



**A community-led study on the viability and feasibility of developing a
Community Food Network for Glasgow
Glasgow Food Policy Partnership**

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Executive Summary

The community food sector in Glasgow is a thriving, vibrant and diverse array of food growing, cooking, food coops, cafes and social meals. Most groups and organisations are small, independent and in local areas, working with local communities.

This project has looked into the feasibility of establishing a Community Food Network in Glasgow, similar to those found in Lanarkshire and Edinburgh that can support community food projects in different ways. The request to carry out this work was initially made by the Scottish Government, however it has been led by community food workers and activists and supported by the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership.

The project was launched at a stakeholder day in June which showed general support for the development of a Glasgow Community Food Network. More detailed responses were then collected over the summer months through surveys and interviews with organisations in Glasgow. The survey was based on the potential functions of a Community Food Network: bulk buying, short supply chains, training and skills development, food waste and food poverty. Organisations consulted represented a broad mix of project types, and included key and anchor organisations with established track records of delivery in the city in addition to smaller lesser known projects run by volunteers.

Recommendations

This study has found that there is broad support for a Community Food Network in Glasgow, and that it should carry out the following functions:

- Facilitate bulk buying of fruit and vegetables for small food coops, community meals etc... to reduce costs and overcome logistical issues
- Identify, purchase and facilitate the distribution of locally grown produce
- Promote and support more local growing in Glasgow
- Provide advice and support around training issues for local community food organisations
- Create a knowledge hub on a range of community food related issues
- Support grassroots 'food poverty' projects, specifically alternatives to food banks such as social eating, food coops etc...

Background

This report is the accumulation of a 2 month consultation and research period exploring the feasibility and viability of developing a Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN). The primary focus for such a network would be to support community food projects working across Glasgow to improve health and reduce health inequalities.

The initial call for this work came from the Public Health Division of the Scottish Government, who had indicated in late 2015 that they would be keen to support the development of a network that functioned along similar lines to those already developed in Lanarkshire, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. This may include for example the provision of bulk buying to support 'fruit barras' (food coops), or training and skills development.

Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP) was asked to oversee this study. The GFPP is a collaborative group of people drawn from voluntary, public and private sector organisations who believe that a fairer, healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system would make Glasgow an even better city to live in.

To start this consultation process, on June 3rd GFPP held an initial Community Food Network event to explore amongst those working in and with community food projects in Glasgow support for the development of a community food network, and to consider what sort of community food network would be useful and feasible. The event had 3 objectives:

1. To assess level of support for the development of a Glasgow Community Food Network in principle.
2. To explore what a Glasgow Community Food Network might look like in terms of useful functions
3. To recruit a small working group to consider the issues and develop the detail of the proposal to be recommended to Scottish Government

The event was well attended by over 40 people working across the community food sector, and discussions were themed around some of the potential functions of the GCFN which have been subsequently used as the topics for the rest of this research. These themes also mirror the aims and objectives of the GFPP. In addition there was overall support to explore in more detail the feasibility of developing a network, giving the GFPP the mandate for this second phase of consultation. A separate report for this event is available.

It has been important for this piece of work to be 'grassroots up' rather than 'top down' – on the assumption that those working in the community food sector in Glasgow know what it best for the sector, and are in the best position to talk to their colleagues in other organisations. This work has been led by 7 individuals already active and working in the community food sector in Glasgow drawn from a range of disciplines including food production, food poverty, nutrition and food waste. All have experience of participatory and community consultation.

Methodology

The purpose of this study has been to build up a picture and understand better how food in the community sector is currently produced, distributed, consumed and surplus managed, as well as how issues such as food poverty are currently addressed by different groups and organisations. Following this, the aim was to explore how a community food network could potentially help and add to the work of community food organisations, establishing where the gaps are – if any exist. Using notes taken at the themed discussions on June 3rd, members of the working group formulated an in depth and comprehensive survey that would provide additional information around the themes and potential functions of a GCFN. These themes are:

- Bulk Buying – exploring the possible need for bulk buying of fruit and vegetables that can be redistributed to local food coops, community cafes, pop-ups etc. making produce available at low cost.
- Short Supply Chains – looking into how best to tap into locally produced food, either as a surplus from community gardens or by engaging better with local smallholders, farmers etc.
- Training and Skills Development – finding out where current gaps in organisation's training exists, and if a GCFN could potentially meet those needs.
- Managing Surplus Food/Food Waste – asking about current work in relation to food waste and distribution, and exploring where a network could support this work.
- Food Poverty – establishing if there is a need for a network to support work around food poverty, and how this would fit with current work already happening in the city.

The working group then drew up a list of community and other food related organisations whose work crosses over with the above themes. Many organisations were chosen purposefully, for example a community gardening organisation already growing food to sell locally, or a community centre hosting a food coop or lunch club. Others were chosen for their role as key or anchor organisations within the sector, or for their known current practices.

Broadly speaking, the organisations fitted into the following categories – although some crossed over since they carry out multiple functions:

Community and small retailers	Community cafes and pop-ups
Community growing groups	Local food producers
Soup kitchens and food banks	Lunch clubs

Members of the working group then selected a number of group and organisations from the main contact list. Face to face interviews were preferred since this allows for a better more in depth conversation, alternatively a telephone interview could be arranged. If neither of these were

possible, group members sent a link for the survey via email. The link for the survey was also forwarded around various networks, for example via the Glasgow Local Food Network and local Health Improvement Teams (NHS CHPs), Healthy Living Award cafes and many more.

In total, this research has engaged with 44 groups and organisations involved in community food activity. Summer holidays of both respondents and researchers alike played a role in slowing down the process, in addition to summer being one of the busiest times for community food projects. However, the working group managed to engage with a good range of diverse organisations, giving a snapshot of both the current situation in Glasgow and a good overview of the needs and aspirations of these organisations.

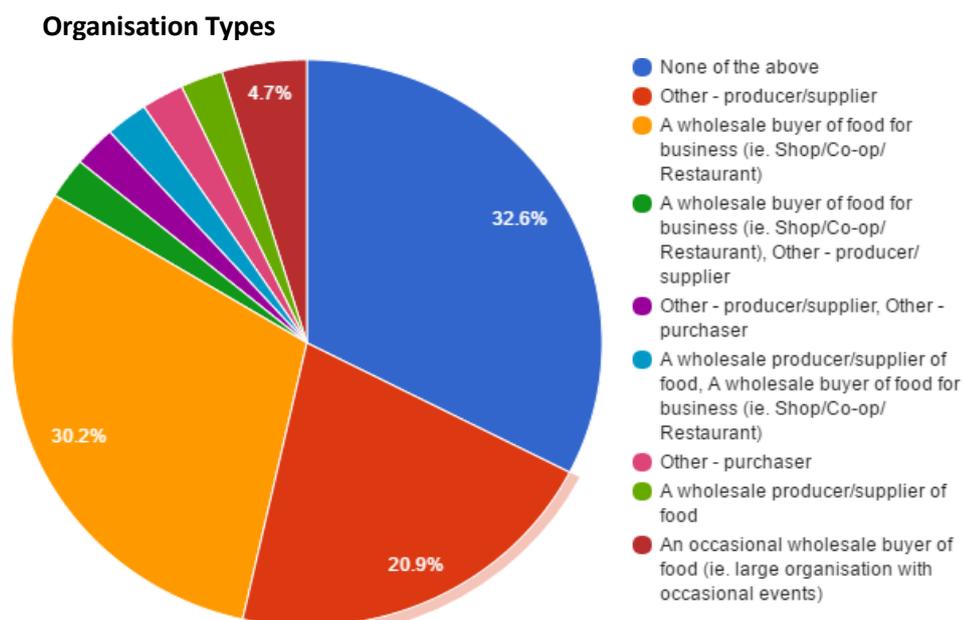
Results from interviews and surveys were recorded and shared between members of the working group. Below is a summary of the key findings of that work, noting specifically what is already working well, where the needs appear to be, any overall consensus on particular themes, common threads and differences of opinion.

Results

The following sections are a reflection of both qualitative and quantitative information obtained during the interviews and via the online survey. Each section highlights key themes and threads, areas of consensus and disagreement.

1. Bulk Buying

The Bulk Buying section attempted to understand the needs of those currently buying, selling or using wholesale produce in the Glasgow area, and where opportunities exist for a network to facilitate cooperation between groups to increase access to low cost produce. Further to the GFPP



event, themes around the potential of the network to facilitate sharing of logistics and knowledge were also explored.

1.2 Demographic

Respondents participating in wholesale purchasing/food use included community cafés, restaurants, co-ops, catering companies, and groups diverting food waste from landfill.

1.3 Wholesale Provision

Current Practice

Of the organisations surveyed, current food supply activities included physical shops and/or market stalls, online sales and delivery, and bulk food distribution/sales types included cafés, surplus food distribution centres, and contract caterers.

Desired Practice

A common theme when asked what service their organisation would like to provide was that of increased sales - within the research group, 17 of the 44 organisations expressed a desire to either begin to, or increase their food provision/sales. Proposed activities included veg box provision, market stalls, CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) schemes, delivery services (including a “fruit and veg bus”, online sales, and ‘bricks-and-mortar’ farm shops.

Barriers

Of 25 Organisations choosing to describe the barriers to their proposed bulk provision activities, 52% gave financial barriers, 44% had logistics issues, and 24% noted a lack of knowledge/network. Logistical issues included lack of access to land/space for growing, planning permission, storage, transport for collection and/or delivery, staffing, production, and premises.

Other notable responses included:

-“food education, consumer awareness, misinformation around ‘local’ “

-“cultural barriers”

-“lack of contact from other organisations/ companies. Nobody comes to speak to us about working with them”

- “keeping costs low for ethically sustainably produced produce; lack of knowledge where to source such ingredients”

- “Don’t know how to set it up”

1.4 Local Purchasing

Current Practice

Most respondents reported purchasing local produce every week, however on closer inspection, this had mostly been interpreted as purchasing produce from local outlets, rather than purchasing food that had been produced locally.

Potential Practice

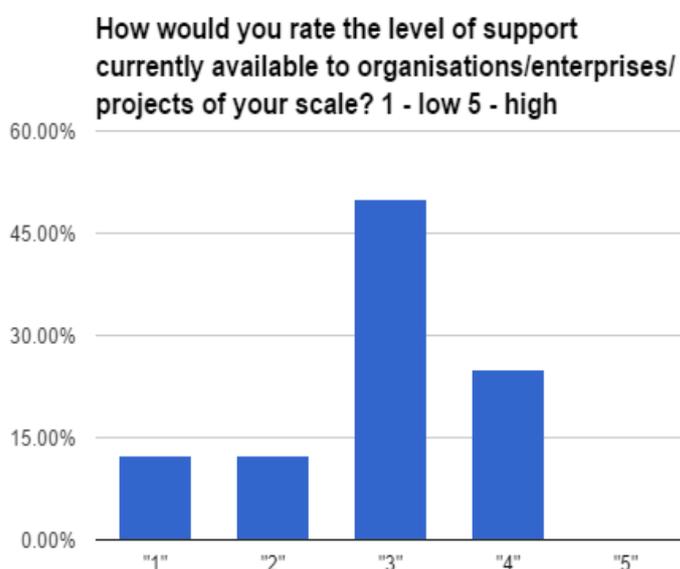
90.9% of respondents would “like to buy from local wholesalers/producers more often”, however, access to produce was the most prohibitive factor; with either inaccessible prices, difficulty sourcing produce, and 13% finding difficulty in transporting produce when delivery is not offered by suppliers.

Opportunities

Despite the noted barriers to sourcing local produce, most respondents ranked sourcing local, organic, or ethical food as high priority, with 88.89% giving it a score of 4 or 5, with cost being noted as the overriding priority in the case of lower rankings.

1.5 Demand for a Network

Current Support



Most organisations ranked their current level of organisational support as low to average, with more favourable scores being linked to support from specific organisations, including *Love Milton*, *Rose Mount Lifelong Learning*, *CEIS*, *Green City Wholefoods*, *Fair Trade*, *CEMVO Scotland*, and *Pillars of Hercules*.

Desired Support

Of the organisations involved, 24 gave their thoughts on how it would be helpful for a Community Food Network to provide support, with regard to bulk buying and wholesale supply.

For both “*help organisations make collective purchases and/or set up collective distribution centres*”, and “*help link local suppliers with those looking to purchase locally*”, 54.17% and 62.5% of respondents gave these the highest level of importance, respectively, and not a single respondent gave the lowest rating of 1 (very unhelpful).

In addition, we asked respondents for ideas for the support a Community Food Network could provide. Responses included having a central building/the importance of a physical space, the need for the network to be accessible to those involved, and to create links between community groups.

1.6 Summary

There is a clear need amongst the majority of respondents for a community food network to explore options for bulk buying of wholesale produce, for distribution to community cafes, fruit and veg barras, food coops etc... In addition, there is an appetite for local produce, but for organisations such as community cafés etc, there is a difficulty in identifying and sourcing local producers, and then in coordinating the delivery of produce. These issues affect charities, CICs and social enterprises in particular due to the nature of funding and income generation, with most barriers to purchase and production being logistical or financial in nature.

Respondents were keen to see a network help facilitate collective purchasing and distribution, and to help link suppliers with organisations making wholesale purchases. Given the under-use of assets (including skills, knowledge and resources) shown, there is scope for a network to bring these groups together and help foster a culture of sharing. Knowledge, in particular would be especially valuable within this segment, as being unable to find suitable local produce accounted for around 40% of barriers to buying local produce.

Recommendations and thoughts on support from respondents echo that of the initial GFPP event - there is a recognised need for an overarching network to create awareness, and link organisation to both facilitate transactions and resource sharing.

2. Supply Chains

One of the objectives of this study has been to establish where community food organisations currently purchase their food for retail, cooking etc..., if community growing projects are growing a surplus and if there is scope and possibility for linking the two together. The study also engaged with local smallholders and food producers, and small cafés/restaurants.

Various different organisations involved in community food projects were invited to answer a series of questions regarding quantities of fruit and vegetables, dairy, meat and other products either purchased or produced each month. These were split between organisations involved in procurement and retail, and those involved in production and supply.

2.1 Organisational Breakdown

Twenty-two out of the forty-four surveyed organisations answered this section. Those involved in procurement and retail included Food Cooperatives, Box/Bag Schemes, Fruit Barras, Other Community Retail or Network and lastly Cafes, Restaurants and Shops. The majority of respondents described themselves as 'Other Community Retail or Network'. A smaller amount were involved in Fruit Barras, Food Coops and Box Schemes.

With regards to producers and suppliers, respondents fell into the following categories: Community Gardens, Allotment Garden, Back Garden, Market Garden, Small Holding or Larger Holding. The majority of respondents answered on behalf of community gardens and allotment gardens, with smaller number representing small holdings and market gardens.

Some organisations carried out multiple functions, for example both growing and selling. Examples of these include North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, Moogety Grub Hub in Govan, Nan's Food Coop in Pollokshields and Locavore. Others restricted themselves to community retail, for example SEAL Community Health Project who run Fruit Barras across the Southside, and community cafes such as Milk, Spoon and the Project Café. A further, smaller group was only involved in community gardening for example Saheliya – a women's project in North Glasgow, and Andulus – a grassroots community based initiative in the west end of Glasgow.

2.2 Procurement and Production Patterns

The next section asked respondents about the quantity of various produce purchased over a month, and for producers how much they grew or how much meat or dairy they produced. The survey aimed to gather quantities in Kg. The results were incredibly mixed, with many unable to give an answer as records had not been kept, had been kept in terms of money spent or the information being difficult to obtain.

Fruit and Vegetables

Those purchasing fruit and vegetables for community retail or cafés gave very varied answers. Seventeen organisations responded to this section, with answers ranging from

“5-10k depending on seasonality of veg weight” to “100,000kg”.

Other responses included:

“Unable to answer (~£170K per annum)”

“We attend the market 8x per month - fill vans each time”

“Nothing, I grow most of it myself”

Production patterns of fruit and vegetable were similarly diverse. Thirteen organisations answered this section, with responses ranging from less than

“<10kgs” to “500kg”

Other responded with:

“First year of growing, no weights recorded”

“Only started in May, but on track to produce around 500kg” and

“Not able to estimate- we have a 100 sq meter garden at the Andulus community centre.”

Meat and Dairy

Responses for meat and dairy products were also quite variable, although out of the sixteen respondents for these sections all but one were able to give a figure. For dairy purchases, the range was from 2kg to 300kg; for meat it was 2kg > 300kg. In the same section for producers there were only 2 responses under 'meat' which were 300kg > 7tonnes.

Producers were additionally asked if they specialised in anything. This was to show the diversity of food items being produced in and around Glasgow, and illustrate some of the gaps and potential for further specialisms. Some interesting results were yielded here, including:

“Bread made from 100% Scottish ingredients.”

“Edible flowers, Herbs, roots & fruit”

“African veg, okra, aubergine, tomatoes, chillies” and

“Quick growing high value vegetables”

In addition, a representative from the Glasgow Food Assembly stated that

“Food Assembly provides a spaces for producers to connect with consumers, so do not produce anything themselves. However, all produce is local and there are various specialisms.”

These responses show the very different scales that different projects are working on, and the need for a more focused study on production and procurement in the city. Building up a bigger picture of community garden production would be highly beneficial in order to see better where the overlaps and crossovers are for community retail.

2.3 Local Food Economy

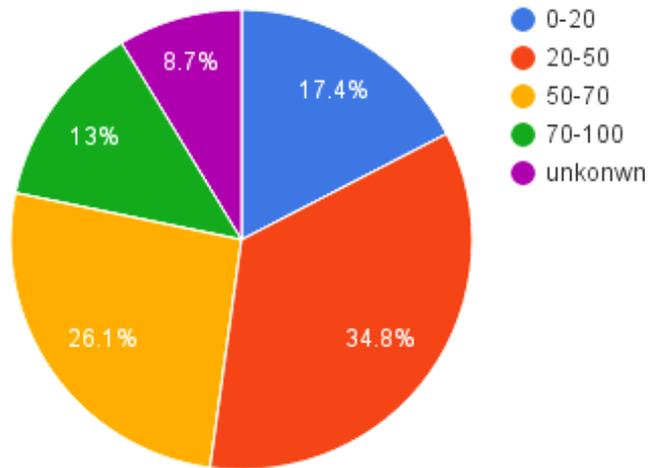
A number of questions were designed to ask survey respondents about the provenance of the produce they bought, or for producers where their produce was sold or distributed.

Those involved in procurement were asked about the provenance of the food they bought, and how important the sourcing of local, organic and ethical food was to their organisations. Of the twenty-three organisations answering the first question, only a small percentage did not know. Most organisations gave the answer 20-50%, followed by 50-70% as the next highest answer.

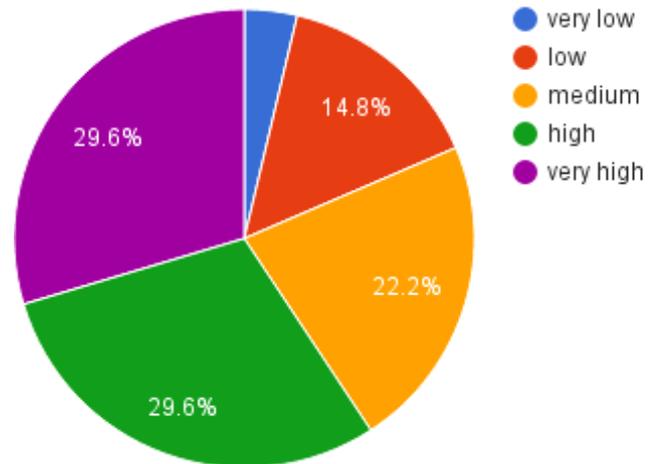
The follow-up question 'How important is the sourcing of local, organic and ethical produce?' showed a very strong leaning towards a preference for food with a local provenance and ideally organically grown.

The two charts below represent the answers to these questions. This shows a disparity between the amount of locally grown produce being purchased, and the need or desire for it.

How much produce you buy in is locally produced?



How important is the sourcing of local, organic and ethical produce?



We can see from the charts that the procurement of local produce is mid to low, while the importance of it is mid to high.

Respondents were invited to elaborate on their answers if they chose to. Some of the comments included:

“Local and organic produce is absolutely fundamental.”

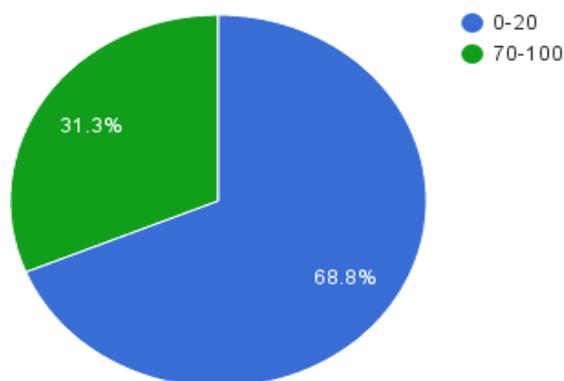
“Fish is 80% local and veg up to 50% local depending on the season. “

“The network should look at bulk buying from farms and community gardens and help to coordinate city wide logistics.”

“High priority but prohibited by cost” and

“Not so much, price is the biggest indicative of our purchasing”

How much of what you produce is sold locally?



Similar questions were asked of community growing projects and local food producers. The survey first sought to establish how much local produce was sold locally. There were sixteen responses to this question which represented opposite ends of the spectrum as shown in this chart.

The survey then asked two follow-up questions – ‘Would you like to find a more

local market for your produce?’ and ‘What stops you from selling locally?’

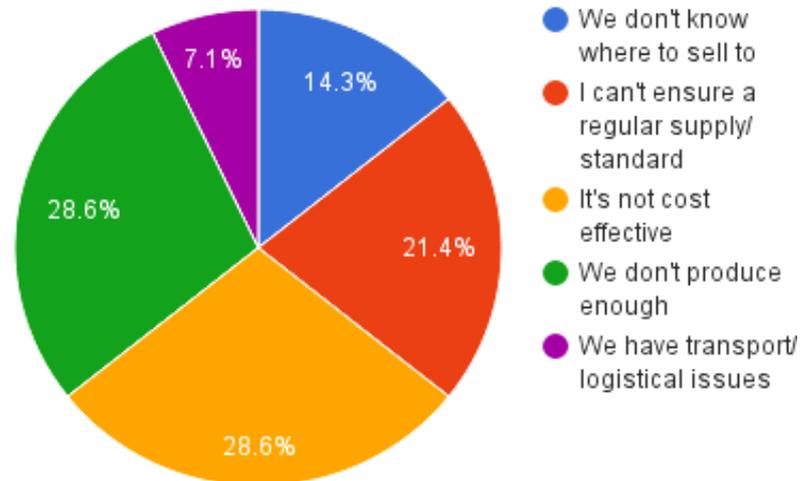
Overwhelmingly the responses to the former were a resounding yes, projects and organisations would like to find a more local market for their produce. Some of the more significant comments

included:

“not sure we want to market it, would possibly prefer to have more land to grow more and then share that out with those who work the land or barter it for other skills” and *“Yes, we'd like to set up supply chains and partnerships”*

When asked what stopped organisations from selling locally, respondents were presented with a range of options. The main barriers represented here were around cost effectiveness and a shortage in production. Most produce grown in community gardens and growing spaces is shared amongst gardeners. These responses indicate that most projects involved in this study did not think growing food to sell was a worthwhile activity, or had limited capacity to grow food specifically to sell. Some suggestions were made around establishing bartering networks between allotments/community gardens and small cafes/restaurants, and that a CFN could have a role to play in facilitating this.

What stops you from selling locally?



2.4 Support and Benefits to Organisations

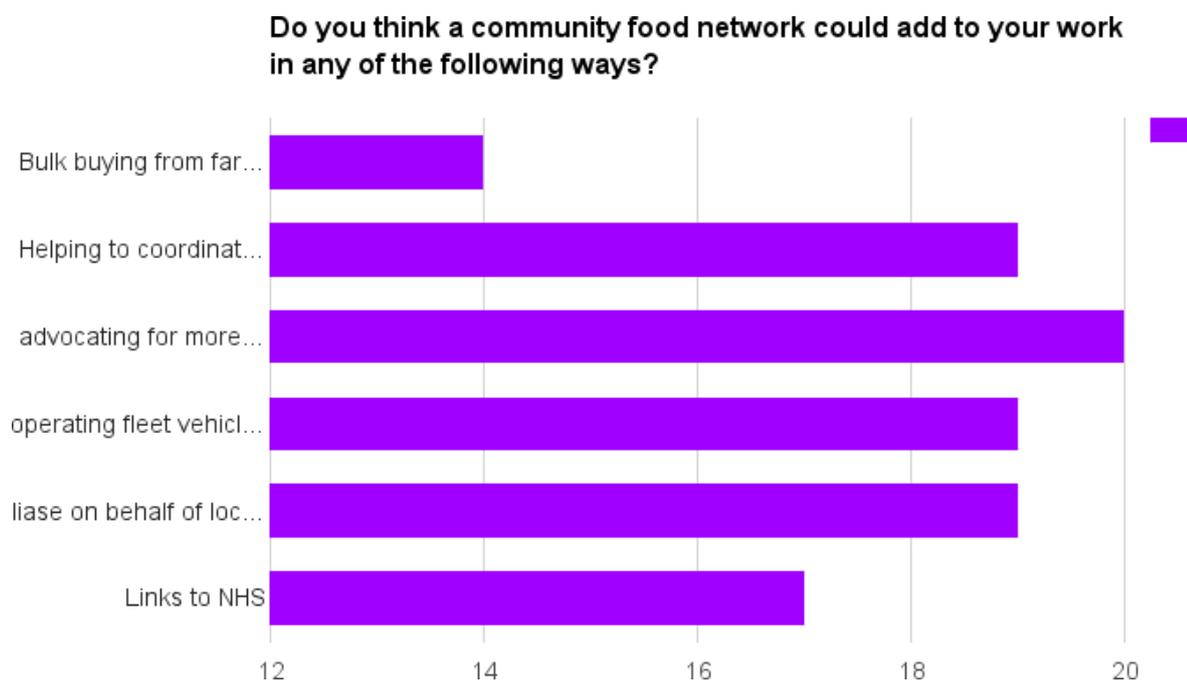
The final set of questions in this section asked what benefits and added value a community food network could bring to an organisation's work in relation to supply chains. Options given in the survey were based on responses and ideas at the launch event on June 3rd, with space for respondents to add additional ideas.

There was a general consensus that a food network could take a logistical role in identifying, collecting and distributing produce around the city for the benefit of community food outlets. An additional strong leaning was for a food network to advocate for more permanent urban growing space. The response distribution between questions is shown in the chart below.

Response headings not visible are:

- Bulk buying from farm, community gardens and local producers
- Helping to coordinate city wide logistics
- advocating for more permanent urban growing space
- operating fleet vehicle to collect from local producers
- lease on behalf of local and community food project with the Scottish Government and other existing initiatives
- Links to NHS

Further comments were given that either expanded on some of the above responses or gave additional suggestions for the kind of work a community food network could do in relation to supply chains.



The comments can be broadly speaking divided up between 'management and infrastructure support', examples of which included

"Help in every way- management support and structure of organisation and

"Working to secure more sustainable funding streams, skills academy/ sharing"

"It would be useful to be able to collectively test soil as it's so expensive to do- most of the land we use has an industrial past-so testing it would really help us use land safely- I know other small services have this problem too."

'Practical suggestions and offers of help' such as

"I work on an NHS site - I could be an onsite contact which would put a Local Food Network in touch with the appropriate contacts within the hospital for e.g. locally sourced catering." and

"We can collect and redistribute surpluses to cut down on waste. We would like to develop local collection points so the surplus food can get out to a wider group. "

And finally some cautious words on not duplicating work already being done, for example

"Promoting our services. Being careful not to use subsidy to compete what we already do."

2.5 Summary

This section has shown a strong leaning towards a preference for locally grown, organically grown and ethically sourced produce. This is specified by all types of organisation, from small local food coops based in community halls to cafés and pop up canteens.

However, there is a clear disparity in the local supply of fruit and vegetables, specifically within community gardens and growing projects. Of those spoken to, only some were able to produce enough food for retail although this remains an aspiration for many.

Another common thread in this section is the need for a Community Food Network to take an overarching role in the distribution of produce to food coops and community cafés etc... in the city. For small projects and organisations, logistics and overheads can be major barriers to achieving aims and objectives. This has been evidenced here by those wishing to access affordable, local fruit and vegetables and those wishing to produce and sell it.

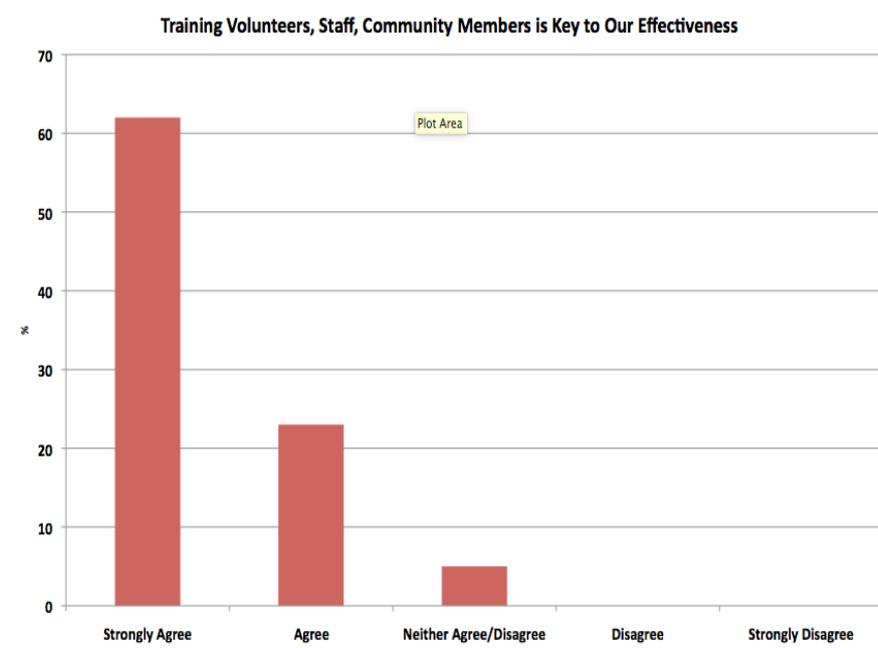
Given the comparatively small number of respondents in this survey, there is a clear need to develop this work further. There is certainly scope for taking a longer, deeper look at the barriers, challenges and opportunities faced by those wishing to set up short supply chains and access local markets.

3. Training and Skills Development

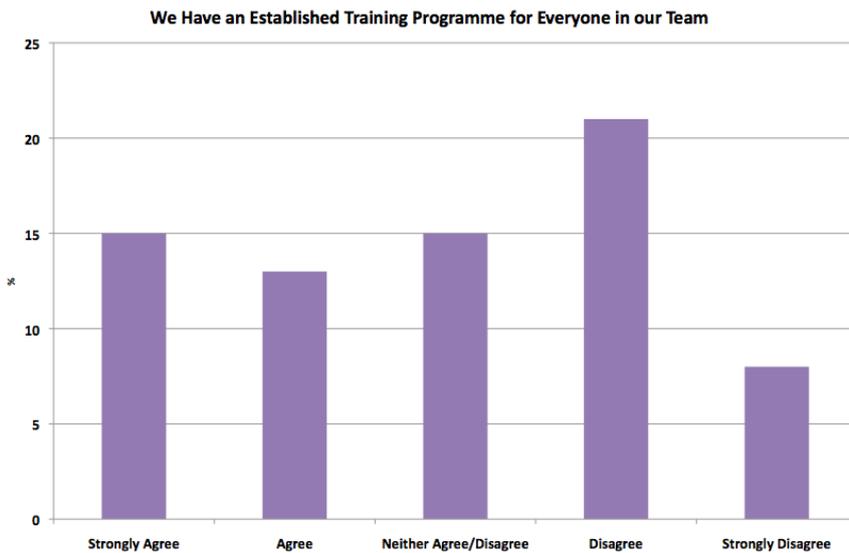
Within the survey, there were 14 questions specific to the identification of training needs for local organisations. Not every respondent answered every question; therefore, conclusions can only be drawn based against those who did respond.

3.1 Key Points

The main threads from the survey were as follows:



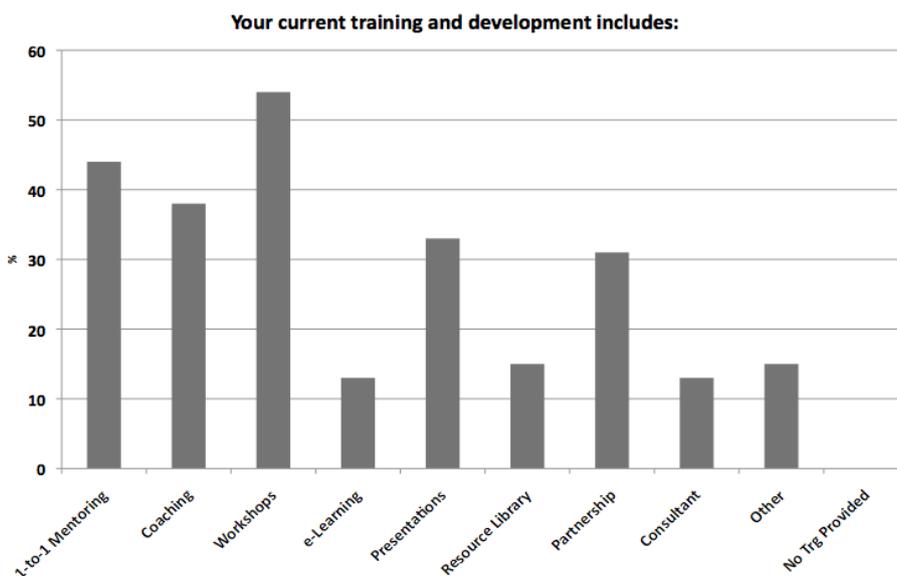
When asked if they felt whether training of volunteers, staff and community members was key to their effectiveness, the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with this statement (62%). Nevertheless, when asked if they had an established training programme in place for their team, only 28% of the organisations that responded stated that this was current practice.



Unsurprisingly, most organisations have identified that they could be more effective if their staff and/or service users had more knowledge and capability. However, this has not translated into the delivery of training. It is recommended that the GCFN aims to help bridge this training gap to help organisations achieve their full potentials.

Organisations which are either strongly linked to - or controlled by - NHS/government (20% of total respondents) had the highest understanding of national health targets, whereas smaller, community-grown organisations had little comprehension of the relevance of these health targets to their service provision.

This is likely to reflect a lack of perceived direct, practical relevance of these targets (relating to chronic disease, smoking cessation, physical activity, reduction in poverty, etc) to their organisations. This is unfortunate, as the majority of these targets are associated with government funding, support and assistance. It would therefore be advantageous to ensure that all community organisations are aware of where they fit into the 'bigger picture' in Glasgow, and how they could all be a part of the overall national health improvement strategies.



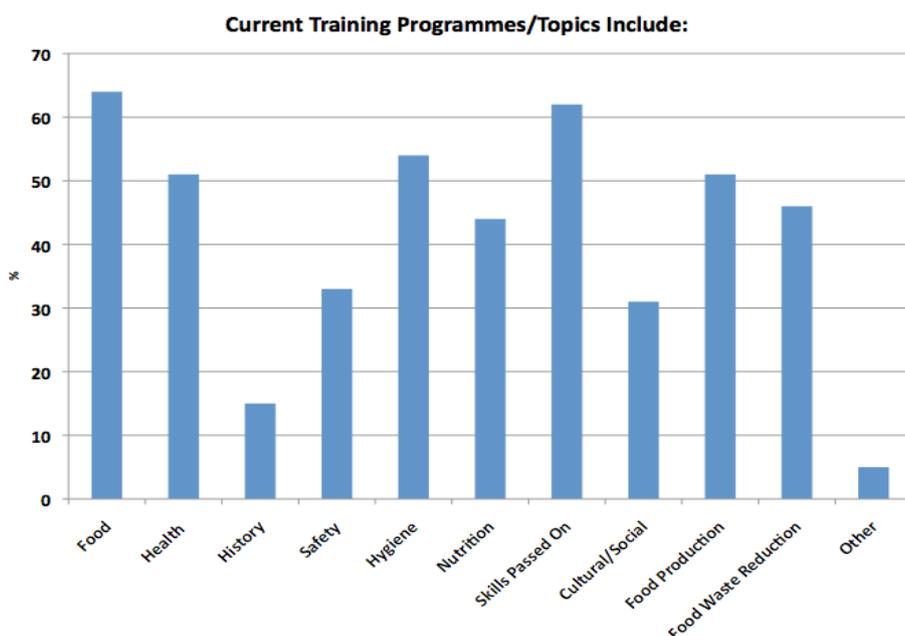
It is noteworthy that most organisations that provided training to staff/volunteers/community did so via active/directed face-to-face engagement (e.g., coaching, workshops, 1-to-1 mentoring and presentations), rather than via self-directed learning (such as through

e-Learning and resource libraries). This probably reflects the skills and experiences of both the communities being trained and those doing the training. This also highlights the importance of

ensuring that those carrying out any face-to-face training are competent and confident at delivering training packages to a diverse range of people with all levels of education and social background. The responses also suggest that either the use of self-directed learning may not be an effective strategy for the community groups involved, or that these are underutilised. It may be that organisations lack the resources (computers, internet access, text books, library space, etc) to do self-directed learning, or it may be that when people come together to help their communities, they expect a more social and interactive experience, where they can talk to and engage with other people. Indeed, this could be the primary reason that they become involved with community organisations in the first place. Further investigation may be necessary to fully understand the findings.

Current training programmes reflect a wide variation of subjects, though they seem to focus mainly on food and health topics, including food production and waste.

There is an argument for mandatory training around food safety, hygiene and waste as these are nationally-regulated and there are legal implications for those working in food preparation, production and delivery. This is likely the reason for high representation in the survey responses. Unfortunately, there was not enough detail in the survey to analyse 'Skills Passed On' but as this is well represented in the responses it should be further investigated.



From the responses to this question, it would appear that cultural, historical and social topics are under-represented. Considering that the history and social culture of Glasgow is inextricably linked to its current health issues such as Glasgow's excess mortality, the use of social/historical education to place our

current situation in context would be beneficial. In other words, 'why are we in the situation that we are in?' and 'what contribution can my project make to improve things?'

Over 75% of the organisations delivered practical cookery classes. These were facilitated mainly through trained professionals, with the remainder delivering training via volunteers, employees or through partnerships. This suggests that there is already an effective cookery skills network within Glasgow and this is a 'strength' that can probably be expanded upon, with scope for further

partnership between organisations to improve efficiency and utilisation of resources. There is a potentially strong symbiosis between those that grow and produce food, and those that emphasise the preparation and cooking of food. This should be explored further.

3.2 Discussion

In general terms current training provision falls into two distinct categories: 'cooks' and 'growers'. The 'cooks' employ REHIS (Elementary Food Hygiene), Health and Safety and First Aid in their work. Whereas 'growers' focus more on growing, design and waste-reduction related topics. We need to investigate further 'common' training opportunities to bring these groups together and create a more cohesive food system within Glasgow.

Rather than concentrate upon the mandatory, more prescriptive training activities, it may also be useful to explore “softer skills” training and development with communities to provide a more holistic approach and encourage skills that would be useful both inside and outside of the community organisations.

It was clear that there was a wide variation in training delivered; for example, one responder offered a volunteer package of:

“Volunteer training 4 times a year - benefits, welfare, food hygiene, mental health support, administration”

Others offered no training or development opportunities. Therefore, any training strategy should be designed to both establish a minimum level of training for those that offer little-to-none, whilst supporting/enhancing existing training programmes already in situ.

When considering what type of training and development respondents would like to supply, there were no specific areas highlighted; however, there was a large variety of topics suggested. These included: bread and its origins, harvesting, driving license, group work skills, holistic customer service, healthier drinks, healthier foods and more advanced cookery skills, communication skills, age-specific training and accredited training courses. Some of these training requirements are already available and other communities are already using them. This suggests that a role for GCFN would be to signpost existing training providers as well as potentially develop new training opportunities. For example, one responder reported they were:

“Planning to do breastfeeding awareness, some other interesting requests e.g. Hep C, police safety - how to keep yourself safe (there has been some hassle in the shop from kids), equalities (also have had racist abuse)”

Possibly one of the most interesting question responses was that of whether organisations tailored training to their communities. From the 77% of organisations approached that responded to this

question, 36% agreed that they tailored their training provision to that needed by their community. This, however, meant that 64% either did not tailor their training or did not know if they did.

Respondents used a variety of methods to assimilate the nutritional needs of the communities they serve. One organisation successfully used Facebook to gauge feedback on new seasonal menus. Communities who gathered feedback either through conversations/interactions felt that they were important and useful for future project delivery.

However, an equal amount did not use any tools or methods to gather the communities' feedback on their nutrition needs.

Some comments from respondents who do not gather feedback:

“Communities have universal needs”

“After 23 years we know the community well”

“We understand good food”

When asked what they actually did, only a small number of organisations could state that they actively surveyed customers or analysed feedback in a meaningful way. We felt that many of the organisations that agreed that they tailored training based this more on their own opinion than on actual evidence from the community. This means that there are possibly large portions of the communities served that are not represented in current training programmes.

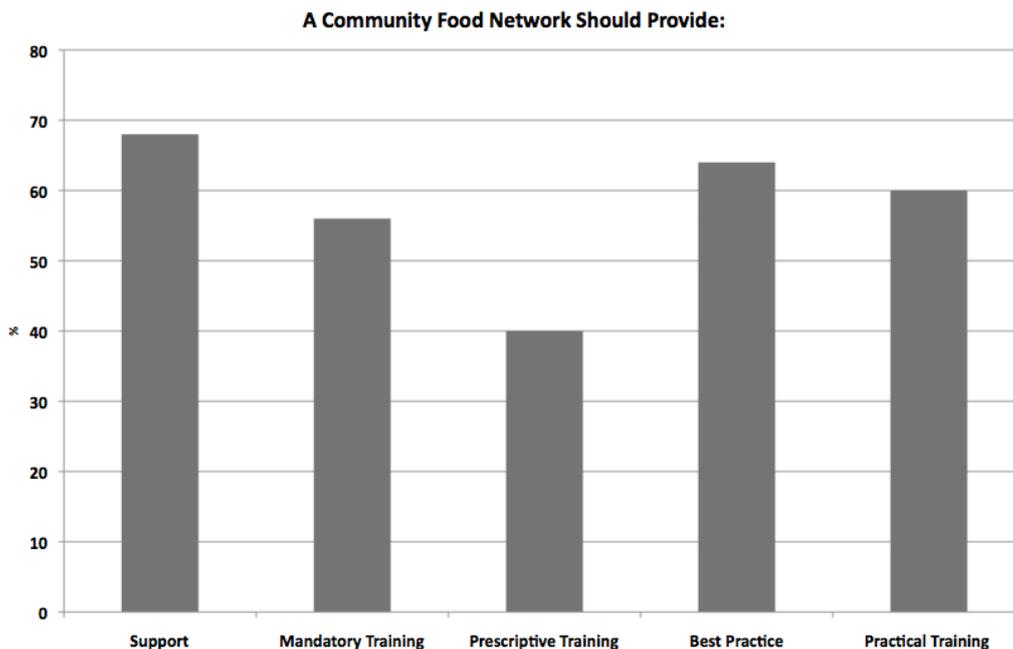
The findings suggest more could be done to ask, listen and collate evidence from communities. The outcomes may lead to more community-oriented intervention strategies around nutritional messages. This is an area which requires further discussion and investigation.

Skills passed on via coaching, workshops and 1-to-1 mentoring are better suited to activities such as growing/gardening and cooking, where a strict curriculum is neither required nor perhaps advantageous. In contrast, health, nutrition and hygiene subjects are more likely to be delivered through more prescriptive training programmes as there are often examinations/tests/assessments to be taken (for example, REHIS Basic Food Hygiene).

When asked what a Community Food Network should provide in terms of training and support 80% of organisations responded that some form of training should be provided (mandatory, prescriptive, best practice and practical). 'Best practice' and 'practical' training were most well represented, suggesting the importance placed on the delivery of more active learning and engagement activities (as identified earlier), which may possibly be better suited to the client groups. There is, however, still a need to deliver a standards framework, for best practice, when training groups and individuals. This could be a part of the GCFN remit to establish a standards framework for training.

Organisations also wanted to see 'Support' from a Community Food Network, which could include access to subject matter experts, courses on training delivery, support materials and advice. This needs to be further explored and could become a part of the training standards framework.

Prescriptive training was the least popular delivery method: this likely reflects a need for flexibility based around characteristics of the populations served; however, the more flexibility that is built into training, the more difficult it becomes for an organisation to deliver it. An example could be the delivery of REHIS training to people with chaotic lifestyles – they may not be able to attend every session and this may preclude them from completing an important course.



What resources or support do you need to fill these gaps?

Both 'funding' and 'go to' lists received the highest equal (22%) request rates, followed by the need for trainers/training (15%).

Respondents 'funding' comments

“More money to increase capacity and backfill”

“Funding & staffing”

“Time and money”

“Additional staff hours, greater buy-in from hospital managers (to enable more hospital staff time to facilitate patients accessing growing spaces), more hospital grounds turned over to food growing”

Respondents 'go to' lists comments

“Coordination ' go to' people/organisations and more standardisation of resource/ 'policy into practice' across ALL Glasgow areas”

“A list of current providers would be great. How about also a list of producers where we can obtain fruit & veg from (allotments, community gardens etc who have access produce or who are willing to sell/give?”

“Some large care providers 'dump' their service users who need 1-2-1 support at our projects- without giving us proper guidance, support or funding... it would good to provide both supported therapeutic workshops and general support...”

3.3 Summary

In summary, most organisations understand the relevance and importance in training staff/volunteers/community members, with a need to deliver not only the 'mandatory' courses but also more holistic/softer training. Unfortunately, many lack the resources/knowledge to meet their aspirations and this is where GCFN could be of use in developing support and training standards frameworks. Furthermore, an important role for GCFN would be to signpost organisations to where training opportunities and resources already exist.

There are many obvious benefits in linking the 'growers' with the 'cooks' and making best use of skills and resources, and improving knowledge/information sharing between organisations.

Responses to the survey showed a bias towards 'delivered' face-to-face training at present. There are a number of possible reasons why this should be the case and these should be investigated further.

There is also a definite need to further engage with the communities in order to establish what training is actually required in order to best serve them and fully engage them.

Overall, there is scope to harness the enthusiasm and skills of people and their motivation for what they do, and help them grow – the provision of training is key to developing and enabling this aim within Glasgow.

4. Surplus Food and Food Waste

In this section current work in relation to food waste is identified and the potential role a community food network could play in supporting further development of practices and activities in this area.

4.1 Who is currently working on food waste?

Out of the 44 participating organisations 72% were working on food waste in some capacity. Projects resulting from successful partnership, such as Space To Grow community food growing project funded by the Climate Challenge Fund and facilitated by TCV in partnership with Cube housing; community food hubs, such as Moogety Grub Hub at Elderpark Housing association , allowing for local people to grow, cook and eat together; community cafes (e.g. Unity cafe); pop-up community

meals (Govanhill Community Canteen; The Real Junk Food project Glasgow); soup kitchens; community gardens; food banks; markets; producers; retailers.

This study has highlighted just how diverse the range of models of tackling surplus food wastage in Glasgow is at present. Here are some of the ways organisations are tackling the issue:

- ❑ Conscious efforts to avoid waste by planning: procurement (regardless the scale of an operation); and portion sizes (catering); distribution (“the whole point of Food Assembly is there is no waste. Producers only bring what is ordered. If there is surplus it is traded or bartered amongst producers.’ survey participant);
- ❑ Donating surplus to local charities providing meals for those in food poverty or food banks;
- ❑ Raising awareness about food waste within the community (household scale) through cookery workshops;
- ❑ Composting and feeding to surplus food to livestock;
- ❑ Using intercepted or donated surplus food as the basis for accessible to all community meals (e.g. The Real Junk Food Project (TRJFP) Glasgow; Govanhill Community Canteen);
- ❑ Training and mentoring of chefs to follow zero waste practices (minimise waste, appropriate disposal, storage, redistribution);
- ❑ Working in partnership to redistribute surplus- FareShare + North Glasgow Community Food Initiative; MILK cafe + The Real Junk Food Project (TRJFP) Glasgow;
- ❑ Providing storage space for projects working with intercepted food (i.e. for TRJFP Glasgow);
- ❑ Engaging across all levels of activity in the supply chain from growers, manufacturers and retailers to rescue and minimise food surplus (FareShare).

4.2 Where is produce currently sourced from by projects working with intercepted/donated food?

(Listed in order of highest number of mentions):

1. Blochairn Wholesale Market;
2. FareShare;
3. Big retailers- supermarkets, Pret-A-Manger, EAT., Greggs;
4. Local greengrocers;
5. Other organisations receiving food surplus donations, such as North Glasgow CFI, Food Bank surplus;
6. The Real Junk Food Project Glasgow;
7. Donations from the public;
8. Suppliers from Glasgow.

And an additional comment: *“We actively engage with all levels of activity in the supply chain from growers, manufacturers and retailers to rescue and minimize food surplus.”*

This gives us an overview of some of the key sources of food waste utilised by different projects in Glasgow, it is not an exhaustive list of points where avoidable food waste could be used for community benefit.

4.3 How much of a priority is the sourcing of local, organic, or ethical food?

34 out of the 44 organisations which participated take action to address food waste issues and use different approaches to managing surplus food- that is 78% of the organisations which contributed to the study.



As demonstrated, using sustainably sourced produce for the various food activities is of high priority to organisations. However, some common barriers for organisations emerged- cost associated with procuring of such identified as the most

significant barrier. For some organisations the inaccessibility of such ingredients affected the importance which was placed on sourcing local, organic, ethical food.

Here are some additional quotes to illustrate the opinions shared:

“Not so much [of a priority], price is the biggest indicative of our purchasing.”

“Not high, influenced more by price.”

“High priority but prohibited by cost.”

“High, but working in low income communities so cost is more important. Roots and Fruits (supplier) have ethical position on purchases.”

“High, but fallen by the wayside due to costs and previous cafe manager.”

“High priority but also a barrier due to high price and the seasonal change in menu required to follow seasonality of local produce.”

“Freshness, availability, affordability, practicality are priority e.g. chicken bought local.”

“We have no control over what is donated therefore we cannot influence how it is sourced and produced.”

4.4 What are the issues currently faced by organisations working on food waste:

These, the study revealed, are sometimes associated with internal organisational structures, external organisations, existing processes and infrastructure, or the lack of, resources.

The following main barriers were identified:

- ❑ Logistics - collection and transportation of surplus; the small proportion of food surplus which is currently intercepted and used by groups and organisations; 'unworkable' pick up

times posing 'high burden placed on small charity by large corporates'; small organisations are often unable to collect surplus food, especially at last minute notice, lacking both transport and time as a small team is responsible for all aspects of a pop-up community meal, for example.

- ❑ Procurement processes can present a barrier to accessing surplus food and other produce;
- ❑ Knowledge and skills: finding relevant expertise to provide workshops/training on specific topics; volunteer management; planning to avoid over purchase.
- ❑ Resources – funding; finding and maintaining suitable premises, difficulty covering core costs; high costs of operations; time; manpower.
- ❑ Sourcing- lack of awareness or relationships with local suppliers.
- ❑ Quality and nutritional value of produce donated to projects working with intercepted food. One respondent elaborates on that point: 'Foods high in fat, sugar and salt are donated with no regard of end use for service.'
- ❑ Behavioural and cultural barriers – difficulty in facilitating behaviour change in the community regarding waste; difficulty in re-prioritising organisational values to include sustainable zero waste practices; cultural barriers in certain communities around composting; competition by large commercial catering operations; insufficient support from local authorities; lack of joined-up thinking demonstrated by decision-makers and stakeholders.

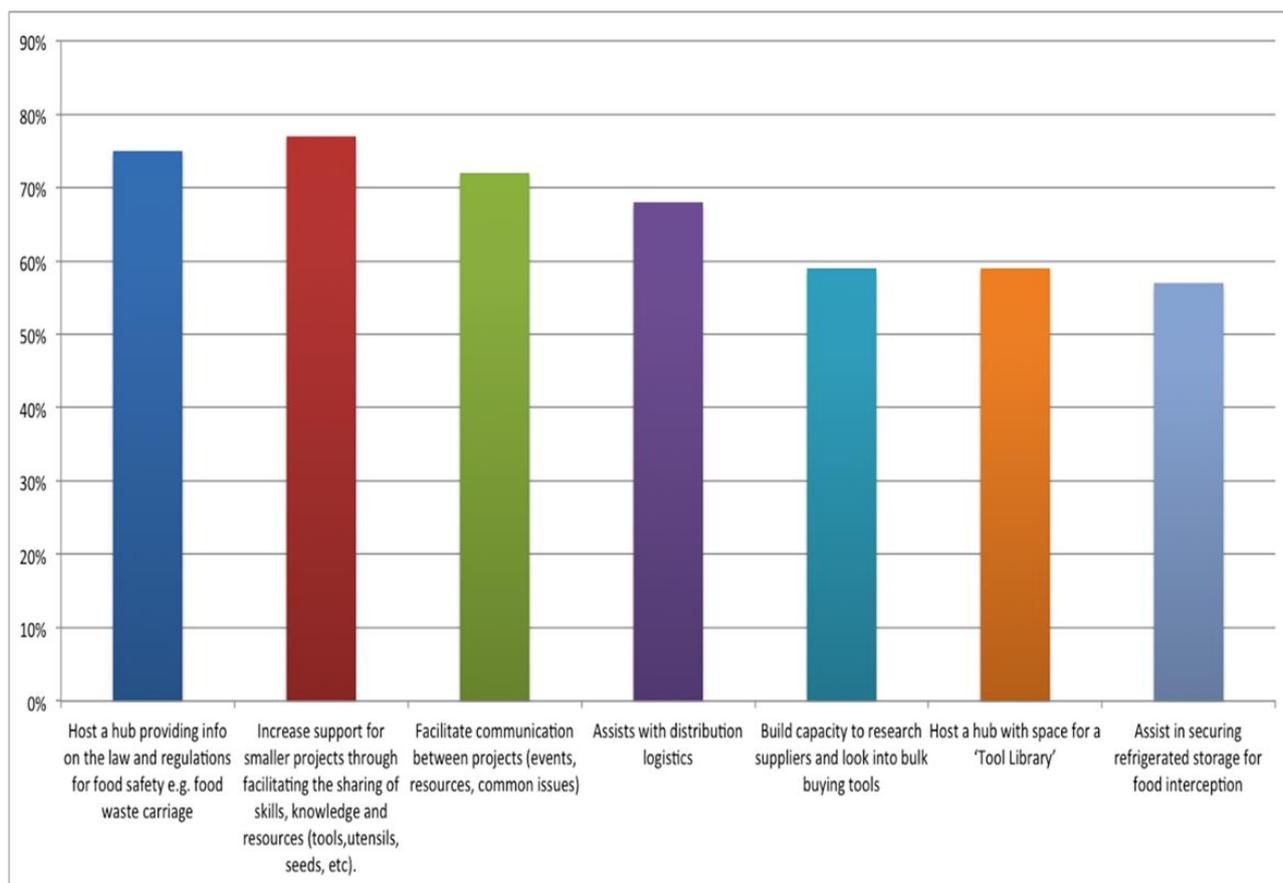
4.5 What is the level of support for organisations?

Respondents were invited to identify the level of support available. We found that there is a significant lack of support both in terms of funding and in terms of support through knowledge and resource-sharing from peer and large mainstream organisations.

4.6 What role could a Community Food Network play?

Organisations were generally supportive of the idea of a food network. Suggestions generated at the June stakeholder event as to what a food network could do with regard to food waste were provided and respondents were asked whether this would be useful. The 44 responses to this question are shown in the chart below.

What Role Could a Community Food Network Play?



All suggestions from the stakeholder event appeared to be popular with survey respondents. As demonstrated by the graph above a Community Food Network in Glasgow could make the most impact by increasing support for smaller projects through facilitating the sharing of skills, knowledge and resources (tools, utensils, seeds, etc.) and enabling better communication between projects (events, common issues).

A large proportion of respondents felt a Network could make a positive difference to how much food is intercepted and diverted from going to waste by assisting with distribution logistics and securing refrigerated storage for food interception. A hub for information on the law and regulations for food safety, e.g. food waste carriage as well as a physical hub (or a tool library) were also popular suggestions. Respondents felt their capacity to research suppliers and look into bulk buying tools could be developed through the support of a community food network.

4.7 Summary

A Community Food Network in Glasgow could add to existing activities in relation to surplus food management and use by address some of the common issues faced by organisations (outlined before). This study demonstrates existing support for some of the ways in which a new network could contribute.

To summarise, a Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN) could play two key roles in supporting existing work on surplus food - a facilitating role and an influencing role.

GCFN could facilitate:

- Logistics + refrigerated storage
- Knowledge + information sharing- training as well as law and standards developments
- Communications
- between projects- e.g. events, development opportunities exchanges
- about funding and other organisational development opportunities
- Physical resources sharing- tool library

GCFN could work on influencing change on a more strategic level by engaging with:

- Procurement processes and legislation which currently identified as restricting to the work organisations aspire to do;
- Dialogue with key stakeholders on behalf of smaller organisations members of the network. For example, on issues of quality and nutrition of surplus food donated by big retailers/ commercial catering enterprises.

5. Food Poverty

Organisations completing the survey were asked about the work they do around food poverty.

Although food poverty/ food insecurity does not have a universal definition it is often described as 'an inability to acquire or eat an adequate quality of sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways (or the uncertainty of being able to do so)'. An important distinction should be drawn between different approaches to tackling food poverty: organisations providing emergency food aid and organisations tackling the determinants of food poverty. Some of the organisations completing the survey did either one or the other and some did both.

5.1 What is currently being done?

Emergency Food Aid

Organisations offering emergency food aid provide short term food parcels to see people through a crisis situation. These foodbanks generally source their food from donations from the public or from partnerships with corporate organisations. For them, therefore, some of the earlier themes of the survey, such as bulk buying and sourcing local produce, were not relevant. Those organisations that only offered emergency food aid generally used non-perishable food so wastage was not an issue. When a surplus of a particular food item accumulated this was usually distributed to other foodbanks. Non-perishable food perhaps also allows for easier storage and none of the

organisations reported storage space to be a problem. Some fresh produce, usually bakery or fruit & veg, was donated to foodbanks but due to a requirement to “know your source” these could only be accepted from certain organisations and generally did not make up a significant proportion of the food provided. Perishable food, such as surplus fresh sandwiches from particular corporate organisations, was accepted by one foodbank on a daily basis but this organisation also provided meals in the evening so all perishable food was used for this. A very small amount of food waste was reported from this activity: restrictions imposed by the corporate donators and the short life span of this type of food meant surplus could not be redistributed again and was therefore thrown away. Although there was some interest from the foodbanks in sourcing locally grown fruit and vegetables the unpredictability in the number of service users in any one day lead to concerns about significant amounts of waste and a system for subsequent redistribution of the fresh produce would need to be put in place. The existing Food Bank Forum currently provides the opportunity for networking amongst these particular organisations.

Determinants of Food Poverty/Insecurity

Food poverty can be a contentious issue and it was out with the scope of the project to explore all the factors that contribute to food poverty. Glasgow Food Policy Partnership have a specific subgroup looking at food poverty in Glasgow and hosted an event to inform this work in October 2015. A report of this event is available. The organisations completing the survey generally saw their contribution to tackling the problem to focus on accessibility and availability of healthy food and also people’s aptitude and confidence towards food. They did this through, for example, provision of low cost/ free healthy food at fruit barra’s and community meals, providing cooking skills classes, offering opportunities for people to ‘grow their own’ in community gardens or allotments and increasing confidence towards gardening. Alongside the specific food related benefits some of the social benefits of attending such activities may also contribute to tackling the health consequences of food poverty. Where food was required for these activities, such as the cooking groups, price was usually the key driver in where it was sourced and although there was an awareness of a need for local and ethical sources of food it was considered “high priority but prohibited by cost”.

5.2 What could a food network do?

Organisations were generally supportive of the idea of a food network. Some suggestion as to what a food network could do with regard to food poverty were provided and respondents were asked whether this would be useful. Of the 24 responses to this question the following numbers agreed that a food network should:

Link food projects with other anti-poverty work i.e. linking in with 'financial inclusion' support.	79%
Support organisations access funding aimed at tackling food poverty	75%
Provide storage and space for equipment/ food.	58%
Support local social eating to combat loneliness and isolation.	79%
Provide a support system for people working in the field of food poverty (which can be isolating and stressful).	71%
Campaign to change public perception of food poverty.	71%
Provide comprehensive signposting suggestions for organizations to distribute i.e. to other cooking projects, grow your own schemes etc.	71%
Act as advocates for organisations tackling food poverty.	66%
Communicate and position food poverty as part of a wider food issue i.e. unsustainable food production, supermarket dominance etc.	92%

Organisations were asked for other suggestions as to what a food network could do around food poverty. These responses suggest that food poverty is very much seen as part of a bigger picture that can be addressed through a number of avenues:

"Emphasise the importance of sustainability."

"Raise the profile of local growing by approaching councillors, MPs and celebrities."

"Keep organisations informed of developments in the area of food poverty and share information."

"Support food education in schools."

"Connect organisations and promote joint working."

Conclusions

To close the interviews and survey, respondents were asked for some final thoughts on what a Community Food Network could or should do, as well as leaving space for any other relevant thoughts they wanted to add. 33 respondents chose to offer their views, the vast majority of which were overwhelmingly positive and in support of a network.

Responses were quite varied, but there was a strong leaning towards a Network providing a facility for sharing learning and resources, and linking projects together. Examples of this include:

"Promote joint working"

"Communication between organisations, resource sharing, be good to find out more about local suppliers."

"Facilitate visits to other projects, skill shares and peer learning, potentials to learn from each other."

These comments are in keeping with the responses in other parts of the survey, where the need for a resource hub facilitating the sharing of knowledge/training/equipment has been identified. Peer support and learning between projects and organisations has also been a demonstrated need, and many have pointed to the role of a network in this.

There were some specific suggestions for the functions of a community food network, such as: *“Have an online hub as a resource, online calendar for planning crop production between community gardens across Glasgow. How To guides. Network should not duplicate, should be grass roots, and should maintain self awareness, feedback loops.”*

“Key things that the network should do is 1. Promoting fresh local produce 2. Facilitating communication between projects and between purchasers and consumers 3. Facilitate knowledge, equipment and venue sharing. A mobile kitchen would be really helpful for doing sessions with schools.

“The priorities of the network should be promoting healthy eating (particularly five a day), wholesale buying on behalf of community co-ops, facilitating distribution and encouraging more local sellers.”

Comments like these are useful, and show how respondents have engaged with this process. There are some very clear ideas as to what benefits a network could bring to organisations, identifying gaps in resources and support in the community food sector across Glasgow.

Another theme that came through strongly both with the main body of the survey and in the comments at the end is around environmental sustainability. As the environmental issues endemic in our current food system gain more prevalence both with professionals and members of the public alike, there is a strong leaning across the sector for organisations to play their part in both raising awareness and tackling some of these. Some of the relevant comments included:

“Be able to emphasise the importance of sustainability within local food networks and the importance of being involved with your food supply more consciously, for both personal health and to help the environment.”

“Ideally provide all the above but should focus on low carbon production and distribution”

“A challenge currently faced in relation to providing low-carbon catering is the expectation for meat dishes to feature in the menu”

Some additional comments as to how a Community Food Network could strengthen the movement for socially just and sustainable food in Glasgow were gathered. It was agreed that investing in one single project should be avoided and that the Network should not compete for resources (such as funding) with other organisations. A useful contribution would be the setup of new hubs. A new network should aim to avoid replicating existing skills and knowledge. It should also be aware of the changing circumstances in the different local contexts across Glasgow.

Finally, there were some words of caution expressed with regards to the development of the network. These chimed with some earlier cautious reflections, and also the many comments made at the June launch event which made reference to not reinventing the wheel, being resource intensive or competing for funding with other organisations it is trying to help.

“Network needs to be tangible and constructive. Needs to become established, building up knowledge and earning its credentials. Achieve strong local engagement first. Should encourage more things to happen in poor areas of Glasgow. Have knowledge, skills and space to share.”

“The network should focus on practical matters not political”

“To... reassure people that this won't be a top down development it would be beneficial for the development of the network to emerge from existing groups and organisations.”

Recommendations

This report, combined with the outcomes from the June event has shown that there is strong support within the community food sector in Glasgow for the development of a Community Food Network. Given the 'snapshot' nature of this report, some caution can be applied to the results, however despite this there is consensus on the functions of a Network:

- Facilitate bulk buying for small food coops, fruit barras, community cafes etc... and to overcome some of the logistical hurdles that are faced by small organisations (storage, distribution etc...)
- To identify, purchase and facilitate the distribution of locally grown produce
- Promote and support more local growing in Glasgow
- Provide advice and support around training issues for local community food organisations
- Create a knowledge hub on a range of community food related issues
- Support grassroots 'food poverty' projects, specifically alternatives to food banks such as social eating, food coops etc...

To summarise then, the authors of this report believe the following next steps should be taken:

- Further engagement with the community food sector in Glasgow to establish who will take this idea forward. Ideally, this should be a collaboration between existing community food organisations, or people working with them.
- Comprehensive mapping of all types of community retail and growing projects around Glasgow.
- To carry out an additional piece of research exploring the practicalities of short supply chains. This should be a more focussed in depth mapping study of community growing projects, surplus produce and the potential for produce grown specifically for community retail projects.
- To create a directory of community food training providers. This should cover a wide range of topics, as a reflection of the training needs survey. The directory should be accessible to local projects.

Researcher and Author Biographies

Brenda Black is a Glasgow-based, self-employed registered dietitian who provides nutrition-focused training and consultancy services to care organisations and the third sector. She has a specific interest in improving nutrition in vulnerable groups, especially people affected by homelessness, addiction, poverty and inequality. Brenda is a REHIS trainer, a Healthyliving Award assessor, and a non-executive board member for Edinburgh Community Food.

Mark Fitzpatrick has a background in community education, participatory greenspace development and sustainable living. He has previously worked for the Scottish Government Food and Drink division, for the Carbon Trust as well as community food projects such as Locavore.

Katy Gordon is currently studying a PhD at Strathclyde University exploring social enterprise in the community food sector. She has a background in nutrition and has undertaken various pieces of research in the third sector as well as leading a number of community cooking activities.

Fiona McAra is a service designer currently working with a community food growing project in Glasgow. Fiona is an advocate for seasonal eating and local food growing, and is interested in designing ways in which we can increase awareness of environmental issues around food, and access to sustainable and ethical food for all.

Abi Mordin has been working on sustainable food projects for 20 years, in both food production and community food. She is interested in how we 'do' food better, and works collaboratively on practical and participatory projects that contribute towards building a fair and sustainable food system. Abi is a director of Propagate – an initiative working on the links between food, communities and resilience.

Kristina Nitsolova has worked in sustainability and community development for the past 5 years. She is passionate about exploring collaborative approaches for creating a more sustainable and equal society, and currently works at CEMVO Scotland developing an Ethnic Minority Environmental Network. Kristina is currently part of the community of new growers at the Urban Croft in Queens Park.

Alex has worked on food related projects in the voluntary and creative sector for the last 15 years across all areas of Glasgow as an artist, gardening and cookery workshop leader, project co-ordinator and community activist. She has extensive experience in facilitating conversations with people about the food system and encouraging people to ask questions. On a personal basis she is passionate about ethical food consumption and growing her own food.