

## Cross Party Group on Food

## Minutes of meeting June 19<sup>th</sup> 2019

### In attendance:

Jenny Rathbone AM	Chair
Mike Hedges AM	Swansea West
Euan	Rhun ap Iorweth's office
Paul Griffiths	Head of Procurement, National Procurement Service
Kristy Roberts-Medcraft	National Procurement Service
Rhys James	Caerphilly CBC
Ian Evans	Caerphilly CBC
Romano Provini	NHS Wales Shared Services Procurement Services
Katie Palmer	Food Sense Wales
Pearl Costello	Food Cardiff
Judith Gregory	Education Catering, Cardiff Council
Louise Shute	Food For Life Get Togethers
David Morris	Welsh Government Food Division
Gemma Roberts	Public Affairs Officer, Cancer Research UK
Shea Buckland-Jones	WWF Cymru
Jane Powell	Wales Food Manifesto
Holly Tomlinson	Landworkers' Alliance Cymru
Joanne Jefford	Dietician, Cardiff and Vale UHB
Hannah Caswell	Soil Association, Food for Life Served Here

Minutes of the previous meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2019 were circulated in advance. No matters arising raised.

### **Public Procurement**

Paul Griffiths Head of Procurement and Kristy Roberts Medcraft from the NPS described their role and the changes made to the Government's public procurement process in order to increase the purchase of goods sourced from Wales. Public bodies spend £35m on purchasing food every year. Most fresh food is supplied by Welsh companies to a value of £6.3m of total £6.6m spent pa.

**Food Safety Standards** – are a high priority given the high risk/vulnerable groups(children elderly and hospital in-patients) served with food within the public sector; so food safety and the ability to identify exactly where food has been sourced is key to public procurement.

Katie Palmer said the latest National Audit Office report. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Ensuring-food-safety-and-standards.pdf> emphasised the potential risks.

For Caerphilly food safety is paramount, especially when considering the tragic event that happened in 2005 due to E-coli. They use an independent auditor to monitor safety standards and liaise closely with environmental health officers.

### **Caerphilly Council Case Study**

Ian Evans and Rhys James outlined what Caerphilly Council is doing to procure more food from local businesses. They have held stakeholder events to explain the procurement process to local businesses, which includes the standards demanded amongst other requirements, They provide tailored advice to help businesses successfully bid for contract opportunities.

Fresh meat contract was required for school meals to provide a local source.

They recognize that few companies would be able to bid for supplying a product to all schools in the first instance, so split the contract into lots initially.

They successfully worked with a local milkman who started by supplying a couple of schools and then gradually scaled up his output to take on larger contracts. His business now supplies milk to 5 local authorities and a health board.

Caerphilly PSB has identified increasing the number of local suppliers for goods purchased by the public sector as a priority.

Action: What are other PSBs doing to increase no of local producers supplying food to public sector?

WLGA have produced a briefing paper titled 'The Future of Local Government Collaborative Procurement in Wales, Investing in Local Government Procurement to Deliver for Future Generations.

Two years ago, the NPS undertook activity to ensure local food providers were aware of procurement opportunities and what they needed to do.

There were 12 pre procurement Meet the Buyers events with potential suppliers that described the whole procurement process from objectives to process.

Paul Griffiths: While there were successes the size of the tender package, bringing together many areas of food supply did deter some from bidding

Ian Evans said Caerphilly had just held its 2000th procurement clinic.

There was a discussion about the **definition of Welsh suppliers**. Does that mean Welsh-based or Welsh-produced? Castell Howell is a large Welsh supplier but only 18% of their products are wholly sourced in Wales. Castell Howell does supply both fresh and ambient produce and has to cater for widespread demand across its customer base, both private and public sector.

### **How can we increase Welsh content?**

Wales is not producing nearly enough horticulture to meet demand. In the event of a No Deal Brexit, schools plan to substitute tinned and frozen veg and fruit in the absence of fresh produce coming from continental Europe.

NHS procurement increased focus on healthy food limited by shortage of suppliers

Whole change approach needed and effective knowledge transfer

- The EU Basic Payments Scheme is not available for people producing on less than 5 hectares
- The average age of farmers is 60 years so need to look to new entrants into food businesses
- A training course in Snowdonia was oversubscribed but they have little access to land.
- Need to removing planning restrictions and develop small lot approaches.
- Carmarthenshire identified as a local authority focussing on the issue.
- The Welsh Government's Foundational Economy Challenge Fund offers funding of up to £100,000. Deadline for applications July 12th

### **Getting young people focussed on real food**

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act has been used to inspire Tasty careers to combat the poor image of horticultural sector amongst young people.

The First Minister attended the Welsh launch of the Children's future food enquiry <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/the-childrens-future-food-inquiry-final-report-is-here/> May 2019. It highlights the extent of the challenge to ensure all children are able to eat fresh food. 55,000 pupils estimated to go hungry who are not currently eligible for FSM as their parents are working.

The cost of food bags from Food coop bags has risen by 25%. Many seeking help are in work as wages have not kept pace with the rise in food prices.

Of the 100 primary schools in Cardiff, 25 allow their pupils to pre-order their meals at morning registration. This reduces waste and gives pupils more reassurance they will get what they ordered.

**Action:** It was agreed that a lot more work needs to be done to increase the number of local and regional Welsh suppliers able to bid for public contracts.

The meeting ended at 1.20pm. Date of next meeting TBA once main speaker has been identified.