

A Healthy Local Food System For Manchester



Summary report on the Bentley Bulk Healthy Local Food (HeLF) Project developed in South Central Manchester in 2003.

- Feasibility study and test-pilot
- Key Design Features of the HeLF model
- Social Enterprise
- Food Futures Manchester and HeLF

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Bentley Bulk Local Food Project

- Bentley Bulk was an innovative community food project based in South Central Manchester during 2003.
- The initiative was designed and developed by Manchester Permaculture Group, in partnership with Bentley House Tenants Association. It was financed through a mix of £4,000 small grants, Workers Education Association tuition fees, and voluntary investment.
- A *feasibility study* was conducted which resulted in the conception of the *Healthy Local Food (HeLF) System*, and a 6-month test-pilot.
- During the test-pilot approximately 50 people benefited from the different aspects of the project, including:
 - Education and awareness,
 - Practical training and experience in growing and distributing food
 - Good access to affordable, healthy and local produce.

Key design features of the Healthy Local Food (HeLF) Model

*The aim of the Bentley Bulk Local Food Project was to stimulate a process of **sustainable community development** through the creation of a **healthy local food system**.*

- The system was formed, by linking different components of the local food economy in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Components of the system included:
 - Consumers – members of the local community
 - Food Retail – the Bentley Bulk Community Co-op
 - Food Production – Glebelands organic market garden in Sale
- The project components were connected into a viable whole, by a local trading system called the Bentley Bob.
- The whole process was supported by an education Programme based on Community Economics and Local Food Issues.
- Participants received training and practical work-experience in aspects of food production and managing the community co-op.

Social Enterprise

The commercial food model is based upon providing food to the consumer in the most cost-efficient manner. It is based upon a principle of *more-for-less*, and involves:

- Paying lowest salaries wherever possible
- Employing small numbers of suitably skilled full-time workers
- Obtaining goods and services from the cheapest suppliers

The HeLF System is a social model and takes a very different approach to the commercial food model:

- The System is viewed as a whole so all components are taken into consideration. *Local Fare Trade* is practiced, meaning that local suppliers are preferred, and ethical prices are paid. There is an underlying principle of co-operation throughout all aspects of the project.
- Community engagement is more important than cost-efficiency, and procedures are designed to engage the local community in the Food System in as many ways as possible.
- Consumers are required to pay a *Local Fare Trade Premium* for their produce, in recognition of the value added by community engagement and supporting sustainable local food production.
- Low-income residents in particular are encouraged to participate in the System and earn credit (Bentley Bobs). Premium prices are therefore made affordable, as produce is part-purchased using the credit they have earned.

The model is unlike other community food co-ops, which aim to use volunteers to provide food to their members as cheaply as possible:

- Prices are not as cheap because the *HeLF System* rewards participants with credits.
- The credit system however provides incentive for local people to participate.
- It also ensures that those that contribute the most receive the greatest benefits.

Sustainable Communities, Education and Awareness

All aspects of the social enterprise are supported by an Education and Awareness programme, which teaches people about Fare Trade, Sustainable Community Development, and the workings of the Healthy Local Food System.

The Bentley Bob Trading System



- The different components of the Bentley Bulk HeLF System were connected into a viable whole, by a local trading system called the Bentley Bob. Energy and resources circulate in one direction, whilst local credits called Bentley Bobs circulate in the other direction.
- Within the HeLF System, participants from the local community earned Bentley Bob credits by working in the field at Glebelands market garden growing organic fruit and veg.
- In response Glebelands earned credit by selling fresh produce to the Bentley Bulk Community Co-op.
- To close the cycle, the Bentley Bulk earned credit by selling a wide range of produce to the local community, part cash / part Bentley Bobs.

Bentley Bulk Community Co-op



**bringing fresh
local food into your
community at a price
you can afford**



Based in south-central
Manchester, providing
local people with organic
and non-organic produce

Working with local communities, and food producers,
we encourage people without jobs to participate in
the process of bringing food to their table



**Bentley
Bulk**
save cash
make friends
get involved ...

Publicity from Bentley Bulk Local Food Project 2003

Bentley Bulk

We provide boxes of healthy, affordable produce through a network of collection points, and we deliver in the Hulme area. Orders are made in advance and are available on Tuesdays.

We encourage people who are not working to participate in the process of bringing food to their tables, by helping to grow food, preparing boxes for customers, and handling orders, or by providing goods and services for other members.

In return for their time, participants receive Bentley Bobs which they can use to purchase goods and services from the Co-op.

We provide courses in local food issues and community economics.



Agents Required

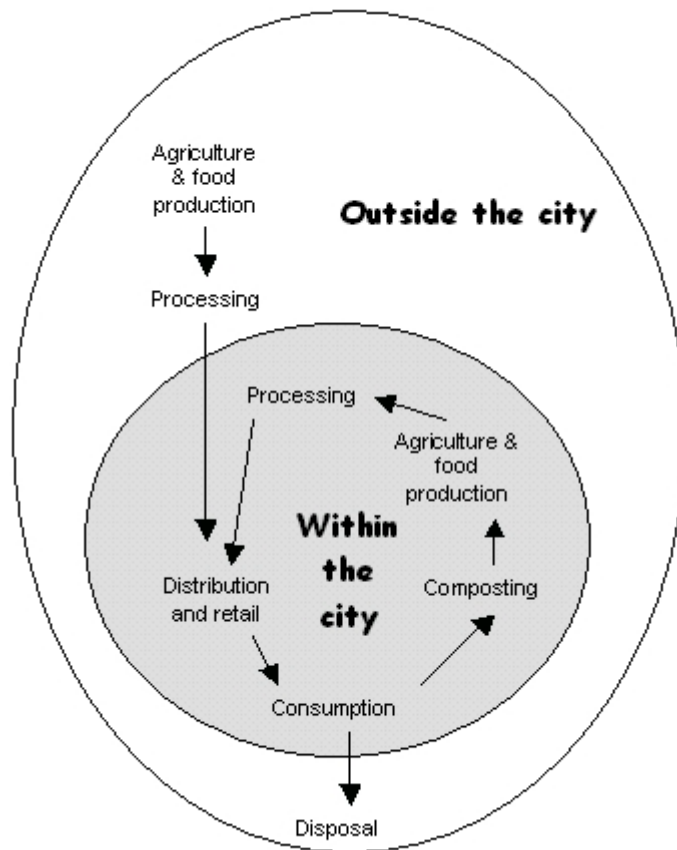
If there are no collection points near you then you can become an agent and handle orders for your friends, family and neighbours. You generate the orders and we will deliver the boxes to you. Agents receive Bentley Bobs for all orders that they handle, which they can use to purchase produce from Bentley Bulk, plus goods and services from other members.

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Publicity from Bentley Bulk Local Food Project 2003

Food Futures Manchester and the HeLF System



The ‘new model’ urban food system for Manchester, includes food production and distribution within the City. The existing Bentley Bulk HeLF System, demonstrates a model for community engagement in these activities.

The urban food system also includes processing and composting. The HeLF System has the capability for these activities to be bolted on as addition work-experience modules in future development.

The Manchester Food Strategy has five overarching aims:

- To improve the health of the people of Manchester
- To protect the local and global environment
- To strengthen the local economy
- To build stronger and more sustainable communities
- To promote culinary diversity and the enjoyment of good food across the city.

Strategic Aim	How this is achieved by the HLF System
Improve the health of the people of Manchester	<p>Gives people better access to affordable, fresh, healthy, local food.</p> <p>Provides exercise, physical activity.</p> <p>Raises awareness of dietary issues.</p>
Protect the local and global environment	<p>Supports sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Encourages local production and reduces food miles.</p> <p>Raises awareness of environmental issues.</p>
Strengthen the local economy	<p>Provides a market for food producers in the area.</p> <p>Stimulates social enterprise through new food access points.</p> <p>Engages local people in new economic activities.</p> <p>Has potential for growth in future work activities such as food processing and composting.</p> <p>Financial rewards for low-income people.</p> <p>Raises awareness of local economy issues.</p>
Build stronger and more sustainable communities	<p>Education and Awareness raising in Fair Trade, Sustainable Community Development and Local Food Issues.</p> <p>Building co-operation.</p> <p>A highly participative structure, encouraging engagement wherever possible.</p>
Promote culinary diversity and the enjoyment of good food across the city	<p>Access to local varieties of vegetables that are not found in supermarkets.</p> <p>General awareness raising through education component, mixing with new people and discussing food issues.</p> <p>Access and affordability improved.</p>