



Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00758/22

Paul Davies MS
ETRA Committee Chair
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5th January 2023

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter of 16th December regarding updated details on the Community Food Strategy.

The Welsh Government committed to 'develop a community food strategy to encourage the production and supply of locally sourced food in Wales', as per the Programme for Government and subsequently the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, because we recognise the value of community level activity. We have long standing policies for important aspects of the 'food system' but targeted at mainstream agri-food businesses only. We judged there was a policy gap which warranted a Community Food Strategy.

The initial focus of work has been to explore the scope of 'community food' in Wales in order to identify and consider what might be relevant to developing a strategy. Ultimately the Welsh Government wants a strategy which makes grass roots food initiatives more impactful in communities and can help them play a part in the overall food system.

Initial work has included one to one discussions with diverse stakeholders, conducting two surveys, background research and compiling case studies. It has created a comprehensive picture of the abundance of diverse community food activities being done at grass-roots level and the public's general attitude to community food. From these pieces of work, it is apparent there is a lively and very diverse range of community level activities taking place across Wales, some wholly food focussed, others where food is more incidental to another purpose. Furthermore, many of the activities are contributing in some way to advancing the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The provisional conclusion the Welsh Government has reached is the overarching aim of the strategy should be to encourage and empower this diverse grass roots activity and not to impose a particular model. Success lies in activities in communities involving the community and being for the community. Given there is a lot of excellent existing work, and palpable energy and enthusiasm, the Welsh Government's focus is likely to be on what are the barriers and strategic opportunities where action by the Welsh Government or other

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

stakeholders could facilitate the success and expansion of community food initiatives and the creation of new ones. The Welsh Government thinks this can be achieved through existing planning and executive structures, mechanisms, and partners, with no need to create new structures or bodies which would be at a cost to the public purse.

Subject to further policy development work the focus of the Community Food Strategy might be:

- strengthening local leadership capacity and organisation at the grass roots level and through the work of Public Service Boards
- providing national support for common needs such as access to information and advice
- improving the availability of affordable land and linkages with agriculture through piloting the Community Supported Agriculture model
- strengthening and diversifying producer and processor networks and supply chains by extending current work in the food industry into communities, and using the opportunity of public procurement (especially the free primary school meals policy) to create new markets and to raise public awareness of locally produced food.

Our intention in 2023 is to engage more widely with stakeholders in order to co-design solutions. We plan to commission the running of focus groups in order to gather intelligence on the results of our findings, identify any areas of omission and to pin down levers of maximum impact to the public and lowest cost to the public purse, as potential elements of the CFS.

We welcome the involvement of the committee in the development of our ongoing work and would happily consider any report they might wish to bring forward on the topic.



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