



SSN Conference 2008 Day 2 – Friday 14 November

Case Study Seminar - Local Food Procurement; Measuring the Benefits

There were fourteen delegates at the seminar. Presenters were Robin Gourlay, East Ayrshire Council and Osbert Lancaster, Footprint Ltd. The seminar was facilitated by Alan Speedie, Alan Speedie Associates Ltd

The purpose of the seminar was to consider the East Ayrshire school food project, including the evaluation of the project using the Social Return on Investment methodology. There were presentation on the project and the evaluation process, followed by a group discussion. This gave delegates the chance to question the presenters and to develop lessons from the project which could be transferred to their own organisations.

This short report comprises two parts:-

- Key lessons from the Ayrshire experience which can be transferred to other local authorities; and
- Flipchart notes of the group discussion (annex 1)

The first part provides two versions of the flipcharts. The first shows the basic text recording the group's comments. The second version highlights where key learning points have been selected from the text.

These notes were produced from discussions by the whole seminar group, and considered what the main issues – and the remedies were to these - were in developing a local food policy and local procurement practices, using the East Ayrshire experience.

Conclusions – How to Make Local Procurement Happen

The following ten lessons were identified through the group discussion process:

1. Ensure that qualitative factors counted for 50% of the total contract evaluation
2. Use EU procurement rules - changed in 2004 – which allow inclusion of sustainable development considerations in contracts
3. Use 2003 Scottish Executive guidance 'Sustainability and quality in procurement of food and catering'
4. Establish the availability of 'local' suppliers
5. Convene a food event/conference for potential local suppliers awareness-raising
6. Check local suppliers – invite them in to presentations on contracts
7. Ensure equipment and staff training is available to support changes in catering methods
8. Stimulate demand for and provide healthier (local) food choices rather than junk food.
9. Consider funding sources like the Climate Challenge Fund e.g. using a consortium of schools supported (but not led by) a local authority
10. Use evaluation models (such as the Social Return on Investment tool) to help 'argue the case' - these can provide metrics for the outcomes of local food procurement

Annex 1

Flipcharts – Version 1

This shows the basic text recording the group's comments. There have been only minimal changes to these, to clarify the points made.

Flipchart 1

Key Issues:

Working with Scotland Excel

Specifying 'local' food produce?

within EU rules on procurement

against having to procure nationally

Qualitative factors counted for 50% of the total contract evaluation in East Ayrshire

Coping with 'named' sources

Can contracts specify 'Orkney lamb'?

Supply response times

e.g. '1 hour' supply time (used by Perth and Kinross)

Evaluation model helps 'argue the case'

contracts 'need to be bold' (East Ayrshire)

EU procurement rules changed in 2004 – allow sustainable development considerations

Dichotomy with using Scotland Excel and accommodating smaller contracts

Flipchart 2

Need to establish the availability of 'local' suppliers

you don't always know what the capacity to deal with large contracts (the Scottish Government is doing some work on this?)

check local suppliers – invite them in to presentations on contracts and see if they want to participate

Fife example – this was done, and companies still didn't tender for the contracts

Changes in catering methods

some local authorities don't have the equipment or skilled staff

training needs

Need for careful specification

e.g. Perth and Kinross 'meals on wheels' service

Use 2003 Scottish Executive guidance 'Sustainability and quality in procurement of food and catering'

Need to provide 'tasty' (healthier) food choices rather than 'pie and beans'

Flipchart 3

Barrier – size of authority – e.g. Fife (needs large supplies over large number of sites)

numbers to be supplied

use 'traditional' local sources

subdivide large contracts

use supplier 'collectives' (although didn't respond to tender in Fife)

Local food conference for awareness-raising

The Climate Challenge Fund could help – with its carbon reduction objectives – e.g. using a consortium of schools supported (but not led by) a local authority

Value of Social Reporting of Investment

makes the case – provides metrics

uses the concept of 'values for money'

helps overcome local authority 'silo' problems and supports Community Planning Partnerships and Single Outcome Agreements

Flipcharts – Version 2

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