CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership welcomes and supports the Scottish Government’s ambition to be a Good Food Nation.

The Community Planning Partnership believes that becoming a Good Food Nation could be the catalyst for improved change within society. A Good Food Nation can improve health and reduce the cost of healthcare, support local businesses and increase job opportunities, and encourage food tourism.

We also feel that a focus on increasing exports is positive as is improving the perception of Scotland as a land of food and drink worldwide.

Argyll and Bute CPP would welcome a strategic and overarching ambition which unites policy and action on public health, well-being, food and farming, procurement, environment and economy. Scotland being a Good Food Nation would directly link into several outcomes of our Single Outcome Agreement and in turn, improve outcomes for the communities of Argyll and Bute.

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

The CPP believes that success will come when people of all ages and from all communities know, understand and care about the connections between food, health, economy and the environment; can access affordable good food; and can choose (and/or are encouraged and enabled) to eat and cook good food.

We think success means:

- Better access to affordable, healthy, sustainable and local food which will in turn improve health and wellbeing across society, leading to a decline in obesity and weight-related health issues.
- Resilient and strong local economies with communities having greater local food provision from nearby farms, suppliers and retailers which will also create sustainable and long term job opportunities.
- A positive food culture with mealtimes being recognised as an important part of the day for families or groups of people to come together.
- An increase in teaching of food related skills – from growing and cooking to butchery and baking – with food education in schools, workplaces and communities. Careers in farming and the food sector
perceived as a worthwhile and attractive option for our young people to live and work and stay in Argyll and Bute.

- A thriving retail sector with a diversity of food choices on offer all produced locally and serving fresh, healthy and sustainable food.
- An increase in food and agri-tourism with visitors coming to the area to specifically explore the natural larder and food/drink that is on offer.

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

The vision itself is very positive however there is little detail at this stage on how it will be achieved.

Argyll and Bute CPP believes that the important role of farming systems as the first link in our food system is recognised as a key starting point.

The vision should be clearer on how it will positively impact communities in Scotland in addition to exports and industry. There also needs to be more detail on how affordable access to good food will encourage and enable positive behaviours. Only providing information to communities will not bring about the necessary change. People should feel empowered, supported, encouraged and enabled to make positive food choices and have these choices available to them.

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

For Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership, being a Good Food Nation would impact the following short term outcomes that are part of our Single Outcome Agreement:

- To achieve business growth and additional employment opportunities – this would cover exports, international turnover creation of employment
- To ensure we have a robust tourism sector with an extended season, a higher value proposition and increased turnover – covering the local food and drink offering and quality tourism experiences in Argyll and Bute
- Our children and young people in Argyll and Bute are supported to be ambitious and realise their full potential
- To ensure education and skills training opportunities are aligned to economic development opportunities both within Argyll and Bute and nationally
- To enhance the contribution of our communities to school curricula
- Children and young people should enjoy the highest possible attainable standards of physical and mental health
- Individuals are more physically active
- Individuals make healthier/positive lifestyle choices
5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?

We think that Community Planning Partners should be assisted where appropriate to implement emerging policies consistently so that strong national policies are fully realised locally and are able to empower key audiences.

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

A Food Commission could help take a high level overview of the food system to ensure that the activity across public health, food and drink and environment across the public, private and third sector is joined up and consistent where practicable.

A Food Commission should also report publically on a regular basis against clear targets.

Indicators should best reflect current indicators where possible and support locally any need for data gathering against indicators.

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

It appears that most of the targets are around health which we welcome although we would request that economic benefits and sustainability are also included. There should also be a focus on primary ingredients – fresh meat and vegetables etc. Skills and lifelong learning, employability and a measure looking at food poverty and health inequalities should also be included.

There may be areas which are more difficult to quantify than others e.g. “people having pride and taking pleasure in the food that they eat”.

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

The Community Planning Partnership supports the view that one single approach will not be productive and a range of approaches is required to enable Scotland to become a Good Food Nation.

Education, positive promotion and access to affordable, healthy food for all are approaches that we would support.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:

- Stronger, resilient and more involved communities
Food in the public sector – The CPP supports the view that the public sector should use locally sourced produce where possible to boost the local economy and should lead by example. This would be a very positive step but there needs to be a degree of realism to balance this with tight resources and practical issues.

A children’s food policy – Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership supports the idea of a children’s food policy but believes it should be extended to encompass families as well, enabling children and young people to have access to good food both within educational settings and at home in order to further develop their learning.

Local food – this could be expanded to include “Food/ Agri Tourism” – encouraging producers to create interactive tourism opportunities around their business, including active stays with food producers, educational tours of facilities, tastings, retail outlets (good examples include Cornwall and the Isle of Wight). This could also include development of more food related events celebrating local and seasonal produce or food trails.

Good food choices – this needs to take cognisance that some people require support and encouragement to make good food choices. The price of high quality, fresh, local food may be a barrier to some consumers.

Continued economic growth – quality food products with provenance reared in a high quality natural environment is a key economic sector within Argyll and Bute with significant potential for growth. In addition to the creation of wealth and jobs, our food production sector plays a significant role in sustaining our communities, particularly in remote rural areas. We would therefore welcome a focus which strengthens this.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

N/A

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

The concept could be built on to help small food and drink producers in the local area achieve their growth ambitions. Producers could be encouraged to export their produce to create sustainable businesses through programmes such as the SDI-led Collaborative Export Solutions pilot where a group of SME food and drink producers have been selected to have
access to specialist exporting support and hands-on guidance. The concept could link with the 2015 “The year of Food and Drink” to encourage businesses to offer healthier options or re-formulate existing recipes.

12. What else should be considered?

There needs to be a clearer definition in the resulting document of terms such as “local” and “sustainable” which are used consistently throughout the document without clarity on what they actually mean.

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?

Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is actively working towards the outcomes set out in our Single Outcome Agreement as detailed in question 4.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Through the Community Planning network