

Food Strategy Advisory Board Meeting – 8 December 2025

Attendees

- Angela Eagle MP (Chair)
- Emily Miles, Director General, Defra
- Tessa Jones, Agri Food Chain Director, Defra
- Catherine Frances, Director General at DHSC
- Rupert Daniels, Director of Services, DBT (on behalf of Jaee Samant)
- Paul Kissack, Defra Permanent Secretary
- Sarah Bradbury, Chief Executive Officer, IGD (IGD is co-secretariat to FSAB)
- Ash Amirahmadi OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Sofina Foods
- Peter Kendall, former NFU President (virtual)
- Julian Marks, Group Chief Executive Officer, Barfoots
- Simon Roberts, Chief Executive Officer, Sainsburys and President of IGD
- Andrew Selley, CEO BidCorp UK
- Tim Smith CBE, Non-Executive Chairman, Cranswick plc
- Anna Taylor OBE, Food Foundation
- Susan Jebb OBE, Professor of Diet and Population Health, Oxford University (also Chair of the Food Standards Agency)

Introduction

- Tessa Jones provided updates to the membership of the Food Strategy Advisory Board (FSAB), including addition of new members: Roisin Currie, Tanya Steele, Andrew Forsey, Julian Marks, Peter Kendall, Catherine Frances, Jaee Samant.
- Minister Eagle reiterated her ambition for the group to co-design and collaborate to make food system more effective for good growth, domestic production and affordability.

Food prices

- Minister Eagle outlined challenging context and sought views from members on how government can best work with the wider food system to focus support for healthy food in areas of greatest need, e.g. food deserts.
- Link made between Farming Profitability Review and food prices.
- Members discussed the willingness and ability of the group to provide public support for the domestic production agenda.

- The group provided feedback on policy proposals shared via supporting paper. There were linked but separate issues around price; inflation; and affordability.
- Concerns were raised about the difficulty of accessing healthy food, especially in areas of deprivation, for example due to misleading information and increased cost of healthy food relative to unhealthy food.
- Minister Eagle stressed the importance of place-based solutions, and the Board debated the merits of national vs local interventions.
- Members put forward ideas for materially boosting the supply and quality of healthy food (especially) in the most deprived areas, including through enhanced data sharing and problem-solving mechanisms between industry and across government to overcome current barriers. Ambition was high with appetite to move quickly on practical solutions.

Food Inflation Gateway

- Tessa Jones provided overview of the Food Inflation Gateway that the Secretary of State announced at the Food and Drink Federation Summit on 19th November.
- There were two elements to the Gateway: one on cross government coordination including on impact assessments; and the other on providing a roadmap on government policy to give food businesses a clear line of sight.
- Minister Eagle sought views from members on the policy proposals presented.
- Members discussed the value of giving industry a line of sight on government regulations. Acknowledgement that this would not necessarily materially impact food inflation forecasts in the short term but would support longer term thinking on investment.
- Members discussed the practicalities of implementing the gateway, including decreasing certainty on regulations further into the future.
- Discussion concluded that the gateway and line of sight for businesses would help with economic modelling, certainty and increased transparency; and join up on impact assessments across government.
- Members discussed the significance of addressing planning barriers to expansion and investment in the food system, and associated policy ideas.

Public procurement

- Minister Eagle and Defra representatives outlined challenges associated with public procurement (including finance). A discussion followed on how best to progress food strategy objectives in this space, particularly for UK food production.

- Members discussed various means of increasing the quality of food provided via public sector procurement, especially in schools. Potential interventions included both government action (e.g. ringfencing of school food funding, improving standards) and measures that could be taken by industry.

Concluding remarks

- Minister Eagle thanked members for their time and insights, and looked forward to further progress on the food strategy – including mobilisation on policies discussed - in the new year.