

Summary Report - 17 March 2025 Business Committee Meeting

INFO 25/03/02 - Report from Timothy Riley

The Committee considered the following items:

Chief Executive's (CE's) Report to the Business Committee (FSA BC 25-03-03)

The CE announced that the two Statutory Instruments to grant Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) powers to National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) Officers had been laid before Parliament and would come into force on 1 May 2025. The Committee received confirmation that the FSA was well prepared and resourced for the implementation of the new powers.

The Committee discussed the recent press coverage on glycerol in slushies and the Chair confirmed that this is an issue on which the Board will exercise additional oversight given the risks to very young children. Officials are preparing advice on further options to reduce the likelihood of further incidents.

The CE noted significant announcements from the Prime Minister and Chancellor regarding the role of the state and civil service performance management, indicating potential changes in these areas that will be discussed further with the Board.

The Committee received updates on the recent foot and mouth disease cases in Germany and Hungary. Learnings from the German incident had led to quicker implementation of controls to manage the Hungarian situation. Industry feedback on handling indicated that measures taken were effective and well-received.

The Committee were assured that the transition of lots and staff to the new FSA Delivery of Official Controls (FSADOC) contract supplier remained on track for the start date of 31 March 2025.

Performance Report for Q3 2024/25 (FSA BC 25-03-04)

The Committee noted the strong performance across **Operations** particularly the NFCU and the delivery of Food Business Operator (FBO) meat audits. They also discussed numbers of incidents and how best to measure them and the quality of work being done by the incidents team.

The Committee discussed the progress on tranche 3 of **Market Authorisations** and highlighted the need for updated indicators to better track performance.

On **Reputation and Communications**, the Committee discussed the different issues arising from media coverage of the CCP sandbox; the development of materials which could be used quickly in response to rapidly evolving social media stories; and the need to do more to use different communication channels to capture, listen and respond to consumer's concerns.

FSA 2025/26 Annual Plan and Budget (FSA BC 25-03-05)

Building on the Board's review of a first draft of the priorities in January 2025, Ed Clift gave a summary of the key FSA priorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland for 2025/26. Ed also presented the budget allocations for Westminster, Wales, and Northern Ireland detailing how resources would be distributed to support the organisation's objectives.

The Committee received confirmation that the FSA had been resourced to become the designated competent authority for recycled food grade plastics; and that work was underway to clarify the boundaries of FSA's expert advice to local authorities. The Committee agreed the final business plan and budget for 2025/26.

Local Authority Performance Update (FSA BC 25-03-06)

The Committee discussed the progress and challenges in local authority performance, particularly good progress in completing interventions in higher-risk categories and slower progress in meeting the requirements of the Code at lower-risk establishments. The Committee expressed concern at the slow progress in addressing the backlog of new business registrations and a desire to better understand the level of risk from unrated businesses and if there were alternative strategies for addressing the backlog.

Regarding the anticipated delays to some local authorities implementing the new Food Standards Delivery Model, the Committee recognised that implementation of management information systems was very variable across local authorities. The Committee was keen to see delayed implementation addressed and emphasised the need for effective cooperation between local authorities and management information system providers. The Committee also emphasised the importance of local authorities maintaining compliance with the Code during the transition period and beyond. The FSA would continue to support local authorities to ensure they complied with the new Food Standards Delivery Model and effectively managed their workloads.

Regulatory Sandbox for Cell-Cultivated Products (CCPs) (FSA BC 25-03-07)

Joshua Ravenhill presented the high-level delivery plan for the CCP sandbox, outlining the key deliverables and the timeline for achieving them. He also outlined the assurance mechanisms designed to ensure that the sandbox's progress and outcomes would be monitored and evaluated effectively.

The Committee emphasised the need for: greater consumer involvement in the sandbox process to reduce the risk of regulatory capture and ensure transparency and public trust; a clear and comprehensive communications strategy to gradually build public awareness and confidence in the sandbox and the understanding of CCPs over the next two years; and consideration of enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the sandbox's outcomes could be effectively implemented and regulated.

The Committee were keen to understand how citizen/consumer views could be regularised as part of the sandbox with possibly wider benefit to a generalised market authorisation process. The Committee also emphasised that it would be helpful to scope and categorise the types of risks as part of the developing process.

The Committee confirmed it was content with the assurance mechanisms and schedule to keep the Board and Business Committee updated on the sandbox's progress.

Annex A: Business Committee Papers – 17 March 2025

- [FSA BC 25-03-01 - Minutes December Business Committee Meeting](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-02 - Actions Arising Business Committee](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-03 - Chief Executive's Report](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-04 - Performance report for Q3 2024-2025](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-05 - 25-26 Annual Plan and Budget](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-06 - Local Authority Performance Update](#)
- [FSA BC 25-03-07 - CCP](#)