



Local Food for Bradford Schools

Developing sustainable, localised supply systems for Education Contract Services

Research co-ordinated and report written

by

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Local Food for Bradford Schools

1) Executive summary

ECS and local sourcing

Education Contract Services, the in-house catering organisation for Bradford Metropolitan District Council, has a long standing commitment to and strong track record of developing local sourcing in its supply of meals to 45,000 pupils at schools in and around the Bradford District. In 2003, ECS brought together local primary producers and suppliers such as wholesalers, processors and distributors to give further information on the tender process and facilitate communication and collaboration. In spite of this work, the tender submission rate was lower than expected. This highlighted a need for further communication to ascertain how to achieve future success in increasing the number of bids from local suppliers.

Development of project

ECS, Grassroots Food Network, National Farmers Union, University of Bradford, and Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber formed a steering group and secured funding from Defra's Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative to take forward the work to encourage bids from local suppliers. Yorkshire Forward supported the initiation and development of the project. Taking place from January to March 2004, the project aimed to develop opportunities and capacity for local suppliers to bid for ECS contracts by:

- Identifying flexibilities in tender specifications and processes which could encourage local suppliers;
- Improving partnership working and fostering a collaborative approach throughout the supply chain;
- Identifying potential infrastructure for local food supply systems;
- Identifying opportunities and barriers to local suppliers, and;
- Developing an Action Plan for further localisation of ECS supply systems.

Research

Interviews with producers and suppliers has resulted in identifying, and increasing understanding, of some of their key issues from their perspectives:

- Public sector suppliers are customer focussed and are prepared to develop local sourcing policies and practices if procurers demand it;
- EU rules prohibit discrimination on the basis of a suppliers' location which deters suppliers from sourcing from local producers and makes it vital that the benefits of local sourcing are assessed and incorporated into purchasing decisions;
- Some local producers anticipate higher margins from other routes to market. It is vital to promote the advantages of supplying ECS including fairness, stability, flexible pricing and purchasing decisions based on value for money and cost effectiveness rather than on price alone;
- Potential suppliers have negative perceptions of school food. They are unaware of the high standards and continuing improvements made by ECS. With ECS' commitment to local sourcing, and expansion of school food provision, there are opportunities for suppliers of quality local produce;
- Complex tenders, exacting specifications and tight delivery requirements deter SME's who need support in accessing 2nd and 3rd tier supply opportunities;
- There is awareness among suppliers and producers of the policy drive for local sourcing, and they are calling for sustained and joined up support.

Practical action

Tender documents have been made more accessible to local suppliers by providing detailed information on the quantity and delivery requirements for each product, and an annual profile of the usage of ingredients. ECS are working to develop baseline data on the provenance of supplies, which is fundamental for assessing sustainability impacts of supply systems.

A gap analysis highlighted products and facilities that do not appear to be available locally, and which indicate enterprise opportunities and priorities for investment. Gaps identified comprehensive vegetable processing facilities, chill-chains and specific products such 1/3 pint cartons of milk.

ECS's partnering with suppliers achieves incremental improvements in local sourcing. One example from the short time frame of the project is that the fruit and vegetable supplier now sources Yorkshire cucumbers in place of imports.

Future goals of project

The aim of the Action Plan that has been developed is to develop sustainable, localised supply systems for ECS. The priorities are to:

1. Develop opportunities and capacity of local suppliers to bid for ECS contracts;
2. Develop physical and communications infrastructure for localised supply systems;
3. Raise awareness and involvement in local sourcing in schools and the wider community;
4. Incorporate assessment of sustainability impacts of supply systems into ECS purchasing decisions and contract management;
5. Contribute to relevant policy and strategy.

The project steering group is diverse and there were steep learning curves all round. The understanding developed between procurer, local suppliers and organisations supporting local sourcing is worth building on. The steering group hopes that our commitment to overcoming some major barriers to local sourcing will be matched by investment to enable the transition from making inroads to making a major impact.

This project, including writing this report, took place over a short time-scale of 2^{1/2} months. It was made possible with the PSFPI grant of £6,500, the commitment of the steering group, and all the businesses and organisations who kindly agreed to be interviewed. Processes to enable the development of models for localised, sustainable procurement are emerging and synergies between sustainability principles and business objectives are already evident. The project has identified priorities for the further investment that is required to take this work on sustainable public procurement forward. It is encouraging that Defra has announced funding for the regions to develop the PSFPI, to be distributed by the RDA's, and members of the project steering group are contributing to regional co-ordination on public procurement issues.

2) Project outline

Background

In Autumn 2003 Education Contract Services (ECS), the in-house catering and building-cleaning organisation for Bradford Metropolitan District Council, advertised tenders for fruit and vegetables and fresh meat. To encourage local suppliers to bid for the contracts, ECS brought together local primary producers and suppliers such as wholesalers, processors and distributors to give further information on the tender process and facilitate communication and collaboration. This was well received by the businesses attending and from organisations including the Food Standards Agency and Food from Britain. However, the tender submission rate did not increase, highlighting a need for communication with local suppliers to ascertain how to rectify this situation for future success.

Aim of project

ECS and a number of organisations working to localise food supply chains secured funding from Defra's Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative to develop a case study and take forward ECS work on local sourcing. The project took place from January to March 2004, and the key aim was:

To support food producers, processors and ECS in increasing the proportion of food sourced locally by:

- Identifying and addressing barriers for local suppliers to bid for ECS contracts and the wider public sector;
- Identifying flexibilities in tender specifications and processes which could encourage local suppliers;
- Improving partnership working between ECS and local suppliers;
- Improving communication and fostering a collaborative approach throughout the supply chain;
- Identifying potential local food chain infrastructures for the public sector;
- Developing an Action Plan for further localisation of supply chains.

Steering group

The project was managed by a steering group consisting of:

- Ann Hobbiss (Chair) – School of Health Studies, University of Bradford
 - Robert Barraclough – Director of Grassroots Food Network and livestock farmer
 - Julie Holmes – Purchasing Manager, Education Contract Services
 - Michael Holmes – spokesman for NFU on sourcing and procurement issues, member of Regional Implementation Group for Yorkshire and the Humber SSFF
 - Tony Milroy – Director of Grassroots Food Network, Director of Arid Lands Sustainable Communities Trust
 - Roger Sheard - Business Development Manager, Education Contract Services
 - Ian Smith – Framework for Change Facilitator, Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
- Frances O'Riley, Food and Drink Cluster Manager of Yorkshire Forward, supported the initiation of and development of the project.

Interviews

Research for the project was co-ordinated by Rose Bridger, an independent local food specialist. Interviews were conducted with established and potential suppliers and were primarily a listening exercise. The research focussed on established and potential suppliers for recent tenders for meat, fruit and vegetables. The survey sample covered producers and suppliers including agents, wholesalers, processors and distributors, with several of the companies' scope of operations covering two or more of these categories. We aimed to include potential suppliers as local to Bradford as possible. Eighteen in-depth interviews were conducted, plus short telephone conversations with another 8 companies. The companies had varying experiences of public procurement, so their views on supplying any public bodies were invited, with a focus on ECS where possible. The short time-scale for the research means that the survey sample is not as comprehensive and balanced as would have been allowed for in a longer time frame. The framework of questions covered:

- Views on supplying ECS / the public sector
- Feedback on tender documents and process
- Capacity to supply ECS and the wider public sector
- Local supply chain links
- Support available and support needs

- Knowledge and views of the current local sourcing policy drive

Input to regional activity

Steering group members are involved in regional activity relating to public procurement. Michael Holmes of the NFU held two meetings bringing together food procurement officers from region. This work is a key element of the Public Procurement Working Group of the SSFF Regional Implementation Group and encourages procurers from the region to share ideas and good practice on local sourcing. This group is also working to improve the capacity of local suppliers to meet current and future public sector requirements, including introducing the Assured Produce scheme to fruit and vegetable growers. They also link with NHS work on incorporating social and environmental factors into purchasing decisions.

Relevant organisations and initiatives

Many organisations are working to localise food supply systems. Steering group members met with representatives of some of these and Appendix 3 outlines the activities and perspectives of BMDC's Corporate Procurement Unit, Bradford and Airedale Food Network and Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation. At the time of the project there were many events on the subject of public procurement and local sourcing in the region, which steering group members attended where possible:

- Business Link for West Yorkshire ran a series of seminars on supplying the public sector which some interviewees were planning to attend;
- A regional IDeA seminar addressed key strands of the PSFPI such as EU and UK procurement regulations, scope for contract specifications and supporting suppliers;
- A major 'Meet the Buyer' event organised by Yorkshire Forward included public procurers.

Key sources of information for this project included the PSFPI website with sustainable public procurement guidance and case studies from around the UK and Sustain's 'Good Food on the Public Plate – manual for sustainable public sector food and catering'.

Structure of project report

This project report presents the perspective of ECS, the procurer, highlighting the business constraints and opportunities for change, the potential suppliers (processors of vegetables and meat), and primary producers who feed into the supply chain. It outlines the opportunities and barriers recognised by these companies, explores the potential for business support in the region to facilitate these companies to change their practice in favour of establishing a local food chain.

Exploration of the position of primary producers and suppliers such as processors in the region highlights concerns and potentialities for change. The report identifies potential opportunities and makes constructive and realistic recommendations. These recommendations are taken forward to an Action Plan to take the work forward.

Action Research

As the project was a piece of Action Research, the steering group has worked together to move the situation forward from the starting position. Considerable progress was made in making tender documents more accessible for potential local suppliers, particularly those operating on a small scale. This involved breaking down the requirements into the exact quantities required for each delivery point. This work complemented ECS compilation of baseline information on the provenance of current supplies. Information about potential local suppliers has been compiled, along with a list of publications, websites and networks used by these suppliers in which to publicise the action on local sourcing and forthcoming tenders.

3) About Education Contract Services

ECS is the in-house catering and building-cleaning organisation for Bradford Metropolitan District Council. ECS operates as a separate trading organisation within BMDC, without recourse to any devolved Local Government money, nor does it draw on local Council Taxes. It competes for its customers, predominantly schools, along with national school meals providers such as Initial, Compass and Sodhexo, and in turn, can compete against other Local Authorities to provide school meals outside the Bradford District.

Development of ECS

Bradford has a long track record of innovation in school food provision, dating from 1904 when it became the first local authority in Britain to provide free school meals. With expenditure on food at £4 million per annum, ECS can make a significant contribution to local sourcing and the wider agenda of sustainable economic regeneration of the District. School food provision has expanded beyond the midday meal, and vending machines, breakfast clubs and tuck shops are estimated to earn £1,000,000 a year across the Bradford District. ECS serves approximately 45,000 meals a day, including school lunchtime meals for 45,000 pupils, 5 days per week, thirty-eight weeks a year, to schools in Bradford.

In 2003 ECS won a Caroline Walker Trust Award for work on improving public health through good food and nutrition. This focus on food, nutrition, health and curriculum support is the main factor behind expanding operations to include schools in three areas in the North of England - Northumbria, Cumbria and Yorkshire. Schools are increasingly looking for bespoke arrangements reflecting their ethos and indications are that competition in school meal provision will intensify. ECS's latest marketing plan commits to continual improvement in all areas of customer service, with an emphasis on increasing dialogue with customers, including through school forums, web based feedback, in-depth interviews and professionally administered surveys with all their customer groupings.

ECS service provision in the Bradford District

Within the Bradford District ECS serves 170 primary schools and 21 secondary schools. Take up of school meals is above the national average at 55% and is increasing. There are three modes of school meal provision, in order of preference these are:

- 73 - Site kitchen - meals cooked on-site in a traditional kitchen – this method is preferred because meals are freshly prepared and processing is minimised;
- 85 use 'Primary Choice' - a delivered meal system of multi portion frozen meals accompanied by fresh produce from ECS's Food Manufacturing Operation (FMO) at Laisterdyke;
- 12 use cook chill (pre-cooked meals from FMO reheated at schools) - there is a rolling programme to move schools using this method over to the delivered meal system, or traditional kitchen.

Tender requirements

ECS procures food from a variety of sources, the tenders for which are advertised for suppliers to bid for in accordance with European regulations and BMDC protocol. In recent years a number of factors have given cause to consider the potential cost-effectiveness and added value of local suppliers. These include the need for traceability to audit trail all produce, environmental and sustainability arguments to minimise the transport of food and support for the Rural Regeneration programme following the foot and mouth outbreak.

For the purposes of this case study there were two tenders of interest. The 'Prepared vegetables, potatoes, salad and fruit' tender has an estimated annual value £280,000. The 'Meat, meat products and poultry' tender has an estimated annual value of £166,500. The produce needs to be delivered within specified times on average three times a week to over two-hundred schools across the District, the FMO at ECS and eight schools outside the District. Both tenders are divided into four lots:

- Lot 1 - FMO
- Lot 2 - Bradford schools
- Lot 3 - Non-Bradford schools
- Lot 4 - other premises

Much of the produce requires some degree of pre-processing, delineating the need for at least one intermediary between the primary producer and the procurer. Meat needs to be either free-flow frozen or fresh vacuum packed and the requirements for prepared vegetables include diced and sliced.

School food initiatives

ECS is involved in a wide range of food related initiatives. These are embraced by the 'whole school food approach' where food provision is not just a bolt on service, but integral to how children respond to learning. ECS suppliers are encouraged to contribute to the initiatives, which offer secondary financial and marketing benefits:

- **Fruit and vegetable** tasting sessions help to give pupils confidence to try new varieties;
- **SCOF's (Schools Council on Food) and SNAG's (School Nutrition Action Groups)** enable children to have their say about and influence catering provisions in school;
- ECS received an Employer of the Year Award for its **work experience placements for students**. These help with aspects of the school curriculum, encourage disaffected students back into school, and help develop ICT and communication skills;
- Pupils **visit the FMO** and learn about manufacturing as part of curriculum links with food technology. Secondary school students learn about HACCP;
- ECS work helps schools to gain the **National Healthy Schools Standard Award** which is concerned with the physical, mental, emotional and social well being of the whole school community;
- A **Cashless System** eliminates the stigma attached to free school meals. Bullying is reduced as students carry less cash. Pupils collect reward points for a prize by making healthier choices at mealtime;
- ECS was involved in the National School Fruit Scheme (NSFS) pilot that is now rolling out across the UK;
- The **water in schools** scheme was initiated in response to research proving that hydration increases concentration levels;
- ECS **supports educational objectives** with promotions, competitions and other tools. Marketing tools range from starter packs, menus, flyers, posters, surveys, and parents' evening materials.
- Product specification and traceability ensuring no animal fats or unsuitable additives or preservatives are used in any product, or ingredients unsuitable for children in terms of attention, hyperactivity or health.

Community partnerships

ECS is actively involved in many partnerships with the local community including:

- **Sure Start** is a cross-departmental strategy to improve services for young children and their families by preventing social exclusion, raising educational standards, reducing health inequalities and promoting opportunities;
- Contribution to **food related events** such as community tasting sessions and cooking demonstrations at Bradford Food Festival;
- ECS is actively involved with **local food networks** such as Airedale and Bradford Food Networks and the Directorate of Housing & Environmental Protection's Bradford Food Forum.
- Bradford Bulls Safety First, an holistic approach to tackling health issues and to help raise standards of achievement in schools.

ECS and sustainability

ECS works to incorporate sustainability into its operations and is totally committed to putting service, people and best value in advance of profits.

- ECS is **committed to local sourcing** within the constraints of EU regulations.
- ECS has made a commitment in the Corporate Plan to gain accreditation under the **Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** by September 2005.
- An **Environmental Policy Statement** commits ECS to continual performance in environmental management. This includes encouraging suppliers in their efforts to reduce negative environmental impacts, and auditing suppliers' practice as part of the selection criteria.
- Considering accredited **assurance schemes** for all food supplied, for example the Assured Produce Scheme for fruit, vegetables, salads and potatoes, which encompasses statutory legislation e.g. health and safety, environmental issues and is regularly independently audited.

- ECS is committed to providing a catering service that complies with the **Government's Nutritional Guidelines** and **Bradford's Food and Nutrition Policy**. Recipes are regularly reviewed to incorporate healthier ingredients and production techniques.
- A strong track record of working to ensure that the **needs of ethnic customers** are reflected in the menus, particularly through provisions of fully traceable locally reared and processed Halal meat.
- **Minimising waste** through reduced packaging, promoting recycling and exploring possibilities of composting food waste.
- **Minimising food miles** through consolidation of delivery requirements.
- Promoting **safety, welfare and training** for catering and manufacturing staff.

ECS action on local sourcing

ECS has a track record of incorporating local sourcing into its own operations. A prime example is Halal meat, which has been provided since 1983 with documented audit traceability from farm to plate, and is entirely reared and processed within the Yorkshire region. More recent work on local sourcing has involved bringing together potential suppliers to discuss the tender requirements and processes.

Partnering with suppliers

The award of a tender to a supplier is just the start of the working relationship and Julie Holmes has been appointed as Purchasing Manager. This is a new role centred on developing partnership working with suppliers. This communication enables continuous, incremental improvements with benefits for ECS and the suppliers. It is anticipated that improved cost effectiveness will cover the cost of the post and make additional savings and continued improvements.

Baseline data

Baseline data on the amounts of each type of produce required, plus its provenance, is being gathered. This will establish the current position and can be used as a benchmark in the evaluation of future tenders. This has been completed for the fruit and vegetables contract, and an impressive proportion of produce is already sourced regionally including all potatoes, carrots, cabbage and 80% of onions. This baseline data is a fundamental building block in assessing the sustainability impacts of purchasing decisions and contract management. It is being developed further to ascertain an annual profile of the usage of different ingredients over the year. This will facilitate development of menus to incorporate a greater proportion of local, seasonal ingredients. The information has already highlighted instances of produce that is currently imported but could be sourced locally, such as tomatoes.

Price flexibility and payment

ECS is developing price flexibility, which involves monitoring price information and reflecting this in pricing. There is increasingly detailed, instant and accessible information about prices but the flexibility has to be kept simple. With fruit and vegetables, prices are reviewed with the contractor on a monthly basis. Concerns over lengthy delays in payment were identified as a barrier to smaller suppliers, and ECS pays for orders within seven days.

4) Interview findings

Views on supplying ECS and the wider public sector

Prime contractors

Prime contractors often specialise in supplying the public sector, and they intend to further develop their business in this direction. 'It's our main area of business, we're pushing it that way' said one and another explained 'we excel at routes into supplying schools'. The prime contractors are very customer focussed, comments illustrating this include 'we will do what the customer wants', and 'will do anything if there's a way of doing it'. They meet many exacting specifications already. One summed it up as 'its difficult, we do it'. The companies are ambitious and see their public sector business developing to meet the special requirements, increasing their range of goods and services. If the prime contractors think that their customers really want

local produce, there is every indication they will develop local sourcing policies and practices. Suppliers have jumped through a lot of hoops already.

Potential suppliers unaware of procurement processes

In contrast, local suppliers who do not supply the public sector are unaware of how the public procurement process works and how developments in recent years have addressed many of the issues deterring them, like fixed pricing and purchasing decisions being made on cost alone. There is uncertainty about how to get on approved supplier lists and they are not seeing the 'supplying the council' information from BMDC, although some had received information about the Business Link series of seminars on supplying the public sector. One growers' agent and distributor, who has built up a network of local growers, had tried to supply schools in part of the region but had 'hit a brick wall' in spite of offering free produce one day a week.

Some potential suppliers were positive about the public sector, seeing it as a potentially stable business, one said 'supplying schools could be stable, with x numbers of kids.' In contrast, many expressed many negative views and perceived many barriers. There was some uncertainty about what 'Best Value' means in terms of specifications, one said 'I can tick 19 boxes, but I still can't tick the 20th – Best Value'. There did not seem to be awareness of the value-for-money and whole-life costs criteria on which food contracts are awarded.

Scepticism about transparency

Some potential suppliers were dubious about the transparency of public procurement, experience from many years ago had led them to speculation that there are 'back-handers' or that behind the tender processes it's 'a done deal'. One talked of attempts to break into the public sector market years ago, but developed a suspicion that 'they didn't really want competition, they wanted to keep it as it was'. An expanding Bradford based wholesaler, processor and distributor presumed the public sector wasn't open to them asking 'isn't it a closed circuit?'

Pricing and payment

Many interviewees think that the pricing for public procurement is low and inflexible. One local grower said 'We've gone into all this and the prices offered are rubbish, the education authority used to go to the wholesalers and buy all the rubbish they had left', another said 'Whenever it cropped up it was always a cheap sort of job.' Many think that tender prices are fixed. Some have experienced or anticipate delays in payment from a cumbersome bureaucracy. They were surprised to hear that ECS does not buy on price alone, is developing price flexibility and pays within seven days of receipt of orders.

One grower and processor talked of his experience of a contract to supply schools in the region over ten years ago. It proved very hard work for very small returns. When another company undercut their prices and they lost the contract, they were relieved even though they had invested time and money in gearing up to fulfil the contract and were left without an alternative outlet lined up.

Requirements seen as rigid

Potential suppliers envisage the requirements for supplying the public sector as being rigid. One said 'I've seen things about it, problem with supplying 52 weeks per year'. Several are concerned about being unable to meet delivery requirements. Some were worried about building their business around a public sector contract that could go to another company in a future round of tenders. One was reluctant to bid for an ECS contract, anticipating first mover disadvantage in that the first to go ahead would come up against barriers for other companies to learn from, and said that 'pioneers are killed'.

'Never say never'

Without exception, the potential suppliers did not exclude the possibility of bidding for public sector contracts, and some with no previous experience had firm plans to do so. This even includes those who were very sceptical or whose initial enthusiasm had been dampened after finding out more about the stringent specifications and demanding bidding process. One said 'we never say never, open to all opportunities, always on the look out for new customers'.

Feedback on tender documentation and process

There was positive feedback about some aspects of the ECS tender documents. There was surprise that the nutritional specifications were so comprehensive, for example the no GM policy and long list of prohibited additives. A meat producer particularly liked the pictorial diagrams showing the cuts of meat required. This producer also wondered how ECS' commitment to incorporating local provenance was incorporated into purchasing decisions, saying 'When contracts are awarded the sourcing of ingredients needs to be added, or they don't know at what stage it is outsourced'.

Even established suppliers found the tender process arduous, although the process became progressively less time consuming and difficult once they had been through it a few times. One described how in fulfilling the contract 'we have got over 60 files for the Bradford job, its how the food industry has evolved and progressed.' A supplier described how supplying schools and hospitals requires highly skilled staff, 'it's academic work, we have an ongoing in-house training programme'. Potential suppliers perceive a disproportionate amount of work in the tendering process when balanced against the risk of not securing the contract.

Lead in times

ECS has noted from feedback from companies involved in the tender process that the timescale for submission is too short. This appears to be a problem with other public sector contracts. A growers' agent only saw publicity about the recent tender for the School Fruit Scheme three weeks before the deadline for expressions of interest. The short time-scale for tender submission contrasts with calls from suppliers for recognition of lead in times of at least a year for vegetable crops, and longer for produce like apples and meat. There were calls from suppliers for longer-term contracts to enable investment in infrastructure. One supplier thought ECS should 'look at contracts of 10-15 years then we could invest in storage etc'.

How much, where and when?

Companies without experience of public procurement were baffled by lengthy tender documents where the key information they required was hard to ascertain. One said 'on the face of it this tender is frightening, I would like to talk to someone to go through all the questions'. Smaller suppliers wanted concrete information 'I needed to know what is required, how much, where and when' another said 'it does not contain the information to make a business decision'. Small local suppliers do not have the reach in sourcing, slack in the system or capacity like storage to be able to fulfil a contract without this level of detail on what is required.

Structuring and presenting information

There were a lot of comments along the lines that tenders are 'long-winded'. It is appreciated that absorbing and providing complex information is time consuming, but ECS' exacting specifications are likely to become more so with increasing emphasis on traceability and ongoing improvement of nutritional standards. Work is required on structuring, layering and presenting tender documents so that the relevant information and opportunities for local suppliers are more easily apparent.

Publicising supply opportunities

Some interviewees read publications where ECS tenders are already publicised such as The Grocer and Yorkshire Post, yet do not see the tender information. Many stressed that they do not have much time to read trade journals or websites, preferring short bulletins. Word of mouth is not to be underestimated, a current supplier said 'we didn't know Bradford were up, but found out through an NFU contact and now supply them'. Interviewers found out about publications, websites and networks where tenders could be advertised to attract local suppliers' attention:

- Asian Trader magazine
- Bradford Council website
- British Dairying Magazine
- Business Link website
- Buy Bradford – Invest in Bradford website
- Feeder's Digest (BMDC Food Safety Team newsletter)
- foodsector.com (Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Food Technopole)

- Fresh Produce Journal
- Leeds and District Market Gardeners' Association
- NFU Bulletin
- Yorkshire Regional Food Group newsletter

Capacity of local supply base to meet public sector requirements

Localising supply chains requires interplay between improving capacity of the local supply base and developing ECS operations to offer increasing opportunities. The reality for ECS is that the local supply base is dwindling, with fewer tenders being submitted by local companies over time. This short research project indicated that the supply base is fragile and fragmented. The positive side is many food businesses have evolved through these difficult times and are forward-looking and dynamic. The food industry is the second largest sector in the Yorkshire and Humber region, and Yorkshire Forward is developing food and drink as a key cluster because of its potential for job creation and improved economic performance in the region. Bradford is particularly notable for its success in food processing, supplying major retailers and ethnic foods. The research indicates that while there are successful and forward-looking companies, they may not have schools and hospitals on their horizons.

Over specialisation is evident throughout the supply chain. Some companies are geared up for lengthy supply chains with produce travelling across the country for just one stage of the many processes needed to get produce from farm to fork. An example is a Bradford based processor, which just washes and packs potatoes for major retailers. Such a company would not be able to supply the diced and sliced potatoes required by ECS. Interviews with two nearby vegetable processors were encouraging in their attitudes to local sourcing, views on possibilities of supplying the public sector and expansion plans.

The range and volume of produce required for ECS is simply not available locally. This is particularly the case with fruit and vegetables. There are only extremely small amount of vegetables grown in the immediate area in and around the district, and virtually no fruit grown commercially. The closest vegetable growers are of a scale of just a few acres and already with a stable route to market such as a farm shop. Co-ordination with the wider region is vital to secure the necessary range and volume of produce.

Recent years have seen the loss of some whole sectors, such as mushroom growers. While the research was being conducted, Bronte Foods, a frozen and chilled poultry company that had expanded its manufacturing in the district in recent years, went into administration with the threatened loss of several hundred jobs. The company had been seen as an example of a successful Bradford-based food business and was an ECS supplier.

Electronic trading

Not all suppliers found the drive for electronic trading brought speed and convenience. One said 'I don't like email, its supposed to take 6-7 minutes but can take 2-3 hours, and we get an order in at 11pm.' Some current suppliers do not have email. One company found purchasing cards expensive to set up. Some small local suppliers without experience of supplying the public sector are innovative in their use of IT. One grower is working on a sales/distribution channel, supported by an online buyers/sellers portal website and explained that 'we have integrated XML capabilities for online data exchange and would be interested in working with others'.

Assurance schemes

The research gained an indication of suppliers' adoption and views of assurance schemes. There was good feedback on the Assured Produce scheme, including one grower saying 'Assured Produce is OK – some are silly'. Other assurance schemes mentioned included UK 2446, STS – NHS own auditing body and EFSIS, which provides manufacturers and caterers with expert inspection of their operations, and combines inspections and assessments. Interviews indicated that some suppliers are not adopting formal assurance schemes and just rely on the information on the box. One grower expressed frustration at the number of different assurance schemes for supermarkets, saying 'all the supermarkets want' their own thing. Public procurers could make it easier for suppliers to compete for a range of contracts by agreeing common assurance schemes.

Some potential suppliers are working towards far more specialised assurance schemes like regional branding. These assurance schemes will attract a premium, and this raises the issue of whether the public sector, with its requirements for bulk produce and price sensitivity, will be the ideal market for such produce.

School food initiatives

ECS is involved in a wide range of school food initiatives and some potential suppliers immediately thought of opportunities to contribute. A rhubarb producer told the interviewer that 'its not just rhubarb and custard or crumble, we have recipes for savoury dishes as well like a shepherd's pie with mackerel'. This grower also has regular media coverage and visits, including for schools. Two prime contractors said how they provide free samples of local and exotic fruit and vegetables for tastings. There were instances of frustration at lack of support for contribution to school food initiatives. One supplier would be prepared to provide half the cost for free apples to every pupil on Apple Day, but had not found a source of support willing to match their commitment or help with promotion. Some potential suppliers expressed scepticism on whether such involvement makes a substantial difference to the award of contracts, raising again the rather entrenched view that price is the deciding factor.

Lack of capacity

Some potential suppliers do not have the capacity to contribute to such initiatives directly. A large-scale vegetable grower said:

'There's not many of us, the thought of school trips and putting together materials... the last thing we want to do is take on office staff, we keep it lean and prices keen'.

A smaller grower said 'curriculum support goes beyond me' and another explained that 'its hard for someone at farmer level to get involved in other sorts of activity, though it could bring marketing benefits'. It is evident that many primary producers supply the intermediary, and that's the end of the story. There are instances of primary produce, such as cress, with a very short supply chain from primary producer to ECS customers via suppliers, but there is no communication link back through the supply chain to promote this provenance. It is clear we cannot expect suppliers to get involved with school food initiatives without support, and a wide range of organisations, including NGO's, provide educational materials on food and farming issues.

Farm visits

Linking farms with schools, including regular visits to farms, is recommended in the Curry report and ensuing policy developments. As with other aspects of linking with schools, local suppliers may not have the capacity to do this. There are increasing health and safety requirements, caution and regulation around school visits. Some were of the opinion that channelling visits through facilities like city farms is a positive way forward, but others think this does not enable schools to link with working farms which may actually supply some of their food. Another option for linking schools with primary producers is bringing produce into schools for tastings and linking with educational materials.

Making inroads with local produce

Inroads into localising food supply chains are being made by investigating the possibilities of incorporating produce that is widely available in the immediate area into school menus:

Meat

Most of the primary production in the Bradford District and surrounds is livestock, with a relatively high proportion of small farmers. An example of established local supply chains is in the Calder Valley to the west of the Bradford District where meat gets from farm to plate within a radius of less than 15 miles. There were suggestions that using more fresh meat in school meals would facilitate local supply. One supplier described how they only deal in fresh meat as 'its all fresh, its easier to control the supply chain' and said that frozen meat is much more likely to be imported. There are promising local developments in rearing and processing of Halal meat, and expanding public sector opportunities for Halal suppliers.

Off-size produce

A possible inroad for local fruit and vegetable growers could be 'off-size' produce that is rejected by the major retailers because of its size and shape, but is not of inferior quality. The ECS FMO can utilise such produce, and may consider lowering the specification for fresh fruit and vegetables, to allow size or shape variations and superficial markings that do not impact on the nutritional quality. Some growers interviewed have found markets for all grades and sizes of their produce. For others there was a high degree of interest. One grower finds that 10% of their produce is rejected by supermarkets and is rotavated back into the ground. A Bradford based processor was interested in tapping into off-size produce as it would be cheaper.

Fruit and vegetables

ECS is investigating possible openings for local fresh vegetables to accompany the multi-portion frozen meals made at the FMO. Fresh herbs and spices, including Asian specialities like coriander, are being grown successfully in the area, and it is worth looking into incorporating these. Some suppliers are looking at possible involvement in the School Fruit Scheme. Although there is very little fruit grown commercially in the Yorkshire region, cherry tomatoes, carrots and cucumbers grow well and can be included in the scheme. There are also opportunities for delivery of imported fruit. Stockbridge Technology Centre is scoping opportunities for local growers including trials of new crops and chemicals, and pilot local supply projects.

Fresh milk

Two relatively large-scale dairy farmers were interested in the possibility of supplying the FMO. They provide milk in a comprehensive range of types and sizes, but not the 1/3 pint cartons given to individual pupils, and could not access the technology to do this. One dairy farmer was proud that they get milk from the farm to local shops in less than 24 hours, and that this short supply chain means that a lower temperature is required for pasteurisation, which, they think, improves the milk's nutritional value. They wondered whether schools would be any more interested in this than their established outlets, saying that 'there is no premium or value on local or fresh milk'. In contrast, a supplier stressed the importance of the long shelf life for milk, which has increased to 8-11 days over recent years, from their current suppliers, who operate on a much larger scale and are based considerably further away. From ECS' perspective there is the consideration that the dried skimmed milk currently used in the FMO is substantially cheaper than fresh milk.

Comparisons and links with other routes to market

It seems that some small producers are receiving or anticipate better margins by selling direct e.g. at farmers' markets. A representative of a producer network said that margins could be as high as 60% for direct sales like farmers' markets, and looked like being as low as 5% for the public sector. Producer collaboration is required to achieve the high volume throughput required to make a profit on low margins.

The relation of public procurement to other markets could be important for suppliers. A meat producer said 'we need a secondary market to put produce through'. Other meat suppliers wondered how they would sell the cuts of meat not used by schools asking 'what would we do with the rest of the animal?' An alternative market for produce during the school holidays, particularly the long summer break when a lot of fresh produce is available, is not immediately apparent. Continuity of demand from schools is an issue for suppliers, just as continuity of supply is an issue for the procurer.

Several producers and suppliers thought that supermarkets have been active in developing their local sourcing practices, and saw opportunities to expand in this area. Views were varied as to the credibility of the supermarkets local sourcing. Two growers thought supermarkets were developing more regionalised distribution systems, but others detailed how local produce travels around the UK for various stages of processing before arriving in the local branch, one describing how it 'goes to Evesham and back'. One grower is working with a major supermarket chain on Yorkshire branding for its produce and said 'supermarkets pay for quality, they are keen on UK produce'.

Suppliers' views on local producers

Some suppliers were very critical of local producers. One spoke at length of problems they had experienced with the quality, continuity of supply and sometimes with the working practices and attitude of UK vegetable suppliers. One spoke on this at length:

'Fruit and veg suppliers are miles behind everyone. Cornish cauliflowers, no one buys, its like 25 years ago they're all bumping around in a crate and broken. The local growers all think their produce is the best and want more for it. In an ideal world local suppliers offer value for money, this is not always the case. We can't get continuity of supply locally. Over the years we have reduced suppliers to people we know and who have a track record.'

Suppliers often cite quality as their key concern, and find that local produce is not always the best, examples were given like 'we could buy local swedes, but Scotch is better'. It seems though that appearance, uniformity and shelf life of produce are paramount to some public procurers, who demand the produce that is 'not much flavour, looks the part', or apples that 'aren't out by a millimetre either way.'

Two suppliers thought that local growers have a strong incentive to send their best produce abroad because it would be more expensive for them if sub-standard produce was returned. One thought that 'Importers have more money on the haulage side so if there's a problem they lose out. We send our best gear abroad too.' A processor described their reluctance to deal directly with growers, saying that 'if you buy through an agent if there is something wrong it can be sorted out'.

Some suppliers are of the view that the suppliers that are left are up to the challenges. A growers' agent was particularly positive about local growers, saying that after challenging times 'the best ones are left' and is committed to supporting them. Suppliers often talked about growers being more supported in other European countries. 'In the Netherlands there's more concern for growers' said one, with another commenting that 'UK farmers are not supported in investing'. Many issues raised by suppliers about primary producers relate to communication. One said that 'we have to have farmers think the way we think', and another thought that 'we have to have farmers aware, they will grow to specifications'.

Supply chain links

The research enabled an insight into the type of local supply chain links that are already established. There are instances of localised supply chains already in place that are not formalised or documented. There are some producer networks, but it seems they are small scale and fragile with only partial coverage of the region. Examples are a meat producers' organisation supplying about fifty butchers, with 4 depots and growing by the week. A rhubarb and brassica grower brings in and distributes from smaller growers but this is diminishing as they explained 'there's only 5-6 of us left!'

Primary producers often mentioned lack of processing facilities, and processors talked about the loss of local suppliers. 'There is a need to develop local processing facilities and supply chain consolidation'. Some interviewees expressed concern over the future of remaining local supply chain infrastructure, one meat producer was sceptical about the long-term viability of a relatively new abattoir facility.

Most suppliers say they use local produce where possible. They were supportive of the idea of using more local produce, with comments like 'I'm all for it'. However, there do not appear to be policies or strategies to assess or increase the proportion that is sourced locally to back this up. A few suppliers classify their produce or product as 'local' but are only considering the first preceding supply chain link, such as fruit and vegetables bought from a nearby wholesalers which may originate from across the globe. Suppliers gave some encouraging examples of local supply chain links, one 'teamed up to source bread locally' and another has contracted vegetable processing to a company five miles from their depot.

Price

Suppliers' views on the relative price of local produce were complex and require further investigation. On the face of it local produce is often cheaper, which is encouraging. 'Local person is always the cheapest.' 'Anything imported is more expensive'. This is more complex as local may only be cheaper when in season. A meat suppliers described how 'once the sheep are in lambing season local lamb is prohibitively expensive'.

It is evident that the price of produce is not the only cost incurred by suppliers. Suppliers, and their public sector customers, have exacting specifications including quality, uniformity, appearance, and delivery requirements. If a product does not meet the specification there are considerable on-costs including sorting, wastage, trimming and labour costs. Lack of continuity of supply also incurs costs, and a processor gave an example of a local vegetable supplier who was not open for business for several days following Christmas so they had to find an alternative supplier.

Several responses indicate that suppliers think that local produce will inevitably be more expensive because of factors like lower labour costs, subsidies on agriculture and lower animal welfare standards in other countries. Many interviewees raised the issue of whether public procurers are prepared to pay extra for local produce. One said 'it would be nice to support local suppliers, will they increase the Council Tax to pay for it?'

Support requirements

There was positive feedback on ECS' work to bring producers and processors together, 'the briefing sessions were good, bringing people together does help' said one who attended. It is clear that many potential suppliers want someone to talk to, not vast volumes of paper they won't get around to reading. Some suppliers are keen to meet with other companies 'We need better awareness of collaboration opportunities, like a local food network'. Maybe 'Meet the Buyer' type events could incorporate meeting other suppliers and facilitating horizontal collaboration along the supply chain.

Some are critical of event based support in general. 'There's lots of conferences and talking about it, it needs practical work', said one and another thought that 'seminars are a waste of time, a load of hot air'. One producer pointed out that the November 2003's PSFPI conference in London was too expensive for suppliers at £395. For one business 'the problem with looking for support is everyone knows what you are doing, we keep it under our hat, we're pro-active, ring councils, ask for advice'.

There were strong feelings that support needs to be co-ordinated and long term. One said that 'there has to be joined up support, there was funding for renovating an orchard, but the apples were left rotting on the ground'. Another was disappointed because 'we were making inroads then the funding runs out'. One producer had found it easier to find support for accessing export markets saying how they 'got help for selling lambs to Greece'.

Knowledge and views on local sourcing policy drive

Interviewees' knowledge of the PSFPI and broader local sourcing policy drive varied. Most had at least heard of the initiative, although one major supplier had not done so, while some small-scale primary producers had detailed knowledge. Some had received a lot of information and one said 'its like a blizzard, but you're the first to come and talk to us'. Suppliers seem to be of the view that the policy drive for local sourcing has not yet had a dramatic effect on public bodies purchasing decisions. One said that schools and hospitals are 'still not bothered where it's from', and another that 'Bradford is the first to stipulate local produce'. Two suppliers talked about the delivery of the School Fruit Scheme pilot as an example of public procurement being uncoordinated and working against localised distribution, with one wondering 'why are there half-empty vans going up and down the country. The fruit could have joined the existing schools delivery'.

One vegetable grower had looked at the PSFPI information and the outline of this project in detail and concluded that although he was always looking for new opportunities he was 'not sure how this can change reality for an ordinary farmer like me.' Sustained effort will be required for potential suppliers to be convinced that this initiative is worth developing their business in a new direction for, and for established suppliers to develop local sourcing policies and practices. Many businesses take a long view on things, and one explained how 'local produce bubbles up again then goes quiet, but get the feeling this time its more substantial'. There is a long way to go and many immense barriers to achieving local supply systems, and one producer suggested the interviewer 'take a reality pill'!

5) Other issues arising from research

Perceptions of school food

Many responses indicate that suppliers see public procurement, and provision of school food in particular, as working against the sustainability and health concerns that are driving the PSFPI and related policy and initiatives. Some potential and established suppliers think that the trend is for more canned, increasingly processed and frozen food in schools, which is more likely to be imported. 'Its all frozen food' said an established supplier, and a potential supplier dismissed school meals as 'chemicals at 1p a portion'. Some interviewees were more optimistic though, with one saying 'times may be changing, schools and hospitals should have the best quality.'

Many suppliers do not view the public sector as considering the finer points of nutrition like freshness and variety. 'There's a limited range of vegetables the schools want - just potatoes, carrots, peas and sweetcorn'. said one, while another thought that 'school cooks used to have nutrition charts, now its pizza and chips'. 'Bring back school kitchens!' was the call from many, who saw the loss of kitchens as meaning more processed and less healthy food, and reduced opportunities for smaller local suppliers to break into the market. Many thought there has been a contraction of school food provision, with lots of comments like 'schools have encouraged sandwiches and going out of school at lunchtime'. There was appreciation of wider problems around the lack of a cultural appreciation of local or healthy food, and what schools are up against in improving meals. One supplier thought that 'like families on a budget, schools can't afford to buy produce speculatively and see it wasted'.

Definitions of 'local' food

What is local?

Interviewees' definitions of local were decidedly pragmatic, with many saying regional, national, or 'as close as you can sensibly get it'. Consideration of how local provenance interrelates with other dimensions of sustainable food systems like health, fair trade and combating food poverty is required. Promotion of local food often implies that it is synonymous with 'quality', 'fresh' and 'healthy'. In the narrow but important terms of the actual product on the customers' plate this is not necessarily so. It is important to tackle the ironies of the current local produce situation like lack of fruit and vegetables in the area and weak distribution networks which make it difficult to supply fresh local produce.

Externalities like negative environmental impacts of transportation strengthen the case for local supply. One grower suggested that alongside 'food miles' there is the concept of 'time miles', and they promote that their produce can be from field to fork in less than 48 hours. This example is encouraging, but it seems that for some prime contractors freshness has as much to do with growing for long shelf-life and a successful chill-chain as the time or distance it takes for produce to reach the customer. One supplier compared the one-day shelf life of UK strawberries with 4-5 days of their Dutch counterparts, which they attribute to the vacuum chilling. Some suppliers stressed how successful overseas companies are in supplying a range of produce very quickly, and criticism of local producers arose again: 'It's here next day on a refrigerated trailer, local growers would say is next Tuesday OK?, and it would be stored at 8°C when it should be 1°C'.

Migrant labour

Several interviewees brought up the issue of migrant labour as a dimension of local provenance. This focussed on concerns that some workers are paid below the minimum wage and suffer poor working conditions. In February, twenty Chinese cockle pickers died on the Morecambe coast, and the subject arose frequently in subsequent interviews. One of the objectives of the PSFPI is 'Better working conditions for catering staff'. Evolving policy, including definitions of 'local' food, needs to adequately incorporate the issues around instances of exploitation of migrant labour as for some suppliers it is of very high practical and ethical importance.

The Gangmasters Licensing Bill to introduce a statutory licensing scheme for labour providers, often referred to as 'gangmasters' was introduced by Bill Sheridan MP in January 2004, and has received its second reading. It's supporters include major supermarkets, Defra and several government agencies, the NFU, TGWU, the

Association of Labour Providers and the Ethical Trading Initiative which is a broad alliance of business and trade union organisations working with government to tackle these abuses.

'Local and organic'

Local food is often linked with organic food in publicity and by initiatives such as Local Food Works, a joint initiative from the Countryside Agency and the Soil Association. Two interviewees found this unhelpful. 'You can't graft local on to organic or vice versa' said one producer, adding 'its different supply chains and specifications, and most organic is imported.' A vegetable grower said that combining the organic and local food agendas is 'mucking up the market for local food'. Nevertheless, there is relevant work on localising organic food supply chains by the Yorkshire Organic Centre, and this project benefited from helpful information and support from Local Food Works.

Scale and complexity issues

Public sector contracts often appear too big or small for a local supply base that appears to be increasingly polarised in terms of scale, particularly regarding primary producers. A large-scale grower thought the amounts required are too small and said 'It has to be a full truckload – 25 tonnes' although he did not dismiss the possibility and continued 'we do have a few smaller customers and share transport with a potato supplier'. At the other end of the scale a producer said 'We're too small to respond to a tender that size – not geared up for it. We've not got systems in place'. The complexity of the specifications and delivery requirements discouraged a Bradford-based processor who said 'we don't supply in small quantities, not kitted up to do little bags'.

It appears that the established suppliers require a large scale of operation to make the smaller quantities and high number of delivery points economically viable, one explained how 'there's two ways of looking at it, if can't do the small stuff you don't get the big'. Many potential suppliers liked the idea of supplying ECS's FMO, which requires relatively large amounts of produce with just one delivery point that is easily accessible by road.

Opportunities for smaller suppliers

The current models and trends for school food provision are not encouraging for smaller suppliers. ECS food contracts are mainly large, with none being under the £60,000 OJEC level. Suppliers are looking for larger scale primary producers, 'local suppliers never have enough, they're not big enough' said one processor. Discussions with primary producers constantly returned to the issue of the need to bring together the produce to get it to processors.

It is anticipated that establishing the necessary collaboration between smaller suppliers and put together consortia bids will be difficult and a long haul process. Suppliers and producers themselves talked about an independent spirit among farmers that needs to be considered. One producer advocates that ECS 'put a purchasing grid together that is farmer friendly' and recommends calling moves to encourage producer collaboration a 'food hub to get over the "co-operative" word producers are wary of'.

Towards a new economy of scale

The cost benefits of large scale farming, processing and distribution systems can only shift in favour of localised, diverse supply networks if externalities of lengthy supply chains like adverse effects of transportation are assessed and incorporated into purchasing decisions. Public procurers alone cannot change their specifications to give appropriate weight to social and environmental concerns, or develop the 'harmonised methodology for quantifying the external costs and benefits' advocated by Sustain. It is necessary to look at how local sourcing can obviate the need for some processing and offer fresher and more nutritious food and less energy and resource use. Analysis of the impact of aspects of long distance transportation of food, such as lengthy chill-chains and packaging could yield some powerful arguments for local supply networks. EU regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of location of supplier make it all the more vital to incorporate these externalities into purchasing decisions.

Models and infrastructure

Case studies

The Bradford District encompasses rural and urban communities, and disparities in wealth that are reflected in health indicators. Schools have different ethos and circumstances, and ECS needs to maintain equity of service throughout the District. Different local supply chain models are likely to evolve, and the way to progress could be to encourage adoption of processes that are conducive to local sourcing rather than imposing models that worked elsewhere. Case studies of individual schools that source locally are inspirational, but not necessarily widely replicable. The schools tend to be in affluent areas and with a wider range of produce on their doorstep, particularly fruit and vegetables, than is available to Bradford schools, particularly those in urban areas. One producer was critical of case studies focussing on the success of individual schools, saying that 'a niche is not a model'. ECS will support schools through the process of becoming more independent in their food provision, including sourcing local produce if that is the direction they want to take. Further division of contracts into lots has limited potential to facilitate local sourcing in and around the Bradford District. It is more cost effective to consolidate contracts, and it appears that the main opportunities for smaller primary producers will be as second and third tier suppliers through a prime contractor.

Competing models

Inevitably, different and competing potential models for local supply chains are emerging. There are differing views on whether to utilise, bypass or replace supply chain players like agents, wholesalers and processors. An example is varying views on the potential of involving wholesalers. It appears that a considerable amount of produce from major growers in the York and Lincolnshire areas, plus smaller local farms and even local allotments is channelled through Bradford St. James's wholesale fruit and vegetable market. Some are of the opinion that traceability and assurance standards may be inconsistent but the wholesale market is an important figure in Bradford's food economy. It could also be of strategic importance for the wider region as it has incorporated the remnants of the loss or downsizing of several wholesale markets including Leeds, Doncaster and Hull.

What can be agreed is that whichever local supply models do prove successful will grow or create enterprises and new employment. It is important that work to encourage bids from local suppliers does not raise unrealistic expectations and that it is understood that no potential supplier can be treated preferentially and that business decisions will be made by the businesses themselves.

Growing the local food sector

Local sourcing for the public sector must consider the broader goal of growing the local food sector, there could be risks of displacing existing but fragile local supply networks. Building capacity to meet exacting public sector requirements such as assurance schemes, traceability and electronic trading could enhance the potential for local food businesses, especially including SME's and social enterprises, to supply other outlets. The exacting specifications for public procurement could help to increase the skill levels in the food sector, increasing wage levels and helping to make the food sector a higher priority for statutory bodies' investment and regeneration programmes.

From supply chain to supply network

A conceptual shift from linear supply chains to supply networks is emerging. This project enabled a cursory glance incorporating the farm inputs and food waste at the extremities of farm to fork. Co-ordination of purchasing could be of comparable importance to co-ordination of the supply base with many raising this issue. 'Standardisation across the local authorities would help', said one, and another thought 'we need public procurement co-operation between regions'. A co-ordinated network of opportunities to supply the public sector could give more encouragement, and suppliers' operations often transcend local authority and regional boundaries. One major supplier said 'we supply three authorities, it's not co-ordinated with schools no, but its happening in hospitals'. A grower had the idea that for the School Fruit Scheme groups of schools could be scheduled to receive different types of produce on different days of the week to minimise delivery distances.

Learning from elsewhere

The project looked at relevant work in and around the region. North Yorkshire County Council is working on the development of a transferable model for future procurement for social enterprises. This encompasses supplier audit and capacity building, a model for contracts to incorporate community, social and environmental benefits and development of cross-directorate mechanisms to assign quantitative and qualitative values to benefits. In East Yorkshire, Bishop Burton and Askham Bryan colleges are working with farmers to develop clusters or clubs to supply processors, and putting together a toolkit with FBAS and others on how to respond to public procurement. There are also examples of individual schools sourcing locally, such as St. Aidan's School in Harrogate which is working with the support of the Soil Association. There could be a lot to learn from many other initiatives including clusters of schools purchasing from local suppliers in Cumbria. At the regional level, the SSFF Regional Implementation Group is mapping the produce supplied to schools and its provenance.

Gap analysis

The research enabled an insight into some of the gaps in products, services and facilities required to further localise ECS supply chains. These gaps indicate enterprise opportunities and priorities for investment. Some examples given in interviews include:

- comprehensive vegetable processing facilities
- growers of cherry tomatoes and cucumbers for School Fruit Scheme
- value-added dairy produce from within the Bradford District - cheese, yoghurt etc.
- bacon curers
- machinery for 1/3 pints of milk
- carrots in batons – vacuum packed for snacks
- schools to have refrigerated storage facilities (fewer deliveries would be required as shelf life is extended and delivery can be overnight when there's less traffic)
- better packaging and handling techniques of fruit and veg
- chill-chain
- vacuum chilling
- vegetable peeling
- labelling

Information and communication

A producer said that 'it's the communication that links up the supply chain'. There are initiatives to develop supply chain information, including from the regional SSFF 'Framework for Change' Food Working Group. There are also useful sources of information including BMDC, Business Link and websites such as Buy Bradford (Invest in Bradford) and foodsector.com (Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Food Technopole). However, there is insufficient knowledge of the supply base and supply chain, and gaps in horizontal and vertical communication. However, comprehensive, detailed and up-to-date information about local food businesses' scope of operations is not available, so the project necessitated a step back to bring together information about potential local suppliers.

Distribution

'Transport is one of the main issues' said one potential supplier, and many talked of high transport costs. Distance is not the only factor in transport costs though, and complex delivery requirements with small quantities and lots of delivery points are a clear disincentive. Typical comments included 'it needs a few delivery points of as much volume as possible'. ECS recognises that multi-drops are more expensive and is introducing flexibility in requirements, for example offering a bulk drop option.

Localised delivery requires co-ordination, not one long delivery replaced by countless smaller deliveries. Many suppliers have already made savings in time and energy costs through backfilling loads, and there will be more opportunities for this with localised supply chains. Co-ordinated localised distribution could bring considerable savings. One processor said that motor insurers are auditing companies to reduce driver hours, which could be another motivator for reducing transportation distances.

There are many distribution networks to tap into. Moorsfresh offers a range of local produce with a single invoice and co-ordinated distribution, a 'one-stop shop linking the different tiers in the supply chain'. The company will shortly open a facility at Melmerby, which will service West Yorkshire. A small number of specialist distribution companies have been established at Bradford's St. James Wholesale Market over recent years. These specialise in relatively small deliveries, such as shops and restaurants, so may find it feasible to deliver to individual schools en route.

6) Policy context

Much policy drives support local sourcing, but work to implement this on the ground appears to be swimming against the tide of some other priorities:

Local and regional policy

Many local and regional policies and programmes support localisation of food supply chains. The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Sustainable Development Framework 2003 - 2005¹ includes an objective that local needs are met locally and commits itself to supporting the formation, maintenance and use of local and regional supply chains for goods and services. Likewise, a report on the economic opportunities afforded by the NHS Plan for Yorkshire and Humber highlights the potential boost to the economy were the NHS able to source locally². The forthcoming Bradford Food Strategy includes the aim to develop a sustainable local food economy and commits many Bradford organisations to review existing food chain lengths. Local sourcing is supported at the corporate level by BMDC as part of the fair trade policy and because of the broader benefits for the local economy and regeneration.

Asset Management Project

There is potential for conflicting outcomes of strategic policies in terms of increased private sector involvement in investment initiatives and as service providers versus the public sector procurement initiative. Bradford Council, similarly to many other local authorities, is in the advanced stages of developing strategic partnership for asset and facilities management. The objectives for this initiative are to:

- achieve optimum long and short term solutions for the utilisation of the council's operational estate;
- develop an improved estate that is flexible to respond to changing needs and support strategic objectives;
- reduce the council's risk exposure;
- achieve reductions in the running costs of asset and facilities management services and the estate as a whole;
- rationalise the council's administrative estate to support the corporate strategy;
- rationalise the estate to provide capital receipts to be invested in front-line services.

ECS catering and cleaning functions are scoped as one of the facilities management services. The preferred strategic partner for this type of arrangement usually sub-contracts the catering and cleaning service to one of the major national / international private sector operators. This arrangement potentially puts at risk the excellent work in terms of sustainable local food supply, local sourcing, procurement and the health and education focus of ECS, the current in-house provider.

In terms of a successful partnership it is fundamental that the current focus is reflected in the service specification, contract negotiations, evaluation model and key performance indicators to ensure continual improvement is delivered through the partnership. However, the question has to be asked whether private sector operators will truly have the same motivation to the sustainable public procurement initiative?

¹ Building the Benefits - Yorkshire and Humber Assembly (2003).

² NHS Plan and Economic opportunities in Yorkshire and Humber (Report prepared for Regional Directorate of Public Health for Yorkshire and Humber).

OGC report

Local sourcing initiatives could complement the recommendations of 'Increasing Competition and Improving Long Term Capacity Planning in the Government Market Place' the OGC report to the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Dec 2003. Key strands of the report include improving supply base capacity, increasing knowledge and visibility of supply chains and increasing 2nd and 3rd tier supply opportunities for SME's. Another key strand of the report is increasing co-ordination of public procurement, which has been highlighted in this project as potentially offering a network of opportunities for local suppliers.

Practice lags behind policy

There are instances where economics has not caught up with announcement of a policy shift. An example is support for small abattoirs, as many in the region continue to struggle. From the schools perspective, hardly a day goes by without announcements of how school food must be healthier and use local produce. So far, funding has been available for the education side around food issues, but not for comprehensive improvement of school kitchen facilities to enable more pupils to have meals that are freshly cooked on site, although there have been small amounts for small storage units and fridges.

7) Action plan

The Action Plan resulting from the case study is a work in progress. Much has already been achieved on many of the aims outlined. There are many organisations working to support sustainable supply chain which the steering group hope to involve. Development of the Action Plan necessitates bringing together the wide range of organisations working on relevant issues.

Overall aim: Develop sustainable, localised supply systems for ECS

1 Develop opportunities and capacity for local suppliers to bid for ECS contracts

What needs to be done?	Lead organisation	Outputs and outcomes
1.1 Increase local suppliers' understanding of ECS procurement processes and contract opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECS 	Publicity of initiative and tenders in publications and networks used by local suppliers Comprehensive knowledge of provenance of current ECS supplies - Increased supply chain visibility Local supplier knowledge of new and expanding contract opportunities
1.2 Develop tender documents, specifications and processes to encourage bids from local suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECS 	More accessible tender documents and supplementary information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantities and delivery requirements Annual profile of product usage Forward programme of tenders to give more lead in time
1.3 Increase supply opportunities for SME's and social enterprises, including consortia bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECS 	More bids and contracts for SME's and social enterprises Wider supply base

<p>1.5 Support local suppliers in meeting ECS requirements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effectiveness and added-value • Management systems • Electronic trading • Assurance schemes 		Improved local capacity to supply ECS, wider public sector and other routes to market
<p>1.6 Events to bring together primary producers, suppliers and ECS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS 	Increased communication and collaboration throughout supply chain
<p>1.7 Encourage bids from suppliers of produce widely available from closest primary producers, e.g. milk, rhubarb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS • GFN • NFU 	Flagship examples of produce sourced as locally as possible

2 Develop physical and communications infrastructure for localised supply systems

What needs to be done?	Lead organisation	Outputs and outcomes
<p>2.1 Develop comprehensive knowledge of local supply base and capacity to supply ECS</p>		
<p>2.2 Facilitate vertical and horizontal supply chain communication in local supply base</p>		<p>Bring together producers and suppliers together to encourage collaboration on supply opportunities</p> <p>Supplier strategic alliances and networks (particularly primary producers)</p>
<p>2.3 Gap analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products • Services and facilities e.g. storage, refrigeration, delivery 		Knowledge of investment needs and enterprise opportunities
<p>2.4 Strategic pilot projects to bridge supply chain gaps.</p>		<p>Development of local food enterprises</p> <p>Improved local capacity to supply ECS, the wider public sector and other routes to market</p>

3 Raise awareness and involvement in local sourcing in schools and the wider community

What needs to be done?	Lead organisation	Outputs and outcomes
<p>3.1 Facilitate involvement of local suppliers in school food initiatives and community related partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS 	<p>Secondary financial and marketing benefits for suppliers</p> <p>Outreach to parents and wider community</p>

3.2 Work with schools to incorporate local, seasonal ingredients in menus		Recipes
3.3 Encourage schools to link with local suppliers and potential suppliers e.g. farm/factory visits		Link with school curriculum
3.4 Link with local food networks, organisations and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS • GFN 	<p>Profile and outreach to wider community e.g. food festivals</p> <p>Links with wide range of NGO's and community organisations</p> <p>Help to grow the local food sector and food culture</p>
3.5 Publicise initiative through media (local, regional, community, trade etc.)		<p>Wider public awareness and support</p> <p>Increased awareness of initiative among policy makers and funders</p>

4 Incorporate assessment of sustainability impacts of supply systems into ECS purchasing decisions and contract management.

What needs to be done	Lead organisation	Outputs and outcomes
4.1 Baseline data on produce procured and its provenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS 	Knowledge of sustainability impact of ECS procurement
4.2 EMAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS 	EMAS accreditation by September 2005
4.3 Environmental Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECS 	Continuous improvement of environmental management

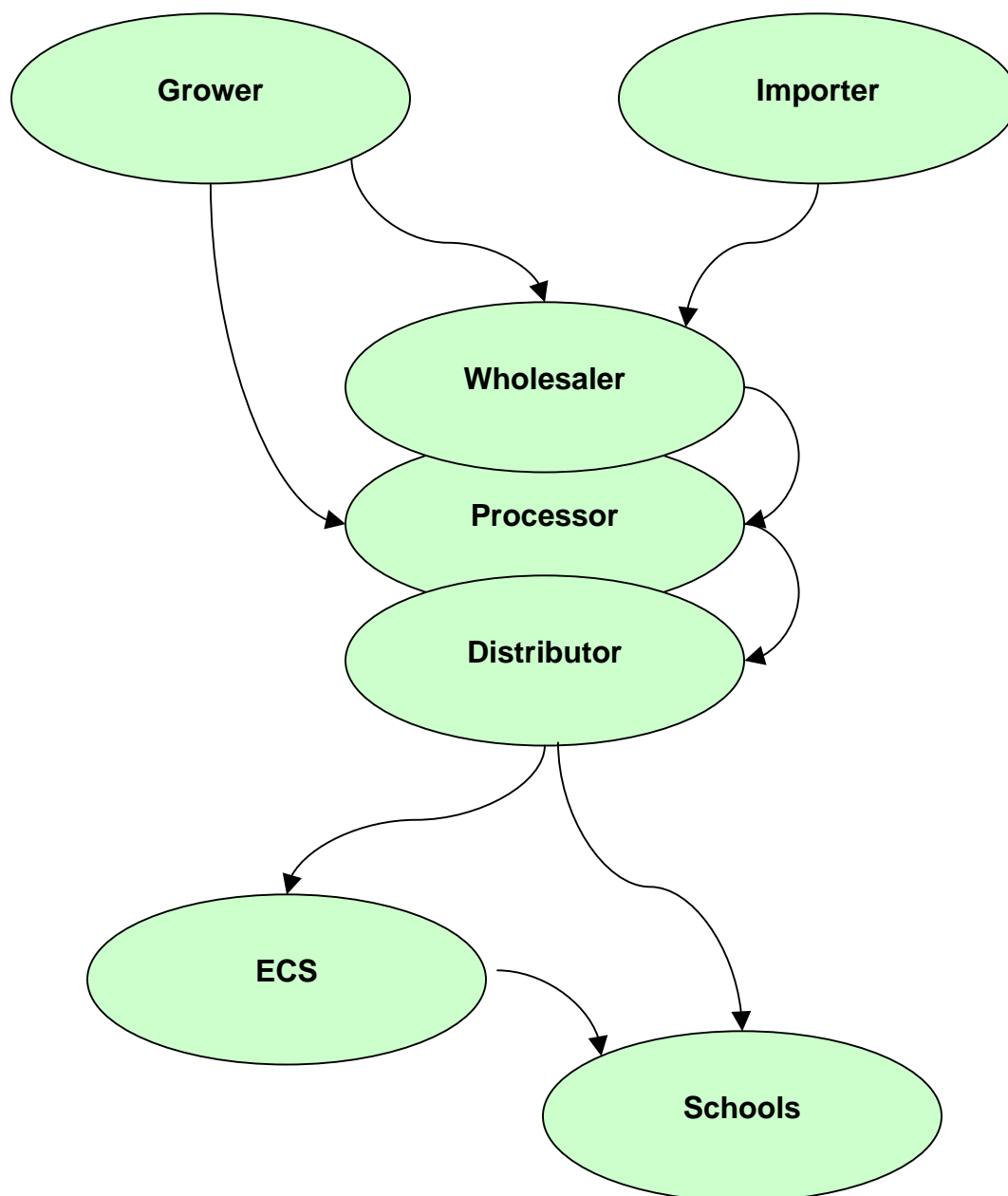
5 Contribute to relevant policy and strategy

What needs to be done?	Lead organisation	Outputs and outcomes
5.1 Contribute to Framework for Change, particularly the Public Procurement Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOYH/Yorkshire Forward 	<p>Improved links with other public procurers in region, sharing ideas and good practice</p> <p>Help develop regional network of opportunities for local suppliers</p>
5.2 Develop models of good practice for sustainable, localised supply system – focussing on collaboration		Inspiration and practical guidance for suppliers

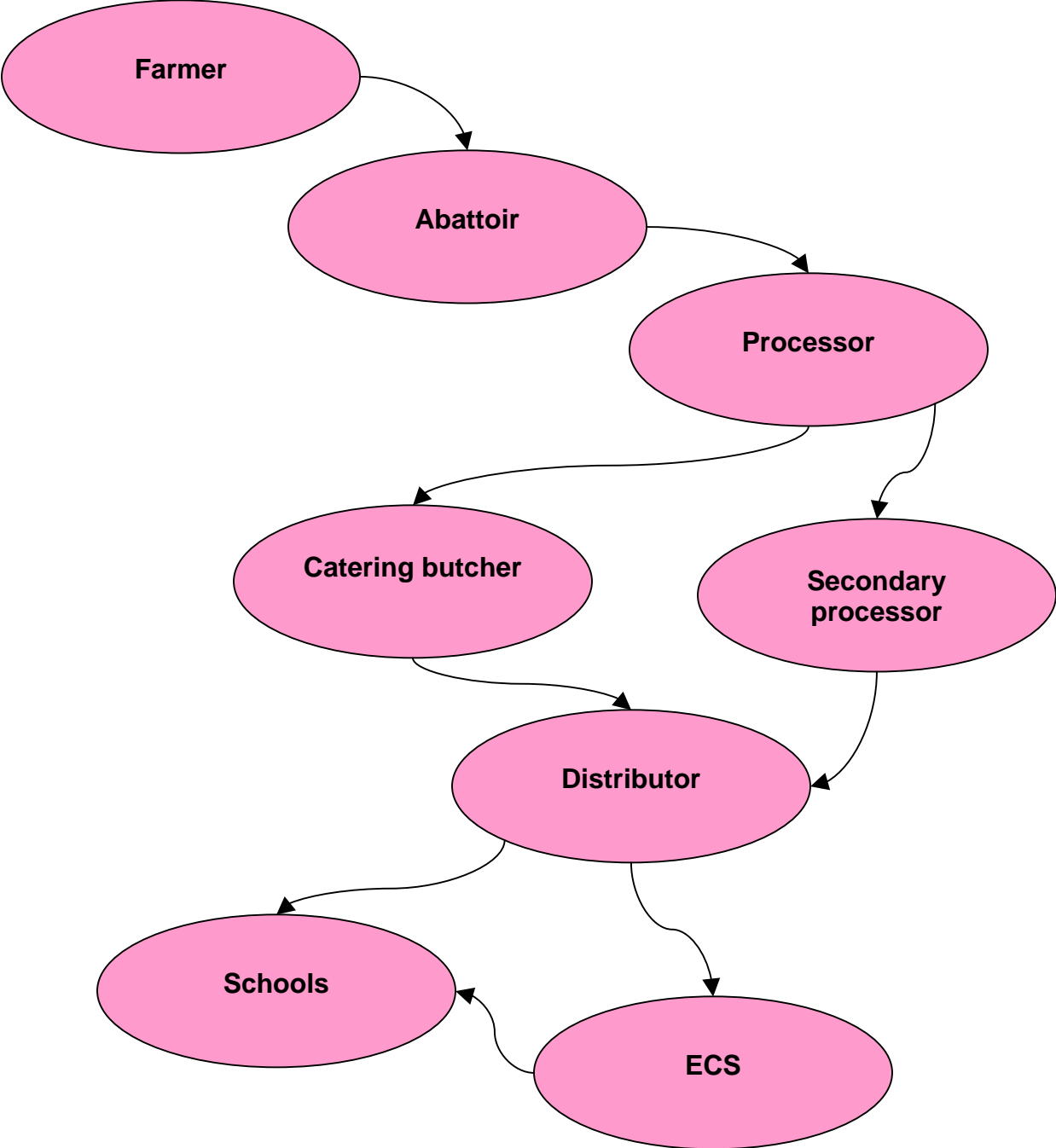
8) Appendix 1 - Supply chain diagrams

These diagrams outline the current supply chains for the two tenders that were the focus of the project.

Supply chain - Potatoes, fruit, vegetables and salads



Supply chain - Meat, meat products and poultry



9) Appendix 2 - Framework of questions for suppliers

- 1 Please outline your key products/services and customers.
- 2 Has your business considered, bid for or secured any public sector contracts? If yes please give details. If no, why is this?
- 3 Where do you find out about potential suppliers and customers, for example trade journals or websites?
- 4 Do you see information about public sector contracts? If yes, please give details.
- 5 What do you see as the key requirements for supplying ECS/ the public sector?
- 6 Are there any issues for your business in considering public sector contracts?
- 7 Are there any ways in which your business might be able to offer cost effectiveness and/or added value?
 - Product specifications and quality, including assurance schemes
 - Transport/delivery
 - Sub-contracting - linking with other suppliers/intermediaries
 - Management systems and performance monitoring
 - Traceability / supply chain visibility
 - Curriculum support and marketing (see school food initiative sheet)
 - Any other benefits of working with your business
- 8 Please outline your procedures or plans on the following, which relate to capacity to meet ECS/public sector requirements:
 - Health, safety and environmental management
 - Documentation and administration
 - Electronic trading
 - Indemnity and insurance (Employers, Product and Public Liability)
 - Equal opportunities
- 9 Do you have any links or collaboration with other local businesses in the supply chain, for example local suppliers? If yes, please give details.
- 10 Is there anything that would help you link with other local businesses, including sourcing from and supplying them?
- 11 What is your experience or general opinion of local producers supplying more produce specifically for public sector contracts?
- 12 Do you know of any instances of local suppliers unable to meet the prices of imports?
- 13 Do you have any plans or ideas for bidding for ECS/public sector contracts in the future?
- 14 Have you received, or are you aware of, any support that could help your business bid for ECS/ public sector contracts?
- 15 Are you aware of the political drive from Defra to encourage local procurement by the public sector?
- 16 Is there anything that could be done to encourage local suppliers to bid for ECS/public sector contracts?
- 17 Any other comments on supplying ECS/the public sector?

10) Appendix 3 - Relevant organisations and initiatives

Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) of City of Bradford District Metropolitan Council

Background

The CPU ensures the legal technicalities of awarding tenders are covered for all tenders awarded by a Council department. Although Education Contract Services (ECS) is a stand alone direct service organisation from the Council, and allowed to trade across LA boundaries, it remains within the domain of the CPU.

CPU is part of the West Yorkshire Procurement Partnership. WYPP is a collaboration between the five Councils of West Yorkshire to standardise procedures for submitting tenders and to develop IT software to enable this to happen electronically. Through this collaboration and with locally targeted publicity, the WYPP aims to encourage local businesses to submit tenders within West Yorkshire.

Tenders are advertised in accordance with EU regulations according to the value of each tender. The management of contracts is devolved to different departments. Regarding food, ECS take on the full responsibility for developing, evaluating, awarding and managing contracts. Bradford Council passed a motion on Fair Trade that includes support for local sourcing.

Support for Public Sector Local Food Procurement

Local procurement is now a big driver for social change regarding sustainable communities and local regeneration. Local Government is being pushed from ODPM to increase local procurement. The CPU has to evaluate value for money vs sustainability and Fair Trade which can mean for a dichotomy of interests. The first means more savings, fewer, larger contracts to large companies, local sourcing often deals with small, medium, enterprises (SME's) that cannot compete with economies of scale.

'We sort it out contract by contract. If savings are good, would have to go with the larger contract for the tax payer's benefit.'

Bradford's strategy on procurement is up for revision and will go before the Council Executive after the June 2004 elections. There will be quite a few changes and these will include more information on social regeneration aspects as it is high on the political agenda. As a department the CPU is accountable to the Council policy on Fair Trade which includes local food and food to be identified as GM free. These have been brought in by officers rather than councillors.

Key Issues

Legality of tenders.

Openness and transparency of tender process.

Management of contracts.

Interpreting Best Value to balance value for the Council Tax payer's money and sustainability issues.

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation

Background

YPO is a joint purchasing organisation owned by a consortium of 12 Local Authorities along the M62 corridor including North Yorkshire. Its biggest customer-base is Local Authority school meals providers. 80% of business is from education, the rest social services. It operates from a depot off the M1 near Wakefield, to which goods are delivered and distributed. It is non-profit making, only needing to cover its revenue costs.

Purpose of organisation

YPO negotiates purchasing agreements for eggs, cheese, butter, canned foods, groceries (including soft drinks) and dry goods. It does not deal with fresh or frozen produce. The final decision to purchase may be made by YPO (as is the case of eggs, cheese and butter) or by the customer.

Support for Public Sector Local Food Procurement

In theory, YPO is supportive and open to new ideas from its customers. In practice, there are a number of practical issues to be resolved before it could incorporate locally produced goods (for example, eggs, butter or cheese).

Operates a centralised depot system – depending on the customer's definition of 'local' it may or may not support local sourcing for customers on the perimeters of its delivery range.

There is limited space in the warehouse restricting the number of lines stocked at any one time.

Given that it is both a large consortium and a non-profit making organisation, it can command a very competitive price.

Key issues re-food supply

Full traceability with documented audit trails
Quality Assured foods
All food GM free
Quality and consistency are maintained through out year.

Future role with Yorkshire and Humber PSFPI

Key purchaser in the Region. Would need customers to question the possibility of sourcing locally and collaborating to enable YPO to respond.

Bradford and Airedale Food Network and Charter

Background

The Food Network was set up in the year 2000 to provide an opportunity for different people working on food issues to come together to share information and resources. The overall aim is to attain a co-ordinated approach across the District, which should avoid duplication of resources and enable people to feel supported in their individual work and linked to a broader network working on similar issues. The Network also enables agencies to gain a clearer perspective where their work fits in to the overall picture. Through this, opportunities have arisen for the development of partnerships in service delivery linked to food.

One of the notable benefits so far has been the range of different organisations involved, from community groups to Health and Local Authority strategic planners and professionals working in related fields. This provides an opportunity for direct communication and planning on food issues to take place between people who may not ordinarily come into contact through their individual area of work. The Network is supported by a co-ordinator and a Chair who is elected annually by network members and is supported by the Food Network Steering Group.

The Food Network passed a ten-point Charter to which its 120 members are in broad agreement. This includes a commitment to developing sustainable food system for Bradford.

Bradford District Food Charter

This charter has been prepared by the Bradford District Healthy Food Network to encourage individuals, communities, businesses and statutory agencies to consider food issues. The food choices we make impact on the health and well-being of communities around the world and their environment. We wish to work with you to:

- Promote Bradford as a Centre of Food Excellence.
- Encourage people to enjoy food that meets their health and cultural needs and adds meaning to their lives.
- Ensure everyone has access to a reasonable choice of nutritionally adequate, appropriate and affordable food, and opportunities to grow their own.
- Support people's right to the facilities, skills and knowledge to choose, purchase, prepare and cook a variety of healthy and nutritious foods.
- Improve the safety of food in Bradford by ensuring food proprietors maintain good standards of food hygiene and safety and by informing the public on safe food practices.
- Encourage the production of a diversity of food by supporting local growers, food producers, manufacturers and retailers.
- Encourage and support food initiatives involving local communities.
- Where appropriate encourage people to buy and eat food grown and produced in the district.
- Support practices in food growing, production and distribution that do not exploit people and the environment, locally and world-wide.
- Lobby and campaign locally, nationally and internationally for healthy sustainable and ethical food policies and practices.

11) Appendix 4 – Business Risks

Business Risks Inherent with Supply Changes - Supporting Local Sourcing

PROCURER RISKS	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCE	RISK MANAGEMENT
Damage to existing supply arrangement	Change of supplier not familiar with the school meals market	Damage to reputation Poor quality produce Loss of customer confidence	Contract specification Key performance indicators
Infringement of EU Legislation	Favourable to local sourcing through the evaluation criteria	Recrimination from European Legislation	Stringent robust evaluation model
Dependence on one local supplier	Limited availability	Inability to source a supply Premium price fixing	Incremental improvement approach to increase locally sourced produce. Award contracts in lots to more than one supplier
Creating a niche market product potentially increased cost of product	Demand for locally sourced	End customers / parents and students do not value locally sourced products. Potential loss of sales to the catering provider due to menu price increases	Caterer to market this and the benefits as a unique selling point of their business
Vulnerability in terms of locally sourced produce not being a customer led initiative.	Public sector caterer supports the locally sourced procurement initiative. Private sector contract caterer is motivated by cost savings	Potentially un-competitive for the in-house school meals provider to support the initiative due to cost of locally sourced produce	Through education interventions promote the importance to all customer groupings the benefits of sustainable supply

SUPPLIER RISKS	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCE	RISK MANAGEMENT
Significant investment requirement for processing plant and transport costs	Limited processors for vegetables within the region	Potential loss of business and therefore not sustainable	Business 'partnering' for shared risk and reward. Link through Business Link and Regional Development Agency new business opportunities
Disproportionate overhead by not being able to fill the gap in 52 week supply base	38 week contracts	Not financially viable	Encourage market diversification to bridge gap
Insufficient capacity to supply the demand requirement	Increased demand for locally sourced produce	Inability for the caterer to control food costs within a tight parameter	Incremental approach Longer leads to lenders Open channels of communication Variable market price contracts
Unsuccessful in securing the business and developing the market	New market opportunity	Bad PR Risk aversion	Regional Development Agency Interventions
Short term 2 - 3 year contracts	Current approach to short term contracts stifles long term planning for business / enterprises	Suppliers not prepared to invest resources into a insecure market. Short-term decision-making	Longer term negotiated contracts with further options to extend the tenure

Compiled by Roger Sheard, Education Contract Services from project Steering Group meeting of 18th March 04.

12) Appendix 5 - Nutritional Health needs of School Children

The nutritional health of Bradford's children is key to improving the health of the population of Bradford. The key aspects are:

- **Adequate and balanced diet** (including hydration) to ensure optimal concentration, learning, development and performance.
- **Adequate and balanced diet** to ensure healthy growth concomitant with age and growth spurt.
- **Prevention and management of iron-deficiency anaemia** (again to support optimal development, concentration and learning ability). Anaemia is common in early childhood and adolescence and there is evidence that sub-clinical levels can adversely impact GCSE grades as well as future health. Developmental delay caused by early anaemia may have a permanent effect.
- **Prevention and management of obesity:** Obesity is recognised as one of the biggest future threats to the nation's public health that needs preventing in childhood.
- **Adequate calcium intake to prevent osteoporosis.** Calcium intakes in secondary school age girls are known to be low currently and put them at high risk in later life
- **Health of future generation:** Inadequate and or unbalanced nutrition in childhood and adolescence not only impacts the current and future health and development of the current generation but their children too via poorer birth outcomes.
- **Oral and dental health:** Bradford's children display a higher than average incidence of dental caries.
- **Provision of special diets as required for individual children:** Allergy, diabetes, coeliac, malabsorption).
- **Provision of breakfast in schools.** Breakfast clubs have been shown to improve attendance and help concentration during morning classes.
- **Behavioural improvements** in children have been credited to improvements in eating and drinking at school.

In addition, the diet of childhood is key to supporting long-term healthy eating habits to prevent major chronic diseases of adulthood:

Coronary Heart Disease
Hypertension
Cancer
Diabetes

Bradford carries the burden of a higher than average incidence of all of these chronic but preventable diseases.

Shortening the food chain and sourcing local food need not necessarily improve the nutritional content of the meals. Fresher vegetables and fruit should contain more water-soluble vitamins if stored correctly and used with minimal preparation. The greatest benefit of developing local suppliers will be in the education and awareness raising for staff and children. Were each school to have a kitchen and skilled staff able to prepare meals from fresh foods with a known provenance, and were this aspect of the school experience to be valued within the school, then there are great opportunities to develop children's interests and enthusiasm for food. This is the first vital step before people become food and health literate – which according to the recent Wanless Report on Public Health, is necessary for the public to become fully engaged with their personal health promotion.

13) Further reading

Bradford Food Network submission to Asset Management Project consultation, January 2004.

Bradford Food and Nutrition Policy: Bradford Nutrition and Dietetics Department, St Lukes Hospital, Bradford.

Farming and Food, a sustainable future - Report of the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food - Jan 2002

Food Procurement for Health and Sustainable Development – Sustainable Development Commission, 2001

Framework for Change –the Yorkshire and the Humber Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food - Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber, July 2003

Healthy Futures – Sustainable Development Opportunities for the NHS – Sustainable Development Commission 2003

NHS Plan and Economic Opportunities in Yorkshire and the Humber - (Report prepared for Regional Directorate of Public Health for Yorkshire and Humber)

Integrating sustainable development into public procurement of food and catering – Defra guidance and action sheet for buyers and their customers

Increasing Competition and Improving Long Term Capacity Planning in the Government Market Place - OGC Report to Chancellor of the Exchequer, Dec 2003

National Procurement Strategy for Local Government – ODPM 2003

PSFPI website – www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/procurement

Securing the future of public health. Derek Wanless: The Treasury, February 2004

Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food – Defra 2002

Smaller supplier, better value – OGC/Small Business Service, May 2002

Sustainable Food Procurement in the NHS – interim report, Sustainable Development Commission 2002

Good Food on the Public Plate – A manual for sustainability in public sector food and catering, Sustain July 2003

Public Sector Procurement of Food and Drink in the South West of England – Countryside Agency and South West of England Regional Development Agency, April 2003

Seasonal and Migrant Workers in the UK Food Industry - Ethical Trading Initiative

Tendering for Government Contracts – A Guide for Small Business, OGC/ Business Link

Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Sustainable Development Framework

14) Glossary

BMDC	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Chill-chain	Some kinds of produce must be refrigerated at the correct temperature from point of production to consumption
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECS	Education Contract Services
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
FACE	Farming and Countryside Education
FBAS	Farm Business Advice Service
FMO	Food Manufacturing Operation, ECS' central production unit
GFN	Grassroots Food Network
GOYH	Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System
IDeA	Improvement and Development Agency
Intermediary	Contractor who is not a primary producer, including agents, wholesalers, processors and distributors (many businesses encompass more than one of these categories)
NFU	National Farmers Union
NHS	National Health Service
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
OJEC	Official Journal of the European Communities
SBS	Small Business Service
SME's	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSFF	Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food
YPO	Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation

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