

To: Leadership Board

On: 1 May 2024

---

Report by: Chief Executive

---

Heading: Fairer Renfrewshire Update

---

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council and its partners continue to work together to progress the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme, with a strong shared focus currently on the local response to the cost-of-living crisis.
- 1.2 This paper provides a summary of the key headline issues, as reported to the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee on 27 March 2023. Specific updates are also provided in relation to:
- The most recent programme update including information on recent statistics and research in relation to the cost-of-living crisis.
  - The proposed Fairer Renfrewshire Programme 24/25.
  - Response to the Scottish Government's National Good Food Nation Plan Consultation
- 1.3 At Council on 29th February 2024, members reaffirmed their commitment to the Fairer Renfrewshire programme with further investments in a number of targeted interventions including additional welfare rights funding, a targeted programme of summer activities for children and young people from low-income families, additional resource to explore inequalities experienced by older people and strengthen engagement with young people, and a further winter school clothing payment in 2024.
- 1.4 This paper makes recommendations for the allocation of a further £0.516m of Council funding to support the Fairer Renfrewshire work programme for 2024/25, sustaining and developing a number of key projects and services that contribute to the Fairer Renfrewshire programme as detailed at Section 5 of this report.

- 1.5 Section 6 of this paper notes the planned closure of the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service on 7 June, and recommends that officers work with all stakeholders involved including service users, to develop options for the transition to a new model of support, with an additional £90,000 being earmarked from the Fairer Renfrewshire programme funding to support the development of a community led support model for people impacted by a brain injury and their families. Further proposals in relation to the allocation of the funding will be brought to Leadership Board on 19 June 2024, subject to the agreed development work to be undertaken by the Policy and Partnerships service.
- 1.6 Officers continue to work with partners to progress the Fairer Renfrewshire programme. Priority actions over the next quarter include:
- Evaluation of the Winter Connections 23/24 programme
  - Development of the Local Child Poverty Action Report
  - Developing and delivering budget investments, particularly the design and delivery of the summer holiday programme
  - Development of equalities workstream as detailed in February 2024 Leadership Board
  - Launch of Renfrewshire Community Survey 2024
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that elected members:

- Note the content of the report and the work being undertaken to progress the Fairer Renfrewshire programme;
  - Approve the allocation of £0.516m from the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme budget, to deliver key additional elements of the 24/25 Fairer Renfrewshire programme detailed in Section 5
  - Agree that officers will engage with stakeholders on the development of a new community-led model of support for people impacted by a brain injury and their families, with £90,000 funding earmarked from the Fairer Renfrewshire funding to support this upon final agreement and approval of the model in June 2024.
  - Agree that delegated authority is provided to the Head of Policy and Partnerships in relation to the award of grant funding for the summer holiday activity and food programme, in consultation with the Council Leader and;
  - Homologate the consultation response attached at Appendix 1 submitted in relation to the National Good Food Nation Plan.
-

### **3. Background**

3.1 The Fairer Renfrewshire Programme has continued to develop during 2023, with the immediate focus of the Council and its partners being in relation to the ongoing cost of living response and wider initiatives which seek to tackle poverty and inequality. This is a fast paced and constantly evolving programme and the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee continues to meet to provide oversight on all related activities being undertaken.

3.2 As previously reported to Board, four key themes were identified for the initial Fairer Renfrewshire programme:

- Improving financial security
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Building community capacity and resilience
- Listening to lived experience

3.3 At its meeting on 27 March 2024, the sub-committee considered:

- The most recent programme update including information on recent statistics and research in relation to the cost-of-living crisis.
- A presentation of an initial Renfrewshire Cost-of-Living dashboard which has been developed
- Updates in relation new projects being brought forward such as the Schools Support Service providing advice in secondary schools, as well as progress updates on priority actions such as supporting the Fairer Renfrewshire lived experience panel
- An update on the Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme

3.4 In terms of key statistics highlighted at the meeting of the sub-committee it is worth noting:

- The rate of inflation has reduced to 3.2% (Feb 24), falling from 4% in January 24 but remaining above the 2% target set by the Bank of England. This was largely attributed to a fall in some core food staples. Whilst it is positive to see lower rates of inflation, this does not mean prices are falling. Put most simply prices are now rising less quickly and most things continue to cost more than they did before.
  - The Bank of England has kept the interest rate unchanged at 5.25% as of 21 March 2024, which is the highest rate in 15 years.
  - The Energy Price Cap, originally introduced by Ofgem in January 2019 to set limits on the underlying rates energy suppliers, is now set at £1,928, but will reduce to £1,690 from the 1 April until 30 June 2024 for a typical dual fuel household. This will be the lowest rate for 2 years.
  - Standing charges for pre-payment meters have reduced to below those for households who pay by direct debit, meaning those on pre-payment meters are currently likely to be paying less for their energy.
-

#### **4. Fairer Renfrewshire Programme Update**

4.1 Since the last update to Leadership Board in February 2024, a range of activities have continued to be progressed by officers and partners. A summary is provided in the sections below.

##### **Scottish Government Council Tax Debt Pilot Project**

- 4.2 As previously reported, in November 2023, Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (RCAB) approached the Council to collaborate in a Council Tax Debt Pilot funded through the Scottish Government. The pilot focuses on exploring how local Citizens Advice Bureau and local authorities can work together to improve the journey of those who are in council tax arrears or struggling to make council tax payment. The aim is to provide better outcomes for people and for local authorities and Renfrewshire is one of three Council areas involved.
- 4.3 The Pilot ran to the end of March 2024, however due to the very short period of the Pilot, allowing for only limited outcomes, the Council and RCAB have agreed to continue to collaborate over the next year to develop supports and better information about these supports for those struggling to pay Council Tax, as well as working to encourage those who can pay to do so timeously and those who are not liable for Council Tax to claim their reductions or exemptions.
- 4.4 The Fairer Renfrewshire Panel were consulted as part of the Pilot, and provided feedback in a number of areas, including the current processes for billing and payment, barriers to paying Council Tax, communications, including better letters, and supports for those struggling to pay. The first tangible outcome from this has been the development of a leaflet by RCAB giving details of where to get advice on different aspects of Council Tax and outlining supports around payment.
- 4.5 Regular meetings have commenced between relevant Council Officers and RCAB staff, and while the outcomes of the initial pilot will be provided through an evaluation report which will collate the learnings and achieved outcomes from all three funded local authority areas, Renfrewshire will consider these as part of the ongoing project.

##### **Thrive under 5**

- 4.6 Late in 2023, Renfrewshire HSCP secured Scottish Government Childhood Obesity- Early Intervention and Prevention Funding. The funding is supporting the development and implementation of a 'Thrive under 5' pilot programme. Thrive under 5 is a whole system, community food nurturing approach with families of pre-school children, combining action on food and financial insecurity, healthy eating and physical activity. Following a review of child health and wellbeing data and community assets it was agreed that Thrive under 5 would be piloted in Johnstone with a view to further roll out dependant on the allocation of further funding.
- 4.7 Key elements of the programme will include money and debt advice, provision of fruit and vegetables, free pantry membership and shops, fuel support, cooking classes, provision of cooking equipment and physical activity opportunities.
- 4.8 A steering group has been set up by Renfrewshire HSCP and includes Council Officers from several services, including Advice Works and One Ren as well as third sector partners. Representatives from Fair Food Renfrewshire are also part of the group. This group will plan,

implement, monitor and evaluate the programme. The initial pilot will be delivered by Active Communities with support from Renfrewshire HSCP Health Improvement team. Robust referral pathways will be developed to ensure the programme reaches families who may benefit most.

### **School Support Service**

- 4.9 The School Support service provided by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau commenced at the start of the school year, with the first appointments week commencing 23 August 2023. From that date until the end of February there had been 113 advice appointments/contacts made, and advice provided to 76 individuals.
- 4.10 The busiest schools have been Linwood with 16 appointments, followed by ASN schools, Riverbrae (14) and Mary Russell (13), then Johnstone High (11). Reasons for appointments have been varied, however the majority, 62% have been for support with benefits and benefit checks, with housing the second busiest area at 11% and 7% have come forward for crisis support, such as foodbank vouchers.
- 4.11 A meeting was arranged with Education staff in March to look at how the service is working in general and Education managers were informed about the schools where take up of the service was low. It was agreed that further promotion of the service would be targeted at those schools and a further meeting will be arranged to discuss results.

### **Easter holiday provision**

- 4.12 A focussed programme of holiday activities for children and young people throughout the Easter break has been developed and delivered using residual funding identified from previous holiday provision. Camps were provided across six locations by Community Learning and Development staff and Street Stuff for children and young people aged 5-14. The camps are free and a meal is provided at lunch time. Information and booking for the camps was shared with key third sector organisations and also on a referral basis from Social Work in order to ensure effective targeting of places to children that need it most.

### **Winter Connections**

- 4.13 The Winter Connections programme for 23/24 which launched at the end of September ended on 31 March 2024. At the Leadership Board in June 2023, it was agreed that £75,000 of funding be allocated from Fairer Renfrewshire programme and an additional £10,000 was awarded from the Recovery Change Fund to ensure Winter Connections activities were open to people affected by drugs and alcohol and people living with mental illness.
- 4.14 There were 58 applications to the programme which were assessed by officers from Renfrewshire Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership and Engage Renfrewshire.
- 4.15 Of the 58 applications, 46 were successful, 11 were unsuccessful and one application was withdrawn. Unsuccessful applications were signposted to alternative sources of funding where appropriate.
- 4.16 A further £6,000 was allocated to One Ren to provide hot drinks, soup and snacks in all Renfrewshire libraries. This included drinks and snacks for the twice weekly film club at Ferguslie Park which was set up as part of Winter Connections last year and has continued to run. It also provided free drinks and snacks for families using the SkoobMobile service at their community stops.

- 4.17 A wide range of activities were provided as part of the programme, some of which were tailored to the age of those attending. These included coffee mornings, choirs, fitness classes and fun activities for all ages, such as bingo, board games, quizzes and movies. Some projects were targeted specifically at older people or younger people, but many aimed to be intergenerational and to attract families.
- 4.18 A full evaluation of the programme will be carried out over April 2024, with key findings being reported to the Leadership Board in June 2024.

### **Lived Experience Panel**

- 4.19 Elected Members have been given a number of updates relating to work of the Fairer Renfrewshire Panel. The February meeting of the Panel was used to discuss digital exclusion and the DigiZone initiative. A sub-group of Renfrewshire's digital partnership, Citizens Voice, has been working to introduce DigiZones which will be locations within Renfrewshire where any member of the public can connect to the internet as a minimum, but may also be able to gain digital skills support and access devices. Panel members were positive about the proposed initiative and also gave an insight into the issue of digital exclusion. The Digital Strategy Delivery Manager has agreed to consult with the Panel when he is reviewing the Council's Digital Strategy.
- 4.20 March's Panel, as detailed above, was used to discuss Council Tax and the Council Tax Pilot, while the Panel met with the Convener and Depute of the Fairer Renfrewshire Sub-Committee late in March to discuss Panel priorities and explore opportunities for the Panel and Sub-Committee to work more closely.

### **Child poverty – deep dive activity**

- 4.21 Work has now commenced on a child poverty deep dive exercise at a Community Planning Partnership level, with a discussion held with the Community Planning Partnership Executive Group in January to discuss some of the initial insights. In addition to considering partners' current activity and intelligence on child poverty at a strategic level, and partners were asked to consider how we could work differently with the resources available going forward. A particular focus is on reviewing how resources are used and could be targeted to support families in the child poverty priority groups. A follow up session will be held with the Executive Group in June 2024

### **Community Needs Assessment in Gallowhill**

- 4.22 Late in 2023, Renfrewshire HSCP was successful in a funding bid to NHSGGC Public Health to carry out a Community Needs Assessment in Gallowhill. Recognising the increase in Child Poverty rates in the Gallowhill and Renfrew South Ward, a rapid review of the data for Gallowhill has highlighted a number of health indicators which have worsened precipitating the funding bid.
- 4.23 Council Officers worked with those from Renfrewshire HSCP to pull together a specification for commissioning a local organisation to facilitate a Grassroots Community Needs Assessment in Gallowhill for a six-month period. The organisation which is commissioned will involve the community in the assessment, which will identify community needs and capture community responses to the health indicators affecting local individuals and families in the area. They will scope existing services, reporting on their findings at the end of the six-month period.

- 4.24 The closing date for organisations to apply to carry out this piece of work is 8 April, and a Panel made up of HSCP, Engage Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Council Officers will meet soon after to make the decision on applications.
- 4.25 A partnership session took place on 21 March 2024, bringing together services from across the Council and key partners such as the HSCP, One Ren, and Engage Renfrewshire focussed on exploring and planning a place-based, partnership response to challenges around rapidly growing child poverty in the Gallowhill area. The session was focussed on sharing knowledge and insight, and starting to identify potential actions where we can develop our understanding, target resources and work collaboratively moving forward.
- 

## **5. Fairer Renfrewshire 2024/2025 Programme**

- 5.1 At Council on 29th February 2024, members further reaffirmed their commitment to the Fairer Renfrewshire programme with further investments in a number of targeted interventions including:
- additional welfare rights funding, delivered by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau
  - a targeted programme of summer activities for children and young people from low income families, working across Council services with community groups and third sector organisations across Renfrewshire to ensure that our most vulnerable families are able to access a range of activities and healthy food over the summer period
  - additional resource to explore inequalities experienced by older people, delivered by ROAR
  - strengthened engagement with young people, including the targeting of activities to support our most vulnerable children and young people in Renfrewshire through the development of a youth-led programme
  - a further winter school clothing payment in 2024, providing £50 per child eligible for the School Clothing Grant
  - continued delivery of the Dolly Parton Imagination library programme, for all children aged between 2-5
  - continued deliver of the Who Cares Scotland Communities that Care programme within Renfrewshire's educational establishments, continuing the Council's support for the care experienced community
- 5.2 In terms of the summer holiday programme, proposals for the programme are currently under development through further consultation with the Fairer Renfrewshire Panel. It is currently proposed that £50,000 of the £100,000 funding available is allocated through a grant funding process which local community and third sector organisations can access to deliver targeted local activities and healthy food to low income families and children. It is proposed that the grant guidance and process is retained from summer 2023, and launched in May 2024.
- 5.3 In order to ensure grant allocations can be made as timeously as possible ahead of the summer break, members are asked to authorise the provision of delegated authority to the Head of Policy

and Partnerships to make related grants awards in consultation with the Council Leader. A full update on all grant allocations will be provided to the Leadership Board in September 2024.

- 5.4 In addition to the commitments within the Council's budget, further proposals have now been developed for additional investments from Fairer Renfrewshire programme funding to be allocated for 2024/25. These relate to previously supported Tackling Poverty funded initiatives as well as new and emerging priorities and combined with the 2024 budget announcements will form the 2024 programme for Fairer Renfrewshire.
- 5.5 These funding proposals total an additional £0.516m to be allocated from Fairer Renfrewshire funding. All activities are intended to be very targeted with a sharpened focus on priorities identified through the wider programme, recognising the limited nature of the Council's resources. Any projects supported by Fairer Renfrewshire funding will be required to monitor impact and provide required information for collation by the Fairer Renfrewshire Lead Officer.
- 5.6 It is recommended that a further £0.516m is allocated from the Fairer Renfrewshire programme to support the following initiatives and supports as part of the 2024/25 work programme:

### **Improving financial security**

- 5.7 There are a number of investments across the Fairer Renfrewshire programme aimed at improving financial security for households. This includes investments which directly put money into the pockets of local people, such as adding additional funding to the Scottish Welfare Fund and providing the additional winter school clothing grant for low-income families. In addition, there are several investments which provide additional capacity for local income maximisation services on a targeted basis currently funded from the Fairer Renfrewshire budget, including the Schools Support Service and Family Advice Service.
- 5.8 It is recommended that a further £115,000 is allocated to:
- sustain support to the Council's Energy Management Unit, helping people who need support to reduce their energy bills, manage fuel debt and improve the energy efficiency in their homes. Fairer Renfrewshire currently funds one energy advocate within the team.
  - Deliver another Winter Connections programme in 24/25, co-producing a programme of activities hosted by local groups that support people to connect to others within their community over the winter period. It is recommended £75,000 is allocated to this, in line with the 23/24 programme.

### **Supporting health and wellbeing for low-income families with children**

- 5.9 There are a number of projects aimed at supporting the health, wellbeing and development of children and young people from low-income families with children as part of the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, a number of which were established in some form as part of the



Council's Tackling Poverty Programme. As part of the Council's budget £100,000 was allocated to provide a programme of activities and food for children and young people over the summer holidays.

5.10 It is recommended that a further £361k is allocated to:

- Continue providing the free universal breakfast service in nine primary schools. The project relieves financial pressure on low-income families, but most importantly, makes sure that children start the school day ready to learn.
- Continue the Cost of the School Day fund, operating across all primary and secondary schools in Renfrewshire, directly supporting families in a variety of ways including uniforms, food, transport, extra-curricular activities and curricular expenses.
- Continue to deliver the Peer Health education project in partnership with Active Communities, working with young people in secondary schools across Renfrewshire to identify key health priorities in their school and developing young people to lead their own activities to improve health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health.
- Continue to provide the Skoobmobile, providing a mobile public library service directly to children and families in communities. The programme continues to support the delivery of the Skoobmobile which introduces children to the benefit of reading and play and supports the Council's ambitions to narrow the literacy attainment gap.

### **Developing understanding and insight**

5.11 There are a number of key projects within the Fairer Renfrewshire programme which seek to develop the understanding and insight into the experiences of local households and inform policy and practice moving forward. These include the development of Renfrewshire's Cost of Living Dashboard and the Child Poverty Data Deep Dive which will seek to understand child poverty locally, particularly for priority families and at locality level. A Renfrewshire Community Survey will also be carried out in 2024 to continue to build understanding of impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis on individual households. These key enabling projects are all delivered within existing staffing resources supporting the Fairer Renfrewshire programme.

5.12 It is recommended that £40k is allocated to:

- Continue to develop models of participation for people with lived experience of poverty to inform the Council's policy and practice

### **Advancing equality of opportunity**

5.13 At Leadership Board in February 2024, members approved the allocation of £150,000 for the development of an equalities workstream within the Fairer Renfrewshire programme to be progressed throughout 2024/25. In addition to this, further resources were allocated as part of

the Council budget relating to barriers experienced by older people in partnership with ROAR, and work is also underway to develop the Council's BSL Plan moving forward.

---

## **6 Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service**

- 6.1 Elected members will be aware that the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service provided by Quarriers will come to an end on 7 June 2024. The Council has provided some support to the delivery of the overall service in recent years, specifically through funding to support service users and their wider family to navigate the social and wellbeing impacts of a brain injury.
- 6.2 Whilst the overall service will close, there is strong support from a range of stakeholders to develop a new community led model of support going forward, which could ensure that the holistic support required by people impacted by a brain injury and their families can continue to be available across Renfrewshire. This includes support around issues such as employability, income advice, health and wellbeing and social isolation, particularly given the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.
- 6.3 In terms of developing a community led model of support, there is potential interest from a range of stakeholders to take this forward at pace given the planned closure of the service on 6 June. It is recommended that officers work with all stakeholders involved including service users, to develop options for the transition to a new model of support. This work would be co-ordinated by the Policy and Partnerships service, drawing in support and advice from Engage Renfrewshire on governance and potential funding opportunities.
- 6.4 Indicative funding of £90,000 has been identified from Fairer Renfrewshire programme funding, which could be utilised to support transition arrangements subject to the development of a formal proposal for consideration by elected members, which would include future recommendations on funding over a longer term period. Given the pressing nature of this issue, officers will prioritise this development work and bring a further report outlining next steps to the Leadership Board on 19 June.
- 

## **7. Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act Consultation**

- 7.1 Regular updates are provided to Leadership Board on the Fair Food Renfrewshire programme. The steering group established to drive the local approach to Fair Food has recently drafted and submitted a partnership response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Good Food Nation Plan. The consultation is seeking views on proposed national Good Food Nation outcomes, ways of measuring progress and insight into how different groups envision life in a Good Food Nation.

- 7.2 The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 places a requirement on the Scottish Government to develop and implement a National Good Food Nation (GFN) Plan, and also requires other relevant authorities (32 Local Authorities and 14 Health Boards) to develop and implement Local GFN Plans.
- 7.3 In preparing these Plans, the Scottish Government and relevant authorities must also take into consideration how food-related issues can affect outcomes relating to; social and economic wellbeing, the environment (climate change, wildlife, and natural environment), health and physical/mental wellbeing, economic development, animal welfare, education, and child poverty.
- 7.4 The draft National Good Food Nation Plan was published on 24 January 2024 with the public consultation being launched on the same day. The consultation closed on 22 April 2024 and a local response was developed and submitted in consultation with the Council Leader and Depute which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Members are therefore asked to homologate the submission of the response. The Council's consultation response has also been submitted to COSLA as a draft to inform the combined local authority response developed by COSLA.
- 

## 8. Next steps

- 8.1 Officers continue to work with partners to progress the Fairer Renfrewshire programme. Priority actions over the next quarter include:
- Evaluation of Winter Connections 23/24
  - Development of the Local Child Poverty Action Report
  - Developing and delivering budget investments, particularly the design and delivery of the summer holiday programme
  - Development of equalities workstream as detailed in February 2024 Leadership Board
  - Launch of Renfrewshire Community Survey 2024
- 

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – this paper recommends that additional funding of £0.516m from Fairer Renfrewshire funding be allocated to support the delivery of the programme throughout 2024/25. This is in addition to budget commitments made as part of the Council's budget setting process in February 2024.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – This report provides a summary of current partnership activities being progressed through the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, with a key focus on tackling the inequalities that exist in Renfrewshire.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none

6. **Information Technology** - none
  7. **Equality and Human Rights** – The report provides an overview of key activities undertaken as part of the Fairer Renfrewshire programme, and as such there continues to be a high level of equalities and human rights consideration across this programme – the activities detailed in this report are targeted specifically at advancing equality of opportunity for a number of groups across the Renfrewshire area.
  8. **Health and Safety** - none
  9. **Procurement** – none
  10. **Risk** – none
  11. **Privacy Impact** – none
  12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
  13. **Climate Risk** – none
- 

**Author:** Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Partnership

## Appendix 1

### Scottish Government's National Good Food Nation Plan Consultation

#### Renfrewshire Council Response

##### Introduction

The Scottish Government is developing the national Good Food Nation Plan. This is a requirement of the [Good Food Nation \(Scotland\) Act 2022](#), which was passed in Summer 2022. This Good Food Nation Plan is intended to set out the Scottish Government's goals for food policy and how it intends to achieve them.

Our food system is a source of incredible success: the Scottish food and drink sector generates turnover of around £15 billion per annum, and exports of Scottish food and drink were valued at £8.1 billion in 2022. Our fantastic food industry provides employment from the local farmers' market to the export of Scotland's finest produce across the globe. This success contributes positively to the wellbeing of the food and drink workforce, while also making it easier for the population to access healthy food options. Food enables a healthy population to enjoy life to its fullest. Our establishment of the Good Food Nation body of work recognises this and the importance of Scotland's food and drink sector not only to our economy, but also to our culture, heritage, and society.

Food is fundamental to everything we do, but it can be taken for granted and the supply chain that produces it is sometimes overlooked. Whilst there is much to celebrate in our food system, there are also challenges that we must meet head-on: our food system and the people who work in the food sector need and deserve stewardship and care. A key aim of our work to be a Good Food Nation is to shift the dial so people can make healthier choices in what they eat.

We know that many households in Scotland experience food insecurity on a regular basis or are intermittently worried about being able to access food. Diet-related ill health is also more pervasive in communities experiencing deprivation. In striving to achieve our Good Food Nation ambitions we must do so for all communities and leave no one behind. Reducing socio-economic and other inequalities is part of being a Good Food Nation. When creating future food policy to align with the overarching outcomes set out in this plan, consideration of such inequalities needs to be a key focus to avoid unintended consequences.

The Scottish Government is already taking action to reduce inequality; provide greater food resilience and security; enable healthy and local food choices; and support our food and drink sector, all while working towards our net zero goals. However, making important and necessary long-term changes to our food system and achieving ambitious food-related goals will take time. As things stand, the Scottish Government does not have full control of all the levers that can be used to influence all aspects of the food system and people's ability to access healthier food. The impact of Brexit has also been significant: as the UK now sits outwith the EU it is required to conduct its own trade negotiations. Scotland's ability to influence its food system is thus further limited by the fact that we are not represented in our own right at these international-level discussions and negotiations.

An independent Scotland would have full control over all the levers and resources linked to food policy, which would have a material effect on what we can achieve and how quickly. We are publishing a series of papers on the subject of [Building A New Scotland](#): these papers form our prospectus for an independent Scotland and set out many issues linked to food.

This first Good Food Nation Plan represents how the Scottish Government intends to use the powers and levers we do have to work collectively with people, communities, businesses, agencies, and organisations to meet our Good Food Nation ambitions.

The first draft national Good Food Nation Plan sets out the following:

- Part One outlines the history of the Good Food Nation in Scotland and highlights how the plan will take effect. This part does not form part of this consultation, but it provides relevant background information.
- Part Two proposes a set of six national Good Food Nation Outcomes and sets out how they were developed and how progress will be measured. We will ask you questions about the Outcomes as well as the measures.
- Part Three highlights how working mechanisms within government will change and presents some of the key food related policies that are currently under way. It also presents what life would be like for different groups of people under a Good Food Nation. We are particularly interested in understanding if we have captured correctly what life should be like in a Good Food Nation.

This consultation seeks views on all three Parts of the draft national Plan, and we hope you and others will take part. As part of this consultation, we are also seeking views on specified functions, which will be defined in secondary legislation. Specified functions are very important as it is when Scottish Ministers are exercising these functions that the plan will take effect. Questions on specified functions will be asked after the section on the national Good Food Nation Plan. You can choose to respond to some or all of these questions.

#### Part A: Consultation on the national Good Food Nation Plan

In collaboration with colleagues across the Scottish Government we have developed a set of six overarching Outcomes. These Outcomes are ambitious and not meant to be achieved within the first iteration of this plan. They are necessarily broad in nature as they are designed to be applicable to policies from across a wide range of areas.

The Outcomes serve as the high-level aspirations for a good food nation: they are not a list of detailed instructions.

They reflect that there is a continued need to adjust how food is produced, processed, distributed, and disposed of in Scotland to address the undeniable challenges of climate change and environmental degradation. This transition to a more sustainable food system also needs to be managed in a just and fair manner. This includes taking the people who work to put food on our tables along with us and demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement in animal welfare. They also acknowledge that everyone deserves dignified access to good food and that our food system should create a healthy population.

The Outcomes represent what we would like a sustainable food system in Scotland to look like. The Outcomes link to other overarching policy frameworks such as the [National Performance Framework](#) and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). The Outcomes also link to relevant international human rights instruments.

**Q1. Does each individual Good Food Nation Outcome describe the kind of Scottish food system you would like to see?**

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6
Strongly agree						
Mostly agree	X	X	X	X	X	X
Neither agree nor disagree						
Mostly disagree						
Strongly disagree						

**Q2. What, if anything, would you change about the Good Food Nation Outcomes and why?**

Broadly speaking, the outcomes are supported. Whilst it is appreciated that the Outcomes are high-level and aspirational, council officers have suggested some strengthening around the wording of the Outcomes. This may in turn require some further thought with regards to the applicable measures, targets, indicators, and specified functions.

- Food waste does not feature in any of the Outcomes, and this is a critical area for both poverty and net zero agendas. This could also include surplus food re-distribution.
- Outcome 1 is very reliant on current economic conditions. Whilst we welcome the inclusion of “affordable” within the Outcome, the levers to deliver affordable food will often be outwith the devolved powers of the Scottish Government. Recent world events have contributed to rising costs and food inflation which could jeopardise affordability.
- There is no mention of Fair Trade or any ethical sources of food in the Outcomes, especially when it relates to products that cannot be grown or sourced in Scotland. Promotion of seasonal food would promote buying local, rather than imported food.
- The community element seems to be missing from the Outcomes.
- Although the Food and Drink sector is frequently referenced, it is not clear whether alcohol is deliberately missing from the Plan. Alcohol can have a significant impact on physical and mental wellbeing. The food system in Scotland with regards to available land, energy and resources, supply Scotland’s Drink sector so there is correlation between the two sectors.
- Outcomes 2 and 4 could be strengthened the benefits (particularly to net zero and the local economy) of having shorter food supply chains, this requires greater collaboration between local growers, producers, and suppliers.

**Measures, Targets & Indicators**

**Q3. Do you think that these targets will contribute to achieving the overall Good Food Nation Outcomes?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	I don’t know
----------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------	-------------------	--------------

	X				
--	---	--	--	--	--

**Q4. Would achieving these targets contribute to making the kind of Scottish Food system you would like to see?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
	X				

**Q5. If you have other comments on the suggested Good Food Nation targets, please comment:**

- We note that many of the targets listed, are existing targets. By the time the Plan is finalised and published, some of the timelines will already have been passed.
- Some of the targets are not fully defined. For example, “Reduce adult diet-related health inequalities” versus a defined target such as “halve childhood obesity by 2030 and significantly reduce associated diet-related inequalities”.
- The community element is not well referenced throughout but in terms of measures, it would be positive to see mention of local food growing projects around growing grounds or allotments and community larders or pantries.
- There are no targets around the provision and uptake of food education, either for children or adults.
- With regards to Outcome 3 and its associated indicators/targets it is critical that the supply market can produce quality and variety of fruit & vegetables to meet demand relating to this outcome. This will require a consider procurement strategy which supports the increase in supply, whilst remaining a cost-effective route to market which balances the support for local produce versus availability.
- There appears to be a very narrow targeting of health-related improvements in relation to weight, but nothing specific in relation to other diet related diseases or conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and even dental health.
- Whilst breast-feeding targets are welcomed, there should be acknowledgement that for a variety of reasons not all children can be breastfed. Alternative support targets could be considered to avoid stigma and ensure dignity.
- The Plan has reducing per capita food waste as a target but there are no Greenhouse Gas emissions related to food waste as an indicator (only agriculture).
- Food waste doesn't feature in the outcomes which is critical from both a social/poverty point of view but also net zero.

**Q6a. Do you think these indicators will be useful for measuring progress towards the Good Food Nation Outcomes?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
	X				



## **Q6b. Why or why not?**

- The indicators are largely quantitative. How will qualitative information be gathered and reported upon? There is need to share effective best practice.
- We are interested in how information about fruit and veg intake of children aged 2-15 will be gathered and measured, and what implication there will be for schools, if any.

## **Q7. What other indicators, if any, would you like to see included?**

- Number of educational establishments participating in Food for Thought programme. Case Studies related to best practice should be provided.
- Qualitative information could also be drawn from schools participating in Hearty Lives projects.
- Qualitative information drawn from Health and Nutrition Inspections (HNI) during Education Scotland inspections of schools and early years providers.
- In relation to education, measures of numbers of young people achieving Senior Phase qualifications in Food Technology.
- The Plan should consider indicators included which relate to the supply of allotments and community growing spaces, for example the percentage of local authorities complying with the statutory plots-waiting list numbers threshold stated in Sections 111 and 121 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; Number of new allotment plots created during a reporting period, in line with Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- Fruit and vegetable intake of children and adults could be added in addition to the Percentage of adults and children consuming the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. By measuring intake, it would give some detail on how many individuals are below the recommended daily portions.
- The “number of pupils registered for a free school meal and the percentage of pupils utilising entitlement” would be a better indicator to have alongside or even instead of the “number of pupils registered for a free school meal” indicator.
- Outcome 1 has no indicator for safe food. Indicators relating to compliance across the food sector should be considered.
- It might be beneficial to have an indicator on funding committed to food education and community food projects. Whether or not a target is associated with community food projects/local food growing could be debated, but there is a potential to include a target related to this, like the national target for community energy. In Renfrewshire’s Plan for Net Zero there is a metric of percentage m<sup>2</sup> covered by allotments/community growing grounds but there may be a better measurement that can then be used at a national level and consequently at a local level also.
- There could be an indicator which covers the level of support to local food businesses to be able to sustain businesses in the current climate.
- Although there are indicators in relation to the number of pupils registered for free school meals, it should be noted that there are no indicators in relation to holiday food provision. This is an area of focus for local authorities to ensure access to nutritious food outwith term time.
- In terms of indicators and targets/measures, the indicators could be developed more for example, Outcome 2 could show some indicators of progression to sustainability such as “number of agricultural businesses adopting new greener technologies”. This Outcome could also benefit from some biodiversity indicators.
- Outcome 4 could include some indicators and measures around fair work such as the number of people employed on the living wage. Median weekly full-time wage would not necessarily be a good

indicator as the Food and Drink industry will have seasonal workers, lots of part-time workers and possibly agency workers on low hours or zero-hour contracts. It doesn't point to the Fair Work Action Plan in the targets/measures either which seems like a missed opportunity. Indicators of a diverse workforce could also focus on pay gap, disability, and ethnicity within employment stats in the food and drink industry. Measures could also point to the Wellbeing Economy Toolkit.

**Q8. If you have other comments on the suggested Good Food Nation indicators, please comment.**

- It would be helpful if there were some indicators around food advertising arounds schools.
- The Eating Out, Eating Well framework is voluntary so some indicators which food vendors near schools should meet would be welcome, to promote healthy choices especially to secondary school children.
- All school menus are compliant to providing 3 portions of fruit & vegetables. The challenge in providing this is evident within school dining halls by the increased levels of food waste. Monitoring/weighing food waste in dining halls can provide evidence of increases or decreases in food waste levels as the provision does not necessarily indicate being eaten.

**Life in a Good Food Nation**

**Q9a. Does this reflect what you think life should look like for a child in Scotland as a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
	X				

**Q9b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- We would suggest that the first bullet point is changed to include the word “safe” – “I have access to healthy, safe, and nutritious food that is appropriate for my age and developmental stage”.
- In the third bullet point, there could be some strengthening of wording around “food-related educational experiences”, for instance including some wording that encapsulates “At nursery and school, I routinely learn about what makes a healthy balanced diet to enable me to make healthy informed choices”.

**Q10a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a parent/carer in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
	X				

**Q10b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- There is no mention of food education for parents/carers which is needed to make a food system change.

- There is a step missing before the first bullet point, something like “I know what meals are healthy and nutritious and how to make good food choices so that I have a balanced diet”.
- The second bullet point should be amended to include dignified access to food support.
- The last bullet point potentially implies this, but there could be more explicit wording around breastfeeding support.

**Q11a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as an adult in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
	X				

**Q11b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- This could consider culturally appropriate foods, as well as age-appropriate foods as older adults may have different requirements.
- Affordability should be included, especially in terms of healthy options.
- “Healthy and sustainable options are easy to find wherever I eat and buy food” – this could include reference to local or community food, and Fair Trade/ethical foods.

**Q12a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a public caterer in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
	X				

**Q12b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- As Food safety and standards are fundamental in a Good Food Nation, there should be a reference to compliance with food law requirements, such as “I will ensure that I meet food law requirements”.
- Local suppliers are integral within supply chains to enable keeping food miles as low as possible; seasonal eating is critical to this.

**Q13a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a retailer in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
	X				

**Q13b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- There should be a reference to compliance with food law requirements such as “I will ensure that I meet food law requirements”.

**Q14a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a restaurant owner in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
					X

**Q14b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- There should be a reference to compliance with food law requirements, such as “I will ensure that I meet food law requirements”.

**Q15a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a farmer/crofter in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
					X

**Q15b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- With reference to selling produce locally, this must be on the proviso that any food meets the same food law standards as the rest of the food sector.
- There is no mention of soil health and regenerative farming to increase environmental sustainability.

**Q16a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a fisher in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
					X

**Q16b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

No comment to make.

**Q17a. Does this reflect what you would like your life to look like, as a food processor in a Good Food Nation?**

Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
					X

**Q17b. What changes, if any, would you make?**

- There should be a reference to compliance with food law requirements such as “I will ensure that I meet food law requirements and good manufacturing practice”.

**Q18. If you have any further comments on the national Good Food Nation Plan, please comment here:**

- Clearer evidence of collaboration and engagement that the Scottish Government has had with local authorities, public bodies, and other relevant organisations in the formulation of this plan would be beneficial if included.
- More information could be added on the baselining undertaken for a policy of this scale, and consequently there has been no cost impact analysis undertaken which would inform an appropriate level of funding and investment that would be required. It is essential that sufficient funding and resources are provided to allow local authorities and partner agencies to deliver these outcomes.
- Whilst the important part local authorities will play in helping Scotland become a Good Food Nation is recognised, ultimately the goal will be only met in collaboration with individual households, families, communities, community groups and charities along with growers, farmers, fishers, and all other businesses within the food sector (production, distribution, retail, hospitality).
- As per many other public sector bodies, Renfrewshire Council utilises collaborative frameworks for a lot of its food supply. It is critical that public procurement contracts are formulated in a manner to enable and support this Plan. For example, lotting structures which support variety of producers to access contracts as well as product/price lists which are suitable flexible to ensure best value for in season products. It is essential that government support is provided to the supply base, in particular local providers, to be able to access local and national frameworks/ contracts.
- It could be suggested that 45-60 minutes for 400+ pupils to sit and eat a hot meal is very difficult to achieve, and that the serving and eating environment has a direct impact on whether pupils take school meals (universal, free, or paid). Older pupils uptake of meals in secondary schools will also be driven by the local area and access to external vendors.
- Without legislative changes, procurement targets cannot currently be set around local supply or buying Scottish produce as, as per the Plan, “International trade obligations prohibit activities that would discriminate between suppliers on grounds of nationality or locality, or which would result in unequal treatment of suppliers.” Procurement continues to develop innovative routes to market to support the ambitions detailed within the Plan whilst also supporting many other government and local initiatives.
- There needs to be more emphasis on community within the Plan. Community groups and organisations play a vital role in sharing information on local food networks, and they play a big role in the social and cultural aspects of food as they service a diverse group of people in the community. Consideration should be given to including a further category in the “Life in a Good Food Nation” section, such as “As a Community Organisation/Group in a Good Food Nation”.
- The Plan could have more focus on advice, education, and skills for life. Skills links to more opportunities and better career prospects. With regards to school education there should be increased learning around cooking skills for life.
- Generally, the aspirational nature of the plan is welcomed, but must be balanced with realism, for example, are affordability issues for households sufficiently addressed, especially during cost-of-living crisis as current context?
- From a Community Wealth Building perspective, officers would like to see more in the Life of a Good Food Nation focus on supporting/contributing to thriving local supply chains through procurement choices. This will ensure more local food businesses are aware of what is being bought so they can diversify their products and ensure more local food businesses are entering the local supply chain. It would also be a good opportunity to mention supporting collaboration between local growers, producers, manufacturers, suppliers, and buyers to form denser local food supply chains.

## **Specified Functions**

**Q19. Please let us know if we have missed any function falling within a specified description or relevant specified functions in the list.**

- Whilst we recognise including the list of existing functions was intended to evidence the alignment of policy intentions, there are several pieces of legislation which are not referenced and are of relevance: Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 which governs many products used by many businesses within the Food and Drink industries. This will help control food waste and environmental impact.
- Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 – the Scottish Government have powers to strengthen the promotion, widen the eligibility and increase the entitlement and support to many benefits, especially for children. (Best Start Foods, Best Start Payments, and Scottish Child Payment)

The list should also refer to current food related Bills at various stages within the Parliamentary processes:

- Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill,
- Human Rights Bill,
- Circular Economy Bill,
- Community Wealth Building Bill,
- Land Reform Bill,
- Natural Environmental Bill

**Q20. Why do you think this specified function/function falling within a specified description should be added?**

Comments to Question 19 should also cover a response to this question.