

The workshop considered three main questions:

- 1) Whose responsibility is food access?
 - Food access appears to be on the edge of lots of partners' 'maps' (areas of responsibility) but essentially no-one is accountable.
- 2) Why has there been a restructuring of local retail?
 - Supermarkets selling a lifestyle and marketing this idea.
- 3) Why do community food projects exist?
 - There is less healthy food available in communities – so we are filling a void.

The story in Sandwell

The Sandwell Food Access team comes from the position that access to healthy, affordable food is a basic human right, and one which governments should pay attention to.

Angela Blair travelled around a third of the borough to explore food availability. She realised that while access to any food was high, access to healthy food was low. Food access projects in Sandwell currently act as a disjointed network, and have produced a series of maps to understand the geography of food access in Sandwell. In addition: The network is working with public procurement to try and build the ability to purchase locally-produced food.

- It's important to persuade the partners to take responsibility for policy areas.
- 'Slimwell' slimming club and the cooking sessions are a success
- The Local Shop Alliance system is being developed: The idea is to support local shops selling fresh produce. While a model shop has refrigeration for fresh food, this isn't feasible for 300 projects, so they are working with Cash & Carry to ensure frequent delivery of fresh produce. So far 37 shops are 'signed up' to the Alliance, creating a new market for fresh produce. To be signed up means to commit to selling a minimum amount of fresh food bought through the Cash & Carry.

Next steps:

- 1) Restructuring retail: Retail should encompass more than just supermarkets and should sell a village lifestyle.
- 2) We need to influence policy and planning and develop responsibility through existing or new partnerships
- 3) More meaningful partnerships need to develop between food workers and consumers. Retailers need to know this is happening, and to be confident about demand.

Link to: Website: <http://www.sandwellpartnership.co.uk>