Towards a Sustainable Food Cornwall

Kernow's food system is blessed with a great deal of good practice and energy, but also contends with an array of deeply entrenched structural problems. This report is an initial attempt to bring together the key actions needed to build a more sustainable food system in Cornwall. While incomplete, it points towards a Good Food Strategy for and is hopefully the basis for further partnership development.

There are many more areas for action than we could capture in this report. All those ideas, conversations, enterprises, initiatives, and programmes we did not manage to mention, we salute you. You are part of our future and we cannot wait to work with you as we strive to **make Cornwall a place of good food, for one and all**.

Meur Ras!   Thankyou!

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APPENDICES

Further information from us via

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Summary

1 Survey, workshops and discussions

We carried out a survey, workshops and individual focussed discussions with a wide range of involved individuals, companies, groups and the public sector on their views of the present food system in Cornwall, what problems it poses and what they view a sustainable local food system entails.

Well over 200 people were involved, from struggling consumers, farmers, growers and fishers to food processors and retailers, food banks and hospitality, social services, gleaners and many supportive organisations such as councils, planners and health specialists.

The clear messages on present problems include :-

♦ Lack of knowledge about food
♦ Unsustainable expectations by shoppers
♦ Prices too low for local producers and too high for those in food poverty

♦ Problems with local supplies and traceability
♦ Nutrition and meeting needs
♦ Wider system issues around sustainability including supply chains, concentration of power in the supermarkets, lack of awareness of consumer power

Each sector has specific issues including for farmers and growers the major negative impacts of supermarket contracts, both pricing and contract conditions, as well as issues around achieving meaningful local supply contracts. Cornish fishing is diverse with day boat fishers feeling the reduction in fish and market availability and the larger fleets able to fish further out and maintain their place in the market.

Foodbanks and related organisations have seen very large increases throughout the pandemic and a continuing need for their services, with problems in supplying enough good quality food for their clients.

Commercial caterers such as schools and colleges are often cut off from local supplies as their organisations are increasingly large groups with central purchasing, and smaller per person budgets with low sustainability criteria. A need for a Cornwall wide central purchasing system for local product was expressed.

The major barriers to a sustainable food system for Cornwall, and many other areas, centre around the power of supermarkets to attract customers because they value the convenience and perceived low prices above other factors.

This power is compounded by lack of knowledge and skills around food: its nutritional values and relation to health in particular, as well as low cash and time availability for many people.

Our respondents expressed very high levels of concern for those in food poverty, which is hitting an increasing percentage of local people.

Overall, the survey and discussions show there is a strong appetite for change and sustainability is well understood and valued.

However, there is also uncertainty about how to implement the necessary system changes; particularly relating to larger local organisations, budgets, nutrition and food knowledge.

2   *What could be?*

Whilst pinning down the meaning of sustainability in general can be difficult we found in this survey that there is wide ranging agreement on a number of key topics.

Sustainable food is about everything else too and connects land, people, health and the economy.

There is clear recognition of the links of every part of the system to every other part and that for example soil quality impacts food quality, which impacts nutritional value, which impacts health: that low health impacts job prospects leading to poverty which leads to low quality food being the only food affordable or none.

Over 70% of our respondents want Cornwall's leaders and decision makers to commit to a sustainable, healthy, fair food system that could tip all existing system into a new way of thinking about the role of food.

The conclusions on what a sustainable food system looks like include

- ♦ Good environmental practice
- ♦ Better soil health
- ♦ Clear actions to increase health and social impacts
- ♦ Increasing local economic actions on food supply and processing
- ♦ Linking climate and soil/food supplies
- ♦ Linking planning and sustainable land use.

When considered together the discussions, workshops and survey responses indicated the key three principles which need to be applied for a sustainable local food system to emerge. These require systems thinking to enable actions within this framework.

Key principles

- ♦ **People care**
  1. Health connections – diets, nutritional values of foods, the approaches of the health system
  2. Community power – raising awareness via education and training around all aspects of food growing, processing and marketing in local communities as a collective process
  3. Better education and skills training for local people including the role of food quality and diet in health
  4. Local places to connect within communities and with local food
  5. System change to enable more affordability and accessibility for local food

- ♦ **Earth care**

6. Over 90% of respondents agreed that improved soil health and increased biodiversity are essential
7. Increased organic growing
8. Reduced pesticide use
9. Regenerative agriculture
10. Local sustainable fishing
   ♦ **Fair share**
11. Local ownership
12. Fair wages
13. Local collaboration
14. Fair contracts
15. Good business practices including sustainable approaches
16. Stronger local economy

17.

Innovation is needed to enable a range of new types of enterprise to flourish. These

will include many collaborative enterprises such as Community Supported Agriculture Schemes, support for more local food processing, work on a Cornwall Diet (where a high proportion of food is grown locally), new planning strategies to enable local growing, health oriented food takeaways. Cornwall Council's decision wheel process can help with this.

Collaboration is key to much of the system change needed. One powerful and essential example of collaboration is to establish local procurement of an expanding range, and quantity, of quality local food supplies. This is essential to higher nutrition for employees at work, for students and for patients & clients in caring environments.

Local systems planning also needs to encompass new thinking about the planning and land use system locally, how to reduce barriers to access, and how to move plans and decision-making towards increased health and more local quality food.

All these proposed system changes will need understanding and clarity of vision to

enable perceived risks to be minimised and local economic and health benefits to be maximised.

3 What can we build on?

There are many groups and individuals heavily involved in the work of improving local food supplies. These range from local growers and chefs to food bank and farmer's market volunteer, to teachers and planners, to community orchards and refill shops, CSAs and community fridges.

We can build on:-

   ♦ existing and new natural clusters of activity, sector, and geography
   ♦ emerging new national and local policies and strategies and put

planetary and human health, and food, right at their heart

♦ emerging thinking on local food security
♦ collaboration for market development
♦ local education with its hunger for relevance and increasing sustainability
♦ work already underway with local climate action groups, now >50

4 Existing examples of food sustainability

When considering examples in other regions it is clear that the most successful actions are those which cover all three main principles we have outlined above ie

people care, earth care and fair share, though they might express their principles differently.

The most advanced examples are Food Partnerships which include a large number of stakeholders in the public, social and private sectors of their region and all work towards improving local health, better food access and increased resilience for local residents and businesses. They have clear measures of success and take their metrics seriously.

Other examples tend to focus on part of the food system, such as CSAs which reach out into their community, or the Soil Association which runs the Food for Life Programme of improving food in schools. Taking the people centred approach examples include one where local biodynamic produce is supplied to the farmhouse which operates as a therapeutic centre for families and children in distress.

Improved land access for regenerative agriculture is enabled through various legal and other approaches including Land

Trusts, the commons, tenancies and other less well known options.

The most successful strategies we found in this survey of others progress to a local good food region are noted below in order of likely action:-

1   Create a wide, representative partnership which is well resourced and supported by the main bodies in the local area, including the Council, educational establishments and local NHS bodies.

2   Spend time developing a Strategy which involves significant consultation and building enthusiasm locally and increases local expertise and "ownership". This needs to address the main local issues of concern and directly address these in the Strategy development.

3   Develop many local "islands of coherence" where sustainable food activities can flourish and spread across the region. These can range from small regenerative farms/smallholdings supplying a local village shop to a network of local food production units using a

small processing unit: to a new approach to providing meals on wheels.

4 Survey local land availability and potential for regenerative growing options, as well as building dialogue with producers with a view to helping the transition to more regenerative practice.

5 Investigate in detail the actions needed to eliminate food poverty and health inequalities

6 Encourage project champions The wide range of successful projects is clearly the result of much hard work and enterprise by small groups of committed individuals. Without such people locally, nothing will happen.

5 Call to action

The existing situation is obviously harmful to many people and our precious local environment. There are many organisations which are comfortable with the present situation and hence they find it difficult to act towards a new approach –even when the benefits to all are well evidenced.

We have shown in our research through the over 210 responses to the questionnaires and the significant workshop and individual conversations, both structured and free flowing, that there is a hunger for change. We see nearly all respondents from all parts of our local food system recognising that the present situation has many flaws. There is a high percentage agreement on what is meant by sustainability and major interest in being part of the change.

Develop the Strategy in order of these steps

Whilst this is presented as a linear process it is likely to be iterative, with several approaches going on at the same time. The aim is to enable each topic area to

progress to sustainability at their own fastest pace, whilst keeping in touch with changes in other parts of the local food system.

1 Convene the Partnership Create a wide ranging multi-stakeholder group of people who represent diverse parts of the system under consideration.

2 Map the system together and get a shared understanding of it as a whole to create a context for shared actions.

3 Determine values by creating scenarios of the future and exploring developmental trajectories for how the system might change based on different assumptions and interventions. Agree the measures of success.

4 Agree a shared agenda around what the group most wants to see happen, and ensure an appropriate support system is put in place.

5 Outline the benefits of increasing sustainability such as:-

♦ Increased local economic activity and employment
♦ Increased local good food supplies

- Decreased local ill health, reduced GP visits, reduced hospital admissions
- Increased local soil health/biodiversity
- Increased community action & resilience
- Increased local good food awareness and demand

6 Major issues for inclusion

Both our team and many of our respondents feel passionate about transforming our food system towards sustainability. Whilst it is recognised that at this stage the Strategy is still to be developed we feel that some issues must be included.

These include:-

- Action on attitude change - away from acceptance & apathy and towards education, a spirit of inquiry, respect for food and its producers, sustainability and our planet
- Information on local food, nutrition and health - a strong and enduring communications and education programme

- Action to increase community resilience at the local level
- Action to reduce the need for food banks
- Local skills development including food production, processing, permaculture and regenerative agriculture skills, food preparation, cooking and nutrition
- Increased local food processing facilities for a wider range of local produce such as grains, malting, local abattoirs, food preservation, etc.
- Engage local leaders and project champions, including the young

7 Remain in inquiry

 The local food system, as with any food system is complex and hence difficult and "unruly".   It is therefore vital for those involved to manage complexity by "Remaining in Inquiry" to avoid system disasters.   The question Why? Is a vital tool for this process.

8 Aim towards food sovereignty

With food sovereignty in mind, the system design can develop towards sustainability.

9 Draw on local enthusiasm and energy for the transformation

An early task of the Partnership is to harness the abundant energy and enthusiasm shown by nearly all of our contributors, to bring people together and together move with confidence to what we all know is the right set of choices for local people, the environment and fair business health. Project champions are vital to the process.
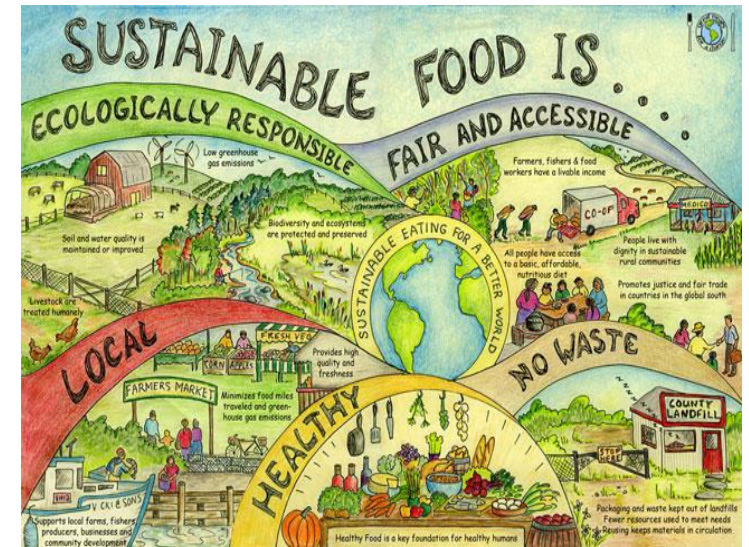
SECTION 1: Where are we now?

Our work on the beginnings of a Sustainable Food Strategy began with survey work aiming to include all the key sectors where food is an issue. We included:-

- farmers
- growers
- agricultural & environmental advisors
- farmers' markets & shops, food hubs
- Community Supported Agriculture schemes
- local government
- local health service
- chefs
- schools and colleges
- fishers
- food processors
- food retailers & wholesalers
- food banks, community food & kitchens
- restaurants, hospitality
- social services

- volunteer groups
- local councillors
- businesses
- interested local residents

The survey questionnaire was sent out to each sector, with separate questions for farmers & growers and for food banks. Our aim was to be in listening mode, and so included space for comments on each topic. We also ran a series of mainly online group discussions with several sectors and had significant numbers of structured one-to- one discussions to gain more information on this important local topic.

The results of this work were shown in context in a widely attended webinar which included several breakout room discussions on the aims for the next phase.

The results indicated here aim to show the important issues raised, and a flavour of the many and varied comments we received on each topic. It is clear that the local food system is

an important issue to many people and we hope to deliver a good understanding of the complexities and challenges ahead as we work towards a Sustainable Food Strategy for Cornwall.

1.SECTION 1.1 The survey

Our food survey achieved over 210 responses from a wide range of people and businesses, organisations in the public and private sectors along with statutory public sector bodies, groups of producers and voluntary assistance organisations such as food banks. We are also reporting on responses from the workshops and individual discussions noted above.

Survey respondents: food sector

Legend: producers, processors, hospitality, sales
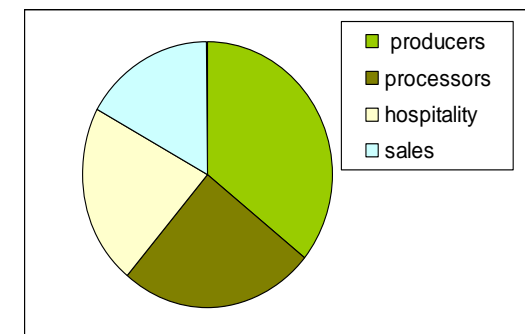
Survey respondents: supportive sectors

- local government
- health
- social
- environmental
- education

2.SECTION 1.2 Problems identified

Our survey showed that there are significant problems with our current food system. We had a wide range of responses and it was clear that many people feel strongly about problems with our present food system. The main issues identified are:-

♦ *Lack of knowledge about food*

♦ *Unsustainable expectations*

♦ *Pricing issues*

♦ *Local supply issues*

♦ *Nutrition and meeting needs*

♦ *Wider system issues*

The key issues centred around the most frequently mentioned topics included: -

Supermarkets

♦ *The power of the supermarket model making it hard to create another more sustainable approach to local food*

♦ *This power being based on price perception and convenience, including all year round supplies*

♦ *This power is partly enabled by lack of food knowledge and local supply side difficulties*

"I feel there is an over-reliance on mass food production, large supermarkets. People wanting/ expecting every item of fruit and veg available all year round" **Farmer**

Food quality and nutrition

♦ *Lack of organic/ regenerative/ quality food & an overabundance of poor quality, cheap processed food*

♦ *Low awareness of quality & nutrition*

Food poverty

♦ *Two thirds of survey answers expressed concerns for others being unable to adequately feed themselves or their families and one quarter stated they could not afford good food themselves– mainly due to poverty. Shame is a real issue.*

"I like delivering local milk, but worry about my friends who have little money and can only go to the cheapest supermarket for their food, especially with Covid creating a lack of money" **Milk delivery driver**

Local food supplies

♦ *Generally deemed hard to find, not convenient & with strong perceptions/ sometimes reality of being too expensive*

Farmers and growers/producers

♦ *Find it hard to make a living on local food supplies or even with supermarket contracts*

Pricing

♦ *Pricing issues show conflict between the different sectors as supermarkets drive prices down , enabling lower family food bills, but difficulties for local producers in competing*

"Too much power sits with supermarkets and processors. The price paid to primary producers has no reflection on the cost of production which makes farmers subsidise cheap food" **Farmer**

Awareness of food issues

♦ *Major lack of awareness of all aspects of food from quality, preparation, cooking, nutrition, access to local supplies*

Wider system issues

♦ *Food waste, soil & biodiversity destruction*

♦ *Fragility of the food supply system with its long supply chains and decreasing nutritional value of foodstuffs- with 80% mentioning concerns on food miles of supermarket food.*

♦ *Concentration of supply via large supermarkets and low cost processed food outlets*

♦ *Lack of awareness of consumer power, and local choices available*

The bar chart below indicates the main issues on customer decisions on why they shop as they do. This is a useful supplement to our survey work as it was carried out in a similar manner. Key issues identified in this CPRE survey are the same as our survey showed- with cost and convenience being major determinants of supermarket use.
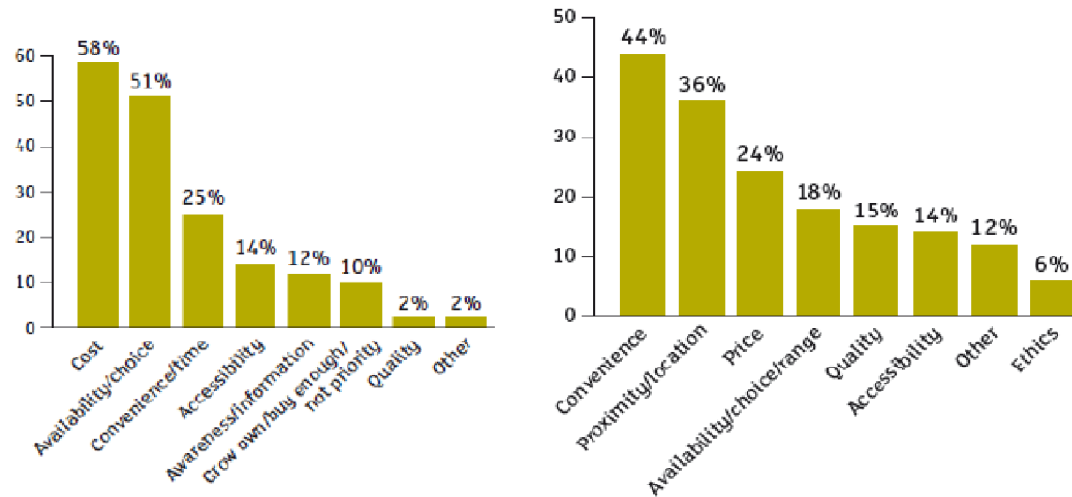
Figure 1 Why don't you buy more local food? (left) and Main reasons given for shopping at supermarkets (right)
Source: CPRE From Field to Fork, England, 2012

4.SECTION 1.3 barriers to a more sustainable food system: by sector

Producers: Farming & growers

Farmland covers over 80% of Cornwall, with a high proportion of dairy and beef production. With our mild climate, Cornwall also houses some large vegetable and flower producers, who rent land to produce brassicas, potatoes and daffodils for all the main UK supermarkets.

As this is a relatively large sector in Cornwall, concentration was given to farmers and growers and though the term 'sustainable' doesn't attract all busy farmers, the response was impressive.

There are several key issues for farmers and growers which include: -

♦ **Supermarket contracts and their direct consequences**

Pricing achieved

"We cannot charge enough for produce to cover any reasonable living wage" **Grower & seller**

"People need to pay the real cost of food and they don't know what that is!" **Citizen**

"So busy, hard to think about how to achieve things on a practical scale..." **Grower**

"More appreciation of the value of local food is required, so that farming can be more sustainable and profitable." **Citizen**

Contract conditions

"We have to oversupply in order to maintain supermarket contracts, this means food gets wasted in the field" **Grower**

"Sometimes there is a glut which is difficult to manage" **Grower**

♦ **Lack of access to more local non-supermarket supply contracts**

"Problem with access to public sector contracts" **NFU & Farmer**

"Many of Cornwall food businesses are already trying to produce sustainably but large food businesses are actively competing on price and are happy to confuse customers with deceitful labelling" **Grower/Farmer**

"In order to sell locally we would need, market development, manufacturing infrastructure, investment, and a significant enough belief that my new customer base would pay the additional costs" *Contractor/Farmer*

♦ **Processing and distribution problems**

"Distribution and processing always present logistical challenges" **NFU, Citizen**

"We need more local processing" **Producer**

"Processor margins are usually protected by passing any retail sales pressure back through the supply chain. Retail must be mindful of true costs and not avoid paying such costs by threatening to source from other supplies" **NFU**

♦ **Pollution**

"We need to protect our seas from excess nitrogen run-off creating dead zones like in the Bristol Channel from use of such fertiliser. Also, we need to ensure farmers

and communities know how normal farming methods have been destructive to our planet & our lives for years" **Farmer**

"There is fear, stress and some resentment within the farming sector due to weather extremes, Brexit and the transition to ELMS" **Farmer/NFU**

Producers: fishing and marine

The fishing and marine sector has also shown significant variation in the responses to both the questionnaire and in one-to-one discussions.

The Cornish fishing industry is one of the larger fleets in the country and covers a wider range of species and habitats than most fisheries in the UK. There are a large number of organisations relating to fishing, which all aim to help and to speak for fishers themselves. There are also significant public sector management organisations tasked with quotas, fishing methods and areas, licensing and quality control. It has proved difficult to succeed in obtaining many survey answers. This has been supplemented by direct phone talks with representative members of the local fishing community. The results of these conversations reveal stark differences in views between the small day-boat and inshore fishermen and the larger fleet-based groups/the main representative organisation.

To the larger organisations most sustainability issues are addressed on a daily basis and the sector is progressing well.

"Cornish fishing is diverse and sustainable across wild caught fish and shellfish fisheries. We are pioneers of gear selectivity, fish science partnerships etc. Public awareness and understanding of the current position ...is poor: instead a negative doom laden narrative is chosen... We should be celebrating good practice.. " (**CFPO**)

Major barriers to a healthy industry, as seen by the dayboat operators and their groups, include Brexit and the total loss of all ability to sell shellfish to Europe which was 90% of the shellfish market, in conjunction with the new bureaucracy and in some views fish stocks reducing. However, the wide variety of species and types of fishing around Cornwall make comparisons difficult. Dayboat operators have concerns about how the market operates with long-haul boats potentially selling their catch as dayboats, making it more difficult for the smaller <10m dayboats to compete.

"I feel there is no future long term: the fish are nearly gone compared to a few years ago. I earn mainly less than minimum wage level. There are too many boats now chasing too few fish.

I think we need to ban trawling and all big boats within the three-mile limit where the fish spawn. I have been frightened by the big boys seeing me out of the market,

where their week-old fish on ice is sold as dayboat fresh fish" **Dayboat fisherman**

"Shellfish fishing is sustainable: our family has been doing this for hundreds of years, but now we are running out of time because of Brexit bureaucracy preventing us selling to Europe. The main issue for local and national selling is having a reliable carrier.

We need better customer education but cannot afford to pay a chef to show people how to prepare our shellfish. I want to make it a fun time to eat our shellfish, especially the delicious King Crab" **Shellfish business**

Fishing regulation

Fishing is subject to significant regulation by two different bodies; 0-6 miles by the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority and beyond six miles by the Marine Management Organisation. They work together on designating Marine Protection Areas, a 12-step process taking between two and ten years to determine what constraints each area should be subject to. Cornwall IFCA finds that the long timeframe & budgetary constraints reduce the speed of progress to more sustainability for Marine Protected Areas.

Voluntary/charity/ social enterprise

Food banks, community kitchens & larders

KEY POINT Cornwall is seen as a 'foodie' county, but many go hungry and suffer with diet related illness, including malnutrition.

We have found significant agreement over some of the issues facing food banks and community food provision. All groups are keen to see a better resolution of the

problems of lack of food for some groups and families. Most providers think that local good quality food supply would be helpful for their clients, but are concerned that they are too beaten down by problems to be able to make changes.

"The main problem is the current over-reliance on charitable food aid". **Foodbank**

"We need to clarify/separate the missions of the food projects. So many of the projects that were (pre-Covid) using food to engage with their communities, have moved into longer term emergency/crisis food provision. While this is beneficial in the short term, we need to call out that it can't and should not be sustained" **Foodbank**

"There is limited distribution of healthy sustainably grown and produced food for all. Perhaps a big shift to prioritising seasonal local produce over desired export/import foods would help. Many people are struggling with access to food and yet still high levels of food waste" **Foodbank**

"I think mostly it is psychological: people think it's too expensive, it's not convenient enough, wholefood takes too long to prepare and cook" **Grower & Foodbank**

Schools and colleges

Most schools and colleges provide lunches for their students. This food is provided against a very tight budget, often by purchasers with little time or knowledge of food and nutrition and against the expected eating habits of the children/students. The most frequently purchased dishes/meals are often the least healthy: for example, young people want hand-held food to eat outside and most of the time the offer is of poor nutritional value. These small budgets have been shrunk further in recent years

with the trend towards Academies and grouping of colleges, which has centralised food purchases away from the captive consumers.

"Scoring mechanisms for procurement managers are 60% price, 5% sustainability and location" **College**

Schools/colleges are mainly purchasing from larger national companies, sometimes individually or from academy/group chains.

The major barriers are the lack of budget and management time given to food purchase and preparation. In addition, there appears to be little understanding of the wider curriculum value of growing and preparing food for on-site consumption or of the health benefits of fresh food and increasing food variety and nutrition for young people.

The teaching of cookery/catering plus related subjects such as science, geography, nutrition, farming, soil health is well behind modern scientific understanding of, for example, the interlinked nature of soils and health.

"It takes a lot to go above and beyond the current curriculum due to immense pressure on teachers currently" **Education**

"The major barrier of small budgets shows itself in the lack of healthier/more sustainable approaches such as installing water fountains instead of selling bottled sodas/fizzy waters as the latter are sold at a profit" **Education**

Even should the schools wish to purchase locally there is no collective group of food buyers in Cornwall. A few academy chains work together but there is nothing substantial to create a large enough market for farmers to be able to sell to. There is also no Cornish food consortium known which includes dried or frozen local foodstuffs.

"Our main ambient and dry supplier is based in Sherborne. When we place an order, the food is transported from Dorset, to their Cornish Depot in Redruth, and then transported back to Bicton, this is a round trip of 305 miles each time, and sometimes we have two deliveries a week". [over 200 miles extra each time] *College*

"Our fresh meat suppliers in Redruth have a round trip of 210 miles each week to supply to us and we do not know how much of their supply is local meat" **College**

5.SECTION 1.4 Conclusions

The major barriers to a sustainable food system for Cornwall, and many other areas, centre around the power of supermarkets to attract customers because they value the convenience and perceived low prices above other factors.

This power is compounded by lack of knowledge and skills around food: its nutritional values and relation to health in particular, as well as low cash and time availability for many people.

Our respondents expressed very high levels of concern for those in food poverty, which is hitting an increasing percentage of local people.

A key issue is the low and reducing nutritional levels of many foods on offer in supermarkets, driven down by chemical farming methods, by high processing and by long transport distances reducing freshness.

Many of our respondents told us that accessing good local food is both difficult and too expensive, whilst local suppliers cannot make a reasonable living in competition with supermarkets: against loss leaders in particular.

Overall, the survey and discussions show there is a strong appetite for change and sustainability is well understood and valued.

However, there is also uncertainty about how to implement the necessary system changes; particularly relating to larger local organisations, budgets, nutrition and food knowledge.

SECTION 2: What Could Be?

1.SECTION 2.1 Defining our terms

Defining "sustainable" is like nailing jelly to the wall. However, if sustainability is inherently about lots of things, and necessarily about how they're connected, the responses indicated a growing sense of this complexity, and a demand that such a complex system be recognised in any building of a better food future.

Respondents overwhelmingly see food as part of a system which includes the land, soil, power, economics, physical and emotional health, fairness, justice and people: not as a single issue, or specific commodity.

92% of respondents agree that sustainable food involves   "a way of growing that improves rather than degrades the soil and land in which it's grown".

The connection was also made in reference to the land, people and jobs:

79% agree that it involves "food that's grown in a way that creates good jobs that respect people as well as the land that they work"

and two thirds agreed that health was fundamentally involved:

66% feel that it involves "healthy food that keeps us well, physically and emotionally".

KEY POINT -Sustainable food is about everything else too and connects land, people, health and economy.
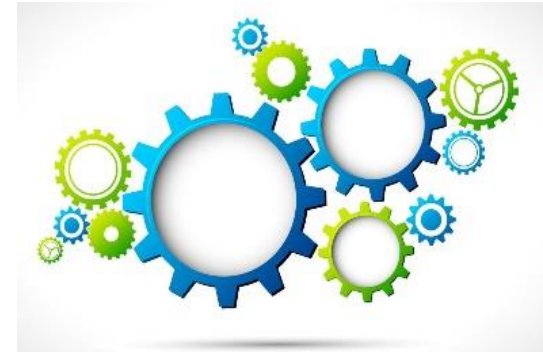
2.SECTION 2.2 What better looks like

There is no shortage of offerings in terms of what a good sustainable food place would look like.

All survey participants responded to the question "if Cornwall were to become a "good sustainable food place", what would that include?"

The great diversity of responses and the enthusiasm for change happen at a time of social, economic, environmental and health instability - what has been referred to by the environmental thinker and writer David Fleming as a "critical

juncture"[1]. Such instability is disconcerting but can offer the chance for new thinking. The data suggested that such new thinking could include a more systems-based way of thinking, where relationships between things are seen as at least as important as the things themselves.

We see this emerging in multiple sectors already, such as the connection between health and climate. It's also appearing in emerging economic models such as Doughnut Economics[2], in social and earth science models such as complexity theory and emergence, and by health approaches prioritising "whole person" thinking, seen in both secondary care (eg hospital settings) and primary care (eg doctors' surgeries), such as in the rapid take up of social prescription[3] across the UK.

The responses make it clear that the health bone is connected to the climate

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[1] *David Fleming/Shaun Chamberlin, 2016, Surviving the Future, Chelsea Green Publishing*

[2] *www.doughnuteconomics.org*

[3]

https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/

bone; the food bone is connected to the well-being bone; the well-being bone is connected to the job bone; and so on. We live in complex systems, where everything is connected to something else, and when one thing changes, it does not happen in isolation.

Our food system is not seen as simply part of our economy. It's seen and valued as an expression of culture, an articulation of values, an indicator of soil health, a pillar of human health, a means of connection to and sharing with others, an often-disregarded part of our education (both formal and informal) and means of supporting livelihoods, habitats, ecosystems, water cycles and communities. Food could be about growing better food in better soil, and health

"Public spaces used for small, local good, healthy, fair food providers, such as pop-up businesses - good street food culture!" **Food hub**

Food is seen as a function of our communities, not a commodity of our economics.

This call is clear, in both survey and interviews, from people inside our institutions working on health, government and education, and from people working in communities, business and the food system.

Likewise leadership and collaboration is key across respondents, once a new, shared metric of "good food as success" has been agreed. Analysis shows that the poorest 10% of households in England would **need to spend around 75% of their disposable income on food to meet the guidelines in the NHS's Eatwell Guide**.

This limitation on income inevitably impacts options and therefore diet and health.[4] Recent research argues:-

"There is evidence to reject the twin notions that people are poor because they make poor choices, and that the poor health of the poor results from poor choices. Rather, it is poverty that leads to unhealthy choices and the poor health of those lower down the social hierarchy results from the restricted range of options available to those on low incomes, as well as the direct health impacts associated with the stresses and poor conditions which result from poverty. As an illustration, the poor diet of people in poverty is, very largely, the result of poverty, not poor choices". [5]

We have an abundance of coastline and a huge rural farming space, and yet we do not feed ourselves well and fairly. We take so much food from soil and sea, and even have international prestige for what we grow and cook with a significant tourism industry dependent on that culinary excellence; yet we still have massive structural poverty with some of the most deprived areas in the country and people and children still go hungry, unable to afford the fruit, vegetables, fish, cheese, beer, meat and drink harvested and crafted from our own waters and lands.

Over 2/3, (71%) of respondents wanted Cornwall's leaders and decision-makers to make a clear commitment to a sustainable, healthy fair food system, that could tip all existing systems into a new way of thinking about the role of food. The appetite, and the political mandate, is there for the taking. Existing change-makers in the health and public health system, in business and food sectors, and within the community, are enthusiastic about what can be achieved.

What could be responses include:-

Clear environmental opportunities

♦ good soil (feeding, not poisoning and not damaging with heavy machinery)
♦ room for nature to thrive
♦ making organic local seasonal produce the norm
♦ only local line caught fish sold
♦ regenerative farming and fishing techniques improving soil, water and habitat

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[4] *The Cornwall We Know, Cornwall Council, 2020.*

[5] *The Cornwall We Know, Cornwall Council, 2020*

- more electrification of transport and machinery to reduce emissions
- better soil health and mixed planting, mitigating flood risk (UK cost £1bn pa)

Clear social and health opportunities

- greater distribution of money as we create more decent jobs growing more decent food
- better overall health of our communities
- positive impact on the half of children in low-income families in Cornwall who live below the poverty line
- increased celebration around our wealth of food, bringing people together to eat and be together as community
- good food seen as a central part of our statutory health system
- land ownership/access in favour of small producers
- improved access to good food for all, ending food deserts
- less packaging, using fewer resources and creating fewer disposal problems

- wider access for consumers to education and training around nutrition and cookery
- greater specific skills development and up-skilling (growing, cooking, nutrition, marketing and selling)

Clear economic opportunities

- access to local land for new growers
- good jobs in all parts of the food system
- training programmes for sustainable farmers of the future
- ability to respond to demand for good, "clean" food
- climate resilience to extreme weather events which disrupt supply chains and monoculture growing

These and other calls for action often offer multiple benefits: more local processing to reduce food miles and cost; better and less packaging means lower cost and lower environmental impact; changing the cards away from always being stacked in favour of the big guys and the notion that bigger is better so that the small operators always have a chance to win too, offering

better social and local economic impact. Three quarters of respondents want to level the playing field for small producers competing with supermarkets, and for there to be appropriate business support to enable them to do that.

Community ownership appears again and again, done carefully to work with small shops and with decent wages, accessibly located (the role of planning appears once again) to ensure people can access them without driving too far.

Other ideas offering multiple benefits include:

- linking producers with locals to ensure wise use of gluts, ensuring more food is enjoyed, and less is wasted;
- helping communities buy into good food for all as a way of life, improving their health resilience;
- using climate action groups to disseminate skills and learning on food, soil and planetary & human health;
- changing planning rules so that "community space" required in new

developments could encourage food growing, rather than just grass;

♦ working with our visitor economy to design out the "nice food not meant for me" presumption of some communities

Some might see such a list as aspirational; but the survey responses suggest that many solutions are already here. We need to focus on re-joining the apparently separate sectors of our local food system to ensure that we meet local needs for health, land use, good food supply and increasingly local business to drive the circular economy and increase local skills.

In essence a good food system feeds itself.

The interconnected pillars of sustainable development (people, planet and economy) are the same three underpinning and intersecting principles of permaculture (people care, earth care and fair share). The point is to join the dots.

KEY POINT: systems-thinking is crucial to a better food system.
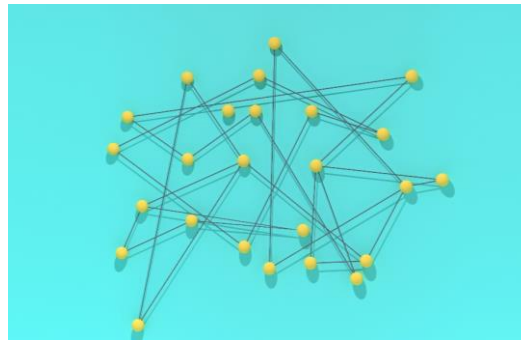
2.2.1 Better: Food and people

❖ **People care**

98% of respondents considered that a good sustainable food place would include "more locally produced food available to all".

A "good" food system contributes to social, environmental and economic needs. A poor food system does the opposite. Poor access to good food speaks of poverty, ignorance, inequality, damage to human and soil health and in turn contributes to poor social, health, and economic outcomes. Getting it right, for all, in short, is good for everyone, and everything, a world view heard across the

research findings. Fairness, justice, physical and social access emerge repeatedly, with a clear understanding of the social role of growing, cooking, and eating food.

A: Better health connection

Almost half of coronary heart disease and a third of cancer deaths in the UK are attributed to poor eating habits[6].

Yet despite being a fundamental part of how humans operate, and increasingly clearly how the planet is affected, food is not yet a central part of our thinking in the health system. Our health system is looked at to put everything right, forced into being a national "fixing" mechanism - a national sickness response - not a system for ensuring health.

"Food is not talked about in our daily discourse." **Health sector**

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[6] *The Cornwall We Want, Cornwall Council, 2020*

There is a wide range of activities around developing systems for more local food, such as a local food processing system; the research suggests these areas of good practice need more space, focus and support.

There is a sense of a distinction between food as a necessary part of daily living, and its pivotal role as a means of ensuring health or sickness of both patient and planet. This is compounded by a sense of frustration that bigger systems - such as the health system or the planning system – are fighting against each other.

"Given how things are – saying to someone in a hospital, do some exercise or eat better is a futile exercise – it's much more complicated. They might have night work (worst for diabetes and obesity), might have to drive to work, might live in a food desert – this is all structural – it's poverty/access/education. None of the things we do address this at all – we would need a completely new thing – in conjunction with primary care" **Health sector**

The trick is joining things up. One answer to the "what could be" question is clear: collaboration could be the key to transformation.

Partnerships in existing activity are key. Collaborations in Plymouth across local authority health practitioners, social prescribers, and housing associations are perceived as crucial good practice. Exeter University noted its keenness to collaborate, and to see its research being used (and influenced by) the organisations and people who work on sustainable food in Cornwall.

This is also a key means of overcoming adversity to change; seeing what others are doing can release latent demand for change. The health system's needs are described as:-

"Examples of other initiatives and reliable links that people can vouch for – so feedback is crucial here. As an organisation like the NHS, we have to have faith in what you're promoting – and examples of good practice… we know it's better to keep them well and out of hospital! "**Health sector**

The numbers who could be engaged are immense, once anchor institutions are involved:

"There are so many people we can engage with [in our Health Trust] – 6,448 staff plus cleaners plus security guards" **Health sector**

Examples of what could be from within the health sector itself include:-

♦ "discharge boxes" of fruit and vegetables rather than processed food (on return home from hospital) ;

♦ checking how able someone is to cook upon return home;

♦ providing more information to staff, visitors and patients, on the central role of food and health, for everyone;

♦ edible growing for health staff on hospital and surgery grounds;

♦ veg boxes for health sector staff;

♦ easing distribution of local food to anchor institutions;

♦ having someone paid to make all those connections.

"What would be the one thing that would change it, make the most difference [inside a hospital] would be having an expert who knows all about this, 'cos we're starting from scratch. We need… a dot joiner upper" **Health sector**

KEY POINT - good health is profoundly dependent on a good food system; imagine if we could make a good food system central to our health system!

B: Better community power

Calls were also made for community training and education programmes around growing food, in collective food buying, guaranteeing income to growers, and in good food to buyers. The opportunities for communities to create a new community-based economy around food are immense.

"Healthy food can be made cheaper if it's done more locally with a local food economy with the community involved, like community supermarkets, or the community centre that does community activity – community cohesion through food that might also improve skills – that looks like a better picture." **Public Health**

Growers, buyers, sellers and community food activists frequently repeat the need to extract ourselves from the dominance of the supermarkets. They sell some good food; but also push down growers' prices, and make large profits from selling poor quality, over packaged and imported food. A more community-based food system would challenge that.

Those working in the food bank system are aware of the endless loop of structural poverty. If you're poor, you eat poorly; if you eat poorly, you tend to stay poor. Food banks help reduce food waste, one of the elephants in the room of our climate crisis; and provide a crucial role in emergency food distribution. But having the opportunity to become involved in local growing schemes could provide food, company and skills for work.

KEY POINT - a good food for all system has to be rooted in community, not only in the hands of large companies

C: Better education and skills

If you have little money to spend on food, and there is low availability of fresh produce locally, and you have never been taught to cook, you often have little actual choice and can only afford the knock down processed foods supermarkets sell off cheap at the end of the day:

"Because of the availability of cheap, crappy food there are people in Cornwall with malnutrition and some have low motivation to cook from scratch. More fresh produce is needed, too much sliced bread and cake" **Citizen**

The opposite is also true.

"From a physical point of view food, in my opinion, is either a cure or a slow killer.

Improving people's mental health and physical state through engaging with growing food and learning to cook healthy meals is the way forward!" **Grower**

Food activists have a clear view of what 2030 could be if we centred this view of food, making it a fundamental metric of our success:

"In 2030, a good food place means every person is fed with nutritious locally grown sustainably farmed organic food, every person knows how to eat and cook and knows the importance of being responsible for our own health" **Community Sector**

KEY POINT - good food skills - growing, selling, buying, cooking - and an understanding of their role in our health, are a prerequisite of a good food system

D: Better places and tools

Linking health of planet and people, a good food system by 2030 means the NHS considers food a central part of "therapy"; community gardening is a well-used process within social prescription, and is well supported by appropriate clinical expertise; and local food growing places are seen as:-

"Places to gather and learn with community kitchens, with courses and with strong links to growers and farming community and health practitioners". **Community sector**

The health, therefore, of communities, as well as individuals, is seen as fundamentally connected to that food system - growing, buying, cooking and sharing.

The hopes for what could be are consistently rooted in systems thinking, in community, and in horizontal collaboration. Food is something that should be grown, cooked and eaten in company, at local scales, and with people and the planet in mind. Calls abound for

community space, from a "mad hatter's tea party" after Covid, to having "benches around for people to sit and once a month a shared communal meal on long tables".

What is called for is an entirely new food system, but built on well established principles of regenerative, re-distributive design that ensures human and planetary health, and is deeply inclusive.

Community food health is seen to be created and called for with practical spaces:

♦ more space to grow, share, educate & food focused farmers' markets

♦ community halls to cook & to train families, creating local jobs

♦ county farms to become community assets

♦ better common land mapping across Cornwall

♦ new conversations with the Duchy, National Trust and other landowners & other users about sustainable land use

The future could be a community which is:

" using local land and an army of land workers to supply food to all cafes, create co-ops for people to afford local produce, using CSA models and including the community in growing and producing food, teaching and training and elevating the occupation of food production to entice our young people to want to get involved; and celebrations and collectives and events to promote local food, cafes and businesses using their produce. A return of wildlife and making green beans from Kenya illegal!" **Community grower**

A good food future would involve planting more community apple or other fruit/nut trees on every village green; vegetable growing in all schools, and small plots of unwanted Council land to be actively donated as a habitat positive mini allotment for local communities. Young people could be involved more not just in growing and cooking but in decision making.

"People's tastebuds have changed & they prefer the high sugar and salt tastes... a lot of people are living with high anxiety; this anxiety is paralysing the ability to change for the better... it has disconnected people from each other and the planet and I think bringing people together to eat and celebrate and talk and empowering them to change and create community cooperatives is the way forwards" **Grower and food bank worker**

KEY POINT: a good food system is dependent on local places for people to gather, grow, sell, buy, cook and share food

E: Better affordability and accessibility

Multiple respondents cite the lack of physical and economic access to good food as key. Issues raised include:-

♦ food deserts (areas where no food shops exist in areas of high population)
♦ low pay for food workers
♦ high price of good food
♦ poverty leading to buying cheap processed food from supermarkets
♦ failure to move all surplus food to "those in need"

However, a challenge view also emerges, about not making food cheaper, but that a sustainable food system improves the ability of people to afford it.

Food should not be cheap. We went wrong with that many years ago. Cheap food means terrible lives for farm animals, and is not sustainable morally or ethically.

Growers and farmers are also clear that squaring the circle of paying decent wages and growing decent food in decent soil for local people needs paying for; and asking them to bring prices down even further (such as how the supermarkets operate)

simply makes this impossible, whilst not dealing with the heart of the problem: inequality of access caused by poverty, not food cost.

People need feeding better now, clearly; but we also need to redesign our food system so that being in poverty does not just mean you get other people's waste. We need a food system whereby falling into food poverty means you are supported in the short term, and then supported to find a way out; and we all share a food system that does not generate waste as a normal part of its operations. The price is not what needs to change; the ability to participate in our food system is where the main problem lies.

Accessibility is also deeply dependent on marketing and distribution infrastructure. More mapping of what is available where, where need is, where opportunity for small growers to grow, sell and collaborate, a better network of processing and distribution outlets, could all facilitate more, better food being sold to more people in easier ways.

Giving priority to multiple small producers who keep more money in the local economy than one large supermarket means more money is available locally to buy better food. More people are then employed by local businesses who pay a decent wage; so money re-circulates back into the community rather than exported by large supermarkets

KEY POINT – accessibility & affordability are significant barriers for many. We need to question our view that food needs to be cheaper; good food is not cheap, what needs to change is structural inequality so everyone can afford it.

2.2.2 Better: food and planet

❖ *Earth care*

Our respondents were very clear. Over 90% of respondents agree it involves food grown in a way that improves rather than degrades soil, and 80% of respondents agree it involves fantastic local habitats and wildlife able to thrive.

Repeated hopes include:-

♦ systems based understanding of food

♦ better soil and biodiversity health

♦ less plastic use and fewer food miles

♦ fewer pesticides

♦ more locally available food with fewer food miles

♦ more organic growing

♦ more line caught fish

♦ more green spaces through the planning process

♦ more low carbon land management

♦ more regenerative agriculture training, awareness and deployment, with

better management of water and carbon cycles

♦ less food waste.

The connection to food waste was made repeatedly. Wastage in the field, in distribution, at point of sale or in the home, wastes the energy involved in those processes, stops food being eaten by those who need it and creates a significant waste disposal problem, including waste food causing emissions as it rots, and packaging waste which causes habitat damage. This includes damaged food, and structural surplus which is undamaged but still thrown away. The ease of composting was also raised. Hopes were clear for more communication between emergency food distributors, the development of new

initiatives such as the Gleaning Network in central and west Cornwall, and the collaboration between anchor institutions and their communities to ensure waste food is reused before disposal wherever possible. All these areas of collaboration could be achieved without large-scale structural change.

KEY POINT - a good food system requires deliberate and well-informed land and resource use

2.2.3 Better: food and jobs

❖ *Fair share*

The connection between food and jobs was also made repeatedly. Issues include*:*

♦ the importance of local ownership

♦ decent wages

♦ small rather than large businesses

♦ community based businesses that are connected to local people and other businesses (food and tourism are an obvious connection)

♦ collaborative work between public, private and social sectors

♦ clear connections between food, land, personal health and jobs. A good food system was perceived as being of that place rather than reliance on elsewhere, or on external businesses

♦ 76% of respondents agree it involves local ownership of food businesses.

♦ principles involving local employment and community ownership access to it, and community ownership were favoured by 76% of respondents. Even

more – 79% - agreed that it involves respect for those who work to grow our food

♦ 79% agree that sustainable food is "food that's grown in a way that creates jobs that respect people as well as the land they work"

♦ not one respondent chose the "not sure" option; 0.6% chose the option to "increase in our reliance on supermarkets"; 59% agreed a good food system means a reduction of the same

The connection between people, place and the land is consistent across the responses.

Views of a "good food future" in 2030 include:

♦ multiple co-operative food enterprises and new ethical businesses with huge local demand, good jobs selling good food

♦ a local economy built round everyone having a role to play in keeping land well, growing food, cooking food,

sharing food, and teaching others the same skills

KEY POINT - community, business, health and planning respondents agree a fairer business model is required for a good food system

3.SECTION 2.3 - a different model

The range of understanding of "*what could be*" is both diverse and connected, but so clearly different from the status quo, that we need therefore not to just tweak the current system, but to build a wholly different system. The new model of growing, cooking, distributing and sharing food, needs to be based on the principles outlined above. These calls come from community, business and public sectors alike.

The answer to "*what could be*" is not just a different type of food business on the ground, but a different way of managing our land and processes, in a way that enables good practice to move around freely and find new homes. We need change to be welcomed rather than viewed with suspicion.

One respondent noted with some vigour that this new model would turn the notion of cheap food on its head. Our presumption is now that food should be cheap, rather than people should be enabled to pay the right price that the economy in terms of the multiplier sustains a sustainable food system:

"Food should not be cheap. We went wrong with that many years ago. Cheap food means terrible lives for farm animals, and is not sustainable morally or ethically. Cheap chicken is an abomination, but people see it almost as their 'right'. People need to choose and eat differently - fish and meat once or twice a week. At the market I run, some local people won't buy the meat because they see it as expensive, but later that same day they will drive for nearly 25 miles to Trago Mills to buy a cheap joint of meat - never considering the cost of fuel.." **Charity worker & Food market volunteer**

A different model would not favour perverse incentives, such as loss leaders in supermarkets which sell poor quality processed bread cheaply, encouraging people to not pay for smaller amounts of sustainable "accountable" bread made by a local baker, with a more positive impact on the local economy in terms of the multiplier effect.

The new model would ensure local operators are able to access large public sector contracts, good access to a seasonal workforce, ideally with training for those who wanted to stay in the sector, and effective local distribution and logistical systems.

Planning policies could enhance the opportunity for small growers and sellers to occupy central locations which would improve access, moving away from a system which allows:-

"too many chains; drive thru' convenience outlets still being given planning, extending reliance on vehicles" **Baker**

A different model would involve understanding how things connect, and see buying from a local business just over the border in Devon better than buying from a supermarket in Cornwall. The regional "space" is cited again as the range within which we could be operating.

"There's nothing wrong with Devon! So to me 'local food' doesn't have to just mean Cornwall (I am not a nationalist) - but it should mean the main SW counties of

Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall" **Charity worker**

2.3.1 Loving the innovators

The "*what could be*" question elicited excitement around using new learning and existing examples to seed more change. Such examples of what can be are now becoming increasingly visible. The diverse range of new ventures, enterprise and community-based models across Cornwall echoes similar innovation across the UK; Cornwall has the largest number of CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture schemes) in the country, and is part of a significant national network. "*What could be*" is already fed by things that "*already are*", for moral support and practical learning.

"We need to connect the radicals to the bigger regional network" **Local government**

Examples elsewhere are cited as food for the imagination; from the Fife Diet (where people live off what is produced locally, as part of a much wider carbon, justice and

health agenda[7]) triggering questions as to whether there could be a "Cornwall Diet". Other new partnership models which bring policy and operational practice together such as Food Plymouth[8] and Nourish Scotland[9] are seen as inspiring. See Chapter 4 for a more comprehensive look at examples of good practice that can feed the food imagination.

These examples are important to enable more people to feel that change is possible; to see what has worked and what is being tried elsewhere; and to offer moral support to those who are working for change against the status quo. Institutional inertia is commonplace; what is called for is a galvanising "community of practice.".

"There are other examples of good practice – we did some work on hot takeaways in South Gloucestershire and

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[7] *https://www.nourishscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/FOOD-MANIFESTO-PRESENTATION.pdf*
[8] *https://foodplymouth.org/*
[9] *https://www.nourishscotland.org/* 2013-conference/food-manifesto-presentation/

Torbay - but very public health orientated. It's about getting it through health, and then through planning – and that's the challenge. They [Public Health] think we can do that but we can't – so having a good community of practice would be incredibly helpful" **Planner**

What is required for planners is practical support, and strength in numbers to help understand where Appeals are successful. Understanding the strategies has made a difference. Similarly, there is possibility in transferring existing skills locally, connecting new thinking in one sector to another.

"[The LA] does understand some risk; it has the language and the currency around, for example, the impact of climate on land mass. Can we do the same regarding food and health?" **Local government**

And there is appetite: it simply needs the courage to try doing things differently, and seeing a new model as a means of solving problems rather than bringing risk.

"We've been doing some work around One Planet Living [10]; and people are coming and saying I would really like to do this but the planning systems and how we deal with enterprise … and our business model that doesn't fit, focussed on only economic profit – the tests are so blunt and pushed towards [financial profit]. … The system is too rigid in a way and is becoming too rigid ... becoming too fixated on measurements – more and more detached from land use" **Planner**

Existing examples of new economic systems and business models are part of the potential for change. Cornwall Council's Decision Wheel process encourages systems thinking and has been lauded across the UK. Likewise, other national and local policies and strategies offer new options:

"We want to go to the bit of the system that allows us to experiment – and be

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proportionate. That's the problem. The regenerative agriculture policy we have in the DPD[11], and the One Planet thinking may offer a way to do that" **Planner**

The role of other examples in the thinking around "*what could be*" is hugely important in enabling new models to be accepted.

"The only way we can make it possible is by demonstrating [there is no need for suspicion] – that it's more about a regenerative model" **Planner**

Examples of how to do things differently, evidence that it can work, or even an amnesty to encourage innovators operating under the planning radar to come forward "*could be a good way; or an honest broker type affair, such as with traveller space*" **Planner**

Again, an easy win offers itself here. A call for examples of courageous, multi-impact new models is happening at the same time

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as the most diverse range of growing systems is evident across the country. It's a matter of simply joining the dots. Then we could allow the birth of a new model that sees land, our food, and our health being more of a common asset, with benefit and savings available to all, rather than then few.

KEY POINT - better use of existing good examples across Cornwall, and across the UK, will help the wider system be brave enough to change

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[10] *Welsh One Planet Living Policy enables low impact dwellings to be built in order to live off the land, but to very strict criteria:* https://reasonstobecheerful.world/one-planet-development-policy-wales-rural-sustainability

[11] *Climate Emergency Development Plan Document: written by the planning department, they set out a local authority's frame of future development*

2.3.2 Collaboration every which way

Both surveys, and interviews, saw our collective *"what could be"* depend on greater collaboration, between providers, between wealth and poverty, between communities, between growers and schools, between state and community. This creates the architecture that enables so many other social, economic and environmental benefits.

"What if we had all the colleges and anchor institutions as CSAs[12] or connected to growers or offering community accessible growing and land?" **Community grower**

A new model needs a step up from anchor institutions (such as local authorities, universities, health systems, schools and colleges):

To do more of what we're doing would need investment/buy- in from the public sector and links up from them for funding, referrals and being able to share what

[12] *Community Supported Agriculture schemes: https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/find-csa/*

we're doing to replicate further and in other places.

Networks connecting growers to communities in need were cited as crucial. Some community growing schemes are seen as active in this area, but

"… none of us have cracked it yet in Cornwall – in order to connect to the pockets of poverty. The people who are doing this well nationally are in big cities – we can use their learning, and then adapt them – we can start this by learning from Plymouth" **Community Grower**

Similarly, emergency food distributors, mutual aid groups and food banks call for more collaboration and connection, to share information, food and space. Networks around surplus food are called for, as is collaboration between food providers and food banks/emergency food providers.

Food hubs (where local food is collected by a community group, and sold locally at an agreed venue) are becoming increasingly popular in Cornwall and elsewhere. They allow collaboration

between growers, sellers, buyers and households, but are seen as having to try very hard to compete against the big companies. Their role could be much greater in a good food future.

Grower and producer interviews also call for better access to consumers; they could sell more food locally if more people knew about it, wanted it, could get to it, and had enough money to afford it. Collective buying, in community spaces, with local marketing, could help. More money would stay in the local economy; more jobs could be created. The response to the research suggests that people feel it could happen. The question is how we create the awareness, appetite, space, and money for that local food to stay closer to home.

"If food hubs could become the market place for regeneratively grown, local produce, buyers could buy large amounts of produce in one place" **Community sector**

The space required does not need to be large to begin with; another role for planning to be proactively involved emerges.

"Start small and build it up. Start with a strong mission about what we're trying to do. It just needs a space for producers to deliver and a place for customers to collect". **Grower**

The same answers emerge around farmers markets and market gardens as one of the key means for people to connect and collaborate, as noted already in this section.

Local buyers repeatedly ask for connections with local sellers within the hospitality industry.

"We have lots of small producers in Cornwall and they need outlets not just in the west of the county but all over, where small producers can come together to offer a wide range of produce and make it convenient for shoppers" **Hospitality sector**

Similarly, new ways of connecting food and learning are called for by respondents inside and outside the education sector.

"If an education package was created and put forward to catering personnel and relevant teachers, heads & governors around food-health/planet-health, better emphasis would be given to food budgets and the children in their care. An educational offering, perhaps pamphlet or book could be specifically put together or sourced, for caterers in order to expand their repertoire of meal plans including UK produce and more vegetarian recipes for fussy youths!" **Education sector**

Further opportunities lie in increasing our local teaching on the science around food and growing (given little priority despite the large tourism and agricultural sector in Cornwall). See *Chapter 3* for what we have in this regard that we can build on.

Our food system *could* be a contributor to health and learning and climate resilience. Examples from other sectors, or within the education sector, are known of. It comes down to passing the good ideas on.

The NHS had an independent food review last year. The education sector should have one also; our children's health and the opportunity for greater learning about cooking and growing for the climate, environment and health is being missed on the whole.

A what could be involves more of so many things we already have. For more on this, see Chapter 3.

KEY POINT - collaboration and combining priorities of different sectors laterally, and enabling community-based initiatives to connect to strategy vertically, will move everything forward

### 2.3.3   Procuring for people & planet

Better collaboration also allows more progressive procurement – cheaper, healthier, easier to get hold of food grown with the planet in mind. All anchor

institutions (health, education, governance) have enormous catering budgets. Local education establishments could create simple email groups and buying groups, enabling schools and colleges to buy affordably, feed their students well, and push their huge procurement clout back into local economies, growing jobs, not poor habits. This is a clear solution to the problem identified elsewhere in the research that academisation has brought lower budgets and no buying group; and a sense that we are

"getting our children into bad habits and usually serving them the cheapest food available" **Education sector**

Cambridge Catering Managers Committee was cited; examples exist. Having greater say over where and how food is grown, to allow environmental and social factors to be as important as cost, the education system could be a contributor to wide-scale change. See Chapter 3 for what we have to build on to respond to this problem, and Chapter 4 for more examples from elsewhere.

NFU county and regional advisors both suggest farm clusters both for large ELMS projects and for sales and local procurement purposes. They also recommend that the group concentrate on researching and promoting the potential health sector savings to healthy diet. They see the need also for more local food processing as part of a new localised food infrastructure to serve those emerging clusters.
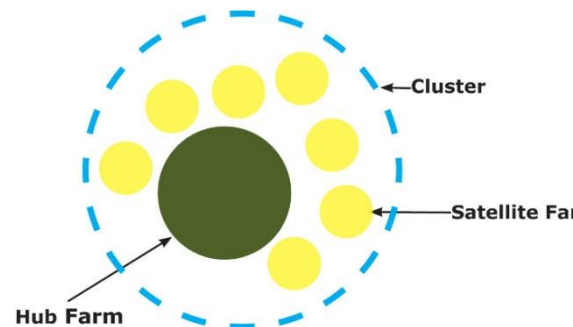
Current procurement protocols favour cheapness, ease, bulk, long payment timescales, "efficiency" and predictability. Progressive procurement could favour small producers, short supply chains, seasonal flexibility, short payment timescales, and invest in planetary and human health and our local economies.

KEY POINT - using our buying power at both household and at large scale eg in colleges, health systems etc. is a crucial means of enabling the food system to change.

2.3.4   Planning for people & planet

If the planning system is fundamental to land use, it is therefore fundamental to how and what we grow, who gets to do it, the spaces we have to sell it in, and therefore who has access to buying and eating it. Currently the role of planning in contributing to a sustainable food place is seen as "a challenge!" even by those who work in it; and that is shared by those outside it.

74% respondents identified access to land for small producers as a key issue that needs sorting – and to take into account the need to live on the land when working it .

"The biggest challenge in all these areas is for planners to see food as part of their remit. **Community food sector**

This barrier is backed up by interviews with local growers, who cite lack of access to land for small-scale growing, meaning long and complicated supply chains. This is at its heart a land issue*:*

"Allowing people the space to grow their own food is a fundamental". **Farmer**

Planning, economic development and economic metrics are inherently conservative (small c), risk averse functions of a local authority. But the what could be vision indicated in the research includes a future where local housing includes access to green spaces where growing takes place, and apprenticeships for growers and farmers and small scale farms are easily accessible, with spaces for them to move on to.

The problem is identified as the traditional role of the planning system - reactive rather than proactive – which means it's difficult to encourage new good things, because most of the effort is responding to what is coming forward*.*

"It's about how you justify refusing something rather than promoting good food health. We've been trying to put in edible landscapes as part of design, but it brings in issues of access …. Our tools are blunt – it's about refusing bad stuff rather than encouraging good stuff. It does my head in. It's essentially a reactive rather than a proactive sport – raises the question how do you operate within the system?" **Planner**

To compound this, the different parts of the local government system seem to struggle to collaborate on a shared vision.

"We always have this discussion with public health; they say you should just ban places having more take-aways, but that's hard – we don't have control over certain elements – like Pool! That has been raised a number of times...now referred to "coronary corner". [13]**Planning practitioner**

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[13] *Reference to a significant road intersection that has seen a wide range of fast food outlets be given planning permission, close to a tertiary college, and in an area that is one of 17 Cornwall neighbourhoods which are in the 10% most deprived in the country.(UK Govt Indices of Deprivation, 2019)*

The increasing desire for and difficulty around access to land to grow (identified as a problem by 74% of survey respondents) combined with the inherent conservativeness and risk-averseness meaning "it's quite difficult to experiment, in the planning system" suggests that engaging the planning system is central to a better food system. The sense of what could be is currently seen at times as exactly what the planning system is prevented from engaging with: justification for business development is based on money likely to be made, rather than social and environmental benefit.

The collision with the model is being able to build up social capital rather than financial capital.

This thinking is shared by other sectors, such as public health:

"The economic paradigm we're working on is not good for food equality**" Public health sector**

KEY POINT - change-makers in our planning systems need great examples and a community of new practice around good food for all, to make the argument for change

2.3.5 Understanding vs. blame

The disconnect between those who have food, and those who don't is extreme. Such disconnect between the social strata can compound misunderstanding and generate a culture of blaming individuals rather than understanding structural problems. A good system therefore also involves listening, not blaming; and to continue that conversation, either to keep good things on track, or to co-design out problems.

The current system sees emergency food distribution groups increase in number, size and range in order to respond to demand. In West Cornwall alone, one community emergency food distributor is currently providing over six thousand meals a week, before the evictions have begun post Covid, and before furlough ends. They cite phone calls from GP surgeries saying they have malnourished women trying to feed their children and pay their household bill; and that they are only picking up those whose social worker or nurse pick up: "who knows how many others there are".

"What needs to change… is there is a lot of blaming people… there may be adverse child experiences, poor mental health… people may smoke, people who don't understand that, blame them – there is not much empathy. I think there are lot of people who are privileged who don't understand. I think the national decision makers blame; I think potentially it happens here too**". Public Health sector**

"The big ones – obesity and diabetes – in relation to climate – they are an enormous big win… how do we get round this without blame?" **Health sector**

A different approach is collaborative, connected, humble, horizontal not top down, wise to complexity and systems based. A future is seen by community food activists as one offering not blame, but opportunity; "cook days" for isolated or elderly people, who have their heavy food such as vegetables delivered; opportunities to come together. Community Days every week are suggested, in every village, offering coffee and cake - "but you have to make the cake!" The vision is one of bringing communities together to "empower them to live together to get to the future".

The emphasis is on refusing to blame, and understanding the structures that lock people into poverty of food, of fuel, of health. Joining the dots between work precarity, or no work; food precarity, or no food; health and community connection precarity; food-related skills deficits; and almost impossible access to land, point to an obvious new opportunity to create a new community led food economy. It's not difficult to see that the problem offers its own solution. And this vision of what could be is reiterated by the health sector:

"To change the disconnect: one approach to change that might work is using Appreciative Enquiry. It has two purposes; if you can talk to people and ask a good question and let them speak, and hear what they say, then potential solutions might arise from that without us assuming that we know what the problem is or how to fix it; and secondly it can get more people involved across the system, with people undertaking the enquiry themselves. Others have done this … it's the starting point with all their systems work. They build common understanding". **Public Health sector**

The blame game appears to be practised by all, but its use increases in line with failure to understand. Greater collaboration and communication might enable greater understanding what is going on for some people at the bottom of our actual and social food chains, and also enable community solutions, as noted already, to emerge even more readily.

KEY POINT - encouraging programmes that bring lived experience of food (and other) poverty to the fore could ensure we make better informed strategic decisions that enable good change, rather than assuming we know.

2.3.6 What the real "risk" is

What could be is therefore seen as dependent on the development of a new understanding of risk, which could be possible if more examples of other new models were more available. Less blame and greater communication bring insight. More insight and understanding bring humility, and makes new ideas seem a

viable option. Other people already undertaking such new ideas make them seen inherently less risky, easing our fear of risk. The issue that emerges in the research is that the risk of not changing our food model is much greater than keeping things the same; frustration sits in the belly of every sector that participated; and that there is an increasing appetite for that change. The perceived risk of change might no longer be greater than the risk in staying the same.

"It's difficult to transfer a new thing into an existing set-in stone structure without exploding local authorities; although one would have to say it's already exploded, and the paradigm it's based on is now invalid". **Local authority sector**

If the traditional "risk-currency" of anchor institutions is what is disabling the imaginative space, seeing other people already succeeding at change could be powerful. What could be depends on how able we are to imagine doing things differently; seeing others do it already makes it seem less risky; and communicating with more people about their real lives and needs means blame is a less likely response. More imagination, less blame, more courage, less fear, more understanding, less separation. All are called for, in different ways, by respondents.

"The NHS and Council are both risk management organisations. They are risk-deflecting; we need to have a risk without blame culture. The risk of doing NOTHING [ie preserving the culture of BAU] has not been integrated into the "risk currency" of those organisations". **Local Authority**
Seeing other people try new ideas could reduce the fear of trying new things, and then being ok with them not being perfect. It would offer a means of understanding the relationship between different things – housing and food and

poverty and health and green space; and be more comfortable with complex systems thinking.

"We need to move away from consensus to consent – from alignment of preferences to alignment of tolerance of what is good for now, and safe enough to try. This is is better way of looking at systems, and moving away from tensions and blame". **Local Authority**

More visible examples lead to greater understanding of actual risk, less blame, and more systems thinking. The emerging appetite within planning is for an understanding of "good risk eg current examples, and lots of social and environmental profit, which is all in our existing strategies, so that's good".

If that can be combined with the appetite for a different model from the recent surveys such as The Cornwall We Want[14], then "we can take that as a starter, plus climate and ecological emergency, food insecurity, rural proofing ... that conversation takes you away from the

immediacy of a planning application and more big picture. All that will be caveated as there will be some traditional thinking around that, but government policy will be coming through NPPF[15], so there may be some room in that to develop our own policy". **Planning practitioner**

KEY POINT - big decision makers in local governments and health systems need great examples to counter their concern around risk of change, in order to centre good food.

2.3.7   *Better metrics of success!*

Given the call for systems thinking, and the calls for a new food system as a system, rather than more tweaks, a new metric of what counts as progress is also clearly required.

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[14] *https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/overview*

[15] *National Planning Policy Framework, a document and set of principles which inform all local planning decisions*

A metric which measured the actual health of the population rather than economic growth as a proxy for that would be a start. Public health is clear on the need, given its calls to economic planning to use its powers proactively; and it also sees the impact on a population level of poor access to food as a result of poor distribution of wealth.

What we value as a society is not well-being and thriving of people, it's economic growth which is taken to mean improvements for everyone, but it doesn't; it means improvement for some and some are forgotten about just because a lot of people lose out. It's our current economic paradigm – that where the problem is.

Such a metric - health and well-being - would trigger different uses of our existing system. Planning systems could have a more proactive response to health impacts of new developments, in conjunction with economic development structures.

As one example, one farmer suggests that all fast-food outlets within 10 minute walk of an educational establishments should have the business rates increased by 20% every year until such time as they can no longer afford to operate in that location; and in the meantime, all planning should be refused for fast food outlets within 10 minute walk of an educational establishment. There are restrictions on fast food developments already, but they are clearly not felt to be adequate.

If these ideas are not currently possible, the question needs to be asked how we make it so. Tools such as Business Improvement Districts, Neighbourhood Plans and Development Plans are possible allies; what is needed is a vision that makes human and planetary health a direct metric of success, rather than using economic outputs as a proxy; and then sees the growing of good food for all as a direct means of achieving, affecting the way all such tools can be deployed.

The metrics would change from seeing the following as a positive indicator of success:-

- the number of food banks
- number and "choice" of supermarkets
- the profit made by supermarkets, and the fact that is seen as an indicator of economic growth rather than economic extraction

and instead, be:-

- more about well-being
- more about human health
- more about planetary health
- more about diversity of habitat
- more about diversity of small food businesses and less about size
- more about community purpose and collaboration

The large businesses are considered to skew regulation and markets, and create a reliance on supermarkets and supermarket deliveries - to both visitors and locals. Farm shops can be sometimes "verging on the "twee", with nice packaging but aimed at visitors and not enough of the Cornish grown basics".

"It takes time, ingenuity and effort for shoppers to get hold of local fish, local salads, local veg, local meat - it should all be made much easier, and not just the preserve of those who have the time and the inclination and the money to pursue it. The goal should be that it's the SIMPLEST option to buy local, not the most difficult". **Community sector.**

Counter-intuitively, the number, diversity and multiple impacts of an alternative food economy is enormous. Even in the writing of this report, more examples are emerging; this is not an exhaustive list. So, if the access is still considered a problem, a straightforward first step would be to connect what is there already, and understand, and challenge, the grip of the

dominant food, planning and economic development systems.

"If we look at what a product of this work might be, it could be a food/community partnership that identifies different work streams across emergency and structural change that we work on as a group – the aim is to STOP emergency food provision reliance – 'cos the system is what is allowing that to happen". **Community sector**

KEY POINT - what we decide to measure drives our actions; if we decided to measure health and well-being of our communities as our core priority, good food for all could be a powerful metric of success.

4.SECTION 2.4 Conclusions

Our key conclusion here are:-

♦   Systems-thinking underpins all current good practice and could become second nature; food connects
  ♦ jobs
  ♦ health
  ♦ community
  ♦ education
  ♦ planet
  ♦ soil
  ♦ wellbeing

and needs to be understood in that light
♦ A better connection to existing good examples could crucially encourage contagious change and encourage risk-averse decision makers
♦ Human health is dependent on healthy food; making food healthy (growing, eating and cooking it) could become a completely central part of our health system
♦ Using our procurement to support local suppliers, could create jobs and new habits at the same time

♦ Really understanding barriers such as access to land, access to markets, dominance of supermarkets could create a different model, and will meet support from growers, buyers and communities alike
♦ A new model could provide resilience for growers to changing weather by using regenerative techniques; and more diverse buyers could provide resilience to the dominance of the supermarkets and their insistence on low prices
♦ Communication & understanding is better than blame; the solutions could be created by the people who have most need, if they have some of the barriers lifted
♦ We can nurture the process of change in the county with good connections, using good food for all as a metric for success, and then constantly assessing progress and gaps to support those who want to change.
♦ Our food system could provide human and planetary health, decent jobs, new skills and learning, new enterprises, new understanding of shared land use and new community spaces and networks that allow all to thrive.

Dolphins & surfer fun off Porthmeor Beach *Photo SWNS*

SECTION 3: What we can build on?

1.SECTION 3.1- Just join the dots

The question of what we have to build on generated the most extensive array of answers, in both number of respondents and range of answers. It was the second largest response after the question asking what is wrong with our current food system. The loud answer is that we have an enormous choice of great examples.

A notable result is that 80% of respondents answered with this wide array of examples; yet of those 80%, approximately 20% answered to say they did not know, were not certain or were not sure.

Responses therefore range from "none, they are all pretty useless" to "there are so many fantastic initiatives!".

These examples of good practice range from community supported agriculture, to

> To that end, what helpful initiatives, programmes, businesses, partnerships etc do we already have in place that we can build on?
>
> sustainable Bosavern Community Farm Well food poverty spaces University farm shops public lots education start build great also initiatives organisations farmers markets make know enough growers Growing Links businesses Tamar markets idea good help need projects growing food hubs farm organic growers food producers local system Cornwall many community grow food people Use support promoting work really organic buy shops already farmers veg box schemes produce selling Council EAT sure miles Community orchards schemes network distribution allotments benefits food business fantastic small market gardens groups climate action groups etc

food hubs, farmer's markets and apprenticeships, formal education sector initiatives, community business, community farming and growing schemes, networks, market gardens, community orchards, climate action groups, allotment clubs, emergency food distribution and support systems, social prescription based activities, regenerative agriculture, agroecology, and community learning and teaching around growing, selling, cooking and sharing. Included were county wide initiatives such as networks and associations supporting local fishing, farming or business start-up.

However, there is a significant gap between those people actively involved and knowledgeable, and those who might be interested (ie answered the survey) but

have no knowledge of this "alternative" food economy to the supermarket and corporate systems.

"I have no idea what is already in place or what grants are available to start such projects. But I would really like to be part of that change". **Farmer**

Knowledge, connectivity and communication are underlined as a priority, in order to enable the existing good practice to flourish and extend its reach, and benefit.

"I think it is mainly about continuing to improve recognition and connectivity – so that existing initiatives can learn and grow". **Farmers' market seller**

Some respondents knew some examples, but still felt better connectivity is required.

"Local farming, fishing, renewable energy, electric vehicles, allotments, recycling, bee keepers. Red Tractor initiative. Not really sure what we have so better communication would be useful" **Resident**

KEY POINT - there are many great examples of good practice; enabling more people to know about them will improve access, and help them grow

2.SECTION 3.2 - Mutual aid muscles

The level of response during the pandemic has been a story of the good, the bad and the ugly. The structural need and poverty have been laid bare, and a schooling for some (but not all) in where we are failing as a society. But this has also been a blinding indication of good: how we are able to mobilise and respond to change to create an entirely alternative architecture at no notice. Mutual aid groups leapt from our communities across Cornwall (as elsewhere); Volunteer Cornwall alone (Cornwall's volunteering charity) saw over 4,000 volunteers come forward asking to help, within weeks of the first lockdown announcement. They have been supporting nearly 5,000 people across Cornwall, many with food basics, and some still doing so. Food banks and community groups already involved in food poverty alleviation went up a gear and turned to emergency food distribution, as people were no longer allowed to gather at the food bank venue. This was previously a source of company and connection as well as food; and more people need both uncooked food and hot meals. We feed - and are still feeding - uncounted thousands of people and families; the Street Food Project in Penzance, already feeding dozens of single homeless people every night, are now still providing over 6,000 hot meals a week across West Cornwall.

The fact this has been and is still required is nothing short of scandalous; the fact it

was, and is, provided by largely its own community is an indication of how powerful, agile, hard-working and well connected that community response muscle is.

There is still need to connect, actively, within our communities; as has been noted elsewhere in this research, we do need to ensure we work together and invest time in our collaborative skills. As noted by one activist:

"I seem to come across so many "local heroes" that just want to run and expand their own little empires. It really makes me think that - before we do anything else - we should be running workshops on co-operation and networking!" **Food activist**

But as is often the case through history [16] the big state systems of health, care and housing would not have been able to cope without that massive community endeavour; now is the time for a new collaboration between state and community ecosystems, this time on our food economy, moving information to where it is needed, finding which parts of the system do not work, inventing better systems which do and giving platforms to the new ideas and people who can help the transformational change required.

KEY POINT - we are an inventive and agile community; this could be a superpower to transform our food system

3. SECTION 3.3 Moving the mountain of incumbency

A repeated issue noted amongst those working in the existing alternative food

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[16] *For more on community mutual aid at time of crisis, see Solnit: Paradise Built in Hell*

system was that of how difficult it is to change the incumbent system. The existence of the overarching corporate food structures, such as supermarkets, and politically driven policies such as economic development and planning, are seen to be a mountainous block, rather than a facilitator of such change.

"Plenty [to build on], but still dominated by the established and the establishment – the best work and thinking is coming from the new and younger generation of food producers". **Education sector**

This inertia, or risk-averseness, is reiterated in the responses around current problems (see Chapter 1), from both community members and those working inside anchor institutions such as the local authority, or the health system. Several respondents from within the local authority refer to the culture of a very narrow "risk currency", in which bigger threats such as climate and ecological change are minimised and keeping things as they are is seen to be less risky than welcoming in new thoughts. One respondent from the health system refers

to the need to "create a trend within healthcare that could filter out to the wider system".

The "do nothing" option is seen to be the safest route, as it ensures the business as usual, the known, remains the dominant paradigm. This is particularly the case when the wider social, economic, health and environmental status quo systems are in flux, increasing anxiety amongst those who operate within them. The appetite, however, as noted in Chapter 2, is for change. The success of building on what we have, therefore, depends on connecting and strengthening it, in order to create a better, wider system of change that is bigger than its individual parts.

KEY POINT - big change is hard, but wanted; creating and supporting new small trends is possible, and makes big change possible

4.SECTION 3.4 - Islands of coherence

One potential way of responding to the clear demand for change and challenge to this, at this time of flux and anxiety, could be found in what was referred to by one respondent as the theory of "islands of coherence",[17] where new, emerging, small models and systems can offer a new opportunity for the bigger, unstable system to re-cohere around a new logic and set of values. The vast array of new ideas could be seen as an immense range of islands we can build bridges between, to help change happen faster.

The research clearly points to many existing examples of new ideas, delivering multiple impacts (see Chapter 2 on the benefits of thinking in systems) and keen to connect to others doing similar things

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[17] *A theory developed by the physicist Ilya Prigogine*

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"There are lots of businesses. The business I manage is already supporting lots of sustainable food businesses by creating a low cost platform on which to sell their produce as well as creating an outdoor space that teaches people how to grow food sustainably and also cooking good food that can't afford it. We would love support to help us further our aims."

Deciding as a county to value and connect such initiatives and enterprises would respond to the significant number of calls for renewed support for local community activity such as CSA groups, food hubs, local veg schemes, community businesses such as refill shops, and farms working to

deliver environmental and social profit. Increased connectivity would raise their profile; improved profile would then increase their customer base.

A small extract of the range of responses and projects is noted below:

Cornwall is just amazing. =)

♦ Community supported agriculture schemes: Cornwall has the biggest single concentration within any local authority. Eight so far, with more to come.. (and one on the Isles of Scilly).

♦ Growing Links, Bosavern Community Farm, St Ives Community Orchard, Whole Again Communities, Fat Hen.
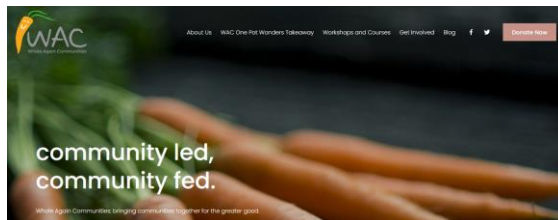
♦ Fresh Point in Newquay, pioneering package free fresh produce with free delivery on electric vehicles.

♦ Forest schools educating on healthy habits and the impact of growing food.

♦ Newquay Orchard.

♦ Restaurants like Concho Lounge offering decent vegetarian menus.

♦ Refill shops - The Good Lyfe, Incredible Bulk , ReFILL Bude

♦ Honesty box roadside stalls.

Bosavern Training & Work Experience

KEY POINT - our current economic, climate and social uncertainties are allowing new ideas and food models to have the room to grow

5.SECTION 3.5   Building new bridges

The wider community knowledge of such a range of activity appears to be low; but the research indicates that the emerging new models, the opportunity, and appetite are, however, significant. If new ways of thinking are "islands" in the current seas of change, then the research suggests there are more emerging from the waters, and they are diverse and innovative and ready to join up; we just need to build the bridges.

One respondent sums up the issue as having many things to build on, and needing a combined effort of connectivity, communication and collaboration, between and across sectors:

"We need to build rapidly on our network of CSAs, expand local allotments, develop local supply chains. Much of this is about education too, so a focus on public awareness is essential. Somehow, we need to move from a special interest movement to a mass market movement, and that will take commitment from all
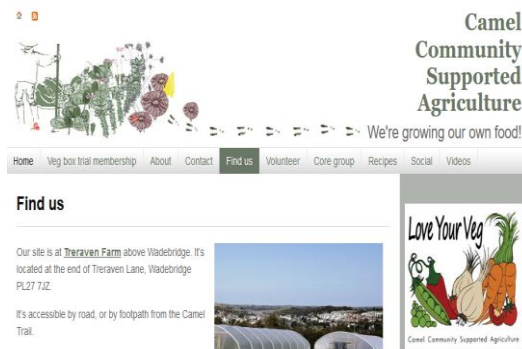
There seem to be a lot of local farms opening their own shops. It would be great to build and improve on what they already have. Eg buying milk from the local dairy farm but in refillable glass bottles instead of plastic ones.

KEY POINT - we can optimise what we already have by connecting disparate things together better to make a new food culture more visible.

3.5.1   New bridges: by clustering

A simple policy to create localised good food maps of what initiatives are operating, and what they need (finance support, access to markets, connection with other sectors) would enable local clusters of activity to become self-organising. Some local mapping appears to exist, with some local groups cohering about emergency food provision, climate group activity or community growing are emerging. Likewise, CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture schemes) are networked as a type of operation, but an increase in their connections to local needs (see Chapter 2) could enable them to thrive, whilst meeting the unmet demand amongst those who want to know more about what's available.

There are many outlets such as Tamar Grow Local, Community Orchards and community allotments and farms, but they need help to start up and organise. There are also lots of small farmers markets and shops offering hubs but there needs to be a strategy to spread the hubs out to subsidise their use initially by small producers.

OUR ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON THREE MAIN AREAS

COMMUNITY — Providing opportunities and support for local people to grow their own food including allotments and community orchards.

EDUCATION — Raising awareness of the benefits of local produce and the unique market gardening history of this area.

COMMERCIAL — Working with commercial growers and supply chains to increase the availability & consumption of local food and produce.

One farming conversation suggested the notion of regional clusters of farms connected by ELMS[18] (government funded environmental land management schemes) and the Nature Recovery Network[19] (government driven national network of wild-life rich places) as such recovery needs a larger scale than the average Cornish farm. Such a cluster could also be extended to cover financial regional clusters and networks.

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[18]
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-schemes-overview
[19]
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network

Past and current support programmes based in partnership working such as Tevi (Cornish environmental growth programme) and Duchy College's Soil Carbon Project enable clustering of like-minded support organisations, and sectors such as farming or tourism.

CoaST ReBoot: Positive Soil.

Although individually small in terms of cohort, such programmes create critically needed space for new thinking, for the development of new practices, for connection to new ideas from elsewhere,

and then the dissemination of such new ideas and practices across peers in their own places and sectors.

Some programmes, such as Cornwall Food and Drink, have been going strong for some years, supporting hundreds of businesses. Other network sellers offer monthly lists of seasonal produce. These network mechanisms are part of the new world of low impact, high quality, climate resilient and fundamentally equitable food system being called for across the research.

Clustering can also take place in the world of procurement – essentially buying collaboratively. One regional college respondent noted that he is contacting regional catering managers to organise a group buying network. Regional activity is a crucial part of local impact; what we can build on in Cornwall stretches beyond the Tamar.

"Every college, university and school in the SW has a catering manager and/or a procurement manager. Every few years each one individually puts out a tender process for food and we look for the cheapest. Surely, we should be working together". Education sector

The fishing sector also points to multiple problems (see Chapter 1) but also

indicates what we have to build on: helpful clustering support mechanisms such as Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, Seafood Cornwall, the Marine Conservation Society Good Fish Guide, offer informative websites, and factual information all aspects of fish and fishing in Cornwall.

The regional and national dimension comes in again; many in Cornwall are members of national and regional networks such as LEAF, The LandWorkers' Alliance; Sustain, Better Food Traders and the Open Food Network. The sense is that these are little known amongst land use planners and decision makers, but could offer that community of practice called for in Chapter 2. There are many islands; the

bridges are just waiting to be built between them.

The tourism industry has made a name for itself in Cornwall, espousing low impact and high-quality business practice for the last 15 years.[20] That sector - worth over 25% of Cornwall's economy - is a massive opportunity to increase demand for high quality and low impact food, as it is part of their offer; clustering around local food sellers as a sector could bring benefit to all. The research heard from multiple visitor economy businesses keen to access more local food more easily. The demand is there to build on: what is wanted is a whole new food system:

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[20] www.coastproject.co.uk

"Need more direct cove boat local line caught fish selling locally; higher farming/animal welfare standards, less pesticides, more organic, less plastic!!!!!! More seasonal and less imported from abroad. Less food miles, more sustainable for planet. Less use of polluting transport. More local abattoirs. BUY LOCAL and more farmers ' markets". **Tourism business**

KEY POINT - we can build on existing and new natural clusters of activity, sector, and geography

3.3.2   New bridges: by policy-making

Opportunities lie within the planning system to place the notion of good food for all as a more central driver, over a drive for economic profit.

"We've been doing some work around One Plant Living [21]; and people are coming and saying I would really like to do this but the planning systems and how we deal with enterprise … and our business model that doesn't fit, focussed on only economic profit – the tests are so blunt and pushed towards [financial profit]. … The system is too rigid in a way and is becoming too rigid.. becoming too fixated on measurements – more and more detached from land use" **Planner**

Calls for a more community and planet wise system emerged in "The Cornwall We Want"[22] survey; this again offers another island of thinking from which policy bridges can be built.

"We can take that as a starter, plus climate and ecological emergency, food insecurity, rural proofing ... that conversation takes you away from the immediacy of a planning application and more to a big picture. All that will be caveated as there will be some traditional thinking around that, but government policy will be coming through NPPF[23], so there may be some room in that to develop our own policy". **Planning sector**

KEY POINT - we can build on emerging new policies and strategies and put planetary and human health, and food, right at their heart

3.3.3   New bridges: by farming & fishing

Increasing interest within the farming and fishing community offers routes into connecting issues such as food and climate, and connecting communities and local food. Responses included the need for a more plant-based diet, and a more sophisticated understanding of the role of our marine life, and the role of livestock in carbon and water cycles and soil health. One livestock farmer notes that:

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[21] *Welsh One Planet Living Policy enables low impact dwellings to be built in order to live off the land, but to very strict criteria:*

https://reasonstobecheerful.world/one-planet-development-policy-wales-rural-sustainability/
[22] *https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/overview*

[23] *National Planning Policy Framework, a document and set of principles which inform all local planning decisions*

"Food security and soil health should be high priority to help us cope with climate change. Also farming can play a big part in carbon sequestration, I have learnt a little on the subject as I am involved in the Soil Carbon Project, run by Duchy college. I find the whole subject of trying to farm in a climate friendly way very interesting, And I am making some changes to the way I run the farm like reducing fertilizer use and rotational grazing of cattle'. **Farmer**

This and new initiatives such as Farm Net Zero[24] are an example of how contagious change can be fostered, building on farming networks, on emerging interest in new farming methods and on the existing ecosystem of like-minded organisations at local and national level, such as Duchy College Rural Business School, The Farm Carbon Toolkit, The Soil Association, Westcountry Rivers Trust, and Innovation for Agriculture.

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[24]

https://www.farmcarbontoolkit.org.uk/news/farm-net-zero-project-deliver-over-%C2%A31-million-support-farmers-cornwall

Through Farm Net Zero, the project will be monitoring 40 farms in East Cornwall with soil sampling and carbon footprinting undertaken each year.

Three demonstration farms will be developed to act as examples of how to reach net zero. There will also be field labs and citizen science projects established, alongside events and workshops to encourage learning and discussion in both the farming and wider communities. This systems change thinking is entirely replicable.

Likewise, initiatives engaging fishers in issues around stock protection, marine pollution and habitat protection are cited, though sometimes only known about in smaller circles.

Noted were good practice dairies, farmers, farming support initiatives, from local social enterprises making food waste into sellable products such as Wasted Apple, to larger networks encouraging carbon literacy, habitat positive farming, high welfare farming, cottage farming, online food hubs, small fisheries and bakeries all operating on small scale, high quality and low impact principles.

The principle point from the research is that we have multiple examples of excellent practice, and support to encourage it; there is an immense array of examples to build on, by making this a central part of who we are as a Cornish community not just for our visitors, but for one and all.

KEY POINT - we can build on growing interest in the farming and fishing sectors and their support networks in soil, water, habitat, climate and health by ensuring they have a much higher profile in our collective understanding of ourselves

3.3.4 New bridges by market development

Building on the emerging appetite for low impact food seen nationally, and fostering it where it does not yet exist is a key opportunity. The 20% of those interested enough to complete a question on what we have to build on in our survey feel they do not know what is available, indicate there will be others. 41% of all survey respondents want more information on where to get sustainable food. Answers from growers indicate that they are clear from their end that what is required is market development as well as manufacturing/processing infrastructure, and a significant enough belief that new customer bases would pay the additional cost.

Local selling is clearly already done, but to a limited market; it is clear that more would be done if growers felt organic produce was better valued.

Similarly, our hospitality industry is a key lever for change - with an even more important role to come in this change, with calls for better labelling on food origin, and promotion of seasonal produce.

Pubs and restaurants are gradually realising that people want healthy, local, seasonal food, that is still affordable. It is becoming easier to find decent menus, but there is still some way to go.

Yet the appetite exists. As well as calls in the research from growers for greater demand, one farmer's market organiser noted that they are always looking for more producers; which in turn would grow support to keep farms as farms rather than being redeveloped as holiday accommodation. Another grower and veg box scheme talks of not enough local suppliers of good quality certified organic vegetables, with demand outstripping supply; there is clearly a need to join up

the people who want to grow more, with the people who want to sell it.

It's all about facilitation. People who are good food producers aren't necessarily good at marketing or running a business. Business support and seeing these enterprises as businesses is vital. Large farming subsidies need to be diverted to small growers.

Key point: we can build on the call for more good food from sellers and buyers by better connecting them to growers, across all sectors (eg tourism and hospitality)

3.3.5   New bridges: by learning

Formal and informal teaching is emerging at multiple levels, across the region, each example of new learning creating islands of new thinking. Cornwall College and The Eden Project are writing BTEC and degree courses in regenerative horticulture; Schumacher College in Totnes are offering a Regenerative Food and Farming BSc, the first in the UK, and HE Diploma and HE

Certificate. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) department at Cornwall College and Regenerative Food and Farming have created an assembly for secondary schools to be sent out via Cornwall Council; and SW anchor institutions are now working on their own collaborations.

Duchy College is working with Bicton College to produce meat for their canteen use, with a possible expansion to vegetables and fruits. The possibility of a farm shop at Duchy was mentioned in the farm discussion groups, as was the potential of links with Camborne and St Austell Colleges, furthering links between catering and farming students.

Anchor institutions (schools, hospitals, local authorities, universities) are key in this positive re-learning about food, within their staff base and with the people they teach, or support, or help.

"People need opportunities to alter their taste buds! This can start in schools and hospitals. Positive role models in education. A lot of teachers haven't a clue and don't practise a healthy lifestyle" **Farmer**

At community level, teaching has been happening with the Cornwall Food Foundation and Food for Change programme for some years before ending in the last 2 years, leaving a legacy of skills in the workforce; and currently

community enterprises such as Bosavern Community Farm, Growing Links and Newquay Community Orchard amongst others are developing and offering a range of formal and informal learning opportunities around growing, cooking and selling food to community members, enhancing their physical health, mental health and job prospects simultaneously.

Local third sector conservation organisations are already developing conversations about food via information about climate and regenerative food and farming into the farming sector, with possible partnership working between the third sector and anchor institutions; local community climate action groups are

working on upskilling local abilities in relation to food, soil, climate and community competencies such as the emerging Incredible Edible programmes in Helston and elsewhere, and calls for more are evident in the research.

Cornwall Council has recently launched a Carbon Literacy training programme for councillors as part of its Climate and Ecological Emergency Plan[25]; it is not mandatory, but a welcome move in the direction of upskilling elected members to ensure they are better equipped to deal with the complexities of the future. As

part of the call for greater climate, carbon and ecological literacy especially for decision makers, similar training on the role food plays at the intersection of health, climate, carbon, justice, community, soil, economy and resilience of place is now seen as a next step in the research.

KEY POINT - we can build on existing and emerging formal and informal learning by seeing it as part of what we all do in our organisations, as a default shared priority and objective

3.3.6 New bridges: by connecting to community climate action

The IPCC report in 2018 stated we are now facing an "existential crisis", meaning our existence as a species is now under threat. The rate of change is still considered "wildly inadequate" by parts of the climate science community and increasingly the social science and economic science communities[26]. What we do about our need to eat is central to how we address this crisis.

Climate action groups now number over 50 across Cornwall; several respondents named them as active in relation to a new food system, through work on carbon sequestration, food hubs, community gardens, health, incredible edible programmes and more. As active, community-based groups of citizens, business people, local councillors, teachers, nurses and third sector workers, their ability to engage and catalyse action locally, despite an unreceptive incumbent food system, is seen as an important opportunity to leverage and accelerate change.

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[25]

https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency/

[26] *Jason Hickel, May 2021*

KEY POINT - we can build on the huge and contagious community activity around climate and ecological resilience by making it easy (via planning permission, money, support, publicity) to put good food for all at the centre of their efforts

3.3.7 New bridges: by finding our courage

Covid has disrupted many of our systems. Some food markets have closed during the pandemic, but others have grown:

"Supermarkets have a stranglehold on consumption patterns and pricing that disadvantages local producers. Direct sales 'from farm to fork' have increased during Covid pandemic. This pattern needs encouraging and supporting" **Grower**

At the same time, over 2/3, (71%) respondents wanted Cornwall's decision-makers to make a clear commitment to a sustainable, healthy fair food system.

"There are lots of things the Council can do, but not top down as that won't have buy-in; we want the Council to have food as a priority. We want them to say, this is what the people say they want, and how can we do that?" **Public Health**

At the same time, individuals inside institutions and communities on the ground are taking action at all levels. At the time of writing, a fruit and vegetable stall for staff and patients has been installed on the ground at Cornwall's main hospital; local and county wide food security groups are being set up to consider both emergency aid and structural change; and an enormous array of community based and small business sector high quality, low impact food and farming programmes and enterprises are being set up.

Individuals within community, state, and business know we have the Mothership of all challenges ahead of us. Food is central to our physical, cultural, emotional and planetary wellbeing. We are beginning to understand the connections between climate and planetary health, and how food sits front and centre of that. Communities and anchor institutions are now looking to tools such as doughnut economics[27] and systems thinking to reconsider our decisions and priorities. There is much creative disruption afoot, and an increasingly persistent challenge of the status quo. Such positive deviance is where the future lies. We only need the courage to make it so.

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[27] *https://doughnuteconomics.org/*

_{6.}**SECTION 3.6   Conclusions**

- ♦ Systems-thinking enables us to join up, make visible and enhance the reach of the vast number of existing imaginative and challenging food enterprises and initiatives.
- ♦ 2020 has proved we have the ability to move quickly and deal with crisis, with a very engaged community who cares on the whole about our communities and our land & seas. This is a huge asset to be used to help us achieve such a joined-up way of thinking about food.
- ♦ Moving what "is" into what "could be" is always hard, but there is great appetite for new models both within and outside our institutions.
- ♦ The more we connect what we have already, the greater chance we have of enabling the wider system to become a less hostile and more fertile context for the new system to flourish.
- ♦ Making connections across (unexpected) sectors (community and anchor

SECTION 4 Examples of food sustainability

To achieve sustainability, we need to create answers to the following questions

1.SECTION 4.1 - What is sustainability?

As discussed in Chapter 2 there are many related issues around defining sustainability in food. The general view from our survey work is that the food system for Cornwall has the following characteristics: -

Our food system provides mainly local, healthy food, affordable by all and produced by techniques which enhance the soil and our surrounding seas, animal welfare and growers/producers' livelihoods.

This means that a high proportion of our food:-

♦ Is produced locally
♦ Is organic and regenerative

♦ Increases soil/seabed carbon sequestration
♦ Is high in nutritional value and
♦ Provides a healthy diet
♦ Is interesting, varied and seasonal
♦ Is both affordable and cost- effective enough for producers
♦ Comes from locally owned and community owned producers
♦ Provides a production and customer model for other regions to emulate
♦ Integrates energy and the labour force into the locality
♦ Rapidly Increases local biodiversity

All these threads are bound together through the three principles outlined earlier in this report: -

❖ **People care**
❖ **Planet care**
❖ **Fair share**

We also need to understand how to achieve these principles for the food system in Cornwall. To help with this process it is helpful to learn from success elsewhere.

The Doughnut
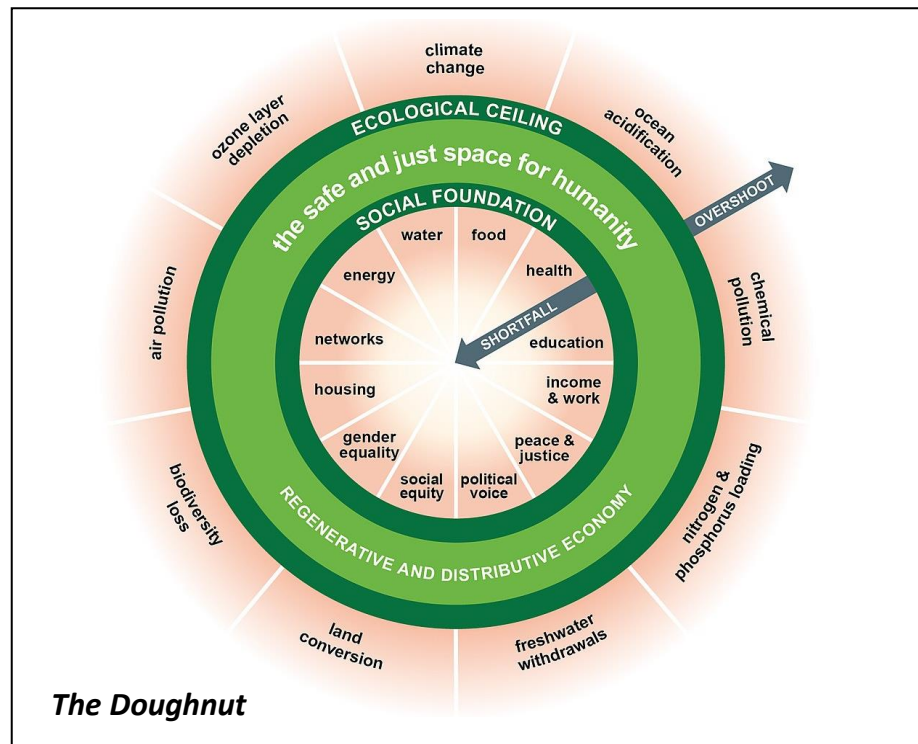
2.SECTION 4.2 - What strategies are shown to assist sustainability?

There are many fine examples of good practice helping the process towards meeting the principles outlined earlier. Examples include how these strategies are reaping many rewards locally.

The examples shown here cover a range of strategy perspectives which depend on the involved communities, their local issues and orientation regarding the major issues which can be addressed.

❖ **people care**
  health, nutrition
  education and skills
  family and community
  enough   (food poverty, access)

❖ **earth care**
  planning and land use
  soil health
  plant health
  go local to help the planet

❖ **fair share**
  fair local jobs and business
  fair approaches to change
  integrated thinking & action
    by public, private & social sectors

We have found that some strategies aim to address all these approaches. These tend to be the outstanding successful approaches.

4.2.1   Strategy: all/many aspects

❖ **Food Partnerships**

Example: Bristol Food Council
This initiative includes a large number of stakeholders in the public, social and private sectors in and around Bristol, all working towards improved health, better food access and increased resilience for the residents of Bristol. They work collectively and together their individual initiatives are creating positive change in Bristol.

Bristol Food Council principles
♦ **Good for people** – everyone should have access to information, training and resources that enable them to grow, buy, cook, and enjoy good food.
♦ **Good for places** – the public and policy-makers should support and value food enterprises who promote local jobs, prosperity and diversity, and treat workers well
♦ **Good for the planet** – food should be produced, processed, distributed and disposed of in ways that benefit nature

Bristol Food Plan – builds on many local projects under their ten topic headings and develops indicators of success – eg reduced food waste, improving health indicators in local children, number & types of local food businesses.

❖ **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

Example Stroud CSA
Stroud Community Agriculture Ltd is a community-led enterprise, which is developing a local farming business to produce fresh organic/biodynamic produce for its members. Members pay an annual membership and a further payment in order to receive produce including vegetables, pork and beef, and diversifying into other produce. The farm is certified organic and is influenced by biodynamic methods. & has been running for 20 years*.

4.2.1 Strategy: people care

❖ **NGOs outreach advice & training**

Example: Soil Association: Food for Life
FFL works in partnership with local authorities & community organisations to improve local health outcomes: in particular with local schools and a whole systems school food programme with a suite of training programmes, help to start growing, school awards programmes and high local catering standards.

KEY POINT - Pupils in Food For Life schools are twice as likely to eat their 5-a-day vs pupils in comparison schools!

This programme has successfully created a new food culture throughout the schools in eight local authorities so far, where the LAs have wholeheartedly followed the Food for Life Programme over a number of years.

Example: Edinburgh Food for Good Coalition
Edible Edinburgh partners initially co-ordinated action to feed those falling through the cracks in the Pandemic. This

has led to a wider Coalition focussed by industry professionals aiming to provide quality, healthy food for communities.

❖ **Community Interest Company**

Example: The Apricot Centre
The Apricot Centre is a social enterprise on a 34 acre farm in Devon, growing a wide range of Biodynamic produce including vegetables, fruit, jams, chutneys, juices and flours. The Farm is also the home & space for providing therapeutic support for families and children, using the farm and nature as a co-therapist. They also offer Permaculture Consultancy services, including designing school gardens, working alongside children, staff & parents in creating & implementing gardens specific to the schools needs and to help support their curriculum. They have fed over 200 families a week over the pandemic.

This CIC approach demonstrates how to integrate successful people care with good food and a fair business, where the emphasis is on providing a therapeutic space.

4.2.3 Strategy: earth care

❖ **Land access**

Example: Commons
Managing land as a commons means finding a better balance between the needs and capacities of landowners, farmers and other users of the land, supporting tenure regimes that rebalance the rights of users and owners in collaboration with public and private interests.
Crofting provides a good example of how smallholding can combine with common grazing rights in the Scottish Highlands. The Commons are run by a committee of

the crofters holding rights and make the main decisions on use of the land.

Example: Land tenancies
Where central/local government wish to improve access to land and aim to develop better use and governance of their land based around strengthening communities' voices and decision-making power, then policies are needed to provide:-
♦ Access to land
♦ Strengthening tenant protection
♦ Measures to prevent land speculation
♦ Tax policies to support active farming and intergenerational renewal
♦ Strengthening public & democratic control over land eg. via community right to buy or public land banks such as county farms.

Example: County Farms
Cornwall Council has over 10,000 acres in its County Farm estate, providing a valuable entry method for new farmers. Several Councils are now regarding county farms as an essential element in their climate plans. Some councils are considering using this estate to enable local food production for schools, via the

Preston Model of procurement, or helping adults with difficulties in Care Farms – which can assist Adult Social Care budgets.

KEY POINT - In the UK, average farm business income in 2019 was £50,400 but only 12% of this was from agricultural activity, with 62% coming from subsidies and 26% from diversification.

(Farming Smarter: the case for Agro-ecological enterprise Food Farming & Countryside Commission Nov 20)

Example: Community Land Trusts
This approach shows that many different groups can have an impact on increasing local regenerative acres for food and nature, with emphasis on local community links. This is a successful, but necessarily longer-term approach.

Example: Public Interest Head Lease
The Merton Land Policy Group – an informal association of lawyers, surveyors and community landowners, is developing a new kind of lease which prioritises public interest.

This would enable communities and other publicly interested bodies to prevent hoarding or neglect of land by empowering them to obtain an interest in the land for its better use. Sitting between the freehold or existing long leasehold interest, and a long lease of the land for the existing user, it would allow the landowner to retain all the economic interest in the land until the Public Interest Lease holder can deliver its better use. Upon this, the landowner would receive 50% of any surplus generated from its sustainable development.

See also Shared Assets CIC for different models of shared land use and the wide range of related organisations
Shared Assets - What We ThinkShared Assets

Example: Biodynamic Land Trust
Purchases land for conversion to regenerative and biodynamic agriculture. The Trust is a charitable community benefit society working to secure land in trust, protect and develop biodynamic community connected farms and provide further opportunities for sustainable

agriculture and new entrant farmers & growers. The Trust now has six farms, is expanding and operates the **Seed Cooperative** which focuses on open pollinated seed with the aim of building resilience within the food system in anticipation of major disruptions resulting from environmental degradation. The pandemic showed how necessary this is.

❖ **Soil and plant health**

Successful examples of sustainable food strategies often focus firstly on producing healthy food via increasing soil and plant health.

Example: One Plate, registered charity
One Plate partners with foodies, cafes and restaurants - which grow their own food-across Australia to fund sustainable food projects in developing countries. By leveraging the power of joy through food, we can provide hope, love and support for children in the greatest need through food security. We each have the power to make an impact through our everyday actions one plate at a time.

Example: Soul Farm CSA , nr. Falmouth
Organic, no-dig smallholding focussed on regenerative vegetable growing a long neglected walled garden. Producing veg boxes now in demand around the local area.

"Healthy food grown using organic principles: food grown using organic principles that hasn't had to travel far is packed full of nutrients" **CSA**

4.2.4 Strategy: fair share

Example: Chaos Garden
Farming for the locality: uses a cover crop, planted in between cash crops. While a

standard cover crop may contain alfalfa, ryegrass, or sorghum …a chaos seed mixture might include peas, squash, radish, okra, melons, sweet corn, and other edible plants i.e. groceries.

"I just load my drill with 50 plus species, and don't ever go back until it is time to harvest. Community members can pick their own produce. "After the people get everything, they want, you turn out cattle onto the field." "It is not a regenerative mindset if I'm not directly providing food for other people. There is something very gratifying for us as farmers to remake that connection: to know that you are directly nourishing another" **Farmer**

4.2.4   Strategy: working structures

❖   **New networks**

Example: University colleges combined food buying group with sustainability
Cambridge Colleges have networked with Oxford and Durham University Colleges to form a buying group of 33 colleges and now employ Compass to manage their food and drink contracts and deal with the tender processes. In this way they have a greater say over what they buy. The group is working towards higher sustainability standards eg stopped buying the main five threatened fish, and reduced meat. They have installed water fountains, reduced plastic, increased seasonality, have UK only weeks, deal with a local food hub for local veg and are working on increasing local suppliers.

❖   **Local contracting**

 Good examples of local contracting can have a large impact on local farmers and growers as well as rapidly increasing local economic activity and increasing the quality of the food supplied by local contractors.

Example: Somerset Larder Catering company Somerset Larder is partnering with Shop Somerset to promote local businesses and support local communities. Somerset Larder won the contract to supply Hinckley Point C's food outlets in 2016, focussing on supplying freshly made, locally sourced food. Somerset Larder now has a new restaurant at Musgrove Park Hospital, for staff and visitor foods.

Shop Somerset, the first interactive map and listing facility of its kind for the county, is extending its service to offer a go to resource for all independent businesses based in Somerset, providing communities and a showcase for traders, businesses, their products and services, allowing them to connect with consumers in their locality.

❖ Local Authority actions

Local authorities have a number of measures available to them to encourage the new generation of farmers and new forms of sustainable agriculture including:

- Providing **access to (start-up) capital and rural development grants** to smallholders, agro-ecological farmers and new entrants. These can flow from educational and training centres, cooperative banks, subsidy regimes, municipal budgets or other forms of sponsorship and stimulus.

- Initiating processes of **participatory land mapping**, such as in the Basque Country in Spain, to identify current land use and distribution patterns to inform plans for land ordinances, zoning, and allocation. These can include criteria for sustainable land use and priority access for particular types of farmers and farming systems

- Setting up **land trusts and public land banks** that seek to take land out of the market and give it over for sustainable agricultural use on a long-term basis.

- Working with **local food policy councils** to strengthen territorial markets for small, organic and agro-ecological farmers. These can include designated spaces for farmers markets in town centres, public procurement and distribution systems, and a variety of supports for market gardening, CSAs, food education etc. which can be articulated in local food strategies.

Successful Food Policy Councils are noted below and include Bristol – see above

❖ Food Partnerships

Example: Brighton and Hove Food Partnership This is a successful Partnership of over 50 local organisations, with a vision of a city where everyone has the opportunity to eat healthy food from sustainable sources.
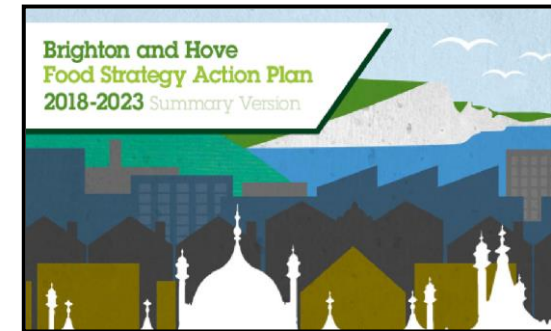
The big issues for the revamp of the original Strategy include diet-related ill health, child poverty & obesity, food waste, lack of food security –even though the council owns land, which could be used for food production.

Example: Highland Good Food Partnership The Highland Good Food Partnership is developing local protected cropping to dramatically reduce the food miles of Mediterranean vegetables.

"on some measures … soil grown vegetables have 10x the nutritional value of those grown hydroponically"

❖ **Food Co-operative/supermarket**

Example: Unicorn Grocery A supermarket-sized workers' cooperative providing affordable, fresh produce and wholefoods with an emphasis on organic, fair-trade and locally sourced goods.

3.SECTION 4.3   Conclusions

The most successful strategies we found in this survey of others progress to a local good food region are noted below in order of likely action:-

1   Create a wide, representative partnership which is well resourced and supported by the main bodies in the local area, including the Council, educational establishments and local NHS bodies.

2   Spend time developing a Strategy which involves significant consultation and building enthusiasm locally and increases

local expertise and "ownership". This needs to address the main local issues of concern and directly address these in the Strategy development.

3   Develop many local "islands of coherence" where sustainable food activities can flourish and spread across the region. These can range from small regenerative farms/smallholdings supplying a local village shop to a network of local food production units using a small processing unit: to a new approach to providing meals on wheels.

4   Survey local land availability and the potential for regenerative growing options

5   Investigate in detail the actions needed to eliminate food poverty and health inequalities

6   Encourage project champions The wide range of successful projects is clearly the result of much hard work and enterprise by small groups of committed individuals. Without such people locally, nothing will happen.

7 Consider several legal structures which can help work towards increasing local food sustainability. Each main project/action may need its structure assessing as part of the action plan development.

Above all it is clear that a wide range of ideas can succeed in any region. The key is to encourage many options. Aim to assist and bring together pilot and developing projects to generate more enthusiasm and critical mass to enable high success rates.

There are many paths to a meadow

Let a thousand flowers bloom…

SECTION 5 Our call to action

1.SECTION 5.1 Foundations of community action

The six foundations of community action for building resilience are:-

1. People The power to envision the future of the community and build its resilience resides with community members.

2. Systems thinking: essential for understanding the complex, interrelated crises now unfolding and what they mean for our similarly complex communities.

3. Adaptability A community that adapts to change is resilient. But because communities and the challenges we face are dynamic, adaptation is an ongoing process.

4. Transformability Some challenges are so big that it's not possible for the community to simply adapt; fundamental, transformative changes may be necessary.

5. Sustainability Community resilience is not sustainable if it serves only us, and only now; it needs to work for other communities, future generations, and the ecosystems on which we all depend.

6. Courage As individuals and as a community, we need courage to confront challenging issues and take responsibility for our collective future.

These Foundations have been developed and observed over some years by the Post Carbon Institute.

2.SECTION 5.2   Local foundations

We have begun the process, through the survey and local conversations, of assessing how to bring our understanding into action.

The notes below start that process with an indication of local actions under the Foundations headings outlined above.

5.2.1 People: Cornwall Sustainable Food Partnership

Through our work on this Strategy and wider knowledge of food in Cornwall we have developed an initial understanding of who it is important to include in the food strategy development and action.

This is a very preliminary list, in no particular order, of organisations and individuals keen to be part of the process

- ❖ **Producers, processors, sales**
  - ♦ Farmers & Growers
  - ♦ Fishers
  - ♦ CSA Network
  - ♦ Regenerative Food and Farming
  - ♦ Food processors
  - ♦ Farmers' markets, shops

- ❖ **Supporting organisations**
  - ♦ Cornwall Council
  - ♦ National Farmers' Union
  - ♦ Cornwall Fish Producers Organisation
  - ♦ Agricultural & environmental advisors
  - ♦ Cornwall Wildlife Trust

- ♦ Exeter University
- ♦ Town and Parish Councils
- ♦ Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
- ♦ Cornwall Good Seafood Guide

❖ **Commercial catering**
- ♦ Cornwall Academy Schools
- ♦ Cornwall Council Schools
- ♦ Cornwall College
- ♦ University of Exeter
- ♦ NHS Treliske, Cottage Hospitals
- ♦ Restaurants using local supplies
- ♦ Hospitality businesses

❖ **Health and people focus**
- ♦ LEAF- Healthy Cornwall
- ♦ Cornish Gleaning Network
- ♦ Feeding Britain
- ♦ Food Banks, community kitchens
- ♦ Social Services
- ♦ Volunteer groups
- ♦ Cornwall Primary Healthcare

There are a large number of individuals and organisations we need to ensure are involved in the Food Strategy process. We also have to be able to progress this

urgent task and hence are investigating methods of keeping in touch and developing the vision whilst not requiring too much of any one person or group. This could be via topic groups, but also ensuring that whole systems thinking is at the heart of the process.

5.2.2 Cornwall food system

We have begun to understand some of the complexities of our local food system and how it impacts on the various parts of our wider Cornwall system. This includes an appreciation of the climate impacts of the very large food miles much of our food travels to reach us, and how many people are having to resort to food banks, even in a system focussed on cheap food. We also have begun to appreciate how the present food system produces food too expensive for some and too cheap for local producers to compete.

Our approach to the journey towards sustainability includes meeting our aims of people care, earth care and fair share. These aims demand systems thinking to

enable wider horizons and increased resilience.

Systems diagrams are helpful in understanding some of the complications and inter-relationships in our food system. The diagram below is one example, which can help us to develop our own food system diagram.

One early action is to develop a diagram(s) of the local food system which will enable us to work effectively on all aspects of the local system. A key element in developing this systems diagram/approach is to understand the drivers of the present system and how to change them towards the type of food system we all want to be part of.

Some existing drivers have been identified by the survey, alongside the drivers for the new system.

Example food system diagram
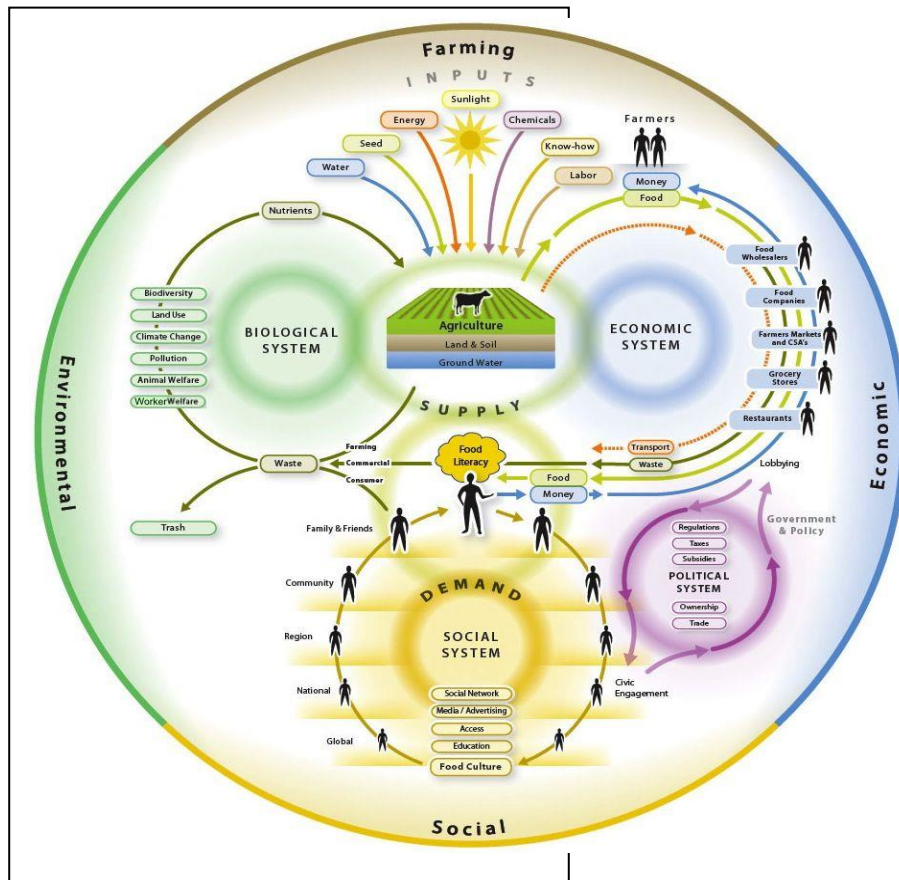
*From Food and Cornwall, Cornwall Council Public
Health Systems Leadership Project 2014*

5.2.3 Adaptability

This applies as much if not more to local organisations and institutions as it does to local people and communities. Our aims include showing our anchor institutions locally how much there is to gain from adapting to the needs of the present and future and the major losses from neglecting to act.

5.2.4 Transformability

We recognise that the journey to a sustainable food system for Cornwall is one of transformation. It requires transforming attitudes and understanding of the issues for people, the planet and for business and government. We also have to transform our food production, processing and marketing in many ways.

"Cornwall's agriculture is heavily dependent on livestock farming. Any attempts to make a case for less meat need to be balanced with a strategy for farming diversification". **Farmer**

This rebalancing needs to include a change in attitude towards the need for food banks and their users, & the "residues" being given to those not yet able to otherwise obtain good food.

"I have been homeless and ate junk for ages: what helped me out of that was people showing caring, not looking down at me" **Resident**

Our aim with the development of the Sustainable Food Strategy is to bring people together to explore, develop and implement methods and processes across Cornwall and across all sectors to create that necessary transformation.

5.2.5 Sustainability

The whole ethos of the work so far has been on increasing sustainability in the local food system. This includes for all people producing food, for those who have food and health problems for the local environment and for local business sustainability.

"A nation that destroys its soil destroys itself" **Franklin Roosevelt**

5.2.6 Courage - to do something different: together!

The survey, workshops and separate conversations clearly show the appetite for change as well as indicating a readiness to change - so long as they go together. Together is the key to having courage to change our local food system. The work so far has shown that there are a large number of people in Cornwall willing to put energy into this required system change.

3.SECTION 5.3   Key pointers

The Partnership will be developing the Cornwall Sustainable Food Strategy. Therefore, this section gives an outline of some key pointers gleaned from the intensive survey and discussions so far. The need to develop a sustainable food system for our local area shows the way to the three-pronged approach outlined in earlier sections of this report, and we believe this will provide an appropriate basis for the Strategy development.

1 **people care**
    health, nutrition
    education and skills
    family and community
    enough   (food poverty, access)

2 **earth care**
    planning and land use
    soil health
    plant health
    go local to help the planet

3 **fair share**
    fair approaches to change
    fair local jobs and business

increasing local employment
integrated thinking & action by
public, private & social sectors

In our search for examples of success elsewhere, we found that some strategies aim to address all these approaches, and that these tend to be the outstanding successful strategies.

4.SECTION 5.4   *Implementing the new*

Creating change is difficult, even when the existing situation is obviously harmful to many people and our precious local environment. There are many organisations which are comfortable with the present situation and hence they find it difficult to act towards a new approach –even when the benefits to all are well evidenced.
We have shown in our research through the over 210 responses to the questionnaires and the significant workshop and individual conversations, both structured and free flowing, that there is a hunger for change. We see

nearly all respondents from all parts of our local food system recognising that the present situation has many flaws. There is a high percentage agreement on what is meant by sustainability and major interest in being part of the change.

Develop the Strategy in order of these steps

Whilst this is presented as a linear process it is likely to be an iterative process with several approaches going on at the same time. The aim is to enable each topic area to progress to sustainability at their own fastest pace, whilst keeping in touch with changes in other parts of the local food system.

1 Convene the Partnership
Create a wide ranging multi-stakeholder group of people who represent diverse parts of the system under consideration.

2   Map the system together and get a
shared understanding of it as a whole to create a context for shared actions.

3   Determine values by creating scenarios of the future and exploring developmental trajectories for how the system might change based on different assumptions and interventions. Agree the measures of success.

4   Agree a shared agenda around what the group most wants to see happen, and ensure an appropriate support system is put in place.

These steps and their relationships have been taken from *Reflections on the pedagogy of bioregional regeneration* Joe Brewer, Resilience May 2019

5   Outline the benefits of increasing sustainability such as:-
♦   *Increased local economic activity* [28]

♦   *Increased local secure employment*

♦   *Increased local food supplies*

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[28]   *Plug the Leaks, local food purchase increases local economic activity by double that of supermarket spending ... see appendix notes for details*

- *Decreased local ill health*

- *Decreased local GP visits & hospital admissions*

- *Increased local soil health/biodiversity*

- *Increased community action/resilience*

- *Increased local good food awareness and demand*

These benefits could be some of the agreed measures of success in **step 3** above

The present food bill for Cornwall is around £980 million a year of which possibly 12% or £117 million is spent on local food. Major local benefits would therefore accrue from a 25% local food supply, with an extra £127 million worth of business activity in the food sector.
See appendix for details of the calculations

6   Major issues for inclusion
Both our team and many of our respondents feel passionate about transforming our food system towards sustainability. Whilst it is recognised that at this stage the Strategy is still to be developed we feel that some issues must be included.
These include:-

- **Action on attitude change -** away from acceptance and apathy and towards education, a spirit of inquiry, respect for food and its producers, sustainability and our planet
- **Information on local food, nutrition and health** - a strong and enduring communications and education programme
- **Action to increase community resilience** at the local level
- **Action to reduce the need for food banks**
- **Local skills development** including food production, processing, permaculture and regenerative agriculture skills, food preparation, cooking and nutrition

- **Increased local food processing facilities** for a wider range of local produce such as grains, malting, local abattoirs, food preservation, etc.
- **Engage local leaders** and project champions, including the young

7   Remain in inquiry
The local food system, as with any food system is complex and hence difficult and "unruly".   It is therefore vital for those involved to manage complexity by *"Remaining in Inquiry"*.
The cognitive psychologist Dietrich Dörner dedicated his life to studying how people make catastrophic errors when trying to manage complex systems. What he learned after many different modelling experiments was that one observable behaviour explained nearly all of the system-collapsing mistakes. [29] It was when a person stopped asking questions,

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29 The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations Dietrich Dörner, Addison-Wesley Pub., 1997

that they were about to do something catastrophically wrong.

We aim to encourage the question *Why?* in discussions and decision processes to help to "Remain in Inquiry"

8   Aim towards food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is based on reclaiming our food systems. It moves ownership from a global industrial model to a community-based model, back into the hands of the eaters, making the right to food inherent in the system's function. The essential difference between food security and food sovereignty is this ability to define our own food systems, putting the people's needs ahead of the markets'[30].

With food sovereignty in mind, the system design can develop towards sustainability.

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[30] *Groundswell: a guide to building food security in rural communities. 2013*

9   Draw on local enthusiasm and energy for the transformation

An early task of the Partnership is to harness the abundant energy and enthusiasm shown by nearly all of our contributors, to bring people together and together move with confidence to what we all know is the right set of choices for local people, the environment and fair business health. Project champions are vital to the process.
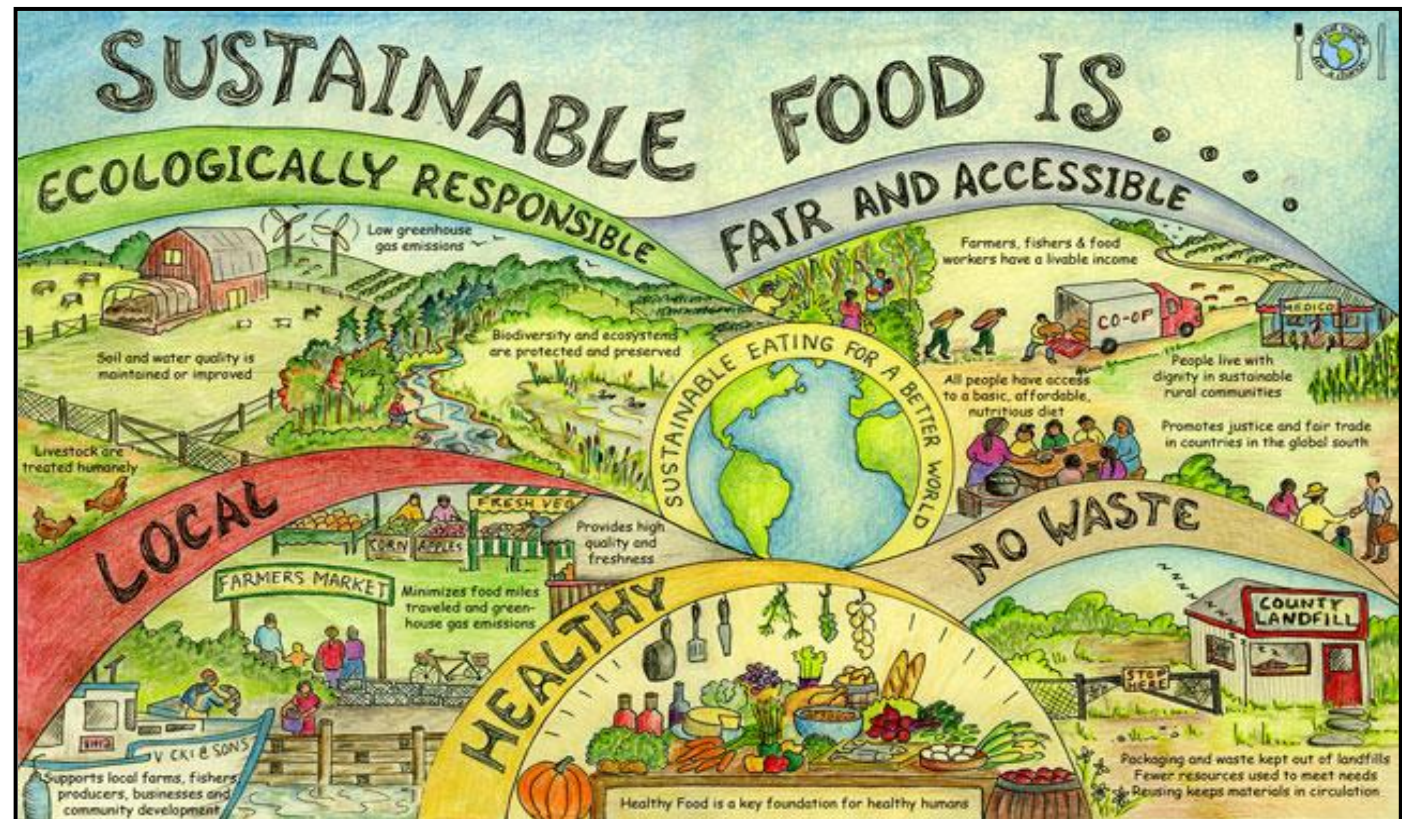
Appendix 1 *Estimate of present spend and potential for local food supplies in Cornwall*

These figures have been compiled from Office of National Statistics figures including

- *Weekly purchases of food & drink pence/person/week for a range of food and drink items – and by weight/volume for the SouthWest*
- *UK Retail sales by type of establishment and food/non food items*
- *ONS population of Cornwall 2018 mid-year estimate.*

The UK spend on food excluding supermarket expenditure is estimated to be around 12% of total spend. This suggests the present food and drink spend outside supermarkets, for home consumption is around £117 million in Cornwall.

Type of purchase	2018/19	£m
Dairy	9%	92
Meat & meat products	20%	197
Fish & fish products	5%	46
Eggs	1%	9
Fats	2%	18
Sugar, cakes, chocolate	9%	84
Potatoes	4%	37
Vegetables - excl potatoes	9%	84
Fruit	8%	78
Cereals - all kinds including bread	12%	115
Beverages & soft drinks	6%	56
Alcohol	11%	109
other - water, baby food, pickles, sauces	5%	51
	100%	**978**

Annual spend on food for home consumption in Cornwall 2018-2019

Table 1.1

An increase to around say 25% of local food supplies from local sources would increase the local food production and processing system by around £127.3 million p.a.

The breakdown of the table on the previous page indicates the areas in which local suppliers have a track record in supplying quality product, and hence potentially where efforts will bring the most success. This includes local dairy, meat, fish, eggs, potatoes, vegetables and some fruits.

One potential market which is presently met at scale by supermarkets is in processed meats including sausages, burgers and meat- laden ready-meals which total 16% of local food and drink purchasing. To meet this market will require increased processing capacity in Cornwall.

Local multiplier effect

New Economics Foundation pioneered understanding of the impact on local economies of spending on locally sourced supplies.   Their report The Money Trail, 2002 118 pp, details how to work out the local multiplier effect LM3. This is the increased impact that local spend on local supplies has on the local economy, unlike the spend on, for example, supermarket foods.

One example they worked through was with Cusgarne Organic Farmshop, near Truro. The results of this calculation showed that their local purchases had an impact of 2. This means that for every £10 they earn, £20 is generated for Cornwall.

If this figure is applied to an increase to 25% of Cornwall food supplies being sourced locally there would be a **local economic multiplier impact of over £250 million for Cornwall.**

Appendix 2: Notes on food waste in Cornwall

Food waste occurs at each stage of the food production, processing and preparing process. There are significant unknowns about the present situation, but our survey also indicated that food waste is a big issue for over half our respondents.

Food waste is a complex set of issues, which is presented in outline only in this short appendix. Worldwide it is often estimated that half of all food production is lost at the numerous stages in its journey to consumption.   As food waste arises at several different steps in the food system it has to be tackled at these stages.

1. Domestic Food Waste

Whilst this is the last stage of food waste production, it is also the least difficult to determine the scale of its arisings, potential methods of reducing such

arisings, and deployable technology to gain some environmental value from it.

Cornwall Council is responsible for household waste collection and disposal. In line with national policy, they are due

to enable the new collection contract holders to collect food waste separately from general black bag waste. Cornwall is well behind most Councils throughout the country in achieving this step in waste management, with around 75% of Councils already undertaking this separate collection process.

It was not possible to obtain up-to-date information on the Council's plans for the new waste collection contract and the rollout of separate food waste collections, at the time of writing. Once the new system is operating this is expected to raise Cornwall's present low recycling rate of about 35% to 50% or more (as well as reducing total waste arising). Based on sampling, Cornwall Council estimates food waste to comprise 35% of household black bag rubbish currently.

Rough calculation of household food waste (tonnes pa)

Food waste	Assumptions	Tonnes p.a.
Household food waste	at 35% of total household waste	65,947
Expected capture under new collection contract Sep? 2021	approx capture rate 27% to separate treatment	17,806
Reduction in arisings –once separate collection starts	from increased awareness of total food being thrown away in each household. WRAP estimate	4,000
Awareness campaigns reduce by	assumption that CC will instigate large food waste awareness campaigns- though they have not so far.	5% reduction p.a.
Food waste arisings left soon	still destined for the incinerator	13,806
Reduction in food waste to incinerator	over time should reach approximately	52,000

Table 1.2

Separate food waste collection by the Council is expected to yield an approx reduction of 52,000 tonnes p.a. in food waste still going to the incinerator or to anaerobic digestion or In Vessel Composting. These latter both yield useful soil conditioner, provided the food waste is not contaminated.

2. Post farm-gate food waste

Nationally, Defra estimate that around one quarter of all food is wasted, with around 60% of that being avoidable waste. For the UK in 2015 this food waste had a value of £17bn and caused about 20 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

The government statistical estimate is the following breakdown of food waste nationally, with an indication of what that suggests for Cornwall:-

Approximate totals of post-farmgate food waste in Cornwall

Food waste fraction	% by weight	Approx. tonnes p.a.
Household	70%	66,000
Manufacturing	17%	16,000
Hospitality & food service	9%	9,000
Retail	2%	2,000
Totals	**98%**	**93,000**

Table 2.1

While based on national estimates, these figures give an indication of the scale of the issue and of the opportunity.

Defra estimate that in addition to food becoming waste there is another 7% food surplus from manufacturing which mainly goes to make animal feed and a small amount to charities. A potential figure for Cornwall could be around 6,500 tonnes pa of surplus from our food and drink manufacturers. Given the relatively high food and drink production levels in Cornwall this is likely to be an underestimate.

3. Commercial Food Waste Treatment

Commercial food waste is generally more controlled than household food waste as the businesses are aware both of the losses from food waste and the collection and disposal costs which can be high.

However the volumes are less well known. Commercial food waste arises in food processing, production and when hospitality customers leave food.

At present there are six commercial Anaerobic Digestion plants in Cornwall treating these wastes, with estimated throughputs in Table 2.2.

Some treatment of commercial food waste

Waste Type	note	Approx. tonnes p.a.
Processor wastes	e.g. beer, bakery	27,000
Vegetable	approx	7,000
Animal slurries	approx	28,000
Total		**62,000**

Table 2.2

4. On-farm food wastes

Farm food wastes are difficult to estimate as most will not be weighed and would often be left to rot in the fields or be ploughed under. The large brassica growers have estimated that they have to leave around 150kg of produce per acre p.a. in the field.

There are several reasons for this waste which include the tight supermarket contracts which require growers to aim for well over the contracted volumes to avoid penalty clauses for under production.

Growers also lose out when the weather is unreliable or plant growth/sizing is variable and they cannot generally afford to send pickers through each field more than once. Cornwall's nascent Gleaning Network is attempting to help address this.

Horticulture and direct food crops occupy up to 13,000 ha in Cornwall. If all growers lost produce at the brassica rate this would amount to some 4,500 tonnes pa. This is not including cereals losses in the field.

Some rejected vegetables are sent to anaerobic digestion locally, see note above, but AD plant operators prefer to take regular supplies of the same materials to similar specifications to feed the bacteria.

This waste could be reduced by one or more of several methods including:-

- *More extensive local gleaning*
- *Local higher value processing to avoid the need for "perfect" plant supplies – e.g. pickles, cooked/prepared meals, sauces*
- *Supplies to social eating groups, food banks and food rescue organisations such as The Hive Cornwall and Fareshare*

It has to be recognised that the present food growing system is a major contributor to this waste arising in such large amounts. As it is dispersed around Cornwall, some imaginative methods of reducing these arisings are needed to have an impact.

5. Conclusion

*In total it is therefore estimated that food waste/surplus in Cornwall amounts to potentially **100,000 tonnes p.a.***

Tevi's recent Food Waste Scoping Study offers pointers to the more thorough research required to inform the development of effective strategies for reducing food waste arisings in Cornwall.