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Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:
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P-04-444
11th March 2013
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WLGA • CLILC

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear William

P-04-444 Dig for Victory Campaign

Thank-you for your letter of 23rd January to Steve Thomas which he passed to me for a response. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The concerns about food security expressed in the petition are seen as a serious issue by the WLGA. As part of our Sustainable Development Framework we have been working with local authorities to encourage them to plan ahead for issues likely to become increasingly significant in future years (further information is available on our website – see [Futures Trends : Sustainable Development Framework : Environment and Regeneration : Topics : Welsh Local Government Association](#)). This covers not only food security but also related issues such as energy security and resilience to severe weather events. Active consideration of such long term issues will have to be demonstrated by public bodies once the Sustainable Development Bill passes into legislation.

In 2012 the Wales Rural Observatory produced a report for the Welsh Government examining the emergence of community-based food activities in Wales, and identifying what could be done to promote and encourage further activity within this field. It categorised community grown food into four areas of activity: allotment gardening, community gardens, Community Supported Agriculture schemes (e.g. where members of the community pay farmers or producers a predetermined amount in advance in exchange for a share of the harvest or product) and communal food growing in schools.

The report showed that there is increasing interest and activity in relation to community-based, locally grown food, which is encouraging. Growing concerns over food safety are likely to raise the level of interest still further. A shift towards more local production and

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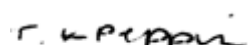
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consumption of food has the potential over time to contribute substantially to a reduction in 'food miles' (and carbon footprint as referred to by the petitioners) compared to the systems operated by the supermarkets. Encouragement of local food production can also help in terms of local job creation and improve physical and mental health. Initiatives such as those proposed by the petitioners therefore need to form part of a wider strategy on community grown food.

Whilst a good deal in this area can be achieved at relatively low cost, if there is to be a concerted drive to promote and support community grown food it will need to be properly resourced. The WLGA would be willing to support any such funded initiative as part of its Sustainable Development Framework with local authorities. However, without additional resources this discretionary area of activity unfortunately would be unlikely to be prioritised in the current financial situation faced by local government.

I trust that this response is of assistance to your committee in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely



Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development