The Highland Council

Agenda Item	**6**
Report No	**RDB/15/26**

Committee: **Redesign Board**

Date: **19 November 2026**

Report Title: **Good Food Nation Plan - Progress report**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Following the introduction of the Good Food Nation (GFN) Plan to Redesign Board on 19th March 2026, it was agreed that updates on progress be presented to the Board at regular intervals.

1.2 This report provides an update on actions that have taken place since 27th August 2026 Redesign Board in relation to National and local GFN Plans.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

i. **Note** the progress to date.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** There are no resource implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

3.3 **Risk:** There are no risks arising as a direct result of this report. Project/Programme risks are identified via the council risk management process and monitored through the Portfolio Boards and are reported by exception only.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no immediate health and safety implications arising from this report.

3.5 **Gaelic**: There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required. When further action plans are developed these will be assessed for impacts accordingly.

5. Good Food Nation Plan

5.1 National Update

Scottish Government have confirmed that Section 10 of the Good Food Nation Act will commence on 1st April 2027 and therefore relevant authorities' Good Food Nation Plans will require to be published by 31st March 2028.

Confirmation has also been given that a funding proposal is currently progressing through the Scottish Government's internal approval processes ahead of consideration by the COSLA Settlement and Distribution Group (SDG) at its November meeting. As approval is still being sought there is still no confirmation on the level of funding.

Any funding agreed for local authorities in financial year 2026/27 will be paid in arrears through the usual redistribution process towards the end of the financial year.

Discussions are also continuing on funding arrangements for both health boards and local authorities in financial year 2027/28.

5.2 Local Activity

The business development lead continues to liaise locally with NHS Highland and Highland Good Food Partnership, and nationally with Scottish Government and the Living Good Food Lab to share information and considerations that will help shape the Highland Council GFN Plan.

An officer working group met on 8th October to agree the outcomes and actions that should be included in The Highland Council's Good Food Nation Plan. At this stage these are very much in draft format and not all the suggested actions will be necessarily be taken forward, plus others may be added. Members and relevant officers are invited to provide comment on these actions to the GFN Lead.

5.3 Draft Plan Summary

The Highland Good Food Nation Plan sets out six strategic outcomes aimed at creating a healthier, fairer, more sustainable and resilient food system across the region:

Outcome 1: Access to Good Food for All
The plan seeks to ensure that everyone in Highland can access safe, nutritious, affordable and appropriate food, regardless of where they live. This includes addressing food insecurity through welfare support, strengthening community food initiatives, expanding allotments and community growing opportunities, and providing targeted nutrition support for vulnerable households.
Outcome 2: A Sustainable Food System
We aim to develop a food system that supports both environmental sustainability and economic resilience. The plan promotes climate-positive and nature-friendly food production, biodiversity restoration, reduced food system emissions, and increased food waste recycling. Actions include supporting regenerative agriculture, sustainable fisheries, local sourcing, and community growing projects that contribute to nature recovery.
Outcome 3: Improved Health and Wellbeing
The plan recognises the important role food plays in physical and mental health. It seeks to improve dietary outcomes and reduce health inequalities through food education, healthier school meals, food literacy programmes, public health campaigns, cooking skills, food growing initiatives and stronger links between schools and local food producers.
Outcome 4: A Thriving Food and Drink Economy
The food and drink sector is recognised as a vital contributor to Highland's economy, supporting employment, business growth, tourism and rural communities. The plan aims to encourage innovation, investment and business development while increasing opportunities for local sourcing and creating fair, sustainable jobs across the food supply chain.
Outcome 5: Empowered Communities and Strong Food Culture
The plan seeks to increase community involvement in shaping Highland's food system. Through education, public engagement and community food forums, residents will be supported to learn about healthy and sustainable food, celebrate local produce and traditions, and make informed food choices. Planning policies will also help safeguard opportunities for food production and infrastructure development.
Outcome 6: Contributing to Wider Food System Transformation
Highland Council aims to play an active role in local, national and international efforts to create more sustainable and equitable food systems. This includes sharing best practice, participating in food and sustainability networks, supporting innovation, promoting local food and drink, and establishing partnerships between public bodies, businesses, communities and academic institutions.

Overall, the plan presents a coordinated approach to improving food access, health, environmental sustainability, economic prosperity and community participation, while ensuring Highland contributes to the wider transformation of food systems in Scotland and beyond.

5.4 The detailed draft outcomes and actions are included in **Appendix 1** to this report.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The following are the key milestones:

Milestone	Target Date
Officer working group	08/10/26
Draft outcomes and actions written	29/10/26

Draft outcomes and actions to RDB for approval	19/11/26
Refine outcomes and actions, complete draft plan	April 2027
Public consultation	May – Aug 2027
Revisions based on outcomes of consultation	Sept – Nov 2027
Approvals	RDB Nov 27, Council Jan 28

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate

Date: 04 November 2026

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Appendix 1

Strategic Outcomes

This plan seeks to achieve a number of strategic outcomes which reflect those within the National Good Food Nation Plan. The outcomes are:

Outcome 1: The food environment in Highland enables people to eat well. Everyone benefits from reliable and dignified access to safe, nutritious, affordable, enjoyable, sustainable and age-appropriate food.

Outcome 2: Highland'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 protecting and improving animal health and welfare and in restoring and regenerating biodiversity.

Outcome 3: Highland'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.

Outcome 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 Highland food secure and food resilient, and creates and sustains jobs and businesses underpinned by fair work standards throughout food supply chains.

Outcome 5: Highland people and communities are empowered to participate in, and shape, their food system. We have a thriving food culture with a population who are educated about good and sustainable food.

Outcome 6: Decisions we make in Highland contribute positively to local, national and global food systems transformation. Highland actively engages in learning and exchanging knowledge and best practice both nationally and internationally.

What do these outcomes mean in Highland?

Outcome 1

The food environment in Highland enables people to eat well.

What does this mean in Highland?

Enable all people in Highland to access healthy, affordable and age-appropriate food close to where they live. Everyone in Highland is able to access the food they need, when they need it. The food is within an affordable budget range and is nutritious and enjoyable. The food system is suitably flexible across the region to enable people to access food in the manner that suits them best (online, face to face, bulk buys, day to day, etc.).

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Welfare Team

- Embed food insecurity screening within welfare support.
- Develop referral pathways with community food providers.
- Report quarterly on food-related referrals.

Housing & Communities

- Deliver community food growing strategy.
- Increase allotment provision.
- Support food resilience groups.

Child Health and Dietetics

- Expand targeted nutrition interventions.
- Monitor vulnerable households.
- Develop preventative support programmes.

Outcome 2

Highland's food system is sustainable and contributes to a flourishing natural environment in our land and in our waters.

What does this mean in Highland?

We aim to support a climate-positive and nature friendly local food system that is resilient, fair and innovative. We recognise that a healthy food system relies on a healthy natural environment.
Our actions will result in nature-positive food production on land and sea that helps reverse biodiversity loss, enhances habitats on farmland, croft land and in our waters, supports species recovery, and strengthens the resilience of ecosystems on which food production depends.
We will reduce emissions and increase climate resilience across the food system.
Our food system management will lead to thriving farmers, crofters, fishers and food businesses.
We will align food production, transport and land use with national greenhouse gas reduction goals such as reaching net zero emissions by 2045, becoming nature positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity by 2045.

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Climate Change Team

- Develop food system emissions baseline.
- Support carbon reduction planning.

Environment Team

- Promote regenerative and nature-positive approaches to food production.
- Support community growing linked to nature recovery.
- As part of the Council's Greenspace Biodiversity Management Strategy, we will identify and support opportunities for urban food growing that enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing within our public greenspaces. This will include initiatives such as fruit forests and community orchards.

- Promote nature-friendly food growing in Council allotments and community gardens.
- Enhance Council green spaces for biodiversity, creating nature networks and improving land for pollinators.

Waste Services

- Increase food waste collection, particularly in schools.
- Expand behavioural change campaigns.

Procurement

- Introduce food sustainability criteria for the terrestrial and marine environment
- Strengthen local sourcing opportunities.

Outcome 3

Highland's food environment and wider food system enables and promotes a physically and mentally healthy population.

What does this mean in Highland?

We aim to improve dietary health outcomes for all ages and reduce inequalities. Our actions will: strengthen the role of schools as anchors of good food culture through high-quality meals, food education and growing projects. We will also support preventative approaches such as food growing, cooking skills and green prescribing, building on existing community programmes including our role in the Highland Green Health Partnership.

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Education

- Establish food literacy framework.
- Integrate food sustainability across curriculum delivery.
- Develop links between schools and local producers.

Catering Services (CCFM)

- Increase healthy menu choices.
- Increase seasonal sourcing.
- Reduce food waste.

Child Health

- Promotion of public health nutrition messaging.
- Monitor child health outcomes.
- Support healthier food environments within proximity of educational settings

Communications

- Run annual Good Food awareness campaigns.
- Develop digital communication toolkit.
- Produce accessible information.

Outcome 4

Our food and drink sector is prosperous, diverse, innovative, and vital to regional and local economic and social wellbeing.

What does this mean in Highland?

The Highland Good Food Nation Plan recognises food not only as a health and environmental issue, but as a key driver of economic development, regional identity, and community wellbeing.
The Highlands is home to a globally recognised food and drink sector spanning agriculture, crofting, fisheries, aquaculture, food and drink manufacturing, hospitality and tourism. These sectors play a vital role in supporting employment, business growth, exports, inward investment and the visitor economy, while underpinning the sustainability of many rural and island communities.
We will seek to encourage innovation and growth in local food and drink businesses, increasing opportunities for local sourcing within public services and tourism, and creating new jobs that provide fair pay and good working conditions. We will highlight the role of the food and drink sector in sustaining rural and island communities, supporting economic development, and ensuring that Highland residents have access to a reliable, diverse, and resilient local food system that can adapt to future challenges such as climate change, economic shocks, and supply chain disruptions.

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Economic Development

- Establish Food Economy Working Group.
- Produce Highland Food Economy Strategy.
- Connect investment opportunities across sectors.

Business Gateway

- Dedicated food and drink business support programme.
- Start-up mentoring.
- Export readiness support.

Tourism

- Expand Highland food tourism promotion.
- Promote local food experiences.
- Work with destination management organisations.

Outcome 5

Highland people and communities are empowered to participate in, and shape, their food system.

What does this mean in Highland?

This outcome will involve increasing opportunities for residents to learn about healthy, sustainable, and locally sourced food through schools, community programmes, and public engagement activities. It also supports the development of a strong Highland food culture that celebrates local produce, traditional skills, and

regional identity, while helping people make informed food choices that benefit their health, the environment, and the local economy.

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Education

- Develop food education curricular resources
- Deliver local food education across all primary schools

Housing & Communities

- Facilitate community food forums.
- Strengthen community asset-based food delivery.

Planning

- Protect growing opportunities through planning policy.
- Consider food infrastructure requirements.

Communications

- Promote community opportunities.
- Publish annual progress reporting.

Outcome 6

Decisions we make in Highland contribute positively to local, national and global food systems transformation.

What does this mean in Highland?

This outcome would mean ensuring that decisions made across Highland support the development of a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system at local, national, and international levels. It recognises that the actions of public bodies, businesses, communities, and individuals in Highland can contribute to wider efforts to address challenges such as food security, climate change, biodiversity loss, and health inequalities.
For Highland, this could involve adopting and sharing innovative approaches to sustainable food production, local procurement, community food initiatives, and food waste reduction. It also highlights the importance of working collaboratively with partners across Scotland and beyond to exchange knowledge, learn from best practice, and bring new ideas and investment into the region. By actively participating in national and international food networks, Highland can both contribute to and benefit from wider food system transformation while ensuring local priorities and rural perspectives are represented.

Service actions to achieve this outcome:

Economy and Regeneration

- Develop a Highland Food and Drink Growth Programme
- Facilitate participation in Scottish, UK and international food and rural development networks to attract investment and share Highland best practice.

Climate Change and Sustainability

- Promote regenerative agriculture, sustainable land management and nature-based solutions through partnership working.

- Share Highland case studies and lessons learned through national climate and food system networks.

Community Development

- Encourage communities to participate in food policy discussions and contribute local knowledge to regional food planning.
- Facilitate links between Highland community organisations and food networks elsewhere in Scotland and internationally.

Tourism and Visitor Economy

- Promote Highland-produced food and drink as part of the region's tourism offer.
- Encourage visitor attractions and events to source local food and reduce food waste.

Commercialisation

- Establish a Highland Food Partnership involving public, private (land managers/farmers), academic and community stakeholders.
- Participate actively in national organisations such as the Scottish Food Commission, Sustainable Scotland Network and relevant food place initiatives.
- Support healthier food promotion within advertising and sponsorship.