

# Minutes of the Food Standards Agency Board Meeting – Wednesday 10 December 2025

FSA 26/03/01

Victoria Hall, Town Hall, Reading

**Present:** Susan Jebb (Chair); Frank Atherton; Alison Austin; Clare Evans; Fiona Gately; Anthony Harbinson; Rhian Hayward; Louise Hoste; Timothy Riley; Steve Ruddy; Sue Paterson.

## **Officials attending:**

Katie Pettifer ? Chief Executive  
Reginald Bevan ? Head of National Food Crime Unit (for paper FSA 25/12/06)  
Beth Chaudhary ? Director of Strategy and Regulatory Compliance  
Rachel Cooper ? Director of Strategy and Regulatory Compliance  
James Cooper ? Deputy Director of Food Policy (for papers FSA 25/12/04 & FSA 25/12/05)  
Claire Forbes ? Director of Communications  
Ian Gibson ? Director of Corporate Resources  
Junior Johnson ? Director of Operations  
Anjali Juneja ? Director of UK & International Affairs  
Rick Mumford ? Head of Science Evidence and Research  
Julie Pierce ? Director of Information and Science  
James Robinson ? General Counsel  
Rebecca Sudworth ? Director of Policy

**Apologies:** None.

## **1 Introduction and Declarations of Interest**

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board Members, officials and observers to Reading. She noted that the Board continued to prioritise accessibility of its proceedings and that the meeting would be recorded, with the recording made available alongside the papers and minutes to support public engagement.

1.2 Seven public questions had been received in advance covering precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) and threshold choices, the evaluation of the meat charging discount regime, activities of the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), and two matters of Agency governance. The Chair said that the Board would try to address relevant points during the associated items, and all questioners would receive written responses published with the minutes.

1.3 The Chair explained that, immediately after the open session, the Board would meet briefly in closed session to consider a paper relating to the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement that was proposed as part of the Common Understanding between the UK and the EU in

May. She acknowledged the Board's strong commitment to openness and said that private proceedings were necessary only because of the sensitivity of the negotiations at this stage. She stated her intention to publish the paper in the new year, when appropriate.

1.4 Declarations of interest were invited. Timothy Riley declared an interest as a livestock producer in relation to the meat charging discount regime. Sue Paterson declared a close family connection with a nut allergy relevant to the PAL discussion. No other new interests or conflicts were raised in relation to the agenda.

## **2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (FSA 25/12/01)**

2.1 The minutes of the 17 September 2025 Board meeting in Belfast were confirmed as an accurate record without amendment.

## **3 Actions Arising (FSA 25/12/02)**

3.1 The Chair reviewed the actions log, noting progress.

3.2 Three actions remained open. On cannabidiol (CBD) products, the Chair reminded Members that the Board had asked for a synthesis of consultation responses to inform consideration of risk management arrangements. The FSA's consultation had closed at the end of November; Food Standards Scotland had not yet launched its equivalent consultation. To preserve four-nation alignment, officials had deferred advice to Ministers until both sets of responses could be considered together. The Board expected to see a summary paper before advice was finalised.

**Action 1 - Policy team to provide a paper to the Board summarising CBD consultation responses ahead of risk management decisions on CBD products.**

3.3 On the sampling strategy, the Chair said the Board sought a deeper, rounded discussion on portfolio priorities and opportunities to maximise the utility of samples already taken, including multi-purpose testing, and any gaps that required investment. She asked that a substantive session be scheduled at the January Board retreat, ideally with the newly appointed CSA contributing to the strategic direction.

**Action 2 - Science Evidence and Research Division to table a substantive sampling session at the January 2026 Board retreat, covering portfolio rationalisation, gaps and prioritisation.**

3.4 Action 1 from the September 2025 Board Meeting related to the food-borne disease epidemiology group was in progress. Rebecca Sudworth advised that work to reconcile trends in reported incidence with changes in testing sensitivity, travel patterns, domestic cooking practices, climate change and imported foods was complex, but the update was being finalised. The Chair asked that the note be circulated ahead of the retreat and reiterated that the Board expected to see a clear action plan at its March meeting.

**Action 3 - Director of Policy to circulate the food-borne disease epidemiology group update to Board Members before the January retreat, and to bring a plan for addressing elevated food-borne disease incidence to the March 2026 Board.**

## **4 Chair's Report (Oral)**

4.1 The Chair provided an oral update covering preparations for a UK-EU SPS agreement, ministerial engagement, parliamentary activity, innovation, and people. On SPS, she said the FSA was closely involved in cross-government planning led by the Cabinet Office and

Defra. She had attended the first two meetings of the Europe Implementation Group chaired by Cabinet Office Minister Nick Thomas-Symonds, noting that these focused on the practical measures needed to deliver any agreed common understanding and to support businesses through the transition. She stressed that dynamic alignment would have implications across the food system, including for businesses not directly trading with the EU, particularly in regulated products. In addition to supporting central government events, the FSA would run its own stakeholder sessions targeted at industry and innovators, beginning the following week and continuing into the new year. These sessions would cover regulated products and authorisation pathways and would aim to provide practical guidance as the details of the agreement became clearer.

4.2 The Chair described a productive introductory meeting with Dame Angela Eagle, the new Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs, as well as exchanges with Baroness Hayman on public health risks at the border. She had also joined an MP roundtable, accompanied by Junior Johnson, to discuss the future of the sector and the impact of the meat charging discount regime proposals on small abattoirs and rural economies. MPs had highlighted the social and economic importance of local slaughter capacity and the need to avoid regulatory cost burdens falling disproportionately on smaller businesses.

4.3 On innovation, the Chair reported attending the launch of the Market Authorisation Innovation Service at Imperial College and thanked Lord Vallance and colleagues in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology for their participation at this event and wider support for the Innovation Hub. She noted the opening of authorisation routes for precision-bred food and feed last month and said the Agency was seeking to give innovators and investors greater clarity on regulatory requirements and time lines while maintaining rigorous safety standards.

4.4 On people, the Chair recorded thanks to Anjali Juneja for her contribution over the past three years as Director of UK and International Affairs, particularly in connecting the FSA across government and strengthening four-nation working; she wished Anjali well in her new role at Defra. She announced the appointment of Professor Ian Young as the FSA's new CSA from early 2026, noting that his clinical and policy experience would bring valuable insights and advice to the FSA.

4.5 Reflecting on the FSA's twenty-fifth anniversary year, the Chair noted milestones such as the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) and Natasha's Law and observed that the Agency stood at a critical juncture given the likely changes arising from SPS and new programmes of work on the horizon. She welcomed the Budget statement that the Government had asked the FSA to develop proposals for a new system of food regulation in England. She emphasised that reforms must protect public health, be proportionate, intelligence and data led, and must avoid eroding the support local authorities provided to small businesses.

## **5 Chief Executive's Report to the Board (FSA 25/12/03)**

5.1 The Chief Executive (CE) drew out key points from her written report. She underlined the centrality of SPS work to the FSA's forward programme and explained the approach the FSA was taking on work that might create divergence, consistent with earlier Board discussions. She said that significant financial and resourcing risks were present because no additional funding had been provided for SPS, even though work would need to be undertaken simultaneously on negotiations, implementation with industry, and legislative changes. As Accounting Officer, she would need to take managed risk to recruit ahead of confirmed funding. Discussions were ongoing with the Treasury, and the Board would be kept closely informed.

5.2 On the Budget announcement, the CE outlined the opportunity to develop proposals for a consistent national approach to regulating large food businesses in England. She stressed four guiding principles: protecting public health and consumers; considering the whole assurance

system rather than only national regulation; retaining independent checks alongside data; and ensuring that any changes did not further diminish local authority resources. She emphasised the need to work at pace if legislative windows opened and confirmed that stakeholder engagement would be extensive, building on the Agency's earlier pilots.

5.3 The CE noted heightened parliamentary interest in the FSA's work, including recent and forthcoming evidence sessions across committees. In the broader regulation for growth agenda, she said the FSA had delivered commitments including the first audits under the recycled plastics regime and publication of sandbox guidance. It was also noted that the case management system had improved incident handling. She welcomed Ian Gibson to his first Board meeting as an EMT member and recorded thanks to Anjali Juneja for her contribution to four?nation and international work.

5.4 On future food regulation, the Board asked for further detail on the engagement process with regulatory partners and industry, emphasising the need for strong relationships with local authorities and clarity of messaging. The importance of continued support for under?resourced local authorities was noted, and the board reflection on the dedication and expertise of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Trading Standards teams they had met on recent Board visits, including that morning in Reading and Slough. Board Members highlighted the need for any future reforms to recognise the on?the?ground realities for small businesses as well as the data?rich environments of larger retailers and manufacturers. It was emphasised that reform should address the way data is used to help manage risk effectively across the changing food industry landscape.

5.5 The Chair noted broad support for combining data with independent checks and ensuring that reforms would deliver better outcomes without eroding local authority work. A time?limited Board subgroup would be established to oversee the development of proposals for future food regulation.

**Action 4 - A time?limited Board subgroup to oversee development of proposals for future food regulation, providing steer on scope, engagement and dependencies to be convened**

5.6 On SPS, there was disappointment from Board Members that additional funding had not been provided for the work and they encouraged the CE to take a managed risk in staffing plans to deliver well for consumers. The Board also noted the importance of encouraging clear communication for business as soon as possible, given that the stop?start experiences post?EU? exit were not always within the FSA's control. Practical, actionable guidance should be provided.

5.7 Ian Gibson said officials were in discussion with the Treasury and would submit a transparent case for net additional SPS delivery costs early in the new year. The Board took assurance from the approach but asked the Executive to set out any significant resourcing implications as they emerged so that oversight could be maintained.

## **6 Evaluation of the Meat Charging Discount Regime – Proposals for Revised Support System (FSA 25/12/04)**

6.1 James Cooper presented proposals for a revised discount support system following the Board's steer in June. He reminded the Board that the economic analysis had demonstrated a regulatory cost burden that fell disproportionately on smaller abattoirs relative to larger ones. On the basis of this evidence, the Board had concluded that support should be re?focused on smaller businesses while being removed from the largest, which had economies of scale. Ministers had supported this direction. James summarised stakeholder engagement across Cardiff, Belfast and London and said that although many stakeholders understandably wanted support to continue for

all, no evidence had been presented to justify continued support for very large operators.

6.2 He outlined proposals for a simplified model consisting of a single discount rate; maximum support for the smallest businesses; a taper to avoid cliff edges; and removal of support for the largest businesses. Officials recommended use of a three-year historic rolling average of livestock units as a basis for determining discount. This would be the default approach for determining support but they also advised retaining some elements of discretion in how the model was applied.

6.3 The Board welcomed the clarity and asked about the rationale for discretionary elements and whether administration might become burdensome if used frequently. James said discretion to adjust individual support would only be used sparingly, if at all, to meet Ministerial requirements; within the model it is proposed to have a degree of discretion in movement of the position of taper annually to allow management of costs within overall budgets but this would also be constrained by practical parameters such as ensuring we do not over-subsidise.

6.4 There was a question about how averaging would work for businesses that experienced significant changes in throughput or seasonal volatility and whether averaging could be reset if an operator lost a major contract. It was explained that the three-year rolling average would smooth volatility in either direction. For new entrants without data, proxy measures and prudent assumptions would be used initially; consultation would test these proposals with industry.

6.5 The need for clarity in communications was noted. The Board asked that officials be explicit about the meaning of 'regulatory burden' in external materials; practical detail on what the transitional year 2026/27 would look like from the perspective of businesses planning budgets was requested. James committed to clear communications and said early engagement sessions on the approach to the discount in 26/27 would walk businesses through the proposed approach, timelines, and likely changes in the upper bands.

6.6 The Board asked whether there would be a set point each year when eligibility would be confirmed and whether sufficient notice would be given to allow budgeting. Officials said annual positions would be confirmed on a published timetable, with the aim of maximal predictability. They would make use of prior-year data and the rolling average to avoid late surprises.

6.7 Board Members drew attention to paragraph 3.21 in the paper, which refers to annual movement, and asked how variation driven by the overall budget, inflation indicators such as CPI/RPI, and changes in service delivery costs would be handled transparently. James explained that the annual charges process would continue to set charge rates on the basis of cost of service, with separate decisions on thresholds bounded by fairness tests, consultation outcomes and spend limits; both sets of decisions would be explained together.

6.8 It was noted that growth did not always mean expansion within a single plant but could mean the emergence of additional small plants. The Board said that the scheme should retain flexibility to support the wider ecosystem over time and avoid cliff edges that undermined viable local capacity. The Chair agreed; the Board asked officials to reflect this in consultation materials.

6.9 Rhian Hayward asked how the model would affect smaller-to-medium abattoirs near the top of the taper, particularly in Wales, and whether operators might be discouraged from growth if they perceived a 'sweet spot' in support. James said analysis suggested the proposed thresholds would cover all of Band 1 and some of Band 2 in the current scheme, increasing the number of businesses receiving maximum support and smoothing the slope thereafter. The team would model behavioural effects and invite evidence during consultation.

6.10 Anthony Harbinson explained the particular features of the Northern Ireland context: large, multi-species plants; high reliance on mobile staff; practical constraints on moving livestock

across jurisdictions due to cost and welfare; and ministerial discretion operating across departments, often requiring Executive decisions that were not quick to obtain. He supported avoiding divergence as far as possible and urged early engagement with Ministers, noting that it would be classed as a cross-departmental responsibility in Northern Ireland, with more than one Minister involved, making it an Executive decision.

6.11 The Chair noted that the Board agreed that the current banded scheme should be retained in 2026/27 but with reduced support in the upper bands to begin the transition, aligning with budget constraints and giving businesses time to plan. The revised approach would be introduced in 2027/28 and phased to 2030 in line with Spending Review periods. Consultation would be held in spring 2026, with final proposals brought to the Board ahead of Ministerial decision in autumn 2026. Officials undertook to develop a clear communications plan, including early briefings for industry, timelines for confirming annual eligibility, and worked examples of how the rolling average would be applied.

**Action 5 - Policy team to return to the Board with analysis of the consultation and final proposals ahead of Ministerial decision in autumn 2026.**

## **7 FSA position on Codex Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) standard, including thresholds (FSA 25/12/05)**

7.1 The Chair asked James Cooper to introduce this item and noted the human consequences of poor allergen management. She sent condolences to the family of Benedict Blyth who died in December 2021 after accidental exposure to milk at school. The prevention of future deaths report had now been published and contained no recommendations for the FSA, but underscored the FSA's responsibilities to people with food hypersensitivity. She noted that Rebecca Sudworth had met with Benedict's mother to discuss improving systems and the needs of people with food hypersensitivity would remain an important consideration for FSA. She also noted the Board's requests for further evidence and stakeholder insights when the issue had been discussed previously, which were included within the paper.

7.2 James presented the recommendation to support Codex's work to standardise PAL internationally, including ED05 thresholds, subject to resolution of gluten treatment in the standard.

7.3 The Chair reflected on the roundtable she has attended with allergy charities, which unanimously supported standardisation including ED05, provided gluten was addressed appropriately. Charities considered that the most sensitive individuals did not rely on formal thresholds and would continue to practise strict avoidance, but that standardisation would help reduce inappropriate PAL and improve consumer confidence. The Chair said she had been persuaded by the charities' arguments and now supported ED05, noting that theoretical lower risk at ED01 did not carry persuasive real-world benefits for the most sensitive individuals.

7.4 Roundtables with industry had also given broad support to the Codex proposals. Some larger businesses said they already operated to tighter internal limits and would not lower standards; they welcomed the potential for clearer supply-chain communication if Codex set a common approach. Views on whether PAL would become more or less common were mixed. Businesses emphasised that accuracy mattered more than prevalence.

7.5 Anthony Harbinson confirmed that NIFAC supported standardisation and drew attention to the educational implications in Northern Ireland, where food labelling formed part of the curriculum for Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14). He said guidance would need to be updated to reflect any new standard and urged clear communication.

7.6 Rhian Hayward set out her experience of perspectives from smaller manufacturers via the Welsh food centres, noting the need for practical guidance on testing methodologies and expressing support for a separate explainer on methods.

7.7 The Board said that industry and consumers would need clarity on where ED05 applied and reassurance that risk assessments would continue to be done to the lowest available level. They asked about timing for resolving the gluten issue at Codex.

7.8 Board Members also emphasised the importance of consumer education and asked for monitoring and evaluation plans that considered both consumer understanding and business application in practice.

7.9 It was acknowledged that evidence suggested ED08 was below levels associated with serious adverse effects and therefore ED05 lay within a relatively conservative zone; there was support for standardisation given stakeholder backing and likely alignment with international practice.

7.10 Sue Paterson, drawing on personal experience of managing severe nut allergy in her family, said her initial instinct had been to prefer ED01 but she was reassured by the FSA's analysis and the charities' views. She called for continued advocacy to support Owen's Law so that allergen information on menus would be mandated in the out-of-home sector, noting that many incidents occurred there rather than in prepacked foods.

7.11 The Board agreed to support Codex's work, subject to gluten resolution, and asked for a clear communications plan and an implementation proposal following Codex agreement. Members reiterated that PAL should communicate residual risk after robust controls and should not be used as an alternative to managing risk in production.

**Action 6 - Policy team to provide background briefs to the Board on the Codex timetable for PAL, the gluten issue and current testing methodologies; and consider communications and evaluation of impact following Codex discussions.**

## **8 National Food Crime Unit – Annual Update (FSA 25/12/06)**

8.1 The Chair invited Reginald Bevan to present the NFCU's annual update, marking ten years since the Unit's establishment. Reginald reported a step-change in capability with the introduction of PACE powers in May, used nearly twenty times with robust governance and no complaints. Operational successes included custodial sentences for meat fraud, seizure of misrepresented product, guilty pleas in a significant fraud case, confiscation orders under proceeds-of-crime legislation, and joint operations with the City of London Police targeting suspected laundering via food businesses.

8.2 Reginald highlighted expansion of prevention capability, including bespoke training for third-party auditors. He said practical impacts were already visible: auditors had identified falsified training certificates and changed oversight practices, generating intelligence that the Unit had shared with local authorities. Junior Johnson explained that whistleblowing reports below the NFCU threshold were routinely referred to local authorities for action, with guidance on next steps.

8.3 Board Members asked about partnership working and intelligence sharing with local authorities and the CPS. Junior said the Unit maintained access to local authority intelligence databases and a steady flow of disseminations. He added that the CPS now provided an account manager to help navigate public interest thresholds and operational issues, improving throughput despite systemic court delays.

8.4 The Board highlighted the importance of deterrence and asked the Communications team to help surface enforcement narratives across arrest, charge, conviction, sentencing and proceeds of crime stages to show consequences.

**Action 7 - NFCU and Communications to continue to publicise enforcement outcomes across arrest, charge, conviction, sentencing and proceeds of crime stages, subject to legal constraints and partner collaboration.**

8.5 The Chair noted frustration at court delays, which were not within the FSA's control, and on penalties, asked officials to consider whether approaches to judicial training bodies and sentencing committees might improve magistrates' understanding of food crime seriousness. Junior said he would reflect and advise.

8.6 On borders, Members focused on illegal meat imports and biosecurity risks, including African Swine Fever in Europe. Reginald said that bilateral information sharing with European partners continued to strengthen and would likely be enhanced by any SPS-related improvements in access to general alerts. He gave a brief update on a recent arrest related to suspected illegal importation of products, including protected species, and said investigations were ongoing.

8.7 The Board asked if it would be possible to do more to demonstrate the economic dividend of tackling food crime. The CE supported this work being done, adding that this could be useful going into spending review negotiations and recommended holding this over until then.

8.8 The Chair noted the value of the work of the NFCU to the FSA around food standards issues and added that the Board would be interested to see more detail on the future work with Defra on illegal meat imports. Reginald said this could be provided.

**Action 8 - NFCU to provide the Board with a written note on planned work with Defra on illegal meat imports, including sampling programme timelines and expected outputs.**

## **9 Annual Communications Update (FSA 25/12/07)**

9.1 Claire Forbes presented the Annual Communications Update. She described a year of high volumes of responsive work and proactive campaigns for consumers and businesses, strengthened partnership channels, and the growing impact of AI-generated summaries in search results. The latter had reduced visits to Agency web content and necessitated work with large language model providers via government partners, including the NHS, to ensure accurate, up-to-date information surfaced and to adapt content towards concise, clear messaging likely to be used in summaries.

9.2 Board Members discussed public trust. Research suggested visibility in broadcast media and transparent, consistent messaging as drivers of trust. For the FSA, the FHRS remained a highly visible symbol of food safety. Claire said the team had developed explainers and video content for rapid deployment to counter misinformation.

9.3 The Board asked for additional detail on misinformation trends around ultra-processed foods (UPF) and additives and welcomed the partnership approach to reach specific consumer groups. Claire explained that some of the work over the year was to identify which topics were at greatest risk of misinformation such as specific food additives and cell cultivated proteins which were new and largely unknown. The team had been working with the FSA Science Council to consider those topics and how to respond.

9.4 Rhian Hayward welcomed the launch of Welsh language social media channels and emphasised maintaining momentum in Wales through the Senedd election period. She asked that the migration of content to gov.uk preserve Welsh language parity and quality. Claire

confirmed that three-country working continued to emphasise bilingual parity and that engagement plans with the Senedd and Welsh Government were active.

9.5 The Board endorsed priorities including a strategic review of the Annual Report on Food Standards to clarify unique value and avoid duplication with other publications; migration of content to GOV.UK with Welsh language parity; promotion of enforcement outcomes with the NFCU; and communications support for future food regulation. Members asked that capacity be maintained for rapid responses to misinformation and for targeted outreach to groups less likely to access social media or web content, using partnerships and broadcast channels.

**Action 9 - Communications to undertake a strategic review of the Annual Report on Food Standards, proposing format and scope that maximise unique value and reduce duplication with external publications.**

## **10 Annual governance report (FSA 25/12/08)**

10.1 Timothy Riley presented the annual governance report and summarised actions already taken following the internal Board effectiveness review, including refinements to agenda planning, horizon scanning, and the use of ARAC deep dives to improve assurance over complex and high-risk topics. Minor housekeeping amendments to ARAC's terms of reference were approved, updating procurement reporting and role titles to reflect organisational changes.

10.2 The Board reaffirmed its standing orders and the terms of reference for the Business Committee and the Board itself.

## **11 Report from the Chair of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC) (FSA 25/12/09)**

11.1 Anthony Harbinson reported that NIFAC had held themed meetings on operational delivery, horizon scanning and local authority engagement, with strong participation from district councils. He said next year's programme would include surveillance and science themes, engagement with the Northern Ireland reference laboratories structure, reflecting EU obligations, and contributions to four-nation monitoring such as folic acid fortification. He welcomed continued joint sessions with WFAC and opportunities for Board Members to engage with local authorities when the Board met in Northern Ireland.

## **12 Report of November ARAC meeting (INFO 25/12/01)**

12.1 Anthony Harbinson reported that ARAC's November meeting had focused on certification of the Annual Report and Accounts. The National Audit Office had given a clean audit opinion; the Accounting Officer had signed the Accounts, and they had been laid in both Houses. He noted that dedicated ARAC training on NFCU operations had been valuable for Members, particularly those newly appointed.

## **13 Report from the Chair of the Business Committee (INFO 25/12/02)**

13.1 Timothy Riley reported that the Business Committee met on 1 December. The Committee scrutinised incidents thresholds, local authority delivery, and market authorisations. On the Food Standards Delivery Model, the Committee recognised workforce constraints and inspection backlogs and reiterated the importance of realistic acceleration while avoiding setting targets that

could not be met. The framework was already providing better, more accurate data and would support system improvement; the Committee would continue to monitor progress closely.

## 14 Reports from the Chairs of the Food Advisory Committees (Oral)

14.1 Rhian Hayward reported that WFAC was now at full complement following recent appointments, which had strengthened expertise in trading standards and consumer perspectives. She described recent themed meetings, including sessions with the Consumer Protection Team and discussions on data signals and technology to improve efficiency. WFAC had also engaged with the Welsh Government Food Forum and the Future Generations Commissioner, whose recent report contained far-reaching recommendations on food policy. Rhian said upcoming themed meetings would include a deep dive on food supplements, reflecting growing complexity and consumer interest in this area, and she welcomed the Board's suggestion to incorporate labelling and mislabelling issues into that discussion. She stressed the importance of maintaining momentum in stakeholder engagement during the pre-election and election period for the Senedd and confirmed that WFAC would continue to work closely with NIFAC to align themes and share learning wherever possible.

14.2 Anthony provided an oral update on NIFAC's recent activities beyond the formal annual report. He highlighted the Committee's continued focus on operational delivery and horizon scanning, noting strong engagement with district councils during themed meetings. He emphasised the importance of maintaining relationships with local authorities, given their critical role in sampling, enforcement and delivery of the Food Standards Delivery Model. Anthony confirmed that NIFAC had met jointly with WFAC on several occasions to share perspectives and avoid duplication, and he reiterated his open invitation for Board Members to attend NIFAC meetings or preparatory sessions to deepen understanding of Northern Ireland issues. Looking ahead, NIFAC planned to examine surveillance priorities, the management of Northern Ireland reference and contract structures (reflecting EU obligations), and four-nation monitoring work such as folic acid fortification. He also noted Northern Ireland's additional responsibilities for public health and suggested leveraging this experience to inform wider FSA thinking.

## 15 Any Other Business and public questions

15.1 Under Any Other Business, the Chair informed Members that the Minister for Public Health had asked the FSA to support to develop proposals for of a healthy food reporting regime and targets for large businesses, as part of the DHSC policy work initiated under the NHS 10-year plan. The Board welcomed the opportunity in principle, subject to appropriate funding and organisational bandwidth, and asked the Executive to work with DHSC to scope the work and return with a full proposition at the next meeting. Rachel Cooper observed that synergies were likely with the future food regulation programme, and Louise Hoste asked that scope be clarified early so that dependencies and resource implications could be understood.

**Action 10 - Executive to work with DHSC to scope the proposed healthy food reporting regime and return to the Board with a detailed proposition on scope, resource, timeline and alignment with future food regulation.**

15.2 During public questions, a representative of an allergy charity raised concerns about labelling for imported supplements and for halal/kosher products and asked how PAL would apply in those contexts. Officials reaffirmed that products sold in the UK must meet applicable labelling standards and said that intelligence on mislabelling would be referred to local authorities and, where thresholds were met, to the NFCU. The Board noted that WFAC planned a themed meeting on supplements and asked that labelling and mislabelling issues be explicitly covered.

**Action 11 - FSA in Wales to include labelling and mis?labelling issues within the planned themed meeting on supplements, and to share any prepared papers with Board Members.**

## **16 Close**

16.1 With no further business, the Chair thanked participants for their contributions over the year and wished all a restful festive break. The next Board Meeting would take place on 25 March 2026.