

*This Scoping Agreement is an update to the version previously published on 3 October 2022.*

## **SCOPING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND THE SCOTTISH SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Project Title: the contribution of local production<sup>1</sup> to Scotland's food systems -**

### **Background**

Following discussions with Scottish Science Advisory Council (SSAC) members and a variety of colleagues across the Scottish Government (SG), the contribution of local production to **food systems** was identified as the theme which would be most useful to take forward.

The work will be closely aligned to SG policy including the Good Food Nation and the PfG commitment to "*Catering for Change*, which will set out principles in relation to sustainable procurement of food and catering services in the public sector, to align public procurement behind sustainable, low carbon farming and food".

Food cuts across a number of policy areas, including climate change, health and wellbeing, so our work will be cross-sectoral.

### **Context**

SSAC have discussed a number of directions the work could take, and given the current interest in local food production (see e.g. response to the recent SG consultation on local food [SG Analysis of responses to the consultation on local food for everyone](#)) and recent publications<sup>1</sup> a focus on the opportunities and risks of increasing local production is considered to be an area where synthesis of scientific evidence could prove useful.

<sup>1</sup> (<https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/research/urban-farming/>) and <https://www.farmurban.co.uk/> <https://theecologist.org/2020/aug/19/local-food-and-global-food-security>

From the consultation responses on local food, as well as workshops, a number of key themes were evident, including:

- Local food to be affordable and accessible to all, with a Right to Food embodied in local food policies.
- More land to be made available and accessible for those who wish to enter the market.
- Financial support and investment, including agricultural subsidy reform.
- A comprehensive, holistic and interdisciplinary approach across all relevant policy areas, particularly in relation to the environment; and policy interventions as aids for prioritising local food.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as: it is produced locally (this includes your, town, region or elsewhere in the rest of Scotland) and it has short supply chains (there are fewer steps than global and imported food between the primary producer of the food and the person who eats the food, this could include a farm supplying a local shop or supermarket)

## **Proposal**

The proposal is that SSAC would phrase several questions around innovation in local food production, which could cover urban and peri-urban farming, as well as remote and rural areas and explore some international and national examples of innovative practices. These questions would form the basis of a virtual roundtable, (and could be informed by a request for evidence). The health, social and economic aspects of local food production would also be considered. Attendees at the roundtable could include industry, local communities, council staff as well as academics and NGOs, public health specialists and nutritionists as well as selected international invitees as appropriate.

Recognising that food systems are highly relevant to a number of policy areas, such as health, the economy, the environment, SSAC would follow a systematic approach to explore the potential impacts of a higher sourcing of local food along with an appreciation of unintended consequences this might bring.

Example questions might include:

1. innovation and use of new technology to support (local) food production. What are good case examples of innovative practice? Examples included vertical farming, (a further link to energy generation required was also made). What are examples of innovative (local/central) government policies to support (local) food production?
2. What are the health, social and economic issues of local food production, including its relation to food poverty and nutrition aspects?
3. Does local food production provide sufficient volume to bring increased resilience to the national food chain?
4. What barriers are there to support a local food production- and how might they be addressed?
5. Does local food production also crossover into 'growing your own food'- what are the science issues?

## **Timescales**

It is expected that the final report will be ready to publish by Summer 2023.

## **Next Steps**

The next step would be to set up a Short Life Working Group led by Marian Scott, but with Wayne Powell and Maggie Gill as members plus external members.