CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

It’s important to define what we mean by ‘good’. Encouraging and supporting Scotland’s growing confectionary and chocolatier industry, playing on Scotland’s reputation as a nation with a sweet tooth is as ‘good’ for the development of our food and drink sector as farmers’ markets and organic produce. In embracing an umbrella term such as ‘Good Food Nation’ we must beware of avoiding superficial generalisation, such as ‘good = health’ which could negatively impact on some sections of our food and drink sector.

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

The inclusivity within the Good Food Nation proposition is reminiscent of the ‘Tourism is everyone’s business’ approach. Securing and retaining engagement across multiple sectors will be indicative of success. Operationally, how this is facilitated and channelled will be critically important. This proposal must have genuine depth to it in order to create meaningful, sustainable change.

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

From an economic development point of view, the proposed vision appears somewhat light on food and drink sector development and growth at the SME level. As a nation we must give serious consideration as to ‘how’ our local food producers transition in scale towards becoming manufacturers and job creators. Innovation and encouraging ambition and growth is a priority we have identified in Dumfries & Galloway.

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

Dumfries & Galloway already has a particularly well connected local food and drink network however stronger engagement and a commitment to support the sector could have significant impact on local producers, particularly in relation to generating product demand within the public sector.

However, that demand can only positively impact on local food production if it is understanding of the volume and scale constraints that some producers operate within. Were public sector purchasers able to anticipate demand
across a year to enable producers to plan around stable and predictable demand (eg contract farming / production), such an approach could be transformative, particularly in horticulture and red meat sectors.

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

An open, honest and frank discussion about the stress points and duplication within food and drink sector support at a regional and national level will enable sound, innovative and effective approaches to be developed.

Whilst there has been significant investment within local food networks, there is considerable duplication and limited knowledge sharing. Dumfries & Galloway has of course had a very intensive and high profile food and drink support service over the past five years, with considerable learning as a result of this. However, Scottish Enterprise through the food and drink forums look set to repeat many of the less effective interventions that have hampered industry engagement with public sector led initiatives in the past.

The food and drink sector is a highly dynamic industry, particular at the SME level, and while the overall vision appears sound, there is much that could be learned by open and very frank discussions of the weaknesses and the areas of best practice across Scotland’s existing support networks.

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

In principle a Food Commission could play an important role in drawing together the various strands of the food and drink sector. However, leadership, responsiveness to industry knowledge and sector development experience, as well as an understanding of differing regional challenges across Scotland’s food and drink sector will be absolutely critical to its success. Depth as well as breadth will be essential. Delivering the aims as described in the document will likely be challenging.

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

Public sector engagement in a meaningful way. Good Food Nation must lead on public sector engagement in order to generate demand which the private sector can respond to.

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

Determining supply volumes and identifying market opportunities is a clear need within the sector, which can be informed by technology and emerging communication methods. For example, the concept of pre-selling
production runs through crowdfunding mechanisms is an interesting model which, with some leadership, could address many of the growth challenges faced by food and drink SMEs.

Scotland has been improving its support for the sector and increasingly recognising the value of the food and drink sector for at least 10 years. Those years of learning with many different projects and initiatives have created a wealth of knowledge which now needs to be brought together to inform a fresh, responsive, dynamic and innovative approach.

In terms of the economic development of the sector, we are yet to be convinced that Good Food Nation will deliver significant impacts for Dumfries & Galloway as, by its very nature, the priorities in relation to health (and therefore horticulture) and public sector purchasing (and therefore requiring scale within suppliers) are not well suited to the micro business producer or the livestock and dairy agriculture that dominates our food and drink industry here.

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:
   - Food in the public sector
   - A children’s food policy
   - Local food
   - Good food choices and
   - Continued economic growth?

   - Food in the public sector – there needs to be clear definition of what that actually means to the food and drink sector, particularly in terms of the continued challenges to local authority finances. If, as seems likely, the public sector is continuing to seek products at the most competitive prices locally sourced, this could in fact have a negative impact on a region such as Dumfries and Galloway dominated by micro-businesses. This approach may result in local producers having prices driven down through the public sector trying to achieve a national policy. This needs careful thought and dialogue.
   - A children’s food policy - Reintroduction of national guidelines on nutritional content of meals can have positive impacts, particularly in early year learning as there is clear research linking mental ability and concentration with good nutrition. There would need to be careful consideration of capacity for local authority education catering departments to achieve this, particularly in a rural region where there is a lack of on-site kitchens. Budgets would need to be allocated to enable schools to achieve their part in a National Food Policy for children. There is greater scope through Curriculum for Excellence to link local producers/chefs into schools to both highlight where products come from and the provenance of such but also to encourage children back into the art of cooking real food and the illustrative links between food provenance locality, affordability, cooking and healthy active lives.
   - Local food – We would support this approach and would add that linking communities to local producers and organisations such as Farmers
and Community Markets, which have seen dramatic sustainable growth in Dumfries and Galloway over the last 3 years would also support this initiative.

- Good food choices we would support this approach through the Food Commission.
- Continued economic growth? Continued economic growth would benefit from some clear definition, the growth of the sector cannot continue to be so dependent on whisky and salmon.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

- Innovation
- Product development
- Infrastructure
- Production facility development
- Sector interconnectedness with tourism
- Exploring potential for development of producer organisations

Also, introducing levy to the sector – the food and drink sector needn’t be fine malts and delicate salmon and sophisticated meals. Sweeties, quirky product propositions, subscription models, pre-production sales, crowd funding, seasonal responses to purchasing behaviour, humorous approaches to branding and packaging will help the sector respond to and exploit emerging market trends.

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

We would recommend full, frank and open dialogue with the many varied stakeholders in the food and drink sector, particularly with representatives of Scotland’s many micro businesses who are the predominant factor in this sector and also with varied public sector agencies particularly ensuring that all regions across Scotland are considered. Rurality, infrastructure, routes to market and capacity vary greatly across the country and the ability to deliver on a National Policy is absolutely not a ‘one size fits all’.

12. What else should be considered?

- The business base of the food and drink sector in the various regions across Scotland, many rural areas such as Dumfries and Galloway have a predominance of micro businesses with very different challenges to larger food producers
- Re-segmentation of some defined areas within the sector from primary producers to a food and drink business, which could enable greater public sector support to pump prime or support business growth.
- Appropriate definition by region of ‘growth’ to enable more producers, businesses with growth/export aspirations to have improved access to internationalisation, growth and export products and support. For Dumfries and Galloway there is an overwhelming case for this segmentation in terms of growth to be redefined to a turnover of £50,000 in line with Highlands and Islands.
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?

- We await the outcome of this consultation to fully determine the direction of travel and would welcome Dumfries and Galloway Council and DG Food and Drink being actively involved in relevant initiatives.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council is fully committed to Dumfries and Galloway’s food and drink sector, it continues to have a lead officer for the sector, as well as continuing to support the industry via DG Food and Drink.
- We will continue with active support for our thriving farmers’ and community markets.
- We will develop, in consultation and partnership with our food and drink sector, a regional Food and Drink Strategy.
- We will continue to deliver specialist food and drink workshops for businesses.
- We will develop further links with colleagues in education.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?

Dumfries and Galloway Council were sent the discussion document and invited to comment on it. This response has been developed by close public/private sector joint working between Dumfries and Galloway Council and DG Food and Drink, and submitted by DG Food and Drink.

Responding to this Consultation Paper

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by 17th October 2014. Please send your response with the completed Respondent Information Form (see "Handling your Response" below) to:

goodfoodnation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:
Good Food Nation
Food and Drink Division
B1 Spur
Saughton House
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD

If you have any queries please contact Eugenia Christie at 0131 244 9574.

This consultation, and all other Scottish Government consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the Scottish Government website at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations.
Recipe for Success: Scotland’s National Food and Drink Policy.
Becoming a Food Nation Discussion Document.
Response: Dumfries and Galloway Council.

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- Funding – to effectively deliver the aspirations of a proposed policy there will need to be appropriate levels of additional funding from the Scottish Government.

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?
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