

# Food and Drink Sector Council Terms of Reference

## Purpose

The FDSC brings together senior leaders across the whole agri-food chain to work in partnership with government to collaboratively address the longer-term risks and opportunities facing the sector. It aims to be at the leading edge of thinking and acting, to take a creative and action-oriented approach to delivery, and to lead the sector in supplying healthy, affordable and sustainable food in a way that is fair for all.

## Scope

The FDSC will:

- Focus on longer-term, strategic issues affecting the whole agri-food chain.
- Focus on objectives which both industry and government want to deliver together through the FDSC. Equally, it will be clear what is for industry or government alone and therefore out of its scope.
- Strengthen collaboration between industry and government at all levels, including with Ministers and other government departments
- Focus on a realistic number of priorities and their delivery.
- Avoid unintentional duplication and link into wider work, including of other sector councils, where beneficial.
- Champion diversity and inclusion within its membership, sub-committees and the agri-food sector.

## Co-Chairs

The FDSC is co-chaired by industry and government:

### Industry:

- The industry chair is appointed by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) ministers for a 2-year term.
- The industry chair is Tim J Smith CBE.

### Government:

- The government chair is Mark Spencer, Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries.

## Membership

The FDSC brings together senior leaders from across the whole of the agri-food chain including businesses in agriculture, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, wholesale, delivery platforms, SMEs, trade bodies, trade unions and consumer organisations.

Seats are filled following an open process. Memberships are reviewed every two years, with appointments staggered, so not all members are appointed at the same time. If

industry members would like to be considered during the next recruitment round for the council, they can email [fdsc@defra.gov.uk](mailto:fdsc@defra.gov.uk) and we will contact them when we are next seeking applications.

Members are appointed by Defra ministers for two years. There is a possibility of one extension for a further term, at the discretion of ministers. There is no automatic presumption of reappointment.

Holders of ministerial appointments are expected to adhere to and uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), and the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#) in so far as it could be reasonably applied.

Members are unremunerated. Reasonable expenses may be claimed.

## **Role of Members**

Business members are appointed for their personal standing to lead and represent their sector. Trade body members are appointed based on their office. As business members are appointed for their personal standing in the sector, it is not appropriate to send deputies to meetings.

Members are expected to:

- Represent their sector, not the views of individual businesses.
- Contribute to and drive forward the FDSC's work programme.
- Make constructive and honest contributions to FDSC discussions.
- Challenge each other and government.
- Champion the FDSC through their networks.
- Understand the strategic context and be frank about opportunities and risks.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to meet the expectations of the role.

## **Devolved Administrations**

From the perspective of the governments of the four nations, the scope of the FDSC is England only. However, the FDSC will seek to strengthen close working between the governments and businesses of the four nations to recognise that the food supply chain is UK-wide. This includes the appointment of Business Representatives to represent businesses within the agri-food chain in devolved nations, on the advice of the governments of those nations. In addition, officials from the governments of devolved nations are invited to participate and provide updates at FDSC meetings.

## **Sub-Committees**

Sub-committees are the engine rooms for FDSC delivery. Sub-committees are steered and held to account for delivery by the FDSC.

Sub-committees will:

- Have clear objectives, deliverables, timescales and measures of success, and be agreed, steered and held to account by the FDSC.
- Have a chair to lead the work.
- Report to the FDSC on progress and seek steers.
- Be sector-led and include representation from both industry and government departments that have an interest and expertise in the subject matter.

## **Meetings**

Meetings are held biannually in person. Only FDSC members that represent food and drink businesses from the Devolved Administrations are able to join remotely. Meetings are 2 hours long, or as driven by the agenda.

Meetings are conducted under Chatham House rules to promote full and open discussion. A high-level note of meetings is published on gov.uk with comments unattributed.

Industry member-only discussions will take place as necessary.

## **Support for Members**

FDSC members have the option to nominate individuals to support them at a working level. They may receive agendas, papers, and communications.

Defra forums are being made available where appropriate to support industry discussion on FDSC issues and agenda topics.

## **Role of Government:**

The FDSC is co-chaired by Government.

Relevant government departments and ministers will be brought together with the FDSC where appropriate. Government will commit resources to support the delivery of joint objectives through the FDSC.

The secretariat is provided by Defra.