

**Minutes of a Cross Party Group on Food held on Wednesday 18th June
2014 at the Scottish Parliament**

Frank Strang	Scot Government
Claire Baker	MSP
Jim Hume	MSP
John Scott	MSP
Rob Gibson	MSP
Mary Lawton	SFDF
Leighann Watson	SFDF
Kirsty Ritchie	SFDF
Colette Backwell	SFDF
Fiona Richmond	Scotland Food and Drink
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Wendy Barrie	Scottish Food Guide
Bosse Dahlgren	Consultant
Laura Stewart	Soil Association
Pam Rodway	Soil Association
Kirsten Leask	Soil Association
Julie Edgar	Scottish Salmon Producers Organization
Pat Abel	Nourish
Barbara Stutz	Nourish
Antonia Ineson	Nourish
Beatrice Morrice	Scotch Whisky Assn
John Cooke	Slow Food
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
Fiona Bayne	NHS (Health) Scotland
Emily Maguire	Independent Nutritionist
Lois White	Focus on Food
Marnie Sommerville	The Nutrition Training Company
Nicki Holmyard	Seafood Scotland
Anne Gibson	Community Food & Health Scotland
Bill Gray	Community Food & Health Scotland
Derek Robertson	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Geoff Ogle	Food Standards Agency Scotland
Alison Clews	Sainsburys
James Wildgoose	SFAC
Charlotte Maberley	QMU
Martin Irons	Food Trust Scotland/QMU
Miriam Smith	QMU
Laura Wyness	QMU
Kirk Hunter	Dairy UK
Frances Birch	NHS Health Scotland
Ewan Macdonald- Russell	Morrisons
Mhairi Greer	Pagoda PR/Waitrose
Amanda Fox	Scottish Government
Robin Gourlay	Scottish Government
Douglas Scott	Scottish Fed Meat Traders Assn
Ian Shankland	Lanarkshire Community Food Partnership
Kimberley McClean	Lanarkshire Community Food Partnership

1. Apologies for absence

These were received from Yvonne Traynor, Fiona Bird, Amanda Brown, John Scott, Graeme Findlay, Robert Burns, Daniel Gotts, Brian Ratcliffe, Alison Sampson, Phil Thomas, Stephen Hutt, Robbie Beattie, Wendy Wrieden, Jon Wilkin, Jennifer Bryson, Pieter van der Graaf, Moyra Burns, Nancy Robson, Sue Bird, Phil Thomas, Willie Fergusson, Martin Meteyard, James Graham and Patrick Harvie.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting agreed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election for Officers

The following were proposed as officers by Colette Backwell, seconded by Christine Fraser and elected.

Co-Conveners

Rob Gibson MSP (SNP)
Patrick Harvie (Green)
Jim Hume MSP (LD)
Claire Baker MSP (LAB)
John Scott MSP (Con)

Secretariat

Mary Lawton Scottish Food and Drink Federation

5. Recipe for Success : The Next Stage in Scotland's Food and Drink Policy

Presentation

Frank Strang (FS) Deputy Director for Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division at the Scottish Government presented the new refreshed Food and Drink Policy launched that morning.

The "Becoming a Good Food Nation Discussion Document" (GFN) was the follow on from the first Scottish National Food and Drink Policy "Recipe for Success (RfS)" launched in 2009.

FS thought RfS had stood the test of time and noted the unprecedented economic growth in the food and drink sector since its launch. The industry's targets had been met years early and were now being increased significantly. There had been progress in collaborative working within the sector and

between industry and the public sector. Individual companies of all shapes and sizes had grown and been successful alongside great growth in the local food movement around the country, raising a real interest in food.

There had been lots of other progress, for example in schools; a huge number of pupils were being reached by the various food initiatives and there was an increase in the numbers of pupils taking school meals. Big steps forward had also been seen in waste issues; 1.2 million households were now able to recycle food waste.

FS said that was the success story; however there was a paradox in Scotland, which GFN sought to address. We are world renowned for our food and drink, particularly for the quality but we still have huge diet related health issues. It was calculated that the cost of obesity to Scotland each year until 2030 would be the same as the value of 4 Edinburgh tram systems, £3 billion.

Waste was still a huge issue, as a nation one fifth of the food bought each year is wasted. Many people were disconnected from their food; where it comes from, where it is produced and the whole food supply chain. We needed to address our food culture and the paradox between having a reputation for good food and but still as a society having a relationship with food that is a bit dysfunctional.

GFN as the next phase of Recipe for Success Good Food Nation was not starting anew but the next phase of the overarching policy and focussing on these challenges. This did not mean a lack of emphasis on economic growth as that was important still for our economy, for our jobs, for our rural areas, for our image of ourselves but the aim was to address this food culture as well.

At the launch today the aspiration to become a good food nation was presented. There was a lot of discussion around what is meant by this. FS pointed out the strap line that that has been used for a few years “the land of food and drink” renowned around the world for the quality of what we produce. He said Scotland also needed to be a land of food and drink renowned for what we eat and sell every day; so a land of food and drink in its fullest sense. Reputation around food and drink was a reputation of both those things, one reinforces the other.

The vision articulated in the Good Food Nation discussion document is as follows:

“By 2025 people from every walk of life, will take pleasure in the food served in day by day in Scotland. An increase in Scottish food exports will attract overseas visitors and the quality of the food we serve will be one of the key reasons to travel to Scotland. Everyone will know what constitutes good food and why. All players in Scottish life - from schools, to hospitals, retailers, restaurants, food manufacturers -will be committed to serving such food. Its ready availability will have contributed children’s wellbeing and hence outcomes. Scottish suppliers will have developed their offering so that local increasingly equals fresh, healthy and environmentally sound. The most

intractable dietary-related diseases will have begun to decline as will the environmental impact locally and worldwide of our food consumption. The food industry will be a thriving and well known feature of local and national economies with each part of Scotland equally proud of its culinary heritage past and present”.

FS explained that was the vision, what was needed now was a discussion around this. He was very aware of that this would need long term culture change with everyone involved.

To start this off, a Scottish Food Commission would be appointed in the autumn to advise Ministers about what needs to be done and what the key priority areas are. FS thought it was necessary to be more explicit in what GFN was trying to achieve and what targets across the board were.

The Commission would also take on a role promoting the case for good food around the country and working with a local network of good food champions in all walks of life. Scottish Government (SG) would ask the Commission to brief them on the areas where there is work to be done.

FS highlighted that GFN covered food in the public sector. He said work on this had started but there was more to be done on its economic impact and the signal it gave to suppliers that SG was serious about the kind of food wanted, but also that SG were “walking the talk “on food and the public sector are leading by example.

Other plans included developing a specific children’s food policy and working with communities to encourage the production and sale of more locally grown food.

Crucially the way forward came down to behavioural change and choices for consumers. In order to do this FS said firstly it was important to look at moving away from relying entirely on 5-a-day public health messages, whilst these are important Scotland needed to be celebrating what it has, the wonderful larder and the joy of cooking.

Secondly the “every walk of life” vision in the document was vital. It was essential that the debate did not become a middle class “foodie” debate. He questioned how we encourage people from all walks of life to engage in the discussion and think about where their food comes from and how to make good food affordable.

He emphasised that what SG had produced was a discussion document telling the story and asking questions. He asked people to think what a good food nation meant to them and what changes needed to be introduced. He saw the discussion document more as a rallying call asking; what are you going to do, in the short term, in the medium term?

FS said there was a mid-October response date for replies which would be fed into the commission. He asked everyone present to send in their views

and spark debate in their own organizations and spread the message further afield. Mary Lawton agreed to include a link to the document in the minutes. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/1195>

Action: All

Open Debate

Mary Lawton, Scottish Food and Drink Federation (ML) noted that the CPG Food had held several themed meetings to discuss the original RfS and minutes of these had been formally submitted.

Geoff Ogle, Food Standards Agency Scotland observed it was easy to support the ambition of the document. In terms of the vision, safety and authenticity elements were implicit. Given FS comments around reputation and its importance, “reputation arrived on the back of a snail and leaves on the back of a horse” he felt that, safety, standards and authenticity should be more explicit as of part of the overall ambition.

FS agreed that food safety was paramount and needed to be stressed in the ambition. The new Food Standards Scotland Bill was currently going through Parliament and was an opportunity going forward. Richard Lochhead’s Cabinet Secretary title had changed that day to encompass the importance of food. FS noted that reporting issues around public health would remain as before in terms of food safety issues

Christine Fraser, Food Training Scotland asked why there was such a long time frame of 2025 and whether any of the ideas in the paper could be brought forward.

FS agreed that the timescale was long but thought it reflected the huge journey ahead. He felt that whilst the situation in Scotland was better that it was we were not yet a good food nation. The question for everyone was what they could do and when.

Marnie Sommerville, The Nutrition Training Company (MS) wondered where the new food commission would sit with the existing Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) and the New Food Body Scotland structure. MS also queried if there was going to be a review of the dietary targets for Scotland as a result of the SACN report on carbohydrates.

FS said SG hadn’t yet thought through the implications of the advisory structure but his view was that the food commission would not have any executive responsibility. It was important not to duplicate other groups. For example there needed to be consideration of the Scotland Food and Drink group, working well on economic growth.

Clare Baker, MSP said at food was now highlighted as Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead’s responsibility; but as a topic it was very cross-cutting involving important aspects such as public health. She asked how SG would make the proposed commission cohesive regardless of where issues fit or

whose department will was involved. She gave as an example the land reform document which covered housing, taxation and land.

FS recognized that there was no perfect way to balance people having specific responsibilities and accountabilities and joining these up. However he stressed that the document was the fruit of a cabinet discussion and the importance of food and what it meant for everyone's portfolios. For example how does food fit in with education? How does food fit in with health and social care; what about the availability of fresh fruit and veg as part of the solution? It was about the whole government. The mistake would be to change responsibility; it must be about communication, about being very clear about the vision and the outcomes to be achieved. The new food commission should represent the wide range of interests and provide a spread and a balance.

There also needed to be a debate around proofing including rural proofing and how to measure progress on outcomes. Some of this would be in statute for example the procurement reform bill where there would be a requirement on public bodies to have a clearly articulated policy for sustainable food. **FS** was really encouraged that the Commonwealth Games has a food charter that was also being used at the Royal Highland Show.

James Wildgoose (JW) SFAC pointed that once the new Food Standards Scotland (FSS) was set up in April 2015 the SFAC would cease to exist.

JW thought the discussion document was good and that a certain vagueness was inevitable when you have a discussion document. For him the crucial issue was in terms of nutrition and diet. There seemed to be a huge number of initiatives around this but relatively little in terms of leadership and making things happen. His understanding was that the FSS could provide this and co-ordination. He noted that the reason for creating the FSS was because the internal government changes that occurred down south, which took nutrition away from the FSA.

Laura Stewart Soil Association Scotland added that as well as dietary advice in Scotland which is usually health focused, sustainability should also be included. For example Sweden gave advice about climate friendly and healthy food. She felt we needed this leadership from FSS and all across our government bodies.

FS agreed leadership was needed by the FSS and the food commission. Championing was important too and he pointed out that leadership happened everywhere, for example, school chefs can drive change in schools and there are champions of local food around the country.

Colette Backwell SFDF asked about initial thinking on the children's food policy.

FS said for a whole variety of reasons it was important to get children's food right. It was partly about learning and children conversing about food with their

parents. Early years were important given how quickly we form habits and how difficult it is to unpick these. FS was impressed with the amount of progress being made in schools and now wanted to look at children's lives outside school and make links around physical activity and children's wellbeing. There was a lot of effort going into the early years collaborative in Scottish Government; FS thought the different food aspects should be looked into. This could possibly lead to the decision that a separate children's food policy was not the best approach but instead the integration of food into these other initiatives.

Pam Rodway, Soil Association mentioned the project she was running for crofting connections in taking the crofts back to rural communities. Whilst she thought children's food was important she wanted to see a stronger emphasis on young people's future. There were crofting communities where some crofts were not used to their full potential and there were no role models for children. There was land in Scotland, some of it challenging, that the children would inherit. PR thought GFN needed action championing young people in rural communities, redignifying manual labour and seeing production of food for themselves and their communities as a really vital part of their future.

FS agreed there should be a "growing" aspect in the children's food policy. He mentioned current work in schools promoting careers in food, including the SFDF programme.

Beatrice Morrice, Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) asked how scotch whisky fitted in to the GFN document. The only mention seemed to be about the dominance of exports.

FS said whisky was a good example of the economic success and was a key part of what SG was trying to do, for example in the exports and markets. He thought SWA as part of the Scotland Food and Drink partnership worked really well and the work that they did, including sustainability, other food and drink companies could learn from.

FS said the term "food" in the GFN document was shorthand for "food and drink". The health agenda was very important and there would always be tensions within a food policy and emphasised SG was not anti-alcohol, only mis-use. There would be some difficult choices to be made, but he believed there could be relationship with alcohol including whisky that was a celebration of life.

Clare Baker, MSP noted the tensions in the policy and that some key Scottish products were not healthy. It was important to have that debate with the public; there were strong messages around smoking and alcohol but not food whilst there were huge problems with obesity and health. She asked how GFN would address these.

FS thought a mixture of approaches was needed. For example, minimum unit pricing on alcohol was a case where SG was doing something hard edge. There was also the recent publication "Beyond the School Gates" which

encouraged Local Authorities to use the powers they have to regulate fast food outlets around the schools. However FS thought it important not to over legislate and pointed to the voluntary approach in “Supporting Healthy Choices”. FS thought it best to have everyone around the table and discuss ways forward.

Antonia Ineson Nourish (AI) asked about the role of organic food, it was important with respect to the food for life work in schools, and asked whether there might be a target for organic production in Scotland as a part of GFN.

FS answered that SG wanted to encourage organic production and see that organic food was affordable. There was an organic action plan that was being discussed.

LS Soil Association reported that there was a Scottish Organic Forum meeting on the 10th July at SRUC Crabstone to discuss the organic action plan and its next iteration from 2015 onwards.

On the GFN document generally, LS felt it was good and reflective on the problems that Scotland has. There were synergies with the Soil Association’s key message of “Good Food for All”. She thought we were going to have to be very brave to achieve the vision by 2025. It would need the breaking down of the barriers in the way the food system works in Scotland. This included public sector procurement where there were issues because of budgets, the rising cost of food, and because we don’t pay for the full cost of our food environmentally LS was concerned that the word sustainable wasn’t hijacked; it was often just looked at from the economic point of view and thereby skirting over the environmental aspects.

FS responded that food security must be part of the way forward too.

Rob Gibson MSP reported that in French law allows LA’s to designate land for agriculture and not to be sold for another use. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill showed there were issues with allotments. In Scotland there were large numbers of absentee landlords and underused crofts. We needed to encourage people to grow food themselves and the land reform agenda fitted very well with this.

AI mentioned the work that was done in Copenhagen where a public procurement initiative drives organic production and thus jobs. She suggested there were lessons to be learnt there.

FS said he had visited Copenhagen with Richard Lochhead, in particular the “House of Food” where the day he visited, chefs from all the care homes in Copenhagen were discussing how to use the cheaper cuts of meat and to make them healthy, palatable and attractive using good recipes

Alison Clews, Sainsburys said today has been the start of a conversation and asked what was next and what happened after the October deadline.

FS said it was intended to convene the food commission in mid-November. At the first meeting SG would ask what targets to set, how to work going forward and how would the local network work.

At the second meeting, priority areas would be discussed. This would include food grants, land reform and all policies already in place. Broad areas such as rail franchise tenders, COSLA and Local Authority policies would also be covered. It would be about mainstreaming GFN in to our daily life.

John Cooke, Slow Food, queried since FS talked about mainstreaming and implanting and embedding the idea of good food vision as part of our lives at every level; whether there was an argument to make the “Right to Good Food” a legislative right.

FS thought it was an interesting suggestion but was not sure how effective it would be.

Bill Gray, Community Food & Health Scotland said there were tensions and potential contradictions in the GFN but felt the CPG Food was one of the few groups that brought those contradictions and tensions out and in an open environment where all the sectors could contribute. He was interested in community groups, voluntary organisations and our more vulnerable groups having their say. He hoped this would be reflected in the way the commission was set up.

FS agreed it was important to discuss the tensions and that if people disagreed that was not failure, the difficult conversations were necessary to have a way forward.

In particular he had been pleased that the GFN launch had been in a sports hall near Cameron Toll, since within half a mile there was a community allotment, large Sainsbury’s, Nairn’s the world class oatcake exporter, and Liberton School. There was the strong link to physical activity and the key message was this was not a posh “foodie” thing but about everyone.

Claire Baker, MSP thanked FS and the Group for helping start the conversation around GFN.

6 Topics for Future Meetings

ML asked that members contact her with suggested for future meetings

ACTION: All

7 Dates of next meetings

The dates for the next session all at 6pm are;

Wednesday, 1 October 2004	CR5
Wednesday, 26 November 2004	CR5
Wednesday, 29 January 2015	CR5
Wednesday, 18 March 2015	CR4
Wednesday, 17 June 2015	CR4