

Report from the Chair of the Business Committee

INFO 24/12/02 - Report by Timothy Riley

Report of 2 December 2024 Business Committee Meeting

The Business Committee met via Teams on 2 December. The Committee considered the following:

Chief Executive's (CE's) Report to the Business Committee (FSA BC 24-12-03)

Discussion around the CE's report covered the awarding of contracts for the FSA Delivery of Official Controls (FSADOC), the People Survey scores for the FSA, delays in the criminal justice system and the impact on prosecutions, and staff vacancies.

The Committee heard that the FSA had successfully retained two suppliers, increasing market diversification. The tender process had been recognised by the Cabinet Office for good practice in procurement.

The results of the recent Civil Service People Survey were discussed, which cannot be shared outside of the Civil Service until the benchmark and organisation results are published by the central team on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) in the new year.

Concerns were raised about delays in the criminal justice system and the impact on prosecutions. There was some discussion about the effect electing crown court over summary trial could have on timelines.

The number of vacancies within the FSA, though appearing high, was considered within the normal range due to regular turnover and market conditions.

Performance Report for Q2 2024/25

The report was discussed, focussing on the following areas.

Incidents and Our Response,

The Committee noted the high volume and complexity of incidents; and efforts to build surge capacity and improve triage processes. It was confirmed that officials were able to access three-nation data from the Signal and Incident Management System (SIMS). Where there were ongoing challenges on unlocking, work was underway with an external company to help access and join up the information and make it available for performance reporting.

The Committee asked about FSA pushback on local authorities in incident handling and emphasised the need for consistent communication to ensure local authorities were clear about expected standards.

The use of retrospective reviews to test the effectiveness of the approach being taken was also noted. Recent incidents were illustrative of the complexity of relationships between various parties during incidents and the significance of lessons learned for the national risk register was highlighted.

Market Authorisations for Regulated Products

The Committee heard an update on Tranche 3 feed applications and active caseload management. Tranche 3 Feed Authorisations were progressing in line with our public commitment, with Statutory Instruments laid in England, Scotland, and Wales, pending parliamentary scrutiny. A firm line was being maintained on active caseload management and work is underway to explore improving metrics, with continuous improvement activities and reform efforts to speed up the process.

There was a discussion about the tolerances for metrics, and the need for better data on tolerances was acknowledged.

Local Authority Delivery

The need for ensuring better understanding of the local authorities' Management Information System (MIS) providers' timelines and the importance of consistent communication with local authorities was discussed in regard to the implementation of the Food Standards Delivery Model. It was the intention to have all local authorities having implemented the Food Standards Delivery Model by March. It was explained that this was optimistic, and efforts were being made to identify those least likely to achieve this.

There was a question about the metrics for Food Standards and how the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) ratings were determined. The subjectivity of the SurveyMonkey data capture mechanism around Food Standards was acknowledged and it was explained that it would be replaced with a new system, which would make it easier for local authorities to provide data much more frequently.

Annex A: Business Committee Papers – 2 December 2024

- [FSA BC 24/12/01 - Minutes of 9 September 2024 Business Committee Meeting](#)
- [FSA BC 24/12/02 - Actions Arising](#)
- [FSA BC 24/12/03 - Chief Executive's Report to the Business Committee](#)
- [FSA BC 24/12/04 - Performance Report Q2 2024-25](#)