



Explanation

Community mapping is based on the principle that people are experts in their own lives. It is focused on the opinions, concerns and ideas of local people, enabling them to identify and develop solutions to the issues they face. 'Community' because it takes place in communities and 'mapping' because many of the methods used involve maps and diagrams of various kinds. Change that incorporates this principle takes the perspective of local people and places it at the centre of decision making i.e. the people who are most likely to be affected by change are intimately involved in deciding what that change should be. Their involvement in understanding the issues, planning what actions are taken and implementing the change leads to more appropriate, meaningful and ultimately more sustainable development.

Community food mapping applies this principle to the food system associated with a place – for example a housing estate, neighbourhood, town, city or region. Like all community mapping it uses an approach to community development called Participatory Appraisal, which enables local people to identify issues in their community and explore ways in which those issues can be addressed.

Participatory Appraisal (PA) uses visual and engaging methods, tools and activities to help people express their opinions in an accessible, non-judgemental, inclusive and enjoyable way. PA often uses maps or involves the creation of maps particularly when trying to understand the way communities work, where things and places are located and what happens where and why. The PA approach involves going to places where people already come together and encourages them to talk, listen and think together. This includes working outside on busy parts of the high street; outside schools; in local parks; and at events such as festivals or fairs; or working with different groups of people at youth clubs; sports centres; libraries; parent/carer and baby groups; and places of worship – even laundrettes and pubs. The fundamental point is to go where people already are, so that they are relaxed and more likely to talk about what they think and how they feel. For a very good introduction and description of Participatory Appraisal see the introductory guide produced by The North East Social Enterprise Partnership in 2014

https://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/files/NESEP_Participatory_Appraisal_Handbook_2014.pdf

This participatory approach is key to the concept of Food democracy and the development of truly representative Food Strategies.

Introduction

The purpose of Community Food Mapping is to ensure that your local food strategy responds to the needs, interests and experiences of different individuals and communities in your place. If the strategy is to truly represent your place you need to hear what different local communities and groups think about food and how the food system relates to them. The process of listening and representing those voices also helps to develop a sense of agency and ownership – that different communities are involved not only in deciding what the strategy includes but also potentially a role in its delivery.

Community Food Mapping is an extremely valuable part of local food strategy development and should be considered as an important activity in the early stages of strategy development. Other tools in this toolkit cover different ways of listening to local people and specific groups and gathering information that can help you to develop your strategy: [Food System Mapping](#); [Food Surveys](#); and [Food Policy Mapping](#). As explained above Community Food Mapping focuses specifically on understanding the perspectives of individual citizens and communities that your strategy should aim to represent.

However, Community Food Mapping requires time and effort and the capacity of your food strategy team will be a key consideration in deciding whether or not and when to embark on this work. In the development stages of a new food partnership there may not be enough people with the skills and inclination to carry out public consultation of this type and a Food Survey may be more feasible. Community Food Mapping for some partnerships may be more appropriate as momentum builds and team capacity is developed. One final thought – the process of public participatory appraisal can have a strong galvanising impact on your team and serve to bring active members together during the sessions. The work can bring a very powerful and motivating energy to your team and begin to build strong and meaningful connections with specific communities and groups.

This guide covers some practical participatory appraisal techniques and gives a session outline that might be useful in the development of food partnerships and food strategies.

Community Food Mapping Session

This participatory session is designed to be held as a public drop-in session which is accessible to individuals who might be passing by. This session could be held in a variety of public spaces e.g. a shop window (ask permission), a bus shelter, sports centre, library, shopping centre or a community hall and may last for 2-3 hours. You may also wish to hold sessions with particular groups e.g. youth groups, elderly residents, whereby you attend existing meetings or events and hold the session in situ. If working across a neighbourhood, it is best to hold multiple sessions in a range of venues to build up a more detailed understanding of the food issues from a range of perspectives. If you are holding multiple sessions, then it might be worth using later sessions to verify some of the findings from earlier sessions.

This session example from Lambeth includes a basic coding system to collect information about the people who participate in the Community Food Mapping. This helps to determine if there are gaps in your mapping and identifies specific groups you may want to focus on in subsequent sessions. For example, the coding may show that you are not engaging with many young people or with people from particular ethnic communities and may encourage you to run additional sessions within specific neighbourhoods or venues. Coding adds extra complexity to the mapping process but contributes to a more inclusive and robust consultation process.

Equipment:

Post it notes, flip charts, markers, sticky dots and a large scale map of the area.

What to do:

- Prepare the **4 Key Question Charts** (see below) – these can be on flip chart paper – and stick them together along one wall if possible. (We have given example questions below based on experience in developing the Lambeth Food Strategy)
- Facilitators (two is usually the minimum, particularly if in a busy location) will need to be on hand to engage participants / explain the process and guide people through the questions.
- Be prepared to explain who you are, what you are doing and why you are doing it.

Q1. How easy is it for you to eat healthily in Lambeth?

Tool: Spectrum Line between VERY EASY and NOT AT ALL EASY

- Ask people to put a cross on the line to represent how they would respond
- Ask them to add additional comments on post-its beside the cross explaining why

TOP TIP:

Don't ask them the question and don't ask them if they have 5 minutes (they'll say no)
Simply point at the question and ask them:

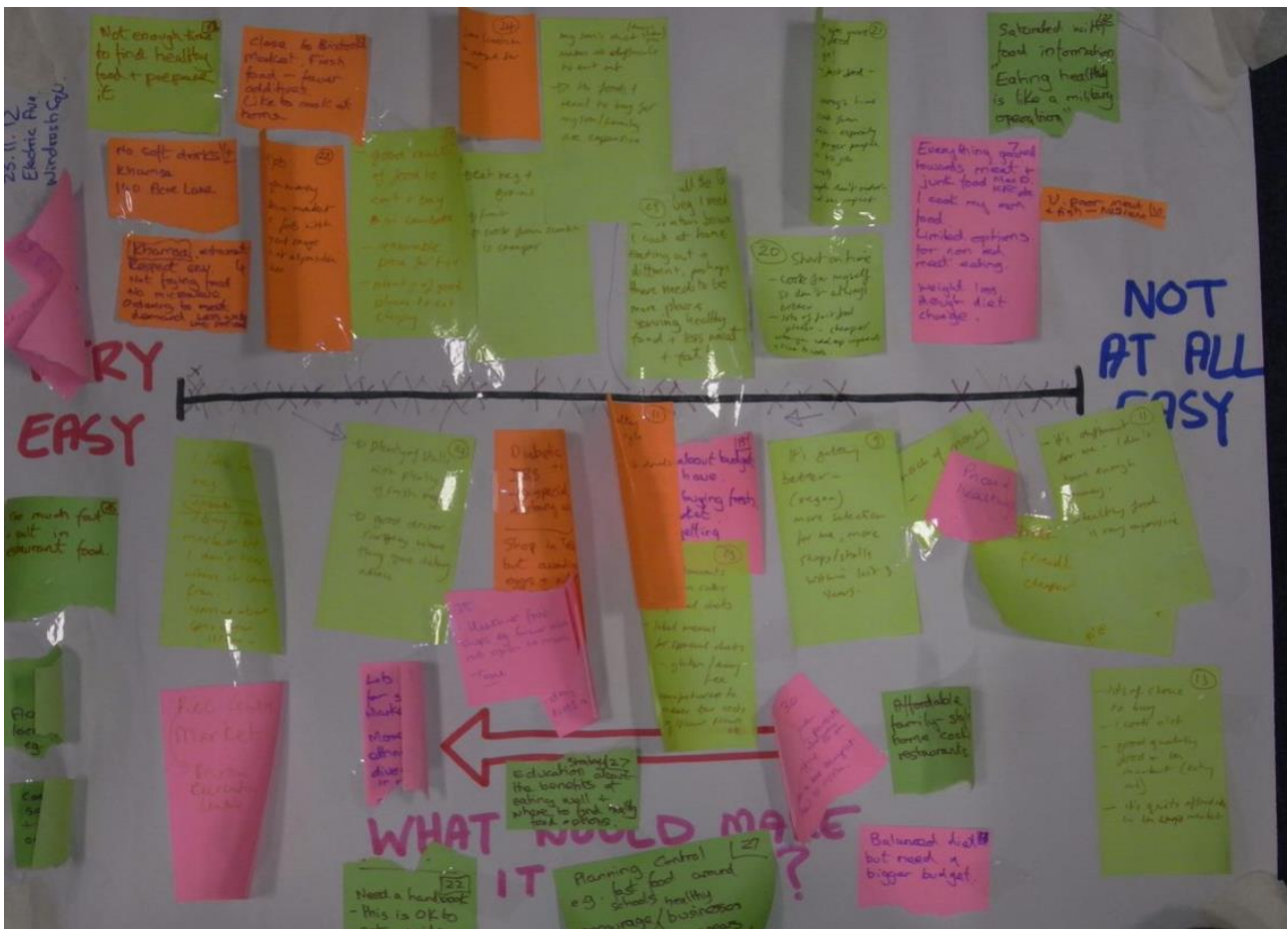
How would you answer that question?

This encourages them to stop and read and think.

When they answer ask them to put a cross on the line – and away you go!

Prompt questions:

- Why have you put your cross there/why do you feel that?
- What factors influence the way you feel?
- Has this changed since (say) 5 years ago? If yes, Why?
- What would make it easier for you to eat healthily in (e.g.) Lambeth?
- What would need to change?



Spectrum Line Chart from Lambeth showing responses to the question 'How easy is it for you to eat healthily in Lambeth.'

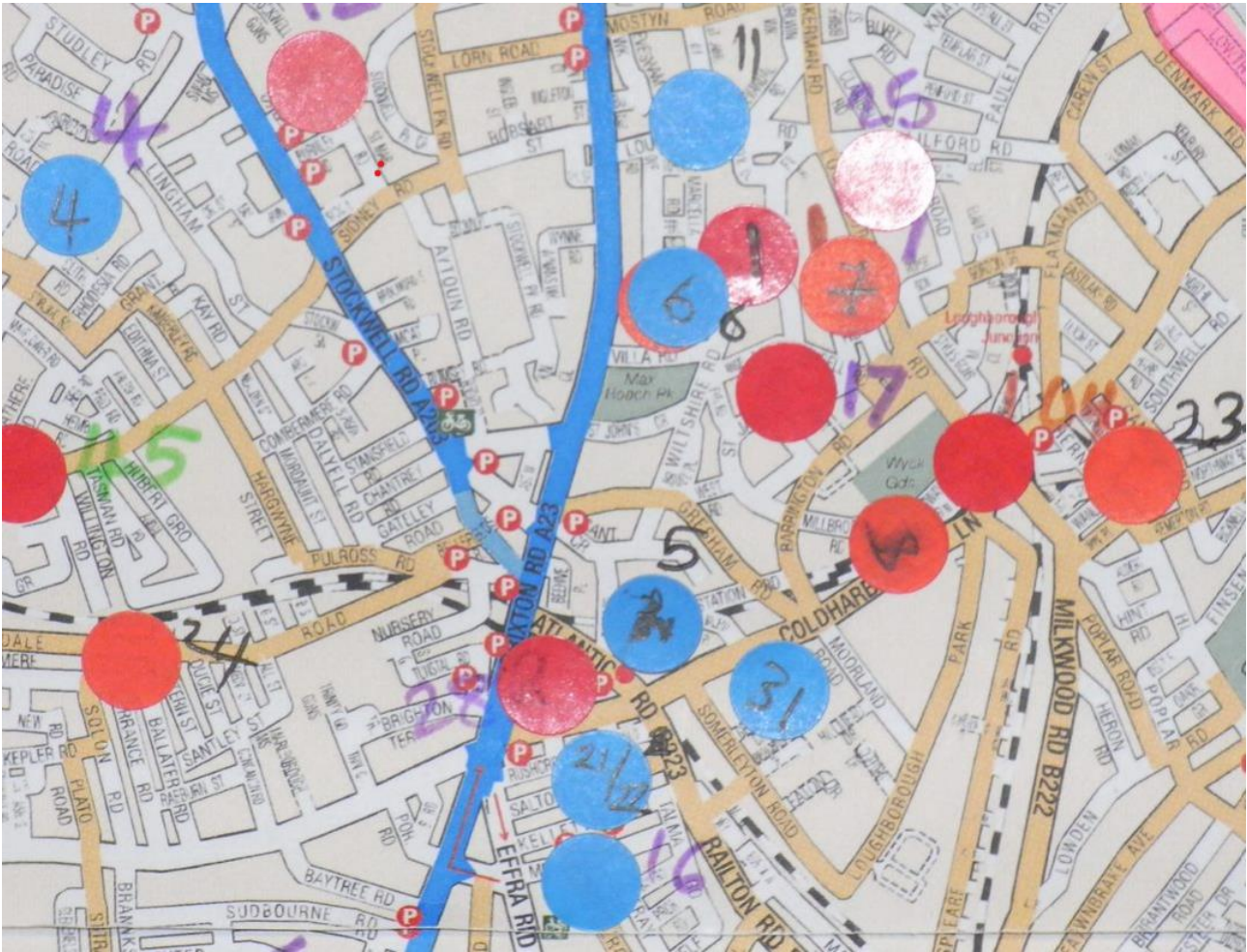
Q2. On this map could you show us where you live?

Tool: Map of Lambeth (Or could be specific neighbourhood)

- Indicate approximately where you live by placing a sticky dot (men BLUE, women RED) on the map.
- Give each sticky dot a unique number – this will be used in the coding when the participant has completed the questions.
- Add additional comments on post-its beside the dot or connected with a line or written directly on the map.
- Identify and name food outlets and link to dot with an arrow.

Questions:

- Where do you do your main food shop?
- Where do you do your specialist food shopping?
- Where do you eat out? (cafes, restaurants, pubs, food stalls)
- How do you feel about the local food outlets you use?



Copy of map used in Lambeth Community Food Mapping.

**Q3. What do YOU think?
The top 3 things that make up a healthy diet are....**

Tool: Thought bubble chart

- Write responses on post-its

Questions:

- Why do you think that?
- Is eating a healthy diet important to you?
- What would make healthy eating a higher priority for you?
- What other factors influence what you eat?



Top 3 Things chart from Lambeth Community Food Mapping.

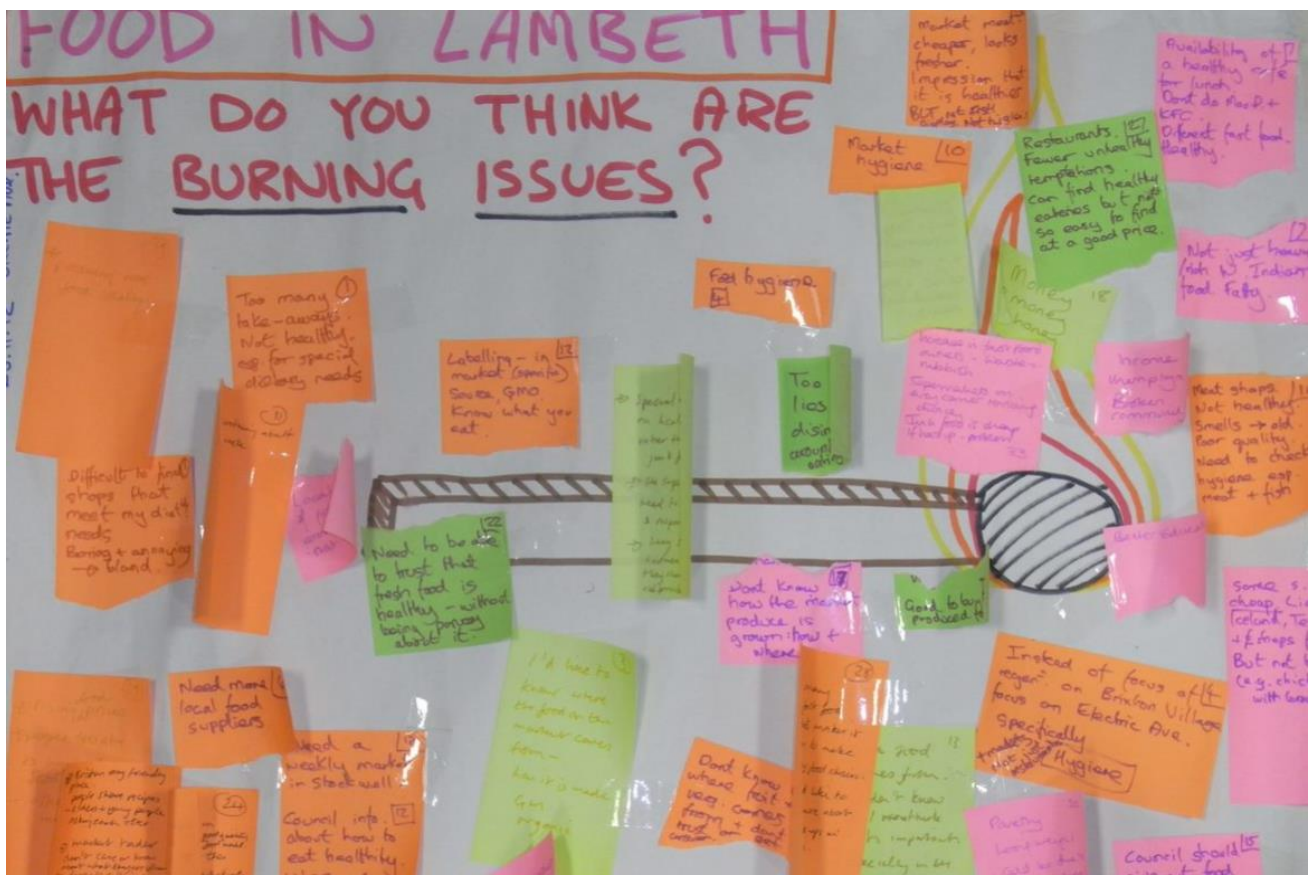
Q4. Food in Lambeth? What do you think are the Burning Issues?

Tool: Burning Issues (Match) chart

- Write responses on post-its

Questions:

- What are the Hot Topics of debate?
- What are the most important food issues?
- Why do you think that?
- Why is this important to you?
- What needs to happen to address this issue?
- What can you do to help address this issue?
- What do others need to do (with you or for you)?





Burning Issues Chart from Lambeth Community Food Mapping.

Coding

- Before people leave explain that it would be useful to record some basic information about the people we have been engaging with.
- Prepare a **Coding Key** and for each respondent complete the **Coding Table**, starting with their unique number from the map, and referring to the coding key
- See example of a **Coding Key** and **Coding Table** below.

Coding Key

Put a dot on the map.

MALE 
FEMALE 

	Code no.	Age range in years
AGE:	1	under 15
Which age category	2	15 – 25
are you in?	3	26 – 35
	4	36 – 45
	5	46 – 60
	6	over 60
ETHNICITY:	AC	Afro-Caribbean
Which category best	Af	African
describes your ethnicity?	As	Asian
	Ch	Chinese
	MR	Mixed Race
	WB	White British
	WO	White Other
	O	Other / None of these
		How would YOU describe your ethnicity?
OCCUPATION:	S	Student
Which category best	S/PT	Student + employed part time
describes your current	PT	Employed part time
occupation?	FT	Employed full time
	U	Unemployed
	R	Retired
	O	Other please describe.

Coding Table

UNIQUE NUMBER	POST-CODE	GENDER M or F	AGE 1 to 6	ETHNICITY (see key)	OCCUPATION (see key)	Would you like to be more involved in addressing Lambeth's food issues? YES or NO and HOW.	Other comments and contact information if appropriate.



Community Food Mapping Report

Having done several community food mapping sessions in different locations across the neighbourhood it is important to collate the data and information that has been gathered. Once analysed this data can be used to help frame the priorities for the food strategy. A report is a good way of presenting what has been learnt and can contribute to the evidence of need.

For each of the **Key Questions** asked in the community food mapping exercise, pull out the headline findings.

- Look for commonalities between the responses and highlight key issues.
- Give percentages of participants e.g. % of respondents who agreed that
- Include the results of the coding process by reporting on age, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- Include a map indicating the location of the sessions as well as where participants came from.
- And if possible include some photographs of the Community Food Mapping team in action as well as photographs of completed charts