

Proposed Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Member's Bill to ensure policy development and implementation by public bodies is in line with principles of sustainable development and wellbeing by introducing a duty for public bodies to promote these principles and establishing a Commissioner for sustainable development and wellbeing.

The consultation runs from 14 December 2022 to 24 March 2023

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

No Response

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

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".)

Academic with expertise in a relevant subject

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).
(Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Paul Beswick

Please provide details of 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.

We will not publish these details.

[Redacted]

Aim and approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note, that this question is compulsory.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

It is important to be clear about terms like sustainable development. The word sustainable is attached to

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everything in government and is often meaningless or disingenuous. Wellbeing needs to be at the forefront of government policy.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

Legislation is necessary and a commissioner's office could keep different actors focused.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether 'sustainable development' should be defined in legislation?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including any views on what the definition should include.

It is important to be clear about terms like sustainable development. The word sustainable is attached to everything in government and is often meaningless or disingenuous.

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether 'wellbeing' should be defined in legislation?

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including any views on what the definition should include.

The term can be very subjective but if an agreed definition is not used then it is unmeasurable and there is little point in making promises if they cannot be assessed in terms of progress.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether there should be a Commissioner for sustainable development and wellbeing?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including any views on what the key functions of the proposed Commissioner should be (see pages 19 to 20 of the consultation document), what model of governance could be adopted (see page 22 to 23), and whether the Commissioner could play a role in strengthening existing duties or legislation.

A commissioner's office could keep different actors focused. It is likely that a commissioner, who should be independent of government, would provide more unbiased assessments and advice than that from politicians with the inevitable spin.

Q6. What, in your view, should the title of the proposed Commissioner be?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Using a title containing the words Wellbeing and sustainability might be appropriate but there would be times when the 2 could be mutually exclusive. Perhaps a title such as Sustainability Commissioner would be useful where part of their remit was enhanced Wellbeing. Long titles with several responsibilities puts people off.

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view on whether there is a need for duties for public bodies to promote sustainable development and wellbeing in policy development and implementation?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response including views on any barriers to implementation of these duties and on how the effectiveness of implementation could be measured.

There is a need but it must be focused (hence a common definition). We are currently told we have a sustainable festival or a sustainable Christmas Market. These statements are completely meaningless and disingenuous.

Financial Implications

Q8. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

some increase in costs

Please explain the reasons for your response, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.

Proposals have to be realistic and account for costs on the public. For example, creating policy involving replacing gas with heat pumps might sound nicely sustainable. However, if half our housing stock (often of the poorest) requires £50,000 of retrofitting, there has to be a way forward that does not virtually destroy wellbeing. Some of the costs should be borne out of progressive taxation.

Equalities

Q9. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your response and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

This requires sensitive legislation which may be problematic for definitions such as 'wellbeing' as wellbeing for one may not be the same for another.

Sustainability

Q10. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? (If you do not have a view then skip to next question)

Please explain the reasons for your response, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

This would depend on the remit and powers of a Commissioner who would have to argue for compromise as some work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations would have conflicts where choices about which area should be given priority would have to be made.

General

Q11. 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)?

I just wish a Commissioner could call out politicians who constantly spout about a just, sustainable, inclusive and fairer society which is more garbage than reality.