

Good Food Nation Consultation

Summary and Recommendations

This report provides members with a summary of the Scottish Government's current consultation on Good Food Nation (GFN) and seeks to highlight key issues regarding GFN, as well as obtain views and comments to inform COSLA's response.

This report invites Members to:

- i. Note the Scottish Government's current consultation on Good Food Nation (GFN).
- ii. Provide views and comments on the GFN consultation; and
- iii. Note COSLA's finalised response to the GFN consultation is to be agreed by correspondence later this month by the CW Board.

References

Previous reports:

- Not Applicable

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Good Food Nation (GFN) Consultation

Purpose

1. This report provides members with a summary of the Scottish Government's current consultation on Good Food Nation (GFN)¹ and seeks to highlight key issues regarding GFN, as well as obtain views and comments to inform COSLA's response.

Background

2. Members may recall that COSLA submitted written and oral evidence on the Good Food Nation Bill that was considered by the Scottish Parliament's RAINE Committee in early 2022, before it was passed later that year.
3. The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 placed duties on the Scottish Government, local authorities and NHS Health Boards to produce Good Food Nation (GFN) Plans. These plans are to outline the main outcomes related to food issues, necessary policies, and measures to assess progress.
4. Additionally, the GFN Plans are to cover aspects such as social and economic well-being, the environment, health, economic development, animal welfare, education and child poverty. The plans are also to be reviewed every five years with progress reports produced every two years.
5. Presently, as part of the provisions of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 a Scottish Food Commission is being established that is intended to scrutinize and make recommendations regarding GFN Plans. As a result, the commission will conduct research and provide advice to relevant authorities in fulfilling their duties under the Act.
6. Since the GFN Bill became law a consultation has been developed by Scottish Government officials and has been undertaken since late January through a series of in person events across the country, as well as online consultation events up to 18 April.

What is changing?

7. The Scottish Govt's GFN consultation seeks to obtain feedback on its broad policy, aimed at ensuring access to healthy, sustainable food produced with fair work practices. As a result, the consultation seeks views on improving the food system as well as aligning with broader goals of environmental sustainability, health and economic contributions.
8. The aims of the GFN Plan consultation are also to address food insecurity, enable people to make healthier food choices, improve access to healthy food and milk, help parents make informed choices and ensure that local authorities and NHS Health Boards provide a clear lead on the delivery of a GFN.
9. The consultation on GFN sets out 6 proposed overarching national outcomes, various targets and indicators to measure progress towards achieving the vision and the goals of GFN, along with a range of food related policies and initiatives. The 6 national outcomes

¹ [National Good Food Nation Plan: consultation - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

are also intended to serve as a roadmap to guide food related policies and are set out below.

- **Access to Food:** Ensuring that everyone has equitable access to nutritious and affordable food;
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Promoting sustainable food production and minimizing the environmental impact of our food system;
- **Public Health:** Focusing on healthier diets and improving the well-being of the population through food;
- **Economic Prosperity:** Supporting the food industry, creating jobs, and contributing to Scotland's economic growth.
- **Social Justice:** Addressing inequalities related to food access, affordability, and quality.
- **Cultural and Social Well-being:** Recognising the social and emotional significance of food in our lives and communities.

10. The Scottish Govt have also developed proposed indicators to measure progress of GFN that are intended to evolve during the life of the national GFN Plan, as well as future iterations of it that are to contain updated indicators and targets.

11. Presently, there is a wide range of good practice across the country in respect of community growing projects in local areas designed to encourage community engagement in learning about food. As well as promoting healthy eating habits and reducing the carbon footprint of consumed foods to inform the national plan as well as local plans.

Proposed COSLA Position

12. It will be important that the Scottish Govt provide local authorities with adequate resources to fund the necessary members of staff to undertake the development, co-ordination and implementation of local GFN Plans. LAs will also be required to publish progress reports every two years and review (and if necessary, revise) their plans every five years. To date, COSLA officers have been assured in principle from Scottish Govt officials that resource will be provided to councils for this. That said, it will be important that this is formally confirmed by the Scottish Govt, given the Food Commission's role will be to scrutinise GFN Plans.

13. Additionally, it would seem from the GFN consultation that there will be other resource requirements stemming from the practical actions required to achieve GFN goals. These include tackling food insecurity, improving public food, shaping the food environment, supporting the local food economy, influencing regional land use and reducing food waste. Local GFN plans cannot meaningfully be implemented without adequate additional resource provided by Scottish Government. Local authorities also cannot be expected to pick up additional costs. The current challenging budget positions prevent this.

14. Further, initial views expressed from limited feedback received so far from local authorities are that many of the outcomes and indicators are questionable at a local level. There is not the capacity and resource to take this work forward, given the key barriers to this are constrained budgets and public procurement procedures.

15. It has also been stated that public procurement regulations may need to be reviewed to provide local authorities with greater flexibility to procure local produce. In addition, reference in GFN will need to be made on veterinary support and the fundamental need for good livestock welfare.


16. Other initial feedback on the outcomes of the GFN consultation is that it fundamentally needs a cultural change. This itself would require community support and the building of momentum. However, the targets and indicators in the GFN consultation do not adequately reflect this. As a result, it has been suggested that a set of local indicators may be needed to help to measure the development of community food projects, gardens, allotments and community kitchens that would confirm a cultural change in food.

Next Steps

17. COSLA will collate further responses from local authorities to the Good Food Nation consultation that will inform a united local government response that will be circulated by correspondence for consideration and approval to members of the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board.

April 2024

Contribution to agreed COSLA Plan and Verity House Agreement:

COSLA Plan 22-27	Priority Areas	
	Strengthen Local Democracy	
	Secure Sustainable Funding	√
	Improve the Wellbeing of Individuals, Families and Communities	√
	Enhance Education and Support for our Children and Young People	
	Deliver a Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy	√
	Support the Most Vulnerable in our Communities	√
Verity House Agreement	Shared Priorities	
	Tackling Poverty	√
	Just transition to net zero	
	Sustainable Public Services	√