

## School and Community Meals Service

### Supply of Local Produce – Q&A's

As one of the largest employers in the area and as the largest catering organisation in Tayside, serving over 5 million meals per year, we in [Tayside Contracts](#) have a strong commitment to corporate social, ethical and environmental responsibility. We are in a strong position to support the wider ambitions of our communities, to enhance the lives of everyone in Tayside.

Tayside Contracts recognises the benefit of healthy and sustainably sourced school and community meals and the impact that local contracts for school meal ingredients have, for the local and wider society.

We recognise the need to support local economic growth, and our Business Plan sets out our ambition: -

*To support our local businesses, we will work closely with local food and other producers, to maximise their access to our procurement opportunities and supply chains, in a way which ensures all parties meet their legal responsibilities.*

Tayside Contracts serves up to 30,000 school meals in 183 schools and 800 Community meals per day. Our school meals need to comply with the [Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools](#), as part of the healthy living agenda.

This Q&A document provides a general overview and summary of Tayside Contracts' activities and how we procure the produce we need to deliver our meals service and what we can do to work with local suppliers, including what we look for from our supply partners in terms of the operational requirements for our school and community meal provision.

#### **Q. How much food does Tayside Contracts need?**

**A.** On an annual basis, Tayside Contracts spends in the region of £5m on food for school and community meals.

This spend is broken down as follows: -

- Groceries, provisions and frozen food - £4.1m
- Fresh butcher meat - £350k
- Fresh fruit and vegetables – £310k
- Bakery products - £35k
- Fresh milk - £200k

# Annual usage of food items for school meals, some examples;



27,919kg



25,785kg



144,364



127,985



318,055



**Q. Can Tayside Contracts choose to 'buy local' from Tayside based food producers instead of going to other providers?**

**A.** The simple answer is 'no'. By law, we are required to follow certain practices – see below.

**Q. What are the procurement regulations?**

**A.** Tayside Contracts is a trading arm of the Tayside Local Authorities and therefore is subject to tender regulations under the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 which means we must procure goods, services and works in a fair and transparent manner. As an organisation, Tayside Contracts must ensure opportunities are available to all suppliers, including local suppliers. The majority of our contracts are procured collaboratively through Scotland Excel and the tenders are designed to encourage participation by suppliers of all sizes. All opportunities to supply Tayside Contracts are advertised on Public Contracts Scotland. This ensures that the opportunity is accessible to all interested parties, and that the process is transparent.

**Q. How straight forward is the public tender process?**

**A.** [Public Contracts Scotland](#) (PCS) is a national website, provided by the Scottish Government, where all public sector buying organisations must advertise all regulated procurements, so suppliers are encouraged to register to receive information about contracts that may be of interest. Tayside Contracts understands that the public tender process can appear complex, however assistance is available through engagement with Scotland Excel and other bodies such as the [Supplier Development Programme](#) which is a business support initiative providing assistance to local businesses.

It should be noted that products are procured in different commodities, for example fruit and veg, groceries, milk, fresh meats etc to ensure total costs are considered to achieve best value for Tayside Contracts.

Suppliers should also engage with the Supplier Development Programme and local procurement teams. The Councils' Economic Development departments host 'Meet the Buyer' events to promote future tender opportunities which Tayside Contracts attends. We are also happy to meet with local suppliers to inform on the intricacies of the procurement legislation and facilitate meetings between local suppliers and our supply chain. If you are interested in this, please contact Elaine Brown on 07767326826 or 01382 834075.

**Q. Is there a single production site for school meals?**

**A.** Tayside Contracts operates a CPU (Central Production Unit) service delivery model therefore all primary and nursery school meals and Dundee City Council Community Meals are produced on a single site based in Dundee. This means that although the main dishes, some starters and desserts on the school lunch menu are produced centrally at the CPU, there is a requirement for the accompaniments such as the vegetables, potatoes etc to be supplied to and prepared at the local Hub kitchens.

**Q. What do local suppliers need to be aware of when supplying to Tayside Contracts?**

**A.** Local suppliers should be aware that because of the volume of our meals service it is essential to that we have continuity of supply. Suppliers therefore must have the capacity to service the Tayside school estate. Other considerations that suppliers have to be aware of are: -

- The level of compliance required in terms of product specifications as there can be no deviations from this – further information is available on request
- There is no scope to substitute goods as a result of supply issues because we serve pupils with allergens and food intolerances, therefore we cannot have any variations
- We have high standards of quality requirements such as [Quality Meat Scotland](#) (QMS) butcher meat, [Red Tractor](#) chicken only, MSC ([Marine Stewardship Council](#)) certification for fish products
- Vegetables must have undergone a cleaning and preparation process. ‘Dirty’ vegetables cannot be delivered into school kitchens due to food safety risks and labour implications
- There are restrictions to access/delivery times to safeguard the health and safety of pupils, for example deliveries must be made to meet individual school requirements such as out with school break times and lunch service times

**Q. Can local suppliers service individual sites such as schools with individual products?**

**A.** No, suppliers must have the capacity to meet our entire demand to the entire school estate which includes deliveries to 90 sites up to 3 times per week as far as Kinloch Rannoch to Montrose. It is essential for our operations that service delivery is uninterrupted, and disruption kept to a minimum. Suppliers are required to be flexible and reactive to meet operational demands, for example changes to delivery schedules for our operations and additional deliveries at short notice. If local producers feel they can only provide partial supply within a tender, we can broker a discussion between the local producer and our major supply companies, so that local farms could possibly supply part of the produce that we need by entering the supply chain. Tayside Contracts procurement team is happy to facilitate contact between any local grower and our main suppliers.

For more information, please contact Elaine Brown on 07767326826 or 01382 834075.

**Q. Are the successful local suppliers awarded contracts on the basis of price alone?**

**A.** No, there are many factors taken into consideration when awarding contracts. An evaluation process is carried out which covers price, quality and service. Tenders will be awarded on what is known as the ‘Most Economical Advantageous Tender’. Considerations will be made to sustainability factors such as environmental and social, and the financial health of an organisation is also taken into account.

**Q. What if I need more information or a discussion with Tayside Contracts on how a local producer can get involved?**

**A.** Please contact our Procurement Team on 01382 834075, we will be happy to help.