

Local Food in the Ludlow Marches

Issues and actions

f3 – the local food consultants

June 2005



Contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 1 | Summary..... | 1 |
| 2 | Current activity | 2 |
| 2.1 | Producers and support infrastructure | 2 |
| 2.2 | Produce outlets | 3 |
| 2.3 | Consumers – locals and visitors | 3 |
| 2.4 | Independent agencies for change | 4 |
| 2.5 | Local and regional public sector agencies | 5 |
| 3 | Issues..... | 5 |
| 3.1 | The producers’ perspective | 5 |
| 3.2 | Retail and hospitality sector perspectives | 6 |
| 3.3 | Public sector caterers’ perspective | 6 |
| 3.4 | Local organisations’ perspectives..... | 7 |
| 3.5 | The statutory sector’s perspective | 7 |
| 3.6 | The consumers’ perspective..... | 7 |
| 3.7 | Opportunities to develop, new ideas and new directions | 8 |
| 4 | A vision for the local food sector in the Ludlow Marches | 9 |
| 5 | Action plan | 10 |
| 6 | Appendix 1 – workshop outputs | 12 |
| 6.1 | Action areas | 12 |
| 6.1.1 | A local produce supermarket | 12 |
| 6.1.2 | Processing & distribution | 13 |
| 6.1.3 | Distribution network | 14 |
| 6.1.4 | Schools / community learning about food | 14 |
| 6.1.5 | Education across the board | 16 |
| 6.1.6 | Agri-Tourism | 17 |
| 6.1.7 | Organisation/ Co-ordination | 18 |
| 7 | Appendix 2 – contact details | 20 |
| 8 | Appendix 3 – case studies | 23 |
| 8.1 | Lochaber Food for Thought | 23 |
| 8.2 | Sandwell Growing Opportunities | 23 |
| 8.3 | Local Food in Somerset Schools | 24 |
| 8.4 | Somerset Centre for Local Food..... | 24 |
| 8.5 | Hampshire organic burgers in local schools | 25 |
| 8.6 | SPICE - East of England | 25 |
| 8.7 | Eostre Organics..... | 25 |
| 8.8 | RCMA Social Enterprise Ltd..... | 26 |

Prepared by :

f3 – the local food consultants

www.localfood.org.uk

mail@localfood.org.uk

0845 458 9525

The research project and workshop on which this report is based were organised and part funded by Ludlow 21 Food and Farming Group. The following organisations also gave financial support:

Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival

Craven Arms Community Food

Ludlow 21 Green Festival

Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs

Shropshire County Council

Ludlow Market Towns Initiative Community Chest

1 SUMMARY

Ludlow is seen by many as a town with a rich and vibrant local food sector. It hosts a food festival of national repute, and offers local people and visitors the opportunity to sample local produce from a range of local outlets, from the farmers' market to fine restaurants and specialist food shops.

Much more is happening too, in a less visible way, from farm tours to school and community food and health projects, active Slow Food¹ and CittaSlow² groups, and a number of innovative food enterprises. Whilst this picture is the envy of many market towns, the local food scene is not without its problems, and a number of opportunities for growth in the sector are meeting barriers or undeveloped yet.

This report is the culmination of a brief research project that was commissioned of f3 – the local food consultants, by a consortium of the key stakeholder groups working in the sector in the Ludlow Marches area.

The starting point for the work was to identify ways forward for the sector that would enable the diverse stakeholder interests to work together more effectively.

The consultants spent several days talking to a wide range of people locally in the town, at the farmers' market and at other local venues, and gathering information by telephone on current strategies, activities, future ambitions and issues to resolve. This work resulted in an 'Issues Paper', which formed a reference point for a workshop held in Ludlow on the 12th May, which was attended by 44 diverse local stakeholders. These issues and others were explored more deeply at this workshop, which also acted as the catalyst to instigate an action plan to address the most pressing areas of concern and opportunity. These include:

- developing a local networking mechanism, to inform and co-ordinate activity between stakeholders of all types;
- looking more deeply at the feasibility of a local food & drink business marketing and information system, and a local processing, distribution and marketing centre;
- looking into the feasibility of a local food supermarket;
- developing more pilots and new tendering/contract systems to enable local food to be purchased for local schools – linked to better educational programmes about food systems, healthy diet and cooking skills; and
- assisting in the development of farm tourism and linking tourism marketing to the distinctiveness and availability of local food.

The consultants have also made a number of independent observations, noting in particular:

- the paucity of activity and integration into the local food scene of community health and diet-related activity;

¹ Slow Food is an international movement dedicated to conserving local food culture and identify

² CittaSlow works in parallel with Slow Food to promote local culture and identity and a more sustainable urban lifestyle

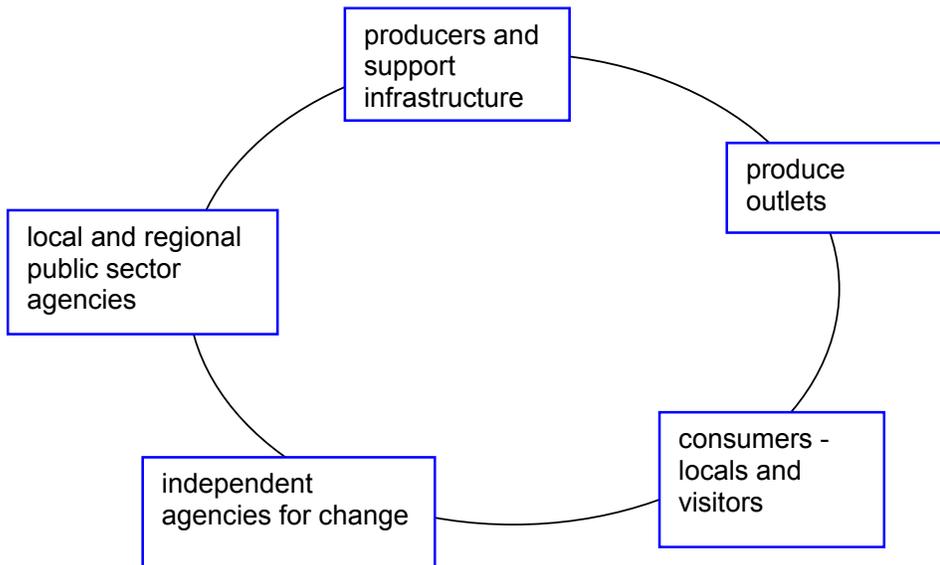
- the need to resolve the responsibilities of groups with overlapping remits, requiring rationalisation and co-ordination; and
- the potential overkill of activity, and the consequent need for a co-ordinated strategy for securing funding and other forms of support.

2 CURRENT ACTIVITY

The Ludlow Marches has been termed by local organisations to describe an area that includes South Shropshire, but includes parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Powys. The focal point for this study has been the towns of Ludlow and Craven Arms, where much activity is centred.

In many ways Ludlow is held up as a model market town, with a vibrant local food economy. This has built on the presence of some top restaurants, the retention of many small independent shops, and a food festival, which has become over the last 10 years the biggest of its kind in the UK. Linked to this, the town has a vibrant Slow Food group and is the UK's first 'Citta Slow'.

A brief resume follows of strategies, activities, organisations and businesses within the Ludlow Marches area, categorised into five overlapping types as described by the diagram below:



2.1 Producers and support infrastructure

Produce from the Ludlow Marches includes a wide range of primary and processed foods. Whilst the rolling landscape of the immediate area supports primarily the production of meat and dairy products, there are a variety of small producers of vegetables and other primary and processed produce. The proximity of the lowland landscapes further north in Shropshire, and south in Herefordshire, offers a wider

scope for sourcing a more comprehensive range of produce from within a reasonable distance (say 50 miles).

There is a local abattoir that serves butchers in both of the main towns as well as offering a service to local producers of all sizes. A local cheese-maker, brewer, crisp manufacturer, and many other niche producers create a diverse array of local food. The farmers' market now regularly hosts over 30 stalls from producers within 30 miles of Ludlow.

Organisations with a focused remit to support farmers and the regional food and drink sector include the NFU³ and HEFF⁴. EFPF⁵ offer help to producers collaborating in the West Midlands region, SASTAK⁶ operates a machinery ring, and the Shropshire Rural Hub offers a business network, supported by a physical hub being developed at the Battlefields Centre.

2.2 Produce outlets

Ludlow boasts a very healthy range of independent shops, quality restaurants and pubs, of whom many are committed to a greater or lesser degree to sourcing local produce. They range from butchers and bakers, greengrocers and deli to a specialist cheese shop and an organic grocery, all of which are highly committed to local produce. The identity of the town in terms of its attraction as a tourism venue rests heavily on these artisan businesses.

Producers either access and deliver directly to the produce outlets, or make use of wholesale or distribution services, but such services are generally not tailored to the smaller producer. The Graig Farm Organic producers' group offers a market outlet to smaller organic producers, a local box scheme based in Craven Arms delivers fresh vegetables to consumers, and internet-based deliveries are offered by several enterprises, such as the Ludlow Sausage Company.

Farmers' markets operate in Ludlow and Craven Arms, as well as Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle, but are not managed in a co-ordinated way.

Farm shops are another way in which local produce can be sold direct to consumers, and the area has several. A major new farm shop and food centre is planned at Bromfield, which will offer a range of producer services and educational opportunities.

There is the likelihood of close competition between many of these existing and developing outlets.

2.3 Consumers – locals and visitors

Much of the area is fairly sparsely populated, with under 40,000 residents in South Shropshire. Over 25% of the population is over retirement age, and this proportion is growing. There is a range of people in all socio-economic classes, with a high proportion of those in skilled or professional occupations. Whilst there is clearly a

³ National Farmers' Union

⁴ Heart of England Fine Foods – the regional food promotion group

⁵ English Food and Farming Partnerships – advisors on producer collaboration

⁶ Also providing various administrative services to farmers

market for higher end produce and enough disposable income to support the pricier food outlets, both Craven Arms and Ludlow host low income communities with problems with easy access to good food, and poor diet.

Ludlow is a focus of visitor activity, with a good range of accommodation, serving as a focal point for visits to the Shropshire hills and Welsh borders. Several festivals, including a nationally renowned food festival, also generate visitor activity.

There are several schools in Ludlow and Craven Arms, which have participated in educational activities relating to food growing, cooking and food production systems. An initiative by Shropshire's catering services organisation, Shire Services, has recently piloted direct supply contracts between local producers and schools in the district.

Initiatives in low income communities have targeted health issues and social integration through food-related projects led by the Rockspring Community Centre in Ludlow, and the Craven Arms Community Food group. Shropshire's PCT has also funded a worker to assist with school projects relating to food and diet in Craven Arms. Some of these projects relate to the Surestart⁷ programme. The 'Churches Together' project also runs local and fair trade events, and a 'meals on wheels' service runs locally.

Ludlow Hospital has some direct supply contracts with local producers and wholesalers, but all suppliers need to meet national standards set by the NHS procurement agency.

2.4 Independent agencies for change

The area is well served by independent organisations that aim to promote local produce and address problems such as access to fresh healthy food and food education. The Ludlow 21 Food and Farming Group runs several initiatives, such as 'Local to Ludlow', which supports local producers through the farmers' market, a linked directory and website, a local branding scheme and guided farm tours. In Craven Arms the community food group runs the more occasional farmers' market, as well as projects focused on diet and health such as cookery skills courses and visits to pick-your-own farms. Further north in the county a similar set of local food link projects is being run by Ruralscapes.

Festivals are an established feature of Ludlow, with an arts festival established in the 1960s and held mid summer, including music, theatre and cultural events. The Ludlow Marches Food & Drink Festival was established in 1995 and runs over a weekend in September, hosting over 120 producers in the castle grounds, with food trails, demonstrations and talks. Other festivals include a crafts festival in May, a Green Fair in June, and a medieval Christmas Fair in November. Church Stretton hosts a Food Fayre in July.

Slow Food has an active group in Ludlow, organising meals, tastings, and visits to producers. Closely related is the activity of CittaSlow, run by the Town Council, to promote the 'slow city' concept through a wide range of activities from food to town planning.

⁷ a government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child

2.5 Local and regional public sector agencies

The regional strategy for the food and drink sector is set by Defra⁸, under the Strategy for Sustainable Food and Farming, linked to economic development activity supported by AWM⁹. These agencies work fundamentally by enabling and promoting change, such as in the development of rural business hubs and business clusters. Intervention or funding for physical infrastructure is limited, but the new Battlefields Centre at Shrewsbury is an exception, which will offer incubation space linked to business support services. The West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum acts as a multi-stakeholder committee to inform regional policy.

The Countryside Agency¹⁰ through its Eat the View initiative supports local food sector projects, with a focus of activity at present in the Shropshire Hills AONB¹¹ to develop a producer network, linked to hospitality sector buyers. Market town initiatives also operate in Ludlow and Craven Arms supporting local projects that will enhance the vitality of the towns.

Shropshire County Council has been active through its Shire Services procurement agency project to supply local food to schools, and through influencing educational initiatives.

South Shropshire District Council, based in Ludlow, is also able to offer support to organisations nurturing local economic or social well-being.

The PCT¹² has an active role in promoting health through diet and physical exercise which may include food growing.

The Town Council in Ludlow is active in supporting CittaSlow, and manages the market space in the town square.

3 ISSUES

The issues noted below include observations by the consultants from their research, as well as additional items and areas of concern that were voiced at the workshop.

3.1 The producers' perspective

- farm businesses need to change – competition on open markets is increasingly difficult even with direct sales (e.g. in a school pilot project prices were not good)
- producers are best at producing, but even so they need to take more responsibility for developing their own markets – for many, opportunities lie in direct marketing to customers where trust and loyalty can be fostered, creating niche products and adding value, and in developing new trading partnerships

⁸ The central government department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs

⁹ Advantage West Midlands - the regional development agency

¹⁰ The statutory body with responsibility for the countryside and rural life

¹¹ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

¹² Primary Care Trust – part of the NHS focusing on local health services

- the kind of infrastructure needed for primary processing, packaging, labelling, marketing and distribution is too costly for most producers to consider individually – collaboration may be a key to effective ways forward for many
- landscape and farming varies within the local catchment area, so definitions of local produce may need to be flexible to offer a full range of 'local' products
- a portfolio of supply contracts or customer types may be more secure than limited larger contracts
- the market for Class 2 vegetables, front end meat products etc, needs to be developed
- planning control issues constrain diversification
- customers of all kinds, whether wholesalers or end-users, need to understand better the issues producers face and how contracts can be shaped to address such issues
- clarity is required about the limits imposed on public sector support by State Aid rules
- public sector and other funding may create a distortion in market forces

3.2 Retail and hospitality sector perspectives

- many local independent shops, restaurants, pubs and hotels are interested in local produce, but levels of take-up are widely different – partly because there is limited knowledge about who is producing what, quality, price, continuity of supply, seasonality etc – or because many business owners have established supply chains and don't need to look further at local alternatives
- many caterers want produce 'just right' for them, with regard to size, inclusive of primary processing etc., which may not reflect what is available locally, and the price needs to be right – adding value through packaging etc. may be irrelevant
- the hospitality sector may vary its specifications, which producers may not be ready to meet
- it is difficult to attract trained staff
- the assumptions that local food is quality food or cheap need to be challenged

3.3 Public sector caterers' perspective

- whilst specifying 'local' is illegal in public sector contracts, much can be done in shaping contracts to offer better opportunities for local producers
- making use of local suppliers can mean more work involved in brokering links between wholesalers/contract caterers and producers, or between end-users and producers
- due diligence requirements mean that audit processes must be met by producers, which can be a barrier due to cost
- awareness by cooks needs to be raised about seasonality, what's on offer and other benefits of local produce

- primary processing, such as vegetable washing, may be required by some kitchens

3.4 Local organisations' perspectives

- clarity and consensus is needed on objectives and operational responsibilities, and issues of succession and rationalisation and financial sustainability need to be addressed to avoid personal burn-out or duplication of effort, and to achieve co-ordination of funding support
- opportunities to foster partnerships within and beyond the Ludlow Marches should be explored further, in particular across sectoral remits such as economic development, education and health
- a mechanism is required for sharing best practice effectively within the area
- the relationships and co-ordination between market towns in the sub-regional area needs to be clarified and co-ordinated
- the multiplicity of food and other activities and festivals in the area may create an 'overkill' of choice, weakening the potential success of any individual event or initiative

3.5 The statutory sector's perspective

- government policy is now well developed on sustainable farming, food, public procurement and health, which provides a supportive context for local action, but links need to be strengthened between health, economic and other agendas
- strategies are developing but most rely on private or social enterprise to develop further, as mainstream funding is limited and competition for funds is high
- public sector bodies can, however, offer a lot of help in facilitating, enabling and hand-holding project development
- The Learning and Skills Council, and other training providers, need to be made more aware of training needs in respect of a wide range of local food issues

3.6 The consumers' perspective

- the needs of low income communities needs to be met better in terms of food access and education about healthy eating and cooking
- all parties need to recognise that better eating habits require a cultural change, which is a slow and incremental process
- much better marketing/awareness raising is required all round
- there is a need to strengthen the understanding of the relationship between food systems and choices and the character of the local landscape

3.7 Opportunities to develop, new ideas and new directions

The points are noted in order of importance (as defined by the workshop delegates):

- develop a mechanism or organisation (South Shropshire Food Links?) to facilitate networking between diverse sectors and stakeholders – producers, wholesalers, retailers, caterers in hospitality sector, schools and other institutions, health, community and education sectors. This would keep all parties informed about who's who, new and existing projects, to identify and assist in the enabling of opportunities for business or community initiatives, and to identify funding or other support mechanisms
- build on existing and proposed infrastructure in respect of processing, packaging, warehousing, supply and demand information, marketing and distribution – in particular to enable better access to local food by low income families
- strengthen the marketing and identity of food from the Ludlow Marches
- develop a shared vision for local food in the area and clarity about who does what, and the nature of the overlaps
- facilitate producer collaboration
- a local food supermarket may be an attractive idea to develop
- make better use of the Internet to generate sales and to promote the food of the area
- enable easier auditing processes for small producers
- find ways to involve all sections of the community in developing an interest, understanding and participation in health and local food initiatives (i.e. not just wealthy foodies)
- carry out more mapping of food and health issues, especially regarding low income communities
- help develop awareness of opportunities for food co-ops in low income communities, and enable their development if required
- develop further the integration of healthy food, cooking skills and food systems education into the school curriculum
- enable better understanding by cooks and caterers of local and seasonal produce
- encourage public sector procurers to make use of recent Defra guidance on tender specification and evaluation to offer better opportunities for local producers
- develop better understanding of hospitality sector needs and raise awareness of local sourcing opportunities, and broker links between producers and customers
- develop better integration of tourism sector and local food, including the understanding of links between local food systems and the character of the landscape

4 A VISION FOR THE LOCAL FOOD SECTOR IN THE LUDLOW MARCHES

A core exercise in the workshop required delegates to project ahead to the year 2015, to describe what a successful local food sector might be like. The following summary of this vision is also informed by comments by stakeholders in the discussions held prior to the workshop:

By 2015, core values expressed by the local community are putting food high on the agenda. There is a better understanding of the environmental sustainability of food production and distribution systems and their impact on landscape management. In parallel, there is a wider understanding by all sections of the community about the links between diet, health and lifestyle. Educational programmes at school and for families support this.

As a result, there is more demand for local and organic food, and prices are such that more people see better food as good value. This helps link to health programmes that are addressing obesity and other diet-related illness.

Supporting this demand, collaboration between local producers and others in the food chain has resulted in better local infrastructure. Examples include a local co-operatively owned processing and distribution centre, co-ordinated marketing and better links with other business and community organisations across the region. These facilities help the market towns to work as business hubs, and there is more employment in the food sector.

Producers are now able to meet demand locally as well as getting better access to regional and national markets. In part this is enabled by an effective information system that informs all parties about demand, supply and trends in food and drink markets.

One of the key changes has been in schools, where more local, fresh food is cooked on the premises. Pupils and their families are involved in food growing projects and cooking skills development. In parallel, other public sector institutions are finding that, with help from independent agencies, they are able to source in such a way that local produce meets best value criteria. Chefs and kitchen staff are better skilled and informed about healthy, local and seasonal food choices.

In residential communities, food co-ops have formed to buy directly from a number of local farmers and other producers, linked to farm visits. A local produce supermarket has been created that sources food as locally as possible. It offers a full range of food types prepared locally including healthy, ready-to-eat and frozen food.

In restaurants, B&Bs and pubs, more local food is used, helping create distinctiveness in the local cuisine and tourism offering.

Local organisations, businesses and interested individuals are all regularly informed about local food activity, and invited to get involved in helping new or current projects to work effectively. A well informed organisation or individual, led by a local steering group, sits at the core of these activities to enable this cross-sectoral networking.

5 ACTION PLAN

One of the key outputs from the workshop asked delegates to 'vote' for their highest priority aspects of the 2015 vision, which they subsequently worked on to create the bones of an action plan. The verbatim record of their discussions is recorded in the appendix, section 6.

In most cases the delegates have agreed to meet following the workshop to take forward these action areas.

The following key actions are noted:

1 Developing a local networking mechanism, to inform and co-ordinate activity between stakeholders of all types:

| Activity | Lead partners |
|---|------------------|
| Set up initial meeting to establish co-operation between voluntary food groups and other key stakeholders | Kate Norman |
| Build on local producer co-operation | EFFP, Rural Hubs |

2 Looking more deeply at the feasibility of a local food & drink business marketing and information system, and a local processing, distribution and marketing centre:

| Activity | Lead partners |
|--|--|
| Begin feasibility study for a processing and distribution node | SASTAK, Peter Norman, Bromfield Farm Shop, SCC, SSDC, |
| Develop the idea for a local produce information system | Local to Ludlow, Carl Rowley – Ludlow Sausage Co., Our Local Food, |
| Develop link to emerging AONB network | AONB, Countryside Agency |

3 Looking into the feasibility of a local food supermarket:

| Activity | Lead partners |
|--|---|
| Further research and discussion required | Tony Norman, John Lewis, Julia Brereton, Celia Perrin |
| Consultancy support | EFFP |

4 Developing more pilots and new tendering/contract systems to enable local food to be purchased for local schools – linked to better educational programmes about food systems, healthy diet and cooking skills:

| Activity | Lead partners |
|---|---|
| Developing new approaches to public sector supply chains | Bill Campbell |
| Working with schools on farm visits and other school and community health & diet programmes | Local to Ludlow, Tahira Paul, PCT, CACF |
| Developing better school and community gardens | Ludlow Allotment Assn, Slow Food, Ludlow in Bloom |
| Engaging probation and community services | Probation service, SCC, Youth Service, Rockspring |
| Better information and communication, e.g. through a local educational 'Foodtech' website | Slow Food |
| Identifying needs and training opportunities to support food industry requirements | Graeme Perks |

5 Assisting in the development of farm tourism and linking tourism marketing to the distinctiveness and availability of local food:

| Activity | Lead partners |
|---|--|
| Promote visitor activity linking farms to local food | Tourism Bodies, Slow Food, Ludlow 21 |
| Co-ordinated marketing of places to buy and eat local produce | Local to Ludlow, SS Tourism, County Councils |
| Developing and supporting distinctive, high quality local produce | Slow Food, Festivals |

6 APPENDIX 1 – WORKSHOP OUTPUTS

The workshop involved the use of notes written to flip charts as well as ‘sticky notes’ prepared by the workshop delegates. A verbatim record of the introductory session is available separately. Recorded here are the key outputs:

6.1 Action areas

The action area spokesmen each offered to follow up the workshop with detailed notes on what was discussed and what could be done. These are duplicated as follows:

6.1.1 *A local produce supermarket*

Brainstorm

- 7-day a week outlet
- car parking
- one stop shop
- knowledge of product
- reasonable price
- wholesale and distribution centre
- pre-order – Internet/phone/fax
- convenience food
- food could be frozen
- coffee shop/food
- educate customer – produce and farm tours
- samples and leaflets
- working people require long opening hours
- supermarket style with car park in local towns and villages
- special offers to promote
- special buses for shopping
- suppliers working together/splitting costs
- good position
- rates and rent, overheads, staff cost
- distribution
- drip feed information
- find people who are willing to give up time for this project

Action

- 1) Find location – contact council
- 2) Advertise
- 3) Commitment from suppliers – co-op?

4) finance/management

Help from: EFPF, Defra – funding, RDS, Members

Further discussion with group would be interesting but no date has been set.

Research to do – location, market, supply, meet again

6.1.2 Processing & distribution

Focused on provision of a centre(s) for this activity. There was no wider discussion of the problems for producers in pursuing value-added/processing or distinctions in production for wholesalers versus niche market buyers; what these issues mean for travel time, destinations etc. – all highly relevant to the reality of what is truly possible in terms of production, processing and distribution.

Brainstorm:

- Focussing purely on a physical CENTRE(s)
- Need for Funding
- Need for Market Research (viewpoint of Consumers, Producers, Funders, Administrators...)
- “Localisation” – network of Local Distribution Centres – Travel no more than 15 miles to the nearest; distance of 30 miles between each LDC; Where to locate them??
- Mapping the producers – who produces what and where?
- What will be in Centre?
 - Wash & Bag
 - Primary Processing
 - Secondary Processing
- Who will manage it?
- What happens to profits? Plough back; Shareholders...
- Capacity to serve whole Hospitality/Public Catering Market in area & Retail/Food Service Industry
- Marketing Opportunities outside of Area “Marches Brand” across UK & beyond
- Links with other sectors (Tourism & Leisure, Crafts) Adding Value to Product
- Transportation – Cheap/Tax Breaks supporting Sustainable Fuel Systems; Integrated incl. “sharing” miles with other businesses (half empty van scenario)
- West Midlands Market = the sustainable consumer

Opportunities:

Building upon the following:

Bromfield Food Hub; Craven Arms SASTAK; AONB Work; Battlefield Food Enterprise Park; Organic By Order; GreenGrocer (Warwickshire & Worcestershire Rural Hub work); “Our Local Food” Model; “Local To Oswestry”; Ludlow Eco Park

Barriers:

Funding; logistics; sustainability/viability; politics; personnel & harnessing energy; parochialism

Who Can Do What/Who Should Be Involved?

1. Shropshire County Council & South Shropshire District Council – identifying land/buildings & funding and being open to support the proposal
2. Shropshire Rural Hub – role uncertain?
3. Initiatives (Ludlow 21 Food & Farming Group; Local to Ludlow; Food Fayres; Farmers Markets...) – Champions & Campaigners; Marketing & Promotion
4. AONB Officer (soon to be appointed post – purpose of role to be explored) – Development of Business Plan?
5. Producers & Suppliers – Backing for Centre; provision of “product”
6. Trade (retailers, hotels, restaurants, B&Bs...) & Public – Purchase Power!

Next steps:

- Market research, check who else is doing what.
- Business plan
- Visit other models
- Council – funding,
- Through AONB?
- meet again

6.1.3 Distribution network

(no notes received)

Next steps:

- Research existing distributions
- Ludlow Sausage Co. (software available) expand to a co-operative approach
- Can we do so now, using existing distributor?
- Work towards a bigger system

6.1.4 Schools / community learning about food

Brainstorm

- Suppliers – co-ordination of the Supply Chain
- Quality criteria, specification, consistency of quality
- Food Safety legislation / accreditation
- Product availability
- Budgets
- Forward planning / programming
- Products & range

- Customer / supplier interaction & communication – point of contact
- Customer & supplier – administration, payments, invoicing, order processing
- Performance monitoring – KPI's – who
- Public Sector Guidelines for Procurement – interpretation & mutual understanding
- Skills / training needs along the Supply Chain
- Processing / prep facilities
- Logistics / storage / order picking / distribution
- There is a will from the public sector to have a go – marketing by suppliers not essential
- Visits to successful projects (school/groups etc.)
- Scale of operation / critical mass needed to establish a sustainable business
- Producers / customers can
 - establish links / contacts with existing suppliers, caterers & wholesalers, existing co-operatives
 - OR develop a new producer controlled business perhaps from Farmers Market stall holders / producers to get availability & range.

Barriers

- legislation
- finance for the development of some existing facility / infrastructure
- shortage of producers so that range / continuity / availability constrained
- logistics
- scale of operation too small
- chilled storage / food safe premises – chilled distribution

Can do's

- Lobbying to change Rules / Legislation
- Pilot local produce – assess training needs / costs logistics
- promote existing examples
- share best practice of working supply chains
- forge links between schools & local producers
- organise producers into supply groups
- access to funding and business skills
- incubating an approach using Ruralscapes, Peter Norman / SASTAC & Green Grocer
- Educate schools in local food culture
- Educate children and parents – benefits for health / working with dieticians, local economy (local multiplier 3)
- Impacts on local economy, rural regeneration, rural community profiles

Next steps:

- Continue to work with partners to encourage local suppliers to change tendering rules for fruit + veg contracts
- Simplify tendering process.
- Pilot local produce, network through council, publish evaluation report.
- Influence curriculum. Encourage school gardens
- Professional resources – needs money
- Needs co-ordinated approach
- Start promoting community/ school gardens
- meet again

6.1.5 Education across the board**Brainstorm**

- Thinking across the board – schools, wider community, every agenda and mechanism
- Look at best practice
- Engage LEA, head teachers.
- Communicate effectively
- Clear informed message
- Good quality presentation
- Engagement of the community
- Funding for events
- Publicity and endorsement
- Own dynamism and passion to promote projects

What is being done at the moment?

Food Festival/Chamber of Commerce & Trade

- Young chefs:
Ludlow 21, Food and Farming Group
- Market and farm visits
Rockspring Community Centre
- Sure Start, Young parents' groups:
Youth Foyer
- Small projects (making soups etc)
Youth Service
- Existing groups covering food issues
Youth Forum
- Activities when funding exists
Tara?
- Gardening and cooking

FWAG

- Working with farmers
CittaSlow/Slow food
- Looking at all sustainable food issues
Ludlow Allotment Association
- Organic gardening group
Colleges and Schools
- Limited by curriculum

Ambitions

- School Gardens and Community Gardens
- Ludlow Allotment Ass., Food and Farming Group, Slow Food, Working Together, (groups to liaise)
- Also Ludlow in Bloom and Gardening Fair
- After School Clubs
- Need to spread the message e.g. Foodtech teachers website
- Local democracy partnership interactive website
- Visits to successful projects (school/groups etc)
- Mechanism to create a permanent presence and regular communication network

Opportunities

- Engaging probation and Community Service
- Needs a good website/ linked to Slow Food and CittaSlow

Major Barriers

- Funding: need an organisation that can find and arrange funding for all above
- Volunteer fatigue/ intervention, competition for ownership
- Huge work loads/ national curriculum
- Cultural barrier, raising agenda
- Regulations
- School gardens – timescales/ summer holidays etc.

6.1.6 Agri-Tourism

(no notes received)

Next steps:

- Whole range of opportunities
- Needs regional marketing into conurbations
- Tourism Bodies can help
- involve Slow food, Ludlow 21 etc.

6.1.7 Organisation/ Co-ordination

Brainstorm:

- Many organisations involved with different aims and goals. Need to map these and define roles
- Very local networks – small scale producers
- Role of producers – how to link them up effectively?
- County Rural Hub is a possibility – working groups and a new co-ordinator
- “Marches” is not a clear label to outsiders
- The current loose network involves many different areas – not only Ludlow. Ludlow vs hinterlands may be a problem
- Need to draw on experience from elsewhere – eg. Herefordshire and Powys
- Communication systems? Email network ?
- Do we need an organisation? Or a steering group?
- Role of statutory bodies? and relationships with other organisations
- Co-ordination and access to funding resources
- Directories of stakeholders and information. Who manages this?
- Practical resources – stalls, etc., storage.
- Producers working together can command larger procurement contracts
- Strategic context
- Market research needs

Existing activity and organisations

| Public sector | Voluntary sector | Private sector (producers outlets) |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEFRA – Regional Food and farming • AWM – RR2 • Countryside agency • Tourism. Regional – district • Health group /authority • County Council – LEA • District council • Local Strategic partnerships • Business Link • Market towns • Chambers of trade • AONB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local to Ludlow • Craven Arms CF • Church.Stretton Food Fayre • Ludlow Marches Food Festival • Slow food • Voluntary care sector – meals on wheels • Community Centres • National trust • Wildlife trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFU • HEFF • Producers • Shops • Catering • Hospitality • Tourism • Chambers of commerce • Area Tourism Groups • Craven Arms box scheme • Graig Farm Organic producers |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Councils • Wales – mid Wales partnership, Powys Land Trust • Schools | | |
|---|--|--|

Barriers / Opportunities /Solutions

| Barriers | Opportunities and Solutions |
|---|---|
| Different aims - personalities - criteria/definitions of local - motivations Identities – Ludlow or somewhere else? - may affect finding opportunities Boundaries – counties , England /Wales State aid rules Uncertainty in agriculture – hard to plan strategically Decreasing funding | Loose network of organisations /market towns How would it work? – link to Hub ? – South Shropshire focus – link to Herefordshire networks – Role of AONB – access to funding Increasing contact between England and Wales New agri–environment schemes Link to health agenda Link to regional food and farming group Energy in Market towns |

Next Steps:

- Develop loose network possibilities, under Shropshire HOB umbrella to help with communication
- Kate to conceive the first network meeting

7 APPENDIX 2 – CONTACT DETAILS

| NAME | ORGANISATION | TEL.NO. | E-MAIL | consulted |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|--|-----------|
| WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS | | | | |
| Richard Arnold | The Crown Inn, Munslow | 01584 841205 | info@crowncountryinn.co.uk | yes |
| Julia Brereton | Director of SASTAK machinery ring | 01588 673636 | office@sastak.com | yes |
| Tom Brettell | MTI, Ludlow, Cleobury Mortimer | 07977 261338 | tom.brettell@southshropshire.gov.uk | yes |
| Bill Campbell | Shire Catering, schools pilot | 01743 254439 | bill.campbell@shropshire-cc.gov.uk | yes |
| Jacqui Casey | SCC Research & Sector Development | 01743 252591 | jacqui.casey@shropshire-cc.gov.uk | yes |
| Graham Collier | Worcs. Rural Hub, 'Green Grocer' | 01295 680127 | graham_collier@btinternet.com | yes |
| Peter Cook | Chair, Ludlow Chamber of Trade | 01584 872815 | pricesbakers@btopenworld.com | |
| Alison Cundall | Chair, Cittaslow Ludlow | 01584 873273 | cundall@talk21.com | |
| David Currant | Chair, Ludlow 21 | 01584 875501 | canddcurrant@ecosse.net | |
| Naomi Diamond | F3 Consultant | 08454 580060 | naomi.diamond@localfood.org.uk | |
| Jonathan Felton | Countryside Agency, Eat the View | 01952 247161 | jonathan.felton@countryside.gov.uk | yes |
| John Fleming | Chair, Ludlow Marches Slow Food | 01584 875548 | john@slowfoodludlow.org.uk | |
| David Gibbon | Chair, Craven Arms Community Food | 01588 673086 | davidgibbon@yahoo.co.uk | yes |
| Joy Greenall | Organic beef farmer, Soil Association. | 01588 640307 | mark.ecom@btinternet.com | yes |
| Frances Hall | SSDC Regeneration monitoring officer | 01584 813227 | frances.hall@southshropshire.gov.uk | |
| Irene Harlington | Ludlow 21 Food and farming Group | 01584 879614 | irene@harlنگtn.gotadsl.co.uk | |
| Samantha Hine | SSDC Regeneration Officer | 01584 813206 | samantha.hine@southshropshire.gov.uk | yes |
| Phil Holden | Manager of Shropshire Hills AONB | 01588 674088 | phil.holden@shropshire-cc.gov.uk | yes |
| Jamie Inglis | DEFRA Farming and Food Team | 01902 693293 | Jamie.Inglis@defra.gsi.gov.uk | yes |
| Alan Latchford | Ludlow 21 Food and farming group | 01584 874990 | palatchford@onetel.com | |
| Pam Latchford | Ludlow 21 Food and farming Group | 01584 874990 | palatchford@onetel.com | |
| Jonathan Lewis | Organic farmer, Orleton Farm Shop | 01584 872540 | enquiries@orletonfarmshop.com | yes |
| Rose Lewis | Orleton Farm Shop | 01584 872540 | Sandy.boyd@earlofplymouthestates.co.uk | yes |
| Phil Maile | Chair, Food and Drink Festival | 01584 873611 | phil@foodfestival.co.uk | |
| Josiah Meldrum | Northern Marches Food Marketing Initiative | 01691 679683 | josiah.meldrum@ruralscapes.co.uk | yes |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Simon Michaels | F3 Consultant | 08454 580060 | simon.michaels@localfood.org.uk | |
| Phil Moore | Organic smallholder, Hopesay. | 01588 660737 | phil.moore@hopesay.freeserve.co.uk | |
| Kate Norman | Chair, Ludlow 21 Food & Farming Group | 01584 878398 | kate@ledwyche.demon.co.uk | yes |
| Peter Norman | Treasurer, Ludlow 21 Food & Farming Group | 01584 878398 | peter@ledwyche.demon.co.uk | yes |
| Tony Norman | Organic farmer, Dairy House cooperative | 01544 388305 | tony@theleen.co.uk | yes |
| Tahira Paul | Primary care trust, Nutritionist | 01588 640280 | | yes |
| Graeme Perks | SS District, Ludlow Town councillor | 01584 878202 | gperks@meadowdesigns.co.uk | |
| Celia Perrin | Hammonds shop, Cleobury Mortimer | 01299 270395 | hammond@countrybreak.co.uk | |
| Anthony Ratcliffe | DEFRA Farming and Food Team | 01902 693293 | anthony.ratcliffe@defra.gsi.gov.uk | |
| Nick Read | Diocese of Hereford -Agricultural Chaplain | 07973 361055 | agchap@tiscali.co.uk | |
| Carl Rowley | Ludlow Sausage Company | 01584 877138 | www.theludlowsausage.co.uk | |
| Matt Smith | Market Towns Initiative, Craven Arms | 01588 673992 | matt.smith@southshropshire.gov.uk | yes |
| Anne Smith | Ludlow 21 Food and farming Group | 01584 823599 | daveandanne@cleebarn.freeserve.co.uk | |
| Sarah Starkey | HEFF Marketing Executive, Shropshire | 01746 785185 | sarah.starkey@heff.co.uk | |
| Jane Straker | Organic grocer, Ludlow | 01584 876121 | davidandjane@zoom.co.uk | yes |
| Simon Thelwell | English Farming and Food Partnership | 01939 210308 | sthelwell@effp.com | yes |
| Michael Turner | Organiser, Craven Arms Community Food | 01694 781437 | michaeljturner@onetel.com | yes |
| Bob Welch | Chair, Church Stretton Food Festival | 01694 722998 | bob.welch@btinternet.com | |

APOLOGIES

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|--|-----|
| Ian Baker | AWM head Rural Renaissance | 07919 168238 | ianbaker@advantagemw.co.uk | |
| Sandy Boyd | Bromfield Farm Shop, Plymouth Estates | 01584 856239 | sandy.boyd@earlofplymouthestates.co.uk | yes |
| Glenda Cuttell | Manager, Rockspring Centre, Ludlow | 01584 874922 | info@rockspring.co.uk | yes |
| Mark Hindle | Cheese shops, Ludlow, Leominster | 01568 720307 | enquiries@mousetrapcheese.co.uk | |
| Graeme Kidd | Mayor, Ludlow Town Council | 01584 877946 | gkidd@townscape.co.uk | yes |
| Kate McGeary | Primary Care Trust, Health improvement | 01743 283370 | kate.mcgeary@shropshirepct.nhs.uk | yes |
| Mark Measures | 'Project Carrot', Holme Lacy | 01588 640307 | mark.ecom@btinternet.com | |
| Mike Smith | DEFRA Farming and Food Team | 01905 763355 | mike.smith@defra.gsi.gov.uk | yes |
| Marcus Themans | Chair of Shropshire Rural Hub Food ctee | 01694 771203 | mthemans@themansco.freeserve.co.uk | yes |
| Angie Turner | Shropshire CC, Sustainability Officer | 01743 252599 | angie.turner@shropshire-cc.gov.uk | yes |

OTHERS CONSULTED

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--|-----|
| Douglas Griffiths | Alan Griffiths - Local butchers | 01584 872141 | | yes |
| Mark Hindle | Mousetrap cheese shop | 01568 720307 | | yes |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-----|
| Graham Lambert | Organic Grower | 01588 673559 | | yes |
| Tim Nichols | Our Local Food internet deliveries | 0781 4029664 | info@ourlocalfood.co.uk | yes |
| Emma Noble | Soil Association, Regional Foodworks | 0117 929 0661 | enoble@soilassociation.org | yes |
| Paul Russell | Town Clerk | 01584 878437 | | yes |
| Maggie Wright | Deli on the Square | 01584 877353 | | yes |
| Pete | chef at Dinham Hall hotel | 01584 876464 | | yes |
| | Ludlow hospital services | 01743 492059 | | yes |

8 APPENDIX 3 – CASE STUDIES

A number of case studies were presented at the workshop, which may offer useful insights into opportunities for the local food sector in the Ludlow Marches. In each case there is a brief summary of the project, followed by links or contact details for more information. Visits to some of these projects may be useful for local stakeholders.

8.1 Lochaber Food for Thought

This multi-stakeholder project had as its starting point addressing health through diet. The project has been taken forward involving local people, support organisations, producers, wholesalers, and retailers. Some of the outputs to date include:

- creating a database of all local producers and potential producers
- workshops to support growers and producers
- a website to order local produce
- sheltered housing community edible hanging baskets
- a minibus to take people from a housing estate to variety of local wholesalers
- a recipe book relevant to the local area
- local food cooking demonstrations
- a new farm shop and box scheme

Contact:

Margaret Colyer
Voluntary Action Lochaber
An Drochaid
Claggan
Fort William
PH33 6PH
Tel 01397 701123

8.2 Sandwell Growing Opportunities

The Growing Opportunities project derived from four years of research in the Sandwell area, to try to identify mechanisms to link health and regeneration, and the needs of disabled people.

The project is now well into its development phase, creating two purpose built centres for therapeutic horticulture, food production and local distribution. These projects will be a core part of an emerging vision for independent living, healthy eating, exercise and lifelong learning.

A participative approach has been at the core of the project. Major programmes of consultation have been held, and continue, so that the project is led by the needs and aspirations of the users.

Outputs from the project include:

- two purpose built centres for therapeutic horticulture, food production and local distribution

- training programmes for independent living, healthy eating, exercise and lifelong learning
- a fully working market garden focusing on high-value crops
- meeting leisure, educational, social, and biodiversity objectives
- getting fresh food to local people

Contact:

Grainne Siggine
 Ideal for All 100 Oldbury Road
 Smethwick
 West Midlands B66 1JE
 0121 565 7906 grainne_siggins@sandwell.gov.uk

8.3 Local Food in Somerset Schools

This pilot project was carried out in Oct 04 - March 05. The aim was to help local producers to access school catering contracts. Outputs of the project include:

- training given to producers to enable new contracts
- worked with schools to raise awareness
- children kept food diaries
- during pilot local food increased from 12-20%
- evaluation of benefits using LM3
- myschoollunch website

www.myschoollunch.co.uk

Paul Sander Jackson
 Somerset Food Links
 Old Town Hall
 Bow Street
 Langport
 TA10 9PR
 Tel: 01458 259485

8.4 Somerset Centre for Local Food

This centre is in the development stages, and plans to incorporate a number of functions within premises at Barrington Court, a National Trust property. The centre will help smaller producers through:

- a local food distribution facility
- training /education for producers and community groups
- a local food shop
- incubation workspace
- a cafe and visitor centre

Contact: Somerset Food Links as above.

The **Somerset Local Food Direct** project is also of relevance, whereby producers have formed a co-operative to distribute produce to local shops and domestic customers. It is based at a small warehouse near Glastonbury, where orders are processed. Web-based orders are a key component.

www.sfmdirect.co.uk

8.5 Hampshire organic burgers in local schools

This project to supply local organic burgers to schools in Hampshire was a partnership between the producers, the county catering services, the local food group, the abattoir/processor and wholesalers 3663. The client was impressed by value for money of the product. The producer benefited by finding a low margin but steady market for forequarter beef, which complements other higher value parts of the carcass.

Contact:

Tim Brock,
Hampshire Fare
www.hampshirefare.co.uk

8.6 SPICE - East of England

This project works to support and promote sustainable public catering across the East of England. It works by enabling partnership and facilitation between school caterers, Healthy Schools and other public health workers, producers, distributors.

It also aims to share best practice on menus, skills & specification; and has set up a guidance booklet on how to set up an in-house catering operation and how to develop a whole-school approach to healthy food.

Contact EAFL:

www.eafl.org.uk/default.asp?topic=Spice

8.7 Eostre Organics

This is an organic producer co-operative, with members in East Anglia and from partner producers and co-operatives in the UK and Europe.

They sell their produce at farmers' markets, via box schemes, and to independent outlets. Increasingly they are aiming at public sector catering such as at Stibbington Centre for Environmental Education in Cambridgeshire, and have also supplied direct to East London food co-ops.

Eostre aims to support its members and to benefit consumers by providing a wide range of organic fruit, vegetables and processed foods through independent outlets.

Contact: www.eostreorganics.co.uk

8.8 RCMA Social Enterprise Ltd

RCMA runs the farmers' market in Cardiff, but has developed a range of other food projects, which include:

- work in schools on healthy eating, and developing links to the market
- working with women's groups from a range of ethnic backgrounds on cooking skills
- assisting with business incubation for micro food businesses
- developing a community garden for training and horticultural therapy, which will sell produce at the market and to other local outlets

Contact:

Ken Moon

Riverside Community Market Association Social Enterprise Ltd

South Riverside Community Development Centre

Brunel Street, Riverside, Cardiff CF11 6ES

Tel: 029 20 19 00 36

Email: Ken@riversidemarket.org.uk

Web: www.riversidemarket.org.uk