

Discussion paper

Sustainable food in Hounslow

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About the author

Andrew Dakers gained an MSc Development Management from The Open University in 2002. His career has spanned IT at the BBC, and then communications and business change management at the UN and GlaxoSmithKline. Today he works for an international environmental NGO. Andrew has been a parliamentary candidate and was elected as a local councillor in 2006. Amongst many community commitments Andrew now chairs the project to regenerate the historical heart of Brentford town centre; sits on the board of the waste disposal authority for West London; and is a trustee of Hounslow's pension fund. He has written this report in a personal capacity with the generous advice and support of various individuals and organisations.

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1.0 Executive summary

Food in Hounslow constitutes 22% or 1.17 global hectares (gha)/person of each Hounslow resident's ecological footprint. Given that our total footprint would require three planet earths to sustain, urgent action is needed. This is reflected in Hounslow's new administration's plan for Hounslow, which includes the objective of "Work[ing] to reduce the Boroughs overall ecological footprint."¹

In response this discussion paper outlines out how Hounslow could set targets and achieve 3% annual reductions in our food footprint through to 2024. Annual reduction targets of 3% are already supported for CO2 emission reductions by the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats.

The paper sets out the steps Hounslow Council should take to develop farmers' markets and allotments in the borough. It then goes on to look at ways in which public sector food procurement can be made more robust, as well as the need to proactively market sustainable food. Finally the paper considers key interventions to shorten the supply chains of food coming into Hounslow through Western International Market, supermarkets, and independent retailers and high streets.

The cumulative impact of these measures would help to achieve a 54% ecological footprint reduction per capita by 2024 or an ecological footprint of 0.54 gha/person, although it is noted that more research is needed into the respective contributions of different interventions. In conclusion the report identifies two new posts that should be created to develop the borough's allotments and actively market sustainable food products available at Western International Market. These would be supported by also including the sustainable food programme in the work content of existing officers at the Council.

Five local political parties responded extremely positively to a question on sustainable food from a local waste action group before the May 2006 local elections (see appendix 1). This clear support across the political spectrum suggests now is clearly the time to press ahead with implementing a comprehensive sustainable food strategy in Hounslow.

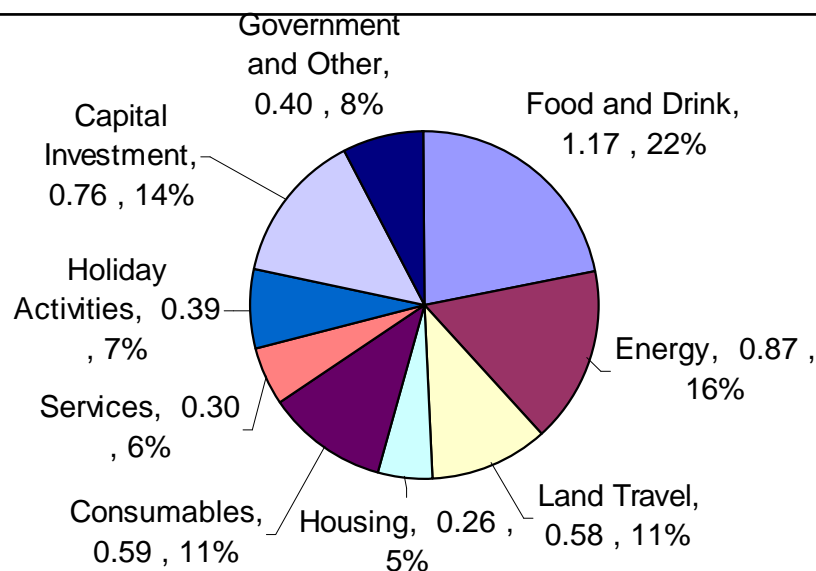
¹ The Hounslow Plan 2006-10
[http://213.210.33.3/Published/C00000254/M00003827/AI00029238/\\$FINALHOUNSLOWPLAN.docA.ps.pdf](http://213.210.33.3/Published/C00000254/M00003827/AI00029238/$FINALHOUNSLOWPLAN.docA.ps.pdf) , pg.61

2.0 The challenge

2.1 Food's unsustainable ecological footprint

Each Hounslow resident's ecological footprint is on average 5.32 global hectares (gha)/person, which would require three planet earths to sustain (see chart below).² A strong correlation appears to exist between the rapid decline in the planet's biodiversity and humanity's increasing ecological footprint (which includes CO₂ emissions). Changed farm practices in the UK, for example, are believed to be responsible for a decline in more than 40% of farmland bird populations since 1970. All this illustrates the need for urgent action to change our consumption patterns.

Food in Hounslow constitutes 22% or 1.17 gha/person of each Hounslow resident's ecological footprint. Hence addressing the lack of environmental sustainability in our food supply chains is clearly just as important as moving quickly towards sustainable transport and energy systems.



Source: *Hounslow's Ecological Footprint report (Stockholm Environment Institute 2006)*³

Modern food systems involve resources being consumed and pollution and waste being generated at each stage of food chain: production, processing, packaging, distribution and retailing. Agricultural production draws 70 per cent of the world's freshwater – more than

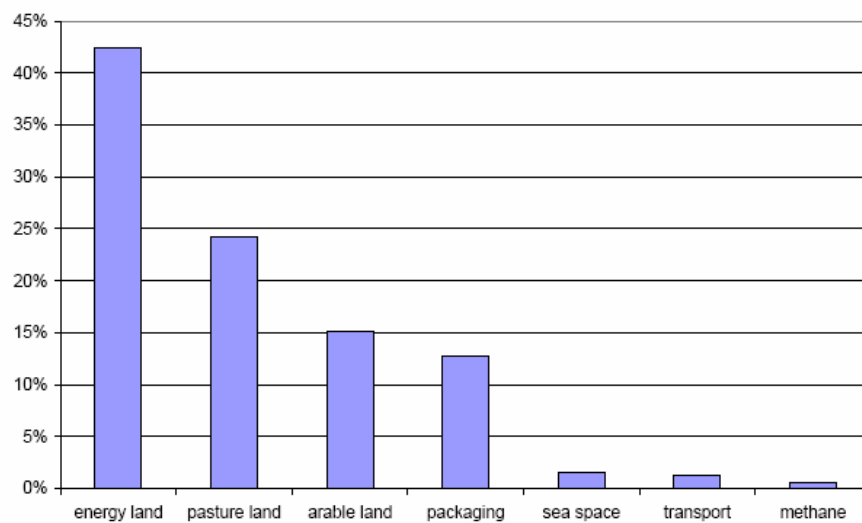
² "Work to reduce the boroughs overall ecological footprint" is one of the objectives towards the target of "Creat[ing] a cleaner and more sustainable local environment" in The Hounslow Plan 2006-10 (pg. 61)

³ *Capital Investment* is in assets that are used repeatedly or continuously over a number of years to produce goods. For example, machinery used to create a product.

90% in some countries – and this contributes to massive degradation of world’s freshwater ecosystems.

The food system now accounts for up to 40% of all UK road freight. Distances involved in the distribution of fresh produce can be demonstrated by looking at a traditional meal. If bought at a supermarket, many ingredients will have been imported and could have travelled, cumulatively, over 39,000km. However, by choosing seasonal products and purchasing them locally, for instance at a FARMA certified farmers’ market, could reduce the total distance by 66 times – to just 605km.

The ecological impacts of food production for the UK⁴



Energy land – amount of land need to absorb CO₂ from food production (transport and fertiliser production)

Pasture land – used for grazing animals

Arable land – cultivated for crop production

Methane – results from wasted food decomposing

The chart above shows the different impacts of food and reveals that direct impact of growing or rearing food accounts for over four-fifths of the total. The impact of packaging is highlighted by showing that its impact is almost the same as the arable land area required to grow the food. As transport accounts for only 1% of the impact it would appear that buying local food is not an important issue. However, this is not the case as there can be a link between the amount of packaging and food wastage with greater transport distances. Both packaging and food wastage cause increased methane emissions from landfill. There are also other impacts of the food transportation system which impact negatively on human health, for example, noise, pollution to air, land and water.⁵

⁴ One Planet Living in the suburbs, WWF-UK, 2006, pg 78

⁵ *Ibid*, pg 78

2.2 Sustainable food – a cross party concern

On 1 December 2006 David Cameron, Leader of the Conservatives, said at the launch of Slow Food UK⁶ that: “Food matters to public health, with the impact of rising obesity on the NHS... it matters to our countryside, as small local producers struggle to compete with multinationals. And it matters greatly to the environment – not least because of the carbon emissions that come from air-freighting food around the world.”⁷

David Milliband (Environment Secretary) has recently refocused Defra on delivering a One Planet Living⁸ agenda for the UK. In Autumn 2004 the Liberal Democrats passed a motion “Hungry for change” at their conference acknowledging “the environment is suffering as a result of the over-reliance on processed foods and a lack of cooking skills and nutritional knowledge.”⁹

Locally the responses of all the political parties in Hounslow to a questionnaire by Brentford Recycling Action Group before the May 2006 elections (see Appendix 1) demonstrates keen support across the party political spectrum for shifting Hounslow towards a lower impact local, organic and seasonal food economy.

2.3 Links to the healthcare and school meals agenda

Adopting a preventative approach to healthcare and making healthier lifestyles easier is a national priority.¹⁰ Better health through a culture of home food consumption: consumption of genuinely fresh fruits and vegetables from a local garden, can underpin good health and help to combat the current obesity epidemic. Garden produce can keep people healthy when they grow it and also when they consume it.

In the past few years Jamie Oliver has brought the quality of school food to the centre of the political stage.¹¹ The government has responded with increased investment as well as the creation of the School Food Trust¹². In Hounslow the Council developed a Food Strategy with the Primary Care Trust. This included consideration of the negative impact of the food system on environmental sustainability,

⁶ Slow Food is a non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organisation that was founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people’s dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world. (Source: www.slowfooduk.org)

⁷ Improving our food culture, 1 December 2006, http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=133882

⁸ One Planet Living – a joint partnership between Bioregional and WWF-UK, www.oneplanetliving.org

⁹ Liberal Democrat Autumn 2004 Conference Motions Report, <http://www.libdems.org.uk/media/documents/policies/2004Bournemouth.pdf>

¹⁰ Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier, Department of Health, 2004 <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/07/92/04120792.pdf>, pg. 31

¹¹ Jamie Oliver’s manifesto, <http://www.jamieoliver.com/schooldinners/manifesto>

¹² Food School Trust, <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk>

although the resultant action plan did not rise to the scale of the challenge. Some would argue this was due to a lack of political will, and thus resource commitment, at the time.¹³

DS Catering who supply food to a large number of Hounslow Council's schools provide two portions of vegetables a day. One of these is fresh and the second is organic frozen. Fruit is also available.¹⁴ The fresh vegetable will often be local and seasonal as this can be most cost effective. However in part this is dependent on the commitment of suppliers to carefully considered menu design.¹⁵

Despite the fact that at times local authorities are exploring new ground, many are already supporting local food initiatives as a means to simultaneously achieving environmental, economic and social goals. Liverpool City Council backed the Merseyside Local Food for Local People¹⁶ project and part funded it. Kirklees and Calderdale Councils are backing the Food Futures initiative to promote local Yorkshire food¹⁷.

This paper sets out to explore some of the key opportunities that present themselves in Hounslow to reduce our ecological footprint from food consumption as we set out to become a beacon local authority for sustainable development in the next six years.

¹³ Hounslow Food Strategy (2004), pg.20

¹⁴ Telephone conversation with David Adams, Manager of DS Catering on Thursday 7th December 2006

¹⁵ Good Food on the Public Plate: A manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering (2003), East Anglia Food Link and Sustain, Edited by Clive Peckham and James Petts, <http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/goodfoodpp.pdf> (pg 140 of PDF)

¹⁶ Merseyside Local Food Initiative, http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/merseyside_local_food.pdf

¹⁷ Food Futures, <http://www.foodvision.gov.uk/pages/food-futures>

3.0 Local targets

A recent report by WWF-UK researched what would be required to achieve a substantial reduction in three planet lifestyles in the suburban context. The modelling demonstrated that a keen resident in the Solihull suburbs, where steps had been taken to develop local food systems, could over time achieve a reduction of 55% of their existing food ecological footprint.

Ecological Footprint of nourishment for each scenario showing savings compared to Scenario 1¹⁸

Food and drink	Scenario 1 'Average' resident of Solihull	Scenario 2 'Average' resident of Solihull living in retrofitted property	Scenario 3 'Keen' resident living in Solihull's suburbs	Scenario 4 'Keen' resident living in retrofitted property
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ average Solihull consumption rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low meat and dairy diet ▪ mainly all local, organic produce ▪ 30% less waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low meat, dairy and fish consumption ▪ twice fresh fruit and vegetable consumption ▪ increased transport impact due to increased vegetable and fruit consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ low meat, dairy and fish diet ▪ nearly all local, organic produce ▪ no food waste
EF/habitant	1.22gHa 100%	0.64gHa -48%	0.83gHa -32%	0.55gHa -55%

In the Solihull scenarios 'keenness' is defined as residents who are:

- aware of their ecological impact
- sufficiently motivated to try to reduce this impact, for example, through turning off lights when not in use, growing food in their gardens, composting their organic waste and reducing car use and aviation where possible.

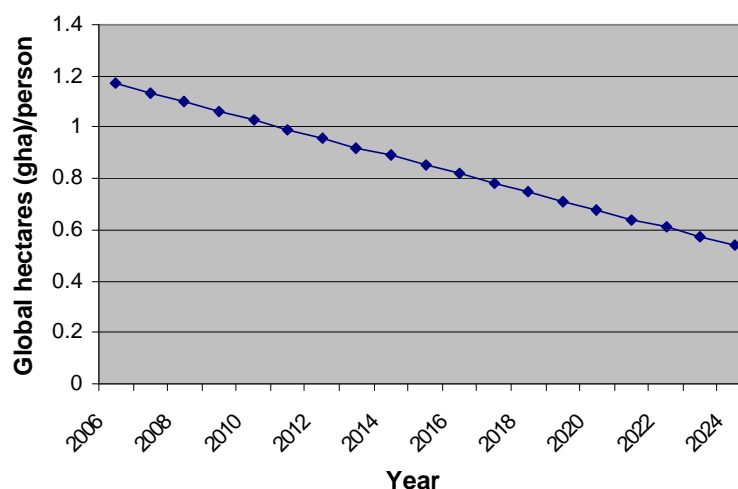
A 'retrofitted' suburb is one in which homes have been:

- retrofitted to have a lower ecological impact and sustainable goods
- services and infrastructure are locally available, such as microgeneration
- efficient public transport
- local food systems
- rainwater harvesting.

Nationally all of the three largest political parties have now accepted the need for CO₂ emission reduction targets. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have supported Friends of the Earth's call for 3% year on year CO₂ emission reduction targets. This same 3% target is applied below to Hounslow's food ecological footprint, which of course includes CO₂ emissions.

¹⁸ One Planet Living in the Suburbs, WWF-UK, 2006, pg 83

Proposed Hounslow Food Ecological Footprint Targets

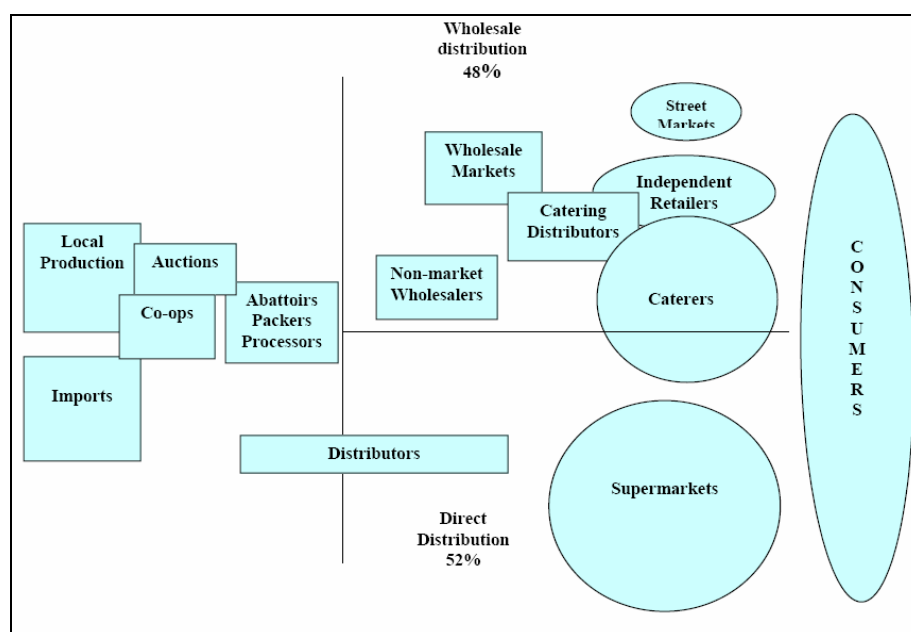


Year	% of 2006 baseline Hounslow food ecological footprint	Hounslow Food Ecological Footprint (gha/person)
2006	100	1.17
2007	97	1.13
2008	94	1.1
2009	91	1.06
2010	88	1.03
2011	85	0.99
2012	82	0.96
2013	79	0.92
2014	76	0.89
2015	73	0.85
2016	70	0.82
2017	67	0.78
2018	64	0.75
2019	61	0.71
2020	58	0.68
2021	55	0.64
2022	52	0.61
2023	49	0.57
2024	46	0.54

Essentially the goal is to halve Hounslow's food footprint between 2007 and 2024. The fourth chapter of this paper considers the practical steps that would be required in Hounslow to start achieving these challenging annual targets. London Borough of Hounslow needs to use modelling tools to determine the relative contribution of various interventions to these food footprint reduction targets.

4.0 Opportunities to reduce Hounslow's food footprint

The food supply chain is exceedingly complex (see diagram below) and will require multiple interventions to reduce the ecological footprint of Hounslow's food consumption. Hounslow Council must focus its efforts where it can have most influence.



'Food supply chain overview' in *London's wholesale markets review*, Saphir/ Defra, 2002, pg.50

This chapter of the discussion paper has two parts. The first looks at opportunities to develop farmers markets, allotments and increase the marketing of sustainable food in Hounslow Borough. These are categorised as lower impact. Farmers markets and allotments seem likely to remain fairly niche as a percentage of total food consumption in Hounslow for the foreseeable future. Despite this they are important in raising awareness of environmentally sustainable food and 'setting the mood music'. Beyond simply raising awareness, in combination these levers have the potential to trigger significant shifts in the market place by changing demand.

The second section considers the significant influence that Hounslow Council has in changing public sector food procurement, business practices at Western International Market (a major London wholesale market and 'food hub' owned by the Council), supermarkets and high streets. Actions proposed in this section could contribute very significantly to a reduction in the food element of the borough's ecological footprint.

4.1 Lower impact opportunities

4.1.1 Farmers markets

Background

Farmers' markets are food markets where farmers and producers bring their produce for sale direct to the public. Today there are over 500 farmers markets in the UK - in rural and urban areas - with a total turnover of more than £100 million a year. Over half the markets are National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA) certified.

Hounslow Borough's only certified market is at Turnham Green (Belmont Primary School, Belmont Road W4) from 9am – 1pm on Saturdays. Brentford High Street and Dukes Meadows, Chiswick also host weekly farmers markets.

Research by Friends of the Earth suggests farmers, local economies, consumers and the environment all benefit from farmers' markets.

Benefits for farmers

- different source of revenue, often crucial in today's difficult farming climate
- greater control over their economic lives
- higher prices as the middle man is cut out
- diversify skills giving marketing and business expertise
- increased networking and learning opportunities with other farmers

Benefits for the local economy

- more money is spent in the local economy, increasing the multiplier effect
- high knock-on spending in other shops on market days
- outlet for local produce, spurring local value-added start ups and expansions
- reinforce local job and business networks, maintaining local employment

Benefits for consumers and the environment

- increased choice for fresh, healthy produce usually at competitive prices
- can offer extra fresh, affordable produce in areas with few such options
- strengthen community - a key factor in the quality of life in Britain
- food travels less far and has less packaging
- vital outlet for farmers selling organic and less intensively-produced food

Evidence from the UK and other countries such as the USA clearly shows that the potential for further growth in farmers' markets is substantial. Although at least four of every five established farmers markets are self-financing, support is required to encourage their development, help with start-up costs and networking at the local

authority level. Local authorities like Hounslow are well placed to provide such support.¹⁹

National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA) Core Criteria²⁰

1. Locally produced

Only produce from the defined area shall be eligible for sale at a farmers market. Producers from the area defined as local must be given preference.

There are two types of local definition that FARMA recognises:

Local as a radius - Local is defined as a radius from the market. A definition of 30 miles is ideal, up to 50 miles is acceptable for larger cities and coastal or remote towns and villages.

Local as a county boundary - The definition of local may also be a county boundary or other geographic boundary such as a National park that is similar in size to the radius option.

Difficult to source produce

Producers from further afield may attend the market if there is no suitable local producer of a given product. Markets that accept producers from beyond their definition of local should include a clause that states "preference will be given to the most local producer when a space becomes available at the market, without compromising quality".

Maximum distance

If producers from beyond the area you define as local are permitted to attend your market/s it is recommended that a maximum distance of 100 miles of the market is stated.

2. Principal producer

The principal producer, a representative directly involved in the production process or a close family member must attend the stall.

The stall should be operated by someone directly involved in production, not just in other aspects of the producer's business. One of the key principles of a Farmers' Market is for the consumer to have a direct relationship with the producer.

¹⁹ http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/farmers_markets_actions.pdf

²⁰ <http://www.farmersmarkets.net/certification2.htm#cert2>

Community associations such as local allotment societies or Country Market groups may be agreed as principal producers on a case by case basis by the local market.

3. Primary, own produce

All produce sold must be grown, reared, caught by the stall holder within the defined local area

Primary produce will have been grown or reared on the producer's land, for livestock and plants this means grown or finished (having spent at least 50% to its life) on the producer's land. Preference should be given to the largest percentage of a products life cycle spent on the producer's land.

Game shot or caught within the defined local area may be sold at farmers markets by the person rearing or licensed to hunt the game.

Fish at a Farmers Market, ideally, should be sold by the fisherman. A representative of a number of known local boats may attend the market so long as the fishing grounds are known local, inshore waters and a link to the fishing business/es can be proven.

4. Secondary, own produce

All produce must be brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or processed by the stall holder using at least one ingredient grown or reared within the defined local area. The base product should be substantially altered

Anyone processing produce or adding value is a secondary producer. For processed products the base product should be substantially altered and they must contain as much local ingredient as possible - this means grown or reared within the area the market defines as local. Receipts should be kept as proof of origin for inspection by the market manager and Trading Standards when requested; producer growing their own should be prepared to be visited by an appointed representative from the market management.

Processors, who want to benefit from the success of farmers' markets, which is partly built on the localness of the food on offer, should be prepared to abide by similar principles.

5. Policy and information

Information should be available to customers at each market about the rules of the market and the production methods of the goods on offer. The Market should also publicise the availability of this information.

6. Other rules

Markets may establish other criteria in addition to the above provided they do not conflict with the core criteria.

For example, a market may choose to split a stall space to allow small scale producers such as allotment associations to sell at the market. Each producer should be treated as a separate applicant and the criteria will apply as before.

In addition for split stalls:

- All producers involved should complete separate application forms
- All producers involved should have their own insurance
- Each producer's areas of the stall should be distinct and produce must be clearly labelled with the producer's name and place of business in addition to legal labelling requirements.

Market management may agree a concession on shared attendance at the market for very small scale producers.

Potential actions in Hounslow

Farmers' markets have great potential, but there are several actions to which Hounslow Council needs to commit if we are to ensure their continued development. Local authority support is needed particularly to deal with:

- Start-up costs
- Publicity, promotion and information exchange
- Help to ensure a permanent farmers' market location
- Ensure that farmers' markets also set up in poorer areas
- Market charter issues
- FARMA or similar certification
- Co-ordinate between local markets – e.g. no clash of dates
- Advise and monitor health and safety/ food hygiene issues

Farmers' market managers will have to deal with a range of local authority departments - for example dealing with planning, environment strategy, market charters, advertising/ publicity, local economic development, trading standards, health and safety, and licensing. Lack of co-operation of just one of these departments can stymie the development of markets; so overall a strong steer from the Executive and Chief Executive's office is needed.

Action specific to particular departments includes:

Economic Development Office

- Support farmers' markets, especially in setting-up, networking and marketing.
- Explain the economic benefits to other departments and elected members.
- Liaise with Local Chambers of Commerce to elicit their support and minimise potential for conflict between farmers' markets and local food retailers.
- Highlight potential benefits to all local traders.

Help will often be needed with set-up costs, e.g. a rent free period, or grants for equipment such as refrigeration units can enable a farmers' market to get off the ground.

Even if the local authority is not managing the market, the market co-ordinator will have dealings with many local authority departments. Putting one person in charge of co-ordinating the authority's response to farmers' markets is crucial.

Environment team

The roles of supporting setting up, co-ordination and networking can alternatively be taken through the Environment strategy office. Environment strategy officers also have a key role in market promotion both to producers and to the local community.

Environmental health and trading standards

Give guidance on health and safety issues to potential stall holders at an early stage, and provide training to those wishing to set up stalls.

Chief Executive's Office

Ensure that the different departments within Hounslow Council are working together to promote farmers' markets.

Legal

Ensure that the legal department allows a flexible approach to the interpretation of Charter rights laws - allowing for example farmers' markets to operate on different days to any conventional markets.²¹

Planning

Positive treatment of planning applications for farmers' markets in recognition of the multiple benefits they bring. Help in identifying suitable sites, and issuing guidance to those wanting to set up a market.

The biggest barrier to farmers' markets in urban areas is sites which can be expensive. Hounslow Council should offer sites such as council office car parks at weekends, where a market can be organised by a third party - such as a local community group or farmers' cooperative. In the US markets pay no (or peppercorn) rent for sites on federal and local government property.

Licensing

Take a positive stance on trading licenses for farmers' markets.

Retailing strategies

Ensure that farmers' markets and other local food initiatives - as providers of multiple economic, environmental and social advantages - are integral parts of local retail strategies.

²¹ The history of charters for markets across Hounslow could be further researched through the London Metropolitan Archives and Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516, <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>

If Hounslow Council takes these actions, then we can expect to see a network of thriving, dynamic farmers' markets, helping to revitalise the local economy, protecting farmers' livelihoods in the South of England and providing community as well as environmental benefits.

4.1.2 Allotments

Background

Hounslow Borough has 34 allotment sites (statutory and non-statutory) across 60 hectares. About six of the allotment sites are almost entirely out of use. Of the 2134 plots available about 1170 are presently utilised. There is very high occupancy – and waiting lists – in the East end of the borough and low occupancy in the West.²²

CIP are responsible for managing Hounslow's allotments but have negligible budget which is used for essential repairs – sometimes not even these. There has not been an allotments officer in the borough for many years.

Tenants have a duty of care for their plot and must keep them clean and maintained in a good state of cultivation.

In their 2005 research Perez-Vazquez, Anderson and Rogers suggest: "Today, it is an exception to find any allotment holder who makes regular and intensive use of pesticides, and even those who do are being more influenced by the organic movement. Diverse organic (ashes, manure, household wastes, and crop and garden remains) and nonorganic (concrete slabs, plastic tubs, bottles, pallets, old tires, fences and old washing machines) waste materials were recycled in allotments to increase soil fertility, keep plants in place, store water or hold compost. Considering these facts, it is expected that organic production in allotments will increase in the future due to food safety, environmental concerns and the popularity of organic food for its healthy qualities."²³

It is worth noting that dependent on there not being any local by-law or plot holder agreement restrictions, an allotment can be used for a wide variety of production. Provided the plot is used mainly for growing vegetables and fruit, plot holders are allowed to keep hens and rabbits on their allotment.

Subject to local authority regulations, plot holders may also be allowed to keep certain other livestock. Plot holders keeping livestock, will need to build suitable fences and structures to make sure they cannot escape. A free fact sheet entitled *The Welfare of Animals on Allotments* is available from the RSPCA.

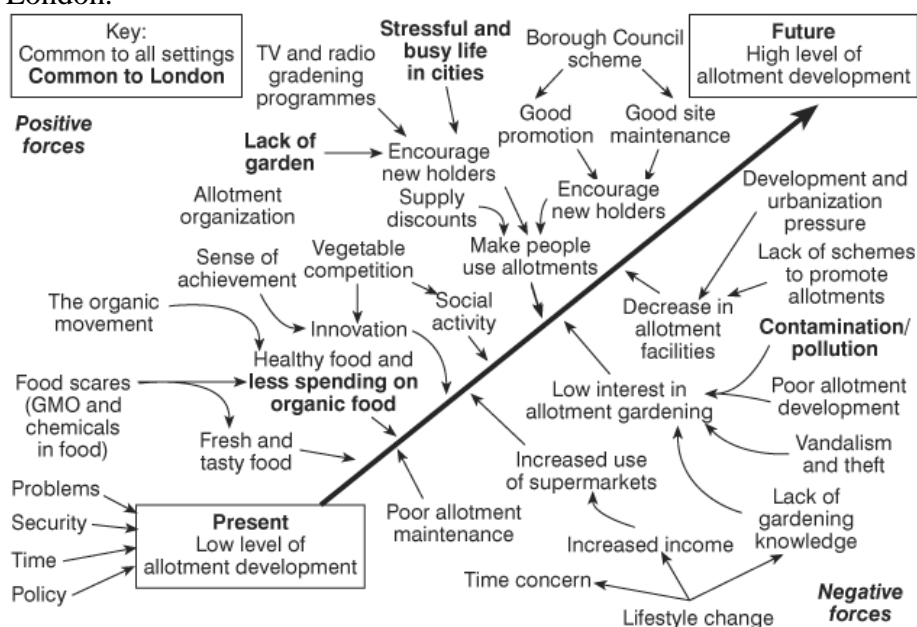
²² In West area about 144 of 533 are used

²³ Assessing Benefits from Allotments as a Component of Urban Agriculture in England, Perez-Vazquez, Anderson and Rogers, 2005, http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-85414-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Beekeeping is allowed on some allotment sites but not all will be suitable and required the council's consent. Plot holders considering keeping bees are also generally advised by DCLG to consider joining the British Beekeeper's Association and taking out insurance.

Composting is permitted as well as ponds which can be very attractive and provide a habitat for wildlife. However they can also present a danger to children and the allotment authority is required to impose conditions on building ponds. These are likely to cover the siting and size of the pond and arrangements for inspection.²⁴

Perez-Vazquez, Anderson and Rogers produced a *Force-field analysis (positive and negative forces) of allotments in London* (below) as part of their research. This highlights some of the drivers that will support or discourage the future level of allotment development and usage in London.



One of their key conclusions is that: "Allotments should be viewed as an integral part of the urban infrastructure and as an asset and enhancement, giving a better quality of life in cities and towns, especially for people who live in flats and houses with no gardens, for people with stressful and busy lives, and for people who wish to grow their own food and who enjoy gardening. ...To develop and sustain allotment gardening in England, there is a need for allotment holders, their organizations and local authorities to combine their efforts."²⁵

²⁴ Allotments: A plot holder's guide

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/690/AllotmentsAPlotHoldersGuide_id1127690.pdf

²⁵ Assessing Benefits from Allotments as a Component of Urban Agriculture in England, Perez-Vazquez, Anderson and Rogers, 2005, http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-85414-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Potential actions in Hounslow

- Strategic review of allotments should include allotments that are managed by charities to ensure that a full picture of supply and demand is developed
- Hounslow’s Local Development Framework (LDF) must incorporate consideration of the necessary land allocation to allotments. This should be informed by further research into existing supply and demand, and then annual targets set for total occupied plots in 2007-2024.
- Hounslow’s sustainability checklist should be reviewed to include consideration of sustainable food provision in development proposals, including the additional allotment new residents coming into the borough may demand
- Ensure that new allotment management contract includes funding for a new Allotment Development Officer post
- To compensate for the steady erosion of green space in the borough Hounslow should pilot “Allotments in the sky” on green roofs. This would see tanked allotment plots integrated into green roof schemes.
- Encourage links between allotments and independent high street outlets to provide a channel to sell surplus produce
- Review best practice guidance in *Growing in the community: a good practice guide for the management of allotments*. Guide jointly published in June 2001 by the DTLR, the Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association and the Shell Better Britain Campaign

4.1.3 Marketing sustainable foodBackground

There are a range of key low food eco-footprint messages²⁶ that need to be disseminated across the community if we are to achieve the targets outlined in chapter 3. These are:

- Reduce the amount of animal protein in diet
 - Enjoy the health benefits of a low meat/dairy diet
- Grow food in garden or local allotment
 - Enjoy the health and environmental benefits of low chemical use on food and land
- Buy local, seasonal and organic produce
 - This might be home grown, a local vegetable box scheme²⁷, farmers’ market or supermarket – eco-labelled (this gives eco-points of food highlighting estimated embodied energy)
- Reduce levels of food wastage and increase composting in gardens

²⁶ One Planet Living in the suburbs,

http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/OPL_suburbs_fullrpt.pdf

²⁷ For example www.organicdelivery.co.uk or www.abel-cole.co.uk – both have different environmental standards

Hounslow's work in this area to date has included the Edible quilt project with Ground Work.

Potential actions in Hounslow

A detailed communications plan should be developed with Corporate Communications and the Environmental Strategy team. Actions might include:

- Utilize full range of channels available to the council: 'hm' magazine, website, schools, Primary Care Trust and other partners in the Hounslow Local Strategic Partnership
- Actively promote environmentally friendly food choices and outlets such as farmers markets, as well as local shops (like Osterley Farm shop) selling sustainably sourced produce.
- Fully populate and promote internet tools like www.BigBarn.co.uk to help Hounslow residents quickly find traders
- Promote the "plot to plate" initiative at Osterley Park^{28 29}
- Encourage the take-up and active use of allotments across the borough
- Promote National Consumer Council and similar league tables of supermarkets environmental performance to ensure that Hounslow residents can make informed shopping choices (for example, features might be run every six months in 'hm' magazine)
- Run an annual Greener Hounslow competition for the workplace, restaurant, supermarket and local shop with the most eco-friendly food
- Engage key local media outlets as partners in communicating the necessary changes to shape a low eco-footprint Hounslow

4.2 Higher impact opportunities

4.2.1 Public sector food procurement

Background

A key element of successive UK Sustainable Development Strategies has been moving the public sector towards environmentally sustainable procurement practices.³⁰ National Audit Office research shows £2 billion of taxpayers' money is spent on food in public-sector organisations.³¹ Nationally there have been many high publicity failures.³² Locally there has been little scrutiny of this area, following the commitment in Hounslow's Environment Challenge Review (2000) to green procurement practices.

²⁸ Hounslow Food Strategy (2004), pgs. 31 & 34

²⁹ National Trust – Trustees Statement, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-3-trustees-statement.pdf>, pg. 15

³⁰ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>

³¹ Value for Money: Smarter food procurement in the public sector, National Audit Office, http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/05-06/0506963es.htm

³² Ministers admit mistake over 'unethical' timber, 12 July 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2124504.stm

Despite this the catering services of organisations such as schools, hospitals, prisons, care homes, as well as the police, fire brigade and others, are beginning to understand what difference they could make if they spent their money in a way that supports the local economy, supply chain infrastructure and food sustainability. Furthermore the council has now signed up to the Mayor of London's Green Procurement code at B1 level and has published Green Purchasing Guidance (August 2006) which includes guidance on food & catering contracts (see below).³³

London Borough of Hounslow Green Purchasing Guidance³⁴

Food & Catering

Issues

- Intensive agriculture depends upon extensive uses of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers.
- Transporting food over long distances contributes considerably to global warming and does nothing to support local farmers and food producers
- Wildlife – intensive farming practices change harvesting regimes, destroy habitats and need large buildings in the countryside.

Good Practice

- Purchase locally farmed produce to reduce transporting food over long distance and to support the local economy.
- Purchase organic food grown without pesticides, herbicides or artificial fertilisers.
- Buy animal products that have not been farmed using intensive factory farming methods.
- Buy food packed in returnable boxes using the minimum of packing.
- Buy unprocessed food not convenience foods.
- Buy Fairtrade products.

Disappointingly when a recent contract (c. £500k in value) went out to tender for fresh fruit and vegetables supply to the Council and local schools this was not brought to the attention of Western International Market, one of the best placed organisations to identify short supply chains, until just a few days before the submission deadline. This shows how much more work there is still to do in embedding sustainable food procurement in the Council's and LSP partner's work practices: from meals on wheels to school catering.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supports a flagship programme called the Public Sector Food Procurement

³³ Mayor's Green Procurement Code, <http://www.londonremade.com/mgpc.asp>

³⁴ London Borough of Hounslow Green Purchasing Guidance, http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/green_procurement_final_web.doc

Initiative (PSFPI)³⁵, working with public-sector catering. Sustain and many of its members have been among the early pioneers of sustainable public sector food procurement as part of this programme. In 2005, Sustain also worked with Camden Council to develop a borough-wide policy for sustainable food procurement for school meal provision.³⁶

Potential actions in Hounslow

- L.B. Hounslow procurement officers and DS Catering become involved in Government Office for London's PSFPI project to form public sector buying groups (also recommended in the NAO Best Value report) to join together to increase purchasing power to overcome the barrier of higher cost of sustainable food
- Produce detailed action plan and timescales for achieving B2 level of the Mayor's Green Procurement Code
- Complete full environmental audit of the council's, and then other local public sector organisations, food suppliers – from Meals on Wheels to Hounslow Voluntary Sector Forum
- Review all menus to design out high eco-footprint food (see Appendix 3)³⁷
- Either give existing suppliers timescales for changing their supplier base if required or put in place timeline for re-tendering of food supply contracts
- Ensure that Western Internal Market, local chambers of commerce and West London Business all receive information on food related tender opportunities

4.2.2 Western International Market (WIM)

Background

Western International Market (WIM) is wholly owned by Hounslow Council and moved from Brentford in 1974. London's four other food markets are owned by the Corporation of London and Covent Garden Market Authority. The Saphir report (2002) on London's wholesale markets made the following recommendations relevant to this paper:

- Farmers and their organisations should work with wholesalers to develop a better understanding of the changes that have taken place in wholesale markets and the opportunities that might be available for improving the distribution of British produce³⁸

³⁵ Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI) scheme, Defra, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/index.htm>

³⁶ Sustainable Food Procurement for London's schools, Sustain, <http://www.sustainweb.org/news.php?id=130>

³⁷ Good Food on the Public Plate: A manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering (2003), East Anglia Food Link and Sustain, Edited by Clive Peckham and James Petts, <http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/goodfoodpp.pdf>

³⁸ London's wholesale markets, Saphir/ Defra, 2002, pg. 56

- London should be serviced by three composite markets for meat, fish, fruit and vegetables based at the sites of Nine Elms, Spitalfields and Western International³⁹

With about £1m annual surplus, which help fund services across the borough, WIM can perhaps be considered one of the UK's most successful social enterprises.

WIM is reported as having the smallest portion of catering customer business at 14%. This compares with Billingsgate 29%, Covent Garden 39%, Spitalfields 42% and Smithfield 41%.⁴⁰ This means that development work is required if businesses at WIM are to secure a greater share of this sector and increase the market's influence in the sustainable supply of food into London. The lack of distribution capacity of businesses operating at WIM may be a problem in accessing this sector.

In November 2005 the LDA published the London Sustainable Food Hub report. This described a new London Sustainable Food Hub as follows:

The London Sustainable Food Hub could be a place from which more food from the regions around London is brought for storage, processing and distribution to London customers and markets. In addition, the centre could import exotic foods from sustainable sources (akin to fair-trade). Facilities could include butchery, warehouse and refrigeration facilities, a marketing office, catering facilities, closed organic areas and training space.

Through research and consultation a vision emerged for the sustainable food chain centre had six main aspects. The London Sustainable Food Hub should provide and/or promote:

1. Efficient, trusted and well-regarded warehousing system that can accept, store, sell on and distribute produce to final and intermediate consumers and take some of this burden off producers
2. Transport system that minimises vehicle miles, reduces transport costs for producers, and realises significant cost and environmental savings
3. Secure base for the development of business initiatives associated with food processing, packaging, marketing and specialist activities (e.g. preparing food for hospitals and schools)
4. Increase in employment opportunities, especially for social enterprises, both in the hub and in transport
5. Close working partnership between producers, consumers and intermediaries to build trust in food from the hub
6. Increase in the amount of local, organic and sustainably produced food consumed in London with consequent gains for the local economy, health and environment.

³⁹ Ibid., pg. 58

⁴⁰ Ibid., pg. 21

Thinking at a regional level is now moving towards the need for *all* of London's food markets to start reducing their footprint, rather than simply encouraging the development of a single sustainable food hub. This should be encouraged by Hounslow Council. Under WIM's new manager Bob Marlow it has led the way in market recycling of packaging and food waste. Achieving recycling rates of 39% it has set precedents now followed by other London markets.

Potential actions in Hounslow

- Celebrate success already achieved by WIM leadership in recycling, making the case for wind turbines at WIM and researching Anaerobic Digestion opportunity through 'hm' magazine, local media and opening of new market buildings in 2007 (?)
- Support collaboration between Sustain and WIM in pilot projects to promote LEAF⁴¹ accredited single product supply chains from producer to plate
- Appoint a Sustainable Food Marketing Manager at WIM to work full time (explore external funding of post):
 - identifying new, local and competitive suppliers, as well as marketing the produce to customers (restaurants, shops etc)
 - ensuring that distribution networks out of WIM (the last few miles of the supply chain) are operated as efficiently as possible
 - developing environmentally sustainable business plan and change management model for WIM as London's first "sustainable food hub"
- Provide this manager with working budget to implement proposals and apply for external funding
- Explore with West London Alliance partners potential for joint funding of projects as market changes will benefit West London business as a whole and help sub-region compete with emerging East London Green economy
- Make case to the LDA for WIM to pioneer the sustainable food hub concept, given WIM's leadership to date in market waste recycling

4.2.3 Supermarkets

Background

Tesco today accounts for about £1 in every £8 spent in the UK retail sector.⁴² This highlights the importance of influencing supermarkets (aka multiples) future ways of operating.

⁴¹ LEAF – Linking Environment And Farming, <http://www.leafuk.org/>

⁴² Tesco makes £1.1bn in six months, 3 October 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/5401494.stm>

The rise of the multiple has brought considerable benefits to many consumers, particularly the convenience of choice from a large product range under one roof. However, in identifying and satisfying consumer preferences so effectively, and therefore increasing their market share, supermarkets have also brought some negative impacts including concentration in the food sector, particularly in fresh produce; a major decline in specialist, independent stores (butchers, bakers, greengrocers, etc); and a decline in the availability of local/regional produce.⁴³ This has contributed significantly to the loss of short local supply chains and the growth in Hounslow's ecological footprint.

About nine supermarkets operating in Hounslow. These include: Asda, Sainsbury's, Somerfield and Tesco.

The most recent study of supermarkets environmental performance was completed by the National Consumer Council's (NCC) in 2006. The NCC established a range of key indicators for supermarkets environmental performance and a broader challenge to the sector (see below).

*The NCC's Greening Supermarkets Indicators*⁴⁴

1. Food transport: Reducing its impact on climate change

- Seasonal food: availability, promotion and 'signposting' of ten 'in-season' UK-sourced vegetables.
- Seasonality information: ability of supermarket telephone helplines to provide information on seasonal produce.

2. Waste: Action to reduce, reuse and recycle

- Recycled content: declared recycled content of breakfast cereal packaging, toilet paper and kitchen towels.
- Carrier bags: incentives to reduce use, or encourage reuse of carrier bags, including 'bags for life'.

3. Nature: Supporting sustainable sourcing

- Fish: availability of sustainably sourced fish (including those with Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification) and information to consumers.
- Trees: availability of toilet paper and kitchen towels, and wooden kitchenware certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), or with high recycled content.

4. Sustainable farming

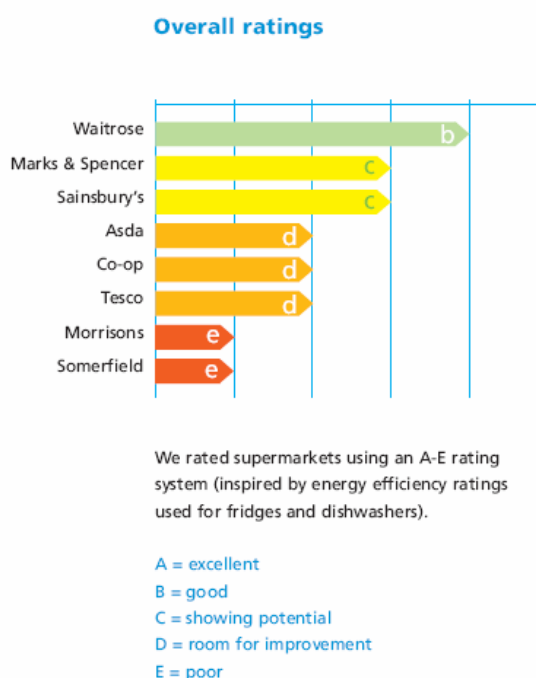
- Organics: availability of organic choices in ten food products.
- Pesticides: clear communication of pesticide reduction strategies, or other 'low chemical' options.

⁴³ Race to the top, IIED, 2002-6,

http://www.racetothetop.org/indicators/module4/page_1.htm

⁴⁴ Greening Supermarkets, National Consumer Council (NCC), 2006,

<http://www.ncc.org.uk/responsibleconsumption/greening-supermarkets.pdf>, pg. 1



In the NCC's overall ratings the UK's eight major supermarkets achieved the following ratings:

- Waitrose rated best – B – with good scores on sustainable sourcing. But it also had the highest number of fruit likely to have been airfreighted
- Of the big four retailers, Sainsbury's received the best rating – a C – along with M&S
- Asda, Co-op and Tesco were rated with a D – showing room for improvement
- Somerfield and Morrisons received a poor E rating

To read the scorecard expanding on each supermarket's transport, waste, nature and farming performance rating see appendix 2.

NCC's Greening Supermarkets Challenge⁴⁵

We think supermarkets can do more to help their customers to make greener choices. We call on supermarkets to pledge their support for our Greening Supermarkets Challenge and:

Make green mainstream – not just a niche market for green shoppers Ensure that all own-brand products and packaging meet high environmental standards. For example, set targets for all products to be sustainably sourced and all paper products and packaging to have recycled content.

⁴⁵ Greening Supermarkets, National Consumer Council (NCC), 2006, <http://www.ncc.org.uk/responsibleconsumption/greening-supermarkets.pdf>, pg. 4

Make it easier for shoppers – take less sustainable products off the shelves For example, set targets for when all products, including fish and wood products, will be sourced sustainably.

Inform, engage and inspire your customers – use creative communication to engage customers with ways in which they, and your company actions, can make a difference.

Lead by example – help make people feel they are part of something bigger. For example, introduce front-of-store recycling.

Offer incentives – make green the ‘positive choice’ by offering loyalty card points or other incentives, including price offers for greener choices.

Be aspirational – publish a strategy with clear targets to improve ratings for all of the NCC’s indicators, as part of the company’s environmental corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy, and report annually.

Potential actions in Hounslow

- Council write formally to supermarkets national HQs inviting them to pilot new sustainability initiatives in Hounslow
- Set annual targets for supermarkets operating in Hounslow to substantially shorten their supply chains. This is likely to require a reduction in the use of large consolidated hubs and categorisers and a shift towards more local hubs.
- Annual Hounslow supermarket league table published in ‘hm’ magazine – produce in partnership with an NGO?
- Explore partnerships to promote “green food trails” around Hounslow multiples through Hounslow Council communications channels (e.g. ‘hm’ magazine, website and high quality leaflets)
- Encourage additional in-store promotion of local, seasonal and organic produce
- Research potential for funding this work area through the development of a Hounslow Carbon Offset fund to which multiples would contribute
- Hold discussions with Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF)⁴⁶ to encourage the development of a supermarket food sustainability policy to help deliver faster climate change mitigation in the food retail sector

4.2.4 Independent retailers and high streets

Background

Crucial in reducing the Ecological Footprint associated with food in suburbs is to increase easy access to local produce on the high street.

⁴⁶ Local Authority Pension Fund Forum, <http://www.lapfforum.org/>

In recent years there has been a proportionately greater decline in the number of independent grocery stores than there has in their market share of grocery sales. This is because the stores that have closed are the most precarious single grocery stores, with the smallest amounts of business. Isolated corner shops are more likely to close than shops on parades. However, once one or two shops on a small suburban parade of six shops close, footfall to the remaining ones falls so far that they too are at risk. The impact is that people are now more inclined to drive to a supermarket, rather than walk to a high street store.⁴⁷

As well as ensuring there are affordable units on high streets with good foot fall for independent retailers, we must consider how they can link to short food supply chains. Most small shops, if asked about fresh fruit and vegetable provision, or the lack of it, locally, made comments under one of the following four headings:

- Can't compete with the retail prices at the supermarkets. Most people who want fresh fruit and vegetables find some way of getting to the supermarkets
- Wholesale prices are too high for us, especially for the small amounts we would order
- Wholesalers don't want to deliver the small amounts we would order, and it just isn't worth my time or money to go a long way to the wholesaler and get it myself. (Centralisation of wholesaling has meant an increasing average distance between shop and wholesaler, and this is exacerbated by high fuel prices)
- Just no demand for it here, they don't eat them here; mostly it goes off before I sell it, and my business can't stand any kind of loss as profits are low anyway.⁴⁸

An action plan to support more sustainable food provision through independent retailers and Hounslow's high streets must therefore be underpinned by the changes required at WIM, as well as the sustainable food communications plan to encourage consumer demand.

Potential actions in Hounslow

- Establish a Town Centre Management approach⁴⁹ across Hounslow. This might include:
 - Reviewing rent setting approaches in regeneration areas
 - Supporting joint negotiations on business rates reductions by stores that have been impacted by supermarket expansion
 - Exploring mechanisms to fund the appointment of Town Centre Managers
- Offer financial incentives (e.g. rent discounts on council owned units) to businesses working towards Green Mark standards⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The validity of food miles as a sustainable development indicator, Watkiss, AEA Technology Environment,

<http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/media/attachments/191351/FoodMiles1.pdf>

⁴⁸ <http://www.fooddeserts.org/images/cursma.htm>

⁴⁹ Association of Town Centre Managers, <http://www.atcm.org/>

- Work with Town Centre Partnerships to improve the marketing of Hounslow's town centres
- Develop "green routes/directories" around town centres to help people find environmentally friendly products, including food

⁵⁰ Green Mark, <http://www.green-mark.co.uk/>

5.0 Prioritisation of actions

This chart gives an indication of the key proposed actions' relative impact and cost, and hence the appropriate priority that may be given to implementation. They are colour coded by the section of the paper from which they are extracted.



■ Farmers markets
 ■ Allotments
 ■ Marketing sustainable food
 ■ Public sector food procurement
 ■ Western International Market
 ■ Supermarkets
 ■ Independent retailers & high streets

6.0 Conclusion and next steps

This initial study confirms that the opportunity is there for Hounslow Council to put in place a series of projects that will establish the borough as the UK beacon urban local authority for the environmental sustainability of food supply. Further **research needs to be commissioned modelling the annual footprint reduction targets** that each project should be seeking to achieve – and potential gaps in the proposed interventions.

The entire programme of work should be co-ordinated by a **sustainable food working group**. A senior officer should be responsible and accountable for leading in this area of work. The working group should bring together council officers, the private sector and member representatives. In some areas the group may be able to leverage the Fair trade steering group's relationships with local traders.

Several areas of work will need **dedicated staff** if they are to be implemented. These would be at arms length social enterprises:

- CIP need to be sufficiently resourced to appoint an Allotments Officer
- WIM should appoint a Sustainable Food Marketing Manager

Within the Council **lead officers** are needed in four areas:

- Senior officer responsible for co-ordinating programme
- A Communications officer needs to be identified that will specialise in the promotion of food sustainability
- A lead officer for farmers markets needs to be identified in Economic development or Environmental strategy
- Monitoring of footprint reduction needs to be developed as a skill set within Environmental strategy

The Council must get its own house in order. This means rigorously auditing and adapting menus, food dispensing machines and our food supplier base. Procurement must work much harder to ensure tender opportunities reach local suppliers, scrutinise the tenders for their sustainability and monitor their delivery to agreed environmentally sustainable specifications.

This programme of work, as a potential key contributor to the Executive's Hounslow Plan objective of working to reduce Hounslow's ecological footprint and CO2 emissions, should be considered as the basis of **bids to charitable trusts and development agencies** like Esmee Fairbairne, Bridge House and the London Development Agency that have environmental sustainability goals in their work programmes. This would enable the addition of more staff to the team driving this work programme and particularly support work to influence supermarkets.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Extracts from responses to Brentford Recycling Action Group pre-election questionnaire to political parties (April 2006)

Question: How will you increase the amount of local, seasonable and organic food residents purchase in Hounslow?

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

We would support any plans to help producers, consumers and retailers make a positive choice for sustainable, local food. This means better access to affordable, high quality and seasonal food, shorter supply chains and campaigning for policies which promote a thriving local food economy and culture.

We would:

- Offer business advice to include information on both sustainability criteria and where to source local assurance and seasonal ingredients
- Examine with the Council's own catering services to see what the Council can do to promote sustainable food supplies across its services – at the Civic Centre, Schools, homes etc. Local authority purchasing and tendering can have an impact on corporate behaviour, given that such administrations are large consumers of goods and services.
- Encourage caterers to run promotional days or weeks for greener, seasonal, healthy or Fair Trade produce.
- Raise public awareness of the need to ask for more sustainable food supplies from caterers, that there may be slightly higher costs and seasonal variations. Local authorities can also provide information about local producers to encourage the concept of local purchasing by both firms and individual consumers.
- Review our planning guidance to ensure that local traders are not forced out of our High Streets.

GREEN PARTY

One part of the answer is to encourage local, small business. There are good and bad Farmer's Markets with good and bad stalls, but their growth has given many small producers an alternative to the supermarkets. The burden of tax and regulation - so often designed for medium to large firms and corporations - should be lightened for companies working at a local level.

Food which isn't local needs transportation. As road charging is introduced, it will become possible to monitor lorries carrying foods and other products which might be produced locally and increase the tax on them - particularly if they carrying luxury or out of season goods.

And then there is the airfreight business, flying luxury and out of season goods into the country. We have to introduce realistic airfreight costs. A Green Party press release issued today (Mon 13th

March) estimates that zero-rating tax on aviation fuel gives a £9.2 billion annual subsidy to the aviation industry from the UK tax payer. Not much the Hounslow Council can do about that? It can campaign and apply pressure - as it already does on the 3rd runway. But we should not aim at stabilising Heathrow: we must aim at shrinking it - cutting it's impact on local road traffic, on the UK's Kyoto targets, on our daily lives.

Legislation might have a role to play too: Supermarket domination of both consumer spending and agricultural output is such a level that they might be required to purchase minimum quotas, in season, from local producers. Or to reduce the 'Organic Premium' that is still charged for organic produce in the big stores. This - all of this - will probably make our food more expensive, but we believe it is a price worth paying.

Finally, D.I.Y: Allotments are directly under the control of the Council. They need to be viewed as an important resource, and managed so as to enable people to provide their own local, seasonable and (hopefully) organic food.

INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY GROUP (ICG)

We are a local organisation, so the promotion of local foodstuffs or produce of any kind would be something we would wish to encourage. The active promotion of small enterprises such as the Osterley Park Farm Shop is something we would wish to consider. It is a question of increasing public awareness, and of utilising the means available to us as a local authority to do this. Incentives to such businesses through means of preferential business rates etc. could also be considered, within the confines of our statutory obligations.

LABOUR PARTY

We will seek to support and encourage the establishment of Farmer's Markets in the Borough. We will also work with food retailers to promote and increase the range of foods available for sale that are locally produced, in season, and organic.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PARTY

Food must have a dedicated chapter and approach within the borough's environmental strategy. We believe this should be aligned to and build on the draft London Food Strategy. With Western International Market (a major London food hub) in Hounslow there is a fantastic opportunity for Hounslow to influence sustainable food provision in the Borough and West London.

We must also work with representatives of supermarkets operating in the borough to encourage them to reduce their food footprint and clearly communicate the environmental impacts of different food products to their customers.

We support the development of a network of Farmers Markets through the borough, as well as targeted support to small restaurants, catering companies and food shops. This might take the form of meet the buyers events in partnership with organizations like Hounslow Chamber. To this end we would seek to work with West London Food

Forum⁵¹ to embed sustainable food consumption as well as linking up with the recently LDA funded “Towards a greener food and drink sector in London”⁵² project being led by London Sustainability Exchange to ensure Hounslow businesses are involved.

⁵¹ West London Business – Food Forum,
http://www.westlondon.com/events_detail.asp?id=24

⁵² LSx Greener Food project:
http://62.169.138.194/whatwedo/behaviourchange_page2566.aspx Pilot project report at
<http://www.lsx.org.uk/docs/page/2569/Towards%20a%20Greener%20Food%20and%20Drink%20Sector.pdf>

Appendix 2: Greening Supermarkets, NCC, 2006, Scorecards pgs. 6-9

Name: **Asda**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport		
Seasonal UK-sourced food	Good. Along with Morrisons, had the highest proportion of UK-sourced veg (69%), and was the supermarket doing most to highlight British veg. Opportunity for more customer information on 'seasonality'.	B
Waste		
Reduce, reuse and recycle	Poor: no declared recycled content on own brand cereal packaging or toilet paper, though company told us 'Shades' own-brand toilet paper has 40% recycled content. This wasn't declared on the label. No disincentives on carrier bags found. Told us it plans to reduce plastic bag use by 40%.	E
Nature		
Fish	Room for improvement: fish counter staff unable to provide information. Two MSC certified products found. Told us it plans to stock only fish from MSC standard sustainable fisheries in next 3-5 years.	D
Trees	Poor: no FSC-certified wooden kitchenware found. Company told us 'Shades' toilet paper has 60% FSC-certified content (but not declared on label).	E
Sustainable farming		
Organics/pesticides	Room for improvement: limited range of organic produce with some in-store promotion. Plans to triple organic range this year. Some LEAF products found.	D
Overall comments and score		
Top scorer on sourcing and promoting UK produce – with potential to do more to signpost seasonality – but lagging behind on other indicators. We encourage Asda to communicate its recycled content on its own-brand toilet paper.		D

Name: **Co-op**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Showing potential: 55% of seasonal veg was UK-sourced, but had little signposting or promotions apart from a few Union Jack flags on products. Helpline unable to help, but referred to local store which produced list of UK produce available. Had the smallest amount of 'long distance' fruit from outside Europe.	C
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Room for improvement: only company we found that had more than one own-label toilet paper with 100% recycled content (giving a B rating), but poor overall due to no declared recycled content on own-brand cereal packaging or incentives to reduce carrier bag use except availability of 'bags for life'. Company told us it has pioneered degradable plastic bags and compostable packaging.	D
Nature Fish	Poor: unable to provide information on sustainable fish. No MSC-labelled products found.	E
Trees	Showing potential: one-third of wooden kitchenware products FSC-certified and FSC content in one own-brand toilet paper.	C
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Showing potential: small fresh produce sections with little variety, including organic. Some LEAF products found and good labelling on non-organic produce: 'Conventionally grown; reducing, banning and controlling pesticide use' and posters: 'We ban more pesticides than any other retailer'.	C
Overall comments and score A disappointing overall score for the Co-op. Has potential to build on 'ethical' commitments and pioneering packaging work to improve scores in all areas.		D

Name: **Marks and Spencers**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Room for improvement: more emphasis on promoting non-seasonal and exotic produce than on UK-sourced in-season vegetables. No information on seasonal produce available through helpline. Along with Waitrose, had comparatively more fruit likely to have been airfreighted long distance, including Mexican raspberries and blackberries and Australian nectarines.	D
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Room for improvement: all breakfast cereal packaging contained a minimum 50% recycled content (B rating) but let down by having no toilet paper or kitchen roll with declared recycled content and no incentives to reduce carrier bag use, other than 'bags for life'.	D
Nature Fish	Excellent: leading the way. Sources all fish from sustainably managed sources. Communicates issue with customers through leaflets and posters in-store. Staff able to help with information.	A
Trees	Room for improvement: no FSC-certified wooden kitchenware. However, company told us it is committed to sourcing increasing amounts of FSC-certified products as member of WWF Forestry Trade Network. Also, has pioneered FSC-certified cardboard sandwich packs and is working towards FSC certification for tissue products.	D
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Showing potential: reasonably good range of organic products available (16%) with some price promotions on organic produce. Company told us of its commitment to publish its own pesticide residues testing data.	C
Overall comments and score Overall, showing potential and top scorer for sustainable fish sourcing and customer communication. Has opportunity to place more emphasis on UK seasonal produce and reduce proportion of airfreighted produce.		C

Name: **Morrisons**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Room for improvement: had highest proportion of UK-sourced seasonal veg (B rating) but this was let down by lack of signposting and promotions. Helpline was particularly unhelpful. Only company to flag up use of airfreight (for pomegranates from India and apples from the US) though company told us it minimises use.	D
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Poor: only company not to offer reusable 'bags for life'. Offered an own-brand toilet paper and kitchen roll with recycled content, but no declared recycled content in own brand cereal packaging.	E
Nature Fish	Poor: no MSC-labelled products found. Fresh fish counters unable to provide information on sustainably sourced products.	E
Trees	Room for improvement: a quarter of wooden kitchenware FSC-certified. Company didn't tell us of any commitments to FSC sourcing.	D
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Room for improvement: restricted range of organic options in surveyed food categories (11%). Some promotion ('Organic food that doesn't cost the earth') in Southeast store.	D
Overall comments and score Overall poor rating. Apart from having the highest proportion of UK seasonal veg (71%), did not shine in any other category. Only company not to offer reusable 'bags for life'. Opportunity to give greater emphasis to all environmental sustainability policies.		E

Name: **Sainsbury's**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Room for improvement: 59% of in-season veg were UK-sourced, but little signposting of seasonality. No seasonality information available from helpline.	D
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Showing potential: high recycled content in two-thirds of breakfast cereal packaging (B); one toilet paper and two kitchen roll products with 100% recycled content (B). Let down by having no incentives to reduce plastic bag use other than availability of 'bags for life' (D). One store had recycling bins for plastic bags.	C
Nature Fish	Good: had the widest range of MSC options (8 out of 72 products on sale) including some alternatives to popular species such as cod, but little promotion of products. Some helpful information available at fresh fish counter, and fishmonger able to point out sustainable options. Notice in Southeast store explaining skate no longer available due to sustainability concerns.	B
Trees	Showing potential: a quarter of wooden kitchenware FSC-certified. Company told us it is committed to sourcing increasing amounts of FSC-certified products as member of WWF Forestry Trade Network.	C
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Good: had the highest percentage of organic options in surveyed food categories (21%) and only supermarket to have organic option for all ten products available in both stores surveyed. Policy on responsible pesticide use found on some conventional products. Company told us of its commitment to publish its own pesticide residues testing data.	B
Overall comments and score Top of the big four supermarkets and showing leadership on organics/pesticides and sustainable fish sourcing. Room for improvement in sourcing and signposting UK in-season produce.		C

Name: **Somerfield**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Showing potential: 62% of in-season veg were UK-sourced, with several price promotions and displays for UK produce, though little emphasis on seasonality. In-store magazine feature on seasonality featured non-UK produce. Low proportion of fruit likely to have been airfreighted. Company says it minimises airfreight due to cost.	C
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Poor: no declared recycled content on breakfast cereal packaging, and no ownbrand toilet paper or kitchen roll with recycled content. Offers 'bags for life', but no other incentives for reducing plastic bag use. One store had recycling bins for plastic bags.	E
Nature Fish	Room for improvement: three MSC products found but with no promotion or signposting. No fresh fish counters in either store and helpdesk unable to provide information.	D
Trees	Poor: no FSC-certified wooden kitchenware found in either store.	E
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Poor: provided the least organic choice – only 4% of options were organic in surveyed food categories.	E
Overall comments and score Has considerable potential to improve ratings, particularly on sustainable sourcing policies and waste. Sourced reasonable level of UK seasonal produce. Has opportunity to increase promotion and signposting.		E

Name: **Tesco**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Room for improvement. 61% of in-season veg were UK-sourced, but no noticeable signposting of seasonal produce. Particularly unhelpful helpline.	D
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Showing potential: half of breakfast cereal packaging had recycled content of 75%; offered one toilet paper and two kitchen rolls with recycled content. Was the only company to promote reusable 'bags for life' at checkouts, including price promotion. Kitchen roll carried statement 'This kitchen towel is made from recycled paper and therefore helps reduce the amount of waste which is land filled.' Stores had recycling bins for carrier bags.	C
Nature Fish	Room for improvement: one MSC product found out of over 150 products surveyed. No information available. Fish counter staff failed to understand questions, however much explained.	D
Trees	Poor: only 5% of wooden kitchenware FSC certified.	E
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Showing potential: very large stores with reasonably good range of organic choices. 16% of options were organic in surveyed food categories.	C
Overall comments and score Poor overall score for the UK's largest retailer. Has room to improve on all aspects, including sustainable sourcing and seasonality. Showing potential on waste and reducing carrier bag use.		D

Name: **Waitrose**
Date of report: **March 2006**

	Comments	Rating
Food transport Seasonal UK-sourced food	Showing potential: 53% of in-season veg were UK-sourced, with eye-catching information on British growers. No specific seasonal signposting. No easily accessible information from helpline, but was the only company able to send a typewritten list following request. Had highest number of fruit likely to have been airfreighted, including apricots and organic strawberries and blueberries from New Zealand.	C
Waste Reduce, reuse and recycle	Showing potential: three-quarters of breakfast cereal packaging had between 75- 80% recycled content. One own-brand toilet paper and kitchen roll with 100% recycled content. No incentives to reduce plastic bag use except availability of 'bags for life'.	C
Nature Fish	Good: stocked five MSC products (out of 63) and fish counter staff were the most helpful in our survey, able to offer information, including printed materials, on fish and sustainability.	B
Trees	Excellent: the small range of wooden kitchenware products were all FSC-certified. Company told us its policy is to source only independently certified timber (such as FSC).	A
Sustainable farming Organics/pesticides	Good: second only to Sainsbury's. largest proportion of organic options within surveyed products (19%). Organic options signposted with blue 'O' on shelf tag. Range of LEAF products also available.	B
Overall comments and score Overall, top rated retailer, with good policies on sustainable sourcing. Has potential to source and signpost higher proportion of seasonal UK produce and to reduce amount of airfreighted out-of-season produce.		B

Appendix 3: Good food on the public plate (2003), East Anglia Food Link and Sustain, pgs 210-11

Sample South and South East England Seasonal Menus

Spring

Light Meal

Carrot Soup

A substantial soup eaten in the 18th and 19th century by the Hussey family of Scotney Castle, traditionally made with lamb stock but possible to substitute with chicken or vegetable stock for a lighter version.

Spinach Tart

Enjoyed by the Twisden family of Bradbourne Park in the 17th century, this is a sweet rather than a savoury tart, with an addition of dried fruits. It could be used as a morning or afternoon light dish.

Seafood and Watercress Soup

The healthy properties of watercress have been appreciated for many centuries and when combined with seafood provide a very nutritious soup.

Main Meal

Shepherds Pie

A dish that belongs to the whole of Britain, and to France, it is a hearty meal of meat and potatoes.

Navarin of Lamb with Spring Vegetables

An easy, flavoursome casserole dish using boned shoulder of lamb and whole spring vegetables.

Beef Olives with Parsley and Thyme

A popular method of cooking beef. The stuffing gives it an excellent classic flavour.

Deserts

Rhubarb Crumble

A classic crumble recipe, almost as popular as apple crumble. Very simple and easy to make using this first fruit of spring.

Queen of Puddings

An amalgam of three puddings into one, this pudding requires good quality home-made jam.

Rice Pudding

A traditional nursery pudding, this is often a favourite with children and can be made in a healthy way using semi-skimmed milk, whilst still retaining its creamy texture.

Summer

Light Meal

London Particular Soup

Named after the thick blankets of fog known as 'pea soupers' that used to descend on London before the 'Clean Air Act' was passed.

Leek Gratin

A tasty light meal best made with thin summer leeks and fresh breadcrumbs.

Chicken and Warm Potato Salad

A simple, healthy meal that is easy to prepare.

Main Meal

Roast Loin of Veal with Carrots, Onion and Celery

A simple roast, full of flavour and combined with the best of summer vegetables.

Honey Mustard Chicken

A chicken dish that is very simple to cook and best served with summer vegetables. A mild mustard would be best used in the marinade.

Boiled Beef and Carrots

Immortalised by the old music hall song, this is a truly traditional Cockney dish.

Deserts

Gooseberry Fool

Using semi-skimmed milk and low fat yoghurt, this desert is a healthy variation of the original classic.

Summer Pudding

Served during the 19th century in health spas, this is a nutritious desert that is low in fat and high in Vitamin C.

Cherry Cobbler

A country dish with a short scone topping over cherries that have been cooked in their own juice. It reheats well.

Autumn

Light Meal

Country Vegetable Soup with Cheese

A flavoursome soup using Autumn vegetables such as carrots, leeks and potatoes. A generous topping of cheese can be added to make this soup into a light meal.

Gammon and Broad Bean Soup

A hearty Autumn soup, full of flavour and nutrition.

Stuffed Jacket Potatoes

A classic easy meal with any number of variations to suit tastes and seasons.

Main Meal

Steak and Kidney Pudding

A classic Sussex recipe from Mrs Beeton, this dish can be altered to reduce the fat content in the crust, perhaps replacing the suet with a pastry.

Old English Stewed Rosemary Chicken

A good chicken stew, traditionally marinated in red wine but possible to adapt accordingly.

Baked Ham

This meat can be served hot or cold with a variety of vegetables or salads.

Deserts

Apple Pie

The south and the home counties are renowned for their apple varieties and a light, thin-crust pastry would be best for this desert.

Autumn Pudding

Apples, blackberries, plums and pears are used to make this simple pudding which has a bread crust.

Greengage Tart

First planted by Sir William Gage in the 18th century, these French, green plums became known as the green Gage's Plum, hence the greengage today. They are a sweet fruit with good flavour.

Winter

Light Meal

Palestine Soup

Named after its main ingredient, the Jerusalem Artichoke, this soup can be topped with croutons or hard boiled eggs to create a light meal.

Winter Vegetable Soup

A simple soup using the best of the winter root crop vegetables to create a thick, warming meal.

Cheese Omllette

A classic British omelette that is very popular and has many variations for the fillings.

Main Meal

Beef Hotpot

A hearty meal of beef and potatoes, very popular as a winter warmer.

Fisherman's Pie

A creamy fish pie that can be made low in fat but high in flavours, with the fish, potato and eggs being contrasted with the piquant flavours of capers and gherkins.

Sausage, Mash and Gravy

A family favourite. Good quality, low fat sausages are the key to this main meal.

Deserts

Richmond Maids of Honour

Named by Henry VIII, these dainty little tarts can be made with a low fat curd cheese and the traditional puff pastry can be substituted with a low fat filo pastry.

Chelsea Buns

A famous bun containing currants, topped with an icing glaze.

Apple Charlotte

A classic apple desert from the south. A good cooker or cooker-desert apple is required for this dish.

*Appendix 4****Future research directions***

It is undeniable that assessing the sustainability of existing food supply chains can be a very complex task. Furthermore there is clearly no single policy prescription that will lead to the design of a one planet food supply chain. Many more years of research, underpinned by practical action, are needed until the vision of an environmentally sustainable food system will be fully realised.

To support Hounslow in reducing our ecological footprint future research needs to address questions such as: the appropriate locations⁵³ and seasons for farming produce supplied to the borough; standards/methods for minimising energy use in organic farming; low carbon transport of produce; and the appropriate balance between these different factors over time as supply chains are restructured.

Some of the complexities of food miles (i.e. local production) as an indicator of sustainable development were explored in a 2005 report commissioned by Defra. The report concluded that the impact of food transport can be offset to some extent if food imported to an area has been produced more sustainably than the food available locally. For example, a case study showed that it can be more sustainable (at least in energy efficiency terms) to import tomatoes from Spain than to produce them in heated greenhouses in the UK outside the summer months. Another case study showed that it can be more sustainable to import organic food into the UK than to grow non-organic food in the UK. However, this was only true if the food was imported by sea, or for very short distances by road.

Finally the 2005 report considered whether there could be a net energy saving from centralised mass-production of food (ready meals) compared to home cooking. The conclusion here was that it may be possible in some cases that overall energy savings are achieved through manufacture of processed “ready meals” which require only reheating in the home. However, this depends on the cooking method used for the fresh produce (e.g. oven versus frying pan). Also the nutritional implications of consumption of processed food need to be considered. The implications of this finding are that this issue is not significant for a food miles indicator.⁵⁴

⁵³ *How local is local?* At the moment this depends on who you ask. National Farmers’ Retail & Markets Association state in their guidelines that 30 miles is ideal with up to 50 miles acceptable for larger cities and coastal or remote towns and villages – they recommend a maximum distance of 100 miles; Bioregional Development Group consider “bioregions” of about 50km as efficient in terms of deliveries and regional consolidation of food – a bioregion is a natural ecological community with characteristic flora, fauna, and environmental conditions and bounded by natural rather than artificial borders; Sustain look at UK regions in developing their sustainable menus for the public sector.

⁵⁴ Validity of food miles as an indicator of sustainable development (July 2005), Study by AEA Technology Environment commissioned by Defra, <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/final.pdf>, pg.7 and 76

WWF-UK, through the One Planet Economy Network (OPEN), has started considering what future food “resource flow scenarios” might look like. In the framework below, from OPEN’s recent report, F1 projections outline the current trends, and the F4 scenario considers an alternative one planet living approach.⁵⁵

FOOD								
	Material sources	Manufacturing	Logistics	Services	Demand side 1	Demand side 2	Products in use	Externalities
PHYSICAL	Import %, source, extraction mode	Energy in production	Transport distance & mode	Tertiary activity & value added	Intensity & utilization factors	Consumption / mode choice	Product life: energy efficiency	Waste, emissions
F1 – projection	Import % growth: intensive farming	Rising energy int.	Air freight growth	Increased catering = higher waste %	Globalizing of food markets	More processed food		disposal without recovery
F4 – scenario	Import reduction:	Organic foods = lower energy int.	Air freight reduction: local food	Quality & low impact catering	Local & niche food markets	Vegetarian diet = lower energy in production		Less waste = increased utilization
Policy options	Sustainable farming / forestry	Cleaner production	Integrated supply chain mgmt	Incentives for low impact catering	Local food policy	Social marketing		Integrated agri-environ policy
ECONOMIC	Commodity prices: market effects	Fuel costs: factor & finance cost	Int. transport fuel / transaction cost	labour costs: investment costs	Consumer exp / saving: social discount rate	Market behaviour: stock turnover	Product life: energy prices in operation	External costs / impact charges
F1 – projection				Catering & value added growth		Processed food consumption rises		UK impacts level: global impacts rise
F4 – scenario	Commodity prices rise	Fuel / material costs rise	Fuel costs rise	Investment & share value linked to CSR	Low time preference & long term investment	Lower quantity, higher quality purchases		Subsidy on low impact farming
Policy options	Commodity levies / tariffs	Carbon tax: public procurement for clean tech	Comm / indust energy tax: Multi-lateral aviation tax	Incentives for CSR	Public procurement for sustainable food	Incentives for low impact diets		eco-services trading: food waste recovery
INSTITUTIONAL				Service / social economy	Utilization choices	Behavioural choices	Operational choices	Waste practices
Policy options	International development: ethical trading	Producer responsibility: env management	CSR	CSR	Social economy & civic society	Social economy & civic society		Education on waste recovery

Leading food sustainability research organisations include Sustain⁵⁶ and the Food Policy Unit at City University⁵⁷. The London Development Agency (LDA) has funded policy development work in London, whilst Defra has taken a UK view. Clearly as more in-depth research is undertaken by these organisations, and further policy advice emerges this will need to be disseminated and applied in Hounslow.

⁵⁵ One Planet Economy: Technical Report Part C (2006), Centre of Urban & Regional Ecology at Manchester University for WWF-UK, <http://sites.wflearning.co.uk/data/files/open-technical-report-c-408.pdf>, pg. 18

⁵⁶ Sustain, <http://www.sustainweb.org>

⁵⁷ City University Food Policy Unit, <http://www.city.ac.uk/hmfp/foodpolicy/index.html>