

This workshop was aimed at new members or those that are about to join the network. The group heard from two new members Aberdeen and Nottingham about the process of setting up; their challenges and successes so far.

Aberdeen

Aberdeen have just joined the network. Laura Penny is the newly appointed Sustainable Food Cities & Sugar Smart Co-ordinator for Aberdeen city, based at Community Food Initiatives North East. She has been involved in bringing the Sustainable Food Cities approach forward in Aberdeen city for over a year now, both through her former post at Aberdeen City Council and through her personal interest in sustainable food and community empowerment. Key messages were having the right people around the table from the very start can make the journey to membership less challenging. Aberdeen also sees it as essential to be open and flexible to changing plans when barriers arise. They found it challenging in engaging local agricultural organisations particularly as Aberdeen shire (as opposed to Aberdeen city) dropped out of the SFC .

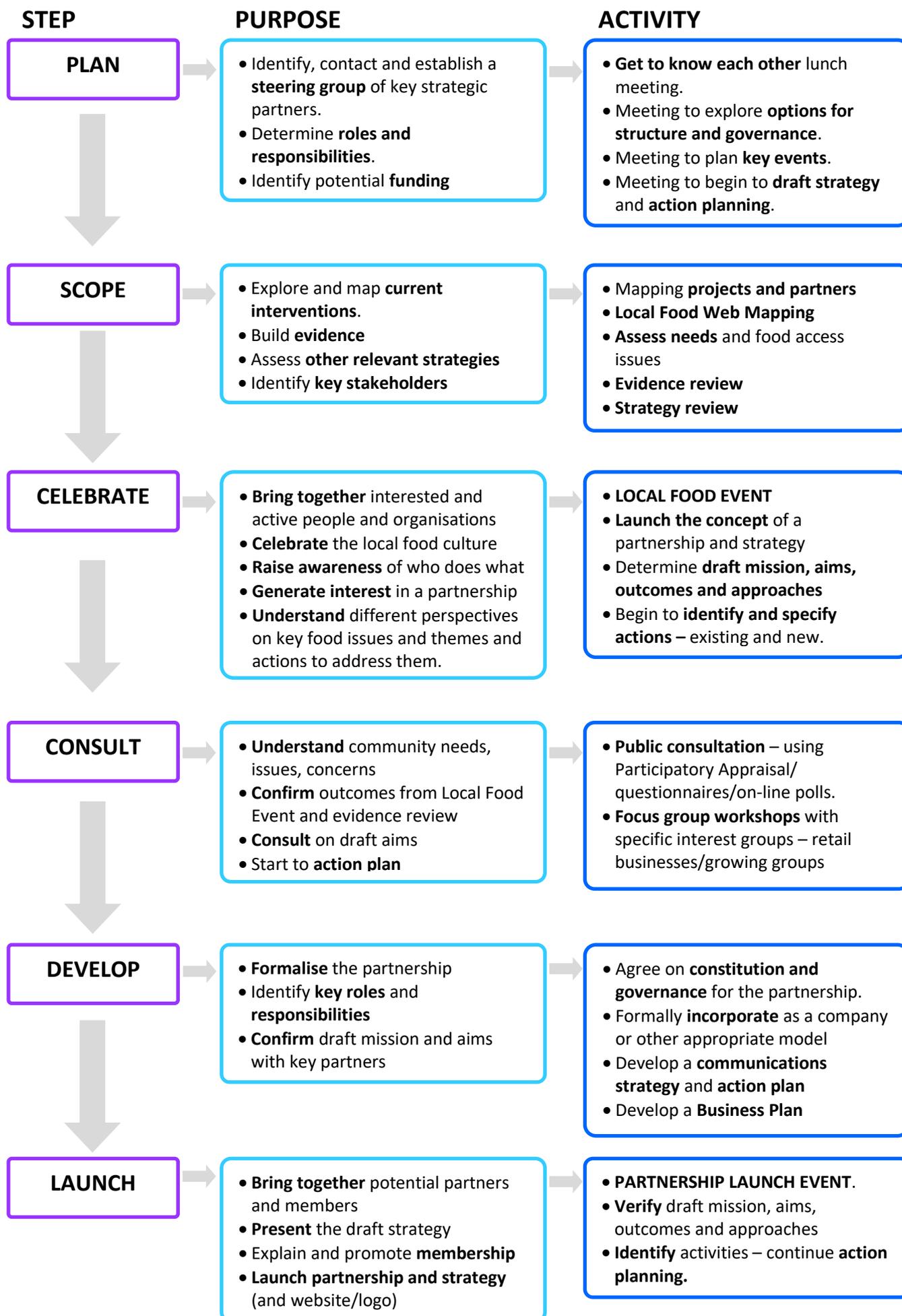
Nottingham

Penny Poyzer chairs the new SFC partnership in Nottingham. Their approach has been driven by both Nottingham Universities getting involved. They rarely collaborate outside of the SFC context. There was also a drive from public Health. An older sustainable food partnership called FIG has been revived and revised in name, logo and strategy. This used to be well known around Nottingham and helps give the partnership a sense of history and purpose. A challenge in Nottingham was having the confidence to say a small group of committed individuals were the SFC partnership but this was seen as legitimate to begin action. A wider partnership and further consultation will be part of the action plan. An early action to get more buy-in was to take up the offer of 2 MA students to put together a business case for a local food partnership.

Step by Step Activity

The workshop looked at the different activities and steps involved in moving from the initial idea of doing something on sustainable food through to the development of a Food Partnership and Action Plan. Participants were divided into small groups and given a task to order a range of 'activity cards' in a progression from the first meeting through to launching the new Food Partnership. Every group's arrangement was photographed – they were all different! The activity cards were based on those activities carried out in Brighton during the setup of the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership. A sample step by step guide was handed out based on the activity in Brighton. This was **not presented as the answer...** rather it was illustrative of one way that it has been done by a well-established food partnership. See below.

FOOD PARTNERSHIP AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



Points from discussion on Step by Step Activity

- The exact order that you do things in depends on culture, resources, whether it is local authority or community driven etc.
- If you are working with a local authority that is very keen on consultation then you might be inclined to do more of that.
- Different elements were described as 'tricky' by different people in the workshop – clearly it depends on local circumstances as to what these are.
- The process is not linear
- Some uncertainty as to when to involve wider groups? At what stage in the process?
- Need to look at which elements of the process are of interest to whom – e.g. strategy might only be of interest to particular people.
- A tendency to get bogged down with the setting up the steering group stage.
- As well as applying for funds, people felt there was an activity around 'generating income'.
- There were distinct strands of work around governance and the use of events
- Formal incorporation was thought to be too late in the process in the Brighton example.

NOTE: The feedback above, together with images of each group's step by step activity plan will be used as the basis for developing a Step by Step guide to support new members of the Sustainable Food Cities Network.

What support could SFC provide you during set up / early days of becoming a member?

- Creation of an 'Early Stages Health Check Tool' – possibly pre –partnership.
- Guidance on how to develop action plans
- Toolkits – how to engage other cultural organisations in the agenda
- Additional support around developing a generic business case.
- Basic Steps guide – where to start from ground zero
- Early stages networking events for members
- Rural areas best practice
- Historically there may have been unsuccessful attempts at developing food strategies – what are the common blockages?

Joining the SFC network

It is important that prospective members are clear about what is needed, or importantly what is NOT needed, to join the network. The SFC team is there to support but it is important to know exactly what is expected of a Terms of Reference, Charter and Action Plan. Prospective members can contact the Network manager to discuss and a resource will be developed to support.

Workshop report prepared by Leon Ballin (Chair) and Sarah Davies