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The Forth Diet[1]:
Reducing Forth's carbon footprint by increasing the supply of and demand for local, low carbon food in Edinburgh

This project aims to:

1) Make local, low carbon food more widely accessible across Edinburgh
2) Strengthen and stimulate Forth's local and regional food economies
3) Increase the demand for local, low carbon food across Edinburgh

Despite demand for local, low carbon food already being high and on the increase[2], its availaibility across Edinburgh remains scarce. This makes it extremely challenging for people to make their preferred food choices. Various projects like the *Fife diet*, Beth Tilston's *100 Mile Diet* and Transition Bristol's *Eat the Change* have highlighted just how challenging it is to choose local, low carbon foods even for those already committed to these choices and despite the greatest of efforts.

The long term solutions to our current food-related environmental, health and social crises seem not to lie in individuals bending over backwards to 'do the right thing' but rather through collaborative efforts to transform our food system so that our relationships with food are naturally harmonious and wholly beneficial. Were Edinburgh's high streets to be transformed into a thriving hub of nutritious, nourishing local, low carbon food, not only would consumer choice begin to mirror real preferences but Forth's communities would enjoy:

- Significant reductions in C02 emissions
- Improvements in food related health – physical and mental
- Stimulation and strengthening of the local and regional food economies, including meaningful job creation and improved rural livelihoods
- Improved community cohesion and wellbeing now and in the future.

Edinburgh's current lack of local, low carbon food is in large part due to a disconnection between those who produce, distribute, sell and eat food in Edinburgh and the surrounding Forth area. Our current lack of involvement in our food system – and the food choices we make within it – makes it far harder to appreciate the consequences of our food consumption. By building more human relationships between those involved in the food system and broadening the experiences of communities within the food system, the *Forth Diet* will support more conscious planning and positive behaviour change around food.

By working first with those already committed to sourcing local, low carbon food it will be relatively easy to create the momentum needed to start re-building relationships between these 'consumers', local retailers and local producers. Through these relationships it will be possible to bring about immediate reductions in carbon emmisions by finding simple solutions to sourcing more local, low carbon food.

Furthermore, this will also create a forum for more long term solutions to be explored and identified in the form of alternative distribution systems and hubs.

We will begin to engage with those not yet aware of the benefits of local, low carbon food once positive relationships have already been formed between producers, retailers and consumers. At this point local, low carbon food will be more available across Edinburgh, therefore making it easier for people to prioritise these choices. It would be challenging to begin by trying to increase demand for local, low carbon food, in the

1 This is a working name to be consulted on further
2 See Scottish Acricultural College's statistics on demand for local food

absence it being more widely available across Edinburgh. Starting by empowering those already supportive of local, low carbon food to meet current demand and to develop solutions to making these choices more available, seems a more pragmatic and effecttive approach than starting by trying increase demand. What's more, we will be able to benefit from the lessons learned throughout the process of rebuilding relationships between local producers, retailers and consumers, which will help to make it increasingly easier for the barriers to rebuilding these relationships to be overcome as the numbers of stakeholders involved increases.

The barriers to re-localising

Sustain's *Eat Somerset* pilot and other related work has identified various logisitcal barriers to increasing the availablility of local food in Cities, the most significant of which are:

- The disparate nature of the supply of local food into Cities which makes it hard to make the business case for food retailers to source locally or for local producers to favour local markets.
- Local producers and retailers lack the capacity, knowledge and skills needed to broker the development of alternative distribution systems
- Local producers lack the confidence that their exists sufficient demand for local food from local markets and therefore often default to unfair supermarket contracts.
- Community groups are perfectly placed and suited to playing both this brokerage role and to to demonstrating and creating the necessary demand
- There is a need to raise awareness of the environmental and economic imperatives for low carbon food production amongst local producers
- Support is needed to catalyse increased production of local, low carbon food as the financial incentives do not yet exist
- Policy change is needed within the planning system to allow the increased numbers of people needed to work on the land, to live on the land.
- Support is needed to facilitate the re-learning of the skills necessary to shift food production away from its current dependence on oil.
- It is necessary to increase the demand for local, low carbon food to create the economies of scale necessary to make it more easily available and affordable to all.

The Forth Diet will begin to address these challenges by:

1) Bringing together those with an exisiting interest in local, low carbon food with local producers, distributers and sellers to collaboratively identify:

   a) Short term solutions to sourcing more local, low carbon food tomeet current demand
   b) Regional and local food distribution systems - for example a physical food storage and distribution hub to make local, low carbon food more widely available across Edinburgh

2a) Running a behaviour change programme to encourage people in targetted communities to spend 50% of their food budget on food from within 50 miles (or some other variant of this target)

2b) Facilitating the implementation of the most appropriate alternative distribution system

Monitoring and evaluation throughout phases one and two will then identify the most pragmatic and effective ways to address the remaining challenges to re-localisation, allowing the project's strategy to evolve in response to the communities' growing understanding of their food system.

Phase One

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Making local, low carbon food available to those already wanting to make this choice

Create a multi-stakeholder forum around local food that:
– Brings local food stakeholders (producers, retailers, distributers, community groups and 'consumers') together to better understand each others' motivations, challenges and aspirations around food
– Develop initial solutions to meeting this current demand e.g. through local buying groups, demonstrating existing demand to local retailers introducing local producers to local retailers
– Develop longer terms solutions to supply Edinburgh with more local, low carbon food by supporting community groups to:

1. Rebuild relationships with their local producers, distributors and retailers
– Who are our local producers, retailers and distributors?
– What motivates them?
– What challenges are they currently facing?
– What is their appetite to be involved with the local community?

2. Understand the basics of Edinburgh's current food distribution:
– What is currently available
– Who is currently supplying and distributing our food
– Where there are gaps in local production to meet our nutritional needs

3. Explore the barriers faced by retailers, producers and distributors to making local, low carbon food more widely available
– Why are local producers currently not supplying local markets? What are the barriers – perceived and real?
– Why are local retailers/ distributors not sourcing from local producers? What are the barriers – perceived and real?

4. Explore and identify the most appropriate and effective solutions to making local, low carbon food more widely available, for example a local food storage and distribution hub

Whilst initially solutions will be sought through existing local producers, retailers and distributors, it may be that alternative options need to be explored if the appetite for change does not exist within existing players. For example, if a local retailer is not interested in sourcing more sustainably, it might be that a community group decides to set up a food coop within the community to make local, low carbon food available at affordable prices.

Similarly it is likely that the need for new local producers will be identified, thus diversifying the area's agriculture and also creating meaningful employment opportunities.

Phase Two
Increasing the demand for local, low carbon food across Edinburgh

2a) Develop a behaviour change programme to mobilise Edinburgh's communities to , for example spend 50% of their food budget on food within 50 miles by:

2ai) Running a year's programme of seasonal food celebrations will be run in a chosen number of Edinburgh's communities. These fun and celebratory events will draw on food's amazing potential to bring communities together in positive and affordable ways – and afford the opportunity to better understand current relationships

with food, at the same time as promoting the 50:50 campaign. The resulting understanding of people's motivations for behaviour change will allow Eat the Change to identify the most effective approaches to promote meaningful behaviour change, to be incorporated within the behaviour change programme.

2aii) Inspirational figures with a passion for food will be recruited from the targeted communities to become Local Food Champions to help better understand local motivations and relationships with food.

2b) Facilitate the implementation of the most appropriate alternative distribution system
Having brought local producers, retailers and consumers together to collaboratively explore how best to overcome barriers to making local, low carbon food more widely available across Edinburgh, we will identify the most appropriate stakeholder body to implement the system.

This stakeholder body will be cooperatively governened and operate as a community interest company – with any profits generated beyond fair wages being invested back into the company and used as decided by the company's stakeholders.

Who are we?
This project proposal is being kick started by a group of organisations and individuals[3] with view to involving as many of Forth's local food stakeholders as possible – please forward to anyone you think may be interested. This project's success depends on collaboration between those who produce, distribute, sell and eat food within Forth, so we hope it will engage as many stakeholders as possible, representing a broad diversity of interests, passions and motivations around food as possible – but with the common vision to collaboratively improve livelihoods within Forth.

Organisational structure
At this early stage we are still exploring the most appropriate organisational structure to steer this project. There is currently support for the idea that this project will operate as a coalition of projects and organisations that an umbrella organisation would provide the support and coordination for. Options for this rnage from setting up a new social enterprise to an exisiting organisation acting as a financial and legal clearing house.

Can Edinburgh Feed Itself?
The twin challenges of peak oil and climate change have created the imperative for communities to collaboratively develop an interconnected web of resilient local food systems that meet our nutritional and social needs within the natural constraints of our ecological system. Economist David Flemming captures the growing consensus that "... localisation stands, at best, at the limits of pratical possibility, but it has the decisive argument in its favour that there will be no alternative" (Fleming 2006). The Transition Network[4] has started the process of developing a *Food Plan for Britain.* This work is beginning to explore what this new collaborative web of resilient local food systems might look like. By exploring the potential of towns and cities to meet their own nutritional needs, Transition groups are beginning to identify gaps that require collaborative efforts with communities with the climate and land suitable to meet this needs.

Whilst this early work is extremely exciting, a number of challenges have been identified and *Edinburgh Eat the Change* represents an important contribution to addressing a number of these and has the potential to share the resulting good practice nationally and beyond.

3 Including Slow Food Edinburgh, PEDAL, Transition Scotland Support, Transition Edinburgh South, Whitmuir Organics
4 Transition Totnes, Norwich, Stroud and Forest Row have all strated exploring their potential to meet their own nutritional needs with varied and interesting findings materialising.

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Aim
Improve the current wellbeing and future sustainability of Edinburgh's communities by increasing the availability and consumption of sustainably produced food in and around the city.

Objectives
Long term

- Significant reductions in C02 emissions
- Significant improvements to health – physical and mental
- Stimulation and strengthening of the local food economy, including meaningful employment creation.
- Improved community cohesion and inclusion.

Medium term

- Increased amounts and varieties of low carbon food produced in and around Edinburgh
- A diverse range of locally produced low carbon food is widely accessible in and around the city
- A wide range of public and private sector food businesses commit to improve sustainability performance for example through the Soil Association's Food for Life catering mark
- Greater intolerance for exploitation of people in the supply chain
- Greater demand for higher animal welfare
- Decreased food waste due to a reduced need for food packaging through closer distribution – and a better awareness of waste disposal issues and the impact of waste on the landscape
- Better awareness of the true cost of food supply – and a willingness to pay more for food

Short term

- Demonstrate the existing demand for locally-produced low carbon food to local food businesses
- Generate an understanding of Edinburgh's current food system
- Create a better understanding within communities of the reality of the food chain and challenges faced by those working in it (see section P3.3)
- Help schools to connect directly with their local food chain and build better relationships with community groups