Food and Drink Sector Council

3rd meeting, Monday 2 July 2018
Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, Westminster, London

Attendees:

Food and Drink Sector Council Members:

Judith Batchelar        Sainsbury’s
Ian Wright              Food and Drink Federation
Dame Fiona Kendrick     Nestlé UK & I
Sir Peter Kendall       AHDB
Iain Ferguson           Stobart Group Ltd.
Gavin Darby             Premier Foods
The Rt Hon. John Gummer, Lord Deben  Sancroft
Cassandra Stavrou       Propercorn
Andy Richardson         Volac
Ursula Lidbetter        Greater Lincolnshire LEP; LEP Network
Nick Whelan             Dale Farm
Minette Batters         NFU
Jo Whitfield            Co-op
Jamie Phillips          ABF (standing in for George Weston)
Ian Rayson              Nestlé (Industry Secretariat)

Government:

The Rt Hon. Liam Fox, Secretary of State for International Trade

Minister George Eustice Minister of State, Defra
Item 1 – Welcome and update from chairs

The Chairs welcomed Secretary of State Liam Fox and Minister George Eustice to the meeting.

The Chairs opened the meeting with a review of progress to date, which included:

- The Council has been operational for 6 months
• The majority of the workstreams are up and running
• An interim industry secretariat is in place with formal systems (IT, branding, and a communication portal) being set up for the Council.

Item 2 - Food and drink manufacturing sector deal exports proposal

Ian Wright updated Secretary of State Liam Fox and Minister George Eustice on the exports proposal of the food and drink manufacturing sector deal.

Secretary of State Liam Fox voiced his support for the proposals in principle and highlighted the importance of inward investment and outward FDI to boosting exports.

Item 3 – Agri-food sector strategic challenges and opportunities

Nick Whelan made some key points on behalf of the Agricultural Productivity workstream:

• Agricultural productivity is key to any food and drink strategy
• Bringing 50% of farmers up to the top 25% of farmers would generate £1.2 billion GVA

The Agricultural Productivity working group would like to write proposals for an industry and Government partnership including data collection and knowledge exchange.

Action:

• Agricultural Productivity working group to bring forward initial proposals for discussion. The intention being to have a 15 minute agenda slot at the next council meeting

Cassandra Stavrou highlighted the need for SME support through tangible initiatives:

• Improving the access and visibility of more boutique manufacturers to young brands
• Guidelines on evaluating the suitability of new markets for exports
• A matchmaking service for businesses and distribution partners
• Standardising packaging into substrates, so that they can be recycled more easily

Minette Batters proposed that the Government should use the Council as a key resource on the development of the food strategy. Minister Eustice said Government want industry to be fully engaged in this process, though it is currently at a very early stages.

Secretary of State Liam Fox and Minister George Eustice depart.

Item 4 – Food and drink manufacturing sector deal learnings

Angela Coleshill presented learnings from industry’s work on a food and drink manufacturing sector deal. Challenges included the fragmentation of the sector and need for long term investment. The key learnings were:
- There is a need to prioritise. The process started with very broad ambitions that were then cut down
- A successful sector deal requires a strong business and economic case, which takes a lot of resource
- Third party and industry support is essential (e.g. for commissioning research).

**Item 5 – Communications and engagement strategy**

Ian Rayson presented on the progress of the Council's communications and engagement strategy. There are three main objectives:

- To raise awareness and understanding of Council and its role
- To mobilise the industry, farm to fork, to support and engage with the Council
- To raise awareness and gain support from parliamentarians and stakeholders

**Item 6 – Discussion with Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on obesity**

Gavin Darby gave an update on the Nutrition workstream. The working group has set three principles:

- Additional value that the Council can add to existing work
- Leverage across the supply chain
- Focus in on key areas to ensure effective progress

Judy Buttriss updated on the scope for the Nutrition workstream. The emerging themes were around childhood obesity and improving child nutrition and adding value to healthy food.

Judith Batchelar highlighted the link to innovation, which through the working group can help join up soil, plant, animal and human health. There is also a role to join up the cross-sector councils within this space.

Mark Davis and Jenny Oldroyd presented on the Childhood Obesity Plan Chapter 2 (COP2), covering why it is important and what progress has been made. DHSC have arranged consultations that should capture all of industry and invited Council members to feed in views.

**Item 7 – Workstream updates**

Each Council member was provided with a two-page update on all of the working groups.

**Item 8 – Final comments**

The next meeting is on the 17th October 2018 at 9:00.