Food Summit:

Exploring ways to address food insecurity in York & North Yorkshire

21 September 2023

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Overview of the Food Insecurity Research
3. World Café Discussions

Lunch & Networking

4. Flash Talks
5. Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Background

- Covid-19 saw a whole range of new and different community based food support projects emerge across York & North Yorkshire
- Recovering from Covid Response – lessons learned and captured
- Food Insecurity Insight and Research Project jointly commissioned by City of York and North Yorkshire Council to try and better understand the food insecurity landscape across the region, explore the food access models that exist, and the outcomes associated with them.
- Understanding how lived experience can increasingly be placed front and centre in longer term strategy development, to actively encourage the characteristics of dignity and choice.

Project ambitions

- Understand what kind of food security models/provision is available in York and North Yorkshire.
- Undertake desk research to understand the efficacy of different food models/provision and explore the outcomes/benefits they can deliver.
- Use data, insight and evidence to understand the scale of the food insecurity issue now and in future e.g., considering the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.
- Improve approaches to short-term action planning, longer-term strategy development, commissioning and grant deployment that could contribute to a reduction in food insecurity in York and North Yorkshire.

Covid Recovery Insight Project - Poverty

Desk research

To inform positioning papers that help describe poverty, its causes and consequences, populations at risk and protective factors.

Rapid evidence assessment (REA)

Exploring the efficacy of household food insecurity models and provision.

Gaps

Identifying any models of best practice or provision typologies that are either missing or emergent in York and North Yorkshire

Poverty data dashboard

Key data helping visualise the scale and geographical dimensions of poverty across York and North Yorkshire.

Provision

A map and description of provision across York and North Yorkshire initially focused on household food insecurity but evolving as the Project develops.

People

Appropriate qualitative research and co-design with stakeholders / residents to inform future models and solutions.

Associated ambitions

- Start to understand how lived experience can increasingly be placed at the heart of longer-term strategy development and an improvement in systems with models/provision that have the characteristics of dignity and choice.
- Engage with stakeholders through a mix of conversations, formal interviews, surveying (now and or in future) and events that can help identify what works well, what is missing in the landscape (‘gaps’) and what better could look like.
- Identify practical resources and toolkits that are used elsewhere to save time or effort reinventing models/provision thought to derive the kind of benefits that the partners desire in York and North Yorkshire

Why this is increasingly important

- Food inflation March 2023 was 19.1%, the highest since 1977. In July 2023, food inflation was 14.8%.
- In July and August 2023, 56% of adults reported an increase in their cost of living compared with the month before (ONS). Of these, 47% had started spending less on essentials including food.
- In 2021/22, 4.7 million people in the UK (7%) were in food insecure households in the UK, according to the DWP. This included 12% of children, 7% of working-age adults, and 1% of pensioners.
- The Food Foundation found that in June 2023, 17.0% of households in the UK were 'food insecure' (ate less or went a day without eating because they couldn't access or afford food), up from 8.8% in January 2022 and 7.4% in January 2021.
- More than 760,000 people used a Trussell Trust food bank for the first time in 2022/23, a 38% increase from 2021/22.
- In January 2023, around 23.8% of state school pupils were eligible for Free School Meals. This rate has increased sharply since 2018 and is the highest rate recorded since the current time series began in 2006.

UK Local Food Insecurity - ESTIMATES	Household estimates	Highest
Hungry: having skipped food for a whole day or more in the previous month or indicated they were hungry but not eaten because they could not afford or get access to food	York 2.81% = 2,458 NY 5.0% = 13,692	Selby (7.84%), Craven (6.07%) Scarborough (5.64%)
Struggle: a positive response to at least one of the following: • Sought Help accessing food • Skipped or shrank meal • Gave a reason for not having enough food	York 7.54% = 6,601 NY 10.4% = 28,681	Selby (14.7%) Scarborough (11.36%) Craven (10.08%)
Worry: choosing very worried or fairly worried about getting food	York 9.5% = 8,315 NY 8.1% = 22,240	York (9.50%) Scarborough (9.44%)

UK local food insecurity of adults 2021 Estimates by Dr Angelo Moretti (MMU), Dr Adam Whitworth (Univ Sheffield) and Dr Megan Blake (Univ Sheffield).

these percentages are not additive across measures. These are estimates only – confidence levels provide lower and higher estimates.

E-food desert index

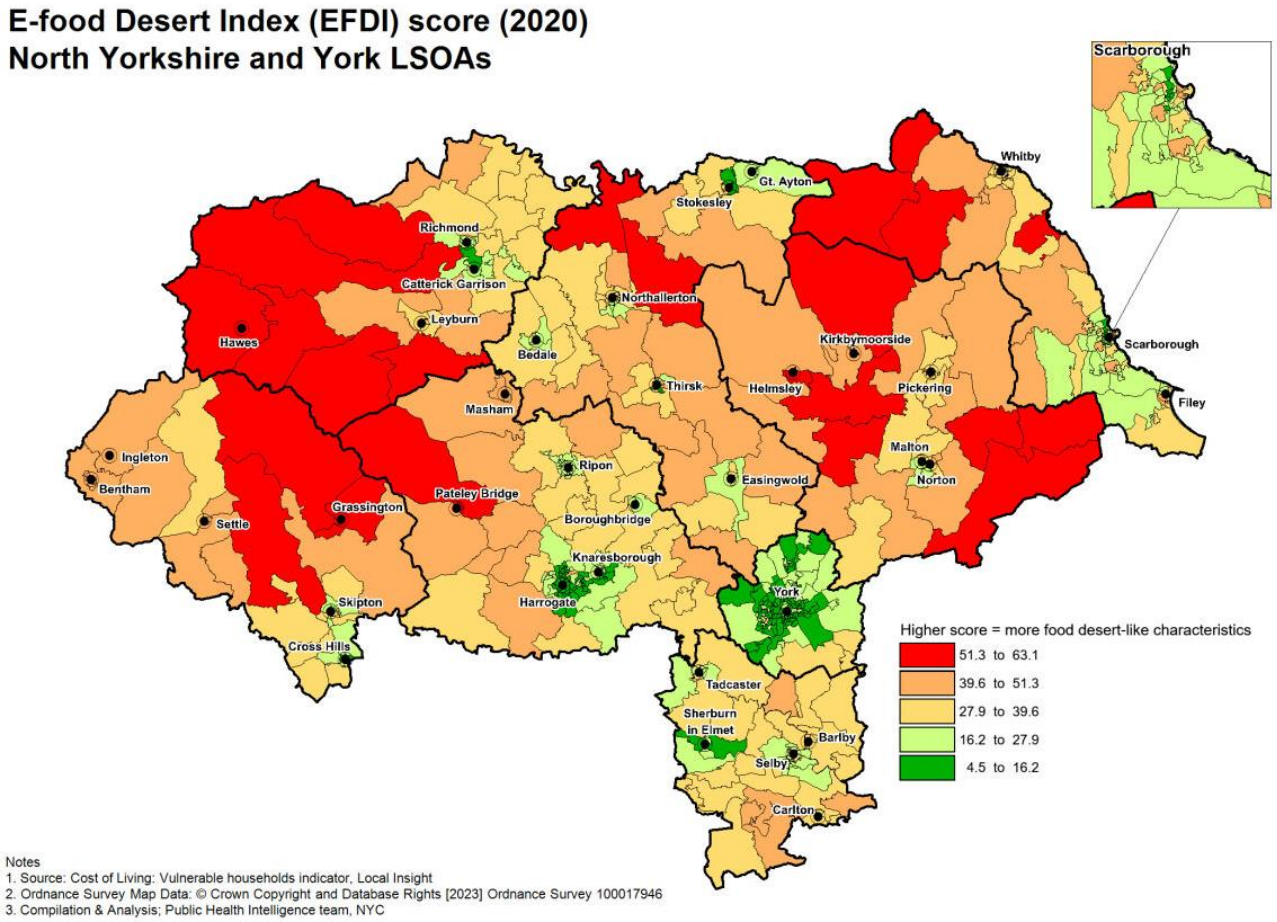
The e-food deserts index measures the extent to which neighbourhoods exhibit characteristics associated with food deserts across four key drivers of groceries accessibility:

- Proximity and density of grocery retail facilities,
- Transport and accessibility,
- Neighbourhood socio-economic and demographic characteristics and
- E-commerce availability and propensity.

A higher score denotes more evidence of food desert-like characteristics.

Areas with highest indices:

- North Yorkshire: Upper Dales (59.54), Hunmanby & Sherburn (54.0), Helmsley & Sinnington (52.5), Wharfedale (51.76)
- York: Westfield, Chapelfields and Foxwood (29.63)



Covid Recovery Insight Project: Food Insecurity

Research Focus: Food Insecurity

April 2022 to March 2023

SKYBLUE
RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Understand what kind of food security models/provision is available in York and North Yorkshire.

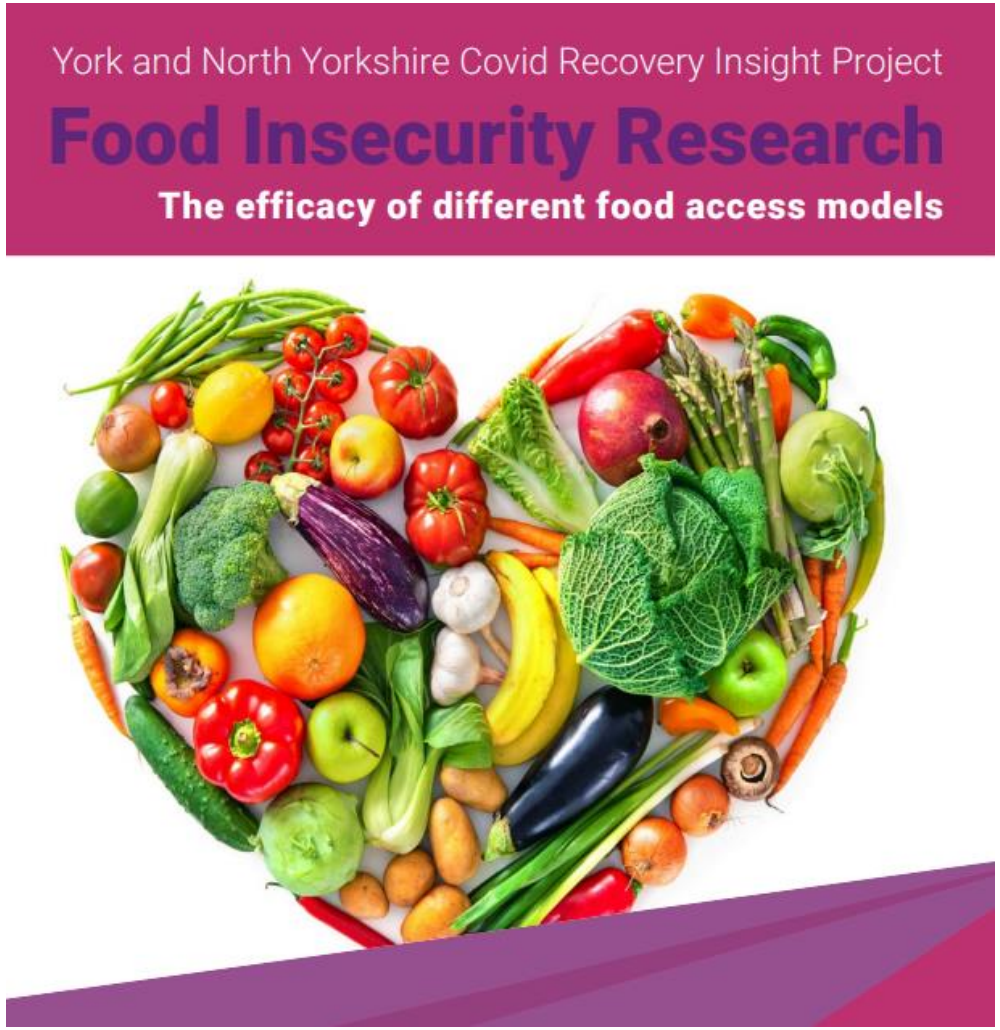
We wanted to understand what food access models were out there in the UK.

How were they referred to and described?

Were they all the same thing but with different names?

What were their distinctive characteristics?

We drew on research to develop a **taxonomy** and some **definitions** to help with all this!



Over 50 models were identified at the time of the research.

These have been grouped into 11 categories where shared characteristics were observed.

There may be others as the topic is dynamic and different approaches are being tried all the time.

Examples of types of food access activity in each Model

Free food
- Food banks
- Community fridges
- Community larders

Low-cost community food retail
- Social supermarkets
- Food pantries

Cash-based approaches
- Cash grants
- Financial inclusion / income maximisation activity
- Vouchers (for comparative purposes)

Direct food provision
- Food parcels
- Direct meal provision e.g., meals on wheels

Community Hubs, Food Hubs and Clubs

Collaborative models
- Partnerships
- Networks
- Taskforce
- Alliances

Resources for food response
- Funding (e.g., into VCSE sector)
- Food
- Human resources/capacity
- Other 'infrastructure' (equipment/ transport)

Tailored / targeted food aid provision
- Aimed at specific population groups

Wrap-around support
- Money advice / debt counselling / other services
- Signposting

Food and Education
- Community kitchens
- Community food programmes or projects with a specific 'social making' motivation e.g., cooking, learning and sometimes then eating together
- Courses and demonstrations that are accessed at community hubs

Community food initiatives / projects
- Initiatives that run food activities as part of their wider work or whose core work is about food (multiple models)
- Projects about 'growing', 'enterprise', 'sharing' and or 'celebrating' food

We found these models in the research literature.

We wondered whether they were available in York and North Yorkshire.

York and North Yorkshire
Covid Recovery Insight Project: Food Insecurity

Want to know more about each model?
www.skyblue.org.uk/foodinsecurity

You can download each resource as you like and find out more about:

- The definition of the model.
- Some examples of practice in the UK.
- The outcomes typically associated with the model.
- Evidence – where available about the efficacy of the model *which means its ability to produce a desired result.*
- Learning lessons from the desk research and evidence reviewed.
- Questions to ask yourself whether providing the model already, thinking of starting it or if you are investing in the model as a funder.

We wondered whether the varied food access models we'd identified nationally were available in York and North Yorkshire.

Food access models in North Yorkshire

- Community Fridge
- Community Pantry
- Subsidised Food Provision
- Food Shopping & Delivery
- Preventative/Education
- Food Infrastructure Support
- Food Banks
- Food as part of wider support services
- Hot Meals

This will likely need updating as the landscape has evolved since the mapping was done in 2022. The map will also be missing any provider with whom NYC does not have a funding relationship with that we know are providing a food-related service. If you're not on it, please let us know!

York provision

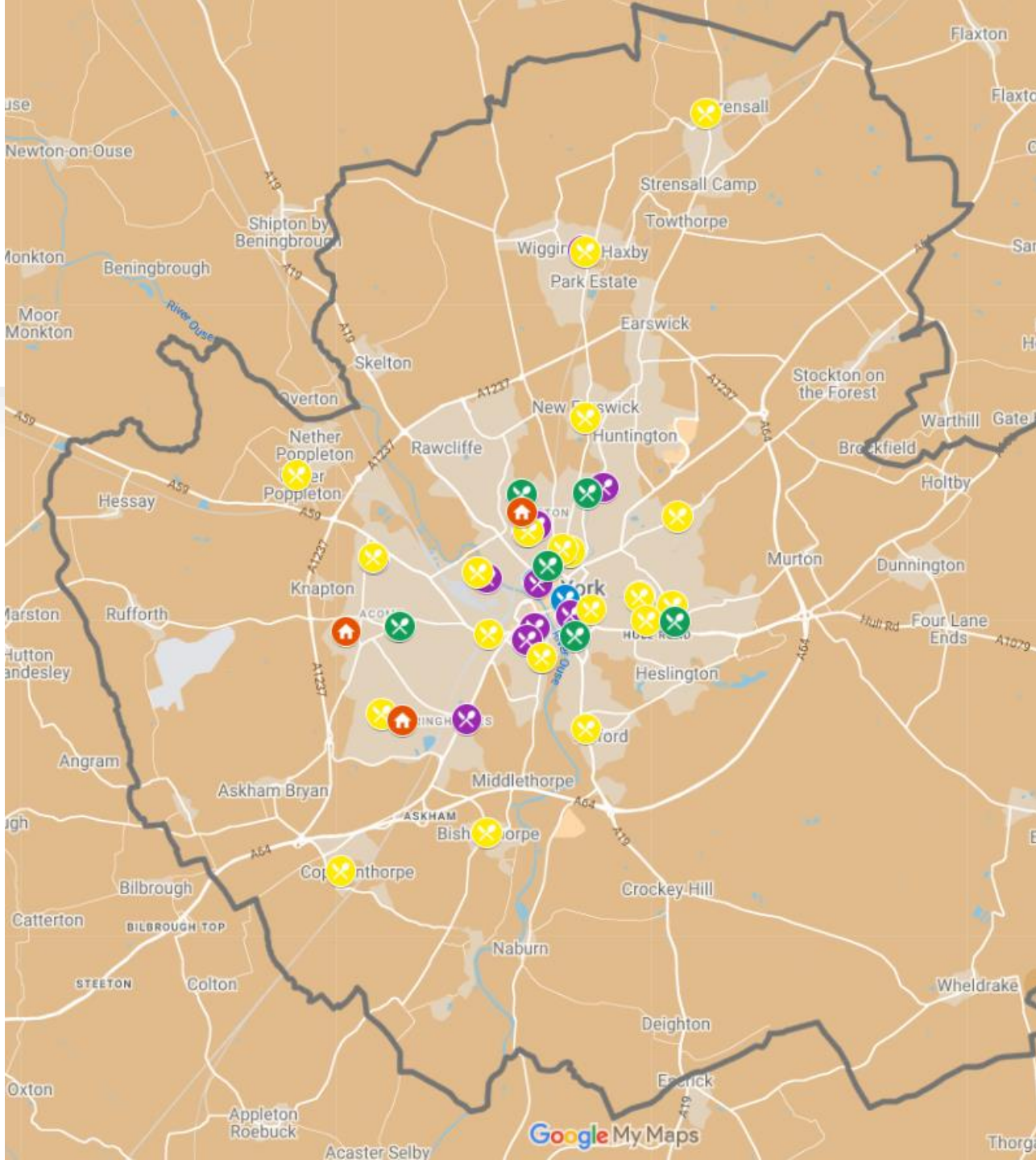
Homeless Support

Food Share

Pay as you Feel/Community Café

Voucher Operated Food Banks

Other provisions




What about outcomes typically associated with these food models?

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions

Organisations / Groups

Food support / aid providers / VCSFEs

Partnerships, networks, alliances

The environment

Reduced food waste to landfill

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Individuals

That are accessing the food

That are volunteering

This can impact households too.

Communities

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions for Individuals

- ↑ Improved physical health through healthy eating
- ↑ Improved mental health e.g., through reduced feelings of anxiety and better managing situations of 'stress, struggle and stretch'
- ↓ Reduction of risk factors associated with chronic diseases as a result of accessing healthy, nutritious food and diet behavioural change
- ↓ Contribution to prevention outcomes e.g. reduced admission to hospital, delayed need for care
- ↑ **Improved food and nutrition security**
- ↑ Access to address immediate short term need
- ↑ Alleviation of hunger
- ↑ Availability, access and stability of wide variety of healthy and nutritious food
- ↑ Enables choice of healthier food / improved diets / cook healthier at home
- ↑ Enables individuals to try new nutritious food not previously tried or afforded
- ↑ Improved sense of empowerment wherever choice is built into the model
- ↑ Food knowledge and literacy

Some mixed models claim to contribute to ↑ stability for members to improve their food security long-term

- ↑ Behavioural change e.g. ↑ increased intake of fruit and vegetables as an ↑ % of household budget and / or as a snack choice displacing less healthy options
- ↑ Changes in the way recipients buy, shop, and cook
- ↑ Changes in householders' food preparation patterns

- ↑ Improves feelings of self-worth
- ↓ Reduces feelings of stigma
- ↑ Improved feelings of social inclusion
- ↓ Reduces anxiety and stress to feed self / others
- ↓ Reduces financial worries improving mental health
- ↑ Improved sense of dignity
- ↑ Self-confidence
- ↑ Improved life skills
- ↑ Improved self-efficacy
- ↑ Sense of control
- ↑ Feelings of independence
- ↑ Safe spaces that encourage belonging

Some evaluations highlight benefits of some models for families / households not just individuals

- ↑ Valuable (employablility / life) skills
- ↑ Confidence around food / cooking skills / food literacy
- ↑ Feelings of being needed, not needy (reciprocity through contribution)
- ↑ Improved sense of purpose, meaning, 'ownership', enfranchisement and 'doing good in a simple way', supporting instinct for mutual aid
- ↓ Reduced isolation and /or feelings of loneliness

- ↑ Financial savings used to settle debts, pay other bills or buy more quality food elsewhere
- ↑ Avoided spend through use of no / low cost / PAYF (pay as you feel) models
- ↑ Helps stretch household / family budgets further
- ↑ Improved financial wellbeing
- ↑ Food resilience e.g., avoided use of food banks
- ↑ Enables people to feed their families and have money left over from their food budget
- ↑ Increase your/household/family food spending budget

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions for Communities

↑ A reliable / stable response in times of crisis

Where additional support and/or signposting is offered to services or community-based activity by the model additional direct and indirect benefits can accrue e.g.,

↑ Improved skills and personal development through training such as cookery classes / demonstrations / home budgeting / interview skills / community leadership training / business courses helping you / families to learn how to cook simple and nutritious meals with confidence / within a budget

↑ Connection to other social and service providers - debt service recovery groups, local welfare support scheme, pastoral, and spiritual support; benefits and legal advice, help for self / families deal with the root causes of food insecurity

↑ Members who participate in a wider community hub model's activities are connected to other support organisations in the communities thereby providing them with opportunity to 'build back their life'

↑ Co-ordination / local support and involvement

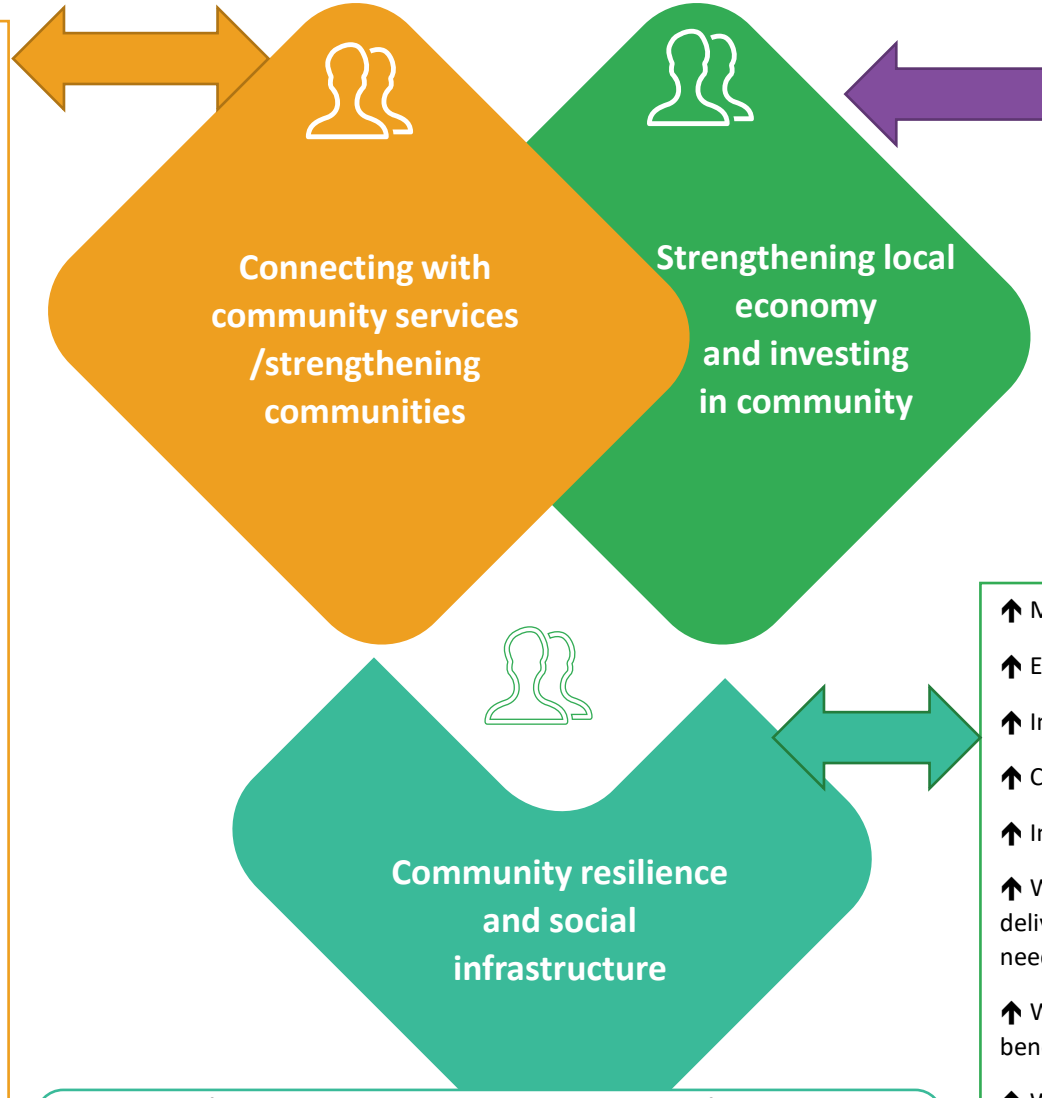
↑ Members buying the food packages in their community spaces often provides an informal opportunity for them to engage with other support services that they wouldn't necessarily have done before, in turn supporting them to rebuild their **resilience**

Depending on the nature of the individual's journey before or after accessing the model:

↑ Improved employability

↑ Access to education

↑ Opportunity to address food insecurity longer term through person-centred support



↑ Reinvestment of income (e.g., membership fees) to purchase stock from local firms where possible (n.b., this is a hallmark of community wealth building)

↑ Some models disproportionately invest in local people who have struggled to access the labour market for whatever reason

↑ Some multi-faceted models e.g., community food hubs can often emerge from opportunities to regenerate a space through a community asset transfer

↑ Place based voucher schemes can be redeemed at local (fruit/vegetables/other) markets / stalls increasing income for participating stalls, co-operatives and FV producers and increase spending in local markets

↑ More connected to your local community e.g. membership models

↑ Enables building of social networks, socialising, meeting new friends

↑ Improves feelings of value and sometimes, enjoyment

↑ Catalyst for community / sharing / developing new perspectives

↑ Increased sense of community and enfranchisement

↑ Where partnership models are established there is the potential to deliver more co-ordinated responses to deliver greater impact through needs identification, resource deployment and sharing information

↑ Where models use lived experience to inform the local solutions the benefits to all involved are thought to be more effective and enduring

↑ Working with community partners to establish community / food hubs creates community resilience, a sense of ownership / enfranchisement and social infrastructure for members/community

↑ Social cohesion / 'build a community within a community'

Some food models can contribute to place-based self-organising, strengthened referral pathways for people navigating different 'systems' as well as encourage local co-ordination of person-centred support. 'Communities within a community' can be built and the involvement of experts by experience is thought to significantly enhance outcomes.

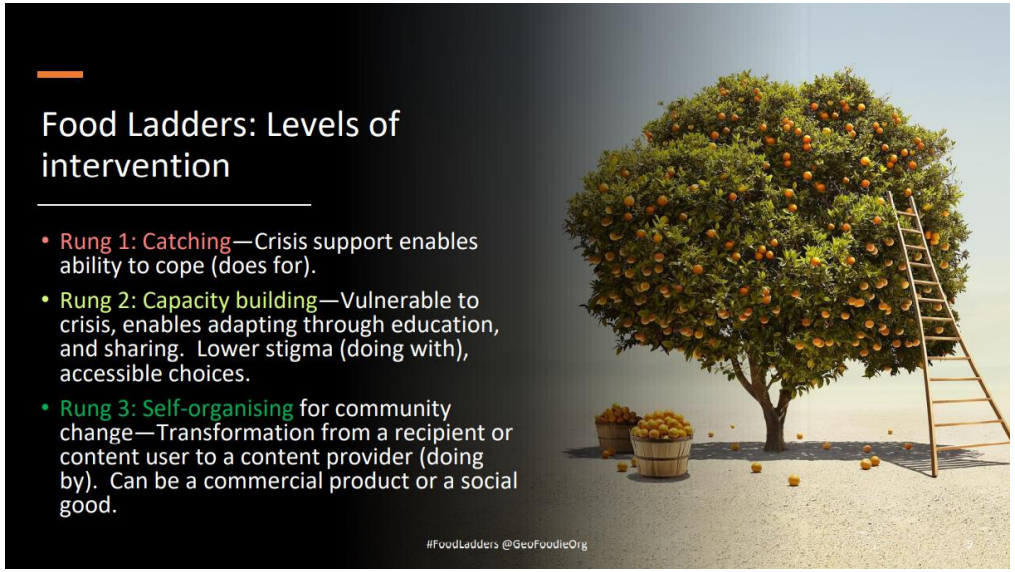
What opportunities does this present for York and North Yorkshire?

1	The opportunity to invest in place-based collaborative food access models e.g., networks, partnerships, alliances, taskforces to improve co-ordination with options to position them in areas where disparities / food insecurity is greatest or at higher risk.
2	The opportunity to invest in / nurture mixed income models rooted in communities.
3	The opportunity to pilot cash-first approaches in York and North Yorkshire.
4	The opportunity to invest in / nurture 'more than food' models linked to wrap around support, advice, signposting and / or connection to other services and community assets.
5	The opportunity to invest in the convening power of food including 'food and education' (to grow, share, celebrate and encourage community enterprise, resilience and social capital).

5 recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Place-based collaborative models



Why consider this?

Evidence suggests collaborative models accelerate local co-ordination of food security initiatives, helping to join up different food models despite their different drivers and purpose, whilst also providing a forum for lived experience and multiple sectors to join their resources and endeavour in a place-based context.

Some things to consider in the break-out discussions:

1. Do we have enough / the right type of partnerships, networks, taskforces or alliances in enough parts of York and North Yorkshire addressing the causes of – not just the symptoms of – food insecurity?

2. How would we know where the 'right' place is for any collaborative model?
   - Go where the energy is and build on that in a community?
   - Go where the energy isn't but where the need may be greatest?
   - Go where there is evidenced need of experienced or high risk of food insecurity linked to health disparities? For the latter should we be using the 'Priority Places for Food Index' to guide us or other such tools to complement local insight?

3. Could / should we adopt the **'Food Ladders'** approach in more places? This would mean not just having models designed to support people in crisis, but also develop local foodscapes that can build capacity for those struggling to afford and / or access good food (but who are not in crisis), as well as the pursuit of self-organised community change.

Recommendation 2:

Mixed income models rooted in their communities

Examples of mixed income models in the research include a community hub with a café and social supermarket or a community store/shop with an integrated community kitchen and community café.

'A decent network of community food spaces in a place.'

Why consider this?

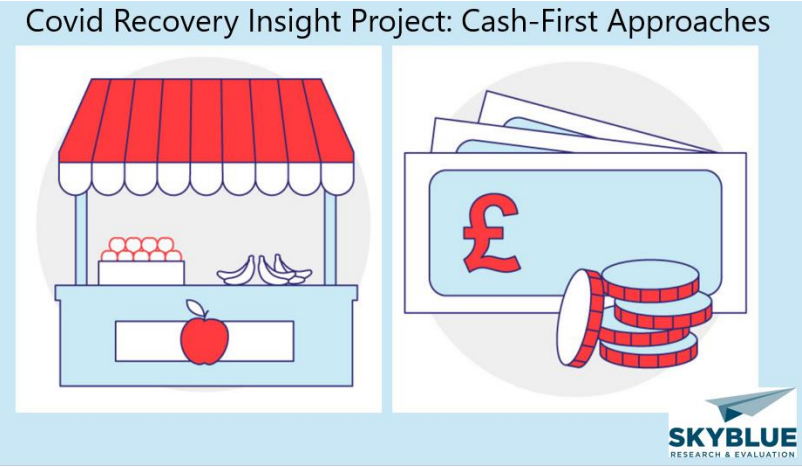
Evidence suggests that mixed income models deliver a wide set of positive outcomes for individuals, volunteers and staff and wider community over time, whilst not depending on repeat public sector funding to prop up the operations. The enterprising aspect of these models not only improves their longer-term viability (to meet local community needs), but also in of itself encourages local enfranchisement and 'ownership' – an emotional connection to some social infrastructure that encourages a sense of belonging and higher levels of reciprocity where everyone contributes something – if not money, they can contribute, time and skills and feel needed not needy.

Some things to consider in the break-out discussions:

1. If we have good examples of 'viable' mixed income models in York and North Yorkshire how they have been developed over time and what can we learn from that experience?
2. Community hub models often incorporate a 'food element' but they vary in their operational approach, sourcing of food and income model. Some models report being precarious whilst others seem to operate in a way that ensures their social good and intention persists by generating income through diverse means.
3. Research, whilst inconclusive from an evaluative standpoint, suggests the potential for low-cost community food retail models such as social supermarkets or eco-shops to be more viable and deliver useful outcomes for everyone involved. Is it surprising then that we seem to have very few of these models active and operational in York & North Yorkshire or not or is there something contextual preventing their inclusion in local foodscapes?

Recommendation 3:

Cash-first approaches



Why consider this?

Cash-first approaches offer a different type of emergency response option. These approaches put money directly into people's pockets at a time they need it most and without conditions. The growing evidence (particularly in Scotland as a result of policy there) is that cash-first approaches can support individuals in a more dignified fashion, without stigma, that alternative models cannot match. When aligned to supportive advice and guidance this can create the time and headspace for individuals to more likely access that support and address the root causes of their insecurity.

Some things to consider in the break-out discussions:

1. How can cash-first responses work most effectively alongside models of wrap-around support?
2. What can we learn from pilots in Leeds supported by The Trussell Trust and local authority there. Its recent evaluation shows promise, is this something we could pilot in York and / or North Yorkshire beyond the use of cash-based flexibilities already available from the local welfare assistance schemes? Where would any such pilot best be trialled and why?
3. How could cash-first feature in any new approach to financial inclusion in York and North Yorkshire?

We wonder if there would be interest in a community of practice around this topic after the Summit to generate more shared understanding of what it means, how it works and how it differs to other investment approaches?

Recommendation 4:

More than food models

Why consider this?

'More than food' models' are those as the name suggests that offer something beyond the transaction of the food itself. They might include wrap-around support and advice, with access to other services either on-site or signposted accordingly into communities and other settings. These models are more likely to help an individual or household address the root causes of their food insecurity because the food is just the symptom of wider insecurity, hardship and / or poverty

Some things to consider in the break-out discussions:

1. The way in which advice and support is made available to individuals presenting at food venues seems to divide researchers when trying to identify the 'right' or most dignified approach. Moreover, is that the right time and setting for advice when some people just want the food not conversation. What can we learn from lived experience to inform our approach to food + advice or food + signposting to other services or opportunities that will matter to the individual?
2. The absence of a wrap-around offer seems to limit the potential efficacy of any food model so ensuring this is built into a place-based 'system' or foodscape would seem highly beneficial. Are we doing this well in York and North Yorkshire?
3. More evidence is welcomed to demonstrate that 'more than food models' can and do support individuals from being severely insecure to moderately insecure to marginally secure to secure over time. These journeys for individuals from severe insecurity are not so obvious in the literature reviewed or evaluations available and yet so many food models do have a wrap-around element and / or signposting element the sector instinctively seems to offer this where it can. But is it working and how would we know?

Recommendation 5:

The convening power of food (including education, celebration & enterprise)

These models may manifest as community food projects or initiatives, luncheon clubs, suppers, cooperatives or intentional models that combine 'food and education' (such as community kitchens, cooking classes or courses and demonstrations at community hubs).

Why consider this?

Beyond the notion of food as fuel, or food as an essential resource needed at a time of crisis and emergency, food has the power to convene and include and encourage connection – through **growing, enterprise, sharing and celebration.**

There is strong evidence from evaluations of food and education models that individuals experience short-, medium- and longer-term benefits from participation (leading to better life chances and outcomes linked to learning and employment).

There is also growing evidence about the efficacy of community food initiatives and the coproduction opportunities afforded by community food projects

Some things to consider in the break-out discussions:

1. How can we all maximise the potential for these kinds of model for communities, especially where there are thought to be lower levels of social connection?
2. How can we do more around the 'food and education' models being careful not to presume what people need most; and in a way that creates opportunities for 'social eating' (eating together) and 'social making' (cooking together) – opportunities for things like community kitchens in York and North Yorkshire perhaps?
3. How do we learn from the likes of The Eden Project, Sustain and Community Food and Health Scotland who have created an array of practical resources to inspire places to develop community food projects and initiatives in fun and engaging ways involving different people and attitudes in places?

And there is a 6th recommendation: the golden thread….

Finally, and most important of all, lived experience should be at the heart of any revised policy around food insecurity, indeed any investment options appraised in future.

Through a greater understanding of people's experiences, needs, hopes and strengths the value of this work can be more authentic, pragmatic and likely to succeed – if the measure of success is an incrementally more food secure York and North Yorkshire by 2030.

And with this in mind let's hear from Miles who with colleagues from the LIFE Group have done some amazing work to help us understand lived experience from people who are using the different food access models and services in York.