

ABERGAVENNY AGRI-URBAN INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

“THOUGHT FOR FOOD”



Local food on urban forks

<http://urbact.eu/agri-urban>

Abergavenny Agri Urban Local Action Group 2016-2018

ISSUE ONE

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FOREWORD



Councillor Peter Fox OBE



Councillor David Simcock

“Monmouthshire is proud of its heritage and considers food and farming to be of huge importance now and in the future. Given the global challenges we will all face, our participation in the Agri Urban programme and preparation of the Abergavenny Agri-Urban Integrated Action Plan (Thought for Food) is most welcome. The process has brought together many different stakeholders to consider solutions to the challenges and to set out detailed actions which will be of particular benefit to Abergavenny and the surrounding area.

Abergavenny hosts an annual international Food Festival showcasing the numerous high-quality food-based companies located in the area and we welcome visitors from all over the UK during Festival weekend. Abergavenny is also fortunate to have many active community-based organisations promoting locally grown, locally sourced and ethically produced food. By building on this strong base we can all support and contribute to the sustained growth of our food and farming sectors into the future.

We would both like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals, groups and organisations who have contributed thoughts, ideas and time to the preparation of this plan and we look forward to seeing the ideas evolve into actions.

Cllr Peter Fox OBE

Leader

Monmouthshire County Council

Cllr David Simcock

Mayor

Abergavenny Town Council

THE VISION

Abergavenny, located in the north of the county of Monmouthshire, is recognised for its food festival and is externally and locally recognised for understanding it's agricultural industries and its people.




The vision is to make it a place where Culture, Cuisine and Community are intrinsically linked, where local produce is the purchase of choice for residents. A place where farmers are confident in the knowledge that they have receptive markets and where food is available at fair prices for the producer and the consumer, and draws on a sustainable resilient and exciting ecosystem reflecting the traditions of this beautiful market town.

We believe the way to achieve our vision is to have a shared Food policy and strategy across the County, to create a unique food hub in the region, improving the level of education and awareness of the public on healthy food, and improving access to land for small scale cooperative production and the development of innovative food production business skills

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QUICK FACTS ABOUT AGRI URBAN

<p>URBACT</p> 	<p>The Network</p> 	<p>Abergavenny URBACT Local Group</p> 
<p>The URBACT programme is the European Territorial Cooperation programme that aims to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. URBACT’s mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another’s experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.</p>	<p>AGRI-URBAN is an action planning network within the URBACT programme. The network consists of 11 European cities working towards sustainable food systems. The cities are: Baena - Spain (Lead Partner), Fundão – Portugal, Abergavenny - United Kingdom, LAG Pays des Condruses – Belgium, Södertälje – Sweden, Jelgava LM – Latvia, Petrinja – Croatia, Pyli – Greece, Cesena – Italy, Mouans-Sartoux – France, and Mollet Del Vallès - Spain</p>	<p>Each partner city was required to set up an URBACT Local Group (ULG) to bring stakeholders together to give a joint perspective on the problems to be faced in the Agriculture and Food systems in and around Abergavenny.</p> <p>WHY?</p> <p>To produce an Integrated Action Plan to act as a guiding vision document, highlighting short term actions and longer term visions necessary to advance the Agri Urban themes in the region</p>



Funding for project

- **Abergavenny AGRI-URBAN budget - 50,000 €**
Action-planning networks budgets are reserved for learning, exchange and planning activities, not for investment purposes
- **URBACT Contribution (70%) - 35,000 €**
- **Monmouthshire County Council (match funding) Contribution (30%) – 15,000 €**

SUMMARY

This Integrated Action Plan is about the community of Abergavenny and its environs identifying key projects and strategies to enhance the productivity of small agricultural related businesses, by examining best practice in areas of sustainability, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental objectives, by visiting and learning from good practices from ten partner countries in the Agri Urban network, and by engaging with local stakeholders. This plan concludes that the main projects to be tackled should include the four aspects listed below:

This is a “living document” and action tables within this plan identify suggested responsible groups to take each project forward in line with guidance from Monmouthshire County Council and Abergavenny Town Council.

1 COMPILATION OF A LOCAL FOOD SHARED VISION

Compilation of a Shared Food Vision agreed by stakeholders to act as a guideline for future food development in Abergavenny and its environs. A shared vision for a growing friendly county – one in which individuals, families, community groups and small entrepreneurs as well as established businesses are encouraged and enabled to grow, process and purchase the nourishing and affordable food that the county needs in a way that sustains our environment and ensures our resilience in the challenging times ahead

2 DEVELOP A FOOD HUB – CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

To create a Food Hub to promote that vision and economic stability in the food sector, develop business skills and space for innovation and growth.
To shorten the supply chain and bring local food producers and consumers closer together to meet the food needs of people in Monmouthshire.

3 EDUCATION – EXPLORE ACCESS TO ADVISORY AND TRAINING SERVICES ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

To support education in sustainable growing in the community and to promote the use of land for sustainable agricultural education

4 ACCESS TO LAND

To identify land for use for development of small scale incubator and start up food growing businesses for a younger generation of growers.

1.0 Background

1.1 Town Profile

Abergavenny is a town of circa 13000 inhabitants and is located at the northern end of Monmouthshire in Wales adjacent to the Brecon Beacons National Park. It lies in a critically interesting position between two farming systems because it is on the edge of upland “less favoured” farming land while to the east and south is major good farming land.

Over the centuries it has emerged as a market town and has been occupied by Romans, and Normans who built Abergavenny Castle. It has a magnificent Priory Church and sits on the River Usk. Close by is the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. It developed as an agricultural market town with a livestock market and abattoir located in the centre of town for over 150 years. Trades such as tanning and weaving were a natural development. Nowadays the livestock market has relocated to a site ten miles away, near to the village of Raglan.

The area has been predominantly agricultural particularly in sectors of beef, lamb, and dairy. There has been a slight increase in the number of registered farms in Monmouthshire over the past decade. To reach a truly sustainable food system this current predominance may need to shift considerably. The Integrated Action Plan will be addressing itself to that long term shift by increments.



The vast majority of farms have grassland, and over the last 10 years this has increased by 1%. Whilst the number of registered farms with grassland has increased between 2005 and 2015, the number of those with cereals, non-cereal crops and horticulture have all fallen. Horticulture has witnessed the greatest decline of all farm types, falling by 39%, to just 63 registered holdings. This would include those growing fruit and vegetables (*stats Newport and Monmouthshire food hub feasibility study*). There is growth within the poultry, pigs and goats sector but there is little appetite from producers for a change in business direction towards entering this sector. (*Source Food Hub Feasibility Study – Promar International For Vale of Usk LAG 2017*). The central challenge is to what degree can the local horticultural sector be substantially revived.

The area is renowned for its relative strength in award winning food producers and destination restaurants, but this only serves a tiny proportion of the local population. Abergavenny has developed into a predominantly tourist town and offers many festivals throughout the year including a Steam Rally, an annual Shire Horse Show, and Festivals of jazz and cycling. However, the best known of Abergavenny's festivals is of course the Food Festival, the largest and longest running food festival in Wales which attracts over 30000 visitors every September. What is currently being re-addressed is to what degree this festival can re-generate the local food supply economy.

The region is often quoted as a flagship for Wales, a profile which is driven by the success of the Food Festival, and the significant foodie customer base derived not only from inside the region with its population of higher than average wealth for Wales but also from outside the region due to the excellent transport links to England. All in all, these features provide growth opportunities for business in food, hospitality, food tourism and so on, but they have yet to invigorate a revival of a local food supply chain particularly in horticulture.

1.2 Examples of Food Focused Local Organisations;

Abergavenny Food Festival

An established internationally renowned Food Festival that attracts over 30,000 visitors to Abergavenny each September, and is supported by volunteers from the community. www.abergavennyfoodfestival.co.uk



Abergavenny Community Canteen

The Canteen organises monthly two course vegetarian meals for about 70 people. The Canteen is based on co-operative principles. Each meal is planned and prepared by a different group of volunteers. The food is vegetarian and where possible ingredients are local or Fairtrade, and organic. Everyone pays a minimum amount to cover the costs of the evening and make a donation to support a local or international social project.

<http://abergavennytransition.org/community-canteen/>



Abergavenny Community Centre

A Charity, bringing people together in simple and practical ways to combine potential, and respond to complex problems on the ground. By its actions the charity is fostering sustainable behaviour, and provides a community setting where groups and organisations can sharpen their focus and inform their actions too.

<http://www.abergavennycc.org/>



Food Assembly Abergavenny

The Food Assembly brings together people to buy fresh food directly from local farmers and food makers. With their technology and support, everyone gets a better deal: communities get to know each other, farmers get a fairer price for their work, and they get locally sourced, unique produce: the most delicious food available! - an online service that reduces food wastage and improves the freshness and quality of food.

THE FOOD ASSEMBLY
www.foodassembly.com

YES TO LOCAL!

- 1 REGISTER AS A MEMBER**
As a Member (customer) there is no commitment to buy.
- 2 BUY FRESH FOOD ONLINE**
From a range of local farmers and producers within an average of 28 miles of your neighbourhood.
- 3 COLLECT YOUR SHOPPING**
Directly from the hands of the local producers.

Abergavenny Community Centre’s Kitchen Project



The Kitchen has become a central feature of the Community Centre since its opening in March 2017 after being refurbished with money raised by volunteers, through donations and grants. It has become a focus for enjoyable social activities and delicious food (e.g. the weekly *See you for lunch*) that bring people together and promote well-being by reducing feelings of isolation. Using local produce and supporting small businesses, it is creating nutritious meals. It introduces new people, cultures, recipes and flavours through the monthly World Bistro, and the Culture Kitchen project. Local people are gaining new confidence, skills and knowledge such as volunteers acquiring Food Hygiene qualifications. Through the Fare-share scheme at Tesco, with other supermarkets and individuals, it provides a means of reducing waste as food is recycled for community benefit. The

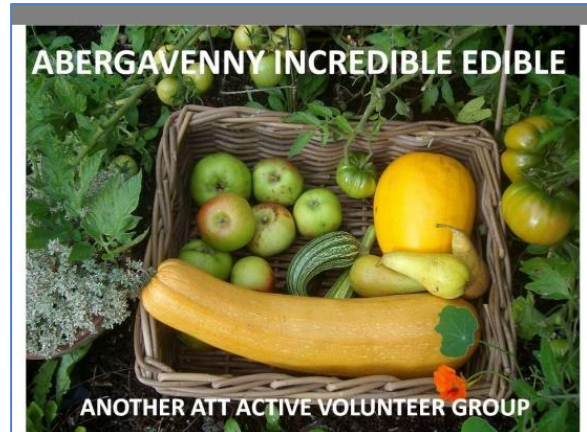
centre also has plans for tackling food poverty with partners.

<http://www.abergavennycc.org/food-network/4593839733>



Incredible Edible Abergavenny

Incredible Edible Abergavenny (IE), is based on the Todmorden Incredible Edible model in Yorkshire. It aims to demonstrate that growing food on a small scale is easily done. It encourages people to get involved in growing, whether on a community level on publicly owned land under licence, or in their own gardens. It is best described as “propaganda gardening”.



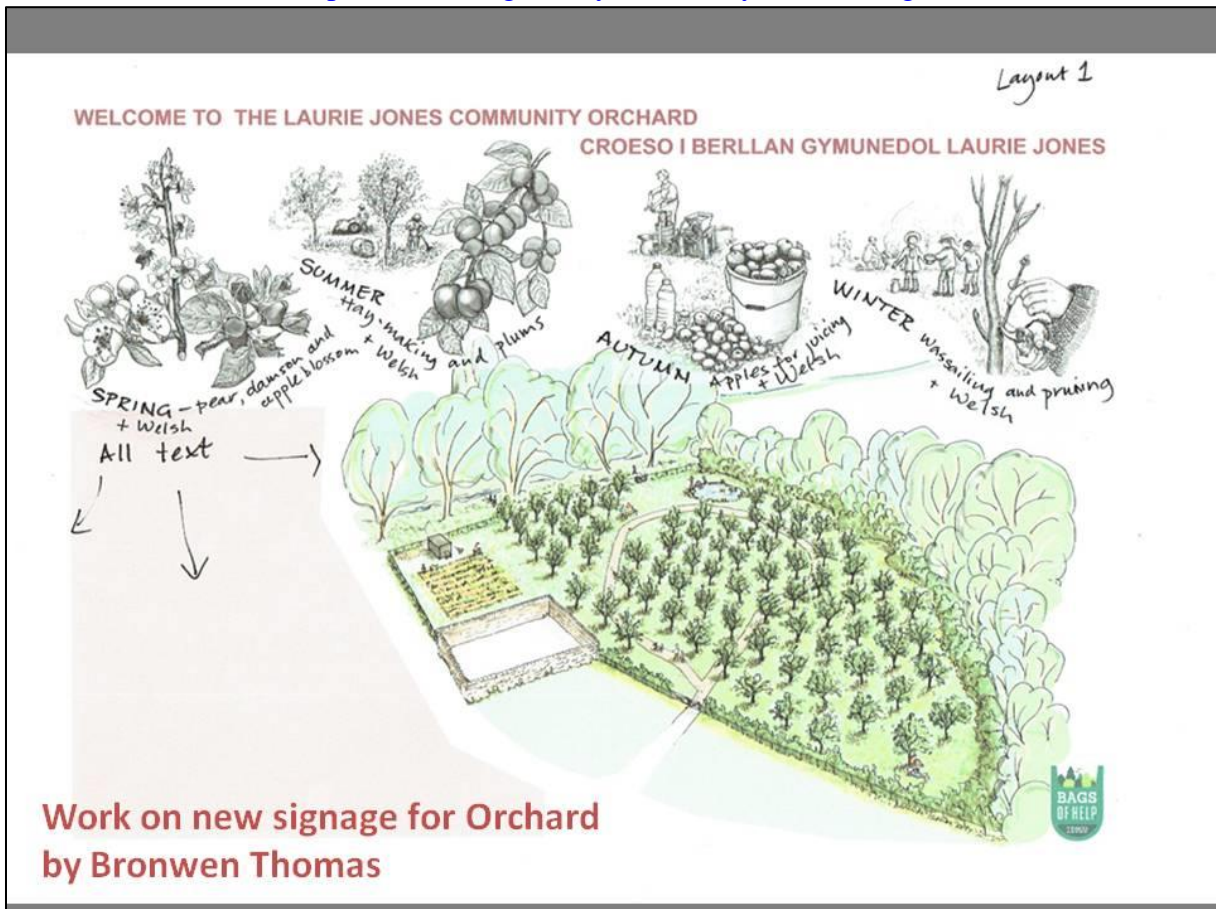
To help promote this Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) has developed a Community Food Growing policy that actively supports local people to grow food on MCC land under the ethos of the IE movement. It is believed to be the first Welsh County to have an IE group on its County Hall land, and the first to implement a policy to support community growing.

The first IE license was granted to St Helen’s Road, Abergavenny with a further 3 being issued on MCC land in Abergavenny. Other groups have embraced the ideas around community growing and although not calling themselves Incredible Edibles the idea is the same, they can be found in Skenfrith, Goytre and Monmouth. These groups are supported by the Incredible Edible Network, The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and Community Land Advisory Service. <https://www.facebook.com/incredibleedibleaber/>

Abergavenny Area Community Orchards and Gardens



Abergavenny Area Community Gardens and Orchards CIC was formed in 2011. Its aims are to develop community growing in Abergavenny and the surrounding area and encourage people to get involved in growing food, whether as a community activity or as individuals. Its two largest initiatives to date are the Laurie Jones Community Orchard which is now five years old, and the Incredible Edible Abergavenny installation of vegetable and fruit growing beds around the town. <http://www.abergavennycommunityorchards.org.uk/>



The “Just Food” Group

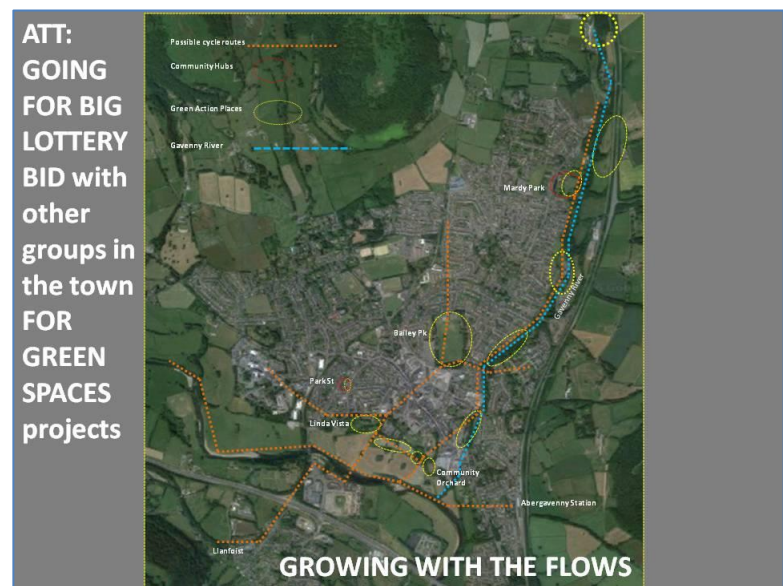
The Just Food group provides opportunities to debate the political issues around food & hunger from social justice & sustainability perspectives. Launched during 2013 by regulars at the Community Canteen, their first public event was on the Fringe of the Abergavenny Food Festival. They have run fringe events over four years at each annual Food festival and at other times of the year, focussing most recently on ‘Farming and Brexit’. Early ones were day-long events with talks, and debates that addressed the global food system, land use, poverty & hunger worldwide, and challenges for farming locally. The most recent Food festival fringe event focussed on the fishing industry around Wales and globally. The Just Food group has produced a draft Food Manifesto (see appendix 3)

Abergavenny Transition Town

Abergavenny Transition Town (ATT) is linked to the worldwide Transition Town Network initiated by Rob Hopkins and citizens of Totnes in Devon, founded in 2006. The network and ATT itself, aims to help its communities to respond to climate change and shift from being dependent on non-renewable resources to renewables. This process, called ‘Transition’, aims also to create stronger, happier and more ecologically sustainable and resilient communities.



ATT is an umbrella organisation for a range of active groups in the town working on community energy initiatives, food growing projects, improving cycling and walking facilities, campaigning on Food Justice, with a group running a Community Canteen, and also a future land-use and site-development group. Representatives of these activist groups meet monthly in the Abergavenny Community Centre and visual minutes from these meetings link up the network of group activists to ATT’s over 200



supportive members and the Monmouth and Chepstow Transition Town groups.

<http://abergavennytransition.org/>

Old Lands – Community Supported Agriculture



“Old Lands” is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme in the walled garden and orchard at Old-Lands, Dingestow, Monmouthshire. The garden is run organically, without the use of pesticides or fertilizers, and as a wildlife-friendly garden, will support the biodiversity of the Old-Lands estate.

The scheme’s members pay a monthly subscription and in return receive a weekly share of the produce from the garden. This

provides the members with a good selection of seasonal vegetables and fruit throughout the year. There are regular social events during the year for those who like more involvement, and also monthly volunteer days where members can meet each other, and learn a little more about the garden and growing.

<https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/csa/old-lands-csa/>

https://youtu.be/h8g_IRLfE6E

Vale of Usk Local Action Group (LAG)

The Local Action Group (LAG) is a group constituted to oversee the delivery of Rural Development Programmes. Monmouthshire County Council is Administrative Body for the RDP LEADER programme. There are currently 20 members of the LAG drawn from Private, Public and 3rd Sectors. <http://monmouthshire.biz/rural-innovation/local-action-group-lag/>

Food Producers

Monmouthshire boasts food producers making, baking, growing, farming, producing, and selling produce. The producers include bakeries, vineyards producing exemplar wine, cider producers using local fruit, organic horticulture and fruit farms, dairy and meat producers and processors, community farms, community supported agriculture establishments. Beef, sheep and pork farms currently form the backbone of the county.

2.0. The Agri-Urban Programme

The Agri–Urban program is about rethinking agrifood production in small and medium-sized cities/towns which have a relative specialization in agrifood production. Agrifood production is a mature industry that still continues to play an important role in terms of GDP, employment and environmental sustainability. That is why new growth potentials must be activated by means of innovation, new business models and strategies.

“What do European consumers want on their plate today? A growing movement globally recognizes that the current complexity of food systems based on economies of scale is causing economical, societal and environmental challenges to cities and rural areas. Simultaneously, consumer awareness on food quality, security and healthiness is causing a demand for alternative food systems.”

“The good news is that not only do many farmers want to provide high quality products that are known to be healthy and safe, they realise it is also better business for them. A US Department of Agriculture study in 2010 comparing revenue from the sale of apples, blueberries, milk, beef and salad, found that in local supply chains almost all the gain is retained in the local economy, with producers receiving 50% to 64% higher income in comparison to the traditional chains (Friends of the Earth Europe, 2015). Thus closer links between rural areas and nearby cities are not only societally and environmentally beneficial, but also ensure economic development regionally.” (Miguel Sousa – INVOMAS).

The difficult question for local farmers in and around Abergavenny and the Vale of Usk is whether they wish to, or are able to shorten supply chains to serve the locality more and whether they will shift production to more locally based horticulture and away from being dependent on exporting livestock and milk out of the region.

2.1 The Agri Urban Network

Agri Urban is a network of eleven European cities from 10 European Union Member States consisting of:

SPAIN: City of Baena (Lead Partner);

LATVIA: City of Jelgava

PORTUGAL: City of Fundão

CROATIA: City of Petrinja

WALES: Town of Abergavenny

SPAIN: City of Mollet del Vallès

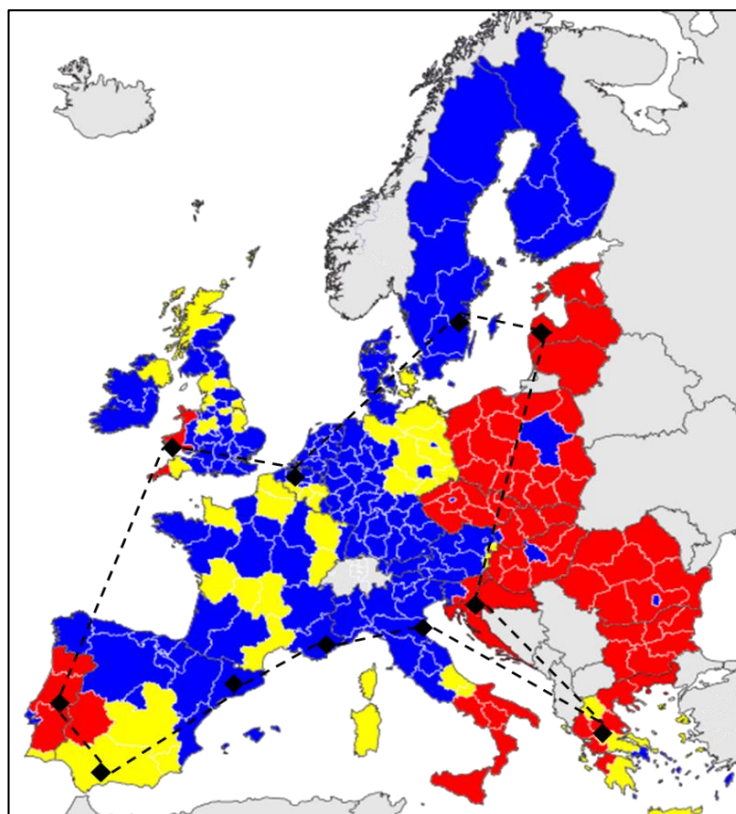
FRANCE: City of Mouans-Sartoux

BELGIUM: LAG Pays De Condruces

ITALY: City of Cesena

SWEDEN: City of Södertälje

GREECE: City of Pyli



The specific objective for this project is to create an Integrated Action Plan for developing a regional food system for each participant city and in this case Abergavenny and surrounding area. It is perceived that Monmouthshire has a dominant part of its food production system that has current little interest in local supply, and that change is required. Horticultural production needs re-instating.

This document and actions are a result of work undertaken by engaging with the URBACT Agri Urban Program funded by the European Union. It involved local volunteers, representatives from Monmouthshire County Council and Abergavenny Town Council, key interest groups and individuals across the County with an interest in the key food production developments of the area.



Figure 1 Representatives of Agri Urban Cities during Network Visit to Abergavenny



Figure 2 Agri Urban delegates discuss action plans in Mouans Sartoux

2.2. Policy Context

2.2.1 The EU Agenda

According to a European Parliament report (2014), the main economic challenges for small farms are access to farming resources (such as land and capital) and access to markets, particularly in terms of bargaining power in the food chain. A food system is a complex web of interconnected entities that take food from its source to our plates. Heavy and complex supply chains give the competitive advantage for large wholesalers instead of smaller, local farms with small quantities of products. Many small farms also lack the entrepreneurial skills to improve their business models, or to identify new business opportunities. Having said that, it should be pointed out that finding new business opportunities in a traditional food system can be difficult with the resource limitations of small producers (European Parliament, 2014) (source baseline study)

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda>

2.2.2 National Policies

The devolved Welsh National Government has produced a national food and drink strategy and action plan while there is no corresponding UK Food Policy. It recognises the breadth of support needed in the Agricultural industries and offers direct funding and business mentoring through the RDP Programme in Wales.

The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 was adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015 and all projects funded by the Programme must align with one or more of the following European Rural Development Priorities:

- fostering the competitiveness of agriculture
- ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action
- achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.
- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
- enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests
- promoting food chain organisations, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

As part of the Rural Development Programme, at a local level, the Vale of Usk Local Action Group offers the opportunity to access funding for support and development of community led initiatives which link directly to the above.

<http://monmouthshire.biz/rural-innovation/>

The Welsh Government document “Towards Sustainable Growth - an Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020” can be accessed via web site: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/foodanddrink>

Regarding BREXIT the latest report from the Public Policy Institute for Wales highlights the challenges and opportunities for agriculture and rural areas in Wales that could result from Brexit.

The report’s author, Professor Janet Dwyer, argues that the most likely changes in trading conditions will leave Welsh agriculture in a disadvantaged position compared to its main trading competitors. How key food and forestry processors and retailers respond will be crucial.

<https://www.wcpp.org.uk/single-post/2018/01/16/The-Implications-of-Brexit-for-Agriculture-Rural-Areas-and-Land-Use-in-Wales>

2.2.3 Local Policies

At present there is no formal food strategy or food policy document available within Local Government in Monmouthshire. This has been considered within the group and there is now the basis for developing a shared vision for the county as one of the key actions of the Integrated Action Plan. A draft food manifesto has been put forward by the Just Food Group (see p.10 and see appendix 3). Key partners are being consulted.

3.0 Development of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP)

3.1 The Method

The project methodology was established during Phase I of Agri-Urban in 2015. The Project Team developed a methodology for the transnational meetings and for the work with the Local Groups which was discussed and approved by the Local Groups and then developed through a series of meetings.

The Integrated urban development and participative action-planning are at the heart of our work. The infographic on the right, recaps the main steps to go through to develop an integrated action plan, which will analyse problems and opportunities, address specific needs by defining expected results, and prepare a set of actions in co-production with stakeholders. In each AGRI-URBAN stop (transnational meeting) we work a different step of the Action-Planning Cycle



The following is a summary of the key stages at local level:

- 1 Creation of the Local Support Group with representatives from public and private sector;
- 2 Stakeholder Analysis;
- 3 Definition of Key Problems and Challenges;
- 4 Gathering evidence based on desktop studies and site work;
- 5 Generation of ideas for solutions;
- 6 Transnational visits to partner countries with exchange of best practice and learning;
- 7 Refinement of the Actions and completion of Action Tables;
- 8 Identification of potential funding mechanisms for IAP Actions;
- 9 Communication and consultation with key stakeholders and validation of IAP;
- 10 Further refinement of the IAP following consultation with stakeholders;
- 11 Completion of Phase 2 and formal launch of IAP;

3.2 Learning and sharing at EU level

The Agri-Urban journey started in October 2015. Abergavenny were invited to join the scheme in February 2016. Together with 10 EU cities we were rethinking agri-food production in small and medium-sized cities that have a relative specialisation in this area, with the goal to increase transparency in the European food system, strengthen the rural-urban relationship and raise jobs in the sector.

The transnational exchange meetings enabled representatives from each partner country to visit each other during project development and exchange best practice ideas, share relevant case studies and develop new ideas within their own cities based on experiences and learning.

This was considered the real added-value of the Agri-Urban Network where key personnel of Local Groups were afforded the opportunity to visit, see and discuss with relevant individuals in partner countries as to how to tackle various problems and what solutions would be best suited and fitted to their own situation. The visits offered the opportunity for technical workshops which directed the coordination of the programme.

It is mandatory to attend the meetings and to ensure continuity in attendance, the ULG Coordinator and representative from the key partner agency (Monmouthshire County Council) attended all meetings. In Abergavenny the ULG offered representatives with key skills to visit each transnational meeting. The object was for learning, information gathering and to relay to the local group on return. This has proved key to the development of the action plan.

The transnational exchange visits are considered the most valuable part of the project as the ideas and learning generated among partners is now being reflected in each IAP across the Agri-Urban partnership. Whilst the focus on providing local solutions to local problems was given in practical examples, visits and presentations, it was evident that some of the problems were similar in each area. The key areas of interest for Abergavenny were :-

LAG Pays de Condruses – Belgium.

Development of a Food Hub and cooperative working - This fits exactly into the opportunities identified by our Local Action Group and gave practical examples of Food Hub management and producers working together to deliver local products to new markets.

Business incubation on Municipal land offered us the opportunity to see start up business thrive in a model of shared principles, equipment and business support.

Mouans Sartoux - Education in schools and the community in sustainable dietary development and land use, offering evidence of a coordinated approach in dietary management for schools, and community growing and education in sustainable food management.

Soldertalje

This city in particular offered a key visionary example of policy development being articulated into community projects and offering political change. Again good use of land and attention to healthy sustainable diets in schools and the community in general was observed.

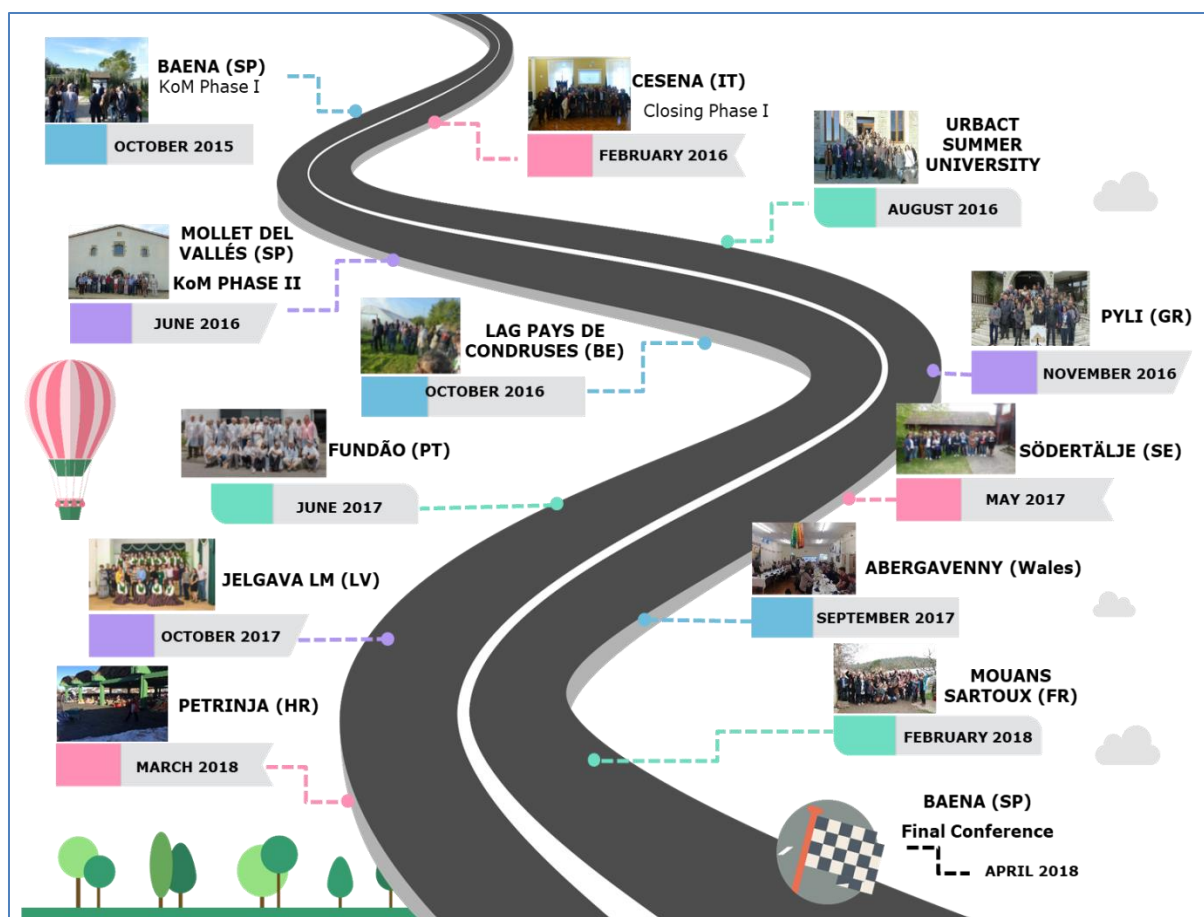
Barcelona

This city demonstrated how local farmers formed a cooperative to protect land from development and to provide land for horticultural business start-ups. They also have various projects aimed at introducing local food and healthy diets to local schools and public organisations.

Policy development - we found some examples of development of Policies and shared vision in many of the cities we visited, however, it should be noted that in all cases it was evident that political “ buy in “ is integral to changing direction of development. In most cases in the areas we visited they are further advanced than we are in policy development and notably lead by Municipality who recognize that the participation of community required some strong leadership and direction.

Bilateral Meetings; the ethos of the Agri Urban network is shared information and direct support for projects where appropriate. As the plan developed it was clear that we have a shared vision with other partners but in particular with Pays de Condruces (Belgium). With this in mind a representative of LAG de Pays de Condruces visited Monmouthshire in August 2017. From this meeting and further skype and actual meetings we are in the process of developing a transnational cooperation project which will inform and develop both partners Food Hub development. This is included in one of the four major initiatives identified in this Integrated Action Plan.

The following image is a visualization of our journey that started in October 2015 in Baena and finished in April 2018 at the same place.



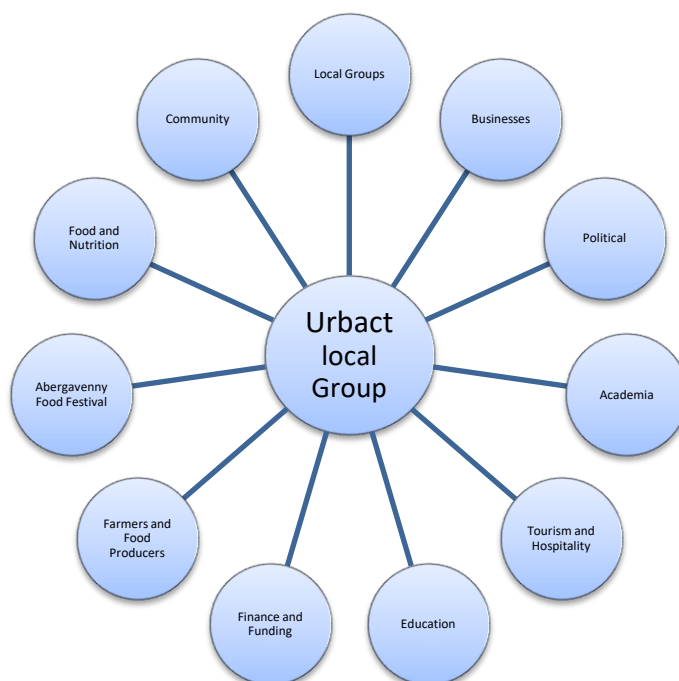
All of the visits have offered the opportunity to see projects being developed and delivered in partner cities. Some are highly relevant to the development of activity which may offer solutions to the issues identified in our area.

Access to a list of Creative Minutes of each visit is given in Appendix 2

3.3 The bottom up approach – The Local Group

The main theme of the Agri Urban initiative is that it should be driven by local stakeholders and not necessarily just by politicians. That is the “grass roots” approach, or “bottom up approach” which was encouraged from the onset of the project.

To ensure key participation from the community, groups /organizations and individuals who could make a key contribution to the project were identified.



Public meetings were held to inform stakeholders and to raise interest in the project. From those who attended, a group of local interested parties was formed. This was called the URBACT Local Group (ULG). Some people only attended one local group meeting and others attended all! It was necessary to encourage new members as they were identified and eventually a core membership of the ULG evolved.

Workshops and meetings have been conducted over the duration of the project. The key priorities have been identified and results from two key pieces of work undertaken by the Vale of Usk LAG (RDP 2014-20) have informed those priorities.

<http://monmouthshire.biz/rural-innovation>

The studies were “Food Hub Feasibility Study” and the “Catering Education Study” which can be viewed via the following links:

<http://monmouthshire.biz/project/food-hubs-feasibility-study/>

<http://monmouthshire.biz/project/catering-education-study/>

3.4 The Focus and development of the Plan

The Vale of Usk with Abergavenny at its northern tip in Monmouthshire is a recognised high quality food destination. Despite this close association with high quality local food, there is anecdotal evidence that food producers selling direct to the public may find it difficult to compete with supermarkets and that many produce too small a quantity to access these larger markets. In addition, according to figures from DEFRA, farmers receive less than 8% of the added financial value produced in the food chain and increasingly rely on subsidies, a proportion of which could be at risk following the UK’s departure from the European Union (EU). As farm to plate food chains have lengthened over the decades and involved more ‘actors’, more profit has accrued to manufacturers, distributors and retailers with less money

being made at the farm gate. Despite these low financial farm gate returns, farmers have at times been under even more financial pressure in the market for commodities such as milk where the return on production costs has been negligible.

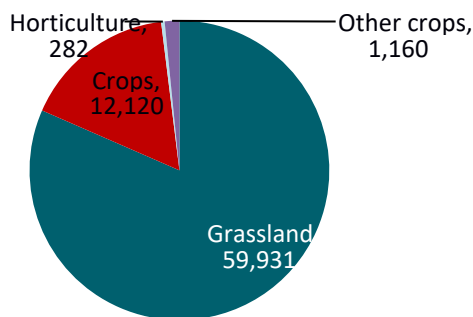
The Vale of Usk is predominantly a rural region with a large number of farms and food producers. Hence there exists the potential to bring new food products to market as well as divert some of the raw commodity (meat, milk, vegetables, fruit and possibly grain) away from the mainstream supply chain and/or to the Vale of Usk plate (both public and private, including the domestic). However, many producers are hesitant to trial new products due to the cost of setting up processing facilities and are accustomed, reluctantly in some cases because of the poor profitability, to operating in the mainstream food system. Farmers selling into the mainstream have become ‘price takers’ rather than ‘price makers’ with relatively little power to change the status quo. Linked to this situation is the lack of processing plant and the demise of slaughtering facilities in the Vale of Usk. With a few exceptions, Vale of Usk food, especially meat, producers and most Welsh vintners have their produce processed outside of this immediate area and often out of Wales due to a lack of facilities here.

It has been suggested that more needs to be done to educate and inform local people of the benefits of locally produced food, including freshness and taste due to shorter distances that food is transported and potential benefits to the local economy with increased job creation.

Making more locally produced food available can contribute to improved food resilience in the locality, which could be of growing importance in the context of factors such as Brexit (as we import 27% of our food from the EU), climate change and its impacts on food production in countries from which we import food and, in some cases, increased use of limited resources when food is transported a distance. However, these benefits cannot be realised without more local food becoming available, accessible and affordable (*Source Food Hub Feasibility study Promar International 2017*).

The ULG recognised this as did the Vale of Usk LAG which commissioned the named study into the development of a food hub within The Vale of Usk LAG region. The study was asked to identify current provision of food from food hub type approaches and evaluate the different food hub models in the UK and other countries to ascertain the most appropriate solution for the Vale of Usk. It was also asked to consider the issues highlighted above, with a view to incorporating viable solutions to these issues where possible, into the most suitable food hub model (if appropriate). The feasibility study can be viewed at the following web page: <http://monmouthshire.biz/project/food-hubs-feasibility-study/>

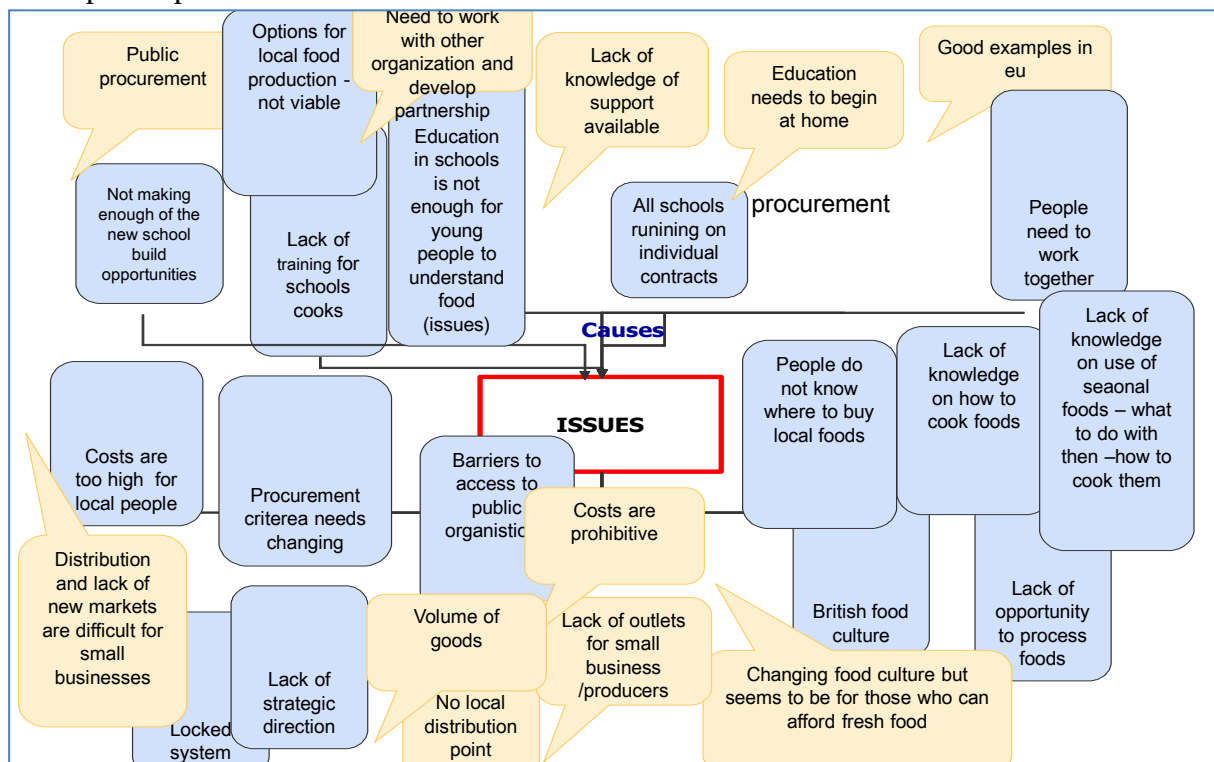
Monmouthshire and Newport land breakdown by type, 2015



Cropping, which includes barley, wheat, maize, stock feed and other cereals account for 20% of the land within the county. The land area has increased during the past 10 years. According to records, there is no classified potato production in the area, with horticulture totaling 282 ha in 2015. Whilst the number of horticultural farms in the area has declined over the past 10 years, the rise in total farm area suggests that the size of these farms has increased. There are 9 primary vegetable producing businesses (2017/2018) across Monmouthshire and the 2017/2018 data indicates that those selling direct to the public are small in size, the largest being 15 acres.

3.5 Sorting Out Priorities

During the two year compilation of the Agri Urban Plan the ULG started with a wide remit pursuing many food and agricultural concerns raised by local stakeholders. Examples of some of the issues identified are noted below which relate to difficulties with getting local foods on to the public plate:



Samples of issues considered by the ULG

Areas of focus were identified by the URBACT Local Group (ULG). Initial discussions from workshops revealed the following issues and potential solutions;

ISSUES	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to identify a route for young people to enter the Agricultural /Food Sector • There is no defined Local Food Strategy or Policy for Abergavenny or its environs • There is a need to raise awareness of sustainable food systems in schools and the community • There is a perceived lack of processing facilities • Identification of suitable land for growing is difficult – lack of horticulture • Businesses do not interact greatly and there in no obvious way to develop new agriculturally related food businesses • There is little or no direct access to the Public Plate for small producers and food businesses • Local markets have changed little over recent years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a youth food academy might address part of this problem • Development of a shared food vision – this is seen as key • Links to be developed to formal and informal education • Provision of a local food hub could offer short circuits to markets, training and education • Development of a cooperative for new and existing business may provide land and expertise for food growers and businesses to work together • There is a desire to introduce a vibrant market scene with innovative ideas and state of the art facilities which will enhance the market scene in Abergavenny

A number of key workshops then looked at validating and prioritizing the suggested areas of work – the above options were reduced to 4

The key priorities being:

1. Compile a Local Food Shared Vision

Compile a Shared Food Vision agreed by stakeholders to act as a guideline for future food development in Abergavenny and its environs. A shared vision for a growing friendly county – one in which individuals, families, community groups and small entrepreneurs as well as established businesses are encouraged and enabled to grow, process and purchase the nourishing and affordable food that the county needs in a way that sustains our environment and ensures our resilience in the challenging times ahead

2. Develop a Food Hub and Centre of Excellence

To promote economic growth in the food sector. This was seen to be the catalyst for future development. It could contain elements of support for all the following options identified.

3. Education - to support advisory and training services on sustainable food systems The Education element was amalgamated to include the suggested Youth Food Academy (which could be incorporated into the Food Hub).

4. Access to Land – to identify land available and include development of co-operative working and business support and joint marketing options.

The group prioritised the above four areas of action to provide a focus for the Integrated Action Plan.

4.0 Actions Identified for each Focus Area

4.1 Development of a Local Food Shared Vision

Whilst the food hub is seen as key to development of economic growth and a catalyst for cooperative working, there is no overarching **policy /strategy** to define the processes and activity of development in the food sector.

The Local Action Group (ULG) note the key to development of the sector alongside practical interventions is the development of a shared vision and strategy for future growth and cohesion in the Sector.

Seen to be key for this are organisations with strands in Health and Well-being, Social Services, use of local foods in the Public departments. It is felt that there should be a more defined link to offer a wider remit, linking to Welsh Government Food and Drinks Strategy.

There are some good examples of strategies such as Who Feeds Bristol and various interventions at National and Local level.

<http://bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Who-Feeds-Bristol-report.pdf>

Often, however the interventions are disparate and are often in isolation. Key groups such as WI, Friends of the Earth, and Community Canteen engage with Just Food within Abergavenny and alongside the Agri Urban Local Action group have identified a need to a joint vision.

In addition the business sector will be a key group and we encourage dialogue and action from the business sector to address necessary change.

A draft food manifesto assembled by members of the JUST FOOD group was developed in parallel with the workings of this ULG. A copy of it is in Appendix 3.

4.1.1 Action Table

City name: ABERGAVENTNY						
Main Objective:		COMPILE A LOCAL FOOD SHARED VISION				
Action Title & Short Description	Intend Result	Resources & Assets	Lead organisation	Key partners	Timescale	Indicative Cost
Convene a working group of interested parties and food sector specialists to define a programme of work and to determine responsibility for taking action forward.	Formation of a working group of interested parties – engaging with at least 6 producers Programme of work identified Responsible person or group identified	A Volunteer partnership using community skills	JUST FOOD Group	Potential partners include: Mon CC NFU Farmers Union Wales Procurement / WG Kevin Morgan	By end April 2018	Zero
Engage with stakeholders and compile a Local Food Shared Vision.	Compilation of a Shared Food Vision agreed by stakeholders to act as a guideline for future development of agriculture in Abergavenny and its environs	A Volunteer partnership using community skills Funding required to support this initiative Knowledge of policy development and key stakeholders	To be determined by working group. (could lead to development of a food officer or independent facilitator)	See above	By end December 2019	Zero

4.2 Development of a Food Hub

During 2017 as part of the Vale of Usk Local Action Group LEADER Program (2014-2020) Monmouthshire County Council charged Promar International to conduct a **Food Hub Feasibility Study** with the following Terms of Reference:

“To identify pre-commercial rural enterprises, to engage through a rural mentoring network, business to business supply network, targeted towards sector specific beneficiaries. The Terms of Reference will identify the current provision of food from land to markets, identify and evaluate models for Food Hub activities in the UK and other countries, to ascertain the most appropriate solution for the Vale of Usk. The study will also consider the issues highlighted above, with a view to incorporate viable solutions to these issues, where possible, into the most suitable food hub model (if appropriate).”

The report highlighted the following perceptions of what a Food Hub could encompass:

- ‘A central point, linking producers and consumers’*
- ‘An overarching resource to help food to be grown, processed and sold/distributed by local companies’*
- ‘Address the middle point of the supply chain between agriculture and consumer’*
- ‘Retail provision that allows customers to access local food’*
- ‘A place where food businesses come together for a reason’*
- ‘Provide a stepping stone for businesses, as well as distribution and collaboration’*
- ‘A series of mini-factories’*
- ‘Traditional market with an internet connection’*
- ‘Connecting producers with consumers’*
- ‘Where all producers have the opportunity to sell their produce’*
- ‘Can be a physical operation or a person in an office looking for markets’.*

To view the complete Food Hub Feasibility Study visit <http://www.valeofusk.org/>

The development of local processing facilities was deemed to be not in the priority list but may well be drawn out in the development of the “Food Hub” option.

<p>Phase 1 Set up an Agri Urban Food Forum body consisting of stakeholders and volunteers, and define the role of a project coordinator.</p> <p><i>Central Portal - Distribution Facilities</i> Concept: Central virtual portal providing a ‘go to’ resource for customers and producers in the Vale of Usk region on local food and drink</p> <p>How it is going to work: Marketing platform for customers to understand what’s going on in the local area regarding food. Includes information on local food producers and how to purchase. For producers, it gives a platform to promote to the local market. An intranet portal will allow them to network, and begin to collaborate. Shared training and support, along with signposting of resources will also be available. All together this will create a platform that is appealing to a wide range of businesses</p> <p>Supply chain impact: The key benefit is that it starts to bring producers together, and promote their offerings to the customers</p> <p>Resources: Website/platform coordinator, ad hoc technical support (delivery of training sessions), access to meeting venue for producers</p>	<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Concept: Building on the Food Assembly for local exposure. As well as pooling supply so to appeal to wider and/or larger markets</p> <p>How it is going to work: Development of platform/web-based model. Local food products will be available through a central channel to local consumers.</p> <p>Pooling of supply to access larger/more distant markets. Commodity products (such as red meat) branded as one, whilst already branded products continue to be sold under their own name. Food products are then collected together and delivered to customers as a range of products through one drop off</p> <p>Supply chain impact: Shortening of supply chain, with only a distribution hub between the producer and the customer</p> <p>Resources: Website/brochure with producer & product information, coordinator, space for products to be picked up by local customers, space for products to be pooled together and sorted for distribution, transport</p>	<p>Phase 3</p> <p>Concept: Processing/production units for food and drink businesses to use, on both an ad hoc and more permanent basis</p> <p>How it is going to work: Satellite processing units could be used. This would allow the development of satellites and allow a stepping stone for producers from kitchen production to large investment in a specialist unit. As well as this, the provision of a kitchen will allow for products to be showcased to customers or allow events to be held. Due to the varying of food businesses, basic units should be established, with the producers renting/buying specialist equipment</p> <p>Supply chain impact: Allow the growth of small food and drink businesses through the ability to increase production, or for the establishment of new producers</p> <p>Resources: Processing units, kitchen, coordinator, information website, technical support for food and drink businesses</p>
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4.2.1 Action Table

City name: ABERGAVENTNY						
Main Objective:		DEVELOP A FOOD HUB – CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE				
To promote economic growth in the food sector						
Action Title & Short Description	Intend Result	Resources & Assets	Lead organisation	Key partners	Timescale	Indicative Cost
Set up an Agri Urban Food Forum body consisting of stakeholders and volunteers, and define the role of a project coordinator.	Formation of a forum with at least 10 local stakeholders to provide a focus on promoting a Food Business Strategy for the area. Introduction of a project coordinator.	Officer required to facilitate setting up of the Food Forum body	Vale of Usk Local Action Group (LAG) in association with Monmouthshire County Council	Local food businesses and producers Coleg Gwent MCC Area Committee Town Council Incredible Edible Just Food Transition Towns Team Abergavenny LAG Farmers Community Representatives Volunteers	By end of December 2018	zero
Appoint a Project Coordinator and set up a Food Hub and Centre of Excellence to encourage new business start-ups, cooperative working for local producers to develop joint marketing activity, purchasing, and distribution and increase outlets for local produce	Formation of a pilot food hub to facilitate coordinated trading and to provide a support service targeting 15 businesses to use the facility in the first twelve months. Improve turnover of pilot businesses by 10%	An initial estimate of at least £70,000 to support the appointment of a coordinator and to cover start-up costs. International Food Hubs partnership to be considered	Lead officer on International Food Hub project in association with new Food Forum body.	Monmouthshire County Council Abergavenny Food Forum (to be defined) Local food businesses and producers LAG Pay de Condruces and partners in cooperation project Vale of Usk LAG	January 2019 to December 2021	£70,000

ABERGAVENTNY AGRI URBAN INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

<p>Engage with groups and individual businesses interested in co-operative working/networking. Develop a virtual online portal providing a go to resource for customers and producers of local food and drink in the Abergavenny region). Identify and apply for funding, and set up portal. and develop 5 training elements for local producers</p>	<p>Provision of access to relevant training. Increased skills of at least 8 businesses signposting business to funding and business support</p> <p>Provision of easily accessible training. Target 10 businesses to receive training in first year.</p>	<p>See financial costing above</p>	<p>New Food Forum Body</p> <p>New Food Forum Body</p>	<p>By end of December 2018</p> <p>January 2019 to December 2021</p>	<p>£to be identified</p>
<p>Develop the branding opportunities and joint marketing opportunities linked to the virtual site and the international food hub project</p>	<p>Enhanced profile of locally available produce with a brand building on the Made in Monmouthshire model resulting in an increase in sales of local food produce by 10% under the brand by 2022</p>		<p>New Food Forum Body</p>	<p>January 2019 to December 2021</p>	
<p>Provide distribution facilities</p>	<p>1 shared facility</p>	<p>Minimum requirement is a stock room with reception table/counter to receive customers</p>	<p>New Food Forum Body</p>	<p>January 2019 to December 2023</p>	<p>£to be identified</p>

4.3 Education – Advisory and Training Services on Sustainable Food Systems

Members of the ULG considered education at several levels. The main farmer/landowners have an average age of late 50s. Therefore the need for training of the next generation of food producers will be paramount (probably more so than catering education but the two are linked).

The Abergavenny Community Centre offers an alternative curriculum opportunity for vulnerable pupils at the comprehensive school working towards the Jamie Oliver BTec. Chefs, youth workers and volunteers all working together to enhance the learning experience of young people. This could be substantially increased.

As the Vale of Usk Catering Education Study (2017) notes that if the area is to maintain and develop its anecdotal status as Food Capital of Wales, there is an implied need for the highest standards of catering and hospitality to be in place. Whilst this implies the highest standard of staffing and training are required, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the food and drink sector in the region suffers from gaps in skills and expertise, potentially compromising the ability of the region to live up to its title.

The research has shown that current accredited provision provides a steady stream of lower-level skilled employees into the industry – however there is a lack of ongoing professional development to meet needs – which is thought to contribute towards the high number of hard to fill executive chef level vacancies. Furthermore, among new entrants there is a lack of understanding about the high demands of the industry and a perception of poor career progression. There is clearly a need therefore, to put in place more structured career paths which develop the necessary talent and helps to dispel the poor career perceptions. This combined with poor diet and lack of knowledge of how to develop meals from scratch and lack of access to non processed foods offers us a reliable guide in development of education and training for the sector.

Findings from the Catering Education Study (2017) Miller Research noted ...” young people had an unfavourable perception of a career in catering and hospitality”. Potential reasons for the negative perception of the industry included the demands of the job / hard work / lack of work ethic in young people long, unsociable hours, and poor pay, and that young people do not know how hard it is / what they are getting into possibly ... they also felt there may be no progression or alternative (better) career routes.

From the findings of the study some individuals felt there was a need to build awareness and to instil a desire within young people to choose catering as a career choice, rather than seeing it simply as ‘just a job’.

The Welsh Government recently announce its £3 million of funding for the development of ‘Food Skills Cymru’ – a package of technical and staff development training for food and drink companies based in Wales. The Minister commented “This demonstrates our commitment to developing the skills of the industry and I am confident it can and will continue to grow to form an important backbone of the Welsh economy

She continued “. “Our detailed action plan for the industry sets out our vision of growing the scale of the sector, strengthening its brand and markets, and doing all these things in a sustainable way. Central to this is the ability to attract and retain a talented workforce and drive up skills within the industry.

<http://gov.wales/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2018/180208-a-recipe-for-skills-success-3m-for-food-skills-cymru-training-programme-announced/?lang=en>

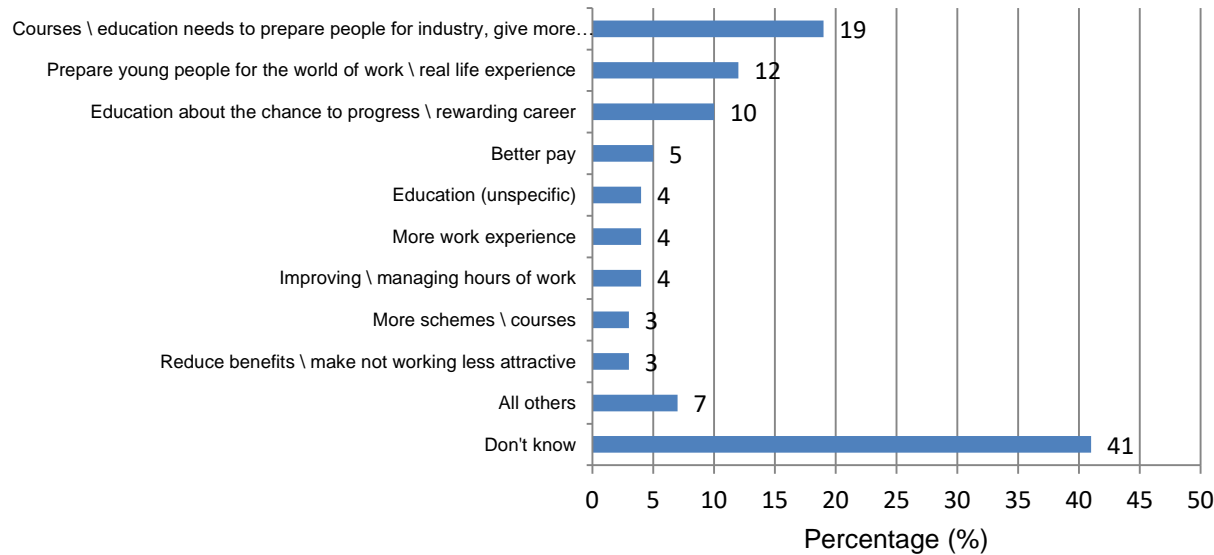


Figure 3 Extract from Catering Study

The findings of the report’s local business survey were conclusive in their support for either a new catering establishment (56 per cent) or a virtual academy (20%). Only 22 per cent indicated a preference to continue with the existing training offer. 93 per cent of those interested in becoming part of a network were prepared to offer training or mentoring to other businesses. A training facility offering a combination of on-site and bespoke academy / apprenticeship style training appears to most effectively meet industry need.

4.3.1 Action Table

City name: ABERGAVENNY							
Main Objective:		EDUCATION – ADVISORY AND TRAINING SERVICES ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS To support education in sustainable growing in the community and to promote the use of land for sustainable agricultural practices					
Action Title & Short Description	Intend Result	Resources & Assets	Lead organization	Key partners	Timescale	Indicative Cost	
Provide coordination of activities on sustainable growing and opportunities for food business start-ups and diversification. Forge links with education establishments and develop access to sector jobs	Improved awareness of sustainable growing practices Formation of 6 new food businesses per annum using sustainable growing practices.	Access to land for use as incubator plots Tools to be obtained for loan to start-up businesses. Estimated £5k	Agri-Urban Food Forum (New body)	Coleg Gwent MON CC (education) Strategic food officer Mon CC Procurement /schools Mon CC schools healthy eating officer and dietary officer Cooperation project for local food producers Tyfi Fynni Coleg Gwent / Aberystwyth	By December 2019	£5,000 pa	
Set up a youth training academy Develop training with local chefs and organizations	To provide a Training Academy for aspiring food businesses and in particular the younger generation. Development of links with Education, local Chefs, and catering networks	Links to the new Welsh Government training programme Direct interest from Food Businesses to develop this asset and programme of training .	Agri-Urban Food Forum (New body) Or Mon CC Or Mon Enterprise	Youth Enterprise – Mon CC AFF Coleg Gwent Healthy Schools Officer Local food businesses Regional Skills Partnership Welsh Government Local restaurateurs Chefs and Businesses	By December 2019	£30,000	

4.4 Access to Land

The focus on land use in general was deemed to be a difficult task. We now have Brexit with an apparent risk of lack of people (from EU countries) to work on the land. Also main farmer/landowners have an average age of late 50s. Therefore the need for training of the next generation of food producers will be paramount (probably more so than catering education but the two are linked). Young people find it difficult to afford farm rental/purchase at affordable prices.

This plan refers to “Old Lands” Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as one example of a land owner wanting to use his land for agro-ecological farming, veg boxes etc. There is a growing movement in the UK (and indeed elsewhere) which suggests that more land be used for similar purposes. This is should be investigated.

The Land-share approach might be worth considering <http://freshstartlandenterprise.org.uk/land-partnership/> as demonstrated already in Monmouthshire by Chepstow Transition Town Land-Share project <http://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/projects/landshare/>

Permaculture is a system design methodology which can be applied to agriculture. It has been suggested that a potential way forward for land use in the area would be to set up a large scale permaculture farm to be run as a tourism, recreation, events, art and learning space. It is acknowledged that the shape of farming, reshaping the farm design and offering a diversity of outputs would improve environmental benefits in monmouthshire. This approach hasn't been scaled up to landscape scale in the UK yet and offers potential for a pilot project. Details of a local project can be viewed at www.threepools.co.uk .

Classification of Land

A Welsh Government Classification of Land map can be viewed via the following link:
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/agricultural-land-classification/?lang=en>

The following link also gives details regarding Sustainable Agriculture activities:
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/?lang=en>

The ULG identified that some of the key barriers to development of horticulture were that there was little or no knowledge of locations of suitable land for growing, lack of knowledge of sustainable horticultural practices, lack of co-operative farming/growing and a perceived view that there is little support for business development or diversification .

There is a suggestion that business skills and incubator for business growth supporting young farmer starter businesses could be established and possibly linked to the food hub proposal.

(Source “Promar International Food Hub Feasibility Study 2017” and “Who feeds Bristol “)

With regard to encouraging horticulture a document titled “A New Deal for Horticulture” issued by Landwork Alliance and Growing Communities (a grassroots union representing farmers, growers, and land based workers) can be viewed via their website at: <https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/> . This should certainly inform future debates on this issue.

Figure 1: Number of farms by different enterprises in Monmouthshire and Newport, 2015

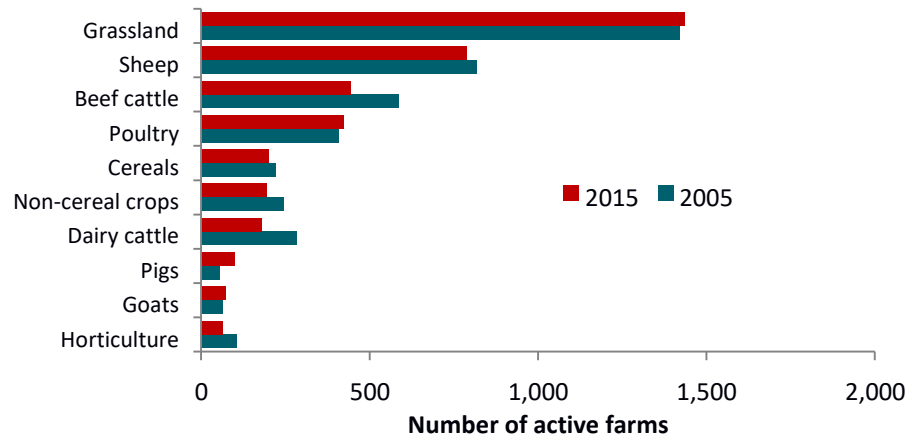
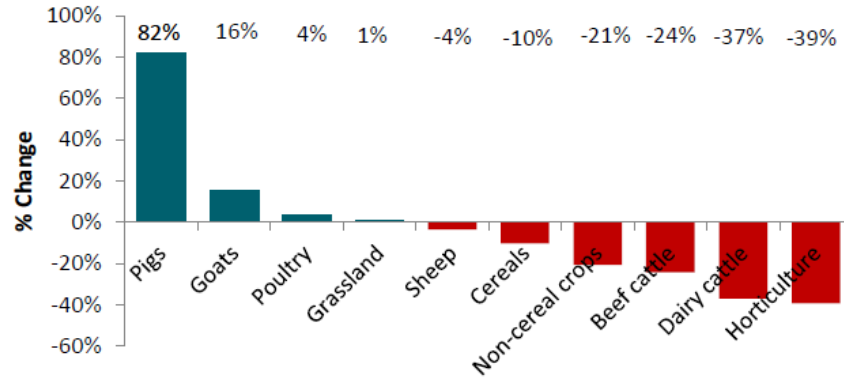


Figure 2: Monmouthshire and Newport change in number of agricultural holdings 2005 – 2015



Source: Welsh Agricultural Statistics

There was some reference to the possibility of an agro-ecological farming college combining education and land use.

Coleg Gwent is an agricultural college located in the neighbouring town of Usk. It is felt that there could be some benefit using the college facility. This could offer opportunities in linking directly with the developing courses and indirectly (or directly) developing activity with Aberystwyth University. The findings of the RDP funded Coleg Gwent study should be considered alongside this plan. It can be viewed at <http://monmouthshire.biz/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/VoU-Catering-Study-Final-Report-V1.0-004.pdf>. The college has plenty of land which could be used to help start-up businesses and individual entrepreneurs. Some members have suggested the possibility of using ‘growing spaces’ at the college, with links to Incredible Edible activities at County Hall and enhancing the college curriculum.

The potential use of MCC land and issuing of licenses should be considered. This will form part of the planned approach to Land Use.

There is potential for development of exchange programmes in conjunction with the Education and training development and with the Food Festival and other potential partners.

4.4.1 Action Table

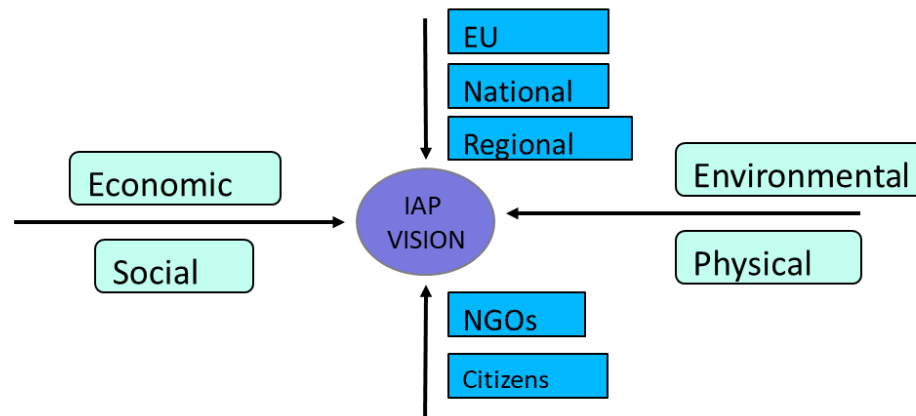
City name: ABERGAVENTNY						
Main Objective:		ACCESS TO LAND Identification of land for use for development of incubator and start up units				
Action Title & Short Description	Intend Result	Resources & Assets	Lead Organisation	Key Partners	Timescale	Indicative Cost
Convene a discussion group meeting with Coleg Gwent, Aberystwyth, Incredible Edible, Lantra and other potential partners	Formation of a partnership group to identify the key areas for development and initial set up of the group	Aberystwyth digital programmes and bespoke centre – initial discussion Coleg Gwent (Agricultural College) neighbouring village	ULG/Food Forum	Vale of Usk LAG, Enterprise Department Mon CC Developing programme of activity for land development Coleg Gwent Aberystwyth University Coleg Gwent Incredible edible Community growers Garden centres Farmers (and Unions) Young Farmers	By end December 2019	zero
Form links with Lantra who are already running a training programme in land management and will be the vehicle for the new WG funding for land development training.	Access to land and development of at least 6 new fledgling businesses Offer of shared equipment in situ	Well established Young Farmers Groups				zero
Identification of land for use and development of incubator spaces	Development of cooperative working					£to be identified
Shared tools and greenhouse space and business skills development						£10,000
Development of a pilot programme for setting up incubator units	To offer incubator units to fledgling businesses and self-employed individuals		ULG (sub group)	Mon CC Incredible Edible Farmers Farm businesses	By December 2020	£50,000

An Integrated Approach

Note: It is increasingly clear that the various challenges facing urban areas – economic, environmental, climate, social and demographic – are interwoven and success in urban development can only be achieved through an integrated approach. Hence, measures concerning physical urban renewal should be combined with measures promoting education, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. The development of strong partnerships involving local citizens, civil society, the local economy and the various levels of government is an indispensable element. Combining capacities and local knowledge is essential to identify shared solutions and to achieve well accepted and sustainable results.

The aim in fostering integrated strategies which enhance sustainable urban development in order to strengthen the resilience of Abergavenny and to ensure synergies amongst the investments being made locally. This section is critical for getting funds for the actions, it will have a number of practical effects on the various levels of governance concerning the preparation and implementation of programmes.

Horizontal integration = combining physical, economic, social & environmental interventions



Vertical integration = cooperation between all levels of government and local players
(local administration, civil society, private sector, etc.)

5.0 Financial Resources

To boost job creation, growth, collaboration, cooperation, and competitiveness in our town, we need to maximize the quality, quantity and impact of our actions and investments. Exploiting the potential for synergies between Horizon 2020, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and other innovation and competitiveness-related EU Programmes and other funding sources can help us to achieve this objective.

This section describes the rationale for developing links between the different funding sources and explains how they can be combined, based on a suggested 5 step approach:

Step	Action	Commentary
1	Make the participation in EU funds a policy priority	Addressing lack of political motivation and reluctance and explains why it is important for local politicians to address funds at city level
2	Get informed	Addressing the lack of information on EU and structural funding opportunities (and to a certain extent complex administrative rules managing funds) and explain where to find such information.
3	Explore co-financing possibilities	Addressing the barrier of co-funding requirements and lack of resources and give tips on where to look for possible co-funding.
4	Get connected and learn from others	Addressing the lack of information on funding and limited technical capacity. It gives examples of different sources of funding and links to other cities in a similar process.
5	Establish partnerships and foster cooperation	Addressing difficulties in establishing adequate partnerships and proposes ways to foster cooperation with the different stakeholders.

The key to delivery and implementation of the IAP is finance. Without the necessary financial support and resources, the actions are unlikely to be implemented and therefore the plan will not have the impact envisaged in its vision, aims and objectives. There is however no one source that will deliver sufficient finance to fund all individual aspects of the IAP. Within the Action Tables, a number of funding schemes and instruments have been identified that are considered key potential funding sources and these will be pursued throughout the implementation phase of the project.

A wide range of programmes and funding provide financial support to hundreds of thousands of people and organisations such as farmers, students, scientists, NGOs, businesses, towns, regions and many others. EU funding is available on local, regional, national, interregional and EU level. These schemes are grouped into 45 different categories, 9 of which are directly linked to innovation in agriculture, food and forestry. The most relevant for our IAP are presented below.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

BUDGET: €95 billion

AIMS: Improve competitiveness for farming and forestry, protect the environment and the countryside, improve the quality of life and diversification of the rural economy, and support locally based approaches to rural development.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING? Grants and subsidies for projects and contractual commitments provided by regions or countries implementing their rural development programmes.

WHO FOR? Farmers, foresters, rural businesses, groups, organisations...

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

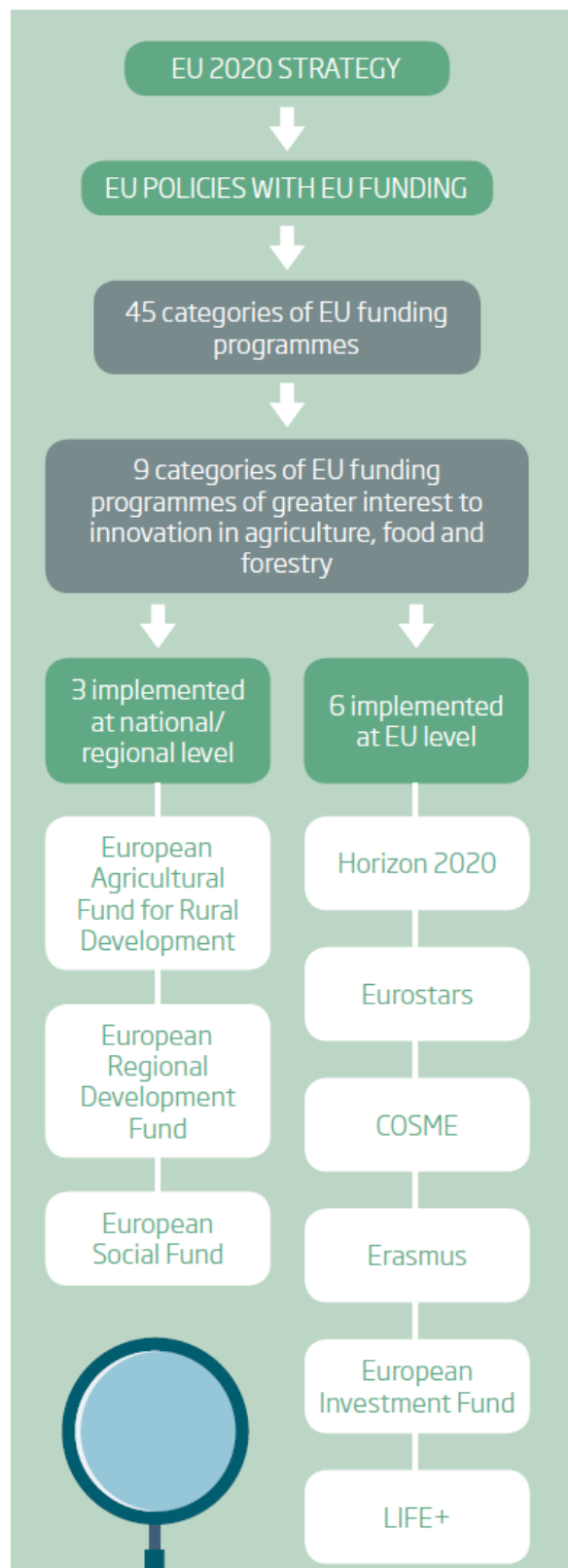
BUDGET: Approximately €200 billion

AIMS: Strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions.

FOCUS: Research and innovation; digital agenda; SME competitiveness; low-carbon economy.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING? Grants and other types of financial support provided by regions implementing their Operational Programmes.

WHO FOR? SMEs, research centres, universities, local and regional authorities, training centres, non-profit organisations...



INTERREG: Cooperating between regions

ERDF also provides funding for several European territorial cooperation activities including the Interregional cooperation programmes known as ‘INTERREG’. There are three types of INTERREG programmes: interregional cooperation between cross border regions, between states in a given part of Europe, and between regions throughout the whole of Europe. The interregional cooperation programme for 2014-2020 ‘INTERREG EUROPE’ is open to all regions and supports mainly the exchange of practices at regional policy level. Cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes may support investments more widely, including in the agri-food chain.

European Social Fund (ESF)

BUDGET: Minimum €80 billion

AIMS: Investing in human capital to improve job opportunities for all EU citizens.

FOCUS: Improving skills and jobs, favouring employment, mobility and social inclusion, fighting poverty.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING: Grants and other forms of support provided by regions and Member States.

WHO FOR? Businesses, public bodies, schools and training centres, universities and non-profit organisations.

EUROSTARS

BUDGET: €1.14 billion

FOCUS: Innovation in all sectors.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING? Grants for development of new products, services or processes provided on a country-by-country basis.

WHO FOR? Consortia must include at least one research and development performing small or medium sized enterprise (SME). Other participants can be of any kind (industries, universities and research institutes).

Erasmus+

BUDGET: €14.77 billion

FOCUS: Education, training, youth and sport.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING: Scholarships, grants for small projects, loan guarantees for students...

WHO FOR? Educational institutions, training centres, universities, different sorts of organisations.

LIFE+

BUDGET: €3.4 billion

FOCUS: Environment and climate action.

WHAT TYPE OF FUNDING: Grants for environmental projects provided through yearly calls for proposals.

WHO FOR? Private companies, NGOs, public bodies.

H2020

The main opportunities for agriculture and forestry can be found in two main H2020 calls:

- Sustainable Food Security (SFS)
- Rural Renaissance (RUR)

With these calls, we search support to:

- improve the management of resources and ecosystems to provide healthier and more diverse food to people while safeguarding the environment and adapting to climate change;
- develop smarter, greener and more circular rural economies through modernised policies, generation renewal, more innovative value chains and enhanced uptake of digital opportunities.



There are also opportunities for agriculture and forestry in other parts of Horizon 2020 work programme, such as the calls on “Digitising and transforming European industry and services” (LEIT-ICT), “Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future” (SC3), “Greening the economy in line with Sustainable development goals” (SC5) or the “European Innovation Council Pilot”.

Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme

£100Million available over the next 3 years (£44M for East Wales)

Local authorities, along with partner organisations, will be able to apply for the capital investment for projects that promote economic regeneration and serve the aims of wider sustainable development with activities focussed at individuals and areas most in need.

It will help create jobs, enhance skills and employability, and create the environment for businesses to grow and thrive.

Tourism Amenity Investment Support

The Tourism Amenity Investment Support scheme (TAIS) is available for public, third sector and not for profit organisations.

TAIS is an investment fund targeting amenity projects in the tourism sector in Wales. Support of between £25,000 and £128,000 will be considered.

The cap on total eligible project expenditure is £160,000. The aim is to:

- develop quality sustainable tourism facilities
- add value to visitor experience
- deliver quality, innovation and a sense of place

The Community Facilities Programme

This is a capital grant scheme and can be used to improve community facilities which are useful to, and well used by, people in the community.

Grants are available at two levels; small grants of under **£25,000** and larger grants of up to **£250,000**.

The Programme is open to community and voluntary sector organisations, including social enterprises. The focus of the Programme is on increasing opportunity, creating prosperity for all and developing resilient communities where people are engaged and empowered. All applicants are expected to work with partners which can come from the public, private or the third sectors.

6.0 Communication Strategy & Public Consultation

The Strategy

1. To promote the completed action plan
2. To engage with key or potential partners who could assist in taken forward the actions identified in the action plan
3. To promote the Integrated Action Plan as a whole to Welsh Government; Europe and beyond

What will we communicate?

The Integrated Action Plan

The studies which supported the activity and informed the development of the plan

The Actions which have been identified or taken forward because of the program e.g. partnerships formed, projects developed (the positive aspects)

How will we publicise?

- Showcase the program by means of an ‘Event’ in Abergavenny. This is compulsory as an end of program action. All partners will comply and a budget identified through the marketing budget already in place
- Social media campaign to a targeted audience
- Publicity through the political outlets
- Publicity via network and groups participating in the program
- Press releases through the main line newspapers in the region;
- Radio interviews
- Re-issue or development of a group video

Who should be invited?

The stakeholders to be invited should include:

- Members of the local press
- Supporting agencies such as Menter a Business , (Federation of City Farms and Gardens), Business connect
- Senior representatives of Monmouthshire County Council and Abergavenny Town Council
- Local groups (particularly those who have been involved with the development of the plan.
- Councillors and Assembly Members
- Education Establishments
- Farmers Unions
- Anyone who has been involved in the process.

The Venue:

This should be within the confines of Abergavenny and its environs

7.0 Post Plan Implementation

Taking forward the program – The Legacy

The program has successfully engaged with key partners, individual and groups who have formed or participating in the Local Action Group and /or contributed to the development of the Action Plan.

However, there is a danger that once the Action Plan is produced and agreed there may be a lack of momentum.

Therefore the plan requires endorsement and the following actions are suggested:

- Develop the ULG or set up a Food Forum to take the project forward
- Canvas political support from MP and Assembly members
- Ensure support from key local groups /individuals
- Seek wider agency support – such as Menter a Business (Farming Connect).
- Seek endorsement from the local business community

It is imperative to note that this is an action plan and a living document.

8.0 SWOT Analysis of Integrated Action Plan

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>Low start-up cost for virtual hub. Funding channels identified Number of pilot schemes in place Strong volunteer base Allows for testing the actual uptake from consumers and producers and starts to bring together producers and customers Provides a unique focus point in Abergavenny and supports the local supply chain Develops cooperative trading and improves market reach of local producers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>No funding to date for Project Coordinator Needs a Champion to promote and take project forward Difficulty in maintaining interest of local food businesses and farming community Lack of formal structure to apply for funds</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>Appointment of a Coordinator Starting platform for collaboration within the sector and encouragement of business start-ups and development Development of Local Branding Existing resources that can be built on Promotion of locally produced food and food businesses Collaboration with International Food Hub project members Future Generations Act Public Services Act? Full title and check if applicable WG funding for support / start ups Changes to Agricultural perceptions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>Lack of political support Potential for lack of visibility of the virtual hub on the world wide web. Funding for Project Coordinator might not be forthcoming. Lack of take up by local food businesses Approach or provision could lack coordination Uncertainty of BREXIT outcome</p>

Document compiled by John Prosser – URBACT Local Group Coordinator

and Deserie Mansfield - MCC Rural Projects Coordinator

on behalf of and with contributions from

The URBACT Local Group, Monmouthshire County Council, Abergavenny Town Council and the Community of Abergavenny

Appendix

Appendix1 – Participants in the URBACT Local Group

Professional Activity	Representing (Group or community)	Sector
<u>ULG Coordinator</u>		Volunteer
<u>Butcher - Local Business</u>		
<u>Deputy CEO Monmouthshire County Council</u>	Chief Officer Monmouthshire County Council	Public
Chef and organiser	Local Food Assembly	private sector
Farmers Union Representative		Private
Farmer		Private
Officer	Abergavenny Food Festival	Markets/Events /Food
Officer	National Trust	Public
Union Rep	Farmers Union Wales	Private /Community
Chair of Abergavenny Tourism Association	Abergavenny Tourist Association	Tourism
Food Tourism Officer	Monmouthshire County Council	Public
Head of Enterprise	mon cc finance and funding	Public
Business and enterprise portfolio Politician	Monmouthshire County Council	Monmouthshire Enterprise / Economy growth and development
Hotel Owner and local business	Private Sector	Private/Community
	Transition Towns	Community
Incredible edibles/community development , CSA's		
Monmouthshire Markets Manager		Public sector
Park Ranger		Public Sector/Community
		Farming Union
Fruit Farmer		Private Centre /Community
Land Based Manager	Coleg Gwent	Public / Education

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Rural Projects Coordinator (ULG support and project management)	RDP Mon CC	Lead body coordination / delivery
<u>Academic - food nutritionalist</u>	Consultant and academic	Nutrition and Academia
Viner - Farmer	Whitecastle Vineyard	Business
Abergavenny Town Team (Chair)	Team Abergavenny	Transition Town and LAG
Academic	Research	Education
Abergavenny Food Festival		
Head of operations - Monmouthshire County Council	Public Sector	Public Sector
-	Rural Development Plan	Funding / project development
Coordinator /Manager	Menterabusness	Public
	Abergavenny Town Councillors and County Councillor	Public (political)
Menterabusness	Farming Connect	Public
First line controller	Mon CC finance and funding	Lead body coordination /strategic (Public)
Farmer		Private / Community
Coordinator National Farmers Union Wales	National Farming Union	Public /Community
Farmer	Farmer and representative from National Farmers Union	Farming / Private sector/Community
Member	Just Food	Community
Chief Officer Mon CC	Public sector	
	Farmer Entrepreneur	Farming Project

Appendix 2 – Creative Minutes of Network Visits

To view reports on all the network visits please visit web page <http://urbact.eu/news?network=7338>

and folder

[Link to Creative Minutes](#)

Visit Dates:

22/24 February 2016 - Cesena – Italy	7/10 June 2017 - Fundao – Portugal
8/10 June 2016 - Mollet del Valles – Spain	9/12 September 2017 - Jelgava – Latvia
10/12 October 2016 - Huy Pays de Condruces – Belgium	19/22 February 2018 - Mouans Sartoux – France
14/17 November 2016 - Pyli – Greece	7/10 March 2018 - Petrinja – Croatia
22/24 May 2017 - Sodertalje – Sweden	18/21 April 2018 - Baena – Spain

Contacts of Interest during visits

NETWORK PARTNER	ORGANISATION VISITED	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT LINKS
Cesena - Italy			giovannini_e@comune.cesena.fc.it
Fundao – Portugal	CERFUNDÃO - Fundão Producers Club partner	Cherry production cooperative. Packing and Commercialization of Cherries	http://www.cerfundao.pt/eng/novidades.htm
	LIVING LAB COVA DA BEIRA: Fab-Lab Aldeias de Xisto Incubated companies: CogusBox (mushrooms), Mercearia Comunitas (solidarity grocery)...	Small business start-up units	http://www.llcb.pt/ João Milheiro Tony Barreiros Fernando Castro Virginia Batista
	Natura Glamping Gardunha –	Sustainable tourism project	http://www.naturaglamping.com
	Networking between FRUIT FARMING Erasmus project (RUDE) & AGRI-URBAN		http://www.fruitfarming.eu/

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	Castelo Novo 2.0 Integrated community program –based on economic and social relocation for integrated development within an agroforestry paradigm that safeguards biodiversity and indigenous resources	Sustainable community growing	https://www.evensi.pt/page/castelo-novo-20/10003790272/ Hugo Madeira Inês Lúcio
	CHERRY FESTIVAL	Street festival	http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/pais/2016-06-11-Festa-da-Cereja-no-Fundao
Jelgava - Latvia	THE RIGA CENTRAL MARKET	One of the largest covered markets in Europe	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riga_Central_Market guided by Ivars Jakovels, Manager of Marketing projects & Inese Rebaine, Head of Planning Department www.rct.lv
	LOCAL TRADITIONAL BAKERY / FARMSTEAD	Small traditional baking “CAUNITES”	www.caunites.lv
	THE LATVIA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE (LUA)		www.llu.lv sandra.muiznece@llu.lv Head of Technology and Knowledge Transfer Office – LLU Facility of Food Technology Prof Dr sci ing Sandra Muizneice-Brasava https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9MAJxlrTxckM3gzM3dVd25hNDQ/view
	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG)		www.lps.lv
	Lido Healthy Diet School and Restaurant		www.lido.lv
	Mezaciruli Farm	Award winning sustainable farming system	www.mezaciruli.lv http://www.celotajs.lv/en/e/mezaciruli
LAG Pays de Condruces – Huy - Belgium	Visit of a mobile canning lab		Presentation of the project by Céline Mahut (Agriculture services of the Province of Liège)
	Cooperative Point Ferme	Logistical Platform – e-commerce – short supply chain – Food hub project	www.pointferme.be Marjorie (CEO)

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	<u>Incubator Land</u>	Explanantion by JF Pecheur and meeting with Fanny (seeds producer)	www.cycle-en-terre.be
Mollet del Valles - Spain	Walk and talk: “The experience of Gallecs Agroecological Project”: Organic flours milled by stone mill The organic vegetable garden The social gardens Gallec’s farm shop and workshop	Study visit: ES GALLECS Agrarian Park	urbact.eu/our-network-“es-gallecs”-agri-urban-model-initiative-0 Introduced by Gemma Safont (Manager Consortium Es Gallecs) Santi Duñach, Local producer Nuria Gascon and Joana Gonzalez, “Black Radish Collective” Gemma Safont, Manager of Gallecs Consortium Laura, local producer
Mouans Sartoux - France	Presentation of the Sustainable School Catering Project OF MOUANS SARTOUX / MEAD Community Gardens of Mouans Sartoux Territorial Agri Food Project	Presentation Available Presentation Available	Gilles Perole – MEAD and canteens : gilles.perole@mouans-sartoux.net Elsa RAIBON – AGRI-URBAN : elsa.raibon@mouans-sartoux.net – Cathy Blossier – Fair Trade: catherine.blossier@mouans-sartoux.net Daniel Le Blay – Urbanism : daniel.leblay@free.fr Lea STURTON – canteens & menus : lea.sturton@mouans-sartoux.net Laureen TRACLET - MEAD : mead@mouans-sartoux.net
Pyli - Greece	Mediterranean Diet		Dr Athanasios Manouras
	Incubation in Thessally Socratis Farm Karditsa	Community Gardens	Tsiogas Telis
Sodertalje - Sweden	Torekallberget Open Air Museum Matlust Project Eco Growers Skillebyholm College	The Eko-odlarna i Telje project is aimed at refugees with long-term unemployment In connection with the philosophy of the district, Skillebyholm is a meeting place and a	https://www.sodertalje.se/torekallberget http://matlust.eu/om-matlust/ http://www.sfris.se/web/page.aspx?refid=258 https://translate.google.co.uk/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=http://www.skillebyholm.com/&prev=search

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	<p>Norrbyvalle Centre</p> <p>Jarna Culture House</p> <p>Under Tallarna</p>	<p>centre for biodynamic agriculture, education and sustainable development.</p> <p>Waldorf education, curative pedagogy, culture, anthroposophic medicine, biodynamic agriculture - activities inspired by anthroposophy in Sweden today Creative employment</p>	<p>http://www.xn--norrbyvllle-w5a.se/</p> <p>http://steinerhogskolan.se/in-english/</p> <p>http://undertallarna.se/</p>
Petrinja - Croatia	<p>Green House Petrinja</p> <p>High school Petrinja</p> <p>Public institution for Plum and chesnut</p> <p>Banijska šara - pig producers</p>	<p>Visit to Petrinja's Green house, presentation about the effect of this space on agri-food sector</p> <p>Workshop- exchange of knowledge and practice between partners and the school staff</p> <p>Visit to the institution, local expert presentation on the theme of Advantages of rural areas of Petrinja and Banovina ; presentation of the Chesnut path association</p> <p>Visit to local farm The founder and President of this association of producers explained their initiative and business project to breed the local pigs varieties and give added value to the product.</p>	To be added
Baena - Spain			To be added

Appendix 3 - Extract of draft Manifesto drawn up by Abergavenny Just Food

“Towards a Manifesto for Food Justice for Wales - Draft Manifesto”

“Our food system is broken. In Wales an estimated 1 in 7 households are struggling to avoid going hungry and Food Bank use is on the rise. Growing numbers of households are undernourished and at the same time obesity rates are rising – more than half the adults in Wales are overweight or obese leading to rising rates of type II diabetes as well as more heart disease and cancer. Only half our children eat fruit and vegetables every day and less than a third of all adults, 32%, reported eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day, yet an estimated 400,000 tonnes of food is wasted every year by households in Wales – food that could be recycled or used to provide nutritious meals. Our food production system is unfair – workers in the system are often migrant labourers receiving low wages in poor quality jobs; farmers receive only 8% of the added value in the system. The productivity of our land is threatened by environmental damage such as carbon emissions, soil erosion & loss of biodiversity. Brexit exposes how broken our food system is. It poses threats such as increased prices due to the fall in value of sterling & possibility of tariffs on imports, loss of migrant labour, and possible reduction in environmental protection. **BUT** Brexit also opens up opportunities to create a fairer and better food system; good food for people, good for places, good for the planet. We believe that food is a public good; everyone should have access to food by right rather than relying on the charity of others. Food justice means tackling not just how people get enough nutritious food necessary for their health and well-being, but also asking why so many can’t. Confronting the root causes of our broken food system matters if we are to have a fair and sustainable food system in Wales. Food justice is key to reducing poverty, improving health & well-being, and tackling climate change & environmental degradation – all commitments that we in Wales have made under the Well-being of Future Generations Act

We want a Wales where:

1. Everyone is entitled to affordable, high-quality, nutritious and safe food
2. Those involved in producing & distributing our food have a right to a fair income
3. Food production is sustainable – policies and practice boost bio-diversity, cut carbon emissions, and increase soil quality
4. Everyone is supported and encouraged to cook from scratch, grow their own and eat more fresh, seasonal, local, organically grown food
5. Sustainable diets are at the heart of food policy – low in animal protein & processed & refined food; high in fruit & vegetables
6. We prioritise awareness raising and education in our schools, workplaces and homes about the part that food, nutrition and lifestyle can play in meeting the needs of disadvantaged individuals, families and groups in the community and encourage social inclusion and social cohesion

7. Animal welfare standards are improved and fish stocks are protected
8. The redistribution, recycling and composting of food waste is encouraged and promoted
9. Food subsidies encourage production of affordable, high-quality & less carbon intensive food for the benefit of public health and the environment – more horticulture and more organic food
10. Our food policy supports and advances local food production & distribution; championing the right to fresh good quality food and helping to cut ‘food miles’
11. Community-led food trade and production such as co-operatives, buying groups, Community Supported Agriculture and pop-up shops are valued and nurtured
12. New tax powers are used to discourage unhealthy food high in fats & sugar”

Appendix 4 – Sustainable Diets Case Study – Pam Mason

SUSTAINABLE DIETS

By Pamela Mason

(Member of the URBACT Local Group, Abergavenny)

How can huge populations be fed healthily, equitably and affordably while maintaining the ecosystems on which life depends? The evidence of the impact of diet on the health of people and the planet has grown enormously during recent decades, yet changing consumer eating habits, even for public health alone, not to mention planetary health, is proving difficult.

What is a sustainable diet?

So, what is a sustainable diet? This term is not new. Two nutritionists – Gussow and Clancy – proposed in 1986 that human diets should be based on environmental as well as nutritional criteria for which they coined the term “sustainable diet”. They argued that food choices should take into account not only nutritional impact but also the long term stability of the global food system encompassing global justice, biological diversity, efficient use of resources, avoiding fossil fuels and using local seasonal produce. They advocated eating a variety of foods, avoiding too much fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar and eating foods with adequate fibre, advice which largely remains today.

More recently the FAO and Bioversity (2010)¹ defined sustainable diets more broadly than nutrition + environment as ***“Sustainable Diets are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources”***.

This definition attracts criticism for being too vague, too many factors involved, impossible to achieve and drives discussion around trade-offs (e.g., between nutrition and the environment; environmental factors and cultural acceptability and so on). Whilst environmental sustainability within planetary boundaries can be argued to be the most important dimension of sustainable diets, cultural acceptability, accessibility, safe and affordable food and the health and welfare of all who work in the food system are also important.

Why are diets unsustainable?

Why does the issue of sustainable diets matter? The short answer is that modern diets are unsustainable at a mass scale. Food systems, and hence diets, are linked with health, environmental and socio-economic challenges. Food systems account for 24% of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHGEs)² arising from: conversion of land to agriculture; fertilized soils leading to release of nitrous

¹ International Scientific Symposium, Final Doc, 3-5 Nov 2010

<http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/23781-0e8d8dc364ee46865d5841c48976e9980.pdf>

² UNEP (2016). Food Systems and Natural Resources. Report of the Working Group on **Food** Systems of the International Resource Panel. Westhoek, H, Ingram J, Van Berkum, Ozay L and Hajer M.

oxide; enteric fermentation in ruminant animals that produce methane, rice cultivation that releases methane, and burning biomass. Livestock production is under particular scrutiny for its impact on the environment. Animal production is responsible for a third of all of agriculture's GHGs almost half of which are caused by feed production and processing.³

Dietary impact on the environment is not limited to GHGs. Biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate driven by overexploitation, changes in land use, patterns of consumption, pollution and climate change. This destruction of the natural world threatens the food and water security of billions of people. According to a 2018 UN backed report, conversion of forests to croplands and wetlands to shrimp farms has fed a human population that has more than doubled since the 1960s, but at a devastating cost to other species – such as pollinating insects and oxygen-producing plants – on which our climate, economy and well-being depend. In the Americas, more than 95% of high-grass prairies have been transformed into farms, along with 72% of dry forests and 88% of the Atlantic forests. The Amazon rainforest is still mostly intact, but it is rapidly diminishing and degrading along with an even faster disappearing cerrado (tropical savannah). Between 2003 to 2013, the area under cultivation in Brazil's northeast agricultural frontier more than doubled to 2.5m hectares, according to the report.⁴

Humans have used an estimated 7000 different plant species since they started agriculture approximately 10,000 years ago, but the agricultural landscape is dominated by less than 100 species. More than three crops – maize, rice and wheat provide more than 50% of plant derived calories consumed by humans. Some 40 livestock species are raised for food but five species alone account for 95% of the total. Thirty-one species of fish and shellfish provide 95% of the total consumed; and an estimated 85% of global fish stocks are either fully fished or overfished and more than a fifth of wild caught fish is fed to animals.⁵

We live on a planet that has a fixed amount of land. The increasing speed with which land is being cleared for agriculture is destroying forests and wetlands and contributing to loss of biodiversity, climate change, soil degradation, soil erosion and the leaching of nutrients. The growing consumption of meat and dairy produce is a key driver accelerating this process. Raising livestock for human consumption accounts for some 70% of all agricultural land use. Nearly half of global agricultural land is used for livestock feed production⁶ Some 36% of the calories produced by the world's crops are used for animal feed. Only 12% of those feed calories ultimately contribute to the human diet as meat and other animal products. Eating more plants instead of feeding them to animals, humans could significantly reduce the escalating demand for land and the environmental problems associated with land use.

Other dietary challenges for planetary health include the vast amounts of water used by agriculture, with agriculture also responsible for water pollution. Animal products generally have higher water footprints than plants with an average US diet consuming 5400 litres of water a day and a vegetarian diet consuming 2600 litres a day. Significant amounts of water are traded around the world as a result of the export of water thirsty foods often from parts of the world suffering water scarcity.

³ <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/protein-challenge-2040-feed-compass>

⁴ <https://www.ipbes.net/>

⁵ <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/protein-challenge-2040-feed-compass>

⁶ <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/protein-challenge-2040-feed-compass>

Soil erosion too is a critical problem. In 2014, a Sheffield University study found that over-intensive farming meant that the UK had 100 harvests left while the FAO has suggested that if soil degradation continues at the current rate, the world's top soil could have gone in 30-40 years.⁷ Given that 90% of our food comes from the soil this is a serious situation. Livestock production is responsible for 35% of soil erosion globally. Other environmental challenges include the use of pesticides and excessive run-off of nitrogen and phosphorus used in fertilizers causing eutrophication.

In terms of dietary challenges to human health, we have a double burden of malnutrition. About 850 million people do not have enough to eat, 2 billion people have nutritional deficiencies, whilst 1.9 billion adults (>18 years) are overweight; of these, 650 million are obese. In addition, 41 million children (<5 years) and 340 million children and teenagers (5-19 years) are obese. Diet related disease, in particular type 2 diabetes is increasing globally. Unhealthy patterns of eating – consuming sugar sweetened beverages, processed and unprocessed meats and processed foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, salt and sugar are outpacing increases in healthy dietary patterns throughout the world.

Other significant challenges of the food system for human health include food-borne microbial illnesses such as campylobacter in chicken. Microbial contamination of salad vegetables has been growing worldwide. The use, misuse and overuse of antibiotics in animal farming has increased antimicrobial resistance posing a threat to human health. Antibiotics are used in many countries as growth promoters and as non-specific agents for preventing and treating infections. Excessive use of pesticides can be damaging for the health of people who work with them in agriculture with small studies showing effects on respiratory health and possible links with some cancers.

Current diets are also associated with significant socio-economic challenges, such as food insecurity and inequalities in access to a healthy diet. More than enough food is produced worldwide to feed everyone yet 850 million people go hungry. Despite food having become cheaper in richer countries during the last 60 years with people in the UK, for example, spending less than 10% of their income on food, use of emergency food is on the rise with food banks rapidly becoming 'institutionalized' and an 'accepted' part of the social fabric. Unhealthy foods are marketed at the expense of healthy foods and are often cheaper. Significant amounts of food are wasted and in some production systems, animal welfare is poor.

For those working in the food system, poor wages and working conditions and poor economic returns are significant challenges. Power in the food system is becoming increasingly concentrated with mega-mergers in the seed, agri-chemical, fertilizer, animal genetics and farm machinery industries; this reinforces the industrial farming model, exacerbating its social and environmental costs. Globally, farmers are increasingly reliant on a handful of suppliers and buyers, squeezing their incomes.

The true costs of food to the health of people and the planet are not accounted for at the supermarket checkout. The UK Sustainable Food Trust (2017) report evaluated the true cost of food, estimating that for every £1 UK consumers spend on food, another £1 is spent by UK taxpayers on additional costs incurred by society through the production and consumption of that food: impacts

⁷ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/only-60-years-of-farming-left-if-soil-degradation-continues/>

on the natural environment (50p), effects on public health (37p).⁸ In cash terms this means the UK spends £44 billion a year dealing with food-related health costs and £60 billion on environmental impacts, but the true costs to society in terms of days of work lost, increased care costs and mental effects are unknown.

What is a sustainable diet?

The food system is associated with a number of environmental, health and socioeconomic challenges. To be sustainable, diets need to be healthy for people, the planet and be accessible and affordable for all, providing fair returns, decent jobs and good working conditions with fully internalized costs (see Figure 1). Sustainable diets must be culturally acceptable and of appropriate quality.

Figure 1. The key features and determinants of a sustainable diet



Source: Mason & Lang, 2017

⁸ <http://sustainablefoodtrust.org/articles/hidden-cost-uk-food/>

So what does a sustainable diet look like? In 2014, the UK Food and Climate Research Network (FCRN) came up with some practical guidelines for low environmental impact diets consistent with good health⁹:

- Diversity – a wide range of foods eaten
- Balance achieved between energy intake and energy needs
- Based around minimally processed tubers, wholegrains, legumes, fruits and vegetables – particularly those that are field grown – “robust”, less prone to spoilage, and less requiring of rapid and more intensive transport modes
- Meat if eaten, in moderate quantities, and all parts eaten, and should be of high welfare
- Dairy products or alternatives (e.g., fortified milk substitutes and other foods rich in calcium and micronutrients) in moderate amounts
- Unsalted seeds and nuts
- Small amounts of fish and aquatic products sourced from certified fisheries
- Very limited consumption of foods high in fat, sugar or salt and low in micronutrients (e.g., crisps, confectionery, sugary drinks)
- Oils and fats with a beneficial omega 3:6 ratio such as rapeseed and olive oil
- Tap water in preference to other beverages, especially soft drinks.

A few other countries, including Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany and Qatar, have developed similar national guidance, whilst others such as the US and Australia have faced obstacles in the form of vested interests. Of particular note are the Brazilian guidelines which highlight the importance of culture in terms of where to shop, eating together and so on. They can be summarized as follows:

1. Prepare meals using fresh and staple foods
2. Use oils, fats, sugar and salt in moderation
3. Limit consumption of ready to eat food and drink products
4. Eat at regular meal times and pay attention to your food instead of multitasking. Find a comfortable place to eat. Avoid all you can eat buffets and noisy uncomfortable environments.
5. Eat with others whenever possible
6. Buy food in shops and markets that offer a variety of fresh foods. Avoid those that sell mainly ready to eat products
7. Develop, practice, share and enjoy your skills in food preparation and cooking
8. Decide as a family to share cooking responsibilities and dedicate enough time for healthy meals

⁹ Garnet T. Changing what we eat. A call for research and action on widespread adoption of sustainable healthy eating. FCRN 2014

9. When you eat out, choose restaurants that serve freshly prepared dishes. Avoid fast food chains.
10. Be critical of food industry advertising

What needs to be done?

For diets to become more sustainable, action will be needed at a number of different levels.

First there is a need to develop national official food based sustainable dietary guidelines (SDGs). Overall commitment from government is crucial (usually beginning with Ministry of Health). Sustainable Dietary Guidelines can be linked with the recent UN Sustainable Development Goals. Several of the 17 goals, and the targets within them, are related to food (e.g. Goal 2 targets hunger, nutrition, food security). In my own country of Wales, the Well-Being and Future Generations Act (WBFGA) provides an opportunity to make diets more sustainable. In this Act, food is crucial (although not stated) to all seven of the Act's targets. Sustainable Dietary Guidelines could be linked with the Welsh Act.

Second, consumers will need to change their diets and it does need to be recognized how difficult this is. Education is important, but time and effort are required to shift social norms and make new dietary patterns the norm. There is certainly a role for the food industry in reformulating products and developing new ones. But there is a key role for dietitians and other healthcare professionals in explaining to clients what is meant by a sustainable diet and providing practical information on food choices. Dietetic Associations in the UK, Italy, Canada and the US have developed or are developing position statements or toolkits on sustainable diets.

Third, and of particular interest in the agri-urban context is the things that towns, cities and communities can do, for example, developing local food strategies, public procurement for schools and hospitals sourcing healthy, sustainable food using short supply chains wherever possible, and making the best use of land to produce a diversity of healthy, low environmental impact food. Key city approaches include the Milan Food Policy Pact <https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/> (an international pact signed by 163 cities worldwide, promising to deliver sustainable food systems) and the UK's Sustainable Food Cities <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/> initiative.

In conclusion, the impacts of current diets on the health and welfare of people and the planet are huge. Whilst food production and the types of food produced will need to change, consumption (i.e. diets) will also have to change. In short, we need sustainable diets from sustainable food systems. And we all have a part to play.

Appendix 5 – Case Study - Community Food Initiatives in Abergavenny

AGRI-URBAN

The local food in urban forks

<http://urbact.eu/agri-urban>

Case Study

Community Food Initiatives in Abergavenny (South Wales, UK)

By Jeremy Gass and Pamela Mason

1 Introduction

This case study concerns two community food initiatives in the market town of Abergavenny in south Wales. It looks at the way one was born out of the other and how both connect with the objectives and policies of the AGRI URBAN project. Both initiatives are less than ten years old and offer new ways to experience and think about food.

2 Abergavenny Community Canteen

Abergavenny Community Canteen held its first meal as a one-off experiment at a church hall in the town centre in February 2012. Six years and sixty-seven meals later, hundreds of local people and their visitors from further afield have cooked and eaten together, enjoying fresh, nutritious, tasty and affordable food whilst respecting the environment.

The meals are vegetarian or vegan and where possible the ingredients are sourced locally. A local organic grower provides fresh fruit and vegetables, whilst other items are bought from the local market. Supermarkets are turned to as a last resort. Fairtrade goods, such as Zaytoun Palestinian olive oil, are used where appropriate. Meals often reflect the cooking of a particular region or country and may introduce people to unfamiliar foods or flavours.

By no means are all of the diners vegan or vegetarian, but nobody has ever suggested they are not getting a ‘proper’ meal.

Minimising waste is a priority. There is little left over food, but if there is any it is taken away in return for a small donation at the end of the meal. All vegetable peelings are composted as a matter of course and packaging is recycled.

The success of the Canteen relies upon co-operation. Each of the monthly meals is prepared and cooked by a different group of volunteers. Those who haven’t taken part in cooking are

encouraged to help with putting away the tables and chairs or washing up at the end of the evening. Occasional meetings, to which everyone who has been to a meal is invited, are held to decide on when the meals will be held and who will take the lead in planning the menu. This is the time when decisions are made about entertainment (provided freely by talented local musicians, singers, poets & storytellers) and a good cause to support for each evening.



Through the shared experience of cooking and eating together, not only do people create community but also become active producers of each event rather than being simply consumers disengaged from the origins of food.

Up to seventy people eat together and everyone is asked to pay a minimum amount to cover the costs of the ingredients and room hire charge. This usually amounts to about £3 per person for a two course meal and the entertainment. At this price meals are affordable for people on a range of incomes. Any additional donations people wish to make go towards the chosen good cause which may be a local community group or a global humanitarian or environmental NGO. Between the first and second courses a representative or advocate of the cause speaks on its behalf explaining how the money raised will be used.



To know more :

<http://abergavennytransition.org/community-canteen/> <http://abergavennytransition.org/food/>

3 Just Food and the Community Canteen

The second initiative, Abergavenny Just Food, grew out of the Community Canteen when a group of people who met regularly at the Community Canteen during its first year began meeting together to discuss the need for a space to debate food issues in the town. The well-known Abergavenny Food Festival had, during its early years, provided that space but in recent years, it seemed to this group, this had become less of a priority for the Festival which appeared to have become more of a site for consumption in an unquestioning way. Just Food set out to provide a platform to debate the political issues around food and hunger, from social justice and sustainability perspectives, with the first of a series of public fringe events at the Food Festival in 2013. A day-long programme of films, talks & discussion addressed the global food system, land use, poverty & hunger worldwide and challenges for farmers locally. Every year since then the group has arranged fringe meetings covering such issues at both the summer and winter Food Festivals always attracting good audiences that demonstrate a healthy appetite for critical thinking and an opportunity to take part in lively debate. In 2017



the group was delighted to be able to collaborate with the newly appointed head of the Food Festival with whom there is much common ground.

Over the past year Just Food has drafted proposals for a manifesto for Food Justice in Wales as well as a series of proposals for a Vision for Food in Monmouthshire through the AGRI URBAN project. These proposals address issues such as food poverty, public procurement, local production of fruit and vegetables and the creation of bee friendly environments.

Another topical concern has been Brexit and its consequences for food policy in Wales. A well-attended public meeting was held which attracted some food producers as well as consumers and provided an opportunity to explore the challenges and opportunities that Brexit may provide. This community group plans to continue to raise awareness around Food Justice and to campaign for a fair, affordable and sustainable food system for Wales.

4 AGRI URBAN Connection

Both of these community food initiatives connect with AGRI URBAN's objectives, in particular with the Socio-Cultural objective of promoting quality of life and wellness and the Environmental objective of promoting organic farming.

Both are in line with the stated policies of AGRI URBAN. For example in relation to 'Policies to support short circuits of production and consumption', Just Food proposes an increase in the production of fruit and vegetables locally and the Community Canteen buys its fruit and vegetables directly from a local organic grower. This results in local people having

access to good quality products at affordable prices through buying large quantities for communal meals.

In relation to ‘Social and cultural policies’, both initiatives have provided opportunities for empowerment and participation. The Community Canteen offers opportunities for informal education about food as well as a chance to learn new recipes and gain skills in preparing meals. Just Food has created more formal learning opportunities and created platforms for nationally known speakers & NGOs that local people would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet.

The aspirations of the ‘Policy for environmental sustainability’ are at the heart of what the Community Canteen and Just Food stand for. Both promote organic and local food seeking to reduce carbon and minimise waste and ‘food miles’.