

# 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.

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

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).

Generations Working Together

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.**

We wholeheartedly support this bill which presents an opportunity to ensure that key policy decisions that are made today, account for the needs and lives of future generations. This has never been more crucial

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

that it is today, given the climate crisis we face, and with that, the subsequent social and economic impact. We believe that this bill will hold policy makers to account for socially and environmentally irresponsible policies, and hope that it can act as a stepping stone towards a more equitable, sustainable and socially connected society in Scotland.

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.

New legislation, which defines key terms which don't currently have legislative definitions, will allow for greater implementation of wellbeing and sustainable development principles.

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.**

A clear definition of 'Sustainable Development' in legislation will allow for rigorous standards to be upheld in line with the definition. Without it, different interpretations of the term may undermine its intended purpose and value. We believe that the definition ought to include 'intergenerational responsibility' within its key principles; that is, responsibility to present and future generations. Policy makers must be held accountable to the environmental, social, economic and democratic performance of its present and future generations. With clear and coherent definitions and legislation, this can be more readily achieved.

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

Fully supportive

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

Wellbeing should also be defined, though it's important to ensure that the definition is detailed, accounts for a range of metrics and is reviewed regularly and amended if necessary. The comprehensive explanations of wellbeing in the proposal are excellent and capture the necessary criteria. Reference to ensuring 'autonomy' in all citizens may help to capture a number of these points in a more concise way, where autonomy is defined as a right to self-authorship of one's own life. An example may look like: "Wellbeing refers to the social, environmental, economic and democratic flourishing of society, whereby citizens are objectively and subjectively content, and sufficiently autonomous."

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**

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

**role in strengthening existing duties or legislation.**

We welcome the introduction of a Commissioner for Sustainable Development and Wellbeing. Given existing urban and environmental commitments in Scottish government, particularly regarding achieving net zero emissions, developing local town centres (20 minute neighbourhoods) and transforming public transport, a Commissioner for Sustainable Development could help to ensure that these plans are executed and implemented properly, in line with principles of intergenerational fairness and the upholding of wellbeing standards. Establishing clear principles of best practice in ensuring sustainable development goals, and holding public bodies to account on these, will allow for greater clarity on how policies must be developed and implemented.

In terms of governance and accountability, the second approach, exemplified by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, could potentially provide greater independence and stability for the office, as the office holder has all functions vested in them as a "corporation sole," and the office is funded by the Welsh Government. This would hopefully provide greater freedom for the Commissioner to act in the best interests of current and future generations, without being subject to the whims of political pressures.

In terms of playing a role in strengthening existing duties and legislation: The Commissioner's role would be unique in that it would cut across a wide and diverse range of policy domains. In order to be effective, we argue that there would be a need to the commissioner to scrutinise existing duties and legislation, and offer practical amendments, particularly where existing policy and legislation presents potential harm to future generations, or threatens future wellbeing and principles of sustainable development.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Commissioner for Intergenerational Justice

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 undoubtedly a need for public bodies to promote ideals of sustainable development and wellbeing through sincere action, and not tokenistic gestures. This bill ought to be as radical as possible, given the imminent threats that we and our future generations face, therefore every public body should have a duty to promote SD&W and where possible, change existing/implement new policies to meet necessary criteria.

## 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.**

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?

Difficult to determine. It's likely that there will be an increase in short-term costs, due to new staffing and changes to legislation. Implementation of new standards across all sectors may incur additional costs. Long-term however, it is likely that the costs will be recovered and the bill will eventually work out to have cost less. By ensuring sustainable scrutiny is exercised across all policy domains, it is likely that we can reduce costs according to needs, and in some cases, profit. The Welsh hospital that built a solar farm is not only powered entirely by solar energy, but also profits from this. This proposed bill represents an opportunity to explore these kinds of options across society, generating not only environmental sustainability, but greater economic and socioeconomic performance.

## 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.

I would be confident that this bill is in the best interests of everyone, including minority groups. The climate crisis is likely to impact upon marginalised communities first, thus ensuring sustainability and wellbeing principles are adhered to will hopefully act to mitigate the more immediate threat to socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. Regarding age and disability, proposed local town centres, which limit distance of travel and therefore emissions, can be designed to facilitate the needs of everyone. Age-friendly principles and improved disability infrastructure will create more harmonious towns that are self-sustaining and inherently intergenerational.

## 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?

Given the nature of the bill, it is expected that the bill will have positive impacts upon the environment and is likely also to impact positively upon the economy. These are likely to extend to future generations also, given the key focuses around intergenerational justice and fairness. In terms of specific impacts, a number of these have been addressed in previous responses, but in short:

- Creating greater policy accountability will likely ensure that environmentally, economically and socially damaging policy decisions are identified and prevented/amended in the early stages of policy development. This applies also to existing policies, which may come under new scrutiny as a result of the bill.

## 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)?

As an organisation, Generations Working Together have connected with the School of International Futures (SOIF), who have done a lot of work regarding intergenerational fairness and solidarity. Their 'framework for assessing intergenerational fairness' requires policymakers to pass the details of their policy through a set of questions, before giving the proposed policy a 'fairness' rating - based on how intergenerationally fair it is. It does so by attending to several criteria which fall under the three key pillars: environmental, economic and social impact. The framework has been piloted within governmental institutions in Portugal and has also been adopted by the APPG for Future Generations in the UK. Whether or not this exact framework would be appropriate for use in the Scottish context may be up for debate, but it certainly offers a solid concept by which to start on, even if just for theoretical purposes. We would therefore be keen to see this framework explored in Scotland, and believe that it could offer a very practical starting point with regards to upholding the rights of future generations.

We are delighted to have contributed to this consultation call for views and look forward to seeing the results. We would be very keen to contribute to future conversations surrounding the bill and its implementation.