

A Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol - DRAFT

Executive summary

A sustainable food strategy for Bristol has been developed over the last two years by a small group of organisations¹. Its aim is to transform Bristol into a hub of sustainable food that nourishes the health and wellbeing of all our communities and contributes to global sustainability. By this we mean that in the future, whenever anyone buys food in Bristol, instead of having no idea how and where it has been produced and what impact it will have on our health - and that of communities and the environment, we will be able to trust that all the food we buy will be good for us, as well as for everyone and everything involved in its production.

We are currently seeking funding to establish a new organisation that will support the range of stakeholders involved in producing, distributing, preparing, selling and eating Bristol's food. This new organisation will support food stakeholders to work together to improve their impact and effectiveness and develop the new initiatives needed to ensure food in and around Bristol no longer devastates the health and wellbeing of our communities and jeopardising global sustainability.

Food has the potential to nourish our communities and we will support stakeholders to develop the solutions that will ensure Bristol is abundant with food that has been grown, produced and sold:

- **Locally**, with minimal food miles by local enterprises that enrich and support the local community
- **Naturally**, without oil-intensive production methods, fertilizers, chemicals and packaging
- **Fairly**, in the absence of exploitation in its production, processing or retailing

By creating opportunities for projects to come together to make the whole of Bristol's food work greater than the sum of its parts, we will empower stakeholders to increase their impact throughout the entire food chain. This new organisation will deliver 6 programmes, with 6 cross-cutting themes to support its stakeholders to:

- Rebuild relationships around food between those producing, distributing, selling and eating it
- Develop local food strategies at the neighbourhood level, which will inform the evolution of this overarching Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol
- Reconnect those communities most negatively effected by food and transform their relationships with food – particularly Bristol's most disadvantaged communities
- Maximise the effectiveness of existing food initiatives by developing, sharing and signposting to good practice, ideas and resources
- Support the creation of necessary new food initiatives, as identified by Bristol's network of food stakeholders
- Develop cross-sectoral, strategic approaches to food across the Bristol City region

The rebuilding of relationships around food will be at the heart of all our work. It is only by facilitating this collaborative approach within and between communities that we will bring about the huge changes that are needed. By reconnecting people with where their food comes from people will start to recognise the devastation our current food system is causing – and most importantly how much more it could be nourishing the health and wellbeing of communities and supporting global sustainability. What's more, by empowering communities to work together collaboratively and take responsibility for their own food – rather than being at the mercy of big remote businesses, we will create the necessary capacity to achieve these huge changes.

Support programmes

The following support programmes will be delivered:

1. Reaching Wider Audiences
2. Sustainable Food Production
3. Sustainable Food Procurement
4. Sustainable School Food
5. Advocacy
6. Communications

¹ Transition Bristol, Forum for the Future, Bordeaux Quay and Bristol Food Hub are the lead organisations who have developed this strategy, with the support of various other organisations and food businesses.

Cross-cutting themes

The following cross-cutting themes will be embedded within each of the above programmes:

1. Rebuilding Relationships around food
2. Re-skilling
3. Health – mental and physical
4. Resource Efficiency
5. Global Food Justice
6. Organisational Efficiency and Sustainability

In recognition of the essential changes that peak oil and climate change necessitate, these programmes and cross-cutting themes will, between them, support stakeholders to ensure Bristol is able to feed itself and meet its full nutritional needs. It will do this by:

- Maximising the amount of land being used for sustainable food production for Bristol
- Supporting farmers and food producers to make the transition to low carbon operations
- Supporting community food projects to develop effective behaviour change initiatives to transform people's food choices and create the necessary demand for healthy, sustainable food.
- Supporting innovative models of farming, such as Community Supported Agriculture
- Supporting the creation of alternative distribution networks to enable Bristol's food businesses to source from local producers.
- Supporting stakeholders to bring about the necessary policy change to allow the implementation of practical solutions

Rising to the challenge

We are under no illusion that our aims are extremely ambitious. However, the challenges we currently face have created the imperative for responses on this scale. By putting communities - and the rebuilding of relationships within and between them, at the heart of this strategy we will unleash of the collective genius of communities and generate the capacity, resources, skills, experience, diversity and – most importantly, belief, necessary to bring about this imperative change. Needless to say the transformation we are projecting will not take place over night, but what better time to start than now! We are confident that by working together Bristol is on the cusp of creating a truly resilient food system that cities, towns and communities the world over can learn from and be inspired by.

This Strategy means action!

Unlike most strategies, this Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol will not simply gather dust on a shelf somewhere. It is work in progress, it is yours', mine ... everyone's and as we work together to create the solutions, it will inevitably be constantly changing. Rather than a document set in stone, it should be seen as a navigation tool, to keep us focused on where we are headed, but ready and able to change direction at any time, depending what we learn along the way.

We very much look forward to receiving your input on the this Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol – which will help us to ensure that it will deliver on your specific needs. We will be holding drop-in **consultation sessions** in the Hub's offices, on the fifth floor of Bush House, 72 Prince St. on:

Tues 16 June between 6 and 8pm

Wed 17 June between 12 and 2pm

These sessions will offer you the opportunity to speak to some of the people who developed this strategy, ask any questions you may have about it and feed in any suggestions for improving it.

If you are unable to make one of these sessions, please email your feedback to bristolfoodhub@googlemail.com by Wed 17 June.

We look forward to working with you to make these exciting plans a reality!

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Introduction

At a time when recession is fueling the nation with anxiety and apprehension and communities the world over are facing overwhelming food-related environmental, social, health and economic crises, sustainable food offers the perfect opportunity to encourage and develop new ways of living that have the potential to deliver on the diverse needs of Bristol's communities – and beyond.

Food is amazing and despite the possibly unprecedented food-related crises that our current globalised and industrialised food system is causing, food has the potential to play an immensely positive role in the health and wellbeing of Bristol's communities – the regeneration of their neighbourhoods, the strengthening of their local economies, their cohesion and cultural diversity, their freedom from crime and anti-social behaviour and the future prosperity of their children and young people. What's more, in the context of peak oil (and fossil depletion more generally) and climate change - global sustainability rests on the re-localisation and de-industrialisation of our food system. By rebuilding relationships between those producing, selling and eating food, we will start the process of returning food back to the collective and democratic control of communities.

What do we mean by sustainable food?

The term sustainable food refers to food that:

- Preserves fossil-fuels and mitigates against climate change
- Protects people's health and the welfare of animals
- Stimulates and strengthens local economies
- Improves the local environment and enhances bio-diversity
- Creates social benefits, such as community spaces to enjoy healthy, affordable food
- Respects the rights of everyone involved in its production, both locally and globally
- Respects the right of all peoples to define their own food systems

In practice, this means food that has been grown, produced and sold:

- **Locally**, with minimal food miles by local enterprises that enrich and support the local community
- **Naturally**, without oil-intensive production methods, fertilizers, chemicals and packaging
- **Fairly**, in the absence of exploitation in its production, processing or retailing

What is the Bristol food network aiming to achieve?

The Bristol food network will develop a range of programmes to support Bristol's multiple food stakeholders to significantly contribute to the city's resilience by transforming Bristol into a hub of sustainable food. The Bristol food network's overarching aim is to ensure that food plays an entirely positive role in:

- Bristol's communities – their health and wellbeing, cohesion, local environments, economies and cultures
- Global sustainability
- Global food justice

How will the Bristol food network achieve this?

Through a range of support programmes and cross-cutting themes we will:

- Rebuild relationships between stakeholders to develop local food strategies at the neighbourhood level and inform the evolution of an overarching Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol
- Reconnect those communities most negatively effected by food and transform their relationships with food – particularly Bristol's most disadvantaged communities
- Maximise the effectiveness of existing food initiatives by developing, sharing and signposting to good practice, ideas and resources
- Support the creation of necessary new food initiatives, as identified by the Network
- Develop cross-sectoral, strategic approaches to food across the Bristol City region

- Overcome the barriers – physical, social and political - faced to transforming Bristol into a hub of sustainable food

Rebuilding relationships around food:

Collaboration within and between local communities, farmers, land owners and retailers

At the heart of this strategy – and its key to long term and radical change – is the rebuilding of relationships between those who produce, sell and eat food. The current food-related crises we are facing are a direct result of the break down of these relationships. Our subsequent disconnection from where our food comes from has blinded us to the devastating impacts of our current food system – and the food choices we make within it. It is the absence of these relationships around food that have led to our masochistic food choices and addictions that are destroying the quality of our lives and the survival of future generations.

By rebuilding collaborative relationships around food, based on trust, everyone involved will wake up to the impacts their relationships with food are having on everyone – and everything, involved. By bringing the production of our food closer to home, we will no longer be able to turn a blind eye to the impacts of how it is produced, on both people, animals and the environment. As people start to understand the injustice and unsustainability of our current food system – not to mention its chronic and crippling impacts on our health, people will start to understand and act on the need to re-localise our food. What's more when it is our own communities that are being contaminated with the harmful chemicals and fertilizers currently used to produce our food and we are confronted with the realities of the animals are treated to satisfy our insatiable appetites for meat, we will start to think twice about the true costs of the cheap food we have come to rely on.

These new relationships will help us to understand why food prices may need to increase, if those involved in producing and selling it are going to be fairly treated and remunerated. What's more, we will feel the direct benefits of our new relationships with food on our health and wellbeing – both physically and mentally – and any increases in price will be cancelled out by the savings we make on medicine and health care.

We will also come to understand that we live in a closed system with finite resources, which means, as the Sustainable Development Commission has recently affirmed, economic growth, and the consumerism it relies on, is not compatible with the sustainability of future generations. For example, when it is the local farm land that we rely on to feed us that needs to be used to produce bio-fuels (rather than that of the world's poorest people), we will think twice about just how much we really need to drive our vehicles.

Furthermore, with food no longer needing to travel half way round the world to reach us, there will be little if any need for the incredulous amount of packaging we are subjected to. And should producers and retailers still be tempted by packaging's marketing benefits, it is safe to say that communities would put their foot down if it were their own land that had to be filled, so to speak, with this food waste.

Needless to say historically these relationships did exist and history has taught us that a connection with the people and land we rely on for our food, survival and vitality, is the key to appreciating their fragile and finite nature. When water runs freely from a tap and 'food' is infinitely abundant on supermarket shelves, it is inevitable that we become disconnected from the reality of our reliance on nature's finite resources for our survival.

Furthermore, this rebuilding of relationships around food also holds the key to cultivating the collaborative approach needed not just within, but between communities. Not only have we become blinded to our interdependence with nature's finite resources, but also to the interdependence of communities the world over. By reconnecting people with where their food comes from, and the realities of its production, this relationship building process will also make obvious the need for collaboration between communities if we are going to be able to feed ourselves in times to come. The importance of collaborative relationships with our rural and sparsely populated neighbours in Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France, is set to become increasingly obvious as fossil-fuel depletion kicks in. We see then that the transformational potential of food reaches far beyond health and agricultural, seemingly holding the keys to paradigm shifts in the manifestations of the natural synergies within and between communities, and their interdependence on nature and her simultaneously finite, fragile and formidable ecosystems.

Underpinning this strategy, therefore is a belief that in the absence of the rebuilding of relationships around food, any attempts to transform our food system will be short lived, if not futile. Any meaningful and long-term transformation of our food system, such that we develop the resilience necessary for the prosperity of future generations, relies on returning

food back to the collective and democratic control of communities, alongside a collective awakening to our interdependence on each other, and nature's finite resources.

The Bristol food network and Transition Network will work with its stakeholders to rebuild these relationships and develop a model of support that will then be rolled out nationally to the rapidly growing number of local Transition groups across the country – and beyond.

Support programmes and cross-cutting themes

The Bristol food network will deliver the following support programmes to achieve its aims:

1. Reaching Wider Audiences
2. Sustainable Food Production
3. Sustainable Food Procurement
4. Sustainable School Food
5. Advocacy
6. Communications

The following cross-cutting themes will be embedded within each of the programmes and the Bristol food network's work more generally:

1. Rebuilding Relationships
2. Re-skilling
3. Health – mental and physical
4. Resource Efficiency
5. Global Food Justice
6. Organisational Efficiency and Sustainability

Who is the Bristol food network?

The Bristol food network is made up of the growing number of people, communities, organisations and enterprises in Bristol who share its vision to transform Bristol into a hub of sustainable food. This includes:

- Food producers
- Food retailers
- Community food initiatives
- Individuals interested in food
- Health practitioners

This strategy has been developed by four key organisations with on-going input from myriad stakeholders. See appendix 1 for more information on stakeholders and partnership working.

The key individuals and organisations who developed this bid are:

Claire Milne – Bristol Food Hub, Transition Bristol, Transition Network and Bristol City Council

Claire Skinner – Forum for the Future

Amy Robinson – Bordeaux Quay and the Green Capital Momentum Group

Kristin Sponsler – Transition Bristol, Transition Network and the Post Carbon Institute

See appendix 1 for biographies

This is however only a temporary group formed to produce this strategy and secure the funding to deliver it. As soon as funding is secured a 6 month multi-stakeholder consultation will take place to decide on the most appropriate governance structure and name for the organisation.

The work of this group initially started as part of a process to try and resurrect Bristol Food Links, however this did not prove successful and so a sub-group of the Bristol food network Steering Group continued to develop a sustainable food strategy for Bristol – the result of which is contained in this document. The key team that produced this strategy, along with various advisers, between them hold a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience at the local, regional and national levels. Various stakeholders have also volunteered for the Bristol food network, for example, Jane Stevenson

(Bristol Friends of the Earth), Emily Warmley (Sawday Publications), Alex Michelson (Radford Mill Farm) and Nadia Hillman (GROFUN).

Mission Possible

We are under no illusion that our aims are extremely ambitious. However, the challenges we currently face have created the imperative for responses on this scale. By putting communities - and the rebuilding of relationships within and between them, at the heart of this strategy, we are empowering a paradigm shift that will see people working together to solve their own problems, rather than relying on governments and businesses to shape their lives. By supporting the rebuilding of relationships within – and between - communities, we will be bringing true meaning to the term 'empowerment'. What's more, by raising awareness of the interdependence of communities with respect to being able to feed ourselves, the collaborative approach between communities that has been historically lacking, will become a reality.

This unleashing of the collective genius of communities holds the key to generating the capacity, resources, skills, experience, diversity and – most importantly, belief, necessary to bring about this imperative change. Needless to say the transformation we are projecting will not take place over night. By embedding this deeper societal change within practical programmes of work, we believe the necessary tipping point is not just possible, but inevitable. If not now, then when? What's more, the process in itself is worth as much as the final destination.

We are confident that Bristol is on the cusp of creating a truly resilient food system that cities, towns and communities the world over can learn and be inspired by and that the Bristol food network holds the skills, expertise, passion and motivation to truly empower this transformation.

This Strategy means action!

Unlike most strategies, this Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol will not simply gather dust on a shelf somewhere. It is work in progress, it is yours', mine ... everyone's and as we work together to create the solutions, it will inevitably be constantly changing. Rather than a document set in stone, it should be seen as a navigation tool, to keep us focused on where we are headed, but ready and able to change direction at any time, depending what we learn along the way.

Delivering the Strategy

Bristol boasts a wealth of successful food initiatives, run by a range of stakeholders already working to promote sustainable food and keen to deepen and expand their impact. However there currently exists an almost complete lack of coordination ensuring these projects are working together, adding value to and learning from each other and developing a joined up strategic approach to transforming Bristol's food.

The Bristol food network will play this role by creating opportunities for projects to come together to make the whole of Bristol's food work greater than the sum of its parts and empower stakeholders to increase their impact throughout the entire food chain and develop local food strategies for their communities that will in turn inform and shape Bristol's constantly evolving Sustainable Food Strategy.

The Bristol food network will achieve its aims and objectives by delivering a support and coordination programme, cross-cut with a variety of themes, for its network of food stakeholders to:

- Rebuild relationships between stakeholders to develop local food strategies at the neighbourhood level and inform the evolution of an overarching Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol
- Reconnect those communities most negatively effected by food and transform their relationships with food – particularly Bristol's most disadvantaged communities
- Maximise the effectiveness of existing food initiatives by developing, sharing and signposting to good practice, ideas and resources
- Support the creation of necessary new food initiatives, as identified by the Network
- Develop cross-sectoral, strategic approaches to food across the Bristol City region
- Overcome the barriers – physical, social and political - faced to transforming Bristol into a hub of sustainable food

With the rebuilding of relationships around food at the heart of all our work, the Bristol food network will provide Bristol's multitude of food initiatives with the support they need to function more effectively and a forum and framework through which to embed their work within. The Local food strategies borne out of these new relationships will form the basis of the continual development of this long term Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol.

1. Support programmes

The Bristol food network's range of programmes and cross-cutting themes will be fully integrated and underpinned by the rebuilding of relationships around food and the subsequent development of local food strategies. This joined up and integrated approach will ensure that all aspects of food are addressed through a fully holistic approach.

The Bristol food network's overall Coordinator will work to ensure all programme coordinators work in synergy to ensure all of their work is informed by and feeds into all other programmes. This post will also oversee the rebuilding of relationships around food and creation of local food strategies across Bristol, the champions of which will work together to continually develop this Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol. This work will weave together all of the Network's programmes and themes and will involve exploring the relative merits of initially piloting relationship building and the development of local food strategies in one or two communities.

- 1.1. Reaching Wider Audiences
- 1.2 Sustainable Food Production
- 1.3 Sustainable Food Procurement
- 1.4 Sustainable School Food
- 1.5 Advocacy
- 1.6 Communications

2. Cross-cutting themes

Food effects almost every aspect of our lives and if the Bristol food network is going to ensure that it starts to play a positive role across all these aspects we need to attend to a variety of issues throughout our programmes of support. The following themes will be embedded within all our work, more long term strategies gradually developed. What's more, additional themes will be introduced as our work progresses, for example transport is likely to become a theme once

solutions to local food distribution are generated.

- 2.1 Rebuilding Relationships
- 2.2 Re-skilling
- 2.3 Health – mental and physical
- 2.4 Resource Efficiency
- 2.5 Global Food Justice
- 2.6 Organisational Efficiency and Sustainability

Programme delivery

Each of our programmes will involve coordinating themed working groups and stakeholder forums to:

- facilitate the rebuilding of relationships around food and the development of local food strategies
- facilitate the development of innovative, joined up approaches
- develop and share good practice, ideas and resources across Bristol, regionally and nationally
- run regular networking events, open space sessions, talks, training and workshops
- inform the work of all programmes and working groups
- inform the continual development of Bristol's sustainable food strategy

By ensuring that these programmes and cross-cutting themes are fully integrated and informed by each other, we will ensure that all of the Bristol food network's work is contributing to food playing an entirely positive role in the health and wellbeing of both communities and the environment – and to a new collaborative approach, within and between communities, to create solutions to the unprecedented challenges we face.

1.1 Reaching Wider Audiences Programme

It is Bristol's more disadvantaged communities that tend to be disproportionately affected by the health, environmental and economic damage being caused by our current food system. With food budgets being perhaps the most elastic of our essential outgoings, the bombardment of cheap nutritionally-void food is responsible for the overwhelming food-related health crises we currently face – not to mention the environmental and economic crises.

The UK is currently enjoying a rapid growth in awareness and interest in sustainable food – however this interest is predominantly among the 'middle classes'. This is due to a variety of reasons but in particular because 'healthy', 'sustainable', 'organic' and 'ethical' foods have been marketed as a lifestyle choice for the wealthy as a result of companies' pursuit for profits – which come from heavily marked up processed foods, rather than fresh, natural wholefoods. Supermarkets and 'health food' chain stores like Planet Organic and Whole Foods, have created the popular illusion that healthy and sustainable food choices are extremely expensive, as heavily processed and packaged 'health foods' are being marketed by supermarkets as the answer to our nation's food related health and environmental problems.

The reality however is that these processed goods are seriously oil drenched climate criminals. But what's more, healthy, sustainable food needn't be expensive. Everyone has the ability – and right – to be nourished by real food that has come from local soils, untainted by damaging chemicals and fertilizers. Unfortunately many projects with a history of promoting healthy eating to disadvantaged communities take the attitude that to promote local, organic food is 'out of touch' as these communities simply can't afford such foods, and don't see them as relevant. On the contrary – everyone has the right to enjoy and be nourished by these foods that can grow naturally and freely from the soil, and there are a growing number of models that are removing them from the realms of the profit-motive and returning them to collective community control.

In Bristol we already have a number of community food projects, including food coops, community growing projects and increasingly CSAs that are specifically working to make sustainable food accessible to disadvantaged and low income communities. In addition to making healthy, sustainable food more widely accessible, these initiatives are also demonstrating to people the potential we have to free ourselves from our current slavery to high salaries to satiate our addiction to consumerism. By experiencing the pleasures of growing, cooking and eating food communally, we are not only empowering people to access healthy, sustainable food – but also to discover more socially and environmentally positive ways to spend our time.

The Reaching Wider Audiences Programme will work to ensure that all Programmes are addressing the need to make sustainable food accessible to all, by for example, raising awareness of models like CSA and food coops. The Programme will also support its stakeholders to ensure that their work is reaching beyond the usual suspects, using culturally sensitive approaches at all times. This will underpin all our work.

Seasonal Food Celebrations programme

Persuading people to make sustainable food choices and to transform their relationships with food on ethical grounds is extremely challenging though and tends to speak only to 'the usual suspects'. In contrast, highlighting the fun and community wellbeing food can bring when engaged with in a social way, and based on local and multi-cultural food traditions and a love of real food, affords the opportunity to reach much wider audiences – and in particular Bristol's most disadvantaged communities – many of whom hold a wealth of culturally specific food traditions ripe for celebrating and benefitting from.

Despite an almost complete lack of contemporary mainstream British food culture, historically Britain was rich with diverse, regionally and seasonally specific food cultures and traditions that brought people together to celebrate the foods produced in their locality. What's more, Britain now enjoys myriad food cultures introduced by a cacophony of different cultures now enriching communities throughout the country. Engaging people with this diversity of food cultures will not only empower them around food, but will also help to nurture relationships between different cultures and communities, through a better understanding and appreciation of each other's eating habits.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, by bringing together and enthusing people around local food traditions we will be able to counter the fears people have about low carbon alternatives being regressions to the 'hard times' of the past. Tasting how delicious real food is and how much fun learning about it, preparing it and celebrating it is, therefore represents the perfect way to motivate people to eat in a more sustainable and healthy way.

The Bristol food network will work with the Transition Network develop and deliver a year's programme of seasonal food celebrations in Bristol's most disconnected and deprived communities. These fun and celebratory events will draw on food's amazing potential to bring communities together in positive and affordable ways – and afford the opportunity to better understand current relationships with food. The resulting understanding of people's motivations for behaviour change will allow the Bristol food network to identify the most effective approaches to promote meaningful behaviour change – rather than superficial change as exemplified by the media and government's current approach to food (for example Change4Life).

Key to this Seasonal Food Celebrations Programme will be the recruiting of local Food Champions. The Reaching Wider Audiences Coordinator will work with partners to identify inspirational figures from the targeted disadvantaged communities, and find funding streams to pay them to work within the targeted communities to ensure that the food events respond to their interests and are truly collaborative, with everyone actively involved in skills and knowledge sharing. These insights will help develop a food and behaviour change programme, with a growing number of Food Champions in Bristol's most disadvantaged communities.

These seasonal food celebrations will be run as a pilot in partnership with Transition Network's Food Programme (funding applications are imminent), such that the resulting good practice can be shared with and rolled out by the rapidly growing network of local Transition groups, Sustain's Local Action on Food Network and beyond. We are also in communication with the New Economics Foundation and Food Ethics Council regarding their work to address food-related social justice issues and look forward to being able to contribute and share good practice with this national initiative.

Small pilots have already been run to explore the appetite for such events and the barriers to their success. It was during these pilots that the need for Food Champions and for running a series of specifically celebratory events as a way to get to know the specific communities and their relationships with, and motivations around food, were identified.

What's more these celebratory events, and the Food Champions we recruit, will be central to the rebuilding of relationships around food and extremely beneficial to the myriad existing food initiatives in Bristol who struggle to meaningfully engage more disadvantaged communities in their work. For example, local project GROFUN has developed an incredibly successful model supporting neighbours to support each other to grow food in their gardens, and growing workshops in schools. They have already expressed their enthusiasm for this programme, stressing how useful such Food Champions would be for them and their work. Similarly, Food Champions will be involved with all of the Bristol food network's programmes and will work with us to increasingly get more and more people from their respective communities engaged and involved within efforts to transform food in Bristol.

1.2 Sustainable Urban Food Production Programme

In the face of fossil fuel depletion and climate change, Bristol is going to need to work towards being as self-sufficient in food as possible. What's more, food that has been produced locally is more beneficial to our health, enhances the local environment, strengthens local economies and creates relationships built on trust that preclude the need for expensive and resource-heavy certification and regulation.

Bristol already has a wealth of urban agriculture projects, but now needs to rise to the challenge of developing a coherent strategy to be able to feed itself as far as is possible. This will rely heavily on building relationships with local land owners and farmers to raise their awareness and motivate them to start growing sustainably for local markets now – rather than wait until crisis point hits when the task will be severely more challenging.

Bristol's Eat the Change campaign (part of Share the Harvest, one of our pilot seasonal food celebrations), which challenged people to spend a week eating only local organic food, free from plastic packaging, highlighted just how challenging it is, even for the most committed, to eat an entirely sustainable diet. People's feedback through the forum provided extremely useful information regarding staples, like milk and oil, that are impossible to source locally.

1.2.i Support communities and retailers to re-build relationships with local land owners and farmers to develop collaborative models of sustainable food production

The Bristol food network's Production and Procurement Programmes will together work with Transition Network to develop a model of good practice to support local communities to successfully rebuild relationships with local land owners, farmers and Bristol's food retailers so that food and farming begins to play the cohesive and positive role in communities that it used to - and needs to if we are going to develop the resilience needed to overcome the unprecedented crises we are currently facing.

Eat Somerset is working to increase the amount of local food available in Bristol and Bath. By connecting local food producers and local retailers the barriers currently faced in terms of supplying Bristol and Bath with more local food have been explored. The logistics of distribution, barcoding and marketing were found to be the major barriers to local producers supplying Bristol's retailers. (To find out more visit www.sustainweb.org and go to the Eat Somerset pages.)

Drawing on lessons learned from Eat Somerset, the Soil Association's work with organic farmers and Forum for the Future's Farming Futures work with non-organic farmers, local community groups will be supported to play a brokerage role between farmers / land owners and their local retailers. Lessons learned from Eat Somerset highlighted the need for this brokerage role, in the context of local producers, distributors and retailers being too overstretched to champion this themselves. We will also feed into and learn from the newly emerging work of the Low Carbon Farming Initiative which is in the early stages of developing a programme bringing together good practice in sustainable farming from around the country and beyond, to develop pilot sustainable farms to ensure our agricultural sector is prepared for the serious challenges ahead.

The Bristol food network and Transition Network will pilot this reconnecting of farmers, land owners, retailers and communities – with the latter at the heart – to develop a model that moves away from centralised organisations brokering such relationships, without the involvement of communities themselves. This is based on a belief that communities hold the key to creating resilience in the future. What's more, by bringing all these stakeholders together to work collaboratively, we will automatically be addressing the issues of both supply and demand. In the absence of communities reconnecting with farmers and where their food comes from, attempts to significantly increase demand for genuinely sustainable food will remain futile.

What's more, the lessons learned from this pilot will then also inform the Low Carbon Farming initiative, the Soil Association, Farming Futures and other relevant initiatives' work with farmers and be shared through the national roll out of this programme by the Transition Network and other relevant networks.

1.2.ii Support the development of Community Supported Agriculture initiatives

If land owners and local farmers are going to give their land over to sustainable local food production they need to be convinced that their local community is willing to support them, that it will be financially viable and that there is a real need for this.

The Bristol food network jointly hosted a well attended CSA training event for groups wanting to set up a CSA, with the

Soil Association and as a result there are various communities in Bristol exploring moving ahead with this. Support is needed to take their plans forward and to kick start other communities to develop these initiatives. A new CSA is currently being launched and we are working with the local farm to support and learn from its development. The Bristol food network will support groups to set up CSAs and will also work with the Soil Association to innovate new models of CSA, for example company supported agriculture. We are already in fact liaising with a new local food restaurant, Canteen West, interested in sourcing through a company supported agriculture model.

Needless to say the emerging new relationships around food will support the development and proliferation of CSAs.

1.2.ii Identify Bristol's nutritional needs, the amount and types of land needed to meet these needs and its potential to achieve this

The Transition Network is working with mapping specialists, GeoFutures, and other partners to calculate the UK's potential to feed itself and develop the necessary knowledge and tools to support communities to calculate their nutritional and land needs. This information will be based on population and climate change predictions, as well as land aspects such as soil type, slope and more specific demographic information. This work is currently being piloted in Totnes and the Bristol food network is involved in this development and will begin work on this once adequate information is available.

This national work has already established that feeding Britain must be a collaborative effort. For example, whilst it is relatively easy to be self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables, other crops will need to be grown on land, and in micro-climates most suitable to their specific needs. What's more, vastly varying population densities mean urban areas will be increasingly reliant on their rural neighbours. Mapping to date already highlights that without collaboration with our Welsh neighbours, Bristol and Bath could be fighting over land to feed ourselves.

The Bristol food network will work with the Transition Network, GeoFutures, Transition Town Totnes, Transition Norwich and East Anglia Food Links (who both are already starting to develop this work) to establish, among other things:

How much land Bristol needs to feed itself (based on its nutritional needs)

What new crops local farmers will need to grow

What contribution to feeding Bristol land and food producers surrounding Bristol can make

How much land exists within Bristol could be used for food production

What the barriers are to Bristol feeding itself

BCC, regional and national land use policy and how to influence it

Land and models currently being used in Bristol for growing

Amount of food currently being produced in and around Bristol

The Bristol food network needs to work closely with its stakeholders and partner bodies regionally and nationally, to accessibly communicate the findings so as to empower communities to remove the barriers to securing land for food production in their neighbourhoods and their rural hinterlands. Again, this will process will be aided by the emerging relationship building around food.

1.2.iv Ring fence the necessary land to feed Bristol

Land use is an increasingly political issue and in Bristol there exists a plethora of competing demands. The building of relationships between communities, land owners, farmers and retailers will form the foundation of our work to ensure that adequate land – public and private - is secured for sustainable food production. However, it will also be necessary to address the legislative and policy frameworks that shape land use and to work with partners across the country to develop a strategy to work with big land owners and to lobby for land reform. The Capital Growth and Land Share projects offer interesting models for Bristol to learn from. Initially the Bristol food network will:

1.2.iv.a Lobby local, regional and national decision-makers to ring fence public land for sustainable food production

BCC owns a vast amount of land that could be used to feed and nourish Bristol. However, rather than prioritising land for feeding Bristol, BCC is rapidly selling off land to developers to bring in funding and meet central government housing targets. This is even the case for the Allotments team, who in their new strategy plan to sell off significant amounts of land to fulfill budget shortfalls. What's more, in addition to the 10 000 houses planned for south Bristol (and 117 000 across the south west) and the park and ride earmarked for grade A agricultural land alongside the M32, much public land is also currently being used to graze horses, as this brings in revenue for BCC.

The Bristol food network will develop a strategy to ring fence this land by raising public awareness of the need for Bristol to feed itself and of opportunities to influence BCC and South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), as and when they arise, for example through the Sustainable Communities Act.

In the short term, Bristol City Council currently has a shortfall of 700 allotments (based on numerous wards having less than the required 7 allotments per 1000 people). The public land for these is available, but not in the necessary state for use as allotments / community growing. We will support community groups, where waiting lists exist, to secure funding to implement the necessary improvements so the land can be given over to community food growing.

1.2.iv.b Develop a strategy to ensure that private sector land owners use their land for affordable sustainable food production

Significant and increasing amounts of land lie in the hands of large private land owners such as the National Trust, insurance companies and developers. In addition to supporting local communities to rebuild their relationships with local land owners and farmers to persuade and motivate them to grow sustainably for local markets, there will also be the need to work collaboratively at a regional and national level. A strategy will be developed, learning from national good practice such as Capital Growth and Land Share and drawing on the relationships being built at the local level, to persuade these key players to work with the Bristol food network and national partners to create resilience for Bristol.

1.2.v Support existing and initiate new and innovative models of sustainable urban food production

Bristol boasts a wealth of community food projects, not all of which are necessarily promoting sustainable local food production. We will work with community food projects to raise their awareness of the need for a holistic approach to food – for example, ensuring that healthy eating projects promote locally produced food and models that make sustainable food affordable for all, such as food coops and CSAs, as part of their work to promote healthy eating. We will encourage mentoring by more experienced and successful projects, for new and struggling initiatives and draw on the Making Local Food Work programme for models of good practice to learn from.

By bringing groups together we will facilitate the sharing of knowledge, resources and good practice and ensure Bristol's community food sector is as effective as possible. What's more, this networking and strategic approach will allow us to identify gaps and together develop innovative new initiatives to address any problems identified.

1.2.v.a Community Supported Agriculture

As above, we will support existing and encourage and support the creation of new CSAs to feed Bristol.

1.2.v.b Edible roofs

BCC's Sustainability and Environment team have run workshops to support the creation of green roofs. Bristol food network needs to work with them to offer similar workshops specifically for edible roofs. There are a range of commercial operations and community projects that are ripe for innovating this across Bristol, including Canteen West, a new local food restaurant keen to start work on this as soon as possible.

1.3 Sustainable Supply and Distribution Programme

Transforming Bristol into a hub of sustainable food rests on understanding where Bristol's food currently comes from – who is producing, distributing and selling it - and what the barriers are to both the public and private sectors sourcing more sustainably.

Exploring Bristol's food system, including its over 4000 food businesses, would be an almost impossible for a central body to usefully conduct. Far more effective is for local community groups to build relationships with their local food retailers – who should be keen to engage with them as they provide their customer base - to better understand their attitude to sustainable food and the barriers they face to sourcing it.

The Bristol food network will support community food groups across the city to establish:

- Who is growing, producing, distributing and selling / providing the food we eat in Bristol
- How is food being transported to and within Bristol
- The barriers faced in terms of supplying Bristol with sustainable food
- The most appropriate and effective solutions to overcoming these barriers

The Making Local Food Works Local Food Webs programme is interested in rolling out its mapping work in Bristol and we are in on-going discussions about this. Should this happen, it would provide useful information about those retailers already sourcing local food, where this is coming from and how it is being distributed – information vital to developing a more efficient delivery system for local food to Bristol. What's more it would also provide the opportunity for the Food Webs Programme to learn from the model we are developing around building relationships, as one of the challenges that has been mentioned is the reliance of the programme on the buy in of community groups.

Whilst the public and private sectors have different needs, this information will be essential to supporting both sectors to source more sustainably.

2.1 Private sector

As already discussed, the Bristol food network will develop a model to build relationships between local communities, land owners, farmers and retailers, to facilitate them better understanding each others' needs and collaboratively overcome the barriers to Bristol becoming a hub of sustainable food.

With respect to local food retailers, many lessons have been learned from Eat Somerset in terms of barriers to getting more local food into Bristol, as summarised in section 1.2.i under the Production Programme. Local retailers wanting to source locally are challenged on numerous levels, including not knowing where to source local food from, not knowing local food producers' respective credentials on sustainable production and perhaps most importantly, the lack of an effective distribution system that avoids several multiple small deliveries from different local suppliers. What's more, Eat Somerset identified the need for a brokerage role, as local food producers and retailers are too hard pressed to create and maintain the necessary momentum tackle these vital issues. Local communities are perfectly placed to play this brokerage role. What's more, through this process communities will begin to reconnect with where their food comes and thus appreciate the benefits of local organic food, and therefore create an increasing demand for sustainable food.

The Bristol food network will support community groups, such as the some 13 local Transition Neighbourhood groups, to build relationships with their local retailers, to better understand their attitudes and barriers to sourcing sustainable food and raise awareness of the local demand for it. This local information will then inform city-wide discussions around collaborative solutions to address the identified barriers.

It is essential that community groups are well informed about the reality of food distribution and the nuances of the sustainable food debate, before they engage in this dialogue. The Bristol food network will support groups to understand the basics of food distribution and empower them to build positive relationships with their retailers so as to solicit information essential to generating solutions to the barriers faced to sourcing sustainable food.

There tend to be three different camps amongst food retailers:

- a. Already on board and keen to source sustainably, but challenged by logistics (for example, we are already aware of some 10 restaurants that are very keen to source sustainably but who are challenged by the

- unconsolidated distribution system)
- b Persuadable once presented with the business case and empowered to make it happen
- c Uninterested and not worth pursuing.

We will support local groups to deal with all of these situations. Once information has been generated about the barriers faced, we will begin to generate solutions, drawing on national good practice such as physical food hubs and distribution networks. Plans for a Virtual Farmers Market have already been developed, but the initiating group have agreed that there is a need to explore the current distribution system before moving ahead with specific solutions.

Those in camp 'a' are ripe for helping develop and piloting these potential solutions.

Community groups will be supported to support those in camp 'b' to understand the need for and benefits from sourcing more sustainably and keep them updated on the development of solutions to overcome the logistical problems. We will also draw on the Soil Association's Catering Mark, highlighting the business case and marketing opportunities, as a leverage tool to persuade caterers to source more sustainably.

With respect to those in camp 'c', local groups will be supported to set up their own community-owned shops, drawing on good practice from the Making Local Food Work programme, and providing a model that makes sustainable food available in community spaces (not people's living rooms), at affordable prices. We already have a big appetite for this in Bristol, from community groups, and Bristol City Council's regeneration team are interested in working with us to pilot a food coop in one of Bristol's many empty shops – as part of BCC's Recession Action Plan, which is prioritising filling empty shops. This support will draw on and feed into the good practice being developed by the Making Local Food Work programmes on both food coops and community-owned shops. What's more we will capitalise on the Department for Communities and Local Government's programme of support to see empty shops filled with social enterprises and support local initiatives to tap into some of the promised £3mn.

The tourism sector

Sustainability South West have carried out some work to promote sustainable food within the tourism sector. This has mainly consisted of producing and disseminating publicity materials to B&Bs and hotels, signposting tourists to local food producers. This work is now being carried out by Destination Bristol and the Bristol food network will link with this work to explore opportunities to support each other.

Sustainable food procurement within Bristol's tourist sector is not yet being addressed. The Bristol food network will encourage stakeholders such as Bristol City Council's Media and Culture Unit, South West Food and Drink, the West of England partnership and Destination Bristol to develop an initiative to address this.

2.2 Public sector

Again, Eat Somerset has generated some extremely useful information and results in terms of public sector food procurement and is waiting to hear whether it will receive funding to deliver an important project working to increase local organic food production to supply the public sector, and schools and hospitals in particular.

The Meet the Buyers event it recently ran to forge relationships between local producers and public sector caterers and food procurement staff had four (of 17) Bristol staff in attendance and as a result Frenchay Hospital now has a contract for ice cream from a local supplier and Southmead hospital is looking to do so in the future. Whilst this is good news, it highlights just how far there is to go. In contrast, Bath based schools, universities and NHS trust centres have now secured contracts with local fruit and vegetable producers, as a result of this event.

The Soil Association have also carried out some work to get hospitals sourcing organic food, however this has proved extremely challenging.

Sustainability South West are now starting to work around public sector sustainable food procurement as part of their Sustainable Health Care programme which is focusing on NHS trusts, in particular.

We will work with Eat Somerset (who have been working with South West Food and Drink and the West of England Partnership), the Soil Association and Sustainability South West to promote this agenda and identify opportunities to extend their outreach, as well as embedding it within all our programmes.

We have built relationships with relevant Bristol City Council staff to better understand the challenges they face to sourcing more sustainably – for example, long contracts with multi-national food companies and EU regulations preventing the specification of local food due to this being seen as anti-competitive against non-local companies. We are working with BCC's procurement team to identify opportunities to introduce more sustainability criteria within their contracts. We have also found out that some contracts will be put out to tender in the near future, as and when Council accommodation changes, which affords important opportunities to ensure new contracts have sustainability criteria firmly embedded within them.

We are also working with Bristol City Council's Transforming School Meals team to explore the opportunities for increasing sustainable food procurement by schools and our Procurement and Schools Programmes will work together to progress this. We have also recently started working with Bristol's Let's Get Cooking team. Our Schools Programme will enable us to ensure a joined up, holistic approach to food is being taken throughout all food work within Bristol. We will specifically work with those schools that have opted out of contracts and that are therefore free to decide who provides their food, as this affords good opportunities to develop good practice around sustainable food procurement within schools, and thereby demonstrate to other schools that they do not need to opt into these contracts.

BCC also recently hosted a workshop around sustainable food procurement. In response to our suggestion, the Corporate Procurement team plan to follow this up by coordinating a forum to continue discussions around how BCC staff involved in food procurement can work together to overcome the challenges they face to sourcing more sustainably. We have been invited to present to this group to provide an overview of sustainable food and how we can support them to source more of it. We will help support this group by raising awareness about the issues and linking them with work being done to transform Bristol's supply chain and by signposting them to useful information, resources and partners. BCC's Procurement team is also planning to run workshops for food SME's to support them to be able to secure contracts. We will support these efforts by feeding in the lessons learned around distribution.

BCC's Parks and Green Spaces team are developing an initiative called Bristol Beef, which involves them purchasing a piece of land to graze 35 heads of livestock to produce local, organic beef for schools, hospitals and retailers across Bristol. We will work with BCC to ensure this initiative receives the support it needs to go ahead and to extend this to other public land.

Our Advocacy and Procurement Coordinators will work together to develop a strategy to lobby BCC to introduce the necessary policy change and resources to enable and implement the changes needed to make Bristol's public sector food procurement sustainable and resilient.

1.4 Sustainable School Food Programme

Schools will play a key role in the process of rebuilding relationships around food – and transforming food in schools relies heavily on embedding schools within these collaborative relationships, built on trust – which will model for our future generations the behaviour needed to create healthy, vibrant communities who recognise and act on their responsibility in terms of securing the sustainability of generations to follow.

Various school focused initiatives exist within Bristol, including Food for Life, Bristol City Council's Transforming School Meals and Let's Get Cooking programmes and healthy and eco schools programmes, but these need coordinating, extending and building on.

Working within the frameworks already developed by those already working with schools, the Bristol food network will coordinate a programme of work that aims to support Bristol schools to develop and implement sustainable school food strategies. The Bristol food network's role will be to coordinate this work and support appropriate local organisations to deliver the work in schools.

Pilot sustainable school food strategies

Food for Life has developed an extremely useful framework and criteria for schools to transform their relationships with food. There are already 12 schools in Bristol registered with Food for Life and the Let's Get Cooking team is also supporting 36 school cooking clubs. What's more, the Transforming School Meals team is looking to offer additional support to Food for Life schools – and we have already started to support this by helping to connect them with local community food groups.. However, these organisations are only able to provide a limited amount of support on specific parts of the food chain and so it is challenging for schools to get to the point of transforming their entire food system. The Bristol food network will work with these organisations to develop and deliver whole school food strategies, which can then be shared as good practice with schools across the City and beyond.

This pilot will select a small number of these already engaged schools to work with, based on their respective willingness and capacity to be involved and interest from local community groups to support and embed this work within the wider community and connect with the wide range of relevant stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, we hope to pilot this with at least one school that has opted out of school meal contracts so as to develop good practice to demonstrate the feasibility of this alternative model.

These school food strategies will be focused on engaging pupils, teachers and parents with the entirety of the food chain, including them at every stage from building the growing beds, growing and cooking food and menu planning with the catering staff.

Persuading young people to eat healthy food is extremely challenging, however Bristol Food Hub's experience of bicycle powered smoothie making in schools has highlighted how much more willing the pupils are to try very new and different recipes if they made them themselves and when happening as part of an inter-house competition. The pilots will build on this, supporting schools to involve pupils in this menu planning and exploring inter-house competitions around growing, cooking and menu planning.

Pilot schools will develop programmes including the following:

- Building allotments and community gardens
- Growing their own food (and of 'exotic crops' where multi-cultural communities are prevalent)
- Sustainable food production, for example, bee keeping
- Local foraging / wild food walks
- Regular healthy eating and cookery workshops with school / home / locallygrown produce
- Regular school feasts
- Menu planning with catering staff based on school / home / locally grown produce (including, for example, competitions for best menus, lowest food miles etc)
- Promotion of the Soil Association's Catering Mark and food distribution models to support this (for example StroudCo)
- Encouraging entrepreneurialism within specialist schools / academies, for example, CSAs with pupils delivering by bicycle and a trailer, healthy sustainable tuck shops following a food coop model etc

What's more, these sustainable school food strategies will be embedded within the local food strategies being developed by community groups, based on the relationships being built between local communities, land owners, farmers and retailers and working closely with local Food Champions. Schools will form a key part of this community collaboration and have the potential to act as central hubs for food distribution, seasonal food celebrations and awareness raising events.

1.5 Advocacy Programme

As already discussed, it is becoming increasingly obvious that it is communities themselves who will deliver the solutions to the impending and growing food-related crises we face. The emphasis of this strategy is on creating and delivering practical solutions, in the belief that communities hold all the skills, expertise and resources to transform themselves and contribute to a collaborative transformation of communities the world over.

However, the reality is that the delivery and success of these solutions does in large part depend on an enabling environment – that is the necessary policy space at local, regional, national and international levels. For example, increasing the demand for sustainable food risks being futile if land is not safe guarded for local food growing, in the face of competing demands for housing and development.

The Bristol food network will work with other city-wide organisations to:

• **Inform food stakeholders about relevant policies and strategies**

The majority of food initiatives across Bristol are unaware of the policy frameworks that could either help or hinder their impact and success, and how to influence them. Policy work tends to be extremely intimidating for most community projects, who simply do not have the time to wade through the impenetrable world of policy-making.

The Bristol food network will keep abreast of relevant local, regional, national and international policies, strategies and consultations and empower Bristol's food stakeholders to understand the implications of these policies and strategies and to feed into consultations – either directly or through the Bristol food network.

• **Coordinate input from food stakeholders**

A coordinated voice from Bristol's food stakeholders has the potential to carry much weight in policy and strategy consultations. The Bristol food network will publicise opportunities to feed into such developments and consultations and facilitate the network's input into them by summarising the issues in hand, explaining their relevance to food initiatives, highlighting opportunities and suggesting recommendations. This will be made more meaningful and legitimate through the rebuilding of relationships between stakeholders.

• **Represent food stakeholders within decision-making processes**

Having built strong relationships with Bristol's food stakeholders and supported them to understand and analyse the policies and strategies that effect their work. The Bristol food network is in the perfect position to represent this diverse network of stakeholders. The Bristol food network's legitimacy and credibility within these consultations will be based on the quality of its relationships with its stakeholders and the increased common ground developed through collaboration between stakeholders.

• **Lobby relevant decision-makers**

In addition to feeding into formal consultations, the Bristol food network will proactively lobby decision-makers to bring about policy change that its stakeholders have identified as necessary to transform food in Bristol.

Our advocacy work will be shaped by the emerging needs of the network, however there already exist a number of obvious policies and strategies that need influencing if the aims of this strategy are to be achieved, including:

Bristol City Council's:

- Corporate Plan (with elections on 4 June, a change in power would likely result in a new vision and priorities for the City meaning a real opportunity to embed food within the City's overarching priorities)
- Bristol Development Framework: shaping the spatial layout of the city and its land use, this framework plays a key role in determining the amount of land available for food production and the nature of Bristol food retail environment. This will be a key forum for preventing, for example, the proposed park and ride on grade A agricultural land alongside the M32.
- Sustainable Communities Act (SCA) proposals: the SCA affords communities the opportunity to challenge central government policies that are preventing their Local Authority from acting in the best interests of their community's sustainability. It offers much potential in terms of transforming our food system. We are already in fact working with Local Works who succeeded in getting the Bill passed, to develop food proposals for the SCA that can be used by communities across the country.
- Sustainable Procurement Policy: we need to develop a strategy to capitalise on all opportunities to increase the

- amount of sustainable food being sourced by Bristol City Council and PCT.
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
 - Comprehensive Area Assessments
 - Area based grants
 - The Bristol Partnership (Local Area Agreement)
 - Community Infrastructure Levy
 - Section 106 funds
 - Young person's employment strategy
 - Food and Health Strategy
 - Allotments strategy
 - Community Development service delivery plan

The collaborative communities resulting from our rebuilding of relationships around food will increasingly strengthen our ability to persuade BCC to shape its policies and strategies such that they are truly in the best long term interests of all of Bristol's communities and global sustainability.

South West Regional Development Agency's:

- Regional Transport strategy
- Regional waste strategy

Various other strands of the Advocacy Programme have been described elsewhere in this document. The Advocacy Coordinator will develop a strategy prioritising the most appropriate policies and strategies to target.

1.6 Communications Programme

The Bristol food network already has an impressive number of stakeholders involved, considering its limited and voluntary capacity – however there remains much work to be done in terms of raising awareness of its work to more stakeholders. Our relationships are currently strongest with the voluntary and public sector so we will initially prioritise building relationships with more local food retailers and producers. Our current relationships are with those retailers and producers who are already on board with the sustainable food agenda – our priority then will be to support the re-building of relationships between communities, food retailers and local food producers.

Our communications strategy will involve identifying key target audiences and tailoring our messaging to them. This will be facilitated through the website, newsletters, events and myriad relevant Bristol-wide email groups and local media. Each of our programmes will be deepening our understanding of a particular sector of our stakeholders and as this knowledge increases, our ability to engage with, support and influence these stakeholders will grow.

The Communications Coordinator will initially facilitate a multi-stakeholder branding consultation process to ensure that our external image is appropriate for the wide range of stakeholders we aim to engage, support and influence.

1.6.i A one-stop sustainable food website for Bristol

The Bristol food network will develop a one stop shop website for all things food in Bristol. The website's interface will capture the structure of our food system, so visitors are taken on a virtual journey of how their food initiative fits into the bigger food picture and how they need to connect with other initiatives to increase their impact. This will include:

- *Signposting*

Anyone in Bristol wanting to access information about sustainable food would currently be at a loss as to where to look. A wealth of extremely useful websites and resources exist to support Bristol's food initiatives, but often people simply do not know they exist. The Making Local Food Work programme in particular is developing a range of support resources to help food initiatives become more effective and have more wide reaching and sustainable impacts.

For example:

- useful food websites and resources (for example; www.bristolfood.co.uk; www.ecojam.org.uk; www.voscur.org.uk; www.transitionbristol.net; www.bristolfoodhub.org; www.grofun.org.uk)
- where to buy / source sustainable food in Bristol (for consumers and public and private sector)
- where to eat out sustainably in Bristol
- local food projects (including spot lights on examples of good practice)
- local food producers / suppliers

- *Information about:*

- the benefits of sustainable food
- the impacts of the current globalised food system
- healthy eating
- local food projects and events
- how to source sustainable food
- fair trade

- *Advice on how to:*

- eat sustainably on a budget
- start growing your own food
- set up and run a successful local food project

- Virtual farmers market – online sustainable food shopping

A funding application for this has already been submitted and development of this concept could be built into our funding bid.

- Community food swaps / bartering – facilitating food bartering

1.6.ii Magazine and newsletters

The Bristol food network already produces a regular Local Food Update for its stakeholders, but this is currently being produced on a voluntary basis and distributed electronically.

This Local Food Update will become a 16 page quarterly magazine – with the website and communications from individual programmes keeping people more frequently updated on relevant events and information. The Communications Coordinator will edit the magazine and volunteers will be recruited to sub- and production-edit and research articles, write up case studies and conduct interviews etc

The Communications Coordinator will also work with the other relevant programme Coordinators to produce their own electronic newsletters and they will each contribute to the quarterly magazine as appropriate.

2. Cross cutting themes

Cutting across all these 8 programmes will be a series of themes, relevant to all of the Bristol food network's work.

2.1 Rebuilding relationships around food:

Collaboration within and between local communities, farmers, land owners and retailers

As detailed already in this document, rebuilding relationships between those that produce, distribute, sell and eat our food will be at the heart of our work.

2.2 Re-skilling

Key to transforming our food system will be re-learning the skills that our industrialised society has predominantly lost. These skills are still held within communities however, and it is essential that we build on the work already started in Bristol to create the skills and capacity for Bristol to feed itself.

The Freeconomy's 'Freeskilling' and East Side Roots' 'That'll Learn You' projects have already started this important work in two of Bristol's more disadvantaged communities, running regular free workshops on skills vital to the transformation of our food system. We are together exploring how best to see this initiative rolled out across Bristol, and in particular how it can reach out to Bristol's most disadvantaged communities, who are most in need of these skills with the recession kicking in.

This will involve the development of a good practice toolkit, based on the learnings and administrative systems already developed and including a growing central database of people with skills to offer. One of the programmes benefits from the free use of a local food cafe and tips such as how to secure such space and resources for free etc will be included within the toolkit. Currently these sessions are run for free, but with time a barter system could be introduced so people are remunerated for their time and efforts through the sharing other skills and resources.

This toolkit will then be shared with Bristol's wealth of community food groups, local Transition Neighbourhoods, sustainably minded restaurants and cafes and schools to be rolled out far and wide. We will also draw on the Soil Association's Organic Farm School courses and classes and the Transition Network's Skilling Up for Power Down programme.

2.3 Health – mental and physical

The devastating health impacts - both mental and physical, of our current food system are becoming increasingly recognised and attempts – with varying degrees of success – are being made to address this growing crises.

Unfortunately the majority of more mainstream projects tend to take a parochial nutrition focused approach, neglecting the wider benefits to health and wellbeing that food could be delivering. Food's impact on our mental health and the conversely positive role it could be playing, highlights the case well. Improving our health and wellbeing through food, is not simply about eating 5 fruit and vegetables a day – it must involve a complete transformation of our relationships with food.

Bristol City Council's Quality of Life analysis highlights fear of crime and anti-social behaviour as one the biggest concerns amongst Bristol residents. Food has a key role to play in overcoming crime and anti-social behaviour both through improved nutrition and the wider health benefits that arise from involvement in activities such as growing, cooking and eating food communally.

Whilst our work to support community food groups and in schools will be continually addressing this issue, the Bristol food network will in the future explore the most effective way of ensuring food is playing the most positive role it can in significantly reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Needless to say the collaborative communities that will emerge through our work, in the long term, will in themselves address this social anomie.

This food-related health crises we are facing is a direct result of the crippling food addictions that have been created by our current food system, whose hard and fast bottom line is profit. That our Government has permitted the pursuit of profit to be put well and truly above the health of our communities is unfathomable – but a harsh reality. Take away the profit motive, and why would anyone allow people, and in particular children, to eat foods that are unquestionably plundering the health and wellbeing of our nation. What's more, it is the addictions that have been created to these unhealthy and unsustainable foods that have blinded our population to the reality of their malign nature.

In the absence of addressing these food addictions, attempts to address our food-related health crises are guaranteed to fail. The rapid and overwhelming benefits to be gained from transforming our diets to a diet that will truly nourish our bodies, minds and souls, cannot, and must not be underestimated.

We will highlight the life-changing benefits to be had from shifting to a sustainable food diet throughout all our work and support healthy eating initiatives to move beyond a parochial nutrition focused approach to one that draws on food's wider benefits to health and wellbeing.

Bristol Primary Care Trust's current Food and Health strategy ends this year. This affords an important opportunity to ensure that this holistic approach to food and health is embedded within the new strategy. What's more, the impact of the current strategy has been severely hindered by an apparent almost complete lack of budget to deliver it. We will support the PCT to ensure that appropriate budgets are attached to the subsequent strategy and that the wealth of expertise held by Bristol's myriad food stakeholders is drawn on to ensure the most effective and meaningful delivery of this strategy.

2.4 Resource Efficiency

A strategy to increase all aspects of resource efficiency within Bristol's food systems is needed and in the future we will develop more work around this. Initially though, we will focus on embedding efforts to reduce, re-use and recycle Bristol's food waste throughout our programmes.

It may be that in the future a Programme and post is identified as necessary to fully address this, but for now, we will embed it within all our work as a cross-cutting theme, as follows:

2.4.i Domestic food waste

Bristol City Council has an impressive track record on domestic recycling. However such recycling actually perpetuates people's disconnection from their food and misses the opportunity to raise awareness of the need to first and foremost reduce our waste. The Bristol food network will ensure Bristol City Council and local food initiatives are raising awareness of these issues within their work and exploring community composting solutions.

2.4.ii Private sector waste

2.4.ii.a Raising awareness

We will support communities to raise awareness with their local retailers and producers about the need and potential to reduce their waste. Again, this will be facilitated by our work to support the building of relationships between communities, retailers and producers and draw on communities power as customers. Support could include, for example, workshops such as that run by Eat Somerset on sustainable packaging and community events to discuss the situation and possible solutions.

2.4.ii.b Composting

Food retailers in Bristol currently have no obvious way to compost their food waste or recycling their packaging. We will work with those retailers already proactive about this to create solutions, which could involve the creation of a social enterprise to facilitate the use of compost for local growers, through for example the allotments association and other growing networks. Such a social enterprise is a good example of a potential profit-making initiative for an existing local food project seeking to find a way to become independent of grant funding.

Once commercial composting is available, communities will persuade their local retailers, restaurants and cafes to compost their waste – drawing on the relationships that are developing as a result of the Bristol food network's wider work.

2.4.ii Public sector food waste

The Bristol food network's role will be to lobby BCC to ensure that they are addressing their food waste appropriately and supporting initiatives to ensure the private sector and households are able to do the same.

Our Advocacy Programme will support stakeholders to feed into the South West's Waste Strategy to ensure the most sustainable solutions are pursued.

Low carbon farming

We will also develop our knowledge around efficiency within farming by continuing to engage with the Low Carbon Farming Initiative, Soil Association and Farming Futures programme, which will help to identify opportunities to support local farmers to rise to the challenges presented by fossil-fuel depletion and climate change.

2.5 Global Food Justice

It is sometimes said that prioritising local food is at the direct expense of producers in the impoverished developing world. However the livelihoods of the world's poorest people are being devastated by malnutrition because they devote the lion's share of their most essential resources – water, land and labour – to feed our insatiable appetites for exotic foods all year round – whilst they literally starve to death. Many of these households spend up to 80% of their paltry incomes on food, having been persuaded to grow cash crops rather than feed themselves – and have lost the traditional growing and food production skills and knowledge needed to truly nourish themselves. What's more, those attempting to supply local markets find themselves undercut and outpriced by both food aid and produce from rich countries that has been dumped on their markets at artificially low prices thanks to EU's Common Agricultural Policy and US Farm Bill's subsidies.

That said, any food that cannot be produced locally and has come from developing countries, should be 'fairly traded'. However, most of the food we eat has involved exploitation of the world's poorest people. Our insatiable appetite for cheap food is directly responsible for the exploitation of millions of people the world over working tirelessly for less than a dollar a day and under the most inhumane conditions.

Whilst the demand and therefore availability of fairly traded foods is on the increase, it is a sad reality that only a small minority of the foods we buy from developing countries have been produced under fair, humane conditions. It is imperative therefore that we see urgent changes to international trade rules, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, that permit this exploitation within the food industry. However, in the meantime it is essential that when we do buy products from developing countries they have been fairly traded and produced under conditions that respect the dignity and wellbeing of all those involved.

Bristol City Council's Sustainability and Procurement Units jointly support the Bristol Fair Trade Network which, along with securing Fair Trade City status for Bristol has also significantly increased supply and demand for fairly traded foods. As well as its annual Bristol Fair Trade Directory, the Bristol Fair Trade Network has produced a Fairtrade Purchasing Guide for Bristol's businesses and schools to enable them to easily purchase fairly traded food and drink locally.

In 2008 the Network ran a Fairtrade schools conference to encourage schools to switch to using fairly traded foods wherever possible which resulted in Eden, the main supplier of food to Bristol's primary schools switching to supplying 100% fairly traded bananas and many more fairly traded foods on a regular basis. Volunteers have also provided all of Bristol city centre's shops and cafes with information on why it makes good business sense to use fairly traded food and a copy of Bristol Fairtrade purchasing guide.

We will continue to work closely with Bristol's Fair Trade Network and are currently jointly organising, along with Bristol City Council and the Schumacher Institute, a World Food Day conference in October addressing the inter-connectedness of local, sustainable food with issues of global food sovereignty and sustainability.

2.6 Organisational Efficiency and Sustainability

Along with the absence of meaningful relationships around food, a lack of experience and confidence around organisational efficiency and sustainability is hindering those with the most developed and appropriate skills to drive forward necessary solutions. Bristol perhaps boasts the country's most bountiful urban abundance of food initiatives, growers, activists and pioneers – including a vast, coordinated and active permaculture network, numerous whole food cafes, food coops, community growing projects, cookery and healthy eating courses, sustainably minded restaurants and food retailers, and playing home to the Soil Association and Federation of City Farms and Gardens.

However, despite this abundance of food activity, it is commonly recognised that, particularly community projects, find it extremely challenging to develop the efficiency they need to maximise their impacts, and the sustainability they need to free themselves from the chains of project funding, that would allow them to be more forward planning, visionary and successful.

Most of those with the skills, experience and passion to deliver this transformation of our food system however, lack the necessary experience, knowledge and confidence to create organisations that fully do justice to their potential. All our Programme Coordinators will be well versed in the challenges facing food initiatives and will offer support and signposting to the wealth of resources and organisations available to support small and new food initiatives. What's more our website, magazine and newsletters will offer up to date advice, information, opportunities and good practice for our stakeholders to draw on. The more we can support our emerging collaborative communities to support each, the more longevity our support will have. We will in particular focus on the need for projects to create financial sustainability, drawing on the growing good practice and models being explored within the Transition movement and the social enterprise model in particular.

We have been exploring the relative merits of creating a specific Programme and post to develop and deeped this work – and the options of working in close partnership with a variety of Bristol based support organisations. We will continue to explore this and monitor the effectiveness of offering this support as part of existing programmes.

Appendix 1

Partnership working

Over the last two years we have been working in informal partnership with numerous organisations to develop this strategy and maintain the activities of the network, these include:

Locally

There are a vast amount of organisations we have liaised with – as indicated by our database including:

Voluntary Sector

- GROFUN – Nadia Hillman
- East Side Roots – Nick Ward
- Bristol Fair Trade Network – Jenny Foster
- Easton Community Allotment – Beth Astle
- Wellspring Healthy Living Centre – Bearnie DeMonick
- ECOJAM – Matt Fortnam
- Bristol Friends of the Earth – Jane Stevenson, Julian Jones and Pip Sheard
- Cafe Midnimo – Leanne Anderson
- Knowle West Media Centre – Misty Tunks and Maddie Stanley
- Transition BS3 – Emma Winfield
- Radford Mill Farm – Alex Michelson
- Freeconomy – Mark Boyle
- Boiling Wells / St Werburghs City Farm – Sophie Bull
- FreeSkilling – Lucy Harper

Bristol City Council

- Steve Marriot – Environment and Sustainability Unit
- Sharon Sexton – Transforming School Meals
- Steve Clampin – Allotments
- Pete Wilkinson – Parks and Green Spaces
- Liz McDougall – Corporate Health
- Jason Thorne – Regeneration
- Steve Morris – Markets
- Christine Storry - Procurement
- Ian Quaife – Community Cohesion
- Andrew McGrath – Community Development
- Michele Webber – Let's Get Cooking
- Adrian Jenkins and Grace Davies – Environmental Health

Regional –

South Gloucestershire County Council / South Gloucestershire Local Food Partnership – Val Harding

Eat Somerset – Alison Belshaw

Sustainability South West – Michele Webber

Herefordshire Food Links

East Anglia Food Links / Transtion Norwich – Tully Wakeman

Transtion Scotland – Eva Schonveld and Luci Ransome

London Food Links – Ben Reynolds

Retailers

Bordeaux Quay – Amy Robinson

Canteen West – Matt Pike

Phil Haughton – Better Food Company

Producers

Radford Mill Farm – Alex Michelson / Mark Boyle

Ragmans Lane Farm – Claire Milne used to work here

Leigh Court Farm – our contact has moved on so we are building new relationships

Multi-stakeholder

Green Capital Momentum Group

Schmacher Institute

Transition Bristol

Forum for the Future

Bristol Food Hub

National

Sustain – London Bristol food network and Local Action on Food – Ben Reynolds and Suzanne Natelson

Soil Association – Joy Carey, Jade Bashford, Patrick Holden, Dan Keech

New Economics Foundation – Jim Sumberg

Transition Network – Rob Hopkins, Peter Lipman and Tamzin Pinkerton

A formal partnership is currently held with the Transition Network (see letter attached) and a funding application from them, and a business plan indicating how the partnership will work, will be submitted shortly.

Other formal partnerships will be established once specific programme strategies are further developed.

Appendix 2

Multi-stakeholder consultation

The development of this strategy has taken place over the last 2 years and involved:

- An initial consultation event to assess the support needs of Bristol's food stakeholders
- Responding to requests for advice, information and support from stakeholders, which has proved vital in understanding our stakeholders' support needs
- A regular Local Food Update mailing – the feedback from which and contributions to, has again informed this business plan.
- On-going liaison with local, regional and national stakeholders
- Pilot events
- On-going local media work
- Steering Group members involvement in their own organisations and networking with respective stakeholders

Our Steering Group members are each connected to important networks that have informed and shaped Bristol's sustainable food strategy:

Amy Robinson has been Sustainable Development Manager for Bordeaux Quay, a restaurant operating on environmental and sustainable principles, for three years. This role includes policy development, resource monitoring, staff training, educational talks and involvement in a number of environmental groups including the Bristol Green Capital momentum group, the steering group for Bristol Sustainability Network, Bristol Food Links, The Harbourside Forum and is a member of Sustainability South West. Her work involves engagement in the business, public and community sectors on issues of local, sustainable food procurement and waste, particularly food waste. Amy's work with the commercial food retail sector has equipped her with a good understanding of the challenges facing food businesses in terms of sourcing sustainable food from local producers and is often contacted for advice from other food businesses.

Claire Skinner coordinates Forum for the Future's Farming Futures programme, supporting non-organic farmers to rise to the challenges of climate change. Through this work Claire has developed an excellent understanding of the barriers facing farmers across the country to implementing the changes necessary to make the transition to sustainable farming.

Kristin Sponsler from Transition Bristol, Transition Network and energybulletin.net co-editor has a good understanding of the support needs of the rapidly growing network of local Transition groups across the country. Kristin is also an active member of her local Transition group, helping with the set up of an urban smallholding and an incipient food coop. She has been a member of Transition Bristol coreteam since 2007 and at a national level, has taken a leading role in producing the Transition Network Cities Conference in November 2008 and the highly successfully Transition Network Conference in May 2009. She has helped coordinate the web presence for the "Share the Harvest" series of events that ran in the autumn of 2008 coordinated by Transition Bristol, Bristol Food Hub and Friends of the Earth. She has over 20 year's experience in delivering web and desktop publishing projects and plans to continue to lend her expertise supporting sustainable food communications. She will be helping to coordinate Transition Bristol's themed food group work in preparation for the writing of Transition Bristol's Energy Descent Action Plan food strand. She was raised on a farm in Iowa and has a passionate interest in sustainable food and fiber systems after seeing the impact of industrial commodity grain and livestock farming first hand. Kristin holds a Permaculture Design Level 1 certificate and plans to continue her education in permaculture. Her academic background is in cultural anthropology, which fuels her interest in food cultures.

Claire Milne is involved in numerous initiatives that have informed the development of this strategy. Claire set up and coordinates Bristol Food Hub, a small social enterprise running education workshops around food, set up to bridge the gap between food policy / campaigning and community food work. This has involved hands on delivery of workshops at community events and in schools and coordinating seasonal food celebrations across the city and the Eat the Change campaign. Claire also coordinates Transition Bristol's food work and has also been coordinating Bristol City Council's work to promote sustainable food, including identifying opportunities within relevant policies, strategies and delivery plans to embed sustainable food – and raising awareness within various Council teams about the relevance of food to their work. Lessons learned are now informing Sustain's work to develop and share good practice on local policy around

food.

Claire's Bristol based work has resulted in an excellent understanding of the issues facing food initiatives in Bristol and good relationships with those running them. Claire is regularly asked to speak at various food events across Bristol and give media interviews to share her knowledge, experience of, and vision for food in Bristol and beyond.

Claire is also coordinating the development of the Transition Network's national food programme to support Transition food groups around the country, which has provided yet more information and learning in terms of the challenges facing food initiatives and the creative and innovative approaches being developed to tackle them. Claire is also an Advisor and Assessor to the Local Food Fund which is providing on-going learning and development in the field of supporting food initiatives. Claire also previously coordinated Sustain's national Food Poverty Project, which involved supporting community food projects across the UK and equipped her with a particularly good understanding of the social justice issues surrounding food poverty. Claire also used to work at Ragmans Lane Farm, on a permaculture farm in the Forest of Dean, has studied permaculture design, organic horticulture and natural nutrition.

Claire was shortlisted for the national Sheila McKechnie campaigner award for her campaigning around local food strategies. Prior to focusing her energies on national food work, Claire previously worked as a campaigner on global social justice issues as Campaigns and Parliamentary Officer at the World Development Movement (WDM) which campaigns as of coalitions such as Stop Climate Chaos, Trade Justice Campaign, Make Poverty History, CORE Coalition and Jubilee Debt Campaign.

Claire's experience to date has equipped her with a good understanding of the support needs of food projects and particularly those trying to reconnect disadvantaged communities with food, as well as understanding how to support groups to use public campaigning and advocacy to influence local, national and international decision-makers.

This strategy has also benefitted greatly from the advice and support of Joy Carey, Head of Local Food at the Soil Association, Peter Lipman and Rob Hopkins, pioneers of the Transition Network, Ben Reynolds from Sustain's Local Action on Food programme and London Food Links and Tully Wakeman from East Anglia Food Links / Transition Norwich.

Current consultation

This current consultation includes this draft strategy being emailed to more than 300 stakeholders – both in Bristol and across the country, and two surgery style consultation events – one in the evening, the other during working hours, to ensure those involved within both a professional and community capacity, are able to attend.

Appendix 3

Logistical details

Staff team

The delivery of this strategy will be coordinated by a team of eight staff and numerous volunteers, consisting of:

- Bristol food network Coordinator
- Office Coordinator
- Reaching Wider Audiences Coordinator
- Urban Food Production Programme Coordinator
- Urban Food Procurement Programme Coordinator
- Sustainable School Food Coordinator
- Advocacy Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator

Premises

The Bristol food network will be based at Hamilton House a 15 storey building (3 blocks each of 5 floors) on Stokes Croft – a particularly disadvantaged and run down area on the very outskirts of Bristol city centre – which was until very recently a derelict. The building is now being managed by a social enterprise *Coexist*, and being developed as an incubator for the creation of sustainable communities. Its tenants range from artists, performers and musicians to recycled bike and furniture projects, environmental consultants, local businesses and local food projects.

An affordable sustainable food cafe is being launched on the ground floor this summer, including a small growing space out front, on the infamous Stokes Croft. This area is heavily populated with street drinkers and the cafe and growing area are collaborating with them to encourage their involvement. There are also plans afoot to develop a roof garden to supply the cafe.

Discussions are in their early stages regarding a training kitchen and a lunch club is already running, whereby tenants take it in turns to cook lunch for each other and share a communal meal.

Hamilton House also hosts a range of food-related events and has the capacity to accommodate more food projects, offering the potential to develop a hot pot of food entrepreneurialism, sharing ideas, resources and good practice.

To aid the process of choosing its premises, the Bristol food network agreed on some assessment criteria:

- Relatively central
- Shared ethos of community driven sustainability and resilience
- Opportunity to 'be the change' and therefore grow and cook food on site.
- Competitive rates
- Availability of meeting rooms and communal space

Hamilton House delivers perfectly on this criteria.

Legal aspects

Status

The Bristol food hub will be registered as a social enterprise the governance structure of which will be determined by a 6 month multi-stakeholder consultation process.

Name

'The Bristol food network' is a provisional name being used for the purposes of this funding bid. A multi-stakeholder consultation process will determine the official name for this Network.

Insurance

Appropriate insurance will be secured by the staff team once funding is secured and in consultation with an appropriate ethical insurer.