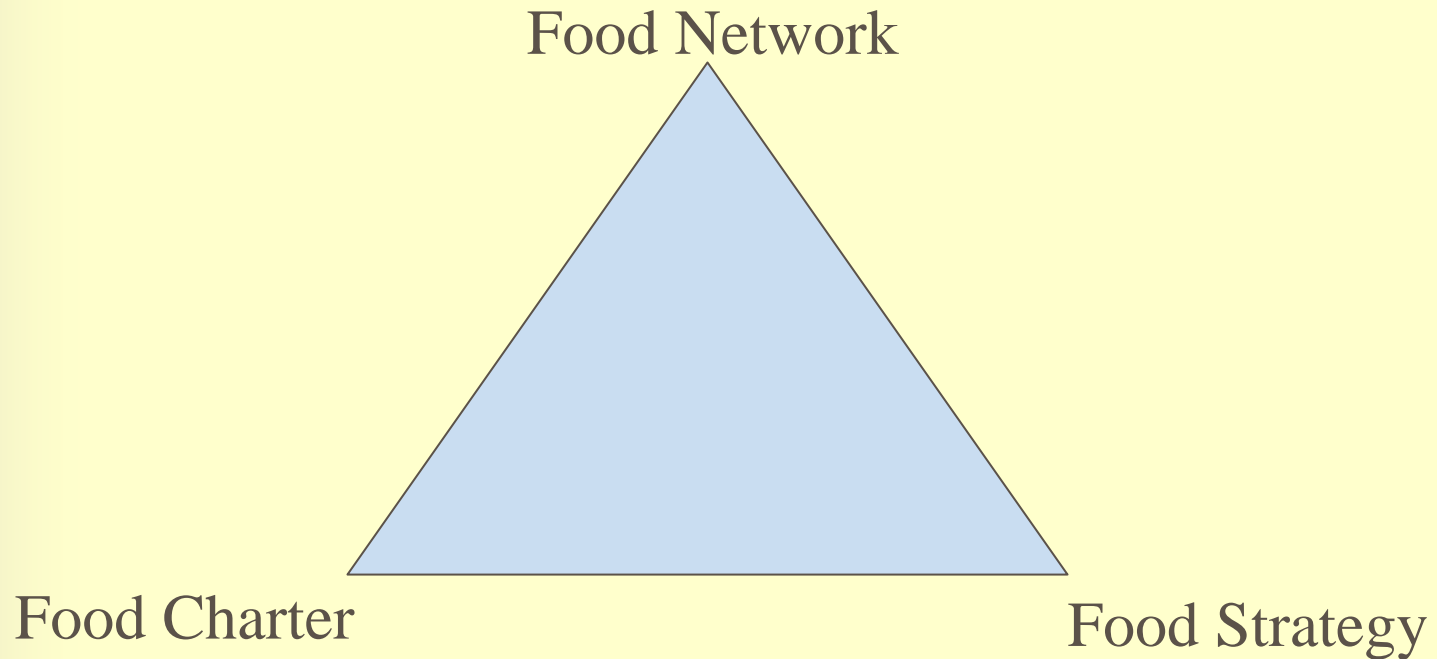
Lessons that could be learnt....

- Accessible and affordable healthier food is the key to a better diet
- Food work needs a sound nutritional basis
- Achieving change takes a sustained, multidimensional approach
- Productive partnerships need time and commitment to build, grow and survive.
- Progress needs investment in implementation ...capacity needs to be sustained to prevent wastage and loss.

‘Nutrition and food issues need to be an automatic consideration in all policy and strategic development...forever!’



Local Food Strategy in Bradford





Bradford and Airedale District Food Network

- Any group, individual or organisation with an interest in food issues
- Led by elected chair and steering group, supported by a co-ordinator
- www.bradfordfoodnetwork.org
- Philosophy captured in our Food Charter
- High maintainance..needs some £ and lots of commitment to keep functioning!



Purpose of the Network


- Share information and resources
- Maximise resources coming into the district for food work
- Facilitate communication and co-ordination between agencies/workers involved in food issues
- Encourage development and implementation of common strategic approaches across District, that are integrated into local plans and strategies impacting health, regeneration, environment, economic development, sustainability etc...



Bradford Food Charter

- *The food choices we make impact on our health and well-being, communities around the world and the environment.*
- *The Charter has been prepared by the Bradford District Food Network to encourage individuals, communities, businesses and statutory agencies to consider food issues.*

(2000)

- 
1. Promote Bradford as a centre of food excellence
 2. Encourage people to enjoy food that meets their health and cultural needs and adds meaning to their lives
 3. Ensure everyone has access to a reasonable choice of nutritionally adequate, appropriate and affordable food, and opportunities to grow their own.
 4. Support people's rights to the facilities, skills and knowledge to choose, purchase, prepare and cook variety of healthy and nutritious foods.

- 
- 5.Ensure food proprietors and encourage the public to maintain good standards of food hygiene and safety.**
 - 6.Encourage the production of a diversity of food by supporting local growers, food producers, manufacturers and retailers.**
 - 7.Encourage and support food initiatives involving local communities.**
 - 8.Where appropriate encourage people to buy and eat food grown and produced in the district.**
 - 9.Support practices in food growing, production and distribution that do not exploit people and the environment, locally and worldwide.**
 - 10.Lobby and campaign locally, nationally and internationally for healthy, sustainable and ethical food policies and practices.**



Something for everyone?

Short!

Aspirational


Embraces a wide range
of food interests/the
food chain

- community involvement
- Environmental
- Food safety
- Socio –cultural value of food and eating
- Economic /regeneration
- Ethical issues
- Health
- sustainability agenda inc local food
- Access and affordability




Developing a Food Strategy for the district – Why?

- Food is central to everyone's life....
- Food is big business....
- Therefore... many organisations in Bradford district have a vested interest in maintaining a food system that benefits all aspects of the district. Health, environment, sustainability, regeneration...



‘Strategic action to link policies on health and regeneration, sustainable development, planning and contracting of services, is needed to provide a whole-systems approach to improving people's nutritional health.’



What did we hope having a document would achieve?

- Provide guidance to commissioning agencies
- Raise awareness of how improving food cuts across the remit of almost all sectors of private and public sector services
- Link into current policy and strategic development –local and national
- Seek to inform, inspire and provide practical guidance to help Bradford realise 3 key aims...



Aims

- To redress inequalities in peoples access to a healthy diet and combat food poverty
- To maximise local food production for local consumption
- To establish a local food economy



What is in the strategy document?

- **Background information/context**
- **Why do we need a strategy?**
- **What's the potential for health gain if people ate according to current recommendations?**
- **What are the major changes needed to diets in Bradford to achieve these health gains**
- **Food poverty –what is it and who's affected in Bradford?**
- **What are the most crucial aspects of the food system that need to change for a sustainable future?**
- **Current strengths in Bradford for implementing this strategy**
- **Environmental factors applicable to the people of Bradford**
- **Threats to current food work within the district**
- **Opportunities for Bradford Food development**
- **Links to local and national policy developments**
- **What PCT's can do**
- **Info re nutritional priorities for health improvement**



5 Strategic objectives

Each strategic objective has..

- Proposals for action
- Expected outcomes
 - short term
 - medium and longer-term
- Measurable indicators or ways of assessing progress towards these outcomes
- Examples of work already underway to support this objective (*c 2002/3!*)



5 Strategic objectives

- To maximise equitable access to the affordable, available safe provision of healthy food choices across the district
- To increase the level of knowledge, skills and awareness of food and health within the whole population of Bradford
- To develop capacity within the public sector for maintaining nutritional health
- To support sustainable strategic development locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- To develop a sustainable local food supply chain by connecting urban and rural regeneration



Implementation

‘attaining the vision of this strategy cannot belong to only one sector. Although traditionally the health sector has taken the lead on diet and health issues, the social, economic and commercial influences on people’s food requires all sectors to assess their potential to impact upon peoples nutritional status.’



Suggested Policy measures

Link the food strategy objectives with

- floor targets of Bradford Vision LSP Community Strategy
- Bradford Action Plan for sustainable food and farming
- Reduction in health inequalities through PCT delivery plans



Health warning...

- Its far from perfect
- Needs updating already...or does it?
- Its only words!



Where are we up to now?-officially

- PCTs showing increasing interest /using.
- Policy and Executive Support Unit of Council developed an action plan
 - for council departments....
 - to inform its partnership work with health sector....
 - To take forward to strategic partnership...
- Working towards getting strategic objectives linked to LSP targets...



Linking with Local Strategic Partnership Health Improvement Forum

Strategic Health Improvement Partnership

Bradford Vision (LSP) Community Strategy



Meanwhile, back at t' mill

Strategic influence by the back door!..a few recent eggs

- Local procurement for schools (NFU, schools meals provider, B-FIT)
- Input to Asset Management Transfer tender process
- Input to Building Schools for the Future
- Scrutiny of obesity by LA health improvement scrutiny
- Lobbying councillors re proposals to change community development funding that would have had immediate negative/fatal consequences for food projects operated out of community centres



What are we learning now?..

Personal reflections...

- Taking things through the strategic processes is useful to accredit strategy and opens doors
....danger of being seen/used as an easy tick in a box
- Meeting people to discuss strategy and why it might be something they can engage with is essential and effective
....time is our limiting factor
- Need to be ready to act as opportunity arises
...we have the tools, not always the time



- Political process

.... Our voices as ‘citizens’ seem to be heard more than as professionals –need to consider how to use this appropriately

- Needs a funded post – strategic lead to do the leg work

....hope we haven’t shot ourselves in the foot!

Local Food Strategy in Bradford

