

Agenda Item 9

Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Subject: Food
Date: Friday 18th December 2015
Contact: Alison Comley – Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods

1. Scoping paper – Food

At the summer scrutiny planning workshop, members identified ‘food’ as a topic which they would like to investigate further through scrutiny. ‘Food’ as a subject is potentially extremely broad and the purpose of this paper is to make scrutiny members aware of the scope of the subject and to inform them of the wide range of activity (both within the Council and more broadly across the city) which is currently being undertaken in support of the food agenda.

There is a very active and broad-based community sector involvement in the food agenda across Bristol. This involvement ranges from small-scale local growing groups, to organisations with a cross-city, strategic focus such as the Food Policy Council. The scope of this report is primarily focussed upon City Council activity and responsibilities, although it is important that the work of the council in this area is understood in the context of this wider community involvement.

The majority of the council’s involvement in this policy area is as a matter of choice and community leadership rather than statutory duty, as there is very little legislation mandating local authority involvement in the wider food agenda. Based on this report, feedback is sought from members as to whether they wish to consider any aspects of the topic of food in further depth at a future meeting.

2. Food: Key issues and work areas

The Sustainable Food Cities Network is a not-for-profit group of 44 cities and local authorities which is convened by the Soil Association with the aiming of helping people and places share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice on key food issues. The Sustainable Food Cities Network has set out a framework comprising six key strands, against which cities and localities are able to self-assess and against which a number of accreditations can be awarded. This framework is set out below and has been used to capture some of the existing activity that is currently taking place within the council and the city.

2.1 Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.

The current Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes a priority to “Achieve a healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system for the city, which benefits the local economy and environment.” The council’s Public Health team has a substantial involvement in the wider food agenda through a range of programmes including Healthy Schools, Healthy Weight , breastfeeding and early years nutrition and a variety of community based programmes in areas of high health need, which address growing, cooking, budgeting and food waste such as the “Kitchens on Prescription” scheme.

Healthy eating campaigns are co-ordinated by Public Health Bristol Community Health Teams which are based in areas of deprivation in order to tackle key food issues and address health inequalities. The Department of Health Change4Life themed campaigns include focus on sugar, snacks, cooking, breakfast, fat, 5 A DAY, and salt.

The Bristol teams have implemented Change4Life messages locally through a range of examples, including:

- North team: The ‘cooking from scratch’ campaign has led to the development, sourcing and setting up a local food co-op.
- Inner East team: deliver cookery and weight management campaigns with the Somali Community. Deliver healthy eating workshops using the Eatwell resource for the Drug and Alcohol support group within the mental health services.
- South team: supports the long established Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group (HHEAG) and with the Knowle West Health Association. These projects deliver growing and cooking skills projects to the local community, and incorporate key good food messages and campaigns.

The Change4Life roadshow has been brought to Bristol to deliver citywide campaigns (Dance4Life in 2011, Food Smart in 2013, Sugar Swaps in 2015) in the main shopping area Cabot Circus and during the Harbour Festival which is attended by 300,000 visitors over three days.

From 2016 the newly created Healthy Lifestyles & Healthy Place Team will enable Public Health to take a lead on the council’s contribution to the food agenda from a health and wellbeing perspective.

2.2 Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food.

The Department of Health’s definition of food poverty is “*the inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet*”. Crucially, food poverty is about quality of food as well as quantity – it is not just about hunger, but also about being appropriately nourished to maintain health and involves the dietary choices, cultural norms and the physical and financial resources that affect which foods are eaten, ultimately impacting upon health status. The Food Ethics Council estimates that 4 million people in the UK are in a state of food poverty.

Food poverty, when taken in its broadest sense is difficult to quantify and is largely examined through a series of proxy measures such as measures of household income, fruit and vegetable consumption, free school meal uptake and use of emergency support.

It is particularly important in the early years, which is a key time for laying down the foundations for future health and wellbeing. Where we live, how we are cared for, what we eat, see and feel, all affect our health and wellbeing, not only as babies and young children but on into adulthood

The UK Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency revealed that low income households have diets that are deficient in fresh fruit and vegetables, deficient in iron folate and vitamin D and high in sugar and saturated fats. Over a third of the low income families reported that they could not afford balanced meals.

Poorer households spend proportionately more of their income on food, and often choose highly processed and high fat foods of poor nutritional quality in order to save money. Prices charged for healthy food are higher in small convenience shops compared with in large supermarkets. People on low incomes, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups like travellers, homeless, asylum seekers and some black and minority ethnic groups may be more likely to be reliant on small local shops where choice and affordability is limited.

Some key themes emerging from definitions and discussions around food poverty or food security are:

Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there sufficient food? • Can we depend on supplies? • Where does our food come from?
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can everyone in our population obtain food? • Do they have skills and facilities to make best use of available food?
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can low-income individuals and families afford to buy healthy food?
Nutrition and quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do people consume the right type of food, in the right quantities, for their physical needs?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we rely on continued access to food? • Will everyone always be able to afford food?

Support to people who need emergency funds and food aid is provided by a broad range of statutory and voluntary providers. Referrals for emergency food aid are made by health and social care workers. Emergency food centres are provided by Trussell Trust, Matthew Tree Project and by a number of different charities and faith organisations. The Matthew Tree

Project runs a network of Food Plus Centres located in the most deprived wards of the city of Bristol and supports over 2,000 of the most disadvantaged people and families annually.

2.3 Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.

Food growing is happening successfully via allotments, community gardening and urban farming. BCC currently allocates land for community food growing on via the Allotments Team. There is an increasing demand for urban farming, community gardening and allotments evidenced by:

- The Land Seeker Survey created by the Bristol Food Producers (BFP) totalling 25 responses in six months
- The smallholdings waiting list held by Property Services
- Extensive waiting lists for allotments in some areas of the city

The Council encourages city residents to use parks, open spaces, housing estates and other areas to grow food for the community, and welcome proposals from any group of people. A new policy on community growing in public spaces was agreed in 2014 and sets the ground rules for growing in public spaces enabling new groups to avoid starting a negotiation process with BCC from scratch.

The council's allotments team has been leading on a number of project streams to develop this work and further thinking, including:

- GIS mapping of available council land which could accommodate food growing
- Draft process to grade the mapped land re its suitability for food growing
- Audit to identify allotment plots that are 'hard to let' or deemed unworkable.

There is strong demand for the provision of land to grow food at many different scales within the city. This means that careful thought is needed to ensure integration between the allocation of land, the planning hierarchies, the reclaiming of land and the quality of land use activity.

There is significant community involvement in the wider food agenda within the city ranging from successful small scale food growing projects (such as allotments, community gardening and urban farming), to bodies with a more strategic focus, such as the Food Policy Council and the city-wide 'Food Connections' festival.

2.4 Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.

As part of the 100 Resilience Cities Network Bristol is learning from other cities such as Rotterdam that food growing policy can be integrated into a wider Green Infrastructure approach to harness co-benefits of re-greening the city. For example, introducing Sustainable Urban Drainage at a street level can reduce surface water flooding and also offer new spaces for growing food. Green roofs can be used to grow food and reduce run-off. Urban infrastructure can be used to grow food and make it more bio-diverse and attractive e.g. Incredible Edible planting at bus stops.

Local food growing can also offer employment to disadvantaged or vulnerable people, such as through the Severn Project. Severnside Community Rail Partnership have funded containers and plants, water butts & recycling bins along the Severn Beach line. Schools closest to each station along the Severn Beach line have been involved in a local art project and installation of edible beds (mostly perennials and fruit) at the stations, and will help with maintenance. Community payback workers also help to maintain beds. Noticeboards included with information on what's in the beds and with suggested recipes.

Food supply chain

Who Feeds Bristol report stated that "Bristol city region is supplied with around 84% of its food & grocery retail sales by approximately 100 stores/shops owned by 5 supermarket companies". We do not have any access to information on how resilience these supply chains are and yet we do know that the chain will be vulnerable to flooding (many distribution centres are located in Somerset levels at risk of flooding), transport failures or terrorist attacks. It would be good to work with these retailers to explore our vulnerabilities and help build resilience.

The future of Bristol's Wholesale Fruit Centre in St Philips (established as a co-operative with a not for profit ethos in 1968) should also be given consideration as it is an important source of affordable and healthy food within reach of many deprived areas of the city as well as being an important source of local food for the hospitality industry.

Food processing

There is a lot of interest in food processing as part of a strategy for bringing back local/small scale manufacturing into the city. There is a major EU funded programme of work being led by the University of Bristol on the future of Re-distributed Manufacturing in Bristol and Bath. It has identified local food processing (particularly artisan food) as having major potential for increasing employment opportunities in the city.

2.5 Transforming catering and food procurement.

Sustainable food procurement and ensuring delivery is a key strand of the work of the Food Policy Council (of which Bristol City Council is a member). The council jointly leads a newly created West of England Sustainable Food/Catering Procurement Working Group with the aim of promoting healthy and sustainable food within public authority contracts in the region.

BCC is directly responsible for food provision through a range of outlets including (within Neighbourhoods) five catering outlets located in the city's parks, and (more widely) the community meals service and school meal provision (through the Trading with Schools unit). In addition to these contracts a business plan is currently being produced for a café in the City Hall redevelopment.

Resources have been allocated internally to bridge the gap between the Green Capital aspirations and the reality of food contracts/provision. This includes a review of:

- Council cafes and catering: Ashton Court mansion (weddings & conferences), Café, and golf course; Blaise Castle café; and Oldbury Court. The aspiration is to increase the amount of local and seasonal fruit & veg going into BCC cafes and restaurants.
- Bridging the gap between allotments and catering, considering ways to use allotment surplus.

Recent approaches have included the development of Meet the Buyer events where public procurement officers talk through contracting arrangements and support smaller businesses identify opportunities and to understand the procurement process.

2.6 Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.

Bristol City Council provides residents with a separate food waste collection. Each householder is provided with a food waste caddy which is collected weekly from households by Bristol Waste Company. Residents are also given advice on avoiding food waste and garden composting (with subsidised home compost bins available). As part of the new refreshed Waste and Resources Strategy (currently in development and being reported on separately to scrutiny) there may be further opportunities to reduce food waste and to increase its separation from the waste stream.

2.7 Food Safety and Licensing

The Sustainable Food Cities Framework does not currently include food safety and licensing, which is a significant area of activity for the council in relation to food and also an area in which the council has a range of statutory duties. The main statutory activities relating to food hygiene regulation include:

Food Establishment Interventions, Inspections, Partial Inspections, Audits, Sampling

Enforcement:- Securing compliance via informal and formal means including Hygiene Improvement Notices, Remedial Action Notices, Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices, Seizure and Detention, prosecution (by Authorised Officers of the Food Authority)

- Food Establishment Regulation
- Food Alerts
- Food Complaints
- Food operations information guidance and advice
- Health Certification for 3rd Country Exports
- Foodborne disease control
- Compliance Building Initiatives (such as Food Safety Management Systems/Safer Food Better Business and the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme)

During 2015/16 approximately 1,300 food premises inspections will be completed by the team.

3. Summary of current position

Theme	What are we required to do (e.g. by statute, guidance)?	What are we currently doing?	What more could we do? What is our aspiration?	Does BCC lead on this? Who are our key partners?
<p>1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public</p>	<p>There are a number of Public Health Outcomes relating to this theme. The key outcome measures are around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeeding initiation • Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth • Average number of portions of fruit consumed daily • Average number of portions of vegetables consumed daily 	<p>Bristol delivers a range of healthy eating campaigns which link to citywide initiatives, as well as targeting areas of high health need through the public health community teams. This work not only aims to increase awareness of healthy eating messages but aims to support changes in behaviour for long term health gains. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeeding promotion and support • Change4Life campaigns on sugar, snacks, cooking, breakfast, fat, 5 A DAY, and salt. • Food Connections Festival <p>There are a range of community based campaigns to promote public consumption of sustainable food, e.g through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairtrade Network • Flexitarian Bristol (aimed at reducing meat and dairy consumption) • Bristol Independents Campaign <p>Regular markets have been established which serve both the central city area and workforces as well as being located in communities.</p>	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes a priority to “Achieve a healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system for the city, which benefits the local economy and environment”.</p> <p>In 2012 the Bristol Food Policy Council developed a Food Charter to aid the development of a resilient food system for the city region. The Charter states that “good food is vital to the quality of people’s lives in Bristol. As well as being tasty, healthy and affordable, the food we eat should be good for nature, good for workers, good for local businesses and good for animal welfare”</p>	<p>BCC does lead on this area of activity through the Public Health function.</p> <p>There is also an extensive and very active network of community partnerships ranging from local (e.g. Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group) to city-wide (e.g. Bristol Fairtrade Network, Bristol Food Network, Grow Bristol).</p>

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<p>2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food</p>	<p>There are a number of Public Health Outcomes relating to this theme. The key outcome measures are around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds - 4-5 year olds • Excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds - 10-11 year olds • Excess Weight in Adults • Under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases considered preventable • Under 75 mortality rate from cancer considered preventable <p>Whilst non statutory, the recently published 'Feeding Britain' all-party parliamentary group report sets out a number of recommendations.</p>	<p>For those in urgent need relevant agencies are providing rapid referral to hardship funds and emergency food aid through a range of statutory and voluntary providers. Bristol City Council has a Local Crisis and Prevention fund of £500K in place</p> <p>A key recommendation of the Fairness Commission was that Bristol should become a leading Living Wage city. BCC implemented a Living Wage Supplement last October, since when no directly-employed staff member has been paid any less than the Living Wage for all hours worked.</p> <p>Projects and interventions delivered by the adult service include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrition education resources aimed at preventing avoidable malnutrition among the elderly • 'Nutrition in Health Care Settings' courses have been provided for care homes and 'Eating Well • Several Conferences have been run on the topic of 'Food Matters for Older People' in order to raise awareness knowledge and skills and to create strong networks • Training is provided by community dieticians for adults with Learning Disabilities • Improving the dietary related health of the local prison population including menu analysis, 'Eatwell, Cookwell on a Budget' courses, an annual food survey, and training for prison staff 	<p>BCC is currently assessing whether it can extend the expectation of paying the Living Wage to all Council suppliers, which is normally a pre-requisite for organisational accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation. The BCC's Learning City Board and the work it is doing consulting and developing a Social Value Policy and Toolkit will help with these aims.</p> <p>Responding to anticipated national guidance on tackling childhood obesity</p>	<p>The Public Health team within BCC aims as part of its remit to improve the diet-related health of vulnerable people and takes a lead on this agenda. The team works in partnership with the Nutrition and Dietetics Team at University Hospitals, Older Peoples networks, BCC Learning & Development, Nursing Homes, and the Clinical Commissioning Group</p> <p>There are several organisations in the City, most notably the Trussell Trust, the Matthew Tree Project, and the Bristol Pound's Real Economy Project, devoted to food poverty, and several concerned with redistribution of wasted food, most notably FareShare South West and Food Cycle.</p>

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<p>3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects</p>	<p>There are no substantial requirements or regulations in this area of activity – the council’s involvement is largely discretionary</p>	<p>Bristol City Council Parks and Open Spaces are working jointly with Bristol Food Producers to link up with people seeking land for food growing. They have provided free ‘set-up agreements’ and early years peppercorn rent on larger areas of land for community growing projects.</p> <p>Edible Parks Policy: The Council encourages city residents to use parks, open spaces, housing estates and other areas to grow food for the community, and welcome proposals from any group of people. A new policy on community growing in public spaces was agreed in 2014 and sets the ground rules for growing in public spaces.</p> <p>One Tree Per Child: over 3 years every primary school child will plant a tree, many of which are fruit trees for gardens and allotments.</p> <p>Healthy Schools: The ‘Bristol Mayor’s Award for Excellence as a Health Improving School’ has been developed. Children learn about good food and experience how to grow and cook food. Results from the schools show an increase in eating fruit and vegetables, an increase in those having school dinners and a reduction in crisps and chocolate in packed lunches. Food for Life and its partnership with Healthy Schools results in 23,620 Food for Life Catering meals served each day in Bristol</p>	<p>Bristol City Council Parks and Open Spaces (which includes allotments and smallholdings) is currently leading an internal resource assessment mapping exercise to identify all available land for food growing.</p> <p>The current Allotments Strategy runs up to 2019. It sets a minimum provision of 7 plots per 1,000 residents, with all residential areas to have access to an allotment site within 0.75 mile.</p>	<p>The council contributes to and enables this agenda, but it is primarily led by community sector partners, particularly the Bristol Food Network and Bristol Food Policy Council.</p>

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<p>4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy</p>	<p>There are no substantial requirements or regulations in this area of activity – the council’s involvement is largely discretionary</p>	<p>Regular markets have been established which serve both the central city area and workforces as well as being located in communities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Harbourside • Temple Market • Bristol Farmers’ market • Friday Street Food Market • The Slow Food • Fishponds Farmers Market • Sunday market in Southville • Knowle West Project Agricola • Whiteladies Road <p>The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership have a Strategic Economic Plan (2015-2030) with important reference of the links between supporting the local food system alongside benefit to the economy.</p> <p>VISIT Bristol is the tourism service for the city and actively promotes businesses, events and activities which support good food aims. Specifically it encourages visitors to visit independent places rather than chains, stating ‘Bristol is fiercely proud of its independent restaurants, bars and cafes that serve the finest local produce.’</p> <p>The Councils Economic Development team also issue a weekly newsletter email to traders’ groups and other stakeholders highlighting local opportunities, training, events.</p>	<p>Our work in this area is focussed on contributing to the objectives of the Good Food Plan for a more sustainable food system for the region.</p>	<p>The council contributes to and enables this agenda, but it is primarily led by community sector partners, particularly the Bristol Food Policy Council.</p>

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5. Transforming catering and food procurement	<p>BCC specific commitments in this area include:</p> <p>Council resolution on genetically modified organisms Fairtrade Policy Bristol Good Food Charter Bristol Food Standards</p>	<p>The new Schools contract has Soil Association 'Gold' in the specification – to be achieved in the first 2 years.</p> <p>A pilot Soil Association benchmarking process has just been carried out for the two caterers who have the BCC hospitality and events contracts.</p> <p>The Specification for new contracts (agreed by a working group from Public Health, The Sustainable City Team and Procurement last year), includes an obligation for the caterers to achieve the Silver standard of the Soil Association Catering Mark during the 2 year contract.</p> <p>Other council contracts include the catering that is provided directly by BCC (Ashton Court, Parks and Care Homes) – the standards are currently being addressed by Neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>There are other catering contracts that will need, for consistency, to have similar high standards when they are re-tendered. This includes:</p> <p>Museums M Shed Libraries Community Meals Create Centre</p> <p>Public Health are currently liaising with Procurement, Sustainable City Team, Business Change and others in Neighbourhoods to make this happen for all contracts as they come up for renewal.</p> <p>In partnership with the Soil Association we are exploring options for developing a suitable benchmark for use by smaller caterers.</p>	<p>BCC leads on this policy area for the purposes of its own procurement and catering provision.</p> <p>The council jointly leads a newly created West of England Sustainable Food/Catering Procurement Working Group.</p>
6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system	<p>BCC are not legally required to separately collect, reduce or prevent food waste from Bristol Households. There are currently no specific statutes for managing food waste in a particular manner.</p> <p>There is a voluntary agreement between Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the Retail/Agricultural/Hospitality</p>	<p>Bristol City Council provides residents with a separate food waste collection. Each householder is provided with a food waste caddy which is collected weekly from households by Bristol Waste company. Residents are also given advice on avoiding food waste and garden composting (with subsidised home compost bins available).</p>	<p>Our aspiration is in the process of being developed through the emerging Waste and Resource Management Strategy.</p> <p>The Climate and Energy Security Framework has recently been agreed by Cabinet and contains strand of activity around food resilience and security.</p>	<p>BCC takes a partial lead on this through its waste management function – in particular in terms of diverting food waste from landfill. In addition, source reduction of food waste and reducing 'food miles' are also addressed by a range of voluntary and community sector partners.</p>

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	sectors to reduce Food Waste (Courtauld Commitment). This is a national, rather than local or regional agreement which aims to reduce the amount of food the nation's householders throw away by 155,000 tonnes.			
7. Food Safety and Licensing	BCC is the statutory food authority with responsibility for delivering official controls in food premises. Part of that responsibility is a requirement to undertake a programme of annual inspections as set out by the Food Standards Agency.	<p>The main statutory activities relating to food hygiene regulation include:</p> <p>Food Establishment Interventions, Inspections, Partial Inspections, Audits, Sampling</p> <p>Enforcement:- Securing compliance via informal and formal means including Hygiene Improvement Notices, Remedial Action Notices, Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices, Seizure and Detention, prosecution (by Authorised Officers of the Food Authority)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Establishment Regulation • Food Alerts • Food Complaints • Food operations information guidance and advice • Health Certification for 3rd Country Exports • Foodborne disease control • Compliance Building Initiatives (such as Food Safety Management Systems/Safer Food Better Business and the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme) 	<p>We are currently achieving approximately 45% of the total annual programme of food inspections set by the FSA . This covers all risk rated premises from high risk to low risk. We need to increase performance although this is only likely to be achieved by moving resources from other areas which is challenging in light of the pressures in those other public protection areas.</p> <p>There is growing recognition within the industry that the current inspection model set by the FSA is very resource intensive and could be improved with a shift towards more self assessment and targeted intelligence led enforcement, particularly at a time of reduced resources. We are however working on interventions to improve performance in 15/16.</p>	<p>BCC is the lead agency for food safety and licensing within the city, led by Regulatory Services in partnership with Public Health.</p> <p>The Food Standards Agency is a key partner.</p>

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		The Food Safety Service currently carries out approximately 1,750 inspections of food premises annually, targeting the higher risk premises. Of those inspections approximately 90% are broadly compliant.		

4. Sustainable Food City Award

The Sustainable Food Cities Network operates an award scheme under which localities can apply for different levels of accreditation, by demonstrating achievement against the framework set out above. The award aims to recognise and celebrate success of a city in achieving significant positive change to food issues in the six key themes by taking a joined up and holistic approach.

The Food Policy Council is preparing an application for Bristol to be recognised as a Sustainable Food City at Silver standard, and this work is being supported by the city council.

As at March 2015, Brighton (Silver), Plymouth (Bronze) Cardiff (Bronze) and Lambeth (Bronze) have achieved the Sustainable Food Cities award.

5. Next steps

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to give feedback as to whether they would like to give further consideration to any specific aspects of the food system in Bristol, and if so, which elements.