



Bwyd a Diod Cymru Food & Drink Wales

Future Strategy & Planning for Food and Drink in Wales – Outcome of initial engagement exercise

The Welsh Government and the Food & Drink Wales Industry Board (FDWIB) have begun work on producing a new joint plan of action to support the Food & Drink industry in Wales. This is a close collaboration between industry and government to ensure that our future actions after 2020 will empower our businesses to succeed. This will follow the achievements of the current plan, 'Towards Sustainable Growth', with its aim of growing industry value to £7 billion by 2020. The Food & Drink industry has also been recognized as a Foundation Sector for support in the Welsh Government's wider plan for the Welsh economy; 'Prosperity for All'.

Initial consultation has started with stakeholders, with over 40 one to one meetings held to date, 17 of which were held during RWAS week. Meetings have been scheduled for October which will complete the first engagement exercise.

In addition we have received comments from other officials to the [consultation questions](#) seen on our [website](#). We need to hear from as many voices as possible and we encourage stakeholders to get in touch via our mailbox FoodandDrinkConsultation@gov.wales

Food Division has started analysing the responses and several broad themes are coming through with some points being made repeatedly around 'Growing our Businesses'; Promoting Wales the Food Nation and 'Benefiting our People and Society'.

Growing Our Businesses

There is a very strong desire for continuity of the headline goal of Towards Sustainable Growth, aiming to increase the value of the food and drink manufacturing sector, to grow the scale of the sector, to improve productivity and profitability. From stakeholder engagement the emphasis has been on sustainable growth, not short-termism, and there is recognition of needing to deliver properly for the 'well-being' goals. Feedback points strongly to needing to focus on productivity

improvements through capital investment, automation, innovation and R&D. Delivery support through Food Innovation Wales and Project Helix have both been flagged up as initiatives to further and deepen, as well as improving businesses' access to finance.

Secondly there is a need to develop stronger supply chains, forging better connections amongst businesses in Wales using the cluster network and encouraging greater trade between local businesses. Further work to strengthen knowledge of routes to market (UK and export) is seen as essential.

Feedback has also recognised the advantage of creating better connections to Welsh agriculture and fisheries as both a supply source and stimulating new food ventures in farm diversification, working closely with the CAP replacement scheme, and having shared 'brand values'. There is wide recognition that the successor document should make the links to primary production but should not be about primary production itself.

Promoting Wales the Food Nation

The theme is to raise the profile of the food and drink industry inside and outside Wales, in ways that make it attractive and seen as something valuable that people want to buy from and identify with.

There is support for developing and then using the 'brand values' of the sector in Wales, possibly through creating a 'Taste Wales theme' extending the concept from the biennial trade event, to create a distinct Welsh identity and point of difference. This would incorporate the ongoing research into the 'Value of Welshness' to identify a series of values that can be used to promote Welsh produce.

To strengthen the opportunities for stronger supply chains and increased sales, the feedback received to date recognises the need to reach for benchmarked standards of production, food quality and safety, and to support this by targeting accreditation uptake.

There are opportunities to promote the quality food offer in Wales as an intrinsic part of tourism development, improving the Welsh food offer at visitor attractions and destinations, and to link with tourism for greater penetration into the food service sector.

Benefiting Our People and Society'

This theme strengthens the links to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generation Act in addressing the wider contribution the sector can make to benefit Wales.

Welsh Government support should provide stronger levers for achieving wider societal benefits not just narrow business cash value growth. Grant funding, support, and event attendance might be contingent on contributing to wider agendas such as

decarbonisation, waste reduction, and 'Fair Work'. Providing 'fair work' and better skilled (and by correlation better remunerated jobs) is seen to be the sector's contribution to tackling poverty and inequality. Businesses could further demonstrate their corporate social responsibility by sign-up to Courtauld 2025 and support for Fair Share. Feedback supports actions like supporting healthier production formulation in support of the wider public health agenda, with the successor document having strong links to the Welsh Government's planned Obesity Strategy.

There is recognition of food poverty but no agreement about how the successor document might tackle this given food and poverty are intrinsically linked and stem from societal and economic issues which are beyond the Welsh Government's and Board's sphere to control. This is an area to consider further.

There is strong support for improving skills in the existing workforce and for potential entrants – a win-win for business and individuals. Work should focus on the Skills Pledge, Tasty Careers, apprenticeship development, and explore opportunities for greater industry led training development. In conjunction work should continue and expand to promote the image of food and drink sector, to change attitudes and attract more people to it.

Work is continuing and its expected that these will be refined in the future.