



## Healthy and Sustainable Food Procurement

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## Why is supporting local food producers important?

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Each purchasing decision made by public sector organisations has a significant impact on the local economy, irrespective of how small or insignificant those individual purchases may appear. When decisions are made to support local businesses and producers, it creates a ripple effect of economic benefits. Each purchase made from a local business contributes directly to the revenue and growth of that business, allowing them to sustain and expand their operations. This, in turn, leads to the creation of more local jobs and opportunities for the community.

Furthermore, the money spent locally tends to circulate within the region, as local businesses often reinvest their earnings back into the community. They may purchase goods and services from other local suppliers, support local initiatives and charities, while of course also paying their fair share of taxes and rates that fund local infrastructure and services. This foundational circulation of money stimulates local economic activity, generating additional income and creating a multiplier effect that amplifies impact.

Each small purchasing decision can play a role in shaping the local business landscape. By signalling demand by consistently choosing local products and services, it encourages the growth and diversification of local businesses. This can foster entrepreneurship, innovation and competition, ultimately enhancing the overall vibrancy and resilience of the local economy.

Conversely, taking decisions that neglect to support local business through purchasing decisions can have adverse effects. It may result in the closure or downsizing of local enterprises, leading to job losses and economic decline. This can negatively impact the vitality and character of a community, as well as the availability of diverse and unique products and services.

In terms of supporting food and drink producers specifically, procurement can be leveraged as a powerful tool to strengthen local economies, promote sustainability while also ensuring access to fresh, high-quality products:

- 1. Economic Development:** Supporting local producers stimulates the local economy by creating jobs, generating income, and fostering entrepreneurship within the community. When local businesses thrive, they can contribute to the overall economic growth and vitality of the region.
- 2. Sustainable Agriculture:** Local food procurement can encourage sustainable agricultural practices. Local producers often prioritise environmentally friendly methods such as organic farming, reducing the use of pesticides, and practising crop rotation. By supporting these producers, consumers can contribute to the preservation of local ecosystems, biodiversity, and soil health.
- 3. Freshness and Quality:** Buying from local producers can enable access to fresh, high-quality products. Locally sourced food and drink generally have shorter supply chains, meaning that the time between harvest or production and consumption is minimised. This reduces the need for excessive processing, refrigeration, and transportation, which can compromise the freshness and nutritional value of some products.
- 4. Food Security:** Supporting local producers enhances food security within a region. By diversifying the sources of food and drink, communities become less reliant on distant and potentially vulnerable supply chains. In times of crisis or disruptions, such as the macroeconomic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, local food systems are more resilient and can provide a reliable source of sustenance.

5. **Preserving Cultural Heritage:** Local food and drink often reflect the culinary traditions and cultural heritage of a region, including language. By supporting local producers, consumers contribute to the preservation and celebration of local foodways, traditional recipes, and unique flavours. This fosters a sense of identity and pride within the community.
6. **Reduced Carbon Footprint:** Buying locally can reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and distribution, particularly by comparison to products sourced outside the UK. Procuring locally Additional reductions in carbon footprints can also be realised by ensuring support of nature friendly farming, as well as minimising use of commodities that are linked to deforestation such as soy.
7. **Community Cohesion:** Supporting local producers encourages community engagement and fosters a sense of connection between producers and consumers. It provides an opportunity for people to learn about where their food comes from, interact with producers directly, and participate in farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, and other local food initiatives. This engagement strengthens social bonds, promotes healthier lifestyles, and builds a sense of community resilience, many aspects of which are interlinked with key policies that the Welsh Public Sector are required to consider in the course of their activities, such as the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## How do we define what is considered local procurement?

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The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 allow for local procurement and provide provisions to support and promote local businesses and suppliers through specific provisions to encourage local participation in procurement processes. Primarily, public sector organisations have the flexibility to design their procurement processes and criteria to include considerations for local businesses. This can be done through various means, such as dividing contracts into lots to facilitate participation from smaller, local suppliers, or setting specific requirements that give an advantage to local suppliers, such as subcontracting or community benefit clauses.

However, it's important to note that favouring a supplier solely because they are local is unlikely to be compliant with the principles of fairness, competition, and non-discrimination that underpin public procurement.

While you can take locality into account as a factor in your procurement decisions, it should be done within the framework of the regulations and in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. Key points to consider include:

1. **Value for Money:** The primary objective of public procurement is to achieve value for money. When evaluating suppliers, you should consider their overall quality, capability, pricing, and ability to meet the requirements of the procurement. Local suppliers should not receive preferential treatment solely based on their location if they do not meet the necessary criteria.
2. **Non-Discrimination:** Procurement regulations emphasise the principle of non-discrimination. Any preferences or criteria applied to local suppliers should be clearly defined and justified, with a legitimate aim related to the specific procurement. It should not unfairly exclude or discriminate against suppliers from other locations.
3. **Competition:** It's important to maintain competition in the procurement process. While you can encourage local businesses to participate, it should be done in a way that ensures fair and open competition. This can be achieved by dividing contracts into lots, providing clear and transparent evaluation criteria, and ensuring equal opportunities for all suppliers.
4. **Transparency:** The procurement process should be transparent and documented to demonstrate fairness and compliance. Clearly communicate the evaluation criteria, including any considerations for local suppliers, and provide equal access to information and opportunities to all interested suppliers.
5. **Social Value:** Consider incorporating social value considerations into the procurement process, specifically by utilising the Welsh Governments' Community Benefits Policy<sup>1</sup>. This can involve assessing the wider benefits that local suppliers may bring, such as job creation, supporting local economies, or environmental sustainability. However, these factors should be balanced with the requirement to achieve value for money, and the requirements must be proportionate to the nature and specification of goods and services being procured.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/procurement-social-value-community-benefits>

## Local doesn't always mean sustainable or healthy

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Healthy food procurement and sustainable food procurement are related concepts, but they have distinct focuses.

- **Local Procurement** refers to the practice of purchasing goods and services from suppliers/producers within a specific geographical area.
- **Healthy Procurement** focuses on acquiring products and services that promote health and well-being.
- **Sustainable Procurement** involves obtaining goods and services in a way that considers environmental, social and economic factors, aiming to minimise negative impacts on the planet and society, while promoting long-term sustainability.

Healthy food procurement refers to the practice of prioritising and sourcing food items that promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities. It involves selecting and procuring foods that are nutritious, balanced, and aligned with dietary guidelines<sup>2</sup>. The emphasis is on providing wholesome options that contribute to a healthy diet and support overall health outcomes. This can include considerations such as reducing added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats, while increasing the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products.

On the other hand, sustainable food procurement goes takes into account environmental, social, and economic factors. Sustainable food procurement considers the entire lifecycle of food production, distribution, and consumption, aiming to minimise negative impacts on the environment, support local economies, and promote social equity. It involves sourcing food items produced using environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, reducing carbon footprint and benefiting nature, minimising food waste, supporting fair trade, and considering factors like animal welfare and worker rights.

While healthy food procurement primarily focuses on the nutritional value and health outcomes of the food being procured, sustainable food procurement takes an alternative perspective by incorporating environmental and social considerations into the decision-making process.

In practice, healthy and sustainable food procurement can overlap, with efforts made to prioritise food options that are both nutritious and produced sustainably. By considering both aspects, organisations and institutions can contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities while also promoting environmentally and socially responsible food systems.

While local food is often associated with sustainability and health, it is important to recognize that being local does not guarantee these attributes. The following summarises why local food doesn't always mean sustainable and healthy:

### 1. Environmental Impact:

- Local production does not necessarily imply environmentally friendly practices. While local food may reduce transportation distances, other aspects of production, such as intensive farming techniques or excessive use of pesticides, can still have negative environmental consequences.
- Sustainable farming practices, such as organic or regenerative agriculture, can be adopted both locally and non-locally. The focus should be on promoting sustainable farming methods rather than relying solely on the geographical proximity of the food source.
- Locally produced food may also use a high amount of high-carbon imported inputs such as animal feed or fertiliser
- Local food can also be high carbon due to the type of food (e.g. legumes and pulses are often linked to lower carbon impacts).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/eatwell-guide>

## **2. Seasonality and Variety:**

- Local food availability can be limited by seasonality. In regions with shorter growing seasons, local produce may be scarce during certain times of the year, leading to a less diverse and balanced diet.
- Non-local food sources can provide a wider variety of fruits, vegetables, and other food products year-round, allowing for a more diverse and nutrient-rich diet.

## **3. Food Safety and Quality:**

- Local food does not automatically guarantee better food safety or higher quality. Food safety practices can vary among producers, regardless of their proximity. Local producers may still face challenges in meeting food safety standards and maintaining consistent quality.
- Non-local food sources often undergo rigorous quality control processes and may be subject to stricter regulations, ensuring that the products meet specific safety and quality standards.

## **4. Affordability and Accessibility:**

- Local food can sometimes be more expensive than non-local alternatives due to factors such as higher production costs, limited economies of scale, and smaller production volumes. This can make local food less affordable and accessible, particularly for lower-income populations.
- Non-local food sources, especially when produced in large quantities, may be more affordable and readily available, providing a wider range of options for consumers with varying budgets and dietary needs.

## **5. Consideration of Health and Nutrition:**

- While local food may offer benefits such as freshness and shorter time between harvest and consumption, it does not inherently guarantee superior nutritional value or health benefits compared to non-local alternatives.
- The nutritional content of food is influenced by various factors, including soil quality, farming practices, and processing, which can vary regardless of the food's origin. It is prudent to highlight that local food, even that which is sourced sustainably, can still be unhealthy food with fat, sugar and salt content.

It is important to note that promoting sustainability and health in the food system requires a holistic approach that goes beyond the sole consideration of locality. Factors such as farming practices, food processing, packaging, and transportation methods should all be considered when evaluating the sustainability and health aspects of food, regardless of its origin.

## **Should Welsh suppliers be prioritised over other 'local' suppliers.**

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All procurement decisions should primarily be driven by organisational need, whilst also ensuring that obtaining value for money is realised whilst adhering to key principles of maintaining open competition and operating in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner. The goal is to strike a balance between supporting the local economy and ensuring effective and efficient procurement practices.

Arguably, public sector organisations, particularly those based on or near to the border with England, may have instances where there are options to transact with suppliers that are not based in Wales. While this is perfectly compliant with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations (2015), there are broader questions that Welsh Public Sector organisations should ask of themselves in regards to the broader implications of their procurement decisions. In any case, the supplier that is appointed should be identified in an objective manner and should be the best at meeting the stated organisational needs. Welsh Public Sector organisations however may want to consider supporting local suppliers that are based in Wales over those based in England, for reasons including:

1. **Economic Development:** Supporting local Welsh suppliers can contribute to the economic development of Wales by stimulating local businesses, creating jobs, and retaining wealth within the region. It helps to build a resilient local economy and supports the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Wales.
2. **Regional Identity and Culture:** Promoting and supporting Welsh suppliers helps preserve and showcase the unique regional identity and cultural heritage of Wales. It allows public sector authorities to promote local products, traditions, and expertise, contributing to a sense of pride and connection to the local community.
3. **Environmental Considerations:** Supporting local suppliers can reduce the environmental impact associated with transportation and logistics. By sourcing products locally, Welsh public sector authorities can contribute to lower carbon emissions, reduce reliance on long-distance supply chains, and support sustainable practices within their procurement processes.
4. **Community Well-being:** Supporting Welsh suppliers contributes to the overall well-being of local communities. It helps maintain local jobs, boosts income levels, and creates opportunities for social mobility. Additionally, the proximity between suppliers and buyers allows for stronger relationships, collaboration, and mutual support.
5. **Supply Chain Resilience:** Prioritising local suppliers can enhance supply chain resilience by reducing dependencies on external sources and mitigating risks associated with disruptions in global supply chains. Local suppliers may offer more flexibility, adaptability, and faster response times to meet the specific needs and demands of public sector authorities.
6. **Social Value and Social Responsibility:** Supporting local suppliers aligns with the principles of social value and social responsibility. It demonstrates a commitment to investing public resources in a way that delivers broader benefits to local communities, including job creation, skills development, and social inclusion.
7. **Compliance with Procurement Regulations:** Public sector authorities have a responsibility to comply with procurement regulations that promote fair competition and transparency. By considering local suppliers, public sector authorities can demonstrate their commitment to promoting fair competition and providing opportunities for local businesses to compete for public contracts.



## Overview of the challenges and opportunities faced by local food producers

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Local producers wanting to supply food to the Welsh public sector face a combination of challenges and opportunities. Here's an overview of these factors:

### Challenges:

1. **Scale and Capacity:** Small local producers often face limitations in terms of production capacity, processing facilities, and distribution capabilities. Meeting the volume and consistency requirements of the public sector can be challenging for smaller operations.
2. **Cost Competitiveness:** Local producers may struggle to compete on price with larger-scale suppliers who benefit from economies of scale and lower production costs. Public sector organisations often have budget constraints and may prioritise cost-effective options, which can put local producers at a disadvantage.
3. **Compliance with Regulations:** Local producers must comply with various regulations and standards related to food safety, quality assurance, labelling, and traceability. Meeting these requirements can be complex and costly for smaller producers who may have limited resources or expertise.
4. **Procurement Processes:** Public sector procurement processes can be complex and bureaucratic, involving formal tendering, adherence to procurement regulations, and rigorous evaluation criteria. Navigating these processes can be challenging for small producers who may lack experience or dedicated staff for tendering.
5. **Logistics and Distribution:** Delivering products to various public sector facilities or distribution points can pose logistical challenges for local producers. Ensuring efficient and timely delivery, especially for perishable goods, may require additional investments in transportation and storage infrastructure.

### Opportunities:

1. **Demand for Local and Sustainable Food:** There is an increasing demand for locally sourced, sustainable, and high-quality food within the public sector. This presents an opportunity for local producers who can demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practices, traceability, and supporting the local economy.
2. **Supporting Local Economy:** Public sector organisations, such as schools, hospitals, and local authorities, have a growing interest in supporting local businesses and promoting community resilience. Local producers can leverage this interest to highlight the economic and social benefits of sourcing from nearby suppliers.
3. **Value-Added Products and Differentiation:** Local producers often have the advantage of offering unique and value-added products that showcase local flavours, traditions, and culinary heritage. Public sector organisations may prioritise these distinctive products to provide a diverse and culturally rich food experience to their constituents.
4. **Collaboration and Networking:** Local producers can collaborate with each other to form supply chains, consortiums, or networks that collectively meet the needs of the public sector. Such collaborations can enable shared resources, knowledge exchange, and the ability to fulfil larger contracts.
5. **Branding and Promotion:** Public sector contracts can provide local producers with an opportunity to gain exposure, build their brand, and enhance their market presence. Supplying to the public sector

can be leveraged as a marketing tool to showcase products and generate additional business opportunities.

To capitalise on the opportunities, local producers must address the challenges through strategies such as collaboration, investment in production and distribution infrastructure, participation in training and capacity-building programs, and building strong relationships with public sector buyers. Additionally, engaging with industry associations, business support organisations, and local networks can help local producers navigate the complexities of supplying to the Welsh public sector.

## Overview of the challenges faced by buyers looking to source from local food producers

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While most buyers recognise the importance of supporting local SMEs and note an eagerness to do so, public sector organisations often face a number of practical challenges when trying to buy local food. Some of the common challenges include:

1. **Supply Chain Capacity:** Local food producers may have limited capacity to meet the demand of large public sector organisations. They may face constraints in terms of production volume, processing capabilities, or distribution infrastructure, making it challenging to scale up to meet the procurement needs.
2. **Seasonality and Product Availability:** Local food availability might vary based on seasonality and weather conditions. Public sector organisations may face challenges in sourcing a consistent supply of local food throughout the year, particularly for certain products that have limited growing seasons or are highly perishable.
3. **Cost and Pricing:** Local food products may sometimes be priced higher than non-local alternatives due to factors such as smaller-scale production, higher production costs, and limited economies of scale. Public sector organisations may face budget constraints or cost considerations when trying to incorporate local food into their procurement strategies. This is increasingly challenging for the supply market due to rising energy costs impacting on the ability of small producers being able to remain financially competitive.
4. **Compliance with Procurement Regulations:** Public sector organisations are bound by procurement regulations and guidelines that aim to ensure fairness, transparency, and competition. These regulations may present challenges when trying to prioritise local suppliers or implement specific criteria that favour local producers, as they must adhere to the principles of fair competition and value for money.
5. **Quality Assurance and Food Safety:** Public sector organisations have a responsibility to ensure the safety and quality of the food they procure. They may face challenges in verifying and ensuring that local producers meet the necessary food safety and quality standards, especially if they are smaller-scale or less familiar with regulatory requirements.
6. **Logistics and Delivery:** Coordinating logistics and delivery of local food products can be complex, particularly when dealing with multiple small-scale producers. Public sector organisations may face challenges in managing the logistics, storage, and timely delivery of local food products to their various facilities or distribution points.
7. **Administrative Burden:** The administrative burden associated with identifying, vetting, and engaging with multiple local food suppliers can be time-consuming and resource-intensive for public sector organisations. It may require additional staff, systems, and processes to effectively manage local food procurement.

## Case Study: The Big Fresh Catering Company

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A feasibility study undertaken by The Big Fresh Catering Company focused on 'how local' do we define local. Ty Tanglwyst Dairy is cited as a prime example of how this can be done effectively. Business owner, Rhys Lougher, explains that since investing in bottling equipment on the farm, they have zero food miles between primary production and process of their dairy products. Their fleet of 10 refrigerated vans make local deliveries to a range of local customers including schools and nurseries, with the produce being delivered no further than 30 minutes' drive from the farm.

The results being low food miles and a low carbon footprint, complementing the broader sustainable farming systems already in place on the farm.



*Figure 1: Rhys Lougher, Ty Tanglwyst Dairy*

As part of their community benefits, Ty Tanglwyst Dairy offer chances to schools and nursery settings to undertake visits to the farm. This is an opportunity to meet the cows that produce the milk, as part of a fun filled and information packed 2-hour visit to teach about sustainable milk production on a working dairy farm.

Symon Dovey of The Big Fresh Catering Company highlights the importance of what they learned through the feasibility study, that is to look around at what's available to you in the local area.



## Case Study: Green Shoots Café

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In response to feedback from students about wanting more sustainable catering options, Cardiff University took the opportunity to rebuild and redesign a café location as they returned to site following the Covid-19 pandemic. Healthy and sustainable procurement is at the heart of their new Green Shoots Café.

Food is now freshly made by the kitchen team on site, ensuring fresh, local and seasonal menus. Angeline Sharp, the kitchen manager explains how previously it was common for them to have a lot of stock left over. As part of the new café, they also implemented a e-procurement system with all suppliers in one place, helping the kitchen team to reduce food waste. This is achieved through the system giving much clearer visibility of what is available and what is not in terms of stock. They are also able to place all their ordering through the system, including creating all their recipes, ensuring everything is costed and planned in accordance to what is actually needed whilst also minimising waste in the process.



*Figure 2: Angeline Sharp, Kitchen Manager*

Annabel Hurst, Head of Catering, Cardiff University explains that there have still been challenges in procuring from small, independent food and drink supplies. The main obstacle being accreditations, which is a big expense to take on, particularly for small independent producers. The University is currently looking at ways of trying to simplify the process and work with more independent growers and farmers.

Annabel summarises that the best things they did was paused and reflected and what they were already doing. Catering is such a fast-paced environment, it's easy not to see the good things you are already doing. This process helped them focus on what they wanted to achieve, breaking down the challenges into manageable steps.

## Case Study: Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

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The steering group at Cardiff & Vale University Health Board have been working together to ensure and more sustainable retail food offering. The target is to implement a set of healthy eating standards across the retail and restaurant operations. The ultimate aim is to ensure that at least 75% of the food offer is healthy, doing so using the food standard agency's traffic light labelling,

The Procurement Team explains that their role has included working on understanding what 'value' means to the organisation, while also looking on how to find the best fit financially. He explains that from an income generating perspective, it's above making more money. On the other hand on the quality and public health side, it is more weighted to ensuring a healthy food offering. The role of procurement is to mediate and define that in the final requirement. Understanding best practice, understanding what the market offering is, and understanding what the requirements are from a health board perspective. Crucially, its all about communicating them well, and influencing what value means to those sets of stakeholders.



Among the key lessons learnt by the Health Board are about the scale of the challenge. In hindsight, they realised they were looking to make quite big changes to food service, and that it takes a lot longer time than initially thought. It's not just what people see on the ground, but its about shifting attitudes and ensuring acceptance of broader stakeholders in understanding why we are making the changes in first place.

## Current arrangements in place across public sector bodies

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There are a number of frameworks that are relevant to food and drink producers wishing to target public sector opportunities in the Cardiff and Vale area.

### Welsh Public Sector Collaborative Food Group - Food Framework Agreement

This is a pan-Wales framework that is principally managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council on behalf of a number of authorities across Wales. Anticipated expenditure through the framework is approximately £228,000,000 (between 01/12/2023 and 30/11/2026)

The requirement is for the direct delivery of various food goods to various establishments throughout the public sector bodies participating in the tender exercise with the ultimate aim being to establish a new all-encompassing food framework agreement for Wales. There are a number of lots in operation that span the following key categories:

- 1) Ambient, Chilled and Frozen Foods
- 2) Fruit and Vegetables (Fresh and Pre-prepared)
- 3) Meat – (Fresh and Cooked)
- 4) Milk and Dairy Goods (including Dairy Free Alternatives)
- 5) Bread, Cakes and Morning Goods
- 6) Soft Drinks, Confectionery and Snacks

Public sector organisations that are operational in Cardiff and the Vale that have committed to procure through this framework include:

- Cardiff Council
- Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Welsh Government
- Linc-Cymru Housing Association Ltd
- NHS Wales LHBs & Trusts

Additional information regarding the framework will be available via sell2wales once the contract award notice has been published.

While the framework is locked in place until as far as 30/11/26, there are still opportunities for smaller food and drink producers to participate by supplying directly to framework participants.

For smaller food and drink producers, the most appropriate route to market is often through larger, established wholesalers. This approach offers several key advantages, particularly when dealing with the complexities of public sector tendering. Firstly, established wholesalers already have a comprehensive understanding of the intricate requirements and regulations involved in public sector tendering, which can be daunting and time-consuming for smaller producers to navigate independently. These wholesalers often have established relationships with public sector entities and a track record of successful tenders, thereby increasing the likelihood of a successful bid. Additionally, they can leverage their scale to offer more competitive pricing and efficient distribution, which is crucial in meeting the often large-scale and specific demands of public sector contracts. By partnering with such wholesalers, small producers can focus on their core competencies, such as quality product development and production, while benefiting from the wholesalers' expertise in market access and contract management. This symbiotic relationship enables small producers to penetrate markets that might otherwise be inaccessible due to the procedural, financial, and logistical barriers inherent in public sector tendering.

Any food and drink suppliers interested in competing for public sector tenders in Wales need to ensure they are registered as a supplier on Sell2Wales, and that they have selected appropriate CPV codes relevant to the products they supply. For suppliers of food and drink products targeting public sector tenders, the relevant Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes would be within the range of "**15000000 - Food, beverages,**

**tobacco and related products."** These codes are used to categorise products and services in public procurement, simplifying the process for both suppliers and contracting authorities. It's essential for suppliers to accurately identify and use these codes in their tender notification portals to align with the specific requirements of public sector buyers. These codes encompass a wide range of food and beverage categories, each pertaining to different types of products such as dairy, meats, fruits, vegetables, beverages, and more. Each category has its own set of codes to ensure precise classification in public sector procurement. Suppliers should select the codes that most accurately represent their products to align with relevant tender opportunities. For more detailed information and a comprehensive list of CPV codes, you can refer to the CPV Codes Search Tool within Sell2Wales.

Outlined below are examples of additional CPV codes that may be relevant to food and drink producers:

- 03140000-4: Animal products, meat, and meat products
- 03200000-3: Crops, products of market gardening, and horticulture
- 03220000-9: Vegetables, fruits, and nuts
- 03310000-3: Fish, crustaceans, and aquatic products
- 15000000-8: Food, beverages, tobacco, and related products
- 15100000-9: Animal products, meat, and meat products
- 15200000-0: Prepared and preserved fish
- 15300000-1: Fruit, vegetables, and related products
- 15500000-3: Dairy products
- 15800000-6: Miscellaneous food products
- 15810000-9: Bakery and farinaceous products
- 15840000-8: Vegetable, fruit, and nut food products
- 15850000-1: Confectionery products
- 15860000-4: Sugar and related products
- 15870000-7: Cocoa; chocolate and sugar confectionery
- 15880000-0: Macaroni, noodles, couscous, and other farinaceous products
- 15890000-3: Special nutritional purpose foods and baby food

### **Additional Opportunities arising from the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023**

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 <sup>3</sup> is a legislative act in Wales that focuses on improving public service delivery and well-being. It establishes a framework for enhancing sustainable development through social partnership working, promoting fair work, and implementing socially responsible public procurement practices. This act places new social partnership duties as part of the well-being duty, amending the "A Prosperous Wales" well-being goal to include securing fair work as part of its description.

The Act also includes the creation of a statutory Social Partnership Council for Wales, which is tasked with providing information and advice on socially responsible public procurement. This council plays a crucial role in guiding and advising on the functions conferred on contracting authorities and the Welsh Ministers under the socially responsible public procurement part of the Act. The Act aims to ensure that public procurement in Wales is carried out in a manner that improves economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being.

The implementation of this Act is a significant step for Wales, focusing on socially responsible outcomes in procurement processes and enhancing public services through collaborative efforts among different sectors.

The act presents several opportunities for local food and drink producers in Wales. This Act introduces Wales's first piece of primary legislation on procurement, requiring public bodies to implement socially responsible procurement practices. This approach emphasises putting environmental, social, economic, and

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/social-partnership-and-public-procurement-wales-act>



cultural well-being at the forefront of public procurement decisions, involving an annual procurement spend of approximately £8 billion.

For local food and drink producers, this shift towards socially responsible procurement could mean greater opportunities to participate in public sector contracts. The focus on environmental and social well-being aligns well with the practices of many local producers, especially those engaged in sustainable, organic, or community-focused production. This change in procurement policy could open doors for smaller, local businesses that previously might have found it challenging to compete with larger suppliers.

The Act's emphasis on economic and cultural well-being also suggests a preference for supporting local economies and preserving cultural practices, which could benefit producers who are integral to the local food culture in Wales. By placing a higher value on these factors in procurement decisions, the Welsh government is creating an environment where local food and drink producers can potentially find more opportunities to supply their products to public sector organisations.

The Act, therefore, represents a significant shift towards a more inclusive and sustainable approach to public procurement, which could be advantageous for local food and drink producers in Wales, provided they align their practices with the values of social, environmental, and economic well-being emphasised in the Act.

### **How can public sector buyers support local suppliers to offer more competitive pricing?**

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It is widely reported by buyers across Public Sector Organisations that small food producers are increasingly struggling to offer competitive pricing. While the commercial decisions taken by businesses must be appropriate for meeting the needs of their targeted markets, there is still a role that public sector buyers can take to help support small producers to address the challenges faced and help them improve their cost-efficiency, market competitiveness, and overall sustainability in the long term. This is particularly within the current challenging climate of increasing prices and shrinking profit margins.

Measures that can be taken include:

#### **1. Long-Term Contracts and Commitments:**

- Buyers can provide longer-term contracts or commitments to small food producers, ensuring a stable and predictable demand for their products.
- This stability allows producers to plan their production and pricing more effectively, potentially reducing costs and enhancing competitiveness.

#### **2. Collaborative Product Development:**

- Buyers can collaborate with small food producers to develop products that meet their specific requirements while also considering cost-efficiency.
- By jointly exploring opportunities for innovation, process improvement, and value engineering, buyers and producers can identify ways to reduce costs without compromising quality.

#### **3. Capacity Building and Training:**

- Buyers can support small food producers by offering capacity-building programs and training opportunities.
- These initiatives can help producers enhance their operational efficiency, adopt best practices, and improve cost management strategies, leading to more competitive pricing.

#### **4. Bulk Purchasing and Grouping Orders:**

- Buyers can aggregate their demand and encourage collaboration among small producers to enable bulk purchasing and economies of scale.
- By grouping orders, producers can benefit from cost savings in raw materials, packaging, transportation, or other shared resources, ultimately lowering their production costs.

#### **5. Providing Access to Market Intelligence:**

- Buyers can share market intelligence and insights with small food producers, enabling them to stay informed about industry trends, consumer preferences, and pricing dynamics.
- This information empowers producers to make informed decisions, adjust their offerings, and optimise their pricing strategies to remain competitive.

#### **6. Supporting Marketing and Branding:**

- Buyers can assist small food producers in enhancing their marketing and branding efforts.
- By promoting and showcasing local producers' products, buyers can help create awareness and demand, which may enable producers to command better pricing for their unique and differentiated offerings.

#### **7. Financial Assistance and Funding:**

- Buyers can facilitate access to financial assistance and funding opportunities available to small food producers.
- This may include providing information about grants, loans, or subsidies that can help producers invest in equipment upgrades, process improvements, or scale-up their operations, thereby improving their competitiveness.

#### **8. Facilitating Collaboration with Other Buyers:**

- Buyers can facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities among small food producers and other buyers, such as local restaurants, cafes, or catering services.
- By helping to establish partnerships or contracts between producers and additional buyers, the producers can broaden their customer base and potentially negotiate more favourable pricing arrangements.
- There is also a substantial role that can be played by larger food wholesalers to strengthen their own competitive market position whilst also assisting smaller local producers to form part of the larger supply chain.

## Mapping of existing resources, guidance and support pathways in place

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### Certifications

Outlined below are a number of certifications that may be suitable for food and drink producers to consider. These certifications can help in building trust with consumers, accessing new markets, and can often fetch premium prices for products. In some instances, they may also be stipulated as a requirement by commercial buyers. It's important for Welsh producers to choose certifications that align with their product type, production methods, and target markets.

- **Fairtrade:** This certification ensures that products are produced under fair labour conditions and farmers receive fair payment. It focuses on sustainable production and trade practices, especially in developing countries, ensuring that small-scale farmers and workers get a fair deal.
- **Organic:** Organic certification verifies that products are grown or produced without the use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It emphasises natural, sustainable farming practices that are better for the environment.
- **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):** This certification is for seafood products and ensures that they come from a fishery that practices sustainable fishing methods, maintaining healthy fish populations and minimising environmental impact.
- **Red Tractor:** This is a UK-based food assurance scheme that certifies food has been produced to high standards across the whole supply chain - from farm to pack. It covers aspects like animal welfare, food safety, traceability, and environmental protection.
- **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI):** This designation is for products with a quality, reputation, or other characteristics specific to a geographic region. It helps consumers identify authentic regional products and ensures that only products genuinely originating from that region can be sold as such.
- **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO):** Like PGI, this certification is for products that are produced, processed, and prepared in a specific region using recognised know-how.
- **Good Egg Award:** This award is given to companies that use or commit to using cage-free eggs or egg products. It focuses on improving the welfare of hens and encourages ethical egg production practices.
- **Free-Range:** This certification indicates that animals, particularly poultry, have been raised with access to outdoor spaces, allowing them to exhibit natural behaviours. It is often associated with higher welfare standards.
- **Welsh Organic Scheme:** Similar to the organic certification but specific to Wales, ensuring products meet the high standards of organic production within the region.
- **Leaf Marque:** This certification is given to farms that meet high environmental standards in their farming practices.
- **BRC Global Standards:** A leading safety and quality certification program, this is often required by UK retailers and global brands.

- **Soil Association Certification:** Particularly for organic products, this certification is widely recognized in the UK and assures consumers of organic authenticity and environmental stewardship.
- **Vegan Society Trademark:** For products that are free from animal ingredients and testing, this certification is increasingly relevant given the growing market for vegan products.

#### **Other relevant accreditations**

- **Living Wage Employers**

The Living Wage Foundation accredits Living Wage Employers for their commitment to paying their staff according to the cost of living.

[Accredited Living Wage Employers | Living Wage Foundation](#)



## Reports, resources and other useful contacts

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### Localising Food Sourcing in Welsh Hospitals

A report completed on behalf of the National Collaborative Commissioning Unit on Localising NHS Hospital Food Sourcing, in partnership with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB).

This project, a practical outworking from Wales Transition Lab, was tasked to undertake a feasibility study to establish a model of food supply to secure local, healthy and sustainable food for future generations, improving the wellbeing of patients and food communities, and supporting local food suppliers/producers.

[Localising Food Sourcing in Welsh Hospitals — North Star Transition](#)

### Deforestation Free procurement toolkit from Size of Wales

Deforestation Free Procurement (DFP) Toolkit has been designed by Size of Wales to help Welsh public bodies ensure that the products and commodities they buy, do not drive tropical deforestation and habitat destruction overseas.

[https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DFN\\_Toolkit- Final 2021\\_Eng-1.pdf](https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DFN_Toolkit- Final 2021_Eng-1.pdf)

### Buying Food Fit for The Future

An online food procurement resource published by Welsh Government: 'Buying Food Fit for the Future' which brings together a number of pieces of work recently completed on food procurement:

1. 'Values for Money: public sector food procurement in Wales' produced by Professor Kevin Morgan of Cardiff University, provides an expert perspective on public sector food supply in Wales and procurement arrangements across the sectors. Following extensive interviews with food buyers, caterers, food wholesalers and producers, the report identifies the opportunities and challenges associated with buying local food and stakeholder perceptions. The recommendations contained in the report address some key issues being faced currently in the food system which, if collectively addressed, will lead to positive outcomes.
2. 'Harnessing the Purchasing Power of the Public Plate: a Legal Guide to Embedding Sustainability into Food Procurement for a Healthier, Wealthier Wales' produced by Blake Morgan Solicitors, provides some useful myth-busting and clarity to encourage more innovative and creative approaches in food procurement. This can help increase the supply of local, sustainable food within the confines of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and help achieve the Wellbeing of Future Generations goals.
3. 'Welsh Public Sector Food Procurement – Update on Spending and Welsh Purchasing' undertaken by Brookdale Consultancy, has enabled us to build a picture of food procurement spend across Wales, the amount of Welsh food being supplied and attitudes/barriers to buying Welsh produce. This provides a rich baseline of data that will strengthen our FE food work and from which we can measure improvement.

[Buying Food Fit for the Future](#)

## **Business Wales Tendering and Supply Chain Support**

If your business is a small or medium-sized enterprise SME or a not for profit (employing up to 250), and wants to improve its chances of winning public and private sector contracts, Business Wales - Tendering may be able to help. Support provision includes workshops to help understand what buyer's look for in a supplier and to develop your skills and knowledge to successfully tender for public or private sector contracts.

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/topics-and-guidance/tendering-and-supply-chain>

## **Cywain**

Cywain is a Welsh Government funded programme delivered by Menter a Busnes that works with food and drink businesses that are focused on growth. This includes new businesses that need help and support in starting up, and established businesses that want to grow. Cywain can support your business in many ways, including by showing you how to make your business more competitive; providing opportunities to collaborate with others in the supply chain; and help you to gain new skills. There are Regional Development Managers located across Wales who provide direct support and consultation, and organise group activities including workshops, networking and study tours.

<https://menterabusnes.cymru/cywain/>

## **Food & Drink Skills Wales**

Food & Drink Skills Wales works with the food and drink industry to develop a skilled and capable workforce to increase productivity and efficiency, and to fuel innovation and sustainable growth in Wales.

Support is focused on the Welsh food and drink processing and manufacturing industry to ensure employees have the right skills and training for their business and the wider industry.

We encourage employees to share knowledge and experiences with fellow peers whilst also increasing confidence and flexibility in the workplace in order to make employees feel valued. The aim is to prepare employees across Wales to adapt to changes and opportunities in food manufacturing including technical, business and environmental challenges. A skilled workforce will be able to progress careers in the food industry in all parts of Wales.

Training provision is categorised into six pillars aligned with the main sectors within the industry – allowing streamlined access to up-skilling opportunities:

- Leadership and Management
- Marketing and Sales
- Production and Manufacturing
- Sustainability and Decarbonisation
- Compliance and Statutory for Growth (Industry Skills / Workforce Skills / Beyond Basics)
- Bespoke / Business Led

<https://menterabusnes.cymru/food-and-drink-skills-wales/>

## **Best practices for collaboration between public sector organisations and local food producers**

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Collaboration between public sector bodies and local food and drink producers can be strengthened by adopting the following best practices:

1. **Engage in Regular Communication:** Establish open lines of communication between public sector bodies and local producers. Maintain regular contact to exchange information, address concerns, and foster a spirit of collaboration.
2. **Understand Producer Needs:** Take the time to understand the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by local food and drink producers. This knowledge will enable public sector bodies to tailor their support and initiatives effectively.
3. **Involve Producers in Decision-Making:** Include local producers in decision-making processes that affect them. Seek their input and involvement in policy development, program design, and procurement processes to ensure their perspectives are considered.
4. **Foster Trust and Transparency:** Build trust and transparency by being open, honest, and accountable in all interactions. Clearly communicate objectives, expectations, and outcomes, and ensure fairness and equity in dealings with producers.
5. **Provide Timely and Relevant Information:** Share relevant information, updates, and resources with local producers. This can include market trends, regulatory changes, funding opportunities, training programs, and best practices. Timely and accessible information empowers producers to make informed decisions.
6. **Facilitate Access to Markets:** Help local producers access markets by providing information about procurement processes, requirements, and opportunities within the public sector. Streamline procedures and provide guidance to make it easier for producers to navigate the system.
7. **Support Training and Capacity Building:** Offer training programs, workshops, and mentoring to enhance the skills, knowledge, and capacity of local food and drink producers. This support can cover areas such as business planning, marketing, food safety, sustainability practices, and product development.
8. **Foster Collaboration among Producers:** Encourage collaboration and networking among local producers themselves. Facilitate platforms, events, or initiatives that enable producers to share experiences, learn from each other, and collaborate on joint projects or marketing activities.
9. **Recognize and Showcase Local Producers:** Highlight the achievements and contributions of local food and drink producers. Publicly acknowledge their efforts, feature their products in public sector institutions, and leverage marketing and promotional opportunities to showcase their offerings.
10. **Evaluate and Adapt Initiatives:** Regularly evaluate the impact and effectiveness of collaboration initiatives between public sector bodies and local producers. Seek feedback from producers and stakeholders, and use the insights gained to refine and adapt support programs and strategies.

## Recommendations for how public sector bodies can work together to support local producers

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To enhance collaboration among Welsh public sector bodies in supporting small local food producers, consider the following recommendations:

1. **Sharing Resources & Insight:** Bring together buyers from different organisations to share information, resources, and best practices related to supporting small local food producers with a view of facilitating communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among the various bodies involved.
2. **Coordinate Procurement Practices:** Coordinate procurement practices across Welsh public sector bodies to ensure consistent support for small local food producers. This can involve developing common guidelines, sharing procurement frameworks, and aligning specifications to prioritise local sourcing.
3. **Local Producer Database:** Develop and maintain a comprehensive database of small local food producers in Wales. This database should be accessible to all public sector bodies, enabling them to easily identify and engage with local producers for procurement opportunities.
4. **Joint Training and Capacity Building:** Collaborate on training programs and capacity-building initiatives aimed at supporting small local food producers. By pooling resources and expertise, public sector bodies can provide targeted training on topics such as business development, marketing, food safety regulations, and sustainability practices.
5. **Promote Local Procurement Policies:** Advocate for and promote local procurement policies within Welsh public sector bodies. This can include setting specific targets for procurement from small local food producers and raising awareness among staff and decision-makers about the benefits of supporting local economies.
6. **Networking Events and Workshops:** Organise networking events, workshops, and conferences that bring together small local food producers and public sector buyers. These platforms provide opportunities for direct engagement, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, fostering stronger relationships and partnerships.
7. **Joint Marketing and Promotion:** Collaborate on marketing and promotional activities to raise awareness and promote the products of small local food producers. This can involve joint campaigns, participation in local food events, and showcasing local produce within public sector institutions.
8. **Research and Development Partnerships:** Foster research and development partnerships between public sector bodies and small local food producers. This can involve supporting research projects focused on sustainability, product innovation, and market development, providing valuable insights and support to producers.
9. **Evaluate and Share Impact:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of collaborative efforts on small local food producers. Share success stories, lessons learned, and best practices among public sector bodies to improve effectiveness and inform future initiatives.

## Charter for Public Sector organisations to support local food producers

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Outlined below are a number of pledges that Public Sector Organisations can consider to demonstrate their commitment to supporting local food producers. These pledges aim to specifically address the needs and challenges faced by small local food and drink producers, empowering them to thrive and contribute to the local economy while enhancing the quality and diversity of Welsh food and drink offerings.

1. **Dedicated Procurement Opportunities:** Create dedicated procurement opportunities specifically for small local food and drink producers, providing them with fair access to public sector contracts.
2. **Simplified Procurement Processes:** Streamline and simplify procurement processes, reducing administrative burdens and making it easier for small local producers to participate in public sector supply chains.
3. **Minimum Local Sourcing Requirements:** Establish minimum local sourcing requirements for public sector contracts, ensuring a significant portion of food and drink products are sourced from small local producers.
4. **Fair Pricing and Payment Terms:** Commit to fair pricing and prompt payment terms for small local food and drink producers, such as the Prompt Payment Code<sup>4</sup>, providing them with financial stability and reducing cash flow challenges.
5. **Ethical Practices Across Supply Chains:** Commit to working with suppliers that demonstrate positive action against issues such as Modern Day Slavery<sup>5</sup>. Further ethical practices include committing to become an Accredited Living Wage employer<sup>6</sup>.
6. **Capacity Building Programs:** Invest in capacity building programs tailored for small local producers, providing training, mentorship, and business support to help them enhance their skills, competitiveness, and market access.
7. **Networking and Collaboration Opportunities:** Facilitate networking and collaboration among small local producers, encouraging knowledge sharing, collective marketing efforts, and joint ventures to strengthen their collective impact.
8. **Technical Assistance:** Provide technical assistance to small local producers, such as guidance on food safety regulations, quality standards, packaging, and labelling requirements, helping them meet compliance requirements.
9. **Marketing and Promotion Support:** Assist small local producers with marketing and promotional activities, including assistance with branding, product labelling, and participation in trade shows or food fairs to enhance their visibility and market presence.
10. **Product Development and Innovation:** Support small local producers in product development and innovation efforts, enabling them to create unique, value-added food and drink products that can cater to changing consumer demands.
11. **Local Food and Drink Events:** Organise local food and drink events or showcase opportunities within public sector institutions, providing a platform for small local producers to exhibit and sell their

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk/ppc/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-0223-tackling-modern-slavery-in-government-supply-chains/ppn-0223-tackling-modern-slavery-in-government-supply-chains-guidance-html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>



products directly to consumers.

12. **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs connecting small local producers with experienced industry professionals or larger food and drink businesses, fostering knowledge transfer and providing guidance on scaling up their operations.
13. **Sustainable Practices:** Encourage small local producers to adopt sustainable practices, such as organic farming, waste reduction, and energy efficiency measures, and provide resources and guidance to support their sustainability efforts.
14. **Collaboration with Local Retailers:** Foster partnerships between small local producers and local retailers, encouraging public sector institutions to work closely with retailers to stock and promote products from small local producers.
15. **Ensure seasonality is factored in to purchasing decisions:** for example, by being flexible in menu design to ensure focus on seasonal produce that can be sourced locally, which presents additional opportunity to source environmentally friendly, healthy and potentially more cost-effective options.
16. **Supplier Diversity and Inclusivity:** Actively promote supplier diversity and inclusivity by seeking out and supporting small local food and drink producers owned by marginalised groups, fostering a more inclusive and equitable supply chain.
17. **Recognition and Awards:** Establish recognition and awards programs to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of small local food and drink producers, further enhancing their reputation and market positioning.
18. **Ongoing Support and Evaluation:** Provide ongoing support to small local producers through regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms, ensuring the effectiveness of support initiatives and making necessary improvements.

## **Toolkit: SME Friendly Food Procurement**

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Outlined throughout this report are numerous steps and considerations that public sector organisations can take to support and enable opportunities for small Welsh food producers. As a summary, the following toolkit provides an overview of key steps that should be considered.

### **1. Assess Local Food Procurement Opportunities:**

- Identify the potential for local food procurement within your organisation and the opportunities it could bring.
- Analyse existing procurement processes and identify areas for improvement.
- Conduct market research to understand the availability and capabilities of small food producers in the local area.

### **2. Develop Local Food Procurement Policies and Guidelines:**

- Create clear policies and guidelines that prioritise local food procurement.
- Prioritise triple-benefit choices by selecting food that is not only locally sourced but also champions health and environmental sustainability.
- Define criteria and requirements for qualifying as a local producer.
- Establish targets or benchmarks for increasing the percentage of local food in procurement.

### **3. Engage with Local Producers:**

- Build relationships with small food producers in the local area.
- Organise supplier forums, workshops, or networking events to connect with local producers.
- Provide guidance and support to help producers navigate procurement processes.

### **4. Streamline Procurement Processes:**

- Simplify procurement procedures and documentation for small producers.
- Develop frameworks or pre-qualification systems to reduce administrative burdens.
- Consider setting aside specific contracts or quotas for small local producers.

### **5. Support Capacity Building:**

- Offer training and resources to help small producers meet procurement requirements.
- Provide guidance on food safety regulations, labelling, and packaging standards.
- Facilitate access to business development programs or funding opportunities.

### **6. Promote Collaboration and Clustering:**

- Encourage small producers to collaborate and form producer networks or clusters.
- Facilitate matchmaking or partnering events to connect producers with complementary products or services.
- Support joint marketing initiatives and collaborative supply chain development.

### **7. Raise Awareness and Promote Local Food:**

- Develop marketing and communication campaigns to promote the benefits of local food procurement.
- Showcase success stories of local producers supplying to the public sector.
- Collaborate with media to highlight the impact of local food procurement on the community.

### **8. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:**

- Establish monitoring methods to track the percentage and value of local food procurement.
- Evaluate the impact of local food procurement initiatives on the local economy.
- Continuously assess and adjust policies and strategies based on feedback and outcomes.

## Conclusion

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In conclusion, this report emphasises the transformative power of small steps in procurement arrangements for public sector buyers when it comes to sourcing local food and drink. By recognizing the significant positive impacts that can result from such actions, we have the opportunity to drive wider economic development efforts in our communities. These small steps can lead to job creation, support for local businesses, and the strengthening of our local economies. Through collaborative efforts, streamlined processes, and targeted support, public sector buyers can contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth, fostering resilient food systems and vibrant communities.

Procurement has the potential to be utilised as a powerful economic development tool. There is substantial opportunity to make a lasting difference by embracing local sourcing in our procurement practices and realising the profound ripple effects it can have on economic development and overall well-being.

The actions of individual officers within public sector organisations plays a crucial role in transforming procurement practices and promoting the increased use of local suppliers. These officers, at various levels and roles within the organisation, have the power to influence decision-making, shape policies, and implement changes that prioritise local suppliers. By understanding the benefits of sourcing locally, they can advocate for the inclusion of social value criteria in procurement processes, which can prioritise the economic, social, and environmental impact of local suppliers. Moreover, individual officers can actively engage with local suppliers, build relationships, and assess their capabilities and capacity to meet procurement requirements. By championing local suppliers, officers can foster collaboration, build trust, and establish long-term partnerships that benefit both the organisation and the local economy. Ultimately, it is the collective efforts and actions of individual officers that drive the transformation of procurement practices, leading to increased support for local suppliers and the creation of sustainable and thriving communities.