

The Food Conversation: What are the issues?



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The Food Conversation

“In March 2023, citizens involved in the People's Plan for Nature published their recommendations, setting out the urgent actions needed to protect and renew nature. Among them was a call for a national conversation on diet to better support nature.

FFCC responded to this with a plan to hold a national conversation on food, asking people what they expect from government and business when it comes to food – and how the food system can deliver more for health, nature and climate.”



The Food Conversation: National Picture

1 Lead and collaborate

Embed cabinet-level leadership and cross-departmental working, coordinating food policy across all four nations. Use inclusive processes like the Food Conversation to involve citizens, farmers, and others, in finding practical solutions to make a good food system work for everybody.

2 Create a healthy food environment

- a. Make healthy food easily affordable for all
- b. Restrict and phase out UPFs
- c. Ban junk food advertising to children
(across all platforms – not just TV)

3 Strengthen standards and protections

Make food in schools and hospitals locally sourced and healthy, tackle food waste, limit excessive packaging.

4 Make food and farming fair

Rebalance power between corporations and supermarkets, farmers, and citizens. Prioritise supporting farmers transitioning to more sustainable practices.

5 Connect communities

Invest in local food and local food plans. Create food hubs for communities to meet and have more fresh local produce.



The Food Conversation: Local Picture

4 November: Planet Shaftesbury

25 February: Dorset LNP / Dorset
National Landscape / Dorchester Town
Council

5 March: Dorset LNP / Dorset National
Landscape / Dorset Wildlife Trust

Online Form: Dorset LNP

Youth Engagement



Positives in the food system

- Convenience
- Variety / choice
- Growing relationship / understanding with food & nature
- Good safety standards
- Community projects – growing / access to food
- Increase in sustainable / regenerative farming
- Farm shops / food markets / festivals
- Education - food technology in schools
- Food waste initiatives e.g., too good to go, wonky fruit and vegetables



Negatives in the food system

- Unhealthy food choices / ultra-processed food
- Environmental impacts
- Unseasonal food / food miles
- Food waste
- True cost of food production not always recognised
- Multinational companies controlling much of the system
- Disjointed system
- Uncertainty of farming support
- Food poverty
- Disease transmission through intensive livestock farming
- Lack of knowledge on where food is produced



Shaftesbury



Making healthy sustainable food choices: e.g. promote local food markets/festivals and seasonal eating.

Education, engaging young people: e.g. give children healthy food messages.

Networking amongst producers: e.g. farmers link to local community / immediate neighbours.

Building connections between food production and the wider public: e.g. Promote on-farm shops and Open Farm Sunday.

Map local land use: e.g. for the area around Shaftesbury including into neighbouring counties; online resource capturing useful info.

Dorchester



Dorset
National
Landscape



Dorchester
Town Council

Food education: e.g. Cooking education on food growing and sustainable regenerative farming.

Marketing and advertising: e.g. Clearer labelling of food e.g., new system to show what food is ultra processed and what is local/low carbon.

National policy: e.g. Stronger regulation and better enforcement to raise food production standards.

Community action: e.g. Try to start a local food project that includes a social supermarket/cookery classes/eating together.

Dorset-wide



Dorset
National
Landscape



Dorset
Wildlife Trust

Education / awareness: e.g. Demonstrating the benefits of regenerative agriculture for businesses and nature. Farmers could work with nature organisations to present joint message.

Government support: e.g. Returns to farmers that use regenerative system that supports ecosystem services.

Local community action: e.g. Obtaining and publicising pilots where a procurer like a school or hospital works with local producers. Responsibility with the procurers with support from government.

Food production: e.g. Support food and fibre production approaches that are environmentally sustainable and resilient to environmental change.

Online Form

Government: policy / legislative changes / funding: e.g. Local food resilience – more production of local food with governmental policy support.

Support for farmers: e.g. Change the subsidy system so the farmer benefits not the supermarket

Education / awareness: e.g. Greater education & awareness raising amongst consumers about food production and how our choices directly impact the natural world (all) / the true cost of farming needs to be understood.

Community action: e.g. Eat seasonally and locally and cook more from scratch.

Youth Engagement

Food Waste e.g. Make management more efficient.

Marketing and advertising: e.g. Clearer labelling of locally produced food in supermarkets / Pushing locally produced food over imported foods / More adverts about food health / More advertisement on easy ways to eat less processed foods.

Government policy / legislative changes: e.g. Make healthier food cheaper than processed foods (and vice-versa) – with the help of global companies / Councils to run voucher schemes for local markets and bakeries instead of giving them out for supermarkets / Shops to put food that is going out of date outside for free.

Community action: e.g. More community fridges / Food banks letting people choose their own food instead of having it ready bagged.

Education: e.g. More teaching of food technology in schools.

Food production: e.g. Produce less processed vegetarian and vegan meals / get local farm produce into global supermarkets i.e., a different section or a stall / Rural areas having more healthy choices - without transport, people must rely on deliveries which are not always fresh, so people choose processed foods.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Use **sustainable farming practices** that improve soil structure to reduce run off and improve soil health.

Adopt farming practices that **support soil health** to encourage microbial activity beneficial to soil structure and maintaining soil cover.

Support local sustainable food production by **increasing the amount of local sustainable produce bought and eaten**.

Use an **ecosystem-based fisheries management** approach and sustainable aquaculture practices.

Maintain and establish **new fruit trees and orchards** within public spaces and establish related community groups and ways for people to use the fruit.