



**BECOMING A GOOD FOOD NATION:
RESPONSE FROM THE EDIBLE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP**

Submitted to Scottish Government on 1 October, 2014

Background

1. This paper provides a response to the Scottish Government's consultation paper "Becoming a Good Food Nation" on behalf of the Edible Edinburgh Partnership.
2. [Edible Edinburgh](#) is a cross-sector initiative which aims to transform food systems so that Edinburgh can become a sustainable food city. Edible Edinburgh Partners are leading strategic change to inspire and motivate people across Edinburgh to work together to develop new approaches to food which bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the whole community.
3. In 2011, the [City of Edinburgh Council](#) published a framework for a '[Sustainable Edinburgh 2020](#)' and consulted city-wide on priority issues for action. A keen interest in a wide range of food and food related issues was identified and a series of seminars were then held to explore issues ranging from community access to land for growing to concerns about food and health, food waste and food poverty, etc.
4. From this, a cross sector group was established to develop Edinburgh as a sustainable food city and the Edible Edinburgh initiative was formed. In the autumn of 2013, a public consultation was launched to ask people across the city their opinion of Edible Edinburgh's vision. Over four hundred people and organisations responded. An Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan has been developed incorporating this feedback. The Edible Edinburgh initiative is led by the City of Edinburgh

Council and the steering group involves representatives from the public, private and third sectors. The [full plan](#), and list of [steering group members](#) is available at www.edible-edinburgh.org.

5. Edible Edinburgh is established within the city's community planning governance structures, represented within the [Edinburgh Partnership](#) as a sub-group of the [Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership](#).
6. The [Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership](#) (EFFLP) between the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh is a sub-group of Edible Edinburgh. EFFLP has submitted a separate response to this consultation which focuses primarily on the role of the public sector within a Good Food Nation.
7. In association with Nourish Scotland and the University of Edinburgh, Edible Edinburgh held an event on 4 September, 2014 to engage the people of Edinburgh in exploring and responding to the issues and priorities set out in this consultation. Much of the discussion from this event has been incorporated into this response.

Introduction

8. Edible Edinburgh welcomes this wide-ranging consultation and the opportunity to influence food related government policies and priorities.
9. By taking a sustainable, integrated approach to developing and supporting our food system we can maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits from it and take steps to reduce negative impacts. We are therefore encouraged that the Scottish Government's policy focus on food now encompasses broader issues such as diet, environment, local economy, education and health inequalities. While recognising the importance of Scotland's produce within the economy Edible Edinburgh believes that the purpose of food is, first and foremost, for sustainable nutrition rather than as a commodity for production and export.
10. Edible Edinburgh supports the Scottish Government's aspiration that Scotland should become a Good Food Nation where it is second nature to serve, sell and eat fresh, healthy food and where food – which is tasty to eat, nutritious, fresh and environmentally sustainable - is a key part of what makes people proud of Scotland.

11. Edible Edinburgh recognises the strengths and successes of the food and drink sector in Scotland, for example, successful food export strategies, high economic growth and a strong contribution to our tourism offer.
12. There have also been recent helpful developments in government policy such as revised school meals policies, new procurement legislation and proposed improvements in relation to community planning, asset transfer and community growing.
13. However, Edible Edinburgh also recognises that significant challenges remain, for example, in providing access to land to grow, access to fresh, affordable food for all and in reducing food poverty and levels of diet-related ill-health and inequality.

Edible Edinburgh & the Role of Cities

14. Edible Edinburgh believes that cities have a crucial role to play in delivering a more resilient, diverse and sustainable food system. With over a third of the population living in Scottish cities (and over 80% in urban areas), they are key to achieving the Scottish Government's aim of becoming a Good Food Nation.
15. Scotland's cities' collective spending power, population numbers and ecological footprints all have implications for food policy. The [Sustainable Food Cities](#) model (of which, Edinburgh was one of twelve founding members) has considerable potential to deliver better joined up decision making on food related issues. Cities have potential to drive forward action in a number of areas. These areas include:
 - Stimulating demand for sustainably produced local food and generating better links between consumers and producers. In particular, this may include using public sector spending to procure sustainable food and to develop the local economy and community benefits;
 - Making effective land-use decisions and working to ensure the availability of land, and advisory resources, for community growing and allotments;
 - Co-ordinating decisions on spending priorities in areas such as health, environment and tourism via the community planning process;
 - Using the community planning process to engage local communities in decision-making and to highlight the importance of food related issues;
 - Promoting the importance of sustainable food as part of the city's tourism offer as well as encouraging and promoting local events,

festivals and learning and training opportunities involving food or celebrating local food traditions;

- Developing local responses to food poverty issues and ensuring appropriate links are made with national and local health inequalities work
- Working with national organisations to develop local arrangements to ensure that food waste is reduced, recycled or re-used and that energy and water use is reduced where practicable, both domestically and commercially.

The Role of Government

16. It is important that the Scottish Government sends out clear and consistent messages about food. For effective decisions to be made at city level, joined-up thinking is required at national level. For example,

- Climate Change Frameworks should take cognisance of the significant impact which our food system has on carbon emissions and Adaptation Frameworks should consider food security and local resilience to changes forecast in global food production and supply.
- Economic development, tourism and learning and skills development policies should support the development of a sustainable local food economy with skilled jobs and diverse products and retail offers.
- Education policies should involve children in learning about food and food choices in a more joined up way.
- planning and land-use frameworks, procurement guidance and community planning best practice should all contain specific references to sustainable food issues.
- Recognition of the importance of food as a cross-cutting issue should be reflected in future Single Outcome Agreements with local authorities and community planning partnerships.

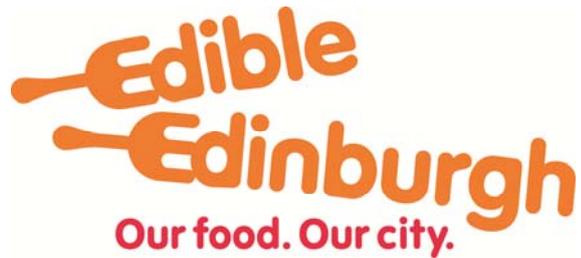
Priorities - Food Poverty

17. The proposed priorities should include the issue of food poverty as an immediate and pressing concern as evidenced in part by the recent, rapid expansion of food banks and food aid. Edible Edinburgh is concerned that food banks do not develop as a long term structural welfare 'solution'. The Scottish Government should consider as a matter of urgency how best to address wider issues of poverty and inequality which impact on access to food (physical and financial) and in turn dietary related health, perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty and poor

health.

Conclusion

18. Edible Edinburgh wishes to see the emergence of a more sustainable food system and welcomes action to support the transformation of our food culture, reduce food poverty, inequality and waste, tackle poor diet and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
19. These are wide ranging, wicked issues, impacting one another inextricably. In order to transform our food systems to become a sustainable Good Food Nation, the Scottish Government must establish clear priorities which are effective and which join up throughout the public sector. Resources must be allocated to support these priorities.
20. Edible Edinburgh is working to make Edinburgh a beacon of best practice in sustainable food. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Scottish Government to achieve our shared goals and to develop a sustainable approach to the priorities set out in “Becoming a Good Food Nation”.



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