



Darren Miller, MS,
Chair
Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff,
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16 March 2023

Dear Darren

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Economy Trade and Rural Affairs committee on 1 March to give evidence with regard to the Food (Wales) Bill.

We had a useful discussion about policy join-up and I thought it would help the committee to offer some further evidence about questions of policy join-up outside my portfolio which arose during the session.

The first example referred to '*...the planning system which allows for fast food restaurants outside our schools*'. There is indeed a need to address the proximity of fast food restaurants to schools and so I draw your attention to work which Welsh Government is doing in this matter and in particular to [Healthy Weight Healthy Wales](#) which includes the explicit commitment to place limits on the establishment of hot food takeaways around schools (see page 11).

You also referred to '*... the NHS having vending machines with unhealthy items in them in our hospitals*'. Again, the [Healthy Weight Healthy Wales](#) strategy (pp 17-18) targets increasing the proportion and appeal of healthier food and drink options in vending machines so they become the norm. By 2030 it sets the specific goal of all food and drink provision for patients, staff and visitors adhering to strict healthy criteria, including within canteens, vending and retail outlets on NHS sites.

The third example of perceived policy not being joined up was raised by Luke Fletcher MS on the matter of Big Bocs Bwyd (BBB) setting up in Bridgend. He stated that *'Big Bocs Bwyd was competing with a lot of these community organisations already for the same load of food, and what we saw then were shortages of food—difficulties in those community organisations in getting that food.'* Mr. Fletcher argued that a National Food Strategy could address this issue.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the introduction of the Bridgend BBB allegedly resulted in difficulties for other community organisations sourcing surplus food. Drawing from this experience we have recently funded a Food Partnership in Bridgend. Through this partnership Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) are currently developing a comprehensive work plan for a new coordinator post which will bring local co-ordination of food initiatives through:

- identifying and establishing connections between food growing in the county
- identifying opportunities to secure additional supplies of good food surplus
- mapping other activity such as allotments and linking food projects.

I hope this letter clarifies these issues for the committee.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'L'.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd