

Local food for everyone: a discussion



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- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Nourish Scotland

Phone number

07513 551922

Address

1 Summerhall Place, Edinburgh, Midlothian, United Kingdom

Postcode

EH9 1PL

Email Address

info@nourishscotland.org.uk

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- Yes
 No

Questionnaire

Local food for everyone: a discussion

Consultation questions

PART A – Local food

1. Do you agree with the Scottish Government definition of local food as set out in the strategy?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

B. Please provide further detail on what local food means to you in the text box below.

We agree with the overall definition outlined although we would argue that there should be a distinction around what we call 'local', proactively seeking opportunities to support smaller producers to maximise their contribution, whilst also building in diversification, flexibility, and resilience to the Scottish food system.

Nourish Scotland and members are disappointed to see that seafood is absent from the consultation on the local food strategy as Scotland's seas are an important part of our culture and economy. Our seafood is diverse, low carbon and a healthy source of protein, and both our fishing communities and marine environment are very important to our Scottish culture. Yet, we are not looking after them nor valuing their offerings. Unfortunately, many of the issues which beset the food system on land persist in the sea too.

The rise of industrial fishing fleets has driven down many of our fish stocks, while making others (such as inshore herring) commercially unviable. New forms of fishing have emerged to fill the void, including scallop dredging, electrofishing and trawling for scampi. Many of these practices are harmful to our marine environment.

We should be eating more of what we produce here in Scotland - and we have a rich bounty of seafood in our waters. Scottish vessels catch enough seafood each year for everyone to eat a dozen portions each week. Unfortunately, few of us eat our recommended 2 portions, or 160g, per week. Seafood can contribute to varied and balanced diets and help us keep healthy. Sustainability and the protection of marine environments should be key priorities in how we manage our seas to ensure fish stocks are healthy, and the marine ecosystem and seabed have recovered.

2. Do you agree with the benefits associated with local food as set out in the strategy?

- a. Yes
- b. I agree with some but not all of the benefits
- c. No
- d. I don't know

B. Please provide further detail on your response, including whether there are there any further benefits not captured. Please provide examples if possible.

A good local food strategy would have a huge positive impact on the communities, economies and the environments of Scotland – and beyond.

To ensure that 'local' is sustainable beyond the mere reduction of transport food miles, the importance of supporting environmentally friendly, low-impact methods of food production, such as agroecological approaches, is crucial in maximising all potential benefits to a local food strategy.

Particular attention must also be paid to ensuring that regional and national infrastructure mirrors and facilitates the potential benefits of local food.

A thriving local food economy must also ensure that those that grow, pick, cook and serve food are as equally nourished as those that eat it. Workers' rights, fair pay and an emphasis on the right to food will ensure that there is 'local food for everyone'.

3. Are you aware of any disadvantages of local food?

- a. Yes
b. No

B. Please provide further detail about your response. Please provide examples if possible.

Disadvantages associated with Scottish local food could be seen as higher price premium than imported products and limitations of locally available food variety.

However, locally produced food is in fact an investment beyond the mere provision of food itself: It can contribute to Community Wealth Building, foster production diversification and contribute to climate change mitigation, contribute to tackling dietary and health inequalities, support children's learning about food sustainability and seasonality, and more widely lead the way in reshaping Scotland's food system towards a reality where sustainably produced, healthy food is available and affordable for all.

4. Do you have any comments on the first pillar of the Scottish Government's local food strategy: connecting people with food?

Grow your own:

Scottish Government and Local Authorities should take a much more ambitious approach when building on their existing Food Growing Strategies, ensuring these are reviewed annually as opposed to the 'within 5 years' statutory requirement. The reviews should be a collaborative process between all stakeholders and incorporate the local indigenous food growing cultures of both Scots and other ethnic groups.

Most people in Scotland live in urban area and many more live in towns around Scotland. These cities and towns are the centres of social life, the centres of our food consumption, and the centres of our culture. From community gardens to allotments, windowsills to back gardens, and urban farms to market gardens, all of these are essential for the Scottish wellbeing agenda. With Food Growing Strategies in place, it is now time to significantly step up the Scottish government's support for urban agriculture that delivers food and other public goods right where people live.

Besides the manifold benefits to physical health, mental wellbeing, job creation, community resilience, and the environment, urban agriculture can make a substantial contribution to people's daily diets and nutrient intake. A conservative estimate in Dundee, for example, states that about 35% of the city's food needs could be met from within the city boundaries, with all its associated outcomes of community cohesion and resilience, reduced food miles, health and wellbeing improvements, etc. New recommendations to Scottish Government for supporting urban agriculture are described in [Local Food, Green Jobs: A prospectus for supporting urban and peri-urban veg production.](#)

Making land available:

There is a specific role for Local Authorities to identify good quality land that can be used for growing at all scales, ensuring that sites have adequate facilities to enable food production, e.g. running water.

Support should be provided for community and small-scale growers to become commercially viable, including secure tenancies to allow them the confidence to invest time and resources into their operations.

Consideration of alternative ways of bringing land into use for growing such as the One Wales: One Planet scheme which provides a genuinely affordable and sustainable ways for people to live and work on their own land, bringing social, economic and environmental benefits.

Improving access:

Improving access to local food requires work to reduce both geographic and financial barriers to ensure that everyone can access healthy and sustainable food locally. Work being undertaken at local authority and Scottish Government levels to maximise incomes through social security and other financial supports will help to address financial barriers, though it will take public, private and third sector coordination and collaboration to achieve this aim.

If there is to be 'local food for everyone' we must recognise the role of local food in the realisation of the right to food and incorporate it within the future development of the Good Food Nation Bill.

Our work with community food initiatives throughout Scotland has demonstrated a strong and growing desire from staff and volunteers to use healthy and local food into their work with communities. Unfortunately, most organisations do not have the resources to source and afford food from local suppliers and are therefore left with no choice but to join food surplus redistribution schemes or purchase the food they use at the cheapest food retailer available nearby. It is clear that the barriers for community groups being able to find, build and sustain relationships with local producers, afford local produce and be able to use local food in community activities are far too high for most individual organisations to overcome.

Connecting people with food must involve a review of how our current system of support for community food activities is structured and what can be done at local authority and regional level to reduce the barriers that community organisations face in bringing the benefits of local food to their communities.

To connect more people with local food we must pay attention to processing infrastructure across the country, in particular exploring the scaling up of small / community bakeries and doorstep milk and dairy deliveries. For example, Scotland The Bread has established two small grain mills in the Bowhouse in Fife to turn locally and organically grown heritage grains into flour for baking and breadmaking. Similarly sized mills could be located throughout Scotland to provide freshly milled flour to cafes, bakeries, schools and retailers, which would reduce food miles, build greater resilience in the bread and flour supply chain, strengthen local businesses and ensure more nutritious flour was made available to local communities.

Learning about food:

School food provision to children in Scotland – and in particular the expansion of Universal Free School Meal provision across Scottish primary schools – provides a unique opportunity for connecting Scottish children and young people with Scottish food in their everyday experience. However, to do this the related policy environment needs to be holistic: whilst procurement processes need to prioritise 'local' attributes, Scotland's local

authorities also require sufficient budgets to afford locally produced ingredients, teachers need to be sufficiently trained in food education, growing and nutrition, and school food professionals and catering staff require valorisation and professional development opportunities to cook and celebrate locally sourced school food. Community Benefits from procurement contracts could also be one mechanism to support food related activities in schools.

5. Do you have any comments on the second pillar of the Scottish Government's local food strategy: connecting Scottish producers with buyers?

If there is to be 'local food for everyone' then there must be an increase in growing capacity itself, not only through the availability of land but also in the growers themselves. With an ageing population of farmers Scottish Government must investment in the training and financial support for new entrant farmers, whilst also promoting and supporting the use of agroecological farming techniques to minimise the use of chemicals and protect biodiversity from soils to sea.

Foster short and circular supply chains

With regards to public food procurement and beyond, creating short supply chains by connecting Scottish food producers with public or private buyers in local or regional markets requires investment in the establishment of efficient distribution networks and adequate processing facilities for Scottish produce.

Implementing more innovative models of procurement, such as Dynamic Purchasing Systems, can facilitate the incorporation of smaller producers into the often-large public food and drink contracts. This not only allows for fluctuation in supply due to producer capacity but also helps take advantage of the seasonal changes of supply.

The development of regional distribution hubs would connect local producers with supply chains and help manage the uneven spread of food production across Scotland, with gluts and gaps being more efficiently managed.

There must also be a role for smaller scale alternative supply chains, e.g. support for the establishment and running of farmers' markets that are accessible (physically and financially) to all, support to veg box schemes and models such as Community Supported Agriculture.

Encourage retailers to stock Scottish food

Providing the necessary support, land and infrastructure to increase Scotland's food production will ensure there is adequate supply and will in turn increased retailers opportunities to access local food. Again, regional distribution hubs and making best use of existing logistics systems will shorten supply chains and ease routes to market.

Retailers should be encouraged to maximise opportunities for the promotion of Scottish produce in store, using 'local' as lever to increase sales. There is also potentially a role for Scottish Government's 'Healthy Living Programme' to work with local suppliers to ensure that convenience stores have better access to local and seasonal produce.

Encourage consumers to buy Scottish food

Encourage the diversification of local agricultural production in line with the nutritional needs of Scottish communities. Using appropriate technology, such as glasshouses, will extend the growing season and range of Scottish food available which will reduce consumers and retailer reliance on imports. There must be trust is how food is labelled, ensuring that items marked as 'Scottish' are grown here, not just packed in Scotland.

The 'local' aspect of food needs to be both valued by consumers (through awareness raising and education) to make it the first choice and needs to be the easiest, most natural choice available (either cheapest or most visible). In other words, local food must become the default choice for the public food service and private consumers alike. Using food to tell a story about where it's come from, who grew it and how will build trust and relationships between producers, retailers, and their customers.

Encourage use of Scottish products as inputs

Following our various recommendations about supply chains, procurement and availability of product in this response will help to ensure there is adequate supply which will in turn help to generate a demand.

6. Do you have any comments on the third pillar of the Scottish Governments local food strategy: harnessing public sector procurement?

Public sector food procurement is a key element in the localisation of food supply chains in Scotland and to support local food producers:

1. Procuring food locally does not only generate significant returns for the local community, but it also offers long-term stability of demand to local producers.
2. Whilst public procurement is a relatively small portion of Scotland's food market, it can send the right market signals and generate innovation.
3. Dynamic procurement models of public sector procurement and regional food distribution hubs can lead the way in to connect local producers with supply chains and allow for fluctuation in supply due to producer capacity and seasonal change.
4. Public sector food procurement can also shape supply chains with benefits for the climate and biodiversity by prioritising sustainably produced local food over more impactful alternatives.

To allow Scotland's public food procurement to yield the maximum benefits for Scottish food producers, localisation requires a holistic supply chain approach:

1. Both production and processing of the food and food products required by the public food service must be available locally for local food producers to benefit from meeting demand. For instance, learning from other EU countries and exploring new solutions to the issue of finding local abattoirs such as modular abattoirs with remote vet monitoring.
2. Strengthening the 'local' unique selling point in food procurement frameworks and setting a minimum % of locally and preferably organically produced food to be procured, public institutions will ensure that local food is a priority. At the same time, the capacity of local producers to compete in the tendering process should be strengthened through training and the process should be simplified as much as possible.
3. The development of dynamic procurement systems and regional distribution hubs requires investment in procurement expertise and capacity at the local level.
4. Fostering relationships between local producers and public sector procurement is crucial to synchronise demand and supply. Local producers must be supported to cater for the demands of highly regulated school food. Procurement policies and regulations must, in turn, proactively encourage the procurement of locally produced food.
5. Scotland's local authorities must have secure budgets for the procurement of locally and sustainably produced food, even if these priorities come at a higher cost. This 'cost' must instead be reframed as an 'investment' in local economies, communities, and environments.

6. The revision of *Catering for Change* as a policy framework for local public food procurement should include specific targets for the procurement of local and sustainably produced food. The policy must be universally implemented and monitored throughout.
7. Lastly, prioritising locally produced food in Scotland's public food service provides the Scottish Government with the opportunity to shape local food systems which benefits food workers and their communities through fair wages and employment security, thereby taking one step closer to the realisation of the Right to Food in Scotland

7. Are there any areas related to local food where Scottish Government involvement could bring further benefits or reduce disadvantages?

- Scottish Government must recognise that the involvement of Local Authorities is critical to the success of any local food strategy; after all, it is Local Authorities that are best placed to work at a local level and much of the heavy lifting in the delivery of any strategy will fall within their remit. However, they will need to be adequately supported and resourced to do so. There is a once in a generation opportunity to do this through agricultural transition in the post-BREXIT reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. We would recommend allocating a percentage (5% minimum) of the CAP replacement budget to Local Authorities to allow them to invest in local food systems and deliver on a comprehensive national food strategy.
- We encourage Scottish Local Authorities to join [URBACT](#) and other EU networks to exchange best practice in developing local food economies.
- Scottish Government and Local Authorities should formally link the food & climate agendas, for example through signing of the Glasgow Declaration, and recognise pivotal role that localised food systems have in delivering on Scotland's existing and future climate change commitments. There are numerous global case studies looking at how food and climate policies can together in tandem as part of the [Glasgow Declaration resources here](#).
- National bodies such as COSLA and Sustainable Scotland Network should also acknowledge the role of local government in the delivery of any food strategy and its place in their wider climate and biodiversity activities. In order to do this, they need to allocate some dedicated resource.
- There is also a crucial role for local food partnerships, such as the Sustainable Food Places network, in bringing together stakeholders from across all sectors of the food environment and engaging directly with food citizens in their communities.
- Another important factor in supporting locally produced food is the potential to mitigate the environmental impact of the Scottish diet. Here again, public sector food procurement and provision can constitute an example of developing a more sustainable relationship between consumers, food and the environment.
- Climate mitigation can be achieved through prioritising low-impact production systems, minimising transport, and energy efficient storage and distribution arrangements. It can also be achieved through resetting our relationship with resource-intensive and high-impact foods: Setting targets for % of reduction of meat and dairy for local public procurement and % of meat and dairy sourced to high animal welfare, e.g. Serving Better Guidance calling for 25% by 2025, can incentivise Scottish producers to produce 'less but better' and more environmentally-friendly food. Shifting to more plant-based meals based around local and seasonal vegetables can not only help improve the diets of Scotland

children and communities, but also reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from Scotland public food service.

- Lastly, prioritising locally produced food in Scotland's public food service provides the Scottish Government with the opportunity to shape local food systems which benefits food workers and their communities through fair wages and employment security, thereby taking one step closer to the realisation of the Right to Food in Scotland.

The next set of questions are aimed at individuals. Please skip to question 14 if you are answering on behalf of a company or NGO

8. Please indicate how willing you are to pay more for local food?

- a. Very willing
- b. Willing
- c. Neutral
- d. Unwilling
- e. Very unwilling
- f. I don't know

9. Please indicate how willing you are to go to more/different shops to access local food?

- a. Very willing
- b. Willing
- c. Neutral
- d. Unwilling
- e. Very unwilling
- f. I don't know

10. Please indicate how likely you are to change your diet, for example to eat fewer exotic foods or to eat more seasonally, in order to eat more local foods?

- a. Extremely likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely
- f. I don't know

11. Are you aware of where you can access local food?

- a. Yes, and I buy it frequently
 - b. Yes, and I buy it occasionally
 - c. Yes, but I don't buy it
 - d. No, I am not aware of where I can access local food
-

~~B. Please provide further detail about your answer above.~~

~~12. A) Are you currently able to buy healthy, affordable food groceries within a 20 minute walk (approximately 800 metres) of your home?~~

~~**Note:** This question is focused on local access to healthy and affordable food. The next question is focused on local access to local food specifically.~~

- ~~a. Yes, I have a variety of options~~
- ~~b. Yes, but there is limited choice~~
- ~~c. Partially, I have to travel further to buy certain products~~
- ~~d. It is not possible for me to buy healthy and affordable food within 20 minutes walking distance of my home~~
- ~~e. I don't know~~

~~B) Please provide further detail about your answer above, particularly focusing on any barriers to your ability to access healthy, affordable food.~~

~~13. Are you currently able to buy local food within a 20 minute walk (approximately 800 metres) of your home?~~

- ~~a. Yes, I have a variety of options~~
- ~~b. Yes, but there is limited choice~~
- ~~c. Partially, I can access some local food but have to travel further to buy certain products~~
- ~~d. It is not possible for me to buy local food within 20 minutes of my home~~
- ~~e. I don't know~~

~~B) Please provide further detail about your answer above, particularly focusing on any barriers to your ability to access local food.~~

14. Do you have any further comments on improvements that could be made to allow for everyone living in Scotland to have better access to healthy, affordable and locally sourced food?

People in Scotland face both geographic and financial barriers to accessing healthy, affordable, and locally sourced food, and strategies for overcoming these barriers will need to include public, private and third sector partners.

Those providing public sector food in Scotland can play an important role in ensuring that everyone living in Scotland has better access to healthy, affordable and locally sourced food. For example, inclusion of local food in the provision of universal free school meals will establish a regular and consistent way for children to access and become connected to healthy and local food, while simultaneously reducing the burden on families for sourcing and affording these options.

Making this a reality requires significant investment across the food supply chains, school food environment, and human resources. This should not be regarded as a cost to the Scottish Government, but as sustainable, long-term investment in Scotland's community resilience, public health, environmental sustainability and contribution to global climate change mitigation.

The Good Food Nation Bill provides an opportunity for the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to set out plans for addressing both the geographic and financial barriers that people face and ensure these are integrated into ongoing work. For example, Best Start Foods and the Scottish Child Payment are mechanisms through which the Scottish Government can respond to changes in the affordability of healthy and locally sourced food to ensure that families are being offered the financial support required to afford these foods. Local authorities can evaluate and review the effects that transportation routes and costs have on particular groups' ability to access healthy and local foods and work with local residents and transport providers to find solutions that ensure no one faces an insurmountable barrier to affording healthy and local food.

15. A) Do you think that Scotland's schools, hospitals and other public institutions provide sufficient access to healthy, locally sourced food?

- a. Yes
- b. Mostly
- c. Somewhat
- d. Not at all
- e. I don't know

B) Please provide further detail about your answer above, focusing on any changes you think could be made to improve access to healthy, locally sourced food within schools, hospitals or other public institutions

In recent years, the Scottish public food service has made significant efforts to improve the quality and sustainability of the food it provides. The adoption of the Food For Life Served Here (FFLSH) Certification across more than half of Scotland's councils is a sign of commitment to serving food which is good for Scotland's public health, communities and the environment. Locally sourced meals and ingredients are now more common in Scottish schools, for example, than a decade ago. However, challenges persist with regards to facilitating access for local food producers to public food procurement contracts and much more could be done. Crucially:

- Public sector procurement should proactively encourage the use of local and organic food by setting targets. This would both act as a stimulus to increase supply and give confidence to the market.
- Budgets for food public procurement should be adequate and secure in order to pay the true cost of food and support the industries that underpin the food system.

16.A) Are you aware of any examples of schools, hospitals or other public institutions that have been particularly effective in providing healthy, locally sourced food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide further detail on these and why they were effective.

North Ayrshire Council has a long-standing commitment to sourcing and serving sustainable school meals. Holders of the Gold Food for Life Sold Here (FFLSH) award since 2013 has meant that the council pays much attention to food provenance and has sourced many items which are organic, free range, and promote good animal welfare practices. The majority of the food spend is with Scottish suppliers and over 27% with suppliers located in North Ayrshire. The Council's Community Wealth Building (CWB) strategy allows progression of local wealth and supports and creates local jobs.

One of the pillars of the CWB is procurement. Facilities Management liaises with the Soil Association and the Ayrshire Regional Food Group Co-ordinator to discuss local routes to market and sourcing the best possible food for school menus. North Ayrshire Council has set a target to increase local spend and officers are working across services including Business Development and Procurement to work towards this. Additionally, North Ayrshire has been joined by other major Ayrshire anchor organisations (Including East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire & Arran Ayrshire College) to pledge to encourage local spend therefore supporting local companies and jobs. Working collaboratively across the council and with other external organisations and communities secures commitment locally and provides support to achieve positive outcomes for the community as a whole.

There are a number of Local Authorities across Scotland delivering a similar approach to North Ayrshire Council, and exemplars can be shared from others if required.

The Soil Association's Food For Life Served Here (FFLSH) Award has been adopted by more than half of Scottish councils who now serve at least 75% of their meals freshly prepared, ensuring high welfare standards of all meat served and making the most of local and seasonal produce.

17. A) Has your attitude to local food changed at all due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related restrictions?

- a. Yes
- b. Somewhat
- c. Not at all

B) Please provide more detail about your answer

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown saw a number of factors, from isolation and stocking up of pantries to closing of the hospitality sector, that led to people changing the way they procure food and businesses coming up with innovative logistical solutions to a

new pattern of local demand. We saw a huge upsurge in those sourcing their food more locally, not just with a rise in veg box schemes but also people using the shops closest to them. Those fortunate enough to live near to local producers found a comfort in being to look their baker or butcher in eye and make a connection between themselves and their food. Smaller retailers and producers showed the most agility during the pandemic, constantly finding more resourceful ways to get food to their customers and keep their businesses alive.

However, the COVID-19 conditions have acted as a magnifying glass on our society and food systems, laying bare existing dysfunctions and inequalities; access to local food should not be based on where you live or how much you earn.

It is inevitable, as we are seeing now, a heavy reliance on imports means we are at risk of fluctuations in supply and price. Shortening supply chains mean better feedback systems to respond to changes. Meanwhile localising food systems helps local economies thrive. This not only supports food security for the general public but also helps the communities themselves; people with resilient livelihoods are better prepared for – and can better cope with – shocks, whether recurrent, protracted or unexpected.

18.A) Are you aware of any organisations or schemes that have been particularly effective in providing local food during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- a. Yes
- b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide further detail on these and why they were effective.

There are many good examples of community organisations across Scotland building community resources around food and they multiplied and adapted their offerings during Covid. Each have a slightly different focus, including: training and skills around growing your own food and connecting people with food; tackling mental health and social isolation; increasing access to fresh and healthy food and ensuring awareness of healthy diets (some targeting particular age groups); ensuring community resilience and food security e.g. by supplementing the local supply chains for local public kitchens, cafes and markets with seasonal fresh food.

A sample of them are listed here:

- East Ayrshire Council supported the local supply chain during the pandemic by using locally produced goods to support households who received direct deliveries to doorsteps throughout the pandemic, including the families of children in receipt of free school meals.
- Woodside Arran Farm changed their model to focus on growing organic veg for islanders on a pay what you can basis.
- Food for Good was set up at the start of the pandemic to provide tasty and nutritious food in a dignified manner to those needing. They cooked using local and seasonal ingredients, using the money they raised from funding or donations to buy from local suppliers to ensure they left a legacy in the local food economy.
- ['Call4Fish'](#) was set up during the first lockdown and works with local fishers to provide a market and also delivery services across the UK.
- Scotland The Bread established the 'Flour to the People' project with recognition that low-income areas were hit particularly hard by the pandemic and are often excluded from the benefits of local and nutritious foods due to issues of affordability. By empowering people to bake together through community food hubs, and providing low-cost access to locally grown and milled flour, Flour to the People seeks to improve access to nutritious food and opportunities to build local and individual resilience.

- Earth in Common (Leith, Edinburgh) greatly increased their growing and local marketing activities and added to their programme a series of online training courses incl. cooking, growing your own.

19. A) Are you aware of any organisations or schemes that have been particularly effective in developing a strong sense of local food culture and community?

- a. Yes
b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide further detail on these and why they were effective.

IF USING THIS RESPONSE AS A TEMPLATE, PLEASE ADD ANY EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN REGION.

Unsurprisingly, the best examples of organisations and schemes effective in providing local food during the pandemic (Q.18) would also fit very well as examples of those developing a strong sense of local food culture and community.

A very effective way of linking communities with their local food environment are through food partnerships. The most developed of these in the Scotland is the [Sustainable Food Places \(SFP\) network](#). SFP food partnerships work across all aspects of the food system, establishing cross-sector food partnerships to transform their local food system and to solve some of today's most pressing social, environmental, and economic issues. Crucially, these food partnerships have the proactive support of their Local Authority and perform the function of linking together communities with the wider food sector, creating a 'good food movement' around sustainably sourced and culturally appropriate food.

In Scotland there are SFPs in Aberdeen, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Stirling and South Lanarkshire, with new members likely from Angus, Dundee, Falkirk and Perth & Kinross in early 2022.

Since the start of the pandemic, Nourish has convened the Dignity Peer Network to support community food initiatives seeking to adapt their services to engage their communities during the social and economic crises. Organisations such as EATS Rosyth and Greener Kirkcaldy (Fife), the MAXwell Centre (Dundee), St Paul's Youth Forum (Glasgow), Leith Earth in Common (Edinburgh) and Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust are examples of organisations that have worked hard to retain a focus on building community through food and community growing.

Community and small-scale bakeries came together for a series of workshops as part of the 'Baking in the Community' project hosted by Nourish Scotland and Scotland The Bread in 2020. Members included Buckhaven Community Bakery (Fife), Doughlicious (Dumfries and Galloway), High Rise Bakers (Glasgow), Granton Garden Bakery (Edinburgh), Heritage Bakehouse project and Reviving Food (Highland), Riverside Bakery (Stirling) and Strathpeffer Artisan Bread (Highland). Each of these bakeries were taking active measures to engage local community members in their role in supporting and benefiting from locally baked bread. Some have gone on to develop volunteering and community workshop opportunities to involve more people in local breadmaking.

Community Food Forums have been established in many local areas.

20. A) Are you aware of any organisations or schemes that have been particularly effective in reducing the distance that food travels from being grown or produced to being eaten (the number of 'food miles' travelled)?

- a. Yes
b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide further detail on these and why they were effective.

IF USING THIS RESPONSE AS A TEMPLATE, PLEASE ADD ANY EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN REGION.

Two of the six 'Key Issues' that Sustainable Food Places (as described in Q.19 above) work on are 'catering and procurement' and 'local food economy', actively working to link producers and growers with their local communities.

Local Authorities (for example East Ayrshire Council) often consider this factor when developing food and drink tenders.

Woodside Farm on Arran provides fresh seasonal salad and vegetables for their schools on Arran as well as their Care Home. They also take their food waste and use it for compost for the next crop.

Various online platforms, such as the [Open Food Network](#), [Bowhouse](#) in Fife, the [BigBarn](#) and Scottish [Edinburgh Lockdown Economy](#) are also designed to help to shorten the distance between food producers and the public.

21. A) Are you aware of any organisations or schemes that have been particularly effective in the increasing availability of locally produced food?

- a. Yes
b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide further detail on these and why they were effective.

IF USING THIS RESPONSE AS A TEMPLATE, PLEASE ADD ANY EXAMPLES FROM YOUR OWN REGION.

Locavore in Glasgow has a partnership with Caldwell's organics to grow food specifically for their retail and veg box schemes. This not only means they are able to guarantee supply, but they are also able to provide market confidence to the grower. Locavore are also working with other farmers to buy their whole crops which again provides security around supply and demand. Locavore also recently won the contract to provide school food in East Ayrshire.

North Ayrshire have the Soil Association Food for Life Gold accreditation for their schools which requires locally sourced food as part of the criteria. This has become even more prevalent through their Community Wealth Building commitment. They are working with their Economic Development service, Procurement, neighbouring authorities, and Ayrshire Food Network with a plan to identify gaps in the local supply, develop capacity and resilience in local producers. When procuring they have broken down out lots to make them more manageable for local producers and thus allowing them to submit a contract application.

PART B – Vertical farming

22. A) Have you considered using vertical farming technologies?

- a. Yes, I have or work with a vertical farm, or I am currently planning to
- b. Yes, but I have not yet made a decision/do not have enough information
- c. Yes, but I decided not to go ahead because I faced barriers
- d. No, it's not suitable for me/my product/my industry
- e. No, I don't know what vertical farming is

B) Please explain your reasoning.

Vertical farming in its current status is only suitable for a very limited range of food crops. Its growing trays are generally not deep enough to grow roots, they are generally not spaced widely enough to grow grains, the use of pollinators has not yet been developed enough to allow for soft fruit, etc.

The crops considered most suitable and fit for commercial exploitation in vertical towers are small plants such as perishable fresh herbs (basil, coriander...). There are very few producers that are able to use this technology for this limited capability at the moment. It is no surprise therefore that the main interest in investing in this farming technology is coming from large supermarket chains. Neither this farming method nor this type of investor would be contributing what we understand to be the range of potential benefits associated with localising the food system, as defined above.

If you answered E, 'I don't know what vertical farming is', you do not need to answer question 23 to 25 and can skip to question 26.

23. A) What effect would increased usage of vertical farming have on food imports to Scotland?

- a. Significantly reduce
- b. Slightly reduce
- c. Have no effect
- d. Slightly increase
- e. Significantly increase
- f. I don't know

B) Please provide further detail about your answer.

Vertical farming requires a large amount of upfront investment and they are not well suited to grow staple foods. They are ideally suited for growing large amounts of small perishable crops (e.g. fresh herbs) which are destined for elite markets (e.g. Sainsbury's growing basil, parsley and coriander in a tower built in Milton Keynes for high-end restaurants and small numbers of wealthier customers). It will therefore have no effect on replacing staple foods that are imported.

24. A) Would vertical farming cause an increase, decrease or have no effect on the following concerns compared with conventional production?

- | | Increase | Decrease | No effect | I don't know |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Emissions from transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Pesticide and fertiliser usage | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Water usage | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

d. Electricity usage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Packaging	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Land use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Labour requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Seasonality of produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Freshness of produce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Cost of production	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B) Please give examples.

- The towers are best used for growing the same crop on a large scale. They have high energy bills (electricity is needed to operate all automation and to generate artificial light). To keep these energy bills from soaking up profit margins, they are best built in remote places with reduced energy rates for helping take surplus energy off the grid. This results in food miles, transporting monocrops to urban centres. (There is little demand for non-staple foods in remote communities.)
- Since the towers are meant to be sterile environments, pesticide is minimised. However, all other inputs (fertilisers / plant feed) are artificial and synthetic which translates into high emissions.
- These growing systems are known for optimising water use as water can be filtered and recycled in the towers. This means they are ideal for areas with severe water shortages such as the Emirates, California, etc. Water does not pose the same challenge in Scotland.
- (see also a)) Energy bills for VF towers are large as artificial light has to be generated 24/7 in addition to heating and automated tower operations. Automation is required for sterile environments that keep human presence to a minimum.
- The need for packaging is likely to increase as it is needed for all long-distance travel. This is particularly the case for this scenario, where crops are highly perishable and need re-distribution to faraway places (see a. above).
- Land-use is decreased when building vertically. However, there is potentially lots of land available for growing food in Scotland – it makes more sense to put energy into changing land use and accessibility to land instead.
- This method is designed for remote control operation and robotics with minimal human input. There will be a low number of jobs associated with each new business: specialist IT operators and some low-quality jobs (cleaning, routine maintenance, packaging and driving).
- Seasonality does not apply as crops can grow all year round with artificial light and heating. This growing method therefore works against connecting people with nature.
- Freshness is addressed with packaging.
- Clearly there is a large upfront investment that is typically not manageable for smaller producers but attractive to large national operators who can carry this through on a large scale to benefit from economies of scale. In doing so, the potential benefits of these investments are experienced not locally by communities but by larger national operators. As far as the cost of staple foods goes, this method of production will not result in beneficial effects as this is not about growing staple foods.

25. A) What barriers do you see to the uptake of vertical farming in Scotland?

Tick all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Regulatory barriers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Capital expenditure costs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Economic return/cost per unit too high | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Lack of supply chain integration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- e. Lack of awareness of vertical farming techniques
- f. Lack of knowledge or skill in vertical farming techniques
- g. Lack of market
- h. Other
- i. None

B) Please give examples.

On b: There are lots of barriers for doing this on a small scale. On a large scale, however, these barriers can be overcome by large national operators such as supermarket chains with investment capital which makes it a method that moves in the opposite direction from localising the food system. It is instead associated with the negative features of our broken food system: it benefits not communities but large monopolies, generates very few jobs, uses high energy, increases the need for packaging, generates more food miles and thereby increases overall GHG emissions.

On c: The cost per unit would be driven down by large scale monocropping, to the commercial advantage of the investment company. Large scale monocropping will increase food miles and the need for packaging, lengthen supply chains and carry investment benefits away from local communities.

On d and g: The products of these vertical farms run by large companies would be integrated into existing national supply chains in similar ways as the current system operates around large suppliers and distributors. Local short supply chains would be undermined and outcompeted by this additional produce, in similar ways as they are currently.

On e and f: In that this is a highly specialised sector, it is unlikely that raising awareness of it and widening uptake of the skills needed to operate it is likely to benefit Scotland's local domestic economy or community. This might be of interest as an export-focused specialism targeting wealthy clients in dry and hot, water-scarce settings such as, for example, the Arabian Peninsula and the Southern States of the USA.

26.A) Are you aware of any other technologies, other than vertical farming, which would help Scotland produce more of its own food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

B) If you responded 'Yes' to the question above, please provide examples.

Glasshouse technology is underutilised and has lots of potential in Scotland. It lengthens the seasons and the range of products we can grow. Investment in this technology is more modest (than the huge investment required for vertical farming) and can be undertaken by individuals and communities alike (perhaps encouraged with modest start-up loans). They would make Scotland more self-sufficient and food secure and generate high-quality jobs and economic value for rural communities (unlike the large operators that take away profits to shareholders). Glasshouses can be heated with our abundant renewable energy supplies and similar to other community growing projects, are ideally suited for active participation by a wide range of people incl. kids/schools' learning projects, elderly, disabled, and marginalised people. Glasshouse technology lends itself to adding value to a localised food system run on short supply chains, and builds on community resilience in the many ways that vertical farming does not.

The glasshouse sector in Europe is highly developed; indeed, it supplies Scotland with a very high proportion of the food it currently imports. This is thanks to many years of experience and millions of Euros in government investment, something that Scotland could make great use of through shared learning. Nourish Scotland has already facilitated discussions with Dutch colleagues around supporting Scotland to set up training and expertise for new entrants and provide follow up business advice and a mentoring package,

to close the gap on the knowledge and skills that would be needed to develop and establish this sector.

There are currently several pilots (of introducing glasshouses) in the Highlands, and there is at least one existing successful business (tomatoes in Hawick) already.

A blog that evaluates the limited potential impact of vertical farming in its current state is here: <https://www.nourishscotland.org/vertical-farming-to-secure-food-for-the-future/>