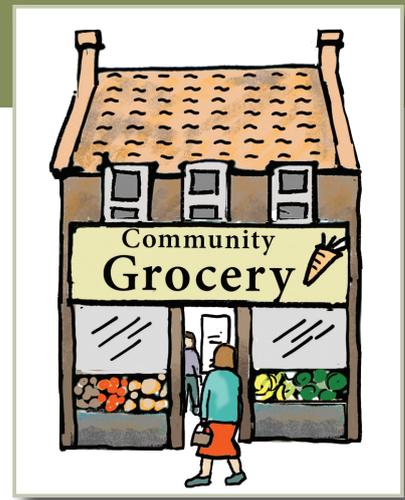


# Food vision

**How will we feed ourselves in 2025? What changes will we have made to local agriculture and food processing and distribution to ensure a local food supply which uses 50% less fossil fuels and is resilient enough to make sure that we don't go hungry after flash floods or a long drought or after an oil price spike disrupts supermarket delivery systems?**



In 2025, we want to ensure that anyone can access land to grow some of their own food. There will be a change to smaller scale mixed farming which is primarily concerned with supplying food to local markets. Local procurement policies and farmers' markets along with local processing facilities such as a slaughterhouse, a flour mill and dairy will be in place. There will be a diversity of food growing enterprises including Community

Supported Agriculture schemes, market gardens and community orchards. Soil fertility will be increasing with an expansion of organic methods and the local recycling of nutrients from animal wastes, crop residues and local food waste. Farms will be becoming self-sufficient in terms of energy with machinery powered by renewable energy and through use of animal traction. Local fisheries will be sustainable and providing for local needs.

## Some Food Challenges (and notes towards solutions)

**1. The majority of people are keen to purchase locally produced food but face a number of barriers. There is very limited quantity or variety of local food available in local shops and none in local supermarkets where most people do their shopping. Lack of precise labeling means it is often hard to know if food is actually local or not. Some local food is available in High Street shops, at Knowes Farmshop and through the Phantassie box scheme but it is perceived as being more expensive than food in supermarkets and veggie boxes can include a lot of imported produce. Many people do not have the transport or time to travel to Knowes Farm or they find that Crunchy Carrot and other local food shops are not open at times that suit them. There is no local produce market in the Dunbar area and there is a perception that rules and regulations make it difficult to set one up.**

We need to find ways of reconnecting growers and consumers. There is already a substantial demand and desire for locally produced food among consumers but farmers are not generally set up to grow food for a local market. It will not be easy for existing farmers and growers to change their business model and to wean themselves off dependence on cheap oil, cheap credit and a few large customers. The development of a local food procurement policy by East Lothian

Council could assist in driving this change along with the establishment of regular local food markets, the development of a labeling scheme for local produce and the piloting of alternative models such as 'community supported agriculture', community gardens and orchards. Local shops may also need to look at developing their business model to provide late night opening and a more flexible delivery service.

**2. Many people would like to be able to grow more of their own food but are frustrated by lack of time, lack of knowledge and by lack of access to land. It has been suggested that part of Winterfield Park could be used for allotments but local residents have objected. Otherwise the Council has no land which is suitable. The 45 new private allotments at Thistly Cross were taken up immediately but more than 65 people remain on the local allotments waiting list. Local landowners are generally unwilling to sell land unless it is for housing and are reluctant to lease it because of complications of agricultural tenancy agreements. When agricultural land does come on the market, the price is very high. Much land adjacent to Dunbar has been zoned for housing or industrial use in the local plan.**

There is a need for a full audit of land which could be made available for allotments, community gardens/orchards and for Dunbar Allotments Association and East Lothian council to make a coordinated approach to landowners, including the NHS. A task group should explore if there is scope for meeting local resident's concerns while including allotments in future plans for developing Winterfield Park. There is a need to understand landowners' reluctance to sell or lease land for small-scale food growing and to develop ideas for how issues can be overcome. There may be scope for a local community land trust to take land into community ownership. The local Development Plan may need to allow for alternative land use models. There is a need to create opportunities for



education and skills training both through informal sharing networks and through more formal courses and volunteer opportunities.

**3. The prevailing ethos, subsidies and high overheads from land and machinery purchase, all pull farmers towards large scale, specialised production for supermarkets and grain merchants. Use of labour is minimised and income maximised in order to service debts. What is grown, and how, is dictated by supermarkets and merchants. Lack of local processing facilities and lack of time make it difficult for farmers to supply small quantities locally. Organic methods yield less and carry extra certification costs without commanding a price premium. Local fishermen are similarly dictated to by merchants. Costs of whitefish quotas are prohibitive for small operators and while the shellfish fishery is currently doing well, all catches are sold through the local merchant and exported, mostly to Spain.**

Transforming the current agricultural and food supply system will take time and will need to happen alongside the development and piloting of new and alternative, community based, more labour intensive food growing projects. The development of local markets, processing

and distribution systems will need to happen hand in hand with this. Future subsidies need to be geared to encouraging smaller scale mixed farming. Further research is needed into the development of a locally controlled, sustainable, small-scale fishery.

**4. Local farmers are not set up to produce local food and there is a disconnection between local needs and local production. There are no local processing facilities such as a slaughterhouse or a flour mill. Locally grown grain almost all goes for malting, biscuit flour or animal feed. There is no local dairy while livestock and vegetable production is almost all on a large scale for supermarkets. Agriculture, fishing and the food distribution system in general is completely dependent on cheap oil. Biodiversity on most farms is low and declining and soil fertility is also in decline with soils becoming increasingly vulnerable to erosion. Our current food system is fragile, lacking the resilience we will need in future to cope with extreme weather events, oil price hikes or breakdown of the current globalised economic system.**

There needs to be an analysis of local food needs, how much of this could be met from local sources, how much land this would require and what gaps it would leave. We need to understand what barriers there are to re-establishing local food processing facilities and find ways to overcome these. Farms will need to become more self-reliant in energy, either through biomass and wind energy and/or

by a move to more labour intensive methods. The cost and reduced availability of chemical fertilisers and pesticides will require a return to smaller scale mixed farming and the local recycling of nutrients. Land and soils need to be managed to increase biodiversity and organic matter so as to build fertility and resilience.

# Food action plan

