CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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

Introduction

Land Use Sub Group – This working group has arisen from Edible Edinburgh.

Edible Edinburgh is a sustainable food city initiative with a vision that Edinburgh be a city where good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment. The Land Use strand of the initiative has the strategic aim that we grow, produce and distribute food more locally while conserving and protecting our natural resources and environment. Our major tactical objectives are firstly to increase the amount of land available for local food production and secondly to introduce a food perspective into both the City’s local plan and the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan.

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

We welcome that the proposed new policy is not solely about the economic success of commercial food and drink producers. We think it important that the concept of being a good food nation should include a thriving grow your own sector which not only creates local produce but also educates and improves attitudes towards food. And celebrates food where it has been grown, cooked and eaten together.

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

The demand for land for community growing would be met. Strategic and local plans would prioritise local growing as a preferred use for the most suitable land. Effective local supply chains would connect local food from producers large and small to local consumers; there would be an abundance of sustainable, seasonal produce available on the doorstep; communal meals would be shared and everyone would be confident in their knowledge and skills to grow and cook their own food.

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

We think that the vision should expressly support and promote grow your own. Communal kitchens would be easily available where the community can come together and prepare and share food in a communal setting.
4. How would your life be better? What does being a Good Food Nation mean in your locality?

Access to affordable nutritious locally grown fruit and vegetables would create a healthier and more confident place for people.

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

Whilst the second paragraph of the discussion under “everyone on board” in chapter 8 of the consultation document says that everyone needs to be involved, the discussion that follows makes no reference to the third sector. We think that the third sector should be engaged because grass roots projects and initiatives which involve members of communities growing, cooking and sharing food together have an important role to play in imparting skills and knowledge, in changing attitudes, and in promoting health. This is particularly the case in more deprived areas and in engaging society’s harder-to-reach groups.

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

We think it important that the composition of the Commission be such that it cannot be dominated by major commercial producers, processors or sellers. We think that there should be representation for local, not-for-profit and community producers.

We see an important role for the proposed Commission in providing national support for local growing and farming initiatives. This could involve assisting with co-ordination and helping to avoid duplication of effort and also providing information and running media campaigns at a national level. Including the promotion of the importance of education on food related behaviour.

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

Indicators on diet related health and inequality.

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

We consider that the proposed range of approaches should include support for and promotion of community growing given its value in imparting knowledge about food and improving attitudes.

There should be an emphasis on soil structure and its role in the nutritional content
of the produce. This should begin in the schools.

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**

Yes, but this should not be limited to the question of public sector procurement. The public sector controls large amounts of land and property which could be better utilised than it is at present in producing and supporting sustainable local food production. Whilst good practice examples exist – for example the Scottish Parliament has bee hives – there is a need to challenge the reluctance of public sector land owners to either make productive use of their land assets themselves or alternatively to permit communities or local enterprises to make productive use of them. The public sector also has a role to play as an employer; another good practice example that might be followed is that the Northern Ireland Assembly provides workplace allotments for its staff within the grounds of Stormont.

**A children’s food policy**

Yes; to be effective the policy would need to address parents’ attitudes and behaviours as well as those of children.

**Local food**

Yes, and within the topic of local food we consider the subsets of grow your own and community growing and cooking should be priorities.

**Good food choices**

Yes, and we consider the education and information involved should not only be about consumer health. Environmental impact, soil health, cultivation and sustainability are all also elements in making good food choices.

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

**Grow your own** embraces gardens, allotments, community gardens, orchards and in cities patchwork farms have in recent years seen an upsurge in interest and can provide a positive outcome.

**Community Food** brings in community shops, cafes, and kitchens. Both of these can provide
   - Fresh fruit and vegetables and other produce
11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

12. What else should be considered?

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?

Beginning in 2015, we aim to start taking actions to increase the amount of land available for local food production in the Edinburgh area. We also intend to input to the development of a local food growing strategy for the area.

The community gardens that are a subgroup of Edible Edinburgh have already begun to work towards the areas proposed above. They are setting up growing spaces that give the local community the opportunity to learn a range of new skills in food growing and cooking. This includes people of all ages and cultures and the sharing of food builds community cohesion.

14. How did you hear about this Discussion Document?