

Annex 1: Summary of proposed changes to public sector food and catering policy

Changes to the policy scope, structure, and use

Proposed changes	Rationale
New clarification of scope of the policy highlights the policy "applies to food service environments (e.g cafes or restaurants) on public sector premises" and "does not apply to food retail (e.g. convenience shops), although we strongly recommend such outlets comply with the relevant food sourcing standards."	Provides clarification on when the policy does and does not apply.
Mandatory and best practice standards sit alongside each other.	Increases clarity and usability.
Standards are restructured into three sections: 1) Food sourcing 2) Healthier, more sustainable menu choices 3) Sustainable catering services	Grouping standards according to their intended audience increases clarity and ease of use. For example, food only suppliers will only need to comply with section 1 (Food sourcing) standards.
New 'verification of compliance' column provides guidance to policy users on how they can verify compliance with mandatory standards.	Improves useability and increases clarity of evidencing compliance.

Fair and transparent procurement guidance principles

Proposed changes	Rationale
Defra intends to publish comprehensive guidance and resources to support and inspire change, based upon the fair and transparent procurement guidance principles outlined under the four themes: (1) Generating environmental and social value; (2) Opening up public sector supply chains to a wider range of companies; (3) Ensuring fair and ethical trading; (4) Continuous improvement. Relevant Procurement Policy Notes (PPNs) and other government policies are highlighted.	Defra recognises that organisations will need support to implement new proposals within the existing framework of procurement policies, guidance and regulations. The guidance based upon these principles will aim to provide a user-friendly summary of procurement policy and information relevant to food and catering contracts, to support our policy objectives.

Some of this guidance previously featured in best practice standards, including ethical trading and inclusion of SMEs.	
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Changes to the standards in the 'Food sourcing' section

Mandatory Standard	Proposed changes	Rationale
	Additional definition of "food" as "any drink, substance or product, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended for human consumption".	Increases clarity of standards.
	<p>New target that contracting authorities and/or tier 1 suppliers should aim for at least 50% of food spend to be on locally produced food or food certified to higher environmental production standards.</p> <p>Locally produced food is defined as: 'Food produced/grown within the same region as it is consumed, or a neighbouring county (for counties at regional boundaries – this may include counties in Scotland and Wales). Multi-ingredient products must contain at least 50% ingredients (by weight) produced in the local region.'</p> <p>Higher environmental production standards are defined in standard 1.2.</p>	<p>This target intends to encourage contracting authorities and suppliers to prioritise sourcing food produced locally, and food produced to higher environmental production standards, to support our policy objectives.</p> <p>Procurement of, and increased demand for, locally produced food and/or food produced to higher environmental production standards aligns with Government ambitions and interventions within the 25-Year Environment Plan and the Greening Government Commitments. Locally produced food can also provide societal benefits such as creating a personal connection between producers and consumers, supporting local food cultures, and improving traceability of food through shorter supply chains.</p>
1.1	Removal of the exemption from compliance with production standards on the basis of cost.	Acts on recommendations from the EFRA Select Committee.
1.2	<p>New requirement that at least 20% (an increase from 10%) of food spend must be on food certified to higher environmental production standards, re-defined as:</p> <p>Production systems demonstrating integrated farm management of natural habitats and biodiversity; soil management and fertility; prevention and control of pollution; energy, water and</p>	<p>The increased percentage reflects the increased scope of this standard and Government ambition to support environmentally sustainable food production by promoting demand.</p> <p>Application to all food rather than just primary commodities increases scope of food items this standard applies to, such as processed foods and pre-prepared meals.</p>

	<p>waste management; landscape and nature conservation (Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) certified, or equivalent) or Organic production systems compliant with European Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, as retained in UK law.</p> <p>Previously this definition included publicly available Integrated Production (IP) standards.</p> <p>The standard now also applies to total food spend. Previously this applied to the total monetary value of primary commodity (that is, raw ingredient) food and drink.</p>	<p>Supporting environmentally sustainable food production in turn supports farmers in their efforts to deliver on net zero, protect the environment and promote biodiversity.</p>
1.2	<p>Redefined higher environmental production standards as production systems demonstrating Integrated Farm Management (LEAF or equivalent) or organic production.</p>	<p>Aligns more closely with the definition of higher environmental production standards used by Government in other policy areas such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive.</p>
1.3	<p>Removal of the exemption from compliance with animal welfare standards on the basis of cost.</p>	<p>Reflects Government commitments to maintain high animal welfare standards and acts on recommendations from the EFRA Select Committee.</p>
1.3	<p>Additional detail on UK animal welfare standards, including key production system requirements.</p>	<p>Increases clarity around expectations of suppliers in evidencing this standard.</p>
1.3	<p>New requirement that in-shell and liquid eggs must be sourced from cage-free systems.</p> <p>Previously eggs from enriched cage production systems were permitted.</p>	<p>A number of foodservice providers have already pledged commitments to 100% cage-free egg sourcing by 2025. This brings Government policy in line with this industry best practice and shows Government leading by example on animal welfare.</p>
1.4	<p>Updated wording from 'fish' to 'seafood' standard.</p>	<p>Increases the clarity and scope of the standard.</p>

1.4	<p>New requirement to only procure seafood, evidenced by a rating of 1, 2, or 3 in the Marine Conservation Society's "Good Fish Guide" or Sustainable Fisheries Partnership score of 8 or above, or equivalent. Equivalent certification schemes which may be used have been benchmarked by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative.</p> <p>Previously any Marine Stewardship Council certified fish or Marine Conservation Society 'fish to eat' were permitted.</p>	<p>Strengthens verification of sustainability of seafood sources. Reflects the objective to promote procurement of local, sustainable, healthier food.</p>
1.4	<p>New requirements that a diverse range of seasonally available seafood species must be procured from locally caught or produced sources and that tuna and prawns must not be procured, wherever possible.</p>	<p>Reflects the objective to promote procurement of local, sustainable food.</p>
1.5	<p>Updated wording for palm oil, palm kernel oil and products derived from palm oil from 'sustainably produced' to 'demonstrably legal and sustainable (certification, or equivalent)'.</p>	<p>Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.</p> <p>Reflects that illegal conversion of land for commercial agriculture and timber makes up a significant proportion of deforestation (49% globally).</p> <p>Aligns with the ambition of the UK Roundtable on Sourcing Sustainable Palm Oil and the UK Sustainable Palm Oil Initiative.</p>
1.6	<p>New mandatory standard that all soy and soy products used for cooking and as an ingredient in food must be demonstrably legal and sustainable.</p>	<p>Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.</p> <p>Evidence shows that the production and harvesting of Soybeans contributes highly to deforestation in overseas regions. Aligns with the ambition of the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya and Soy Manifesto.</p>
1.7	<p>New mandatory standard that all cocoa procured must be demonstrably legal and sustainable.</p>	<p>Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.</p>

	Previously this was only a best practice (voluntary) target that cocoa should be 'fairly traded'.	Cocoa is a top priority commodity whose rapid expansion is associated with deforestation.
1.8	Updated wording for coffee from 'fairly traded' to 'demonstrably legal and sustainable' Mandatory percentage required has increased from 50% to 100%.	Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. Increased proportion aligns with the ambition for this area and the need for all products to be demonstrably legal.
1.9	Updated wording for tea from 'fairly traded' to 'demonstrably legal and sustainable' Mandatory percentage required has increased from 50% to 100%.	Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. Increased proportion aligns with the ambition for this area and the need for all products to be demonstrably legal.
1.10	New mandatory standard that all bananas procured must be demonstrably legal and sustainable. Previously this was only a best practice (voluntary) target.	Reflects the objective to support sustainable food and the Government's commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

Changes to the standards in the 'Healthier, more sustainable menu choices' section

Mandatory Standard	Proposed changes	Rationale
2.1	The new 'Menu cycle and seasonality' standard combines the existing 'seasonal produce' mandatory standard and 'menu cycle analysis' best practice standard. New requirement that there must be at least one menu cycle change every 3 months.	We would like public sector menus to help people make healthier, more sustainable food choices and promote local food culture and identity. We think one menu cycle change every 3 months represents a feasible mandatory minimum.
2.2	A new standard on 'Local and cultural engagement' has been added. This requires that menus must support UK food traditions and take account of cultural, religious, and special dietary needs of consumers It also requires that local produce, UK seasonal produce, and local food	We would like public sector menus to promote local food culture and identity and, reflect the diversity of consumers. Providing more information to consumers on where food has come from (increasing transparency) can improve consumer trust in food provenance and appreciation of local food and local food traditions.

	traditions are indicated to the consumer on menus or through other means, such as posters or websites.	
2.3	Addition of shell eggs and seafood within 'origin labelling' standard scope.	Aligns with existing Government policy on country-of-origin food labelling and increases transparency to consumers.
2.4	New mandatory standard that menus and pre-packaged food must include allergen labelling, following the allergen labelling rules .	Reminder of legal obligation.

Changes to the standards in the 'Sustainable catering services' section

Mandatory Standard	Proposed changes	Rationale
3.2	New requirement that the Energy Technology List (ETL) must be the default tool for equipment selection within its categories. Other energy-related products (not on the ETL) that are subject to Energy Labelling legislation, must have the highest energy rating available on the market at the time of purchase.	Aligns with existing government policy and prepares caterers and contracting authorities for future changes. Reflects the objective to support sustainable catering services.
3.3	New standard that catering suppliers must have a written equality and diversity policy covering its sub-contractors (if relevant) to ensure they and any sub-contractors are compliant with employment law provisions in the UK Equality Act (2010).	Reflects objective to support social sustainability of catering services.
3.4	New food safety and hygiene mandatory standard has been added, to ensure food safety and hygiene legal obligations are met. Previously this was voluntary in the Balanced Scorecard.	Serves as a reminder to catering suppliers and makes the buying standards more comprehensive.
3.5	New customer satisfaction mandatory standard has been added. Previously this was voluntary in the Balanced Scorecard. This requires there to be a system in place to monitor customer satisfaction and address customer feedback, with a	Reflects objective to support economic sustainability of catering services and increased healthier consumption by the public in public sector institutions. This is now industry baseline rather than best practice and has been moved to reflect this.

	plan in place for continuous improvement.	
3.6	New mandatory and best practice standards on 'employment and skills' have been added. This requires that opportunities for employment and routes for development within the catering service are accessible and promoted, and that staff development through suitable training programmes is encouraged.	Reflects objective to support social and economic sustainability of catering services. The standard is based on the voluntary 'award question' in the balanced scorecard. Making this requirement mandatory is in line with industry baseline standards.
3.7	The new 'Food waste prevention' standard requires all caterers to provide evidence of a 'Target, Measure, Act' (TMA) approach to managing and minimising the impacts of waste as described in the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) Food Waste Reduction Toolkit. This is similar to the existing requirement in the 'food waste' mandatory standard. However, the toolkit provided by WRAP ensures consistency of approach.	Aligns with the WRAP approach which is used across the industry as the standard. This should provide clarity and consistency for catering companies. Mandatory reporting, as proposed in the consultation, will also be based on WRAP guidance. There is a strong case for businesses to implement a TMA approach as this brings environmental benefits and financial savings to business.
3.8	The new 'food waste collection and management' standards require that in circumstances where food waste cannot be avoided through prevention or by re-distribution for human or animal consumption, it must be collected separately and recycled through composting or anaerobic digestion.	Aligns with the Defra Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy and Waste Hierarchy guidance and existing Government policy. Reflects the objective to support sustainable catering services.
3.9	The new 'other waste prevention' standard includes several new requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • waste must be prevented by reducing consumables and single use items wherever possible • single use plastics must be removed where possible • caterers must strongly encourage customers to use re-usable items • where use of re-usable items is not possible, recyclable single use items must be procured which come with less packaging and/or recyclable packaging 	Aligns with the Defra Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy and Waste Hierarchy guidance and existing Government policy. Reflects the objective to support sustainable catering services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if single use cups are required, they must be 100% recyclable and made of at least 30% recycled material 	
3.10	The new 'Other waste collection and management' standard requires a core set of dry materials including glass, metal, plastic, cartons, plastic film, paper and card to be collected separately and recycled.	Aligns with the Defra Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy and Waste Hierarchy guidance and existing Government policy. Reflects the objective to support sustainable catering services.
3.11	New mandatory standard on the disposal of catering equipment, requires equipment to be disposed of (where not possible to re-use or repair) to an authorised handler in an environmental sound way. Ensuring the equipment enters the Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) system.	Aligns with the Defra Waste Hierarchy guidance – existing Government policy. Aligns with the WEEE system which is used across the industry as standard. This should provide clarity and consistency for catering companies.

New section on data reporting requirements

Proposed changes	Rationale
<p>New requirement for contracting organisations to report data to Defra annually, within 3 months of each year end.</p> <p>The first measuring year is proposed to be the end of March 2023 – end of March 2024.</p> <p>Each government department will determine how the contracting organisations under their responsibility will report this data to Defra. It may not be necessary for all of these metrics to be collected through one return if some are collected through other means already.</p>	<p>Reflects objective to increase transparency of food supply chains, to drive continuous improvement and build our understanding of what is bought, served, sold and wasted in the public sector.</p> <p>Different departments devolve procurement to local sites or organisations in different ways. Data reporting regimes therefore need to be determined per sector.</p>
<p>The data required will inform the following eight metrics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Total budget for food and catering services (£) Total spend on food (£) Number of meals served % of total food and catering budget spent with SME or VCSE suppliers 	<p>This data will enable us to monitor the environmental, economic and social impacts of public sector food and catering. This in turn will support evaluation of the GBSF, increase public and parliamentary accountability, and inform future public sector food and catering policy change.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. % of total food and catering budget spent on local staff 6. % food spend on food produced locally or to certified higher environmental production standards 7. Food waste as a % of food handled 8. Destination of food waste (Kg per category- anaerobic digestion, composting, incineration, landfill, sewer) 	
<p>Breakdown of food procured per category: Total quantity procured (Kg or L); spend (£); % spend locally produced/caught grown; % spend produced to higher environmental production standards</p>	<p>Reflects objective to increase transparency of food supply chains, to drive continuous improvement and build our understanding of what is bought, served, sold and wasted in the public sector.</p>
<p>Per food sub-category: Quantity procured (Kg or L)</p>	<p>This data will enable us to accurately calculate the associated greenhouse gas emissions and better understand how we can reduce this, to help meet net zero.</p>