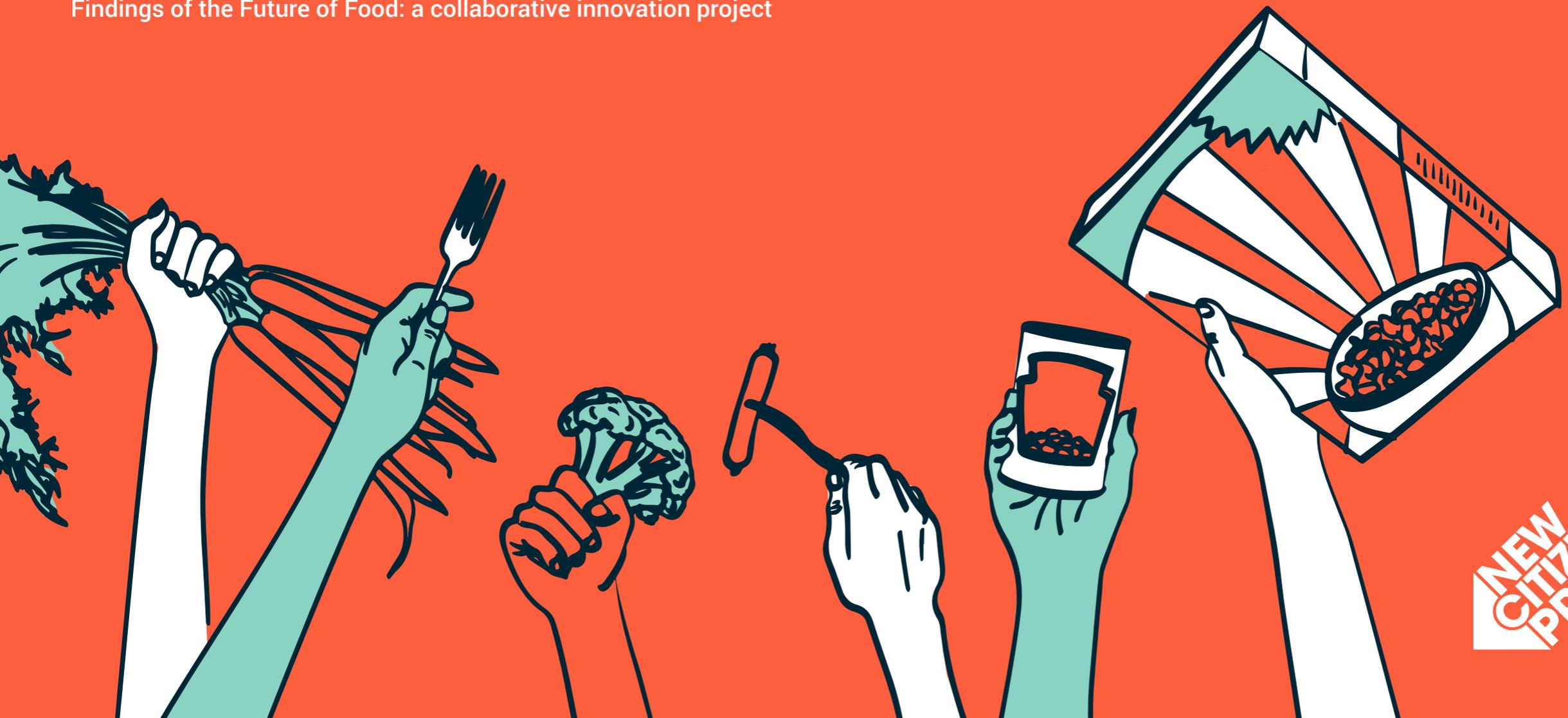


# FOOD CITIZENSHIP

---

How thinking of ourselves differently can change the future of our food system

Findings of the Future of Food: a collaborative innovation project



NEW  
CITIZENSHIP  
PROJECT

# This report is the final output of a collaborative innovation project convened by the New Citizenship Project with support from the Food Ethics Council.

The Future Of Food: Beyond The Consumer was a ten month inquiry, bringing together representatives of six organisations from across the food system to explore and experiment with a new way of thinking about the challenges facing the food system.



The New Citizenship Project is an innovation company founded in 2014 with a mission to catalyse the shift from Consumer to Citizen as the dominant idea of the individual in society: the Citizen Shift.

Collaborative innovation projects are at the core of our approach. We articulate a question which relates the Citizen Shift to a specific sector, then bring together a number of organisations to experiment with new ways of working in response to that question. Finally we publish the findings to make these new approaches available to others, and ultimately help them take hold faster.

Find out more at [newcitizenship.org.uk](http://newcitizenship.org.uk)



The Food Ethics Council is a registered charity that provides independent advice on the ethics of food and farming.

We work for a food system that is fair, sustainable, humane and healthy for people, animals and the environment. The role of the Food Ethics Council in this project has been to advise and support the New Citizenship team with expert understanding of the UK food system and of food ethics more broadly.

Find out more at [foodethicscouncil.org](http://foodethicscouncil.org)

# PARTICIPANTS

---



*The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.*

**Albert Einstein**

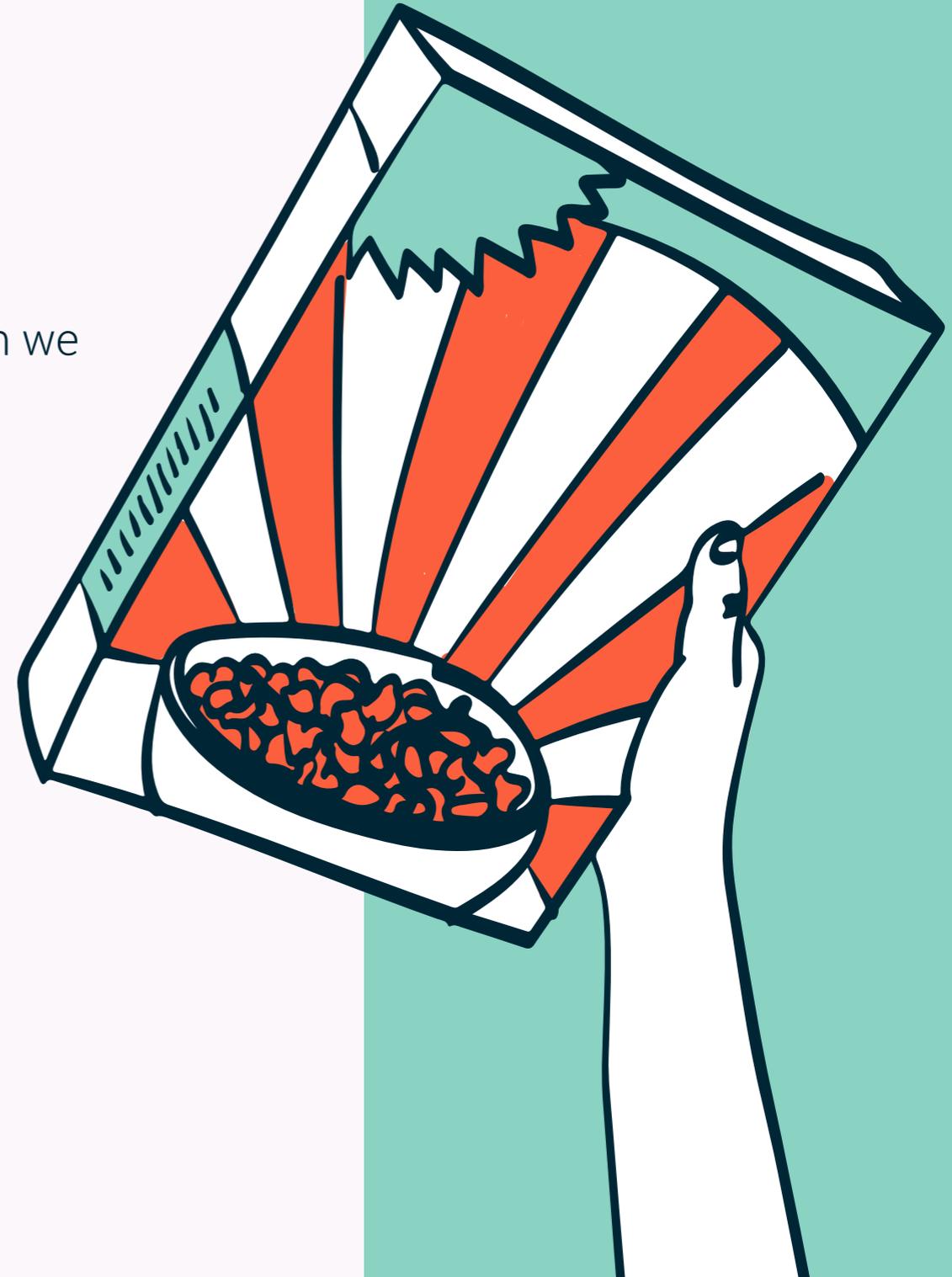
*By most indicators, the challenges facing the food system are getting worse, not better.*

**Food Ethics Council, Food Issues Census 2017**

# CONTENTS

---

- 06** Introduction and Overview
- 09** Thinking Small: The Consumer Mindset and the food system today
- 18** Thinking Big: The Citizen Mindset and the food system we could have
- 38** Toolkit: How to be a Food Citizen
- 45** Method: Process and Participants



# INTRODUCTION

---

Spend time exploring the ways and means of food production, packaging, and retailing in the 21st century and you'll often come up against that brick wall statement: "That's what the Consumer wants." We allow sugar content to remain high, compromise on wage levels and environmental impact for price, focus our best innovation brains narrowly on convenience, all because that's what the Consumer wants. In that phrase is a logic that seems inescapable, an apparently fundamental truth about human motivation and the limited role people are capable of playing that quietly restricts and governs the decisions we make.

Challenge that one supposed truth, though, and suddenly the possibilities for our food system look very different. What if people are not inevitably Consumers? What if it's just a Mindset, a story we tell ourselves and each other? What if we choose a different story to tell?

The insight at the heart of the New Citizenship Project's work is exactly this: no human being is by nature a Consumer, limited in motivation to self-interest and in role to choosing between options; rather, it is our deeper nature to be Citizens, at our happiest when acting for a purpose that takes us beyond ourselves, and at our fullest when we are shaping what the options are, not just choosing between them.

What we have come to call the Consumer Mindset is deeply embedded in the food system. As a result, we find ourselves deeply stuck, with most indicators reflecting problems that, far from resolving, are worsening and proliferating. Not only are the outcomes for society poor, but organisations at all points in the system are under increasing pressure, and individuals within them often feel powerless. The system is not creating value - environmental, social or financial - in the way that we need it to in order to sustain us, and in the face of "what the Consumer wants", we have very few ideas for what to do about it.

In order to experiment and see whether shifting to a Citizen Mindset could offer new ways forward, the New Citizenship Project came together with the Food Ethics Council and with representatives of six pioneering organisations to explore this question:

**HOW CAN WE CREATE MORE VALUE IN THE FOOD SYSTEM BY SHIFTING FROM A CONSUMER TO A CITIZEN MINDSET?**

# OVERVIEW

---

## There are four main sections of this report:

### Thinking Small: The Consumer Mindset and the food system today

In the first section, our aim is to call out the Consumer Mindset as the subconscious mode of thinking with which we are all approaching the food system today, and to make the consequences visible. We begin by establishing the key concepts in this work: what we mean by the food system, and by the term '**Mindset**'. We argue that the Consumer Mindset is corrupting and corrosive, making us '**think small**' and limiting not only what we believe the public can do in the food system, but crucially also the strategies for change available to those who work in or on the system. With the Consumer Mindset called out as merely a Mindset, you will be in a position to free your thinking and join in the work to move beyond it.

### Thinking Big: The Citizen Mindset and the food system we could have

We then go on to offer the Citizen Mindset as that change, one which makes us '**think big**' and opens up a whole new approach to meaningful change in the food system. We explore what it might look like to reimagine each of the key organisational roles in the system, and call on emerging trends to show that this kind of change is already bubbling. We then use the Citizen Mindset to reframe some of the big current debates in the food system, giving us new and better questions to ask. With these ideas, examples and questions, you will be ready to look afresh at the challenges and opportunities you face.

## Toolkit: How to be a Food Citizen

The shift to a Citizen Food System will not be wholesale or top-down; these interventions will come, but only as a result of individuals choosing to recognise and use our power in the system from where we are, and coming together to do so. Drawing on the learning and experimentation of the six participating organisations, in this section we give you the tools to get started, wherever you are in the system.

## Method: Process and Participants

This report is the output of an exploration that we could never have undertaken alone, and if there is value here, great credit is due to every one of the six participant organisations, and to the Food Ethics Council, for their insight, energy and trust in our team in undertaking this exploration with us. In this section, we share more about how this learning developed.

**NB** - The contents of this report represent the collaborative work of a group of organisations, but not consensus - it should not be understood as the view of any one organisation in the group.



# THINKING SMALL:

---

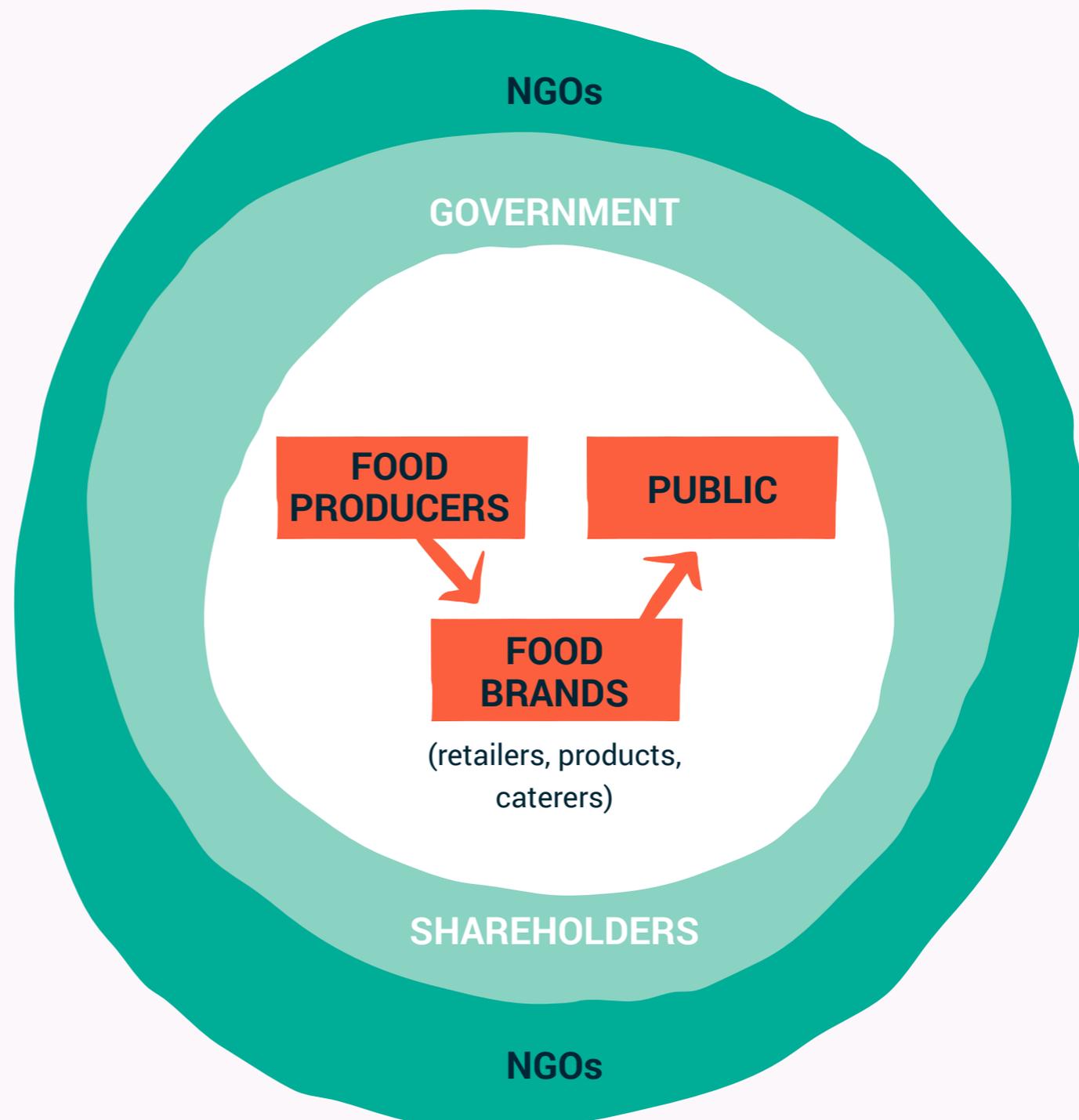
The Consumer Mindset and the food system today

# WHAT IS THE FOOD SYSTEM?

The ideas in this report have their roots in a discipline known as systems thinking:

Instead of identifying specific food-related problems (like food waste or food poverty) and trying to pick them off one by one, we are looking at the relationships between different actors in the system, and at the explicit and implicit goals of the system, in order to identify root causes which lie beneath many of these problems.

To do this work, we first have to define the system we want to work with. This is like drawing a map; inevitably, it is a simplification, because we can't hope to understand every single relationship. The aim is to define a system sufficiently complex to draw meaningful conclusions, but sufficiently simple to enable learning. In this project, we have focused on the UK food system, and defined a simplified relationship of six actors:



At the heart of the system is the core supply chain: food producers (including farmers and manufacturers) who sell to brands (including product brands like Marmite, retailers such as supermarkets and other shops, and caterers including restaurants, cafes and canteens of all shapes and sizes) who then sell to the public.

The activities of this core chain are then shaped by shareholders of the companies involved (from institutional investors to individual pension holders), and by government departments and agencies (including politicians and civil servants, from policymakers to regulators). Together, they set the rules of the system.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as charities then sit in the background of the system, working in various ways to try to shape the system: influencing the rule-setters and the core supply chain, mobilising the public, and so on.

This definition of the food system is clearly very simple: many very different types of producer have been lumped together, from small family farmers to huge multinationals; the same is true of brands; there are many brands who are also producers; there are NGOs present in many places in the system; and so on. As we will see, though, it is complex enough to enable work on the Mindset of the system to deliver a range of powerful insights.

# WHAT IS A MINDSET?

---

One of the most famous proponents of systems thinking was a US scientist named Donella Meadows, who among many contributions wrote a short but highly influential essay entitled [Leverage points: places to intervene in a system](#).

Meadows offers a list of twelve intervention points in ascending order of impact, ranging from introducing constants and costs (like taxes) at the lowest level, through information flows (like labelling schemes), rules and laws, all the way up to Mindsets at the very top of the list.

She defines Mindsets (or “paradigms”) as the “sources of systems”, from which everything follows, quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson to emphasise the point:

*Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a thought of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers... It follows, of course, that the least enlargement of ideas would cause the most striking changes of external things.*

In other words, in any system there is always a set of ideas - a Mindset - which over time become such basic building blocks that they become invisible from inside that system. Like fish who cannot see the water in which they swim, it's almost impossible to see beyond the ideas with which we built the systems we live in, and of which all the relationships and institutions we create are both expressions and reinforcements.

Pervasive as they are, though, there are two important points about Mindsets to highlight at this stage.

**First, Mindsets are powerful ideas - but they are just ideas.** Once we can see them, we can challenge and “enlarge” our thinking. Change at this level is possible.

**Second, they are incredibly powerful leverage points.** If we change our Mindset even slightly, we change everything.



# THE CONSUMER MINDSET

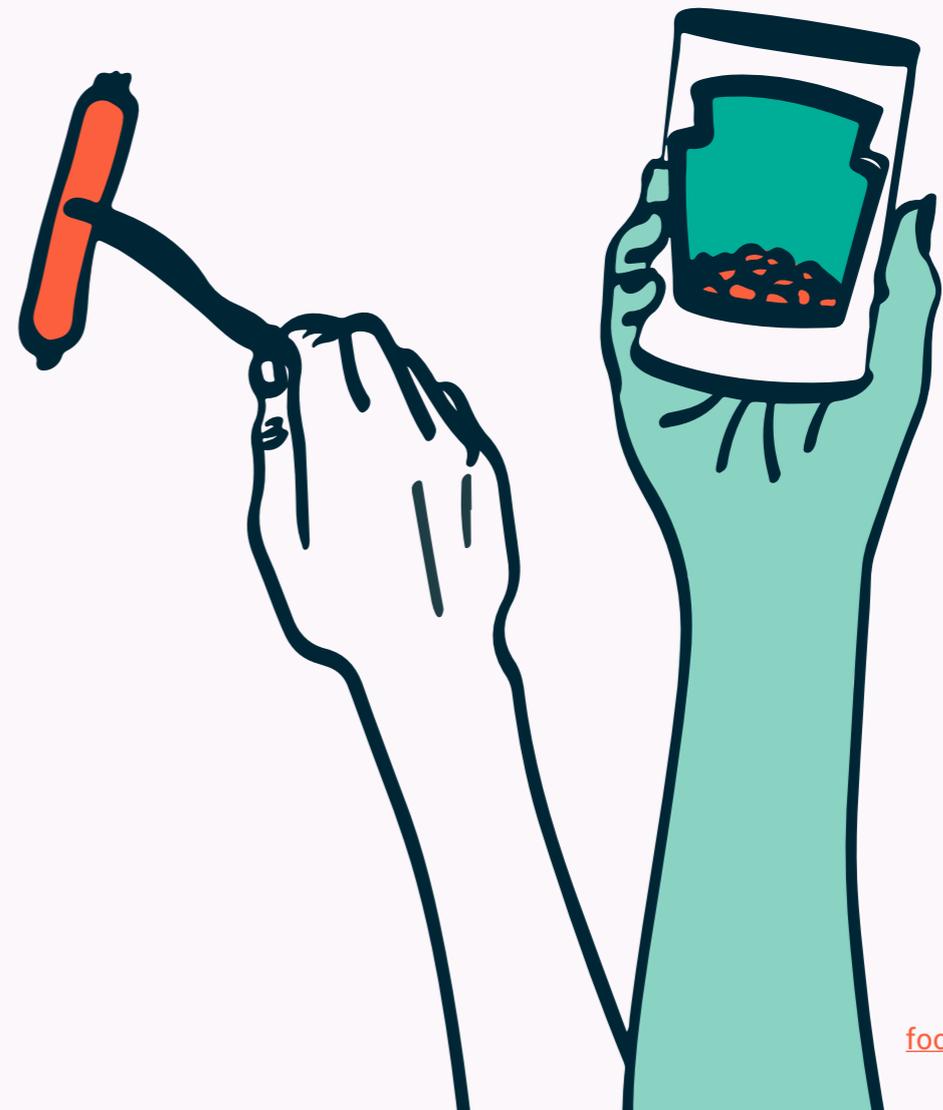
---

The Consumer Mindset is a way of thinking that says people are best understood as Consumers, the role of the individual is to consume food, and the only action available to us is to choose between products and services.

The language of '**the Consumer**' is pervasive in our food system. Whether working for a big retailer or a grassroots NGO, we talk about people as Consumers of food. To some extent, that's understandable: the most basic interaction we all have with food is to consume it. But language matters. It carries unspoken values and norms within it which shape our behaviour as individuals, and which add up to Mindsets that in turn shape entire human systems.

In our wider work as the New Citizenship Project, we have explored the impact of Consumer language and norms through a number of social psychology experiments.

The results show that everything from our motivation to participate in our local community, to our concern for others and the environment can be reduced by priming the Consumer Mindset. Even subconscious exposure to the word 'Consumer' can trigger this effect.



To think of ourselves and each other as Consumers is to tell ourselves a story of humanity as fundamentally selfish. This story is partial and belittling: academic fields from economics (for example in the Nobel Prize winning work of [Elinor Ostrom](#)) to animal behaviour (led by Dutchman [Frans de Waal](#)) increasingly emphasise that we are by nature collaborative, empathic creatures who want to work together and help one another. When it becomes a Mindset, it is deeply destructive: when we use this language in our organisations, we reinforce these ideas, and this impact plays through the systems we create around our lives - including the food system.

For more detail on this research, read our report: [This Is The #CitizenShift](#)

## The well scenario

This was one of a series of experiments first published by a group of academics led by Northwestern University's Galen Bodenhausen in 2012. We worked with research agency House51 to replicate the study at scale in 2015.

Participants were asked to imagine themselves as one of four individuals dependent on a single well for water, that is starting to run dry. As a group they need to use less water.

### Two key questions were posed:

To what extent would you be prepared to use less water yourself?

To what extent would you trust the other three to use less water?

The subtlety is this: for half the participants, the scenario was framed in terms of individuals ("you are one of four individuals..."); For the other half, the scenario was framed in terms of Consumers ("you are one of four Consumers..."). With no other prompt, no explicit attention drawn to this language, and no significant differences between participants, the results were astounding. Those who answered as Consumers were significantly less likely to be willing to reduce their own water usage; and significantly less likely to trust their fellow dependents to do so.

# SYMPTOMS OF THE CONSUMER MINDSET

---

Now conscious of the Consumer as a Mindset, we can start to see many of the problems currently manifest in our food system as symptoms of this deeper cause, shaping the relationships in the system such that negative outcomes are inevitable.

It starts with the **'Value-Action Gap'**, a term often used to describe the fact that greater numbers of people say they will (for example) purchase healthier or more ethical products than do so in practice, where drivers of price and convenience take over. This is generally taken as evidence that people are fundamentally selfish, on the basis that our actual behaviour is a better reflection of our values than what we claim we will do.

Accepting the Value-Action Gap at face value has all sorts of consequences. It leads to:

- Brand strategies like healthier or more sustainable choices (think Fairtrade or organic) being marketed as luxury to justify a price premium; this ultimately restricts these products to niche audiences and undermines their influence in creating widespread change
- Intense price pressure on producers from brands, who are simply referring '**what the Consumer wants**' up the supply chain. As a former executive team member of a major UK retailer put it, "we are Consumers of our supply chains: we seek bargains just like our Consumers do"
- Disconnection of the public from producers: food production becomes sanitised and idealised, as Consumers are protected from unpleasant realities they do not want to know about
- One-dimensional, short-term pressure from shareholders on businesses throughout the system as they prioritise price and convenience as '**what the Consumer wants**'
- Governments withdrawing their influence, seeing consumption behaviour as a better reflection of the public priorities they should be serving than any other considerations; following the consumer rather than leading for future society
- Limited strategies for change for NGOs, who believe they have to work within the bounds of narrow self-interest in direct appeals to the public, and are working against the guiding story of the system when they try to influence any other actors

But understanding the Consumer Mindset and the impact of priming offers a reverse interpretation of the Value-Action Gap: we do care, but when we make our purchase decisions, we are surrounded by primes that artificially push us to prioritise narrow, immediate self-interest and there are few perceived ways other than shopping to act upon values.

This analysis does not identify any one organisation as culpable for the current situation, or indeed any one role in our food system. Instead, what is to blame is a Mindset in which we are all complicit.

A Mindset that leaves us struggling for good outcomes, against our apparently selfish natures; fighting more battles, with no hope of winning the war.

**WE NEED TO THINK BIGGER.**



# THINKING BIG:

---

The Citizen Mindset and the system we could have

# THE CITIZEN MINDSET

---

The Citizen Mindset is a way of thinking rooted in a belief that people are best understood as Citizens: when given meaningful opportunities, we can and want to shape what the choices are (not just choose between them), and seek the best outcome for all (not just narrow self-interest)

The great opportunity is that if we change our starting point and allow ourselves to see a bigger truth of human nature, we can change everything.

This is because we draw on more of ourselves, tapping into the broader resources identified by scholars of human nature from de Waal and Ostrom to [Ken Robinson](#) and [Yuval Noah Harari](#): our natural desire to learn, our inherent capacity to be creative, and the unique ability to collaborate and act collectively that have driven our success as a species to date.

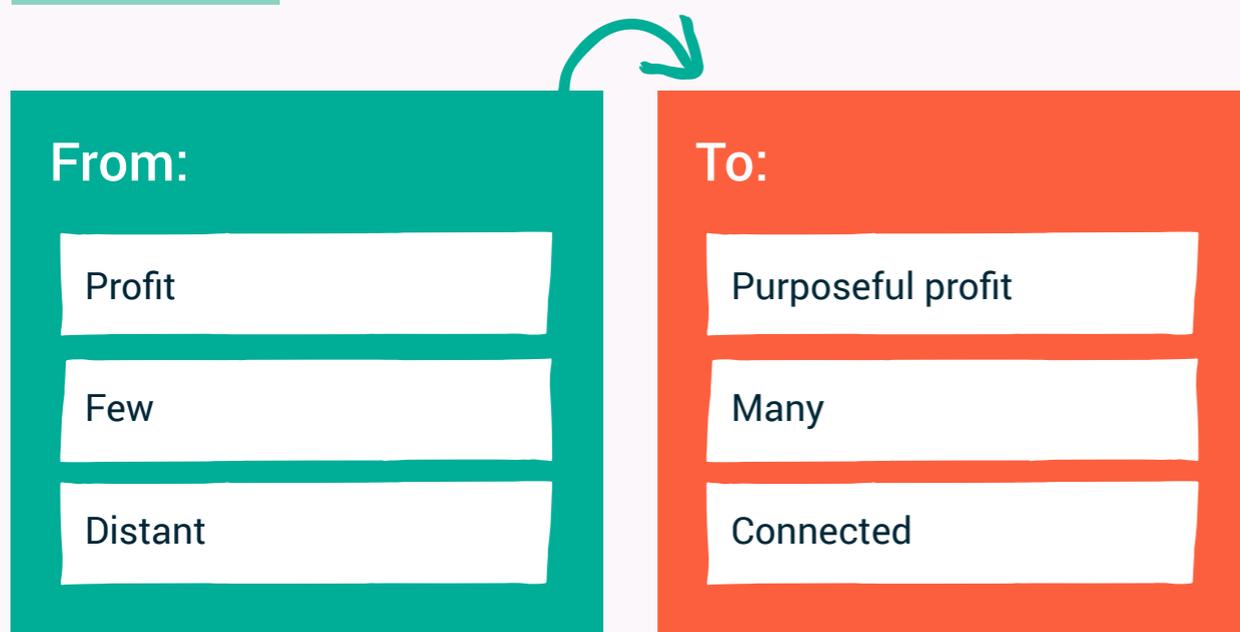
Enabled by the dawning digital age, we can see this bigger story already finding expression in the wider world beyond the food system, across nations and in every sector: in the bubbling of participatory democracy initiatives like [Better Reykjavik](#) in Iceland and [Todos](#) in Chile, which seek

to harness Citizens as ongoing participants in democracy rather than Consumers who choose who to vote for once every few years; in the rise of business movements like [B Corporations](#), whose members see their organisations as purpose-focused corporate Citizens, not just profit-maximising Consumers of their supply chains.

In this section, we explore what it might look like to reimagine each of the key organisational roles in the system through the lens of the Citizen Mindset. Just as with the wider world, what becomes clear when we look from that conceptual shift out into the world is that there are early signals this is already starting to happen. There are new ideas, initiatives and organisations forming that implicitly challenge the Consumer Mindset; once we name the Citizen Mindset, we can see these not just as distinct and isolated from one another, but as a coherent, building wave of change.

We then use the Citizen Mindset to reframe some of the big current debates in the food system, giving us new and better questions to ask. With these ideas, examples and questions, you will be ready to look afresh at the challenges and opportunities you face.

# SHIFT & SIGNALS: SHAREHOLDERS



In the Consumer Mindset, we think of shareholders as a few high net-worth individuals who invest in the expectation of short term returns with minimal involvement other than money. Thinking as Citizens and looking for opportunities to effect positive change, the core role of bringing money into an organisation and expecting a return remains, but we recognise that shareholders have more levers than money alone; choosing the companies to support, shaping what success means, and holding them to account, defining what is and isn't acceptable. Emerging trends such as crowd equity and shareholder activism are creating meaningful power we can all use.

## Brewdog

Started by two Scotsmen and a dog in 2007, **Brewdog** is now among Britain's fastest growing food and drink brands, and in the midst of international expansion. But Brewdog are a company with a difference: back in 2009, long before platforms like Crowdcube existed, they ran their first equity crowdfunding round, recruiting their customers as "Equity Punks". Three further rounds have followed. The beauty of what Brewdog did was in seeing shares not as just a financial transaction but as a means of inviting people into your purpose. With a stated mission "to make everyone as passionate about craft beer as we are" (including on the first page of the shareholder prospectus), they made it easy and accessible to join a craft beer revolution that you feel personally connected to through their beers, their bars and their 'piss up in a brewery' AGM. Driven (and occasionally called out) by the Punks, they operate from pioneering sustainable buildings, open source their recipes, and were one of the UK's first Living Wage employers. From profit to purposeful profit, few to many, distant to connected.

## The rise of the Benefit Corporation

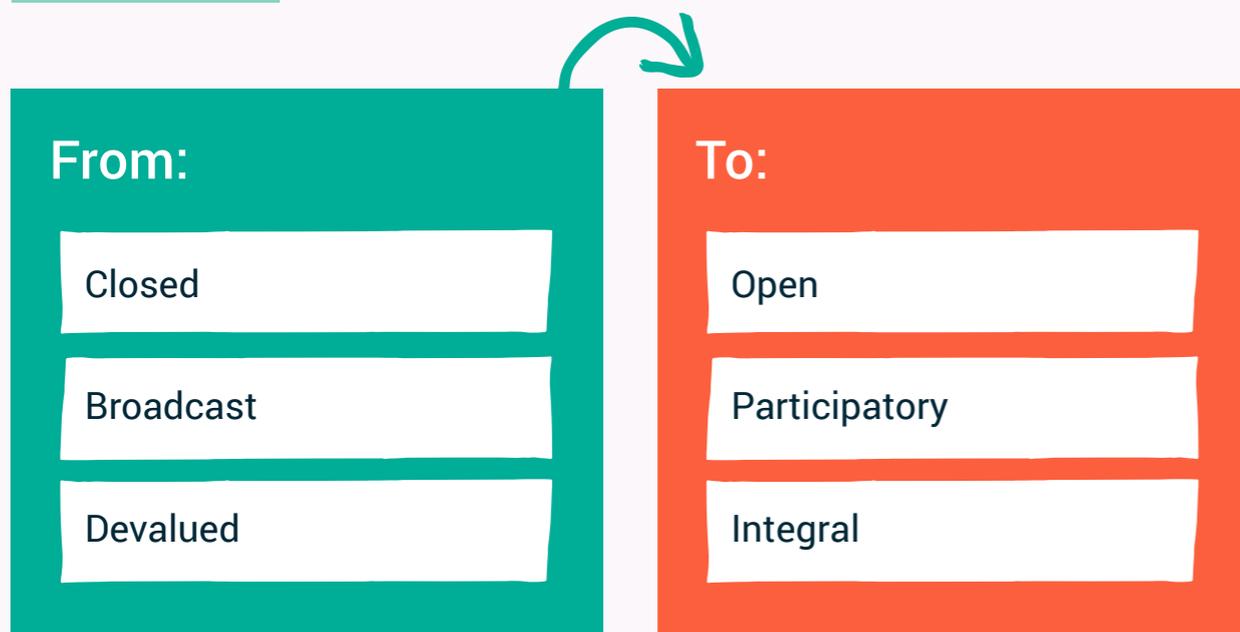
First created in US law in Maryland in 2010, the **Benefit Corporation** is a new legal status of incorporation that requires organisations both to make profit and to serve a greater societal purpose. Crucially, they have a fiduciary duty to their shareholders on both counts, not just on profit, and so must state and report against a measurable public benefit. Baby food brand Plum Organics was among the first to adopt this status, committing them to raise awareness and advance solutions for childhood hunger and malnutrition in the United States - not just sell baby food - and committing their shareholders to hold them to it. The associated voluntary certification system, the B Corporation movement, arrived in the UK in 2015, with project participant COOK among the first wave of businesses to certify.

## Shareholder activism

Even within existing structures, individual shareholders and indeed institutional investors are increasingly claiming the agency to hold businesses to account to their values not just their wallets. Having made a huge impact through fossil fuel divestment, organisations like UK-based [ShareAction](#) are turning their attention to issues like factory farming, powered by an influx of ordinary Citizens who want to know that their pensions aren't financing approaches to food production they don't agree with.

**NB:** Shareholder activism is contested language, with some using it to refer to shareholders who drive the companies they invest in to focus ruthlessly on short-term returns. Organisations like ShareAction, however, are working to build something very different.

# SHIFT & SIGNALS: PRODUCERS



In the Consumer Mindset, producers and the public too easily become disconnected, precisely because there is no direct relationship. But when we think of people as Citizens, there is a major opportunity to reform this link: producers can actively invite in a public they see as capable of contributing meaningfully to understand rather than just asking them to buy; they can involve and get involved in the wider community and share what is increasingly fascinating and innovative work; and as a result reclaim a place at the heart of our society, not the periphery.

## New forms of governance

One of the most interesting ideas we have come across in the research for this project is a proposal to reconnect farming with wider society by making the industry accountable in a similar way to schools and hospitals. Working from the basis of farming as a funded (or at least subsidised) public service, Farmwel founder **Ffinlo Costain** argues that if “schools have governors and Parent Teacher Associations, hospitals have patient panels, and the police have Safer Neighbourhood Panels... It’s time that British farming started to behave like the public service it is, actively reaching out to Citizens to involve them in regional and local farm management plans.” Such a structure would represent a major opening up, a dramatically increased level of participation, and a much more integral role for farms in their local communities.

## New communications approaches

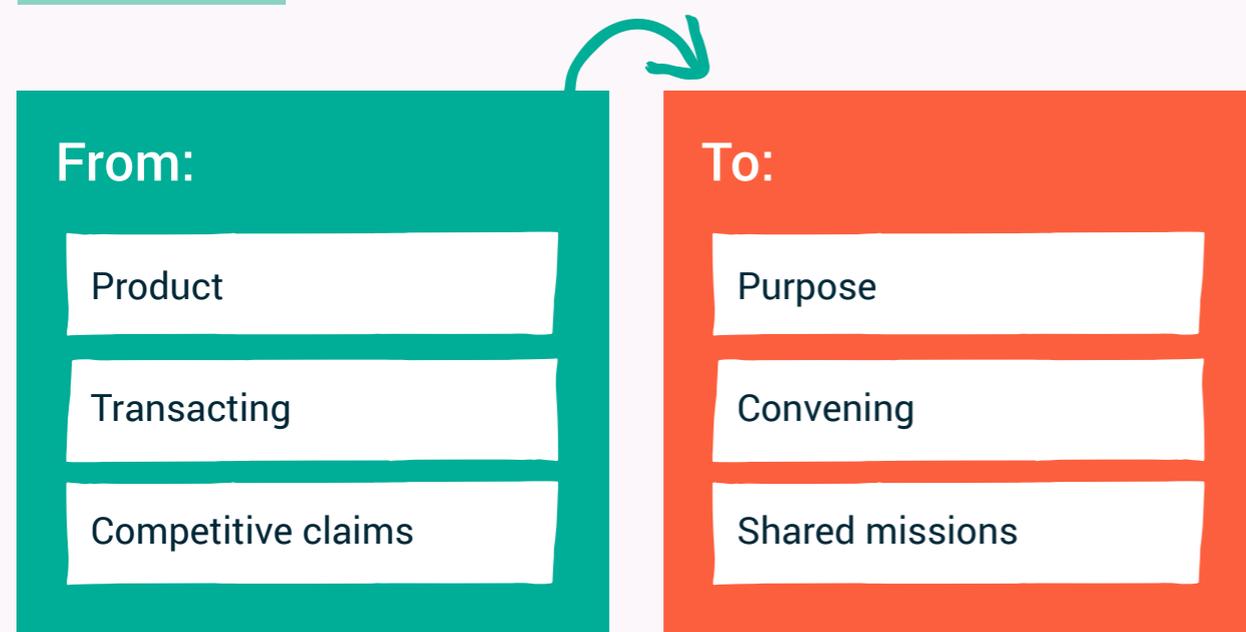
The default food communications campaign speaks to people as Consumers, asking us for example to 'just buy British'. But more participatory approaches are gaining ground: **Open Farm Sunday**, a campaign run by charity Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF), now attracts over 250,000 members of the public to over 400 farms on a single day each June; the National Trust earned widespread praise for its innovative MyFarm project in 2011, inviting the public to participate in the decision making on a real working farm by online vote and debate; and regional campaigns in places like the Isle of Man have invested not just in broadcast communications but in 'big conversations' between farmers and other countryside users, opening up farms as locations for genuine discussion and engagement, often over food. Such approaches start by treating producers and the public as fellow Citizens, able to share concerns and build mutual understanding.

## Stone Barns Center

One of our first inspirations for this project came from a visit to **Stone Barns**, a farm just outside New York City. A combination of experimental farm, conference centre, restaurant, and visitor attraction, Stone Barns explicitly aims to bring people together from across the food system, and open up new ways forward as a result. Programmes range from exchange work between trainee chefs and young farmers, day visits including walks tracing ingredients for restaurant dishes around the land ('following the frittata'), 'Citizen Science'<sup>1</sup> approaches in technical food production experiments, to hosting multidisciplinary conferences and gatherings exploring the future of food, and much more besides.

<sup>1</sup>For more see [New Citizenship Project Citizen science blog](#)

# SHIFT & SIGNALS: BRANDS



When we are in the middle of the high volume, low margin business models that most food brands are, the Consumer Mindset can be extremely hard to break out of. But the prize on offer is big: relationships where people buy into your purpose, instead of just buying products from you, are deeper, longer lasting and ultimately financially rewarding. By acting as convenors within the food system, we begin to embody a different way of thinking about people - whether they are customers, producers, staff or even competitors, we are able to unlock previously intractable change. As convenors we can bring producers into decision-making processes and the overall customer experience, and work with all stakeholders to achieve a previously impossible objective together (rather than simply seeking to drive short-term competitive advantage with a new claim).

## ASK Italian

Viewed from the perspective of the Consumer Mindset, there are few more competitive markets than casual dining, and within that Italian restaurants; as a result price- and promotion-driven strategies have become a major feature. Against this backdrop, **ASK** is finding a new way to compete, thinking not just about the product the business sells but about higher purpose: the team have committed the organisation not just to selling Italian food but to championing and sharing the joy Italians take in eating - the archetypal relationship of the Italians to the food they eat and the experience of mealtimes. This approach has unleashed the creativity of staff across the business, and offered customers and producers a deeper relationship, which is paying off in loyalty. It's still early days, but working from purpose and bringing it to life is giving ASK an edge in a way that creates value for everyone.

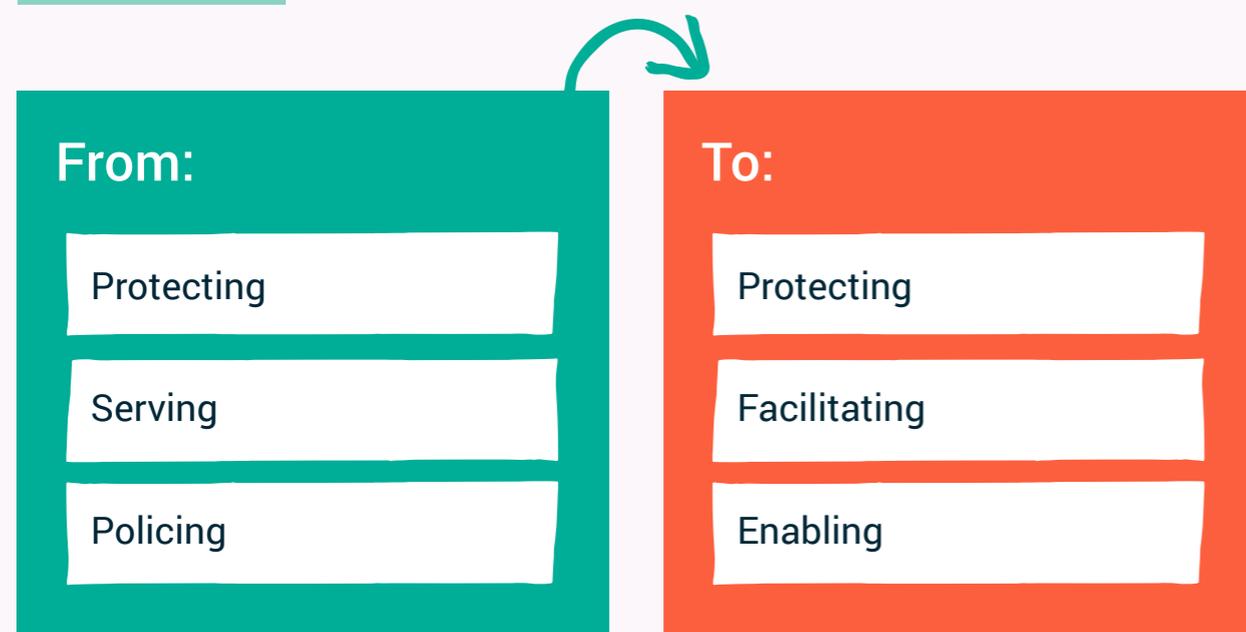
## Food Markets

Across the country - and indeed beyond - food markets are resurgent. From Leeds to London, local markets are springing up everywhere. By their very nature, markets bring people and producers together, but in the best examples, the convening role is taken even more seriously. Now attracting 60,000 people on an average Saturday, **Borough Market** in London has taken a conscious step to becoming a platform for debate and engagement with food, through initiatives including twice weekly free demonstration kitchens, a popular magazine with articles written by traders and customers alike, an annual series of talks and debates, and a new membership-based Cookbook Club for those who want to get really involved. Technology looks set to accelerate this trend further: the French business behind **Food Assembly**, a digitally-enabled combination of buying club and farmers' market, recently took on significant venture capital investment and looks set to grow dramatically.

## Tony's Chocolonely

As an example of a food brand committed to sharing a mission, not just making claims, it's hard to beat **Tony's Chocolonely**. This Dutch brand was founded by investigative journalist Teun van de Keuken, who made a film about modern slavery in the global chocolate supply chain, but was left frustrated by the lack of impact. His response was to start his own brand, with the explicit aim to show all chocolate makers how to run a viable business while eliminating slavery. A core part of the strategy is to involve customers too, not just co-creating new flavours but giving them the tools to lobby other brands.

# SHIFT & SIGNALS: GOVERNMENT



The first line of this table is not a mistake: whatever Mindset we are operating in, it will remain a core responsibility of the state to protect the health and safety of its Citizens. But the underlying shift here is to reclaim the idea that Citizens are the state: it is not about government existing in isolation of us, with politicians representing us and public services serving us. Rather, government is a platform, enabling us all as participants to shape the public sphere. As a result, facilitating Citizens with professional expertise, or simply the expertise of everyday experience, must become more and more central to the practice of policy development; creating the enabling conditions for a more positive food culture, rather than simply policing the worst problems that occur, is a clear way forward.

## National Food Policy Canada

**Canada's National Food Policy** is still in development, but the fact of its existence owes a lot to the growing role of political Citizens in the food system. Starting with a series of small, grassroots meetings called Kitchen Table Talks, 3,500 people from across Canada contributed to the People's Food Policy Project, which culminated in a 2011 report called *'Resetting The Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada'*. In the run up to the 2015 federal election, this energy was invested in a non-partisan campaign called Eat Think Vote, which gained widespread national coverage - and resulted in Prime Minister Trudeau giving the mandate for the creation of a national food policy early in his tenure. This work has also given a further boost to a network of local and regional Food Policy Councils, the earliest of which was formed in the early 90s as formal council committees, but almost all of which have widened their remit to sit at the forefront of Canada's experiments with participatory democracy. The newly published People's Food Policy here in the UK is an exciting sign that this kind of approach is building momentum closer to home.

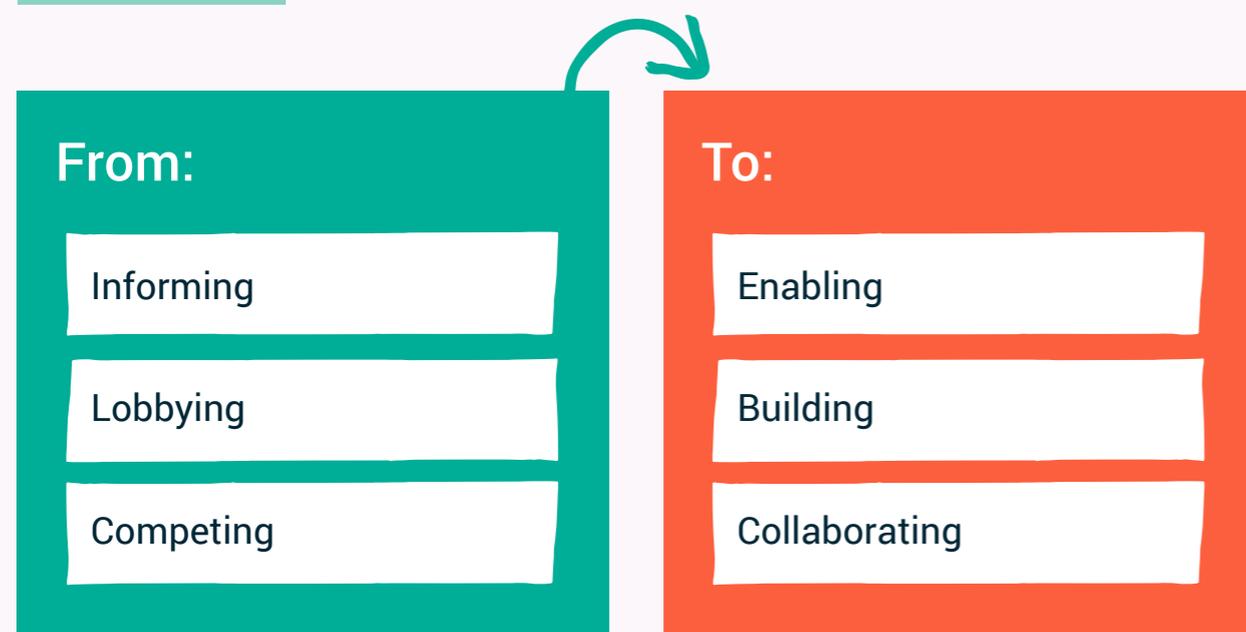
## Better Reykjavik

This is not a food-specific example, but is perhaps the most interesting example of online participatory democracy worldwide. Initiated in the aftermath of the financial crisis, it is in essence a very simple online forum in which Citizens can propose, debate, and endorse one another's ideas for the city - and it counts over 70% of the population in its user base. This is at least in part due to the explicit contract with the city administration, which sees a set number of ideas every month put through to formal debate. Citizens of Reykjavik know their participation means something.

## The Million Pound Mayor

When [Oklahoma Mayor](#) Mick Cornett was told in 2007 that he was obese, his first response was that it was finally time to go on a diet. Then he saw a magazine article that ranked Oklahoma among the most obese cities in the USA. So he asked the city to go on a diet with him, setting the collective target of losing a million pounds in weight. What followed was an astonishing collaborative effort - not only did over 50,000 people sign up to lose weight alongside Cornett, but employers and businesses got involved, with the CEO of Taco Bell even flying in to discuss how to make their menu healthier. Most remarkably, in 2009, the city voted to pass an additional 1% sales tax, with all funds directed to healthy infrastructure in the city. The million pound target was reached by the end of 2011, but the tax, the infrastructure investment, and Cornett's Republican mayoralty continues. To us, this is the power of giving Citizens real agency over the outcomes of their food system. As with the Canada's national food policy, the success of an approach like this is unsurprisingly attractive: there are now dozens of similar campaigns around the world.

# SHIFT & SIGNALS: NGOs



The idea that you can reflect all NGOs as a single category is probably the most difficult to sustain of the simplifications we made in defining the food system for this project: there are so many, of such different size, scope and role. In broad brushstrokes, though, when organisations start by seeing people as Citizens, the challenge is much more to enable what Citizens are already doing to gain scale and impact than to inform Consumer choice. The opportunity is to move from lobbying against excesses to building new models and approaches; and the relationship with other organisations is less competitive and more about collaborating to channel existing energy.

## Transition Network

Since its inception in the form of a school project to explore how the town of Kinsale in Ireland might 'transition' to a world without oil back in the early 2000s, and the subsequent founding of the first Transition Town in Totnes in Devon, the **Transition Network** has proliferated across the world to hundreds of initiatives on every continent, a true community-led, decentralised, grassroots movement with local food production at its heart. One of the finest examples is the town of Ungersheim in France, where the local administration officially endorsed Transition Town organising principles. Amongst other successes, they have transformed 8 hectares of public land into an organic market which produces 64 varieties of vegetables, providing 250 baskets of food for local families each week; changed catering arrangements so that local schools now serve 100% healthy, sustainable food; and even introduced a local currency - the **Ungersheim** radish - to promote local trade, in food and beyond.

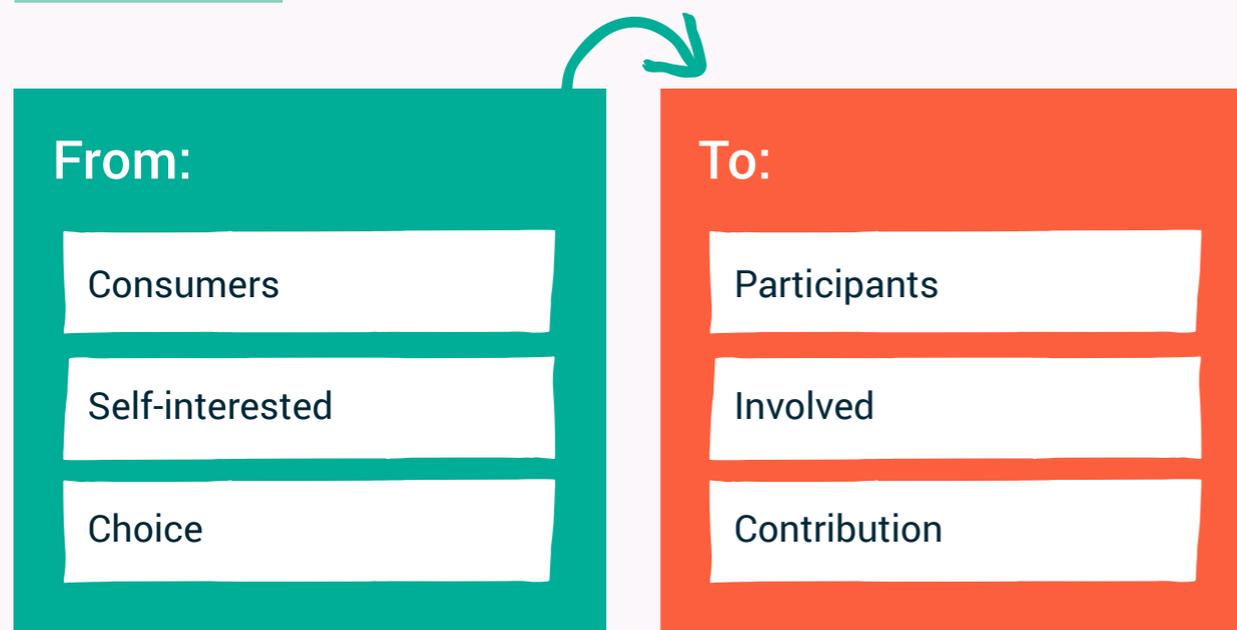
## Soil Association

In recent years, the **Soil Association** has rolled out a number of initiatives which appear to have the Citizen Mindset at their heart: Food For Life Served Here works with (rather than competing against) other certification schemes, and the wider Food for Life programme explicitly seeks to harness the energy and ideas of school and hospital employees; the Innovative Farmers' Network encourages producers to try new things, share their ideas with one another, and build their own capacity to lead change; and the Out to Lunch campaign (now in close collaboration with the Sustainable Restaurant Association) is a great example of working with the public in a 'Citizen Science' project to audit food providers at family restaurant chains and visitor attractions across the country. Such initiatives are channeling energy from all parts of the food system, and developing new business models and revenue streams for the charity at the same time.

## Films and fisheries

One of the most interesting food communications efforts in recent years has been on the broad issue of fish stocks, including the efforts to create marine coastal zones. A feature length documentary called [The End Of The Line](#), which explicitly sought to change business procurement practice, propelled the issue to prominence. In the aftermath, a vaguely co-ordinated set of campaigns came together in mutual support to drive change, including Selfridge's Project Ocean, Channel 4's Hugh's Fish Fight, and many more. These created the space for a moment of change to which producers, brands, and the public could all contribute meaningfully in various ways - including procurement and personal consumption choices, but also political engagement.

# BEYOND CONSUMERS: TOWARDS A CITIZEN PUBLIC



By now it should be clear that if we can embrace the already emerging Citizen Mindset, the term 'Consumers' will no longer be unhelpful, it will also ring false.

This is because people will be participating in the food system in all sorts of ways, and exploring power to shift that system together: the public will do more than just consume, acting collectively, not just as individuals.

At the root of all this is the fact that the public and the other roles in the system will no longer be the fundamentally distinct groups the Consumer Mindset makes them seem:

- The public **will** be the shareholders: we **will** increasingly own many of the companies whose products we consume and can shape what they do
- The public **will** be the producers: new opportunities for meaningful participation in food production **will** open up, whether through governance or growing our own
- As increasingly participatory political Citizens, the public **will** be the government
- As members and participants in gathering movements, the public **will** be the NGOs

We then come finally to the direct relationship between the public and brands: the point of consumption. In the Consumer Mindset, this was perceived as the only place where the public had any power at all to affect the food system. But even that power was limited, individual not collective, and undermined at the point of expression by heavy priming. With this shift, it is just one among many:

the public are not Consumers,  
but Citizens who consume.

This is vital, as it means we will come to the point of consumption seeing our choices as part of a meaningful impact on the system, not as isolated and invisible gestures. We can expect ethical consumption to increase (as is happening in the UK<sup>2</sup>) precisely because people are Citizens, not just Consumers.

Ultimately, the point here is that every role in the system is made up simply of people. When those people think of themselves and others as Consumers, we end up trapped. But if we can think bigger, opening our minds and embracing our role as Citizens, we can shift the dynamics of the system dramatically.

**The next step is to consider how this bigger story might change our approach to some of the key debates in the food system, opening up new and better questions.**

<sup>2</sup>See [See Ethical Consumer Markets Report 2016](#)

# DEBATE 1:

---

HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE FOOD SYSTEM AS A CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

## Consumer Mindset perception:

The public don't care.

## Resulting Question:

How can we get people to care about the impact of the food system on the climate?

## Citizen Mindset reframe:

The public care but feel powerless.

## Resulting Question:

How can we give people power to act meaningfully on climate change in the food system?

## The limitation of the Consumer Mindset

Our current food system is a major source of global emissions, but, unfortunately, most people don't appear to care. Whatever we may say on surveys or in focus groups, our consumption behaviours send the message that this is a low priority: the classic value-action gap. As we saw in our analysis of the Consumer Mindset, this is a misinterpretation. But while we work from this Mindset, this perceived lack of care drives consequences throughout the system: there are few incentives for food brands to push their supply chains to decrease climate impact; with government attention stretched, the lack of apparent public demand makes the case for prioritisation difficult to make; and the relevant NGOs see their role as being to compete with other issues to inform and get people to care.

## The Citizen way forward

If we start from the Citizen Mindset, we start with the perspective that people do care, but need to feel we have meaningful power to affect the situation to sustain that care. With a problem as large as climate change, the simple truth is that that meaningful power does not exist at the level of the individual's consumption choice: it must be collective. This reframing of the challenge channels our energy towards collective initiatives like participatory city-level or national food policies, brand and workplace collaborations, and open innovation challenges seeking ideas from everywhere, instead of the silent standoff we find ourselves in today.

## Early signal

Carlsberg's '[Cheers to Green Ideas](#)' is an open innovation competition seeking ideas for sustainable packaging and process innovation from both customers and entrepreneurs in parallel, offering \$30,000 in prize money. The winning customer ideas included a new nature-inspired lightweight transport crate and a biodegradable design for bottle caps, and are currently in development. In other sectors, this kind of approach has delivered remarkable results: for example, Amnesty International supporters came together in response to an open innovation challenge to develop an app called [Panic Button](#), which starts the audio recording function of a smartphone and alerts five key people with one touch of a button.

# DEBATE 2:

---

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD?

### **Consumer Mindset perception:**

The only way the public can shape the agenda of technological innovation is to choose to buy new technology or not.

### **Resulting Question:**

How can innovators create food tech that works with consumer desire for low prices and convenience?

### **Citizen Mindset reframe:**

The public can and want to shape the agenda for food innovation as shareholders and as political Citizens.

### **Resulting Question:**

How can we involve Citizens in shaping the innovation agenda?

## The limitation of the Consumer Mindset

Technological innovation has always been part of food production, and always will be. The problem is that working in the Consumer Mindset leads to an assumption that the only role for the broader public in the development of innovation is to buy it or not, thereby defining what profit can be made to attract shareholders. This shapes the agenda for innovation in many ways, for example prioritising approaches that can scale rapidly over those that harness the energy of existing producers, and following purchasing power rather than developing a deep understanding of the needs of specific communities. Current efforts to harness technology to solve some of the challenges facing our food system (such as the World Food Programme's new innovation hub) do not yet challenge this.

## The Citizen way forward

If we start by thinking of the actors on all sides as Citizens who can and want to engage meaningfully, the picture changes dramatically. Innovators will be more open to public input and engagement, and less likely to lose themselves in the Silicon Valley dream of making a billion dollars. Governments would be more involved in the debate, facilitating the input of Citizens of all backgrounds to frame the agenda for innovation through participatory approaches to policymaking. Techniques like crowdfunding would be used to gain input and test concepts. Overall, the line between innovators and the public would blur, and we would stand side by side to define the agenda for innovation, not glare at one another in suspicious opposition over its outputs.

## Early signal

[Crowdfunding](#) is an experimental crowdfunding platform that seeks to blur the line between investors, communities and customers, bringing food innovation ideas into the open early in their development and giving a much broader constituency more of a stake much earlier in the process. The framing is still within the Consumer Mindset to some extent, but others outside the food system are starting to show where crowdfunding could go. For example, [Spacehive](#) is a civic crowdfunding platform which equips and encourages people in local communities to develop their own projects to improve their places, and supports them to attract funding and resources from one another and from big organisations across sectors.

# DEBATE 3:

---

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT FOOD POVERTY?

### **Consumer Mindset perception:**

The problem is that many people can't afford to eat.

### **Resulting Question:**

How can we make food affordable for everyone?

### **Citizen Mindset reframe:**

The problem is that many people can't afford to be Citizens.

### **Resulting Question:**

How can we support everyone to be able to shape the food system?

## The limitation of the Consumer Mindset

Both in the media and in the agenda of NGOs, food poverty is arguably the single most urgent issue now facing the UK food system. Viewing this through the lens of the Consumer Mindset reduces it to a material problem with a simplistic and ultimately destructive solution: if people can't afford to eat, the right thing to do must be to make food cheaper. At worst, this logic sees food banks - which can play a vital role but should only ever be an emergency measure - become normalised infrastructure; and it sees ever more downward pressure on prices, which mean there is less money circulating in our food system. This approach to food poverty is only making matters worse.

<sup>3</sup>Source: [Office of National Statistics](#)

<sup>4</sup>Source: [World Economic Forum](#)

## The Citizen way forward

Adopting a Citizen Mindset casts the entire issue in a different light. Instead of thinking of food purely as fuel for material survival, we focus on how difficult it is to feel or express any kind of meaningful agency in the world when you are hungry. We remember that as a proportion of income the poorest in Britain spend twice as much on food as the richest<sup>3</sup>, highlighting this as an issue of inequality that is not specific to food. We also note that across the UK we spend significantly less on food on average than many other nations<sup>4</sup>, and that therefore there is scope to invest more as a society in our food system. Seen in this way, it becomes clear that 'food poverty' is unhelpful language. There is simply poverty and insecurity; and we need to address this situation in ways which empower people to be Citizens, not just keep them alive, and which create rather than erode value in our food system.

## Early signal

Not a panacea but worthy of discussion is the concept of [Universal Basic Income](#) (sometimes called a Citizen's Income) as an intervention to reduce poverty and inequality and increase civic agency. [The Royal Society of Arts](#) (RSA), the main proponents of the idea in the UK, describe it as "a payment made to every eligible adult and child. It is not dependent on income and so is not means- tested. It is a basic platform on which people can build their lives – whether they want to earn, learn, care or set up a business." There are trials under way in a number of countries across the world, run by administrations from across the political spectrum.

# TOOLKIT:

---

How to be a Food Citizen

# THE FOOD CITIZEN'S TOOLKIT

---

A Food Citizen is someone who wants to, can and does shape the food system for the better, and encourages others to do the same.

This section is about turning from theory and understanding to action and making change happen. What is crucial here is that the shift to a Citizen Mindset in the food system does not need anyone to lead it, or any big government initiatives to create the conditions for it; indeed, Food Citizens recognise that those things will only come if we start working from wherever we are, by expanding our thinking as individuals and by coming together in ways we would never previously have considered. Donella Meadows has this to say about how Mindsets change:

*“There’s nothing physical or expensive or even slow about the process of change. In a single individual it can happen in a millisecond. All it takes is a click in the mind, a falling of scales from eyes, a new way of seeing.”*

*Whole societies are another matter - they resist challenges to their Mindset harder than they resist anything else... So how do you change paradigms? In a nutshell, you keep pointing at the anomalies in the old paradigm, you keep coming yourself, and loudly and with assurance from the new one, you insert people with the new paradigm in places of public visibility and power. You don't waste time with reactionaries: rather you work with active change agents and with the vast middle ground of people who are open-minded.”*

Whoever you are, in whatever organisation, the five tools outlined in the following pages are intended to equip you to start on this path of change in the food system around you. We've developed each one to be useful both at the level of an individual working within an organisation, and of an organisation looking out into the food system; and while there is an order of sorts, it is a toolkit for you to pick and choose from at different times as the need arises, rather than a set of sequential steps.

*You don't waste time with reactionaries: rather you work with active change agents and with the vast middle ground of people who are open-minded*

**Donella Meadows**

# TOOL 1: THE CONSUMER ALARM

---

'Consumer' is no longer just a word: it is a powerful Mindset expressed in language, a way of thinking that says people are best understood as Consumers, the role of the individual is to consume food, and the only action available to us is to choose between products and services.

Now you know this, you can set your internal Consumer Alarm by taking a few minutes to write down answers to these questions:

1. What does the word "Consumer" mean to you in your life?
2. When you think of people as Consumers...
  - a. What do you do?
  - b. What don't you do?
  - c. What are the long-term implications of this response?

Once you've done this, whenever you hear the assumptions of the Consumer Mindset being expressed around you, your alarm will go off. When you hear it, do not ignore it - call other people's attention to it wherever possible.

# TOOL 2: THE CITIZEN DICTIONARY

If the Consumer Alarm helps you stop and think, the Citizen Dictionary gives you the means to reframe the conversation.

Wherever possible, reject the word '**Consumer**'. You don't have to say '**Citizen**' (though it is very powerful); '**people**', '**the public**', even '**customers**' are significant improvements, none of them carrying the same subconscious limitations of both motivation and role.

Beyond that, you can create your own dictionary of translations from Consumer Mindset language to refer back to. We've given you a start below, developed together with our participants.

This might be hard in your organisation, or it might be easy. Try it outside your organisation too, at conferences and other gatherings. Take every opportunity you can to practise your new language. It's a powerful intervention, and a great way to start the conversations that will help you find new allies.

## Consumer language

To/ For

Us and them

Rights

Demand

Receive

Choose

Serve

Inform

Comply

Hierarchy

Transactional

My gain

## Citizen language

With

We

Purpose

Participate

Shape/Adapt

Create

Facilitate

Converse

Endorse

Platform

Collaborative

Shared success

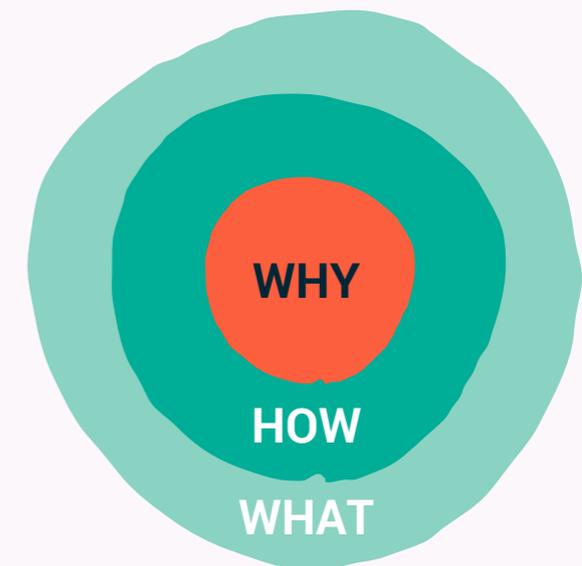
# TOOL 3: THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

This is a tool to help you think about the higher purpose of your organisation, not just the particular products or tasks at hand.

If you think of people as Consumers, the only ideas you will be able to come up with will be for products they can buy from you; if you think of people as Citizens, and start by asking what you exist in the world to achieve, you can invite people to share and participate in that purpose with you. This is a much more creative startpoint.

The Golden Circle, coined by Simon Sinek in his [multimillion-viewed TED talk](#), splits out this challenge into three questions to ask yourself, of which the first is most important:

1. Why does your organisation exist? What is the higher belief about the world that makes everyone who works there get up in the morning?
2. How do you respond to that belief in today's world? What is the active role you exist to fulfil?
3. What are the ways that people can get involved, share in or respond to the belief and the role? What are the products and services you have already that best express the Why and the How, and what more could you do?



This can sound like a big deal, something that requires your whole organisation to stop and think together. It can be - but it doesn't have to be. Even if you just take some time to think and write down your own personal perspective, you'll find it very useful, both as a prompt for idea generation and as a tool to help you filter and prioritise what you're already doing. If something isn't an expression of purpose, it's probably not the right thing to do.

The most basic version of this tool is the very first question. If you do nothing else, asking why as much as possible is a great way to provoke the purpose conversation inside and outside your organisation, and make explicit any Consumer Mindset assumptions that are lurking under the surface.

# TOOL 4: THE PARTICIPATION SCALE

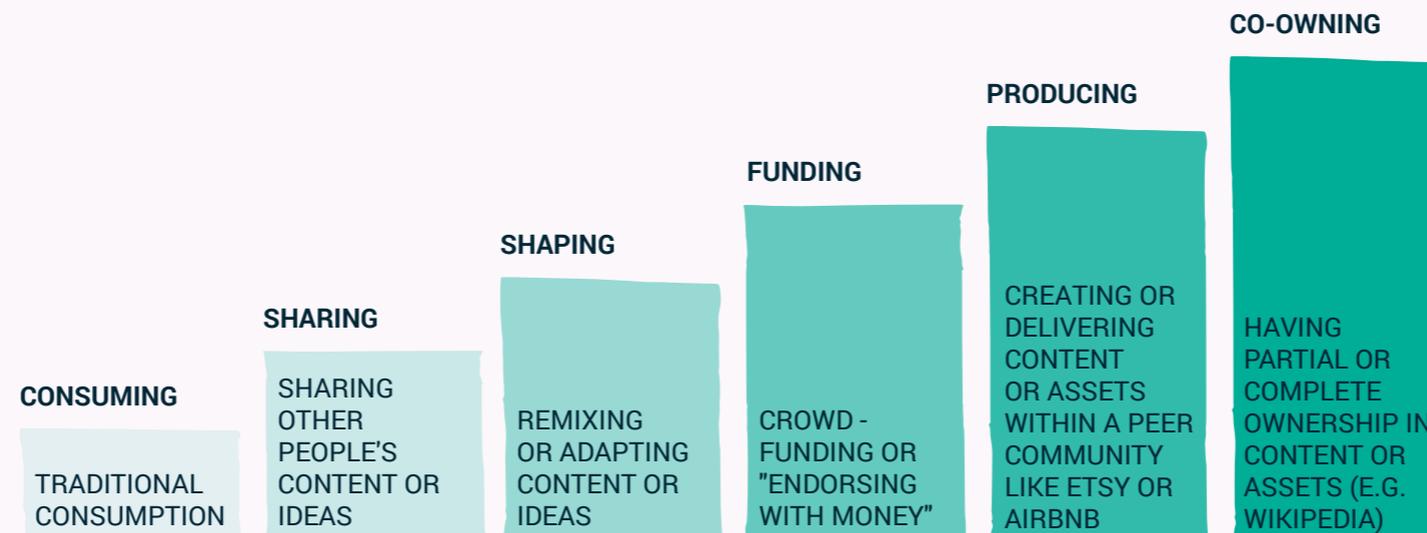
This tool is borrowed from the work of Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms on [New Power](#), and is a useful prompt to help you think about how you and your organisation might be able to interact differently with other actors in the food system - especially the public.

It describes six different ways in which people can participate in your work - with consuming your products included, but as the very lowest level of involvement.

Start by finding ways to practise participation at small scale, in low risk circumstances, so the idea is not completely new.

**For individuals**, this might be about engaging with our teams differently - creating space and using techniques that help everyone contribute ideas, inviting people previously known as 'Consumers' into our meetings or taking those meetings to where they are, and so on.

**For organisations**, it might be about testing out participation in controlled contexts like a single store or outlet, or even shifting a research strategy to test approaches like co-creation.



**SOURCE:**  
Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms  
*Understanding New Power*  
[hbr.org](http://hbr.org)

# TOOL 5: BIG QUESTIONS

---

This tool is all about finding unlikely allies - the kind of people that you would never have thought of working with when you were thinking in the Consumer Mindset.

This can be internal or external: it might be working with your finance team to find new ways to measure the performance of the business that go beyond short-term revenue or profit; it might be about reframing an organisation you used to think of as a competitor or opponent as a potential collaborator; it might be about seeing your customers as partners.

The trick in developing these relationships is asking big enough questions. If you only ask questions that you can answer alone, you don't invite others in, and often they feel they can answer it themselves - you end up competing rather than collaborating.

But if you go big enough, the right question will allow those who share your aspirations to find you, and create space for them to work with you.

Such generative questions often start with the words:

**HOW CAN WE...?**

This is because the “how can” implies that an answer is possible, rather than questions which invite yes/no answers; and the “we” both commits the questioner to playing an active role, and leaves space for others to join in.

Here are a few of the big questions we discussed in the project:

- How can we make all food packaging 100% recyclable?
- How can we nourish our customers' relationships with food and each other, not just sell them food?
- How can we work together to lose as much weight as possible?
- How can we make sure everyone has access to food they can trust?
- How can we end modern slavery in the chocolate supply chain?

# METHOD:

---

Participants and process



This report represents the output of the New Citizenship Project's Future of Food collaborative innovation project. This was a project that we could never have undertaken alone, and if there is value here, great credit is due to every one of the six participant organisations, and to the Food Ethics Council, for their insight, energy and trust in our team in undertaking this exploration with us.

In this section, we share more about how this learning developed. First, we introduce the six participating organisations. We then sketch the outline of the ten month process we went through together. Finally, we share a brief summary of the learning of each of the six organisations: in each case, we set out our provocation for what the different roles in a Citizen food system might mean for the organisation in question, before then looking at what they are doing in practice with that in mind.

It is important to be clear that the provocation is not in any organisation's case something that they have formally approved or bought into as a destination: these should be understood as New Citizenship Project provocations, not organisational strategies.

# PARTICIPANTS

---



[COOK](#) is a frozen-food manufacturer and high street retailer with a mission 'to cook using the same ingredients and techniques that a good cook would use at home so all our food looks and tastes homemade'. COOK has been committed to the idea that good business is about more than just making money from the beginning. Since becoming one of the UK's first certified B Corporations in 2013, COOK has been pursuing sustainable business practice more actively. The team was drawn to the project by the opportunity to explore the potential of this challenging new approach to help refine and articulate COOK's purpose and thereby increase the company's positive impact on the food system.



As both a member-owned co-operative and food retailer, the [Co-op](#) is local and convenient, providing great value food and ethical trading in its 2,500 UK stores. The Co-op's approach to running its business in an ethical and sustainable way is firmly rooted in its co-operative Values and Principles. Co-op champions a leadership position on the issues that matter most to its members and stakeholders, campaigning where it can make a clear Co-op difference; such as Fairtrade, labelling, sustainability and ethical trade. Continually seeking a balance of commercial success with a steadfast commitment to leadership in business ethics and sustainability, in a collaborative way with active members, is what brought the team to this project.



The [FAI Farms](#)' team are a global group of farmers, veterinarians, scientists, and strategists with first-hand experience of food production and its challenges. Through strategic partnerships with leading food brands and organisations, they implement better farming practices, on land and at sea. FAI joined this project to explore whether deploying the Citizen Mindset in its work with major food brands offered an opportunity to be more effective at driving change at all levels of the food chain, and also how it might change its internal organisational practice.



[The FSA](#) is a non-ministerial Government department, responsible for protecting the public's health and interests in relation to food in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The FSA strategy has a big vision - to drive change in the food system so that it delivers 'food we can trust'. The FSA recognises there are growing challenges around food safety, affordability, security and sustainability and were originally attracted to the project by the opportunity to explore how the meaning of 'Consumer protection' might change in the future. The shifting context of the UK's forthcoming exit from the European Union resulted in the team's need to focus more on the core functions of a regulator, and in particular on the relationship between the FSA and food businesses.



The [RSPB](#) is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Passionate about nature, and dedicated to saving it, the RSPB exists to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife, helping to create a better world for everyone. The RSPB was represented in the project by two members of its policy and campaigning teams, whose particular remit was to explore what role the organisation might best play in engaging its supporters and the wider public more deeply in the ongoing debates about sustainable food and farming. The team was attracted to the project by the opportunity to think differently about how to engage its members and the wider public in a set of issues that have long been absolutely core to the fulfilment of its remit in the protection of the natural world, but for many people quite removed from what they might expect the charity to be involved in.



Owned by the [National Trust](#), Wimpole Estate is a large, working estate located in Cambridgeshire, England. The estate includes Wimpole Hall and Home Farm, historically a demonstration farm where new agricultural technologies were tested and shared. The Wimpole team has been working hard to develop plans to put the focus of the whole estate firmly on its past, present and future as a working farm, producing food while at the same time welcoming visitors. The team was drawn to the project initially with a focus on developing its plans for the catering outlets, but then expanding to consider the implications for the plans for the estate as a whole.

# PROCESS

---

Each organisation had two representatives in the Future of Food project, with the six organisations also split into three co-mentoring pairs, thus providing a series of internal and external support structures.

The process was designed to work on two levels concurrently, with the group working together to hold the overall question regarding the food system as a whole, but also working as individual organisations on their own strategic question within this wider frame.

It was structured into three phases over the ten months from September 2016 to June 2017:

- Owning the questions
- Experimenting in practice
- Reflecting and understanding

Each phase started with an intensive full-day workshop, followed by a combination of co-mentoring visits and direct coaching and support from the New Citizenship Project team.

At the heart of the process was an approach called [Appreciative Inquiry](#).

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

This is a technique from an academic discipline known as Action Research. As a methodology, it was developed in reaction to two key insights:

- Human systems evolve towards the questions we repeatedly ask
- There is a predominant tendency in strategic projects, at least in Western culture, to ask the question “What is wrong here?”

When combined, these insights result in a dominant approach that attracts all of our energy to problems - which can become very negative.

Appreciative Inquiry seeks to instead to start from the question “What is great here?”, and build on that.

# PROCESS

---

Owning the question

## Workshop 1: What's working well?

Initial hypotheses

Co-mentoring and  
inspiration

Experimenting in practice

## Workshop 2: Idea generation

Prototype and explore

Establishing strategies

## Workshop 3: Share learning

Forward planning

Write up

Report launch



System role: **Brand**  
Provocation:



COOK has been a pioneering 'good' business for 20 years, always at the forefront of sustainability, employee wellbeing, and other measures. Our provocation to COOK has been to focus this 'goodness' so they have a clear point of view not just on how to do business, but on how the food system should operate, and a clearer basis for collaboration. Defining a driving purpose, such that they can work from this in everything they do, and report against it, could take their impact in the food system to the next level. They would have a clearer filter for other organisations they might collaborate with (those who share some aspect of their purpose), and of what missions they might set in order to involve both other organisations and their customers.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*In some respects, at COOK we've shown it's possible to operate and succeed outside the conventions of the food system and its prevailing Consumer Mindset. That said, we also succumb to Consumer thinking because it can seem the only real option for driving business success. We are now more confident than ever that there is another way - one which can benefit both our business and society. Importantly, the project has helped us clarify, and commit to, our purpose - seeing our role in the world as being to 'nourish relationships'.*

*Clarity of purpose brings so much else into focus and we have recognised the opportunity to make a lot more of the things we already do. Language and voice have been pillars of our brand from the beginning, speaking to people as people rather than Consumers and seeking to involve them as much as possible in what we do. A good example is the AGM (Annual General Munching) we hold across all our shops one day each year, to report back to customers on how we're doing as a business and invite them to ask any questions. Provoked by our generative question - how can we nourish people's relationships with food and*

*each other, not just sell them food? - we have started to see much more potential in this and many other initiatives, particularly with regards to communication. For example, the way in which we frame a standard commercial promotion can speak to our purpose, rather than the Consumer Mindset, without having a negative impact on sales - in fact, hopefully the opposite!*

*We are now more confident than ever that there is another way - one which can benefit both our business and society.*

**Rosie Brown & James Rutter,  
COOK**



System role: **Food brand**

Provocation:

Product

Transacting

Claims



Purpose

Convening

Missions

The Co-op food business is already in the Citizen Mindset in many ways, from the formal governance of being owned by its customers to the committed partnerships with suppliers (as evidenced for example by their relationship with the Fairtrade Foundation). Our challenge to the Co-op has been to live this out in ways that everyone who shops with them can not just see, but also be involved in: to make shopping at the Co-op a conscious, ongoing contribution to a shared mission to make the food system better, not just another shop. We see this as being about opening up the objectives the organisation is trying to achieve before achieving them - for example, asking customers to help them with ideas and personal actions to achieve a shared aspiration on recycling, not just seek to develop 100% recyclable packaging and then make a claim.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*Our whole business sits very naturally in the Citizen Mindset in many ways - we are a membership organisation, and our members own and have a strong voice in how the Co-op is run. Listening to our 4 million active members and 69,000 colleagues is at the core of the everything we do, partly because of this ownership, but also because we know that when we do we make better decisions that are right for the business and for wider society.*

*As a result, we do what matters most for members and customers - championing fair trading, transparency and sustainability, and being leaders across these issues.*

*The challenge of this process has been to make this leadership even more visible for people shopping at the Co-op, so a visit feels like a conscious, ongoing contribution to a shared message and not just another shop. Collaboration is key, and we are excited by the opportunity to do more to invite members and customers to share their own thoughts and ideas with the business to bring change.*

*One test of this strategy was hosting a collaborative fringe event at the 2017 Co-op AGM, where members were asked to share ideas and suggested action around the Co-op recent recycling ambition - something that was very well received. There is such an appetite within the business to further increase our active campaigning, so it's an exciting time. There is huge power and value in gathering the support and involvement of our millions of members in this journey.*

*We are excited by the opportunity to do more to invite members and customers to share their own thoughts and ideas with the business to bring change.*

**Cathryn Higgs & Helen Seed,  
Co-op**



System role: **Producer/Food brand**

Provocation:



As both a producer in their own right and a consultancy working with both food producers and brands, and at the intersection of the two, they have a remarkable opportunity to become a catalyst in the shift to a Citizen food system. The critical shift as we see it is to inhabit the Citizen Mindset fully themselves: not just to take the briefs and challenges that their clients define, but to convene and challenge in return, ultimately seeking to enable the kinds of strategic alliances that could transform the sector.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*The process of embedding the notion of Citizenship in FAI has forced us to think deeper about how we practise participation internally, and in our work with our clients and partners. This has helped us realise how our language, behaviour and advice can inspire our partners to genuinely engage their suppliers - producers and farmers - as participants in a shared cause. Our global food system is stretched to breaking point and we have some big challenges to overcome.*

*We believe engaging food producers as participants in this shared challenge is the only way we are going to make progress toward a sustainable food system. We see part of our role as advisors to some of the world's largest food brands as being to help them create meaningful platforms of engagement that go beyond the transactional to make food producers a visible and valued partner in solving our time's biggest food challenges. We have begun formalising this process by developing a guide for food brands;*

## ***'Engaging Food Producers as Citizens'***

*The purpose is to begin to transform the dominant conversation in supply chains towards genuine strategic alliances. Much of the content builds directly on the ideas developed in this process.*

*We believe engaging food producers as participants in this shared challenge is the only way we are going to make progress toward a sustainable food system.*

**Ruth Layton & Øistein Thorsen,  
FAI**



## System role: **Government**

Provocation:

Protecting

Serving

Policing

Protecting

Facilitating

Enabling

New Citizenship believes the long-term opportunity for the FSA from engaging with these ideas could be hugely important. In the world of the Consumer Mindset, and in particular following food related issues such as the horsemeat crisis, the incentives for food fraud are seen to be rising, with advances in technology making this kind of crime ever more possible and harder to detect. We believe regulators like the FSA have a vital role in challenging the Mindset of the food system, and also a great opportunity in engaging the public differently - not just protecting us, but enabling and inspiring us to protect ourselves through exploring approaches such as Citizen science.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*Many of the ideas we have been engaging with in this process are very exciting but also deeply challenging to the FSA - not least because as a regulator our role is currently framed very much in explicit terms of 'Consumers', and because the UK's forthcoming exit from the European Union means we need to make sure we have a clear focus on our core role in a changing context. However, we will be thinking further about how our work to develop strategic alliances with the food industry to develop new approaches to regulating our future can incorporate the Citizen Mindset.*

*We recognise the value of how subtle shifts in language and discussions at policy level can change things, and our awareness of this is also making our internal conversations much richer as we challenge ourselves as to whether we are allowing the language of the Consumer to take us in directions that ultimately don't align with our purpose in ensuring everyone can trust the food we buy and eat.*

*We recognise the value of how subtle shifts in language and discussions at policy level can change things.*

**Catherine Clarke  
& Tracey Smith, FSA**



System role: **NGO**

Provocation:

Informing

Fighting

Lobbying



Enabling

Celebrating

Movement Building

Our challenge to the RSPB has been to use their public engagement with the debate on UK food and farming as an opportunity to reframe their broader role as an organisation. Rather than working in a manner that is primarily oppositional and focused on government policy, we have been challenging them to create the space for a broader conversation on food with nature lovers. They could give those of us with a love of the environment the opportunity to express and build that through the food we eat - with shifts in public opinion and then policy as a result. We see this as an opportunity for a broad alliance, with the RSPB facilitating rather than leading from the front.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*We have long campaigned for sustainable farming that not only produces great food, but also rewards farmers and land managers for maintaining and restoring the farmed environment, and our departure from the European Union will be one of the most defining events for farming and the environment in living memory.*

*This project has provided a huge amount of stimulus for the development of our campaigning on food and farming, complementing a shift in approach we already wanted to make. Recognising the limitations of a Consumer Mindset and changing our language as individuals has started different conversations internally; we are actively starting to build new alliances and we're looking forward to involving our supporters in our work as we embed these ideas.*

*We are actively starting to build new alliances and we're looking forward to involving our supporters in our work as we embed these ideas.*

**Harry Greenfield &  
Stephanie Landymore, RSPB**



System role: **Producer/Food brand/NGO**

Provocation:



As quickly became apparent, Wimpole stands at a fascinating and powerful point in the food system: a food producer, a retailer and caterer in its own right, and part of the National Trust, itself an organisation with a strong and developing voice in the food system, the opportunities are huge. We believe there is potential for Wimpole to position itself as a hub of the idea of Food Citizenship, drawing on its heritage as a demonstration farm to bring people together from across all aspects of the food system to experience new ways of thinking, working and eating. The resulting problem can be that it's hard to get started - so our challenge to the Wimpole team was to pick somewhere to start, and build the capacity, making sure that when the inevitable opportunities do come their way, they are ready to take them.

# WORK IN PROGRESS

---

*We have very much taken this capacity-building approach, seeking to focus our work in the project first and foremost on the three catering outlets and not only the team that run them but also the wider Wimpole Estate team who supply the outlets with their produce. We've focused a lot on involvement; running team meetings very differently, bringing people together from across the estate more than ever before, and looking to harness ideas rather than just cascade information.*

*The change in conversation both internally and externally with our visitors has been dramatic, and we're seeing huge results already. Just the other day, one of the team overheard two visitors in the restaurant discussing Wimpole's farming approach and the way the menu is created, in a way that could only have been informed by relatively junior members of the team. This kind of widespread engagement means we now have the foundations in place to put the idea of Food Citizenship right at the heart of everything that Wimpole does, and we intend to do exactly that.*

*We're working to put Food Citizenship at the heart of everything we do.*

**Rebecca Barton &  
Stephanie Hall, National Trust  
Wimpole Estate**

# FOOD CITIZENSHIP

---

## This is our Food System

We all have meaningful power in it, and we can and must shape it for the better and encourage others to do the same. We are the staff, the communities, the campaigners, the shareholders, the producers, the democratic public - we are, together, food citizens.



[www.foodcitizenship.info](http://www.foodcitizenship.info)

