

## Climate Change Emergency Working Group Survey Response

May 2019

**This response is from the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP)**, a group of public, private and voluntary sector organisations who share an ambition to make the food system in Glasgow fairer, healthier, more sustainable and resilient. GFPP represents Glasgow in the [Sustainable Food Cities Network](#), and is working at a strategic level with local partners to help strengthen and bring coherence to our work to make good, nutritious food more available and accessible to everyone. This includes joining up and improving our approaches to food poverty and insecurity; health and wellbeing; the local food economy; food growing; reducing waste; and food procurement. We also support Glasgow City Council with its work, outlined in its current Council Plan, to become a sustainable food city<sup>i</sup>.

We welcome this opportunity to comment on how the Council should respond to climate change. We recognise the threat of climate change to population health and we understand the urgent need to respond through both mitigation and adaptation. We also recognise the relationship between climate change and inequality. The most vulnerable people in our population – in particular the old, the very young, people living in poverty – are likely to be the most at risk from the direct impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events e.g. storms, flooding, etc. In addition, they are likely to have contributed the least to carbon emissions.

We believe that a productive and sustainable food system has the potential to help address climate change as well as to provide food and nutrition security for all, to improve social, economic, physical and cultural well-being, to provide secure livelihoods, to contribute to greater social and economic equity and to enhance environmental, economic and political systems for the current, as well as future, generations.

It is important to recognise that food systems are inherently complex. They range from the local to global, they interact with other systems, and cover agriculture to food consumption and every step in between. It is too easy to pick it apart and address each bit individually to make it more manageable, but this risks ignoring the relationships, interactions and links that exist at the system level. For this reason we strongly believe it is important to consider the food system and its impacts on climate change (and a range of other public health issues) in a more coordinated way.

In this response we outline that actions that we believe the Council should take in relation to food and the food system that contributes positively to action to address climate change.

### **1. What more, if anything, do you think the Council and the city should do to prevent major climate change?**

The Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP) believes it is very important for the food system in Glasgow to become more sustainable. We welcome the Council's commitment in the Council Plan to become a Sustainable Food City. We believe that a city-wide food strategy that addresses equity, health and sustainability in a coordinated way is an important step towards this and we welcome the Council's ambition to develop this within the current administration. Such a strategy could contribute to climate change mitigation by enabling and providing support for more food growing in the city and in areas surrounding the city, through procurement, for example by public bodies procuring more food from within Scotland (and

ideally from in and around Glasgow) rather than from abroad (and particularly air freighted food), serving and promoting more seasonal produce, and increasing the offer of vegetarian and vegan dishes in schools and other local authority venues. This is supported by the EATLancet report that came out earlier this year: <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/EAT>, and the Livewell principles outlined in the World Wildlife Fund's report Eating for 2 degrees : <https://www.wwf.org.uk/eatingfor2degrees> .

The City Council provides food directly in a number of different ways: within staff restaurants and canteens, schools, museums, leisure centres, etc. The food system contributes between 20 and 30% of carbon emissions and most of this is from the production of meat and dairy produce, from non-seasonal produce being 'forced' out-of-season or being flown in from other parts of the world, and from the surplus food that becomes methane-producing waste in landfill. Food waste continues to be a major contributor to greenhouse gas emission, contributing about 8% of the world's emissions. The City Council has the opportunity to incorporate an understanding of this in its food provision, for example, by:

- incorporating a number of principles (such as the WWF Livewell principles) into menu planning and food procurement such as reducing the meat and dairy content of recipes and increasing the fruit, vegetable and pulse content (through recipe adaptation and menu changes) using more seasonal and local produce where possible. One meat-free day per week could also be considered, as is already the case in a number of other cities (e.g. Gothenburg).
- using more locally and sustainably grown, seasonal produce (this would have the benefit of helping to build a stronger local food economy). As part of this the City Council could provide more support to develop local growing spaces and produce and trade locally grown food. This could include the provision of longer term funding, and thus continuity, of community food projects that build community growing, community resilience and capacity as well as providing local sources of food, as well as providing small amounts of financial support to urban and peri-urban small farmers along with increased support and investment in building local skills in sustainable farming and food production to build a more local, sustainable food economy. It is likely that this would need to be done in partnership with Scottish Government and with other local authorities. For example, developing relationships with growers and producers in nearby local authorities.
- reducing the amount of meat and airfreighted food used in public sector catering (e.g. schools)
- using a range of approaches to reduce surplus food and food waste. For example, encourage pre-ordering of school meals so that children are more likely to get the meals they want irrespective of when they reach the front of the queue.
- increasing the composting of food waste and reducing the food waste going into landfill from GCC food providers. The food that is wasted and composted could also be used more effectively by opening more anaerobic digestion units that, in turn, can produce energy to power greenhouses to grow more locally produced vegetables. Case studies are available here: <http://adbioresources.org/library/case-studies>.
- discouraging use of single-use plastic containers, cutlery, cups, bottles and disposable coffee cups , and introducing a phased reduction.

**2. What more, if anything, do you think the Council and the city should do to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate?**

Through investing in a stronger local economy the above approach will also increase the security of our food supply which will help limit the impact of food supply chain problems arising from climate change (where established food production or supply chains fail due to major weather events or climate change).

Furthermore, the council could investigate if more of its land would be suitable for food growing and invest in crops that could withstand large changes in temperature/weather. Orchards could be planted in parks and greenspaces. The Council could also explore the possibilities of growing food in high-rise buildings and on roof tops.

**3. What action and or policies, if any, should the Council and the city introduce specifically to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions?**

Increasing growing spaces and planting more orchards in the city. This will require longer term action to address soil contamination in some parts of the city.

Reducing purchase of low quality and processed meat, dairy and airfreighted food in public sector procurement, and increasing more sustainably grown fruits, vegetables and local produce.

More support and enablement of local food growers and producers to be established in the city, and more opportunities for them to trade across the city, for example, more regular local markets.

Food waste continues to be a major contributor to greenhouse gas emission, contributing about 8% of the World's emissions. Household food waste alone accounts for 2,240,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq, this represents 2.9% of Scotland's carbon footprint. More education is needed along with better and more consistent systems for avoiding food waste, redirecting surplus food and building more circularity into the local economy, so that organisations, businesses and individuals don't waste food unnecessarily, that surplus food is used and that any food waste that remains does not go into landfill. Currently many individuals and businesses are not clear about food waste and recycling processes and what they can do; in addition, many businesses and organisations do not have food waste recycling facilities.

Investment in food waste education in Schools, as well as a city-wide campaign educating people about the food waste facts combined with cookery classes (composting, what to do with leftover food and what food to freeze for example) could have a positive impact. The Food Waste Reduction Action Plan by the Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland outlines important actions in order to reach its ambitious targets by 2025: <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/Food%20Waste%20Reduction%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

The food that is wasted and composted could also be used more effectively by opening more anaerobic digestion units that in turn can produce energy to power greenhouses to grow more locally produced vegetables. You can find some case studies here: <http://adbioresources.org/library/case-studies>

**4. What are the barriers, if any, to the Council and the city taking action on climate change?**

Some citizens may be uninterested or ill-informed about the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation but evidence suggests that the majority of people understand the issues and are keen to take steps towards reducing their own carbon footprint. A key role for the Council is to take action to enable citizens to make choices in their daily lives that are sustainable and to develop systems that enable changes in behaviours that support this.

There may be differences in cost arising from a different approach to our food system. A broad cost benefit analysis, however, will value the gains in terms of the environment and health from investing in a lower carbon and more local food system. The Council can't control the actions of individual people (to reduce food waste or to use compost bins for example); however, it can improve the systems in place for food waste recycling and communicate this effectively, it can monitor and reduce the carbon emissions relating to its own food procurement and catering provision, it can look at the energy use of its own council buildings and take opportunities to save energy, to generate green energy (for example solar panels on council buildings), to influence the travel patterns of council staff and purchase energy from renewable sources. It can communicate the new systems to citizens and educate them to make informed choices.

Moving to a more plant based, local diet may not appeal to everyone so there will need to be a transition and a focus on ensuring the food is tasty and appealing. This will require further skills development in catering staff.

Increasing procurement of local food may be challenged by a current shortage of local food producers and growers which is why concurrent programmes to build skills and capacity in the sector will be required.

**5. Are you aware of actions that other places have taken on the issue of climate change which Glasgow can learn from?**

London has managed to reduce its carbon emissions by establishing a Congestion Charge Zone. A fee structure tied to emissions restricts the movement of freight and other heavy goods vehicles within the city's centre and allows electric cars to travel for free in the zone. The scheme, introduced in 2003 has reduced vehicle numbers in the central business district by over 70,000 per day, cutting carbon emissions in the zone by 15% according to the authors of a study published in Science Direct:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421512006118>

Copenhagen has reduced the amount of garbage it sends to landfills from 40 percent to less than 2 percent (since 1988), and half of the city's waste is recycled and used to generate heat: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/which-major-cities-are-leaders-in-reducing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-857410/#3CUTtufchW4SMbbe.99>

New York City has a program designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and otherwise prepare for climate change, which includes planting trees and other vegetation to enhance 800 acres of parks and open spaces and pushing new development to areas with existing transit access so that new subway and bus lines don't have to be added:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/orr/index.page>

**6. In your opinion what help, if any, should the council ask both the Scottish and UK Government for in order to address climate change?**

Councils need funding from the Government to tackle some of the issues, to change the city's transport infrastructure for example, or to be able afford an educational campaign large enough to have a positive impact. National support to develop procurement systems that enable more local and sustainable public sector food procurement is also required.

The Good Food Nation legislation could be a source of national support and resource.

As highlighted in a previous question, the provision of longer term funding, and thus continuity, of community food projects that build community growing, community resilience and capacity, as well as providing local sources of food, is important. Similarly, providing financial support to urban and peri-urban small farmers along with increased support and investment in building local skills in sustainable farming and food production to build a more local, sustainable food economy will be required. It is likely that this will need to be done in partnership with Scottish Government and with other local authorities. For example, developing relationships with growers and producers in nearby local authorities.

**7. The council is keen to involve local residents in discussions about tackling climate change. What would be the best method(s) to allow residents to contribute?**

We agree that it is vital that citizens and communities have a say in any plans, and that they have some control over what happens in their neighbourhoods.

It is our opinion, based on our community engagement work and from the research evidence on this subject, that as broad a range of engagement methods as possible should be used when seeking to involve local people in discussions, to capture a diverse a population. Those who are willing and able to take the time to make a particular effort to engage are likely to be one section of the population already engaged with the issue. Other people (the 'seldom heard voices') may need some support to get involved. Principally involving local residents and community organisations will mean going to where people are – this may involve looking for existing groups, community organisations, or other natural 'bumping spaces' where people are coming together.

Open consultation events – ideally located around the city in a range of neighbourhoods, within community/third sector venues as far as possible - and Citizen's Panels are some examples of engaging local people that we support. We would encourage the provision of health food, provided by local third sector community organisations and grown or produced locally where possible, as part of any community based consultation event.

**8. How can we make sure that action on climate issues supports human rights and equality in the city?**

Climate change will impact on the poorest in society in a range of ways – through health impacts of heat, through the challenges of flooding and extreme weather and through increasing in the cost of living, including food. Food poverty is likely to increase as food prices increase due to climate change. It will be important to ensuring that equity is at the heart of a city food strategy. Any new food growing/tree planting projects should also reach the most deprived areas in order for everyone to have access to the benefits which will include healthy nutritious food and fresh air.

**9. The Council has currently set a target year of 2037 for the city to achieve carbon neutrality. How do you think we might be able to deliver that by an earlier year?**

It would be helpful to have the Council's definition of 'carbon neutrality' laid out. We would like to see that the definition used includes the carbon emissions resulting from the manufacture and transit of purchased goods, including food, as well as emissions made more directly by the City Council.

To assist with monitoring, marketing and public scrutiny of the Council's progress towards carbon neutrality we would like to see annual public reporting from the Council which includes detailed breakdowns of the carbon emissions relating to food from different parts of the Council and its services, and an assessment of how this relates to planned reductions.

Achieving carbon neutrality will be challenging but the possibility of achieving it early will only be realised by looking at every aspect of Council business and reducing the carbon emissions that relate to each of these. We have outlined some examples in this response that relate to food and the food system. We will not be successful in avoiding irreversible climate change if we tinker at the edges, making small changes. Instead we need to recognise that the massive reduction in carbon emissions required means significant changes to almost every part of our lives.

In terms of food we need to have a large programme of greening and tree planting, and we recommend that much of this allows for local, sustainable food growing and we need more dedicated, high quality green areas for this. We also need a much stronger focus on reducing food waste and recycling of food waste that cannot be avoided or redistributed into greener energy. We need to reduce our reliance on road transport and air freight by vastly increasing the proportion of our food that is grown or produced locally.

**Do you have any further comments on the climate emergency?**

Glasgow Food Policy Partnership is very pleased that Glasgow City Council has taken the action against climate change seriously and will continue to work with the Council to develop and then implement a sustainable food strategy for the city that will contribute towards reducing the greenhouse emissions in Glasgow.

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<sup>i</sup> Glasgow City Council. *Strategic Plan 2017-2022*. Glasgow: Glasgow City Council, 2017. Available at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=40052&p=0> (commitment number 72). Accessed: 7/1/19.