

# Edible Edinburgh: A Sustainable Food City Plan



<http://www.edible-edinburgh.org/>

**Edible  
Edinburgh**  
Our food. Our city.

## FOOD

More fresh, healthy &  
\*sustainable food eaten

## PEOPLE

Fewer people living in  
food poverty

## ECONOMY

A thriving food economy  
with greater diversity in  
local food production and  
distribution

## ENVIRONMENT

Our natural environment  
and resources are  
protected and conserved  
with fewer emissions

## CULTURE

A transformed food culture  
with greater awareness  
and skills

# Edible Edinburgh

Our food. Our city.

**\*Sustainable food is tasty, healthy and affordable.  
It is good for nature, for animal welfare, for local  
businesses and good for people and communities.**

# Our food our city

The way we eat affects the city we live in. The food we grow, the way we produce and distribute it, the distance it travels and the people and businesses we buy it from all have a profound effect on the place we call home. Food can change the landscape of our city, the strength of our local economy, the health and wellbeing of our population and the opportunities open to our young people.

At Edible Edinburgh we believe the future of local food is in our hands. Together we can radically transform our food and our city to build a thriving, resilient, greener, fairer and healthier Edinburgh.

Our vision is of a community that can fairly access and enjoy the everyday pleasure that good food offers and which celebrates the food knowledge, skills and traditions that make our city what it is.

Every day, we each have the opportunity to make Edinburgh an even better city to live in through the food choices we make. It's our city – let's celebrate our food and work together to make it better for our health, our environment and our community.

**VISION... a city where *good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment.***



# Edible Edinburgh

## WHAT IS IT?

An initiative which aims to inspire and motivate everyone across Edinburgh to work together in developing new approaches to food, making positive choices that are healthier and tastier and which bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the whole community.

## WHY?

In 2011, the City of Edinburgh Council published a framework for a 'Sustainable Edinburgh 2020' and consulted on priority issues for action. A keen interest in food issues was identified and a series of seminars were then held to explore issues ranging from community access to land for growing to concerns about food and health, food waste and food poverty.

From this, a cross sector steering group was established and Edible Edinburgh was formed. In the autumn of 2013, a public consultation was launched to ask people across the city their opinion of Edible Edinburgh's vision. Over four hundred people and organisations responded with their feedback and thoughts.

This Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan has been developed based on this feedback.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

The Edible Edinburgh Steering Group involves of fourteen representatives from the public, private and third sectors (see page 16).



# We all have a part to play

There is lots of food related activity already happening in Edinburgh and this plan is inspired by the many people and organisations who are leading the way in delivering positive change on the ground by tackling health inequalities, food waste and food poverty.

The Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan is designed to be used as a tool to help strengthen and expand this activity, to identify and address gaps and to engage a city wide audience in developing Edinburgh as a sustainable food city.

It sets out some clear aims and objectives but we are well aware of the challenges that such an ambitious plan involves.

The changes we want to see to our food and our city involve nothing less than a cultural shift and can only happen if everyone – individuals, families, groups, organisations and businesses – works together to make our food systems more

sustainable. No single organization or agency can deliver such change on its own. A key purpose of this plan is to help engage and enable everyone who lives and works in the city to examine how they can positively influence our food system and support them in taking action to make the changes. It means building strong foundations for the future and we have focused on developing these foundations in Edible Edinburgh's first year action plan.

We believe the reward – ***a city where good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment*** – is worth it!



Edible Edinburgh is an initiative for engaging all individuals, groups and businesses in identifying action they can take to transform Edinburgh into a sustainable food city. Supported by a cross-sector steering group, it advocates for change in our food systems and provides a framework for action, funding and investment to realise the vision. This first plan aims to make significant progress by 2020 in line with the Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 framework.

**Edible Edinburgh**  
**A Sustainable Food City Plan**  
**2014-2020**  
 part of the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan

“Sustainable Food” is a vital to the quality of people's lives. Is is tasty, healthy and affordable. Is is good for nature, for animal welfare, for local businesses and good for people.

**VISION: Edinburgh is a city where *good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment.***

**OUTCOMES**

More fresh, healthy and sustainable food eaten	Fewer people living in food poverty	Our natural environment and resources are protected and conserved with fewer emissions	A thriving economy with greater diversity in local food production and distribution	A transformed food culture with greater awareness and skills
--	-------------------------------------	--	---	--

**AIMS**

<b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING</b> To create fair and affordable access to sustainable food, and ensure people can use it to provide a fresh, healthy and nutritious diet	<b>LAND USE</b> To grow, produce and distribute food more locally while conserving and protecting our natural resources and environment	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Use our natural resources more efficiently in order to minimise our ecological footprint and reduce levels of avoidable food waste	<b>BUYING FOOD</b> To develop a thriving local food economy based on public and private sector businesses procuring more sustainable food	<b>ECONOMY</b> To develop a diverse independent food sector which offers a variety of high quality skills, training, and employment opportunities	<b>CULTURAL CHANGE</b> To inspire, enable and support people to connect with food & the everyday pleasures and cultural traditions of eating, sharing and celebrating meals together
---	--	--	--	--	---

**MAJOR OBJECTIVES (to 2020)**

Reduce levels of diet related ill health	Increase the amount of land available for local food production	Establish benchmarks to encourage reductions in food waste, water and energy use and carbon emissions throughout our food systems	Improve the amount & quality of sustainable food procured	Strengthen the wholesale, brokerage, retail and delivery infrastructure that supports the independent food sector	Transform our relationships with food by encouraging more people to cook from scratch, grow their own and eat seasonal, local and organically grown produce
Increase consumption of nutritious fruit & vegetables	Introduce a food perspective into the city's local plan and SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SESPLAN)	Support national and local initiatives to minimise food waste	Establish better communication and links between producers, processors, retailers and customers	Develop a programme of support & skills training for new growers and those working in growing, processing and catering	Strengthen communities by engaging people in communal activities around food
Establish long term alternatives to food banks and emergency food aid					
Engage with existing community food initiatives to explore, research and pilot alternatives to food banks	Develop and consult on a local food growing strategy under Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill	Develop a baseline to measure Edinburgh's progress as a sustainable food city	Support ongoing delivery for the Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership project	Work with Scottish Enterprise and the Council's Economic Development service to develop a strategy for food skills and jobs	Map existing city food initiatives, develop networks and support relevant events and festivals to promote sustainable food and encourage wide participation
Develop effective working arrangements between Edible Edinburgh, NHS Lothian and the Health Inequalities Standing Group	City of Edinburgh Council to review concessionary lets policy for community food growing initiatives	Continue to reduce food waste and levels of unavoidable food waste going to landfill	Investigate the opportunities for the public sector in Edinburgh to develop a city-wide sustainable food procurement strategy under Procurement Reform Bill	City of Edinburgh Council to include a food strand in the work programme of the Co-operative Capital Programme	Develop a City Food Charter to highlight issues & stimulate actions
					Build and expand capacity in the community food sector

# Introducing the Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan 2014-2020

This plan identifies six distinct themes that need to be addressed in order to deliver its vision:

- Health and wellbeing
- Land use
- Environment
- Buying food
- Economy
- Cultural change

It sets out proposed actions within each of these themes to engage and work with the public, private and third sectors in Edinburgh towards these five key outcomes:

- More fresh, healthy and sustainable food eaten.
- Fewer people living in food poverty.
- Our natural environment and resources are protected and conserved with fewer emissions.

- A thriving food economy with greater diversity in local food production and distribution.
- A transformed food culture with greater awareness and skills.

Actions for the first year of this plan will invest in the knowledge and skills of individuals, the capacities of organisations and the effectiveness of partnerships in order to lay the foundations for transforming our food and our city.

Note: Some of the actions set out below are already underway and/or are linked to existing plans or activities.



# AIM 1

To create fair and affordable access to sustainable food, and ensure people can use it to provide a fresh, healthy and nutritious diet.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

Scotland is blessed with an abundant natural larder and our national produce is renowned all over the world for its quality and taste – food and drink is one of our strongest commercial exports. But despite our international reputation as a ‘Land of Food and Drink’, Scotland has a chronic health problem and is notorious for its poor diet.

Our diet and food choices are not only costing us our health but putting a heavy fiscal burden on the NHS and wider society. Although we know what we should be eating – more cereals, seasonal fruits and vegetables and less refined sugar, meat and highly processed food – access to affordable fresh and healthy food is becoming a pressing social issue.

Food prices have risen more than 30% in the last five years and the demand for food aid has rocketed. More and more people across the city are now experiencing food poverty.

By re-inventing our food systems in Edinburgh we have the potential to revolutionise how our communities function and ensure that there is fair and equal access to affordable, nutritious food that has been sustainably produced. It can also ensure that everyone is supported to make healthier food choices benefiting us and our city.

## Major Objectives

- Reduce levels of diet related ill health.
- Increase consumption of nutritious fruit & vegetables.
- Establish long term alternatives to food banks and emergency food aid.

## Year One Actions

- Engage with existing community food initiatives to explore, research and pilot alternatives to food banks.
- Develop effective working arrangements between Edible Edinburgh, NHS Lothian and the Health Inequalities Standing Group.



## AIM 2

To grow, produce and distribute food more locally while conserving and protecting our natural resources and environment.

### LAND USE

To minimize our environmental impact and reduce the distance our food travels from farm to plate means Edinburgh will need to source more of its own food closer to home. This means supporting individuals and communities to grow food as well as supporting commercial opportunities for local businesses and social enterprises. We recognise that in order to meet increased demand for locally grown food there needs to be access to land.

Across the city an increasing number of growing projects are finding creative ways of growing food on vacant, derelict or under-used land e.g. tenement backyards and garden-sharing schemes. Projects like this are important for protecting our city's wildlife and biodiversity, tackling inequalities and promoting social inclusion as well as encouraging physical activity and promoting healthier eating.

There are many competing priorities for the use of land in Edinburgh and its vital our planning system can accommodate these; freeing up existing land for use as well as supporting the creation of innovative new spaces for growing.

### Major Objectives

- Increase the amount of land available for local food production.
- Introduce a food perspective into the city's local plan and South East Scotland strategic development plan (SESPLAN).

### Year One Actions

- Develop and consult on a local food growing strategy under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill and in cooperation with the Grow Your Own Working Group.
- City of Edinburgh Council to review concessionary lets policy for community food growing initiatives.

## AIM 3

Use our natural resources more efficiently in order to minimise our ecological footprint and reduce levels of avoidable food waste.

### ENVIRONMENT

Growing, producing, processing, transporting and disposing of the food we eat have an enormous impact on our environment. Food production consumes valuable natural resources and can have major impacts on biodiversity such as habitat loss and pollution.

Industrial farming methods of production draw on the natural capital of our soil and increase our reliance on chemical fertilisers which are a key contributory factor to global warming. Organic farming methods build soil fertility without the use of artificial fertilisers, prohibit use of the vast majority of pesticides and herbicides and offer high animal welfare standards. However, the scale of organic farming in the UK is significantly smaller than that of industrial agriculture.

Our modern food systems contribute around 30% of greenhouse emissions in the UK. And because so much of our food is imported our food choices place pressure on land and natural resources, like water, across the globe. Edinburgh should play its part in the stewardship of the planet's natural resources, to help ensure these are conserved and that our farming and fishing systems are sustainable.

### Major Objectives

- Establish benchmarks to encourage reductions in food waste, water and energy use and carbon emissions throughout our food systems.
- Support national and local initiatives to minimise food waste.

### Year One Actions

- Develop a baseline to measure Edinburgh's progress as a sustainable food city.
- Continue to reduce food waste and levels of unavoidable food waste going to landfill.

## AIM 4

To develop a thriving local food economy based on public and private sector businesses procuring more sustainable food.

### BUYING FOOD

The capital's public and private sectors have a role to play in transforming Edinburgh into a thriving, sustainable food city. Using the buying power of Edinburgh's public institutions and key private sector businesses to source healthy and sustainable produce for Edinburgh could help stimulate our local economy and create new routes to market for local growers and produces.

Hospitals, schools, nurseries, care homes, workplaces, restaurants/cafes and visitor attractions are likely to provide food to all of us at some point in our lives. Serving fresh and healthy meals could contribute to the health and wellbeing of everyone in Edinburgh and bring a longer-term dividend of social, economic and environmental benefits to the city.

Scotland has a strong international reputation for its high quality produce and ingredients and it is now time to reflect this in the food choices available to everyone in our city. Our public, retail, hospitality and events sectors can all play a part in this and so can individual consumers by asking for local and sustainably sourced products and meals.

### Major Objectives

- Improve the amount & quality of sustainable food procured.
- Establish better communication and links between producers, processors, retailers and customers.

### Year One Actions

- Support ongoing delivery of the Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership project.
- Investigate the opportunities for the public sector in Edinburgh to develop a city-wide sustainable food procurement strategy under Procurement Reform Bill.

## AIM 5

To develop a diverse independent food sector which offers a variety of high quality skills, training, and employment opportunities.

### ECONOMY

Edinburgh has a growing and vibrant population with a high number of economically active people of working age. It has a thriving local hospitality, events and food retail sector that could be developed to support more local producers (and more producers selling locally) as well as a more diverse retail sector where knowledgeable employees are enthusiastic ambassadors for healthy, sustainable and locally produced food, benefiting residents and tourists alike.

We need to ensure that food related businesses in Edinburgh offer a range of career opportunities and improve links between schools, colleges and the food industry to ensure we have a workforce suitably skilled to support the improvement and expansion of our sustainable food sectors.

As a sustainable food city we can encourage and support everyone across the city to have a connection to the food they eat, and the people who produce it, so we can all support local businesses and help our local economy to grow. It is also important that we build relationships and opportunities for collaboration between the people who produce, distribute and sell our food as well as supporting and encouraging a diverse retail sector with more independent food businesses, delivering broad economic and community benefits to the city.

### Major Objectives

- Strengthen the wholesale, brokerage, retail and delivery infrastructure that supports the independent food sector.
- Develop a programme of support & skills training for new growers and those working in growing, processing and catering.

### Year One Actions

- Initiate work with relevant key agencies and partners to develop a strategy for food skills and jobs.
- City of Edinburgh Council to include a food strand in the Co-operative Capital Programme.

## AIM 6

To inspire, enable and support people to connect with food - the everyday pleasures and cultural traditions of eating, sharing and celebrating meals together.

### CULTURE CHANGE

Our food culture has changed dramatically in recent years and reflects a food system which is geared towards delivering fast, cheap food within a highly complex, global food chain. We have increased our consumption of refined sugar and processed foods, become disconnected from how our food is produced and seen a dramatic increase in food poverty in Scotland. This has all contributed towards rising levels of adult and childhood obesity and food related diseases, such as diabetes, which reduce our quality of life and wellbeing as well as adversely affecting our economic growth.

If a city is its people and if we are what we eat, then sustainable food is key to becoming a sustainable city. We want everyone to reconnect with where our food comes from and encourage and support active participation in community food growing and

cooking projects. By sharing the everyday pleasures that producing, preparing, eating and sharing food can bring we can instigate a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits to our communities and our city; building a fairer food culture and a happier and healthier city to live in.

### Major Objectives

- Transform our relationships with food by encouraging more people to cook from scratch, grow their own and eat seasonal, local and organically grown produce.
- Strengthen communities by engaging people in communal activities around food.

### Year One Actions

- Work with key partners to map existing city food initiatives, develop networks and support relevant events and festivals that promote sustainable food and encourage wide participation.
- Develop a City Food Charter to highlight issues and stimulate actions.
- Protect, build and expand capacity in the community food sector.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING



5 a day

Over two-thirds of people across the Lothians eat less than the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and 8% of people eat none.

50%

50% + of all Edinburgh adults are either overweight or obese.



8%

8% the number of people in the Lothians who eat no fruit and vegetables.



5 fold

the increase in foodbank use in the past year.

## LAND USE

Edinburgh has  
**1,434**  
allotment plots  
across 21 sites.



88%

of Edinburgh residents live within 400m of a green or open space.



2700

number of people on allotment waiting lists.



**234.93 hectares of land** in Edinburgh city is either vacant and/or derelict **48%** of all sites are 1 hectare or less in size with **3%** larger than 10 hectares.

vacant and/or derelict land

48%

1 hectare or less

3%

10 hectare or less

2014 > 2015 > 2016 > 2017 > 2018

5 years

average waiting time on allotment waiting list.

## ENVIRONMENT

30%



of greenhouse emissions in the UK are from our food system.

One third



of all household waste in Edinburgh is food.

238% increase



in the amount of food recycled in Edinburgh in past year.



Approx **20%** of all commercial waste collected by local authorities in Scotland is food and kitchen waste – rising to **45%** for food businesses.

53,500 tonnes



food waste from Scottish hospitality sector - two-thirds of which (**35,800 tonnes**) could have been eaten. **150,000 tonnes** of CO2 equivalent emissions could be saved by recycling and avoiding this food waste - the same as taking almost **50,000 cars** off the road for one year.

## BUYING FOOD

 £150 million

annual public sector expenditure on food and drink in Scotland of which 48% is estimated to be on products produced in Scotland (though not all products will use all Scottish ingredients).

416 metres



average distance Edinburgh residents live from a supermarket or convenience store, the lowest distance of any Scottish local authority.

## ECONOMY



30%

increase in food prices over past six years.



Less than 10% of people in Edinburgh work in accommodation and food service.

less than  
5%

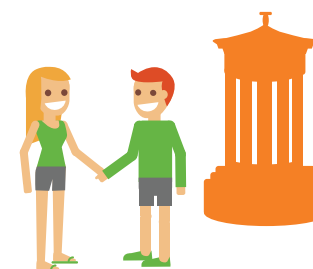


Less than 5% are employed in manufacturing and primary industries such as farming.



A study showed for every £1 invested in a Soil Association Food for Life menu, the social, economic and environmental return on investment for the local authority is £3.

## CULTURE CHANGE



Edinburgh ranked highest for well-being in a recent survey of the UK's top 10 cities.



Every £1 invested in Local Food is shown to return between £6 and £8 to society in the form of social and economic outcomes including health and well-being, training and skills.

## Edible Edinburgh Steering Group

Pat Abel, Transition Edinburgh

Shulah Allan, NHS Lothian

David Somervell - University of Edinburgh

Charlie Cornelius, Iglu Bar & Restaurant

Lesley Hinds & Marianne Paget, City of Edinburgh Council

Colin Murray, EVOC

Cesar Revoredo-Giha, Scotland's Rural College

Pete Ritchie & Tracey Reilly, Nourish Scotland

Fiona Richmond, Scotland Food & Drink

Andrew Stirling, Stirfresh

Laura Stewart & Angela Mitchell, Soil Association Scotland

Veronica Burke, Bread Matters

## Principles

The principles underpinning this plan:

- **Inclusive** – this is about everyone, and about our diverse culture in the city
- **Additional** - we'll build on the good work people are doing already
- **Innovative** - We will use our wealth of knowledge and skills to support innovation and sustainability in our food system
- **Integrated** - We will integrate our plans with new and existing policies and plans in order to ensure effective and efficient working
- **Engaging**- we will work with people and invest in conversations, education, community development, co-operation and partnerships
- **Comprehensive** - we will seek to change the material environment and social context for decision-making and sustainable food choices
- **Ambitious** - we want to be the most sustainable food city in the UK
- **Sustainable** – we will strive to be sustainable in everything we do

For information on how Edible Edinburgh is progressing and how to get involved see the **Edible Edinburgh website**