

ROOTS TO MARKET

Update – May 2019 - Compiled by Abi Mordin

[Intro](#)

[Roots to Market #1](#) was researched and written by Propagate members Abi Mordin and Kristina Nitsolova, with support from Mark Fitzpatrick from Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN). It was published in April 2018 and launched at an event at Glasgow City Chambers.

Roots to Market explored the potential for growing and developing Glasgow's local food economy. Through the voices of aspiring urban market gardeners and chefs passionate about using local produce, it told their stories of ambitions and barriers, and suggested ways to work together to make local food happen.

One year on we review the successes of the previous year and look at what needs to happen next.

[Recommendations](#)

Roots to Market concluded with recommendations for moving forward. These are listed below.

[Food producers \(Growers\)](#)



- Set up a collective working model, e.g. Glasgow Growers Cooperative.
 - Develop an online portal which features all growers producing in the city where interested businesses can order from, a one-stop shop to buy directly from growers and makers. Potentially use a platform such as Open Food Network.
 - Continue to lobby Glasgow City Council on land issues, changes to the City Development Plan and the Food Growing Strategy.
- Organise opportunities for dialogue between Growers and Customers.
 - Develop their business plans and consider diversification.

Food Service and Retail (Chefs etc...)

- Commit to a set of values which supports local sustainable food and embed those at the core of procurement decisions.
- Support chefs in accessing training and learning about local seasonal food and its preparation.
- Adopt seasonal and flexible menus.
- Diversify supply chains to include local producers.
- Pre-order where possible or at least build an ongoing contractual relationship with growers to ensure there's a viable market for locally grown produce.



Local Authority

- Go beyond the successful Stalled Spaces programme- encourage and enable aspiring urban market farmers to access land, secure leases and meet start-up costs.
- Provide support to the networks/organisations who are working to facilitate collective action to increase the amount of sustainable food production and procurement in the city and across business supply chains.

- Create a searchable database of available vacant land in the city, including permissions, ownership and contamination status.
- Provide comprehensive testing of vacant and derelict land to ascertain contamination status
- Include 'Food' in the Main Issues Report 2018, to raise its importance in the City Development Plan so that food production areas are considered as legitimate uses of land by planners and developers.
- Push forward the Sustainable Food Cities agenda, providing coherent and consistent leadership in the areas of enterprise, food waste, food poverty and procurement.
- Develop, champion and implement sustainable procurement strategies, providing access to frameworks for local producers and growers.

Support organisations

- Develop or fund educational and training programmes for chefs, growers and start-up food businesses.
- Embed sustainable food as a topic in chef training curriculum to explore what using local organic produce means in practice.
- Fund the development of necessary infrastructure to enable collaborations between local food producers and restaurant and retail customers accessible to all regardless of the scale of operation (e.g. micro-growers as well as restaurant/retail chains).



Progress

GCFN took on the task of making these recommendations a reality. Funding from Sustainable Food Cities – Veg Cities Campaign, and Regional Food Fund – Connect Local supported activities and enabled much of the work.

Growers

Progress on the recommendations for Growers has been very good. Various initiatives and projects are underway that continue to successfully raise the profile of urban farming, encouraging others to take this route. Access to land – secure and long term – continues to be the biggest barrier. Specific progress has been:

- Glasgow Grower's Cooperative has been established. It is so far an unincorporated body and remains linked to GCFN. The Grower's Coop has stated it's aims as:
 - To provide peer support in (for example) training and skill sharing, tool and resource sharing
 - Share ordering and delivery systems
 - Acquire or lease land on behalf of individual enterprises
 - Encourage and support more market gardening initiatives in the city.

To date the group has organised skill sharing and peer mentoring sessions, and has submitted various suggestions to Glasgow City Council, identifying land that could be collectively leased as a market garden or urban farm.

- GCFN are looking for funding to develop a micro supply chain project that will have a comprehensive online portal for customers (mainly food businesses) to purchase fresh locally grown produce. A recent funding application was unsuccessful (March '19). This project remains in development.
- A further study is planned for this year (2019), working with a post-graduate student looking at local food in procurement supply chains.
- GCFN and Propagate have both been working closely with local authority partners in writing and developing the Food Growing Strategy. This will include an 'enterprise' strand which will support food growing enterprises, market gardens and urban farms.
- Dialogue between Growers and Customers is being organised collectively with the Chef's Network (see below).



One example of effective connection building was the Chef's Challenge, held in September and October 2018. This friendly 'masterchef' style competition involved 16 restaurants and 8 growing spaces. Each restaurant kitchen was presented with a box of vegetables – the same contents in each – from Glasgow community and market gardens. The challenge was to come up with their best meal based on the ingredients. A team of judges travelled around the restaurants, tasting and scoring the meals.



8 restaurants made it to the final, held in City of Glasgow College and judged by Scotland's Chef Gary MacLean, Food Critic Cate Devine and Glasgow Allotment Forum's Jan MacDonald. A short video of the competition can be viewed [here](#).

GCFN also held one popup Producer Market for local growers to promote and sell their produce and products. This was open to secondary producers as well as growers. Plans are in place for more Producer Markets over 2019-20.

Food Service and Chefs

Work with Chefs picked up after the Chef's Challenge described above. This was used as a platform to further engage chefs interested in sustainable and local food procurement. Ffion Smith from The Project Cafe – a social enterprise with a local food ethos – have been leading on this work, which has included:

- A series of meetings for Chefs to discuss and plan how they can influence Glasgow's food system
- Visits to market gardens in and around Glasgow to build relationships with growers
- Sharing of information and exchanging ideas around building seasonality into menus.
- Supporting Nourish Scotland's Chef's Manifesto for a more sustainable Scottish Food System.

Further peer workshops are planned for 2019-20.

Local Authority

The recommendations for Glasgow City Council (GCC) were comprehensively around improving access to land and infrastructure support. Progress to far has included:

- Through membership of Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP), GCFN has been working closely with GCC on food procurement, food insecurity and food waste as well as other sustainable food issues. Work is now underway to start writing a Food Strategy for Glasgow, which will be co-produced with members of GFPP – a cross sector body of organisations committed to sustainable food futures. We will ensure and facilitate engagement with a wide range of stakeholders while developing the strategy.
- GCC has been working with GCFN, Propagate and Greenspace Scotland on preparations for the Food Growing Strategy. The process has included consultation events in neighbourhoods across Glasgow, open to members of the public and interested parties. This has been primarily to identify land for potential growing sites.

Furthermore, to support the delivery of the FGS, GCC have recruited an additional member of staff who will work with community organisations and groups looking to lease or acquire land through asset transfer for food growing projects – including enterprise.

- GCC have recently published their [Corporate Procurement and Commercial Improvement Strategy 2018 to 2022](#) which includes their approach to ‘...suppliers’ fair working practices and ethicality, sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Supported Businesses, Co-operative Glasgow (to create opportunities for more Social Enterprises and Co-operatives), and Third Sector organisations.’ The strategy pays much lip service to GCC’s ambitions to embed sustainability across all procurement and achieve real tangible community benefits. How this will be implemented in practice remains to be seen, but the new Strategy is nonetheless welcomed as a step in the right direction.

Progress on other suggested recommendations remain slow. Despite GCFN’s submissions to calls for the City Development Plan for potential land relating to urban farming, no replies or follow up have been received. Further, despite assurances that ‘Food’ would appear in the Main Issues Report 2018, this commitment was neglected by GCC planning department.

GCFN would welcome progress from GCC to create a comprehensive database of available land in the city, and provide support for infrastructure and growing site essentials, eg contamination testing, mains water and electricity connections, vehicle access etc...



Supporting Organisations/Government

This group includes colleges and public institutions as well as Scottish Government departments. In essence, there has been very little progress on specific recommendations relating to this group. However, the Scottish Government has been consulting on and preparing to write the [Good Food Nation Bill](#) – a new proposed piece of legislation that will include:

- The people of Scotland have improved access to, and understanding of, the benefits of healthy local foods
- Our progressive food industry is clearly operating in a sustainable way
- Our reputation as a Good Food Nation is widely understood and used as an example from which other countries can learn.

There are some aspects of the Scottish Government's proposed approach that GCFN and others have taken issue with – for example with regard to placing targets and requirements on private food related businesses, the linked document above states: *'We have considered this proposal carefully and we are concerned that it would place significant additional costs on businesses operating in Scotland and unfairly disadvantage them compared to their competitors. The conclusion is that the requirement to set out a statement on food policy should not be imposed on private companies but should be limited to Scottish Ministers and specified public bodies.'* GCFN does not agree with this perspective and has argued for regulation of the private sector as part of the Food Food Nation proposals.

The public consultation closed on 18th April. GCFN looks forward to reading the report from the consultation and working with other sustainable food advocacy bodies on any relevant follow up work.

Finally, GCFN and Propagate feel there is still much potential work to be done working with chef's training programmes eg through City of Glasgow College. New initiatives such as the [Kaleyard Cookschool](#) are going some way to filling this gap, however these are social enterprises and the products of people with passion for sustainable and local food. Embedding sustainable food as a topic in mainstream chef training curriculum will help to increase awareness and inspire a new generation.

Next Steps

Roots to Market continues to be on an ongoing and evolving piece of work. More resources need to be identified for some projects to bear fruit, but at time of writing plans and ideas for 2019-20 include some of the following.

Growers

- Continuing to develop the Growers Cooperative with possible incorporation.
- Organise more peer learning exchanges

- Identify suitable land for growing and negotiate with property owners, including local authority, housing associations etc...
- Work with partners to raise the profile of urban market gardening and encourage more uptake.
- Identify suitable funding/resource for micro supply chain.

Food Service and Chefs

- Continuing to develop the Chefs Network with peer learning exchanges and real action for shaping Glasgow's food system
- Organise collectively to access locally grown produce



Local Authority

- Write and publish Glasgow's Food Growing Strategy
- Work with GFPP and other key stakeholders to develop Glasgow's Food Strategy
- Actively help food growing enterprises to identify and secure land
- Help to resource necessary infrastructure for food growing enterprises
- Recognise 'food production' in the planning system
- Continue to improve access to public sector contracts, particularly for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Supported Businesses, Social Enterprises, Co-operatives and Third Sector.

Supporting Organisations/Government

- Provide exemplary and world class leadership in sustainable food, through the mechanisms of the Good Food Nation Legislation
- Work with food producers including urban market gardeners, farmers and smallholders across Scotland to transform agriculture and create a resilient, ecological sound food system.
- Provide resources and funding to organisations and businesses who are working towards sustainable food goals, including supporting small scale growers. Some of these targets may seem ambitious. However, much has been achieved over the last year since Roots to Market #1 was published. Growing enterprises have been strengthened, chefs are working collectively and there has been a clear sea-change in the attitude of Glasgow City Council regarding local, sustainable and good food. Through collaboration and cooperation we can build a fair food system in Glasgow that is good for everyone.

