

Sustainability: The LCC School & Residential Care Catering strategy for sustainable procurement.....



“We can make a difference”

Lancashire County Council School & Residential Care Catering strategy and information document is specific to the procurement of Food, and is intended to complement the Authority's wider Sustainable and Environmental Procurement Policy and Strategy 2008-2011 under which all staff with procurement responsibility are required to support and implement sustainable procurement practices.

Procurement decisions have significant socio-economic and environmental implications, both locally and globally, now and for future generations. As part of a Local Authority, Lancashire County Council School & Residential Care Catering has a natural desire and duty to support the local economy, our community and the environment around us.

We recognise the value and importance of ethical trading, sourcing British and local eco-friendly produce, and we are fully committed to harnessing our collective buying power to instigate positive change, and influence others to do the same.

We will balance the desire to pursue sourcing initiatives with the importance of not compromising the **safety** and **quality** of the products and services we need, and of course **not breaching procurement legislation**.

Lancashire County Council School & Residential Care Catering has employed an incremental approach to influencing and reducing the use of single use plastics over the past decade and continue to strategise future reductions.

Examples of recent sustainable procurement achievements include:

- 65.73% of all catering disposables used by Schools Catering are already recyclable or compostable
- Replacement of the majority of black (non-recyclable) plastic trays, used for packaging fresh meat, which have been replaced with clear recyclable alternatives. This will see the removal of 3-4,000 non-recyclable trays per week



- Unilateral agreement (from all contracted fresh food suppliers) to adopt a policy of only supplying recyclable or compostable packaging which can be guaranteed recyclable/compostable by LCC
- All fresh fruit and vegetable and bread deliveries are made in reusable trays which are returned to suppliers for reuse. The same trays are used by our suppliers produce suppliers (delivery/backhaul) which reduces unnecessary packing in the supply chain
- Our fresh fruit and vegetable supplier has successfully tendered to become the authorities food distribution hub – removing approx. 3,000 delivery vehicles a week from Lancashire's roads, in time, and contributing to improved controls around the types packaging used during transportation
- Specification of a range of drinks which are sold in bottles which contain 51% recycled plastic and which are 100% recyclable themselves

Influences

There are a range of factors which influence the use of single or multi use, including:

- ... Personal choice – whether an individual chooses to retain and re-use or dispose
- ... Time – is there sufficient time for slower and more labour intense alternatives
- ... Waste management – does this offer practical solutions to assist with separation and onward recycling options
- ... Risk – would recycling introduce unnecessary risk, either financially or in terms of health, safety and hygiene
- ... Cost – is there sufficient appetite to invest in infrastructure and higher priced alternatives
- ... Revenue – is there sufficient desire to see income reduce in order to ensure the removal of plastics

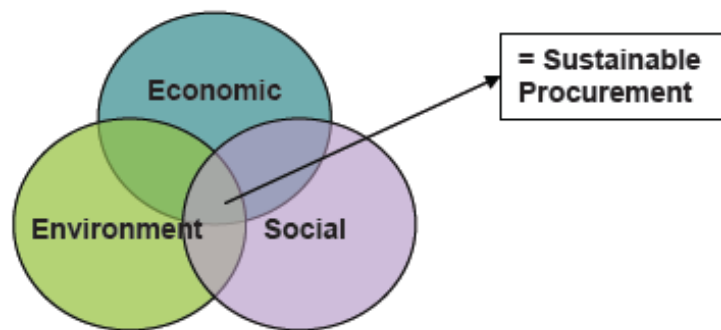
The food service sector, whether educational or retail, cannot define alternative provisions to plastics without the support of...

- ... Government and wider policy makers, who establish Food Packaging and Waste Regulations and who hold the power to set national waste and recycling strategies which could be unilaterally adopted by authorities
- ... Food packaging manufacturers, who, without changes in Regulations, are generally unwilling to invest in wholesale alternatives which may not meet future changes in Regulations
- ... Food suppliers, who are required to meet stringent food hygiene requirements whilst protecting the quality and integrity of the products they supply
- ... Food retailers, who hold far wider influence over the usage and sale of single use plastics

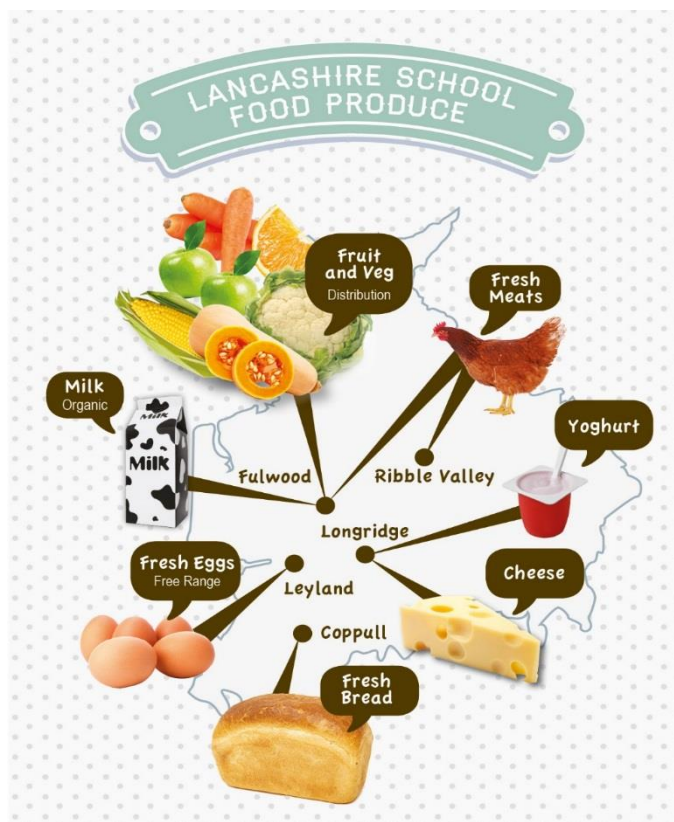


Sustainable food procurement is therefore about taking **environmental, social and economic factors** into account when making purchasing decisions. Examples include:

- Food miles/logistics.
- Material use and recycling.
- Ethical or fair trading including animal welfare.
- Encouraging local businesses to develop and compete.
- Efficient manufacturing and production techniques.
- A supplier's ability to address related consequences throughout the supply chain.



What does this look like for LCC Schools & Residential Care Catering?



Sustainable procurement is an evolutionary process which requires continuous consideration across a range of influencing factors. Placing too much emphasis on one of the three main factors can destabilise the paradigm and limit the benefit and influence of the other factors.

Tackling the use of single use plastic should follow the same sustainable procurement principles. It would be easy to focus solely upon the environmental impact but this would have a profound effect upon the social and economic factors.

Employing a strategic approach can help to remove single use plastic during every point of the food journey, not only at the point of sale.



What does LCC School & Residential Care Catering aim to achieve by implementing its Sustainable Food Procurement Strategy?

Economic Aims

- Secure value for money.
- Support the British and local economy (increase supplies from small and local producers/suppliers).
- Encourage suppliers to develop or enhance sustainable supply chains.
- Reduce waste and energy use.
- Generate savings from waste minimisation for reinvestment in service improvements and maintain stable service pricing in a changeable marketplace.

Environmental Aims

- Embrace cleaner technologies and processes.
- Reduce adverse environmental impacts of production and supply.
- Minimise food miles.
- Reduce food and packaging waste.

Social Aims

- Raise awareness of the benefits of healthy food, and the value of sustainably procured food.
- Increase access to and consumption of healthy food in school meals.
- Raise production and process standards.
- Improve animal welfare.
- Reduce inequalities by promoting ethical or fair trade.

Health Aims

- Maintain and improve food safety and quality.
- Reduce use of additives (artificial flavourings and preservatives etc.)
- Reduce levels of saturated fat, salt and sugar etc.
- Positively influence the diet of children and young people.

Whilst Single Use Plastic consumption is at the forefront of public opinion it must be considered in the wider context of **sustainable procurement** and the **benefits** and **influences** that sustainable procurement offer. Removing or limiting the amount of point of sale single use plastic within the educational food sector may bring marginal benefit however, it will not tackle the wider difficulties associated with the safe packaging, transport and storage of foods, the reduction in food miles, food cost increases or the influence of food choices on the children and young people of Lancashire.

