

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)

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).

SURF is Scotland's regeneration forum. It aims to improve policy and practice in efforts to successfully regenerate disadvantaged communities across Scotland. It does so: by organising seminars, study visits and conferences; by sharing information through reports, briefing notes, policy manifestos and an online magazine; through undertaking research and organising an annual awards scheme; and by working closely with key policy-makers in national government.

SURF's membership, of over 300 organisations across Scotland, includes representatives of all the major players in regeneration including national bodies, local authorities, voluntary and community groups, and private companies. The operation of SURF, as an independent social enterprise, is financed from membership and sponsorship fees, events income, grants and service delivery contracts.

The view expressed in our response are derived from discussion on the themes of the Bills in SURF conferences and workshops, in interviews and consultations towards SURF policy papers and manifestos, and in other SURF network activity.

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).

Derek Rankine, Policy Manager, SURF - Scotland's Regeneration Forum

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.

As a charity chiefly concerned with the wellbeing of people who live in Scotland's most deprived communities, SURF is keenly involved in the debate on how best to support the interventions and physical, social and economic improvements that can create positive change. We see the proposed Bill as a welcome and helpful addition to efforts to further prioritise sustainable development and wellbeing in the Scottish policy agenda.

SURF participated in consultation and engagement events relating to the Fourth National Performance Framework, and agree that a wellbeing-centred approach could add further value to decision-making that further promotes community interests. As a whole, the SURF network welcomes more action towards alleviating poverty and inequality, developing sustainable local economies, responding to climate change, improving health and wellbeing, and in progressing the '20 minute neighbourhood' and community wealth building policy agendas. SURF is confident the proposed Bill adds value to existing strategy and legislation by setting objectives, introducing monitoring approaches and reviewing outcomes.

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.

Yes, SURF believes legislation is desirable in focusing attention on change through legal obligations on statutory bodies. The SURF network is vocal about a busy and complex policy landscape around place-based regeneration, and have identified a number of strategies and approaches, not backed up by legislation or resources, that lack real-world impact. Legislative measures in the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill will ensure it is considered seriously and implemented by key actors.

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.

Sustainable development is a broad term that could be interpreted differently in particular sectors or bodies, and may not be well understood by the general public. A clear definition will focus attention on the purpose and value of the Bill, prevent problems in interpretation and implementation, and contribute to decision-making on the ground.

SURF welcomes the Scotland's International Development Alliance suggestion: "Sustainable Development can be defined as the development of human societies in ways which do not threaten planetary

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

boundaries, and which equitably support the capability of present and future generations across the world to meet their needs."

SURF would like to see a definition backed up by a clear understanding that the focus of the Bill is on improving wellbeing rather than delivering economic growth for its own sake, on reducing poverty and inequality to improve life chances in socially and economically challenged Scottish places, and in promoting community empowerment and local democracy.

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.

As with Q3, clear definitions are welcome in avoiding confusion between partners, and in supporting the implementation of the objectives of the Bill. SURF believes improvements in the wellbeing of local people – not other factors such as improving the physical environment or increasing local GDP – is the real purpose of place-based regeneration.

For SURF, wellbeing is increased when people are able to realise the social, economic, environmental and democratic outcomes that they seek. Wellbeing involves greater community participation in local policy and practice through practices such as community led regeneration and community wealth building, and in improving the quality of life for those living in areas of multiple deprivation.

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.

As previously stated, a strategy that lacks legislation or resources is less likely to result in positive changes in our places and communities. SURF believes the Bill should establish a new Commissioner position to monitor progress and implementation of the Bill and its statutory duties.

The Commissioner should have the legal authority to operate independently of the Scottish Government, to oblige public bodies to provide the information required for formal scrutiny, and to advise policy-makers in national and local government.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The Scottish Commissioner for Wellbeing and Sustainable Development is a clear title that is aligned tightly to the name of the Bill, with added value for external understanding.

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.

SURF discussions on an earlier consultation on a socio-economic duty on public bodies indicated that formal duties have value in obliging public bodies to demonstrate progress. Many public bodies are, however, operating in a challenging resources context, and may struggle to deal with additional duties. The focus should therefore be on encouraging better prioritisation of public sector decision-making and partnership working in areas including place-based regeneration towards the aims of the Bill, rather than a set of additional reporting requirements that do not lead to significant change in our communities.

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?

Don't know

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.

While improvements in sustainable development and wellbeing can have long-term benefits on the prospects for local economies, the SURF network is not confident in making a prediction on the costs to particular sectors in the short and medium term. Prevention often involves up-front investment towards the achievement of outcomes that reduce public spending, through outcomes such as improved health and wellbeing, in the long-term.

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.

No Response

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?

No Response

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)?

No Response