

Monmouthshire
County Council

Datblygu Bwyd
Food Development

CYNLLUN GWEITHREDU
ACTION PLAN



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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<p>Food Development Action Plan – ‘Plan on a Page’ Why is this Activity Important?</p>	<p>Who will we work with?</p>
<p>Although referred to as the ‘Food Capital of Wales, due to its excellent reputation for quality food and drink, issues exist within the County which this Action Plan seeks to address, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of continuity, volume, quality and connectivity in local food supply chains; • A lack of infrastructure and strategic coherence in sustainable land use and food production to help the County to supply and sustain itself; • A lack of opportunities to bring smaller producers into the current ‘public plate’ offer due to their current inability to provide continuous volume, at a competitive price; • Current public sector procurement pricing strategies focusing on value for money rather than local wealth creation; • A demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by Covid 19; • A need to address the decarbonisation agenda through a reduction in food miles and a greater focus on the sustainable food agenda. 	<p>We will work with a range of partners at all levels to address the sustainable food agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and National partners including Welsh Government, Menter a Busnes, NFU, FUW, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Sustainable Food Network, Food Manifesto Wales, National Resources Wales • Local Producers and suppliers • Local organisations such as Food Banks (linking to the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan), farmers, food producers, private sector organisations; • County-wide providers such as Registered Social Landlords, Community Trusts etc. • Schools, Health Board, PSB, catering educationalists and academia to influence change
<p>What will we do?</p>	<p>How will we measure success?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmouthshire Food Resilience Data Mapping And Analysis Exercise; • Test Farm to grow and test the profitability of small scale ecological farming techniques; • Increase internal local food procurement through liaison with local suppliers to identify local, sustainable supply chains and business support needs; • Community Wealth Building Through Progressive Procurement/PSB; • Engagement with primary schools for circular pilot project to encompass all phases of food production; • Expansion of community pantry programme; • SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme; • Extension of Healthy Schools/Healthy Eating Programme to implement scratch cooking across all catering outlets/services in the Council; • Monmouthshire Food Partnership share information on the development of the Food Agenda and shape future support for the county. • Maximising additional RDP funding opportunities for food and food tourism businesses. 	<p>The key indicators to be monitored will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in no. of food businesses engaged to 15; • Increase in no. of local food suppliers regularly supplying produce to MCC -15; • Increase in MCC local food procurement from 20% to 25%; • Establishment of Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised “Sustainable Food Place”; • No. of school children engaged in reducing school food waste 10 in pilot programme – x 2 school clusters; • No. of MCC catering staff trained in ‘scratch’ cooking – 20; • Reduction of food waste by 10% in schools

1. Introduction

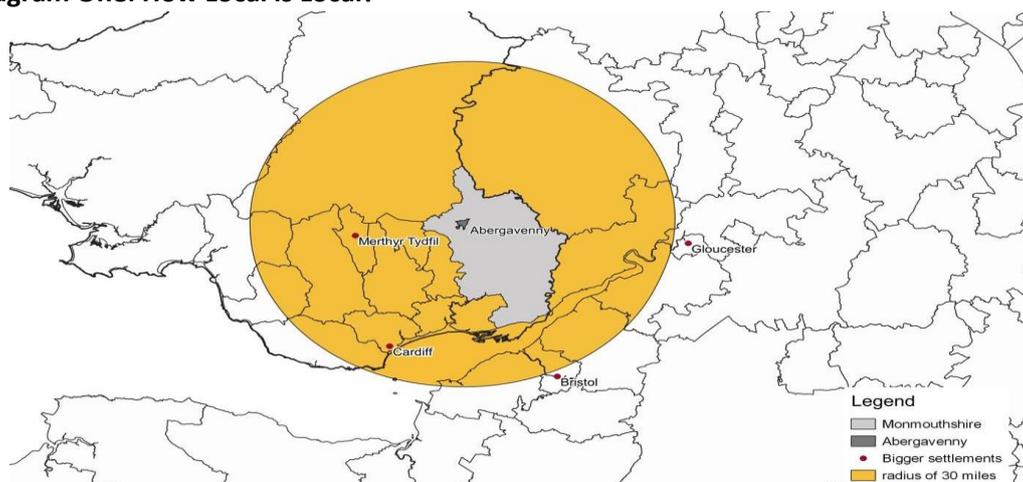
1.1 Known as the 'Food Capital of Wales', Monmouthshire is a 'Taste of Wales Destination' award winner and a county brimming with real, traceable food and drink, numerous high profile chefs and Michelin-starred restaurants. The County's excellent reputation is also supported by the Abergavenny Food Festival which attracts over 30,000 visitors per year. However whilst this is all positive, currently opportunities to increase employment, local wealth creation and reduce environmental food miles are being missed within the County's food sector due to a range of issues such as:

- A lack of continuity, volume, quality and connectivity in local food supply chains;
- A lack of infrastructure and strategic coherence in sustainable land use and food production to help the County to supply and sustain itself;
- A lack of opportunities within the current 'public plate' offer to bring in smaller producers due to their current lack of ability to provide continuous volume, at a competitive price;
- The current public sector procurement pricing strategy which focuses on value for money/cost minimisation rather than local wealth creation, reducing the ability and willingness of small suppliers to engage;

In addition, the Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated a demonstrable increase in food poverty and food insecurity. These issues will be addressed jointly with actions detailed in this Action Plan alongside the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan.

1.2 When examining actions that will support local supply chains and reduce environmental food miles, it is important to clarify what is meant by 'local'. Whilst there is no hard and fast definition of local in the context of food supply chains, it is widely considered by industry that local is ideally within a 30 mile radius. In Monmouthshire's case this would take into account not only the wider Cardiff Capital Region, but also the English border counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Bristol and the South West Region as detailed in Diagram One below:

Diagram One: How Local is Local?

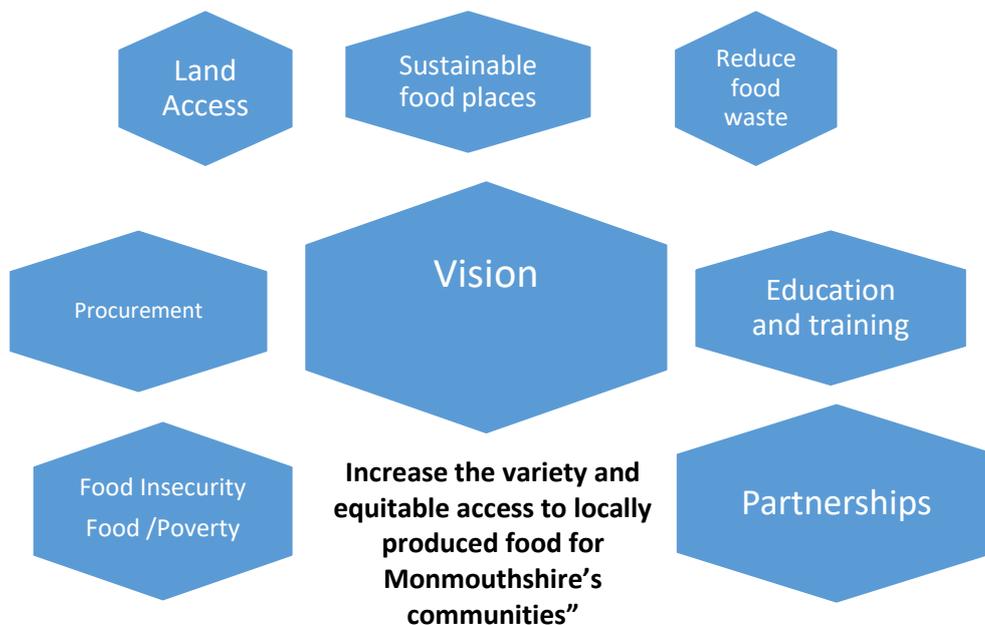


Map showing Monmouthshire's boundaries alongside a 30 mile radius (from Abergavenny) © Lisa Bauchinaer

***Source:** *How local is Local? Rethinking local food and the public plate in Monmouthshire. A study by Aberystwyth University and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data*

- 1.3 This is the first Food Development Action Plan for the Council and has been produced to identify a range of actions and measures that will provide opportunities to improve the continuity, volume, range and quality of locally grown produce. The focus of the activities is detailed in Diagram Two below:

Diagram Two: Food Development Action Plan – Focus of Activities



2. Situation Analysis – What is the problem we are trying to solve in Monmouthshire?

2.1 Current Land Use

The vast majority of Monmouthshire’s land is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last ten years in poultry, pigs and goats. Only 20% of Monmouthshire’s land is currently being cultivated for crops which includes barley, wheat, maize, stock feed and other cereals. There are currently nine primary vegetable producing businesses (2017/2018) across Monmouthshire and those selling direct to the public are small in size, the largest being 15 acres. In order to reach a truly sustainable food system, the current dominance of existing food production groups in some sectors may need to shift considerably and a data analysis exercise is therefore being undertaken, to better understand the food/growing landscape in order to identify market opportunities and provide the necessary support to the sector.

2.2 Access to Markets

Despite a strong reputation for high quality local food, there is anecdotal evidence that local food producers selling direct to the public, may find it difficult to compete with supermarkets as the quantity they produce is too small. Supermarkets dominate 90% of the UK food market which is largely due to convenience, choice of product, continuous supply and competitive pricing and their business models are based on highly developed stock control systems and logistics functions.

Unfortunately, this model does not always reflect the complex needs of a truly local supply chain, where flexibility, seasonality and cooperation are key. According to figures from DEFRA, farmers receive less than 8% of the added financial value produced in the food chain and increasingly rely on subsidies, a proportion of which could be at risk following Brexit. As farm to plate food chains have lengthened over the decades and involved more 'actors', more profit has accrued to manufacturers, distributors and retailers with less money being made at the farm gate. These low financial farm gate returns have meant that farmers have, at times, been under greater financial pressure in the market particularly with commodities such as milk, where the return on production costs has been negative during some periods.

There will, therefore, always be a conflict of conscience for the weekly food shopper between convenience and price, over authenticity and the local wealth creating benefits of localism.

2.3 Food Insecurity

Food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

World Health Organisation:

Despite the county's excellent reputation for food, food poverty and food insecurity exists. Food poverty as a concept is by no means limited to those who have reached a point of food crisis. Other factors affecting access to affordable food and an appropriate diet are the availability of a range of healthy goods in local shops, income, transport, knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet, and a lack of skills to create healthy meals. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the issue of food insecurity and diet has become more pronounced, exposing the fragility of some people's economic situation and exacerbating food and health inequality.

2.4. Food Poverty

2.4.1 Food Banks

Monmouthshire has four Food Banks, one in each of the county's larger towns. Three of these food banks are co-ordinated by the Trussell Trust and one is affiliated to the Ravenhouse Trust. During the Covid-19 pandemic March 2020 lockdown, the UK Food Bank network reported its busiest time ever with 81% more emergency food parcels being given out across the UK, including 122% more parcels going to families with children, compared to the same period in 2019. This has since tailed off and returned to pre-Covid levels however these trends have been broadly mirrored in Monmouthshire.

2.4.2 Food Larder /Food Pantry

Developed in the community, Monmouth hosts the first of the County's free food larder. The Larder takes waste food from supermarkets and donations of food from the community, offering the items to whoever needs them. This alleviates the stigma of engaging with a Food Bank if in need and reduces food waste. This is being considered for replication across the county, taking into consideration the different community aspirations.

2.5 Food Procurement

2.5.1 As a Council we also need to consider our own socio-economic duty to drive change and deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. As one of the biggest purchasers of food in Monmouthshire (in 2019/20 the Council spent £433k with external food suppliers), we need to do all we can to work with our local suppliers. We need to identify our food suppliers and their supply chains to understand if they wish to scale up production to supply the Council and to understand what support they will need to do this. As a Council we also need to inform them of the type of ingredients we need in order to produce locally sourced meals for our meals services. This will include considering the seasonality of our own menus, flexibility to introduce changes in ingredients to accommodate the restrictions on smaller suppliers, etc. We will therefore need to open up discussions with our local suppliers to understand firstly if they wish to supply the Council and if not, why not so we can understand what we can do to assist, ensuring that we make evidence based decisions to enable us to make a commitment to contracts at a later date to ensure the sustainability of our local producers.

2.5.2 As a Council we also need to consider our own food procurement, our own public plate. We need to ensure we are offering the best food we can as part of our catering service offer. Further development and work is required with our local suppliers to help them understand what we need on our menus to enable us to procure fresh local produce and put Monmouthshire food into our Monmouthshire schools and meals services. And there is work for us to do. The Council's current third party on contract food expenditure in 2019/20 was £433k of which 20% was spent locally, there is therefore room for improvement. Table One below details the Council's Third party food procurement expenditure for the last five years.

Table One: Monmouthshire County Council Third Party Food Procurement Expenditure 2015-2020



3. Situational Analysis – Welsh Food and Drink Industry

The food and drink supply chain is a key part of the Welsh economy ([Business Wales: Economic Appraisal of the Welsh Food & Drink Sector 2017](#)). The industry employs more than 240,000 people, in 27,575 business units with a turnover of £19.1bn. Exports totalled £0.436bn, Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium being the top 5 destinations with Welsh retail sales of food and drink at £5.4bn. The sector in Wales represents 18% of all Wales employment; 22% of

the total number of business units in Wales; 18.4% of turnover of the non-financial business economy in Wales (against a UK average of 13.5%) with 4.2% of the turnover of the UK food and drink sector. The Food and Farming Sector which represents primary production and farming only, is a small sector of the industry, representing 79,900 workers if all farmers and agricultural workers are included and a turnover of £6.9bn.

4. Capitalising on Opportunities – The Food Development Action Plan

- 4.1 Within the existing landscape there is clearly potential to bring new food products to market in Monmouthshire as well as divert some of the raw commodity (meat, milk, vegetables, fruit and possibly grain) away from the mainstream supply chain to the Monmouthshire plate (both public and private). However, many producers are hesitant to trial new products due to the cost of setting up processing facilities and have become accustomed to operating in the mainstream food system with poor profitability. Farmers selling into the mainstream have become ‘price takers’ rather than ‘price makers’ with relatively little power to change the status quo. Linked to this situation is the lack of a local processing plant and the demise of slaughtering facilities in Monmouthshire. Apart from a few exceptions, Monmouthshire food, especially meat and dairy, wine, cider and beer is processed outside of the county and often out of Wales, due to a lack of facilities in the region.
- 4.2 Evidence also suggests there is more to be done to educate and inform local residents and visitors of the benefits of locally produced, accessible and affordable food. There needs to be better communication centred on its freshness and taste; the environmental and cost benefits of reduced transportation; and the increased opportunities for building resilience within the local economy through job safeguarding and creation. Making more locally produced food available can contribute to improved food resilience and security in the locality, which will be of growing importance in the context of factors such as Brexit (as we import 27% of our food from the EU), and also climate change with its impacts on food production in countries from which we import food. Transporting food from other parts of the world can also impact on limited resources such as fossil fuel and water.
- 4.3 Taking all these factors into account the vision for Monmouthshire County Council’s Food Development Action Plan is to:

‘Increase the variety and equitable access to locally produced food for Monmouthshire’s communities’

In order to deliver the vision, a range of actions have been identified that will look to balance some of these issues highlighted within the Situational Analysis above, alongside some of the market opportunities identified and set out a way forward. In doing so, a number of actions and measures have been developed which will seek to improve the continuity, volume, range and quality of locally grown produce within the County

- 4.4 The activities within the action plan will focus on the following **guiding principles**:
- Building sustainable, local economic growth through the provision of support for local food businesses and sharing of intelligence to help boost local procurement opportunities and create more jobs;
 - Improving diversity and usage of land for food production to improve self-sufficiency whilst conserving and enhancing our natural resources;
 - Considering how food is produced, packaged, distributed and disposed of in order to reduce waste, energy consumption and increase recycling and composting; and

- Improving food security and the health and wellbeing of Monmouthshire residents through increasing the availability of fresh, local, affordable produce.

4.5 The Plan will also serve to provide strategic context and direction in improving sustainable land use and food production in the County, building on the ambition of Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy, Social Justice Action Plan and key National and Local Partnership agreements, whilst working alongside the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan in addressing food insecurity and food poverty.

5. Strategic Context

5.1 A Monmouthshire that works for everyone: Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022

The Corporate Business Plan sets out the Council’s clear direction and resources required for delivery, informing and shaping a series of enabling and delivery plans focussed on People; Digital; Economy; Customers, Land and Assets.

The overall **purpose** of the Council is to develop:

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well - being of current and future generations

The Council’s five organisational goals which also serve at the Council’s Well-being Objectives, set out the aspirations and the actions necessary to deliver on them and identify the future we want. Of the five priorities the one that is the most appropriate for the Food Development Action Plan is:

A: Thriving and well-connected county; and

Within the priorities there are specific actions which give context to the ambitions for the Food Development Action Plan as detailed below:

Action	Purpose
THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS AND DELIVERS A NEW ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	Raise the profile of Monmouthshire, support and grow the foundational economy including developing proposals for shorter supply chains to benefit consumers and growers.
THE COUNCIL UNLOCKS ECONOMIC VALUE OF ITS SPENDING POWER	Review our procurement spend, improve analysis of expenditure, encourage and support the creation of local supply chains where possible. Minimise the long-term impact of our activities by using resources where they are needed, reducing waste, recycling materials, increasing local value-creation and focusing on whole life costs.

5.2 Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy

Monmouthshire’s Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in October 2019 and sets out how the Council plans to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, as well as

working with communities and partners to reduce wider carbon emissions across the county. The Food Development Action Plan is an important component in helping to address the Climate Emergency, since the Action Plan includes promoting and supporting local food growing, reducing food miles, promoting sustainable land management and agricultural practices and reducing food waste.

5.3. **People, Place, Prosperity: A Strategy for Social Justice 2017 -2022**

This Strategy demonstrate the Council's commitment to address inequalities in the county in order to make our society function better. The Strategy provides an approach that will help turn lives around by removing barriers and facilitating practical support and solutions to enable citizens to realise their full potential. An action to seek to reduce food insecurity will be included as part of the refresh of the Strategy and the forthcoming Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan, the sister document to this Action Plan.

5.4 **Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy – LEADER**

The Vale of Usk 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy (LDS) is funded via the Rural Development Programme (RDP) and Welsh Government (80%) with 20% match funding support from project sponsors. The territory covers the rural wards of Monmouthshire and Newport. LEADER is a community led programme which aims to improve the quality of life and prosperity of rural areas through the delivery of locally inspired and delivered projects. From a food perspective, the programme provides funding for projects which seek to shorten local supply chains and add value to local identity. Investment from the RDP has enabled the creation of a dedicated Food Development Officer post who will be responsible for delivering this Action Plan.

5.5 **Welsh Government: Towards Sustainable Growth - an Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020**

The current Welsh Government Strategy for Food and Drink 'Towards Sustainable Growth' sets out their ambition to make people passionate about Welsh food and drink, prioritising food safety and standards, sustainable development and supporting the drive for food security. The document was put under review in July 2019, a consultation paper was published and a number of views were received from a variety of stakeholders. The review has been paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic however it is expected to resume shortly when new Strategic Plan for the Food and Drink Industry in Wales will be published.

The proposed mission was agreed i.e. to develop a thriving food and drink industry through working collaboratively with the sector to achieve the following three strategic aims:

- To grow our businesses' scale, value, and productivity, through targeted investment, support, innovation and co-operative activity throughout supply chains, and by creating strong and diverse routes to UK and export markets;
- To benefit our people and society by providing attractive careers and fair work, committed to developing the skills of the workforce, using resources sustainably, and encouraging businesses to play a part in addressing public health and poverty; and
- To create and communicate a global reputation for Wales as a Food Nation by showcasing our sector through Taste Wales, developing and living our sustainable brand values, widely adopting high production and accreditation standards, and celebrating businesses' successes.

5.6 **UK Government National Food Strategy** - <https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

The UK Government have very recently released Part One of their National Food Strategy, the Government's first review of the food system in 75 years. The purpose of the Strategy is to work with citizens to figure out how to build a more resilient, less harmful food system for future generations. Part One contains urgent recommendations to support the country through the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare for the end of the EU exit transition period on 31 December 2020. Whilst the governance of food and health is a devolved issue the food systems of the UK are tightly interwoven so many of the issues will be similar so it is important to consider the recommendations in this context, which include shoring up the diets of disadvantaged children and maintaining standards and ensuring scrutiny post Brexit to ensure environmental and animal welfare standards are upheld.

6. Strategic Partnerships

6.1 Monmouthshire Public Services Board

Monmouthshire County Council is a key partner of the Monmouthshire Public Services Board (PSB), whose remit is to improve the 'Social, Cultural, Economic and Environmental' wellbeing within the county for current and future generations. The PSB has committed to working in partnership to deliver the following 'steps' within its wellbeing plan, which complement the 'Food Development Action Plan', these include;

- Working to tackle physical inactivity and obesity in order to increase the health and wellbeing of future generations;
- Improving the resilience of ecosystems by working at a larger scale (landscape) to manage biodiversity and maximise benefits such as natural flood risk management;
- Exploring the potential for specialist centres of excellence in Monmouthshire e.g. food/hospitality, agriculture, tourism and technology

Monmouthshire is well known for its hospitality, agriculture and tourism sectors, which have the potential to be growth areas, in particular for specialist training for excellence. Linked to the "natural environment and climate change" objective within the wellbeing plan, the green economy also has the opportunity to grow in Monmouthshire - renewable energy production and locally sourced food are two such examples. Adapting to the challenges that climate change may have on industries such as food production is also important. Public sector partners have the opportunity to lead the way in further procuring local goods and services where possible, maximising this opportunity regionally and nationally where possible. (Monmouthshire's Wellbeing Plan, 2018).

The PSB welcomed the publication of Welsh Governments long-term strategy [Healthy Weight; Healthy Wales](#) 2020 – 2030, to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales. At a regional level, the annual report of the Gwent Director of Public Health, 'Building a Healthier Gwent' was subject to extensive public engagement, before the final document was agreed. These significant national and regional strategic developments have heavily influenced the PSBs approach in Monmouthshire on tackling obesity; they provide an important framework with which to garner collective efforts as the PSB moves forward.

6.2 **ROBUST**

Monmouthshire County Council is a key partner in the ROBUST partnership which works across both academic institutions and community practitioners. Wales is one of 11 EU counties included in the ROBUST project with WLGA being lead partner and Monmouthshire County Council being the practitioner for sustainable food development. ROBUST partners have recently completed a paper commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council "How local is Local /" which offers an emphasis on buy local /economic and employment effects and effects on procurement. The report can be found [here](#).

6.3 **AGRI-URBAN**

During 2016-2018 Monmouthshire County Council became a partner in AGRI-URBAN an action planning network within the URBACT programme. The network consisted of 11 European cities working towards sustainable food systems. Each partner was required to set up an URBACT Local Group to bring stakeholders together to give a joint perspective on the problems to be faced in the Agriculture and Food systems. In Monmouthshire's case the activity was centred in and around Abergavenny and the overall purpose was to produce an Integrated Action Plan to act as a guiding vision document, highlighting short term actions and longer term visions necessary to advance the Agri Urban themes in the region. The Action Plan that was produced has been the guiding document for this Action Plan and can be found [here](#).

6.4 **MONMOUTHSHIRE FOOD PARTNERSHIP**

An external Monmouthshire Food Partnership has been developed, including external agencies such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Ordnance Survey (OS), Welsh Government, Gloucester and Aberystwyth Universities, individuals and group representatives. This is a fledgling group and will increase membership as appropriate.

The purpose of the group is based on the following actions:

- To act as a focal point for the exchange of information and views on the Food Agenda in Wales, connecting and supporting Monmouthshire /Wales and beyond;
- Develop a shared vision and identify common ground and opportunities for development in the food sector as a Cross Boundary Working Group; and
- To formulate cooperative actions and initiatives which impact on the development and delivery of strategic and local interventions for the sector including development of a Sustainable Food Network

6.5 **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD PROCUREMENT NETWORK**

Monmouthshire County Council Officers have a Food Procurement Network made up of Officers with a responsibility for the provision of fresh and packaged foods. The group seeks to consider current food procurement operations, food supply chains, the environmental impact of food miles, food safety/complaints and training requirements. The group also share intelligence and map complaints to identify which suppliers are supplying below standard food with a view to removing sub-standard suppliers in order to maintain quality and choice.

The Council is engaging with Caerphilly County Council, who is the Lead for the strategic procurement for food across Welsh Local Authorities. This partnership, will encourage a shared

understanding of the key issues and ensure any interventions identified are considered on a strategic level whilst working closely on key projects at a local level.

7. Food Development Action Plan - Aim, Activities and Benefits

7.1 The Aim of this Food Development Action Plan is to:

Increase the variety and equitable access to locally produced food for Monmouthshire's communities and the wider region.

7.2 The activities will include the following:

- The collation and analysis of data to enable evidence led decisions to be made whilst developing innovative responses to the challenges identified;
- The creation of new opportunities and enhanced access to new markets for producers by exploring the opportunities for extending markets (locally, nationally and internationally);
- Working co-operatively at a strategic level to facilitate the sharing of skills, ideas and best practice between each partner and co-build practical tools to assist in shortening supply chains (locally and on an international basis);
- Raise the ambition and increase local food procurement within the Council from the current 20% by ensuring the Council is more flexible in its approach to seasonality, continuity and quantity of supply, etc. This will be very much led by the outcomes of the data analysis and working with the right stakeholders in order to build confidence to enable them to act upon market opportunities;
- Decrease food poverty through improved integration between Food Bank referrals and a range of support structures/mechanisms (with particular emphasis upon use of the Housing Support Gateway);
- Support for community food programmes in partnership with community and housing associations;
- Increased knowledge as a result of an on line training course and shared knowledge to encourage scratch cooking throughout the Council using seasonal, locally sourced foods; and
- Reduce levels of public food waste by monitoring food waste in schools and using the data to inform future purchasing for school meals – Table Two that follows details food collected and diverted from landfill for the period 2018 – first quarter of financial year 2020-2021.

Table Two - Food collected and diverted from landfill for the period 2018 – first quarter of financial year 2020-2021

Food collected and diverted from landfill				
Food Waste Tonnage Collected 2018- 2021				
Period		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Q1	April - Jun		1023.12	1281.71
Q2	July – Sept		1059.92	
Q3	Oct- Dec	326.96	1130.98	
Q4	Jan - Mar	1072.84	1190.60	
Average monthly		349.95	367.05	427.24

7.3 The benefits of delivering the associated actions will lead to:

- Sustainable, local economic growth for the region through the provision of direct business support and sharing of intelligence;
- Improved diversity and usage of land for food production, improving self-sufficiency;
- Improved health and wellbeing of Monmouthshire residents due to increased availability of fresh, local, affordable produce; and
- Reduced levels of food insecurity and food waste leading to a reduction in Monmouthshire’s carbon footprint.

7.4 The Food Development Activity Work Plan (Appendix One) details the activity, the Lead Officer(s), Partners, Progress and the RAG rating.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The progress of the Action Plan will be monitored via the Vale of Usk Local Action Group, who monitor all spend associated with the Rural Development Programme, and the Social Justice Advisory Committee who monitor the progress of the overarching Social Justice Strategy and associated Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan both of which will be updated on an annual basis.

8.2 The key indicators to be monitored will include:

- Increase in no. of food businesses engaged to 15;
- Increase in no. of local food suppliers regularly supplying produce to MCC to 15;
- Increase in MCC local food procurement from 20% to 25%;
- Establishment of Strategic Food Partnership – moving towards Monmouthshire as a recognised “Sustainable Food Place”.
- No. of school children engaged in reducing school food waste 10 in pilot programme – x 2 school clusters;
- No. of MCC catering staff trained in ‘scratch’ cooking - 20
- Reduction of food waste by 10% in schools

Food Development Activity Work Plan 2020 – 2022

Action	Purpose	Lead Officer	Partners	Measure/Progress	RAG Rating
Partnership Projects					
<p>Monmouthshire Food Resilience Data Mapping And Analysis Exercise</p>	<p>Pilot to identify key issues and reinforced knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physical environment data (soil type, crop usage, topography etc.); ○ economy (what food is grown, where it is moved to, how much money it generates, what levels of employment result from it); ○ ownership and responsibility within the food ecosystem (the location of food businesses, the ownership of land etc.); and ○ identify the gaps which relate to but not solely limited to the above. <p>Information will inform and develop programmes of work in the food production sector and will create a layered picture of both the current and future potential landscape of the county to direct focused interventions. Findings will be used across Wales and in other sectors in the future.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer</p>	<p>Funded through the Welsh Government Foundational Economy Fund.</p> <p>Wide range of delivery partnerships - including businesses, producers, academia, local and national government, NHS, NRW, and Vale of Usk LAG.</p>	<p>Consultants appointed</p> <p>Internally data is being sourced and used to test the system and look at the gaps, to identify potential quick wins.</p> <p>Weave the data into opportunities for farmers and produce an action plan.</p>	<p>Green</p>

<p>Conservation Farming Trust - Test Farm Development</p>	<p>Project to grow and test the profitability of small scale, 1-4 acre agro ecological farming techniques, to see how they apply in a Monmouthshire context – including climate, topography and local/regional markets – to establish which can generate enough income to support a family.</p> <p>Project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage landowners to make land available and advise farmers on contractual leasing matters particularly if multiple small plots exist on the same site. ○ Recruit entrepreneurs who have well-formed business plans and provide advice planning a new enterprise, using on-line models from across the world that demonstrate profitability/sustainability and share their business data. ○ Support networking and collaboration among small farmers, for example, knowledge exchange, cooperative marketing. 	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer</p>	<p>Funded via the Rural Development Programme</p>	<p>Funding approved bid</p>	<p>Amber</p>

<p>Monmouthshire PSB Community Wealth Building Through Progressive Procurement</p>	<p>Aims: To effect systemic change in local economies across Wales by working with anchor institutions in selected Welsh Public Service Board areas to introduce and embed the community wealth building concept in these areas and disseminate policy and practice lessons across Wales; with a specific focus on progressive procurement approaches. Recognises that the public sector is a key stakeholder in the local economy and that “building resilience and sustainability into supply chains in Wales has become even more important as we begin preparations for recovery from this pandemic and the uncertainty of Brexit”.</p>	<p>PSB</p>	<p>Monmouthshire PSB, along with the other 4 Gwent PSB’s, project funded by Welsh Government, and led by The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).</p>	<p>Mapping underway</p>	<p>Green</p>

<p><u>Monmouthshire PSB</u> Environmental Review of PSB Partners</p>	<p>Aims: To focus on environmental projects and initiatives which address the climate crisis, reduce carbon emissions, improve resource efficiency, and minimise the organisation's/PSB's environmental footprint. Key areas of focus will be PSB partner's internal environmental management, exploring where the PSB could add value through collaboration, knowledge sharing and pooling resource, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fleet 	<p>PSB</p>	<p>Led by NRW & MCC</p>	<p>Review underway</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings - Land (land management and use across the county, working with the farming community specifically) - Procurement (linked to regional CLES work with environmental considerations see above) 				

Direct Delivery Projects					
<p>Encouraging active engagement with primary schools with the aim of educating and influencing the curriculum.</p>	<p>Gilwern Cluster School Project An active partnership with local schools and (Abergavenny) Food Forum and Community Centre. Project intended to develop a circular pilot project which will encompass all phases of produce /cooking /composting /growing /planting / vegetable harvest. It will encourage the development of a programme of learning which will include education about produce /seasonality and growing cycles and to offer practical involvement in all elements of the food cycle where appropriate.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer</p>	<p>Funded via the Rural Development Programme</p>	<p>Delivery underway although currently paused due to Covid-19 restrictions</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>Community Fridges/Community Food Hubs</p> <p>Work differently to Foodbanks. The intention is to redistribute surplus</p>	<p>Developing 'community fridges'/community pantry programme and expansion of Fare Share Programme in four towns across Monmouthshire in partnership with the local community and housing associations.</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead (link to Tackling Poverty and Inequality Strategy)</p>	<p>Partners to include financial/debt support (e.g. CAB), mental health sessions (e.g. MIND), coffee morning</p>	<p>Delivery underway Monmouth Community Fridge operational</p>	<p>Green</p>

<p>food to the local community from supermarkets and others, in order to facilitate the redistribution of surplus food to the local community to avoid it going into landfill.</p>	<p>Hubs will be based around food – offering a community fridge to develop a wider partnership approach marrying up local community groups, established charities and other third sector groups to address local social issues linked to food. The hub could also offer opportunities to signpost people to other sources of support in MCC or wider.</p>		<p>drop in (e.g. Reengage), cookery classes (e.g. Foodbank), lunch club (e.g. Chepstow Community Focused Schools Approach), as well as other social activities based around food.</p>		
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<p>Monmouthshire Food Banks</p>	<p>Supporting the continued sustainability of local food banks through the improved integration of Food Bank referrals and a range of support structures / mechanisms (with particular emphasis upon use of the Housing Support Gateway).</p> <p>Continue to support local residents through the introduction of a digital system to allocate food “vouchers”. The voucher system enables the food banks to prepare suitable emergency food, sufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>Support personal development opportunities for Food Bank volunteers through the Communities and Partnerships Development Team</p>	<p>Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead</p>	<p>Collective team role to engage with individuals self-referring; liaise with the Food Banks; coordinate distribution logistics and ensure collaboration with other agencies to support underlying issues.</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>Green</p>
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	<p>and the Be Community Leadership Programme.</p>				
<p>Addressing access to affordable and nutritious food ‘Grub Club’</p>	<p>A pilot programme of activities to teach family nutrition and cooking skills</p>	<p>Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead</p>	<p>Partnership with local schools and community organisations</p>	<p>In development</p>	<p>White</p>

<p>SHEP – School Holiday Enrichment Programme Provision of food & nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children in areas of social deprivation during the school summer holidays.</p>	Provision of free healthy breakfasts and free healthy lunches to primary aged children (5-11 years) as part of a structured play provision to 80 children per site per day on 19 days of the school summer holiday period.	Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator (MCC play lead) Tel: 07894 573834 Email: mikemoran@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Welsh Government (WG) Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABHB) Dietetics Service Gwent Psychology Service Participating Primary Schools Town and Community Councils (in 2019, 11 of the 33 councils participated – in 2020, 15 councils had “signed up” before the scheme was	SHEP operated for the first time in Monmouthshire in 2019 at two sites, with attendances/meals delivered totalling 2,494. The take up of places available at Overmonnow Primary School was 97% and at Thornwell Primary School 66%.	Amber – Scheme paused due to Covid 19
			cancelled due to Covid-19)		

<p>Extension of Healthy Schools/Healthy Eating Programme</p>	<p>Extension of the Healthy Primary Schools programme where meals are cooked from scratch from approved suppliers. The Healthy eating agenda covers all establishments feeding school age children between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm Aim to implement scratch cooking across all catering outlets/services in the Council. To include development and delivery of a half day, on line course for all catering managers in every MCC catering establishment, depending on levels of reasonability.</p>	<p>Catering Manager with Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Environmental Health.</p>	<p>Partnership with all departments offering catering services and WLGA</p>	<p>In development</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>Increasing local food procurement within the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of all food produce and producers used within the Council to identify products that could be sourced locally. • Liaison with local suppliers to identify local, sustainable supply chains and business support needs. • Understand the opportunities and the voids. • Once evidence has been collated of opportunities and the Council needs, hold a series of 'Meet the Buyer' events to share the Council's vision for increasing local food procurement. 	<p>Catering Manager, Rural Programme Food Development Officer, Strategic Procurement Team and Environmental Health.</p>	<p>Partnership with all departments offering catering services</p>	<p>In development</p> <p>Encouraging or mandating public procurement to buy local through new suppliers.</p> <p>Engage with the principal stakeholders who can influence change.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council in turn to agree to bulk purchase produce • Council also to consider if the Council spend is significant enough and whether or not it would be more beneficial to roll this out as a PSB initiative. 				
Provision of specialist community meals via in house service	<p>Specialist meals for example allergen free, pureed are currently outsourced to a frozen food company.</p> <p>Pilot to identify viable business model to cook meals from scratch, in house. * also affects food waste reduction</p>	Catering Manager, Community Meals Team, Strategic Procurement Team and Environmental Health.	Partnership with Enterprise and Adult and Social Care Services	In development	White
Partnership Development Monmouthshire Food Partnership	<p>Strategic group bringing together key colleagues/interested parties who have a role or interest in the food agenda. To include (but not be solely) food poverty, land management, food waste, nutrition and health and wellbeing, farming/land management, food business support/ food procurement and food waste. To share information on the development of the Food Agenda across the County along with skills and knowledge to shape future support for the sector.</p>	Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Rural Programmes Manager	Key Officers, Food Business Support Agencies, NFU, FUW, Food Innovation Wales	In Development	White

	The intention is to move towards a shared vision for sustainable food development.				
Maximising additional funding such as RDP funding opportunities for food and food tourism businesses	<p>An additional £106M has been identified by WG for RDP type activities which includes support for food and food tourism businesses with additional opportunities via the CCR Challenge Fund.</p> <p>Opportunities to be identified and built into this Action Plan as they become available.</p>	Rural Programme Food Development Officer and Rural Programmes Manager	<p>Monmouthshire Food Partnership</p> <p>Vale of Usk Local Action Group</p>	In development	White