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Developing a Strong and Sustainable Food Economy in Kirklees

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Dr John Lever conducted the research on which this report is based, with support from Alexandra Coslet and Fiona Hasselden. We would like to acknowledge and thank all those who took part in the study.

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Executive Summary

Kirklees Public Health Directorate commissioned the research on which this report is based. Between October 2014 and July 2015, fifteen interviews were conducted in Kirklees with key actors in the community food sector and the local authority. These interviews were complimented with five more at the national level.

The overall aim of the research was to provide evidence of how the current Kirklees food system contributes to the aim of making local people and the economy more resilient. The research had three main objectives:

- To explore the potential impact of local food on economic development.
- To examine possible frameworks for an independent Kirklees food partnership.
- To develop awareness and promote the significance of these issues.

A number of key findings emerge.

Key findings

1. Many community food enterprises exist in isolation and there is little to bind them together beyond small reciprocal exchanges.
2. The community food sector needs more support and Kirklees should focus on the many good things that are already happening across the borough.
3. Redefining what is meant by 'local food' would improve the effectiveness of local supply chains and enable better procurement.
4. Better local procurement and sourcing would enable local producers and entrepreneurs to make a more effective contribution to the local economy.
5. A system of local/ sub regional food hubs is already in place across Kirklees comprised of community retailers, farms shops and schools.
6. There is a wide support for the development of an independent Kirklees food partnership and central food hub to coordinate these initiatives more effectively.
7. The Brighton and Hove partnership provides a good model for Kirklees to follow, but the right people must be involved from the outset if any new approach is to be successful.

8. Any new agenda must ensure that all the diverse communities across Kirklees, deprived as well as affluent benefit from any new ways of working.
9. Better planning and public policies are needed if the joint Kirklees Health/Well-Being and Economic Strategies are to bring about outcomes that cut across different areas of service delivery.
10. More commitment and support for partnership working is needed across all sectors in West Yorkshire.

Five recommendations are made.

Recommendations

1. Provide more support for the community food sector in Kirklees
2. Initiative better partnership working and collaboration across all sectors in West Yorkshire
3. Link the local food system with local supply chains to enhance local sourcing and procurement
4. Initiative better planning and policy to link the food system to population needs across different areas of service delivery more effectively.
5. Develop a local food partnership and food hub infrastructure to drive the food strategy to the next level.

1. Introduction

Over the last decade community food enterprises have gained greater prominence alongside the emergence of Urban Food Strategies and Food Policy Councils. Attempts to foster new relations between civil society food activists and the local state are now widely discussed as a way of developing new governance structures capable of scaling up local food production in ways that enhance the resilience of places and the health of local populations. In the UK, places such as Bristol and Brighton – following the example set by cities such as Toronto and New York – are attempting to reconfigure food policies in line with local labour markets, transport, land use planning and economic development. Fostering links between policy makers and community food enterprises is vital if new approaches to sustainable food production that enhance local resilience are to emerge (MLFW 2012; Sonnino and Spayde 2014; King et al. 2015).

This is the context in which Kirklees has developed the *Food 2020: From Farm to Fork Strategy* (Kirklees 2014). The strategy lays out plans to transform local food culture in a sustainable way that improves the health of local people, the local economy and the environment.[1] It aims to reduce diet related inequalities, promote healthy food in schools, hospitals and care homes and develop the Kirklees food industry in ways that provide appropriate training and employment opportunities. Reducing obesity[2] levels amongst children and adults by promoting healthy diets and getting people more active are central, as are plans to involve communities in planting and growing work. The food strategy is underpinned by the *Kirklees Good Food Charter* (Kirklees 2014a), which aims to 'celebrate good food and bring people together to increase demand for, and supply of, fresh, seasonal, local healthy food.'

These developments emerge from the Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the underlying aim to make Kirklees a place where people enjoy better health and a great quality of life via a strong and growing economy. The Public Health Outcomes framework is now a major driver of public health in the UK. Local authorities have a duty to conduct an annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to review population needs and inform priorities and policies across different sectors and areas of service delivery. Health and Wellbeing Boards build on JSNAs to define Health and

[1] See http://foodkirklees.org.uk

[2] In 2012, over half (54%) of all adults in Kirklees were overweight or obese; 20% of all 5 years olds and just less than 10% of all 14 years old were also obese: http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/partners/health/jsna/pdf/kirkleesjsnaobesity.pdf

Wellbeing Strategies that cut across local authority priorities and polices to influence commissioning practice (Pitt and Jones et al. 2014). Some of the most deprived areas are in north Kirklees around Dewsbury and Batley and it is here that need is greatest.

In England, deprivation is often measured using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which combines a number of indicators of deprivation into a single score. This is about more than access to money and the measure provides an assessment of a resident populations lack of resources, opportunities and access to services. Deprivation is closely linked to life expectancy and residents in Dewsbury can, on average, expect live 3.6 to 4.9 years less than residents in the Holme Valley in south Kirklees (Kirklees 2013).

The Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy has recently been aligned with the vision laid out in the Kirklees Economic Strategy. The overall aim is to make Kirklees a recognized place to do business in ways that allow *all* people and communities to prosper and flourish (Kirklees 2015).

1.1 Research objectives and methodology

This report is based on research conducted between October 2014 and July 2015. It was commissioned by Kirklees Public Health Directorate to provide evidence of how the current Kirklees food system contributes to the aim of making local people and the economy more resilient. The research had three main objectives:

- To explore the potential impact of local food on economic development.
- To examine possible frameworks for an independent food partnership in Kirklees.
- To develop awareness and promote the significance of these issues.

The project made use of qualitative methods, including interviews, documentary research and observation. This involved visits *to* and semi-structured interviews *with* community food enterprises, local food artisans/entrepreneurs, local councillors and members of prominent food partnerships around the UK; a review of policy and strategy documentation was also undertaken. The combined data was analysed to identify key themes and issues for further research.

2. Local food culture in Kirklees

It is clear from *Food 2020* (Kirklees 2014) that Kirklees has a thriving local food culture.[3] There are numerous community food enterprises (CFEs) across the borough, including local growing groups such as **Golcar Food Growers Cooperative** and **Growing Newsome**. The Colne Valley is home to the **Green Valley Grocer**, a community owned shop, the **Handmade Bakery**, a workers cooperative and a permaculture inspired food project called **Edibles**. Holmfirth and the Holme Valley have the award winning **Holmfirth Vineyard** and **Coddy's Farm**, as well as the **Holmfirth Farmers Market** on the third Sunday of each month.

There are also a number of key educational food projects in Kirklees, including **GROW to School, Growing Works**, and **Plant It, Grow It, Eat It.** The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust also has a project at **Stirley Community Farm** and there are 2000 allotments across the borough on 100 sites.

Kirklees is also home to a number of innovative food artisans and food enterprises, including **Curry Cuisine**, **Proper Maid Cakes**, **Lily Pickles of Holmfirth** and **Proper Nutty**, a peanut butter producer in Dewsbury. There are also numerous food banks and food pantries around Kirklees, including the **Welcome Centre** in Huddersfield, which provides around 200 food parcels every week for people in crisis. Kirklees is also involved in the **Food for Life Partnership** (FFLP).[4] Led by the Soil Association, this national partnership overseas a range of local food projects in schools, care settings and hospitals across Kirklees.

2.1 The community food sector

Following the framework developed by Making Local Food Work (MLFW 2012) a number of different CFEs can be identified along the food chain in Kirklees. These include local farms, community-growing projects, community supported agriculture schemes and community food retailers. Over recent years, the value of CFEs has been widely recognized and they are now seen to have the potential to achieve goals that are social and environmental as well as economic – the *'triple bottom-line'* of sustainable development (Co-operatives UK et al. 2008; MLFW 2012). In the next section the social and environmental benefits (actual and potential) of CFEs and the Kirklees community food sector are examined.

2.2 Social and environmental development

Individuals and groups involved in the community food sector have been motivated to get involved in local food projects for many reasons. One of the things that facilitated

[3] See also http://foodkirklees.org.uk
[4] http://www.foodforlife.org.uk

the emergence of **Growing Newsome** was the difficulty of getting an allotment in the Newsome ward. Investigations with Kirklees Council revealed that lots of allotments were available but that many were either inaccessible or overgrown.

Community food growing sprang from the initial problems and from surveys conducted by volunteers to gauge demand. An independent growing group was subsequently formed and this led to the establishment of a community allotment. People working on the allotment are the main benefactors, but community meals are also provided at **Growing Newsome** events, which can be attended by up to 200 people. Over recent years, **Growing Newsome** has also made links with various CFEs in Kirklees and they now source bread from the **Handmade Bakery** and salad from **Edibles** in the Colne Valley.

A similar story is evident at **Golcar Food Grows Co-operative,** where the major benefits identified from the group's activities again revolve around bringing people together:

> *'I think one spin off from this is people have come along who've never really been involved in growing anything in the past, so they're not only working on the fields with us, but they're also going back into their own gardens, sometimes with neighbours and things, and doing things there as well.'*

The group grows fruit and vegetables and the cooperative orchard has over 30 varieties of Yorkshire apples. The group is also working to transform pasture into woodland and volunteers have already planted thousands of trees. Members work with and forge links with a wide range of local community groups, charities and schools to run these and other projects.

There are also some innovative community food retailers in Kirklees. **The Green Valley Grocer** is widely recognised in national and international local food networks as an example of what can be achieved by a CFE (MLFW 2012). The shop sells a range of local produce, runs a veg box scheme and also acts as a hub for the local community, providing a range of services and deliveries to older people. The shop also provides an outlet for innovative local food artisans such as **Lily Pickles of Holmfirth** and **Proper Nutty** in Dewsbury, who struggle to get their products into supermarkets and larger retail outlets.

A number of CFEs also provide training and educational activities. **Edibles** in the Colne Valley, which has a nursery of edible plants and local heritage fruit trees, and produces organic salads and herbs all year round, aims is to put food at the heart of the local community. They work in schools and with community organisations to provide sustainability skills and experience of working on the land.

There are also a number of specialist educational projects in Kirklees. **Growing Works**, funded through the Kirklees Community Partnership,[5] has a number of themes to its work linked to an overriding focus on growing, cooking and eating food. The project has allotments where gardening for health, therapeutic gardening, and gardening for vulnerable adults with mental health problems, sensory impairment and physical disabilities take place. There are many benefits to this work, as the following quote illustrates:

> *'Our therapeutic gardening with adults, it makes a big difference to people, they really gain socially as well as the skills, and we have volunteers who… gain as much as the participants in a lot of cases. Some of the volunteers also have some mental health issues or physical issues… it seems to take people back to what they used to do, back doing physical things and kids love it, the parents love it.'*

The physical and mental health benefits provided by initiatives such as **Growing Works, GROW to School** and **Plant It, Grow It, Eat It** are increasingly recognized by public health epidemiologists (Cooper 2013; Swinburn et al. 2015).[6] Alongside the work of the Food for Life Partnership (see 3.2), they also play a critical role providing food and sustainability education across Kirklees.

The work of local food projects is outlined in the Kirklees food strategy and food charter (Kirklees, 2014; 2014a). However, what is not clear is that these projects largely exist in isolation from each other, and that there is little that binds them together beyond small reciprocal exchanges. The need to join them up more effectively was discussed by a number of interviewees:

> *'There's so many brilliant small groups around Kirklees, and we're all going off doing our thing, we need to get together, we need to be public, we need to be in the middle of Huddersfield showing what we've got, celebrating what we do together.'*

Stirley Community Farm is another prominent education project. Funded by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the farm provides educational courses that aim to demonstrate how wildlife-friendly farming methods involving local communities can benefit the landscape, the environment and support sustainable farming. Over the last four years, a number of old buildings on the site have been renovated and the

[5] http://www.communitykirklees.org.uk

[6] The Great Outdoors helps people to access free outdoor opportunities in Kirklees at projects such as Golcar Food Growers Co-operative. See: http://www.s2r.org.uk/#!thegreatoutdoorsproject/c87a

farm now has an excellent education facility and a thriving food-training garden where agricultural and conservation events are provided for young people. Local people use the site for dog walking and leisure purposes and there are plans for further weekend opening in the near future to facilitate wider access to the site and generate greater awareness of what the project is trying to achieve.

The farm is currently in its fifth growing season and with the help of volunteers it has planted an orchard, established a 50 strong beef shorthorn herd and introduced beehives. A direct contribution to environmental sustainability is made through the use of sustainable and wildlife-friendly farming methods, as an interviewee stated:

> *'Our animals live for a lot longer than on other farms and we don't send them to slaughter for way over twenty months… and we only feed them on grass so that is sustainable, we don't feed them on hard feed which is unsustainable and expensive, so we are self-sufficient in feeding the cattle.'*

This work also underpins a *community-supported agriculture* scheme through which members receive a 10 kg annual beef box.[7]

There is widespread acknowledgment of the environmental benefits that emerge from the work of CFEs. The most notable benefits emerge from practices that mitigate the worst impacts of climate change by taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, including – most notably – managing land and livestock more effectively (MLFW 2010). Developing a sustainable food system that benefits the environment is a key element of *Food 2020* (Kirklees 2014) and it is clear that supporting and promoting the work of CFEs across Kirklees can further this agenda.

An interviewee discussed the many social, economic and environmental benefits that can potentially emerge from the community food sector in Kirklees (see also Co-operatives UK et al. 2008):

> *'So growing food is one outcome, the food value, but you've also got the people who are employed on the land, so you've got local economic development potential… you've also got the social aspect of getting people with perhaps mental health issues onto the land, and then you've got things like managing land better… So you've got win, win, win.'*

[7] http://www.ywt.org.uk/stirley-beef

The next section focuses on the impact of local food on economic development.

2.3 Economic development

As noted in the introduction to this report, Kirklees Council is currently working to join-up and make links between the Joint Health/ Well Being Strategy and the Kirklees Economic Strategy (Kirklees 2015). The aim is to get the local economy supporting health outcomes and health supporting economic outcomes, the overall aim being to enhance local resilience.

This thinking is evident in the Kirklees Local Plan[8] through the notion that for the local economy to prosper in ways that help local people to prosper there needs to a consideration of what development goes where. While helping Kirklees to grow is therefore a key element of the underlying joined up approach, an interviewee argued there are very different approaches to the idea of growth bound up in the wider debate:

> *'[In the plan, they are] talking about 'growing', but that's a very different view on growing to what we'd see as you grow together as a community, and if there's no scope in there for land for food then you come up against a problem eventually cos you've lost the spaces in which you might do some of this, or replicate them in different communities.'*

The implication here was that many of the spaces where local food projects can be implemented in Kirklees are quickly being taken up by economic priorities, and that this needs to change if the wider objectives of the plan and the food strategy are to be achieved. Another interviewee made a similar point when discussing this joint agenda:

> *'That's one of the things about this view of land for jobs and homes, land's about more than that and that's one of the things that worries me a lot. In terms of the health and well-being strategy, food's right up there as… really important, but it's got to be there in the economic side as well and reflected in your planning policy.'*

As these comments illustrate, developing a sustainable food economy is a key aspect of the attempt to develop this joint agenda.

The need for better planning and policy to facilitate 'joining up' was raised throughput the research. While there was recognition that the lack of fertile land in the Colne and

[8] http://kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/local-plan.aspx

Holme Valley's makes it impossible to grow large volumes of local produce, some interviewees argued that there is fertile land in the lower parts of 'the valleys' that could be used to build a small-scale food industry that supports the local economy by providing employment opportunities and other community benefits:

> *'There could be a small food industry here employing quite a few people which in turn would stop food stuffs coming into the valley, would keep money in the valley, would keep it circulating.'*

However, despite numerous examples of innovative enterprise, economies of scale make it difficult for CFEs to move forward together and they thus continue to exist and operate largely in isolation. The following example illustrates this point well; it also emphasises the need for better planning.

Some years ago Edibles was the recipient of a £5000 grant from the Plunkett Foundation to explore the potential for developing a local food network and examining how a local food system might work. The project was effectively a micro study of **Edibles** as a potential local producer, with the **Handmade Bakery** and **Green Valley Grocer** acting as retailers serving the public in the Marsden and Slaithwaite Transition Town (MASTT).[9] For Edibles, the difficulties of working in this way soon became apparent:

> *'We realised that on a small scale it was very difficult for us to make any [money], to run any sort of coherent business where we can pay ourselves a reasonable salary, even a minimum wage salary, with the prices that the Green Valley Grocer are prepared to pay… the economics of that just doesn't work.'*

This was not a criticism of their retail partners; nor was it to say that the 'the valleys' cannot support a small-scale food industry. It was more that for this to happen there needs to more planning, support and investment in local infrastructure and supply chains.

It is also worth pointing out that many of these CFEs already have a positive impact on the local economy. A few years ago the **Green Valley Grocer** raised £30,000 in equity through a community share issue. As well as investing money, local people gave time and expertise to renovate the building.

[9] https://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/marsden-and-slaithwaite-transition-towns-mastt

Local businesses also helped out with running costs and investors received a dividend within a couple of years (see MLFW 2012). As an interviewee stated:

> *'In year one and two we made losses, in year three we made a marginal profit, which is where we wanted to be because we said to the shareholders we wouldn't be looking at profit making or dividends for three years. In year four we made about £10,000 and last year we made about £10,000 clear, after we had done the dividends.'*

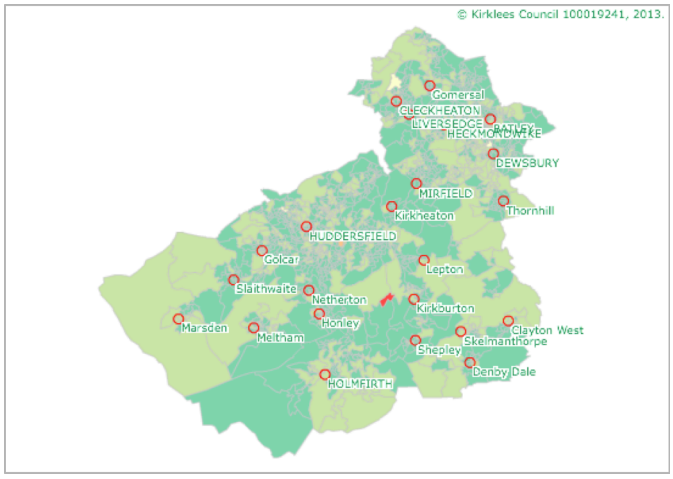
To raise the funding needed to relocate and open a café, the **Handmade Bakery** worked in a similar way by offering local people "bread bonds" that paid interest in loaves on a weekly basis, and "course bonds" that paid interest in places on a bread-making course (see also MLFW 2012). All such initiatives enhance the local economy and create wider benefits for local people by redirecting the benefits of investment back to the local community.

Recently the **Green Valley Grocer** and the **Handmade Bakery** have come under pressure from commercial business interests that have challenged their position in the local economy. This has created tension between the community food sector and conventional retailers by undermining the ability of CFEs to operate and make a contribution to the local economy. It is important to note at this juncture that this report is not advocating a focus entirely on 'local food' at the expense of other options. While food produced beyond 'local' communities is unsustainable in many instances, there is also now a wide ranging literate on avoiding *the local trap* and the assumption that the 'local' is inherently better for sustainable development (Morgan and Sonnino 2010).

Produce not considered 'local' is grown on arable land in many parts of Kirklees and there is clearly potential to grow more food on unused plots of common land. However, land ownership issues, Government regulations and EU legislation that encourage farmers to leave their land fallow were said to restrict the use of such land. Of course, this is not to say that Kirklees can be self-sufficient in food production (see Box 1 below on page 14). It is more that the local food economy can be developed in ways that enhance local resilience by drawing more fresh and nutritious produce from the surrounding region into deprived urban areas; this is a particularly significant issue in north Kirklees, given the high levels of obesity, poverty and deprivation.

Box 1. Can Kirklees produce enough food to be self-sufficient?

In 2014 Kirklees had population of 431,020, up from 428,279 in 2013 (Kirklees 2015a). If population growth continues at the current rate Kirklees will have a population of 500,000 in the not too distant future.



Recommended daily guidelines estimate that on average each of us needs 2000 kcal per day to lead a healthy life (FAO 2010). If we take this as our starting point, it follows that the people of Kirklees will soon be getting through close to 1 billion (2000 kcal x 500,000) calories everyday day.

Feeding the current population of Kirklees (431,020) thus requires enough food to produce:

- 862 040 000 *kcal everyday*
- 6 034 280 000 *kcal every week*, and;
- 314 644 600 000 *kcal every year*

How much land will this require?

The UN suggests that the average number of hectares of cultivated land needed to feed one person annually is 0.22 hectare, which is less than half what it was in 1961 (FAO 2010). Assuming we have ideal growing conditions in Kirklees – which we do not – this means that every hectare of intensively farmed land in the borough can be used to produce enough food to feed around 4.5 people (see also Cooper 2013).

The area of Kirklees is 408.6 km² and the number of hectares of cultivated land needed to feed the population of Kirklees can be worked out in the following way:

- 0.22 x 431,020 = 94,824 hectares or 948 km².

This is more than double the 408.6 km² area of Kirklees.

This is not to say that future food security can simply be reduced to concerns about calories and supply side pressures that stress the need to produce more food; it cannot. It is more to draw attention to the complex issues involved alongside the need to foster well-being in current and future generations (Carolan 2013).

Another issue identified by interviewees in the community food sector was the decline of local farmers markets and food festivals in Kirklees. While an interviewee from the Kirklees Council market team suggested that local markets were moving towards sourcing 'quality' rather than 'local' food, there was a general perception that farmers markets and food festivals do not offer the same opportunities for local food businesses as they once did. As an interviewee from **Coddy's Farm** stated:

> *'We do a lot less farmers markets now than what we used to; we used to do quite a lot of food festivals, we haven't done any this year… they're charging too much money for the rent and we're not getting the takings that we were.'*

Increases in rent were not the only problem identified. As the private sector has moved in to fill the funding gap, the organizational model of these events has changed considerably and people no longer go to these markets simply to buy local produce; they now attend *'for the entertainment, they come for something to eat there and… some booze.'*

As a result of these changes, many CFEs and local food businesses have started looking to farmers markets outside Kirklees where there are better opportunities. An interviewee at **Proper Nutty** in Dewsbury emphasised this point strongly:

> *'We deal with like Selby Farmers Market and it was awesome, Selby's like fifty mile away, why do I need to go to Selby to do a farmers market, there's not a decent one nearer one to home that we can do.'*

Local food events organized in Huddersfield town centre were talked about in similar terms. Ostensibly set up to attract people from across a wider area to promote local restaurants and producers, it was clear that CFEs and local business people attend these events less than they once did. Larger food festivals run by Kirklees Council were also seen to focus on large business interests from outside the area at the expense of local enterprises. More needs to be done to improve this situation if the joint Kirklees public health/well-being and economic strategies are to succeed.

2.4 Better planning and policy

As noted throughout the preceding discussion, better planning and policy support is needed if outcomes that cut across different areas of service delivery are to emerge in Kirklees. *Good Panning for Good Food* (Sustain 2011) has helped many urban planners to re-imagine their role in this area by supporting local retailers close to communities and encouraging small-and medium-sized food enterprises (SMEs). However, to move forward there needs to be much greater recognition that policies focusing solely on the mainstream food system often have the unintended effect of hindering the growth and development of more effective local enterprises and supply chains (Hand and Clancy 2014).

In the US, many states make a commitment *to* and provide resources *for* the promotion of products grown within state boundaries through programs that develop and promote new market outlets. States also use direct marketing to bring producers

closer to consumers, whilst providing assistance and subsidies to farmers markets. Business development programs are also used to help nascent enterprises to develop into larger food businesses and supply chain actors (Hand and Clancy 2014). If the influence of the private sector is to be constrained and local resilience enhanced, local food initiates in Kirklees must be supported and more effective policies and accountability systems put in place (Swinburn et al 2015). Ultimately for Kirklees to deliver joint outcomes through the fusion of the Health/ Well-Being and Economic Strategies, the local food system must be brought more into line with the workings of local supply chains. Greater collaboration is thus needed across all sectors.

3. Improving the local food system through collaboration

Improving the local food system is dependent on a number of key issues that are directly linked to better partnership working and collaboration across all sectors. In this chapter we explore definitions of 'local food', the workings of local supply chains and developments emerging through the Food for Life Partnership framework to explore this issue in more detail.

3.1 Local food and the limits of local supply chains

As noted above, a number of interviewees discussed the need to overcome the limits of local supply chains and redefine what can be classed as 'local food'. A local food entrepreneur discussed the problems of sourcing local ingredients for his company's products in this context. Unable to source ingredients from within the boundaries of Kirklees, this innovative local enterprise went outwards in concentric circles from Huddersfield and the ingredients were eventually sourced from within a 30-40 mile radius. While this enabled the entrepreneur to expand the business nationally, it also raised questions as to whether it was legitimate for his company's products to be marketed as 'locally produced'.

A member of a prominent UK food partnership argued similarly that the whole notion of *'local food'* can be misleading and that there should be a greater focus on sustainable supply chains:

> *'I think local food is a bit of a red herring, I don't say this too loudly a lot of the time because obviously it's quite emotive, but because the UK is small I think we should*

be thinking much more about a sustainable UK supply chain and how best that serves the country.'

A Kirklees councillor argued likewise that the whole definition of what constitutes 'local' should be changed in line with the availability of 'fresh' produce:

'The thing is local definition should be the closest you can get it fresh… Not processed, stored, so you have to redefine what local is, can we get it closer, so it's that procurement process, so the best value.'

A comparable argument was made by a local food entrepreneur in response to the suggestion that many small food businesses in Kirklees do not have the capacity meet to local needs. Questioning this position on the grounds that this type of discussion has never been initiated by Kirklees Council, the interviewee argued that there needs to be more discussion about sourcing and procuring *'local food products'* through local supply chains if a more resilient local food economy is to emerge. Even if such products are slightly *'more expensive'*, and the ingredients are from slightly *'further afield'*, it was argued that they would be *'better for the local economy'* and *'intangibly good for the area'.*

Better local procurement and sourcing would also enable local producers and entrepreneurs to achieve the regular income they need to make a more effective contribution to the local economy, as an interviewee from **Curry Cuisine** stated:

'[S]mall producers, if they know they are getting a fixed volume sale and they know what they are getting, they can work their margins. They might not be able to get high margins but… if I am getting 5-10% margins and I'm going to sell every single week and I know it is guaranteed… I'd bite your hand off.'

As we observe in the following section, some of these issues are starting to be addressed in the community networks that are producing and procuring food for schools and care homes across Kirklees. These networks are significant not only because they encourage schools to grow their own food and educate pupils about the benefits, but also because they increase the supply of better quality, nutritious food in deprived urban areas.

3.2 The Food for Life Partnership and institutional provision

It is well known that Kirklees has a thriving community food sector. What is less well known is that this work is complimented, indeed enhanced by the work done in schools and care homes enrolled in the Food for Life Partnership (www.foodforlife.org.uk) (FFLP) across Kirklees.

Led by the Soil Association, this national initiative is central the agenda laid out in the *Food 2020 From Farm to Fork Strategy* (Kirklees 2014). As stated, it oversees a range of schemes and initiatives focused on sustainable food:

> *'Food for Life brings schools, nurseries, hospitals and care homes, and their surrounding communities together around the core ethos of healthy, tasty and sustainable food. The programme is about more than just food on the plate; it considers where food comes from and how it's grown, cooked and experienced. We provide practical advice and support, and reward and celebrate success.'*[10]

There are a number of FFLP awards that schools and other institutional providers can work towards. The **Early Years Award** works to encourage nurseries and children's centers to develop good eating habits focused on good quality, nutritious food. The **School Award** works in a similar way in order to enhance the school dining environment and make lunchtime a positive feature of the school day. Overall the awards allow schools to demonstrate how they engage with local food production to provide healthy school meals and food education in a way that has a positive impact on pupils and the local community. A similar award is available for **hospitals, universities, care homes** and **workplaces**.

Box 2: Food for Life Partnership School Awards

BRONZE schools

- School meals must have seasonal ingredients that are at least 75% freshly prepared
- Pupils and parents must be involved in planning school menus and improving the lunchtime experience
- Every pupil must have the opportunity take part in cooking, food growing and visiting a local farm

SILVER schools

- School meals must be served using proper/ not plastic crockery and 'flight trays'
- Schools must meet the Silver Food for Life Catering Mark for healthy, ethical food with some local and 5% minimum organic ingredients
- There must be a cooking club for pupils to cook with and eat the produce they grow at the school
- Parents must be involved in wider community food education via food-themed events

GOLD schools

- Schools must act as hubs for local communities and actively involve parents and community groups in cooking and growing activities
- Schools must meet the Gold Food for Life Catering Mark that ensures any served food is healthy, ethical, uses lots of local ingredients, is animal and climate friendly, and includes a minimum of 15% organic and 5% free range
- More than 60% of pupils must be choosing to eat school meals and must be actively involved in the life of a local farm, and in planning and growing organic food

[10] http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/what-is-food-for-life

Food for Life awards work on a framework that goes from bronze, silver to gold (see Box 2 above). One of the most significant award criteria relates to the Food for Life catering mark. The mark is provided through Soil Association certification on inspection and is available for any setting that serves food and provides independent verification of the quality of the food provided.

Kirklees Council Public Health (formerly NHS Kirklees) was recently commissioned to deliver the programme to all schools across Kirklees. A key partner supporting this activity is the Council's catering team, which achieved the FFLP silver award for school meals in 2014 and 2015. As Tony Cooke, Head of Health Improvement at Kirklees Public Health has pointed out:

> *'The Catering Service is a vital contributor in reaching the Public Health goals through increasing take up of fruit and vegetables, tackling inequalities through providing free school meals and sourcing local, sustainable food which benefits the economy and environment'* (FFL 2015).

Food for Life awards are significant in that they illustrate the need to develop new forms of procurement and sourcing that move beyond current understandings of 'local' and 'global' food systems to address problems associated with public health, local economies and sustainable development (see Morgan and Sonnino 2010). There are currently 96 schools enrolled on to the programme across Kirklees and so far there have been 55 awards, including 12 silvers; many of these schools are now working towards the gold award (for a full list of schools see Appendix 1).

Netherton Infants and Nursery School currently holds the bronze award and is actively moving towards the silver; the school has a state of the art pollytunnel for growing food and involving pupils in all food related activities. Since 2010, **Batley Girls High School** has been a FFLP flagship school and it now works widely with local communities and other schools to improve and enhance food sustainability. In 2013 the school won the annual Arthur Halliwell (Memorial) Award for the 'most' sustainable school in Kirklees.

As the develop, the FFLP Local Programme Manager in Kirklees suggested that schools can potentially act as local food hubs for communities, where fresh produce can be dropped off and stored:

'As the schools move through to silver and gold we encourage them to sign up to things like fruit and veg box schemes, use the school as a hub, as a drop off point for fresh fruit and vegetables.'

Schools such as **Meltham CE Primary** are also starting to run farmer's markets, filling the void left by the limitations of farmers markets in Kirklees more generally.

Concerns were expressed during the course of the research that the Asian population in north Kirklees are often overlooked in local food circles. However, the FFLP Local Programme Manager highlighted the breadth and scope of the work going on in schools across diverse Kirklees communities. All school menus developed by the catering team are planned in line with the Government's School Food Standards and provide appropriate meals for *all* children in the many diverse communities across Kirklees, affluent and deprived, including those with vegetarian, halal and special diets.[11]

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) used a Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach to conduct a study of the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of FFLP procurement practices. In Nottingham, spending on school meals within the FFLP framework was estimated to be worth over £5 million in value each year for the local economy, with a £3.11 social, economic and environmental value returned for every £1 spent. In Plymouth the figures were £3.04 for every £1 spent, with £1.2 million of annual value for the local economy (NEF 2011).[12] Similar work is now being conducted in Kirklees.

The Food For life Partnership also works with hospitals, universities, care homes and workplaces. Kirklees recently ran a school competition to design a poster to encourage older people to drink more water. The winner was a pupil from **Netherton Infants and Nursery School,** who won a fruit tree and had his poster sent out to all care homes across Kirklees. During the course of the research a new group has formed to look at the possibility of renovating unused greenhouses at Beaumont Park, which are owned by the University of Huddersfield, to grow food for outlets across the campus and provide an effective learning environment for students. Student groups are already growing local produce for the Welcome Centre food bank and the hope is that this new initiative can make a contribution to similar

[11] http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/leisure/sportHealth/schoolMeals.aspx

[12] Health, educational and cultural benefits were not included in this analysis, so the benefits were probably higher (NEF 2011).

projects and eventually supply enough food for a staff veg box scheme at the University.

As this chapter has illustrated, improving the local economy and the health of local people is strongly dependent on better collaboration and partnership working at all levels across all sectors. For many interviewees this was linked to the development of new Kirklees food HUB overseen by a Kirklees food partnership.

4. A new agenda?

A key theme to emerge from this research is the need for a more centralised food system to link up the many good food things already happening across Kirklees. A number of interviewees suggested that a series of regional food hubs around Kirklees – whether shops, farms or schools – could play a significant role linking different enterprises to a central hub infrastructure overseen by a new partnership. It thus seems pertinent to explore what a Kirklees food hub might look like.

4.1 A Kirklees food HUB?

North Yorkshire is seen to have one of the leading food hubs in the UK (http://deliciouslyorkshire.co.uk). While it is difficult to envisage Kirklees developing a food hub on the same scale, such an approach was clearly attractive to CFEs, small food businesses and artisan food producers across Kirklees. Some had even considered relocating to North Yorkshire to make use of the support on offer, as one interviewee stated: *'We've actually even considered moving… up to Thirsk just so we can make use of the facilities.'*

The possibility of a new hub was generally welcomed in the community food sector and some community retailers were, much like schools, already seen to be acting as food hubs. However, concern was also expressed about how a new hub might operate in practice. While some interviewees argued that farm shops in Kirklees have the potential to act as hubs for local food artisans and entrepreneurs, others argued that farm shops now operate like supermarkets. Hinchliffes farm shop (www.hinchliffes.com), the oldest in the UK, and the largest in Kirklees, is to some extent in this position, straddling the line between supermarket and local food hub. However, food hubs come in many shapes and sizes and there is no one size fits all. They are generally seen to offer an organizational approach that gathers, distributes and markets food. Different types of hub are led and initiated for different purposes by different food chain actors – by retailers, by the public sector, by producers-entrepreneurs, by producer-cooperatives and by wholesaler/ foodservice providers (Morley et al. 2008). Some local food centers also act as hubs by promoting direct links between shoppers and producers. Unicorn Grocery (www.unicorn-grocery.coop) in Manchester is one of the most notable in the UK, supplying a range local, organic, fairly traded and wholesome food from a customer base to the south of the city

centre. This worker's co-operative owns land, grows and sources food from around the region, and is also involved in projects such as carbon offsetting.

The practicalities of running such operations can again be overcome through better collaboration. A good example in the north of England is the Manchester Land Army – a partnership of local CFEs involving the Kindling Trust and the Manchester Veg People, and closely linked to Unicorn (http://kindling.org.uk/landarmy). Funded through Making Local Food Work, the aim is to provide a financially resilient 'land army' with the capacity to support new growers and increase existing yields and income through the provision of expert advice and support. This partnership provided the foundation on which Manchester University began to source local food from around the region for outlets across campus. When locally produced food is unavailable, the infrastructure on which the partnership stands allows fresh, nutritious food to be brought onto the campus from the surrounding rural region.

Compared the US, the development of local or sub regional 'food hubs' in the UK has been slow, despite the clear logic for creating storage and distribution facilities that multiple food enterprises can share (Morley et al. 2008). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) (www.usda.gov) estimates that the number of food hubs is growing as communities recognize the economic benefits of linking directly with farmers markets and community supported agriculture schemes (see Low et al., 2015). Since 2009, USDA has funded 150 food hub projects, offered grants and run development programs and there has been a 65% increase in new hubs overall (Reichel 2015). Kirklees could put itself in a prominent position in the UK if it supported the development a central food hub linked to the latent hub infrastructure that already exists across the borough, as this would provide the foundations on which local supply chains could function more effectively.

It is worth noting a word of warning from a member of the Bristol Food Network at this juncture. To be successful and sustainable, the interviewee pointed out that that any new food hub would have to be overseen by an independent food partnership to set the overall food strategy for Kirklees. Moreover, the interviewee stressed just how essential it is to get the right people involved from the outset:

> '*If you are talking about a partnership existing entirely to develop the food HUB, yes a partnership approach is good… I think food HUBS are really important… [but] … it is important to get the right people on board'*

It was also seen to important to go where the energy is and focus on what Kirklees already does well.

4.2 An independent Kirklees food partnership?

There was widespread support for a new food partnership in Kirklees to coordinate the many good things that are already happening across the borough in the community food sector, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *'I quite like the idea of forming a food partnership to make the whole thing more visible and help people to see what's there already.'*

> *'I think there's a great deal of positive feeling towards the idea of bringing together more of an umbrella organisation to coordinate things.'*

However, concerns were also expressed about how a new partnership might work in practice. Some community groups were concerned about top-down management, while others were worried that any new partnership might become a *'talking shop'*. It was also pointed out that most people at this level don't want to involved on the board of a partnership, and they simply want to be left alone to do what they are passionate about. Even so, community groups also recognised that partnerships need support and leadership if they are to be successful.

There were also suggestions from community groups that any new partnership should be independent of the local authority. While interviewees from prominent local food partnerships around the UK agreed, they also pointed out a new partnership also has to operate at a distance from the community. As an interviewee from Brighton noted:

> *'If you're bringing diverse sectors of the food system together, so from your producers through to your public sector people who are working on food-related issues through to third sector, and perhaps want to take individual residents and community members with you as well, it's important that you are not too associated with local government or even with community sector.'*

This was seen to be easier when there is a defined geographical community that makes 'citywide' reach easier. This is not as straightforward as it seems in Kirklees and there are many barriers to collaboration across the borough, as one interview confirmed:

> *'Part of the problem in Kirklees… you've got Huddersfield, and the rest if you like… Bradford and Leeds are cities, their whole lot is run from the centre. Here, there's much more of a division [across north and south Kirklees].'*

The final decision on the actual partnership model adopted was also seen to be dependent on what those likely to be involved think is appropriate for Kirklees.

4.3 An ideal model for Kirklees?

A number of food partnership models were explored during the course of this research, including those in Bristol (Bristol Food Network 2009), Brighton (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership 2012) and Birmingham (see Cooper 2013).

Of those examined, the Brighton and Hove approach appears well suited to Kirklees. The partnership has an overarching focus on developing the relationship between the food system and 'social equity, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, global fair trade and the health and well-being of *all* residents' (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership 2012; italics in original). A not-for-profit limited company, the partnership has a board of directors and 3000 members from various organisations, NGOs and communities. The membership is consulted on any work undertaken and this feeds into work priorities and programmes. Projects are developed with partners across the city – for example, food waste campaigns and growing projects with the local authority, community groups and mental health organisations. Members drive the organisation and are elected onto the board, with service level delivery taking place in partnership with public health. A similar model in Kirklees would undoubtedly help to bring people from diverse sectors together more effectively.

Finding funding that enabled a chief executive with appropriate leadership skills and other staff members to be employed was also critical, as it provided the foundations to develop new strands of work and funding. An interviewee from Brighton explained:

> *'We now have paid staff so obviously it's a much more sustainable model… you have your leaders in the beginning and… we were able to transition into an organisation that employed people to take that [agenda] on'.*

Another major driver in Brighton and Bristol has been recognition of the need for better planning and wider policy engagement across different areas of service delivery. The Brighton and Hove Partnership recently convinced the local authority to commit to minimum buying standards for all food and they are now working to ensure that local supply chains can deliver this on a regular basis. As in Kirklees, these issues are critical if the local authority is to deliver on its wider policy agenda.

5. Conclusions

This research set out to provide evidence of how the Kirklees food system contributes to the aim of making local people and the local economy more resilient. More broadly, it set out to explore the impact of local food on local economic development, possible frameworks for an independent food partnership, whilst developing awareness and promoting the significance of the issues involved. A number of key findings can be highlighted.

5.1 Key findings

1. Many community food enterprises exist in isolation and there is little to bind them together beyond small reciprocal exchanges.
2. The community food sector needs more support and Kirklees should focus on the many good things that are already happening across the borough.
3. Redefining what is meant by 'local food' would improve the effectiveness of local supply chains and enable better procurement.
4. Better local procurement and sourcing would enable local producers and entrepreneurs to make a more effective contribution to the local economy.
5. A system of local/ sub regional food hubs is already in place across Kirklees comprised of community retailers, farms shops and schools.
6. There is a wide support for the development of an independent Kirklees food partnership and central food hub to coordinate these initiatives more effectively.
7. The Brighton and Hove partnership provides a good model for Kirklees to follow, but the right people must be involved from the outset if any new approach is to be successful.
8. Any new agenda must ensure that all the diverse communities across Kirklees, deprived as well as affluent benefit from new ways of working.
9. Better planning and public policies are needed if the joint Kirklees Health/Well-Being and Economic Strategies are to bring about outcomes that cut across different areas of service delivery.
10. More commitment and support for partnership working is needed across all sectors in West Yorkshire.

5.2 Recommendations

From these findings five recommendations can be made.

1. Provide more support for the community food sector in Kirklees
2. Initiative better partnership working and collaboration across all sectors in West Yorkshire
3. Link the local food system with local supply chains to enhance local sourcing and procurement
4. Initiative better planning and policy to link the food system to population needs across different areas of service delivery more effectively.
5. Develop a local food partnership and food hub infrastructure to drive the food strategy to the next level.

5.3 Afterword

The research on which this report stands constitutes an important stepping-stone towards a more resilient Kirklees, but it is only the beginning. There are many tensions in the conventional (global) food system that need to be resolved. These are summed up in the UK by the current tension between the political desire to attract investment into 'local food economies' through Food Enterprise Zones and attempts to address the health and social issues caused by obesity, food poverty and the poor enforcement of *and* withdrawal of support for food standards. Notwithstanding the good work being undertaken by public health agencies across the UK, these tensions and the countless issues involved pose significant ethical problems for socio-political decision-makers. These issues must be on the agenda as Kirklees moves forward from the foundations for change this report provides.

John Lever, January 2016

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Appendix | Kirklees Schools Enrolled in Food For Life Partnership

School	Date	Status	Type
Newsome Junior School	15/07/11	**Silver**	Primary
South Crosland CE Junior School	21/10/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Crosland Moor Junior School	22/10/12	**Bronze**	Junior
Netherton Infant & Nursery School	07/10/13	**Bronze**	Infant
Lowerhouses Junior and Infant School	21/10/13	**Bronze**	Primary
All Saints Catholic College	19/03/14	Enrolled	Secondary
Batley Business & Enterprise College	18/03/11	Enrolled	Secondary
Batley Parish C of E Junior School	09/07/10	Enrolled	Primary
Berry Brow Infants and Nursery School	23/06/15	Enrolled	Infant
Birdsedge First School	25/10/13	Enrolled	Primary
Brockholes CE Junior and Infant School	12/10/11	Enrolled	Primary
Castle Hill School	02/10/13	Enrolled	SEN
Crossley Fields Junior and Infant School	22/06/11	Enrolled	Primary
Denby C of E (VA) First School	20/11/13	Enrolled	Primary
Dryclough CE (VC) Infant School	18/07/11	Enrolled	Infant
Eastborough Junior Infant and Nursery School	19/03/14	Enrolled	Primary
Fairfield School	03/10/11	Enrolled	SEN
Farnley Tyas CE First School	11/07/14	Enrolled	College / Sixth Form
Fixby Junior and Infant School	11/02/11	Enrolled	Primary
Flockton C of E First School	11/11/13	Enrolled	Primary
Golcar Junior Infant and Nursery School	30/09/13	Enrolled	Primary
Gomersal Primary School	27/04/10	Enrolled	Primary
Gomersal St Mary's CE First and Nursery School	26/11/08	Enrolled	Primary
Grange Moor Primary School	09/09/13	Enrolled	Primary
Headfield CE VC Junior School	15/07/09	Enrolled	Junior
Heckmondwike Primary School	28/03/14	Enrolled	Primary
Hepworth Junior and Infant School	18/11/13	Enrolled	Primary
High Bank Junior Infant and Nursery School	26/11/08	Enrolled	College / Sixth Form
Hightown JI&N School	14/05/15	Enrolled	Primary
Kaye's First & Nursery School	12/07/13	Enrolled	Primary
Kirkburton CE First School	14/02/14	Enrolled	College / Sixth Form
Kirkroyds Infant School	10/12/13	Enrolled	Primary
Leeside Community Primary School	13/07/09	Enrolled	Primary
Lepton CE J I & N School	23/06/14	Enrolled	Primary
Lindley CE Infant School	22/07/14	Enrolled	Infant
Lydgate Junior and Infant School	09/10/13	Enrolled	Primary
Marsden Junior School	21/01/13	Enrolled	Primary
Moorlands Primary School	11/07/13	Enrolled	Primary
Netherthong Primary School	22/06/11	Enrolled	Primary
Newsome High School	22/06/11	Enrolled	Secondary
Norristhorpe Junior and Infant School	10/12/13	Enrolled	Primary
Overthorpe C of E Academy	10/10/11	Enrolled	Primary
Pentland Infant & Nursery School	19/03/14	Enrolled	Primary
Reinwood Infant & Nursery School	30/09/13	Enrolled	Infant
Reinwood Junior School	20/04/12	Enrolled	Primary
Roberttown CE (c) J I School	12/06/15	Enrolled	Junior
Shaw Cross Infant & Nursery School	19/09/13	Enrolled	Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	07/10/13	Enrolled	Primary
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley	31/03/11	Enrolled	Primary
The Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form	28/06/11	Enrolled	Secondary
Thornhill Lees CE Infant and Nursery School	19/02/10	Enrolled	Primary
Upperthong Junior and Infant School	20/03/14	Enrolled	Primary
Wellhouse Junior and Infant School	26/09/11	Enrolled	Primary
Westfields Pupil Referral Unit	03/10/11	Enrolled	PRU

Whitechapel C of E Primary School	07/05/14	Enrolled	Primary
Diamond Wood Community Academy	06/10/09	**Bronze**	Primary
Batley Girls' High School	12/02/09	**Bronze**	Secondary
Hillside Primary School	15/07/10	**Silver**	Primary
Savile Town C of E Infant and Nursery	11/02/11	**Silver**	Infant
Carlinghow Princess Royal Junior School	12/07/10	**Bronze**	Primary
Ashbrow School	18/10/10	**Silver**	SEN
St Aidans CEVA First School	13/01/11	**Silver**	Primary
Field Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School	01/09/10	**Bronze**	Primary
Westborough High School	22/06/09	**Silver**	Secondary
Meltham CE Primary School	10/03/10	**Silver**	Primary
Clough Head Junior and Infant School	09/12/10	**Bronze**	Primary
Ravenshall School	04/05/11	**Bronze**	SEN
Shelley First School	02/11/10	**Bronze**	Primary
Almondbury CE Infant and Nursery School	05/07/11	**Bronze**	Infant
Birkenshaw CE Primary School	13/04/11	**Bronze**	Primary
Boothroyd Primary Academy	29/04/08	**Bronze**	Primary
Brownhill Infants	26/05/11	**Bronze**	Secondary
Chickenley Primary School	30/09/11	**Bronze**	Primary
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School	27/05/11	**Bronze**	Primary
Birkby Infant and Nursery School	22/06/11	**Bronze**	Infant
Holmfirth High School	04/01/10	**Bronze**	Secondary
Moor End Academy	25/03/08	**Bronze**	Secondary
Battyeford C of E Primary school	16/06/11	**Bronze**	Primary
Hyrstmount Junior School	26/11/08	**Bronze**	Primary
Royds Hall Community School	07/07/11	**Bronze**	Secondary
Thurstonland First School	09/10/11	**Bronze**	Primary
Shepley First School	30/03/11	**Silver**	Primary
Colne Valley Specialist Arts College	29/09/11	**Bronze**	Secondary
Crowlees CE (c) J&I School	30/10/12	**Bronze**	Primary
Hade Edge Junior and Infant School	08/10/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Spring Grove Junior School	12/07/13	**Silver**	Primary
Cowlersley Primary School	30/09/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Millbridge JIN School	12/07/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Wooldale Junior School	24/09/13	**Bronze**	Junior
Lindley Junior School	25/11/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Scholes Junior & Infant School (Holmfirth)	19/09/13	**Silver**	Primary
Littletown Junior School	28/03/14	**Bronze**	Primary
Hanging Heaton CE (VC) J&I School	16/10/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Purlwell Infant and Nursery School	19/03/14	**Silver**	Infant
Rowley Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School	04/11/13	**Bronze**	Primary
Highburton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School	20/11/13	**Bronze**	Primary

List of interviewees by sector

- 8 x Community food sector
- 4 x Kirklees Council
- 3 x Food artisans/ entrepreneurs
- 5 x UK Local food partnerships/ national bodies