

Title of Report:	Use of Local Resources - Local Food
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	31 March 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2191

Purpose of Report: To provide the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Recommended Action: That Officers' response to the recommendations is endorsed by the Executive.

Reason for decision to be taken: To provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Report presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 2nd November 2010.

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:
promoting the use of local food and healthier eating within the district of West Berkshire.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Hilary Cole - Tel (01635) 248542
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	16 February 2011

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Implications

- Policy:** If adopted, introduction of a Sustainable Procurement Risk Assessment Methodology within West Berkshire Council will require individual Services to consider sustainable issues and identify/mitigate potential risks as part of the procurement process.
- Financial:** Any financial implications of adopting a Sustainable Procurement Risk Assessment Methodology will be considered as part of this individual piece of work
- Personnel:** None identified
- Legal/Procurement:** See above in Policy
- Property:** Not applicable
- Risk Management:** Not applicable
- Equalities Impact Assessment:** The recommendations specifically relate to actions that would promote, and potentially increase, the use of local food within West Berkshire. It is believed that this will have the impact of increasing choice for consumers and as such there is no evidence that this would detrimentally affect any group.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2009, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) endorsed a proposal from the Greener Select Committee (GSC) to conduct a review into the use of local food and the work being proposed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in promoting the use of local food, to include the following key areas:
- (1) Identifying the work being undertaken by the LSP;
 - (2) Identifying the LSP performance targets;
 - (3) Understanding the barriers to meeting the LSP targets;
 - (4) To look at ways of overcoming barriers to performance; and
 - (5) Report to the Portfolio Holder and the West Berkshire Partnership with recommendations how West Berkshire Council can encourage the use of local food.
- 1.2 The review was undertaken in 2010, with evidence being presented to the GSC between January and September 2010.
- 1.3 The findings of the review together with recommendations arising were endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission at their meeting on the 2nd November 2010. The report as submitted to the OSMC on 2nd November is attached for information as Appendix A.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The Executive response to the recommendations is set out in the report.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The consultation with Council Officers found that, in general, there is a lot of work promoting food standards, local food and healthy eating already underway within the Council.
- 3.2 Officers felt that some of the recommendations would add value to this work, however some are considered to be unviable due to legislative restrictions and the current economic climate.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2009, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) endorsed a proposal from the Greener Select Committee (GSC) to conduct a review into the use of local food and the work being proposed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in promoting the use of local food.
- 1.2 Meetings took place between January 2010 and September 2010, where evidence from representatives of the LSP Greener sub-partnership, The Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm) and the Local Food Group was heard by the GSC.
- 1.3 In addition, officers from Legal & Electoral Services attended to provide information and discuss procedures for the Council's procurement process.
- 1.4 The recommendations have been considered by officers within Policy & Communication, Education, Property & Public Protection, Highways & Transport, Cultural Services and Legal & Electoral Services

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The recommendations are set out below, together with the Service response.

Recommendation 1	Recommend that the Council's Corporate Director for Environment secure funding to enable the LSP's Greener sub-partnership establish current level of local food consumption as long as an affordable methodology is in place to undertake future surveys.
Service response	Since this recommendation was put forward by the Greener Select Committee further work has been undertaken with the LSP Greener sub-partnership. The work to produce an appropriate methodology has now been scaled back to a more affordable option and the funding required has been secured from West Berkshire Council and the Atomic Weapons Establishment.
Action to be taken	None
Target deadline	N/A
Evidence of achievement	N/A
Lead Officer	N/A

Recommendation 2	Recommend that the Council via its Corporate Director for Environment voice its support to national initiatives for clear food labelling and standards.
Service response	The Trading Standards Service (TS) has full legal responsibility for legislation relating to food standards (quality and composition), food labelling, agriculture standards (including animal feeds, fertilisers and pesticide controls), animal health and welfare and organic, local, home made and other claims.

	In discharging this responsibility, TS have delivered food labelling seminars in West Berkshire Schools and also undertaken work to monitor standards for school meals, meals on wheels etc and carry out sampling and analysis to this effect from local producers. Therefore supporting national initiatives for clear food labelling and standards.
Action to be taken	Food labelling and standards is part of Trading Standards core service and so will be supported with officer resource and funding.
Target deadline	Ongoing
Evidence of achievement	
Lead Officer	Sean Murphy

Recommendation 3	Recommended that the Council via its Corporate Director for Environment works with the Local Strategic Partnership in the promotion of the benefits of locally produced food and promote healthy eating on low incomes.
Service response	<p>Trading Standards have a comprehensive nutritional education programme in primary schools and have done a lot of work with adult care and health visitors running food and nutrition courses. This work has been shortlisted for a national award.</p> <p>The Food Safety Team from Environmental Health and Licensing have officers with skills in food safety, nutrition and hygiene. They use these abilities to influence the behaviour of food businesses and have a unique position of being able to link legal requirements and good practice together. The remit also extends into educational programmes for targeted residents and schools. Successful projects include healthy eating on a budget and many promotional campaigns in residential care, health centres and future projects will introduce a sustainability element with regards local food.</p> <p>The team is also investigating the potential for expanding its role in the promotion local food producers and the implementation of a sector specific award scheme that will include sustainability as part of its criteria.</p>
Action to be taken	<p>The Food Safety Team in Environmental Health and Licensing will create an action plan which details officers annual projects aimed at delivering improved local knowledge and understanding of locally produced food, healthy eating and the use of award schemes to incentivise business.</p> <p>The targets will be embedded into the overall service plan and reported progress will be fed into the LSP process.</p>
Target deadline	March 2012
Evidence of	Food Safety Sub-Team Action Plan 2011-12

achievement	Environmental Health and Licensing Team Plan 2011-12 Updated web pages within EH&L scope Project summary reports from officers involved in delivering service.
Lead Officer	Paul Anstey

Recommendation 4	Recommended that the Council via its Corporate Director for Environment works with the Local Strategic Partnership's Greener sub-partnership, the Nature Discovery Centre and the Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm) to ascertain what joint initiatives could be undertaken to promote, educate and encourage a greater use of local food and healthy eating.
Service response	Whilst the Nature Discovery Centre welcomes this recommendation and is keen to work with the LSP Greener sub-partnership and the Organic Research Centre to ascertain what joint initiatives could be undertaken, it should be noted that due to current educational programme commitments delivery of any such initiative would have to be after September 2011. Subject to discussion and agreement with the LSP and Elm Farm, potential initiatives could be centred on other national events such as 'Organic Fortnight' in September and local events such as the Thatcham Festival of Arts in October 2011.
Action to be taken	Lead Officer to discuss the promotion of local food and healthy eating with the representative from the LSP Greener sub-partnership responsible for Local Food target and Elm Farm, with the potential for delivery of joint initiatives in late 2011.
Target deadline	December 2011
Evidence of achievement	
Lead Officer	Fiona Mackenzie

Recommendation 5	Recommended that the Council's Economic Development Officer liaise with the Berkshire Food Group to ascertain what funding streams may be available to support the food group and how the Council may be able to promote the organisations work.
Service response	The Economic Development Officer post is being discontinued from 1 st April 2011. Although essential functions will transfer to other officers there will be no capacity to take forward this recommendation.
Action to be taken	N/A
Target deadline	N/A
Evidence of achievement	N/A
Lead Officer	N/A

Recommendation 6	Recommended that the Council's Head of Highways and Transport and Head of Cultural Services consult with Newbury's Chartered Market and the Farmers Market to discuss possible improvements to road signage advertising the markets and promoting local markets via 'Visit Newbury'.
Service response	<p>There needs to be a distinction between what is road signage and notices. Highways and Transport would not wish to encourage any 'road signage advertising the market' as it would be illegal to use road signs for this purpose. However, the event organisers are able to put up 'temporary notices' advertising the individual markets on the days that they take place. As Newbury Town Council has responsibility for the Chartered Market they should be the first point of contact for the event organisers on any discussion to improve these advertising notices. If required, Newbury Town Council could then consult with Highways and Transport on any technical points. The Farmers Market has already agreed the form of the temporary notices directly with Highways and Transport and the locations where they are to be erected on market days. This arrangement has been in place for some time and works well. Consequently here is no action required from the Council on improvements to road signage.</p> <p>Entries to the 'Visit Newbury' Website are available to all local businesses, including the markets. However, each retailer, or retail consortium pays for their entry. It would therefore be considered unfair on other local food stores to provide a free of charge entry for the Markets. The lead officer responsible for the website will happily consult with the respective market managers should they wish to pay for an entry.</p>
Action to be taken	None
Target deadline	N/A
Evidence of achievement	N/A
Lead Officer	N/A

Recommendation 7	Recommended that the Council via the Head of Legal and Electoral Services support sustainable food production, provide nutritionally balanced meals in schools, workplace and community facilities by introducing a Sustainable Procurement Impact Assessment integrated within the procurement process, that considered locality as part of this process.
Service response	The Council's Procurement team have provided a draft version of a Sustainable Procurement Risk Assessment Methodology (SPRAM), which was developed by the Department of Work and Pensions, as a possible tool for the Council to ensure sustainable issues and risks are identified and mitigated. Under the heading of Social & Economic Aspects, service areas would need to identify and mitigate any perceived risks prior to going out to procurement. The SPRAM is currently being considered by the Council's Cleaner Greener Group and, if approved, this Group will make a recommendation to Corporate Board that this

	<p>is adapted and adopted by the Council.</p> <p>However, although the focus on encouraging local food production is to be applauded, there needs to be some acknowledgement that this may not be suitable in terms of quality, quantity, price and seasonality. In the existing catering contracts, the Council encourages the use of local sources of food production, but this may not always be possible if local sources are not of the required quality that food wholesalers and catering providers require.</p> <p>As an example, the Council has made attempts to secure local meat / meat products for the school meals provision. However, there is no local Butcher or Organic farm that can provide the quality or quantity required for nearly 5000 covers a day. With portion size for children set by the government the product must also be consistent in size. The Council also supports and encourages its Schools Meals provider to source products from red tractor farm assured and marine stewardship council approved suppliers. However, neither of these can currently be provided from local suppliers in the quantities that the Council requires.</p>
Action to be taken	Subject to appropriate approval, the SPRAM to be adapted and adopted as part of West Berkshire Council's procurement process.
Target deadline	June 2011
Evidence of achievement	Paper on SPRAM taken to Corporate Board and proposal accepted. SPRAM formally adopted by West Berkshire Council
Lead Officer	Mike Sullivan

Recommendation 8	Recommended that the Council's Corporate Director for Environment publish, on its website, information to help parish / town councils establish allotments.
Service response	<p>As this specific information is to be targeted at parish / town councils then it is best combined with the information already published on the Council's web site as part of the work undertaken by the Policy & Communication Service area.</p> <p>However, whilst the Service area supports the recommendation it does not have the expertise to be able to write on such a specific topic and therefore would be looking for input from other contributory sources such as the LSP Greener sub-partnership to actually populate the Council web page.</p>
Action to be taken	Service area to liaise with the representative of the LSP Greener Partnership responsible for Local Food target on the publication of this topic.
Target deadline	Linked to Recommendation 9
Evidence of achievement	A 'How to establish allotments' web page for parish / town councils published on the Council's website.
Lead Officer	Helen Bartholomew

Recommendation 9	Recommended that a 'Meet the Expert' event be organised by the Head of policy and Communication to provide information for parish / town councillors on establishing and running allotments.
Service response	The Service supports this recommendation and will add such an event to the programme for 2011/12.
Action to be taken	A 'Meet the Expert' event for parish / town councillors centred on establishing and running allotments will be added into the programme for 2011/12.
Target deadline	September 2012
Evidence of achievement	A 'Meet the Expert' event added to the programme for 2011/12, organised and delivered.
Lead Officer	Jo Naylor

Appendices

Appendix A – Report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 2nd November 2010.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: None

Officers Consulted: John Ashworth, David Holling, David Lowe, Andy Day, Sean Murphy, Paul Anstey, Sam Shepherd, Jo Naylor, Mike Sullivan, Mark Edwards, David Appleton, Amerie Bailey, Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/A

Appendix A

Title of Report:	Use of Local Resources – Local Food
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2010
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

Purpose of Report: For the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to consider the recommendations of the Greener Select Commission review into promoting local food.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission recommends the finding of the review into local food be considered by West Berkshire Council's Executive.

Greener Select Committee Chairman Details	
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Executive Report

3. Introduction

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Greener Select Committee on 8 December 2009 it was resolved that the Committee would start its review of the use of local resources and that they would initially be concentrating on the use of local food.
- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission agreed the terms of reference for this review at its meeting on 1st December 2009. It was proposed that the Committee would examine the work being proposed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in promoting the use of local food.
- 3.3 The Greener Select Committee agreed to conduct the review initially looking at:
- Identifying the work being undertaken by the LSP;
 - Identifying the LSP performance measures and assess meeting these targets;
 - Understanding the barriers to meeting the LSP targets;
 - To look at ways of overcoming barriers to performance; and
 - Report to the Portfolio Holder and the West Berkshire Partnership with recommendations how West Berkshire Council can encourage the use of local resources.
- 3.4 The review would be undertaken during 2010 with evidence being presented to the Greener Select Committee with draft findings being presented at the Select Committee on 14 December 2010 prior to being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

4. West Berkshire Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Greener Sub-Partnership

- 4.1 The Committee considered a presentation concerning the work of the West Berkshire Partnership's Greener Partnership in relation to their work promoting local food.
- 4.2 Kelvin Hughes, Chief Executive Newbury Community Resource Centre, informed Members that the West Berkshire Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Greener Sub-Partnership had been tasked within The Sustainable Community Strategy ([A Breath of Fresh Air](#)) with a priority outcome to have five percent of all the food consumed within West Berkshire grown within the district.
- 4.3 In order to reach the five percent target by 2026 the current levels of production and consumption needed to be established. The methodology for establishing this baseline figure needed to be replicated in future years without costly specialist input.
- 4.4 In order to meet the LSP target four actions had been established; secure funding from the National Lottery, establish the baseline figure, enlist the support of three organisations as local 'champions' and deliver a publicity campaign to promote the

purchase of local produce. Funding had been secured for the last two objectives; however this could not be used for establishing the baseline figure.

4.5 Reading University were able to undertake this piece of work at a cost of £10,000. £2,500 towards the cost had been secured; however the remaining £7,500 had not been found.

4.6 Recommend that the Council's Corporate Director for Environment secure funding to enable the LSP's Greener sub-partnership establish current level of local food consumption as long as an affordable methodology is in place to undertake future surveys.

4.7 Following the above recommendation made by the Greener Select Committee further work was undertaken with the LSP Greener Sub-Committee, it was recommended that the cost of the base survey be scaled back to a more affordable option. The funding has since been secured from West Berkshire Council and the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

5. The Organic Research Centre

5.1 The Committee considered evidence from Nic Lampkin, Executive Director Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm) and Lawrence Woodward, Co-Director Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm).

5.2 The Organic Research Centre's, aim was to develop and support sustainable land-use, agriculture and food systems, primarily within local economies, which build on organic principles to ensure the health and well-being of soil, plants, animals, people and the environment.

5.3 The Organic Research Centre was established as a "Centre of Excellence" to address the major issues raised by a global economy based on an intensive agricultural system.

5.4 It was the UK's leading research, development and advisory institution for organic agriculture, having played a pivotal role in the development of organic research, policy and standards since 1980.

5.5 The Committee were informed that the Organic Research Centre supported the views raised by Kelvin Hughes regarding the work being undertaken by the Local Strategic Partnership's Greener Sub-Partnership.

5.6 Members were informed that local production was important to assist local economic development by targeting spend on local communities, to help reduce energy used and greenhouse gas emitted by reducing food miles and improving food quality through improved freshness.

5.7 It was felt that people needed to question what quality standards were guaranteed, how energy or carbon efficient the production and transport of the food was, did buying from a local business ensure local production and was local trade necessarily fair and ethical?

5.8 To make sure local production did make a real contribution to sustainability local food should meet environmental standards, meet food quality standards, meet animal welfare standards and be aware of social standards such as Fair Trade.

5.9 The sustainable benefit of organic food was recognised across Europe and by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The benefits included reduced energy consumption, increased biodiversity, reduced pollution, high animal welfare standards, increased evidence of food quality benefits and positive social impacts such as increased employment.

5.10 Recommended that Council via its Corporate Director for Environment voice its support to national initiatives for clear food labelling and standards.

5.11 With regards to organic food the committee were informed that organic farms aimed to improve the quality and sustainability of food production that operated to standards that addressed environmental and animal welfare issues. As the term 'organic food' was legally defined and regulated its standards should be more reliable than food labelled as local without any quality assurance.

5.12 The committee were also informed that organic food need not be significantly more expensive and the additional costs were usually associated with supermarkets artificially increasing the cost. It was important to challenge the myth that healthy eating has to cost more.

5.13 Recommended that the Council via its Corporate Director for Environment works with the Local Strategic Partnership in the promotion of the benefits of locally produced food and promote healthy eating on low incomes.

5.14 Members were informed that the Organic Research Centre could help by providing advice on local food issues, advice on standards and regulations, support school education activities and be an active partner with the Local Strategic Partnership. The research centre had also recently opened its conference centre and was keen to work on joint initiatives with the Nature Discovery Centre.

5.15 Recommended that the Council via its Corporate Director for Environment works with the Local Strategic Partnership's Greener Sub-Committee, the Nature Discovery Centre and the Organic Research Centre to ascertain what joint initiatives could be undertaken to promote, educate and encourage a greater use of local food and healthy eating.

6. Local Food Groups and Farmers Markets

6.1 Tamara Schiopu attended the meeting to inform the work of the Local Food Group and to answer any questions pertinent to the committees review.

6.2 The committee were informed that the term 'local' could be very wide or narrow in its definition. As the Local Food Group covered three counties they classed local food as food produced in these counties, they did not wish to introduce barriers to collective working.

6.3 Members were informed that there used to be three separate food groups, in 2004 they were merged with the aid of funding from the South East England Development Agency.

6.4 This funding ceased on 31 March 2010 and the group were looking for additional support. Since the group were created they had become a support network for local producers and worked at introducing local suppliers to local businesses.

6.5 'Meet the buyer' events were held and they also published Local Flavours that promoted locally produced food and drink. If funding could be found they would like to introduce local food walks and a food and drink trade show in West Berkshire.

6.6 Recommended that the Council's Economic Development Officer liaise with the Berkshire Food Group to ascertain what funding streams may be available to support the food group and how the Council may be able to promote the organisations work.

6.7 Alexander Farrow, Thames Valley Market Co-Operative, informed the committee that the co-operative were a 'not-for-profit' organisation that promoted fresh, seasonal, local food.

6.8 Most produce for the Newbury Farmers Market were produced within 30 miles, however they had to be flexible, for example the fish came from Southsea. The idea was to be more local rather than totally local. Farmers markets could be useful as local food hubs and local restaurants have been asked to cook at local markets.

6.9 As markets were not always weekly it was difficult to get people to visit them as part of their shopping routine. The Council could help farmers markets by improving signage to make people aware when they were in town.

6.10 Recommended that the Council's Head of Highways and Transport and Head of Cultural Services consult with Newbury's Chartered Market and the Farmers Market to discuss possible improvements to road signage advertising the markets and promoting local markets via 'Visit Newbury'.

7. Procurement of Local Food

7.1 Leigh Hogan, Team Leader, Legal and Electoral Services and Mike Sullivan, Contracts and Procurement Officer, gave evidence on the Council's procurement process.

7.2 Members were informed that under the Council's Contract Rules of Procedure and The Public Contracts Regulations 2006, the authority was not allowed to discriminate when awarding contracts. This meant that they could not offer a contract to a supplier on the grounds of their locality.

7.3 The Council did not procure food directly; however there were contracts to supply meals to schools and Council owned care homes. When setting these contracts the authority was able to insert a clause that the contractor would explore the use of local businesses. This was not always possible as consideration to the producers' ability to produce the right quality and quantity was more important than locality.

7.4 The Committee felt that although the Council did not procure food directly it was important to encourage contractors to look at using local produce as sustainable food helped:

- Promote good health.
- Improve access to healthy food.
- Helps support the local economy.
- Promotes eating food in season.

- Encourage sustainable farming, involving high environmental standards and reduced energy consumption (food miles).

7.5 Recommended that the Council via the Head of Legal and Electoral Services support sustainable food production provide nutritionally balanced meals in schools, workplace and community facilities by introducing a Sustainable Procurement Impact Assessment integrated within the procurement process, that considered locality as part of this process.

8. Allotments

8.1 Representatives from Newbury Town Council attended the Greener Select Committee to provide information on Newbury Town Council's work in supporting local allotments.

8.2 The Select Committee were informed that Newbury Town Council were undertaking a project called Sustainable Newbury that contained projects looking at local food production. The Town Council was also responsible for managing a number of allotments.

8.3 The Town Council had produced an allotment strategy and were committed to promoting healthy living through the development and management of six allotment sites in Newbury.

8.4 The Greener Select Committee were informed that not all surrounding parish councils provided allotments and they felt it would be helpful if West Berkshire District Council could provide guidance on how parish / town councils could establish allotments.

8.5 Recommended that the Council's Corporate Director for Environment publish, on its website, information to help parish / town councils establish allotments.

8.6 Recommended that a 'Meet the Expert' event be organised by the Head of Policy and Communication to provide information for parish / town councillors on establishing and running allotments.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.