

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Executive
to Cabinet
of 17 February 2026**

Subject: Good Food Nation

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of South Ayrshire Council's requirements in relation to the Good Food Nation Act and agree to progress work towards meeting these requirements on a pan Ayrshire basis.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 notes the requirements of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act to create a local Good Food Nation Plan; and**
- 2.1.2 authorises officers to work with the other relevant authorities in the Ayrshire region towards meeting our requirements and in doing so contributing to wider joined up regional and local strategic outcomes and actions**

3. Background

- 3.1 In June 2022, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed new food systems legislation. As well as the development of a National Good Food Nation (GFN) Plan, the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 requires all Local Authorities and NHS Boards to develop their own GFN plans.
- 3.2 Consultation on the draft national GFN plan concluded in April 2024 and a revised plan was laid before Parliament in June 2025. The National GFN Plan was published in December 2025.
- 3.3 The Act is a legislative framework designed to foster a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable Scottish food system for all. The Act creates a statutory requirement for the production, publication, and evaluation schedule for national, and associated local, GFN plans including biannual reporting and five yearly reviews. Relevant authorities are defined as the 14 territorial health boards and all 32 local authorities, meaning 46 agencies are required to prepare local plans within 12 months of Section 10 of the Act coming into effect. It is understood that this will require our plan to be prepared by the end of December 2027.

3.4 Six GFN outcomes have been developed and are linked to the National Performance Framework, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and human rights instruments as follows:

1. The food environment in Scotland enables people to eat well. Everyone benefits from reliable and dignified access to safe, nutritious, affordable, enjoyable, sustainable and age-appropriate food.
2. Scotland's food system is sustainable and contributes to a flourishing natural environment on our land and in our waters. It supports our net zero and climate adaptation ambitions and plays an important role in maintaining and improving animal health and welfare and in restoring and regenerating biodiversity.
3. Scotland's food environment and wider food system enables and promotes a physically and mentally healthy population. This leads to the prevention of, and a reduction in, diet-related conditions.
4. Our food and drink sector is prosperous, diverse, innovative, and vital to national and local economic and social wellbeing. It is key to making Scotland food secure and food resilient and creates and sustains jobs and businesses underpinned by fair work standards throughout food supply chains.
5. People and communities are empowered to participate in, and shape, their food system. Scotland has a thriving food culture with a population who are educated about good and sustainable food.
6. Decisions we make in Scotland contribute positively to local and global food systems transformation. Scotland actively engages in learning and exchanging knowledge and best practice internationally.

3.5 Local GFN plans are required to set out (a) the main outcomes in relation to food-related issues which the relevant authority wants to achieve; (b) the indicators, or other measures by which progress towards achieving the outcomes will be measured; (c) the policies the relevant authority intends to pursue to deliver the outcomes, and measure progress; and (d) their plans for ensuring that implementation of the policies are informed by the food business sector. No explicit targets or indicators of progress were included in the final GFN (Scotland) Act.

3.6 The GFN (Scotland) Act requires relevant authorities to have regard for the scope of food-related issues that will affect outcomes in relation to several issues when developing their GFN plans; these include but are not limited to:

- Social and economic wellbeing;
- Environment, including climate change and the natural environment;
- Health and physical and mental wellbeing;
- Economic development;
- Animal welfare;
- Education; and
- Child poverty.

3.7 The legislation also places a duty on relevant authorities to have regard to a set of high-level principles when developing local plans and discharging allied duties:

- The fact that each part of the food system and supply chain plays an important role in the provision of food.
- The role of a sustainable food system and supply chain in contributing to the mitigation of climate change, halting and reversing loss of biodiversity, and improving animal welfare.
- The ability of high quality, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food to improve the health and physical and mental wellbeing of people.
- The fact that adequate food is a human right and essential to the realisation of other human rights.
- The importance of the food business sector to be a thriving part of the Scottish economy, having resilient supply chains, operating with fair work standards, and contributing to resilient local economics across Scotland.

3.8 A Living Good Food Nation Lab has been established at the University of Edinburgh, funded by The Wellcome Trust. The Lab's purpose is to provide guidance and analytical support to relevant authorities to develop their GFN plans, and to work with the newly appointed Scottish Food Commission, who will scrutinise and make recommendations on relevant authorities' GFN plans.

3.9 A Food Sub Group has been set up as part of the Sustainability Strategic Delivery Partnership within the Community Planning Partnership following a collaborative workshop on the topic early last year. This group has been supported by the Living Good Food Nation Lab and will continue to progress this work collaboratively. Collaborative work regionally on food and drink has also been progressed within the Food and Drink Workstream of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

4. Detail

4.1 Developing the Local Good Food Plan will be a complex task requiring input from multiple Council services and partners, including the community and voluntary sector. Extensive engagement and consultation will be needed to agree local outcomes, indicators, and targets, and to ensure the plan fully reflects the required scope and principles.

4.2 Following discussion between officers from all three Ayrshire councils and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, as the four relevant authorities within Ayrshire within the GFN Act, it has been proposed that a collaborative approach is taken to develop shared consultation methods and an outcome framework across Ayrshire as a whole. The framework will ensure that local outcomes deliver on the policy areas of:

- Taking a whole systems approach to developing local food systems;
- Improving access to food and reducing the reliance on emergency food aid;
- Promoting the procurement of healthy and sustainable food by public bodies;
- Supporting healthy diets through guidance and programs like free school meals; and
- Focusing on sustainability, including reducing food waste and supporting sustainable production.

4.3 Following this each authority will develop a specific plan outlining their actions, targets and indicators to meet their statutory responsibilities and ensure localised approaches where these are appropriate. This approach ensures a cohesive and coherent set of outcomes across the region while allowing localised decision making and action to deliver upon them. The final South Ayrshire Local Good Food Plan would be subject to future Cabinet approval.

4.4 It is proposed that the Cabinet:

4.4.1 notes the requirement of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 to create a local Good Food Plan; and

4.4.2 authorises officers to work with the other relevant authorities in the Ayrshire region to undertake planning and engagement on a collaborative basis.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements and reflect appropriate advice.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are currently no additional resources identified to comply with the new legislative requirements. Officers are monitoring any opportunities for additional funding support that may come with enactment of the relevant provisions of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 None.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are less strategic alignment with key partners and increased risk of contradictory outcomes or actions, as well as additional preparatory workload for officers. As such rejecting the recommendations may increase the financial burden on the Council.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) considers the following areas:

- Public Sector Equality Duty, Human Rights and Fairer Scotland Duty;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);

- Sustainability, climate change and biodiversity;
- Potential impact on older people;
- Rural communities;
- Health and wellbeing;
- A trauma informed organisation; and
- The Promise.

9.1 The proposals in this report relate to agreement to collaborate with partners. The work at this stage does not involve proposals to adopt policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is not required just now. An IIA will however be undertaken alongside development of the GFN Plan and brought forward with further reports.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not at this stage seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report. The development of our GFN Plan will require consideration of options. The GFN Plan will be subject to a further report for approval.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to all Priorities and Outcomes set out in the Council Plan.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council Yes No

13.1 The matters referred to in this report may contribute to the Council's transformation priority area(s): our workforce; our technology; our assets; our delivery model and may have the possibility to deliver cashable/ qualitative/ quantitative benefits. This will be considered further as the Plan is developed.

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 The Plan to be developed will be subject to consultation and this will be outlined in subsequent reporting.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian Connolly, Council Leader and Policy Lead for Economy and Strategy, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

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15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Chief Executive will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Bring forward Good Food Nation Plan for approval	December 2027	Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance

Background Papers [Good Food Nation \(Scotland\) Act 2022](#)

[Writing a Good Food Nation Plan: A brief guide for relevant authorities](#)

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