

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r ymgynghoriad ar y [Bil Bwyd \(Cymru\) Drafft](#)

This response was submitted to the consultation on the [Draft Food \(Wales\) Bill](#)

OSFB015

Ymateb gan: | Response from: David Smith, Former member Wales Food Advisory Committee (2000-2006), The Food Standards Agency

Overarching principles

Question 1: Do you agree with the overarching principles that the Bill seeks to achieve?

Maybe

I am lukewarm about the Bill. It is very much a mixed bag and crucially uncosted. Further, I have difficulty in squaring it's interventionist nature (ref. public sector capacity and cost implications), in the context of the centralising thrust of UK Internal Market/ free market legislation and the continuing serious reduction in public funds available from the UK Treasury. We need to focus upon deliverable public health priorities at this time, and I seriously doubt Welsh Government has the capacity to effectively undertake even some of the actions proposed in this Bill.

Priorities: Recent events significantly impact upon the cost of living of most people and will continue to do so over the next decade. This leads me to conclude that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

If this proposal is to proceed, particular attention should be given to 'Social Partnership' issues, including employee training; the circumstances in which public funds are deployed across the food chain sector; and how consumers are given adequate voice. These are aspects I championed within the FSA which across food policy has now been lost.

I say this as someone who (a) initiated the Welsh Food Alliance in March 1999; (b) served as a member of the Food Standards Agency, Wales Food Advisory Committee from 2000-2006; (c) has 18 years experience in running a small catering business, and as a former Further Education Food Lecturer at Gwent Tertiary College for 16 years.

It may be pertinent to note: (a) my views have changed in the past few weeks due the emerging Cost of Living crisis and, (b) the horror of FSA Wales colleagues when I wrote an article in the Western Mail arguing for the establishment of a Welsh Food Commission in early 2003.

Question 2: Do you think there is a need for this legislation? Can you provide reasons for your answer.

Yes

Required, if the Commission is to operate effectively and be accountable for public funds.

Food Goals

Question 3: Please provide your views on the inclusion of the Food Goals within the Bill as the means to underpin the policy objectives.

This essentially requires political will, adequate funding and local priorities

Question 4: Do you agree with the inclusion of a Primary Food Goal supplemented by Secondary Food Goals?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 5: Are there additional / different areas you think should be included in the Food Goals?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 6: Do you have any additional comments on the Food Goals, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 7: Please provide your views on the inclusion of targets within the Bill as the means to measure how the Food Goals are being advanced.

They are too complex and need to be simple. The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 8: Do you agree with the process for setting the targets?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds.

I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 9: Do you think the reporting mechanisms set out in the draft Bill provide sufficient accountability and scope for scrutiny?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds.

I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 10: Do you have any additional comments on the targets, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds.

I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Wales Food Commission

Question 11: What are your views on the need for a Welsh Food Commission?

Mixed - as someone who publicly proposed a Welsh Food Commission in early 2003.

I doubt a Commission would be required for government to focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I have concluded that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 12: Do you agree with the goals and functions of the Welsh Food Commission? If not, what changes would you suggest?

The Bill is far too ambitious, and we should focus on precise deliverables involving public funds. I would suggest is that both the Senedd and any WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 13: Do you agree with the size of the membership of the Food Commission and the process for appointing its members?

It is unclear how, even with the proposed sized and appointment process the consumer voice would be heard above the well organised and funded industry lobbies.

Question 14: What are your views on the proposal that the chair and members can serve a maximum term of five years and that an individual may be re-appointed as a chair or member only once? Do you believe this is appropriate?

Five years seems far too long. A system of rotation is required to ensure continuity of experience. Ten years for a member or chair?? 6 or 9 at the outside as with what I assume to be the current public appointment position.

Question 15: Do you have any additional comments on the Food Commission, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

All levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Both the Senedd and any WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

National Food Strategy

Question 16: Do you agree that there is a need for a national food strategy?

I am well aware that Norway has had a national food strategy from 1934 and that in Finland free school meals is a universal service. Current government strategy overly influenced by the agriculture industry. However, what is proposed is far too ambitious in the present climate and call on limited public funds. All levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

Question 17: Do you believe the Welsh Government's current strategies relating to 'food' are sufficiently joined up / coherent?

No, but I would argue it is far too much influenced by the agriculture industry.

Question 18: Does the draft Bill do enough to ensure that Welsh Ministers take advice and consult on the strategy before it is made. If no, what additional mechanisms would you put in place?

Probably, but this is all down to political will and availability of adequate resources and the capacity to use them creatively.

Question 19: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reporting on the national food strategy are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Probably, but how will this relate to the locality and addressing health inequalities and public participation?

Question 20: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reviewing of the national food strategy are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Probably, but how will this relate to the locality and addressing health inequalities and public participation? See Q. 23 any WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 21: Do you have any additional comments on the National Food Strategy, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Local Food Plans

Question 22: Do you agree that there is a need for local food plans?

Yes, but strongly suspect variability in capita and delivery at the local authority level

Question 23: Does the draft Bill do enough to ensure that public bodies consult on their local food plans before they are made. If no, what additional mechanisms would you put in place?

WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 24: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reporting on the local food plans are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Unknown. WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 25: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reviewing of the local food plans are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Unknown. WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 26: Do you have any additional comments on local food plans, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on

health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation. Unclear what is meant by minimised? Digital excluding vulnerable people? If its to be done at all it should be properly resourced.

General Provisions

Question 27: Do you agree with the list of persons defined as being a 'public body' for the purpose of this Bill?

Probably

Question 28: Do you have any views on the process for making regulations set out in the Bill?

This should flow from how we listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.

Question 29: Do you have any views on the proposed commencement date for the Act?

Government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

General Views

Please provide any additional information relevant to the draft Bill.

Having publicly championed the Welsh Food Council in 2003, I have concluded, with the continuing cost of living crisis that all levels of government should sharply focus upon public health and how we can effectively deliver free, nutritious, acceptable school meals across our schools system. This should include improving pay and conditions to ensure well trained staff are in place to deliver this vital service.

WFC should look to change inequalities affecting lifestyle and longevity. How to listen to local communities, assess needs and take action to alleviate them would be a key challenge. Action on health inequalities must be locally based with an emphasis on co-operative principles and grassroots participation.
