

**Food and Drink Sector Council
29 April 2024 Meeting Summary**

Attendees

Co-Chairs:

Tim J Smith CBE Industry Co-Chair
Sir Mark Spencer Minister of State for Food, Farming and Fisheries, Defra, Government Co-Chair

FDSC members:

Andrew Knowles Chief Executive Officer, Fram Farmers Ltd
Andrew Opie Director of Food and Sustainability, British Retail Consortium
Anne Anderson Head of Sustainability and Development, Scottish Sea Farms
Claire Lorains Group Quality Director, Tesco
David Lloyd Chair of the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board
Ian Burrow National Head of Agriculture, NatWest Group
James Bielby Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Wholesale Distributors
Karen Betts Chief Executive, Food and Drink Federation
Kate Nicholls Chief Executive, UKHospitality
Matthew Price General Manager, Uber Eats UK&I
Nicholas Saphir Chair, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
Nick Whelan Group Chief Executive, Dale Farm Ltd
Nigel Murray Managing Director, Booths
Robin Mills Managing Director UK&I, Compass Group
Sarah Bradbury Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Grocery Distribution
Sue Davies Head of Consumer Rights and Food Policy/Strategic Policy Advisor, WHICH?
Tom Bradshaw President, National Farmers Union

Apologies:

Ash Amirahmadi Chief Executive Officer, Sofina Foods Europe
Beth Hart Vice President, Supply Chain and Brand Trust (UK&I), McDonalds
Chris Jewitt Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Food and Drink North East
James Russell Managing Director, AF Blakemore and Son
Jason Richards Senior Vice President and General Manager UK&I, Pepsico
Joe Clarke National Officer, UNITE
John Farrand Managing Director, Guild of Fine Food

Richard Watson Chief Executive Officer, Nestle UK&I

Officials in attendance:

Rachel Bailey Defra, Deputy Director, Food and Drink Quality and Partnerships

Karen Lepper Defra, Deputy Director, Food Data, Standards and Sustainability
presenting

Natasha Burgon Director, Health Improvement, Department for Health and Social Care
presenting

Danny Roff Defra, Deputy Director, Food Security and Coordination **presenting**

Dave Morris Welsh Government

Alice Biggins Scottish Government

Dermott Rodgers Northern Ireland Government

Joy Alexander

[Introduction](#)

This Food and Drink Sector Council meeting was focussed on updates on FDSC changes, Workforce Sub-Committee, Food Data Transparency Partnership and the proposed scope of the Resilience Roundtable.

[Updates to the FDSC and next steps](#)

The Council heard an update from Tim Smith on the proposed changes to the FDSC which included reprioritising the focus of the working groups, reducing frequency of meetings, and reducing membership changes to essential appointments only.

Members mostly supported these proposals. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Members requested three meetings per year and interim updates of the three work streams. This would ensure the meetings allow for strategic discussions and creates tangible outcomes on how to progress work forward.
- Members also suggested a more flexible agenda to allow time to discuss industry concerns and allow for discussion topics to be proposed by members.

[Workforce Sub-Committee](#)

The Council received a presentation from Sarah Bradbury on the Sector Attractiveness Working Group. Activity includes government and industry collaboration, connecting with careers systems and joint communication plans.

Members supported the work being done within the Workforce Sub-Committee. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Succession planning should be included in the career resources for businesses, as this is crucial for workforce development.
- Communication tips and tools should be developed to allow business to choose elements that are relevant to them. Access to information is key to ensure businesses can access support.
- Previous areas of sector improvement should be highlighted, such as more flexible working hours, to show how sectors have listened to feedback and adapted practices accordingly to improve working conditions.

- Members were pleased all food supply sectors, including 'out of home' would be included in this work.

Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP)

The Council received updates from Karen Lepper and Natasha Burgon on the Defra led eco workstream and DHSC led health workstream.

Members endorsed and commended both FDTP eco and health workstreams for progress on this complex work. Noting the importance and benefits of reporting should be highlighted and widely communicated to encourage a wide range of companies to engage.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

On the eco workstream:

- Suggestions included an independent data hub for all to use and a data custodian to store the data to ensure data protection and allow all parts of the supply chain to easily access the transferable information.
- Changes to improve the sustainability in primary food production need to be made now to be shown in reported data for 2030, so understanding the climate goals is crucial.

On the health workstream:

- Members suggested reporting should be mandatory for all sectors, especially SMEs as they play an important role in the supply chain. Voluntary reporting could lead to only larger retailers providing data, which would not show the full picture. However, the limited resource of SMEs could be challenging, and support should be given.

Resilience Roundtable

The Council received a presentation from Sarah Bradbury on IGD resilience activity, which included 10 long-term risks identified for the UK food system. Nigel Murray presented the proposed scope of the FDSC Resilience Roundtable to gain support from members.

Members broadly supported the scope of the roundtable. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Members considered the scope of the roundtable looking at the physical aspects of food resilience: availability, safety and quality from climate change, and suggested it may be broadened to include affordability and health of food.
- The focus will be on a commitment in the Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) to consider the risks climate change poses to food supply and the appropriate responses.
- Members suggested the roundtable should consider how best to measure food resilience aims to understand what success in this area looks like.

Close

The next meeting would be later this year, with the date to be confirmed shortly.