

Paper FSAW 19/04/03
For discussion

Update from interim director

Executive Summary

1. The attached paper signposts to issues introduced by the Chief Executive at the last Board meeting which was held on 13 March 2019. The complete minutes from the Board meeting are available on the FSA's website at <http://www.food.gov.uk>. The paper also provides an update on issues of relevance to Wales and forms the basis of the update to the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC).
2. The interim Director for FSA Wales will supplement the information provided in this report with an oral update where necessary.
3. Members are invited to:
 - **note** the update
 - **invite** the interim Director to expand on any issues for further discussion

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Update from director

1. Summary of Chief Executive's Report to Open Board Meeting 13 March 2019.

1.1. The Board received the written report (FSA 18/12/04) of the Chief Executive (CE) as at:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-19-03-03-chief-executives-report-final.pdf>

2. Interim Director for Wales' Report on Matters Pertaining to Wales

External Engagement

2.1. I have been involved in the following engagement opportunities since WFAC last met in open session in January 2019:

- 14 January – Meeting with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils
- 15 January – EU Exit meeting with Welsh Government
- 15 January – Welsh Government liaison meeting
- 17 January – FSA industry roundtable
- 22 January – Farmers' Union Wales breakfast meeting
- 22 January – Health Protection Advisory Group
- 28 January – Meeting with Shared Regulatory Services to discuss performance in delivering food hygiene interventions
- 31 January – Meeting with Directors of Public Protection Wales
- 5 February – Meeting with Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy County Councils
- 7 February – Welsh Government liaison meeting
- 11 February – Meeting with the Food Industry Board
- 28 February – Meeting with Animal Plant and Health Association
- 5 March – Meeting with Swansea County Council
- 11 March – Meeting with Welsh Local Government Association
- 13 March – Welsh Government liaison meeting
- 20-21 March – Taste Wales conference 2019
- 22 March – Meeting with Directors of Public Protection Wales
- 25 March – Food safety meeting with Cardiff County Council

Stakeholder engagement visits

2.2 My visits to all local authorities and other key stakeholders in Wales is ongoing. To date, I have met with eight stakeholders and discussions have been very positive and constructive. My next visits are being arranged for May and I am on schedule to complete all visits by the end of June 2019.

Meeting with the Minister for Health and Social Services

- 2.3 Heather Hancock, Chair of the FSA Board, met with Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services on 2 April. Agenda items included discussions around EU Exit planning, Regulatory Reform, Appointments (Chief Executive and Board) and allergens.

Taste Wales conference

- 2.4 FSA Wales has continued its programme of exhibiting at stakeholder events, with two days at the Taste Wales conference in March, where we met with stakeholders to discuss a variety of food safety and food hygiene topics. The conference brought together buyers, producers and food industry professionals from throughout Wales and wider afield and provided us with an opportunity to engage with our industry stakeholders.
- 2.5 Along with Julie Pierce, Director for Wales and Digital, I attended the Taste Wales conference and evening networking event.



Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme - Review of the Operation of the Appeals System in Wales Report

- 2.6 A report of the FSA's review of the Operation of the Appeals System in Wales for the period 28 November 2017 to 27 November 2018 was laid before the National Assembly for Wales on 28 February 2019. This report is the fifth annual review of the operation of the appeals system and has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme (FHRS).
- 2.7 The headline figures indicate that: 94 businesses in Wales made an appeal; 17 appeals (18%) resulted in changes to the food hygiene rating; 87 appeals (93%) were determined within the statutory timescale of 21 days; and all 94 appeals (100%) were determined by an officer not involved in the assessment of the rating being appealed. In most cases, local authorities are operating the FHRS in accordance with their statutory obligations. FSA Wales followed up each instance where local authorities missed their 21 days deadline to inform food businesses of their appeal determination.

- 2.8 Local authorities continue to recognise the benefit of consistent application of the FHRs, prioritising officer participation in training events and consistency exercises. In 2018, 164 officers from all local authorities across Wales attended consistency training events funded by the FSA across Wales. Further, all authorities in Wales took part in the FHRs National Consistency Exercise (NCE) which focused on a scenario involving an appeal. The overall picture is a positive one and endorses and underlines the importance and effectiveness of the FHRs. The report has been published on the website of the National Assembly for Wales: <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld12230/gen-ld12230-e.pdf>

Focused Audit Report of Local Authority Implementation and Operation of the Statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales

- 2.9 FSA Wales has published a focused audit report of local authority (LA) implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales: <http://fsa.riams.org/connected/jrTCREwkPU>. The focused audit examined arrangements for the implementation and operation of the FHRs by LAs in Wales. The report details the findings of the audit, highlights examples of good practice and makes recommendations for improvements. I have extended my thanks to local authorities in Wales for their cooperation and feedback during the audit and we will now consider ways in which to implement each of the recommendations.

3 Forward Look

- 3.1 Between now and the next open meeting of the WFAC on 13 June 2019, I have made the following commitment of relevance to the FSA in Wales:
- 14 May - Emergency Preparedness Response and Resilience Board meeting
 - 29 May - Health Promotion Action Group meeting

Richard Bowen

Interim Director, FSA Wales
April 2019