Rethinking Lambeth's Local Economy

Opportunities to grow our local food economy

TRANSITION TOWN BRIXTON

REconomy Project

1 INTRODUCTION

The Food Economy

This report is written with the objective of identifying the opportunities in the London borough of Lambeth to change our food economy to one which is most beneficial to the residents and businesses of the borough.

In order to do this we will be examining the existing food economy in order to identify how much money is spent, where it is spent, and what we buy with it. Having identified this we will examine existing and proposed projects which could help all residents improve their access to affordable locally produced produce and in doing so create jobs.

We will be investigating how to support new and existing independent food businesses, improve links with local suppliers to get best value seasonal produce into the borough, and increase the number of small value added food businesses. We will also look at opportunities for commercial horticulture within the borough.

Our intention is to demonstrate the potential benefits to all in achieving a more sustainable model for supplying our food.

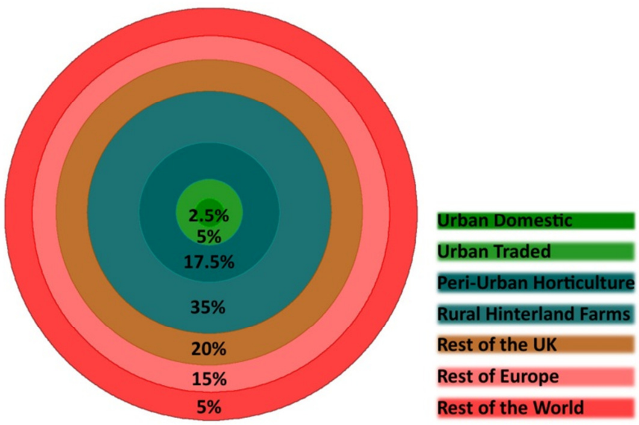

Figure 1-1: Growing Communities Model

The Growing Communities' model, shown left, suggests the proportions of food that could be grown within the urban environment to create a more resilient model of food production.

Within this report we will explore the potential economic benefit that could be gained by the residents of the borough if we pursue this model.

By examining the food currently consumed we can assess what is currently demanded and identify what produce would create maximum economic benefit for minimum land usage due to their high yields or economic value. By the end of this report we will see the first steps towards achieving this.

The Wider Economy

As part of the research for this document it has been recognised that whilst much of the borough has some of the worst ratings nationally for multiple deprivation, it also has a relatively high average equalised income[1i]. Although 64% of Lambeth residents are believed to hold well paid professional employment[v], the levels of deprivation in some areas would imply the wealth they bring into the borough is failing to circulate.

This inequity is highlighted by the 2191 adult and 1837 child meals which were provided by food banks last year.[2]

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) have suggested that this is in a part a result of spending going to large national or multinational businesses who in turn purchase their supplies from far away meaning that only a small proportion of local spending remains where it is spent. This was one of the reasons that Brixton Pound was founded.

As we unpack spending on food within the borough we will see that the current patterns of food spending mean that much of the money spent on food leaves the borough. We will also learn how money spent with local stores provides more opportunities for economic activity due to local businesses tendency to buy from local suppliers and use local businesses for support services.

We will also examine what can be done to reduce the amount of food we waste, both from large scale commercial excess, and through inefficient usage in the home. Much of this is caused by lack of knowledge of how to make the most of fresh ingredients, and is accentuated by drive for ever cheaper food which is making farming uneconomical activity in the UK, further reducing food security.

By creating and supporting locally owned food retailers, restaurants, takeaways and commercial horticulture we can generate economic activity and increase employment opportunities for all across the borough. It will not be easy to create a more sustainable and equitable food system, but this doesn't me we should not be setting out on the path that will ensure everyone gets a piece of the pie.

[1] Average household income, taking into account a households size and composition.
[2] The Trussell trust cannot provide data on how many individual people this fed as they only have data on meals provided.

2 SPEND ON FOOD AND DRINK

Who supplies our food?

To date there has not been a complete study into where our food comes from, commonly known as a Food Web[ii] study, within Lambeth. Therefore we are not able to build a complete picture here, but local knowledge has been tapped and those working to make local food a priority have been interviewed and provided data where possible.

In Section 3 of this document we will review the existing businesses within Lambeth to identify where the money goes. What we know for sure is that very little primary food production currently occurs within the borough for commercial purposes..

Using the data we do have we are able to estimate the size and nature of the current food economy within Lambeth.

The big numbers

The Family Food Survey[iii] is an annual publication from Defra. It is the source of detailed statistical information on purchased quantities, expenditure and nutrient intakes derived from both household and eating out food and drink. Data is collected for a sample of households in the United Kingdom using self-reported diaries supported by till receipts of all purchases, including food eaten out, over a two week period.

Data in the family food survey is broken down into income bands. These have been used to model Lambeth's buying habits. This was done by estimating the number of people in each income band within Lambeth, based on Office of National Statistics data (ONS)[iv] and then multiplying this by the appropriate income band's average spend on various food types.

The results of this modelling exercise show that estimated total expenditure by the 130,000 households within Lambeth on food and non-alcoholic drink is around £572 million each year, with approximately £401 million spent on household supplies and £171 million spent on eating out.

Obviously not all of this money is spent within the borough, given that it is an arbitrary local authority area within the greater London urban conurbation, but without evidence to suggest otherwise we might reasonably assume that a relatively equal amount of people enter the borough as leave it to make household food purchases from retail outlets.

Some work has been carried out around Brixton Market showing that although there are a number of customers who come from further away, particularly to bulk buy culturally specific foods, much of the custom is from within a two miles radius.

It is however observed that the Lambeth Local Economic Assessment (LEA) [v] states that only 28% of the working population living in the borough works in Lambeth. The LEA states Lambeth has a working age population of around 211,000 and an employment rate of 74%. This would mean around 112,000 people leave the borough to work each day.

On the other hand The GLA Local Area Tourism Impact Model[vi] estimates that around £720 million was spent within Lambeth by Tourists in 2009. The ONS states that around 20% of all tourists spending goes on food which would mean an additional £144 million come into the borough annually from Tourism.

Given no specific detailed breakdown of either of these spends we are forced to assume they approximately offset each other and so, for the purposes of our model, we will rely on direct demand for food created by Lambeth residents to estimate our market.

Lambeth residents spend around **£572 million** each year on food and non-alcoholic drink, with approximately £401 million spent on household supplies and £171 million spent on eating out

Typical breakdown of spending

A more detailed look at the food survey gives us a breakdown of what products we are purchasing both in terms of how much is spent and what volume we consume.

It should be noted that these figures are based on national averages which would not be completely representative of the ethnic mix in the borough and their eating habits. Unfortunately it is obvious from the total spend figures within the family food survey that data on food spend between different ethnicities has not been adjusted to show comparable incomes.

It is noted there is a significantly smaller proportion of spend on Potatoes within the 'Black and Black British' category in the family food survey data which would be consistent with a cultural preference for Yams or other carbohydrate staples.

Further review of the regional figures finds London very close to the national averages for retail, with the only significant difference being reduced pork and increased lamb consumption. There is also a greater proportion of spending going on takeaways, with higher consumption rates of pizza and ethnic food in London, as opposed to the traditional chips which are bought from takeaways nationally.

As long as the above remains in our thinking, we are still able to present the following breakdown as a fairly accurate approximation of what Lambeth currently eats.

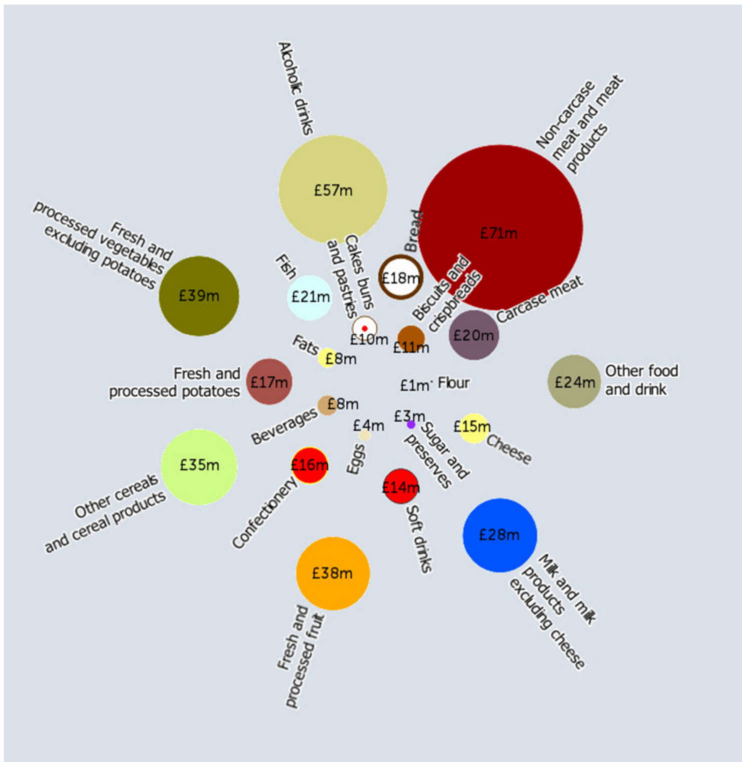

Figure 2-1 Visualisation of total food spend of Lambeth residents

Food Category	Spend (volume)	**Food Category**	Spend (volume)
Cheese	3% (2%)	Bread	4% (8%)
Carcase meat	4% (3%)	Flour	0% (1%)
Non-carcase meat and meat products	16% (11%)	Cakes, buns and pastries	2% (2%)
Fish	5% (2%)	Biscuits and crispbreads	2% (2%)
Eggs	1% (2%)	Other cereals and cereal products	8% (8%)
Fats	2% (2%)	Confectionery	3% (2%)
Sugar and preserves	1% (2%)	Other food and drink	5% (10%)
Fresh and processed potatoes	4% (10%)	Milk and milk products excluding cheese	6% (-)*
Fresh and processed vegetables, excluding	8% (16%)	Soft drinks	3% (-)*
Fresh and processed fruit	9% (17%)	Beverages	2% (-)*

Table 2-1: Food Types as a proportion of total spend (or of total weight of food consumed)

***Drinks are not include for total weigh as they are given as volumes in the food survey**

3 LAMBETH'S FOOD ECONOMY

Food businesses in Lambeth

According to data from Lambeth's Environmental Health team[vii], Lambeth currently has 1,852 locations registered to prepare or serve food. Of these, 1,444 have food as a primary or secondary operational purpose[3].

Type of Business	Total	Local
Retail	364	290
Supermarket	49	0
Small Retail	319	290
Eating out	1023	800
Hotels & Guesthouses	22	16
Pubs & Clubs	156	*
Resturaunts & Cafes	572	534
Takeaways	250	229
Mobile food carts	23	21
Producer/Packers/Distributors	16	15
Distribution and importers	5	5
Manufactures and packers	10	9
Primary Producers	1	1

Table 3-1: Breakdown of the total number food businesses in Lambeth and the number of these which are locally owned. *ownership of pubs and clubs cannot be identified

The accuracy of this data is said to be reliable by the public health team although whether a business is a chain or independent has been established manually by reviewing the business name associated with their entry. This means there may be risks to its accuracy where smaller chains haven't been recognised (although these stores are more likely to be engaged with at a local level then multinationals) and there may be some human error in this process.

It has also been suggested by the data owners that there are a number of businesses which may still be registered with an old name and have since bought out the franchise.

Lambeth currently has at least 1852 registered food businesses. 1639 food businesses are not national chains

How much is spent in supermarkets vs local independent shops?

Of the 49 stores registered as supermarkets by the Environmental Health team, all of these are big chain stores. 36 of the 49 are Tesco's or Sainsbury, with 3 main stores each, identified by restricted opening on Sundays. The remaining supermarkets are dominated by the budget lines like LidL and Iceland although there are a sprinkling of premium marks like Waitrose or M&S food.

Given the number of Tesco and Sainsbury stores, it has not been possible to establish floor space of all. For revenue calculations we have used average floor spaces for stores by category on Open Street Map[viii]. Given the number of stores we can be relatively confident that using the average floor area will be a good estimation across the borough.

[3] This includes pubs and hotels and retailers who only sell a proportion of food, but not schools, hospitals, etc.

Where possible we have checked these against planning applications by reviewing retail floor areas for new store applications.

For the other supermarkets stores we have used approximations of the average areas of the stores which are provided in the 2008 competition commissions report on the big supermarkets [ix].

This same report also provides revenue per floor area so we can make a rough estimation of how much of the £401 million retail market in Lambeth goes to the large supermarket chains.

Store	Number	Floor Area (m^2)	£s per sqm (1000s)	Turnover (£1000s)
Sainsbury Superstore	3	3995	10,152	Included below
Sainsbury Local	14	185	10,152	151,716
Tesco Superstore	3	3995	10,831	Included below
Tesco Extra	16	185	10,831	157,869
Morrison	1	3995	9,854	39,366
Iceland	4	350	5,176	7,246
Lidl	2	350	5,500	3,465
Co-Op	2	300	5,544	3,326
M&S	3	200	11,646	6,987
Waitrose	1	350	9,854	3,448
Total	**49**			**373,426**

Table 3-2: Table of Chain Supermarkets in Lambeth

Our calculations find that around £373 million is currently being spent in supermarkets which is around 93% of the total retail spend in Lambeth.

This is in the region of the latest market share figures published by Routers[x] which state 95.5% of the retail market is currently spent in the large supermarkets[4].

Given the number and high density of independent retail in London, it is safe to assume that this slightly lower percentage is accurate. This would mean that the combined annual turnover for independent grocery stores in Lambeth can be assumed to be £28 million pounds.

Given that the Environmental Health data shows around 290 small independent retailers registered to sell food in the borough, this would mean their average turnover for food sales would be around £96,000 per annum.

Of the £401 million which is spent by Lambeth residents in retailers on food, around 93% of it goes to large supermarket chains. This amounts to **£373 million spent in supermarkets in Lambeth**.

Restaurants and fast-food market share

Although relatively easy to identify independent or small chain restaurants and takeaways, it has not been possible to identify their market share without purchasing expensive market research documents. Neither has it been possible to identify which of the pubs in Lambeth are independent and are able to source food independently.

We are able to see that there are over 800 prepared food businesses operating within the borough of Lambeth.

[4] It should be noted that this list does not include M&S food

The Lambeth Sector Based Skills Needs Study, 2010-11[xi] identifies the number of people currently employed within dedicated food service industry to be just over 6800 people, with an additional 2800 involved in the hotel and beverage industry, which it can safely be assumed a good proportion also have some food related activity within their employment.

Employment Type	Working in Lambeth
Hotels and similar	1130
Restaurant and mobile food services	3941
Event catering activites	1718
Other food services	1212
Beverage serving activites	1753
Total	9754

Table 3-3: Employment in prepared food industry in Lambeth

Given the figures for the proportion of residents of Lambeth who work outside the borough outlined in the LEA, if the majority of these workers are also local residents, this figure could mean that around 20% of Lambeth residents who are employed within the borough work in the food sector.

It should be noted that Lambeth has what could be considered a significant attractor in terms of London's food industry, with Brixton Market becoming a popular place to eat out, having recently been listed in Visit Englands '101 things to do before you leave'.

This would suggest that there is much scope for expansion of the prepared food market in Lambeth and if we focus on widening the Brixton Village brand to the borough as a whole we could provide significant support to growth in this sector.

Data available would suggest that there are around **10,000 jobs in Lambeth** which have prepared food sales as a primary or secondary element of their employment

Brixton Village's reputation is growing nationally and presents a unique opportunity.

4 WHY DO WE WANT TO CHANGE THIS?

What could our money be doing?

Having seen how much of the spending in Lambeth is currently taken up by the large supermarket chains, with around £373 million estimated turnover at these stores we assume that independent retailers currently turnover around £28 million.

As this dominance by the big supermarkets increases it is becoming increasingly obvious that many people don't want this to happen. Campaigns against new stores opening are becoming more common. In London alone there are currently 51 campaigns registered on the anti-Tesco site Tescopoly.

Beyond this it is now recognised that there is also a significant benefit to the local economy of money being spent at locally owned businesses rather than with large chains which are 'centrally contracted'[5] and so do not spend their income locally.

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) has explored the effect of this and has developed a model called the 'local multiplier effect'[xii]. Figure 4-1 below shows some basic examples of how local businesses keep money in the local economy.

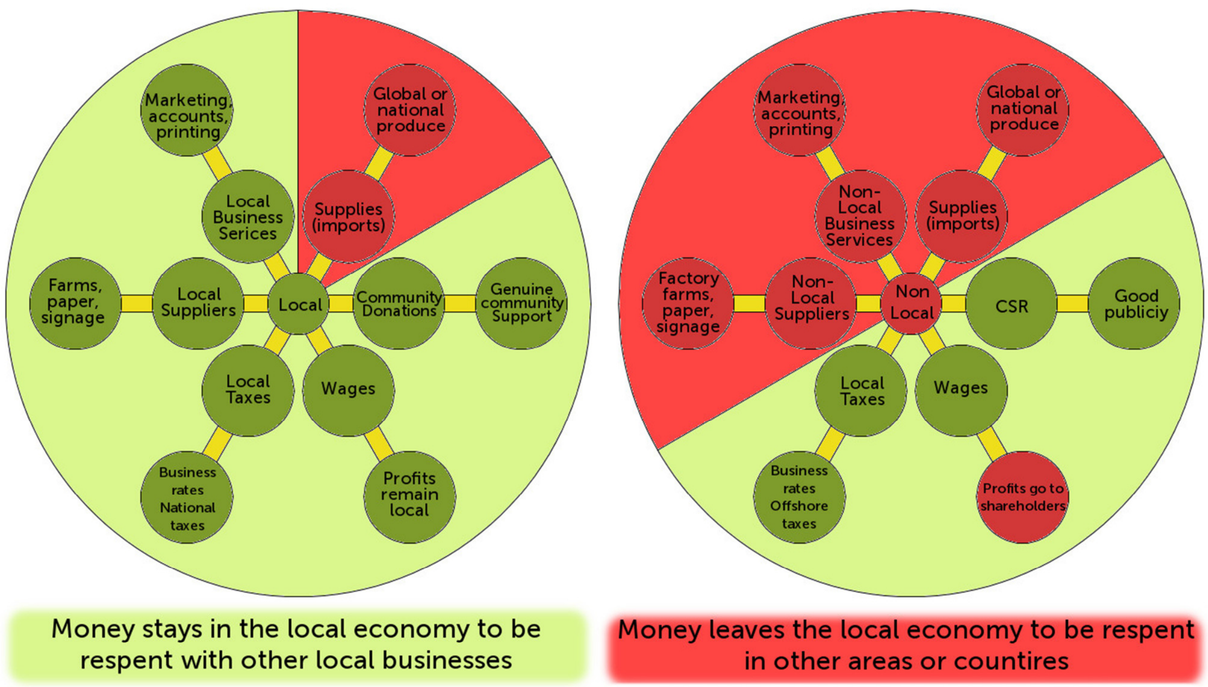

Figure 4-1: Basic local economic multiplier diagram

Local businesses employ more (usually local) people per unit of turnover, use local services (solicitor, accountant, building maintenance), don't have remote shareholders, head offices, HR and marketing spends, or centralised supply systems with large haulage costs.

They are also more likely or certainly able to source stock locally or use local processors or manufacturers. Local businesses also have a strong commitment to their locality and will continue to supply a service when big business would have pulled out due to insufficient profits.

This local multiplier effect represents the additional value accruing to the local people by more of the money continuing to be spent locally by a local business. Money may circulate several times adding value each time. Obviously in a city, many goods and raw materials have to be brought in from outside, so there is an inevitable escape of some of money.

[5] Large chains generally do not use local wholesalers or distribution companies.

It is beyond the scope of this study to calculate the local multiplier for Lambeth and there are currently no case studies in a similar market place. However it is estimated by NEF that, on average, money spent locally will bring about 2.5 times the value to the local economy versus money spent in a chain store, most of which escapes immediately. If that local store can source some of its food locally the value to the local economy will go up correspondingly and the multiplier will be greater.

Work carried out by CPRE found that stores which sold at least 25% local produce produced 1 job for every £48,000 of revenue whilst supermarkets average around £141,000 turnover for every job.

Supermarkets and other large corporations have been extremely successful at reducing the cost of labour per unit of turnover. While this has been good for profits and for their shareholders, it comes at the expense of jobs. While this is a complex issue, and takes into account the ability to price competitively in the cut throat world of supermarket market share, we might ask whether just being able to buy some food as cheaply as possible is worth the cost, especially when often local seasonal produce is no more expensive when bought from an independent outlet.

Supermarkets do deliver competitively priced food to people. The perception is often that people can't afford to shop anywhere else. But it is often possible to find food cheaper in local shops and markets. Farmer's markets are often very competitive as they cut out the middlemen.

The cost of extremely cheap food is a complex issue. Farmers are squeezed out of business by supermarket contracts so only the biggest can survive. There are huge amounts of wasted food on the farm that never makes it to the shelves because it doesn't conform to the supermarket contract's size or uniformity conditions. The food is often a variety selected not for taste but for saleability. It is often picked unripe, is transported hundreds of miles, is cold stored, packaged, so is not as fresh as something you might get at a farmers' market, picked the night before less than 100 miles away.

The supermarket's effect on the provision in the local economy is not easy to quantify. It has been calculated that for every 'out of town supermarket' that was opened, 274 high street jobs would be sacrificed, far more than that store would ever employ. The loss of business from local stores prevents the benefits which can be felt by that business spending its revenue on locally.

Sustain's report into Some Benefits and Drawbacks of Local Food Systems[xiii] found that the true cost of food was not reflected in the price paid in supermarkets.

The estimated that when externalities[6] are taken into account the cost in Britain of an individual's weekly food basket rises by 3% from £16.94 to £17.46 if organic-locally sourced, yet rises by 16.3% to £19.69 if categorised as conventional-global sourced food.

It is also this drive for food to be sold as cheaply as possible which has reduced the value we place on food once it is in the home. Data presented in Household Food and Drink Waste in the UK[xiv] estimates that households waste on average £480 per year on food that need not have been thrown away.

For the average household, the retail price of the avoidable food and drink waste is £40 per month, or more than £1 per day. This compares to an average monthly food and drink expenditure of £260 per household. Therefore avoidable food and drink waste accounts for approximately 15% of the shopping budget.[xv]

Vulnerabilities

London imports from overseas 80% of its food and 95% of its fruit. Cities are centralising forces – they are possible because it is economic for the city dwellers to 'outsource' production of most of its basic needs. We 'farm out' the production of our food over a huge area. The food footprint – the area representing our total resource input into supplying food to London – stretches well into Wales and covers and area similar to that of the whole of the UK.

Our modern food system is very dependent on fossil energy for fertilisers, bio-cides, machinery, processing, packaging, transportation, storage. On average it takes 10 calories of fossil energy to make 1 calorie of food energy. Fossil energy is likely to become more and more expensive as it becomes scarcer. Misguided attempts to replace it with bio-energy lead to additional food price rises as, for example, more than half of US maize last year went into ethanol production for vehicle fuel.

Our food system is increasingly dependent on big suppliers. We have shown that 93% of Lambeth residents food spending passes through the supermarkets. Supermarkets operate a just-in-time supply system so very little stock is held in the stores. Only enough on average for 4 full meals for all the residents of Lambeth are on the shelves at any one time. If there is a crisis (as in the fuel blockades in 2000) supermarkets can empty very quickly.

[6] Negative effects on health and environment caused by food production and consumption

Strengths

Lambeth has many things going for it. An enterprising population, an interested local authority, some great markets, a transformed local food culture, great diversity, 170 community growing spaces, Incredible Edible Lambeth, Transition Town Brixton and nascent Food Partnership and associated strategy.

We have local food enterprises. We have a great veg market on our borders, in New Covent Garden Market. We have local food coops, a genuinely farm-connected local veg box scheme in Local Greens, Lambeth Poly which is beginning estate based polytunnel growing and training. We have many good local bakers, a great wholefood shop, Brixton Cornercopia, which sources all its raw materials from independent traders in Brixton.

We will never supply all our needs locally. There simply are not enough fields in Lambeth to do that or even just down the road in Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Hampshire. Certainly not if Croydon, Lewisham, Southwark and others became interested in local sourcing too. But we can and should look at what needs we can begin to supply as locally as possible and then look to supplement that from outside. Small scale farming can be much more productive in a changing climate than big scale mechanical farming. It can grow a wide variety of crops in small spaces, maximising the use of space by nesting them together, (eg tall onions growing among lettuces) accessing the benefits of biodiversity, cycling nutrients by composting on site and in some cases is shown to be more economically stable than large scale agribusinesses supplying multinational supermarkets[xvi].

There are inspiring examples from all over the planet of successful Urban Agriculture. Various models show that we could grow up to 30% of Lambeth's fruit and veg within its boundaries. Need exceeds supply so there should be very little waste and transport costs would be minimal. In the longer run access to compost from Lambeth's food waste and even nitrogen fertiliser made from human waste would aid productivity. It could also greatly enhance the public realm and build community around food growing, as well as provide jobs as key parts are professionalised. Our diverse culture holds much untapped knowledge. Many local people are only one generation away from a family where growing was a core part of the livelihood and many remember it from their childhood.

Existing projects showing the way

There are already a handful of projects creating a local food economy in Lambeth and some of their details are outlined below. These are a mix of food businesses at various stages of development and existing facilities to provide Lambeth residents with growing and food production skills.

Brixton Cornercopia

Brixton Cornercopia is a tiny neighbourhood restaurant and new kind of corner shop all about ultra-local food and sustainability. It is run by Anne Fairbrother and chef Ian Riley.

Located in Brixton Village Market, Brixton Cornercopia celebrates the abundance and diversity of ingredients available on our doorstep, in the market or through local growers and artisan makers. They source all their ingredients locally, from independents, the market, growers, foragers and makers.

It is all handmade, fresh. They use barter (direct exchange) and the B£ and B£e and even produce a B£ Sauce (locally sauced). Anne is a director of B£. The aim is the provision of fresh foods to the local population. What is served or on the shelves changes daily and reflects the seasons.

They started in 2010 with 1 shop/kitchen and 3 tiny tables. Now they have 3 units and regularly serve 60+ covers a night 4-5 nights a week. They get 4-5 star reviews.

Local Greens

Local Greens is a local veg box scheme with about 250 customers that was started by Therese Stowell and Jean Bergin as a result of attending the TTB Future of our Food Open Space Community Think Tank day in 2009.

Its aim is to source good quality fresh food as locally as possible and they have forged relationships with 6 farms within a 60mile radius including the Sutton Community Farm.

This builds resilience for the community which has a 'valued customer' relationship directly with the producer. They are also sourcing food which has food metres rather than miles from Lambeth Poly. They are looking to recruit more Lambeth based growers.

They currently source a proportion of the fresh leaves from existing local growing projects in Lambeth.

They have provided employment of two part-time packers and ensured a number of farms have either continued to concentrate on horticultural production, and even helped one farmer return to horticulture production by providing a guaranteed market for his produce.

They run regular events to help their customers share recipes and feel part of a community and ensure all leftover produce goes to a local food bank to ensure the project has zero food waste.

Local Greens was a franchise of north London's Growing Communities project, but uniquely set themselves up without any outside funding grants but this has meant that passion, not pounds earned by directors, has been the driving force of this business in its first two years.

Lambeth Poly

Lambeth Poly is a community initiative to grow skills, food resilience and social enterprise. They're developing a replicable model, with help from Lambeth Coop Council, to put poly tunnels onto estates, providing employment, training in food growing and saleable local food.

Lambeth Poly has run a full season of training courses in the poly tunnel on the Tulse Hill estate to enable people to run their own estate polytunnel. They have been supplying salads to Local Greens and to Cornercopia who pays for them in B£e! Lambeth Poly is looking for more estate sites this season and is working with the Loughborough Farm project. They won the Capital Growth Enterprise Award and are part of Incredible Edible Lambeth.

In their first year they achieved respectable yield rates of around 9 tonnes per Ha whilst experimenting with different crops. They are specifically targeting a self-sustaining model of growing zero mile food which will support a number of jobs.

As the pilot project they are still concentrating on expanding growing skills in the borough rather than maximising yields at this point and have plans to introduce a recognised qualification specifically for those who want to grow commercial crops under plastic.

Myatt's Field Park

Run by Victoria Sherwin, Myatt's Field offers outreach to local residents covering all elements of the food system. They also support the Little Cat Café which runs in the park and is one of the few places in the local area where people can buy healthy take-out food.

They are currently setting up as a hub to provide support to local growing projects to help residents in the area increase their self-sufficiency in food production. They sponsored 5 people to do horticultural training through Capel Manor; 2 gained level 2 horticulture and 1 gained level 1 garden design.

50 people have been employed as food heroes, receiving training in teaching about food and basic food safety instruction. Of these, 7 have been sponsored to gain level 2 food safety certificates; 8 have been employed as caterers through us since taking part in our food heroes programme. 12 food heroes have been employed to cook and give away food at a summer fair, harvest festival, pancake day and Big Lunch (estimated 400 people served).

They had 6 work experience people in the cafe, 4 of whom gained level 2 food safety and Barista training. They all spent up to 8 weeks working in the cafe. They have given work to two unemployed people in the cafe for 18 months, both of whom were sponsored to receive level 2 food safety. One received accredited first aid training and Barista training. The current cafe manager and food managers have received level 3 food safety training. 10 people have baked for the cafe and received training tailored to their needs from Lambeth's food safety team.

Brixton Pound

Founded by Transition Town Brixton in 2009 to start discussion about localisation and the value of our local economy. Practically it is 'money that sticks to Brixton'. Money that circulates round local enterprises brings about 2.5 times more real economic value to the local area than money that escapes to corporates and chains.

There are now more than 200 businesses and hundreds of local users. B£ has worked with local businesses to facilitate local sourcing and raised the profile of Brixton to the value of more than £100,000 (Lambeth Council calculation).

In 2011 B£ introduced a pay-by-text e currency which gives consumers B£11 for every £10 they convert into B£e. It is spendable in more than 70 businesses. This facilitates B2B trading as there is an incentive for traders not to turn their B£es back into sterling.

Lambeth Business Rates can now be paid in B£es. The Payroll Local enables Lambeth staff to take a proportion of their salary in B£e and get the 10% bonus. This is a significant spend that is guaranteed for local businesses.

There is an EU funded project with Community Currencies in Action to develop a Lambeth-wide currency that Lambeth can really use to develop the Coop Council.

5 GROWING THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

So, we have seen how big the food market is within the borough of Lambeth, and highlighted how much of this is currently leaving the borough with very little benefit to the local economy

We have also learned what problems are created by out sourcing our food market to big business and suppliers who we have no connection with. We see that not only can localising the food market increase local economic activity, provide more jobs and support business start-ups, but it can also improve our relationship with food and the community around us.

But what is the potential for us to change this, and why is now the time to do it?

Much of the work to alter the way we feed ourselves has already begun; Capital Growth successfully created 2012 new growing spaces. With 170 community gardens having been recorded in Lambeth we are already taking the first steps towards the goal of growing 15% of our fruit and vegetable consumption for ourselves. At present the vast majority of growing is for fun but what could we achieve if we moved to more commercial growing.

In the previous section we have identified several businesses that are already sourcing hyper local produce where possible and our target should be to ensure that their demand can be supplied from within borough for all high value crops.

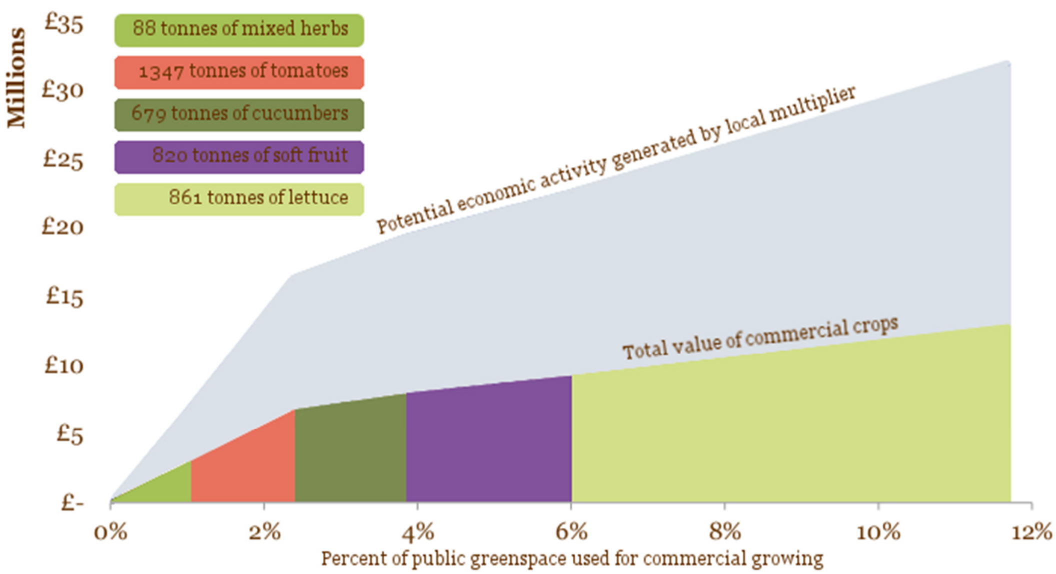

Figure 5-1 Potential value of top five cash crops and their associated land requirements

Produce we could grow	Est. annual demand	Land area required to grow[7]	Potential Revenue
Soft Fruit	820 tonnes	16.4 Ha (2%)[8]	£1.3m
Herbs	88 tonnes	4.4 Ha (1.5%)[8]	£2.45m
Lettuce	861 tonnes	36 Ha (8%)[8]	£3.7m
Tomato	1347 tonnes	6.7 Ha (1.5%)[8]	£4.0m
Cucumber	679 tonnes	6.8 Ha (2%)[8]	£1.2m

Table 5-1: Example high value and high yield crop potentials

[7] Based on low commercial protected yields and percentage of existing public green-space
[8] The percentage of all public open green-space in Lambeth required to grow all this produce

Based on our knowledge of demand we can identify potential crops that could provide significant revenue for local growers. The figures above do not take into account the higher price that these goods could be sold for as local organic produce and are based on existing spending patterns in the family food survey. We should also ensure demand for local food supply by retailers is monitored. This information could be used to promote opportunities to join patchwork farm schemes where demand out strips supply.

Although having only used public greenspace for growing in Figure 5-1 there are also many other ways we could increase commercial food production in the borough. Improvements in the energy efficiency of LEDs make growing under lights an increasingly attractive proposition whilst vertical growing systems are becoming increasingly popular. There are many unused spaces across the borough that could be brought into mushroom production with very little up front capital investment.

There is also the potential for private gardens being used for commercial food production, with either residents making money for themselves, or increasing the amount of land which is brought into production by owners opening their gardens up to the use of others through the use of sites like Landshare. Their might even be a potential for a gardening service which is subsidised by turning over some of your garden over to food production.

Beyond the 15% local production that we are targeting, we still want to find ways to secure as much food as possible from peri-urban farms and the rural hinterland surrounding London. With a target of around 17.5% and 35% respectively for these areas we should be looking to form partnerships between businesses in the borough and local and regional farms. Creating closer links with farming businesses gives them a security which means they can commit to growing more, and avoids entering to contracts which are unsustainable due to the low farm gate prices they receive.

The benefit from this relationship would be a two way street, with the possibility of seasonal work for Lambeth's residents on these farms, the ability for food businesses to ask farmers to adjust what they grow to meet customers demand and the opportunity for small value added food businesses to partner with these suppliers and create premium products. An example of this is evident from the family food survey, with the amount people pay for prepared salads being three times that of a buying a head of lettuce of the same weight.

Although it may seem an almost insurmountable mountain to climb, there are some simple steps we can take over the coming next few years to start the process of change.

Will examine cost effective ways to begin the change over the next three years concentrating on the following areas:

- **Change attitudes to Local Food** - Increase demand for local and seasonal food
- **Increase Local Production** - Ensure year on year growth in the volume of high value crops harvested in the borough.
- **Grow existing food businesses** - Identify and remove barriers to growth of existing projects and business which are improving our relationship with food.
- **Support food business start-ups** - Aid those who wishing to start businesses which sell or prepare foods which are predominantly local and seasonal.
- **Reducing food waste** - Reduce the bulk of food waste across the borough in both homes and businesses and facilitate local composting where waste is unavoidable.

Changing attitudes to local food

Initial Projects

In order to grow the local food economy we first need to address people's perceptions of local, seasonal food. Where possible we need to identify where the prices of seasonal food are cheaper than that sold in supermarkets.

Produce regular price comparisons showing where local seasonal produce available on farmers markets or in box schemes costs less than it would from a supermarket.

It will also be necessary to help identify food waste and what it costs to households. A campaign highlighting waste due to multibuy purchases that may reduce the unit cost in the shop, but when waste is taken into account due to over purchasing actually cost more, could also help influence peoples buying habits.

Intermediate projects

By educating residents on how they might benefit by being engaged consumers of seasonal produce, we are aiming to increase the demand for locally produced food.

We must then help retailers and prepared food sales outlets find local suppliers which would be able to reliably meet their demand. This work could be carried out working closely with Covent Garden market.

Suppliers who have access to local food should be able to display provenance stickers to help customers identify where they can buy well sourced local produce.

As demand for seasonal produce becomes established then finding relatively local producers to supply multiple businesses should be encouraged, with a long term aim of CSA schemes where customers can hold shares in the farms to support the producers who supply their preferred retailers. By tying a CSA scheme to local retailers we could maximise the number of residents it is likely to reach and ensure value can be gained by local businesses from more supplier focused food purchasing.

Increase local production

Initial projects

It should also be recognised that whilst not directly adding to the local economy, growing your own food can not only improve wellbeing, but also increase disposable incomes when growers have sufficient skills to achieve high yields.

Within the family food survey it can be seen that as income increases the amount of money spent on eating out increases as a proportion of food spend, therefore an argument can be made that by encouraging people to spend less on their domestic food by growing their own, they will spend this additional disposable income on eating out.

Lambeth already has one commercially minded primary producer in Lambeth Poly. Further investment in the infrastructure to increase the volume of food produced by commercial growers is a must.

Intermediate projects

Assistance should be given to estates to ensure maintenance contracts are switched to lower input, higher food output landscaping and could even be subsided by a limited area being turned over to commercial growers growing under plastic.

The ‘devolved farm’ model where a coordinator helps home gardeners specialise in producing significant quantities of a few crops for a local market has much potential in an urban setting.

Much local garden fruit and veg is wasted as it comes in gluts (eg apples and pears). Community orientated outlets should be established either on market stalls or in disused shops, to sell produce. This could either be excess production by hobbyist growers, or initial market places for commercial growers who are not yet ready to fill more demanding commercial contracts.

Support in the form of business advice, horticultural training and information on urban growing innovations should be readily available for those who wish to start a business. Training and advice for domestic gardeners in food growing is a potential social enterprise.

Grow local businesses and support food start-ups

Initial projects

Bring together existing local businesses who are already working to provide customers with locally sources seasonal food and identify their problems in terms of securing the supplies they require and desires to expand their businesses.

Ensure there is sufficient support to overcome these barriers. Link businesses for mutual benefit eg a waste from one business becomes a resource for another - coffee waste for growing mushrooms, food waste goes back to grower for composting. Or resource for premises sharing helps them be more cost effective.

We should also carry out an audit of facilities that could be made available for cooking or storage space which could both be used for business who are just starting out, or those that recognise enough demand for their products to expand but without the not the facilities to do so.

Intermediate projects

A full audit of business needs should be carried out for all independent restaurants, takeaways and retailers looking at their needs as a business. This would also look at existing supplier patterns, and identify where they could be helped to sell more local seasonal produce. Using food hygiene inspectors to distribute these surveys could be a way to gather this data without the need for employing more than one officer to process the results and chase responses.

We should help local businesses gain an understanding of the public procurement processes for the Local Authority, Schools, Prisons and Hospitals in Lambeth. Contracts for primary schools have been identified to have a value of around £5 million with a further £800,000 being spent on meals on wheels.

At present all these purchases are with contractors based outside of the borough, the potential value to the local economy of ensuring some of this money is spent locally could be more than twice the value of the contracts themselves. If we cannot yet bid for contracts locally, new catering contract should explore ways that publicly owned kitchens could be available to local businesses out of hours.

Reducing food waste

Initial projects

With 15% of all household purchases being wasted unnecessarily and a real concern that locally produced food is beyond the means of many households within Lambeth, there is significant value to be had in changing purchasing patterns to reduce this waste.

Funding a post to provide advice to those who perceive fresh local produce to be beyond their means could provide significant benefits to the community through advice on food preparation and reducing waste to show that buying and preparing fresh local produce can be more cost effective than purchasing discount pre-prepared produce from supermarkets. Setting up a network of community advisors, possibly recruiting the older generation who know how to use leftovers, could ensure old skills are not lost.

Bring together existing food waste charities operating in the borough for a conference and hack day. This event would aim to increase cooperation between these organisations, input towards a food waste strategy for the borough and devise a tech orientated solution to help reduce food waste. The same solution could also be used for markets and fresh produce retailers to alert food producers of stocks that can be bought cheaply which have to be used that night.

Intermediate projects

The provision of a facility that would allow all businesses to advertise where they have produce that is going to go to waste if not used should be completed. Mobile alerts and a live online database could be used but the exact functionality of this should emerge by bringing together charities working in these areas.

We should also be working towards having food composting available to all residents in the borough, with the first port of call being to compost locally for commercial and recreational food growing projects within the borough.

By growing a network of food waste heroes we could be actively engaging those who are observed to be composting large quantities of food waste, providing tailored advice on how to reduce the amount of food they are wasting.

A brief summary

We have seen that we spend more than half a billion on food each year in the borough, and how most of that goes to large supermarket chains who in turn spend their money a long way away. We have also seen there is already a steadily increasing interest in growing your own food and that some businesses are already leading the way in presenting a different model for food consumption in Lambeth.

We have outlined our suggestions for the next steps to take to increase the proportion of food which is either grown or produced locally, or from farms that we know are receiving a fair price for their crops. We have also recognised the economic benefit which would be gained within the borough by buying local produce and the associated jobs this could create. The final pages of this report provide a summary of our suggested actions but we also must devise a set of indicators that will inform us if whether we are heading in the right direction.

The following indicators are merely suggestions which could be used to baseline this work, we hope that those who take on the projects growing out of this report will be able to find credible academic partners who can provide appropriate processes and rigour to assess the work going forwards.

- Measure the amount of money spent in supermarkets compared to local independent retailers
- Monitor changes in the number of supermarkets and local food businesses
- Record the number of people working in food related businesses across the borough
- Recognise the level of skills that those working in the food sector have and monitor demand for training
- Visible changes in the amount of land used across the borough for food production of all kinds
- Monitor carbon savings due to a relocalised food production model.
- Increased percentages of public sector catering contracts are won by local businesses.

Objective	Additional case studies	Future Lambeth projects	Actions		
			Happening Now	**Should start soon**	**Next three years**
INCREASING AWARENESS	Incredible Edible Lambeth The Lambeth Food Partnerships Various Transition Town networks	Made in Lambeth certification	Formation of a food partnership which is bringing together NHS, community grooups	Lambeth Food Links website, maintained by Lambeth Food Partnership, showcases regular price comparisons of local seasonal food/local retailers vs supermarkets	Investigate interest from growers and producers in creating a regonised brand that identifies them as a Lambeth or South London producer
INCREASED PRODUCE GROWN, PROCESSED & SOLD	Thinking Flowers Incredible Edible Todmordon Local parsley/herb grower - supplies Portugese Deli Brixton Beer / Urban Wine Co Blackbird Bakery Loughborough Farm	Patchwork Gardeners (using maintained gardens and estates to grow some food for sale) - intelligently growing certain crops in certain areas dependent on sun and soil. Lambeth Herb Farmers The Brixton Chilli Co. Mushrooms on Coffee! Vertical growing projects Network of commercial greenhouses and poly-tunnels.	Identify high value low foot print crops with a local demand Encourage food growing on any land available and promote these growing spaces. Up-date, publish and promote TTB community food growing guide (estate growing licencing)	Encourage plug plant growing (like Rocket Gardens) in local greenhouse for sale to producers and home-growers - perhaps on a CSA basis with up front orders. Open a Local Lambeth stall at Brixton/Herne Hill/Clapham/Stockwell farmers markets to sell local surpluses	Open a permenant shop (in central disused space or Clapham Garage) which sells surpluses and also acts as a Food Coop hub Use roof map for shading map and identify potential growing spaces Offer consultancy to growers Facilitate local investment in building food production capacity

Objective	Additional case studies	Future Lambeth projects	Actions		
			Happening Now	Should start soon	Next three years
SUPPORT BUSINESSES	Makerhood	Sustainable food business directory	Offering of food hygiene courses by Lambeth Council for those wanting to start businesses. Makerhood provides a way for small scale growers and producers to sell direct to customers	Look in to how Town Hall for All can be used for food businesses. Survey/food web mapping to assess needs and obstacles, existing supplier patterns and local food demand (helping to match make buyers and suppliers in the futures) - link in with Environmental Health Team inspections; gather data recognised customer needs - convenience, choice, opening hours, parking etc.	Link up local food suppliers (especially take-aways as an easy win) with producers coming in to Lambeth for Farmers Markets. Lambeth Food Links website, supported by Lambeth Food Partnership, offering support with matchmaking demand and supply, space brokerage, help sheets (e.g. on gaining permission for growing on estates), contacts for business advice, workshops and training, urban growing innovations
LOCAL PROCUREMENT	Lambeth Local Procurement Policy and requirements with external businesses to create local jobs	Lambeth owned businesses provide a percentage of Lambeth Council/School/Hospital catering contracts	Review current public procurement situation and identify opportunities and gaps along with barriers to local businesses becoming suppliers. Promote Lambeth Workshops and liaise with Lambeth Business and Enterprise dept.	Research ways kitchens could be made available 'out of hours' for other catering or cottage industries	Bring together a consortium of local businesses, grower and farms to strengthen their businesses to tender for significant public catering contracts.

Objective	Additional case studies	Future Lambeth projects	Actions		
			Happening Now	**Should start soon**	**Next three years**
FOOD WASTE	LCRN Cressingham Gardeners Aardvark Love Food Hate Waste	Food Cycle project Support commercialisation of food waste.	Ad hoc charity action collecting food waste as and when they are aware of it Love food hate waste campaign proves online advice	Bring together existing food waste charities operating in the borough for a conference and hack day. This event would aim to provide a simple technical solution to identify waste which would be diverted to those who need it most/bid on waste/hash tag communication.	Funding a post to provide support and advice on purchasing on a budget, using leftovers, reducing food waste and create a network of local food waste heroes

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