



## **Sustainable Food Policy**

Aston University is committed to integrating sustainability into all aspects of catering to students, staff, visitors, conference delegates and leisure guests where practicable. We recognise our responsibility to carry out our procurement activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and to incorporate environmental and social considerations into our service and procurement selection processes. This is in part demonstrated by the accreditation of Conference Aston to ISO14001 standards. We also aspire to improve the health of our catering customers by increasing choice and access to fresh healthy food, as well as providing relevant information to enable customers to make informed choices. We will support agricultural practices that are environmentally friendly, economically viable and socially responsible by the way we purchase consumables and will incorporate energy reducing methods and practices in all aspects of food production.

The University endorses DEFRA's definition of Sustainable Food 1, and undertakes to provide food and drink that:

- is safe and contributes to a healthy diet
- supports a thriving and competitive food industry
- promote the highest standards of animal health and welfare
- deliver improving environmental impact throughout the lifecycle of the product or service

The Sustainable Food Policy will be supported by related policies that reflect specific sustainability issues, in particular the Sustainable Procurement Policy and by the development of a Sustainable Food Action Plan.

The policy will be implemented by the operational teams responsible for delivering catering services and monitored and reviewed by the Sustainable Aston Working Group (reporting to the University Executive), the Sustainable Procurement Working Group, and the Aston Fair Trade Steering Group. In line with current procedure, the policy will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed 24th September 2012, during the annual environmental management review by SAWG

## **1 Definition of sustainable food**

The Government, whilst fully complying with EU procurement rules, wants to lead by example by procuring food and food services that reflect the changes that it is aiming for across the whole of the food chain. This is a food system in which:

- Consumers are informed, can choose and afford healthy, sustainable food. This demand is met by profitable, competitive, highly skilled and resilient farming, fishing and food businesses, supported by first class research and development.
- Food is produced, processed, and distributed, to feed a growing global population in ways which:
  - use global natural resources sustainably,
  - enable the continuing provision of the benefits and services a healthy natural environment provides,
  - promote high standards of animal health and welfare,
  - protect food safety,
  - make a significant contribution to rural communities, and
  - allow us to show global leadership on food sustainability.
- Our food security is ensured through strong UK agriculture and food sectors and international trade links with EU and global partners, support developing economies.
- The UK has a low carbon food system which is efficient with resources – any waste is reused, recycled or used for energy generation.

Based on this, **sustainable food procurement** is a process whereby public authorities procure food, catering equipment and catering services that:

- contribute to a healthy diet;
- support a thriving and competitive food industry;
- promote high animal health and welfare standards; and
- deliver improving environmental impact throughout the lifecycle of the product or service.

The GBS for Food and Catering Services have been designed to reflect the minimum standards you need to achieve for your procurement to be considered sustainable.