

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 September 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr C Rigby – Chairman

Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr B Chick, Cllr J Clements, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr J Martin,  
Cllr L Northover, Cllr Dr F Rice, Cllr V Ricketts and Cllr G Wright

Also in  
attendance:

10. Apologies

There were no apologies received. Cllr J Bagwell did not attend the meeting.

11. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members

12. Declarations of Interests

The Chair declared that he had already signed the Plant Based Treaty as an individual and would therefore withdraw from the meeting to the public gallery for consideration of item 6 – Plant-based and Reduced Meat and Dairy Diets: Discussion Paper.

13. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 May 2024 were approved as a correct record.

14. Public Issues

There were 7 public questions and 4 statements which are attached to these minutes along with the response provided to the questions.

15. Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper

The Chair did not take part or vote on this item. The Vice-Chair took the Chair.

The Sustainability Manager presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Committee was advised that following questions to Council from several members of the public on the

Council's stance on plant-based diets in relation to climate change, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel requested a preliminary discussion paper on the issue in order to stimulate debate.

The report set out key issues and reported that many organisations agreed that we needed to reduce meat eating by around 20 – 50 percent. Food waste also needed to be reduced.

It was suggested that the Council were not being ambitious enough in setting out what had already been done. Council concessions offer a vegan option on their menus. It was suggested there could be education around more plant-based eating.

During the report writing the Sustainability Manager consulted with Edinburgh Council which had an action plan which was more focussed on the line of awareness raising around plant-based eating.

It was stated that some meat free products can be quite processed and that the best route would be for people to cook from scratch.

It was discussed that the best option was choice and options to look at recording and reporting. The outcomes needed to measure where we were as a base line.

**RESOLVED that**

- a. the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the information presented in the discussion paper and gave their views on possible approaches Cabinet may wish to take in relation to the promotion of plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets. These proposals will then be subject to further evidence-gathering and consultation.**
- b. To support the treaty and do more work outside the committee on the position statement.**
- c. The draft position statement be brought back to the Committee for further consideration with information about how it can be measured against SMART objectives in order for the Council to be more ambitious and positive on this issue.**

Voting: 8 for, 1 against

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24pm and resumed at 7:33pm

16. O & S Budget Presentation

The Environment and Place Committee received a Budget Awareness presentation as part of the enhanced scrutiny engagement for the 2025/26 budget. The presentation covered budget, pressures and assumed savings for those areas within the remit of the Committee. The Committee had the opportunity to ask questions around the budget and was also asked to

consider how it wished to engage further with the development of the 2025/26 budget.

17. O&S Budget working group - scoping report

The Overview and Scrutiny Specialist presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee was asked to confirm the establishment of a budget working group, including membership and key lines of enquiry, to undertake detailed scrutiny work to contribute to the developing 2025/26 council budget during September – November 2024.

It was decided at the meeting that Cllr Jamie Martin, Cllr Lisa Northover and Cllr Felicity Rice would form the working group membership with a view to taking a deeper dive into the following areas:

Environment and budget to transition to Net Zero and B&B accommodation costs within housing.

It was agreed the members of the working group would scope out the topics further and a Key Lines of enquiry document would be sent to them.

**RESOLVED that**

- a. A budget working group be established and the membership be agreed as above.**
- b. That the topics for consideration by the working group be agreed as outlined above and that Key Lines of Enquiry for the working group be completed for the above topics**

**Voting: Unanimous**

18. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Overview and Scrutiny Specialist presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee was advised that it was the annual report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity within BCP Council. There was a requirement to report on the work of O&S to Council, to ensure good visibility of the function and Council ownership of activity and any improvements required.

The annual report contained a summary and analysis of O&S activity during 2023-24, reflections on working practices and an action plan identifying strategic improvements to the O&S function.

All O&S committees would receive the annual report for consideration, providing opportunity for comment prior to the supply of the final report to Council.

The Committee would comment on the proposed minor revisions to the O&S committee structure, outlined at paragraphs 8-10 of this report, prior to Council approval of the structure in October.

The report would need to have any major changes go through Audit and Governance Committee.

**RESOLVED that the annual report and associated action plan be considered and commented on.**

Voting: Unanimous

19. Work Plan

The Chairman presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

There was a scrutiny request received from Cllr Herrett regarding printing and retention which the Committee were asked to consider if they wished to add it to their forward plan.

It was discussed that it was another stage of Transformation and was more suited to a discussion paper. A briefing would be timetabled for the topic.

**RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed, updated and confirmed its Work Plan.**

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

CHAIRMAN

## Public Issues for Environment and Place O&S Committee

Q.

	Questions
1.	<p>Thank you for discussing Plant Based Treaty today. I was also at the July Council meeting, and I'm grateful that you are looking at it again. The councils who endorse Plant Based Treaty go on to do some truly amazing things. I feel particularly inspired by Exmouth Town Council's Plant Based Treaty Action plan. They are transitioning their climate meetings and public events to be fully plant-based and at recent community festivals they have asked food vendors to have a minimum of two plant-based options, emphasise and promote them at the top of the menu and include carbon labelling. It's so simple, and it works. We could do that here, such as Street Food Corner and the Christmas market. Please can BCP council start the process today and endorse the Plant Based Treaty.</p> <p>Mr Chris Jolliffe</p>
2.	<p>At the July Council meeting I heard all of the positive and urgent reasons that BCP council should endorse the Plant Based Treaty. I won't repeat the facts from the last meeting, but I am sure we can agree the science is compelling and the benefits of plant-based food are undeniable. I feel it is particularly urgent for a country that consumes a lot of meat and dairy, like the UK, to act fast and boldly. At COP28 last December, the UK signed a pledge to include food in climate action planning, so I believe this is the perfect time for BCP to become leaders in the food and climate space. Please can the council commit today to initiate a thorough impact assessment like Edinburgh Council. By joining 30 other UK towns and cities worldwide, we can positively impact the local community but also influence the rest of the world.</p> <p>Alex Harman</p>
3.	<p>I have just moved to Bournemouth, and heard about Plant Based Treaty in the Daily Echo. I've come along to show my support for BCP endorsing it. I have been reading about the experience of other councils, and it's brilliant. Haywards Heath were the first European council to endorse. One of the councillors Deanna Nicholson has been building up a test case of public events where plant-based food has been featured and successful, with the aim to make food offerings fully plant-based in the future. She said in an interview: "Not only are we reducing our carbon footprint and meeting the aims of the Plant Based Treaty when serving vegan food, but all our community is suddenly welcomed and catered for. I realised the best plant-based argument is inclusion." Please can BCP council join 30 councils who have endorsed Plant Based Treaty and then create an action plan like Edinburgh.</p>

	Noah Baker
4.	<p>I attended the full council meeting in July, where I invited BCP Council to consider endorsing the Plant Based Treaty and commit to expanding access to plant-based food. I appreciate the committee for listening and initiating this important discussion today. Please can you take the next step by committing to an impact assessment on endorsing the Plant Based Treaty? This process was transformative for Edinburgh City Council, which endorsed the initiative and then committed to a Plant Based Treaty Action Plan. They are now close to completing their carbon labelling trial, which they aim to implement in all schools by 2026. This is one of many Plant Based Treaty actions Edinburgh will deploy to help children and their parents understand the link between their food choices and the planet. It will encourage them to make sustainable choices and opt for plant-based options of their own free will.</p> <p>Nicola Harris</p>
5.	<p>As a parent of vegan children, it's been a huge struggle to get their school to provide plant-based meal options. All children should have the freedom to choose a plant-based options every day. Plant-based options are for everyone to enjoy and they also cover alot of bases when allergies are concerned. I know that BCP can only directly impact a small number of schools and not all the academies, but by expressing support for Plant Based Treaty and creating an action plan would actually help focus the whole area on sustainable food. You could also invite all the schools to do what Edinburgh did with carbon labelling. The council has the power of influence and leading by example, so can the council conduct an impact assessment and look at how the council can influence schools through existing connections and partner organisations.</p> <p>Gemma Middleton</p>
6.	<p>I thank the council for looking into the Plant Based Treaty. It's not just about environment and health. It's also a social justice issue. We must not allow ourselves to be swayed by false justifications such as "I only buy local," and "smoked salmon is the only source of omega 3" and talk ourselves out of accountability. Humane slaughter is a contradiction that we shouldn't be deceived by either. We will be making a strong commitment that will focus our minds if we endorse the PBT. Councillor Jim Dickson, Cabinet Member for Healthier Communities at Lambeth Council, said, "The endorsement makes the direction of travel on food and sustainability clear and identifies it as a priority" Let's do the same for BCP. Can an impact assessment be conducted to scrutinize the issue fully and roll out an action plan? Wouldn't it be a win-win for environment, our health, and animals?"</p> <p>Sasha Jolliffe</p>

7.	<p>As a business owner, I would love to see BCP council endorse Plant Based Treaty. Businesses look to the council for direction and guidance, and endorsing this initiative would positively influence the community and bring us new visitors. Can the committee speak to other towns and cities that have endorsed Plant Based Treaty in order to learn about their experiences please? I do urge the council to be bold. I was disappointed with the council response in July when the leader said they couldn't support a stand-alone initiative. I believe we can. Nothing is actually stopping us. Small changes are not going to be enough given the crisis we face. However a Plant Based Treaty endorsement, which means you are expressing support for it, along with an action plan, is going to set us on the right path.</p> <p>Sarah Abbott</p>
	<p>Response from Cllr Andy Hadley</p> <p>I would like to thank all the members of the public who have presented questions today. It is because of this level of interest that Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished to examine the issue further, and my team have been working on a paper to support that, including talking to other councils who have progressed on this topic.</p> <p>As confirmed at Full Council, we recognise that a change to a plant-based or reduced meat and dairy diet is an important component in reducing our personal carbon footprint, but Cabinet felt that we could not address and therefore endorse the Plant Based Treaty in its entirety. We felt that we should promote and encourage rather than mandate take-up of plant-based options. As acknowledged, our direct influence over schools and commercial outlets is limited. Whereas Government can legislate for mandatory change, our powers are quite limited.</p> <p>Today's meeting enables the Overview and Scrutiny Panel members to review the evidence and debate the form that promotion and encouragement could take. This can then be subject to further consideration by the Cabinet of BCP Council.</p> <p>I hope that the paper, debate tonight, and subsequent work addresses the questions you have all raised.</p>

	Statements
1.	<p>I've just moved to Bournemouth from the North of Wales. Part of the reason I came here is because of the vibrant community and how vegan-friendly it is. I know loads of people visit here as tourists just because of our vegan-friendly eateries up in the triangle. Some cities like Tokyo in Japan have even asked businesses to do more vegan food to attract plant-based tourists. If we endorsed the Plant Based Treaty I think even more people will want to come here from all over the world. It seems a perfect fit for Bournemouth, and I'm asking you to endorse the Plant Based Treaty and then do a world-class action plan.</p> <p>Jacob Baker</p>

2.	<p>I am writing to express my support for BCP Council to endorse the call for a global Plant Based Treaty. The initiative is supported by 200,000 individuals, 3000 groups and businesses and 30 cities, including Edinburgh, Norwich and Amsterdam. When councils endorse Plant Based Treaty it appears to have a mobilising impact, which spurs the council into action. When Amsterdam endorsed it, they agreed to Vegan Fridays in public institutions. I hope Bournemouth can be as focused and bold as this. You've taken the first step by putting it on the council agenda for discussion, I urge you to now turn this into a recommendation for the council to approve an endorsement of the initiative.</p> <p>Amber Lofthouse</p>
3.	<p>I am writing to you to inform you of my full support of the proposed Plant Based Treaty in Bournemouth. I have recently moved to the area, and one of the main attractions for me was the wide range of vegan eateries, groups, and events. Plant-based diets are known to protect the environment, human health, and reduce animal suffering, and the Plant Based Treaty can enable Bournemouth to take action in all of these areas. The treaty is already endorsed by over 200,000 individuals, 3,000 groups and businesses, and 30 cities, showing the high level of interest and support received worldwide. Endorsing the Plant Based Treaty would display how Bournemouth can be a shining light for other towns and cities to also take the pledge as we move towards a fully plant-based system.</p> <p>Hannah Ford</p>
4.	<p>Endorse the Plant-based Treaty</p> <p>Are you doing your best in your personal quest to reduce your carbon emissions? You recycle your waste and ensure that it's placed into bins with correct definitions? You're reducing your flights and you turn off your lights, you cycle to work when you can? What more can you do, you're certain that you are doing enough for one man? But there's something you've missed from your credible list if your diet is milky and meaty You need to do these; eat plants and plant trees to endorse the Plant-based Treaty</p> <p>Animal farming is actually harming this planet we're trying to save We must understand it's destroying the land and the way it's supposed to behave The 'food' of the masses produces the gases that poison the water and air It would be better for you and the animals too if only more people would care Stop all the breeding and change how we're feeding is the plan that should be enforced We can do it with ease, eat plants and plant trees means the Plant-based Treaty's endorsed</p> <p>P G Holroyd</p>



	To be read by Sasha Jolliffe
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