

# Food Strategy Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

## Scope

The following Terms of Reference govern the membership and operation of the Food Strategy Advisory Board ('FSAB'). The Terms of Reference and role of the FSAB and its members, will be reviewed, periodically.

Purpose:

The purpose of the FSAB is to bring together representatives from the food and drink sector to inform the strategic direction of the UK Government's future food strategy. The FSAB will set an ambition for the UK's future food system; consider the outcomes the food strategy should aim to deliver and advise on and help to create the conditions for this strategy to succeed.

This will specifically include consideration of:

- the government's development of a food system outcomes framework;
- tensions and trade-offs between the different aims of the food strategy; and
- how these outcomes can best be delivered (especially by industry), including by identifying early first steps to demonstrate willingness and progress.

Role of Government:

The FSAB is a forum to offer a 'safe space' for food system ambition and insight, as outlined above. The FSAB is advisory, and board members will hold no policy or decision-making powers. **Government retains the right of initiative, the feed on FSAB advice into policy making, and all final decision making on the food strategy will remain solely with Defra and Government Ministers.**

## Term

The FSAB is intended to be established for a period of up to 2 years commencing in March 2025. The duration of the FSAB will be kept under review.

## Composition

The full membership of the FSAB is set out in **Annex 1**. The composition of the FSAB has been designed to ensure full representation from across the food and drink supply chain, and members have been chosen based on the most appropriate recruitment process for the size and number of representatives on this group.

While members of the FSAB may draw on their professional experience with reference to the organisation(s) to which they are employed or operating in a formal

capacity (e.g. trustee), they are not attending as representatives of these organisations. All members should maintain independence and abide by [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK](#) set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, as they apply to your service as a member of the FSAB.

## Changes to FSAB Membership

The membership of the FSAB will be public and will be kept under ongoing review. If at any time a member of the FSAB is unable to continue with membership, a notice period of a month is requested. The FSAB may propose a method to fill the vacant seat.

## Role and responsibilities

Members will provide input and expertise to enable the Board to deliver on its core functions, as set out above. The FSAB membership role is unremunerated, and independent of government. FSAB membership will be kept under ongoing review.

FSAB members will be invited to:

- Commit to FSAB membership for up to 2 years from March 2025. This will be subject to review.
- Attend meetings – initially these will be monthly. The frequency will be reviewed after June.
- Actively contribute their expertise on the food and drink supply chain to inform recommendations for government to shape the food strategy, actions and next steps.
- Represent their sector, not the views of individual businesses.
- Reflect on the potential impacts of strategy proposals on the whole food system.

Depending on the progress of discussions, members may furthermore wish to agree to:

- Work with government and the sector to drive forward actions, and first steps to be taken by government and industry (e.g. public pledges/ commitments) once these are agreed by FSAB.
- Work with government and other FSAB members to support industry and wider stakeholder engagement with the strategy.
- Look for opportunities to optimise the impact of the food strategy.

Additionally, members are expected to:

- Observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice and recommendations they provide.
- Act in accordance with Government policy on openness and comply fully with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and any relevant legislation on disclosure of information.
- Not to misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public

service to promote their and/or their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations.

- Not hold any paid or high-profile posts in a political party and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the FSAB.
- Refer any media enquiries about the FSAB and its work to the Defra Press Office.

## Meetings

The FSAB shall meet at least once a month in person (online by exception only).

Members can claim travel and subsistence allowances in accordance with the Defra travel and subsistence policy.

Defra will provide a Secretariat to support the FSAB - further details are included below. The size of the agenda will determine the length of each FSAB meeting. The agenda shall be agreed by the Chair.

The use of deputies is not normally permitted. However, if a member is unable to join a FSAB meeting, they should give as much notice as possible and may nominate a deputy, but the deputy will need to be agreed in advance with the Chair. Should the Chair be unable to attend a meeting, the Defra Director shall serve as an alternate.

Additional meetings of the FSAB may be called by the Chair at any time to consider any matters falling within the Terms of Reference. These will be by exception.

## Secretariat

The FSAB will have co-secretariat support provided by Defra and the Institute of Grocery Distribution ('IGD') represented by Tessa Jones and Sarah Bradbury, respectively. The joint role of the co-secretariat will be to support the effective and proper functioning of the FSAB.

More broadly, the IGD will help coordinate government and industry by providing food system insight and expertise, alongside engagement with industry and civil society networks to amplify the development and work of the food strategy.

For the purposes of the FSAB, the co-secretariat will provide active and managed support to the FSAB, the Chair and its members, to enable the FSAB to conduct its business focussing on the right issues at the right time.

**Specific Defra secretariat functions will include (but is not limited to):**

- Liaise with the IGD co-secretariat and individual FSAB members.
- Provide advance notice of meetings.
- Provide meeting location and associated logistics.
- Set the agenda.
- Draft and provide relevant papers in advance of the meetings.

- Draft and provide summary notes from meetings, recording and monitoring of actions.
- Take minutes of each meeting and securely file them. Send highlights of minutes to FSAB members for comments, for a week following the meeting, to enable consensus to steer forward. The highlights of minutes will be agreed at each subsequent meeting to ensure those unable to attend a meeting still have visibility of the meeting outcomes.
- Take the advice from the FSAB into internal food strategy governance and policy design.

## Reporting

The FSAB is advisory, and FSAB members will hold no policy or decision-making powers. All recommendations of the FSAB will be subject to standard Ministerial clearance and approval processes. FSAB advice will be fed into advice to such ministerial approval considerations routinely.

Minutes of each FSAB meeting will be taken and securely filed by Defra with highlights for distribution, as outlined above.

## Data and confidentiality

Care will be taken to ensure FSAB members will not be given access to or provided with material non-public information ('MNPI'). However, information of a confidential nature may be shared with FSAB members to inform the food strategy. It is expected that FSAB members will take due care and consideration, not to share such information publicly, and ensure it remains within the confines of the FSAB meeting. FSAB members will have access to early policy development position papers, which members will be expected to treat as privileged information.

Documents will be shared with FSAB members via email. Members will be able to share non-sensitive information to enable them to gather wider stakeholder views on appropriate topics. Documents including sensitive information will be clearly marked as "OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – DO NOT SHARE". Members must take care to protect all materials marked OFFICIAL which are shared with them because of their membership of the FSAB.

Should OFFICIAL or "OFFICIAL SENSITIVE" information be unintentionally disclosed outside of the FSAB, this should be reported to the Chair and Secretariat. Where information marked "OFFICIAL" or "OFFICIAL SENSITIVE" is intentionally disclosed outside the Group, Defra maintains the right to remove those responsible from membership of the FSAB with immediate effect. In which case the FSAB will agree a process for appointing a suitable replacement.

No personal information, or information which could confer a commercial or competitive advantage to FSAB members, or anything which raises issues of market abuse, will be shared with the FSAB.

The role does not relate to the awarding of government contracts or grants or otherwise directing public resources. Decisions of this sort relating to the food strategy will not be discussed with the FSAB.

## **Declaration of Conflict of Interests**

Aside from the fact of being a representative of an organisation, there must be no perception of conflict between a FSAB member and/or their organisation's private interests and the FSAB member and/or their organisation's responsibilities as a member of the FSAB (as applicable). FSAB members must declare all their interests at the time of their appointment (aside from the fact of being a representative of an organisation) and must promptly notify the Secretariat of any changes. FSAB members are expected to submit a Declaration of Interest Form set out in Annex 2, and to update the Secretariat by exception should anything change. This will cover commercial interests, a declaration of any conflicts, and in particular commercial relationships or interactions between members of the FSAB.