



University of Essex



# **Sustainability Sub-Strategy Bitesize**

## **Priority 9: Food and Drink**

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Publication date:	July 2021
Amended:	September 2022
Review date:	July 2026

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# Introduction

Our Sustainability Sub-Strategy outlines our commitment to acting in response to the climate and ecological emergency, while supporting the University's mission of excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities.

## Priority 9: Food and Drink

Our community have shown they want quality food at various price points and their needs will continue to be the focus in the context of delivering sustainable, ethical, and nutritious food. Initiatives demonstrating best practice are already prevalent across our campuses with reusable cup discounts; biodegradable and compostable packaging; use of local suppliers; recycling of cooking oil as biofuel; welfare certified meat, dairy and fish. These practices will be further developed and communicated to our community to emphasise their importance and benefits.

Catering providers have a responsibility to the environment and to carry out activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, supporting their customers to make choices accordingly. All providers at the University of Essex will continue to incorporate environmental and social considerations into their operations, while working with suppliers to encourage them to minimise negative environmental and social effects associated with the products and services they provide. These principles will be adopted across all outlets, as well as for food and drink served for internal hospitality and external events and conferences.

**Objective: To reduce the environmental impact of all aspects of food and drink procurement, preparation, provision and promotion, helping customers make more sustainable choices through a coordinated approach from all providers.**

- An ethical procurement and supply chain will allow our community to benefit from catering operations offering local, healthy, produce with high welfare standards and an increase in environmentally conscious menu options.
- Our catering environments, activities and the equipment used will offer opportunities to further reduce our environment and carbon impact and contribute to our overall carbon reduction aspiration.
- Across our catering outlets, hospitality and external events and conferences we will address single use plastics, reduce food waste, increase recycling and develop plant-based menu choices.
- A strong environmental marketing and communication strategy will realise the benefits of behavioural change, supporting our communities to make positive environmental choices.

## Key Performance Indicators

KPI 27: Sustainable Food and Drink Policy that ensures ethical and sustainable purchasing using local and seasonal produce created and being delivered by 2023

KPI 28: By 2026, vegetarian and vegan food will represent 50% of all menu choices available within Essex Food restaurant menus

KPI 29: By 2024 single use plastics will not be used by catering or be available in catering outlets

# Action Plan

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Priority 9			Food and Drink	
Aim			To reduce the environmental impact of all aspects of food and drink procurement, preparation, provision and promotion, helping customers make more sustainable choices through a coordinated approach from all providers	
Objective		SSS41	Ensure an ethical procurement and supply chain	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS41.1	'Sustainable food' is a contract requirement for all tenders	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS41.2	Purchase all meat from sources with high welfare standards, with farm to plate traceability	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS41.3	Fish purchases will be from MSC approved sources and all catering outlets will use fish certified to Marine Stewardship Council standards	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS41.4	Obtain all coffee from ethically sourced companies	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS41.5	Source all fruit and vegetables from the UK where possible and purchase fresh, seasonal produce	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS41.6	All Essex Food outlets will work together to optimise orders and consolidate the quality of deliveries	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Objective		SSS42	Reduce the environmental impact of catering equipment and catering environments	
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS42.1	Review catering spaces to better understand the spaces and equipment, identify and implement opportunities for greater efficiencies (front and back of house)	Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS42.2	All existing and new equipment to include maintenance and servicing contracts to maximise energy efficiency	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS42.3	Create an equipment purchase policy to set standards for energy efficiency and environment impact, optimising efficiencies and disposal of equipment at end of life	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS42.4	Develop best practice promotional/marketing material to increase awareness to maximise efficient use of equipment	Sustainability Manager
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS43</b>	<b>Reduce waste and increase recycling</b>	
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS43.1	Conduct a food waste audit throughout catering processes to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies and develop an action plan based on findings	Circular Economy Manager
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS43.2	Conduct a single use plastics audit in food/retail outlets to establish key areas to be addressed and develop an action plan based on findings	Circular Economy Manager
Deliverable	2025/26	SSS43.3	Review industry initiatives and best practice that support waste reduction and increased recycling in catering and food/beverage retail and develop a plan to implement improvements	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS43.4	Reduce food waste from delivered catering by gaining a better understanding of the customer needs and educating and empower environmentally conscious choices	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS44</b>	<b>Consider the environmental and social impact of catering operations</b>	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS44.1	Undertake a holistic review of vegetarian and vegan menu options and create a firm plan for 50% of menu choices to be vegetarian and vegan by 2026	Circular Economy Manager
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS44.2	Gain a better understanding of where our food is supplied allowing us to maximise 'local' suppliers	Circular Economy Manager
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS44.3	Produce a publicly available ethical and sustainable catering framework/policy in collaboration with all outlets on campus, embracing principles of good practice and	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU



Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
			to continual improvement in sustainable food and catering	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS44.4	Further develop community awareness of relevant environmental and social effects of purchases through appropriate training and induction programmes	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
<b>Objective</b>		<b>SSS45</b>	<b>Create a strong environmental marketing and communication strategy</b>	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS45.1	Communicate an ethical and sustainability catering policy to staff, customers to demonstrate broad approach and encourage positive change; specifically information related to the sustainability of food, to all customers via various mediums including; the University Intranet, posters, newsletters, plasma screens, notice-boards and social media	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS45.2	Communicate ethical and sustainable catering policy with suppliers to ensure their practices align with our own standards	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS45.3	Training on environmental and social aspects of catering mandatory for all catering staff	Head of Catering and Events, WHH, SU