

Lothians-London Policy and Practice Exchange

Scottish Community Diet Project
and London Food Link

Spring and Summer 2005



Scottish Community
Diet Project

*Supporting local
communities tackling
inequalities in
diet and health*

Scottish Community Diet Project

Our overriding aim is to improve Scotland's food and health. We do this by supporting work within and with low-income communities that improves access to and take-up of a healthy diet.

Major obstacles being addressed by community-based initiatives are:

AVAILABILITY - increasing access to fruit and vegetables of an acceptable quality and cost

AFFORDABILITY - tackling not only the cost of shopping, but also getting to shops

SKILLS - improving confidence and skills in cooking and shopping

CULTURE - overcoming ingrained habits

We help support low-income communities to:

- identify barriers to a healthy balanced diet
- develop local responses to addressing these barriers, and
- highlight where actions at other levels, or in other sectors, are required

We value the experience, understanding, skills and knowledge within Scotland's communities and their unique contribution to developing and delivering policy and practice at all levels.

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Foreword

More than just a lark in the Lothians

by Ben Reynolds, London Food Link

This is the first time that London Food Link has embarked on a project exchange. As such I was uncertain how it would work, but both exchanges were a resounding success, and remarkably easy to organise. This probably has a lot to do with the Scottish Community Diet Project, who do a brilliant job of organising these exchanges regularly. Success was also due to those people running food projects in their communities and their enthusiasm for this exchange, with many involved in both the London exchange in March and the return trip to Edinburgh in June.

Participants' diaries showed how pleased everyone was with the range of projects visited which included food co-ops, vans, community cafés and community pubs. People also said it was useful to see the projects in action rather than hearing about them second-hand. The visits were organised so that we started with those working in the different communities building up to a talk from Lothian Health Board, which put this work in its wider context. Tellingly, a lot of people mentioned how useful it was to spend time with other organisations from their home area, which helpfully supports my case for more socials!

Another interesting point that came out of the trip was one of the differences between the funding for the projects in the two capital cities. Where in Edinburgh and the Lothians there is a more consistent commitment from the government to fund these projects, the London groups felt they were the victim of short-termism with many projects struggling when after two years the funding went to another new project elsewhere. This has given rise to a situation, particularly in London, where such projects are much more keenly aware about raising some of their income from selling produce, i.e. the social enterprise model.

The most useful part of the trip, for me at least, was the time spent evaluating the exchange. This was actually unplanned, and came at the end of the final session. I would advise anyone planning such an exchange to allow time at the end to evaluate how it went, how it could be improved if a similar one was run in future, and whether it was worth organising. In light of this successful exchange we are thinking about running exchanges with other cities, so ideas on a postcard please...

Overview

The exchange was not only a great opportunity for two capital cities to swap ideas about tackling food access, but also an opportunity for a group of people working on similar issues from the same city to share information and make long-term working relationships. The participants valued the time to think and discuss the wider issues of food access.

A key theme of discussion which arose from comparing visits in both areas was the question of whether community food initiatives that are addressing market failure should be funded from statutory sources or encouraged to be sustainable enterprises. Many participants commented that, in the absence of adequate long-term funding, community food initiatives are forced to become community enterprises, trading fresh healthy produce to break even in communities which have no recent history of regularly spending on healthy food locally. However, it was recognised that, despite becoming more business-orientated, those social enterprises that focus their work in low-income communities are likely to need grant funding over the long term to ensure their financial sustainability.

Although at first participants rated their work ahead or behind the projects they visited, towards the end of the tour they became aware of the differences in policy and practice that contributed to where they were, and where other initiatives were in comparison. In addition to understanding the policy implications, the exchange was an excellent opportunity to find out how practice differs in communities with different needs. During the exchange participants had the real experience of examining three mobile food vans, eating in three community cafés and shopping at two food co-ops.

Participants commented on many of the similarities between low-income communities tackling access to and take-up of a healthy diet with little resources. In terms of differences, it was noted that while community food initiatives in the Lothians seemed better networked, many London initiatives had the confidence to become more self-financing.

“The chance to meet people in Scotland to learn about work I’ve heard so much about was brilliant. Also the chance to spend three days with London colleagues was an excellent opportunity to talk and build plans and was fantastic in ways which would not have been so easy in the normal working environment.”

“It has been a really useful experience. The time has flown past and I feel that the opportunity to reflect and visit others has allowed me to feel more enthusiastic about my role and future plans. It is also encouraging to know that general themes are the same across the city of London and the Lothians and although there are subtle differences, we do often end up with similar issues and products - like setting up a food co-op, designing a mobile shop or making advertising work.”

“I was most impressed by the joined up approach to tackling common objectives in Scotland. The delivery agents seem to be receiving valuable support from various networks and the networks have political backing – which ensures their cause is championed at a high level.”

Background

The exchange was a partnership project between the Scottish Community Diet Project and London Food Link . The Scottish Community Diet Project organises exchanges as a catalyst for those people working in community settings to find out about other approaches elsewhere (see page 19 for further reading). Visits to see food access work in other areas gives those who participate an opportunity to network and forge their own relationships with other people and projects working for a similar end. A mixture of professional staff, lay workers and volunteers have all participated in study tours and learned much from being in each other's company.

The visit involving participants who work in Scotland was funded by the Scottish Community Diet Project and the participants from London were self-financed.

Lothian participants visit London (28 February – 2 March)

Participants

Marjorie Shepherd, the Development Officer for Food and Health at East Lothian Council, has over ten years' experience working with a range of community-based food initiatives, with a particular interest in community catering. She has a great deal of experience promoting fruit in schools, firstly as Development Officer with Edinburgh Community Food Initiative and the Snack Attack project, and more recently with East Lothian Council implementing the Scottish Executive free fruit in schools initiative. Currently she works closely with catering staff, teachers and pupils to implement Hungry for Success¹, with particular focus on making links to the curriculum.

"The trip offers a number of 'finding out' opportunities. It will be interesting to find out what is happening elsewhere in the UK, particularly in relation to school meals and other catering initiatives. It's a chance to look and learn from the experience of others, to bring back new ideas and different approaches to problems, and to discuss with colleagues how they might work in East Lothian. I will also enjoy finding out about my fellow travellers, compare experiences and develop opportunities for networking."

Ian Shankland has managed Edinburgh Community Food Initiative for three years. Prior to this he spent over 15 years in marketing and latterly five years in supply chain and business transformation management, all within manufacturing industry.

"I see this visit as a great chance to learn how other projects in inner city areas approach the experience in Edinburgh. It is also an opportunity to learn different strategies and find out first hand what works well and what has proved difficult for other community groups to sustain in the long term."

Ariane Hitthaller, the Food Co-op Development Worker at Gorebridge Health and Regeneration Project, has a Masters in Public Health Nutrition. She has worked in community education and has experience of counselling. The project is continuously expanding and reaching more and more people. Ariane has recently helped to launch a mobile van.

"One of the big opportunities of the exchange will be good networking, getting new ideas and help with problems we might have at the moment to reach the local community of Midlothian. It will also be a good opportunity to learn about concepts other projects work with."

¹ Hungry for Success: a Whole School Approach to School Meals in Scotland. Final report of the Expert Panel on School Meals. www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/hfs-00.asp

Angela Moohan is the Community Health Development Worker for Food Initiatives with the Health Improvement Team at West Lothian Council. She has worked in communities in a variety of posts for the past eight years. In particular she has been involved with young women, campaigning to improve their standard of housing and subsequently their health and the health of their children. She has also worked in partnership to establish and develop a community learning plan for individuals moving on from addiction. Her post at West Lothian is relatively new.

"It will also be interesting to gain knowledge on projects operating in London and generally make links that will aid the development of the West Lothian Food Network. I believe that the opportunity to compare policies with those in England will also contribute a great deal to my professional development in this new and exciting post."

Fiona Bayne worked as a community dietitian in South West Edinburgh for five years. She is currently employed as a Food and Health Development Officer with the Health Improvement Team in West Lothian. The post is funded by the Health Improvement Fund. Her role is to co-ordinate the implementation of the food and health action plan in West Lothian. This involves working within a strategic framework of food and health activity across West Lothian and working in partnership with a number of organisations and communities.

"I would like to make closer links with others working across Lothian with similar interests. I am also really interested in knowing how policy and practice work together and support each other in other areas in order to share good practice."

Graham Nelson has seen Gorebridge Health and Regeneration Project slowly grow over the last two years. He drives the van for the Food Train and takes shopping into people's houses, as well as helping out with the food co-op.

"The Food Train is becoming quite successful and I have been part of its expansion. It is the right time to look for new ideas. I welcome the opportunity to compare the Midlothian model and the London model and forge links with projects and to exchange information on a regular basis."

Tracy McGillivray is on secondment to the South Edinburgh Healthy Living Initiative from the South Edinburgh Local Health Care Co-operative, where she is a community dietitian. She is the Healthy Eating Development Worker and her role is to improve access to good quality nutritious food by working with other food projects and local people and venues to organise fruit barrows. She also works with health visitors and new parents in looking at weaning babies using homemade food. She is part of a small steering group to develop a bid to create a community garden within South Edinburgh. There

is funding for a mobile fruit and vegetable resource but it has yet to be developed.

"I am looking forward to meeting others from Edinburgh and the Lothians to compare ideas and develop opportunities for further networking and support and also meeting people from a different area to see how projects have developed there. I am happy to have the opportunity to develop current work from having time to meet with other projects without being distracted by other work and hopefully ways of developing new areas of work within South Edinburgh. I would like to find out more about SCDP."

Louise Dobbie is the driver for the Roots and Fruits van in East Lothian. Roots and Fruits is a charitable organisation, so does not make a profit from sales but does charge 5-10% to cover running costs. Louise and the other drivers often post letters, pass on messages or do small tasks for the customers as and when they may need help. The social contact for a good many of the customers is as important as providing the produce.

"I would like to see if there is any difference between the relationships and trust I have with many of my customers (e.g. handling their money and leaving their goods behind the front door) and the relationship between vendors and their customers in London (e.g. does the city and security change things? I expect it will). And does the quality and size of the produce change for the better because it's London? What about the prices? Can they offer cheaper produce because it's London? I expect it to be, but I may be wrong. I look forward to finding out."

Programme around London

On arrival the participants visited the **Royal Brompton Hospital** which is one of the hospitals taking part in the **London Hospital Food Project**. After sampling the lunch in the hospital canteen, it was clear the meals were cooked on site and the participants had the opportunity to find out from Mike Duckett, Catering Manager and Emma Hockridge, London Hospital Food Project Officer, how they had worked together to improve the food served in the hospital. Mike explained that through the support of the London Hospital Food Project he had been able to procure some local and organic ingredients. Ben Reynolds, who co-ordinates **London Food Link**, outlined some of the other work going on around London to improve the diet of Londoners.

That evening participants had the opportunity to relax and meet people who are involved in London Food Link at the Wenlock Arms. The Wenlock Arms is the major outlet for the local Pitfield **independent microbrewery**.

The next day participants were given a tour of community initiatives in both Greenwich and Newham. Claire Pritchard was on hand in Greenwich to explain the history of the **Ferrier Co-op**, which was a market stall with no branding in the middle of a social housing scheme.



Before leaving Greenwich participants ate a very healthy lunch at the **Albany Community Café** which was one element of a busy community centre. In Newham participants had the opportunity to talk to Jonathan Pauling of the **Newham Food Access Partnership** as well as both Eric Samuel and Lita Webb of **Community Food Enterprise**. Participants viewed both the mobile store and the warehouse.



Community Food Enterprise Newham had the largest mobile community food van the participants had seen

That evening participants ate in one of London's handful of organic pubs. The pub was displaying the **Bread Street Exhibition** which was a photographic celebration of London's diverse culture through its baking. Sara Hannant, the artist responsible for the photos, was on hand to explain the background to the exhibition. The meal was an opportunity to network and the participants were joined by some of the people they had already met, as well as some new faces involved with London Food Link.

On the last day participants had the opportunity to visit a food processing operation in the heart of London. The **Alara Muesli Factory** has been running for years in Kings Cross, and its muesli is a staple of health food shops all over the UK.

The final visit to the *London Development Agency* was scheduled to help participants put all the visits into a policy perspective. The London food team at the Agency is new and keen to make a difference to the diet of Londoners. Niall Machin explained that London was a diverse city and a ten year food strategy had been drafted which took this into account and would soon be put out for consultation.



Louise, who drives a mobile food van in East Lothian, chats with the Newham driver

Reflection

Talking to Mike and Emma at the Royal Brompton Hospital brought home to the participants the enormous task of improving hospital food. *"I realised that catering managers are very important in implementing change in menus and contacts,"* commented Tracy.

"The London Hospital Food Project and its co-operation with London Food Link shows the importance of an umbrella organisation or at least the importance of joint work," remarked Ariane.

The Ferrier Co-op in Greenwich was unlike many food co-ops in Scotland. *"It was great not to have the project name or 'co-op' on the stall, so people just buy fruit and veg, not 'cheap' fruit and veg. This is definitely something that we will replicate. Also it is good that it is ok to charge more than you pay to make yourself sustainable. I think we need to move to looking at how sustainable our projects can become,"* explained Tracy.

"It was fascinating to see an example of a food co-op which was more self-sustaining. In Midlothian we would like to move towards a more self sufficient model," added Ariane. Louise, who sells fruit and vegetables from a van in East Lothian, commented, *"the prices were in general quite similar to ours with some items being markedly cheaper. But I think this might be because they could buy more produce per week than we can. The difference in providing vegetables and, to a lesser extent, fruit, for an ethnic population was quite marked. The increase in the sales of garlic and ginger for instance, was massive."*

Community Food Enterprise in Newham was similar to several community food networks in Scotland. Ian from Edinburgh Community Food Initiative was particularly excited to see a similar operation in London. *"Wow! I don't know where to start, the drive and energy from Eric was infectious. I liked the focus on strategy and input into high level policy as well as service delivery. Their volunteer support and training initiative is something we must learn from. I need to find out more on the use of schools to house 'co-ops' and working with big business. There is so much here that I am going to follow up if possible with a longer visit."*

Louise, who works predominately in a community setting, noted, *"Once again, personalities seem to play a large part in getting these ventures onto a successful footing. Eric was obviously a very committed and caring individual whose drive was directed at making a difference to the inhabitants of Newham and the quality of their lives."*

"It became apparent that the service was an integral part of many people's everyday life. To do that it carried a large range of goods and had cool storage for milk and cheese," added Graham, who also drives a mobile food van. Tracy, who would like to set up a similar operation, was more interested with the management of the project. *"I am really impressed by the*

enthusiasm of the workers and the vision that some have to develop roles and to sustain projects without relying much on funding."

On the last day participants received a presentation from the food team at the London Development Agency. *"It looked very smart and had grand ideas on what they want to achieve by 2016, but it lacked substance - early days right enough! I was shocked to learn that 55% of kids in London live below the poverty line. I thought they could learn a lot from the Scottish approach to tackling inequalities,"* observed Marjorie. Ian was left confused by how it would actually deliver change. *"Who is responsible for delivery of plans? The leadership and governance was not clear. Great to see the voluntary sector involved in a big way and integrated into planning structures."*

The comparison between initiatives in the Lothians and London led the participants to think about what could be learnt from the experience. *"We can learn from the attempt to make projects sustainable and look at different types of enterprise. We need to look at the terminology we use to reduce stigma. We need to look at formalising Lothian networks around food initiatives. We need to make time to reflect and plan for the future to reduce reliance on grants. We need to stress the importance of partnership working and community development and empowerment,"* commented Tracy. Marjorie saw many similarities, *"a diverse range of activities tackling various aspects of food and health, many not so different from what's going on in Scotland. I saw similar commitment from local activists in London as would be found in Scotland."*

When asked what the participants were going to take back to Scotland, Angela expressed a point many of the group had commented on, *"In Scotland we need to use language to our advantage. When we talk about a food co-op do we mean a social food outlet or a food enterprise or something else?"*

Ian noted that, *"PR and marketing seem to be of a higher focus, there seems to be more upstream supply chain work by organisations such as the Soil Association, Sustain and Community Food Enterprise. Many of the community groups we've seen seem to have the confidence to demand to be listened to."*

Fiona, who works on food access at a regional level, commented, *"I think we can be satisfied that what we are doing is in line with the work in London. I think there is still a lot of work to do in the regions with sustainable food access - particularly the use of 'local food'. I also think that there needs to be a greater focus on working with planners at a local level."*

Marjorie added, *"I found it really useful and interesting, an opportunity to reflect on what I'm doing with a bit of objectivity, and to recharge batteries with a bit of inspiration."*

London participants visit the Lothians (1 – 3 June)

Participants

The London Development Agency's Food Strategy Unit is working with London Food, a Mayoral-appointed body, to advise on the future of food and farming in London in its work on a radical London Food Strategy to be adopted as a Mayoral strategy when it is launched later this year. The Strategy will cover all elements of the food chain, to promote local food, make the food sector more sustainable and improve the health of Londoners. It is supported by projects on food access, linking local suppliers into procurement, local food infrastructures and the economic impact of street markets and farmers' markets. **Mark Ainsbury** is a London Food Unit Officer based at the Food Strategy Unit.

Sima Chaudury is a 5 A DAY Co-ordinator for East London based at City & Hackney Primary Care Trust. She manages projects across East London, including food co-ops, fruit tuck shops, and education-based training in delivering the 5 A DAY message promoting the importance of five portions of fruit and vegetables in the daily diet. The project is developing a sustainability strategy to go beyond the life of the project which ends in August 2005.

Eric Samuel is a Newham resident who leads a small team called Community Food Enterprise who work on food access in Newham, one of London's most deprived boroughs. Community Food Enterprise has launched a mobile food initiative, set up a warehouse to support a network of co-operatives and developed a network of volunteers to support food access work in Newham.

Simon Doff is based at the Food and Business Development Unit of Metropolitan University. For the past five years he has run university-based technology transfer services which put the knowledge and skills of academics in areas such as sales and marketing, business planning, quality management, man management and new product development into some of London's fast growing small and medium-size food businesses. He has an MSc in Food Safety and Control. Recently he has been assisting a range of community-based social enterprises involved in food access achieve market and financial sustainability. He helped write a National Training Programme for Community Food Workers which was accredited by the London Open College Network in October 2004. He completed a report entitled Local Food Policies and Cultural Diversity in London on behalf of the Government Office for London which was published in December 2004.

Jonathan Pauling is the Strategic Manager of the Newham Food Access Partnership (NFAP) a borough-wide umbrella group for providers and advocates of food access work in Newham. The Partnership brings together members from statutory, voluntary, and community organisations to support food access project work and to develop strategies and policies that will help improve people's diets and their access to healthy and affordable food in the long term. In the four years since its creation the Partnership has supported, and been involved with the development of over 60 different community-led

food access projects in Newham. It now takes a lead role as co-ordinating body for all food issues in the borough - acting much like a local food links project.

Ben Reynolds is the Project Officer for London Food Link, a network run through Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. The project assists producers, consumers and retailers make positive choices for sustainable food. This means improving access to affordable, high quality and seasonal food, shorter supply chains, and lobbying for public and private sector policies that promote a thriving local food economy and culture. Over the past three years it has, amongst other things, got food onto the policy agenda in London; run projects looking at London's baking culture; the state of hospital food; how public procurement can increase sustainable food availability; and on access to healthy affordable food and how it links with social housing. London Food Link is embarking on a pilot project that will focus on increasing the availability of sustainable food in ethnic food businesses and restaurants.



The participants who travelled up from London

Programme around the Lothians

The first stop for the participants in the city of Edinburgh was a bite to eat at the **Engine Shed**, a busy community café. The Engine Shed was set up to provide training and employment opportunities for those who require supported training and is run as a social enterprise. The participants were able to see the café fill up over the half hour they were there until a queue formed by 12.30. After lunch participants made their way across the city to the **Edinburgh Community Food Initiative**. The initiative runs a network of food co-ops in low income areas in the city as well as supplying fruit to schools and nurseries. Participants were able to have a look round the warehouse and see the fleet of vans, as well as meeting key staff and hearing about projects that were up and running and those planned for the future. Participants asked questions about the volume of produce distributed, prices and returns policy.

That evening a networking meal was organised so participants could meet some of the people they would be visiting over the next few days.

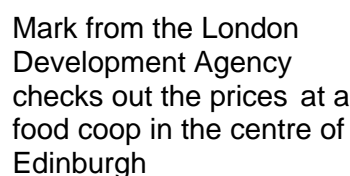
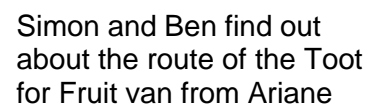
The next day a minibus from **South Edinburgh Amenities Group** was hired to take the participants on a whistle stop tour of all the Lothian local authority areas. The first visit was to a food co-op run by Edinburgh Community Food Initiative in the Braidwood Community Centre. The centre is in an area called **Dumbiedykes**, very close to the new Scottish Parliament building and made up of social housing.

The bus then took participants to **Strathbrock Partnership Centre** in West Lothian where Angela Moohan, the Development Worker for food initiatives, and Kate Marshall, the Service Development Officer for Community Health, used participatory techniques to explain how a food co-op in Bridgend fits into local, regional and national policy.

In Midlothian participants had the opportunity to see 'Toot for Fruit', the brand new mobile food van, co-ordinated by **Gorebridge Health and Regeneration Project**, in action. Ariane Hitthaller, the Food Co-op Development Worker, and Charlie, the driver, explained that the van often modifies its route to cater for more customers. Participants got to see how the wheelchair access worked and were impressed by the cleanliness. Participants then had lunch in the **Paradykes community café** based in the local community centre, which is owned by the community. The chef explained some of the initiatives she had tried to get the kids to eat fruit instead of crisps. Over lunch there was the opportunity to speak to people from the local healthy living centre and find out from Judy Robertson, the manager of Gorebridge Health and Regeneration Project, and Graham Nelson, an experienced driver, about the **Food Train**, which is a home shopping service for the elderly and housebound.

The participants were then taken to East Lothian where they had the opportunity to see another mobile food van. Louise Dobbie, the driver of the **Roots and Fruits** van, explained how the van has been running for quite some time.

The last day started with a visit to **Lothian NHS Board** at Deaconess House in the heart of Edinburgh. Moyra Burns, who is taking a lead to bring together a strategy for food and health across the Lothians, led an informal session to explain some of the national and regional policy context. Moyra, who is also a member of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee which informs the Food Standards Agency, and a member of the Scottish Community Diet Project's steering committee, chose to use participatory methods to explain how the policy and strategies fitted together. In particular Moyra highlighted the focus of the policy development in Scotland and its regions to tackle the inequalities in health. The final few hours were used to find out what the participants thought of the exchange and have further discussions about what they had found out.



Reflection

Participants really valued the opportunity to eat in two community cafés. They also made great use of the networking meal. Mark, who works in a policy environment, valued the opportunity to network. *"It was a great way to help us make links and friendships with people who we ended up meeting on subsequent days."*

The participants had many questions for the staff at the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, not only about the practicalities of delivering fresh produce, but about their health promotion role and history. Simon noted, *"It made me feel that London has much more to do on the promotion of healthy eating."*

Eric found the explanation in West Lothian about local and regional policy very informative. *"I found out so much about toolkits and training courses which have been useful, strategies which are relevant and how policy and practitioners work together."*

The participants saw two mobile food initiatives in Midlothian and East Lothian. Mark was fascinated to find out about the practicalities of running a mobile van, *"I was surprised to find out that the van modifies its route to suit customers."* Ben found it useful to be able to compare two mobile food vans in the Lothians and the mobile van in Newham, *"the range of goods differs in all of them and the way they have been funded also differs."*

On the last day participants visited Lothian Health to find out about how the policies behind the community initiatives they had visited fitted together. *"This was a chance to join up the dots,"* commented Ben. Jonathan, who works at a strategic level in Newham, felt that, *"Scotland seems to be slightly more advanced at linking together policy and practice."*

"It was great to spend a long time with colleagues chatting around all the issues in a much more in-depth and strategic way than we are normally able to do," observed Mark. Jonathon agreed, *"I got so much from being with work colleagues from London and seeing work that was new to me and being able to relate it to London with the help of my colleagues."*

Some of the main discussions between the London participants during the visits were summed up by Sima. *"What does sustainability really mean? Can social enterprise be a model to take sustainability forward? How do we bridge the gaps between strategic policy and implementation?"*

Ben found it useful to reflect on the merits of the exchange to determine if London Food Links should pursue further exchange opportunities with other cities and their hinterlands.

Evaluation

Through a number of participatory sessions and written feedback comments were collected and themed.

Making connections

“So much can be done face to face. Distance learning can follow, but there is so much more that can be found out by meeting somebody first.”

“I will use the contacts and the ideas to develop links with policy and agencies.”

“It was a great insight for me to meet the volunteers who deliver the work.”

“I was fascinated to meet projects I had heard so much about to find out how they actually operate.”

“Travelling and spending time with other people from Scotland tackling food access issues was a great opportunity to strengthen links and discuss problems.”

Learning

It was hugely useful and enjoyable. I learnt a lot and it stimulated my thinking about food access.”

“An excellent opportunity to learn about how others are tackling similar problems. We found out about things in common and differences.”

“A great way to see parallels and variation.”

“I learnt a lot from the different ways people presented information to us.”

Understanding

“It was great seeing connections being made between the policy makers and the practitioners. There is such a gulf between policy and practice, yet there is so much that each field can learn from the other.”

“I now have a clear idea about how community projects fit within the policy framework.”

“Thinking of solutions to other groups’ projects based on my own experiences made me realise how much there is to share between those working on food access wherever they are based.”

“It made me realise that what we are doing is quite ahead of the game.”

Looking ahead

“I was looking for ideas and strategies – lots were identified in terms of community enterprise, sustainability, volunteer support. However I need to find out more before looking at making changes.”

“The Food Train project interested me as I can see it fitting in with our work with the over-fifties. I will explain it to the board to see if they would be interested in piloting it.”

Further reading

Community Study Exchange between Glasgow and Newcastle, Winter 2002. Published by the Scottish Community Diet Project.

Directory of Community Food Initiatives 2004. Published by the Scottish Community Diet Project.

Routes to Health: case studies of 2 community run mobile food shops. The summary report is available from the Scottish Community Diet Project, but was published in partnership with Have a Heart Paisley, East Lothian Roots and Fruits and NHS Health Scotland, 2005.

Capital eats: An analysis of London's food economy. Published by Sustain and the London Development Agency, 2005

Cityharvest. A feasibility study into growing more food in London published by Sustain, 1999

Mayoral London Food Strategy (draft). Issued in August 2005 by the London Development Agency.

Contact details

Participants from the Lothians

Marjorie Shepherd

Development Officer Food and Health
Facilities Management Services
Block B Brewery Park
Haddington
East Lothian
Tel: 01620 827 236
Email: mshepherd@eastlothian.gov.uk

Ian Shankland

Manager
Edinburgh Community Food Initiative
22 Tennant Street
Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 767 7326
Email: Ishankland@ecfi.org.uk

Ariane Hitthaller

Food Co-op Development Worker
14/4 Maritime Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6SB
Tel: 01875 825985
Email: ariane.hitthaller@hotmail.com

Angela Moohan

Community Health Development Worker
Food Initiatives
Health Improvement Team
Strathbrock Partnership Centre
189A West Main Street
Broxburn EH52 5LH
Tel: 01506 771724
Email: angelamoohan@yahoo.com

Fiona Bayne

Food and Health Development Officer
Health Improvement Team
Strathbrock Partnership Centre
189A West Main Street
Broxburn EH52 5LH
Tel: 01506 771848
Email: fiona.bayne@wlt.scot.nhs.uk

Graham Nelson

Food Co-op/Food Train Volunteer
64 Barleyknowe Crescent
Gorebridge
EH23 4EJ
Tel: 01875 823922

Tracy McGillivray

Health Eating Development Worker
South Edinburgh Healthy Living Initiative
Unit 2 Block B
Gracemount Business Pavilions
Captain Road
Edinburgh EH17 8QF
Tel: 0131 664 0555
Email: tracy.sehli@btconnect.com

Louise Dobbie

p/t Fruit Vendor/Van Driver
Roots and Fruits
82 High Street
Tranent
Tel: 01875 616337

Participants from London**Mark Ainsbury**

London Food Unit Officer
London Development Agency
020 7954 4218
markainsbury@lda.gov.uk

Sima Chaudury

5 A DAY Co-ordinator East London
City & Hackney Primary Care Trust
Sima.chaudhury@chpct.nhs.uk
0207 683 4038

Eric Samuel

Community Food Enterprise Ltd
eric@community-food-enterprise.org.uk
020 7511 9014

Simon Doff

Food and Business Development Unit
Metropolitan University
s.doff@londonmet.ac.uk
020 7133 2423

Jonathan Pauling

Newham Food Access Partnership
jonathan@nfap.org.uk
020 7476 1505

Ben Reynolds

London Food Link, Project Officer
www.londonfoodlink.org
ben@sustianweb.org
0207 837 1228

Thanks

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Scottish Community Diet Project

c/o Scottish Consumer Council
Royal Exchange House, 100 Queen Street
Glasgow, G1 3DN

tel: 0141 226 5261

fax: 0141 221 0731

e-mail: scdp@scotconsumer.org.uk

www.dietproject.org.uk

