



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

What is a community food initiative?

Community Food Initiatives foster communities where everyone has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food systems.

Here is an example...

Vale School Catering

creative 
RURAL COMMUNITIES

VALE of GLAMORGAN

BRO MORGANNWG

  
Cwmwl Amgwyddol Ewrop ar
yflwr Ddiwydiol Gwledig
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development
Europe Investing in Rural Areas
Llywodraeth Cymru
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Case Study

Community Food Initiatives

Project Background and Objectives:

In January 2019, a report was published which outlined the study undertaken to explore the feasibility of sourcing local produce from within the Vale of Glamorgan, to be used for school dinners.

A Local Authority Trading Company was created to embrace the catering department of the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Once established, this entity was not bound by the procurement rules that the wider Council had to adhere to, and therefore would be free to source produce locally, supporting the local environment, increasing sustainability and reducing food miles.

The feasibility study investigated the existing supply chains used by the Vale Council, to identify where and how opportunities could be made to supply local schools and hospitality venues within the Vale, with produce grown in the Vale or within a 75 mile radius.

The Council's Catering department wanted to exploit the opportunities within the Vale of Glamorgan area to enable the use of locally sourced, fresh produce to be incorporated into school menus.

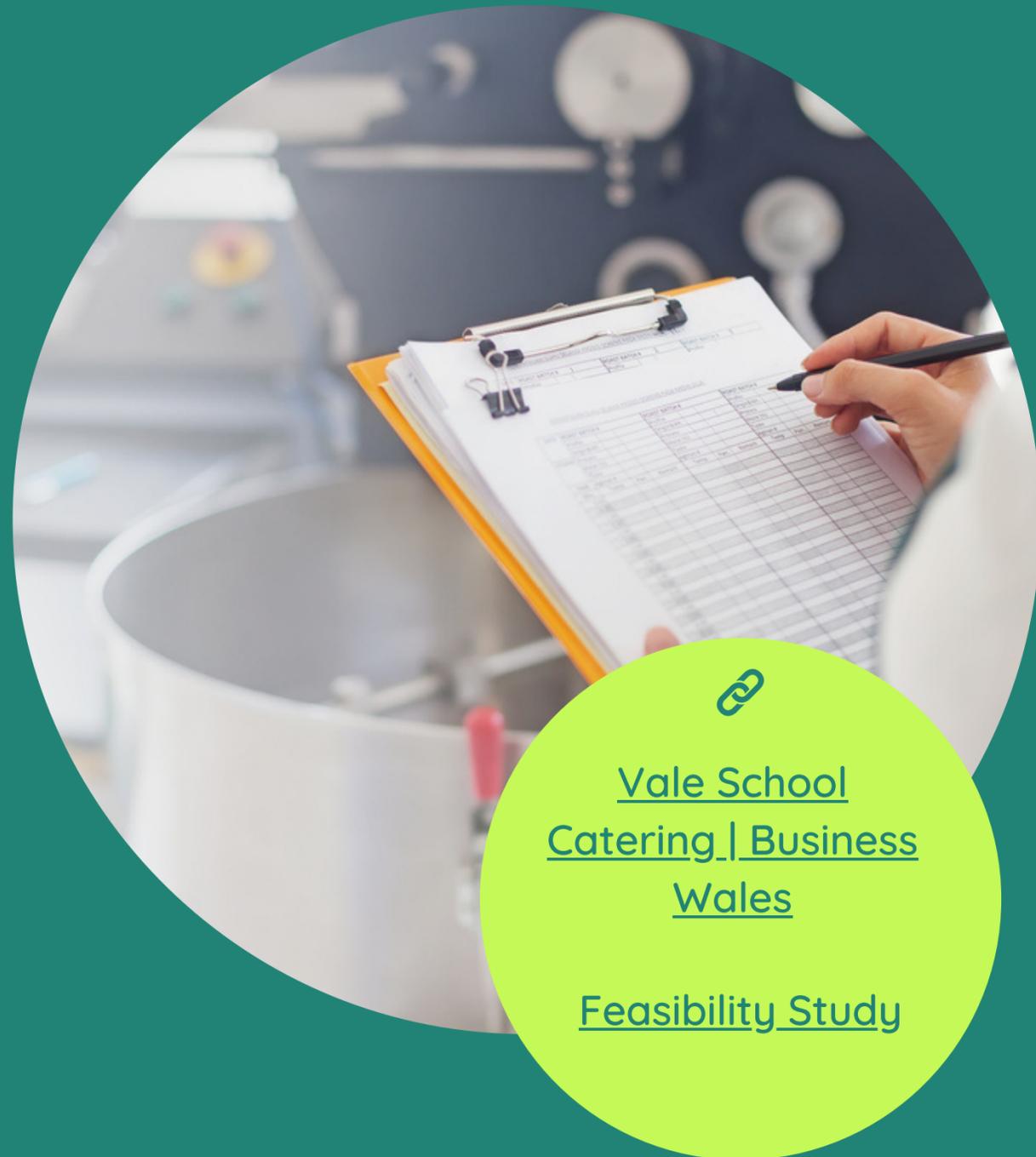
All meals were prepared from scratch in the existing onsite kitchens, using the fresh produce. The meals prepared focused on nutritional value, complying to the "Healthy Eating in Schools" nutritional standards, and included fresh vegetables and fruit every day.

The study area covered 46 primary schools and 5 secondary schools across the Vale, which combined provided approximately 1.3 million meals for their pupils each year.

An extensive programme of consultation and engagement was completed. This involved over 60 individual conversations with a range of local, regional and national stakeholders, farmers and food producers in order to explore the proposed initiative and create conclusions and recommendations.



Project Challenges and Key Learnings:



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[Feasibility Study](#)

The main challenges highlighted were that the majority of local produce is sold into supermarkets. However, a limited opportunity was identified to intervene in the supply chain process through direct agreements with local farmers and growers. Price sensitivity, and the ability to supply the quantity of produce was a big challenge to address, as none of the local producers within the desired 75 mile radius were geared up for large scale distribution of produce.

It was identified that school kitchens were not appropriately equipped to receive and process unwashed vegetables, nor did they have suitable peeling facilities, thus creating problems for direct deliveries of unwashed and non-prepared produce.

Whilst all producers contacted in the study were enthusiastic about the opportunity to raise awareness and educate school children about the food chain from farm to fork, they were concerned however about the consistency of demand.

Due to school terms the demand for their produce would be intermittent and not consistent throughout the year. This was seen as a major concern for producers.

It was not considered feasible to source all the required fresh produce from local supply chains, as many of the required food items are not produced in Wales. This was further impacted by a limited supply of salad crops.

However a mixed arrangement was deemed to be feasible, sourcing some produce directly from local suppliers, with the balance from wholesaler contracts. Furthermore, it was noted that this would need to be agreed on non-exclusive basis. The mixed sourcing approach could still focus on Welsh produce in general, rather than stipulate a 75 mile radius.

Food sourced from wholesalers would need to be able to identify the origin of supply chain, and this was acknowledged to be hard to establish for some food products.

The project identified that further negotiations would be necessary with specific local producers, to identify the potential scale and scope of supply and set a price point agreeable to, and sustainable, for both parties.

The study deemed it unlikely that local suppliers would tender for a published open contract given the complexity of the tender process and uncertainty over pricing and volumes required. Such conversations would need to take place some time ahead of implementation to ensure the detailed wider wholesaler contract agreements were in place.

Future Plans:

Whilst no definite plans to progress the new procurement business model were forthcoming, the feasibility study concluded that a mixed approach to food supply was considered to be most appropriate in the future.

It was felt that whilst some local produce could be sourced through negotiation with local suppliers and farmers, this would never fully replace the traditional wholesale supply chain.

New wholesale contracts were scheduled to be tendered during 2019 after the feasibility study had finished, and it was recommended that this should include greater prominence of Welsh produce and be structured on non-exclusive basis to allow for some direct local produce as well.

The study recommended that early negotiations with local producers should commence well in advance of any procurement, in order to inform the context for the wholesale tender contracts.

Meanwhile opportunities to trial available produce, working with kitchen staff and suppliers, should be explored including potential for catering for special events.

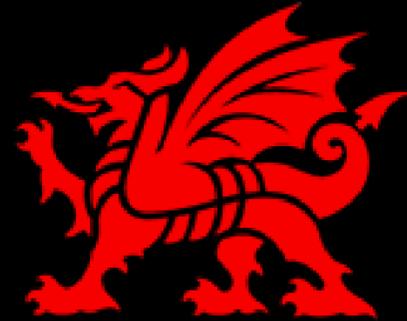
As a result of investigations, the potential opportunities for the way forward include:

- Renewal of Wholesale Contracts – based on price
- New Wholesale Contracts – with local/Welsh produce specified
- A “Balanced Arrangement” between wholesale and local procurement





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*With thanks to Vale School Catering for
participating in this case study*