

## Food-driven policy making

### Making change happen

The Manchester Food Board uses food to leverage social change. We are an independent group, and help provide guidance and clarity on what sustainable, inclusive, healthy food looks like in Manchester.

Food is a cross-cutting issue, and we work across different agendas to make sure we're engaging with all of our stakeholders. We take a systems-based approach to harness this deep interconnectivity.

### Our process for going about influencing policy

#### Barriers and considerations:

- **Buy-in from key stakeholders**  
You need to meet with people in key departments, tell them about your vision, your aims, and get them to agree that something needs to change. There needs to be an ongoing conversation about how to go about making that change. The first step is to get people on board.
- **Partnership working**  
Working with other groups, other organisations – how much time do their teams have to work on something with you? How much budget? What are their priorities?
- **Strategic approach**  
The most obvious thing isn't always the one with most impact. A lot of things look good on the surface, but to make real change you need to get into the detail. Things on the ground don't always work as they should. Start where people are, make it relevant, and be realistic.
- **Prioritising**  
You can't do everything at once. Some things are more complicated, and take more time to unpick. The questions below help give an idea of where to start – where is the energy?
- **Resourcing and funding**  
Grant funding, council funding, or other funding partners – what are they looking for? How much time can you give, or can your partners give?
- **Spotting opportunities – be realistic**  
Sometimes the solution doesn't look like you thought it would. You need to be flexible in your approach, can you make something work? Compromise – this isn't a bad thing, especially in the short term. Real, lasting change is incremental.

### **Key questions to give you a place to start:**

- What policies/strategies are being reviewed? Where are we likely to be able to feed in? What's out of date? What's due for a refresh?
- Where is there appetite?
- What's off the table? What commitments have already been made?
- How will Council/Parliamentary/Mayoral elections effect policy-making?
- How else can we get buy-in?

### **What does this work look like?**

- Writing reports
- Talking to groups
- Meeting with individuals
- Providing briefings
- Making introductions
- Writing funding bids
- Using social media
- Project planning
- Updating stakeholders
- Researching and reading
- Finding examples from elsewhere
- Networking, attending webinars
- Prioritising activities

### **Final reflections**

If you would like more information, guidance, or resources, then please email [rachel@foodsync.co.uk](mailto:rachel@foodsync.co.uk).

We would also welcome any questions or comments you have about food policy-making in Manchester, our work, or our approach.