Vision for 2040: Food

Discussion notes from SRS Staff and Student Workshop, Wednesday 8th March 2017

# Our Vision for 2040

**2040 Aim: More food growing at the University.**

**We can get there by:**

* It’s great that the food growing process is now in place (this process provides a means for staff and students to get permission from Estates to start new gardening projects on campus). However, the University could further support growing activities by coordinating trainings, providing seed funding etc.
* Using food grown on allotments within the University’s catering operations.
* Participants noted that growing projects are also a good opportunity to further community engagement, as there is potential to partner with the local community.
* Participants also noted that staff and students have the ability to make a really positive contribution to existing growing initiatives in the community. We should aim to start new projects within the University, but we should also encourage members of the University to get involved with the many growing projects that already exist in Edinburgh.
* Finally, participants noted the positive effect that gardening can have on health and wellbeing.

**2040 Aim: Sustainable University food provision.**

**We can get there by:**

* Using choice editing techniques to encourage sustainable behaviours. For example, a meat or sugar “tax” could be introduced and used to subsidise healthy and sustainable products (participants noted that this might be difficult to implement in a competitive high street environment).
* Using new retail approaches to reduce waste and nudge people towards healthier more sustainable options, for example paying by weight and offering meat as an add-on rather than an integrated part of the main meal.
* Additionally, the cost and variety of available options were felt to be a reason that people bring food onto campus.
* Participants had good feedback about the new salad bar at KB, reflecting a general appreciation for flexible and healthy options.
* Participants were also pleased to see new vegetarian and vegan options appearing in catering outlets but would welcome more variety .

**2040 Aim: A low or no-waste University with closed loop systems to process any food waste that does arise.**

**We can get there by:**

* Looking at ways to reduce the amount of waste generated in catering outlets from packaging for salads, sandwiches etc. One way to address this is by offering a discount for people who bring their own containers.
* Introducing compost bins for food waste and coffee grounds which could then be used by local gardens to grow food.
* Offering a discount on all reusable cups and eventually phasing out coffee cups altogether.
* Selling food that is near its sell by date at a discount or giving it to charities.
* Ceasing to sell bottled water at some point in the future.
* Looking at ways to stop food leftover from events going into landfill, and reducing the packaging waste arising from delivered catering.

**2040 Aim: Transparent supply chains and responsible sourcing**

**We can get there by:**

* Working towards transparent supply chains that are independently audited.
* Publishing the sustainability questions that are asked in framework agreements and supplier responses.
* Sourcing RSPCA Assured animal products as a minimum, in keeping with the Good Food Policy commitment to source high welfare meat.
* If possible, supporting the creation of producer cooperatives to enable even more local sourcing

**2040 Aim: More communication to raise awareness of the good things already happening**

**We can get there by:**

* Using leaflets / signs in cafes to highlight locally sourced products and other sustainability measures.
* Arranging face to face visits for farms that we source from for students to further promote our Scottish sourcing.
* Putting more information about providence and sustainability on the delivered catering system.
* Many attendees were not aware of all the good things already happening and agreed it would be great to promote this.

**Other things participants wanted to see by 2040 were:**

* More rooftop gardens and other urban food growing techniques.
* More University-led education around the impact of food systems and choices on the environment.
* A communal kitchen on campus which can be used by staff and students and the local community to hold meals, cooking workshops, preserving classes etc. There is a lack of accessible kitchen facilities for these kinds of activities in Edinburgh and the University could be part of the solution.