

Developing and Promoting Local Food in Mold and its Hinterland

Executive Summary

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This piece of research has been commissioned by **Cadwyn Clwyd on behalf of partners including Flintshire County Council, Cittaslow Mold, Mold Town Council** and the Mold Food and Drink Festival. Cadwyn Clwyd is a Rural Development Agency servicing rural communities in Denbighshire and Flintshire. Cadwyn Clwyd has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.



Cronfa Amaeicyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Executive Summary

The Project

This research was commissioned by **Cadwyn Clwyd on behalf of key partners in Mold including Flintshire County Council**, Cittaslow Mold, Mold Town Council and Mold Food and Drink Festival. Cadwyn Clwyd is a rural development agency which delivers support to develop and diversify rural communities in Denbighshire and Flintshire. The overall aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the issues relating to accessing local produce, and the best methods of promoting local food through the following primary objectives:

- Create a comprehensive database of primary and food producers in Flintshire
- Establish what demand there is from food retailers, the hospitality sector and public procurement in the Mold area for local produce. Whether they would support a Local to Mold hub shop in the town centre and brand food as locally produced in their outlets
- Production of a business case for the Local to Mold hub shop based on evidence from the study
- Production of an analysis of the findings with recommendations as to the opportunities for the sustainable development, retail and marketing of locally produced food
- Identify where current funding opportunities exist – and map these against potential projects that will move the local food market forward.

The Strategic Context

There has been an escalating interest in local sourcing of food and drink recently. Indeed, local sourcing has developed as one of the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government and this is reflected through the *Local Sourcing Action Plan 2009*, *Food Tourism Action Plan 2009* and the *Farming, Food & Countryside strategy*. Following recent events in areas including North East Wales, there has certainly been an increase in awareness surrounding the issue. Attention is being given to the importance and benefits of purchasing locally produced food and drink.

It is argued that local purchasing benefits the local economy by allowing capital that is spent locally to be reinvested into local communities. Local scale investment would also lead to securing and strengthening local employment and reducing the impacts associated with the transport of goods from great distances. This, in turn, would lead to reducing carbon emissions, providing a less negative impact on our environment.

Past research within Wales also demonstrates that customer demand for local and Welsh produce is growing. A study by *Beaufort Research* for the Welsh Assembly Government in 2008 outlines cost, health and taste as the only 'motivators' ahead of local produce. Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs, reaffirms the importance of buying locally by stating that:

“People are now demanding to know where their food comes from and are seeking reassurances on production methods and animal welfare. They are concerned about the negative impact of food distribution systems on the environment and want their money to support producers and growers directly.”

It is therefore argued that local food produce has a major role to play within Wales, economically, socially and environmentally. Past research, coupled with the increasing emphasis on local purchasing suggests that there is an opportunity to raise the awareness of the importance of local produce with local businesses.

In response to the issues facing rural Flintshire, several activities have been undertaken to promote producers and to create demand for local produce in the county. In response to the issues facing rural Flintshire, the County Council aims to tackle some of the issues through the Rural Development Strategy for Flintshire (2007-2013). The strategy hopes to “...improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in rural Flintshire by developing and implementing appropriate regeneration initiatives.”

As part of the Rural Development Strategy, Flintshire County Council and Cadwyn Clwyd in conjunction with the Flintshire Rural Partnership have identified 4 strategic themes. This research will also provide valuable information for current activity across 3 of these themes: Development of the Tourism Industry, Sense of Place and Energy / Waste, Land Use, Forestry and Agri Food.

This, as well as other food projects (including *Cittaslow Mold and Mold Food & Drink Festival*) delivered by partner organisations, volunteers and overseen by the Local Action Group (LAG) will assist in raising awareness about local producers and the produce on offer, creating additional economic opportunities. Again current activity in Flintshire in promoting local produce fits in with the Welsh Assembly Government’s aims and objectives through the *Local Sourcing Action Plan – Food and Drinks for Wales*, which seeks to assist Welsh food and drink companies in their efforts to access local markets and also aims to make it easier for consumers to buy food and drink produced in Wales.

This research will provide a basis of information for future intervention and activity and help develop a better understanding of local businesses and their buying and selling patterns, as well as the procurement practices of the public sector in the region.

The table below highlights the key objectives within strategic documents including One Wales, The Food Tourism Strategic Action Plan and the Local Sourcing Action Plan, as well as how a food hub, related promotional activity and capacity building actions would contribute towards meeting these:

| Strategic Document | Objective | Contribution of Food Hub Activity in Terms of Actions |
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| 1. One Wales | To stimulate enterprise and business growth with provision available for social enterprises. | A food hub could be established as a new co-operative and social enterprise, aimed at making local food and drink more accessible. Possible new market for current |

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| | | <p>producers – dependent on demand, possibility that some food and drink micro businesses would grow and/or diversify.</p> <p>Creation of new jobs.</p> |
| | The promotion of tourism and what Wales has to offer. | <p>The targeting of hospitality / tourism businesses – encouraging increased use of local produce thus adding value to their businesses and enhancing the visitor experience.</p> <p>Promoting Mold and Flintshire as a food tourism destination.</p> |
| | Enhancing skills for jobs. | <p>Job creation as staff would be required to manage and run the hub. Possibility for volunteering opportunities – targeting the long term unemployed, would provide valuable work experience and additional skills.</p> <p>Supporting food and drink businesses that may have additional training / skills needs to stimulate business efficiency and growth.</p> |
| | Regenerating communities. | Social enterprises have social, financial and environmental objectives which is central to their day to day business operation. |
| | Encourage sustainability and reduce carbon emissions. | One central hub where information and local produce can be accessed; encourage businesses to buy local thus reducing food miles and encouraging sustainability. |
| | Support rural initiatives, promoting the food and drinks sector. | Primary aims of hub would be to support local food and drink producers, as well as promoting the diversity of produce available in the county. |
| | Promoting a rich and diverse culture. | Food and drink is inherent to Welsh culture and cultivating the sector within the county, encouraging tourism / hospitality providers to use local produce would add value to the tourism sector and visitor experience. |
| 2. Food Tourism Strategic | Improving the branding and marketing of the Welsh food and drink offer. | A central hub would raise awareness about the food and drink offer in the locality, and add value to |

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| Action Plan | | current activities such as the Mold Food and Drinks Festival and the Farmers Market. |
| | Marketing information about food and food outlets making it more widely available to visitors. | Creating promotional literature and information could be distributed widely via local community groups, tourism information centres, and visitor attractions so that both local consumers and tourists would be able to access information more readily about local food. |
| | Improve the capacity of existing food and tourism businesses to provide quality, locally produced food that is distinctive to their area, but in a way which provides for a sustainable, affordable and deliverable future. | Deliberate targeting and promotion of local food offer to hospitality, tourism and retail businesses. Encourage a change in purchasing patterns by demonstrating business benefits of local produce on the menu both financially and environmentally. |
| | Develop food supply chains | A central hub where businesses could purchase local produce as a one stop shop facility would make local food and drink more accessible. A pick up and delivery service would simplify the distribution of food and drink which has historically been a problem not only in North East Wales but across the whole of Wales. |
| 3. Local Sourcing Action Plan | Support the development of food hubs | Establishing a food hub in Mold would address some of the distribution issues faced by small producers to get their produce to market; and also for businesses in terms of accessing local produce. |
| | Encourage producers to diversify to meet local demand and respond to consumer trends. | Some producers may not be able to meet the demands of the hospitality and tourism sectors; the hub through joint working would be able to identify new trends and the needs of businesses and assist producers to diversify. |
| | Develop local food and community projects | There is a synergy in creating consumer demand for local produce and working with community groups to raise awareness about local food and drink. The hub could be involved in the Community Food Co-operative Programme which encourages access to affordable fruit and vegetables by selling them at wholesale prices. Also |

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| | | community allotment groups could sell produce through the food hub. |
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Headline Statistics

Primary and Food Producers

- A survey was undertaken with 121 primary and food producers, and 53 hospitality, tourism and retail businesses in Flintshire. A database of 121 businesses has also been produced and will be used as a source of information for communicating with producers about events, updates and the services on offer.
- 81% of the sample that took part in the survey were primary producers (98 businesses) and 21% were food producers (26 businesses). The total exceeds 100% as some businesses classed themselves as both primary and food producers. Only 7% of the overall total were organic, and 87% employed between 0-9.
- 53% of the businesses were beef producers, 33% were dairy and 24% sheep producers. Flintshire is heavily dominated by meat and dairy producers with very few fruit and vegetable growers in the county.
- A large proportion of primary produce (61 producers responded) is sold in Mold / Flintshire / within 30 mile radius mainly via the livestock market.
- Baked goods, cakes and confectionary is the most popular food product made in the county, accounting for 11% of outputs followed by poultry at 7% and meat also at 7%.
- The main markets for food producers were the UK at 12% (calculated as a percentage of the overall sample), Flintshire at 8% and North Wales 7%.
- 27% of food producers anticipated changes in their businesses in the future including moving into supplying more hospitality businesses; increased internet sales and attending events.

Headline Statistics

Hospitality, Retail and Tourism Businesses

- 53 businesses took part in the survey of which 73.6% of the businesses surveyed employed between 0-9, and the majority of respondents were restaurants, pubs and B&B's.
- 77% of the sample stated that they sourced Welsh produce with 49% of food and drink sourced in Flintshire, 42% in North East Wales and 40% in the UK. Businesses were able to provide multiple answers dependent on the produce they purchased.

- The main drivers for purchasing local / Welsh food and drink products amongst the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors were to support the local producers / economy (62% of the overall survey sample of 53 businesses), with 57% feeling that local/Welsh produce was of a better quality and 53% stating that the produce is fresher.
- 40% of the whole sample surveyed had experienced sourcing problems, and when asked what the main issues were, price was a key factor, followed by availability and regular supply.
- The two key constraints for businesses in purchasing local produce identified when conducting the research were price and availability of produce. Price seemed to be an issue for many of the respondents, even for the businesses who stated that they wish to source more local produce; which could be down to perception. Also businesses felt that there is a limited range of local and Welsh produce available. One respondent argued that food producers need to be more effective in promoting their produce, and need to actively target local businesses.

Conclusions & Recommendations

For ease of reference, the following conclusions and recommendations have been grouped in line with the original research objectives as outlined in the brief. Indicative costs have also been included where possible for any recommendations to be carried out.

1 Establish what demand there is from food retailers, the hospitality sector and public procurement in the Mold area for local produce. Whether they would support a Local to Mold hub shop in the town centre and brand food as locally produced in their outlets.

Conclusions

- ✓ Restaurants, pubs and B&B's are the most likely businesses in and around the Mold area to purchase local produce, and therefore would be key target markets for any food hub.
- ✓ 77% of all businesses surveyed stated that they sourced Welsh food and drink products for their business. This is extremely encouraging and demonstrates that local businesses do seek and use Welsh produce within their businesses.
- ✓ When asked 49% of respondents (based on a sample response of 41 businesses) sourced their produce that were produced or grown in Flintshire, with 42% sourcing produce from North East Wales.
- ✓ The main drivers for purchasing local / Welsh food and drink products by 62% of the sample is to support the local economy / producers; 57% felt that the quality is better with 53% stating that the produce is fresher and 42% stated that consumers demand local produce.
- ✓ Key issues and barriers to sourcing local produce noted by the sample include the price (25%); availability (23%) and regular supply (13%). There was a perception amongst the sample surveyed that Welsh produce is more expensive.
- ✓ During the survey and focus groups, it became inherently clear that the ease of purchasing food and drink was important such as having everything under one

- roof and access to a directory of local producers. No doubt ease of access would be a factor in determining whether local businesses would use a local food hub.
- ✓ The business benefits of using local produce noted by the businesses include, meeting consumer demand; potential for repeat business and to satisfy Visit Wales graders during assessment visits.
 - ✓ The hub should be seen as an intermediary facility or an introduction agency that brings together producers, the hospitality, retail and tourism sectors as well as ultimately consumers to promote the development of the local supply chain, as well as developing a political agenda around an alternative food system in north east Wales.
 - ✓ A number of practical considerations will also need to be examined in terms of the location of the food hub – that it was convenient and accessible; the range and type of produce available; and how local food is defined in terms of geography.
 - ✓ 72% of local tourism, hospitality and retail businesses from the overall sample of 53 stated that a food hub would be beneficial to their business. The key benefit as stated by 38% of the sample surveyed was that it would be convenient to have everything under one roof making local food and drink more accessible.
 - ✓ Competitive pricing was deemed the most essential element of a food hub, followed by quality, availability and accessibility. Even though a food hub might have all the essential elements, the hub would need to be managed effectively to ensure repeat custom, and that staff were also knowledgeable.
 - ✓ Whilst 26% of the businesses surveyed felt that the hub should be a shop; attitudes had shifted during the focus group, with the participants stating that a shop would displace existing businesses. It was also noted during the focus groups that businesses envisaged the hub would service both the trade and local consumers, but that it had a predominantly wholesale function. The ordering process should be simple and that a delivery service was also offered.
 - ✓ The producers when surveyed felt strongly that the food hub should be a producer led co-operative, providing opportunities to promote local producers within the locality and across the border. Producers felt that a co-ordinator would need to be employed to market and promote the local food offer, as they didn't feel that they had the required expertise to do this.
 - ✓ Producers felt that it would be essential that a food hub was able to disseminate information to consumers about local food; be able to bridge gaps in the market and afford opportunities for networking between producers. The ability to access business support was also seen an important function of the food hub for producers.
 - ✓ Flintshire food and drink producers on the whole do not actively seek tendering opportunities, and even those who have experience of tendering had mixed responses. Those who had undergone the formal tendering process would've appreciated more information about the client needs; and they would've undertaken the process differently next time round.
 - ✓ As an increasing number of public sector organisations adopt stricter procurement processes, it would seem from discussions with Flintshire producers that more needs to be done to promote these opportunities and the provision of practical support in terms of the tendering process and necessary requirements. Consortia procurement processes are increasingly being adopted where organisations work in partnership to source goods and services, and can be seen as favouring established and larger producers. It is likely that small producers

- might lose out unless they can either work in partnership with other businesses to compete, or become sub contractors supplying the larger distributors or producers.
- ✓ The local food hub could facilitate these opportunities and encourage producers to form a consortium to bid for public sector contracts.
 - ✓ It would seem from the producer's limited experiences, that there are no standardised procurement processes within some individual schools and colleges and the decision makers are free to purchase from local suppliers. This informal arrangement has worked well for the local producers, which could be a potentially untapped market for the smaller producers and for a local food hub.
 - ✓ There were mixed reviews to the Local to Mold logo mainly due to the following factors: lack of clarity as to what was meant by local to Mold; some felt it was too niche a market limited to a relatively small geographical area; a small number of hospitality businesses stated that they would welcome a logo and felt that visitors would welcome it also.
 - ✓ From the lessons learnt of other food logo schemes, strong brand guidelines and sufficient financial investment in the execution of the brand will be required to ensure the sustainability and longevity beyond any public funding period.

Recommendations

- a) The research findings should be disseminated to businesses in the area in a concise and effective way. As ongoing consultation and communication will continue to be important in terms of raising awareness, it will also ensure that businesses feel that their views are being heard.
- b) With regards to the 'Local to Mold' slogan and logo, further work is required to define and provide a criteria in terms of what is meant by local to Mold in terms of the geography and the product. Whilst there was some resistance by mainly the producers to adopting it, if executed and planned correctly it could be an effective point of sale tool in retail outlets. It could be expanded to incorporate other towns within Flintshire e.g. Local to Holywell, with the number of food miles noted next to the logo on shelving, as stickers and information about the scheme available at tills. Estimated costs to compile branding guidelines can vary from £1500.00 - £2000.00.
- c) Informing businesses of future opportunities in supplying the public sector within the area could allow businesses to prepare for the process and to consider any necessary support e.g. tendering or advice on any policies and accreditations. Joint working between either the new hub facility or Cadwyn Clwyd with the Welsh Assembly Government's Supplier Development Service could provide an important link between public sector organisations and businesses working in the food sector. It could also prove beneficial to establish a local project working with the public and private sector as an intermediary with the aim of encouraging local participation.
- d) The hub and any other related activity should not displace any existing local projects or duplicate mainstream schemes that are currently in operation, but add value.

2 Production of a business case for the Local to Mold hub shop based on evidence from the study.

- √ The following model is proposed within this report as a food hub, which is not a traditional shop retail facility, as there was some unease amongst both producers and ultimately local businesses about the possible displacement of other retailers within the town. Its functions are also illustrated in the diagram below, and its key features would be:
- As a physical hub established in one location, that would be run as a social enterprise and formed as a co-operative run by local producers.
 - To increase accessibility to local food for businesses as a 'one stop shop' facility where local produce can be accessed under one roof, as well as the provision of information about local products in the form of a directory.
 - Develop an online and telephone ordering facility, as well as a delivery service.
 - A clear strategy for the branding, marketing and information exchange about local food and drink.
 - Deliberate methods engaged through events and information sharing between producers and the hospitality, retail and tourism sectors to encourage increased purchase of local food and drink.
- √ There is a commitment and vision by the steering group to establish a local food hub, and a consensus through their professional capacity working within the food and tourism sectors that there is a need to develop a sustainable model to promote the local food and drink offer. They also acknowledge that increased capacity in terms of staff time is required to co-ordinate the development of the hub and the promotion of local food and drink; and that public funds will need to be sought to finance the required developmental work.
- √ The key Welsh strategic documents and the potential contribution of a Local to Mold food hub to their objectives have been explored in the report, and demonstrate that a facility promoting local producers, stimulating business growth and improving the local supply chain network would be welcomed particularly by the Welsh Assembly Government.



- ✓ As a result of discussions with producers and local businesses, there is a need to further promote local producers and to make local food and drink more accessible. Any ordering and distribution facility would need to be responsive to the needs of the trade, and be able to sufficiently supply local businesses.
- ✓ The producers felt that a hub should be established as a social enterprise and run as a co-operative by producers. This would be a similar model to the award winning Pembrokeshire Produce Direct scheme which has been established as an online local food supermarket that delivers direct to consumers, which has been lauded as an example of best practice.
- ✓ The food hub model as illustrated above is designed to be flexible in terms of its central function, but the local businesses were equivocal that any local food hub facility would need to be easy in terms of ordering and that it acted as a 'one stop shop' with produce under one roof.
- ✓ Regardless of whether a hub facility is developed, developmental work such as marketing, promotion and the capacity building of the food and drinks sector as well as the local businesses will be essential to ensure the sustainability of the sector, and in the promotion of Mold and Flintshire as a food tourism destination.

- √ It will be consumers that will drive the demand for local food, either through their weekly shop, as visitors staying in B&B's / hotels or dining out. Of the relatively small amount of research available into North East Wales or Welsh consumer purchasing habits in relation to local or Welsh food, awareness of and the purchase of Welsh food is on the increase.
- √ The estimated cost of a physical food hub based on renting premises and other associated activities such as marketing and the capacity building is £1,192,400.00 over a three year period. Please note that these are indicative costs only.

Recommendations

- a) If a food hub was to target consumers, further research would be required into the potential demand for local produce, purchasing patterns as well as investigate the socio economic profiles of consumers and visitors to the area.
- b) There are insufficient numbers of producers and range of products currently in Flintshire alone to justify a wholesale or retail hub, and it would need to stock produce from other counties. Further investigation is required into the range and number of producers in the neighbouring counties of Denbighshire and Wrexham, to ensure that a hub could meet the demands of the trade / consumer.
- c) Study tours of other food hubs would be beneficial, and an opportunity to gain first hand insight into operational issues, lessons learnt and sustainability issues.
- d) There is a need to map out existing business support provision and promote the findings of this research in order to plan a co-ordinated approach which would address the issues within the sector and thus avoid duplication. The group should continue to establish strong working relationships with other support agencies in order to continually develop their understanding of the services available to businesses. Continuing to understand the type of assistance available outside the County would be of benefit as many businesses seek support and attempt to develop contacts further afield.
- e) It is recommended that funding is sought to employ a full time officer that would be able to co-ordinate and develop the food hub, as well as any marketing activities to start promoting the food offer. To attract a suitably qualified candidate with the relevant marketing and project co-ordination experience, the salary range could be from £25,000 to £30,000 per annum plus any relevant overhead costs, employer costs, pension contributions and travel. Having an officer may save on external consultant costs if they are experienced in compiling marketing and promotional campaigns, as well as conducting market research.
- f) Further investigation will be required into the current local distribution channels operate e.g. direct sales, wholesalers and retailers. A better understanding of these is likely to create further opportunities in terms of the supply and distribution of local food and drink.
- g) If a food hub model led by producers is to be adopted, there will need to be further discussions held to promote the opportunity and to seek out whom and how many producers would be interested in being involved in the project.
- h) This research study has provided a baseline of information within the Flintshire area. Many businesses also stated whilst completing the surveys that it had raised their awareness of the need to support the local economy. It would be interesting to undertake a similar survey in the future – which could form a part of any monitoring and evaluation of the food hub and related activities - to test

- whether the businesses' awareness and purchasing behaviours have changed over time.
- i) The stakeholder list needs to be revised and consist of key strategic and local influencers such as the Welsh Assembly Government, Tourism Partnership North Wales and key local business people who can act as spokespeople and advocates of Flintshire produce. The focus group participants would be an excellent starting point.
 - j) A full business plan for a food hub will need to be completed or commissioned, with a full cost analysis and cash flow forecasts compiled. Sustainable exit strategies should be thoroughly analysed to ensure that the food hub can be self sustaining when any public funding period ends.

3 **Production of an analysis of the findings with recommendations as to the opportunities for the sustainable development, retail and marketing of locally produced food.**

- ✓ When examining promotional activities in other areas across Wales, the majority have dedicated staff working full time on promoting and support local producers, and have strong strategic support by either the Welsh Assembly Government or Local Authorities.
- ✓ The types of events organised across other areas of Wales are varied, but are mainly targeted at the hospitality, retail and tourism businesses to try and generate more interest in local food and drink. These include Meet the Producer events where businesses are invited to sample and purchase local produce; speed networking events again where businesses can network and actively promote their produce. Meet the Buyer events are also popular, where food and drink producers showcase their produce to key buyers such as large local businesses, public sector organisations retailers, larger multiples and distributors. Again the focus is on deliberately seeking new routes to market by bringing businesses and buyers and or key decision makers together.
- ✓ Other areas in Wales examined in this report have or are trying to create a culture where local food is seen as an important contributor to the local economy. Working across counties to promote the food and drink offer will afford additional opportunities to pool resources and strengthen any promotional activity.
- ✓ Any successful promotional campaign is reliant on utilising a variety of communication techniques including mobile and internet technology. The table below features some possible promotional activities that could be undertaken utilising a variety of communication methods within and outside of Flintshire.
- ✓ Due to the close proximity of Flintshire to Cheshire, cross border activity and joint working should be maximised and capitalised on to generate new routes to market, especially in promoting the local food hub and the local food offer. There is also a range of printed media available which target businesses and consumers just either side of the border that could be targeted to generate increased PR.
- ✓ The geographical diversity of the county needs to be capitalised to promote the food tourism offer such as the coast, market towns and designated AONB, promoting quality producers and eating establishments that may be located in places of interest or potential tourism honey pots. A bank of case studies could be developed which demonstrates best practice and provide inspiration to other

businesses to follow suit either to start their own food production business or to adopt more local produce on the menu.

| Method | Activity / Suggestions | Audience |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Advertising | <p>Community announcements on local radio. Local and Welsh press.</p> <p>Border press such as Cheshire Life, Country and Border Life.</p> <p>Lifestyle magazines.</p> <p>Trade press such as The Grocer, catering and hospitality magazines.</p> <p>Tourism publications e.g. bedroom browsers.</p> <p>Use mobile technology to develop smartphone apps to promote key towns in Flintshire which could include listings of local producers, restaurants offering local food, accommodation, pubs and retails outlets.</p> <p>Web and viral advertising – target websites that fit the visitor demographic.</p> | Consumer (local and visitor) and Trade |
| Sales | <p>Presentations to partner organisations.</p> <p>Linkages with cross border and Welsh organisations within the food, drinks, tourism, hospitality and retail sectors.</p> <p>Capacity building within the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors to promote the benefits of having local food on the menu e.g. menu clinics, compiling a local food specials board, creating dishes using local produce, how to sell local food.</p> <p>Target consumers to promote the concept of local food, the produce and producers in the county. Generating more demand.</p> <p>Presence at consumer and trade events to distribute information e.g. producer guides, information about the county / area. Sampling local produce on the stands and provide information on where to buy.</p> | Support organisations, the trade and consumers. |
| Sales promotion | Mold / Flintshire / North East Wales producer stand at organised trade shows and consumer | Trade and consumer. |

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| | <p>events in England and Wales (both food and tourism). Opportunity to sample, taste and purchase produce.</p> <p>Local to Mold food voucher scheme for consumers / visitors – work with producers, the multiples and local retailers to provide money off vouchers for local produce; competitions to win hampers, food experiences at local restaurants / hotels, overnights stays.</p> <p>Link into accommodation websites such as Laterooms and Trip Advisor to undertake promotional campaigns to highlight the food and tourism offering e.g. accommodation, food offering and food events.</p> | |
| PR | <p>Capitalise on good news stories to generate interest e.g. local food heroes, case studies of successful businesses.</p> <p>Use advertising as a lever to generate copy / editorial within the press – maximise coverage and return on investment.</p> | Trade and consumer. |
| Campaign message and image | <p>Ensure that any branding, literature and photography reflects the regional area in terms of e.g. geography.</p> <p>Strong theme that conveys the area and the regional food offer.</p> <p>Demonstrate the diversity of the county in terms of geography; dispel any myths about it being a predominantly urban county and the diverse range of food and drink products available – rural v urban, market towns, Moel Famau the designated AONB. Also convenience in terms of location to north west Wales and north west England.</p> <p>Link into national campaigns such as British Food Fortnight.</p> | Trade and consumer. |
| Direct Marketing | <p>Establish a strong and current database of contacts within the food, tourism, hospitality and retail sectors. Establish a customer relationship management system (CRM) to track contact and communication with businesses, and which events they have attended etc.</p> | Trade and consumer. |

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| | <p>Interactive website with forums and video streaming linked to email communication and updates via e-newsletters.</p> <p>Direct mail by post.</p> | |
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Recommendations

- a) An immediate action point is the need to create a promotional plan to promote local producers within the county and beyond to both the trade and to consumers. Funding will also be required to execute any promotional activity.
- b) Promotional activity should be focused on creating awareness and making information about local producers, food and drink products more accessible and if possible that it is in a suitable format that could target the trade, local consumers and visitors / tourists to the area.
- c) Business to business activity should focus on fostering networks through informal group sessions and event such as Meet the Producer type activity to encourage more awareness of producers amongst the tourism, hospitality and retail businesses. Also masterclasses on local and Welsh food and drink would raise awareness of the range of produce available.
- d) In terms of promoting the area, local food and provenance - especially amongst businesses within the tourism, hospitality and food retail sectors - training for staff within these establishments on how to promote local produce would be beneficial. This could also incorporate sessions on how businesses can use local produce as a marketing tool for the benefit of their business e.g. on their menus, websites and literature. It would greatly assist in raising awareness amongst consumers of the local producers and the food and drink that's available in the area.
- e) Closer linkages should be made with Tourism Partnership North Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government's Food Fish and Marketing Development Division in North Wales to ensure there is strategic backing for any activity. There would also likely to be opportunities to undertake joint promotional activity that could raise the profile of Flintshire producers in a cost effective way.
- f) Price will always be a key factor when considering local sourcing. Businesses should be made aware of other important factors such as quality, reduced food miles and the positive effect on the environment and how they can promote this to their customers. Past evidence shows that price is not always a hurdle and case studies should be used to highlight the benefit of local sourcing.

4 Identify where current funding opportunities exist – and map these against potential projects that will move the local food market forward.

- √ The following funding streams have been identified as potential avenues to fund future activity:
Rural Development Plan (Supply Chain Efficiency Scheme & Axis 3), Welsh Assembly Government – The aim of the RDP is to improve the competitiveness of the rural and agricultural economy through innovation and the development and establishment of micro businesses. The running costs of a hub e.g. staff costs; overheads; marketing; running events and the capacity building of the food and drinks sector would be considered under this scheme pending discussions with the relevant Agri-Food Executives within the Welsh Assembly Government.

Any proposed support mechanisms would need to demonstrate that there is no duplication with other local or mainstream providers.

Rural Development Plan (The Co-operation Fund), Welsh Assembly Government – This fund will assist in the development of cross county (within Wales) and cross border initiatives to share best practice and to plug any current gaps in provision especially in the development of the food and drinks sector. The funding could be used to fund staffing costs, any initial developmental work, events and marketing. This fund is deemed as more flexible. Following initial discussions, the Welsh Assembly Government are keen to learn more about any proposed developments in Flintshire and if there are any opportunities to fund joint activities with Denbighshire and Wrexham, as well as targeting counties across the border in England.

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation – The foundation will support food related projects that will influence policy as well as improve access to appropriate diverse and sustainable food where availability is limited; enhance the understanding of the impact of food on wider well-being as well as demonstrate the positive role of food in a social context. This fund would probably suit community engagement activity as well as healthy eating initiatives; which could be seen as adding value to the central activity of a hub as well as contributing to the triple bottom line of a social enterprise co-operative.

The Big Lottery and the Welsh Assembly Government, Community Asset Transfer – There is capital and revenue funding available for the transfer of assets from public to community ownership, and could be used to fund a building for a food hub.

Communities Facilities and Activities Programme, the Welsh Assembly Government – This scheme will provide funding for the provision of facilities for activities that engage local people and help in the regeneration of communities. It is a capital only fund and is available for physical works to buildings and related professional fees for renovation works. This fund might be suitable in the development of a physical presence for the food hub.

- √ A mixture of funding streams will probably be likely to be required to finance any hub and promotional activity, with the Rural Development Plan the most likely funding avenue as well as the Welsh Assembly Government's CFAP scheme for capital costs and The Big Lottery's Community Asset Transfer scheme if a redundant public building can be identified for transfer to community ownership.
- √ It is highly unlikely that Rural Development Plan funds will finance retail activities as retail businesses are generally either not eligible for European funds or the funding available is very limited.

Recommendations

- a) Following a meeting with local producers to gauge interest in establishing a food hub co-operative, discussions should be held with the relevant local Agri-Food Executive Officer within the Welsh Assembly Government to determine sources of funding available, how much is likely to be available to finance such a project and what they would be able to finance. This should ideally precede any business planning exercise, as various projects and funding bodies will have their own application process and forms to complete.
- b) As noted in the report, there is an insufficient range of produce purely from Flintshire to fully meet the needs of local businesses; and there will need to be

partnership working with Denbighshire and Wrexham to develop a sufficient supplier base. This could also be extended to promote the food tourism offer regionally, and funding should be sought to develop promotional activities to further promote the region's food offer.

- c) If finance is sought to develop a community project within the hub's activities, the project should complement and add value to business activities and organisational objectives. This will avoid any potential confusion in the marketplace and ensure that activities don't veer too far from the original mission and aims.