

[Government announces re-think on supermarket reform](#) [1]

Written by [Dr Eamonn Butler](#) [2] | Tuesday 14 June 2011



"Mr Speaker, following the government's consultation on its proposals to reform the grocery industry, we have been pleased to take on board most of the recommendations of the Supermarket Future Forum. In particular:

"The commissioning consortia that purchase groceries on behalf of consumers will be required to have a transparent governing body and to explain how money is being spent on groceries and why particular groceries have been bought. Commissioning consortia will now include a much wider range of grocery and retail professionals. Multi-professional advice will be required before any groceries are bought on behalf of consumers. Consumer wellbeing boards will have greater powers to require commissioning consortia to explain how their purchasing decisions promote the wellbeing of consumers.

"The National Grocery Commissioning Board will set the parameters for choice and competition in all parts of the grocery industry. A Citizen's Panel will report to Parliament on how well that mandate has been implemented.

"The National Food Regulator's role in relation to competition will be diluted. Instead of promoting competition among supermarkets, its primary duty will be to support collaboration and integration among different grocery outlets. Private grocery outlets will not be allowed to 'cherry pick' customers from others, and the government will not seek to increase the number of supermarkets.

"The Secretary of State will remain ultimately accountable for the grocery industry. The Secretary of State will be given a strong and clear duty to involve customers in the organisation and management of supermarket chains.

"The Food Commissioning Board, the outcomes frameworks for the grocery industry, local commissioning bodies and others will all be used to help reduce food inequalities.

"Independent, expert grocery advice is needed at every level of the system. All local authorities and public food and grocery bodies must cooperate to improve the delivery of groceries.

"Mr Speaker, [these changes](#) [3] will deliver the modern, dynamic grocery industry we all want, and will lead to a better-fed country. I commend them to the House."

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