



**Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS**

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy  
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Mark Drakeford MS,  
First Minister,  
Welsh Government,  
*By Email*

17 August 2020

Dear First Minister,

Office of Janet Finch-Saunders MS,  
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I am writing with regards to my serious concerns about food and drink procurement by the public sector in Wales.

The public sector is a significant contributor to the food and drink spend in Wales. In fact, an estimated £78million was spent in 2015/16. Indeed, according to the Auditor General for Wales, this included £53million by local government; £20million by health; £2million by central government and sponsored bodies; and £2million by further and higher education.

Whilst I appreciate that the Welsh Government has seen procurement capability across Wales grow with the introduction of 28 new procurement officers and over 600 public sector officers benefitting from procurement related training, I am concerned that you have not created a platform from which these teams and the Welsh Government can successfully use procurement as a strategic tool to deliver economic benefit to Wales. Indeed, I am aware that expenditure won by Wales based suppliers may only be around 55%. To put it simply, this is not good enough, and I urgently request that you review *The Principles of Welsh Public Procurement Policy*.

The policy has some positive attributes, such as:

*'Public bodies should adopt risk based, proportionate approaches to procurement to ensure that contract opportunities are open to all and smaller, local suppliers are not precluded from winning contracts individually, as consortia, or through roles within the supply chain'.*

However, we have a fantastic opportunity to build on this so that greater opportunities are given for Welsh food and drink to be procured from Wales. It follows that I would be grateful if you could review the legality of implementing measures which would see the public sector in Wales, including schools, hospitals, and local authorities, access more nutritious, quality food grown in Wales.

Just imagine the difference £78million could make to the sector if the entire procurement budget was spent in Wales on Welsh produce. It would maximise our long-term support of local food and drink businesses who provide essential employment opportunities, encourage a continued push towards high welfare standards, and be a reasonable response to the climate emergency.

Kind regards,

**Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS**