Making Local Food Work:
influencing consumer buying behaviour

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Local food matters. It can have wide-ranging benefits for local economy, community regeneration, health and the environment. Community Enterprise puts people in control of meeting their own needs. Combine the two and you have a recipe for thriving local communities. This belief underpins the Making Local Food Work Programme.

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Foreword

To have a report that tackles a major challenge in local food would be useful. But this report tackles not one, but two challenges. The first stems from the gap between how much people say they want to buy local food compared to how little they actually buy. The report tackles this head on and explores the ways in which we can bridge this gap by understanding what leads to these behaviours.

The second challenge covers an issue that has received far less coverage. The development of behavioural science and behavioural economics has provided a diverse toolkit for helping to bring about changes in people's habits. Yet these tools have largely been in the hands of Governments and Corporates. This report dares to suggest that any community can take up these ideas and use them for their own benefit. After all, the best incentive for changing your behavior is to see your friends and neighbours changing theirs.

Sir Horace Plunkett, the great agricultural pioneer used to argue that communities should have access to the latest technical knowledge in order for them to shape how they wanted to see the world. In his day, this often meant new engineering techniques. Today, many of our advances are about understanding our own minds and this report applies this knowledge to the world of local food.

The idea that a community can "nudge" itself into far greater support for its local food system, with all the benefits that that would bring, may be a radical one. But it might also be an idea whose time has come.

Peter Couchman
Director of Making Local Food Work

Summary

Local food can revitalise neighbourhoods and villages, support a thriving farming sector and, in the best cases, cut our environmental footprint. Almost a third of UK shoppers say they buy local food. Yet they do not buy much: only a couple of percent of food is sold locally.

This report is about how to close that gap by selling more local food through community enterprises, which are best-placed to generate the public dividends that local food can offer. In particular, we explore whether the burgeoning advice on 'behavioural change' can help community food enterprises break from the margins of the food market into the mainstream. Can it help convert the huge public aspiration to buy local into a market that supports the economic, social and environmental sustainability of community food initiatives?

In this report we try to pull together the best bits of current thinking on behavioural change in a way that makes sense for community food enterprises and for people working with them. We have sought to pick the most plausible ideas, supported by the latest research and the practical experience of people we interviewed. While many of these ideas have been tried, fewer have been rigorously evaluated, so they should be treated with appropriate care.

How to change what people do

Since the 1950s, psychologists and economists have come up with a huge spread of models and theories to explain the links between attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour. Since the 1970s, interest in this field has exploded, with behavioural change theories applied to address health problems linked to smoking, drinking and drug addiction. Popularised by books like *Nudge* and *The Tipping Point*, they have found an eager audience among social marketers, policy-makers and campaigners.

So there is no shortage of advice on how to change people's behaviour to support their own wellbeing and the wider public interest. The challenge is to work out which parts of it are most credible and what they mean for people working in community food enterprises. We sum up the main points under three headings: make it easy; make it normal; and make it personal.

Making local food easy

The most immediate barriers to changing behaviour are about access, when the external environment makes it difficult for people to act in a particular way. Tackling this means making desirable behaviours cheaper and easier to achieve, and undesirable ones more expensive and more difficult. This is not simply pandering to laziness: why should well-intentioned people be penalised for doing things that benefit the whole community?

Key points:

- It is often more effective to focus on changing the default option than to target individuals with appeals or information.

- Incentives can encourage people to change their behaviour, but appealing to people's self-interest may make them care less about social and environmental issues in the long-run.

- A little goes a long way: supermarket reward points amount in money terms to a fraction of the difference in price between competing products, but have a strong influence on perceptions of value and on purchasing.

Success story: Bike It, a sustainable travel campaign by Sustrans, doubled the number of children involved who cycled to school every day with a mix of infrastructure improvements and support. For example, RJ Mitchell School in Havering developed cycle storage facilities, improved links with cycle routes and rewarded students who cycled. For additional information, please see page 14.

Tips:

The golden guarantee.
Prove to customers how confident you are in the value and quality you offer by making them an offer they can't refuse: if they don't like it, they get their money back. Morrisons have done this with their 'The Best' premium range. Be careful to ensure the terms of the offer protect you from people taking unfair advantage: for example Morrisons allow one application per household, require proof of purchase and are running the offer for a limited period.

Reaping rewards.
Try introducing a simple rewards scheme, perhaps like the little cards that coffee shops stamp where you get your eleventh cup free. This doesn't just encourage regulars – it also gives you the means to steer people towards new or special products by offering extra points.

Testing the limits.
Look for the little things that could make life that extra bit easier for members or customers. Talk to them first, especially folk who only come in occasionally. Experiment with tackling those barriers and see what difference it makes. For instance, if a shop can find some way of opening longer, even for a limited trial period, the investment may well prove worthwhile.

De-clutter.
If you run a shop, try to mark clearly which products are locally produced but don't clutter your shelves with information. Encourage customers to ask sales staff if they want to know more about provenance, and put up attractive posters or display boards about your main local suppliers.

Making local food normal
Social and cultural norms are behavioural rules or expectations which a society or community uses to tell the difference between appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Key points:
- People not only do things prompted by observing the behaviour of others around them, but are encouraged to continue doing things if they feel that others approve of their behaviour.

- It helps to show people that they are part of something bigger – groups can create a powerful momentum for those involved to change their behaviour.

- Focus on your local area, community or workplaces as people care most about their peer group and immediate surroundings.

- Some people influence social norms much more than others, for instance by being avid networkers or respected figures in the community.

- Agreeing to a small request makes people more likely to agree to a larger one.

Success story: The Community Recyclers Scheme run by Guildford Borough Council involved volunteer 'street leaders' who encouraged recycling. During 2003-4, average monthly recycling rates increased 46% from 625 tonnes per month to 913 tonnes. For additional information please see page 16.

Tips:

Make it count.
Tell people about your existing members and customers. Perhaps make a food-related version of the kind of thermometer people use when they're raising funds for a sponsored run or the church roof and set a target. Whether you're looking for your tenth customer or your ten thousandth, counting them visibly can help.

Sign me up.
Run a market survey before you launch a new project, product or service. Simply canvassing people, whatever their answer, can increase uptake.

Keeping regular.
Whether you run a shop, market or a series of events, keeping the timing regular will make it easier for people to make a habit of a getting involved. It makes it easy for them to remember when you'll be there and means people can rely on you. Irregular or complicated timing can be a real spanner in the works.

Eat the street.
Hold a 'Grow it!' competition for local businesses. As well as cafés and restaurants, try to get unrelated shops involved. This is a great way to engage some of the movers and shakers in your community, and to boost the visibility of local food growing.

Co-operate with your customers.
How could you make your customers more like members, so they have a stake in your success? Formal co-operatives and simpler sponsorship schemes can both support and enrich existing businesses.

Making local food personal

A third strand of thinking on behavioural change is that one size doesn't fit all. In practice, this means using tools such as market segmentation, to identify target groups with different characteristics or relationships to the change you are trying to achieve, and getting messages across in ways that engage the people within each group as personalities.

Key points:

- Understanding how people see the world in different ways can help us to engage them.

- Using messages that promote a positive feeling towards a targeted behaviour, rather than fear or avoidance of an unfavourable behaviour, is more likely to engage people.

- Stories – true or fiction – can be a compelling way of getting messages across to people in ways that resonate with their own lives and experiences.

Success story: A study of recycling behaviour concluded that the key target group for a successful recycling campaign was middle-aged people (46-60 years) with primary education levels – a segment described as the 'reluctant group'. Specifically targeting the reluctant group, rather than all the segments at once – including those already likely to adopt recycling – would play a fundamental part in the success of the campaign. For additional information please see page 18.

Tips:

Pen portraits.
Write short pen portraits of your typical target customers – perhaps five different characters. Give them made up names and sum up their needs, habits, likes and dislikes. Think how each would experience your current operation and what they'd want improved. Which of them is most important to your success now and long-term? You can even stick them on the back of your office door to prompt you to keep them in mind – that's what they do in marketing departments.

The simple life.
Sometimes modern life seems overcomplicated – help would-be customers see how buying local makes it simpler. In designing and promoting your enterprise, try focusing on how it gives them simpler choices and cuts down on needless travel. Box schemes have a head start in this.

Take pictures.
Good photos tell great stories about your own enterprise and your suppliers. Use them on display boards, publicity and websites. If you don't feel much the artist, get a good designer to help make the best of them.

Tell your own story.
All social enterprises are out of the ordinary and have inspiring stories. Tell people and make it personal. What prompted you to get involved and what were you doing at the time? What have been the biggest challenges and how have you and others overcome them? How do you hope the enterprise will develop? Keep it brief, and use it on your website and in PR work, say with local newspapers.

Mystery shopper.
Who is your most interesting customer or member? Perhaps they're a local celebrity or a pillar of the community, or maybe it's someone you just wouldn't think of as a local foodie or co-operative member. Would other potential customers identify with them? If so, ask if they'd be willing to go public, whether in the local media or in testimonials you can use in publicity.

Joining it all up
Behavioural change campaigns use a variety of approaches to target different aspects of human psychology, and the physical and social environment. Engaging with people on multiple fronts at the same time increases visibility and access, which both help to encourage new habits and behaviours.

The need to join up different approaches presents a crucial role for national networks and organisations, including Making Local Food Work and its partners, to support the efforts of community food enterprises. Specific suggestions include to:

- Consider developing a shared brand for local food, to increase the visibility of local food and help with public procurement.

- Provide centralised customer insight, including analysis of the market segments most relevant to local and community food.

- Work with national media to make local food a normal feature of life in radio and TV soap operas.

These are over and above the responsibility that all of us in these organisations face to help government also do its bit in providing a fertile environment in which community food enterprises can thrive. Elsewhere, Making Local Food Work is presenting the case for removing the obstacles that most frequently frustrate efforts by communities to take the initiative, for example in planning processes. But when it comes to making community food enterprises more visible, accessible and viable, there is no greater or simpler test of government credibility than whether it puts its money where its mouth is. Public sector catering offers an unrivalled opportunity for the coalition government to support the 'Big Society' at no extra cost or, by some experience, even saving the taxpayer. A first step in the right direction is to recognise in policy the valued part that community enterprises already play in producing, distributing, retailing and educating about food, and afford them greater influence as partners.

1 Introduction

1.1 From the margins to mainstream

Local food has enjoyed a spectacular rise in popularity. A regular survey of shoppers by retail think tank the IGD finds that 30% now say they buy locally produced food, doubling since 2006, with 57% believing it is fresher and 54% that it is good for the local economy.[1] Yet while many people aspire to buy locally, and sales have grown and weathered the recession, the fact remains that only a small share of food in the UK is bought and eaten near the place where it was grown. The big supermarket chains sell at most a couple of percent of food locally, while all independent grocery retailers, including many that sell no local food, account for only 2.5% of the total market (Defra, 2009).[2] People selling local food, or working passionately in networks or public bodies to promote it, sometimes feel they are just a drop in the ocean.

Why should anyone care? Because aside from qualities that shoppers value – freshness, flavour and provenance – the best local supply chains bring real benefits to communities and beyond. They can boost the vitality of rural areas, helping farmers get a higher return for quality produce. They can help to build social cohesion by encouraging social contact between people and cooperation between local enterprises, as well as developing a greater sense of local identity.[3] While buying local does not guarantee a lower carbon footprint, the local schemes that tread lightest are hard to out-green.[4]

Nowhere is the potential public benefit of local food higher than in community food enterprises – the community supported agriculture (CSA) schemes, farmers' markets, community shops, food co-ops and buying groups that are the focus of Making Local Food Work's activities and of this report. Community food enterprises are diverse, but united in their commitment to communities helping and feeding themselves, often in the face of service closures, rural or urban decline, or poor access to affordable and sustainable food. With all eyes on the coalition government's commitment to the 'Big Society', the stakes resting on their success are higher than ever.

This report is about helping community food enterprises to thrive. It is partly for people working and volunteering in community initiatives, though we realise they often want tailored guidance rather than another report full of general pointers. So this report is also for organisations that can and should be providing community food enterprises with support – national networks such as the partners in Making Local Food Work, and local and national government.

Over the coming year, Making Local Food Work is gathering evidence from successful and struggling community food initiatives from across the country to work out what works in promoting and marketing local food. The network will also be looking at financing and business models for community food enterprises. In this report we set the scene by exploring what advice already exists on how to market food with a social purpose. Community food enterprises already do lots of marketing, often successfully, yet their market share remains small and they often face considerable barriers.

Can the burgeoning advice on 'behavioural change', which draws on research in behavioural economics and experience in social marketing, help community food enterprises break from the margins into the mainstream? Can it help convert the huge public aspiration to buy local into a market that supports the economic, social and environmental sustainability of community food initiatives?

1.2 Approaches to changing behaviour

Since the 1950s, psychologists and economists have come up with a huge spread of models and theories to explain the links between attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour. One of the earliest was developed by Kurt Lewin, who suggested that habitual behaviours had to be 'unfrozen' by changing the 'mindset' before 'refreezing'.[5] Others included the 'theory of reasoned action', which suggested that external factors such as social pressure and expectation affected people's behaviour,[6] and the 'stages of change model' which described behavioural change as unfolding through a series of six steps.[7]

Since the 1970s, interest in this field has exploded, with behavioural change theories applied to address health problems linked to smoking, drinking and drug addiction. They have found an eager audience among social marketers, policy-makers and campaigners.

Academic research into behavioural change continues to flourish, and some recent books have popularised its findings.[8] *Nudge*, by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, suggests that people can be prompted to behave in certain ways simply by changing the way choices are presented to them. To decrease household energy

Barriers facing community food enterprises

Different kinds of community food enterprises face different barriers. Farmers' markets can find it difficult to survive due to their small size, low revenues and dependence on volunteer work.[a] Community supported agriculture schemes may face logistical problems around distribution, struggle to offer the level of choice their members want, and experience irregular food supplies, work pressures and consumer concerns about risk-sharing.[b] Farm shops may be inconvenient for people familiar with supermarkets or used to having shops close to home.

[a] Stephenson, G., Lev, L. and Brewer, L. (2008). "I'm Getting Desperate": What We Know About Farmers' Markets That Fail. Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems. 23(03): 188-199.

[b] Henderson, E. and En, R. V. (2007). Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Lea, E., Phillips, J., Ward, M. and Worsley, A. (2006). Farmers' and Consumers' Beliefs About Community-Supported Agriculture in Australia: A Qualitative Study. Ecology of Food and Nutrition. 45(2): 61.

[c] For an in-depth discussion of challenges facing community food enterprises internationally, see: CFE (2009). 'CFE Challenges — Community Food Enterprise'., available at <http://www.communityfoodenterprise.org/findings-analysis/cfe-challenges> (accessed 19 November 2010).

Community food enterprises of all kinds experience problems associated with:[c]

- Financial support for new, transitional or expanding enterprises.

- Access to markets.

- Consistent and diverse supply.

- Quality assurance.

- Difficulties with distribution and infrastructure.

- Competition with larger grocers and supermarkets.

- Limited advertising resources and a lack of widely known product labelling.

- Low levels of awareness and understanding of local foods among the general public.

- Shortages of specific skills including management and administration, marketing, and fund-raising.

- Limited time and resources for increasing skills through training.

- Limited availability of support and advice.

consumption, for example, it recommends giving people an 'ambient orb', which glows red when energy use is high and green when it is lower.[9] When it comes to shopping, research shows that placing a line of yellow tape across the width of the trolley, combined with a sign asking shoppers to place fruit and vegetables in front of the line, can double fruit and vegetable purchasing.[10]

Another popular book on behavioural change, Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*, examines why certain behaviours become widespread.[11] The book argues that a small proportion of the population – about a fifth – plays a pivotal role in spreading 'social epidemics'. These people include 'connectors' (individuals with large social networks), 'mavens' (information specialists), and 'salesmen' (charismatic individuals). Gladwell says that other factors also play a role, including the 'stickiness' of the idea or behaviour (how memorable the message is), and the context (the time and place of the idea or behaviour).

Many of the recent policy reports published about behavioural change try to pull together key points from a range of these different theories and present them as simple messages that people can use in their work. For example, DEFRA has developed a model that it calls the '4Es', which proposes that government intervention must balance addressing both internal and external barriers to people changing their behaviour, by Encouraging, Enabling, Engaging, Exemplifying.[12] The MINDSPACE report,[13] commissioned to explore the contribution of behavioural theory to public policy, offers a model which includes: a checklist of nine of the most significant influences on behaviour; DEFRA's 4Es; and two further supporting actions (Exploring, Evaluating) to be carried out after policies are implemented.[14] A simpler approach, set out by the Social Market Foundation, treats people's actions as the outcome of internal factors (habits and cognition), external factors (financial and infrastructural) and social norms.[15] The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable report combines DEFRA's 4Es model with four key guidelines: make it fair; help people to act together; make it positive and tangible; and win people's trust.[16]

So there are already plenty of ideas about how to prompt people to change their behaviour in ways that support their own wellbeing and the wider public interest. Many of them have been tried but few have been tested. With the exception of health policy, little of the advice on behavioural change has been supported by large-scale population studies and on-the-ground research.

In other words, while theories drawn from behavioural economics and social psychology suggest lots of interesting pointers, there has been less by way of monitoring and evaluation to see how acting on those ideas has actually turned out.

This is partly because testing is difficult. Where monitoring does take place, for example with campaigns for improved waste disposal, recycling, or public transport use, it is hard to determine which specific interventions had the most significant effect. This is because campaigns usually develop strategies on many fronts, throwing everything they think should be done into the same pot. A typical council waste strategy will include educational initiatives, partnerships with local organisations, the use of media for advertising, posters and flyers, as well as radio interviews and promotions at local events to encourage responsible waste behaviour. Likewise, local food campaigns organise food festivals, chefs' forums, 'meet the buyer' events, Great Taste awards and cookery classes, publish local food directories and recipe books, and develop links between local food suppliers and shops and restaurants in the area. Although all of these initiatives may well contribute to the overall success of a particular campaign, the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach limits efforts to monitor the effectiveness of each.

1.3 Using this report

In this report we try to pull together the best bits of current thinking on behavioural change in a way that makes sense for community food enterprises and for people working with them. We have sought to pick the most plausible ideas, supported by the latest research and the practical experience of people we interviewed. Yet many of them remain unproven, and should be treated with appropriate care.

This is not a general marketing guide. We have tried to stick to points that stem directly from research, thinking and know-how on behavioural change. Where these ideas are broadly familiar or already common practice, we have sought to add some additional insight from the material we found. During our reading and interviews we came across many more traditional approaches to marketing local food, which may warrant attention and support but are not the focus of this report.

In chapter 2 we describe the main ideas about behavioural change under three headings: making it easy; making it normal; and making it personal. We use these to structure the rest of the report. Chapter 3, explores how improving access to local food and using different kinds of incentive can make it easier for people to engage with local food. Chapter 4 is about appealing to and influencing people's norms and habits, and the importance of community-based approaches to many behavioural change theories. Chapter 5 examines how local food initiatives can target specific audiences more effectively and efficiently by using market segmentation and story-telling. Each chapter includes tips for people working in community food enterprises. All the businesses and organisations they feature as examples are listed, with web links, in the appendix. In the closing chapter we make the case for taking a joined-up approach, combining multiple strategies in spite of the difficulties that poses evaluation, and make recommendations for national organisations and government bodies responsible for encouraging a thriving local food sector.

2 How to change what people do

2.1 Make it easy

The most immediate barriers to changing behaviour are about access, when the external environment makes it difficult for people to act in a particular way. The solutions can be thought of as 'hard' interventions that reduce cost, increase access, or improve the infrastructure to help achieve a target behaviour. They revolve around making desirable behaviours cheaper and easier to achieve, and undesirable ones more expensive and more difficult.[17]

'Make it easy' is one of the key ideas in marketing.[18] This partly reflects the outdated belief that people always behave rationally and that their behaviour can be modified by simply adjusting information or economic cost. Yet the ways people make decisions have been revealed to be far more complicated and less predictable than 'rational choice' theorists would like to believe.

Information and cost certainly play a key role, but other factors also matter, including the 'facilitating conditions' of access, quality and consistency, and the 'institutional context' of rules, regulations and market structures within which people act out their lives.[19] So making a change easy is important, but can involve other factors besides cost and information.

External factors like these can clearly influence, and sometimes override, 'internal factors' such as people's attitudes, values, habits and personal norms. For example, when external factors such as access to facilities make recycling very easy, it scarcely makes a difference whether people like the idea or care about the environment: they will recycle anyway. On the other hand, if it is extremely hard to recycle, then very few people will do so.[20] More broadly, research shows that it is often more effective to focus on changing the context within which behaviours take place than to target individuals with appeals or information.[21]

For example, Bike It is one of the UK's most successful projects in encouraging sustainable travel among young people. In its 2009 annual review of the project, Sustrans found that the number of children involved who cycled to school every day had doubled from 4% to 8%. The number who never cycled to school dropped from 75% to 55%. The review found that the scheme made the biggest difference where it included improvements to the physical infrastructure for cycling. So, for instance, RJ Mitchell School in Havering developed cycle storage facilities, improved links with the Sustrans cycle network and a local park, and a system of rewarding students who either walked or cycled to school.[22]

When it comes to how people behave as consumers in the marketplace, changing the options available to them is sometimes called 'choice editing'.[23] This describes the pre-selection by a company, shop or organisation of the range of products or services that they make available to consumers. Manufacturers and service-providers constantly decide what to make available to others, although issues of sustainability currently play a minimal role. The advantages of choice editing are that it requires very little active change in people's lives,[24] and can be implemented quickly with large-scale benefits. Choice editing by regulators, retailers and manufacturers has already played a substantial role in shifting consumer behaviour towards more sustainable consumer purchases, having considerable more impact than information-based campaigns.[25]
Research into public attitudes to choice editing have put paid to the notion that 'making it easy' is just a matter of pandering to people's laziness.[26]

Rather, a good reason to make acting in the public interest the default option is that it seems unfair if you have to go out of your way to do something that benefits society, leaving others who don't make the effort better off. It makes no sense to penalise social responsibility.

Of course, the opposite of penalising particular behaviours is not simply to ensure they are the default option, but to make them positively attractive. This is why providing incentives is central to the current government's policy thinking on many environmental behaviours including waste, recycling, and local food production and consumption. Mostly, government's focus has been on financial incentives, reflecting the influence of 'rational choice theory' in discussions of behavioural change, and the long history of using financial incentives

Simple and painless

There is an assumption in many environmental campaigns that focusing on a few small behavioural changes will then 'spill over' into more significant ones. The thinking behind this foot-in-the-door approach – or what DEFRA calls 'catalyst behaviours'[a] – is that once people become engaged with one aspect of a wider set of ideas, they will automatically or independently become interested in the others.

In fact there is mixed evidence of spill-over actually taking place, with some research showing that when people do something green it actually reduces their propensity to engage in other pro-environmental behaviours.[b] Forms of 'negative spill-over' may take place when people "actively seek to undertake simple and painless pro-environmental behaviour in order to ease their conscience in avoiding more costly or difficult behaviours".[c] "It soothes consumers' guilt if they come in here and buy a jar of chilli jelly, then spend £300 in Morrisons," jokes Matthew Walwyn, from the Dales Store in Birstwith.

There are few studies which examine spill-over in any detail so it is hard to know exactly which behaviours will tend to spill-over into other lifestyle choices. What appears to be the case is that spill-over of pro-environmental behaviours tends to be higher among individuals who have strong personal norms about environmentally friendly behaviour.[d] In other words, the values that underlie behaviours play an important role in creating spill-over.

[a] Collier, A., Cotterill, A., Everett, T., Muckle, R., Pike, T. and Vanstone, A. (2010). Understanding and influencing behaviours: a review of social research, economics and policy making in Defra. DEFRA. London, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/series/documents/understand-influence-behaviour-discuss.pdf> (accessed 8 July 2010).

[b] Thøgersen, J. and Ölander, F. (2003). Spillover of environment-friendly consumer behaviour. Journal of Environmental Psychology. 23(3): 225-236.

[c] Crompton, T. (2008). Weathercocks & Signposts: The Environment Movements at a Crossroads. WWF, available at <http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/weathercocks_report2.pdf> (accessed 9 August 2010). P.15

[d] Crompton, T. (2008). Weathercocks & Signposts: The Environment Movements at a Crossroads. WWF, available at <http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/weathercocks_report2.pdf> (accessed 9 August 2010). P.24

to affect health and environmental behaviours.[27] With waste management, for example, the government plans to encourage councils to pay people to recycle.[28]

However, there are suggestions that appealing to individuals' financial self-interest actually diminishes the importance that people place on developing sustainable lifestyles.[29] It can also be fragile to political or budgetary expediency, explains Andrew Dobson in a recent report on 'environmental citizenship' and behavioural change:

"For instance, just as an environmental tax designed to change people's behaviour can be imposed, so it can be rescinded or reined in. The risk of using incentives to change behaviour is that, if the fiscal measure is removed, people will often relapse into their previous behaviour patterns upon removal of the incentive. In contrast, because the pro-environmental behaviour of environmental citizens is rooted in a commitment to the principles underlying it, it is less subject to the political and institutional willpower required to support fiscal measures. Another problem with the use of fiscal incentives is that they suggest an undersocialised view of social action whereby the extent to which people are motivated by reasons beyond simply self-interest is underestimated."[30]

Financial incentives can play an important part in changing behaviour, but strategies which incorporate a range of other approaches have been found more effective at increasing participation.[31]

2.2 Make it normal

Social and cultural norms are behavioural rules or expectations which a society or community uses to tell the difference between appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.[32] The literature on behavioural change focuses on encouraging social approval and commitment to social norms. Norms can be used to change behaviour by telling people what others do in a particular situation.[33] To be most effective, norms must be noticeable. People's dietary habits, back garden composting of kitchen waste, or reduced household water usage can be motivated by norms but are largely invisible to other people. Street-based recycling schemes for garden and household waste can have more success since they are more visible to neighbours.[34] Signs, stickers, and public announcements related to targeted behaviours can therefore help to create and maintain certain norms. A similar function could be applied to food purchasing behaviour by, for example, placing a visible display in a shopping area indicating the percentages of shoppers who purposely choose certain kinds of foods.[35] People not only do things prompted by observing the behaviour of others around them, but are encouraged to continue doing things if they feel that others approve of their behaviour.[36]

> **Tip: make it count.**
>
> **Tell people about your existing members and customers. Perhaps make a food-related version of the kind of thermometer people use when they're raising funds for a sponsored run or the church roof and set a target. Whether you're looking for your tenth customer or your ten thousandth, counting them visibly can help.**

Some behavioural change models consider social norms, together with attitudes and beliefs, to be part of a trio of influences that also include external factors, such as the physical environment and monetary cost, and

internal factors, such as cognitive processes and habits. Behavioural change can be brought about by focusing on one of these three sets of drivers, but strategies which combine elements from each will likely be more successful.[37]

The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable found that it was important to show people that they are part of something bigger. Although changing habits and norms at an individual level is difficult, working with groups can create a powerful momentum for those involved to change their behaviour.[38] The roundtable's report points to the success of walking groups and WeightWatchers-style programmes, which show how a group setting can help people 'unfreeze' bad habits and develop new behaviours.

Local Authorities have increasingly turned to community-based approaches to behavioural change. With campaigns including composting, recycling, encouraging the use of washable nappies and waste prevention, many Local Authorities have realised that broad blanket awareness-raising approaches are less effective than community-based approaches which involve face-to-face contact with the public in meetings or going door-to-door in particular areas.[39] The 'local' element of community-based approaches is fundamental because people care about their immediate surroundings, find it easier to get involved in new projects or campaigns, and are able to see the local-level impacts of any changes. Building trust and a sense of 'ownership' of an issue is key when encouraging local communities to get involved.[40]

Community-Based Social Marketing blends social marketing with psychological insights into the importance that community engagement and social norms have on changing behaviour. The approach has had some success in increasing composting and efficient use of water.[41] Tim Jackson's review of the evidence on consumer behaviour and behavioural change emphasised the role of community in creating and encouraging individual behavioural change, pointing out that "participatory community-based processes could offer effective avenues for exploring pro-environmental and pro-social behavioural change".[42]

Community-based approaches effectively deal with two hurdles. The first is that we are highly influenced by the social norms we perceive around us, whether in our immediate physical environment – the behaviour of our neighbours – or through our more dispersed social networks, increasingly mediated by internet-based technologies.

The second is that we are instinctively distrustful of government or business attempts to exhort or entice us to change the way we behave.[43] Building a behavioural change strategy from the ground up within a community – be it a street, neighbourhood, community group or area – directly involves local inhabitants and encourages social norms to spread through a form of peer pressure.[44] The successful Community Recyclers Scheme run by Guildford Borough Council used such an approach, including volunteer 'street leaders' who encouraged recycling. During 2003-4, average monthly recycling rates increased 46% from 625 tonnes per month to 913 tonnes.[45] A Waste Recycling report commissioned by Guildford Council had identified "social pressure to recycle and neighbourhood expectation" as potent sources of pressure on people change their recycling habits, and highlighted the "importance of other people's observable behaviour" – the public visibility of what people do – and communicating to the public "meaningful comparisons... such as their own neighbourhood [recycling rates] compared to another".[46]

A strong sense of common purpose within a community can play an important part in reducing the difference between what people say in surveys about their behaviour and what they actually do – the so called 'values-action gap'. According to one model,[47] there are at least three determinants of the decision-making process which links people's attitude to their final behaviour: their personal values and motivations; the knowledge and information available to an individual or group; and 'perceived consumer effectiveness' (PCE). PCE is the extent to which an individual perceives that changing their behaviour can make a difference overall. While values and knowledge are important elements, PCE is said to be crucial in translating thoughts into action.[48] Such perception will be more affected by visible

or potential changes in the immediate local community than by indirect changes reported on a wider scale. In other words, community-based behavioural change is likely to increase PCE, which will encourage the success of the campaign.

As with Guildford's 'street leaders', mentioned above, community role models can act as pivotal figures within community-centred behavioural change strategies. The basis of their authority can range from expertise (for health professionals or teachers) or legal and political legitimacy (for the police or government) to personal qualities (for celebrities).[49] One study identified 'catalytic individuals' as central figures in the process of diffusing new ideas, either by acting as a trusted source of information and advice (often described as a 'maven'), or by making the new idea or practice socially acceptable within a particular social circle (a form of 'opinion leader').[50] The suggested strategy is to identify such 'catalytic individuals' and engage directly with them in pursuit of a campaign or policy objective, the assumption being that they would stimulate others to do the same. Such individuals, variously referred to as 'taste-makers', 'early adopters', or 'consumer champions', can help to create new fashions by changing the social context in which we live and helping to normalise new forms of behaviour.[51]

Community relationships can also encourage people to reinforce their existing commitments to addressing an issue. People who live near each other or are involved in community groups or networks are able to help others form plans and goals to change their behaviour. Commitment forms a central part of community-based social marketing programmes.[52] For example, people who had previously signed a petition in favour of a new recreational facility were considerably more likely to then donate money than those who had not.[53] In another study, people were asked if they would consider, hypothetically, volunteering three hours to help with charity fundraising. When they were called back a few days later, those who had been asked the initial question were far more likely to become volunteers than those who had not been asked initially.[54] Other studies have shown similar effects with blood donation and voting behaviour.[55] Agreeing to a small request makes people more likely to agree to a larger one. This, combined with the social pressures and social norms experienced by people in similar geographical or sub-cultural groups, can be applied to programmes oriented towards local food consumption. There is some evidence that group commitment, when there is already good group cohesion, can produce highly effective larger scale behavioural change.[56]

2.3 Making it personal

A third strand of thinking on behavioural change is that one size doesn't fit all. In practice, this means using tools such as market segmentation, to identify target groups with different characteristics or relationships to the change you are trying to achieve, and getting messages across in ways that engage the people within each group as personalities. Though it can imply an individualistic approach – with the accusation levelled at recent UK public health policies that they have emphasised the benefits of 'getting personal' at the expense of their need to provide support for the whole population [57] – it can equally well complement strategies centred on community action or choice editing. The basic point is that understanding how people see the world in different ways can help us to engage them.

A popular tool in marketing since the 1960s,[58] segmentation enables businesses, social enterprises, and policy makers to identify groups of people with similar habits or needs, and analyses their characteristics and behaviour. In business marketing, segmentation enables companies to define their objectives and allocate resources.[59] Segmentation strategies play a central role in social marketing programmes, initially developed in the 1970s, and have been widely used in campaigns for health promotion and disease prevention.[60] Segmentation might focus on geographical factors (region, climate or population density), demographic factors (age, gender or income), psychogeographic factors (personality,

motives or lifestyle), behavioural factors (habits, benefits sought from products or frequency of usage), or a combination.[61] A number of studies have shown how segmentation can play a crucial practical part in strategies aimed at changing people's behaviour.[62]

One such study, which examined recycling behaviour, concluded that the key target group for a successful recycling campaign was middle-aged people (46-60 years) with primary education levels – a segment described as the 'reluctant group'.[63] Specifically targeting the reluctant group, rather than all the segments at once – including those already likely to adopt recycling – would play a fundamental part in the success of the campaign. Similarly, a study of public perceptions of travel awareness in Scotland divided the population into seven different groups according to a combination of attitudes, awareness and preferences with respect to travelling by car and using alternative modes of transport. The study showed how each segment faced different obstacles to change. For the 'die-hard drivers', who felt passionate about car use and did not believe others would change their behaviour, the recommended policy option was to weaken the stereotypical image of public transport users, while for the 'aspiring environmentalists', the best policy option would be to improve cycling provision.[64]

Segmentation is relevant to designing all kinds of intervention, including changes in 'external factors' like the relative costs and opportunities associated with behaving in different ways. In practice, though, much of the focus in discussions of segmentation is on tailoring communication to different groups. Messages can be designed to guide behaviour, create or encourage new forms of behaviour, or act as prompts reminding people to engage in a particular behaviour that they are already predisposed towards. Using messages that promote a positive feeling towards a targeted behaviour, rather than fear or avoidance of an unfavourable behaviour, is much more likely to engage people to change their behaviour.[65] It is a widely held view that campaigns should avoid promoting feelings of guilt among those not engaging with a targeted behaviour since it is likely that many people will feel they are already 'doing their bit'.[66] In public health campaigning, positive messaging is central to showing people they will feel better by

changing their behaviour.[67] Besides the tone of the message, the success of efforts to change behaviour relies on messages being simple, clear, consistent and engaging.

Stories – true or fiction – can be a compelling way of getting messages across to people in ways that resonate with their own lives and experiences, and story-telling has been used for decades in formal initiatives designed to influence public behaviour. One approach, known as entertainment-education, is widely used today to address a diverse health and social issues. Often an actor or character in a television programme or radio broadcast is used as a role model to demonstrate the positive or negative outcomes of a particular behaviour. The hope is that people identify with the character and follow the positive example in changing their own behaviour. Programmes have been successfully used to promote adult literacy and family planning education to huge audiences.[68] Children and adolescents have been targeted with comic book characters abstaining from drug use or wearing bicycle helmets.[69]

Environmental campaigners and business marketers both agree about the importance of creating a meaningful connection between an issue or product and a group of people. Story-telling can make this connection.

3 Making local food easy

3.1 From price to value

"The key behavioural change is getting people to buy your product and that's going to come down to price and ease of purchase, and quality. If you can get your message across then it helps."

Chrisanthi Giotis, *Social Enterprise* magazine.

Two of the most crucial barriers limiting the consumption of local food are its price and its availability. Limited availability (both in terms of availability of local food in different kinds of shopping outlets as well as availability of product stock throughout the year) means that it is often considered a premium product which commands a higher price. Community food enterprises are characterised by their commitment to paying the full environmental and social costs of production, as well as ensuring they can maintain a system which offers a fairer return to producers and good quality produce to consumers. As small enterprises working on a community level, they are unable to achieve the sorts of economies of scale typical of large supermarkets.

As such, community food enterprises usually struggle to cut costs without resorting to the kinds of business practices that they were set up to correct.

Making sense of supermarkets

Supermarkets accounted for almost three-quarters of UK grocery sales (72%) in 2009.[a] This makes them powerful gatekeepers for influencing consumer behaviour, so much of the recent advice on behaviour change encourages working with supermarkets, and learning from their sophisticated approaches to marketing.[b]

Yet, for community food enterprises, supermarkets are also the competition. Considerable research shows that supermarkets can have a negative impact on local shops,[c] as well as exacerbating unfair and unethical relationships with farmers and other agricultural workers down the food chain. That the multiples have been adapting to changing demands by stocking local food, for example with ASDA developing regional food hubs and Tesco a regional sourcing strategy, may exacerbate this risk. A further concern is that they muddy the meaning of local to consumers, since their use of the term 'local' is often generous and ill-defined. Overall, then, community food enterprises face a problem when it comes to heeding advice to work with or like the supermarkets to change people's behaviour.

One approach is to try and make supermarkets more like community enterprises, encouraging and pressing them to increase people's engagement with local food and environmental concerns, for example through increased transparency about their sourcing and organising 'farm visits'. Some – for example co-operatives – can go a long way in this.

A second strategy is for community food enterprises to try and collaborate directly with local supermarket chains. One of the main opportunities may lie in sharing food hubs to address challenges associated with access, packaging and food regulations. This could benefit producers and consumers, as well as important benefits in terms of carbon emission savings. Community food enterprises may want to get involved in the planning stage of new hub projects to incorporate developments that would be favourable to their operations.

Yet the bottom line is that supermarkets' responsibilities to shareholders or members around the country will come before their commitment to community. So a third approach is to play tough. Narrowing the terms of what counts as 'local food' and promoting a national 'local food' brand could help level the odds in favour of community food enterprises. In practice, all three strategies may have a place.

[a] IGD (2009). 'UK Grocery Retailing - Grocery sector size, structure & value factsheet - IGD.com'., available at <http://www.igd.com/index.asp?id=1&fid=1&sid=7&tid=26&cid=94> (accessed 20 September 2010).

[b] White, P., Sharp, V., Darnton, A., Downing, P., Inman, A., Strange, K. et al. (2009). Food Synthesis Review: A report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. DEFRA. London, available at <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=EV0510_8632_FRP.pdf> (accessed 5 August 2010).; Owen, L., Seaman, H. and Prince, S. (2007). Public Understanding of Sustainable Consumption of Food: A research report completed for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by Opinion Leader. DEFRA. London, available at <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=EV02045_6700_FRP.pdf> (accessed 5 August 2010).; WBCSD (2008). Sustainable Consumption: Facts and Trends From a Business Perspective. World Business Council for Sustainable Development, available at <http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/I9Xwhv7X5V8cDlHbHC3G/WBCSD_Sustainable_Consumption_web.pdf> (accessed 9 August 2010).

[c] Simms, A. (2007). Tescopoly: how one shop came out on top and why it matters. Constable. London,

DEFRA (2003). Local food: A snapshot of the sector. Report of the Workking Group on Local Food. DEFRA. London, available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/industry/regional/pdf/local-foods-report.pdf> (accessed 20 September 2010). P.24

Simms, A., Kjell, P. and Potts, R. (2005). Clone Town Britain: The survey results on the bland state of the nation. New Economics Foundation. London. P.6

Many community food enterprises try to compensate for this by lowering their margins through the use of membership schemes or volunteers. "Local food can be expensive so we try to keep the margins low to make it affordable for the majority of our customers," explains Avril Balmforth, from Kington St. Michael Village Shop in Wiltshire, which also sells standard household goods and offers post office services. Where community enterprises are seeking to make local food affordable to people with lower incomes, this aspect is particularly important. Growing Communities, in East London, tries to improve accessibility by offering flexible payment terms for its organic box scheme and accepting government Healthy Start vouchers. Margaret Price, who organises Brigg Farmers' Market in North Lincolnshire, says they have previously done cost comparisons with supermarkets, and may do so again in future. However, the bottom line is that for many types of food, much of the time, small businesses and projects buying food fairly from local producers will struggle to sell it at prices matching supermarket 'value ranges'. Even where community food enterprises do offer low prices, the experience of people working in the sector is that consumers still assume local food costs more: prices are perceived to be higher than they actually are.

One aspect of addressing this challenge is to shift the focus away from price towards value for money, with food enterprises emphasising the quality of their produce and their focus on small-batch products. According to Matthew Walwyn, who runs the thriving Dales Store village shop in Birstwith, near Harrogate:

"It isn't all about low price. We and our suppliers need to make a living. We also stock some standard lines like Heinz beans, which we get from the cash and carry. That allows us to do some price promotions to drive footfall. But price isn't our main driving factor."

Michael Shuman, author of *The Small Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses Are Beating the Global Competition* and Research & Economic Development Director at the US Business Alliance for Local Living Economies underlines this:

"A big thing economists get wrong is focusing too much on price. No-one really cares about price except with respect to perfectly substitutable goods, which really are rare in the food category. They care about value – taste, quality, trust in the producer, their relationship with the company, and how they feel about it. The most successful entrepreneurs tell a story about their product that consumers know is true, and use their marketing to convey to the consumer how to realise those values by purchasing their product. This is marketing 101, which local food businesses are finally using to beat their global competitors."

This strategy highlights how the food you get in a community enterprise is different, and better, than the food one could buy elsewhere. This difference may come from the care and attention that has gone into preparing it, or from the assurances you can give about the provenance of food. The qualities people care about in their food aren't just about taste, but also people's affinity with the place where it is produced, or their concerns about industrial systems of farming. What is the point of comparing prices when the products and the experience of buying them are poles apart?

Another aspect of tackling people's perception that local food is expensive is to provide incentives that induce people to buy, so they can see for themselves that it is good value for money, whether because the product is better, it costs less than they expected, or both. Community food enterprises use incentives of many kinds to maintain or increase involvement with local foods. Some businesses keep a database of regular customers whom they email with special offers. Others offer reduced prices to members, which encourages people to sign up and become more engaged. Discounts, promotions, and occasional freebies are all useful tools for maintaining commitment with regular users but less useful for engaging people unfamiliar or unaware of local food.

The co-operative model has had considerable success in some quarters since it offers discounted food in a community setting. The most famous example is the Park Slope Food Coop in Brooklyn, New York, which has over 12,000 members and offers 20 to 40% discounts on food in exchange for almost three hours work each month. Joining fees are waived for low-income members, which acts as an incentive for people with varying economic backgrounds to join. This model has recently been adapted in the UK with The People's Supermarket in London, and food co-operatives of many kinds already exist across the country. Many other models of food co-operative also exist, both in the UK and North America. In some US co-ops, members take part in educational roles, spreading the word about the benefits of getting involved, while employees handle purchasing, shelf-stacking and other operations.

One way or another, inducing people to try buying local food in community enterprises is crucial to challenging their preconceptions about price and focusing their attention on value for money. We suggest two rules of thumb for doing this. First, put you money where you mouth is – don't just tell people your food is good value for money – prove your confidence by guaranteeing it. That's how slogans like 'never knowingly undersold' work. Second, a little goes a long way. Take supermarket reward points: they often amount in money terms to a fraction of the difference in price between competing products, but have strong influence on perceptions of value and on purchasing.

Tip: the golden guarantee.

Prove to customers how confident you are in the value and quality you offer by making them an offer they can't refuse: if they don't like it, they get their money back. Morrisons have done this with their 'The Best' premium range.[70] Be careful to ensure the terms of the offer protect you from people taking unfair advantage: for example Morrisons allow one application per household, require of proof of purchase and are running the offer for a limited period.[71]

Tip: reaping rewards.

Try introducing a simple rewards scheme, perhaps like the little cards that coffee shops stamp where you get your eleventh cup free. This doesn't just encourage regulars – it also gives you the means to steer people towards new or special products by offering extra points

3.2 Lifting little limits

As with successful cycling campaigns, strategies for behavioural change have more impact when they are paired with changes in infrastructure. Just as increasing the number of cycle routes and improving cycle storage can have an immediate positive impact on the numbers of cyclists, increasing the frequency of farmers' markets and number of vegetable box schemes collection points can likewise have a positive impact on participation in community food enterprises.

The key point here is to help make it easy for people to become engaged with community food enterprises by tackling the little barriers that otherwise add up to make it less than convenient. Community shops benefit from staying open longer and opening on Sunday, even if it means hiring staff for the evening shifts that volunteers are unable to cover. Says Avril Balmforth, from Kington St. Michael Village Shop:

"Our opening hours are nine to five, and nine til one on Saturdays. We can't find volunteers to work five to six, but we could pay someone just for that time. That would catch people coming in from work. We did try running with this before, keeping it open on a Friday night til seven but that didn't work, perhaps because it was just the Friday, and we started in the winter. The committee will reconsider it for the spring or summer months."

Vegetable box schemes are able to increase access to local food by providing door-step or local area deliveries, combining fruit and vegetable orders with other groceries, and simplifying web ordering.

3.3   Awareness boosts access

Increasing the visibility of local food products and enterprises goes hand-in-hand with efforts to improve access. For consumers who are unaware of local food, the increased frequency of farmers' markets and collection points would also increase the profile of local foods. Community-based food hubs or food centres can play an important role in changing the context in which people shop and eat. For example, the Sustainable Food Center in Austin, Texas, acts as both an advocate and facilitator for local food. It encourages shops, schools, cafés and offices to stock local produce, runs a 'School Garden Leadership Training' programme, supports local farmers with a local farmers' market and a 'Farm Direct' scheme, and offers free cooking classes to different community groups as well as a 'Happy Kitchen' cooking and nutrition education programme.[72] Such a centre could also act as a pick up point for local food deliveries from CSAs and vegetable box schemes.

Regional and national organisations, including the partners in Making Local Food Work, help to facilitate, support, and fund local food initiatives. Since increasing access is closely tied to increasing awareness of local foods, NGOs and networks play a central role by sharing information and increasing the visibility of local foods through education and promotion. One way that they do this by helping to coordinate public celebrations such as food festivals and producer awards, which can act as catalysts for increased engagement with local food. As NGOs and networks are able to work with and influence producers, consumers, and different levels of government, they are ideally placed to produce, channel and distribute information among these different groups.

Heart of England Fine Foods is a network connecting producers with consumers and offers business advice and educational support. Events such as their Diamond Awards ceremony, Member of the Month promotions, and support for local food festivals and courses, highlight the important intermediary role that such bodies can play in making local food more mainstream, and therefore more accessible. A variety of networks exist to showcase and help develop local food in specific UK regions. For example, in Scotland, the Scottish Borders Food Network, set up in 2006, has organised several Borders Banquets, Taste Awards, and Chefs meet Border Producers events. These have inspired local food providers to consider stocking more local food, and increased the public's awareness of the quality and diversity of local food in the area.

Margaret Price explains the part that she and colleagues at North Lincolnshire Council have played in raising awareness of the farmers' market in Brigg, and why the local authority has done so:

"Brigg is a thriving market town with an 800-year history of markets. It has lots of independent shops too. So the farmers' market supports the retailers and the general market, and it all meshes. In effect we're marketing Brigg, building a reputation of it as a food town with award-winning restaurants and pubs and creating a very substantial attraction. The local authority doesn't do as much advertising as before because the market has become so well known. We do promotional postcards with the dates of the markets for about 14 months, which are distributed at the market. Then each month the banners go up to remind people that the market is this upcoming weekend. They're big banners!"

Labels and other point of sale information also has a part to play in boosting awareness of local food, particular where non-local products are also on offer. The supermarkets invest a lot of effort in getting this right, and their experience has lessons for community food enterprises. Says Phil Hancock, from ASDA:

"For smaller products we have point-of-sale highlighting local lines, for example on the shelf. We've tried pulling local products together to be in a certain place within the store, but customers tell us they'd rather find the local jam with the jam. We also do a significant amount of sampling in the store which helps to build awareness of the local brands."

There is evidence that consumers feel confused and overwhelmed by food labelling, so the last thing they will want is more information to digest. The key with labelling and signing local food may therefore be that 'less is more'. Labels should complement the relationship of trust that community food enterprises can build with their customers, rather than seeking to stand in for it.

Tip: de-clutter.

If you run a shop, try to mark clearly which products are locally produced but don't clutter your shelves with information. Encourage customers to ask sales staff if they want to know more about provenance, and put up attractive posters or display boards about your main local suppliers.

It has also been suggested that some shared branding – a recognisable symbol that people can adapt to different places – could help efforts to raise people's awareness of local food products or outlets.[73] Wendy Neal-Smith, who worked for Surrey Food Links and now advises businesses on local food, says:

"I think there ought to be a local food brand on a national level. I felt that fairtrade did so well under one umbrella, with a consistent set of top-down principles and message. It would need to be a broad umbrella. My view is that you want something that will support people's brands – the producer's brand should still be king."

A local food label with an easily recognisable logo could be publicised using stickers and printed on bags and t-shirts – much as the 'Be a Local Hero: Buy Locally Grown' slogan has been in the US. In as much as the plausibility of 'local' claims currently relies on scrutiny by consumers and people working within the sector, even an unaccredited trade mark, with terms and conditions of use, might have the added benefit of providing shoppers with greater assurance.

In practice, having a shared brand for local food might be more useful in raising awareness among commercial and public sector customers than for the general public. The organisation Local Food Plus in Canada has had considerable success developing a local sustainable food certification system which includes a wide range of environmental and social factors: local production is mandatory for official certification.[74] Since the programme was launched in 2005, it has certified more than 200 farmers and processors, and guided the University of Toronto towards sourcing 20% local sustainable food in its cafeterias.[75]

3.4 Legally local

In the USA, a small but growing number of communities have adopted or developed 'locally grown food laws'.[76] In larger cities such as Albany and Cleveland, such policies can have a significant impact since they cover public procurement in hospitals, schools, community centres and jails. Even in smaller communities, a large-scale commitment to purchase local food can serve as an important 'market primer' by encouraging local producers to increase the scale of production and expand the number of products they offer.

Financial incentives can also work on a large scale. New legislation in Cleveland, Ohio (USA), allows the city to offer 5% discounts to certified 'Local Sustainable Businesses' bidding for city contracts. Businesses are eligible for a 2% discount on food contracts if they source at least 20% of their food from a regional producer.[77] Such incentives can act as a springboard for community food enterprises struggling in a highly competitive market. There are also plans to increase local food production in Northeast Ohio so that 25% (the figure is currently 1%) of all food consumed is sourced from within its 16 counties. This would take place following an initial investment of $250,000 with more investment in later stages, hoped eventually to produce around 28,000 new jobs while generating $4.2 billion for the region's economy.[78]

So local government can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour both directly, by increasing local food procurement in the public sector, and indirectly, by increasing the size of the local food market (supporting producers) and normalising local food purchasing (supporting consumers). In the UK, examples include Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, which has been developing a sustainable food service since 2003 by focusing on sourcing local food as well as reducing the kitchen's carbon footprint and waste production. Switching to local food procurement has helped to provide better quality food to staff and patients and reduced the total bill by £20,000 a year.[79]

Many public institutions remain to make any commitment to source local food or work with community food enterprises. Among those that have, the main practical constraints are supply-side production capacity and the lack of a distribution network to deal with large-scale demand. It has been suggested that by coordinating the distribution and delivery of local food from small-scale producers, food distribution hubs, similar to those developed by the ASDA supermarket chain since 2002, could play an important role in making local foods for widely available.[80]

Through grants and other kinds of financial support, government agencies can continue to provide essential funds to fledgling businesses and community groups which may struggle to get a foot-hold in their first few years. Seed funding can provide essential support without the baggage of bureaucracy that often comes with long-term funding. Some councils already provide seed funding to community projects in the early phases of their projects. Through the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, for example, the city's local authority has supported dozens of small growing and cooking projects. Government can also do more by providing technical support and by making it easier for businesses and organisations to get accreditation and certification.

4 Making local food work

4.1 Making a habit

In some respects, food cultures and habits are slow to change since they are instilled in each of us from an early age, and are bound up with our senses of ourselves.[81] We see this in national differences, say between the dense rye sourdough favoured in Germany and the infinitely compressible white loaf common in the UK, but also regionally and locally. Yet eating patterns have changed markedly over the last few decades with large increases in convenience food consumption, whether chips and pizza or ready meals and frappucinos.[82]

For community food enterprises to be successful they have to work with current food purchasing and eating habits or use strategies to encourage people to develop new habits. New habits can be instilled and reinforced through repeated exposure to new practices.[83] It is therefore important that attempts to encourage people to engage with local food are repeated frequently. Rupert Shute, from the True Food Community Co-operative in Reading, recounts their own experience of how important it is for local food events to be regular and frequent:

"When True Food started out with mobile markets we ran many of them fortnightly but no one could remember when they were. So we had to close down lots of markets and then run them weekly so that it would become a habit. Regularity is key. Farmers' markets running fortnightly don't get habits going."

Tip: keeping regular.

Whether you run a shop, market or a series of events, keeping the timing regular will make it easier for people to make a habit of a getting involved. It makes it easy for them to remember when you'll be there and means people can rely on you. Irregular or complicated timing can be a real spanner in the works.

4.2 Leading by example

Of course, simply having the opportunity is rarely enough to encourage people to make a new habit. In chapter 3 we discussed factors such as incentives, which can induce people to take those opportunities by making it easy or appealing. However, work on behavioural change also suggests it is worth concentrating those inducements on people and institutions that have a disproportionate influence on social norms – those who are seen as leaders. Once the norms change, goes the logic, other people will follow.

One approach for people involved in community food enterprises is simply to take that lead themselves. That was what a group of people did in one town in the Pennines, transforming public spaces with guerrilla gardening in a project that became Incredible Edible Todmorden. The project is making food growing part of life in the town and changing its culture – its residents' sense of 'how we do things round here'.

Another way of tackling this is to focus on engaging groups who already play a formative role in the life of a place, such as local businesses or chambers of commerce. The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, set up to promote local and healthy food for all residents, has played an active part in the city's successive food and drink festivals, organised by and involving large numbers of local restaurants and other businesses. During the 2010 festival, the partnership worked with the city council to organise 'Grow it!', a competition in which close to 30 local businesses signed up to grow edible plants in their shops, windows and gardens.

There is a clear role for government here too. In chapter 3 we saw how important public spending can be in making local food available, but it is just as valuable for the signal it sends to the millions of people who eat in public institutions every day. So one of government's roles in helping to establish new food habits is to lead by example. Adopting strong local food policies within government departments and public services would send a powerful message to the public.[84]

4.3   Building communities

Community food enterprises are by their nature well-placed to build on the momentum associated with people's sense of belonging to a group and their commitment to the places where they live or work. For example, community shops provide a striking illustration of the success that committed volunteers can have in pooling their time, energy and resourcefulness to protect or provide services in their area.[85]

A commitment to community is central also to many community supported agriculture schemes. Dragon Orchard is a 22-acre fruit farm in Herefordshire which has developed innovative approaches – including Cropsharers and Sponsor a Tree schemes – to connect consumers with their produce. Norman Stanier, who with his wife Ann runs the orchard, explains how wanting to root their farming into the locality shaped their decision to start the scheme:

"This local and low-input business model offered a good fit with the way the farm had worked and how we wanted it. We could have gone down the route of selling to supermarkets but didn't want to lose control of what we were doing to the orchard and be in their thrall. We wanted to work low-input and build up our relationships with the local community."

So community can be a motivation for local food enterprises, and part of their raison d'être and way of working. Indeed, people look to the success of food enterprises such as village shops to demonstrate

the power of community. In some instances, though, they have been particularly successful in fostering, extending and making the most of that sense of community as a way of increasing people's involvement and the viability of the enterprise. One of the best known examples is Fordhall Farm in Shropshire. In 2005, over 8,000 people from two dozen countries donated money (in the form of shares) to a Community Land Trust, which was then able to buy the farm and save it from redevelopment. A large and diverse range of people now own the farm as 'community landlords', while the work is carried out by the original farmers who are tenants of the Fordhall Community Land Initiative. This community-owned farm has built up a real and virtual (given the varied location of many of its 'owners') community of support. As Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation, describes:

"If you look at Fordhall Farm just in economic terms you miss the point. Volunteer weekends are now possible. The changing relationship people have with the farm changes how they engage with it. This creates a huge market – the farm can already sell more than it produces."

There are many other examples of community-owned farming. The Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm in Forest Row, Sussex, is a 100 hectare co-operative farm founded in 1995 and owned jointly by over 400 'farm partners' and a trust. The farm runs a successful farm shop, and has developed a number of on-site activities to add value to products, including a flour mill, meat processing, and sheep milk production.[86] One study concluded that community supported agriculture schemes had the effect of "reconnecting consumers and producers at a level rarely experienced in today's global food system" and encouraged members to become 'ecological citizens'.[87]

According to Peter Couchman, the potential of community involvement to bring new life to traditional businesses has encouraged some producers to open up their operations:

"The famers who really want to do local well are looking for different, more co-operative business models. They are instinctively trying to wire themselves up differently. We've worked with an apple grower who used to supply a big supermarket who decided to come up with a different business model – a more co-operative approach."

Using the internet - local food 2.0

With almost 60% of adults accessing the internet every day,[a] and 90% of internet users saying they have bought something online in the last year, there is considerable scope for using the internet to increase people's engagement with local food. So far this has been done chiefly in two ways: by increasing the availability of information about local food; and by increasing the ease with which local food can be purchased online. This model of internet use, characterised by a one-way flow of information and labelled by some as 'Web 1.0', can be contrasted with a model emphasising "co-creativity, participation, and openness"[b] – the 'Web 2.0' model. This model has been marked by the growth of websites, blogs and wikis which encourage user participation and act as hubs for information sharing, event organising and social networking. At the moment, the local food movement is still largely based on a 'Web 1.0' model of thinking, with local food guides and directories helping consumers find and buy local food. Websites like bigbarn.co.uk and local-food.net in the UK, and farmfresh.org and localharvest.org in the US, are useful for finding local food providers but offer little interaction with and between website users.

A 'Web 2.0' model would focus much more on the interaction between consumers and producers. Products would be available online, perhaps through the website for a local food hub, and could be reviewed by customers who could link their own blogs or facebook pages to the hub. Special offers could be sent by email and shared with friends. Farms would have up-to-date websites linked to a broader network of community food enterprises.

Local food 2.0 is also about using the internet in new ways, for example, by combining local food guides with social networking sites. The main idea behind these proposals is that using the internet to create a virtual community related to local food production and consumption can help to build and reinforce a real community. iPhone applications already exist to indicate where local food is available closest to you and what is currently in season, for example, though these are yet to be made fully interactive[c].

For Wendy Neal-Smith, who advises small businesses on local food, web 2.0 has a practical advantage:

"Social media is so cost-effective – so it is affordable for social enterprises. There are already lots of applications that they can take advantage of. And in the future there will be more location-based social media. This area is still really untapped."

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[a] Office of National Statistics (2010). 'National Statistics Online - Internet Access'., available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=8> (accessed 30 September 2010).

[b] Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddens, S., Grant, I. and Kelly, K. (2009). New media: a critical introduction. Routledge. Abingdon. P.204

[c] E.g. Rocktime (2010). 'Rocktime - iphone app integration for Local Food Advisor'., available at <http://www.rocktime.co.uk/news/iphone+app+integration+for+local+food+advisor-0048.aspx?fdarticledatetime=01/4/2010> (accessed 19 November 2010) or SimpleSteps (2010). 'Getting Good, Local Food on the iPhone | Simple Steps'., available at <http://www.simplesteps.org/food/shopping-wise/getting-good-local-food-iphone> (accessed 19 November 2010). (SimpleSteps, 2010)

Community food enterprises also reveal some of the challenges of trying to engage or build a community. Rupert Shute, from the True Food Community Co-operative in Reading explains:

"We're definitely seeing that concept of owning the business as a community is very alien to people. Even within the membership people see it as a place to shop, within a conventional retail model. Very few see it as their own business. That's in spite of a huge amount communication and marketing."

Work on behavioural change suggests that a sense of ownership can be underpinned by people having a formal stake in an enterprise, but it need not be. If less formal types of membership and commitment prove easier for people to understand or simpler logistically, then they could also potentially be as powerful a motivator for behavioural change as literally shared ownership, as in a co-operative.

4.4 Big Society in action

One of the most important roles for the new government in assisting these efforts will be to emphasise that community food enterprises exemplify the kinds of things it is looking for when it talks about Big Society. Although the term 'Big Society' has been widely used, it remains poorly understood. Broadly it is about empowering and engaging people by giving them more influence over local decisions and making them feel more involved in their local community. The government has said it wants to help local communities "realise their dreams".[88] Its report on *Building the Big Society* talks about transferring power from central to local government, and supporting "the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises".[89] For these forms of organisation to thrive, they need the support of their communities.

Food enterprises demonstrate the potential of such an approach and show how ambitious government could seek to be in pursuing it. According to Michael Shuman, from the US Business Alliance for Local Living Economies:

"Food has become a common entry point for many consumers to think about the local economy. You literally can taste the difference in a way you can't with local banking, say. Food connects with our most visceral senses."

Within the food sector, the community-led model of ownership has been applied successfully to farms, bakeries (e.g. Loaf Community Bakery in Cotteridge, South Birmingham), community shops and pubs (e.g. Old Crown Pub in Cumbria). According to Mike Perry of the Plunkett Foundation:

"The perception can be that if the private or public sector fails, a community run business would never be viable. The reality is different. In the last 25 years 252 community-owned shops have opened their doors and today 245 are still trading. Can anyone name a business model that's more robust in these terms?"[90]

The Big Society banner could improve conditions on the ground for community food enterprises. "A move towards localism from central government could be helpful", says Wendy Neal-Smith, who works with a wide range of local food initiatives. Credit and finance could be made more available to individuals or groups interested in creating localised and community-led enterprises; and if 'big government' is to be cut, it can be replaced with 'big democracy' to encourage people to engage with government decision-making at national and local levels.[91] When it comes to food policy, perhaps the first step is to reflect the coalition's overall commitment to Big Society by recognising the valued part that community enterprises already play in producing, distributing, retailing and educating about food, and that community can be a powerful communicator of change. In Peter Couchman's words:

"When people see and experience their peers and the people around them carrying out the actions which will create a strong local food system, that's significantly more powerful in terms of creating change than any policy".

5 Making local food personal

5.1 Know your customers

At the heart of the idea that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to behavioural change is knowing your customers. At its simplest, this means keeping tabs on what you are selling when and to whom. Matthew Walwyn, from the Dales Store in Birstwith, recounts their experience:

"We have a real mixture of customers. Some do their weekly shops 'mostly for convenience' especially elderly or infirm people who don't like going to the supermarket. We have a couple of schools nearby so we get parents coming in looking for tea solutions after school. We also get passing trade for fresh sandwiches and pies, we have a post office and people call in for that. Our average spend is about £5."

"We tend to have about 30 people through the door in an hour. We're open half seven til six in the evening. We get people coming in at half seven for newspapers et cetera, and sandwiches on the way to work. We get a preschool rush. We tend to know who is coming in when."

"We have an Electronic Point of Sale system in place that gives us an hourly breakdown of what gets bought when. That gives us an idea of what's selling and what isn't. I think everyone would be well-advised to get an EPoS system like this. We lease it and the cost is OK. With a manual system you needed to know the price of everything and you'd often underestimate. The EPoS also provides customers with confidence that you're not ripping them off."

In addition to this kind of monitoring, though, behavioural change strategies emphasise segmentation.

What does segmentation entail for people trying encourage greener living and, in particular, for community food enterprises?

Building on the ways that segmentation is used in social marketing and policy development, DEFRA have developed a sophisticated segmentation model of the population as part of a framework for what they call 'pro-environmental behaviours'.[92] The model clusters the population into seven groups along two axes: ability to act and willingness to act. Those with high potential and willingness include the 'positive greens' and 'concerned consumers', while those with low potential and willingness to act include the 'stalled starters' and 'cautious participants'. Of the seven segments, only four are considered to find eating more local food fairly or very acceptable. According to this analysis, if a local food campaign wanted to be successful it would have to find ways of involving the other three segments that make up around 40% of the population.[93]

Environmental campaigners, including at WWF-UK, have discussed the need for segmentation along psychological (which they call 'values-modes analysis') rather than socio-economic criteria.[94] In one such report, the population is grouped into 'settlers', 'prospectors' and 'pioneers', a widely used segmentation structure.[95] While this segmentation model is simpler than DEFRA's, the key point remains the same: tailoring messages to specific audiences is crucial to the success of a campaign.

Segmentation can be an extremely complex and expensive exercise in determining which group or groups of people to target with which products. In practical terms, though, the first step in market segmentation can be as simple as carrying out a market survey, which is a useful exercise for many community food enterprises in any case. Survey questions about people's age,

gender, ethnicity, income and eating habits – any where the answers could give you a better handle on what your customers or would-be customers are like – can be combined with comment or feedback forms, or with a competition. Simply reading the responses can be helpful, but they are potentially more useful if you can assemble them into groups of people who are likely to share particular wants and needs that are relevant to your enterprise.

To some degree community food enterprises could all benefit from carrying out market research designed to determine how much variation there is within their target population and whether to tailor their products to different wants and needs, or to use an undifferentiated or 'total market' approach. Coca-Cola's early marketing approach was to sell one drink in one size. Today companies tend to view the market as a collection of smaller markets, each with particular needs and wants. As a result, people are overwhelmed with choices which can lead them to make bad decisions or forgo purchasing altogether.[96] There is clearly a middle ground which allows for some variation without offering too many choices. Simple forms of segmentation can be useful for creating this middle ground.

A survey to support the Plunkett Foundation's Fair Food campaign analysed responses to various local food issues from a broad sample of the population.[97] The survey shows that most of the differences in response were related to age or gender, rather than geographical location or social class. Women were generally more likely to consider issues of fair price and the ethics of food production than men, whereas men were more likely to remain loyal to specific shops than women. Younger people were more interested in beer, puddings and biscuits than the older population, but they were also more interested in the possibilities of growing their own food or being involved in food growing projects. These sorts of results can be extremely useful for targeting efforts to change people's behaviours. It is for community food enterprises to choose whether to focus their energies on specific groups or make their campaigns palatable to a wider audience.

This may be an area where organisations like MLFW – or even government under a Big Society banner (section 4.4) – can really help community enterprises by providing basic customer insight, data and tools. These might include segmentation studies of who buys from community food enterprises, as these currently make up such a small share of the overall market that they don't show up clearly in mainstream analysis of the food sector. Analytical support could be provided to groups such as farmers' markets who are already working to gather data about their customer base, perhaps in the form of tailored advice or even a marketing phone helpline. A first step might be to provide short pen portraits illustrating the characteristics of typical local food buyers, similar in style to those commonly used by the major retailers to help aim marketing at different customer groups.

Tip: pen portraits.

Write short pen portraits of your typical target customers – perhaps five different characters. Give them made up names and sum up their needs, habits, likes and dislikes. Think how each would experience your current operation and what they'd want improved. Which of them is most important to your success now and long-term? You can even stick them on the back of your office door to prompt you to keep them in mind – that's what they do in marketing departments.

5.2 Positive messages

Segmentation can seem daunting for small enterprises, but it works best if it is simple and practical. One of the basic points is that different messages appeal to different people: some of your customers may want 'no frills', while others want 'reassuringly expensive'. How else can the messages that you give your customers and members be designed to resonate with them?

Slogans such as 'Buy Local, Eat Local' and 'Support Your Community: Buy Local' have much more impact on behaviour when they are highly noticeable, self-explanatory (when it is easy to understand what actions they are encouraging), presented close to the targeted

behaviour (e.g. placing recycling fact sheets near waste bins), and framed using positive language.[98]

Community food enterprises are in an enviable position to tell positive messages. Not only can they tell current and potential customers and members about benefits associated with the local food they are selling, for example if it is produced using low-impact and high-animal welfare farming methods, but they can also show how their own work benefits the community socially and economically. For Jane Stammers from Country Markets, a co-operative involving 12,000 home producers and turning over £10 million a year, this was bought home by recent market research they commissioned:

"Young people visiting the market said they saw it like an extended family. Members and producers in the market keep an eye on the welfare of customers too, for example if an elderly customer doesn't show up."

Local Food Links, which provides locally sourced lunches to 23 schools in Dorset, has found communication with parents is crucial. According to Local Food Links' Caroline Morgan:

"We've found we need to get the tone right – it can't be too preachy. We use a trendier tone on the new website, which should be more inclusive, and parents want pictures too. Every one of our menus has the names of local suppliers on it."

Positive messages need not simply be about appealing to people's self-interest or making customers feel 'worthy'. For example, recent research by retail think tank the IGD suggests there is a strong appetite for 'the simple life' that many community food enterprises may be well-placed to provide: 52% said they would like to abandon their cars and do all of their food shopping on foot, and 49% said they would like to produce as much of their own food as possible.[99] Overall, the IGD found that "most British shoppers are more attracted to ideas like self-sufficiency and achieving a zero-waste household than using modern technology to help them shop and live their lives in the future".

It is also important to remember that using positive messages does not mean being naïvely upbeat. Authenticity is central to the appeal that local food and community enterprises have for many people. In fact, some groups of potential local food buyers are motivated by their anger at the mainstream food system: the positive messages to them might include that getting involved in community enterprises can offer solidarity with others who feel the same, and viable, thriving alternatives.

"Remember that the supermarkets can't go as far as community food enterprises when it comes to telling stories," says the Plunkett Foundation's Peter Couchman. "When I previously worked at Midcounties Co-operative we learnt that you had to be part of the movement – you have to show customers where else they can buy local produce too."

5.3 Telling tales

Story-telling plays a central role in engaging consumers by offering background detail about the products they purchase. With food this is often done by describing where the products come from and how they have been produced.

An example of successful story-telling is the advertising by fair-trade company CaféDirect. Using pictures and stories of farmers and farming landscapes, they tried to change the relationship between consumers and products to one between consumers and producers. Local food campaigns already make wide use of this approach in order to forge relationships between producers and consumers. Direct statements with clear messages that are noticeable and easy to understand can usefully be paired with non-explicit, descriptive stories and pictures.

The Plunkett Foundation's Peter Couchman describes how in his previous role at Midcounties Co-operative, their Local Harvest scheme aimed to offer customers a completely different relationship with farms. As he put it:

"The areas that worked the best were where you broke down the traditional barriers through storytelling. The biggest successes always had a great story to tell".

Although there were plenty of local suppliers of eggs (even some local multinationals), the co-operative decided to source theirs from a local family who worked on environmental education and clearly communicated their passion for the farm and their work. They started outselling the non-local eggs despite being considerably more expensive because, Couchman recalls, "we gave people a reason to buy them".

People across the local food sector testify to the power of telling stories about food. It matters everywhere from school catering, where Local Food Links' new online meal ordering system for parents includes pictures of suppliers, so they can see who is making the food before they buy, through to village shops. Matthew Walwyn, from the Dales Store in Birstwith relates their own experience:

"This started as a personal thing – we could list who we wanted, and we weren't being ordered about by supermarkets. So we quickly built up a reputation for good quality food – it wasn't that it was local but that it was good quality. We continued like that for two or three years then realised that we had this great local story to tell."

Michael Shuman from the US Business Alliance for Local Living Economies led a wide-ranging international review of community food enterprises. His tip is "convey the individual story – not just the product, but the person that it came from":

"You see that in a lot of the 24 case studies that we looked at. One story came from Zambia, where Sylvia Banda has become the national impresario for local food and teaches people how to use local ingredients for local products. Another guy in Croatia is a former boxer who now champions the health benefits of the organic food he produces. Creating a story built around who you are as a person has been enormously helpful to these entrepreneurs."

Another example of how local food can be promoted with stories is the BBC radio series The Archers, with at times over five million weekly listeners. One of the Archers converted their dairy farm to organic standard in the early 1980s – before the organic movement had gone mainstream – as a decision of the agricultural story editor at the time Anthony Parkin.[100] Since October 2009, the show has included a story about the village shop becoming a community-owned shop by matching community contributions with a grant and loan.[101] As with other educational-entertainment programmes used to promote behavioural change messages around social and health issues, community food enterprises can benefit from more active involvement with media and storytelling to promote the importance of local food.

5.4 Who's the hero?

Television and radio programmes that celebrate local food using celebrity chefs and 'Local Food Hero' awards can be effective at making local food more acceptable to the public. While celebrities and popular figures can be role-models for inspiring change in people, it is important that they are people who the target audience identifies with, since eating local food can otherwise be seen as exclusive.

Indeed, thinking on behavioural change also offers a different take on how the local food movement has approached the issue of leadership. British schemes to celebrate 'local food heroes' – whether through UKTV's national campaign or local initiatives such as the 'Local food heroes in Leicester & Leicestershire' website – have generally focused on people working in the sector, such as shops, growers, artisans or chefs. This is valuable in

raising awareness about the availability and quality of local food. However, the experience of programmes such as Guildford's recycling 'street leaders', is that making customers the heroes – encouraging respected community figures to buy local food and publicising their actions – could be more effective in encouraging people to change the way they shop.

Tip: mystery shopper.

Who is your most interesting customer or member? Perhaps they're a local celebrity or a pillar of the community, or maybe it's someone you just wouldn't think of as a local foodie or co-operative member. Would other potential customers identify with them? If so, ask if they'd be willing to go public, whether in the local media or in testimonials you can use in publicity.

6 Joining it all up

This report has set out ideas about behavioural change and suggested how they can apply to local and community food enterprises. Yet it is hard to imagine that a single solution or proposition would motivate a host of different people into changing their behaviour. All behavioural change campaigns use a variety of approaches to target different aspects of human psychology, and the physical and social environment – both at a local or national scale. The most successful campaigns are those that integrate multiple approaches most effectively, thereby achieving a greater impact with minimum resources. As we saw in chapter 1 this makes monitoring and evaluation harder, but what evidence there is suggest the benefits warrant that price. A central point in a recent report by DEFRA about pro-environmental behaviours is that we need to take a 'systems approach' which combines top-down and bottom-up strategies for change.[102]

A 'systems approach' applies not only to government agencies in charge of formulating national or regional policies, but also to local initiatives such as community food enterprises. One study puts the importance of joined-up thinking succinctly:

"The record of single-strategy approaches to changing consumer behavior is, in short, mixed at best. The reason seems to be that behavioural change depends on a conjunction of factors, so that changing just one is likely to make a difference to only a small segment of the target population. This is the rationale for... using multiple intervention types in concert."[103]

Engaging with people on multiple fronts at the same time increases visibility and access, which both help to encourage new habits and behaviours. Says Chrisanthi Giotis, from *Social Enterprise* magazine:

"We're seeing more joined up thinking these days. If you have a food hub, why not put allotments behind it, encourage local kids to get involved thereby really solving more than one problem at once."

Incredible Edible Todmorden, which began with a few people planting vegetable seeds in public spaces, has grown to include orchards, school growing projects, community herb gardens, local egg production and distribution, and vegetables in a large number of public spaces. The scale and success of the project has propelled it into national newspapers.[104] With its emphasis on free fruit and vegetables cultivated in public spaces, the project successfully combines a number of behavioural change themes: increasing access, increasing visibility to encourage new norms and habits, and taking an approach that has its roots in the local community.
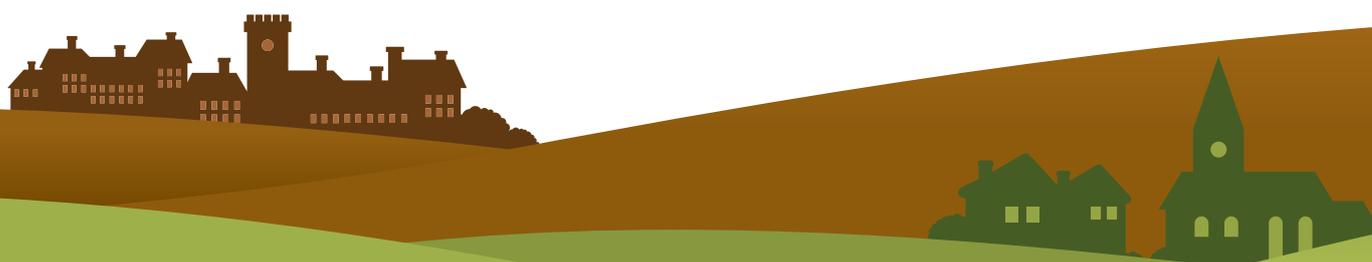
The reason we need joined-up thinking is that the problems we are trying to solve are joined up. The kinds of behaviour that community food enterprises need to change are deeply entrenched, and people have a great deal invested in them. Tim Jackson, a long-standing member of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, offers some cautionary advice:

"In the final analysis, the complexity of consumer behaviours should warn us against simplistic prescriptions for change. Material goods and services are deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of our lives... It is clear from this that behaviour change initiatives are going to encounter considerable resistance unless and until it is possible to substitute for these important functions of society in some other ways. In this context, motivating sustainable consumption has to be as much about building supportive communities, promoting inclusive societies, providing meaningful work, and encouraging purposeful lives as it is about awareness raising, fiscal policy and persuasion.[105]

The need to join up the strategies we have outlined presents a crucial role for national networks and organisations, including Making Local Food Work and its partners, to support the efforts of community food enterprises. As to how, the preceding chapters make the following specific suggestions:

- Consider developing a shared brand for local food, to increase the visibility of local food and help with public procurement (section 3.3).

- Provide centralised customer insight, including analysis of the market segments most relevant to local and community food (section 5.1).

- Work with national media to make local food a normal feature of life in radio and TV soap operas (section 5.3).

These are over and above the responsibility that all of us in these organisations face to help the state also do its bit. Now is not the time to call for new public funds or rules. Instead, the priority for national and local government is to provide a fertile environment in which community food enterprises can thrive. Elsewhere, Making Local Food Work is presenting the case for removing the obstacles that most frequently frustrate efforts by communities to take the initiative, for example in planning processes. But when it comes to making community food enterprises more visible, accessible and viable, there is no greater or simpler test of government credibility than whether it puts its money where its mouth is. Public sector catering offers an unrivalled opportunity for the coalition government to support the Big Society at no extra cost or, by some experience, even saving the taxpayer (section 3.4). A first step in the right direction is to recognise in policy the valued part that community enterprises already play in producing, distributing, retailing and educating about food, and afford them greater influence as partners.

Acknowledgements

Appendix: featured initiatives

Brigg Farmers' Market, North Lincolnshire
http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Leisure/
tourism/placestovisit/thingstodo/FarmersMarkets.htm

Brighton and Hove Food Partnership
http://www.bhfood.org.uk

Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (USA)
http://www.livingeconomies.org

Community Food Enterprise
http://www.communityfoodenterprise.org

Dragon Orchard, Herefordshire
http://www.onceuponatree.co.uk

Fordhall Community Land Initiative
http://www.fordhallfarm.com

Growing Communities, Hackney, East London
http://www.growingcommunities.org

Heart of England Fine Food
http://www.heff.co.uk

IGD
http://www.igd.com

Incredible Edible Todmorden
http://www.incredible-
edible-todmorden.co.uk

Kington St. Michael Village Shop, Wiltshire
http://www.kingtonstmichael.com

Loaf Community Bakery, Cotteridge
http://www.loafonline.co.uk

Local Food Heroes in Leicester and Leicestershire -
http://www.localfoodheroes.co.uk

Making Local Food Work
http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk

Midcounties Co-operative
http://www.midcounties.coop

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
http://www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk/casestudies.
php/14/nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-
sustainable-food-service

Old Crown Pub, Cumbria
http://www.theoldcrownpub.co.uk

Park Slope Food Coop, Brooklyn (USA)
http://foodcoop.com

Plunkett Foundation
http://www.plunkett.co.uk

Scottish Borders Food Network
http://www.bordersfoodnetwork.co.uk

Social Enterprise magazine
http://www.socialenterpriselive.com

Surrey Food Links
http://www.surreyfoodlinks.co.uk

Sustainable Food Center, Austin (USA)
http://www.sustainablefoodcenter.org

Synchronicity Marketing (Wendy Neal-Smith)
wendy@synchronicitymarketing.co.uk

Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm
http://www.tablehurstandplawhatch.co.uk

The Dales Store, Birstwith
http://www.ajsfood.co.uk

The People's Supermarket, London
http://www.thepeoplessupermarket.org

True Food Community Co-operative, Reading
http://www.truefood.coop

UKTF Local Food Heroes
http://uktv.co.uk/food/stepbystep/aid/629507

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