Wells Food Network
Planning Framework & Terms of Reference
for the working relationship with Sustainable Food Cities
programme partners: Soil Association, Food Matters and Sustain

1 Background

1.1 Wells Food Network is rooted in community activism and inspired by its two founding partners: Sustainable Wells and Wells Food Festival. It was established in response to the unanimous support of the wide range of stakeholders who participated in the meeting, held in February 2016 to explore the merits of Wells joining the Sustainable Food Cities network.

Since then we have created a Steering Group of 15 people drawn from a diversity of community and voluntary organisations, local businesses, and the public sector - detailed in Appendix A. We also benefit from the expertise provided by the Wells Food Advisory Network, ref: Appendix B.

1.2 This document brings together our current thinking about the fundamental components of Wells Food Network’s (WFN’s) role, structure and governance. As a result, it provides the key point of reference for determining WFN’s programme of work and its visual and verbal identity, communications strategy and culture.

2 Our core belief

Food and farming have always been an important part of the life of Wells and its surrounding towns and countryside. We have a diversity of producers, local markets, businesses, community organizations and public bodies connected with human and environmental health and wellbeing. And yet the winds of change are presenting us with a number of challenges concerning inter-related issues, such as:

- **Our countryside** – the decline in farm incomes is resulting in the trend away from predominantly family farms to large scale agri-businesses and so to ever larger fields, the depletion of wildlife and decline in rural employment

- **Health** - the typical Western diet, including high levels of sugar, meat and processed food, is one of the leading causes of chronic health problems such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes, which is putting an increasing strain on our health services

- **Food poverty** – is being experienced by some, whilst food waste by others continues, apparently unabated

- **Community** – there’s the need successfully to integrate 1500 new households into the community life of Wells, in a way which avoids dislocation and safeguards the continuation of a safe, cohesive and active community.

- **Local business** - the rise of multiple food retailers, big brands and internet shopping is leading to the declining viability of the independent shops
A common denominator of these challenges is food. And yet, while food is a key ingredient in all these challenges, readily available, local, affordable, sustainably produced food, coupled with healthy diets, is also a vital part of the solution to them.

And yet readily available, local, affordable, sustainably produced food, coupled with healthy diets is potentially a vital part of the solution.

In general terms, the challenges are prevalent everywhere. The quest to address them - by putting sustainable food at the heart of a joined up approach - is what unites the network of Sustainable Food Cities which have been established throughout the UK.

We believe that this joined up approach offers a positive way to:

- enhance public health and well-being - by enabling more people to benefit from healthy, nutrient-rich, affordable diets
- build community cohesion - by forging closer connections between people throughout an expanding local food supply chain
- conserve our countryside – specially by sustaining more smaller / family farms and championing food which is grown locally in sustainable farming systems - with biologically active soils, which respect animal welfare, avoid the prophylactic use of antibiotics and are rich in wildlife
- underpin local economic prosperity - by stimulating local enterprises and keeping a higher proportion of the money in local hands

3 Our direction

3.1 Our Vision: is of a vibrant food culture in Wells and its surrounding towns, villages and countryside that is good for people, good for communities and good for the planet

3.2 Our Mission: is to celebrate the joy of good food and to champion sustainable, affordable, locally grown food as an integral part of a healthy diet, community well-being and environmental conservation.

3.3 Our ambition

WFN has been established by and for the people of Wells and its surrounding communities. To fulfil WFN’s mission our aim is to develop a broad cross-sector partnership – comprising community and voluntary sector organisations, local businesses and public sector bodies – working together to make Wells a successful Sustainable Food City.

As a result, our ambition is to create a vibrant food culture in and around Wells that:
- celebrates the joy of good food
- transforms the health and well-being of the people and our communities
- conserves the natural environment
- supports the local economy
3.4 Our strategy is to achieve this by

1. Promoting a greater appreciation of the role and importance of healthy and sustainable food – fresh, local, seasonal – amongst the public at large, related community organisations, businesses and public sector bodies involved in the local food chain

2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable healthy food

3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects

4. Promoting a vibrant, diverse sustainable local food economy

5. Transforming catering and food procurement

6. Advocating solutions to reduce food waste and the ecological footprint of the food system

7. Inspiring organisations to collaborate in undertaking initiatives around sustainable food and so to achieve positive health, social, economic and environmental change

8. Exchanging ideas and experience with others, especially in the Sustainable Food Cities Network, to develop best practice and achieve an enduring impact.

4 Our goals

4.1 Within 2 years (ie: by the end of 2017) are to have:

1. inspired the support of key stakeholders across the local food system

2. consulted widely and published the Wells Food Charter

3. researched and developed WFN's Business Plan and objectives

4. established a cross sector partnership to drive forward the sustainable food agenda in Wells

4.2 Within 3 years, (ie: by 2019) – are to have:

1. made demonstrable progress in delivering the strategy and programme of work

2. earned a reputation as an effective campaigning organisation

3. qualified for a SFC Bronze Award
5 WFN's culture

5.1 Our values:
- Passionate - about driving real change
- Inclusive – embracing people with most to give and most to gain
- Collaborative – to ensure a joined up approach
- Inspirational – to attract attention and support
- Solutions oriented – in overcoming the challenges
- Challenging the status quo – in our approach and actions
- Celebratory – about Real Food
- Fun – uplifting and energising everyone involved

5.2 Our principles:
- For public benefit
- Independent
- Accountable – to members, stakeholders, SFC partnership
- Transparent
- Ethical
- Focussed on addressing priority needs
- Aiming for lasting beneficial impact

6 Governance

6.1 Charitable status

Wells Food Network (WFN) works for the public benefit and addresses three of the criteria for becoming a registered charity, ie:

- prevention or relief of poverty
- advancement of education
- advancement of health

In the first instance WFN has been established as a charitable unincorporated association, principally because:
- the public recognition associated with this will strengthen WFN’s case for support
- the structure is relatively simple and inexpensive to run
- when WFN’s income rises above £5kpa, registration with the Charity Commission is likely to be relatively straightforward.

6.2 Democratic accountability

We have built democratic accountability into WFN’s constitution by creating a membership organisation, so that the Board of trustees is accountable to the membership, in particular by holding a general meeting annually to which all members are invited. Trustees will be appointed both by election at successive AGMs and by co-option.
Membership is open to all. Our aim is to recruit a growing membership, with as wide a range of stakeholder interests and expertise as possible, as individuals, businesses and organisations.

6.3 Structure

This is a three tier model which, in addition to the membership, will evolve over the coming months to comprise:

1. **The WFN Board** of between 5 – 8 trustees which:
   
i. whilst formally accountable for all WFN’s affairs, which (when the WFN Partnership described below is fully formed) will focus its attention on operational / business responsibilities
   
ii. is constitutionally accountable to, and ultimately elected by, the membership

2. **The WFN Partnership** which:
   
i. will grow to comprise the above trustees, plus an additional 7 – 10 people, with complementary expertise across the local food system, who would be co-opted by the Board
   
ii. will aim to foster and support a vibrant, inclusive and constantly growing food network through which as many individuals and organisations as possible can get actively behind and feel part of aspiring to WFN’s vision
   
iii. will focus on determining WFN’s programme of work and stakeholder engagement
   
iv. during the transition period would be advised by the Steering Group – which would then dissolve
   
   v. would be the accountable body for the working relationship with Sustainable Food Cities

6.4 The Board’s responsibilities:

1. Recruit a Steering Group, comprising people with a broad range of relevant expertise, in order to:
   
i. advise the Board on the establishment of the organisation, including its governance, communications and funding
   
ii. provide a forum for networking, co-ordination and information sharing
   
iii. inspire support for creating a sustainable food agenda for Wells
   
iv. engage with key stakeholders on a vision of good food for Wells
v. research and identify priorities, funding and resources with which to undertake the initial programme of work

2. On the advice of the Steering Group, determine WFN’s mission, direction, initial strategy and associated policies

3. Ensure the continuing viability of the organisation by raising income from diverse sources and effective financial and operational management of the organisation.

4. Create the WFN Partnership, comprising the trustees and individuals appointed by the Board with complementary expertise, which will evolve to supersede the Steering Group and which:

   i. represents stakeholders across the local food system

   ii. is independent and works towards a shared vision and mission

   iii. engages stakeholders in the wider network by eg: collaborating with complementary organisations, setting up joint projects and creating working groups to consider particular issues

   iv. develops and drives forward a strategy for focusing WFN’s work where it is likely to have most influence and impact on the sustainable food agenda for Wells
## Appendix A: Steering Group membership - October 2016

*denotes: also a trustee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Department / Position</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Sector</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Briton</td>
<td>Wells City Council Sustainable Wells</td>
<td>Councillor</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>Public / Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Bulmer</td>
<td>Somerset County Council</td>
<td>Health Promotion Manager</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Clay</td>
<td>The Palace Trust (the Bishop's Palace)</td>
<td>Allotments / Community Gardens</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart Crocker*</td>
<td>Sustainable Wells</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Johns</td>
<td>Wells Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>Business / Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Knight</td>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Economic Development Department</td>
<td>Mendip</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Campbell Murdoch</td>
<td>Wells Health Centre</td>
<td>CCG Person-Centred Care Lead, Clinical Lead for Your Health &amp; Wellbeing</td>
<td>Somerset &amp; Mendip</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Prince</td>
<td>Somerset Waste Partnership</td>
<td>Community Engagement Officer</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Robinson*</td>
<td>Somerset Community Food / Wells Country Market + Sustainable Wells</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>NGO / Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Stanley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable food champion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicky Sullivan*</td>
<td>Health Connections Mendip</td>
<td>Area Lead</td>
<td>West Mendip</td>
<td>Public / Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Terry</td>
<td>Mongoose Energy Sustainable Wells</td>
<td>Head of Climate Change Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business / NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Walrond</td>
<td>Bath and Wells Diocese</td>
<td>Rural Life Advisor</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>NGO / Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie Weldon*</td>
<td>Freelance communications + Sustainable Wells</td>
<td>Journalist, writer and editor</td>
<td></td>
<td>NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger White</td>
<td>Somerset Local Food Direct</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>Business</td>
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Appendix B: Wells Food Advisory Network membership – October 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Department / Position</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rupert Cox</td>
<td>Royal Bath &amp; West Ag Society</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonita Everson</td>
<td>Feed Avalon</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Heappey</td>
<td></td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Hicks</td>
<td>Farming and Countryside Education (FACE)</td>
<td>SW Regional Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Maggs</td>
<td>Bath and Wells Diocese</td>
<td>Social Justice and Environment Advisor</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessa Munt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddy and Judith O’Hagan</td>
<td>Wells Food Festival</td>
<td>Founders</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Pitcher</td>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Head of Economic Development</td>
<td>Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Pyatt</td>
<td>International development consultancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Roper</td>
<td>Soil Association - Food for Life</td>
<td>Development Manager - South</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Sorensen</td>
<td>Sustainable Wells Food Group</td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddy Vaughan</td>
<td>Sustainable Wells</td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Membership criteria**

- Opinion formers / influencers / policy makers / potential funders /
- An interest in the Sustainable Food City approach
- Not having time / and / or inclination to join the Steering Group
- Willing to provide advice and support on an ad hoc basis

**Brief is to provide:**

- a sounding board for the Steering Group’s evolving plans
- access to high level contacts and other resources

NB: it is not intended that members would meet together as a group.