Community Food Initiatives North East - Dave Simmers

CFINE Purpose: To improve health and well-being and contribute to regeneration in Aberdeenshire and Murray. Increase consumption of fruit and vegetables within areas of disadvantage. The work programme is developed based on the needs of low-income families.

Resources: Team of 40 volunteers, 2 vans, lease refrigerated van from FareShare

1. CFINE Ltd – Registered charity – supports 40+ community food outlets, operates "Fast Fruit Scheme", FareShare project
2. CFINE Enterprise Ltd – Social Enterprise – commercial enterprise whereby fruit is supplied to 30+ companies in the workplace. Quality produce is bought direct from wholesalers. Produce is sold at competitive prices in the community and at more expensive rates to companies. Profits are gift-aided back into the charity. Company is currently supported by 20 agencies – 5 year goal is for this enterprise to be self-sufficient.

Discussion:
1. Awareness – Health Promotion messages are not having an impact in low-income communities. Current hysteria re obesity is having a negative impact. Health/nutirition messages must be simplified. Health promotion campaigns must be positively enforced through targeted, community supported programmes.
2. Sustainability – totality of enterprise, airmiles etc, need for discussion with local producers to promote local food. But small staff with volunteers, therefore priorities are subject to resources.
3. Social Enterprise – the market is currently ripe for social enterprise. Social enterprise model (rather than local government) must develop and invest back into the community. Social enterprise generates profits at the same time as working towards the achievement of social goals.
4. Fruit & Vegetables – future of business is in fresh, healthy produce, sexy market, opportunity to secure contacts, trade and invest profits for social purpose.
5. Regeneration – must work with retailers but only in real partnerships. CFINE fruit & veg is competitive with local Tescos and it benefits the community.
6. Challenges – dependent on grants, security for poorer people, staff turnover, personality dependent. Need for leadership and a fusion between business and social goals.