



**Sustainable
South Hams**

Notes from Keep It Local Symposium

Friday 10th Nov 2023

Follaton House, Totnes TQ9 5NE



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Executive Summary

Approximately [40 relevant local food producers, distributors, software specialists and marketeers](#) attended the symposium at the invitation of SHDC.

The purpose of this event was to maximise technical/ practical input and experience into the Keep It Local concept and to maximise engagement and buy-in from key influencers. This initial conversation focussed on food .

Following a scene setting sessions, the attendees addressed two key questions

- 1) What stops producers selling more locally (referred to as barriers)
- 2) What can SHDC do to help?

Key outcomes:

There was a strong appetite for collaboration with the council to help “Keep It Local.”

The full mind map can be found [here.\(add link to pdf\)](#)

The main barriers to “Keeping It Local” were perceived as

- Consumer awareness, perceptions, skills and resources
- Producer awareness, perceptions, skills and resources

The ‘topline’ ideas to address this were seen as

- Create a food culture
- Create a food hub network (Do a Liege)
- Explore collaborative procurement solutions

Ideas that the council could most usefully help with, with relative ease were perceived as

- Invest in the creation of a shared vision - what would good look like?
- Boost and support farmers markets. (Aka ‘Super Markets’)
- Consider the creation of a food and farming officer (to cover both supply and demand)
- Map what’s there (perhaps in collaboration with Universities)
- Collaborate to secure food procurement eg with DCC

The videos and presentations are linked overleaf.

Next steps:

Arrange a series of one to ones with those with particular interest, energy or expertise to prioritise action plan and consider creation of working groups Action: John McKay



Detailed Notes from Symposium

Session 1a: Setting the scene

Councillor
John McKay
[Go to 4m16s
Video](#)

For slides
click [here](#)

Introduction

UWE report for South Hams climate shows

- Hotter drier summers
- Warmer wetter winters

Outcome: Clear need for

- Improved water storage
- Food production adaptation

[Devon Carbon Plan](#)

- Reliance on Negative Emission technology is unproven at the scale required

In order to reach Net Zero, 12% year on year emission reduction is required.

Main emissions in South Hams from

- Housing (18%) - this requires government intervention
- Agriculture and Transport together make up 50% - and this is an area that we could make an impression on

Many valuable projects in progress.

How can the council help?

- £500k budget pa for next 4 years.
- Funding Support- eg access to public loan boards, UK shared prosperity funding, commitment to support communities and central government funds
- Policy and Projects
- Lobbying
- Working together

Common goals: proposed (17m)

Pathways to success: proposed

The need for action: Existing C budget for 1.5 will be exhausted in 4 years. Extinction rate alarming. Dawn of IT (1980's) connected with explosive rates CO2 production as supply chains lengthened. Can IT be a solution to supply chain issue whilst also addressing convenience, efficiencies in distribution and production



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Session 1b: What's already out there

Power of Food Procurement and Lessons Learnt from SW Food Hub

[Greg Parsons](#)
and [Glenn
Willcock](#)
[Go to Video](#)
[23m30s](#)

Glen Willcock (Board Exeter University and Dep Chair Exeter College) set up Exeter City Futures in 2015 which brought together anchor institutions in Exeter with aim of

- Energy independent
- Congestion Free by 2025

Part of this consisted of creating a budget for change with the focus being on how the public sector spends money on procurement - especially on food.

Procurement professionals in anchor institutions are usually responsible for all aspects of procurement so focussing just on food is not possible.

In 2014, Greg Parsons was working for the French government (EDF at Hinkley Point) on local food procurement. Project proved local sourcing could be done at scale. Went to work with DEFRA 'Plan for Public Procurement'

Greg and Glen then worked together ([Dynamic Food Procurement CIC](#)) to build a flexible technology solution bridging willing partners on both supply and demand sides. Concept was that the buyer could stipulate eg carrots with preference that they are supplied locally - but with assurance that order would be satisfied whatever. By year end a significant spend would have been diverted locally.

Willing buyers, producers and users had all been established, but despite this promising work at national level (Crown Commercial Services) and then subsequently at DCC level, efforts to fund the technology development fell through

Key learnings:

- Time is your enemy- people move on an individual's priorities change.
- Large scale intervention was too complex
- Do it fast and local



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the energy! Look for organisations and people that want to do this
<p>Growing Communities Kerry Rankine For slides click here Go to Video 38m</p>	<p>Community led NFP company, operating since 1996 in Hackney, E London.</p> <p>Aim: change food system both in terms of how we produce food, but also in terms of how we sell it by creating alternative routes to market, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veg bag scheme (1996) - All Organic farmers market (2003) <p>which combined, now provides food for @8500 people from 23 growers.</p> <p>Growing Communities also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - train growers - Grow food on 2 urban farms - Run wholesale and networking company, Better Food Shed with the aims of creating more nature friendly farmers and increasing access to this sort of food. Guiding principle: fair price to farmers. - Also set up now independent, Better Food Traders Network, supporting small producers (Contact Lois Gallimore) <p>Better Food Shed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 tonnes food / week from 23 small organic producers within 70 miles of London through veg box schemes (inc their own), but also to schools and community groups. - Buy in from large wholesalers to keep system going, esp in hungry months and when range limited <p>Distributing value through food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair pay to farmers - Flexibility – take what’s in the fields - Prompt payment to farmers - Marketing by veg schemes to build customers understanding & support - Low overheads - Low operating costs - Fair pay for staff (Real Living Wage) - Low pay differential within GC (and BFS) = Not taking lots of money out of the system) <p>What impact does GC have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For every £1 spent, £3.07 with social, economic and



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	<p>environmentally benefits (New Economic Foundation research 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers get 50% inc sales price, increased turnover, more employees - Consumers have better access to good food and eat less processed food - Social benefits of street markets with people feeling happier cf supermarkets <p>What would help ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SURVEY/MAP WHAT IS ALREADY THERE - please don't reinvent the wheel! - INFRASTRUCTURE – SPACES & PLACES & STUFF - SUBSIDY aka INVESTMENT - EG.SOCIAL RENTS - PLANNING - prioritise these sort of businesses - where will these farm workers live? - PROCUREMENT POLICIES - make sure policies aligned to favour local food <p>Closing thoughts:</p> <p>Mainstream supermarket system is efficient but not resilient ro sustainable: UK fruit and veg consumption is reducing year on year, supermarkets have small profits on fresh food so farmers are getting tiny margins.</p> <p>The GC model can provide a template for building a local food system with fairness and resilience at heart whilst still protecting the local environment.</p>
<p>Role of Digital Solutions</p> <p>Lynne Davis, Open Food Network</p> <p>Pete Russell, Ooooby</p> <p>Marina O'Connell, Apricot Centre</p> <p>Go to Video 56m</p> <p>For slides</p>	<p>What do digital solutions provide ? A way of selling direct from farms to local businesses and consumers which levels the playing field, automates sales, simplifies operations and decentralises the food system. This potentially gives local food a huge advantage over the incumbent systems. Clear evidence that up to 40% of supply chain cost can be removed. Presently seeing food from Regen Farms with short supply chain moving to price parity as inflation hits distribution prices. Local food supply is much more resilient with things changing massively recently with more players providing digital solutions eg Big Barn, Open Food Network, Ooooby, Growing Good. Also big increases in food hubs recently where small producers share products, customers and distribution networks. Example being Apricot Centre.</p> <p>Apricot Centre - All food sold via a short supply chain within 25m</p>



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<p>click here</p>	<p>radius. Thriving market stall, veg round with online shop (with fruit, meat and grain from other producers) through consumer interface with Ooooby (B2C solution). Pandemic proved this platform to be easily scalable. Also link to other food hubs in the Good Food Loop through the Open Food Network (B2B solution).</p> <p>Connective infrastructure needs to allow for range solutions, but platforms need to interconnect to prevent data silos.</p> <p>Food Data Collaboration (Lynne Davis). Don't want a single platform as this creates fragility - need diverse creative businesses and a way to link data sharing. FDC has initial funding of £500k (National Lottery) to pilot data interchange based on the established Data Food Consortium (France). This protocol includes multiple platforms, notably shopify and is adopting a commons principles so that no one party owns the technology. The pilot phase is exploring three approaches 1) Regional (Open Food Loop) 2) Depth first - Hodmedods to as many retailer as possible 3) Breadth first: working with Big Barn to get as many suppliers connected as possible.</p>
<p>Liege Food Belt</p> <p>Christian Jonet</p> <p>Go to Video 1 hr 11m</p> <p>For slides click here</p>	<p>Aim: to co-construct a local, ecological and social food system</p> <p>History:</p> <p>First to be established 2013 - now one of 5 food belts in Belgium Started with a large community gathering(600 people) aiming to harness creativity and engagement. Q: what would it look like if at least 50% of our food is produced locally? Used “Open space technology” to identify barriers that needed to be addressed, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to land - Access to finance - Training and business development support - Create missing links in local food chains - Partnerships development with municipalities - Citizen awareness and involvement - Logistics organisation <p>The event started a boom in 100 local food producers and 20 new co-operatives for production, processing and distribution</p> <p>What had to be done? (Examples of things that have worked well)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Citizen awareness:</i> activity included “Feeding Festivals” which are 10 days long. Other towns are now copying. - <i>Mobilisation of stakeholders:</i> Created Food Policy Council - an association between the Food Belt, university, the 24



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	<p>municipalities (covering about 635k people) and 120 members representing all aspects of production, process, distributors, consumers etc. Liege city council has committed to all food coming from local organic suppliers by 2040. Schools involvement - healthy soup and smoothies replace sugary snacks. Community kitchens eg hospitals all part of council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Addressing missing links in food chains</i>: infrastructure investment required for 1) logistics hub inc office and admin support for cooperatives in food belt 2) Cannery: Cooperation with local authorities for European funding. Central canning unit will enable 100% supply of veg to schools and hospitals.- <i>Funding</i>: Initial volunteer and cooperative investment proved an appetite and case for more funding. Institutional and public body investment followed. Annual budget of Food Belt team mainly wages - now employs 7 people with City helping with overheads.
<p>It's 2033 and things are great!</p> <p>Andy Johnson</p> <p>For slide click here</p>	<p>Jane to summarise Key steps taken - awaiting video link and / or review from Andy</p>

Session 2: Breakout discussions

Two questions were addressed:

- What are the key barriers to producing and selling more ?



- How can SHDC help?
The results are collated in Session 3

Session 3a: What are the key barriers to producing and selling more ? **SUPPLY SIDE**

The full mind map can be seen [here](#) with the solutions shown in red.

Producer awareness, resources perceptions and skills	'Organic Hurdle'	'Organic may not be the answer'
	We don't know what's on the ground	This means there's little or no coordination and lots of waste
	Marketing, Technology and selling is not in my skillset	
Resources	Access to land	Big landowners (eg church, DCC, MOD) Topography
	Labour availability	Brexit, Low wages and accommodation issues
	Infrastructure	Right scale machinery , planning permission and lack of processing facilities
	Money	Access to funding - big producers are favoured/and have resources to apply for grants
	Waste and recycling	Could this be a driver for change? (composting and surplus food)
Competition	Large companies in control	
Distribution	Distance and	



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	hence cost to market	
	Physical space	
	Access to market is complex	
Policy	Politics	
	Local Plan	
	Lack coordination	Policies don't align to support local food production (eg planning and need for accommodation)
	Waste	Commercial and noncommercial waste policies and costs are prohibitive for small business
	Anchor institution procurement	Present policy is 'buy easy and cheap'
Culture	B2B Lack Trust	Mindset of distrust, competition and scarcity between producers / organisations

Session 3a : What are the key barriers to producing and selling more ? DEMAND SIDE

The full mind map can be seen [here](#) with the solutions shown in red.

Consumer awareness, resources perceptions and skills	Consumer understanding poor	Seasonality Unfashionable / 'difficult' food Food miles Contributing to local economy to create jobs and vibrant communities Behaviour Value/importance of food Nutrition
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		Health benefits Food Poverty
Accessibility for Consumers	Price	Perception / reality that local food more expensive
	Convenience	
Procurement Chaos	Public sector process and criteria not consistent	
	No coordination across organisations	
Systems and processes opaque and complex		



Session 3b: Collated feedback on *How can SHDC help?* SUPPLY SIDE

The full mind map can be seen [here](#) with the solutions shown in green. The numbers refer to the number of votes an idea received.

Create a B2B Food Hub Network (14) (Do a Liege)	Improve producer knowledge sharing (12)	Establish a way to share knowledge around what's in the ground, existing vehicle fleets Survey/ research to establish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what holds growers and farmers back - What's in the ground R&D around Adaptation and risk (climate change) Help Farmers sell Food and Farming Officer Role (with responsibility for demand and supply) Producer capability support (networking and signposting)
	Engage more farmers / producers	Build trust between producers Open decision making Link to Food and Farming Officer Storytelling and successes Social hubs for informal networking
	Help Access Funding (10)	Public loan board / create a loan board Seed funding (2) Support creation of Cooperatives (5) Link to food and farming officer (5)
	Share Physical Resources (6)	Develop hubs and spokes Training facilities Incubator spaces for offices Admin and warehousing Processing facilities Marketing - back success stories Measure progress Right scale machinery



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	Shared Virtual Resources (7)	Back what's already there (Open Food Network) Explore EPIC (6)
	Boost Farmers Markets (4)	Use surpluses to boost farmers markets
Food and Farming Officer (5)	Role- Help Access Funding (10)	Public loan board / create a loan board Seed funding (2) Support creation of Cooperatives (6)
	Role - boost Producer Capability	Networking signposting and training (5)
	Role - Get more Farmers/ Growers involved	Build Trust between producers Open decision making
	Role - Create a Food culture (on demand side)	
Procurement coordination and collaboration	Control Procurement contracts	Grow the market by being more proactive around anchor institution procurement. Address convenience and pricing through standardised procurement
	Group Buying schemes	Can neighbours/ groups buy together ?



Session 3b: Collated Feedback on *How can SHDC help?*

DEMAND SIDE

The full mind map can be seen [here](#) with the solutions shown in green. The numbers refer to the number of votes an idea received.

Create a Food Culture (34)	Super Food Markets (11)	<p>Fun Buzzy atmospheric markets which have a consumer centric focus - abundant culture with multiple producers in any one category so that consumers have an adventure! Collective marketing. Masses of choice</p> <p>Favour local food (stall price, accreditation and EHO)</p> <p>Link to professional gleaners (ensuring no undercutting and reducing waste)</p>
	Celebrate our Food (6)	<p>Marketing campaign around success stories</p> <p>Food festivals</p> <p>Accreditation scheme for local food</p> <p>Cluster marketing</p>
	Create a shared Vision (9)	<p>Maximise engagement by asking consumers to imagine a future of local food. Ask What would good look like? Use open space technology</p>
	Schools initiative (8)	<p>Connect schools to farms</p> <p>Teach kids growing and cooking more</p> <p>Get kids gleaning food for schools</p> <p>Link with Community Kitchens</p> <p>Increase children's awareness and involvement</p> <p>Supply surplus food to schools</p> <p>Use professional gleaning (to ensure farmers are not undercut)</p> <p>Offer healthy snack eg soups and smoothies (Liege)</p>
	Consumer Understanding	<p>Recipe cards for seasonal food</p> <p>Community kitchen training sessions - how to use</p>



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		<p>Increase children's awareness and involvement</p> <p>Link with Community Kitchens</p> <p>What's available, how to use it and the value of food?</p> <p>Work with peer groups</p> <p>Address perceptions around value and benefits of local food (health, environment, carbon)</p> <p>Health aspect via health professionals and fitness industry</p>
Procurement coordination and collaboration	Control Procurement contracts	<p>Grow the market by being more proactive around anchor institution procurement.</p> <p>Address convenience and pricing through standardised procurement</p>
	Group Buying schemes	<p>Can neighbours/ groups buy together ?</p>

Session 3c : An idea for consideration- EPIC	
	<p>Add summary of notes from EPIC</p> <p>Suggested specific immediate actions</p>

Session 3d : Suggested Next steps		
		Suggested immediate actions
Create a Food Hub Network	Define What were Liege's first steps?	Work with Rob Hopkins to explore use of Open space to engage the public in a collective vision. Explore what does good look like?



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Policy	Planning	Brief Planning Officers and explore change planning guidelines for Agricultural worker accommodation
Food Markets	Favour local producers	Create working group (and other interested parties) with Marina O'Connell to improve food markets
Mapping	What do we already have?	Approach universities for support on mapping existing resources
Food and Farming Officer	Ensure both supply and demand in role profile	Create working group to look at role profile and person spec
Collaborative procurement		Create working group to look at ways of working together to boost KIL

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10.12.23

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