

Food Strategy Advisory Board Meeting – 4 June 2025

Attendees:

Daniel Zeichner MP (Chair)
Anna Taylor
Chris Whitty
Flor Healy
Ravi Gurumurthy
Sam Godfrey
Simon Roberts
Susan Jebb
Tazeem Bhatia DHSC Chief Nutritionist (guest)
Tim Smith
Sarah Bradbury (Secretariat)
Tessa Jones (Secretariat)

Apologies:

Andrew Selley
Ash Amirahmadi
Dalton Philips
Emily Miles
Jillian Moffatt

Agenda:

Welcome and Opening Remarks
(15:30-15:35)

Reporting on Health
(14:35-15:20)

Outcomes Framework and Good Food Cycle
(15.30-16:15)

AOB, Next Steps and Close
(16.15-16.30)

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Minister thanked participants for their continued engagement and noted apologies for this meeting – there were a few people who couldn't make it.

There had been good progress with the four multi-stakeholder workshops and specific deep dives across stakeholder areas throughout May.

A Food Strategy Advisory Board page would be live shortly on gov.uk. IGD also had a food strategy section on their website.

There was continued interest in the Food Strategy with a need to maintain join up across government.

Reporting on Health

The Secretariat presented the paper which had been circulated on this item, which build on work undertaken by the Food Data Transparency Partnership pre-election, and by NESTA, Food Foundation, and the IGD Nutrition Forum. In discussion the following points were made:

- The merits of mandatory reporting to create a level playing field across all sectors and size of food businesses were discussed.
- The value of reporting as a way to impact outcomes was recognised and food waste was given as an example of this. Doing this could create global market forces for investors to see returns on health and environment goals.
- It was seen as important not to create unnecessary burdens, and therefore critical to understand existing reporting structures. Useful work was undertaken pre-election by the Food Data Transparency Partnership.
- The out of home sector had existing nutritional reporting (e.g. calories) that could be built upon.
- There was a discussion about the value in providing geographically specific reporting in order to disaggregate any averages – this would help to look at sales in disadvantaged communities where health outcomes were worse.
- The Food Data Transparency Partnership had looked at health reporting across 30-40 existing metrics and then started to narrow down which of these were critical for driving change in industry and in consumer behaviour.
- The importance of the Nutrient Profile Model (NPM) as well as High Fat Sugar Salt (HFSS) measures was discussed.
- There was broad support for metrics to be 'continuous' in order to support already healthy foods being made even better (rather than a binary score).
- The group explored whether reporting on the provenance of fruit & vegetables and protein was an important driver for both shifting consumption and supporting domestic production.
- On domestic production it was reflected that the primary production (farming) industries would also benefit from reporting on environmental outcomes. It was however noted that they had less consistent data to work from – something that the Food Data Transparency Partnership Eco strand was looking to address.
- Lessons from the implementation of Natasha's Law and the Sugary Drinks Industry Levy were considered.
- The question of whether this policy required reporting to a standard format, or centralised data collection, was raised.
- The issue of internal borders was also raised, and whether there was potential for an aligned approach across the four UK nations.
- The idea of a roadmap was introduced, to have a bold, clear and aligned plan – not everyone would need to move at the same speed but there could be milestones along the way and an ambitious end point. Euro car standards

were an example of this allowing industry to plan and implement change over time.

The Chair summed up consensus in the room, as advice from the Board:

- That there was support for mandatory reporting, with the scope as set out in the discussion paper.
- There was more work to do on thresholds and geographical focus.
- It would make most sense to start with health measures and build out from there.
- There should be a clear and simple package of measures which are on a continuum.
- The inclusion of fruit and vegetable and protein provenance should be considered, and that all four nations should be included in the discussions.
- There was support from those present for a road map and steps to get there.
- There was a question on whether targets were the logical end of the road map.

Outcomes Framework and The Good Food Cycle

The Secretariat presented the papers. Defra, working across government, had developed a draft outcomes framework. This was based on creating a 'good food cycle' in place of the 'junk food cycle' identified by Henry Dimbleby. In discussion the following points were made:

- Improving children's diets would help avoid lifetimes of ill health.
- Metrics were needed for each outcome, though this could be done in later documents.
- The importance of cross government join up was critical to delivering a good food cycle.
- It was important to recognise and articulate where there were things government needed to lead on, versus things industry could lead on, and the role of civil society.
- An investors' perspective was important – it would be interesting to do an analysis of capital expenditure in the food sector. Creating confidence mattered.
- The importance of geographic specificity was further discussed in the context of setting local outcomes for a thriving food system that were relevant to local cultures – rather than a single view of what a 'good food' system looks like. Not everyone currently experienced a thriving local food culture.
- There was an opportunity to mobilise the "good food movement".
- International examples such as Ireland and Denmark were useful.
- Clarifying government's goals and choices that have been made was an important marker of success for the strategy – for example naming the tensions and trade-offs (between e.g. domestic production and trade).
- It was important to continue to recognise that by 'growing' healthy food we can 'grow' healthy people, and therefore 'grow' the economy.
- There should be more included on the role of primary production / farming and any barriers to supporting those sectors – in particular support for plant rich diets.

- There was a discussion of who the audience is for a Food Strategy – the general public / industry / civil society? Excellent communication would be key.

The Chair thanked the Board for this rich feedback.

AOB, Next Steps and Close

- Further work could usefully be done on a health reporting roadmap, drawing in previous conclusions from FDTP and subsequent progress.
- Baroness Minette Batters would attend the next meeting (18 June) to engage the Board on her Review onto Farm Profitability.
- The next meeting would also consider more detail on the ten outcomes in the Good Food Cycle.