

**A review of local authority food procurement in
the North East of England.**

Prepared by North East Land Links



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Executive Summary

This report has been produced for the north east regions Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy steering group. Its principal aim is to provide members of this group with a clearer understanding of current regional local authority food procurement practices and of the key factors which influence their purchasing decisions.

In addition to general information concerning procurement policy and practice, the report provides a review of current regional food procurement activity in the context of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative. Together with suggestions as to how current practices might be amended, to enable further progress to be made against the five main objectives of this initiative. It is hoped that this section will be of value to local authority staff in the region that are working in procurement and catering.

The report has been produced by Bill Kirkup and Janine Ogilvie of North East Land Links (NELL). NELL is a Countryside Agency sponsored action research project which has a remit to consider sustainable development in the context of the countryside around towns. The work on which this report is based was jointly funded by the Countryside Agency and One North East.

Original information relating to current food procurement practices and sources of supply was collected between June 2004 and February 2005. Interviews were conducted with staff involved in the procurement process in eleven local authorities. Interviewees were asked to provide information relating to their current practices and on any responses they had made/ intended to make as a result of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative. Supplementary information was gathered from a wide variety of other organisations and individuals, where appropriate sources are referenced in the text

Key points

- Of the eleven local authorities interviewed all operate significant 'in house' catering operations. Key decision makers and stakeholders are therefore relatively accessible and they perhaps have a greater incentive to actively pursue positive change.
- Catering managers have a pivotal role to play in achieving against Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative objectives. They largely determine the type of food purchased and therefore dictate the nature of the market and effectively its accessibility to 'local' and more sustainably produced forms of food.
- There is pressure on catering managers to promote healthy eating, however they have a practical need to be responsive to customer demand and 'unhealthy' options are often their customer's food of choice.

- We do not believe that the influence which local authority caterers have on the health of the regions population, and the economic implications of this, are sufficiently recognised by those outside of the health and catering professions. There is a need for greater recognition of the importance of healthy eating initiatives (particularly in schools), and for greater levels of support and encouragement to be extended to catering staff.
- Most local authority staff we questioned stated that they were unaware of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative prior to coming into contact with NELL. Correspondingly there is a low level of awareness and understanding amongst procurement and catering staff of the aims and objectives of the initiative, and of how these might best be pursued.
- In general procurement and catering staff are receptive to exploring potential changes to current practices. It is evident however that there are areas of concern (costs, time, and legal issues) and some sensitive issues, for example, the healthy eating agenda.
- Staff from all of the local authorities questioned stated that they feel that they will require external assistance if they are achieve against the objectives of the PSFPI.
- Pioneering work by Northumberland County Council and the New Economics Foundation provides evidence that the use of regional suppliers can generate significant regional economic benefits. Local suppliers do not however necessarily buy locally. Encouraging and enabling them to source more food locally would result in greater overall economic benefit for the region.
- Most regional local authority contracts for fresh meat, fruit and vegetables are currently held by regional businesses. Some regional produce (particularly beef, pork) features strongly in the supply chain. There is scope for increasing this for example one supplier has indicated that they have problems sourcing the volume of vegetable products they require from within the region.
- Currently the regional food supplied is not produced to the British Farm Standard (or equivalent).
- There is evidence of low levels of competition for local authority contracts for fresh fruit and vegetables. This undermines the principles of 'best value' and makes buyers wary of 'scaring off' existing suppliers.

Summary of recommendations

* please see Section 2.11/12 for full the full list of recommendations.

- A cross sectoral regional working group should be established to take forward work on this agenda. It should be embedded as a specialist sub group of the North East Public Procurement Forum.
- A facilitative mechanism (or mechanisms) should be established, either in the form of a dedicated member of staff or through the assignment of responsibility for delivering against specific objectives to existing public sector staff.
- Opportunities to pursue PSFPI objectives via the provision of generic regional documentation (for example, food tenders) should be identified and prioritised.
- There needs to be a wider recognition of the influence of public sector catering on the current and future health of the regions population. Efforts should be made to ensure that senior management and key influencers in local authorities and other appropriate bodies recognise the importance of this issue.
- We would recommend that a regional food and health forum be established to facilitate the exchange of best practice. In particular that relating to the marketing of healthy food to children.
- Catering managers should consider revising their menus to include dishes which incorporate more local, seasonal and sustainably produced/harvested food. This should be undertaken in conjunction with work on healthy eating and should involve organisations with expertise in sustainability and local/regional food sourcing.
- Northumberland County Council and the New Economics Foundation should be supported in their efforts to raise regional awareness of their work on 'local' sourcing. Particularly amongst senior public sector staff and political figures with a remit for economic regeneration.
- Local authorities should develop pro-active engagement strategies for dealing with suppliers. These should focus on promoting increased competition within the public sector marketplace, through the facilitation of better access to markets for smaller/local suppliers and the development of supplier capacity and performance. To fully reflect the objectives of the PSFPI external staff, including rural and environmental professionals should be engaged.
- Public sector bodies should move towards using 'assured produce', but an incremental and facilitative approach may be required to ensure that existing local supply chains (which include pork, beef, and some vegetables) are not disrupted.

PART 1

1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared with the object of providing baseline information concerning the current food procurement practices of local authorities in the north east region. It is hoped that it will have a useful role in informing debate on this issue and in helping to identify priorities for future action within the region.

The report has been prepared by Bill Kirkup and Janine Ogilvie of North East Land Links (NELL). It is based on the responses generated by a series of interviews with procurement and catering staff, supplemented by email and telephone contact where further information or clarification was required. The interviews were conducted by Janine Ogilvie between June 2004 and December 2004. Complementary information has been drawn from a wide variety of organisations and individuals, sources are referenced in the text.

Twelve local authorities were identified as being significant buyers of food within the region, of these eleven agreed to be interviewed. Interviewees were asked to provide information relating to current procurement practices and questioned regarding their intent and capacity to adapt existing practices to comply with the emergent policy agenda relating to food and procurement.

The quantity and detail of information provided to us varied between different local authorities, with some being more responsive and forthcoming than others, this is reflected in the individual reports (see Appendix A).

1.1 Policy Context

The public sector is acknowledged within the regional 'Delivery Plan for Implementing the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food' (Section 1.3 May 2003), as representing a potentially significant market for regional food producers. This report has been produced in recognition of a need, identified within that plan, to develop a better understanding of the nature, extent and accessibility of this market.

Since the publication of the regional delivery plan, Defra has launched the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI) (August 2003). This aims to encourage public sector buyers to seek to secure sustainable development objectives through their food procurement practices and procedures.

'The public sector in England spends £1.8 billion on food and catering services. The Government wants to use this buying power to help deliver the principle aims of the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in England. That is, to deliver a world-class sustainable farming and food sector that contributes to a better environment and healthier and prosperous communities.'

www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/index.htm

The PSFPI has five priority objectives

1. Raise production and process standards
2. Increase tenders from small and local producers
3. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food
4. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply
5. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

Defra has the national lead on the PSFPI. It has established a cross government Food Procurement Implementation Group (FPIG), the aim of which is *'to raise awareness, provide guidance and training, resolve barriers, monitor performance and report on progress'*. This group is supported by a Food Procurement Unit (FPU) within Defra. The FPU liaises with the regions through the appropriate government office.

Currently all local authority procurement work needs to be viewed in the context of the National Procurement Strategy (NPS), see www.odpm.gov.uk. This three year strategy was launched in October 2003 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM); the objective is to deliver more efficient services at a lower cost.

The public sector is under considerable pressure to achieve cost savings in procurement. Informed by the 'Gershon' review, the 2004 Public Spending Review requires local authorities to secure overall efficiency gains of 2.5% per year over the next three years. Thirty five percent of the required savings are expected to be achieved through more efficient procurement practices.

Within those local authorities contacted, compliance with the requirements of the NPS is accorded greater priority than pursuit of the PSFPI. Discussions with local authority procurement staff, reveal that there is a widespread perception that the NPS contradicts the PSFPI. Specifically the emphasis within the NPS on collaborative large scale purchasing and 'E' procurement is seen as being inimical to the PSFPI objective of increasing tenders from small and local producers.

That there is, at the very least, a perceptual problem has been recognised by Defra and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). In a recent letter to local authority Chief Executives regarding a Defra training event Lord Whitty (Minister for Sustainable Farming Food and Energy) states that,

'I should also be grateful if you would arrange for the message on the Gershon Efficiency Review at Appendix B from Martin Sykes - OGC's Executive Director of the Supplier and Government Marketplace - to be disseminated among your authority's procurement officers. He states that efficiency does not signal a return to mindless aggregation and lowest price as the basis for decision-making and that buyers need to harness public sector spending power to support delivery of sustainability objectives.'

www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/pdf/lwhitty-laletter.pdf

Whilst there are difficulties in reconciling certain aspects of the NPS and the PSFPI they share several complementary aims. Chapter 6 of the NPS requires councils to pursue community benefits, including sustainability, through their procurement strategies. It also requires councils to actively engage with suppliers, with the object of 'developing diverse and competitive sources of supply, including procurement from small firms' (p49).

1.2 Procurement: the Regional Context

To assist local authorities to meet the objectives of the NPS the ODPM has commissioned the establishment of nine '**Regional Centres of Excellence in Procurement**' (RCEP), one in each of the nine English regions. The north east RCEP is hosted by Gateshead Borough Council; its Director is David Wright.

David in conjunction with the CBI and other partners has helped to establish a **North East Public Procurement Forum**. This held its first meeting in January 2005. The forum is open to invited representatives of both the private and public sector. In essence it aims to facilitate better access to public sector markets for regional SME's. To the best of our knowledge no representatives from the food sector currently attend these meetings. However many of the issues this group has been set up to address are generic and initiatives which stem from it could have benefits for food SME's.

It is intended that sub-groups be established to take forward work in specific areas, currently priority has been given to construction. The possibility of incorporating a sub group to look at food has been raised in discussions between David Wright and Bill Kirkup.

It is our understanding is that Gateshead was chosen to host the RCEP as a result of its lead role in the **North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO)**.

"NEPO is a purchasing and contracting consortium consisting of 11 full member local authorities and 13 associate members. The North Eastern Purchasing Organisation was established in 1976 as a means of aggregating contracts and pooling purchasing knowledge and expertise between the original 5 Tyne and Wear metropolitan authorities. It has since expanded its membership and services and now negotiates a huge range of contracts. Police, probation and fire services also benefit from NEPO by participating in many joint procurement arrangements. NEPO now covers an area from the Scottish border through to Tyneside, Wearside, County Durham and Teesside."

www.qtegov.com/systems/nepocms.nsf/vhomepage/fsection?opendocument

One of NEPO's objectives is to facilitate the development of joint purchasing between public sector (principally local authority) organisations. Currently

Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council and Hartlepool Borough Council operate a joint purchasing policy for all food contracts. Stockton is the lead authority. Though as we understand it this is not a NEPO contract.

Newcastle and Gateshead Council operate a joint contract for fresh fruit and vegetables. This is a NEPO contract, Gateshead are the lead authority for this contract. It seems likely that in the future joint food purchasing involving several local authorities, (and possibly other public sector organisations) will become the norm.

NEPO have produced several 'standard tender documents' and are keen that these be adopted for use by their members. Standardisation is viewed as one means by which councils can make it simpler for private sector suppliers, who often engage with several local authorities, to engage with the public sector. In initial discussions NEPO have indicated a willingness to consider amending existing documents so that they take a greater account of PSFPI objectives.

E-procurement is a priority issue for both NEPO, its individual members and the RCEP. The government has identified electronic procurement as offering the single greatest opportunity to effect savings in public sector procurement.

There is a recognition that the development of an electronic market may disadvantage regional SME's. A pilot initiative has been launched in Tyne and Wear (TWICT), this will provide training on how to do business with councils using internet technology. Initially it is planned to involve fifteen SME's. This is being monitored by the RCEP, if successful; attempts may be made to replicate it in other parts of the region.

Both NEPO and the RCEP have indicated that the procurement of food is not currently a priority issue. However both organisations have indicated that they would be supportive of others working on the PSFPI agenda and wish to be involved in any work which emerges as a consequence of this report.

1.3 Procurement: How it works

1.31 Rules governing procurement

Introduction

All local authority procurement is governed by European and national legislation. Local authorities also have internal procedures, these vary between authorities.

The legislative framework is meant to,

- **Ensure procedural transparency**
- **Eliminate discrimination on grounds of nationality**

- **Ensure that ‘best value for money’ is attained**

1.32 European Procurement Directives

- Public Services Directive 1993-93/36/EEC
- Public Services Directive 1992-92/50/EEC
- Public Works Directive 1993-93/37/EEC
- Amending Directive 1997-97/52/EC

These directives have been incorporated into UK law in the form of the following regulations.

- The Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995 S.I. No.201
- The Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 S.I. No 3228
- The Public Works Contracts Regulations 1991 S.I. No. 2680

The Regulations apply when local authorities propose to award contracts which exceed a specified value threshold. The thresholds are regularly reviewed, as of the 1st of January 2004 it is £153,376 for foodstuffs.

“Authorities need to comply with their obligations under the procurement regulations in order to avoid legal challenge by suppliers or the European Commission.”

I&DeA, Managers Guide to Procurement (page 18). Available from www.idea.gov.uk/publications/order/

As a general rule when local authorities wish to award a contract which exceeds the threshold value they are required to place a contract notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

“ Even when competition is not required under the EC rules, for example because the estimated value of a project falls below the relevant threshold, EC Treaty –based principles (non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, mutual recognition and proportionality) apply and some degree of advertising-commensurate with the scale of the contract- is likely to be necessary to demonstrate transparency.”

OGC, Introduction to the EC Procurement Rules, page 1.

Local authorities are required to operate one of three types of award procedure.

- a) **Open procedure** – under which all interested parties may tender for the contract.
- b) **Restricted procedure** – under which only selected persons may submit tenders for the contract

- c) **Negotiated procedure** – under which a buyer negotiates the terms of the contract with one or more selected suppliers.

Local authorities are free to use either open or restricted procedures but can only use negotiated procedures in limited circumstances. Each procedure imposes minimum time scales to allow potential suppliers reasonable time to respond.

Local authorities may award contracts on the basis of lowest price or to the 'economically most advantageous' tender. The latter allows for award criteria other than price to be taken into account.

It is not legitimate to discriminate on the grounds of nationality or location. However the legislation does allow for both environmental and social considerations to be taken into account, for further information refer to the following documents.

- Buying Green: how public authorities can help save the environment and taxpayers money (26.10.2004)
- Interpretative communication of the commission on the community law applicable to public procurement and the possibilities for integrating social considerations into public procurement.

Both are available on,

www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/publicprocurement/key-docs_en.htm

- Guidance for buyers and their internal customers: Advice for public sector bodies on integrating sustainable development into food and catering services contracts.

www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/guidance.htm

**For further information concerning EU procurement legislation go to*

www.oqc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1000084

www.simap.eu.int

1.33 National Rules

Local authorities are required to make procurement decisions on the basis of 'best value for money'. This equates to the 'economically most advantageous tender'.

" Best value for money is defined as:

' the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet the customers requirement.'

Contracts should not be awarded on the basis of lowest initial price alone. There must always be an assessment of quality and the costs that will be incurred by the authority throughout the life of the asset or contract period."

I&DeA, Managers Guide to Procurement. Available from www.idea.gov.uk/publications/order/

The I&DeA (Improvement and development agency) have produced a manual Sustainability and Local Government Procurement which explains,

" how local authorities can develop and implement a sustainable procurement policy and a risk based strategy designed to tackle the categories of spending that have the greatest environmental and social impacts."

This may also be accessed via www.idea.gov.uk/publications/order/ .

1.34 Local Authority Rules

Local authorities have their own internal rules, **Standing Orders**, which govern their procurement activities. All local authorities are required by the National Procurement Strategy to produce a 'Selling to the Council Guide', these should be available in electronic form on their websites. Rules relating to public procurement should be contained in these guides.

As an example Stockton Borough Council operates the following procedures for tenders which are below the EU threshold,

"Contracts below £3000 – Officers shall take reasonable steps to secure value for money for the Council.

Contracts exceeding £3000 (but less than £50,000 for the supply of goods and less than £100,000 for the execution of works) – Officers shall invite written quotations from at least three suitable contractors. Contractors will be provided with a pre-addressed envelope in which to return the quotation by the specified date.

Contracts exceeding £50,000 for the supply of goods and £100,000 for the execution of works – Officers will invite competitive tenders from at least three suitable contractors following advertisement in a local newspaper and in a journal or newspaper circulating among such persons who undertake such contracts. Details regarding completing and returning the tender will be provided in the tender pack."

Stockton on Tees Borough Council- How to do business with Stockton on Tees Borough Council

1.4 The Procurement Process

The procurement process in local authorities is governed by legislation and therefore follows a similar pattern, this is described below. Variations on this pattern are described in the individual authority reports.

- Officers responsible for procurement will approach the catering managers 6-12 months before the expiry date of the existing contract. Note: information concerning forthcoming business opportunities and current contract status is advertised through the appropriate media.
- Following discussions between catering managers and procurement officers existing tender documents are revised to take account changes in practice and / or external influences, e.g. policy initiatives. Environmental and social considerations should be built in at this stage.
- Once tender documentation is agreed the tender is advertised through the placing of **contract notices** in the appropriate media. Contracts over the threshold value are advertised in the OJEU. Adverts are also placed in relevant local and national publications e.g. Hotel and Caterer. Contract opportunities are also advertised on local authorities corporate websites and through the NEPO Portal at www.nepo.org.
- Authorities operating the restricted tender procedure will undertake an initial screening exercise. Potential suppliers are requested to submit specified information to the authority; usually via a **Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PPQ)** . Only suppliers who successfully pass this stage are invited to tender.

This pre qualification stage is undertaken to enable a local authority to re-assure itself regarding the ability of the supplier to meet their requirements. For contracts being awarded under the EU Regulations, there are rules governing the type of information which can be sought and on the minimum number of suppliers who may be invited to tender.

- Invitation to tender (ITT) documentation is typically composed of,
 - ITT itself, this includes instructions regarding tendering
 - Specification
 - Contract
 - Pricing schedule
- Following submission tenders are evaluated, tenders are assessed on the basis of their **value for money**. How this is assessed varies between authorities, assessment is not based on price alone, assessment criteria should be recorded in the tender documentation.

- Following tender assessment the selected tender is recommended to the relevant internal authority. In the case of NEPO there is a 'cabinet' made up of elected members from each member local authority. The cabinet is not obliged to accept the recommendation, but in practice usually accepts its officers proposal.
- Following the award and commencement of a new contract regular supplier meetings are held. Typically these are attended by the supplier and the local authorities procurement and catering manager. The management of the contract is part of an on going procurement process. Suppliers are monitored on the basis of their ability to meet agreed operational objectives, these can be amended during the course of a contract if required.

PART 2

2.0 An overview of current local authority food procurement

Introduction

All of the local authorities contacted run in house catering operations, these include school meals services, meals on wheels and staff catering. Catering operations within a local authority may or may not operate independently but purchasing is undertaken collectively. There is no common organisational model, details for individual local authorities are shown in the reports listed in Appendix A.

School meal services are the largest type of catering operation. Schools are not however obliged to use their local authorities service and can choose to run an independent operation or to use other service providers. Several schools in each local authority area have chosen one of these routes. Durham County Council does not operate a school meals service. Instead it has a contract with an external provider, Scholarest.

The regions local authorities are served by a relatively small number of food suppliers. Several procurement staff have indicated that they would like to see greater competition for their business. The information we have been able to collect concerning the identity of current food contract holders is shown in appendix B . Information concerning individual firms is shown in appendix C.

Regional SME's (as defined by the DTI) are major suppliers to the local authorities in the north east. Prominent amongst them are J.Fishwick and sons, JR Holland and son and R.Manners and sons ltd. At the time of writing, between them these businesses held all but one of the contracts for red meat and fresh fruit and vegetables. Our understanding is that these firms are also significant suppliers to other public sector organisations in the region.

Provenance of food

When initially questioned local authorities were in general unaware of the origin of most of the food which they buy. Several local authorities have subsequently contacted their suppliers with a view to providing information on this issue. The information available for specific authorities is contained in the individual reports.

To supplement the information derived from the local authorities we contacted several suppliers of these R Manners and sons, J Fishwick and sons the Whitley Bay Meat Company and J.R.Holland and sons were prepared to provide us with information.

Vegetables

Several local authorities indicated that some of the vegetables they purchased were produced within the region, specifically potatoes, carrots, leeks, swedes, savoy and green cabbage.

Fishwicks indicated that they have fixed price contracts (one year) with twenty farms, three of which are within the region. These contracts are for leeks, Swedes, green (hard) cabbage and potatoes. Fishwicks stated that they have difficulty securing vegetables from within the region, they suggested that consistency and volume of supply were particular problems.

Information contained in an email from Hollands, suggests that they do not have specific contracts with local producers, but that they occasionally buy local produce via other companies based at the North East Fruit & Vegetable Market. Such produce includes potatoes, cauliflower, cabbages and some strawberries in the summer months. They indicated however that,

“ there are no significant volumes and the (supply of) produce is intermittent at the best of times.”

Source: personal communication

Eggs

Newcastle City Council 'Meals at Home' service buys eggs from McCutcheons, a poultry farm at Blaydon.

Hollands stated that they bought some eggs from Lintz Hall Farm.

Milk

Milk is mainly supplied through Dairy Farmers of Great Britain, this is a national company which has a depot at Blaydon. We were unable to confirm that local producers supply to this depot but it is considered a reasonable assumption.

Beef

R Manners and sons informed us that Gateshead, Northumberland and North Tyneside are supplied with Northumbrian Select Beef, as we understand it this is their own assurance label. Beef produced for this scheme is not produced to any particular standard, but is sourced from farms from Northumberland and North Durham. Northumbrian Select Beef cannot be specified in tender documentation, our understanding is that it is supplied at the catering managers request following the award of contract. A premium is paid for this product. One catering manager indicated that they took this option as part of a policy to re-assure parents concerned about the origin of beef post BSE.

Northumbrian beef may on occasion also be supplied to other authorities by default when there is a surplus of this product. We do not know how regularly this may occur.

Lamb

Our understanding is that lamb supplied to the regions local authorities is predominantly of New Zealand origin. Manners suggested that the reasons for this were consistency of supply of the product specified (leg and mince) and price were the main reasons for this situation.

The Whitley Bay Meat Company, which supplies Manners with some lamb, indicated that they bought lamb direct from regional farmers and at market. However they stated that any local lamb which is supplied to local authorities features by default and on a small scale.

Pork

Manners buy their pork from two main suppliers Walker Meats and the Whitley Bay Meat Company. The latter is reportedly the most significant supplier. The Whitley Bay Meat Company buys the majority of its pork from farms within the region.

Chicken

Manners have a contract for supply with Frank Bird, Langwathby, Cumbria to supply chickens.

2.1 Public Procurement of Food in the north east region; **Options for change**

Overview

To the best of our knowledge no other region has undertaken a baseline exercise of the type conducted for this report. In the absence of equivalent information from other regions we do not have a benchmark against which to compare current local authority food procurement practices in the north east with those of other regions.

Our assessment of the current position is that with regard to regional and national objectives relating to food procurement there is significant scope for making positive progress. There are several reasons to be optimistic, there is evidence of relevant good practice, and a willingness (albeit cautious) to consider change in every local authority we have spoken to.

Critically most local authorities retain control over the purchasing and provision of food. Key decision makers and stakeholders are therefore relatively accessible and they perhaps have a greater incentive to actively pursue positive change.

Regional enterprises dominate the local authority fresh produce market and a significant proportion of food, particularly red meat, originates from within the north east. There is scope for expanding the proportion of local/regional produce which features on the public sector plate and reason to believe that this could be effected through existing supply chains.

There is however unequivocal evidence of a general low level of awareness and understanding of the aims and objectives of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative and of how these might best be pursued. Nine out of the eleven local authorities contacted said they were unaware of the PSFPI prior to our contacting them.

The interviews revealed that lack of time, relevant expertise (relating to sustainability, local food) and perceived conflicts with other government initiatives will impede progress against PSFPI objectives. **The need for external assistance was stressed either formally or informally by all of the councils we spoke to.**

There are general concerns about costs and the practicalities (and desirability) of establishing more localised supply chain networks. Several officers also indicated that they did not perceive the initiative as a priority for their authority. We also noted a degree of defensiveness amongst staff from some authorities, perhaps owing to a concern regarding our motivations for collecting the information. At a national level there has been much, criticism of food procurement and catering practices. This has not been helpful to us at a regional level, there is receptivity to change amongst local authority staff, the focus now should be on evolving mechanisms to facilitate positive change.

Introduction

In the following sections we describe the forms of activity which we believe should be initiated to enable the region to achieve against local and national objectives relating to public sector food procurement.

The section is divided into two parts, the first (2.11) lists some general observations (and recommendations where relevant), the aim of which is to help provide context. The second (2.12) is framed in the context of the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative and contains recommendations for action for taking forward the five main objectives of the initiative.

Both sections are based on the information recorded in Appendix A; further informed by meetings and discussions we have held with buyers, caterers and suppliers in the region, colleagues in other regions and the available literature.

It should be noted that it has not always been easy to acquire the information we have asked for. It is evident that some of the issues encompassed by the PSFPI agenda are extremely sensitive. In consequence some authorities have been wary of disclosing information.

Readers should also be aware that certain aspects of the agenda are evolving extremely rapidly. In particular information concerning current practices relating to local authority healthy eating initiatives will quickly become out of date.

Despite these caveats we believe that this report is based on a sufficiently robust understanding of the current situation to enable us to identify some clear opportunities for effecting positive progress. There is now a need to bring people together to discuss, refine, add to and prioritise these proposals, and to determine the best way for translating them into practical action.

2.11 General observations

1) There is a need to establish more effective lines of communication and to promote and facilitate greater levels of practical collaboration across organisational, geographic and professional boundaries.

This is a cross cutting agenda, most organisations with an interest (active or otherwise) only have a partial understanding of the issues and do not necessarily recognise the nature and extent of the role they might play in realising relevant regional or national objectives. Neither do they necessarily have the skills or expertise to do so.

There is a need to improve understanding of the wider context of the public sector food procurement agenda. To identify discrete priorities for action within a broader strategic framework. And to identify, and engage the active participation, of individuals and organisations who are in a position to take those actions forward.

Recommendation

- ***A cross sectoral regional working group should be established to take forward work on this agenda. It should be embedded as a specialist sub group of the North East Public Procurement Forum.***
- ***A facilitative mechanism (or mechanisms) should be established, either in the form of a Food Procurement Officer or through assigning existing public sector staff responsibility for delivering against specific objectives.***

Note:

The need for a more 'joined up' approach was unanimously recognised by participants at a meeting organised by North East Land Links and Government Office North East on the 18th of February 2005. It was agreed at this meeting to establish a regional working group to take forward the PSFPI within the region.

2) Most buyers have expressed concern about the possibility of incurring additional costs at a time when they are under pressure to reduce expenditure.

Catering managers and procurement officers are concerned about the cost implications of pursuing the PSFPI agenda. These relate not just to possible higher food costs but also to higher transaction costs. Each additional supplier an authority deals with carries an additional transaction cost.

3) Catering managers are concerned about the ability of smaller suppliers to ensure a secure and stable supply chain.

The security and stability of the supply chain is of critical importance, particularly to catering managers. The ability of smaller suppliers to ensure continuity of supply over the duration of a contract has been questioned.

It is questionable whether smaller suppliers would be able to comply with current requirements concerning delivery flexibility. Suppliers are generally expected to respond to the needs of individual catering units (schools etc) as and when required. In some cases this may require several trips to one location over the course of a week. A further complication is that deliveries will often only be accepted at certain times, particularly in schools. Suppliers are expected to bear the costs of delivery.

4) Catering managers have a pivotal role to play in determining whether regional and national food procurement objectives relating to local food and health are achieved.

They are largely responsible for what is purchased and therefore dictate the nature of the market and effectively its accessibility to local/regional food

producers. The type of food ordered, and how it is prepared and served determines the nutritional quality of the food which their customers eat.

Key influences affecting catering managers are their need to run cost effective services, the preferences of their customers, and in the case of school meals the influence of school heads, governors and parents. There is a tension between the need to sell food which their customers wish to eat, and the income which this generates; and the need to take account of the healthy eating agenda.

5) We do not believe that the influence which local authority caterers have on public health, and the economic implications of this, are sufficiently recognised by staff outside of the health and catering sector.

The north east region 'boasts' some of the worst health statistics in the country. For example, figures compiled by the CBI (May 2005) indicate that sickness leave is significantly above the national average. It is estimated that this costs the regions economy £600 million per annum. Current health statistics convey a negative image of the region which may influence the decisions of potential inward investors.

There is evidence that eating habits developed in childhood stay with people throughout their lives, and an alarming rise in the incidence of dietary related ill health in children. The public sector, as a major provider of food to children has a significant role to play in influencing the future health of the regions workforce.

Recommendation

- ***There needs to be a wider recognition of the influence of public sector catering on the current and future health of the regions population. Positive change by local authority caterers should be actively encouraged and supported by senior management within their respective organisations.***

6) Environmental sustainability is often the poor relation in debates regarding the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI).

In our (NELL's) experience the PSFPI is often mis- interpreted as being simply about getting local producers to supply local food for the public plate. There is a widespread assumption that such food is healthier and that in terms of food 'local' equates to sustainable. This mis-conception is often reflected in the views of buyers and suppliers.

Recommendation

- ***There is a need to engage more environmental 'champions' in debates about food in the public sector to ensure that the***

environmental aspects of the initiative are pursued with similar vigour to those relating to health and the economy.

7) Economic benefits of regional sourcing

Work undertaken by Northumberland County Council using the LM3 tool (a method of measuring the flow of money in 'local' economies devised by the New Economic Foundation) provides evidence that local/regional sourcing (as opposed to the use of national international suppliers) benefits the regions economy; as a greater proportion of money spent with local businesses is retained in circulation in the regional economy.

Currently most local authorities use the same regional food suppliers as Northumberland and are therefore (by default) delivering 'added value' to the regions economy. There is though a need to raise awareness of the benefits of engaging new regional suppliers, of retaining existing regional suppliers and of the value of increasing the proportion of local/regional produce which suppliers themselves buy for public sector contracts.

For further information regarding Northumberland County Councils work contact Barry Mitchell on 01670 534 145.

Recommendation

- ***Northumberland County Council and the New Economics Foundation should be supported in their efforts to raise regional awareness of their work on 'local' sourcing. Particularly amongst senior public sector staff and political figures with a remit for economic regeneration.***

2.12 Options for change

** The objective headings used are from the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative.*

1. OBJECTIVE : Raise production and process standards

A) Option: New Tenders - Use of assurance schemes ‘the little red tractor’

Background

Assurance schemes are voluntary schemes operated by agricultural/food industry bodies or occasionally third sector organisations, for example the RSPCA. Only those which operate to defined standards and which are independently inspected are relevant in the context of public procurement.

Buyers can use assurance scheme standards to inform their specifications, and may require that their suppliers provide food which meets these standards **or their equivalent**.

Assurance schemes have evolved in response to concerns relating to food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. As a minimum, scheme members are required to comply with legal standards; depending upon the scheme, members will be required to exceed these when undertaking certain specified practices. Schemes exist to cover meat, poultry, egg, fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and combinable crops.

Schemes which qualify to use the red tractor logo provide a **baseline standard**. They are largely based on legal minimum requirements, though aspects of individual assurance schemes do exceed the legal minimums, particularly in relation to health and hygiene issues.

Higher level schemes include the RSPCA’s ‘Freedom Foods’, which places a greater emphasis on animal welfare. And the LEAF Marque (Linking Environment and Farming), this scheme places the emphasis on environmentally sustainable practices.

The use of assured produce does represent an effective mechanism for ensuring that food which is purchased has been produced to higher standards. However buyers considering the use of assurance schemes should consider what it is that they are trying to achieve when determining which scheme to use.

Discussion

The information we have indicates that no assured produce is knowingly supplied to the **mainstream** catering operations of the regions local authorities. Discussions with catering managers and procurement staff

indicates that most remain unaware of what is meant by the term 'assured produce'.

There is also some confusion as to what assurances such schemes actually provide. For example several buyers have described the British Farm Standard as misleading, having at some point assumed that its use is a confirmation that food is of UK provenance. At a recent meeting (18th February 2005) several buyers stated their need for information on 'equivalent' schemes, to assist them in evaluating tenders.

Recommendation

- ***We recommend the use of assured produce by the regions public sector bodies but would stress that if this approach is to be adopted care needs to be taken to ensure that existing local supply chains (which include pork, beef, some vegetables) are not compromised.***

Note

In the first instance we would suggest that existing wholesale suppliers should be approached with a view to determining their ability to source assured produce from within the region. It is presumed that they would also be able to advise on any cost implications for buyers.

Alternatively buyers could request suppliers to provide prices for food produced to assured standards (variants), as well as non-assured produce. Thereby enabling them to determine where assured produce might cost effectively be substituted for non-assured products

Where it appears that existing regional supply chains may be disrupted thought should be given as to how current producers might be assisted to meet the requirements of the British Farm Standard.

Recommendation

- ***There is a need to improve knowledge and understanding amongst buyers (and suppliers) of assurance schemes. Their views should be sought to determine how best this might be effected.***

Who should be involved?: One North East, Fishwicks, Hollands, Manners, Redbridges, NELL.

Links to:

Sources of further information:

- www.littleredtractor.org.uk/contact.asp
- The Sustainable Development Commission have recently published a report concerning the Sustainability implications of the Little Red Tractor Scheme. Hard copies are available free on request, contact enquiries@sd-commission.org.uk.
- For info concerning the Leaf Marque www.leafuk.org
- For info concerning Freedom Foods

www.rspca.org.uk/servlet/satellite?pagename=RSPCA/FreedomFood/FreedomFoodHomepage

B) Option: Supplier / producer engagement

Recommendation

- ***Where links can be established with primary producers directly or through wholesalers, opportunities for promoting and facilitating their adoption of more sustainable practices should be explored.***

Note

As described in section 1a above, this may involve assisting producers to achieve recognised accreditation. Additionally the possibility of initiating the transfer of appropriate skills through projects such as Newcastle Universities Nafferton Ecological Farming Group should be explored. One of the aims of this group is to transfer cost effective, and more environmentally benign practices into conventional agriculture.

Who should be involved?: Fishwicks, Hollands, Manners, Redbridges, NELL, Nafferton Ecological Farming Group.

Links to:

Sources of further information:

- For further information regarding the Nafferton group see www.ncl.ac.uk/tcoa/producers/ .

C) Option: Increase demand for organic produce

Currently there would appear to be limited opportunities to factor in organic produce into mainstream public sector purchasing. When questioned buyers invariably cite cost as the main obstacle. However there is evidence that the cost differential between some organic products and conventionally grown foods (milk, potatoes) is declining and is likely to continue to do so.

Recommendations

- ***Local authorities interested in using organic produce should use variants to request that a supplier provides prices for organic products to allow them to determine the cost differential of an organic alternative.***
- ***Opportunities for niche local authority markets should be explored , for example,***
 - ***the use of organic produce should be promoted to catering managers for use in functions. Several authorities already use organic and local speciality produce when catering for functions.***

- ***The possibility of featuring an ‘organic dish of the day’ in staff canteens should be considered. Such an initiative should ideally be linked to activity relating to healthy eating.***
- ***Darlington Memorial Hospital Trust currently purchase organic milk from a local supplier. Consideration should be given to whether there is scope for extending this practice to the town council and opted out schools. (see also section 3d).***

Who should be involved?: Local authority buyers, Regional Soil Association staff

Links to:

Sources of further information:

- Northumbria Organic Producers www.nop-organic.net/

2. OBJECTIVE : Increase tenders from small and local producers.

A) Option: Increase the accessibility of the market

Northumberland County Council recently broke their food contract into lots on a geographic basis, this (in conjunction with other work) resulted in increased tenders.

In more geographically compact authorities is felt likely that the use of lots will be most successful where certain items, for which there is a known supplier base, are extracted from larger contracts. For example, eggs are often incorporated into general grocery contracts. There are a number of egg producer/suppliers in the region, who may be capable of meeting public sector demand, but who are not in a position to supply the full range of products included in such contracts and are therefore excluded from the market.

Recommendation

- ***When letting new contracts buyers should consider breaking food contracts down, either into smaller geographic lots or by letting contracts for individual items or groups of items.***

Note

It should be noted that reservations regarding this approach have been expressed by several buyers concerned about the increased costs associated with the administration of additional contracts. Whether buyers could achieve purchase cost savings which would help to offset additional transaction costs is unknown and will remain so until the approach has been trialled.

Additionally catering managers, particularly those dealing with schools have expressed concerns regarding the potential for increased numbers of deliveries. It has been suggested

that it may be possible to avoid this by establishing separate contracts for supply and delivery. In this scenario one distributor could conceivably be contracted to deliver goods derived from several different sources. We have as yet to establish how feasible this suggestion is.

Who should be involved?:

Links to: 2b

Sources of further information:

- For information regarding Northumberland County Councils experience contact Barry Mitchell. Tel: 01670 534 145.

B) Option: Develop a regional producer/supplier database

Several local authority buyers have indicated that they have limited information concerning potential suppliers, and that they rely on suppliers approaching them.

Our experience and that of Northumberland County Council is that many potential suppliers do not consider the public sector to be an accessible market and have therefore not approached local authorities.

We are aware of several sources of information concerning speciality food producers/suppliers. These include Northumbria Larders www.northumbria-larder.co.uk, Northumbria Organic Producers www.nop-organic.net/ and the Countryside Agencies 'Local Products Guide- north east'. However, as far as we can determine a comprehensive database of suppliers able to meet mainstream public sector catering requirements does not exist.

Recommendation

- ***We recommend that a database be compiled of producer/suppliers interested in (and capable of) supplying the public sector with commodity products.***

Note

The database should include suppliers whose size precludes them from supplying large local authorities, but who may be able to supply civic catering functions, opted out schools or other independent, small scale units. We would suggest that this information be hosted on the Nepo website. Suppliers included on this list should be appraised of how to find out information concerning forthcoming business opportunities with the councils. Compilation of the database may need to be complemented by a producer/supplier event to ensure they are aware of the operational standards they will be required to meet.

Who should be involved?: those holding information concerning potential suppliers, Nepo, NELL, GONE, others?

Links to:

Sources of further information:

C) Option: Supplier development

Currently the regions public sector food market is dominated by a small number of regional and national businesses. Several procurement officers have expressed a wish to see greater competition for their business. With regard to fruit and vegetable contracts some authorities have indicated that in the past they have only received one tender for their business. This both undermines the principles of best value (which are based on there being a competitive marketplace) and makes buyers wary of 'scaring' suppliers off.

Northumberland County Council have demonstrated that where a pro-active approach is adopted it is possible to encourage greater competition for their business. Officers responsible for purchasing decisions in other authorities have indicated that they either do not have the time, or that they do not see supplier engagement/ development as part of their role.

In Northumberland County Council the impetus for their work with suppliers emerged from an economic development section, who subsequently sought the involvement of Business Link. Such linkages do not appear to routinely occur elsewhere.

Recommendation

- ***Where it does not already occur, we would recommend that food buyers engage with business support and economic development professionals, both internally and externally (for example Business Link).***

Note

Business support staff could offer assistance in identifying suppliers and encouraging/assisting them to tender for business. Critically they could also be called in to assist suppliers who have failed to secure a contract and who have requested advice as to how they might increase their chances of future success.

Who should be involved?: Local Authority Economic Development Departments, Business Link

Links to:

Sources of further information:

- Regarding Northumberland County Councils experience contact Barry Mitchell. Tel: 01670 534 145.

D) Option: Simplify the tender process

Public Sector bodies are required to act in accordance with strict legal requirements. There may however be scope within existing tender procedures for simplifying the process to reduce the administrative burden, this is likely to be particularly helpful to smaller suppliers.

Recommendation

- ***Production of a standard food tender document and its adoption by all local authorities in the north east region.***

Note

Work on a food procurement document is currently (March/April) being undertaken by North East Land Links and Darlington Borough Council. The North East Purchasing Organisation and the North East Centre for Procurement Excellence have been approached with a view to using documentation arising from the Darlington project as the basis for a new regional template.

Who should be involved?: see above

Links to:

Sources of further information:

3. OBJECTIVE: Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene.

A) Option: Pursue further improvements in the marketing of healthy food options.

Local Authority catering managers operate businesses and need to generate sufficient income through sales to sustain their business. It is an unfortunate fact that 'unhealthy' forms of food are generally more popular, particularly with children. Concerns have been expressed by several school catering managers that reducing the range of popular foods they offer will adversely affect their business and conceivably lead to offsite problems as children choose to eat elsewhere.

There is however an acknowledged need to make the consumption of healthier food the option of choice, and a reservoir of expertise in this field within the region. In the individual authority reports we have recorded a considerable amount of joint activity, focused on healthy eating, being undertaken by local authorities working with Primary Care Trusts and other local partners.

For example; whilst all local authorities are required to meet basic government guidelines for school meals, some such as North Tyneside and Northumberland County Council exceed these, and operate to the higher, nutritional standards of the Caroline Walker Trust.

Gateshead Council was recently awarded "School Catering Team of the Year" by the Association of Public Service Excellence {APSE} for their track record in improving the quality and nutritional content of our school menus.

However as we understand it there is no formal mechanism for transferring expertise between authorities across the region.

Recommendation

- ***We would recommend that a regional food and health forum,, be established to facilitate the exchange of best practice across the region. Particularly in relation to the marketing of healthy food.***

Note

Such a body could also take on or share the responsibility for evolving generic documentation, for example, menus, food policies, on behalf of its members.

Who should be involved?

Local authority catering managers, Primary Care Trust staff, Regional Food and Health Co-ordinator (GONE), Local Authority Catering Association, Meat and Livestock Commission, National Farmers Union?

Links to: 5a

Sources of further information:

- Caroline Walker Trust www.cwt.org.uk/

B) Option: Ensure that there are links between work being undertaken within schools on healthy eating and projects engaged with the wider community.

NELL is aware of in excess of one hundred projects operating across the region which are focused on, or incorporate the healthy eating agenda. A number of these but by no means all are linked to wider healthy eating projects involving schools.

In relation to young people and healthy eating there is need for a co-ordinated approach to ensure that parents are encouraging healthy eating habits at home. Where it does not already occur healthy eating projects working in the wider community should complement those operating in schools.

For example, a social enterprise established by North East Land Links, The Foodchain (northeast) Ltd supplies a food co-op selling fresh fruit and vegetables which operates from a school in Easington. This is proving to be popular and the local health project workers (Easington PCT) plan more as a result.

Recommendation

- ***Where appropriate, links should be established between healthy eating initiatives occurring with the wider community and those focused on schools.***

Who should be involved?:

Individual schools and community food projects, Regional Food and Health Co-ordinator, NELL + The Foodchain co. This work could be pursued through the North East Community Food Initiatives network

Links to: 3a

Sources of further information:

- Regarding Easington Food Co-op, contact Simon McCabe North East Land Links 0191 441 4400. see also www.thefoodchain-ne.co.uk

C) Option: Increase provision of organic food

There is mounting evidence that organic food is ‘healthier’ than conventionally produced alternatives. This is however a highly contentious issue, at present the Food Standards Agency’s position is that consumers gain no additional health benefits from consuming organic food as opposed to eating conventional produce. More recent claims regarding the health benefits of organic milk are currently being examined by the agency.

Recommendation

At present it is difficult to justify recommending organic food on the basis of the claims made for its superior health qualities, as these have yet to be proven to the satisfaction of the governments chief advisor (Food Standards Agency) on these matters. Interested staff should monitor the situation as in the case of certain products, for example organic milk, there may yet prove to be a health case for specifying this product, particularly where it is to be consumed by children.

Who should be involved?:

Links to: 1c

Sources of further information:

- Regarding organic milk news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4153951.stm
- Food Standard Agency view www.food.gov.uk/science/sciencetopics/organicfood
- Soil Association, www.soil.association.org.uk

4. OBJECTIVE: Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

* See also section 1.

A) Option: Consider the environmental impacts of production and supply when producing/revising menus.

Catering managers can reduce the environmental impacts of their purchasing practices by avoiding or reducing the use of foods which are produced intensively, which are not in season and/or which are imported by air.

Alternatively they might continue to use such foods but specify that they should have been produced to less intensive or organic standards.

NELL is attempting to identify useful sources of information concerning the relative environmental impacts of different forms of food. Information on this matter may be available from other organisations working on the PSFPI agenda in Yorkshire and East Anglia.

Recommendation

- ***Catering managers should consider revising their menus to include dishes which incorporate more local, seasonal and sustainably produced/harvested food.***

Who should be involved?: Catering managers, NELL, others?

Links to: 1c, 3a, 5a

Sources of further information:

- A useful source of advice concerning marine fish can be found at www.worldwildlife.org/windows/marine/you_do.cfm. This website provides lists of fish and shellfish which are believed to be harvested at sustainable levels. It also features information on types of fish which buyers concerned with sustainability should avoid.

B) Option: Reduce waste

Catering managers should consider where there may be opportunities for them to reduce waste.

Recommendation (taken from DEFRA),

- ***Avoiding the use of disposable cutlery and plates***
- ***Serving milk, condiments and sauces in re-useable containers rather than disposable individual containers/sachets where this does not compromise food safety***
- ***Using serviettes made from unbleached recycled material***
- ***Recycling glass, cans, paper, plastics and vegetable oil***
- ***Minimising packaging***
- ***Specifying energy efficient appliance rated B or better under the EC's energy labelling scheme, which are HCFC and HFC free if they use refrigerants***

Who should be involved?

Local authority catering managers

Links to: 4d

Sources of further information:

- www.envirowise.gov.uk/envirowisev3.nsf/key/fooddrink

D) Option: Establish mechanisms for measuring and monitoring performance against sustainability criteria.

To assist buyers to evaluate tenders and to monitor contracts in the post award phase it is suggested that a generic tool be established for assessing and monitoring performance within the region.

As we understand it only one local authority (Durham County Council) involves individuals with environmental expertise in the evaluation of tenders (though ironically this council stated that they were unaware of the PSFPI). We would suggest that this practice should be more widespread and that local authorities should be pro-active in encouraging suppliers to improve their environmental performance.

For example, where it is not already routine we would urge that local authorities encourage suppliers to make use of free sources of advice such as Envirowise. This is a government funded organisation which provides free advice to businesses on issues such as waste minimisation.

Food processing businesses may also benefit from seeking advice from the ASMa the Association of Sustainable Manufacturers.

Recommendation

- ***Establish generic regional tools for measuring and monitoring the performance of suppliers against sustainability criteria.***

Who should be involved?: Buyers, LA21 officers, ASMa, Envirowise, NELL

Links to: 4c

Sources of further information:

- www.envirowise.gov.uk/envirowisev3.nsf/key/fooddrink
- www.asma-uk.org/

5. OBJECTIVE : Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

A) Option: Develop menus based on products which are (or which could be) produced within the region.

Catering managers can create a greater level of demand for local/regional food by basing their menus on those types of food which can be produced within the region and by taking into account seasonal fluctuations in supply.

Food is cheaper in season and its use is also likely to yield sustainability benefits. Out of season food will either have been subject to a more intensive growing regime and/or have been imported.

For example, Ashington Community High School have reintroduced traditional meals prepared using fresh local produce and have both cut costs and improved the uptake of school dinners.

Featuring local/regional foods in the supply chain can be useful when marketing catering services. For example the use of local produce, adoption of food policies and pursuance of other such measures may help catering managers to dissuade schools from opting out or using alternative services, or even attract opted out schools to return to using local authority services.

For school caterers it can also help to re-assure parents and school authorities concerned about food safety issues. For example Northumbrian County Council established a mechanism by which they could buy local beef to address parental concerns regarding BSE.

A regional menu database could be developed featuring meals based on local foods. It is acknowledged that new recipes would need to be tested and carefully marketed to ensure their acceptability to the customer base.

The development of recipes should involve health professionals but also representatives from organisations with a role in promoting the use of local /regional food, for example the Meat and Livestock Commission.

A complementary approach would be to develop new products based on local ingredients. For example Hampshire Fare have worked with local producers to develop a healthy beef burger. This now features on the menu in schools throughout Hampshire.

Recommendation

- ***Catering managers should consider revising their menus to include dishes which incorporate more locally available produce and products based on local produce.***

Who should be involved?: catering managers, Regional Food and Health Coordinator, health professionals, Meat and Livestock Commission, NFU, Northumbria Larder

Links to: 3a, 4a

Sources of further information:

- Regarding Ashington school case study
www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement/casestudies/ach.htm

B) Option: Supplier engagement

We recommend that further, more detailed discussions should be held with existing regional (and national?) suppliers. They are familiar with regional food supply chains and have views on the factors which currently affect the type and quantity of foodstuffs which they supply to the public sector.

Their perspective would be particularly useful to those seeking to identify opportunities for local/regional producers as second or third tier suppliers. Initial discussions with Fishwicks suggest there may be opportunities for regional vegetable producers.

Recommendation

- ***We recommend that further, more detailed discussions should be held with existing regional (and national?) suppliers.***

Who should be involved?: Fishwicks, Manners, Redbridges, Hollands, NELL, Nepo, NECEP, Business Link?,

Link to : 5a

Sources of further information:

C) Option: Promote and facilitate supplier/producer collaboration.

There is a general consensus amongst catering and procurement staff that they would prefer to see producers incorporated into existing supply chains, rather than deal with producers directly.

This reflects concerns relating to,

- The likely need to for multiple contracts leading to additional time and financial costs
- Multiple deliveries
- Ability of producers to comply with buyers requirements relating to hygiene, flexibility of delivery, ability to comply with product specifications

As discussed in section 2a buyers can extract items from general contracts thereby making the marketplace more accessible to producers wishing to sell directly. Milk is often operated as a separate contract and there is at least one example of a milk producer selling direct to the public sector in the region. Some direct supply of eggs also occurs albeit at a small scale.

Where producers have the ability to meet the requisite specifications and have a delivery system, buyers could consider splitting contracts into lots for some meat or vegetable products. Issues which would have to be considered would relate to the range of products a producer could offer and the producers ability to supply over the course of a contract.

These issues could be addressed through the establishment of producer networks, both within the region and with similar operations both in the UK and in Europe.

At present we are wary of recommending this approach, our main reservation relates to the time and effort the evolution of such an approach is likely to require. We believe that it is feasible and would be interested in the opinion of rural sector organisations on this matter. Currently however we are of the view that in the first instance efforts be directed at establishing methods of integrating more regional producers into existing supply chains.

Who should be involved?: Business Link, Rural Development Service, One North East, NELL

Links to: 2a, 2c

Sources of further information:

Appendix A: INDIVIDUAL LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORTS

DARLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

The council runs two catering operations, school meals and civic catering. A procurement officer based in the policy team within the council leads on procurement.

a) School meals service

Catering manager, Linn Wake, 01325-380651

Darlington council supplies school meals to all schools at £1.48. Schools then charge between £1.50 and £2.00 to those buying a school meal. Most of the boroughs Comprehensive schools (16) have opted out of local authority provision.

b) Civic catering

Business support manager, Judith Chiswell, 01325 388403

Civic catering covers Arts centres, Town hall, and Sports and Leisure facilities. There are five social service outlets and five civic catering outlets.

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The managers of the two catering operations decide what type of food is bought. Responsibility for preparing contracts currently lies within the Leisure and Arts section of the council. The business support manager for Civic Catering prepares the tender documents with support from the councils procurement officer. She and her colleague from the schools meals service are involved in monitoring contracts post award.

Overall responsibility for food procurement rests with Steve Thompson, Assistant Director Leisure and Arts. Tel: 01325 347529.

Procurement officer: Susan White. Tel: 01325 388019

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Councillor Bristow is a member procurement champion based in Resources and Scrutiny group. Tel; 01325 388351

Lorraine O'Donnell, Head of Policy. Tel 01325 380651

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

The composition of the menu determines what types of food are bought. Price, availability and quality are the three key issues determining what appears on the menu. Other considerations are the logistical capabilities of suppliers to meet demands.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

The 'procurement' department/ business section of operational services approach the Catering managers up to one year prior to the current contracts expiry date.

The council have an approved tender list. This is a list of suppliers whom have expressed an interest in supplying the council in the year prior to the contracts renewal.

The council will invite any/all approved suppliers to tender, along with any individual or organisation that has expressed an interest in supplying the council in the year leading up to contract renewal.

Suppliers are added to an approved list if they have a proven track record of supplying the council, or are Quality Assured and request to be an approved supplier.

SECTION 2: Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.0 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

The council currently lets six contracts,

- Fresh fruit and Vegetables
- Fresh meat and poultry
- Dairy products

- Frozen foods
- Bakery products
- Chilled foods

2.1 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st August 2005
Meat	Manners	31 st August 2005
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st August 2005
Frozen	Brakefresh	31 st August 2005
Bakery	Brakes	31 st August 2005
Chilled	Brakes	31 st August 2005

2.2 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Kitchen unit managers place orders directly with the relevant supplier, invoices are dealt with centrally.

Schools receive approx one delivery from each supplier per week. One comprehensive school in Darlington receives more than two deliveries of fruit and vegetables per week.

Milk and dairy products are delivered daily or as and when required.

Civic catering outlets including social care homes and leisure services receive deliveries daily from each supplier.

2.3 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

Fruit and Vegetables	April 2003-2004	£50,752.73
Milk and milk products	April 2003-2004	£7, 906.40
Meat and meat products	April 2003-2004	£74,411.59

2.4 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

Information not supplied.

2.5 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Current contracts do not specify grading for fruit and vegetables i.e. class 1 or class 2.

Meat has full traceability. This is not monitored or audited by the council currently, however traceability is assured by their suppliers.

There are no other requirements stipulated or preferred by Darlington Town Council on any other food products.

2.6 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

Not known.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

NELL raised the awareness of PSFPI with Darlington town council in order to obtain the information included in this report. The council was unaware of the PSFPI until approached by North East Land Links.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

No information supplied.

Note: although not mentioned by staff involved in food procurement the council has published a 'How to do business with the council' guide, as required by the National Procurement Strategy. This is available from Susan White (details supplied in section 1.1 or from www.darlington.gov.uk/business/doing+business+with+the+council.htm)

The guide indicates that the council is committed to supporting smaller and north east based organisations to compete for business.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

All kitchen staff are accredited and independently audited by quality section within the council for food hygiene standards.

The schools catering manager has previously been involved in joint work with a 5 a day project which looked at how methods for promoting healthy eating in schools.

Menus were revised as a result of participation in this project.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

No information supplied.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

European Law was stated as a barrier to encouraging local suppliers to tender.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

Darlington Town Council stated that they have no knowledge nor feel they have any influence on where local distributors buy produce. They asked if Defra intend to assist local producers to meet demand, and to develop capacity and distribution networks? They stated also that they did not know how to trace produce to it's origin, be it local, UK or other, and where 'local' is in relation to Darlington.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Darlington indicated that if it will assist the town council to meet their agenda a representative would attend the first meeting.

**3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region.
Would your organisation be interested in participating?**

Very interested as some primary schools have asked for local and direct supply.

Note: Darlington Borough Council are participating in a pilot project initiated by North East Land Links with financial support from the regions Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy Group.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

Durham County Council operate two catering operations;

a) School meals

Catering manager; Lynda Walker 0191 3833000

The school meals service is run as a 'client unit', and is not a service provider. School meals are currently a 'delegated function'; meals are brought into schools ready cooked by an external supplier, currently Scolarest.

b) Service Direct

Catering Operations Manager; Mike Elsom 3833000

Durham County Council operate a commercial catering operation 'Service Direct'. This operation supplies food for Durham police constabulary, fire service, leisure facilities, social care facilities, County Hall and other commercial kitchens within Durham. Ten thousand five hundred meals are served daily through this operation

Schools who choose not to buy into the main contract can purchase food, including fresh produce from Service Direct if required

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The corporate procurement department are responsible for the procurement process.

Contact: Bill Richards, Head of Corporate Procurement.
Tel: 0191 383 4188

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Member champion: Councillor Don Ross. Deputy Leader
0191 373 2475

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such

as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food which the organisation buys?

All food contracts are awarded on the basis of 'most economically advantageous' option, i.e. decisions regarding tenders take into account price and quality, the weighting is 60/40 in favour of price.

Service Direct menu's are changed twice yearly in March and in October. Menus have some influence on what products are bought but they are only guidelines.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

School meals

School meal provision is exempt from European advertising rules. The current contract will be advertised nationally in the Catering and Hotelkeeper magazine and regionally in the Northern Echo newspaper. There was no indication given as to when this would take place, as consultation is ongoing to decide to renew the current contract or seek an alternative, however the contract expires in July 2005.

Service Direct

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

Catering managers from each operational unit supply a shopping basket for the corporate procurement department, they then draw up a tender and evaluation process based on the information supplied. Conditions of contract and menus for both service direct and school meals operations are decided post contract award.

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.1 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

Service Direct currently hold seven food contracts for the following product categories.

- Fruit and vegetables
- Prepared vegetables
- Fresh fish
- Frozen foods
- Bread and cakes
- Groceries
- Par fry chips
- Yoghurts

There is flexibility to buy outside of contract for special items. Fresh fish is purchased directly from Durham market; Northumbrian nettle cheese is purchased from a local butcher as and when requested.

2.2 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
School meals	Scolarest	July 2005

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Hollands	July 2007
Meat and poultry	Manners	Aug 2006
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	Jan 2005
Frozen foods	3663	July 2007
Bread and Cakes	J R Holland	July 2007
Par fried chips	3663	July 2007
Yoghurts	J R Holland	July 2007
Groceries	C J Lang	Jan 2007

2.3 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Unit managers (kitchen managers) place orders directly with suppliers for delivery to their operation.

School meals operate in a similar fashion though food is supplied ready or partially cooked to be reheated in a 'regeneration oven' by an external contractor.

2.4 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

No information available.

2.5 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

Only information relating to the type of product is available.

Fruit

Apple (Cooking, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Red)
Pear (Granny smith, Packam, Conference)

Vegetables

Beetroot
Broccoli (Floret)
Cabbage (Red, Spring, Savoy, White)
Carrots (Whole, Grated, Baton, Diced, Sliced, Peeled, Ring)
Cauliflower
Celery
Courgette
Herbs (Thyme, Parsley)
Leek
Lettuce (Iceberg, Flat)
Mushroom
Mustard cress
Onion (Large, Red, sliced, diced)
Parsnip (Baton, Diced)
Pepper (Red, Green, Yellow)
Potato Mids
Potatoes new
Potato (Sliced, Diced, Peeled)
Potato Ware
Radish
Spring Onion
Sprouts
Swede (Diced)

Meat and Poultry

Chicken

Fresh
Fillet 200 gms
Leg 340gms
Drumsticks
Diced Thigh
Diced Breast
Strips
Fronts

Turkey

Fresh 14kg+
Frozen 5/10kg
Breast Bomb
Easy carve
Diced Thigh
Minced thigh
Escallops
Turkey strips

Bacon

Back-rind on
Streaky rashers
Back rashers-rind less

Gammon

Boneless
Steaks horseshoe
Steaks half-moon
Bacon chop

Kidney

Ox

Liver

Ox
Pig
Lamb

Pork

Leg boneless
Loin
Chop trimmed
Chop spare rib
Steaks
Shoulder boneless
Belly sliced
Minced
Diced
Fillet

Lamb

NZ Leg Boneless
NZ Chops Loin
NZ Shoulder Boneless
NZ Dice Lamb
NZ Minced

English Chumps

Beef

Topside
Top rump
Silverside
Fore rib
Chuck Steak Diced
Brisket Boneless
Steak Fillet 150gm
Steak Sirloin 175mg
Steak Rump 175mg
Braising Steaks
Mince Lean
Steak and Kidney
Strip loin
Beef strip silverside.
Beef burger 80% 113gm
Economy 57mg

Sausages

Pork
Pork sausage meat
Chipolatas Cumberland
Cumberland ring

2.6 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

None known or requested other than statutory certification.

2.7 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

None known other than some speciality items bought off contract, fresh fish from Durham market and Northumbrian Nettle cheese from a local butchers.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

NELL introduced the PSFPI to Durham County Council. Steps have been taken within the corporate procurement department to develop sustainability in their practices. To date these efforts have concentrated on Information Technology and not on food.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

Durham County Council have not undertaken any specific action relating to food.

As part of their general policy they have produced a

- How to do business guide.
- Attend meet the supplier events within the region run by Business Link and other third party organisations.
- Have offered Chamber of Commerce the opportunity to put together regional producer/supplier groups which DCC would address regarding;

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

The School Meals catering manager works with the contracted supplier to reduce fat, salt and sugar content of the food served.

There is also ongoing work with the local Primary Care Trusts who supply materials to promote healthy eating. In primary education fruit and vegetable tasting session for children are given free of charge.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

Durham County Council have intentions of developing a 'risk register'. The register will serve to identify potential environmental hazard/risk of current and potential suppliers. This will be conducted via a series of 'health checks' of contracts. Environmental officers and the sustainable procurement team will develop the register. The work will be operational by the end of 2006.

“Durham county council will employ new staff to work with other organisations One North East and the Chamber of Commerce to look at ways of taking their procurement strategy forward and on target. We also have a sustainable procurement working group which includes an Environmental Officer, a Procurement officer, Equal opportunities officer and Catering managers.”
Peter Shuttleworth, Procurement officer DCC 11.10.04

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

Durham County Council feel that the legal restriction of openly inviting tenders is a barrier to implementing PSFPI objective 2. They see supplier engagement post contract as a method of overcoming this.

There are plans to implement “supplier engagement” within their developing E-Plan (electronic procurement system) and to identify partnerships to address the issue.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

Will attend.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

3.4 It is our intention to run ‘virtual’ pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

GATESHEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

Gateshead Council runs four in house catering operations.

a) Civic and Leisure – provides in house catering on council sites, including the civic centre and leisure centres.

Catering manager: Christene Beattie

b) Gateshead College

Catering manager: Sonia Smith

c) Social Services – community based services e.g. meals at home

Catering manager: Andy Browne

d) School Meals Service

Catering Manager: Helen McAllister. Tel: 0191 433 3729

The schools meals service is the largest operation, there are 92 Schools serving 14,500 meals per day, 38 weeks of the year.

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The catering managers of the four operations decide what type of food is ordered and are responsible for managing the contract. The procurement team prepare the tender documents in line with the information provided and manage the procurement process.

Procurement contact: Julie Gullon. Tel: 0191 433 5990

Julie Gullon is also the NEPO contact for food purchasing.

1.2 Have procurement ‘champions’ been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Councillor John Eagle is the nominated procurement champion.

Tel: 0191 4781847.

Note: The role of procurement ‘champions’ is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such

as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 Which factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

The catering managers set the menus and thereby dictate what type of foodstuffs are required. For schools there are set menus for winter and summer, these are alternated on a three-week cycle. Information concerning school menus may be found at www.gateshead.gov.uk/soundbites/#menus.

School menus are changed over time; the catering manager has indicated that seasonality is a consideration in the design of school meal menus and that some forms of regional seasonal produce are incorporated into menus. The school catering manager has said that they would be prepared to redesign the menus in order to accommodate more regional produce, if they felt that it was likely to prove popular.

The current tender document states that,

‘Vegetables should be carefully chosen so as to make optimum use of seasonal products which are at their best quality’

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the procurement process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

The current contract was let as a **restricted** contract. Prospective tenders were required to complete a pre qualification questionnaire (PPQ). Only those who complied with the standards required within the PPQ were invited to submit a tender. Tendering is undertaken via an electronic system.

All future contracts irrespective of value will be advertised on the North East Purchasing Organisations portal www.nepoportal.org (see page 5 for information regarding Nepo).

Producer’s/supplier’s can view forthcoming opportunities, current contract status and register their interest in becoming a future supplier via this portal.

SECTION 2: Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.0 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

As of August 2004 Gateshead were operating four food contracts.

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Meat
- General provisions (including eggs)
- Milk

The contract for fruit and vegetables is a NEPO contract held jointly by Gateshead and Newcastle City Council.

2.1.1 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Dual Primary suppliers J R Holland and Fishwicks. (NEPO contract)	31 st July 2007
Meat	Manners	31 st July 2007
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st July 2007
General Supplies		31 st July 2007

2.2 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Current fruit and vegetable contracts commenced on the 1st August 2004, they are due to run for three years, with an annual review. The contract has been let jointly to J. Fishwick and JR Holland's. The contracts were let on an annual estimated value of spend rather than for specific quantities of produce. The contract is split into 'prepared' and 'whole' fruit and vegetables. NEPO hold quarterly contract review meetings, which include price inspections to ensure costs are being met efficiently.

Deliveries are made to schools and kitchens as and when required. Unit managers place an order with the suppliers directly according to their needs.

2.3 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

For fruit and vegetables estimated annual spend £160,000.00

2.4 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

- **Fruit and Vegetables**

The following information has been extracted from the current NEPO tender. Information concerning the volumes purchased is not available.

'Raw materials must be of class 1 quality and suitable variety for purpose according to seasonable availability.'

Aubergine

Whole 350-450g

Courgette

Whole 100-150g

Cabbage

White Roughly shredded
 Red
 Spring greens
 Savoy

Carrots

Whole peeled
 Batons 25x10x10
 Diced 7.10mm square
 Sliced 4.6mm slice
 Grated

Leeks

Whole washed baby bakers no thicker than 3cm
 Un-peeled, washed bags of 12.5g

Onion

Whole 300-500g
 Diced 10x10x10mm
 Sliced 6mm

Potatoes

Peeled, graded	50-60g	50mm diameter
Diced		10x10x10
Sliced		
Baking	300-350g	60 per box
Chipped		
Chateau	45-50g	75x40mm

Salad

Lettuce, Iceberg or equivalent Round Lettuce	400-600g	125-175mm diameters
Curly Endive or equivalent Oak leaf or equivalent	400-600g 300-400g	
Lollo Rosso or equivalent Chicory or equivalent Radicchio or equivalent	250-350g 100-125g 225-275g	100-150mm long

Salad Vegetables

Celery	750-1000g	Head
Cucumber	500-600g	Straight
Radish	500g	Punnet
Pepper, all colours	150-220g	each
Tomatoes		80-90 count
Salad cress		Punnet

Swede

Whole peeled		300-500g
Baton		25x10x10mm
Diced		10x10x10mm

Soup mix

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Diced swede	1
Diced carrot	2
Chopped onion	2
Chopped leek	1
Chopped cabbage	1

Coleslaw Mix

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
White cabbage shredded	2
Carrots grated	1

Fruit

Apples-culinary
 Apples-desert
 Apples-red
 Bananas
 Grapes
 Lemon
 Limes
 Melon Charentais
 Melon Galia
 Melon Honeydew
 Melon Ogen

Melon Water
Pears
Pineapple
Strawberries

- **Red Meat**

Beef Mince
Diced Chuck beef
Diced Lamb
Diced Pork
Lamb Mince

Gateshead MBC uses 'The Meat Buyers Guide' for setting specifications, this standard reference is available from,

Meat Trades Journal,
Quantum House,
19 Scarbrook Road,
Croydon, CR9 1LX
Sales 020 8565 4255

- **Poultry**

Diced Chicken
Diced Turkey
Pork Sausage min 65% meat.

- **Milk**

Skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.

- **Eggs**

Eggs are part of the general supplies contract and are British Red Lion stamped.

2.8 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Meat products are fully traceable, fruit and vegetables are required to be EC Class 1 or equivalent.

- **Fruit and vegetables**

"Quality control is an issue, class 1 is a basic requirement".
Gateshead council, Catering Manager.

Fruit and vegetables are EC grade class 1 or equivalent.

Note: EC marketing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables are not based on production standards. Principally they relate to freshness and cosmetic issues. See www.defra.gov.uk/hort/hmi.htm for further information.

2.9 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

This information was supplied to us by the Schools Catering Manager,

- Beef is supplied from Northumberland or North Durham as 'Northumbrian Select Beef'.
- Pork and chicken comes from farms in Northumberland, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Durham
- Potatoes and carrots are from Northumberland
- Milk is supplied by ACC from their Depot on Team Valley, local milk is likely to be supplied by default.
- Bottled Water from Morpeth, Cheviot spring water bottled at source.

Except in the case of beef (and water), local/regional produce features by default rather than design.

We are unable to confirm the consistency with which regional potatoes and carrots feature in the supply chain.

The Schools Catering manager has indicated that from September 2004 information concerning the origin of vegetables will now be gathered from suppliers at the quarterly review meetings.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

Gateshead Council is aware of the PSFPI and includes the following in their tender document for fruit and vegetables (page 29).

'NEPO is committed to supporting the Governments Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy, the aim of which is to deliver a world class sustainable farming and food sector that contributes to a better environment and healthier and

prosperous communities. The five priority objectives outlines in the Strategy are.

- *Raise production and process standards*
- *Increase tenders from small and local producers*
- *Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious foods*
- *Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply*
- *Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand*

Please give details of any initiatives you are already undertaking to meet these objectives and how you intend to address them in the future.'

We do not have any information regarding the responses of the contract holders to this request.

Council officers stated that the PSFPI represented a new area for them and that they were in the early stages of responding to this agenda.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

In accordance with the National Procurement Strategy, Gateshead Council has produced a guide for suppliers and contractors entitled 'How to do business with the council' (www.gateshead.gov.uk/procurement)

In this the council has stated its intent to 'supporting and encouraging local firms to compete for contracts'. To assist in this process it says that it will,

- *Publicise opportunities in local newspapers.*
- *Give guidance as to the process and making sure they are kept up to date.*
- *Keep tender documents simple to understand and jargon free.*
- *Set realistic timetables.*
- *Encourage suppliers to adopt supply chain management practices.*
- *Encourage suppliers to adopt e-commerce systems that streamline processes, reduce administration time and enable the council to make payment to suppliers more speedily.'*

How to do business with the council. Page 10.

Gateshead Council are collaborating with other Tyne and Wear councils and the North East Centre for Procurement Excellence on a project aimed at preparing existing suppliers for the advent of 'e' procurement. We do not know whether food suppliers are involved in this programme.

Both the Procurement Officer and the Schools Catering Manager stated that they were not in a position to work with local producers, as they have no direct contact or awareness of such businesses.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

In secondary schools:

- Fizzy drinks have been voluntarily removed by the school catering service and replaced with bottled water from a local supplier, milk and fruit drinks
- We have replaced crisps with low fat crisps or corn snacks
- We have never sold confectionery in schools and have reduced the number of sugary snacks available for pupils to buy
- We have increased the number of sandwich bars, jacket potato and salad bars
- We have introduced pasta bars
- We have introduced Northumbrian beef where schools want it

In primary schools:

- We have introduced Taste busters - a sandwich and healthy food bar for children who don't want a hot meal at school
- Our recipes are nutritionally analysed by a consultant dietician and each new menu is checked by the dietician for nutritional content
- We work closely with the PCT, PHSE advisers and the regional 5 a day co-ordinator
- We have undertaken [in 2004] training in "healthy eating and how to get the message across to children" for all our unit managers using health professionals from the PCT and 5-a-day team
- We supported Cancer Prevention Week with Fruity Friday
- We support the Fruit in Schools programme by taking deliveries of fruit and helping with storage
- We have responded to an increase demand for fruit as a sweet at lunchtime from children who have become more accustomed to eating fruit because of Fruit in Schools.
- We have introduced Northumbrian beef to school that want it.
- We have reduced the number of processed foods on our menus and increased the number of fresh meat dishes
- We have increased the availability of fruit, vegetables and milk and reduced carbohydrates, fats and sugars [see the information on our new web-site - details below]
- We are reviewing our food products to meet wherever possible with Hungry for Success standards.
- We are already using products which have been nutritionally improved to meet those standards
- We run an annual "Design-a-Poster" competition with a healthy eating theme.

- We were recently awarded "School Catering Team of the Year" by the Association of Public Service Excellence {APSE} for our track record in improving the quality and nutritional content of our school menus.
- We take part in the Local Authorities Caterers Association [LACA] "Food for Action Day's as part of National School Meals Week.

In addition to this, every school displays a copy of our Customer Promise and Food Policy. Both schools and kitchens hold a copy of our Health & Nutrition Manual, and we have monitoring procedures in place to confirm that we exceed the National Nutritional Standards for School Lunches.

We are part of the Gateshead Healthy School team and each year award a certificate to those schools that have achieved the Healthy Eating criterion. The Gateshead Healthy Schools Award is part of the National healthy Schools Standard.

We also work with the Child Poverty Action Group, to identify reasons why children entitled to free meals don't always stay for lunch, thus missing out on a guaranteed nutritionally balanced meal once a day.

In the last few days, we have been recommended for registration to the Government's Charter Mark award.

We have just launched our web site at www.gateshead.gov.uk/schoolmeals, where advice on healthy eating is included amongst the information we make available to parents and pupils.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

The council stated that deliveries are co-ordinated to minimise the amount of vans going into school gates and multiple grocery supplies are supplied in one delivery, resulting in a reduced environmental impact.

Note: calculating 'food miles' is not straightforward. There may be fewer vans going into schools but in the system described above food has to be transported to one location before it can be re-distributed. In some cases this may result in food travelling an overall greater distance than if supplied direct.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

See section B.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

Regional co-ordinated sharing of information and some National guidance.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Yes

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

There are three in-house catering operations; all three are housed within the Facility Services unit, for further information see, www.newcastle.gov.uk/cwfacility.nsf/a/home?opendocument

a) School meals service

Catering manager; Janet Arnott. Tel: 0191 2783263

The schools meals service is the largest operation. There are approximately 22,000 lunches served every day in 113 schools across Newcastle.

b) Hospitality services.

Acting Civic Services Manager; Trevor Milner. Tel:0191 2328520

Hospitality Services provides catering for functions.

c) Meals at home.

Assistant General Manager, Ancillary Services and Meals at Home; Beverly Goldberg. Tel: 0191 2328520

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The managers of the catering operations decide what is ordered. Their requirements are combined into contracts by 'City Buy' who have responsibility for preparing and letting procurement contracts.

Procurement contact: Gerry Paxton, Assistant General Manager.
Tel: 0191 211 6937

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

The head of strategic procurement, Bill Potts is the nominated procurement champion within Newcastle City Council. 0191 228520

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such

as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

'Most economically advantageous option'

Gerry Paxton

What features on menus determines what is bought.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements.

2.0 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

As of December 2004 Newcastle were running six food contracts.

- Fruit and Vegetables
- Meat and poultry
- Milk and bread
- Groceries
- Two for Frozen foods

2.1 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Fishwicks (schools) J R Holland (meals at home) Holford (civic catering) (NEPO contract)	31 st July 2007
Meat (red meat and poultry)	Manners	31 st July 2005
Milk	CDFGB (formerly ACC)	31 st July 2005

Groceries	Danish Bacon Company	31 st July 2005
Frozen foods 1	Brakes	31 st July 2005
Frozen foods 2	MKG	31 st July 2005

2.5 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Catering unit managers (people with responsibility for a kitchen within a school or other facility), place orders directly with the suppliers.

Perishables including frozen foods are delivered 2, 3 or 4 times per week according to need. Ambient foods (tinned produce, rice, pasta etc) are delivered once a week.

2.6 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

Fruit and vegetables.....£110,000 (NEPO contract)
 Meat..... £250,000
 Frozen foods.....£650,000 (combined total)
 Groceries.....£560,000
 Milk.....£300,000

2.7 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

- **Fruit and Vegetables**

The following information has been extracted from the current NEPO tender. Information concerning the volumes purchased is not available.

'Raw materials must be of class 1 quality and suitable variety for purpose according to seasonable availability.'

Aubergine

Whole 350-450g

Courgette

Whole 100-150g

Cabbage

White Roughly shredded
 Red
 Spring greens
 Savoy

Carrots

Whole peeled

Batons

25x10x10

Diced

7.10mm square

Sliced

4.6mm slice

Grated

Leeks

Whole washed baby bakers

no thicker than 3cm

Un-peeled, washed

bags of 12.5g

Onion

Whole

300-500g

Diced

10x10x10mm

Sliced

6mm

Potatoes

Peeled, graded

50-60g

50mm diameter

Diced

10x10x10

Sliced

Baking

300-350g

60 per box

Chipped

Chateau

45-50g

75x40mm

Salad

Lettuce, Iceberg or equivalent

400-600g

125-175mm diameters

Round Lettuce

Curly Endive or equivalent

400-600g

Oak leaf or equivalent

300-400g

Lollo Rosso or equivalent

250-350g

Chicory or equivalent

100-125g

100-150mm long

Radicchio or equivalent

225-275g

Salad Vegetables

Celery

750-1000g

Head

Cucumber

500-600g

Straight

Radish

500g

Punnet

Pepper, all colours

150-220g

each

Tomatoes

80-90 count

Salad cress

Punnet

Swede

Whole peeled

300-500g

Baton

25x10x10mm

Diced

10x10x10mm

Soup mix

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Diced swede	1
Diced carrot	2
Chopped onion	2
Chopped leek	1
Chopped cabbage	1

Coleslaw Mix

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
White cabbage shredded	2
Carrots grated	1

Fruit

Apples-culinary
Apples-desert
Apples-red
Bananas
Grapes
Lemon
Limes
Melon Charentais
Melon Galia
Melon Honeydew
Melon Ogen
Melon Water
Pears
Pineapple
Strawberries

- **Fresh meat and poultry**

Product

Buyers guide reference

Beef

First quality steer/heifer

Topside/silverside	1057/1077
Boneless rib	1326
Brisket	1357
Chuck steak	144
Steak diced	145
Mince	149
Minced chuck	149a

**Mutton
First quality**

Legs boneless & rolled	2056M
Diced	226M
Minced	228M

**Lamb
British first quality**

Legs boneless and rolled	2056
Loin chops trimmed	226M
Minced	228
Diced	226

**Lamb
Imported First Quality**

Legs boneless and rolled	2056
Loin chops trimmed	226M
Minced	228
Diced	226

**Pork
British first quality**

Belly	314
Shoulder boneless	3166
Boneless legs	3056
Loin chops	3318
Diced	321
Minced	322

Offal

Liver Ox
Liver fry lamb
Kidney Ox
Tripe

Sausage/poultry

Beef sausage, 65% min meat, thin skins approx 45g per sausage

As above, approx 57g per sausage

Beef and pork sausage, 65% min meat, thin skins, approx 57g per sausage.

Beef sausage meat, 65% min meat

Pork sausage, 65% min meat, thin skins, approx 45g per sausage

As above, approx 57g per sausage

Pork sausage meat 65% min meat

Chipolata sausage, Pork and beef

a) 28g per sausage

b) 23g per sausage

Kebab meat, cooked /frozen

Black pudding

Chicken diced thigh meat

Chicken fillets, approx 225g each

Turkey minced thigh meat

Turkey diced thigh meat

- **Milk**

Unless otherwise specified milk will be cows milk and should be non-standardised whole milk with a minimum fat content of 3.0% as defined by the Drinking Milk Regulation 1976.

All milk must be produced in the United Kingdom.

Milk should be supplied in a variety of containers depending upon the requirements of particular establishments.

Size and description of container: pint bottles;3 gall pergal, 5 gall pergal and 0.5 pint cartons.

One third pint bottles complete with straw for milk in schools scheme.

Tetrapak flavoured-200ml with straw

Bottle, flavoured-500ml

2.8 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Delivery notes with meat deliveries must declare the country of origin. Meat is required to have been supplied in accordance with specifications identified in the "Meat Buyers Guide for Caterers" 4th Edition.

Newcastle is a Fair Trade City, dry goods are purchased through Fair Trade though are not supplied in their three major catering operations. Fair Trade chocolate was supplied to vending machines in schools, though objections from Head teachers were successful in removing the item due to its name 'Dubble', despite the success as a brand, it was felt the name was an incorrect spelling and contradicted core curriculum.

2.9 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

School meals

Eggs
McCutcheons farm (battery eggs)

Vegetables

Leeks, Swede, Savoy and green cabbage are supplied from a farm in Hebron. Potatoes are supplied from farms in Wooler and the borders. Baking potatoes are supplied from a farm in West Yorkshire.

Poultry

Is supplied from Cumbria, the butcher has a contract for consistent supply with the farm.

Newcastle City Council stated their suppliers are willing to accommodate local suppliers so long as there is no additional cost, or if the additional cost can be justified to their customers.

Civic catering

Hospitality Services buy's local speciality foods direct from the supplier out of contract. These foods are bought directly from the producer for conference and banqueting menus. Suppliers include Northumbrian Cheese Company and Hadrian organic beef, Piperfield Pork from Berwick upon Tweed, Lamb from Blackface sheep in Elsdon Northumberland. Vegetables and potatoes from Tiptree Farm, and herbs from Ebchester.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

City Buy stated that they were unaware of the PSFPI until it was introduced to them by North East Land Links.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

Any efforts on this have been concentrated on IT and construction, not on food.

A 'How to do business with the council guide' is not yet available, though is under development and will be posted on www.newcastle.gov.uk sometime in 2005.

Note: Newcastle are the lead organisation for the Tyne and Wear ICT initiative (TWICT). This is a pilot project which is trialling a training package which aims to equip suppliers with the skills required to engage in electronic commerce with the council. The pilot is being run with existing suppliers, we do not know if any food suppliers have been invited to participate.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

Menus are planned according to Government guidelines with the Healthy schools co-ordinator and PCT, and are checked by Newcastle Nutrition. Products are purchased taking into consideration the nutritional analysis (fat, salt and sugar content).

Over the past year, the provision of shaped processed foods has been reduced and the choices offered to students reflect a more traditional type of meal. The number of sweet choices has been reduced and a greater emphasis has been placed on fresh fruit and yoghurts. These changes were implemented following a project undertaken in the East of the city, which involved taking a 'whole school' approach.

There are also a number of Breakfast clubs in operation across the city.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

Chip fat is recycled.

Meals at home delivery vans run on LPG.

Supply wherever possible is combined into one delivery to reduce environmental impacts of transportation.

Note: calculating 'food miles' is not straightforward. There may be fewer vans going into schools but in the system described above food has to be transported to one location before it can be re-distributed. In some cases this may result in food travelling an overall greater distance than if supplied direct.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

Those people within the organisation that have influence on the implementation of such initiatives do not know about the PSFPI. There is a need for education through the procurement chain all the way back to 'specifiers' i.e. headteachers and Governors as they are the client that specifies their requirements. Catering managers have to satisfy their clients request under law, catering managers compile shopping baskets for procurement officers to then purchase goods and services on their behalf. There also needs to be political influence in order to allocate resources.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

It would be useful to be offered a definition of what is meant by Sustainability in terms of the PSFPI and specifically with regard to food contracts. It would be valuable to know what specifically Local Authorities responsibilities are to address PSFPI and how might this be addressed through delegated responsibilities, i.e. suppliers?

Real examples of Best Practice warts and all, is there any? Can we be presented with a tangible example?

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Will attend.

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL

SECTION 1 : Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

Catering operations in North Tyneside are all run through Catering Services, this is part of the Education and Cultural Services Directorate. They manage 10 high schools, 4 middle schools, 54 primary schools, 5 special schools, 13 commercial units, Prospect catering, meals on wheels, luncheon clubs and residential homes. They employ 600 staff and provide 42,000 meals a week across North Tyneside.

The Catering Manager is Sheena Lennie. Tel: 0191 2001212

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

North Tyneside have established a project group to manage food procurement activity. It involves catering managers, a purchasing officer and members of the corporate procurement team work together through the procurement process.

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Ian Macaulay, Cabinet member responsible for Procurement. Tel 0191 2006285

Martin Swales, Chair of Procurement board and Director of Regeneration, Environment and Housing. Tel 0191 2192323

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

Most economically advantageous' options, to produce highest quality menu's.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

- A need is established for a new or a renewal of contract.
- Six months notice is given from the Corporate Procurement department to Catering Managers/purchasing officers.
- If a contract is worth over £250,000 Cabinet Approval is necessary.
- A project group is established to consider wants and needs of a prospective contract and a timetable is established.
- Specifications for tender are established.
- An advertisement is placed in OJEU to invite interest, in a **restricted** process. Opportunities are also advertised in Newcastle Journal and on www.northtyneside.gov.uk
- The project group and North Tyneside's financial and legal teams evaluate PQQ responses.
- Audit inspections and taste sessions are carried out by North Tyneside officers of prospective suppliers.
- Tender is awarded.

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.0 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

The council currently lets six contracts,

- Bakery products
- Fish
- Frozen foods
- Fruit and vegetables
- Fresh meat and poultry
- Groceries and general provisions
- Milk
- Speciality meat

2.1 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st March 2005
Meat	Manners	31 st March 2005
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st March 2005
Bakery Products	Tindale and Stanton	31 st March 2005
Groceries and Provisions	C J Lang	31 st March 2005
Fish	Hewitsons (small local firm)	31 st March 2005
Frozen Foods	Tyneside Frozen foods	31 st March 2005
Speciality Meat	Coopers	31 st March 2005

2.10 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Suppliers deliver direct as and when required to each school for 39 weeks per year.

2.11 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

The annual value of current food contracts is £1,900.000.

2.10 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

Information not supplied.

2.11 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Catering managers are keen to raise the agenda of sourcing local, and where possible organic foods. The relevant departments within the council are currently considering asking for a price equivalent for organic alternatives for all food products during the forthcoming tender process.

2.12 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

Not known.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

North Tyneside Council were unaware of the initiative until approached by North East Land Links.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

The council has produced a buyers guide this, together with a comprehensive list of associated documentation relating to their procurement practices is available on www.northtyneside.gov.uk/procurement/business.htm. In common with other such guides it states that the council it is supportive of applications from small suppliers.

North Tyneside Council run free training days for SMEs. The training days cover topics such as 'How to win local authority business.' And 'e-Procurement and the North East Public Sector Market Place', for more information contact procurement@northtyneside.gov.uk

Potential participants for the training course are currently identified from existing lists of suppliers; no engagement strategy has been followed to identify new SMEs. We do not know if existing food suppliers have participated in this training. Procurement officers will attend meet the buyer events, and peruse possible partnerships with external agencies such as Business Link.

The corporate procurement department are currently considering how to introduce a 'community benefit' score to the contract accreditation system, in the hope that this may weight local suppliers favourably.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

North Tyneside Council employ two members of staff whose roles are to improve nutrition in schools. They are employed by Northumbria Healthcare trust and seconded to North Tyneside. North Tyneside have produced their

own nutritional guidelines for school meals that meet both National Guidelines and Caroline Walker standards.

Menus are revised every six months and any new foodstuffs to be incorporated into the new menus are nutritionally analysed for sugar, fat and salt contents. Menus are strictly monitored to ensure good supplies of healthy choices are available at lunchtimes. Special dietary requirements are met with a specially designed menu that offers a balanced meal.

The dieticians provide nutritional training to teachers, catering staff and lunchtime supervisors. This work inputs into local and national initiatives such as 5 a Day, National schools fruit and vegetable scheme and Healthier schools award. Their role extends to developing healthy tuck shops, increasing water and milk consumption, fruit and vegetable tasting sessions. Some of these initiatives link into curricular activity; an example is a poster competition on fruit and vegetable awareness. Poster campaigns are a regular feature in the dining hall to promote healthy eating.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

The council has produced a **general** Environmental Guidance pamphlet, this contains details of their Sustainable Procurement Policy Statement. This can be found at www.northynteside.gov.uk/procurement/business.htm.

The statement describes the councils intention to;

- Compile specifications that have been drawn up in favour, whenever appropriate, sustainable goods, services and works, over non-sustainable goods, services and works and minimise environmental impact during use.
- Procure goods, services and works from suppliers and contractors that have submitted to an approval process that includes evaluation of their environmental policies.
- Whenever possible procure goods, services and works that have minimal environmental impact.

Note: The council is interested in the issue of sustainable food procurement but has yet to determine how the intentions expressed in the Sustainable Policy statement, might be incorporated into food procurement.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

PSFPI adds an additional degree of complexity to an already complex procedure and tender process. As an authority North Tyneside request actual support from Defra or the relevant government body requiring the agenda, to understand their role and responsibilities in delivering the primary objectives.

It is suggested that targeting Catering Managers would be of more influence in addressing the agenda as they have more influence on product requirement.

There are obvious impacts on price for the taxpayers of the area. Defra might benefit more from bringing a personal touch to the process, is there a liaison person, a forum for support etc?

The corporate procurement department are willing to develop partnership working with an external organisation such as Defra to develop and implement environmental criteria post contract award. This would mean after April 2005, as renewed contracts will be awarded on or after this date.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

It would be useful to know what we need to do and what we can do to implement PSFPI, and to know why it is important. Examples of good practice, who is doing it and what are they doing?

Is there a certification from a recognised body to credit process standards, is it possible to develop a sustainability certification, as this would be a tangible goal.

The training workshops should include Catering Managers as they have the greatest influence on the tender process for food contracts.

The training workshops should also include a cabinet member to enthuse political support.

Give clear examples of what is possible and what is being done and how we can take PSFPI forward.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Andrew Lowe will attend.

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

The support of the Catering Managers would be needed to engage in such activity.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

Catering operations within Northumberland County Council are run by the Operational Services Directorate. The Directorate runs the school meals service, meals on wheels, luncheon clubs, provides catering for civic functions and external customers and operates two restaurants. It provides food for 30,000 people a day.

Facilities Division - General Manager Duncan Johnson

Nicola Wakeling the Training and Support Manager has operational responsibility for catering.
Tel: 01670 533 483

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

Operational Services- Facilities Division let the contracts with the assistance of officers from the Procurement section (housed in the Finance Directorate).

Procurement contact: Alan Ratcliffe; Head of Procurement. 01670 534157

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Alan Ratcliffe; Head of Procurement. 01670 534157

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

What types of foodstuffs are ordered is decided centrally by the Catering Technical Support Team. All have to be checked to ensure they do not contain any additives which might be linked to conditions such as

hyperactivity. In addition to this all products are analysed during a desktop exercise to ensure suitability e.g. not too high a fat content etc. Once we are satisfied with a desktop exercise products are then trailed in schools before inclusion on the menu.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

1. Develop tender documents
2. Carry out workshop with local and multi national firms to develop tender documents and also generate interest – work carried out in conjunction with Business Link – Barry Mitchell (Procurement Section) and Adam Wilkinson (Regeneration).
3. Advertising carried out via workshop, OJEC and local newspapers – Journal
4. Expressions of interest sought
5. Interested parties submitted tender docs
6. Evaluation carried out in the following stages –
 - Business questionnaire (must pass this element before can progress to further evaluation stages – no PPQ)
 - Quality evaluation
 - Environmental evaluation
 - Financial evaluation
7. Short listing
8. Tenderers invited to present submission
9. Award of contract.

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.0 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

- Fish – (Frozen 3663)
- Red Meat – Manners (Northumbria select beef)
- Poultry – Manners
- Eggs – Brakes
- Fresh fruit & vegetables – J R Hollands
- Frozen fruit and vegetables – 3663
- Tinned vegetables / fruit – Brakes

2.1 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st Dec 2008
Meat (red meat and poultry)	Manners	31 st Dec 2008
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st Dec 2008
Frozen (fruit and vegetables and fish)	3663	31 st Dec 2008
Groceries (eggs)	Brakes	31 st Dec 2008
Bread	J R Holland	31 st Dec 2008

2.12 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Goods are supplied to schools, civic, social services direct by the supplier. Frequency of delivery varies depending on contract and size of school i.e., some very small schools only receive a monthly grocery delivery but will receive milk on a daily basis

2.13 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

All 7 contracts equate to approx 3 million expenditure per annum.

2.13 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

Information not available.

2.14 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Northumbria select beef – require full traceability
GM free
QA registration with recognised body (ISO etc)

2.15 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

Some vegetables
Northumbria select beef
Waters & Robson Abbey well water products (Morpeth).

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

Northumberland County Council recently let the food contracts, considerable effort was made to encourage smaller and local suppliers to bid for their business.

The council went to some lengths to identify and encourage small, local suppliers and producers to attend a seminar the object of which was to raise awareness of the business opportunity which the council represents.

The council made contact with Business Link and Northumbria Larder who in turn extended assistance to businesses who wished to tender for council contracts.

Contracts were split into smaller areas for meat, veg, bread and milk – 4 areas of the county, could tender for all or part. Essentially 4 contracts were split into 16.

These efforts resulted in a greater number of tenders being received although following evaluation only one new supplier actually won business. The council however believe that some of the suppliers who failed this time around will be in a better position to win business in the future as a result of the experience they have gained.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

The councils caterers take into account the National Nutritional guidelines, blueprint to healthy living and relevant sections of 'Choosing Health', the recent government white paper.

We recently carried out training with all School catering unit managers regarding the 5 a day message in association with Northumberland Care Trust. The training was aimed at unit managers promoting the fresh fruit & veg we currently supply.

There is a choice of vegetables available on a daily basis in most schools – if children do not like one they may choose the other.
National fruit in schools scheme was launched in Northumberland in April 2004

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

Catering Services wish to pursue a sustainable food procurement strategy. However due to the EU regulations it is difficult to include in the tender docs – the way we have approached it is that we want to look to work with suppliers to source local and sustainable food – the actual info in our tender docs stated

– SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Where schools, or clusters of schools, in the future, produce their own specification for the delivery of the school's catering service, Catering Services will need to be able to fulfil their requirements.

As such, suppliers will therefore need to be flexible in meeting the specification requirements. For example, if a school, or cluster of schools specify locally grown or organic produce, a supplier at that point will need to be able to supply locally grown or organic produce in order to assist the Catering Service in their bid to retain / win the service provision.

Response Required

Please provide details of how your organisation would work in partnership with Catering Services, Northumberland County Council in order to source and supply locally grown or organic produce.

There was an 8% weighting (higher than in previous tenders) for this particular area in the overall tender documents.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

Less conflict with regard to government initiatives e.g. procure locally with small suppliers yet we all have to trade electronically – this can be very off putting for small businesses.

Working with local / small suppliers to extend their knowledge of why we have tender documents in the format that we do and that we are not trying to put them off tendering but actually require the information asked for in the tender documents in order to meet government and nutritional standards of operation as well as EU regulations

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

How to develop tender documents which will not put local / small suppliers off tendering whilst still ensuring that they comply with EU regulations.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

In principle this sounds like a good idea and we would be interested in participating however this would depend on who is part of the focus group as different parties have different priorities and this can sometimes cause focus groups to loose impact or for people to leave a meeting feeling like they have not gained anything.

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

Again in principle we would be interested in being involved with a 'virtual pilot' however we would require additional information with regard to the initiative before committing to it.

SOUTH TYNESIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

There are four in-house catering operations.

a) Education Catering Service- provides school meals
Catering Services Manager; Elizabeth Luke 0191 424 7739

Info re this service can be found on [www.s-tyneside-
mbc.gov.uk/learningandleisure/school_meals/](http://www.s-tyneside-
mbc.gov.uk/learningandleisure/school_meals/)

b) Learning & Leisure - Adult & Youth Training,
Catering manager; Jack Dale, 0191 519 1909

c) Health and Social Care- community meals
Catering manager; Dave Jopling, 0191 424 4644

d) LL&L Temple Park
Catering manager; Clive Walker 0191 456 9119

LL&L deals with civic catering in the Town Hall and Libraries.

There are approximately 14,000 meals served across South Tyneside each day.

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The Corporate Procurement unit oversee the procurement process from tender to award.

Contact: Tim Jennet. Tel: 0191 424 7360

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

The Member responsible for procurement is Councillor John Anglin.
Tel: 0191 4231598

The Exec Director responsible for Procurement is Julie Alderson.
Tel: (switchboard) 0191 427 1717.

In addition the Council has established a Members Procurement Panel responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Procurement Strategy, this panel includes members of the Cabinet.

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

The types of food purchased are chosen for their quality, nutritional value and child appeal.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

South Tyneside Council operate an **open** tendering process, with notice lodged within the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), and also advertised in minimum of three publications circulating within the Borough. Tender documentation is supplied to all parties expressing an interest. This includes General and Special Terms & Conditions and a Pricing Schedule listing all items required by the council (the list having been developed by the catering managers). Also included are questionnaires relating Financial, Sustainability, Fair-trade and e-Procurement.

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.1 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

South Tyneside runs six food contracts.

- Groceries
- Frozen Food & Fish
- Milk & other dairy products
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetables and Prepared Potatoes & Vegetables and Par Fried Chips

- Bread, Pies & Cakes
- Fresh meat and poultry

2.2 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Tenders under analysis	Due to begin April 2005 for 1 yr
Meat	J Freeman and sons	July 2005
Milk	Tender under analysis	Due to begin April 2005 for 1 yr
Bakery	As above	As above
Frozen food and fish	As above	As above
Par fried chips	As above	As above
Groceries	As above	As above

2.3 On what basis do the current contracts run?

The goods are supplied on an as-required basis to the individual catering operations/kitchens. Frequency of delivery will depend on the particular operation and the items in question (could be daily for e.g. fresh produce, to weekly or longer for frozen produce).

There is no minimum delivery quantity and deliveries are made free of all transit costs.

2.4 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

- Groceries £600K pa
- Frozen Food & Fish £250K pa
- Milk & other dairy products £300K pa
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetables etc £320K pa
- Bread, Pies & Cakes £110K pa
- Meat, Poultry & Bacon £200K pa

2.16 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

- **Fruit and Vegetables**

The following information has been extracted from the current tender for 'Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and Prepared Potatoes and Vegetables and Par Fried Chips'.

'All goods supplied shall be graded EC Class 1, where no classification exists, the goods must comply with EC marketing standards.'

The council buys the following type of fresh produce, we do not have information regarding quantities.

Vegetables

Aubergine
Bean shoots
Beetroot
Broad beans
Broccoli
Brussel Sprouts
Cabbage and spring greens
Capsicums
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Courgettes
Cucumber
Leeks
Lettuce
Marrows
Mushrooms- buttons, flats or open cup
Okra
Parsnips
Potatoes- new
Potatoes – pre peeled whole
Par-fried chipped potatoes
Radish
Root ginger
Salad cress
Salad cabbage red and white
Spring onions
Spinach
Turnips/Swedens
Watercress

Fruit

Apples- desert red and green
Apples - cooking
Bananas
Citrus fruit- oranges, satsumas, mandarins and clementines, lemons, grapefruit
Honeydew Melon
Pears
Plums

Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tomatoes

Prepared potatoes and vegetables

	Packs required (estimated)	Pack size
Whole cleaned prepared and peeled potatoes	5210	10kg
	5668	5kg
	4414	2.5kg
Fresh chilled par fried chipped potatoes	20,294	10kg
Peeled whole carrots	2482	2.5kg
Diced carrots	2304	2.5kg
Baton carrots	2582	2.5kg
Diced swede	2496	5kg
Baking potatoes 225-270g	59,920	each
Baking potatoes 330-440g	37,430	each
Prepared coleslaw	462	2kg tubs
Coleslaw mixed vegetable	3630	1kg

- **Milk**

Pasteurised milk should be delivered in one third pint bottles. For health and safety reasons the supplier must be able to collect all empty milk bottles on the same day that deliveries are made.

We have no information concerning quantities required.

- **Eggs**

Eggs are supplied as part of the groceries contract.

Eggs supplied must comply with the following:-

- the Eggs (Marketing Standards) Regulations 1985
- the Eggs (Marketing Standards) Amendment Regulations 1987
- class A eggs
- Eggs must be the product of the domesticated chicken and be of first quality
- Eggs must be date stamped

Estimated annual requirements.

Medium eggs loose tray.	1000 (180 eggs per unit)
Medium pre packed	540 (180 eggs per unit)
Large, loose trays	10 (180 eggs per unit)
Medium caterpack tray	17 (60 eggs per unit)

2.17 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Suppliers are requested to make every effort to ensure no GM substances or ingredients have been used within the manufacture of products offered to the council, a letter of assurance to this effect is required from the tender.

2.18 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

Not known.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

North East Land Links brought the PSFPI to the attention of South Tyneside Council.

New food tenders now include the following statement.

'The Council is committed to supporting the Governments Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy; the aim is to deliver a world class sustainable farming and food sector that contributes to a better environment and healthier and prosperous communities. The five priority objectives outlines in the Strategy are.

- *Raise production and process standards*
- *Increase tenders from small and local producers*
- *Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious foods*
- *Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply*
- *Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand*

Please give details of any initiatives you are already undertaking to meet these objectives and how you intend to address them in the future.'

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

The council have produces a 'How to do business with the council guide' further information is available from www.southtyneside.info/businessandjobs/procurement/default.asp

South Tyneside stated that they will give consideration to the possibility of breaking some contracts into smaller lots to enable small companies to tender in the future.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

"Nutrition training for all 450 employees is planned inc merchandising of healthier options, offering fresh fruit in all school daily is on-going, new improved menus due to be launched in May will tighten control over salad and vegetable availability in all schools. In addition we are about to pilot free salad to all secondary school pupils who purchase a plated meal, and a 'grab a bag' pre-order lunch service consisting of fruit and sandwiches as a more healthy lunch choice." Elizabeth Luke, General Catering Manager, South Tyneside.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

No information supplied.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

One of the main problems we experience is the lack of (potential) suppliers, particularly locally who are available, willing to submit tenders and capable of fulfilling the contract(s).

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver

against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

How to reconcile EU Procurement Directives with the PSFPI drive to foster supply from small local producers.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Yes

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

Yes

Stockton on Tees Borough Council. (also Middlesbrough and Hartlepool)

Note: Stockton on Tees Borough Council is the lead authority for all food contracts for Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council and Hartlepool Town Council.

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the councils run catering operations?

There are two main catering operations in each authority;

1.Education and Civic

Catering Managers;

Middlesbrough, Angela Blower , 01642 728030
Hartlepool, Doreen Wilkinson, 01429 266552
Stockton Lynn Wake, 01325 380651

2.Social Services

Middlesbrough, Janet Brown, 01642 727228
Hartlepool, Karen Burke, 01429 266552
Stockton, Sue Jarvis, 01642 393939

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

Angela Lench, a senior procurement officer based in the Corporate Procurement unit at Stockton Council prepares joint food contracts on behalf of all three authorities

Angela liaises with the catering managers listed in section 1.0, they determine what type of food is purchased.

Contact Tel: 01642 526 180

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Stockton are the lead authority for procurement for all three authorities, the procurement champions identified are therefore all based within Stockton Council.

Councillor David Coleman, member procurement champion.

Martin Skipsey, Procurement Manager. Tel: 01642 526 180

Note: The role of procurement ‘champions’ is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food that the organisation buys?

Catering managers decide what type of food is required.

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

The process adopted is an **open** tender procedure.

Twelve months prior to contract renewal a procurement officer will begin building new tender documents based on Catering Managers requirements, Government Guidelines and European Law. The ‘Development and Regeneration’ team are involved in this process. Their involvement is specific to SME engagement.

The tender documentation will outline estimated quantities based on the previous years actual purchases, and the logistics of the distribution of food to catering units. An advert is then placed in OJEU and in Northern Echo and a specialist magazine such as The Grocer magazine.

Future food contracts will be advertised on NEPO portal, specific contracts for Stockton or which Stockton lead on will be advertised through their own website.

It is foreseen that Stockton on Tees borough council will remain the lead authority for food contracts for all three authorities.

Stockton council have produced a ‘How to do business guide’ available from www.stockton.gov.uk

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.1 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

Stockton currently operate seven long term food contracts.

- Fruit and Vegetables
- Fresh meat and poultry
- Milk and other dairy products
- Prepared Fruit and Vegetables
- Groceries
- Bakery products

2.14 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	Dec 2008
Meat	Manners	Dec 2008
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	Dec 2008
Prepared Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	Dec 2008
Frozen foods	MGK	Dec 2008
Groceries	DBC	Dec 2008
Bread and Cakes	Riverside Bakery (local)	Dec 2008
Chips	Bravi	See note.

Note: The contract for chips for school meals is reviewed on a termly basis. Companies are invited to tender each term and the contract is awarded on the basis of best price for the duration of the following term. The information provided regarding the supplier listed in the table was correct at the time of collecting the information.

2.15 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Unit managers place their orders directly with suppliers; deliveries are made as and when required.

2.16 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

The whole food contract value is £3.5 million per year.

Fruit and Vegetables £600.000

Meat	£600.000
Milk	£250.000
Prepared Fruit&Vegetables	Included in Fruit and Vegetable price.
Frozen Foods	£600.000
Chips	£70.000
Groceries	£1.5 million
Bread and Cakes	£200.000

2.19 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

To be supplied

2.20 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

All suppliers are inspected for Due Diligence on award of contract. No other standards are requested or met other than basic legal requirements.

2.21 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

None known.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

The council have been made aware of PSFPI through contact with NELL. There has been no action taken, as law does not require it. The council are currently reshaping their practice to deliver the National Procurement Strategy. There are limited resources and legal priorities that take precedent over the PSFPI.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

No specific action regarding food however the council run meet the buyer events and engage SMEs through the Development and Regeneration team. The development and regeneration team run Stockton Business Centre, which offers free business support to all SMEs. The council now operates using regionally standardised tender documents, making the tender process more accessible.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

Hartlepool

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Hartlepool council currently serve approx 27000 meals a week in primary, this is average of 66% take up. We have over 88% take up of free meals and the cost of a primary meal is £1.35.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Hartlepool council currently serve approx 20000 secondary meals a week, this is average 62% take up. There are around 70% take up of free meals and the cost of a secondary school standard lunch is £1.60.

HEALTHY EATING

In primary schools

- Chips are served only once a week
- Fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, yogurt, milk are served EVERY DAY

Tablecloths are laid on the dining tables to make it a more pleasant eating environment and there are silk flowers on most tables.

It is ensured that there is always a choice at the end of the sitting.

Fresh meat is served twice a week, chicken once a week, fish once a week and there are salad bowls available every day.

In secondary schools

A cashless system operates in all secondary schools, to reduce stigma for free meal pupils, all items are individually priced.

Dining areas are bright trendy surroundings to attract pupils to stay on site at lunchtime and eat a school meal.

Chips are sold at a higher price than jacket potatoes, ie chips 74p - jacket 62p - creamed 29p - boiled 29p

Smart cards are the system of cashless payment that is operated in all secondary schools. Smart cards have healthy eating points automatically added at the paypoint according to your food choice. Choices are monitored to identify any problems, i.e. the introduction of 'specials' on jackets if too many chips sold.

There are always 3 or 4 types of traditional meals available.

Middlesbrough

School Meal Costs in 2004

Primary £1.45

Secondary £1.55

Total Meals Served Daily 12,079 inclusive of Primary, Secondary & Special schools.

No further information was supplied.

Stockton on Tees

No information supplied.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

No information supplied.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

No information supplied.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

It was felt that the PSFPI had not been well promoted as an issue with senior procurement staff, and generally felt that not enough is known about the initiative.

It was suggested that procurement agendas might be simplified and prioritised within central government and that there should be more internal dialogue within central government, i.e. why is PSFPI not included in the National Procurement Strategy?

There are resource implications for implementing PSFPI and without central support the agenda will remain a non priority.

It was suggested that if actual support is available for Local authorities to move on the PSFPI agendas, NELL could use NEPO portal or OJEU portal to see when and where food contracts are due for renewal. This information could create a forward plan to approach those public sector operations where food contracts are due for renewal twelve months prior to the expiry of a

current contract and support them to implement PSFPI in their tender procedure.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

Stockton Borough Council would like to be presented with actual case studies to show what has been done to achieve the aims of PSFPI, how it was done and how barriers were overcome.

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Angela Lench will attend.

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

No

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

SECTION 1 Organisational practices and procedures

1.0 Which departments/sections within the council run catering operations?

Sunderland Council operate three catering operations. As we understand it Anne Escritt has management responsibility for all three operations.

a) Community and Cultural services.

Catering manager:

b) School meals and commercial catering, branded as 'One Call'.

Operations manager: Ann Escritt 0191 5534648

c) Social Services including residential care homes.

Catering manager:

School meals are the biggest operation serving 111,745 meals per week (daily average 22,349 or 4,746,310 over 190 day's).

1.1 Who is responsible for the procurement of food for these services?

The managers of the three catering operations are responsible for identifying the type of foodstuffs required and for managing the contract. The procurement team prepare the tender documents and manage the procurement process.

Procurement contact: Bob Dennington
Tel, 0191 5531000

1.2 Have procurement 'champions' been identified on the executive and the corporate management team?

Keith Beardmore City Treasurer

Member Champion: Councillor David Allen
Tel: 0191 5679013

Note: The role of procurement 'champions' is to ensure that procurement is recognised as a strategic corporate priority. Amongst other responsibilities they should ensure that procurement is aligned with corporate objectives such as the community plan and that sustainability is factored into the procurement

process. For further information see chapter 3 of the National Procurement Strategy.

1.3 What factors determine the type of food, which the organisation buys?

Quality, Price, Availability, and Delivery logistics are noted as the four key factors that determine what food is bought.

Menus and price are the two determinants of what products are bought. Seasonality is considered only because in seasons selections are cheaper. Cultural Diversity is also considered when developing menus. More information on menu's can be viewed at www.sunderland.gov.uk/Themes/Leisure/primary-menu.asp

1.4 Please describe for us the stages in the purchasing process.

** for a complete (generic) description of the procurement process see page 10.*

The Corporate Procurement department approach the Catering Operations Managers ten months in advance of the contract renewal due date. Catering Operations managers produce product specifications based on the menu's they have created. The corporate procurement department build a tender document based on the Catering Operations Managers requirements and EU law. The tender process followed is governed by EU standard procedure, the contracts are advertised in the following publications;

OJEC www.euroguide.org
www.ted.eur-op.eu.int
Business Link www.businesslink.org
DTI www.sbs.gov.uk/content/services/tender.pdf.

Sunderland Council also recommends the following as useful publications;
Contrax weekly and Government Opportunities
Sunderland Echo
Newcastle Evening Chronicle
The Journal

Prospective contractors will be asked to submit a PQQ (pre qualification questionnaire) and the tender will then be reviewed and awarded according to the pre determined criteria.

SECTION 2 Current Purchasing Arrangements

2.1 How many contracts have been awarded and for what category of product?

As of January 2005 Sunderland council were operating seven food contracts.

- Fruit and Vegetables
- Meat
- Groceries and Provisions
- Bread
- Frozen Foods
- Milk
- Confectionary, Crisps and Drinks

2.17 Who holds the current contracts and when do they expire?

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	2007
Meat	Manners	2007
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	2007
Frozen	Brakes	
Groceries and Provisions	Brakes	2007
Bread	CDFGB (ACC)	2007

2.2 On what basis do the current contracts run?

Meat is supplied by Manners, but distributed by JR Holland. Supplies are delivered to each school as and when required. Unit managers place an order directly with the suppliers for delivery to school two weeks in advance.

2.4 What is the estimated value of the current contracts?

Estimated annual fruit and vegetable contract value £228,300

2.22 Please provide information concerning the range of products you buy, in what form you buy them and in what volume.

Information only available concerning fresh fruit and vegetables. Following shows estimated annual volumes required, information taken from current tender documentation.

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Vegetables		
Asparagus	pack	5
Aubergine	kg	115
Baby carrot	bunch	1
Baby corn	each	60
Baby leeks	kg	1
Baby turnip	bunch	1
Beans fine, topped and tailed	pack	12
Beansprouts	pack	29
Beetroot cooked	pack	342
Broccoli	pack	12312
Cabbage red	each	516
Cabbage medium savoy	each	4740
Cabbage large savoy	each	36
Cabbage white	each	2196
Carrots	kg	9180
Cauliflower	each	9504
Celery	each	2868
Chillies green	kg	3
Chillies red	kg	3
Compass 60 bakers	kg	3
Courgette	kg	295
Cucumber	each	49476
Garlic	string	1
Garlic	pack	1
Leaf salad	each	12
Leeks	kg	3800
Lettuce curly endive	each	10
Lettuce lollo rosso	each	444
Lettuce radicchio	each	24
Lettuce twin gem	pack of 2	6
Lettuce flat	each	1080
Lettuce iceberg	each	32712
Lettuce lambs tongue	each	2
Mange tout	pack	5
Mushroom- button	kg	1899

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Vegetables (cont)		
Mushroom –flat	kg	4
Mushroom- wild	kg	2
Onions	kg	3075
Onions, large box		1
Onions red	kg	210
Onions shallots	kg	1
Parsnip washed	kg	1152
Pepper red	each	5376
Pepper traffic lights	pack	48
Pepper yellow	each	2968
Peppers green	each	4312
Potato Italy	kg	530
Potato Jersey	kg	50
Potato new Egyptian	kg	650
Potatoes baker	box 60	1020
Potatoes baker	box 40	127
Potatoes baker	box 80	684
Potatoes baker	box 50	4
Potatoes midsize	kg	1190
Potatoes ware	kg	69025
Pumpkin sml-med	each	44
Pumpkin large	each	5
Radish	bunch	1480
Salad cress	each	11532
Spinach	kg	25
Spinach	pack	2
Spring onions	bunch	3900
Sprouts	kg	40
Swede	kg	6312
Watercress	pack	12
Fruit		
Apples bramley	kg	190
Apples golden delicious	kg	21780
Apples granny smith	kg	252
Apples red delicious	kg	8622
Apples red delicious USA	kg	18
Avocado	each	14
Banana small	kg	792
Banana tops	kg	12564
Beetroot raw	kg	24
Blackberries	kg	2
Blueberry	kg	5
Fresh fruit salad	2kg	132
Ginger	kg	1

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Fruit (cont)		
Grapefruit pink	each	40
Grapes green seedless	kg	2800
Kiwi	each	5705
Kumquats	kg	2
Lemon	each	2040
Limes	each	120
Lychee	kg	1
Mango	each	110
Melon galia	each	36
Melon water	each	13
Melon yellow medium	each	720
Melon yellow large	each	12
Nectarine	each	450
Orange blood	box	1
Orange large	each	288
Orange medium	each	35200
Orange small	each	3800
Ortaline	each	11550
Passion fruit	each	40
Peaches	each	1080
Pear conference	kg	4920
Pear Williams	kg	4248
Physalis	kg	6
Pineapple	each	88
Plums	kg	10
Raspberry	kg	10
Red currants	box	10
Star fruit	each	160
Strawberries	each	415
Tomato	pack of nine	3
Tomato plum	kg	6
Tomato cherry yellow	box	1
Tomatoes	box	2
Tomatoes	kg	11628

Prepared products

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Peeled potatoes	5kg	4783
Peeled swede	1.25kg	5
Peeled swede	5kg	42
Quartered parsnips	5kg	1
Red cabbage	2.5kg	1
Shredded savoy	1.25kg	533

Prepared produce cont.

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Shredded savoy	2.5kg	162
Shredded savoy	5kg	129
Shredded spring cabbage	1.25kg	1
Shredded spring cabbage	5kg	3
Sliced leeks	1.25kg	8
Sliced leeks	2.5kg	2
Sliced onions	1.25kg	48
Sliced onions	2.5kg	9
Sliced onions	5kg	27
Sliced potatoes	10kg	28
Sliced potatoes	2.5kg	69
Sliced potatoes	5kg	95
Sprouts	2.5kg	1
Sprouts	5kg	1
Par fired chips	4x2.5kg	25834
Coleslaw mix	1.25kg	2975
Coleslaw mix	2.5kg	414
Coleslaw mix	5kg	56
Coleslaw onion	1.25kg	18
Coleslaw onion	5kg	4
Diced carrots	1.25kg	528
Diced carrots	2.5kg	164
Diced carrots	5kg	144
Diced onions	1.25kg	3426
Diced onions	2.5kg	859
Diced onions	5kg	152
Diced potatoes	2.5kg	76
Diced potatoes	5kg	12
Diced swede	1.25kg	1002
Diced swede	2.5kg	273
Diced swede	5kg	198
Fine grated carrots	1.25kg	1561
Fine grated carrots	2.5kg	150
Fine grated carrots	5kg	17
Mixed veg soup mix	1.25kg	743
Mixed veg soup mix	2.5kg	166
Mixed veg soup mix	5kg	94
Peeled carrots	1.25kg	184
Peeled carrots	2.5kg	42
Peeled carrots	5kg	124
Peeled onions	1.25kg	39
Peeled onions	2.5kg	10
Peeled onions	5kg	86
Peeled parsnips	5kg	14

Product	Pack	Volume/number
Peeled potatoes	10kg	4730
Peeled potatoes	2.5kg	3722
Stewpack	5kg	10
Stewpack	1.25kg	1
Baby roast	10kg	428
Baby roast	2.5kg	108
Baby roast	5kg	204
Baton carrots	1.25kg	266
Baton carrots	2.5kg	104
Baton carrots	5kg	448
Baton Swedes	2.5kg	3
Baton Swedes	5kg	34
Broccoli	1.25kg	8
Broccoli florets	2.5kg	2
Cabbage white	1.25kg	1282
Cabbage white	2.5kg	416
Cabbage white	5kg	247
Carrot rings	1.25kg	948
Carrot rings	2.5kg	433
Carrot rings	1.25kg	444
Carrots julienne	2.5kg	1
Cauliflower florets	5kg	7
Cauliflower florets	1.25kg	94
Cauliflower florets	2.5kg	11
Chateau	5kg	1
Chopped swede	5kg	95
Chopped swede	1.25kg	4
Chopped swede	2.5kg	8
Coleslaw and onion	1.25kg	5
Coleslaw cabbage	1.25kg	196
Coleslaw cabbage	2.5kg	5

2.23 If you have not already done so in the previous section please tell us what requirements you have concerning traceability, food assurance schemes etc.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are required to be graded EC Class 1 or equivalent

2.24 To what extent is local/regional/UK produced food already supplied to you?

Not known. It is thought that Northumbria select beef is supplied where and when there is a surplus at their meat suppliers, but not often.

SECTION 3: The Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)

3.0 Are you aware of the governments Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI)? If yes, what steps have you been able to take to respond?

North East Land Links first brought the PSFPI to the attention of Sunderland Council.

A. Raise production and process standards

No information supplied.

B. Increase tenders from small and local producers

"In assessing whether a quote or tender is the "most economically advantageous" regard may be had to price, quality, delivery, professional skill, efficiency, health and safety record and reliability. As far as possible, within the law, the Council will maximise the opportunities for using local suppliers. In selecting suppliers to provide quotes for lower value goods and services (under £50,000) due regard should be had to the reasonable justification for local delivery. The Council will work with local business representatives to raise awareness of the opportunities and the procurement process followed by the council."

Local Business, chapter 5.25, Sunderland Council Corporate Procurement Strategy.

No action has been taken to implement the above statement with regard to the procurement of food.

The council have produced a How to do business with the council guide. It is the council's intention to use One North East's 'any opportunities' database to engage supplier opportunities.

The council strongly expressed their view that it is up to suppliers to seek out the council's opportunities.

C. Increase consumption of healthy and nutritious food and promote food hygiene

Free salad and vegetables are available to ALL secondary school pupils. There is no portion restriction on salad and vegetables in primary school meals.

'Taste Buddies' a promotional tool/ fictional character has been developed to assist children in primary schools to choose a balanced meal with colour coded menu choices. The colours represent the variants of a balanced diet so that children can see if they have selected a nutritionally balanced meal.

Free fruit and vegetable tasting sessions each Tuesday in primary school dining halls, labelling a range of fresh produce.

The council aspires to train all cooks to NVQ level one in a Nutritional qualification.

D. Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply

Environmental criteria do not feature in current contracts. The council as a whole is currently preparing a draft sustainability strategy and policy. This may have implications for food procurement.

E. Increase capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

Sunderland council expressed they were unsure of what geographically constitutes local produce. They were unsure in what regard the council might have any responsibility to support local suppliers to meet demand.

Spikes Gazelle data analysts have a local category, which includes regional information. Sunderland council will resource this information to discuss the merits of who and why they currently buy from their current suppliers and consider alternatives for future contracts.

3.1 What problems do you face in trying to implement the PSFPI, what type of assistance do you feel you need if you are to be able to move forward on this agenda?

Politics, the desire to look at this within the council will be governed by what the cities politicians recommend. Resources are more likely to be put into driving issues included in the Sunderland Strategy forward; PSFPI is not included in this document.

Legality, EU procurement regulation on stipulating 'local' is a barrier. Cost implications, bigger contracts are more valuable to both parties. Risk to service, SMEs are a bigger risk requiring more resources, and smaller contracts are more likely to break down.

Capacity of local market unknown.

Education process involved, who will deliver this? We (Sunderland council) did not even know about PSFPI.

3.2 DEFRA have announced their intention to run training courses to assist procurement professionals to deliver against the governments PSFPI agenda. What sort of issues would you like to see them address in this training?

How does PSFPI fit in with EU regulations, and case law?

How do we engage local producers?

How do we measure and credit quality of service?

How do we build PSFPI into our contracts?

3.3 It has been suggested that a regional focus group might be established to concentrate on the issue of public procurement of food. Would your organisation be prepared to participate in this group?

Yes Sunderland are interested in attending the *first* meeting.

3.4 It is our intention to run 'virtual' pilots with selected local authorities and NHS institutions in the region. Would your organisation be interested in participating?

This would need a political decision.

APPENDIX B

CURRENT CONTRACT HOLDERS AND CONTRACT EXPIRY DATES

1) Darlington Town Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st March 2005
Meat	Manners	31 st March 2005
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st March 2005
Frozen	Brakefresh	31 st March 2005
Bakery	Brakes	31 st March 2005
Chilled	Brakes	31 st March 2005

2) Durham County Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
School meals	Scolarest	July 2005

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Hollands	July 2007
Meat	Manners	Aug 2006
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	Jan 2005
Frozen foods	3663	July 2007
Bread and Cakes	J R Holland	July 2007
Par fried chips	3663	July 2007
Yoghurts	J R Holland	July 2007
Groceries	C J Lang	Jan 2007

3) Gateshead Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Dual Primary suppliers J R Holland and Fishwicks. (NEPO contract)	31 st July 2007
Meat	Manners	31 st July 2007
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st July 2007
General Supplies		31 st July 2007

4) Newcastle City Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Fishwicks (schools)	31 st July 2007

	J R Holland (meals at home) Holford (civic catering) (NEPO contract)	
Meat (red meat and poultry)	Manners	1 st Aug 2005
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	1 st Aug 2005
Eggs	Danish Bacon Company (schools) McCutcheons Farm (meals at home) Holford (civic catering)	1 st Aug 2005

5) North Tyneside Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st March 2005
Meat	Manners	31 st March 2005
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st March 2005
Bakery Products	Tindale and Stanton	31 st March 2005
Groceries and Provisions	C J Lang	31 st March 2005
Fish	Hewitsons (small local firm)	31 st March 2005
Frozen Foods	Tyneside Frozen foods	31 st March 2005
Speciality Meat	Coopers	31 st March 2005

6) Northumberland County Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	31 st Dec 2008
Meat (red meat and poultry)	Manners	31 st Dec 2008
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	31 st Dec 2008
Frozen (fruit and vegetables and fish)	3663	31 st Dec 2008
Groceries (eggs)	Brakes	31 st Dec 2008
Bread	J R Holland	31 st Dec 2008

7) South Tyneside Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	Tenders under analysis	Due to begin April 2005 for 1 yr
Meat	J Freeman and sons	July 2005
Milk	Tender under analysis	Due to begin April 2005

		for 1 yr
Bakery	As above	As above
Frozen food and fish	As above	As above
Par fried chips	As above	As above
Groceries	As above	As above

8) Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool Councils.

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	Dec 2008
Meat	Manners	Dec 2008
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	Dec 2008
Prepared Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	Dec 2008
Frozen foods	MGK	Dec 2008
Groceries	DBC	Dec 2008
Bread and Cakes	Riverside Bakery (local)	Dec 2008
Chips	Bravi	See individual report.

9) Sunderland City Council

CONTRACT	SUPPLIER	EXPIRY DATE
Fruit and Vegetables	J R Holland	2007
Meat	Manners	2007
Milk	CDFGB (ACC)	2007
Frozen	Brakes	
Groceries and Provisions	Brakes	2007
Bread	CDFGB (ACC)	2007

APPENDIX C

Information concerning known food suppliers to the Public Sector in the North East Region.

REGIONAL SUPPLIERS

J Fishwick and sons

Simonside East Industrial Estate
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE34 9AA

0191-4557563

www.fishwicks-wholesale.co.uk

J Fishwicks is a family run business operating across the North East for the past 50 years. J Fishwicks are a wholesale food preparation and distribution company. Fishwicks are a SME and accord with DTI definition.

J R Holland and son

North East Fruit and Veg Market
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE11 0QY

0191-4879821

JR Holland is the main supplier of fruit and vegetables to Local Authority catering operations across the North East. J R Holland is an SME and accord with DTI definition.

R Manners and sons ltd

Meadowfield
Ponteland
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE20 9SF

01661-823261

www.manners.co.uk

Manners are a family owned and run catering butcher operating from the Scottish borders to North Yorks, for the last 80 years. They are purveyors of Northumbria Select Beef. Manners is an SME and accord with DTI definition.

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL SUPPLIERS

Dairy Farmers of Great Britain

(Formerly ACC)
Alpha Building
London Road
Stapeley
Nantwich
Cheshire
CW5 7JW

08700108191
www.dfob.co.uk

Dairy farmers of Great Britain is the leading farmers co-operative in the UK, marketing almost 2 billion litres of milk per year from more than 3250 member farms. They have 10 processing sites and 60 product distribution sites across Britain. In the North East there is a site in Blaydon Tyne and Wear, which processes around 180 million litres of milk per year.

Dairy Farmers of Great Britian have an environmental sustainability policy on their website. However no regional member information is available.

Brakes

(Foodservice Solutions)

www.brake.co.uk

Head Office
Enteprise House
Eureka Business Park
Ashford
Kent
TN25 AAG

Tel; 0845-6069090

Northeast Office
5, Burdon drive
NorthWest Ind estate
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 2JH

Tel; 0845 2256000

Brakes marketing states that The Brakes group is the leading supplier of quality food to the catering industry in the UK and France. They supply Prime meats, which are Red Tractor certified.

D.B.C

www.dbcfoodservice.co.uk

(Danish Bacon Company)
DBC Head Office
Denmark House
Parkway
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6JN
01707 323421

Regional Office
DBC Newcastle
Hertburn Road
Washington
Tyne and Wear
NE37 2SD
0191 416 7044

Major International company supplying ambient goods, Chilled, Freezer foods, and Meat.

3663

Gateshead Depot
Green Lane
Felling
Tyne and Wear
NE8 1YQ

Tel; 0870 3663 451

For head office or more details on the company;
www.3663.co.uk

3663 are part of the Bidvest group ltd, which employs 72,000 people across the world in service, distribution and trading industries.

Riverside Bakery

Riverside Bakery
Crossgate Drive
Nottingham
NG2 1LW

Tel; 0115 9866462

Riverside bakery is part of Northern Foods based in Nottingham.

www.northern-foods.co.uk