

**NORTH EAST SCOTLAND AGRICULTURE ADVISORY GROUP
BULLETIN – 25 SEPTEMBER 2019**

DIMBLEBY REVIEW OF UK FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

1 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that the Group notes this report

2 Discussion

2.1 UK Government has announced the first major review of the UK food system in its entirety for 75 years. The indicative terms of reference cover food, nutrition and the environment and the review will be led by Henry Dimbleby who was appointed lead non-executive board member of DEFRA in March 2018. Mr Dimbleby, son of David Dimbleby, is a writer, businessman and co-founder of a restaurant group and the Sustainable Restaurant Association.

2.2 The Dimbleby Review will assess the UK food system ‘from field to fork’ and will consider what may need to change to ensure that it:

- Delivers safe, healthy, affordable food, regardless of where people live or how much they earn;
- Is robust in the face of future shocks;
- Restores and enhances the natural environment for the next generation;
- Is built upon a resilient and sustainable agriculture sector;
- Is a thriving contributor to our urban and rural economies, delivering well paid jobs and supporting innovative producers and manufacturers;
- Does all of this in an efficient and cost-effective way.

It is expected that the Review’s recommendations will pave the way for a new National Food Strategy, potentially for publication in 2020.

2.3 Announcing the review, Environment Secretary (at the time) Michael Gove commented that the UK’s departure from the EU presented a ‘great opportunity for British farmers and food producers’ – but also a challenge in meeting the needs of an expanding population whilst also fulfilling climate change obligations. The review has been welcomed by NFU: ‘overdue....but pleased to see that the Government is taking food production seriously and is putting plans in place forsafe, traceable, affordable foodproduced to high standards of animal welfare and environmental protection and ... that British farmers should be the number one supplier of this. The Food and Drink Federation noted that food and drink is the UK’s largest manufacturing sector, is central to economic success and our cultural fabric and is therefore a strategic national asset which should be protected. However it is generally taken for granted by the public.

2.4 In 2017 Scotland Food and Drink published Ambition 2030, a sustainable growth strategy for agriculture, fishing, food and drink in which progress over the previous ten years was reviewed (industry turnover up 44% to £14Bn and

exports by 56%) and the factors driving success were analysed (collaboration, reputation and produce diversity). The title is drawn from the future envisioned for the sector in 2030, mostly notably growth in turnover value to £30Bn. Key challenges are outlined and include investment in people, research and development alongside market development and enhanced collaboration, profitability and sustainability credentials. Market and consumer trends are also considered across Scotland, the UK and beyond and three key pillars of growth are described: people and skills, the supply chain and innovation. <https://scotlandfoodanddrink.org/resources/publications/ambition-2030-industry-strategy-for-growth/>

In March 2016 NESAAAG published 'The Land Based Sector in NE Scotland – Facing the Future'. The main report is a highly detailed strategic analysis based on empirical data which extends beyond agriculture, food and drink to the wider land-based sector. A summary report was also produced and is accompanied by regional summaries (infographics) for Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray. Whilst the report's conclusions and recommendations are NE Scotland-centric (and have helped inform the Regional Economic Strategy for NE Scotland), they nevertheless align broadly with the national growth trajectory mapped out in Ambition 2030. Food & drink industry analyses have also been carried out by Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Opportunity North East and others.

- 2.5 There is therefore a wealth of evidence and analysis available in Scotland and the NE in particular, which could help inform the Dimbleby Review. It is essential that the voice of the sector in Scotland is heard as it seems likely that the Dimbleby Review will strongly influence the shape of structural fund support for food and drink in the UK post-Brexit. It is anticipated that the Review will issue a call for evidence later in the year, to which it is suggested NESAAAG responds, and a member of the Review team will be invited to attend a forthcoming meeting of the Group.

3 Scheme of Governance

NESAAAG is able to consider this item in terms of its remit to provide a NE Scotland focus to enable issues and concerns across the agricultural and related sectors to be addressed. This includes strengthening economic development links across the wider land-based sector and food industry, contributing to regional and local priorities, improving links between industry, the environment and biodiversity and contributing to policy development and consultations.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 There are no equality impact implications arising from this report
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications for the council arising from this report.
- 4.3 No risks arising from this report have been identified for the council at Corporate Level

4.4 No issues have been identified in relation to the Town Centre First Principle

Stephen Archer
Director, Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Derek McDonald, industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)
18 September 2019

