



Explanation

A key feature of the Sustainable Food Places approach is cross-sectoral and whole food system working. SFP partnerships demonstrate the connections between food, health, community, social equity, the environment and economic prosperity, and how this approach can deliver a sustainable food system. An integrated, joined-up, whole food system approach can bring together people and organisations with diverse interests for the mutual benefit of all. Achieving this depends on ensuring wide and representative participation in the partnership and in the development of a local food strategy. The [Stakeholder Engagement](#) and [Steering Groups](#) guides will help you to identify who to involve in the initial stages of partnership establishment and how to involve them, but the next step is to increase participation and build momentum.

This guide on **Food Summits** will provide some suggestions that may help to broaden participation, mobilize stakeholders from across the local food system and begin to add detail and structure to the food strategy.

Introduction

Food Summits are events that aim to bring together food system stakeholders, for a half or whole day, to begin sharing different perspectives on issues and ideas for addressing them together. Food Summits, if well organised, structured and facilitated can encourage and support collaboration between the different individuals and organisations involved and provide an opportunity to celebrate the importance and richness of the local food system. SFP members have used a range of different ways to express the purpose of their Food Summits, including:

- A 'Call to action'
- An exploration of 'Who feeds our city'
- A conversation about 'The current state of our local food system'

Results of a Food Summit can include education, action, coalitions, and projects as well as new relationships between individuals from different parts of the food system, such as a farmer and a restaurant. SFP Food Summits have typically involved 50-70 participants.

Who to invite?

Think about your local food system and all the ways that people get, grow and learn about food. Think about all the actors whether they be farms, projects, businesses, public sector, community groups, housing associations, universities, not for profit organisations, local government representatives. This is your opportunity to get all the key stakeholders to begin building relationships with each other and see their part in the greater food system. Almost every department of a local authority is involved with the food agenda in some way, but the key ones are probably: planning, public health, sustainability / climate change, economic development,

procurement, waste, community engagement, environmental health and markets. It's helpful to download key stakeholders' address books and build up a comprehensive invite list including as many angles on the agenda as possible.

Purpose

A Food Summit is about building understanding, relationships and ownership of a vision for a sustainable, equitable, fair, healthy and prosperous food system. It's about building on what has gone before, creating a shared sense of where you are going and a sense of joint responsibility for getting there.

- **Bring together** interested and active people and organisations
- **Celebrate** the local food culture
- **Raise awareness** of who does what
- **Generate interest and provide inspiration** for a food strategy and partnership
- **Understand** different perspectives on key food issues, themes and actions to address them.
- **Launching the concept** of a food partnership and food strategy
- Determine **mission, aims, outcomes and approaches**
- Begin to **identify and specify actions** – existing and new

Ways to achieve this may include:

- **Presentations** showing who's doing what and where.
- **Case studies** of successful local food action
- **Inspiration** from other Sustainable Food Cities/places
- **Mapping** relevant: Statutory bodies / Local food businesses /Food projects /Motivated and active individuals (See [Food System Mapping](#) tool)
- **Identifying key local food issues** and concerns:
 - Local success stories
 - Areas of debate and controversy
 - Threats to the local food economy
 - Main topics and areas of need
- Begin to **identify key themes**, work areas and activities and steps that can be taken – suggested activities to address the main issues – and consider how these align with the **6 SFP Award themes**
- **Establish sub-groups/working groups** to focus on specific and distinct themes/topics.
- **Identify gaps** – who's missing?
- **Share and celebrate local produce**

Programme

Invest time designing a programme that will facilitate participation. It is helpful to frame the summit around 3 or 4 key questions that need to be answered. Examples of these are in bold type in the **Examples** below. These questions will guide both presenters and participants throughout the session.

It's also important to allow time for informal networking – this is often highly valued by participants.

When it comes to choosing speakers - find someone who can provide inspiration and accurately frame the day for your keynote slot. You don't need a presentation on the detailed data of the local food system at this point. If you want to provide this information to participants, key stats could be provided on a printed briefing sheet instead e.g. stats on food and health, food bank usage, food poverty, obesity, food businesses, land use etc.

The precise programme for your food summit will depend on where you are in the process of developing your food strategy and building your food partnership. It will need to be tailored to the exact point you are at, whether you are bringing people together for the first time, or whether you are building on previous work or refreshing a previous food strategy.

The timing of the Food Summit will also depend on your aims. In some examples the Food Summit has been used to build initial momentum and start the process of developing a food strategy and building a food partnership. However, other Food Summits have taken place following initial **Food System Mapping, Food Surveys** or **Community Food Mapping** to gain a clear understanding of the food system and the perspectives of different food stakeholders. In these instances the Food Summit aims to confirm the initial findings and seek a common vision from a wide group of stakeholder participants. Finally a Food Summit can also be valuable when re-mobilising a food partnership and refreshing a food strategy.

The two examples below describe a **First Steps Food Summit** and a **Refresh Food Summit**.

First Steps Food Summit Programme

1. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

As participants arrive and settle – to establish focus - display and encourage participants to add post-it notes to the charts.

Food System Map:

Food activity in and around the city... WHO is doing WHAT, WHERE and WHY?

(Who are the key stakeholders, where is food grown locally, how is food grown, processed, sold, consumed and disposed of? What are the key local achievements and positive experiences?)

Burning Issues Chart: (using the image of a burning match)

Food in and around the city... What are the BURNING ISSUES?

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

(Chair or co-ordinator of the food partnership)

- Purpose, approach, agenda
- Introductory discussion – turn to someone near you and discuss for 5 minutes your responses to the Burning Issues question – quickly ask for some people to share their discussions with the whole group

3. CONNECTION

- Facilitated session – Continuum (spectrum line) across the room, at one end write VERY JOINED UP and at the other NOT AT ALL JOINED UP.
- Ask participants to stand on the line and discuss in pairs & then as a group

Food activity in and around the city.... How joined up do you feel it is?

(How well connected is the local food system? Why is it well connected / not well connected? What factors influence this? What could support and facilitate greater collaboration and a more joined up approach? What could a food partnership do?)

4. SFP INSPIRATION AND CLARIFICATION

- Presentation from a SFP partnership elsewhere or from a member of the SFP core programme team
- Alternatively a presentation from a local food activist or project focused on collaboration and whole food system partnership approaches

5. LOCAL ISSUES

- Facilitated session – Rich Picture chart (an annotated ‘mind map’ or ‘spider chart’)

What are the key local food issues?

- Everyone individually write separate post-its for separate issues
- Add post-its to the chart
- Discuss and identify common themes and priorities and cluster them together
- Give each cluster a summary heading
- If possible discuss and determine which are the highest priority/most important issues

6. INSPIRATION

- Presentation
- Another SFP member city/place or local inspiration

7. ACTIONS

- Facilitated session – further annotation to the Rich Picture charts

What actions would address the issues?

- Add to the original clustered and themed charts
- Identify what is already happening to address the issues and what’s missing / should be happening
- Discuss and determine priorities and responsibilities
- How can the issues / concerns be addressed? which of these are the highest priority? Who should be involved?

8. NEXT STEPS

- Open discussion:
- What needs to happen: now, soon, later
- Who needs to do what?
- What can you do?

7. CLOSE

Refresh Food Summit Programme

1. WELCOME

(Local Authority Cabinet Member)

- Thank you and welcome
- Why we're here and what we hope to achieve

2. HOW ARE WE DOING?

(SFP Coordinator)

- History of food partnership
- Acknowledge what's already been achieved
- Recognition that we need to:

Widen engagement and participation

Ensure that the partnership is fully representative of the local food system

Establish a stronger sense of shared ownership

Ensuring that you feel this is your food plan and

Encourage collaboration

To deliver a food plan that realises the vision and achieves the plan's aims

Sustainable Food City Plan – Vision (example):

... a city where good food is available for all, making for healthy people, thriving communities and a sustainable environment.

3. SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES

SFP - Presentation

- SFP Network/Awards - how it fits with local context
- Examples of inspiring work in other SFP members

4. WHY THE FOOD PLAN IS IMPORTANT

Leader of the Council – Keynote Message

- Why the Sustainable Food City Plan is important
- What it means for the City
- Why she/he supports and champions it

5. SUB GROUP PRESENTATIONS

- Brief 2 min presentations from working group chairs explaining key focuses.
- Explain what will happen after the break with the workstations

BREAK & NETWORKING

7. WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

Facilitated session

- 5 working group themes
- Set up as 5 work stations around the room:

1. **Health and Wellbeing**
2. **Good Food Movement**
3. **Food Waste /Climate Change**
4. **Food Economy**
5. **Procurement**

- Sub group chair will act as facilitator at each work station
- Appoint a 'roving reporter' to move around all the work stations during this session

At each work station:

- Brief overview from facilitator/sub group chair
- Discuss the sub group question
- Individual **RESPONSES** on post-it notes
- **CLUSTER** into common themes
- Give each theme a **HEADING**

QUESTIONS for each cluster:

- What **CURRENT APPROACHES and ACTIVITIES** currently help to address this issue?
- What other **SUGGESTED APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES** could help address this issue going forward?
- **WHO** needs to do **WHAT** to help make this happen?
- Which approaches and activities are the **HIGHEST PRIORITY** for the next 3 years?

Move around the room and visit other work stations

- Add additional comments and suggestions

8. FEEDBACK

- Ask each facilitator/sub group chair to provide feedback from the discussions at their work station - Record key outputs
- What needs to happen next?
- How should this event's outputs be documented and used?
- Who needs to do what?

9. CONCLUSIONS

- Final thoughts from participants
- Headlines, highlights and surprises
- Opportunity for individuals to sign up to mailing list for individual sub groups and/or the Partnership.

10. CLOSE & NETWORKING LUNCH

Budget

A venue can usually be accessed for free if the local authority is on board with the Food Summit planning. The food budget is usually the main cost. This will vary considerably depending on the length of your summit. Lunch is a great networking opportunity so if you can afford it we would suggest providing lunch, even if your summit is only half a day.

Food

It's a Food Summit! So, this is your chance to showcase local produce and tell the story of where that food has come from. Give high profile to the local food story, give the stage to local producers, food businesses or social catering services. Use lunch as a way of communicating the richness of the local food system – the preparation, ingredients, service etc. Consider publicly thanking and inviting those who produced, prepared and served the food to speak about their role in the meal.

Venue

Ideally a venue should be big enough to easily cope with the numbers. This is usually a community hall / town hall. Don't go for somewhere that has fixed seating e.g. university lecture hall or town hall room with fixed tables, as this can place severe limitations on the participation and activity. It is important to have space to move around and depending on the design of the programme, it may need to be big enough to allow for separate discussions to be had in different corners of the hall. Think about where you are going to eat and whether that is ok in the main hall or whether you will need a side room where the food can be brought out and cleared away without interfering with the main summit space. You don't want speakers drowned out by plates and cutlery being stacked!

Promotion

Summits are usually promoted through direct invite, so it is essential to build up a good list of stakeholders and potential participants during the planning phase. Map your key stakeholders across the 6 key issues, across public, private and third sectors, and across the food system. It is also a good idea to invite elected officials, this could include councillors, elected mayors, leader of the council or portfolio holders with a relevant brief.

Staffing

You are likely to need a few extra helpers on the day to direct people, register arrivals, serve drinks, take photographs, meet and greet key speakers and generally run around!

Afterwards

Gather the day's outcomes, sort and organise them as quickly as possible and disseminate the results to participants. This is important to honour participants' time investment and to encourage their continued involvement.

Partnership launch event?

The launch event is an important opportunity to publicise the partnership, vision and draft action plan and to begin growing your influence. The event also allows partners to continue to contribute to a more detailed action planning process – really beginning to determine and decide upon a prioritisation of objectives, identification of specific activities aimed at delivering them and deciding on approaches that can be adopted to implement the activities. This is best achieved through a well-designed and facilitated launch event that could also include the launch of the partnership's website and logo.

Questions

- Who are potential members of the partnership?
- How clear are people about the Food Partnerships vision and aims?
- How important is the Food Partnership?
- Do you agree with the vision / aims/ objectives / approaches?
- What should be the highest priority activities to deliver the objectives and support the approaches?
- Who should be doing what – leading the activities?
- What are the opinions / perspectives of key strategic partners?