OxFood Local Food Consultation – Executive Summary

The survey was available at [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk) between 18th July and 30th September 2011. We received 294 responses.

In this executive summary we will provide:
\[a\]) Some visual representations of the survey
\[b\]) Some key statistical trends
\[c\]) Some other qualitative trends
\[d\]) Some caveats to this research

\[a\]) Visual Representations

We asked people which words first come to mind when you think about local food?
(Most common words - with the words local and food removed):

![Word Cloud 1](image1)

...and what might encourage you to buy more local food in Oxford?
(Most common words – again, with the words local and food removed):

![Word Cloud 2](image2)
b) What were the key statistical trends?

There is strong demand for local food - 96% of respondents said that they would buy more local food if they could.

People want a connection to their food - 41% of respondents said that improved knowledge of where their food came from would encourage them to buy more local food.

People are drawn to the idea of community investment - 38% of respondents went as far as to say that they would be prepared to invest money in community local food projects.

Price was less important than we anticipated - Only 22% of people said that the major factor when buying food was price.

The local economy was in people's minds - 86% of people agreed that local food production is an important part of our local economy.

Amongst a sometimes complex set of consumer choices, local has a strong presence - 82% of people thought that local was at least or more important than other factors such as organic and fair trade.

c) What were other qualitative trends?

The demand is there but there are issues surrounding availability & access.
"[Local food] is also seen as being very middle class - as a Blackbird Leys resident I have to go really out of my way to get local food and it should be normalised in each area."
"I think it's a shame there isn't more of it available in and around Oxford, particularly in the City Centre."

There is a need for more than just production - people also want engagement & education.
"I think local food works at its best when it engages people in its production."
"People should engage more with their local system and reconnect with where their food comes from. However this needs to be made as easy as possible to compete with the weekly supermarket shop"

There is strong community support for farming.
"I am angry that we are losing the capacity to produce local food, we are losing land, buildings and skills and it is urgent that we address this before it is too late and we cannot get it back."
"Local food benefits the local economy, preserves the interest and viability of town centres and villages. It protects the countryside and rural jobs and other related rural business."

d) Some Caveats

The research shows clear interest in local food, but the 294 respondents may have come from a relatively self-selecting community of those already engaged in local food and environmental groups.
Whilst it is great to be able to demonstrate the strength of this group, OxFood will design further consultation programmes in 2011/12 to try to engage with a wider spectrum of groups.