

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for BEIS
Victoria Street
LONDON
SW1H 0ET

12 August 2020

Dear Mr Sharma,

UK INTERNAL MARKET WHITE PAPER

I attach the Food Standards Scotland response to the proposals set out in the UK Government's White Paper on its proposals for the internal market.

While there is little to disagree with in terms of wanting an effective UK internal market, FSS' primary concern is related to "how" these outcomes are intended to be delivered where we have significant concerns with these proposals.

FSS challenges the rationale behind several of the proposals in the White Paper and the extension of the internal market scope away from the scope and principles agreed by the JMC (EN) with respect to frameworks principally for the following reasons;

- The majority of the intended principles are already accounted for either within proposed UK frameworks or existing MOUs with other UK administrations;
- The proposals on the internal market, mutual recognition and associated non-discrimination are not in line with internationally accepted principles and are unduly biased towards consideration of business cost;
- The arguments for legislative under-pinning and the establishment of new UK impact assessment body are not substantiated with respect to our policy area;
- The proposals do not properly accord the devolution settlement, or normal conventions of subsidiarity as to where responsibility for decisions on quantitative restrictions should lie;

Finally, the proposals in this paper are of concern because they simply do not strike the right balance between the cost and non-cost benefits of Governments' "interference" in the market. Non cost benefits, which would be in the consumer interest, appear time and again to be subservient to the business cost implications.

Despite the arguments in this paper, fundamentally these proposals do change the scope and accountabilities of FSS and the devolution framework we work within.

A copy of this response goes to Mike Russell, Scottish Government, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, Michael Gove, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Alastair Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland, Lewis Macdonald, Convener, Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee, and Geoff Ogle, FSS CEO, and Heather Hancock FSA Chair and Emily Miles FSA CEO.

Yours sincerely

Ross Finnie
Chair
Food Standards Scotland