CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?

Falkirk Council believes that the aim is laudable, given the relatively poor diet and poor health of many citizens. The Council aims to improve on these areas in many ways by means of a number of initiatives, such as encouraging the continuing roll-out of the Healthy Living Award within Council-run premises, promoting elementary food hygiene courses within the community, support for food business to grow, signposting Zero-Waste initiatives and ensuring that food business operators comply with food safety law.

An excellent example of the Council's initiative in this field is the HELIX project, where a health programme was created to encourage healthy lifestyles and support sustainable food production. It supports the establishment of community allotments and will work with partners to develop associated healthy eating promotion and a community composting scheme. These include:

- Allotments as a sustainable source of food
  - Awareness – food and how it's made
  - Encourages the composting of green waste

- Allotments as a resource for health
  - Healthy physical recreation
  - Therapeutic value

- Allotments as a community resource
  - Bring people together
  - Foster mentoring
  - Co-operation and contact

- Allotments as an educational tool
  - Teaching where food comes from
  - Teaching healthy lifestyles
  - Links with Curriculum for Excellence

The allotments will create a network of sustainable food-growing for Falkirk and Grangemouth, will be open to anyone regardless of their age, abilities or experience and a proportion of allotments will be dedicated to special user groups with specific health, learning and mobility needs. Allotments provide a sustainable source of healthy local food and are a potential habitat for native flora and fauna. As well as cutting food miles to the minimum, they act as green lungs in built-up areas, giving people access to publicly-owned land. Tending an allotment is recognised as a good form of exercise, so there are benefits across a wide spectrum.

2. How would we know when we had got there? What would success look like?

It would be useful to have reasonable goals to aim for at every level of society, from government down to local authorities, schools, communities and workplaces, such as a reduction of x% in child obesity, or an increase
in y% of consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

Falkirk Council supports the vision.

4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

Falkirk Council is keen to promote healthy eating across the community. By being a good food nation this would enhance the health & well-being of the area’s population and it would benefit local business to grow. Many Council facilities have secured Healthy Living Awards, which promote healthy eating. The Council will continue to encourage this.

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?

The initiative will require a sustained promotional campaign, utilising all forms of media.

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?

A Food Commission would be helpful in concentrating various approaches into a coherent policy which can be rolled out and made attractive to all sectors of the community.

7. In what areas should indicators be set to check we are on track towards our goals?

Obesity, uptake of fresh fruit and vegetables, reduction in consumption of fat, sugar and salt.

8. What are your views on the different approaches that could be taken to help us become a Good Food Nation?

A variety of local authority officers regularly engage with food businesses (eg Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Economic Development). These contacts could form the basis of educational and advisory visits in order to promote the general aims of this initiative.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:
   • Food in the public sector
   • A children’s food policy
The focus on the above matters is appropriate as an initial list of priorities.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

There is scope for further engagement with the smaller-medium size catering outlets, which may need some assistance and advice in going forward to promote healthy eating.

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

Recognition has to be given that if local authority staff are to be involved, then there may be budgetary pressures which restrict activities to statutory functions. Dedicated funding may be required.

12. What else should be considered?

Professional organisations, such as the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland would have useful roles to play in assisting with the implementation of this project. For this policy to have a positive impact it also needs to have strong links to planning policies. The number of fast food outlets is increasing at a dramatic rate and planning does not take such policies into consideration. The Scottish Government should therefore look at such policies as a material consideration in these circumstances. Only then will such policies have any chance of making an impact for the better.

13. What steps do you plan to take to help Scotland on the journey toward becoming a Good Food Nation – in the next month and in the next 12 months?

Wherever possible, the Council will support the initiative as mentioned in answers above.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Via the Scottish Government website

Responding to this Consultation Paper