

Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill - Call for views (Scottish Parliament consultation)

Briefing 21-57

December 2021

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues:

The Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee is currently scrutinising the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill and is seeking views on it. The consultation will close on 5 January 2022.

The Bill as introduced can be viewed [here](#). The consultation can be completed by [clicking here](#).

1.0 Background

The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 7 October 2021 with the requirement for local authorities and other public bodies such as health boards to create Good Food Nation Plans. As well as publishing a national Good Food Plan, the Bill states that relevant authority's good food nation plans must set out:

- (a) the main outcomes in relation to food-related issues which the relevant authority wants to be achieved within the relevant authority's area of responsibility
- (b) indicators or other measures by which progress in achieving the outcomes may be assessed, and
- (c) the policies which the relevant authority intends to pursue in order to secure the achievement of the outcomes

Plans can also include other materials in relation to food related issues and should have regard for social and economic wellbeing, the environment, as well as health and economic development. Plans must be consulted upon (and responses to any consultation must be regarded). The progress of plans will be reported on every 2 years and reviewed and revised every 5 years.

The Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee has been tasked with reviewing the Bill and will publish its Stage 1 report following the conclusion of this consultation.

2.0 Consultation Questions

The consultation questions can be found below:

1. What is your view about the scope of the Bill? What else, if anything, would you have liked to see included in the Bill? Please explain your reasons.
2. What is your view of the decision not to incorporate the 'right to food' into Scots law through the Good Food Nation Bill? Please explain your reasons.
3. How should the Bill and/or the Good Food Nation plans link to other food policy initiatives, for example the current process of producing a Local Food Strategy, and addressing global impacts of food and drink supply chains – for example taking up any of the Global Resource Initiative recommendations?

4. The Bill requires that Scottish Ministers and 'relevant authorities' must, when exercising a specific function or a function falling within a specific description, have regard to the national good food nation plan. Those "specified functions" will be set out in secondary legislation. In your view, what should those functions be? Please explain your reasons.
5. The Bill does not provide for a body to oversee how the Scottish Government and 'relevant authorities' are implementing the Bill; what is your view on this? Please explain your reasons.
6. What impact will the Bill have for local authorities and health boards?
7. Does the Bill provide for opportunities to participate in the production of national and local good food nation plans? You may wish to consider, for example, how the views of vulnerable people or those whose voices are seldom heard would be sought.

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE encourages our members to respond to the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill call for views by the Scottish Parliament. It is important that local authorities views are taken into consideration given the requirement for local authorities (and other relevant authorities) to create good food nation plans, which must be consulted upon with stakeholders and have two-yearly progress reports and five-yearly plan reviews.

APSE's Soft FM member local authorities in Scotland have taken great strides already in increasing access to locally sourced and produced food through their school meals service. If this is to continue and there are further requirements for local authority food to support social and economic wellbeing, the environment, health and economic development, it is imperative that funding reflects this.

APSE was part of a working group from across the school food sector, comprising of fifteen organisations including ASSIST FM, COSLA, The Soil Association and Nourish Scotland. The working group produced a discussion paper on Scottish Government's commitment to the introduction of Universal Free School Meals for primary school children by 2022, which is a key step on Scotland's journey to becoming a "Good Food Nation" (see [briefing 21-37](#) for more information). APSE believes that this represents a unique opportunity not only to both invest in producing and serving food with a range of wide-reaching benefits for children and young people, communities, the environment and Scotland's economy but also for all local authority services and public sector partners to collaborate and develop key partnerships to help deliver the "good food case".

In order to facilitate this, local authorities should [respond to the consultation](#) and ensure that the appropriate funding is available to make the aims of the good food nation plans successful. COSLA have been in discussions with the Scottish Government regarding this, with APSE and ASSIST FM continuing to provide assistance where required.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by [clicking here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by [clicking here](#).

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