

Food Miles Scrutiny Task Group – Report of Findings:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 The Task Group asks the Committee for approval of the following recommendations for submission to Executive at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.2 For further information on how the recommendations were reached, then please see section 7, where detail is given.
- R1 That the work carried out so far in raising awareness of the importance of buying locally is supported and continues.
- R2 That the Council supports the Devon Food website and asks that resources are made available to keep this publicised, promoted and updated.
- R3 That Members are fully supportive of the school meals review and the subsequent improvements that have been seen, but;
- a) would like to see continued efforts to increase the amount of local and seasonal food on the menu's and;
 - b) that a target of 70% for local produce in school meals is supported;
 - c) that the Council encourage schools to educate the children so they understand the connections between food and the environment (e.g. supporting farm visits etc);
 - d) that the Council lobby Government for a standard level of health, food, seasonality and nutritional information to be incorporated into the national curriculum;
 - e) that the Council supports the Devon Education for Sustainability Working Group (DESWG) in extending its remit to consider food and nutritional issues and their importance within the educational environment;
 - f) that a pilot menu, with more seasonal produce (healthy and local), is trialled within the school and the results analysed and monitored;
 - g) that the Council support activities, initiatives and competitions, particularly within schools which contribute towards educating children of the importance of healthy, local and seasonal food, for example competitions, prizes etc;
 - h) in respect of the Council's policy on school meals, more support is made available for those schools who have opted out of DDS control.
- R4 That the Council supports the production of promotional material which advocates the benefits (environmentally, economically and socially) of local and seasonal consumption. In particular, those ideas which could be used as educational tools.
- R5 That the Council has a role in setting an example to other agencies and businesses and needs to ensure its own house is 'in order'. The Task Group recommend that a local sourcing policy be prepared and adopted, with the involvement of procurement for the Coaver Club (including calvados bar), tea trolley and catering (to include catering for meetings). The policy should complement existing policies and should include;
- a) definition of local (as local as possible - then Devon wide - then regional etc);
 - b) consideration of contractors sourcing policies;
 - c) consideration of food packaging (both quantity and where it is sourced from);
 - d) appropriate and realistic targets for local sourcing;
 - e) nutritional information to be made available;
 - f) support for those initiatives (e.g. the Workplace Food and Nutrition Steering Group) which aim to improve the nutritional standards of Council catering.

- g) the Food and Nutrition Steering Group be supported in producing a healthy eating policy (to include access to healthy options, standards to be achieved etc)
- R6 That as 3f, the Council support a pilot menu within Coaver where a seasonal menu (healthy and local) is trialled and the results analysed and monitored.
- R7 That, if approached, the Council allows local producers to have tasting sessions at County Hall (and other Council offices) to enable staff to learn more about local products and where these can be purchased.
- R8 That the Council continue to raise the profile of sustainable food policies and local food purchasing at a strategic level, through the most appropriate channel.
- R9 That the Council support the Procurement Unit in their efforts in making representations at EU level to remove food from the A category of procurement regulations.
- R10 That the Council support the ongoing (and future) works which allow smaller producers to compete in the tendering market. Examples include the e-tendering system and training / development sessions that have been undertaken.
- R11 In respect of procurement issues:
- a) an accessible list (regularly updated) be developed of where the Council's current food purchases are sourced;
 - b) that a list is compiled of what can be produced and sourced locally and then gaps in the market identified. The sourcing of these additional items should support sustainable farming and contribute to the reduction in food miles or an alternative be found;
 - c) research be undertaken to ascertain which products are expensive to import. It may be of value to have a break down of what should be imported and what should be locally sourced;
 - d) that consideration be given to creating a directory of potential suppliers (which is regularly updated);
 - e) analysis is undertaken which assesses the benefits or otherwise of sourcing for food and distribution separately;
 - f) that the Council take up the offer of South West Food and Drink who would be able to assess the requirements of the Council and make links with appropriate producers;
 - g) that the Council work closely with other Authorities and organisations to share any good practice initiatives that are identified (particularly in respect of supply chain development). In addition, that the Council promotes its own best practice to other agencies.
- R12 That the Council be requested to improve its working practices in respect of communication and openness between Departments when looking at contracts and tendering issues. The Task Group suggest a formal protocol which dictates that procurement be involved at the earliest stage of the process.
- R13 That the Council should support the **concept** of a 'Devon Food Park' at suitable location(s) in the County which promotes the 'made / grown in Devon' brand, along the lines of that established at Kingsley Village in Cornwall, carrying out a re-branding exercise if required.
- R14 That the Council supports those developments which look to create further employment space, especially for cottage industries, where availability is currently limited.
- R15 In addition, the Task Group recommend that planners and highways adopt 'business friendly' policies, ensuring that the requirements of local food businesses are accommodated, wherever possible.
- R16 That the Devon Food Magazine circulation is reviewed to ensure the widest audience is being reached – the Task Group also suggest that copies are placed on ferries and within

the airport to help promote Devon's food to visitors and local people. In addition, consideration be given to other promotional material, e.g. posters, leaflets etc which also contributes to marketing Devon's food and drink industry.

- R17 That, as the current owner of Exeter Airport, the Council should encourage the current, and future, franchisee to sell local goods within the café / bar / shop at Exeter Airport. There have been missed opportunities for food / drink tourism and those should be addressed.
- R18 That the Council assists / works with those organisations who are working to influence the local food sector and are undertaking lobbying activities with larger retailers, to source and supply more local produce in their stores. This includes the work of the Devon Rural Network (DRN), which the Council should continue to support.
- R19 That Member representation on the recently established 'Workplace Food and Nutrition Steering Group' is considered (Note: Councillor Foggin has expressed an interest in joining the group).
- R20 That, as part of the aim to increase local food within Council catering, when the DDS buffet menu is redesigned, that the Devon menus are located at the front of the pamphlet rather than the rear.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 At its meeting on November 2005, the Environment and Economy Overview/Scrutiny Committee endorsed a recommendation:

(a) that.....a Task Group be established to look at some of the issues raised in more depth concentrating in particular the issue of 'food miles' and the associated environmental impacts and also on local initiatives to overcome those concerns and promote local sourcing and generation of local enterprise;

(b) that the Task Group, comprising Councillors Hook (Chairman), Berry, Foggin, B Hughes and Mrs Jenkins, be asked to agree its terms of reference - in line with (a) above - at its first meeting.

- 2.2 The object of the scrutiny investigation was to consider the latest developments (national, regional and local) relating to food miles and its impact on local sourcing and the associated reduction of greenhouses gases / CO2 emissions.

3.0 Background and Terms of reference

- 3.1 Over the last fifty years, there have been dramatic changes in the food production and supply chain in the UK. The most striking changes have been:

- Globalisation of the food industry, with an increase in food trade (imports and exports) and wider sourcing of food within the UK and overseas;
- Concentration of the food supply base into fewer, larger suppliers, partly to meet demand for bulk year-round supply of uniform produce;
- Major changes in delivery patterns with most goods now routed through supermarket regional distribution centres, and a trend towards use of larger Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs);
- Centralisation and concentration of sales in supermarkets, with a switch from frequent food shopping (on foot) at small local shops to weekly shopping by car at large out of town supermarkets.

- 3.2 These trends have led to a large increase in the distance food travels from the farm to consumer, known as “food miles”. The term is used to highlight the increasing distances that our food travels, and the environmental and social consequences of this.
- 3.3 Members subsequently held their first meeting on **14 December 2006** and agreed the following terms of reference;
- a) study the economic and environmental benefits of purchasing locally, the associated reduction in food miles, thus trying to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gases, congestion and road accidents;
 - b) conduct research into the latest updates on national, regional and local developments in respect of a) above;
 - c) explore opportunities for new joined up enterprises, for example the proposed food park in Tiverton, taking good practice from other areas that have tackled such projects (Cornwall);
 - d) that in support of the ‘Make Poverty History’ campaign, the task group considers the role of the County Council in developing support for Fair Trade within Devon and what actions can be taken to support the campaign (e.g. tea trolley etc);¹
 - e) Consider the issue of ‘seasonality’ in reducing food miles and how this can be further promoted;
 - f) consider any actions that Devon County Council are undertaking and/or could undertake to further support the sector, and recommend the progression of these;
 - g) in the same vein, consider any opportunities for ERS to reduce food miles in local sourcing and local enterprise;
 - h) to seek approval from the Environment and Economy Overview/Scrutiny Committee before making appropriate recommendations to the Executive.

4.0 Links to the Strategic Plan

- 4.1 The study into this issue is directly linked to the goals of Devon County Council’s Strategic Plan 2006/2011 in the following ways;
- 4.2 In the first instance, the priority of ‘Giving the Best Possible Start in Life to Devon’s Children and Young People’ has links to this topic. There is an abundance of excellent quality local produce within Devon and the South West, yet consumers are often purchasing food which has been flown half way around the world (and back again). One of the ‘Making Devon Greener’ goals is to increase the proportion of local produce for healthy school meals which would reduce the food miles incurred by the Council. Local produce is therefore healthier and ‘Promoting a Healthy and Caring Devon’ is one of the goals of the Community Strategy.
- 4.3 Second, the priority of ‘Strengthening Devon’s Economy’ is directly affected. It is important that the local economy is supported by inhabitants and local businesses in order to generate and maintain employment opportunities and subsequently improve local wealth.
- 4.4 The third priority of ‘Looking after Devon’s Environment’ is equally important. There is additional traffic and congestion caused by modern methods of food purchasing, which is particularly damaging to the environment. The subject also contributes to the Community Strategy goal of ‘Protecting and Improving our Outstanding Environment’.

5.0 Task Group Activities

- 5.1 Members held their first meeting on **14 December 2006**. The terms of reference were agreed, with potential witnesses and future dates established.

¹ It was subsequently agreed that as Policy Resources OSC were undertaking a Task Group dedicated to Fair Trade that this Task Group would not duplicate work by its consideration.

5.2 On **10 January 2006**, Members met Liz Bowles from the English Farming and Food Partnership. She highlighted the aim of the organisation as improving the profitability of the land based sector and competitiveness between farmers and other parts of the supply chain. The ethos of the organisation related very much to food miles as there were good opportunities for farmers to deliver locally, but the best use was not always made of existing structures.

5.3 On Wednesday **11 January 2006**, a local food seminar took place at Shillingford Organics in Shillingford Abbot, Exeter (a further seminar took place in North Devon). The Chair of the Task Group and the Scrutiny Officer attended.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore opportunities to buy and sell local produce in the public sector and see examples of best practice. The seminar included a tour of a new food production unit located at Barton Farm.

There were approximately 30 delegates, including public sector representatives, local food producers, distributors and growers.

Presentations were received from:

- Johnathan Smye – Introduction (and the benefits of local, healthy food)
- Kathryn Edwards – RAFAEL project
- Andy Berry (GOSW) - Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative
- Marion Geare – DCC's Client Services
- Ian Wasson – Devon Direct Services
- Johnathan Smye – Procurement, Contracts and Tendering

5.4 Members held their meeting on **6 February 2006** at the South West Food and Drink (SWFD) offices at Dart's Farm in Exeter. Mr Richard Hunter advised that SWFD was formed four years ago, with the backing of the RDA, to focus specifically on the food and drink sector.

Members received a presentation on;

- SW food and drink industry
- SWFD strategy and key roles
- Activities – both current and planned

The second part of the meeting was with Mr James Dart who spoke about the history of Darts Farm. Dart's Farm had food at the heart of the enterprise and the 'lifestyle destination' had proved successful. The ethos was to stock local produce. The market was consumer led, therefore if it could educate the consumer to be concerned about food miles, the market would follow the trend.

5.5 The meeting of **27 February 2006** focussed upon a proposed food park development near junction 27 of the M5 (Jilly Greed and Malcolm Dudley-Williams) and an update on the RAFAEL project (Kathryn Edwards).

The concept for the South West Food Park project was developed in 2001 and followed in the footsteps of the Curry report, giving focus to a sustainable farming and food industry. The 27 acre site would occupy a strategic location with good access. It required £27m of private investment. The proposal for the site was manufacturing, processing, labelling, chilling, freezing and bottling activities. There would also be offices for food related businesses. The criteria for occupation of the units would be strict, which could be achieved through the planning process. Members were informed that there had been a long planning process, but MDDC had been supportive of the concept. Mrs Greed and Mr Dudley-Williams hoped that the Council could lend their support to the project.

The **RAFAEL** project commenced January 2005² aimed to promote the growth of the authentic food system sector and the benefits that it delivers. The County Council is the lead partner of the 3 year INTERREG III B project, which aimed to support and promote the 'authentic' food sector in the Atlantic Arc area of Europe. The project was being carried out by 9 partners from 4 countries (UK, France, Spain and Portugal). In Devon, activities focussed on developing local supply chains and promoting Devon's produce to local people and visitors.

5.6 On **6 March 2006**, Anthony Gibson (NFU) and David Rodda (Cornwall Agricultural Council) attended.

Mr Gibson said that farmers were concerned about food miles. From an economic perspective, a local product usually sold better than an imported one, even if the import cost less. The local element was a key ingredient in marketing as farmers were generally unable to compete with major retailers on price; therefore they had to compete on quality, the environment and food miles.

The NFU worked with large retailers. Supermarkets were keen to promote their environmental credentials and if such concerns mattered to the consumer then they would take this on board. Seasonality was also important. The NFU were keen to educate the public to consider seasonality in their food purchases.

Mr Gibson suggested that the Council could consider how it spends its budget and how it can continue to show commitment to the local economy.

Mr Rodda represented Cornwall Agricultural Council (CAC). He advised it had been in existence since 1989 and its role was to facilitate applications to the Objective One Programme from the agricultural, horticultural, food and land based industries of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Members received a presentation from which focused upon consumer trends, the food sector in Cornwall, the CAC's strategy (which was closely aligned with the Government's Sustainable Farming and Food strategy), Objective One, how the Council worked, the Development Team and supply chain development.

5.7 On **1 June 2006**, members took evidence from Annette Williams (Head of Procurement) and Councillor Humphrey Temperley (Executive Member for Economic Regeneration, Strategic Planning and Regional Affairs).

Mrs Williams highlighted current procurement rulings which have caused difficulty for many public bodies as the rules state that Local Authorities must tender in Europe. DCC has subsequently lobbied Government to remove food from the A category.

Training events had been undertaken to help more SME's bid for LA contracts and a new 'E' tendering system launched. 85% of the Devon companies who had registered were SME's.

Methodology was changing as contracts were being broken down into food groups and geographical areas, which would generate more options, but also increase the cost of contracts. Most suppliers were supportive of reducing food miles, but the supply side was more problematic.

Councillor Humphrey Temperley said that 'branding' had been very strong in Devon (the 'Devon Brand' was one of the top rated brands) and that good food was a key aspect of any thriving tourism industry.

Members also discussed the relationship between food miles, local sourcing and distribution to social policy and deprivation.

² The project finishes December 2007

He summarised that food must be key in Devon's economy (even though there's a low agricultural base), the leadership role was crucial, confidence in the market was required and a need to overcome distribution network problems.

- 5.8 The final meeting took place on **8 August 2006**. Ms Skinner (DDS), Ms Prew (Health Co-ordination) and Mrs Perry (Coaver catering) attended.

Ms Prew advised Members of her role within the Council and the work she was undertaking to introduce more local, healthy options into the catering services of the Council. This included the Coaver club and the trolley service. She highlighted the links between health, diet and stress and of the inception of a 'Food and Nutrition Steering Group.

Mrs Skinner from DDS informed members about the menus and local choices of both Coaver and the functions facility within the Council.

She also highlighted the school meals review (which was nearing completion), the 'Fresh Start' roll out and forthcoming Government legislation which banned certain food and drinks products within secondary schools from September 2006.

6.0 Background Research

- 6.1 **The Relationship between food, transport and CO2 emissions (Nov 03)**. This report considered the relationships between food, transport and CO2 emissions. It also focused upon food miles – what they were, how it might be possible to reduce them and the consequences of not doing so.

It also considered whether measures to shorten the food supply chain and reduce food miles could help cut CO2 emissions from transport, therefore achieving an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

- 6.2 Members received a briefing on **Devon County Council's Sustainable Food and Farming Policy** which highlighted the benefits of sustainable food. It was compiled by the Devon Rural Network (DRN) under the auspices of the Devon Strategic Partnership.

The plan has a number of strong themes including local food, collaboration, sustainable landscapes, quality, new opportunities and co-ordination. The cross cutting strands of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) were drivers throughout the action plan.

The Sustainable Farming and Food Co-ordinator had a role in ensuring that projects were actioned.

- 6.3 Early in the investigation, Members reviewed the **Defra 'Food Miles study'**. It was commissioned by Defra to assess whether a practical and reliable indicator based on food miles could be developed (and whether it would be a valid indicator of progress towards the objectives of the Government's Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy and proposed Food Industry Sustainability Strategy).

- 6.4 Defra's **'Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy'** (SFFS) showed how a profitable and internationally competitive agri-food industry could be achieved alongside a better environment, improved nutrition and prosperous communities. It set out several key principles for a sustainable food chain including the production of safe and healthy products, access to nutritious food and accurate information, supporting viable and diverse economies and communities, enabling livelihoods to be made from sustainable land management, respecting natural resources, achieving high standards of environmental performance, ensuring a safe / hygienic working environment and achieving high standards of animal health and welfare.

The SSFF also promised a more detailed strategy to cover the food chain beyond the farm gate - a **Food Industry Sustainability Strategy (FISS)**.

- 6.5 At the meeting on 10 January 2006, Members received **data** on the numbers of people employed in agriculture and agriculture related activities. From the quarterly economics review by SWRDA, this showed that within Devon, 24.7% of all businesses were classified as agriculture, with a further 27.5% in Distribution, Hotels & Catering. Agriculture contributed 4.2% of GVA.
- 6.6 Members had previously been circulated with a briefing paper by the Common Ground organisation called '**Producing the Goods**'. The organisation 'Common Ground' promoted the value and importance of local, including food, culture and history. There were several recommendations which would help to retain localism including; championing foods that reinforced the particularity of a place; buying / growing local foods, buying 'in season', using local markets, farmers markets / shops etc, choosing products with minimal packaging and composting.
- 6.7 The **Strategy for the Food and Drink Industry in the South West of England 2005-2015** was received from South West Food and Drink. The strategy had the aim of the South West becoming the UK's leading food and drink region with successful and sustainable producers. There were nine objectives to help achieve this aim.
- 6.8 **Public procurement and its effect on Local Economic Development** – was a study carried out by the Strategic Procurement Unit of DCC and the New Economics Foundation. The key point of the report was that for every £1 spent locally, further income was generated for the local economy.
- 6.9 **Defra – Public Sector Food Procurement Report** - highlighted that the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative (PSFPI), launched in 2003, looked at ways in which the public sectors £1.8b annual food budget could contribute towards a more sustainable farming and food sector. There were five objectives including; raising production and process standards, increasing tenders from small and local producers, increasing consumption of healthy and nutritious food, reducing adverse environmental impacts of production and supply and increasing the capacity of small and local suppliers to meet demand.

The strategy was overseen by the Food Procurement Implementation Group.

- 6.10 Details were circulated on the **Farmers Weekly Food Miles Campaign**. Members noted there was a dedicated website, competitions (involving schools / school lunches) and promotions.

7.0 Forming Recommendations

- 7.1 This section of the report gives further details on how the recommendations were reached, should further information be required.

R1 – Members were aware that the Council was committed to improving and increasing local food networks. The group were impressed with the ongoing work and projects to raise awareness and wanted to see these efforts continued.

R2 – The Devon Food website (name to be established) was in the process of being updated. The original Devon Food Links website was a useful source of information in relation to local sourcing, producers, recipes, farmers markets etc and the Task Group would want the Council to support the development of this site.

R3 – The Task Group members were fully supportive of the school meals review and of the efforts that had been made to date, but felt there were other areas where improvements could be made. The reasoning behind recommendation 3 (a to h) is detailed below;

- a) it was important that the amount of local food incorporated within school meals did not remain static and that continuous improvement was made to increase the amounts of local produce;
- b) Members felt that the establishment of a target gave a measurable goal for the supply of local produce within school meals and that a target of 70% should be considered for adoption and monitoring. This was a target that had been previously suggested;
- c) the Task Group felt that there was a lack of knowledge amongst children on the origins of food, with some children not knowing the difference between various vegetables. Such farm related site visits should re-connect the consumer and help improve this situation;
- d) in the same vein, the Task Group felt that Government should be lobbied to review the national curriculum to include basic food and nutrition. There is a generation of young people not understanding the basics and this has to change;
- e) the DESWG is an important group (incorporating teachers, local government officers, members of NGOs, higher education representatives and other environmental / development education providers). They take a leading role in Devon in developing Education for Sustainable Development materials and providing a resource group to help schools to develop their own Education for Sustainability initiatives. They are therefore in a good position to extend their remit to contribute towards improving educational standards in sustainable farming and food;
- f) whilst there is generally a national drive for consumers to source and purchase locally, there appears to be less of a drive on the importance of eating seasonal food. Members therefore request the pilot be undertaken to ascertain the feasibility of more seasonal food being used within school catering. Seasonal fruit and vegetables can often be purchased cheaply, therefore there could be an opportunity to reduce costs.
- g) the recommendation is self explanatory and will help contribute towards the educational aspect;
- h) schools had the option of opting out of DDS control for catering. However, those schools who opted out were not receiving the same level of support as those served by DDS. This is an aspect that needs to be addressed.

R4 – Again, stressing the educational aspect of food and nutrition, the Task group felt it was important that more promotional material could assist, especially in schools, with the education of children. For example, a ‘seasonal wheel’ was suggested which could be used to encourage children to understand the importance and benefits of local, seasonal food.

R5 – Throughout the investigation, there was a recurring theme that, as a Council, there was a need to ensure our ‘own house’ was in order before promoting the importance of purchasing locally and seasonally to the public and other organisations. It was apparent that some aspects of the Council’s own catering were not as ‘local’ as they could be, although efforts were being made to change this. A recent example was booking a meeting room to host external guests and the room only supplied coffee from a vending machine. The coffee was not pleasant to taste and was served in plastic cups, which goes against the policies of making Devon Greener, reducing waste and supporting local food and drink. The establishment of an appropriate local sourcing policy would present an opportunity to establish a baseline.

- a) The definition of local differed from person to person. For example, some individuals felt that Devon defined local, with others suggesting regional was more appropriate. The Task Group suggest that local should mean ‘local as possible’ therefore if what is required is only 3 miles away that this should be investigated in the first instance, only moving outwards if necessary;
- b) When contractors are used, the Task Group requires an assurance that the contractors policies have been reviewed to ensure they reflect the values of the Council;

- c) Food packaging is a huge problem within society and is contributing to the growing waste problem and putting pressure on landfill sites. Members felt that any local sourcing policy should consider not only the quantity of packaging but whether this is locally sourced also;
- d) As with the school meals target, members also felt appropriate 'local content' targets should be established for local content in all DCC catering;
- e) The food served from Council catering outlets lacked nutritional information, especially hot meals, therefore the Task Group felt that further information should be made available;
- f) One of the aims of the Workplace Food and Nutrition Steering Group was to improve nutritional standards, due to the effects that these can have on general health and well being. The Council should support any initiatives which help to contribute towards this aim;
- g) The Task Group felt that the work of the Food and Nutrition Steering Group would be important to the Council, especially for staff. The Council should, therefore, support its work, including that of producing a healthy eating policy, which would include access to healthy options and standards to be achieved.

R6 – This recommendation followed in the same vein as 3f, where an analysed pilot takes place within Coaver to assess the success of a more seasonal menu. Again, the Task Group felt this might allow a more seasonal menu to be achieved in the longer term.

R7 – There have been one or two examples of local producers attending County Hall and allowing staff to sample their produce (e.g. soup). The Task Group felt these were good opportunities for both producers to widen their market and for staff to understand more about the variety of local produce available. The Council should continue to allow these tasting sessions, if approached, and ensure they are well publicised, as this appeared to lacking on the previous occasion.

R8 – Whilst actions on a local level are important, the themes of food, nutrition, local sourcing, seasonality and reduction of food miles need to be highlighted at a strategic level. The Task Group felt the Council was in the best position to choose the most appropriate channel, but the LAA process may be an option for delivery, through the Children and Young People or Healthier Communities and Older People blocks.

R9 – Whilst discussions were held with procurement, it became apparent that some of the European procurement legislation made it difficult to tender locally. The Procurement Unit has previously made representations at EU level to remove food from the 'A' category of the regulations and the Task Group felt the Council should continue to support them in their efforts.

R10 – The Task Group were impressed by some of the new systems that had been implemented by the Procurement Unit, particularly those which allowed smaller producers to compete in the tendering market. In this respect, the Task Group felt that it was crucial that these systems continued (and improvements made where appropriate) and that any other initiatives which contributed to helping smaller producers compete in the market should be wholeheartedly supported.

R11 – Procurement forms a large part of an organisation's ability to source locally and the Task Group felt that there were a number of actions that the Council could take to improve the process.

In the first instance, actions a, b and c would allow a baseline to be obtained, showing current purchases, what is required and where this can be obtained. This will also demonstrate that the Council has undergone a thorough process to source as locally as possible, whilst contributing to reduced food miles.

Members also felt a regularly updated directory might prove useful, especially for advice to other directorates and that an assessment of sourcing separately for food and

distribution might give the Council greater options in its procurement of food and distribution services.

Finally, it was crucial to work with partners and there was information and resources available to be used. The Council needs to make best use of these resources (e.g. SWFD) and share and learn best practice.

R12 – One of the major problems highlighted was that, when other directorates were looking at contracting issues, procurement had not been involved at an early stage. This had caused problems later in the process. The Task group would like to see a formal protocol / working practice whereby procurement are immediately informed of the requirements. They are then in a position to offer help and guidance.

R13 – The Chair of the Task Group visited the Kingsley Village Hall (located in Cornwall) during the course of the investigation. Following discussion on the concept of the project, Members agreed that there may be scope within Devon for a similar project which supported the ‘Devon Brand’, particularly those items which had been made and / or grown within the county. Whilst location may present a challenge, the Task Group would ask that the concept is supported. If this comes to fruition, a re-branding exercise should also be considered as a way of further promoting the ‘Devon Brand’.

R14 – Through the work of the Environment, Economy and Culture OSC, Members had been made aware of the lack of available employment space, especially for the smaller trader. Whilst there is a requirement for employment space in general, Members felt that affordable space for such industries was crucial and the Council needed to support their development.

R15 – Whilst no issues were highlighted in relation to planning / highways issues, the Task Group felt that ‘business friendly’ policies and procedures should be applied to those local food related businesses wishing to develop to assist growth of the industry. This could be executed through various regeneration plans and by dissemination to District Council’s, who can apply this through the relevant planning guidance.

R16 – The Task Group felt that there were missed opportunities with the circulation of the Devon Food magazine therefore have asked for the circulation to be reviewed and consider further opportunities for promoting tourism (for example, the ferry and the airport). Copies should be found in Tourist Information Centre’s as a matter of course, yet some members could not recall seeing these.

R17 – In line with the Council setting an example, the Task Group felt, as the current owner of the airport, the Council should encourage the current (and future) franchisee to sell goods local to Devon. This would assist with tourism promotion. As an example, the only water available to purchase was French, which does not contribute towards reducing food miles.

R18 – The Council has good working relations with many partner organisations and these should be maintained. In addition, the Task Group were keen to ask that the Council continued to support the work of the DRN, which was a key body for leading and co-ordinating such partnership working. Other organisations undertook specialist roles (for example lobbying the retail sector) and whilst the Council was not in a position to undertake the same actions, they should support / assist those who did, wherever possible.

R19 – There was support for the soon to be established ‘Food and Nutrition Steering group’. Cllr Foggin expressed an interest, both personally and professionally, in this area of work and was felt to be a suitable representative for the group. In addition, it was important that Councillors, who were also customers of the Coaver, were represented.

R20 – Members felt that the listing of the Devon menus at the front of the DDS pamphlet might help to encourage more individuals to order the ‘locally produced’ lunches. Whilst

members were not advocating the menu be redesigned, it was suggested this be undertaken when the menus were scheduled to be updated.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The food system places significant burdens on society and the environment. One particular study estimated the food chain's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions to be at least 22% of the UK total. This leads many critics of the food industry to advocate a system based on localism, including seasonal food, produced within the locality, reflecting the 'true' costs of production, whilst also ensuring a fair deal for the producer.
- 8.2 The following quote from the Policy Commission on Farming and Food (P.119) summarises perfectly.
- “Local food markets could deliver on all aspects of sustainable development, economic (by providing producers with a profitable route to market), environmental (by cutting down on the pollution associated with food transportation, and by interesting consumers in how the land around them is farmed), and social (by encouraging a sense of community between buyer and seller, town and country).”
- 8.3 The issue of a sustainable future is one of great concern. The County Council has a crucial role in educating the public, which they do, regarding the importance of supporting local food and produce, but more important, the Council must be an ambassador for good practice.

Cllr J Berry
Cllr G Hook (Chair)
Cllr B Hughes
Cllr S Hughes
Cllr O Foggin
Cllr J Jenkins

| Local Government Act 1972 List of Background Papers | | |
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| Background Papers | Date | File Reference |
| Transport 2000: The Relationship between food, transport and CO2 emissions | November 2003 | |
| Defra Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy | 2002 | |
| Defra 'Lifting the Lid on Public Sector Food Procurement' | | |
| Public Procurement and its effects on Local Economic Development. | December 2003 | |
| Common Ground 'Producing the Goods' | 2005 | |
| The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development | July 2005 | |
| Sustainable Farming and Food Action Plan (DCC) | January 2005 | |
| SWFD ' A Strategy for Food and Drink for the South West of England 2005-2015. | 2005 | |
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