

# THE **FOOD** SECTOR **DEFICIT** BRIEFING NOTE

SUMMER 2019



## The burden on public health, the economy and the planet

OUR TAX SYSTEM: A MEANS TO IDENTIFY THE CORPORATE VESTED INTERESTS TO BE HELD TO ACCOUNT

THE PUBLIC HEALTH BURDEN related to dietary intake includes the costs of alcohol harm, of obesity, dental health and mental health care, plus the life-long effects of malnutrition. Analysis of sector economic data shows over-consumption of drug-foods is the major cause. The data also shows VAT is a means of identifying the global corporations producing and promoting these “foods” at scale.

A HUGE ECONOMIC BURDEN is carried by the NHS and the wider society for obesity alone; estimates of the annual costs vary from £96M to over £200M, the latter equivalent to over 91% of our annual spend on food & drink. Add in, too, all the other costs caused by malnutrition, plus those for recycling or disposing of packaging. In summary, the UK food sector runs a huge deficit.

AND A PLANETARY BURDEN The use of increasingly stretched natural resources, land, soils, water and energy by global corporations making and promoting drug foods is rarely acknowledged let alone debated. For example, should 6% of the UK potato crop go to make Walker's crisps? Or Coca Cola's annual water-consumption be enough to meet the daily needs of over two billion people?

