



**Briefing 14/35    September 2014**

## **Becoming a Good Food Nation (Discussion Document)**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

### **Key Issues:**

[The 'Becoming a Good Food Nation' Discussion Document](#) was published by the Scottish Government in June 2014 to address the country's paradoxical state as a nation regarded as being one of the top producers of quality food and drink while having unsustainably high levels of diet-related diseases and deep-seated poor dietary habits. The Scottish Government's initial five areas of focus – food in the public sector, a children's food policy, local food, good food choices and continued economic growth – provide a road map for tackling Scotland's issues with food and drink.

**If you would like to contribute to APSE's coordinated response to the release of Becoming a Good Food Nation, please complete the questionnaire at the end of this briefing and e-mail your response to Louise McMillan – Principal Advisor (Scotland) at [lmcmillan@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmcmillan@apse.org.uk) by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014.**

## **1.0 Background**

Since the release of Recipe for Success in 2009, Scotland's food and drink sector has experienced significant change with the strongest growth in turnover of any growth sector in the country (2008 to 2011), a 32% rise in retail sales of Scottish brands (2007 to 2013), an increase in collaborative working between industry and the public sector and the development of many new local food initiatives and food education initiatives. Despite this considerable progress, Scotland still faces many challenges to becoming a Good Food Nation. With some of the world's highest rates of diet-related illnesses - which if unchecked will cost around £3 billion in healthcare costs alone in 2030 - combined with widespread and deep-seated poor dietary habits, improving Scotland's health is no easy task. When combined with figures showing we waste 1/5 of the food we buy every year while up to 95% of fresh produce in retailers is at risk from climate change, it is evident that Scotland's relationship with food in general needs to change. The Scottish Government's initial five areas of focus are summarised below.

## **2.0 Five Areas of Focus**

### **1. Food in the Public Sector**

The food in the public sector is important for two reasons: 1) it has tremendous symbolic importance and is a low-cost method of demonstrating the Government's dedication to tackling Scotland's issues with

food and drink. 2). It offers a predictable demand for small and medium enterprises who are able to use these opportunities to scale up their activity.

## **2. A Children's Food Policy**

Children's food is the Government's second area of focus and arguably the most important, as this has the potential to impact their future eating habits, development and their ability to positively influence future generations. Initiatives such as [Better Eating, Better Learning](#) and [Beyond The School Gate](#) - and the work of teachers incorporating food and health as a topic for interdisciplinary learning - are driving real change in this area. Briefings on both guidance papers can be accessed by clicking the links above or by visiting the Briefings section of the APSE website.

## **3. Local Food**

Scotland needs to reconnect with food and embrace the benefits of nutritious local food. The Government plans to capitalise on the resurgence of interest in local food by perhaps increasing the scale of the Healthy Living Programme and community food hubs, and encouraging local food growing and the use of allotments as set out in the framework of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill.

## **4. Good Food Choices**

The key to long-lasting behavioural change is achieved through a combination of the empowerment to make choices, increasing the availability and affordability of food choices as well as education. The Government aims to achieve this behavioural change with the support of retailers through reformulation, marketing or other means.

## **5. Continued Economic Growth**

While Scotland has seen unprecedented growth in turnover of 14.4% between 2008 and 2011 in the food and drink sector, there is still room for improvement. In order to see continued economic growth, Scotland's food and drink sector needs to improve its market diversity and not rely too heavily on mature markets; this will ensure our reputation as a Land of Food and Drink is maintained, will lead to an improved economic performance across the board and will give the industry the opportunity to join oil and gas as one of the premier sectors of the Scottish economy.

### **3.0 Consultation**

The discussion document includes a series of questions under the heading 'Your Response' which the Scottish Government plans to use to gauge how "you, your family or organisation will play your part" as part of ongoing local and national discussions on how Scotland can become a Good Food Nation. Comments received will go to the Scottish Food Commission to ensure they are informed by the widest possible range of views; therefore, APSE plans to coordinate a response from our membership detailed in the section 4.0 below.

### **4.0 APSE Comment**

APSE is encouraged by the release of the 'Becoming a Good Food Nation' Discussion Document and the contribution its aims will make to improving Scotland's health and environmental records. APSE appreciates the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to improving the overall quality of food and the availability of quality food shown this year with the release of the [Better Eating, Better Learning](#) and [Beyond The School Gate](#) guidance on school meals.

APSE welcomes the exposure of the great work being done by our members in East Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire in the document, showing East Ayrshire's impressive Social Return on Investment index score of 1:3 meaning that every £1 invested returned £3 in social, economic and environmental value as a result of their decisions on school food procurement, and showing West Dunbartonshire's pictorial menus initiative for pupils with additional support needs that ensures every child has the opportunity to make independent personal food choices.

APSE's performance networks is the largest voluntary local government benchmarking service nationally and we would be keen to provide our expertise and support to the Scottish Food Commission in their development of high-level indicators.

**APSE plans to coordinate a response from our membership to the release of Becoming a Good Food Nation. If you would like to contribute, please complete the questionnaire over the page and return it to Louise McMillan at [lmcmillan@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmcmillan@apse.org.uk) by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014.**

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## **Becoming a Good Food Nation (Questionnaire)**

**If you would like to contribute to APSE's coordinated response to the release of Becoming a Good Food Nation, please e-mail your responses to Louise McMillan – Principal Advisor (Scotland) at [lmcmillan@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmcmillan@apse.org.uk) by Friday 10th October 2014.**

1. How important do you think it is that we aim to be a Good Food Nation?

2. How would we know when we had got there? What would success look like?

3. Do you agree with the proposed vision? How would you improve it?

4. How would your life be better? What does being a good food nation mean in your locality?

5. Are there any other essential steps we need to take before setting out on this journey?

6. How do you think a Food Commission could best help?

7. In what areas should indicators be set to check we are on track towards achieving our goals?

8. What are your views on the different approaches that could be taken to help us become a Good Food Nation?

9. Do you agree with the proposed initial focus on:

- Food in the public sector
- A children's food policy
- Local food
- Good food choices and
- Continued economic growth?

10. Which other areas would you prioritise?

11. What other steps toward achieving a Good Food Nation would you recommend?

12. What else should be considered?

13. What steps do you plan to take to help Scotland on the journey toward becoming a Good Food Nation – in the next month and in the next 12 months?

**End of questions**

