



**Briefing 22 – 04**

**January 2022**

## **APSE Consultation Call for Views Response on ‘Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill’**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

### **Key Issues**

- This APSE briefing includes APSE’s response on the Scottish Parliament Call for Views regarding the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill which can be found [here](#) as introduced on 7 October 2021
- A link to all submitted responses where consent has been given to publish can be found 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. The remainder of this briefing replicates APSE's response to the consultation.

## **2.0 APSE Response**

APSE was pleased to be given the opportunity to respond to the consultation. APSE's full response is outlined below:

### **About APSE**

APSE's (Association for Public Service Excellence) aims and values are to support and promote the delivery of excellence in frontline local government services. APSE works with over 300 local authorities throughout the UK specialising in frontline service delivery issues. All local authorities within Scotland are members of APSE and in responding to this consultation APSE have considered the views of our member councils, including responses drawn from our discussions with our Scottish Soft FM advisory group. We have also drawn upon APSE research including our 'state of the market' surveys within the Soft FM sector alongside drawing upon data from APSE's Performance Networks service, which is the largest voluntary data benchmarking service in local government. As a representative body of our member local councils we have not endeavoured to answer every point raised in the consultation but to cover the main themes on behalf of our membership.

### **Our response**

APSE supports the principles of The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill which has been introduced to support the ambition of Scottish Government that Scotland becomes a Good Food Nation by 2025. The Bill creates a framework to develop, consult and establish food plans which are designed to ensure "good quality, locally sourced and produced food is a practical everyday reality for everyone". The plans are to support "social and economic wellbeing, the environment, health and economic development", providing the opportunity for local authority services to engage with public sector partners (including private, third sector and communities) to build place based local plans. However, it is important to note that consideration in terms of funding and resource requirements as well as policy and/or legislation will be fundamental to the success, ensuring key themes across plans are embedded and achieve the desired outcomes.

Good Food should be a core consideration across a range of policy areas, it is connected to many other public policies including climate change, health and wellbeing, poverty, school curriculum and sustainability. As such there are a variety of services/areas which play key roles in these policy areas including:-

- Planning, licencing, land use and local development plans
- Economic development and business growth
- Education, curriculum and skills development
- Health and social care support and healthcare settings
- Operations, procurement and contract management of food services including school-food nutrition

- Community resilience and emergency response
- Addressing poverty and inequality

Data from APSE’s 2021 State of the Market research report for Local Authority Catering Services (survey conducted in December 2020 and January 2021) provides evidence of these wider public policy links to food and sustainability, with the report highlighting some of the initiatives which are currently/or due to be undertaken by local authority caterers who responded to the UK wide survey.

	Plan to implement	Have Implemented	Not applicable
Introduced a process to reduce food waste	34.09%	54.55%	11.36%
Purchase products from a local supplier	18.18%	65.91%	15.91%
Reduce single use plastics	27.66%	65.96%	6.38%
Installed equipment to reduce energy consumption	17.14%	37.14%	45.71%
Introduced more meat free options	20.45%	61.36%	18.18%

This data from our State of the Market Catering report can be further supported by data from APSE’s Performance Networks service which continues to work with its membership to ensure that the Performance Indicators collected and report on, best reflect and benefit local authorities and their key policy areas; for example school meal uptake and sustainable procurement and the environment. In addition, information is gathered on cost, quality, productivity, people management and customer satisfaction across all service areas.

As part of the Good Food Nation principles, it is important to highlight: -

- The importance of Good Food in relation to other social policy issues such as poverty, health, education, environment and sustainability. Food poverty remains an issue for too many children, young people and their families. Any policy on good food must strengthen the measures of ‘good food’ to include affordable, healthy and sustainable food to address these issues.
- The importance of adequate investment and resources being made available, in order to support change and drive improvements. This should also include investing in food-waste reduction, avoidance of food waste in the first place and investing in public education and information campaigns. The value of the role of public sector in education and college settings may assist in this regard if properly resourced and funded.
- The importance of developing plans which enhance the benefits to communities as well as understanding that challenges such as available resources, local priorities and other competing demands will be required to be considered during preparation.

- The importance of food policies which reflect the diversity of the population of Scotland and are inclusive of both cultural and religious differences must not be underestimated. The emerging growth in climate-awareness and conscious decisions by consumers, food producers and caterers, to cater for plant-based diets or diets which actively seek to reduce reliance on meat, dairy and fish must be a firm policy consideration. This we believe will be best supported by active monitoring of data and consumer demographics to ensure that food policies are meeting both current and future demands.
- Recognising the range of policies and legislation already in place for authorities to demonstrate compliance of important policy agendas that are also likely to form key themes for plans.
- Although clear engagement and consultation principles are outlined, in order to engage with all stakeholder's consideration and financial support needs to be given in order to address challenges not covered by Government or the public sector. Engagement and consultation should also take a variety of forms in order to reach and make accessible to all relevant groups.

In conclusion, it's important to note that local authorities are already undertaking a substantial amount of work around good food, integrating this important issue into different local outcomes. However, in order to ensure the successful delivery of plans adequate resources, finances and support will be required as well as consideration in terms of competing demands and challenges which are not covered by local authority responsibilities.

APSE would be pleased to provide further more detailed evidence of the matters raised herein to the Scottish Government or its advisors. In the first instance please contact Louise Melville on [lmelville@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmelville@apse.org.uk) who is our lead advisor for APSE Scotland and she will be pleased to answer any questions on my behalf.

### **3.0 APSE Comment**

As outlined within the consultation response above, local authorities are already undertaking a substantial amount of work around good food, integrating this important issue into different local outcomes. However, in order to ensure the successful delivery of plans adequate resources, finances and support will be required as well as consideration in terms of competing demands and challenges which are not covered by local authority responsibilities.

APSE Scotland Soft FM members will continue to discuss this and all related issues within its advisory group meetings.

APSE will also continue to work with our member authorities on Scottish Parliament consultations.

**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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