

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r ymgynghoriad ar y [Bil Bwyd \(Cymru\) Drafft](#)

This response was submitted to the consultation on the [Draft Food \(Wales\) Bill](#)

FB009

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen | Torfaen County Borough Council

Torfaen County Borough Council has been building a Food Resilience Programme for some time. Piloting community poverty project through LEADER and obtaining funding under the Wales Rural Development Programme to develop the capacity to create a Sustainable Food Place.

The core activities of the project are:

- Food Partnership - A multi sectoral partnership that leads the development of a whole system approach to developing local food supply chains
- Digital Platform - hosted through the wider Sustainable Food Places website. Creating the opportunities to share information
- Food Governance & Strategy – using the results from the Torfaen Food Mapping Exercise, a Torfaen wide Food Strategy and action plan will be produced, taking into account the community, economic and environmental factors of the supply chain. The strategy will form a framework for all Torfaen plans linked to food, to ensure services/projects are developed jointly and support the development of future food.
- Community Engagement Programme - the creation of a Community Food Grant Scheme
- Support Local Businesses - develop a network for hospitality, retail, producers and processors to share knowledge and information and to work collaboratively to develop innovative schemes to ensure that the food systems are sustainable and resilient for the future.

The Food Partnership has met 6 times since January 2022 and are keen to develop a strategic and collaborative approach. The key themes arising from the discussions to date are;

- Food Poverty
- Health and Sustainability
- Community Food
- Food Production
- Food Economy
- Transform Procurement
- Reduce Food Waste
- Improve Policy

The activities to date have proven extremely successful and have led to Torfaen gaining funding under the UK Government Community Renewal Fund to pilot a collaboration project called "Food4Growth", between Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Caerphilly. This project is exploring the opportunities and barriers to economic growth in agriculture and community growing. Also piloting small grant schemes to act as a catalyst for engagement, rid the stigma to food poverty and add value to local products.

Torfaen is also leading on the development of Gwent wide Food Resilience Programme under the Shared Prosperity Fund. We will be building a co-ordinated approach to food resilience with the aim that services are developed cohesively to ensure service users gain access to a holistic system of support. A 'system based approach' will be taken so that all services capture the relevant data to provide a clear picture of local and regional need and future resilience. The programme will encourage future sustainability as well as providing quick wins to support the effects on the current cost of living crisis, providing opportunities to tackle food poverty. The programme will consist of a variety of support and development opportunities for local businesses, schools, community growers and social welfare services. All 5 of the Gwent local Authorities have signed up to the programme.

Given the extent of local and regional activity we are pleased to see that the possibility of a Food (Wales) Bill is being discussed. It is proven difficult to align our work to the wider policy agenda in Wales without a Food Bill or associated policy. We would prefer this to be developed in partnership with the existing Food Partnerships to ensure the Food Bill fits the purpose of the current and future needs of the populations we serve.

Overall we agree with the proposal, which will bring together different Government Departments to focus on sustainable food. We agree that there is a need for legislation in this field to create governance, accountability and action. A National Food Strategy will provide local Food Partnerships the powers to invest in the food system, it will create the opportunity to wider engage with businesses and the community. It will also create synergy in measuring success and pave the way to creating sustainable food places.

We also agree that each area should develop local food plans, but we believe this should be a multi sectoral place based approach and owned by the multi sectoral Food Partnership. There is no need to confuse the issue with duplicate plans for different public sector bodies. Overarching statements and goals will be welcome to ensure each local food plans align to the Bill and to each other. This will help strengthen both local and regional supply chains.

The introduction of food goals will be crucial to the Bills success and will form a framework for development for us. This will underpin each action being developed in our Food Strategy. As already stated the targets set must be developed in partnership with the Food Partnerships to ensure they are SMART.

We are pleased to see that the primary food goal is to provision of affordable, healthy, economically and environmentally sustainable food for the people of Wales. This covers all the main priorities within in our consultations to date.

The secondary food goals recognise the wider impacts of the food supply chain. We would hope to see support and guidance created here in terms of procurement and local sourcing to encourage the private sector to work collaboratively.

In terms of a Welsh Food Commission, more detail needs to be provided on this prior to a more detailed comment. We feel it would be more valuable to engage both local authorities and health boards within this to bring their wealth of expertise and experience to the table. Third sector organisations including welfare services should also be involved in the process, particularly give the current cost of living crises.

Overall we believe that the Food (Wales) Bill would significantly strengthen the work which is

already being and developed at a local and regional level to create a better Welsh food system. It would ensure that local initiatives are aligned with national commitments and vice versa, avoid duplication, increase efficiency and add value to our community wealth.

If/when the draft Food (Wales) Bill does become legislation, it is imperative that the Senned and Welsh Government have a system of financial support available to Local Authorities to develop and deliver the plans.