

#TheFoodConversation

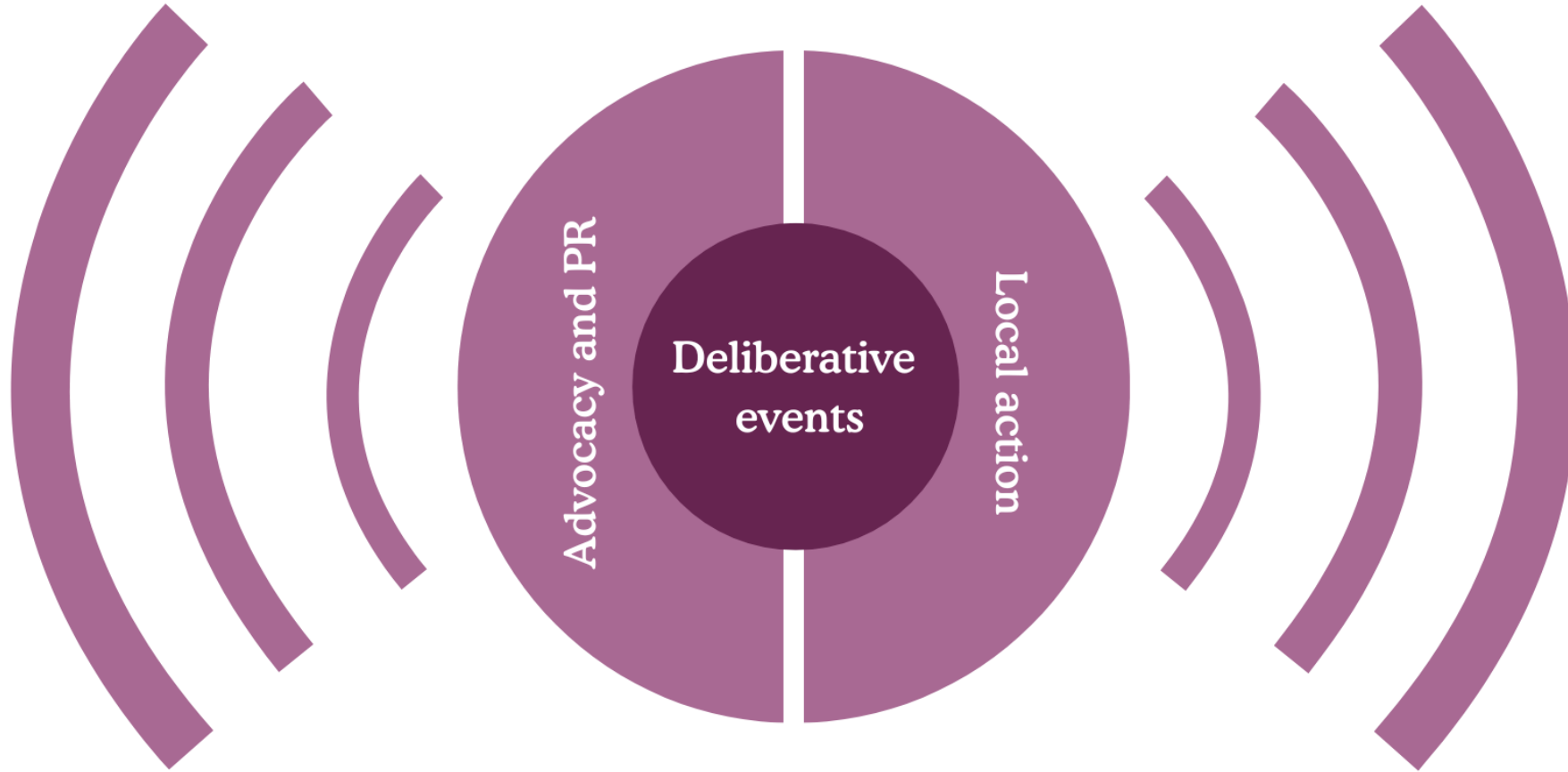


The Food Conversation: what do people really want from food?

Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures



The Food Conversation



Proof of concept phase Summer 2023

Lightening deliberation March 2024

- Wave 1 (April 2024): East Kent, West Yorkshire, Northumberland
- Wave 2 (May 2024): North and South Wales
- Wave 3 (July 2024): South London, Cornwall
- Wave 4 (September 2024): Scotland, Northern Ireland

6,600+ HOURS SPENT BY CITIZENS IN DELIBERATION

118,000+ INVITATIONS SENT

345 CITIZENS INVOLVED IN THE ASSEMBLIES

70+

COMMUNITIES HOSTING THEIR OWN LOCAL FOOD CONVERSATIONS SO FAR

70+

EXPERT SPEAKERS FROM ACADEMICS, LOCAL LEADERS, POLICYMAKERS, FOOD BUSINESSES AND MORE



Deliberation design

#TheFoodConversation



W1: Power and justice, inequalities (online)

W2: Food environment, health (online)

W3: Nature, climate, agriculture (online)

W4: Food policy UK and devolved nations (online)

W5: Developing manifestos, panel discussion with local food system (in person)



Host a Food Conversation

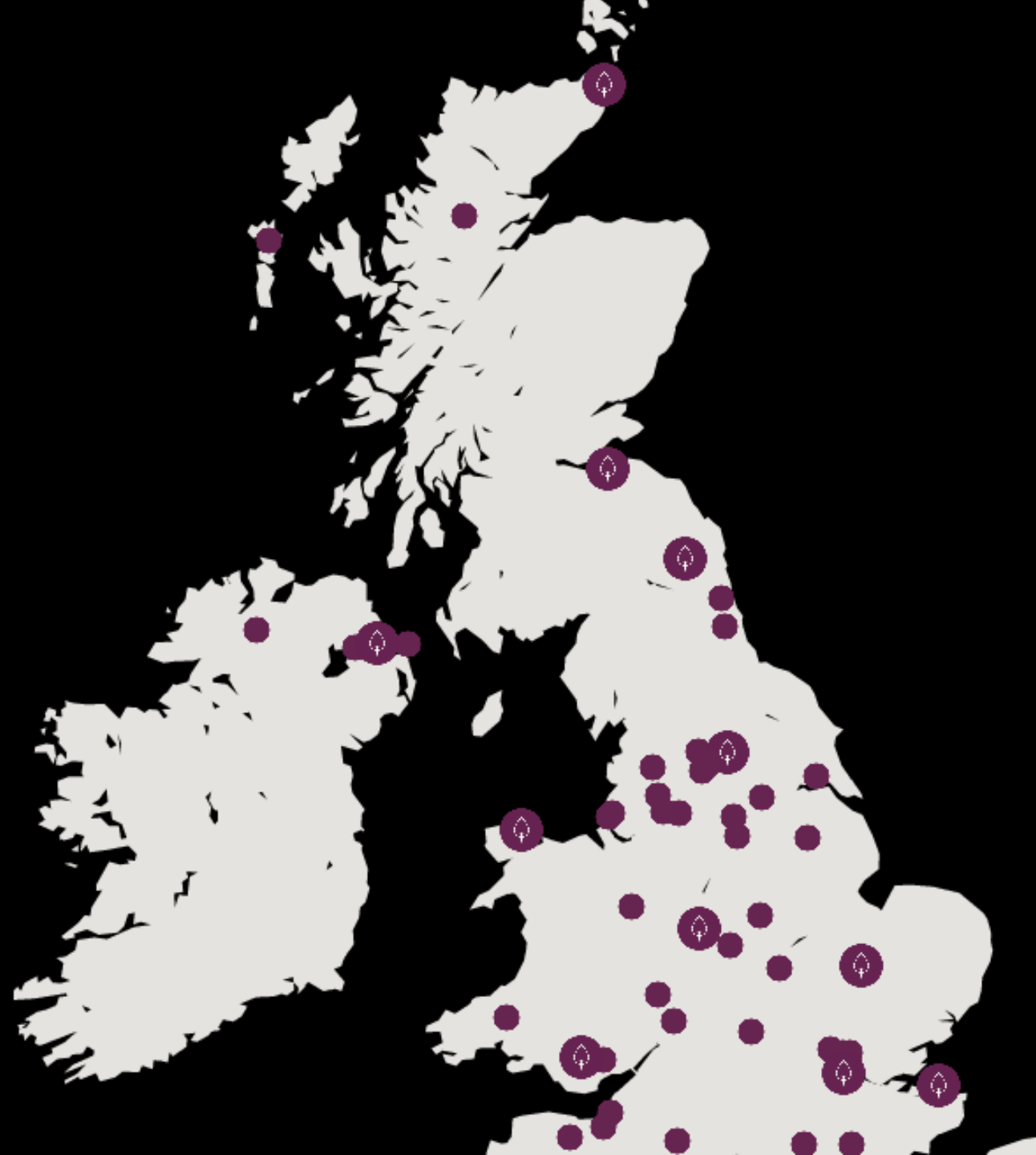
Sign up to get started

Go straight to the toolkits



Community-led conversations

- 70+ conversations
- 1200+ people participated
- Partners: Sustainable Food Places, Amazing Communities Together, Community Organisers, The Felix Project



Concerns, frustrations, anger

#TheFoodConversation



- Power imbalances
- Government inaction
- Lack of transparency
- Ultra-processed food
- Environment, farming, nature
- Disconnection



But there is hope

#TheFoodConversation



- Strengthening local food systems
- Stronger governance can lead to systemic change
- Shift to sustainable farming, benefit communities and nature
- ... if power imbalances can be addressed



Lots of actions have support

#TheFoodConversation



Plans and strategies



Subsidies and taxes



School food, early years settings



Strict advertising restrictions



Henrietta's group's Manifesto

Our key messages

We believe this is a national emergency ☀️. It is as serious as the climate emergency.

As such it needs:

- Rapid action → collective
- An agreement that food system is **IMPORTANT**

* We believe food is at the heart of community, our health & the environment

As such we must:

- Fix UPFs
- Stop our food system from poisoning our children's environment
- Have measurable, enforceable, actionable targets for

To buy into

That we understand

- * We believe awareness of the challenge should be raised across society
- * Big business must change or market will ensure they miss out →
- * Farmers grow food in sustainable way we will support you

Minister for healthy food someone to focus with weight

Not just a Tsar. Someone who does it properly

Protect those on lower incomes while making the change we need

A cross-party / across society campaign → we want change & we are prepared to accept change to improve things
→ less meat ✓
→ less choice ✓
→ more sustainability ✓

Future of the

To Kick-start

* Govt

afraid

* Introduce

get on

System

* Pollution

↳ Also

Tax h

* Int

St

* Sup

P

Key messages:

We want a UK where... food everyone is aware of the food system. And our food system supports healthier people + planet + healthier economy.

Who are they for?

Who should do what?

Citizen Manifesto to Fix Food

The manifesto reflects what we want from the food system: healthy food available to all that promotes fairness and sustainability. The manifesto is a plea for joined up thinking and collaboration to address food inequalities, food poverty and food waste, creating a better system for all – from school children eating well, to families being able to afford nutritious food, to farmers being fairly supported.

1. Joined up food leadership

Decisions on food need coordinated leadership at the highest level, with cooperation across the UK's nations.

- Create national food strategies with strong leadership to bring together farming, health, environment and the economy
- Strengthen collaboration between governments across the UK, sharing best practice and expanding policies that work
- Set up citizens' assemblies and other forums to give people a voice in shaping policies that affect them
- Put limits on corporate influence so that decisions prioritise what is good for all, not just food industry profits

2. Real choice for everyone

Everyone deserves real food choices, not just what is cheapest, the most convenient or will generate the most profit. Children should grow up protected from all unhealthy food marketing, with nutritious meals available regardless of income.

- Regulate ultra-processed food, phasing out the worst offenders and introducing clear warning labels
- Build on upcoming advertising restrictions by shifting all marketing towards fresh, nutritious and sustainably produced food, especially for children
- Cap the cost of healthy foods so that price isn't a barrier to good food
- Coordinate UK-wide food-affordability measures, ensuring that solutions like food vouchers and school meals benefit the most people

3. Better food, less waste

Our schools, hospitals and public institutions should set the example with high-quality, nutritious food while reducing waste and excessive packaging.

- Apply high standards for school and hospital meals, ensuring high-quality, nutritious food is the norm
- Tackle food waste from farm to fork, with clear UK-wide targets and actions
- Cut down on excessive plastic packaging, with recyclable and reusable alternatives promoted instead.

4. A fairer deal for farmers

Farmers deserve fair prices for their produce and support to adapt to sustainable methods.

- Develop fair pricing rules that prevent supermarkets and big food companies from pushing out farmers and small producers
- Support farmers to adopt sustainable practices through financial backing and independent advice
- Regulate food businesses properly, preventing a handful of corporations from dominating supply chains and pricing

5. Flourishing local food

Local food networks bring communities together, make fresh food accessible, and reconnect people with the land and the source of their food.

- Invest in local food hubs, enabling more farmers to sell locally and local businesses to thrive – making it easier for people to buy fresh food and keeping more value in communities
- Make more land available for community food growing, helping cities, towns and villages become more food resilient
- Integrate food growing, cooking and sharing into school curriculums and community programmes to strengthen food culture and reconnect people to where their food comes from

What does this mean for government?

#TheFoodConversation



- Support for change – a citizen mandate for change
- Citizens want more nourishing food, not cheaper food
- Citizens want government leadership, regulation
- Values underpinning how they approach conversations on food
- Implementation is key
- Involve citizens as partners

