

## **Sustainable Food Procurement Policy 2025**

University of Birmingham  
(Updated October 2025)

### **Purpose and Scope**

The University of Birmingham recognises that its food and drink procurement activities have a significant impact on health, the environment, society, and the economy. This policy sets out our commitment to embedding sustainable food procurement across all areas of the University, including catering, retail, hospitality, and events, whether delivered in-house or through contracted partners.

The policy applies to all staff involved in specifying, purchasing, or managing contracts for food and drink products and services.

### **Policy Statement**

The University is committed to delivering food and drink operations that support our wider Environmental Sustainability Strategy and our pathway to Net Zero Carbon by 2045.

We will achieve this by:

- Reducing the environmental impact of our food and drink supply chains,
- Supporting healthy, diverse, and sustainable diets,
- Ensuring ethical and transparent sourcing,
- Enabling value for money through long-term sustainable practice, and
- Working collaboratively with suppliers and partners to accelerate progress towards shared sustainability goals.

### **Working with Staff and Students**

- Promote good nutrition and encourage healthier, balanced food choices that support wellbeing.
- Raise awareness of the environmental and social impacts of food, empowering our community to make informed decisions.
- Increase use of seasonal and locally sourced produce wherever feasible.
- Continue to offer food choices that reflect the diversity and cultural backgrounds of our students, staff, and visitors.
- Reduce food waste across all operations through menu design, portion control, and data-led waste reduction tools.
- Reduce the use of single-use and disposable items, encouraging reusable and circular alternatives.
- Support initiatives that contribute to our carbon reduction, biodiversity, and social value objectives.

## **Working with Suppliers and Contractors**

The University will work in partnership with its suppliers, including Avendra International, our principal food procurement partner to continuously improve sustainability outcomes across the supply chain.

Together we will:

- Source responsibly, prioritising suppliers with recognised sustainability accreditations (e.g., EcoVadis, SEDEX) and commitments to reduce Scope 3 emissions.
- Promote transparency, ensuring supply chains are free from modern slavery and meet high standards of animal welfare and ethical trade.
- Encourage participation of local and SME suppliers, supporting the regional economy and social value.
- Reduce packaging and favour recyclable, compostable, or reusable alternatives.
- Work collaboratively to set supplier-level carbon reduction targets and monitor performance through tools such as Avendra's e-procurement system, Pi.
- Participate in initiatives such as the Hospitality Alliance for Responsible Procurement (HARP) to drive sector-wide progress.

## **Procurement Practice**

We will ensure that all food and drink procurement decisions consider:

- Environmental impact and life-cycle analysis of products;
- Provenance, seasonality, and local sourcing opportunities;
- Animal welfare and ethical standards;
- Resource efficiency, waste minimisation, and packaging reduction;
- Contribution to University sustainability targets and reporting.

Procurement specifications and tenders will require suppliers to demonstrate sustainability credentials, including measurable plans to reduce their carbon footprint and waste.

## **Collaboration and Continuous Improvement**

- Engage with the University's academic community to support research, innovation, and teaching related to sustainable food systems.
- Contribute data and case studies to inform teaching and operational learning.
- Regularly review this policy and associated action plans to ensure alignment with the University's Environmental Sustainability Strategy and UK legislative developments.
- Report annually on progress, including metrics on carbon reduction, food waste, and sustainable sourcing.

## **Governance and Accountability**

This policy is owned by the Food, Beverage & Retail (FBR) Division

Implementation will be overseen by the FBR Senior Leadership Team, with support from

Procurement, Sustainability, and Estates colleagues.

Performance will be measured through agreed sustainable procurement objectives and reviewed annually with Sustainability Steering Group (SSG)

Updated October 2025

Food, Beverage & Retail Division, University of Birmingham