

Supermarkets should create 'local produce' aisles

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Supermarkets should be encouraged to create specific shelves or aisles for produce generated in their local area, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

With the support of government, major retailers would be able to point customers to fresh food and drink made locally, supporting nearby smaller firms in the process.

The party's wellbeing and sport spokesman Brian Whittle said it would be a straightforward enough change for supermarkets to make, expanding options for customers and encouraging healthier consumption.

He said some shops already had specified aisles and sections for food from certain parts of the world, and that a "local produce" aisle could operate alongside those.

The plans will be included in future Scottish Conservative blueprints for boosting smaller firms and improving the health of the nation through healthier eating.

Scottish Conservative wellbeing and sport spokesman Brian Whittle said:

"Most major supermarkets have sections showcasing food from around the world, so there's no reason why this can't be replicated specifically for local produce.

"It would signpost people to where they can get food and drink made in their local area, which will be popular among those passionate about supporting small, local businesses.

"The relationship between major supermarkets and local firms hasn't always been great, but this presents an opportunity to improve that.

"And if shoppers aren't keen on this and want to continue as normal, they can just walk straight past.

"For smaller producers who might struggle to meet the demands of a nationwide contract, this would be a chance to build lasting relationships with major retailers.

"A local produce aisle would also give consumers the opportunity to support local firms without losing the convenience of being able to buy a wide range of products under one roof.

"We know Scots' diets need to improve, and buying fresh, local produce is an important way of doing that.

"With some government support and the goodwill of major retailers, there's no reason why this cannot become a reality."