Local Food

FULL MID-TERM REPORT
October 2012

More than just the veg

Growing community capacity through **Local Food projects**

Contents

Executive summary pg .3

1 Introduction pg .8

2 Case study methodology pg .8

3 Background context for the project pg .10

4 Scope and aims of the project pg .12

5 The project as part of a larger vision pg .14

6 Current state of the project pg .16

7 Direct outputs enabled by the funding pg .18

- **7.1** Land pg .18
- **7.2** People pg .20
- **7.3** Events pg .22
- **7.4** Community engagement pg .23

8 Longer-term outcomes pg .25

9 Relationships between outputs and outcomes pg .28

10 The achievement and interpretation of project themes pg .30

11 Contribution of projects to the main aim of Local Food pg .33

12 Project legacy pg .36

13 Grant additionality pg .39

14 Lessons learned pg .41

- **14.1** Lessons learned in terms of the projects themselves pg .41
- **14.2** Lessons learned for policy pg .41

15 Reflections on the justification for funding pg .43

16 Conceptualising the achievements of Local Food pg .44

- **16.1** Material capacity pg .45
- **16.2** Personal capacity pg .45
- **16.3** Cultural capacity pg .46

Appendix 1

Case studies conducted so far (29 in total) pg .48

MORE THAN JUST THE VEG
Local Food

An evaluation of Local Food
Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

Local Food is a £59.8 million funding programme that distributes money from the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). Developed by a consortium of 17 national environmental organisations, the fund is managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). In 2009, Local Food commissioned the University of Gloucestershire's Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), together with local food consultants f3, to undertake an evaluation of the Local Food programme, which runs from 2009 to 2014.

The main aim of the Local Food programme is to 'make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities'. Introducing local food to new audiences is critical to the achievement of that aim. This report provides an analysis of the first 29 case studies conducted (out of 50) and thus should not be read as a final evaluation of Local Food. The objective of the case studies is to provide a deeper understanding of Local Food than can be obtained solely through the collation of quantitative data.

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

A representative (10%) sample of 50 projects was deemed sufficient for a detailed evaluation of the Local Food programme. The four sampling criteria were grant size, project theme, project type and location. A higher percentage (quota sample) of 'Beacon' projects (5) were selected to reflect their high monetary value and role in the evaluation's shadowing of a small number of major projects; 30 'Main' projects and 15 'Small' projects complete the sample. The first 29 case studies involved 97 face-to-face interviews and 53 telephone interviews, and interviewees included project managers, some advisers, community representatives and individual beneficiaries. Group discussions, site visits and informal conversations complemented the interviews. All interview materials were transcribed and analysed by a qualitative software package (NVivo) in order to identify a number of key themes. The main qualitative findings relating to these key themes are summarised in this executive summary.

KEY FINDINGS

While the Local Food programme is undoubtedly about bringing small, often neglected pieces of land into production and increasing access to affordable food, local food is also very much seen as a vehicle for community cohesion, regeneration, healthy eating, educational enhancement and integrating disadvantaged groups into mainstream society and economy. The following key points emerged for each theme:

Background context

- Local Food funding has enabled the development of networks and collaborative working.
- Local Food funding is acting as a clear 'enabler'.
- In many cases projects have developed from existing work being done in the area.

Scope and aims

- The scope of projects is often determined by the scale of funding received from Local Food.
- While food is an integral part of all projects, many have a wider aim of engaging people in their local community.
- Building community capacity and developing social connections, sometimes for disadvantaged groups, are emerging as key instruments of Local Food funding.

The project as part of a larger vision

- There is usually a larger and/or longer-term vision, where projected outcomes are often at a scale beyond that of the current project's level.
- New tools are being developed to engage a wider range of potential stakeholders/ beneficiaries.

Current state of the project

- There would appear to be three key stages in most projects' evolution: engagement, infrastructure provision and development of the main food-related activities.
- Volunteer labour is often a vital ingredient of project success.
- Some projects have been affected by unexpected events like severe weather, land availability, change in personnel and unlikely competition.

Direct outputs enabled by the funding

- The main outputs can be categorised into four main areas: land, people, events and community engagement.
- Many examined projects are involved in the production of (relatively small) amounts of food; this will increase as they come into full production.
- Most projects involve considerable numbers of people – directly and/or indirectly.
- Volunteer labour is often crucial to the successful running of many projects.
- The qualitative aspects of different projects – such as social inclusion and social cohesion – are often central to engaging the local community.

Longer-term outcomes

- Stronger food networks, involving the production, preparation and consumption of local food products, will result from the Local Food programme.
- Enhanced education and learning about food is an important longer-term outcome.
- Local food can act as an important vector for social cohesion and community development.

Relationship between outputs and outcomes

- It is often difficult, at this stage, to separate outputs from longer-term outcomes.
- The links between outputs and outcomes are perhaps best expressed through different aspects of personal development such as confidence, friendship, social inclusion and being able to help others.

The achievement and interpretation of project themes

- The division between primary and secondary themes is often not that apparent in practice.
- There are different interpretations of what is meant by specific themes. Moreover, there are likely to be many different ways of successfully addressing the same theme.
- Project outputs may not simply be related to themes, but are nevertheless of great value to the overall aims of Local Food.

Contribution of projects to the main aim of Local Food

- The quantities of food produced by Local Food projects are often relatively small. Perhaps more important is changing people's mind-sets towards local food.
- Engaging with schools has been important, both directly with the children and indirectly with parents and other people in the local community.
- Being as inclusive as possible, as well as engaging with those from more deprived social backgrounds and those with mental health issues, is a recurring theme across a number of projects.

Project legacy

- The legacy of Local Food falls into three main categories: food networks and partnerships; community engagement and social inclusion; and educational enhancement.
- Partnership development is often important in the successful evolution of local food networks.
- The creation of replicable models in different parts of the country is another possible longer-term legacy.

Grant additionality

- Local Food funding often acts as a catalyst and, in some cases, has enabled a step change for existing projects.
- The scope and scale of various projects have been increased through the Local Food programme.
- School projects funded through the Local Food programme often show important additionality effects.

Lessons learned

- For the long-term success of projects, it is important that those involved take ownership of what the projects are about.
- There is usually a need for on-going funding, beyond that provided by this specific Local Food programme, to ensure success.
- For 'Small' grants, the levels of administration involved for the amount of funding received can be arduous and perhaps disproportionate.

Reflections on the justification for future funding

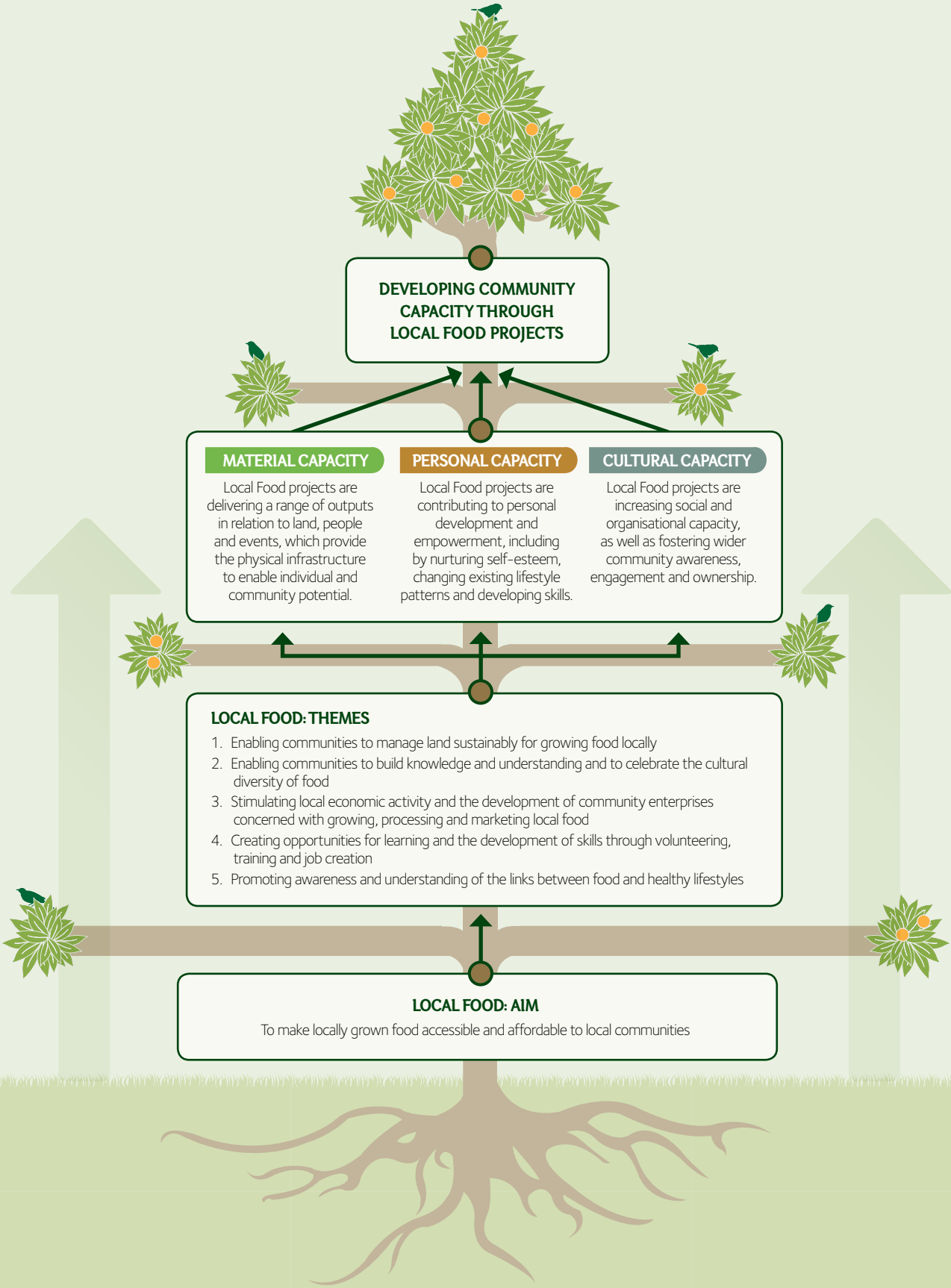
- Further funding is often required to employ key staff, mainly because projects do not generate sufficient funds to cover these costs.
- There needs to be a debate about whether it is better to fund proven projects, through continuation funding, or to fund new projects.

CONCEPTUALISING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOCAL FOOD

In a number of case studies reported, it is apparent that food is primarily being used as a vehicle to enable wider community integration and capacity building. Thus there is a need to further disaggregate the notion of community capacity in order to understand more directly how individual project outputs can help build such capacity. To this end, a conceptual framework has been developed as part of the evaluation, which suggests that three types of capacity – material, personal and cultural – combine to develop community capacity. The diagram on page 7 illustrates how delivering the overall aim and five themes of Local Food has resulted from building 'capacity' at three levels and, in the process, helped develop the overall capacity and resilience of the communities involved. The next round of case study interviews provides an opportunity to further explore these different types of capacity, in relation to local food and the Local Food programme.

The 15-page report, *More than just the veg: growing community capacity through Local Food projects*, which was specifically written for the mid-term conference held on Thursday 18th October 2012 at City Hall, London, is mainly derived from this broader understanding and conceptualisation of how the capacity of communities might be developed with the aid of Local Food funding.

Delivering the overall aim and five themes of Local Food has resulted in building 'capacity' at three levels and, in the process, has helped develop the overall capacity and resilience of the communities involved.



MORE THAN JUST THE VEG
Local Food

An evaluation of Local Food

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide an analysis of the first 29 case studies, undertaken as part of an overall evaluation of the Local Food programme. These case studies provide a deeper understanding of Local Food than can be obtained solely through the collation of quantitative data. It is important to stress that, in taking a case study approach, the focus is on an evaluation of Local Food rather than an assessment of individual projects. In other words, data gathered at an individual project level are used to reflect upon Local Food. However, it is also important to emphasise that this particular report is an interim document and that it should not be read as a final evaluation of Local Food.

Within the context of Local Food's overall aim of making locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities, this report is structured into a number of distinct sections ranging from the case study methodology, scope and current status of projects, to longer-term outcomes, project legacy and lessons learned.

The final section (16) then describes the conceptual framework that has been developed as a way of better understanding the breadth and subtlety of what is being enabled by Local Food funding. Key to this has been a recognition that, although in simply material terms Local Food's contributions are relatively modest, where it can make a significant difference is in terms of enabling projects, communities and individuals to develop capacity at a local level to make local food more accessible and affordable. As such, the framework is centred around disaggregating the notion of developing community capacity through the medium of local food into three categories: material, personal and cultural. Each of these is described in some detail, illustrated by the diagram on page 47.

The report, *More than just the veg: growing community capacity through* Local Food *projects*, which was specifically written for Local Food's mid-term conference held on Thursday 18th October 2012 at City Hall, London, is mainly derived from this broader understanding and conceptualisation of how the capacity of communities might be developed with the aid of Local Food funding.

2. Case study methodology

By the end of the Local Food programme, it is expected that approximately 500 projects will have been funded. It was agreed that a 10% sample – 50 projects – would be sufficient for a detailed evaluation, of which 40 will be through in-depth case studies and the remainder via telephone interviews. The representative sample of 50 was selected on the basis of four main criteria: grant size, project theme, project type and location. In terms of grant size, a higher percentage (quota sample) of Beacon projects (5 out of 10, or 50%) were selected to reflect their high monetary value and role in the evaluation's shadowing of a small number of major projects. These are complemented by 30 Main projects and 15 Small projects. As Table 1 demonstrates, the five main themes of the Local Food programme (see diagram on page 7), are proportionately represented, ranging from five for Theme 2 (cultural diversity of food) to 15 for Theme 1 (managing land sustainably for growing food locally).

Table 1 Project sampling by grant size and theme

Size/theme	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Total	Done so far
Beacon	1	1	1	1	1	5	4
Main	10	2	4	7	7	30	18
Small	4	2	2	2	5	15	7
Total	**15**	**5**	**7**	**10**	**13**	**50**	**29**

The large number of possible project types (16) was conflated into the following three overarching categories in order to simplify the sampling process:

1. ***Enterprise*** (box schemes, catering, CSA, farmers' markets, food co-ops, redistribution of food, social enterprise).

2. ***Community growing*** *(allotments, city farms, community food growing, community gardens, composting).*

3. ***Education and learning*** (celebrating food cultures, education and learning, sharing best practice networking, school grounds).

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the 50 sampled projects according to these three project type categories, together with a summary of the 29 so far examined. However, it needs to be emphasised that the project type should not be seen as being definitive because, although associating themselves with a particular category at the outset, projects may be delivering just as much, if not more, against another category as they develop.

Table 2 Project sampling by project type category

Project type	Total sample	Total done so far	Still to do
Community growing	22	13	9
Education & learning	18	10	8
Enterprise	10	6	4
Total	**50**	**29**	**21**

The final sampling criterion was location and the 50 sampled projects reflect well the overall spatial distribution of all projects. As the London region dominates the regional pattern of uptake of Local Food funding, it accounts for the largest number (11) in the project sample. Likewise, the three least successful regions – the East and West Midlands and the Eastern region – each account for the lowest number (3) in the overall sample.

A small number of projects (10) are classified as multi-regional and so three of these have been included in the sample. Table 3 sets out the geographical breakdown of both the 29 case studies that have been conducted so far, as well as the 21 that will be completed in the autumn of 2012 and spring/early summer 2013.

Table 3 Project sampling by project location

Project type	Total sample	Total done so far	Still to do
East Midlands	3	1	2
Eastern	3	1	2
London	11	4	7
Multi-regional	3	2	1
North East	4	4	-
North West	6	3	3
South East	5	4	1
South West	6	2	4
West Midlands	3	3	-
Yorkshire and Humberside	6	5	1
Total	**50**	**29**	**21**

After two phases of interviewing, 29 case studies have been conducted, including 97 face-to-face interviews and 53 telephone interviews. Interviews were conducted with project managers, some advisers, community representatives and individual beneficiaries; the researcher also engaged in a number of group discussions, site visits and informal conversations. Flexible in nature, but with a degree of structure, the interview schedule developed for the 29 case studies sought information on the aims/scope of the projects; their context, current state, current outputs and longer-term outputs; project legacy and grant additionality; and attitudes towards the adviser function of the Local Food programme. All interview material was digitally recorded and selectively transcribed. The transcriptions were then entered into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Each transcript was initially coded according to the main headings in the interview schedule. This allowed for the identification of general issues before different rounds of more complex coding was undertaken. NVivo is, in essence, a sophisticated 'cut and paste' system that has the advantage of allowing for the multiple coding of the same data, as well as allowing the researcher to see the context of the 'cut and paste' data within the original transcript. The rest of this report is based on the findings from these 29 case studies, which are listed in Appendix 1.

3. Background context for the project

There are considerable differences in the background characteristics of individual projects, not only in terms of scale but also regarding their orientation and the length of time they have been established. In addition, some projects stand very much on their own, whereas others are linked explicitly to a wider context and network of organisations. Not surprisingly, the larger projects (in terms of funding) are more likely to be part of a bigger network of different bodies. For example, BLF000337 (a Beacon project – 'Our Hands on the Land') involves a multi-agency steering group, as well as a partnership board that brings together members of a trust and the local authority; similarly, BLF000340 ('Fruit-full Schools') aims to establish 200 traditional orchards and engage 100,000 young people and their communities in a project that involves working in partnership with a range of other bodies. By contrast, SLF001324 (a Small project: 'Community Eggshare') involves only the members of a community supported agriculture initiative, just as SLF000574 ('Cripley Island Orchard') is a small community orchard project that has become an integrated part of allotment site membership and was conceived as a way of improving access and light to an overgrown area adjacent to an allotment site.

In some cases, Local Food has brought together what were disparate organisations in order to deliver something that would be difficult for individual organisations on their own. For example, BLF000385 ('Sustaining Sutton') brought together Bioregional and EcoLocal to deliver One Planet Food Sutton, building on partnership work between Bioregional and Sutton Council (Sutton Council is one of the formal partners and has provided match funding). Initially, both organisations started to develop separate Local Food bids, before realising that it made more sense to work in partnership with each other. The result is a project that the

local authority on its own would have been unable to deliver. Likewise, Local Food funding seems to have enabled different bodies/interests/organisations to create networks of delivery that, in the absence of Local Food funding, might have remained as individual endeavours. For example, it has enabled BLF000374 ('Harvest Brighton') to develop a city-wide initiative (in Brighton) that encompasses a broad range of smaller initiatives, giving them a bigger impact than their individual delivery would have accomplished. In so doing, it has also meant that there was one large (Beacon) application for Local Food funding, rather than a whole range of smaller projects, suggesting greater efficiency in terms of the time spent on the grant application process. In another case (MLF000013: 'Permaculture LAND project'), Local Food funding had a very important role in helping to coordinate communication and training across a large number (3-400) of relatively small permaculture projects, that otherwise were struggling to function while working in isolation. Similarly, project MLF000816 ('Food for Thought') has enhanced and diversified the work that was already being done by those involved. In this case, a youth project had been running for a number of years, but Local Food funding provided the opportunity to develop a city farm run by young people through investing in the existing site and finding further ways of engaging with the local community.

Despite clear differences in terms of scale and structure, a majority of projects have developed on from existing rather than new initiatives; very often Local Food has enabled projects that might have been under consideration for some time to be taken forward. For example, MLF000671 ('North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food') built upon a trial that had shown there was a demand for 'Weardale Quality Meat', just as a one-off community growing event on a community allotment became the stimulus for MLF000810 ('Chyan Community Allotments') to set up a permanent community allotment with Local Food funding. In the case of MLF001243 ('SE17 Community Food Cooperative'), a community café had been running for some time, but Local Food funding enabled them to develop the capacity to use more local produce as well as to set up a holistic food training programme including horticulture, a food hygiene certificate, catering and business skills, and to work with a range of partners. In these cases and others, Local Food has had a strong 'enabling' role.

Local Food funding has also helped initiatives that have a long history to eventually make something happen. For example, MLF000200 ('Re-CHARGE') involves an allotment site that had fallen into disrepair and, until this funding became available, it had been difficult to know how to move forward. Some initial ideas had been thrown around, but they were impractical without a funding stream. In a similar vein, the instigator of MLF001557 ('Bolton Kitchen') had been involved in food activities in Bolton for over 20 years, including working on community allotments, a food co-op and running cookery courses. There had been discussions about how to take this forward, including setting up a city centre vegetarian/vegan café, but there were never any resources to make it happen. The Local Food fund was very timely in allowing them to turn their vision into a reality: "it fitted into us rather than we fitted into it". Local Food funding has also been used to develop projects that previously relied on volunteer help, as in the case of MLF001842 'Growing Penistone'), and to add value to what an existing project was already delivering, as in the cases of a small community supported agricultural enterprise (SLF001324: 'Community Eggshare') and a new demonstration garden (SLF001349: 'Monkey Sanctuary Garden').

IN BRIEF:

- In many cases projects have developed from existing work being done in the area.
- Many projects involve different groups working together to deliver something they could not deliver on their own i.e. they are adding value.
- Local Food funding has enabled the development of networks and collaborative working.
- The funding has provided an opportunity for existing organisations to make something (or the next stage) happen.
- Local Food funding is acting as a clear 'enabler'.

4. Scope and aims of the project

The overall scope of a project is often determined by the scale of funding received from Local Food. So, for example, the Beacon project 'Fruit-full Schools' (BLF000340), with a budget of more than £450,000 and involving 54 schools from all over England, including five secondary schools in each of the nine regions, aims to establish 54 orchards (of at least 15 trees) and an additional 162 mini orchards (of at least five trees). At the other end of the spectrum, with a grant of £10,000, the 'Cripley Island Orchard' project (SLF000574) is concerned primarily with clearing land of overgrown willow and establishing a community orchard for a single allotment association. In some cases, the funding from Local Food has been specifically targeted at paying for members of staff to develop and deliver the project involved. Thus MLF000089 ('Heeley City Farm') involves employing a food worker and a food growing assistant, MLF000030 ('Plot to Pot') a gardener and a community liaison officer, MLF001074 ('Hedgerow Harvest') a development manager and MLF001557 ('Bolton Kitchen') one year's worth of salaries for five part-time workers.

Integration and partnership give clear advantages of scale in terms of scope and the delivery of a wider vision. For example, in the case of BLF000374 the focus is citywide (Brighton and Hove) with the aim of actually changing policy in relation to food. Furthermore, this level of influence would not be possible if the project was not operating at this kind of scale. 'Harvest Brighton and Hove' has highlighted:

'The importance of enabling long-term change through painstaking lobbying, negotiating with the council and other landowners to actually change things in the long-term. So that within our citywide policy and our core strategy and our planning documents things have changed, so that in future when people want to grow food they can just go and find the right person and go and grow food. As opposed to now, when they try, it is very very difficult' (BLF000374).

Learning by doing is important to the way many of the projects are delivered e.g. MLF000050 ('Fresh Food for Fresh Pupils), where children grow food on allotments as a way of teaching them about food. Further, it is anticipated that the specific schools supported through this project will act as flagships to be copied by other schools within the area, both within the timeframe of the project and, significantly, after the project funding has finished. Similarly, MLF000177 involves children learning about 'farm to fork' processes in preparation for the Great Staffordshire Picnic. Children are learning by doing, and a key aim is to develop a successful experiential food education model that fits in well with the curriculum. It is also intended that the links built between schools and local producers during this project will act as building blocks for the future, as well as a model for other schools to follow. This principle of setting something up that will continue after Local Food funding is common to many of the projects.

Turning more specifically to aims, many projects have a number of different aims. These may include encouraging people to actually grow food for themselves and providing training to enable this to happen, improving access to fresh fruit and vegetables, stimulating local economic activity and developing local networks that make it easier for local producers to supply, for example, public sector catering. In the case of MLF000029 ('Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise'), for example, the overall aim is to establish a new urban farm and associated food-based enterprise, within

the context of urban regeneration and community well-being. In other words, food provides the centrepiece but the project is about more than simply food. Likewise, the aim of MLF000671 ('North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food') is to support and develop the production, promotion and use of locally grown or reared food in the North Pennine Dales. Within this context, partnership working is very important because the business plan is organised around five core objectives, each managed by a particular partner. In taking this approach, the skills and expertise available from within the area's organisations to support local producers are utilised as much as possible. As the project organiser stated: 'it is about using local food as an object to foster local community development', again indicating that local food is used as a vehicle to achieve wider aims. Indeed, one particular project is not specifically about growing food, but enabling others to do so:

'When looking at a citywide project, we are not actually trying to grow more food, you are right, but we are trying to make it possible for other people to do that. So it is looking at what the blocks are to people who want to do that... So, although the ultimate outcome should be more food grown, our role is to enable that' (BLF000374).

Sometimes, projects aim to focus on specific groups in society, helping to enable and empower them. This is nicely summarised in the following quote from the manager of the 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' project in the West Midlands:

'The aim of the project is to give local people who experience mental health problems, and are at increased risk of obesity and diabetes due to sedentary lifestyles and the effect of some forms of medication, the opportunity to grow and eat organic fruit and vegetables and have a greater understanding of the link between healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The project will make quality food accessible to these groups by giving those directly involved in the project the skills and equipment to grow produce at the horticulture site and at home with the start-up packs; and allowing many other people who would not usually have access to fresh organic fruit/vegetables to have the opportunity to try them' (MLF000325).

An important element of many projects is attempting to change people's attitudes towards local food. This is both in terms of their buying habits and how they view food in relation to such things as their own health, heritage and the local community. Thus the 'healthy lifestyles' work, undertaken as part of MLF000816 ('Food for Thought'), is actively integrated into the wider work undertaken by the organisation involved (Prism). In this case, the top priority is education, in terms of enabling young people to gain accreditation and learn healthy life skills, but an important secondary consideration is to actively engage the local community, including those with learning difficulties. Similarly, while the focus of BLF000340 ('Fruit-full Schools') is to create orchards through the schools involved, and to embed them within the life of the schools concerned, it is also very much about creating a 'community resource' that is accessible to the wider community. Finally, MLF001074 ('Hedgerow Harvest') attempts to give people a better understanding of their lost local food heritage by providing practical opportunities to plant their own hedgerows; it also aims to demonstrate that a hedge can have a food value for both people and wildlife. So, while 'food' is an integral part of all projects, it is used in many different ways.

IN BRIEF:

- The overall scope of projects is often determined by the scale of funding received from Local Food.
- Larger scale projects usually have a more encompassing and co-ordinated vision.
- Projects often have a number of different aims.
- While food is an integral part of all projects, many projects have a wider aim of engaging people in their local community.
- Building community capacity and developing social connections, sometimes for disadvantaged groups, are emerging as key instruments of Local Food funding.
- Schools are sometimes used as a centre point for projects, engaging the 'next generation' of consumers and disseminating the benefits into the local community.

5. The project as part of a larger vision

It has already been established that many Local Food projects have developed from existing work being done in the area, with funding being used to develop an additional strand, or strands. The selected examples cited below help to demonstrate that Local Food funding is contributing towards larger visions that organisations may have, irrespective of the scale of the project. Thus in the 'Our Hands on the Land' Beacon project in north east England (BLF000337), the farm trust involved had been established in 1990 and run as a social enterprise. The provision of community education and learning opportunities related to healthy eating, food production and the natural environment had always been central objectives of the trust:

'When we set up, we set up with the complete understanding that we were going to engage in education, development, personal development, organic growing...we always had the philosophy, the vision, to be a centre for education and development and enjoyment and leisure'.

Promoting the benefits of organic growing to schools and local communities had been a long-term aim, which was the reason why the trust had been applying for large grants to do this since 1997. As such, when the Local Food opportunity came along 'it wasn't just about chasing money -- it was something the trust had always wanted to do'.

Being part of a larger vision is also well-illustrated by a quote from one of the partners in the 'Harvest Brighton and Hove' Beacon project (BLF000374):

'Harvest as a project builds on what the Food Partnership has done for the last four or five years prior to Harvest. It's almost like there was a stage that brought us to where we were ready to do Harvest, because of the three or four years of slow lobbying to get our relationships to a point with the council where they were up for supporting the project'.

The wider food partnership had been struggling since 2003/4 to have a sufficiently large amount of money to set up a cohesive and citywide project, which Local Food funding for Harvest has now enabled. Being part of a larger Food Partnership has also enabled synergies with what the Local Food funding of Harvest provides: 'we do get more 'bang for our buck' with Harvest because we have got this infrastructure that is doing associated work. So, Harvest is adding value to the work that was already happening'.

Similar experiences characterise many of the Main projects. 'Heeley City Farm' (MLF000089), for example, has been growing a range of crops, as well as keeping rare breed livestock, on an organic basis for 30 years. Recently, they have had a 'five a day' contract with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) to get fresh healthy food into food deserts. Part of their plan was to grow a proportion of this food directly; however, they have been struggling to do this. This motivated them to develop their Local Food project to take on more land and to work with a range of partners to try and increase the levels of locally produced food that they are able to supply to the PCT. Likewise, Teesdale Conservation Volunteers (TCV) have for many years focused on conservation, but were looking for a project that would allow them to extend this focus towards issues of wider sustainability, thereby making better use of their existing resources and experience. In this respect, the 'Plot to Pot' project (MLF000030) was seen as a natural progression to move into work on local food as an extension of what they were already doing, including continuing to engage the local community through running courses.

In some cases, the project is explicitly identified as being part of a larger vision. MLF000029 ('Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise'), for example, has funding through Local Food that enables it to manage green spaces in such a way that maximises social, environmental and economic benefits to the neighbourhood. This is undertaken by a development trust that also manages many other places along similar lines. MLF000325 – 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' – is a horticulture project that is part of the national 'Time to Change' campaign, which aims to challenge discrimination and change the way people think about mental health. In the 'Re-CHARGE' project (MLF000200), the objective is to restore allotments within some historic gardens; however, this is only part of a much larger project of restoration.

As the coordinator explained, 'bringing projects together creates synergy, which one standalone project would not provide'. In the past, InSpire has, due to funding criteria, been able to work with just younger and older people. However, Local Food funding has allowed this community arts and learning organisation to manage the 'SE 17 Community Food Co-operative' project (MLF001243). The funding was pivotal in setting up a café, with local ownership and a focus on serving the local community, as well as helping to address training, unemployment, lack of food knowledge and healthy eating in the process.

Smaller-scale projects also have larger visions. Thus in Leeds the 'Veggies for Victoria' project (SLF001417) has developed a new school allotment garden in recognition of the role it can play in helping the school to become a 'healthy school'. Likewise, in the 'Growing Kitchen Community' project (SLF000482) there is recognition that projects/networks with similar aims, that may be being delivered by other bodies and funding streams, can be linked together to provide a great impact in London.

IN BRIEF:

- Many projects are developed from existing initiatives, with Local Food funding enabling a further strand, or strands, to be added to what was already being done.
- There is usually a larger and/or longer-term vision, where projected outcomes are often at a scale beyond that of the current project's level.
- Local Food funding is helping to increase the levels of local food production and consumption.
- New tools are being developed to engage a wider range of potential stakeholders/ beneficiaries.

6. Current state of the project

By the time the 29 case studies had been undertaken (March 2012), 14 projects were completed and 15 were ongoing. Perhaps not surprisingly, six of the seven 'Small' projects had finished, compared to eight of the 18 'Main' projects and none of the 'Beacon' projects. Of the on-going projects, eight are due to complete in 2012, six in 2013 and one in 2014 (a Beacon project). The overall impression gained from the interviews is one of very worthwhile projects, running mainly to target and demonstrating plenty of activity, commitment and enthusiasm. For many of the projects, especially Main and Beacon projects, considerable emphasis is placed on the importance of volunteer labour. This dependence is nicely summarised in the following quotes:

'Most of the project steering group volunteer their time for free; the trust and the project would not exist without this input' (BLF000337).

'A range of volunteers built the new community allotment site from scratch, put in water tanks, raised beds, paths and fencing under the guidance of a voluntary supervisor' (MLF000810).

'There is a strong core of volunteers who are extremely committed to working as a team. A small group of five, with learning difficulties, come once every two weeks and help with basic work like clearance or sorting vegetables' (MLF001842).

The case studies suggest that there are three key stages to the evolution of most projects: engagement, infrastructure provision and development of food activities. Information dissemination is a vital aspect of engagement and the case study projects make use of a wide range of dissemination activities, from websites and blogs to newsletters, leaflets, posters and community events/ open days (see also section on outputs). The intention in most cases is to inform and widen the reach of the project, to get people from the local community involved and to overcome any resistance or misconceptions that may exist among the general public. As one of the 'education and learning' Beacon projects explained:

"It is better to take six months to have a really robust consultation, so that you really get the community on board, rather than trying to do something quite fast that then might perhaps fail in a year because it has got a lot of antagonism in the community' (BLF000374).

Similar sentiments were expressed by a representative of a community growing (city farm) project, who suggested that the purpose of such engagement was:

'To inform and educate, to promote and explain, and to advertise and encourage participation' (MLF000089).

Infrastructural provision, in the form mainly of physical developments such as the building of raised beds, stores and community centres/ cafés, the planting of orchards and a wide range of clearance and repair work, is the second key stage for many projects. As one community food growing project in Yorkshire and Humberside suggested:

'The site is well under way to being completed. There are still some more beds to put in. Food was grown in the first and second years and the hope is that even more will be produced in year three' (MLF000816).

Likewise, for a catering enterprise in Sheffield:

'Large raised beds have been created, riverside beds have been dug and an irrigation system drawing river water has been set up. Fruit trees have been planted in a new orchard area, vegetables are being grown and work on more raised beds and a restored grass bank is underway' (MLF001842).

It is not surprising, therefore, that for many projects their core objectives – in terms of producing food, educating people and/ or sharing examples of good practice – will not be satisfied until well after the Local Food funding has finished. Neither is it surprising that projects rarely progress through to their third stage of evolution without experiencing some difficulties or issues. This does not reflect a lack of activity; in fact, it is often quite the opposite and issues arise because of the ambitious nature of many projects. Issues affecting progress range from engaging with the local community and volunteers to attracting local food producers, funding and unexpected events. Thus one Beacon project in southern England lamented that 'the biggest challenge we face is people who have different ideas about what land might be used for' (BLF000385), just as the 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise' project said 'now the push is to get people involved from all over the city (Sheffield) and make people aware of what is on offer' (MLF000029). Likewise, another (community food growing)

project in Sheffield (MLF001842: 'Growing Penistone') suggested that more work was needed to engage the wider community and to 'sort out' some unresolved issues with volunteers:

'It would appear that a few connections are not yet quite in place, or need to be re-established'.

'Formalising work on the site into a project has had its disadvantages from the volunteers' perspective in that they are no longer 'in charge' and don't have the freedom to do the things they did before'.

Another challenge facing some projects is attracting local food producers. This has proved more difficult than expected in some cases, with farmers needing to be convinced of what is in it for them. The community food growing Beacon 'Sustaining Sutton' project in London has not made 'progress on linking local producers directly into supply contracts' (BLF000385). For this project, food is currently sourced from a wholesaler, who 'buys in' from Kent and not from local farmers[1]. This same project also highlights difficulties involved with the public procurement of food:

'Procurement is a complex system. It is difficult to get people to do things differently on procurement, especially regarding the push for larger purchasing consortia; it is difficult to find the right people and getting them to speak to others' (BLF000385).

Two community food growing projects reported issues related to finance and match funding. One multi-regional Beacon project suggested that, because of a match funding shortfall in year four, it would 'focus on enterprise' and on 'how schools can use apples to generate income to reinvest in orchard maintenance' (BLF000340: 'Fruit-full Schools'). Another project (MLF001842: 'Growing Penistone') highlighted how they were unable to rent out some of their office space because local churches were offering free space; this adversely affected their capital raising activities. Other unexpected events included the very cold weather during the 2010/2011 winter, a change in personnel and making land available for community groups. For one hedgerow project, the very cold weather at the start of 2011 and the subsequent spring drought 'delayed planting and affected sapling survival rates' (MLF001074). Some of the problems already alluded to in relation to the community food growing project in Sheffield (MLF001842) stemmed in part from the death of the person who wrote the project bid, forcing the project manager, who had little internal knowledgeable support, to draw on external help.

Finally, in relation to available land, the Capital Growth project in London suggested that:

'There are unresolved issues around making land available for community groups. These relate to legal differences between statutory allotments and short-term leases on land for community groups; this effectively means that landlords can take back land when they wish' (BLF000676).

As a consequence of the high level of activity in some projects, there is a risk of a failure to coordinate everything and ensure that the key project objectives are satisfied. This was recognised by one of the large Beacon projects, which admitted 'there is risk that the separate elements of the project are all very busy and end up working separately' (BLF000385). Despite this, the overall impression from the case study projects is that most are making good progress and keeping to the expressed targets. Nevertheless, many projects are still at a relatively early stage in their evolution and have a long way to go. Even for those (mainly small) projects that have already spent their Local Food funding, there is evidence to show that they are continuing to develop, even if in slightly different directions. Thus the key is to ensure that some of the larger projects have a lasting impact after their funding period has been completed.

IN BRIEF:

- At quite different stages in their development, there is a considerable amount of activity, commitment and enthusiasm among the case study projects.
- Volunteer labour is often a vital ingredient of project success.
- There would appear to be three key stages in most projects' evolution: engagement, infrastructure provision and development of the main food-related activities.
- Some projects have found it difficult to attract local producers and to get people from the local community involved.
- Some projects have been affected by unexpected events like severe weather, land availability, change in personnel and unlikely competition.

7. Direct outputs enabled by the funding

The case study projects reported a wide range of outputs, from bringing derelict and/or new land into food production, involving a large number of people and different kinds of events, and engaging with the wider community. This section examines outputs in terms of these four main areas and according to selected examples of the three types of grant: Beacon, Main and Small. However, it is not always easy to isolate and highlight those outputs that are the direct result of Local Food funding, especially where Local Food projects contribute just part of the total funding for a particular initiative.

7.1 LAND

Many of the case study projects have brought previously cultivated and/or new land into mainly crop, but occasionally animal, production. This is often in the form of allotments, raised beds, gardens, new growing spaces and part(s) of a farm, all owned by different landlords. Although individually the areas involved are quite small, ranging from much less than one hectare (ha) to about eight ha, collectively the projects are making good use of a considerable area of previously unused land. This is well illustrated by two of the four examined Beacon projects. The first is a multi-regional Beacon project 'Fruit-full Schools' (BLF000340) concerned with fruit growing in 50 participating schools where, by the end of 2010, 2500m² of land had been turned into a number of orchards – each about 30x15m in size. This land is owned mainly by local authorities who, together with the schools, are responsible for managing the land. Approximately 1500 trees, predominantly apple and pear, had been planted with the first real crops expected in 2014. Nevertheless, around 1000 kg of apples have been collected from local gardens, parks and other orchards, and consumed as part of apple day celebrations within the schools. The project manager explained how seeds and plants were sourced through a nursery expert in heritage apple trees 'to ensure that the wide range of varieties needed were available and to tap into the expertise of the staff at the nursery' (BLF000340). Eventually, the plan is to harvest and distribute the fruit through school kitchens/ canteens, use it in food technology classes and sell it in school and community shops. There is also potential in the fourth year of the scheme (2013) to look at processing techniques to add value to the raw fruit through drying, crushing and baking, with the intention of generating income to invest in orchard maintenance.

The other example of a Beacon project is a three ha community farm sub-let on a five year memorandum of agreement and a community allotment (BLF000385: 'Sustaining Sutton'). By the end of 2010, around one ha of the farm and 1,300m² of allotment land had been brought back into food production directly through Local Food funding. Aimed at people who would like to grow food and learn new skills, but who do not have time for their own allotment, the community farm provides free growing space and training. A wide range of organic vegetables are produced and food is either given to helpers on the farm or sold via a vegetable van that trades in four locations. The van sold over £5,000 worth of produce in 2010, but not all of this was produced on the farm. However, around 249 kg of fruit, vegetables and herbs had been produced on the allotment land by September 2010, a small amount of which was sold at a farmers' market as part of a youth summer enterprise project. A number of trees have also been planted on the two sites, including six fruit trees on the allotment and 10 cobnut and two sweet chestnut trees on the community farm. Some of the intentions of this Beacon project are nicely summarised by an allotment volunteer and previous Friends of the Earth campaigner:

'It's taken a long time to actually understand that it is local activity which is most important, the community; to understand the global to local concept. I enjoy meeting people. I also get cheap food and feel part of the community' (BLF000385).

Thirteen of the 18 Main projects have been involved in bringing old and/or new land into production, either on individual or multiple sites. These range from very small allotment and raised food beds to three ha of farmland in between two large post war housing estates in Sheffield (MLF000029: 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise'), over 600 new growing spaces in London (MLF000676: 'Capital Growth') and 5.7 ha of farmland and allotments (rising to over 8 ha in 2012) on six sites in the community supported agriculture 'Plot to Pot' project in Barnard Castle in north-east England (MLF000030). Comprising multiple sites, owned by different landlords, the 'Plot to Pot' project encourages organic approaches to food growing, including fruit, vegetables and herbs, as well as bees for honey and chickens for eggs and meat. Over 60 fruit trees (plum, apple and pear) have been planted by volunteers throughout the different sites and the intention is to 'distribute the harvest through the Teesdale Conservation Volunteer (TCV) centre's apple day held in October

each year; people can also help themselves when out for a walk' (MLF000030). Over 20 mushroom logs (shitake mushrooms) have been prepared, with limited success so far, but a considerable amount of produce (ranging from 750 jars of honey and 3,000 dozen eggs to 100kg of potatoes, 50kg of beetroot and 75kg of cabbage) from the farmland and other sites has been sold by TCV. Also of significance are the 178 knee-depth raised beds (each 3x1.5m), built for around 150 households in the Teesdale area.

Other 'Main' projects include different growing spaces, city farms, school grounds and celebrating food cultures. 'Capital Growth' (MLF000676) also encourages organic approaches to its food production and by October 2010, one year after its inception, 603 growing spaces – representing about 15.3 hectares of land – were being supported and used for production through the project. These spaces belong to a range of landowners, from schools and local authorities to housing associations, charities and private businesses, and are managed by an even wider range of groups/organisations including schools, informal community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises, youth groups, hostels and the NHS. The growing spaces are all very different and so it is difficult to generalise about outputs. As an example, an extract about one particular growing space (Food from the Sky) is presented below:

'A biodynamic and permaculture-designed container-grown roof food garden was established in 2009, with support from the owner of Budgens who wants to see London food production on roof spaces. The roof garden site is growing an orchard, vegetables, fruits, edible flowers, mushrooms and herbs over an area of approximately 30 m². Funding has been found from a range of sources including a grant from CG. Food is grown in 250 plastic ex-recycling boxes donated by Haringey Council, filled with 10 tonnes of compost. Waste from the supermarket's produce is used to feed three wormeries and two compost tumblers. It is a story of collaboration between local volunteers and a supermarket and is contributing to more inclusive community activity. The Budgen's Franchise owners are taking it seriously' (MLF000676).

The grounds in a primary school in Staunton-on-Wye in Herefordshire are the site of a relatively small (but classed as 'Main') education and learning project that started in 2010. Approximately 70m² of vegetables and half of a 150m² orchard area were established in 2011, with the rest of the orchard to be completed in 2012; wild food plants are also being planted across the two-acre (0.8ha) site. Originally owned by Herefordshire County Council, the land now belongs to the Jarvis Educational Foundation (the school's endowing charity). A wide range of fruit trees has been planted, including apple, cherry, damson, plum and pear, and a small crop of apples is anticipated in autumn 2012. While it is recognised that the fruit and wild food trees will take some time to come into full production, the intention is that:

'Apples, pears, plums and damsons will be eaten by school and pre-school children, used in cookery activities and sold to the community on the produce stall. Staff and pupils will also make surplus apples into juice for pupils and community members. Wild food will be harvested by pupils and used for healthy snacks or in cookery activities' (MLF001727).

A small produce stall, run between June and October (but excluding August), has already started to sell small amounts of garden vegetables, herbs and bedding plants, some of which have been donated by members of the local community. Approximately £400 worth of produce was sold in this way in 2011.

A good example of a 'celebrating food cultures' project is a hedgerow harvest project in London, where around 2,000 metres of productive hedges were planted in 2011 on 10 demonstration sites in parks, around allotments, in school grounds, and along paths and roadsides. With the permission of local authority and school landowners, local groups plant the hedges and then take responsibility for maintaining them. Typically a fruit hedge, hawthorn plum and blackthorn plants are interspersed with a range of fruit and nut trees in what the manager described as 'an experimental and non-traditional approach' (MLF001074). Over 240 plants were sourced from a specialist fruit nursery and planted by volunteers; further school and community hedge planting sites have been identified for planting in 2012, with a final target of 40 productive hedges. As the manager explained:

'The hedges only went in this winter (2011), so very little so far. We use a specialist fruit nursery which sends out tailor-made packs of trees and hedging to each project site. We use them because we know the plant quality is good and produced in the UK. Fruit and nuts from the hedges are free to anyone in the community who wants to pick them. The eventual harvest will be organised by Tree Warden volunteers and local people who planted the trees' (MLF001074).

Understandably on a much smaller scale, six of the seven 'Small' projects have also involved land: four in the form of allotments and two gardens (one forest and one school). The four allotment projects have now successfully completed allotment plots in

Bolton (SLF000113), Hackney (SLF000482), Cambridge (SLF001033) and Oxford (SLF000574). The Hackney project, for example, has led to the establishment of a new gardening residents group, a constituted voluntary group with its own bank account; the previously waste area of 800 m² is now managed as allotments that produce a wide range of vegetables and soft fruits. Likewise, part of the land leased to the Cripley Meadow Allotment Association by Oxford City Council included an island (0.3 ha) that had not previously been used for food production. So, as part of Local Food funding, over 80 local varieties of apples and a handful of plum were planted by Cripley Meadow members. Being two year maidens, fruit will not be produced until 2012 at the earliest. As one association member explained:

'All members are asked to do three hours community work on the site or to make a money donation when they renew their membership. Almost all members contribute (there is a little bit of resistance). Cropping is expected in 2/3 years and members will share the crop and already have an open day planned for the local community' (SLF000574).

Further fruit-related activities are also planned and suggestions include apple harvest days and the possibility of a juice press.

7.2 PEOPLE

As the second main type of project output, many of the case study projects have involved a lot of people, either directly or indirectly. Age profiles vary from just four to 85 and, in most cases, between 30 and 90 per cent are completely new to food production. Thus the multi-regional 'Fruit-full Schools' Beacon project has involved an impressive 9,000 people (by the end of 2011), of which an estimated 4,000 are completely new to food production. School pupils, teachers, community members, community organisations and volunteers are the main categories of people involved. Regarding volunteers, about 120 places have been created, with each person giving about half a day per term. The programme manager stated that:

'The aim is for each school to have at least two outside people who will get involved, preferably not parents. They are trained in tree care maintenance and grafting and those involved include retired local community members, allotment and orchard owners, and local businesses' (BLF000340).

In a similar fashion, the community food growing project in London (BLF000385) involves two part-time paid workers and over 250 volunteers. The community farm itself has involved 237 volunteers in its first year, aged between 10 and 85, and at any one time:

'There are 47 volunteers and a committed core of 20, mostly local residents with some young and out of work and some retired. There are monthly farm committee meetings involving eight people' (BLF000385).

By October 2010, it was estimated that the community farm in London had created the equivalent of around 100 volunteer days; in addition, nearly 1,500 hours were created from community payback teams and volunteering in the Bioregional office. Likewise, at the project's Westmead allotment there are 37 volunteers and a core group of around 10 regular attendees. Skills vary from novice to expert. Probation teams also work at the site on a regular basis and are usually involved in 'heavier work like clearance, digging new beds, building, fencing and digging the new pond' (BLF000385). Overall, and excluding the volunteers, nine types of jobs, some involving more than one person, have been created by the community food growing project in London. These include project and network managers, gardener, farm manager, farm grower, vegetable van manager, tutors and project workers; the last two help to organise events and to write and deliver training courses.

The 'Main' projects reported have created small numbers of paid jobs and involved between 30 and 500 other people. Three examples are reported here. Fairly large numbers of people are involved in the 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise' project in Sheffield (MLF000029). In operation since February 2009, 1.8 FTE farm supervisor/manager jobs have been created, together with four part-time posts involving a farm ranger, training coordinator and volunteer supervisor and manager. Six people are directly employed to run the project; two-thirds of these are female and ages range from 20 to 50. Up to December 2010, the project had accumulated nearly 4,000 hours of volunteer time (approximately 533 days). It was reported that just over 40 people had so far been engaged in the practical production of food, including 17 weekly participants with special needs from Burton Street Foundation, seven Green Estate apprentices involved in all aspects of food production and 13 employment scheme participants. Typically, between five and 13 people work on site every day. As one interviewee intimated:

'Many varied roles and opportunities have been created and made available as part of the farm project. Volunteers have the opportunity to move onto different roles within the structure, if they wish to and are capable to undertake the discussed tasks. Each volunteer is given training and this is repeated fairly regularly. It is dependent upon their abilities and their supervisors as to whether they are moved to a new role' (MLF000029).

On a much smaller scale, the 'Chyan Community Allotments' project in Penryn (MLF000810) involves a range of volunteers and has approximately 15 people working on the allotment each week. For the volunteers:

'There is a good range of ages and everyone enjoys being outdoors and doing practical work together. There is a mix of people including students, GP referrals, a few retired people and an autistic man and his care worker' (MLF000810).

Also on a fairly small scale, and involving a catering project that does not entail the direct growing of food, the Bolton Kitchen project is the only vegetarian café in Bolton. Local Food funding, which finished in July 2011, created three full-time equivalent jobs for people who were previously unemployed, one of whom had been struggling with mental health issues. Jobs include a volunteer manager, accounts manager, food safety manager, kitchen manager and a customer services manager. In addition, 12 local people have been taken on for eight week sessions as kitchen trainees. They work through a structured on-the-job training programme and most have come from the local job centre. Among the 12 have been four with mental health problems, one with learning difficulties, and five from the refugee community. Two of these have now got jobs elsewhere and others have stayed on as volunteers once they have completed their course. As one volunteer commented:

'I heard about the café from a friend. I did the training and the tick list of learning tasks helps you to see what you have achieved. It's good for CVs and references. Now I am a regular volunteer doing cleaning, cooking, learning to bake vegan cakes, run the coffee machine and the till. I also help with publicity and am involved with the new Transition Bolton Group that has been meeting here' (MLF001557).

The numbers and types of people involved in the 'Small' projects have varied considerably, from 15 children in an education and learning project in Leeds (SLF001417: 'Veggies for Victoria') and 25 homeless, drug and drink dependent and mentally ill people in a Cambridge allotment project (SLF001033: 'Jimmy's Shakey Beans'), to 45 residents in a community food growing project in London (SLF000482: 'The Growing Kitchen Community'), 60 volunteers in an organic food growing scheme in Bolton (SLF000113: 'Organic For All') and 70 volunteers in a new community garden at the 'Monkey Sanctuary' in Looe (SLF001349). In the latter, groups of around 30 BTCV volunteers have helped to build the site on two separate occasions and smaller groups have also helped on practical workdays during which the greenhouse was built, new paths were laid and the new garden area re-landscaped.

7.3 EVENTS

This third type of project output relates to a wide range of organised events, from various kinds of open days and community functions to training workshops, courses, woodland festivals and skills development. These often focus on volunteers and/or people from the local community, attracted through the array of dissemination activities outlined earlier in this report. Two of the Beacon projects demonstrate this diversity very well. For the 'Fruit-full Schools' project, the main type of event has been the 100 community apple days held across the 50 participating schools over the past two years. These have attracted up to 8,000 visitors, including school pupils, people from the local communities, parents, interested growing professionals and local businesses. In addition, well over 700 people have been trained in grafting skills, tree growing and cookery as a direct result of the project, ranging from regional coordinators, teachers, community members and pupils. Orchard heritage learning is an important part of the project, but this varies between schools as reflected upon by one of the coordinators:

'Schools in Sussex used their local varieties to inspire cookery lessons as well as to learn about sustainability, planting and growth, while children in Somerset have used orchards for poetic and artistic inspiration and also studied local history and the process of cider harvesting' (BLF000340).

Likewise, the events organised by the 'community food growing' Beacon 'Sustaining Sutton' project have ranged from a raft of training and skills sessions to family fun food growing days and healthy eating and cooking events. Over 2,400 people have been involved in community farm and allotment activities such as 'land management techniques, food growing skills, healthy diets, cooking healthy meals, access to local food, preparing fresh food in a healthy diet, marketing and selling in a market environment' (BLF000385). Significantly, the people attracted have included:

'Adults, children, families with young children, young people, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health problems' (BLF000385).

In addition, beginner courses and day workshops in adult food growing have been organised, with over 40 trainees gaining recognised AQA certificates. Ten sessions of the family fun food growing days generated 140 participants, just as 17 sessions of children food growing events attracted over 500 participants. Just to complete the impressive list of events in its first year of operation, the community food growing Beacon project ran 29 and 8 healthy eating sessions in school/community centres and Sutton farmers' market respectively, attracting just over 900 people. To maintain the momentum, four promotional events were organised in 2010, including a summer barbeque, a summer solstice and winter firework celebration, and food ambassadors have been trained to deliver workshops on local food and healthy eating to community groups.

Each of the 18 'Main' projects reported varying types and scales of event activity, including workshops (MLF000200: 'Re-CHARGE'), food growing skills (MLF000325: 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds'), training/school sessions (MLF000676: 'Capital Growth') and fun days for families, educational cooking sessions and land management courses (MLF000029: 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise'). Further details on two projects are reported here. 'Food for Thought' is a one-acre (0.4ha) inner city farm project in Bradford that is producing fruit, vegetables and herbs. One of the main objectives of the project, which finished its funding in July 2012, is to encourage volunteers to join their programme and local people to visit the farm and use the produce. A launch event, community events and open days have been used to promote the site and engage local people. One event (summer 2011) was attended by over 400 people, many of whom were families from the local neighbourhood. According to one volunteer organiser, this event 'was an overwhelming success and achievement, beyond what anyone expected and, for the first time ever, it

engaged some of the East European community' (MLF000816). The city farm project has, through its main organiser Prism, also delivered weekly practical and theory workshops to enable young people and volunteers to achieve levels 1 and 2 accreditation in Environment and Land-based studies. Integrating 'Food for Thought' throughout, the courses cover a diverse range of topics, from animal welfare and construction (fences, dry stone walls, decking etc) to horticulture, conservation and healthy eating.

Involving nine schools, the overall purpose of the 'Great Staffordshire Picnic' (GSP) was to understand the 'food journey'. Thus, with the aid of Local Food funding, each school was able to visit parts of the food journey such as local producers, farmers' markets, supermarkets and restaurants. Over 160 children were recorded as attending producer events in 2010. Some of the things learned from these visits were then further developed in the schools, where children learned about food preparation, cookery and nutrition. Other activities have included over 200 people attending the picnic event at Shugborough Hall and four schools using their GSP project grant to set up their own working gardens and to buy seeds and equipment. As the case study interviews demonstrated:

'Students kept food diaries and filled in simple GSP baseline questionnaires about their eating habits. Some schools made videos, others wrote reports in the school newsletters. Some schools arranged their own additional visits. There were clear connections made between healthy eating and supporting local food producers' (MLF000177).

Workshops of different types have dominated the events organised by the reporting 'Small' projects. So, for example, the 'Organic for All' allotment project (SLF000113) held several workshops on both the growing and cooking of food, each attracting between 10 and 30 people, whereas the 'Growing Kitchen Community' project in London (SLF000482) ran different types of event including drop-in workshops, resident cook meetings and community celebration days, each attracting between eight and 50 people. The workshops themselves involved 45 people who learned about skill sharing, growing, cooking, harvesting and companion planting. As the project officer stated:

'At the beginning of the project, the general skill level for growing food was low. This increased hugely through the facilitation of workshops and emphasis on skill sharing. Nearly 90% were completely new to food growing' (SLF000482).

'Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment' (SLF001033) claimed to have developed the gardening skills of 13 people in 2010, varying from those with no skills at all to those with good previous experience of growing food, and the 'Veggies for Victoria' project in a school in Leeds (SLF001417) was visited by 50 people (30 children and 20 adults), where the emphasis was on encouraging healthy eating, providing updates on the garden's progress and trying to attract volunteers.

7.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A final output from the case study projects relates to wider community engagement; indeed, 13 of the 29 case studies are classified as 'community growing' projects: two Beacon, seven Main and four Small. However, it should also be clear from the discussion on the three other main types of output that community engagement figures in some way in all examined projects. An example from each grant type will be given to complete this section on project outputs. A number of events at the Beacon 'Sustaining Sutton' project in London (BLF000385) have already been described, but there is a deliberate attempt to engage the wider community through specific community events about local food and healthy eating. Ten of these had been held when the case study work began and they had attracted just over 700 participants, with some of these events being deliberately held in relatively deprived areas. People are usually informed about community events through leaflets and posters which go to the council offices, libraries, schools, leisure centres, GP surgeries and on notice boards.

One very good example of community engagement is the 'Main' 'Bolton Kitchen' project. Although classified as an 'enterprise' project, it is very much about community engagement. The café is open six days a week and is run by a mix of paid cooperative members working with volunteers and trainees. From diverse

backgrounds and capabilities, the male and female volunteers and trainees are mainly in the 20 to early 40s range. One of the volunteers managed to express in words some of the non-measurable community benefits of the café:

'The café is a great meeting place, a community hub, an example of empowering the community. It is giving displaced people a sense of connection with Bolton. It's opened up a network of people to me and given me ideas. I feel motivated; it's inspirational and I feel happy to be a part of something like this' (MLF001557).

Also in Bolton, the 'Small' 'Organic For All' allotment project emphasised other knock-on and non-measurable effects of their work. This is nicely summarised in the following statement:

'The allotment project has led to a number of other activities e.g. growing herbs in window boxes; children painting plant pots for sale and doing flower baskets for sheltered housing; lots of conversations about eating vegetables; vegetable bbq's at the allotment; more recycling; more people growing things in their gardens; and weekly food redistribution [from a local market and from Sainsbury's] used at a weekly meal for homeless people' (SLF000113).

It should be clear, therefore, that the social dimension is often central to outputs relating to community engagement. Terms such as 'social inclusion', 'social cohesion' and 'social justice' help to capture what a number of case study projects are attempting to achieve.

IN BRIEF:

- A wide range of outputs characterise the Local Food programme.
- The main outputs can be categorised into four main areas: land, people, events and community engagement.
- Many examined projects are involved in the production of (relatively small) amounts of food; this will increase as they come into full production.
- Products are sold through a variety of outlets, including farmers' markets, vans, schools and cafes.
- Most projects involve considerable numbers of people – directly and/or indirectly.
- Volunteer labour is often crucial to the successful running of many projects.
- A wide range of events and dissemination activities are used to attract people and engage with the local community.
- There are often attempts to extol the virtues of local food and healthy eating, and to involve community groups including those who are disadvantaged and people with learning difficulties.
- While difficult and sometimes impossible to quantify, the qualitative aspects of different projects – such as social inclusion and social cohesion – are often central to engaging the local community.
- There are some very successful projects that could be written up as examples of best practice.

8. Longer term outcomes

As only nine of the 29 case studies had completed their funding at the time of their specific interviews, it is not surprising that many struggled to speculate on longer-term outcomes. As the 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' community food growing project in Solihull suggested, 'it is still early days to comment on impacts' (MLF000325). Nevertheless, the general message is one of confidence as it was perceived that most activities will continue into the future, either in their current form or with new dimensions. Not surprisingly, given the focus on community food growing and education and learning in the first 29 case studies, the stated longer-term outcomes relate to different aspects of food growing, preparation and consumption, as well as increased learning about various aspects of local food. These two outcomes are interrelated, especially in the way they link with community engagement and different social groups in society. This section provides some empirical evidence about these perceived longer-term outcomes.

For many projects, the longer-term outcomes revolve around the production and distribution of food. Thus the 'Plot to Pot' project has every intention of 'continuing the work of finding new land and enabling the local community to use it as food-growing sites' (MLF000030), just as the 'Heeley City Farm' project is determined to 'find ways of continuing its food growing role and increasing the supply of fruit and vegetables to local retail outlets in Sheffield' (MLF000089). In a similar vein, a couple of projects associated with farmers' markets (MLF000409 and MLF000671) feel they will help to lead to a stronger network of markets and, through such activities as food demonstrations, to increase knowledge and skills associated with food and to understand where food comes from. Indeed, changing attitudes towards, and perceptions of, food is a stated longer-term outcome for various projects. This is nicely summarised by the Beacon 'Our Hands on the Land' project:

'The project is about changing attitudes between people, food and culture. The main purpose is to educate people about food. Food is important in itself, but its main importance is in terms of the opportunities it provides for children. The idea of organising events, getting people together, cooking and eating together is important. It is about breaking down barriers. Food is functioning as a social communicator' (BLF000374).

Similar expectations were expressed by the project manager of the 'Monkey Sanctuary' food garden in Looe:

'The new forest garden will help increase the exposure of visitors and volunteers to which wild foods can be eaten and how they are grown. It is still early days, but the idea is that visitors can see wild edible plants growing in the forest garden and then eat them in the café' (SLF001349).

However, for longer-term success the production side needs to be complemented by a similar level of commitment to local food preparation and consumption. This is where the views held about longer-term outcomes by the two projects involved with cafés become important. The community Café Crypt is a small enterprise element of the larger 'SE17 Community Food Cooperative' project, where three individuals currently run their own business, with separate menus, on the café premises. However, the longer-term plan is for cooperative members to run a fully-fledged and multi-cultural cooperative café on the site. As one of the café members hoped, 'an outdoor café seating area in the summer with tables and chairs' is possible, as is taking on in-house catering for groups that hire meeting room space on the SE17 site (MLF001243). Likewise, for the 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557), the key challenge is to ensure that the café survives beyond the initial funding by building up its custom and generating more income. If income grows, expanding the number of paid cooperative workers becomes possible, as does sourcing more food products from local producers.

There is a clear link between changing attitudes towards local food and enhanced education and learning, especially in Local Food projects involving schools. This is epitomised by the 'Fresh Food for Fresh Pupils' project, where it is hoped that teachers will pass on skills to new groups of children. As one interviewee explained:

'The pupils' knowledge and awareness increases hugely and they are learning things that are never learnt anywhere else – where their food comes from, how to grow it themselves, and how to work with nature and look after wildlife' (MLF000050).

The longer-term food education benefits were also emphasised by the 'Great Staffordshire Picnic' project:

'The school will continue with food education for the younger students and growing their own food. Children have become more willing to sample new foods and include healthier options in their daily diet' (MLF000177).

Indeed, ensuring that the production, preparation and consumption of local food become an important part of the school curriculum and children's learning is an ultimate goal of the 'Food for Thought' city farm project in Bradford. Student retention is a longer-term objective and perhaps one of their most notable outcomes has been the number of young people involved in their pre-16 provision that have stayed on for post-16 education. Through this particular project, Prism offers a National Diploma (pre-16) and now a BTEC (post-16) in environment and land-based studies:

'We didn't foresee the expansion of the post-16 when we wrote the bid. This has been a significant impact change. Last year 18 stayed on at the farm to do post-16 education – a 25-30 week programme of vocational skills accreditation which feeds into level 3 (A level equivalent) at local colleges' (MLF000816).

Moving on to disadvantaged groups, including those with mental health difficulties and those who are homeless, case study projects commented on longer-term outcomes. For the user-led mental health 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' community food growing project in Solihull (MLF000325), the funding has offered the opportunity for mental health clients living in long-term residential services to eat better and grow food in their own gardens. Each residential house involved has used raised beds to make access easier for mental health users. The main longer-term outcome is simply the development of new friendships and confidence, something that is not quantifiable. The much larger 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise' in Sheffield (MLF000029) is already talking about its exit strategy from current funding, with the possibility of creating a care farm. The project has developed good links with social services and, through its current activities, has gained considerable experience of working with special needs groups. The intention is to continue this work by:

'Providing a whole range of opportunities for skill development in the caring sector for employees, for the organisation itself and for volunteers' (MLF000029).

Community engagement and social cohesion are other types of longer-term outcome. Although not easily measurable, many case study projects spoke about building a sense of community and individual confidence in food, especially by children and other social groups, as an important outcome of what they are striving to achieve. Thus projects mentioned 'increased confidence' (MLF001243: 'SE17 Community Food Cooperative'), 'social integration' (MLF001842: 'Growing Penistone') and a 'new sense of community' and 'working together in a socially enjoyable way' (SLF000574: 'Cripley Island Orchard'). For the 'Growing Penistone' community food growing project, it has provided an opportunity to:

'Integrate with members of the local community. The more we get known in Penistone, there is awareness of disability and the less we get discriminated against. Some of the older people have enjoyed the social contact and have found the site a very therapeutic environment' (MLF001842).

Similar views were expressed by a food worker on the 'Heeley City Farm' project:

'Personal benefits are important in terms of a sense of confidence, satisfaction, new connections. There is provision of meaningful and therapeutic activity, enabling people to gain confidence and move on in their own lives' (MLF000089).

Finally, two community food growing projects (BLF000385 and MLF000676) are considering the idea of becoming independent social enterprises after Local Food funding is withdrawn. Thus for the 'Sustaining Sutton' Beacon project:

'The community farm, veg van and training will soon spin out as an independent social enterprise set up by staff as a community interest company. The aim is to turnover £3,000 per year in training fees in each of the next two years. The community farm will become a fully established CSA' (BLF000385).

Likewise, 'Capital Growth' (MLF000676) is considering the idea of a social enterprise, to sell its services and to carry out consultancy work elsewhere in the country. Its increasingly popular mini food growing plots, where families and individuals grow food side by side, are also acting as important social meeting places for people who have not met before. The importance of such 'soft' outcomes should not be underestimated.

Finally, the most ambitious longer-term outcomes were expressed by the 'Permaculture LAND Project' (MLF000013). While the Permaculture Association is already seeking further funding to extend the Local Food project, there was a clear suggestion that the network of demonstration centres would continue, mainly because 'the permaculture movement is better equipped to respond to growing public interest'. There is now a greater understanding of what the network is doing and this can be communicated externally; members of the network are already offering to self-organise training and events. The Local Food project is helping to demystify permaculture and:

'Long-term, more people will know about permaculture and the Permaculture Association will be empowered to grow food and use permaculture designs themselves' (MLF000013).

IN BRIEF:

- It is often difficult to speculate on longer-term outcomes.
- Projects often expressed confidence that the current activities would continue after Local Food funding had finished.
- Stronger food networks, involving the production, preparation and consumption of local food products, will result from the Local Food programme.
- Enhanced education and learning about food is an important longer-term outcome.
- Changing attitudes towards, and perceptions of, local food and healthy eating is often a major goal.
- For certain disadvantaged groups, a greater sense of identity and the development of friendships are important outcomes.
- Local food can act as an important vector for social cohesion and community development.

9. Relationships between outputs and outcomes

Although respondents found it difficult to say anything that they had not already said before, three main types of relationship emerged from the 29 case studies: community food networks, food education and personal development/behaviour change. These will be discussed in turn, using specific examples where appropriate.

In terms of community food networks, many projects are concerned with different types of food network such as local, urban, farmers' markets and permaculture. Thus, while the 'Permaculture LAND Project' (MLF000013) is attempting to establish a well-co-ordinated and organised permaculture learning network for the future that is low-cost and self-sustaining, the 'Capital Growth' project (MLF000676) believes it is developing a model for supporting urban food growing in large cities. The latter also seems to be establishing a 'Capital Growth' identity and brand, with members talking about a CG space rather than a food-growing space. As well as developing more skilled permaculture practitioners, the 'Permaculture LAND Project' is also concerned with quality of knowledge, teaching skills and the provision of experiences for volunteers. One of the farmers' markets projects (MLF000409) also talked about their role in 'professionalising' the network of farmers' markets in the north-east of England, aided by the mutual support offered by the newly forming network of farmers' market managers.

In other cases, the evolving networks are based more on people than food. Here the focus is often on community cohesion and bottom-up development. The small-scale 'Growing Kitchen Community' project in London suggested that 'the garden project has had a big impact on the area, not so much in terms of producing food but as a sense of community, trust and belonging' (SLF000482). As the project officer continued:

'The wider angle of this work is bottom-up community led involvement in neighbourhood renewal. Overall the project has helped to build a much stronger sense of local community and social connections on the estate and between estate residents and their neighbours. Many people no longer feel alienated' (SLF000482).

For the 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557), the physical space is a café that is very inviting and attractive to workers at lunchtimes. As one customer remarked:

'This place has a heartbeat; it's the first step to greener things in Bolton. There is nothing else like this in Bolton; it's a social hub, a community hub, and I love coming here'.

Perhaps the link between outputs and outcomes for developing community food networks is best summarised by the 'Growing Penistone' project in Sheffield:

'The project is achieving more systematic and organised renovation of a previously derelict site into a productive community market garden run by committed and visionary volunteers. We are providing a physical space for a range of people to meet, learn new skills and contribute to land management and food production activities' (MLF001842).

Similar links between outputs and outcomes were identified by those who emphasised enhanced food education as a direct consequence of their projects. This was well exemplified by the two 'school' projects – one fairly small and focused on a single school and the other a Beacon project that involved 50 schools across the different regions of England. The former described their project as 'timely development' and extolled its real significance:

'This project has enhanced the school's development at a critical time and enabled it to make significant progress in the area of food, which is somewhat on the margins of the curriculum but is nevertheless a critical subject for the school' (MLF001727).

The same kinds of thought were echoed by the spokesperson for the 'Fruit-full Schools' project:

'FFS is giving schools an achievable orchard focus which is engaging staff and pupils across a range of subjects. It is

providing a structure, resources, a focus and timetable that enables them to engage and make the project real in their own schools' (BLF000340).

For another food education project, the most notable element of the 'SE17 Community Food Co-operative' has been the success of its training course (for 10 days, spread over five weeks). Combining specific study visits and group discussions of specific food themes (e.g. where food comes from, where to buy it, food preparation and hygiene), personal development and practical learning activities (e.g. gardening, foraging, cooking and healthy eating), the project manager suggested that 'there was an evolution process as the course developed each time it was run' (MLF001243). The course was clearly appreciated by the participants; as one explained:

'I've been inspired to do something myself like growing herbs on my balcony and wild food foraging. It's been a real eye-opener. I signed up for the course because I want to work in a café' (MLF001243).

Finally, some projects referred to aspects of personal development and behaviour change as one of the key relationships between outputs and outcomes. Although often difficult to express and demonstrate, this third theme relates to a growing sense of personal ownership, developing a wider perspective and changing the ways people think and behave. These more qualitative outcomes pervade across the different types of project. Thus a food worker at the 'Heeley City Farm' felt that:

'The work is much less about the amount of land and much more about people and behavioural change' (MLF000089).

In a similar fashion, the 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' project (MLF000325) suggested that, through the Local Food project, mental health users are gaining confidence and self-esteem, as well as social and life skills from being involved in the garden and learning to take care of themselves through eating fresh organic food. One of the organisers involved stated that:

'They are less lonely and developing their ability to take more risks from having gained confidence e.g. taking the bus alone to get to the site' (MLF000325).

Likewise, 'Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment' project (SLF001033) claims that of most significance to them is the impact on the ex-guests (of the homeless shelter) involved in the project in terms of personal development and the regaining of confidence and direction. They quoted examples of how an ex-chef, who had helped to set up the herb garden and showed other ex-guests how to cook allotment food, was now working again, and how a former carpenter re-used his skills and has now moved away and is looking for work. This type of achievement is nicely summarised in the following quote:

'It has helped those involved feel motivated through having a clear end goal and growing in confidence that they can achieve something' (SLF001033).

Indeed, one of the key things that link outputs and outcomes is the idea of social inclusion, whereby individuals and the local community are able to help each other and to form friendships and understanding, all through sharing some interest in local food networks and food education.

IN BRIEF:

- It is often difficult, at this stage, to separate outputs from longer-term outcomes.
- The relationship between outputs and outcomes is often described through the way in which food networks are engaging with the local community.
- A new generation of school children are being introduced to elements of food education, which may lead to longer-term changes in behaviour regarding local food.
- The links between outputs and outcomes are perhaps best expressed through different aspects of personal development such as confidence, friendship, social inclusion and being able to help others.
- Those with disabilities and mental health issues are gaining in confidence and self-esteem.

10. The achievement and interpretation of project themes

The five themes of Local Food are:

1. to enable communities to manage land sustainably for growing food locally;
2. to enable communities to build knowledge and understanding and celebrate the cultural diversity of food;
3. to stimulate local economic activity and the development of community enterprises concerned with growing, processing and marketing local food;
4. to create opportunities for learning and the development of skills through volunteering, training and job creation; and
5. to promote awareness and understanding of the links between local food and healthy lifestyles.

Although each of the projects is required to identify a primary theme and one or more secondary themes, in practice this sharp division is less apparent. In the case of the larger projects, especially the Beacon projects, all of the five themes is likely to be addressed to a greater or lesser extent. In other words, while the project themes are a starting point for the projects, they do not always drive their implementation on a day-to-day basis. However, it is usually quite clear how the projects are addressing their primary theme, with the extent to which they are addressing their secondary theme, or other themes related to Local Food, emerging from the story of the case studies. Furthermore, the case study stories show how the aims of themes not specifically articulated within a project's application might still be being addressed. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the extent to which projects are achieving the themes that they receive funding for, not least because the themes are an important delivery framework for the overall funding programme. This section uses some of the case studies to illustrate these key points.

In some cases, interviewees felt that their project fitted the Local Food themes very well. In the case of 'Fresh Food for Fresh Pupils' (MLF000050), for example, the primary theme chosen was Theme 1 in that the project aimed to improve the way in which their school grounds are managed through providing an opportunity to combine learning about both the theory and practice of food growing - something that previously had not been available to the pupils. This project also felt that it addresses Themes 2 (in helping to build knowledge of and celebrate the cultural diversity of food) and 5 (in that it is intent on promoting awareness and understanding of the links between food and healthy lifestyles). The 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' in Solihull (MLF000325) also said that the themes were selected because 'they fit the project exactly'. In the case of the 'North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food' project (MLF000671), one theme is at the core of the project – Theme 3, stimulating economic activity - but all are seen as being addressed during the delivery of the project:

'Aiming to get producers and local businesses more actively involved in local food activity was the most important because everything we've done has always been about local economic activity and business development; but in some respects it was quite difficult because they are all relevant and they all applied to us'.

The case of BLF000340 ('Fruit-full Schools') provides an interesting example of how the project feels it is achieving its main theme (Theme 2), evidenced in its annual survey of participating schools by the increasing levels of knowledge about food amongst participating pupils. It is clear that the project has also delivered against its secondary theme (Theme 1), enabled through engaging with the local community and the creation of an educational resource: "Schools tell us that they didn't have initiatives to engage with the local community and that this project has really helped". None of the other three themes was included in the project application, yet the project is making some kind of contribution to all of them. For example, adult volunteers

are gaining experience of working with a school and with pupils in a support role (Theme 4); pupils are also learning about eating fruit, and many of the schools link this to healthy eating in some way (Theme 5).

Other projects are addressing more than what they originally stated. Thus the focus of MLF001074 ('Hedgerow Harvest') is on encouraging learning about the UK's hedge fruit cultural heritage; its main theme is therefore Theme 2. However, in the process of enabling communities to build knowledge and understanding and to celebrate the cultural diversity of food (hedge food in this case), people have also become trained in caring for hedges (thereby addressing Theme 1). The project has also provided an opportunity for tree wardens to develop skills in planting and hedge care, as well as in communication and education through leading walks and giving talks (thereby addressing Theme 4); the provision of education packs for schools also includes links to healthy lifestyles through eating fresh picked fruit from hedgerows, as well as encouraging practical outdoor manual work. In other words, although the primary theme is 2, this project also addresses Themes 1, 4 and 5 and potentially 3 in the future as the fruit harvested from the hedges increases in quantity.

Very similar conclusions can be drawn for other projects. For example, the small 'Cripley Island Orchard' project (SLF000574) focuses on extending the area of land being managed by an allotment association; as such, its main Theme is 1. However, through training events allotment holders have developed knowledge and understanding about different varieties and ways of doing things. Open days at the allotment have also brought visitors onto the allotment site, helping to develop wider community knowledge and understanding (Theme 2). Work parties of up to 30 people have also created learning and skills development opportunities (Theme 4), most notably in relation to the pruning of apple trees. Promoting awareness and understanding of the links between food and healthy lifestyles (Theme 5) was not a stated theme, but it is emphasised in all the newsletters. It has become apparent to the allotment committee that its members are growing and eating more of their own fruit and vegetables, whereas previously a number of the plots were simply being used for leisure activities. Members have also become much more aware of fruit and over 50% of the allotment plots now have their own fruit trees.

There was sometimes a recognition that understanding and interpreting the Local Food themes were not without difficulty. For the 'Our Hands on the Land' Beacon project (BLF000337), for example, Theme 5 was interpreted as follows:

'[It is] about getting people on to the land and using the land to grow their own food and it's on the back of all the allotment growing out there now. It is linking that then to the types of lifestyle, not preaching the health benefits of being able to cook foods, and for youngsters to know where food comes from really, not out of a plastic bag out of a supermarket. The farm has land. We have allotment plots. Some will be encouraged to grow for themselves – garden plots and not just for schools also, but anyone'.

In a similar fashion, the 'Sustaining Sutton' Beacon project had the following to say in relation to Theme 2:

'Both the food growing initiatives involved in this project teach volunteers and users about the seasons. E.g. at the allotment, volunteers take part in seasonal events like a pumpkin harvest where they all share pumpkin pie and pumpkin soup, and roast the seeds and take home pumpkin seeds in homemade packets – a combination of growing, cooking, eating and celebrating seasonal produce in a fun low-cost way. Other events include a summer bbq and a sweetcorn harvest. The community allotment is engaging a higher proportion of different ethnic groups than are represented in Sutton (which is 90% white). The staff are also keen to try growing more unusual crops and to modify a cooking course for other ethnic groups using food grown on the site'.

While interpreting the five themes may sometimes prove problematic, it is much more difficult to measure the actual impact that a project may have had, especially during its early stages. This was acknowledged by both the 'Great Staffordshire Picnic' project (MLF000177) and a farmers' market project in Hexham (MLF000409). There is also a need to recognise that change as a result of the project may well be incremental and/or long-term. This does not necessarily diminish its value at all, simply that the timing of any outcomes (and indeed outputs) needs to be recognised. This is evident in the 'Capital Growth'

project (MLF000676), where one of the biggest recognised achievements of the project (in relation to communities managing land sustainably for growing food locally) is that those involved have brought land into community cultivation, even though the volumes of food produced so far are small. In addition, many of the allotment spaces are now being better used than they were before, even if still more needs to be done.

Indeed, a project's achievements may not be directly related to the theme they appear to fit and, yet, they may well be an important output from the project overall. It is important, therefore, to recognise that projects should not only be evaluated against the five main themes. In the case of one small project (SLF001033: 'Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment'), for example, in addressing Theme 5 (promoting awareness and understanding of the links between food and healthy lifestyles), there is an understanding that homeless people are vulnerable and often have poor health and eating habits. This project offers an alternative way of thinking about food, as well as demonstrating what can be grown. In so doing, it has also created opportunities for learning and the development of skills through volunteering, training and job creation (Theme 4). It has, for example, encouraged an ex-guest of Jimmy's night shelter to learn new skills and to share and put to use their own (unused) skills. It has also more profoundly contributed to some of the ex-guests getting their lives back on track.

IN BRIEF:

- Although projects are required to identify a primary theme and one or more secondary themes, this sharp division is less apparent in practice.
- Even when a theme is not specifically articulated in a project's application, it still might be addressed as the project progresses.
- There are different interpretations of what is meant by specific themes. Moreover, there are likely to be many different ways of successfully addressing the same theme.
- Assessing interpretation and achievement of project themes is one thing, but it is much more difficult to understand the consequences and impacts resulting from this. In this respect, some of the themes are more difficult to assess than others. Those that are about soft issues such as awareness and understanding are much more difficult than demonstrating that an allotment is now being managed in a more productive manner, for example.
- Demonstrable change as a result of the project may be incremental and/or long-term, which should not necessarily be held against the project when evaluating it.
- Project outputs may not simply be related to themes, but are nevertheless of great value to the overall aims of Local Food.
- Some Local Food projects seem to be having a profound effect on the lives of people who are often at the margins of society; such benefits may not be related directly to any of the themes.

11. Contribution of projects to the main aim of Local Food

While the main aim of Local Food is to 'make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities', it seems that introducing local food to new audiences is critical to the achievement of that aim. This section examines some of the key themes that emerged from the 29 case studies.

In general terms, the quantities of food produced as a result of Local Food projects are inevitably quite small and not sufficient to make a big difference to the food supply chain. Nevertheless, some projects have deliberately set out to grow food on sites that previously were not used for growing food; in other words, new land has been brought into food production under the Local Food programme; good examples include the 'Heeley City Farm' (MLF000089) and the 'Cripley Island Orchard' project (SLF000574). This helps to increase access and availability, often in areas that are relatively deprived, and is typified by the 'Sustaining Sutton' Beacon project in London:

'The van and the food growing sites are making affordable fruit and veg available, either for free to volunteers or through sales to the public. In due course, the farm will produce larger volumes for a box scheme, or for the van sales, or for its own CSA members. The veg van is going to places where access to fruit and veg is poor... Increasing the community's food growing skills will help make food more affordable through grow-your-own. Ecolocal give away free herb and vegetable seedlings and plants to people who attend their courses as a way of encouraging ongoing engagement' (BLF000385).

In other cases, the food produced is sold at as affordable prices as possible. For example, the cafe at 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557) serves local food at relatively low prices in an attempt to show that it is possible to cook healthy meals using fresh ingredients on a low budget. However, often projects are too small in terms of funding or area of land (e.g. SLF001033 and SLF001349) to produce much food. For example, in the 'Monkey Sanctuary' project in Looe (SLF001349):

'The garden is only small but it is showing children and parents how to grow fresh food and demonstrating that it can be grown anywhere. The garden is now a permanent resource and will be used on an ongoing basis. It is not able to produce significant volumes of food, but it has raised awareness of the children involved about where food comes from and the importance of a healthy diet and the pleasure that comes from growing your own. [In terms of engaging new audiences], most of the children involved so far have not been exposed to growing their own fruit and vegetables and to managing a garden. The school is in a disadvantaged area so therefore the garden is providing new exposure for children that otherwise might not have such an opportunity'.

This quotation summarises well many of the other attributes of Local Food projects. Thus the notion of demonstration is important and well exemplified by the 'Plot to Pot' project in Barnard Castle (MLF000030). Here a raised bed training area has been specifically designed to demonstrate that a) growing your own food does not have to be physically hard work and b) food to feed a whole family can be produced in relatively small areas without the need for allotments or large gardens. Similarly, 'Hedgerow Harvest' (MLF001074) is beginning to demonstrate that 'food can be grown in hedges and that a barren hedgerow system can be transformed into a productive linear orchard'.

Earlier sections of this report have highlighted the importance of volunteer labour in growing food; many of these volunteers receive free food for their involvement. This is a good example of how those who often have insufficient money to buy such produce can now access it. In the 'Growing Penistone' project (MLF001842), for example, the volunteers check the harvested vegetables and sort them into piles that are good (for sale), bad (for compost) and ugly (to take home for free). Likewise, being located in a deprived area, the 'Food for Thought' project (MLF000816) does not charge volunteers for the food they help to produce because that would become an obstacle to getting them involved. In this respect, involving people is the key and any food produced is distributed at no cost to people in the local community who visit the farm. The project managers estimate

that nearly everyone involved, either as volunteers or service users, are completely new to food production.

Indeed, attracting new audiences and engaging them in the whole issue of local food is an important part of what many Local Food projects are trying to achieve. If attitudes towards local food can be changed, and new skills developed, food will become more affordable because people will be able to grow their own. In this regard, it may take time for projects' aims to be fulfilled; this is nicely illustrated by the 'Chyan Community Allotments' in Penryn:

'A key aim of the project is to engage new audiences, but it will take time to achieve. The community allotment plot and the apple tree share scheme are attracting a different type of audience to the traditional 'allotmenteer'. The list of volunteers shows that a wide range of people are getting involved and that they are mostly new to food growing, and definitely new to community food growing. Contact has been made with local children's centres... A Dad's Saturday club came to help build paths on the site from one of the council estates in Falmouth. The project coordinator may in future do some work in the children's centres. Outreach activities and on-site events are targeted at young families. Work on the orchard appeals to a different audience who are keen to do more serious activity' (MLF000810).

The range of people 'gettng involved' is important and, while some projects try and engage children in schools, others target particular groups in society. In the case of schools, the children are usually enthusiastic new audiences and have the potential to influence their immediate family and their relationship with food. In this sense, they have an important outreach role. In the case of the 'Great Staffordshire Picnic' (MLF000177):

'The overall project goal was to inform students about where their food comes from and to challenge their lack of knowledge and awareness. The project has raised awareness of what food is produced locally and where to buy it and has challenged the students' thinking. It has encouraged visits to farm shops, farms and farmers' markets. All food produced in schools is given away for free... The focus of the project has been young people and schools. A cross section of schools (special, middle, secondary) has been involved from a mix of cities, towns and rural areas. The students in the rural schools seemed to be more aware of farming, while students from the city schools tended to buy all their food in supermarkets and had never visited a farm'.

In the case of the Staunton-on-Wye project (MLF001727), the school is growing and selling small amounts of vegetables at very affordable prices. All the children in the school learn how to garden and how to cook and eat what they have grown. The project has

attracted the interest of parents, with some requesting a cookery book of the things that their children are making at school so that they can replicate the dishes at home; it has also attracted wider local community interest.

Improving access to local food for the poor and those with mental health problems has been an important outcome for many projects. A good example is the 'Heeley City Farm' project (MLF000089) which works with a wide range of people: many disaffected young people and also adults struggling with a range of issues, such as mental health problems, learning difficulties and unemployment. This reach is extended still further by their partners, to include young parents who are new to food growing and cooking with fresh ingredients, as well as young children who need support. Furthermore, these people are from a range of different nationalities and backgrounds. Not only does the project engage people who have little or no previous experience of growing their own food, it also does so in a way that provides social support to the people involved:

'This is my fourth time here, I come twice a week as I'm off work with stress-related problems. This is something positive to get me out the house... I'm not a big gardener. I've learnt things...I would like to grow my own veg so by coming here I hope to learn plenty and that it'll give me the confidence to do it myself.'

Likewise, the 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' project (MLF000325) provides free, organically grown, food for those involved. As the project manager emphasised:

'The project focuses on the mental health audience and the key new audience is the long-term mental health client residents in the three houses that are now starting to grow food themselves in their gardens. This group does not have much resource available to them, so the ability to grow food and have some control over what they eat is important'.

There is a danger, of course, that evidence of increased access and affordability as a result of Local Food funding is in many cases largely anecdotal. Projects have many aims and they are looking for evidence to show that these have been achieved. For example, a visit to the 'North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food' project (MLF000671) showed that they have many aspirations, but as the project manager said: 'as yet it is too early to show evidence of change in purchasing habits and attitudes towards food'. She also stressed that access and affordability are central to everything the project does. Furthermore, she recognised the importance of collecting information in order to be able to monitor and evaluate the impacts of the project. The quality of this information is crucial to enabling an evaluation of both individual projects and the whole Local Food funding programme.

IN BRIEF:

- The quantities of food produced by Local Food projects are often relatively small. Perhaps more important is changing people's mind-sets towards local food.
- New land has been brought into food production, increasing accessibility and affordability for many people, especially those who helped to produce it.
- Various projects provide free food to volunteers.
- Demonstrating what is possible and engaging with new audiences characterise many Local Food projects.
- Engaging with schools has been important, both directly with the children but also indirectly with parents and other people in the local community.
- Being as inclusive as possible, as well as engaging with those from more deprived social backgrounds and those with mental disabilities, is a recurring theme across a number of projects.
- Data that attribute benefits to Local Food are still quite tenuous and it will take time for many projects to achieve their aims. In many cases, this will be clearer by the time of the final evaluation report in 2014.

12. Project legacy

While the Local Food programme is undoubtedly about bringing small, often neglected pieces of land into production and increasing access to affordable food, local food is also very much seen as a vehicle for community cohesion, regeneration, healthy eating, educational enhancement and integrating disadvantaged groups into mainstream society and economy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the responses from case study representatives about project legacy fall into three main categories: first, food networks and partnership building; secondly, community engagement and social inclusion; and thirdly, educational enhancement. In addition, the possible replication of current initiatives in other parts of the country was emphasised by some, as was the need for further funding to ensure continuation and/or development of existing projects.

Starting with food networks, a whole raft of physical spaces (new and old) has been used for the production and consumption of a wide range of food products. These take the form of whole (small) farms, allotments, raised beds, school grounds, gardens and hedges, as well as buildings used for cafés and homes for personal consumption. For some projects, it is a case of producing food for the first time and, for others, it has allowed them to 'scale up' their operations. The cafés and local residents make use of the various fruit, vegetable, salad and herb crops produced on these local physical spaces. In linking production and consumption, localised food networks begin to emerge as new partnerships are formed and momentum builds. The key to future success and thus legacy is sustaining these local food networks once Local Food funding has finished. Thus for the 'Sustaining Sutton' project (BLF000385) 'a new local food supply network for Sutton is the ultimate legacy, with a local food hub that is linked with local producers'. On a much smaller scale, the 'Growing Kitchen Community' project (SLF000482), also in London, highlights the importance of their 'new growing spaces on an estate where access to land is very limited'. Others feel that their work has made a contribution to wider debates on, for example, permaculture, urban agriculture and food security. The 'Permaculture LAND Project' (MLF000013), for example, claims that their 'significant piece of work' will leave:

'The long-term legacy of a self-organised movement for low cost, innovative and highly sustainable land use design through the result of good organisation and development of a formal learning network'.

Similarly, the 'Capital Growth' project (MLF000676) feels that:

'It is a very significant and inspirational legacy for the fledgling urban agriculture movement in the UK' and 'the new urban food growing spaces and new food producers could potentially contribute to London's food security in the long term'.

The development of new food networks is often dependent on partnership working and many case study projects commented on the need and importance of partnerships. While projects such as 'Growing Penistone' (MLF001842), 'Fruit-full Schools' (BLF000340) and 'North East England Farmers' Markets' (MLF000409) emphasised the importance of partnership working, perhaps the two examples that summarise best the role of partnerships are 'Heeley City Farm' (MLF000089) and the 'North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food' project (MLF000671). Thus:

'Sheffield Council now includes food growing in its strategy. Other organisations around Sheffield have actively involved themselves and are seeking to promote and increase the level of

food-related activity in their own work. HCF is already working with 44 other organisations on food growing; Local Food funding has enabled us to engage in this work and to instigate discussions about the future' (MLF000089). And

'The aim of this project is not just about making local food more accessible in Teesdale and the Pennines; it is to try and foster partnership working, which will hopefully allow the group to go on beyond the project. Sharing experience and knowledge to do this is what we want to do; working with partners is a big part of what we do, so sharing expertise will mean it won't stop beyond the funding people. At the end of the day, we want businesses to be local, more proactive and viable' (MLF000671).

Community engagement and the involvement of disadvantaged groups is the second type of legacy emphasised by case study projects. This spans all types of project, from Beacon to Small, and examples from each type will be given. Most 'Small' case study projects mentioned some aspect of community involvement, from creating a new ethos and building trust and confidence in the local community (SLF000113: 'Organic for All') and developing a sense of community and social connection (SLF000482: 'The Growing Kitchen Community') to rebuilding confidence and self-worth (SLF001033: 'Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment') and integrating more groups into the local community (SLF001349: 'Monkey Sanctuary Garden'). Ideas of social cohesion and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into society also resonate well with some of the 'Main' projects. Emphasising community engagement, the 'Chyan Community Allotments' project in Penryn stated that:

'Many people from different backgrounds have got involved and have gained a new perception of what is possible. Chyan is now providing a horticultural therapy centre for the local area and is officially listed on the Cornish horticultural therapy network leaflet' (MLF000810).

On a larger scale than Chyan, the 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' mental health community organic garden in Solihull (MLF000325) has been working with Solihull Minds (SM) to create three new vegetable gardens at residential homes, as well as the organic garden on their main site for use by disabled people. As the case study demonstrates, SM is currently:

'In discussion with the Commissioner of services to highlight the benefits of their work on users, including the physical work aspect, and to seek further funding for the horticultural work. Councillors will be invited to the three-acre site in 2011 to see that it is not just an allotment. There is now more awareness of this kind of work and it has become more 'the flavour'' (MLF000325).

However, perhaps the foremost example of local participation by people with special needs is the 'Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise' in Sheffield. The farm is now playing:

'An important role in providing a place where people of different abilities can meet and work together. This means more opportunity for inclusion of people with special needs (MLF000029).

As a consequence, project partners have been working with Social Services on the possibility of turning the farm into a care farm for people with special needs to come and work on. This would provide funding for the farm and provision of formal apprenticeships for trainees – an important legacy of the Local Food funded project.

Summarising well the idea of embedding food in the local community and linking to more vulnerable groups is this statement by the 'Harvest Brighton and Hove' sharing best practice Beacon project, which has been in operation since June 2009:

'Obviously, we are trying to make a more sustainable food system. We are working in vulnerable and low income communities. If we can try and effect change in these communities, because the middle class have choice and power to make change, we need to be on the ground in these communities where perhaps things don't often reach people in the normal way. There is quite a lot of deprivation in Brighton and we need to be working with those communities and raising these issues. We know that they are interested in local food but they don't necessarily have the access' (BLF000374).

Finally, educational enhancement is an important legacy of many projects. This relates not only to schools but also to catering establishments and other projects offering training and qualifications. For the 'Fruit-full Schools' project (BLF000340),

several year groups have seen their orchards develop during their time at school, leaving them with 'a greater understanding about apples, heritage and the importance of local food'. This was confirmed by the Staunton-on-Wye project:

'A strong school food education culture is now firmly developed. Children have practical experience of how to garden and cook. They enjoy gardening and will try food they have grown' (MLF001727).

In a similar vein, the 'Food for Thought' project (MLF000816) claims that one of its main legacies is its post 16 educational work, which has generated more funding from colleges. As they explained:

'The local primary school is keen to bring children to the farm to work alongside the post-16s on animal care and horticulture. This is currently being discussed and it may be that some young people will also go and help with the school's own new garden in the form of a peer mentoring programme'.

In the case of the 'SE17 Community Food Cooperative' project (MLF001243), the key points about the legacy of educational enhancement in its food training course are encapsulated in the following:

'This is an innovative and holistic food training course with a strong personal development angle which is proving very successful; participants find it empowering'.

There are two final aspects relating to project legacy that need to be raised: one negative and one positive. Perhaps understandably, about one-third of the case studies spoke of the need for further funding to help secure their legacy. It is in this respect that the 'Veggies for Victoria' project (SLF001417) talked about the need to develop a clear 'next steps' plan to help get other people involved in guaranteeing the longer-term success of the garden. Likewise, the 'Chyan Community Allotment' project (MLF000810) suggested that:

'Further funding is needed to be able to continue paying a part-time project coordinator. It is very difficult to expand any further on a voluntary basis'.

More positively, a few projects claimed that what they were doing could be used as a kind of replicate model for other similar initiatives across the country. This view is nicely summarised in the following quotes from three 'Main' projects:

'The effectiveness of the project design as a replicate model is part of its legacy' (MLF000050).

'A good replicable and saleable model has been developed' (MLF000177).

'The project will leave a replicable model with tried and tested on-line administrative systems and ways of dealing with huge numbers of members, sites, enquiries, volunteers and a report' (MLF000676).

IN BRIEF:

- Local Food is a vehicle for much more than growing and consuming food, including community cohesion, regeneration, healthy eating, educational enhancement and integrating disadvantaged groups into society.
- The legacy of Local Food falls into three main categories: food networks and partnerships; community engagement and social inclusion; and educational enhancement.
- Local Food is bringing new (and old) land into food production. In so doing, it is improving both the accessibility and affordability of local food.
- Partnership development is important in the successful evolution of local food networks.
- Local Food is helping to integrate different groups within society, some of which would otherwise be excluded.
- Educational enhancement is arguably the most important longer-term legacy of the Local Food programme.
- The creation of models that have the potential to be replicated in other parts of the country is another longer-term legacy.

13. Grant additionality

Local Food funding has acted as a catalyst in a number of different ways and grant additionality has taken the form of increasing the scope and scale of projects, and leading to a range of benefits not envisaged in the original plan. The Local Food programme has often provided a much-needed financial injection to take existing projects forward; this has especially been the case with larger Local Food projects. Thus, while trying to diversify its portfolio of activities over the past 20 years, it was Local Food funding that allowed the Beacon 'Our Hands on the Land' project in Wallsend to construct a building for educational purposes. As the manager explained:

'The farm and its development were at a stage where we needed to push on. The building for people with learning difficulties is run by social services, but that is really their building. The grant was essential to the farm and our mission' (BLF000337).

In some cases, projects would not have moved forward without Local Food funding. This was made clear by the manager of the 'North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food' project in Barnard Castle:

'If we didn't have the funding the project wouldn't be going, simple as that... We got the money (match funding) from Leader, but there are no other funding streams without this project...This was our saviour, quite simply' (MLF000671).

The funding provided through Local Food has in some cases kick-started a significant new way of working in partnership on food issues. For example, in Sutton (BLF000385) it has enabled other work in the area to be better joined up and incorporated within the overall Local Food project. In so doing, it has meant that new and existing land is being better used for food growing. Better coordination has also allowed some projects to have a significant input into the planning process, in relation to food. This is most notable in the case of BLF000374 ('Harvest Brighton and Hove') and 'Sustaining Sutton' (BLF000385). Thus for Sutton:

'The project is enabling the local authority to make clear strategic links between food issues and their own statutory targets around sustainability and climate change. It has added more value to the existing One Planet Sutton initiative and is succeeding in inspiring and engaging more people than some of the other One Planet initiatives. BioRegional and Sutton Council are looking at wider issues around local business connections, and food supply is now a part of this wider work. An additional outcome of this project will be a food strategy for Sutton Borough Council'.

Similarly, for 'Capital Growth' (MLF000676), the project is sufficiently large that it is able to work directly with the Greater London Authority and for food growing to be included within the London Plan. As such, it has a high profile and is able to draw in further organisations and to leverage additional funds:

'Capital Growth is providing a link between various initiatives and bodies concerned with urban food growing within London, including making connections between strategy makers and food growers on the ground. Through running competitions, it is helping to provide focus, support, profile and acknowledgment for new audiences who otherwise would be invisible. This is helping to build confidence and a stronger sense of identity and connection for projects which can begin to see that they are part of a tangible movement around London'.

It is not always increasing the scale and scope of projects that is the focus; sometimes, it is simply about raising a project's profile. For example, 'Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment' (SLF001033) has raised the profile of Jimmy's night shelter work, which is considered to be very important for a number of reasons and would not have happened in the absence of Local Food funding:

'Without Local Food"s support and funding it would have been very difficult to get the allotment project up and running...It's not just about gardening. It gives people (especially men) who struggle with their feelings an opportunity to talk about issues, feelings, relationships etc in a pleasant and non-threatening environment, while engaging in work activities'.

Local Food funding has also led in some cases to activities being developed that were not envisaged in the original plan. This includes linking different activities together, in that they are seen to complement one another. It also includes making more active links with other projects. For example, since MLF000030 ('Plot to Pot') ended, it has become a demonstration site for other Local Food projects. Links have also been made with other funding programmes. This includes the Food for Life Partnership paying

for a food worker from 'Heeley City Farm' (HCF) at Wortley to run school visits and workshops; similarly, HCF has helped to run 'farm school' weekend courses for the Soil Association which, in turn, has helped the Soil Association to run other courses in other areas. HCF has also helped other groups to apply for Local Food funding, such as a local school, a fire station and local parks. This pattern is also apparent in the 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557), where the presence of the Local Food-funded café is helping to encourage new groups to form, such as a raw food group which runs cookery demonstrations on a Sunday. This is indicative of Local Food-funded projects actively helping to build the capacity, and extend the horizons, of other organisations.

This capacity to influence and encourage other organisations is also apparent within 'Hedgerow Harvest' (MLF001074). For example, a new local authority project in Essex is now working with Tree Council tree wardens to re-establish hedgerows that can link up the coast with inland areas; this will lead to 10,000 new fruit trees being planted. The 'Hedgerow Harvest' project has also brought the Tree Council into contact with the London Orchard Project, which is now planting hedges around their orchards. There are also links with Capital Growth groups and the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens. This has helped to develop a critical mass of activity around hedgerow development and to add value to the work that each partner provides. This influence also extends to the national level, with the Tree Council reporting strong interest from networks in other UK regions who wish to replicate the 'Hedgerow Harvest' project in their own areas.

In projects where schools are involved, there is often a deliberate attempt to integrate the subject matter into the school's courses. For example, in the case of the multi-regional 'Fruit-full Schools' project (BLF000340) it was felt that 'science needed to come outdoors into the environment. This is an opportunity to make science real and relevant'. In another case, the visit of the Chantry School to an orchard was the catalyst for the orchard owner to research and develop teacher information resources about her own orchard and to make contact with over 150 other schools in the area. This wider interest in orchards was further developed by the Chantry School apple festival in 2011, which attracted 300 people:

'The Apple Festival has started a trend; it will become an annual event in Martley... The people from Pershore came (to the Orchard) because they heard about the Apple Festival. They bought apple juice at the festival and then came to our orchard because they wanted to see which trees their apple juice had come from'.

IN BRIEF:

- Local Food funding often acts as a catalyst and, in some cases, has enabled a step change for existing projects.
- The scope and scale of various projects have been increased through the Local Food programme.
- Funding for larger projects has enabled the coordination of a number of smaller projects within a much larger and coherent framework of delivery. This then leads to a more strategic approach in, for example, food planning in an area.
- Local Food funding has, in some cases, led to activities being developed that were not envisaged in the original plan.
- School projects funded through the Local Food programme often show important additionality effects.

14. Lessons learned

Lessons learned can be identified in terms of both the projects themselves and in the development and delivery of future projects. In the case of the latter, there are messages for policy and the deliverers of Local Food: RSWT and the Local Food consortium.

14.1 LESSONS LEARNED IN TERMS OF THE PROJECTS THEMSELVES

A range of 'lessons learned' emerged from the case study interviews, including coordination, ownership, self-evaluation, aspirations and confidence. Some of the larger projects have an important coordinating and umbrella role to play; however, it seems that smaller projects operating under this umbrella are, perhaps, fearful of losing their individual identity and so have not always engaged fully with the aims of these umbrella organisations. For 'Capital Growth' (MLF000676), therefore, it is important that these smaller projects maintain a sense of ownership:

'How we deliver the message of what Capital Growth is and how we engage groups – Capital Growth is an umbrella, so should not lead to groups losing their identity; the team are reviewing language to reinforce this message'.

It is also important for the long-term potential of projects that those involved take ownership of what the project is about. In the case of 'Fruit-full Schools' (BLF000340), for example, it is clear that there is a strong sense of ownership within the schools involved, meaning that they are not overly dependent on the FFS staff. Likewise, for projects involved in producing food products it is important to demonstrate that growing vegetables is easier than they might have thought and that it is something that they want to do: 'you can't scare people into eating (or growing) vegetables' (MLF000030).

For others projects, having procedures in place that allow for self-evaluation on an early and on-going basis is a key lesson. Such procedures can improve delivery and effectiveness, and projects soon learn that some things work better than others and that other things, such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, can take considerable time. Thus, for the 'Permaculture LAND Project', early feedback suggested that the learning centre application form was too complicated; it was simplified and the number of applications increased. CRB checks are essential when working with children and people with learning difficulties; schools, in particular, have found it difficult to encourage volunteers because of this.

On occasions, the aspirations of projects may have been too optimistic in terms of what they thought they could achieve within the timeframe of the project. Related to this, it is unlikely that volunteers alone can achieve the ultimate goals of projects. For example, the allotment-based 'Re-CHARGE' project (MLF000200) felt that:

'In hindsight, the project needed five years funding for a full-time post – we hadn't realised the immensity of the task... The project has led to a realisation that things can be improved, but it will be difficult to continue with volunteers. Without funding, the work would not go so well and there is still so much to do'.

In a similar vein, a number of the smaller projects bemoaned the fact that they did not apply for larger grants. This is partly because they realised there is more that needs to be done than originally appreciated (e.g. SLF000113: 'Organic for All'), but also because there are considerable levels of administrative burden that have to be complied with, irrespective of the size of the grant received. This can put a disproportionate burden on what may be very small projects. Having said this, it is clear that smaller projects can generate confidence amongst those involved. Thus the 'Cripley Island Orchard' project (SLF000574) has successfully generated a sense of confidence and pride, so much so that the allotment association feels able to take on other projects and seek further funding: 'we've learned that we can do it, so we can do it again'.

14.2 LESSONS LEARNED FOR POLICY

Certain lessons for policy have been emerging from the case studies, either directly or indirectly. The first is that projects that rely on either voluntary and/or low wage labour are unlikely to be sustainable in the long-term. While the voluntary sector is adding significant value across the supported projects, this needs to be supported by paid positions; in other words, working together is

likely to be more effective than working on their own. In many cases, this would help those involved to be able to earn a more realistic wage; however, the problem is that projects may be unable to generate sufficient funds to do this. Thus policy needs to consider how to fund meaningful employment in projects that may not be able to generate sufficient funds themselves e.g. 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557) and 'Growing Penistone' (MLF001842).

A second lesson for policy is the need for on-going funding. Funding, such as Local Food, is always on a short-term basis, but many of the projects require longer-term input. In some cases, the initial funding may be sufficient to allow them to continue indefinitely, but in other cases the nature of the projects mean that they need continual funding. This may simply be to fund a project officer or to continue developing what the overall project is about (and what the Local Food funding has helped to develop). As always, continually applying for new sources of funding can lead to a stop-start process and the need to keep recreating projects. Clearly, this is demanding in terms of both energy and administration time. A good example is provided by the 'Food for Thought' project (MLF000816), where horticulture is helping a service provider to deliver its aims. While this project has enabled Prism to engage and retain youth project attendees as they move from pre- to post-16 education, this can only be maintained with ongoing funding for skilled staff. The concern is that they will be unable to continue with this work once their Local Food funding ends. There is frustration and concern amongst those involved in Prism:

'Somebody needs to look at what we are doing and see we are making a difference. We would hate to lose this land-based legacy. Where would all the troubled kids be without it? £50 million in the scheme of things is not a lot. Maybe the government could put just £6 million into ongoing funding into the successful projects, enabling them to continue. It costs £250,000 per person to stay in care for a year'.

Similar on-going funding is needed in schools participating in the Local Food programme. While many schools are attempting to incorporate food and healthy eating into their curriculum, support is very often piecemeal and reliant on committed individuals. This makes it hard to ensure continuity. Further support is required to enable schools to continue delivering this kind of food/ health-related education.

A third message for policy is that food provides an opportunity to engage people in a wider set of issues that face society today. Some of the larger projects such as 'Harvest Brighton and Hove' (BLF000374) and 'Capital Growth' (MLF000676) are clearly being successful at feeding into policy and helping to develop strategy. Thus there would be benefit in all local authorities engaging with those types of project that are focused on food. For example, evidence from the 'Hedgerow Harvest' project (MLF001074) suggests that a focus on fruitful hedgerows could be nationally significant. Likewise, if society determines that supporting localism is an important policy issue, there is a need to develop an integrated approach to food that can help facilitate tackling wider sustainability issues, such as resource use. This point is well made in the following description, where homelessness is the social issue that is being addressed, but growing food is the medium for addressing it:

'Working the land, growing food in a communal way with the right kind of skilled and sensitive support can be a very cost effective way to address issues for homeless people. More awareness, respect and support are needed for this kind of work. The personal stories of recovery and change in relation to working with the land alongside others in a non-judgemental, non-pressured environment are powerful. It also offers more opportunity for integration with other groups and the local community through shared physical work towards a shared goal'.

15. Reflections on the justification for funding

Although perhaps too early to reflect fully on future funding, it is important to try and understand the types of situation and project where funding may be required in the future. A few of these 'situations' emerged from the case studies. First, the future funding of core staff seems to be important for many projects. For example, the Staunton-on-Wye project (MLF001727) suggested that additional funding will be needed for the salaries of the gardener and cookery assistant because vegetables, bread and cookery book sales do not raise sufficient revenue. Without such funding, the project would receive less input and be less effective at delivering benefits to the children and to the families of the children. A similar situation exists at the 'Heeley City Farm' (MLF000089), where the Local Food project is able to raise just 10% of the funds it needs from food produce sales. The project manager argued that further funding would be required to employ its specialist staff, claiming that this would represent good value for money because the funds would be in the hands of an experienced organisation which is able to deliver on its strategic vision. In yet another situation, the 'Bolton Kitchen' (MLF001557) needs to pay its co-operative members more than the minimum wage, not least because staff are working very long hours (many on a voluntary basis) just to keep the café going. This leaves little time for marketing and increasing the number of customers who use the café.

A second type of situation relates to whether it is better to continue to fund proven and successful projects or to fund new projects. Examples of relative success stories from the first 29 case studies include the 'Hedgerow Harvest' project (MLF001074) and the 'SE17 Community Food Co-operative' (MLF001243). The former is a well-integrated project that has influenced the strategic direction of the Tree Council, which is actively working on how to find future funding. While volunteers often provide the labour to continue the work, further funding is needed to cover the costs of new plants and trees – if the project model is to be rolled out further. The latter has been working on strategic planning and fundraising in the hope that they will be able to build on the SE17 project and continue the café developments and training provision. InSpire has been able to reach out to vulnerable groups – people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people with disabilities, the unemployed, single parents etc – and to address food knowledge and healthy eating education, including its formal food hygiene certificate. It is clear that the community development approach has had a very positive impact on its participants and there is potential for such a model to be replicated elsewhere.

Finally, a few other 'situations' were mentioned by projects. These include the very good value for money provided by a number of 'Small' projects, suggesting that supporting similar projects in the future might be a good idea. However, in other cases it seems that, while Local Food funding has enabled structures to be developed and, in theory, projects to be self-financing, there is still a need for further injections of funding if real 'step-changes' are to be made. Development of a partnership approach was also mentioned as a way of ensuring project continuity and ensuring an on-going strategy.

IN BRIEF:

- Further funding is often required to employ key staff, mainly because projects do not generate sufficient funds to cover these costs.
- There needs to be a debate about whether it is better to fund proven projects, through continuation funding, or to fund new projects.
- A number of 'Small' projects have demonstrated notable outputs for relatively small levels of grant funding.
- It is difficult with an evaluation such as this to provide justification for future funding against specific projects.

16. Conceptualising the achievements of Local Food

Although a number of case studies are still to be undertaken, it would seem fairly clear that, if measured in terms of material outputs, Local Food's contributions are relatively modest. However, where Local Food funding really makes a difference is in terms of enabling projects, communities and individuals to build capacity and develop tools at a local level to make local food more accessible and affordable, both now and in the future.

Underpinning the notion of capacity is the concept of 'social innovation', described as being "mould-breaking ways of confronting unmet social need by creating new and sustainable capabilities, assets or opportunities for change"[2]. This idea has been developed further by the introduction of the term 'grassroots innovations', used to describe "networks of activists and organisations generating novel bottom-up solutions", which differ from top-down solutions in that they involve people at the community level "experimenting with social innovations" in order to satisfy human needs[3]. Innovation within this context is not so much to do with technological or economic advances (although these are undoubtedly important); it is about encouraging changes in social practice. This includes new forms of collaborative action, changes to attitudes, behaviour or perceptions, as well as developing new social structures and the capacity to build resilience at a community level. Inherent within this is the specific aim of increasing levels of participation, especially amongst those who had previously been excluded in some way; in so doing, those involved are empowered to take more control over their lives and to take a more active role in society. As such, framing the emerging trends and outputs of Local Food through the conceptual lens of 'capacities' can aid understanding of their wider significance.

In a number of case studies reported, it is apparent that food is primarily being used as a vehicle to enable wider community integration and capacity building. Thus there is a need to further disaggregate the notion of community capacity in order to understand more directly how individual project outputs can help build such capacity. This is a challenge for the analysis of

the remaining 21 case studies. Nevertheless, current thinking suggests that three types of capacity help to encompass the full range of outputs from the Local Food programme and to build community capacity.

16.1 MATERIAL CAPACITY

Material capacity relates to the direct outputs of land, people, events and the physical production of food. In the case of 'land', many of the projects have brought previously cultivated and/or new land into food production, usually involving relatively small areas of less than one hectare in the form of allotments, gardens, community farms and orchards. Local Food funding has also helped set up food cooperatives, farmers' markets and to purchase capital equipment such as poly-tunnels, thereby developing the infrastructural capacity of those involved. Linked with the development of land has been an increased production of food ranging from a few herbs grown in a window box to farm shops, box schemes and Community Supported Agriculture. While the quantities involved are comparatively small, it is clear they can make a significant difference at a local level.

In relation to 'people', most of the projects have involved quite large numbers of individuals, either directly or indirectly. This is partly through the creation of a relatively small number of paid jobs, but perhaps more significantly in providing a large number of volunteering opportunities. The latter have in many cases enabled people who in some way are unable to get a paid job to acquire skills and improve their levels of self-esteem, confidence and transferable skills, thereby putting themselves in a better position to enter the main job market in the future.

The third direct output relates to a wide range of 'events' that are organised by projects. These include training workshops, skill sharing and open days, involving adults, children, families with young children, young people, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health problems. Accredited food growing and cooking courses are also run by a number of projects. For example, one of the projects involves nine schools and over 260 children, with the aim of helping children understand the 'food journey' through visiting different stages of the food supply chain. These events are subsequently built upon in the schools themselves, with sessions run on food preparation, cookery and nutrition.

Material capacity can be defined as *delivering a range of direct outputs in relation to land, people and events, which provide the physical infrastructure to enable individual and community potential.*

16.2 PERSONAL CAPACITY

Projects funded through Local Food have provided a range of personal development opportunities, including for disadvantaged groups of people such as those with mental health difficulties or those who are homeless. In the case of one project, for example, the opportunity for homeless people to participate in gardening and to be outside has been very therapeutic for those involved. It has also enabled them to work side-by-side with volunteers and, in the process, raise awareness within the community about the homeless problem. The social interaction resulting from such projects is also important in terms of improving life skills, thereby helping to increase the confidence and self-esteem of those involved. It is clear that engaging people in food growing projects can help them to develop a range of technical skills, as well as build communication and team-working skills. It can also help build a sense of satisfaction and mental well-being through achieving something that is demonstrably worthwhile. This can help those involved realise that they have something to offer others, and the confidence to go out and try and find employment and enter the paid job market.

The development of personal capacity is also evidenced in the case studies' longer-term outcomes, principally in relation to continued community food growing, but also increased education, skills development and learning about food. The result is that more people have been empowered to access (both physically and in terms of their abilities) and afford (through being involved in growing food in some way) the potential benefits of fresh, locally-produced food, thereby contributing to their health and wellbeing. It has also raised awareness of what is involved in the production of food. This is notably the case with schoolchildren, who are being introduced to food in a way that engages their interest, something that rarely happens otherwise.

Personal capacity can be defined as *contributing to personal development and empowerment, including nurturing self-esteem and changing existing life-style patterns.*

16.3 CULTURAL CAPACITY

Engaging with the local community and ensuring their buy-in is key to the success of Local Food funded projects, as is embedding the idea of locally produced food within a community's culture. In this respect, the opportunities provided by many of the projects for people who previously did not know one another to grow food together have acted as important social meeting places where people from different backgrounds can get to know and understand each other better. Not only has this led to increased knowledge, skills and attitudes towards food at an individual level, but it has also provided the context for wider cultural changes within the community, with food acting as a social agent that builds assets at a community level.

Empowering local people to take some kind of ownership of a project through developing their capacity and skills base is a common aim of projects, as is the utilisation of existing assets such as school grounds being used as an allotment garden. A focus on 'learning by doing' underpins many projects and is seen to facilitate change at both a cultural and philosophical level. While the smaller projects are necessarily limited in their vision, some of the larger projects clearly have the potential to make wider organisational changes to the capacity of the communities in which they operate.

Although some projects stand very much on their own, others are linked more intimately to a wider context and network of organisations; not surprisingly, the larger projects (in terms of funding) are more likely to be part of a bigger network of different bodies. Thus one Beacon project involves a multi-agency steering group, as well as a partnership board that brings together members of a health trust and a local authority. In some cases, Local Food funding has facilitated bringing together what were disparate organisations in order to deliver something that would be difficult for individual organisations on their own. In other words, it has provided a necessary stimulus to encourage greater cooperation and coordination between organisations working within an area, thereby helping to build the overall cultural capacity of the communities involved.

Cultural capacity can be defined as *increasing social and organisational capacity, as well as fostering wider community awareness, engagement and ownership.*

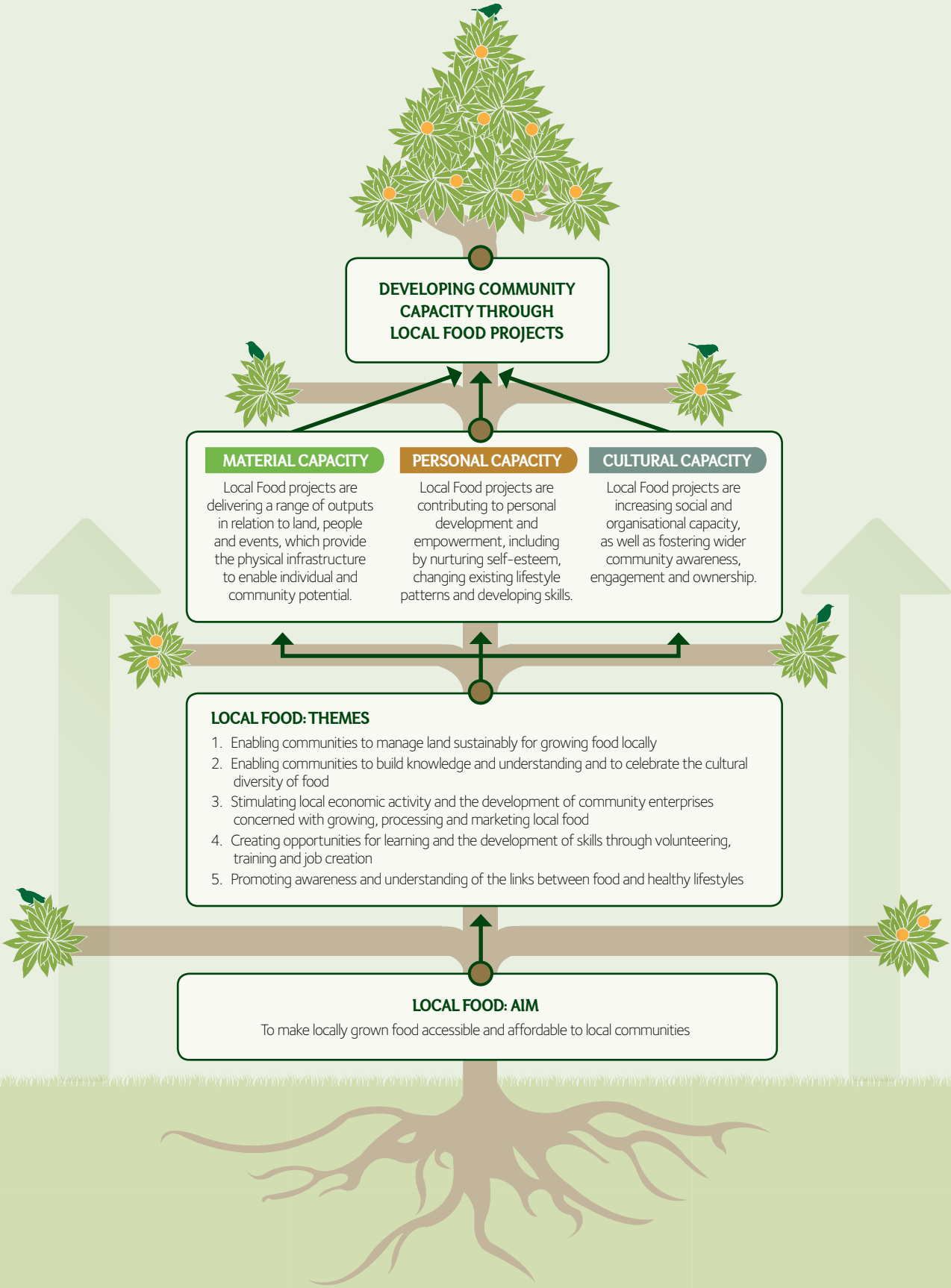
Local Food projects, through developing these different types of capacity, have contributed to the resilience of the communities involved and thereby the overarching aim of Local Food, which is to make 'locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities'. In the process, the five themes of Local Food have also been addressed in that:

- communities are better able to manage land sustainably for growing food locally (Theme 1);
- those involved have developed their knowledge and understanding of food, and have a better understanding of how other people relate to food (Theme 2);
- local economic activity in relation to community food enterprises has been stimulated through a combination of skills development, infrastructural improvements and a broader recognition of the benefits of local food at an organisational level (Theme 3);
- a wide range of opportunities for learning and the development of skills have been created, as well as some jobs (Theme 4); and
- awareness has been raised about the links between food and healthy lifestyles, through developing skills such as cooking and food growing and changing the culture of organisations such as schools and hospitals (Theme 5).

The diagram on page 47 illustrates how delivering the overall aim and five themes of Local Food has resulted from building 'capacity' at three levels and, in the process, helped develop the overall capacity and resilience of the communities involved.

The next round of case study interviews provides an opportunity to further develop and explore the importance of these three components of community capacity – using local food as the key vector of change.

Delivering the overall aim and five themes of Local Food has resulted in building 'capacity' at three levels and, in the process, has helped develop the overall capacity and resilience of the communities involved.



Case studies conducted so far (29 in total)

Project URN	Start and end Date	Theme	Grant Type	Type Class	Region	Project Type	Project Title	Location	Amount Awarded (£)
BLF000337	01.04.2010 31.03.2014	5	Beacon	Education and Learning	North East	Education & Learning	Our Hands on the Land	Wallsend	494,998.00
BLF000340	05.04.2009 04.04.2013	2	Beacon	Education and Learning	Multi Regional	School grounds	Fruit-full Schools	Winchester	457,485.00
BLF000374	01.06.2009 01.06.2013	1	Beacon	Community Growing	South East	Community food growing (Sharing best practice / networking)	Harvest Brighton and Hove	Brighton	500,000.00
BLF000385	01.10.2009 30.09.2012	3	Beacon	Community Growing	London	Community food growing	Sustaining Sutton	London	500,000.00
MLF000013	01.01.2009 31.12.2012	4	Main	Education and Learning	Multi Regional	Sharing best practice / networking	Permaculture LAND Project	Leeds	273,000.00
MLF000029	01.02.2009 31.07.2011	3	Main	Education and Learning	Yorkshire & Humberside	Celebrating food cultures	Manor Oaks Farm Enterprise	Sheffield	237,843.00
MLF000030	01.11.2008 30.11.2011	1	Main	Enterprise	North East	Community supported agriculture	Plot to Pot	Barnard Castle	141,334.00
MLF000050	01.06.2009 30.11.2013	1	Main	Education and Learning	North West	School grounds	Fresh Food for Fresh Pupils	Oldham	98,239.00
MLF000089	01.09.2008 31.08.2011	4	Main	Community Growing	Yorkshire & Humberside	Community food growing - City Farm	Heeley City Farm Local Food Project	Norton, Sheffield	263,073.00
MLF000177	01.11.2009 01.08.2011	5	Main	Education and Learning	West Midlands	Education and Learning	The Great Staffordshire Picnic	Rugeley	73,500.00
MLF000200	18.03.2009 18.03.2012	1	Main	Community Growing	East Midlands	Allotments	Re-CHARGE (Re- Choosing Health and Reviving Garden Environments)	Nottingham	62,838.00
MLF000325	01.09.2009 31.08.2012	1	Main	Community Growing	West Midlands	Community food growing	Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds	Solihull	94,140.00
MLF000409	01.07.2009 30.06.2012	3	Main	Enterprise	North East	Farmers' market	North East England Farmers' Markets Ltd (NEEFM)	Hexham	97,984.00
MLF000671	27.01.2010 26.01.2013	1	Main	Education and Learning	North East	Sharing best practice / networking	North Pennine Dales - Enterprising Food	Barnard Castle	299,600.00
MLF000676	21.09.2009 31.12.2012	1	Main	Community Growing	London	Community food growing	Capital Growth	London	299,999.00
MLF000810	15.03.2010 15.03.2012	1	Main	Community Growing	South West	Community food growing - Allotments	Chyan Community Allotments	Penryn	30,000.00
MLF000816	01.08.2009 30.07.2012	4	Main	Community Growing	Yorkshire & Humberside	City farms	Food for Thought	Bradford	265,136.00
MLF001074	01.04.2010 30.03.2012	2	Main	Education and Learning	South East	Celebrating food cultures	Hedgerow Harvest	London	159,000.00
MLF001243	01.04.2010 30.04.2012	4	Main	Enterprise (Ed. & Learning)	London	Catering	SE17 Community Food Cooperative	London	114,811.00
MLF001557	01.01.2010 30.07.2011	3	Main	Enterprise (Ed. & Learning)	North West	Catering	Bolton Kitchen	Bolton	69,730.00
MLF001727	01.10.2010 31.12.2013	5	Main	Education and Learning	West Midlands	School grounds	Kitchen and Garden development at Staunton-on-Wye Primary School	Staunton-on-Wye, Hereford	26,389.00
MLF001842	01.06.2010 31.05.2013	1	Main	Community Growing	Yorkshire & Humberside	Community food growing	Growing Penistone	Penistone, Sheffield	114,648.00
SLF000113	01.02.2009 28.02.2010	1	Small	Enterprise	North West	Box schemes	Organic for All	Bolton	9,603.00
SLF000482	27.03.2009 31.03.2010	1	Small	Community Growing	London	Community food growing	The Growing Kitchen Community	London	10,000.00
SLF000574	15.03.2009 15.03.2011	1	Small	Community Growing	South East	Allotments	Cripley Island Orchard	Oxford	10,000.00
SLF001033	01.11.2009 31.10.2010	4	Small	Community Growing	Eastern	Allotments	Jimmy's "Shakey Beans" Allotment	Cambridge	6,305.00
SLF001324	01.06.2010 01.06.2012	5	Small	Enterprise (Community Growing)	South East	Food co-ops	Community Eggshare	Bexhill	3,430.00
SLF001349	18.03.2010 31.03.2012	1	Small	Community Growing (Ed. & Learning)	South West	Community land management	Monkey Sanctuary Community Edible Garden	Looe	4,125.00
SLF001417	07.04.2010 07.10.2010	4	Small	Education and Learning	Yorkshire & Humberside	Education & Learning	Veggies for Victoria	Leeds	7,065.00

Acknowledgements

The CCRI and f3 would like to thank all those people from the various projects interviewed, for generously giving of their time and sharing their experiences. Without their support and engagement, this research would not have been possible. Thanks also to the team at RSWT, who have always been very responsive and helpful to the evaluation team.

References

1 The interviews for this case study were conducted in 2010. Since then, the project has made some progress with engaging local food producers.

2 p. 3 in Adams, D. and Hess, M. (2008). *Social innovation as a new administration strategy*. Proceedings of the 12th annual conference of the International Research Society for Public Management, Brisbane, 26-28 March. 12.03.2012, pp. 1–8.

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Authors

Dr James Kirwan, Professor Brian Ilbery, Dr Damian Maye (Countryside and Community Research Institute, Gloucester), and Joy Carey (f3, Foundation for Local Food Initiatives).

Concept & Design by Fresh* Ad Communications e: alf@freshcom.co.uk t: 0116 254 1351