

RIGHT TO FOOD BILL CONSULTATION – RESPONSE FROM DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

QUESTIONS

About You

(Note: Information entered in this “About You” section may be published with your response (unless it is “not for publication”), except where indicated in **bold**).

1. Are you responding as:

- an individual – in which case go to Q2A
- on behalf of an organisation? – in which case go to Q2B

2A. Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose “Member of the public”).

- Politician (MSP/MP/peer/MEP/Councillor)
- Professional with experience in a relevant subject
- Academic with expertise in a relevant subject
- Member of the public

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

2B. Please select the category which best describes your organisation:

- Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government or agency, local authority, NDPB)
- Commercial organisation (company, business)
- Representative organisation (trade union, professional association)
- Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non- profit)
- Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

3. Please choose one of the following:

- I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation
- I would like this response to be published anonymously
- I would like this response to be considered, but not published (“not for publication”)

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason. **(Note: your reason will not be published.)**

4. Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. **(Note: The name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or “not for publication”.)**

Name: Dundee City Council

Please provide a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. **(Note: We will not publish these contact details.)**

Contact details:

5. Data protection declaration

- I confirm that I have read and understood the [Privacy Notice](#) to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used.

If you are under 12 and making a submission, we will need to contact you to ask your parent or guardian to confirm to us that they are happy for you to send us your views.

- Please ONLY tick this box if you are UNDER 12 years of age.

Your views on the proposal

Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is “not for publication”).

Aim and approach

1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal to incorporate the right to food into Scots law?

- Fully supportive
 Partially supportive
 Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
 Partially opposed
 Fully opposed
 Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Dundee City Council would be supportive of appropriate legal guidance which has the main aim of ensuring that everyone can afford and enjoy a healthy and sustainable diet. The right to food is a basic human right. This principle is closely aligned with Dundee City Council's Fairness Strategy and its main objective of promoting fairness and reducing inequalities among our communities. Incorporating the right to food into Scots law will ensure that the Scottish Government has a legal obligation to take measures to address food insecurity.

Dundee City Council and the wider partnership is committed to tackling the causes and impact of poverty and inequality; this commitment is articulated through Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Council Plan and our Fairness and Child Poverty Plan. This is evidenced by actions being taken across our partnership as we seek to address local needs. One impact of poverty and inequality is food insecurity. Whilst recognising that food insecurity has been further highlighted by current circumstances and the importance of discussing a right to food, we agree that action is required that understands food insecurity within the broader system.

2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there are other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

Framework legislation is required as it allows for joined up approach at all levels of the government. It would offer increased protection for vulnerable groups and ensure the right to challenge breaches in public policy in a court of law.

3. Which of the following best expresses your view on an independent statutory body being given responsibility for overseeing and reporting on progress towards realising the right to food?

- Fully supportive

- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Our 'Food System' in Scotland is very complicated and involves a network of statutory agencies, individuals and companies to be effectively inter-linked and to work in partnership. More information is required in order to understand the responsibility for ensuring that the Human Right to food is met and what the role of Scottish Government and other organisations would be. Greater clarity is required on how those with difficulty in obtaining food would exercise their human right and it is difficult to assess the value of a statutory oversight body without an understanding of its full scope, responsibility and powers.

There also needs to be a holistic approach that will encompass all of the human rights under the right to an adequate standard of living ensuring that wider needs of individuals are considered. The Human Rights framework for Scotland, includes 'the right to an adequate standard of living' of which a right to food is a part. Considering the right to food as part of a right to an adequate standard of living presents the opportunity to address the wider needs of individuals experiencing food insecurity and the causes that lead to it. Addressing food insecurity alone may lead to this opportunity being missed.

4. Should an independent body be given responsibility for overseeing and reporting on the right to food, do you think it should be:

- a newly created body
- an existing body (if so, please state which body in the comment box)
- either option

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Taking the holistic approach that food insecurity is part of the wider 'the right to an adequate standard of living'. And if there is further clarity on the need for an overseeing body, an option may be an existing body e.g. Scottish Human Rights Commission. Placing this responsibility on SHRC would allow for the influence and impact of existing structures to be maximised.

5. Which of the following best expresses your view of enshrining a right to food into Scots law as a priority in advance of, and in a manner which is compatible with, any further Scottish Government legislation on wider human rights?

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The impact of COVID-19 has made access to food and food insecurity a pressing concern across all areas of society. It is also reasonable to assume that there will be some further future issues within the food supply chain relating to the production, distribution, sale and purchasing of food products etc., caused by the impact of Brexit.

Dundee City Council is fully supportive of the Right to Food to be incorporated into the wider Scottish Government Human Rights Legislation, Good Food Nation Bill, etc. Addressing food insecurity in connection with other inequalities would ensure more joined-up and holistic approach and would ensure that wider needs of individuals are being addressed.

The need to join up the wider needs of individuals was set out in our recent response to the consultation on **Ending the need for food banks**

6. Which of the following best describes your view of placing responsibility for guaranteeing the right to food on the Scottish Government?

- Fully supportive
 Partially supportive
 Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
 Partially opposed
 Fully opposed
 Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Tackling food insecurity and all of the complex elements involved are multi-faceted and not in the control of any one single agency at present. In order to achieve the aspirations of this bill it is vital to ensure co-ordination and coherent strategic planning which will involve and include a diverse range of sectors, industries, public and private bodies, communities and individuals. This work will require partnership working across a wide spectrum of policy areas including public health, tackling poverty, industry, commercial and environmental.

Covid-19 Pandemic

7. What impact do you consider the effects of, and response to, the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the need for a right to food to be incorporated into Scots law?

- Increased the need for the Bill
 Reduced the need for the Bill
 No significant impact
 Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Local authorities work to combat this has been particularly evident since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic as we and our partners (particularly the Third Sector) have acted effectively, at scale and with pace to provide access to food for those experiencing food insecurity resulting from physical or financial barriers to food.

The pandemic created significant demand for food across Dundee, particularly during the lockdowns. The Dundee Food Insecurity Network (FIN) established at the start of the pandemic brought 26 community food providers together to work with the Council to meet the needs of our citizens. The Dundee FIN played a crucial role in responding to the emergency food requirements created by the ongoing pandemic.

Partners within the Food Insecurity Network are working together on measures to address ongoing food poverty in Dundee and are currently finalising a new Community Food Strategy for the city. The strategy aims to help reduce the need for emergency food, reduce food surplus and increase dignified access to food at reduced costs and increase people's connectedness to others in their communities.

The infographic summary at the end of this response highlights a range of supports provided

during pandemic in 2020/21 including Scottish Welfare Fund, discretionary housing payments, tenancy hardship and free period products too.

Financial Implications

8. Taking into account all those likely to be affected (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc), is the proposed Bill likely to lead to:

- a significant increase in costs
- some increase in costs
- no overall change in costs
- some reduction in costs
- a significant reduction in costs
- don't know

Please indicate where you would expect the impact identified to fall (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc). You may also wish to suggest ways in which the aims of the Bill could be delivered more cost- effectively.

While there may be costs associated with the implementation of the proposed Bill, it is not possible to ascertain their significance, as not enough detail has been provided in the consultation document in terms of practical steps that public bodies would need to undertake and financial burden they could entail.

It is reasonable to assume that it will also require some level of funding to establish an independent body and to make the necessary changes identified to improve the food system. Some investment will be also be required on research, development, impact assessment and performance monitoring.

During the pandemic, particularly lockdown periods there was significant demand for food across Dundee, with additional funding of £1.2M being made available to support a network of community food providers with food supplies. At the peak an additional 4,400 food parcels per week were being issued. This was in addition to their own supplies and funding, as well as the Scottish Government's food boxes to the shielding cohort.

Equalities

9. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

- Positive
- Slightly positive
- Neutral (neither positive nor negative)
- Slightly negative
- Negative
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response. Where any negative impacts are identified, you may also wish to suggest ways in which these could be minimised or avoided.

Evidence and research available shows that people with protected characteristics are more likely to be impacted by inequalities and poverty. The Human Rights commission also found that recent changes in tax and welfare reforms had a disproportion effect on people who were already struggling such as single parents, those with disabilities and those on low incomes.

Right to Food should have positive impact on these communities of interest as it guarantees that

everyone is able to access adequate and nutritious food therefore reducing food insecurity that individuals experience. Placing human rights at the heart of decisions around the food society should ensure a fairer, more equal distribution and access to food.

An appropriate equality impact assessment process is required to ensure that no-one and particularly those within protected characteristics groups are not disproportionately affected by any of the proposals. On-going review as the proposals continue to develop will also be required in order to understand the full impact. This should include consultation and research involving those with lived experience and from within protected characteristics groupings.

Learning from the Covid-19 response should also be reviewed, as this served to highlight the sections of the community who were most at risk from any disruptions to the food/income systems.

Sustainability

10. In terms of assessing the proposed Bill's potential impact on sustainable development, you may wish to consider how it relates to the following principles:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting effective, participative systems of governance
- ensuring policy is developed on the basis of strong scientific evidence.

With these principles in mind, do you consider that the Bill can be delivered sustainably?

- Yes
 No
 Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Access to healthy and affordable food is one of the core elements of sustainable development, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger).

It should be possible to deliver the aims of the bill sustainably. It is likely to assume that the bill which aims to improve access to good, healthy food, will consequently have a positive impact on health inequalities.

Reducing health inequalities and a reduction in chronic disease will have a positive social impact. Our citizens abilities to reach their full potential within their communities and employment prospect may also improve. Children may experience improved educational attainment and improved socio-economic outcomes. Current spending on dealing with chronic disease related to poor diet could potentially in the long term be re-directed to pro-active health improvement initiatives such as exercise programs or screening initiatives.

There may also be positive environmental impacts with enhanced governance and promotion of less wasteful farming techniques, etc. These activities support the ambition in Dundee to reduce the impact of the food system on the environment by reducing waste, more community growing initiatives and increasing the supply and demand of locally produced food.

General

11. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

Due to the impact of Covid-19 it is important that a rights-based approach to ensure dignified access to healthy, sustainable, affordable and sufficient healthy food for all of our citizens.

It is critically important that appropriate funding and resourcing are allocated to these proposals in order to support their development and implementation.

