

Islands Communities Impact Assessment - Screening

Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill

October 2021

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Introduction

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers and other relevant authorities, including a number of public authorities, to have regard to island communities in exercising their functions, and for the Scottish Ministers this will also include the development of legislation. This duty is often referred to as ‘island-proofing’.

Under Section 8 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 there is a requirement on relevant authorities to complete an Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) for any new policy, strategy or service which is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from the effect on other communities.

This screening document sets out how islands issues have been taken into consideration during the development of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill.

Background

The Bill underpins work that is already underway, or planned, across the Scottish Government to deliver the Good Food Nation ambition.

This ambition was set out in ‘Recipe for Success: Scotland’s National Food and Drink Policy – Becoming a Good Food Nation’¹ published in 2014. This set out a vision for Scotland: that by 2025 Scotland will be “a Good Food Nation, where people from every walk of life take pride and pleasure in, and benefit from, the food they produce, buy, cook, serve and eat day-by-day”.

Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill

The Bill places duties on the Scottish Ministers to set out a national good food nation plan and makes provision as to the effect of that plan. The Scottish Ministers are required to have regard to the plan in the exercise of functions to be specified in secondary legislation. The Bill requires the Scottish Ministers to have regard to certain international instruments when preparing the plan.

The national good food nation plan must set out:

- the main outcomes in respect of food-related issues which the Scottish Ministers want to be achieved in relation to Scotland;
- indicators or other measures by which progress in achieving the outcomes may be assessed; and

¹ Recipe for Success <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recipe-success-scotlands-national-food-drink-policy/>

- the policies which the Scottish Ministers intend to pursue in order to secure the achievement of the outcomes.

Similar requirements are placed on health boards, local authorities and other public authorities (collectively referred to as “relevant authorities”) as may be specified, who are required to publish a good food nation plan and to have regard to that plan when exercising specified functions. They are required to have regard to the Scottish Ministers’ national good food nation plan when preparing their own plan.

The good food nation plans may include such other material in relation to food-related issues as the Scottish Ministers or relevant authorities consider appropriate. The Scottish Ministers or relevant authorities are to have regard to the scope for food-related issues to affect outcomes in relation to social and economic wellbeing, the environment, health, and economic development, when determining the content of the good food nation plans.

This Bill will ensure that there is a more co-ordinated approach to the setting of main outcomes which the Scottish Ministers and certain other bodies want to be achieved in relation to food, and their policies to achieve those outcomes, supported by indicators or other measures to assess progress. This means that when the Scottish Ministers and relevant authorities are exercising certain specified functions in relation to food-related issues there will be a statutory requirement to consider the determined outcomes, indicators and policies set down in good food nation plans. It is therefore intended that the plans will support a more co-ordinated, coherent and joined up approach to delivery of the Good Food Nation ambition in Scotland.

Islands Communities Impact Assessment

This screening assessment is based on responses to the ‘Consultation on Good Food Nation Proposals for Legislation’², the associated ‘Consultation on Good Food Nation Proposals for Legislation: analysis of consultation responses’³ and a framing workshop with Scottish Government officials from a wide range of policy areas in relation to food that took place in December 2019. The purpose of the framing workshop was to discuss all the impact assessments in relation to the Bill, including the impact on islands communities.

The discussion at the workshop covered a wide range of issues, some of which were also raised in response to the consultation, that could affect islands communities in relation to food. These included: food being more expensive owing to haulage costs; that most food on the islands is exported; and that island schools import their food from large mainland suppliers. There are differences in health e.g. a greater obesity issue on the islands. The group noted that there may need be a greater push on the islands to achieve the same results as on the mainland. Other issues discussed included broadband issues that could affect island communities connectivity (possibly preventing islands populations from engaging) and that there may be specific cultural delicacies on the islands in relation to food.

² Good Food Nation Proposals for Legislation consultation <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-food-nation-proposals-legislation/>

³ Good Food Nation Proposals for Legislation: analysis of consultation responses <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-food-nation-proposals-legislation-consultation-analysis-report/>

The conclusion of the framing workshop was that it is not possible at this stage to identify specific direct or indirect impacts. This is because the Bill mainly includes enabling powers, which in themselves will not directly affect islands communities. Currently, there is not enough detail to carry out an assessment of whether the Bill would have a positive or negative impact on islands communities. However, it was recognised that islands communities may have different requirements and this should be taken into account once the details of the secondary legislation and the national good food nation plan are known and can be assessed.

Conclusion

The high level nature of the Bill means it is not possible, at this stage, to undertake a meaningful assessment of the specific impact on islands communities. More detailed assessments of the impacts, including those on islands communities, will be undertaken for the secondary legislation resulting from the Bill and for the content of the national good food nation plan.



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