



# Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper

Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel

11th September 2024

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### Purpose of this paper:

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

## 1 The link between food and climate change

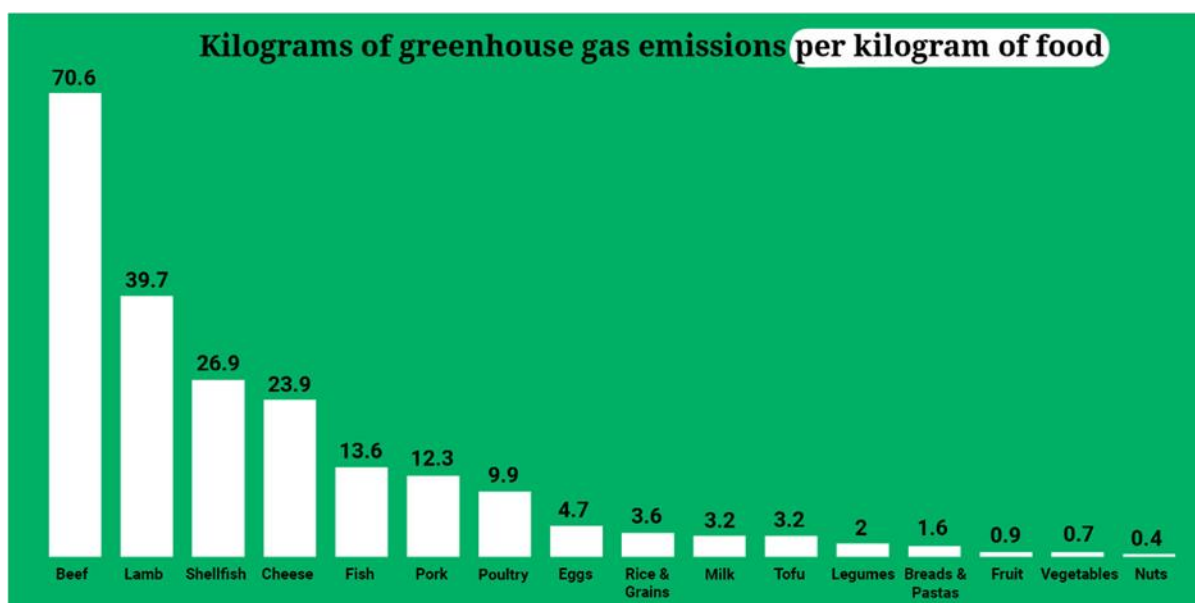
According to the United Nations, it is estimated that globally, approximately **one third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions are linked to food**<sup>1</sup>.

Our food needs to be grown and processed, transported, distributed, prepared, consumed, and food waste disposed of. Each of these steps creates greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, the largest portion coming from agriculture and land use.

Animal-based foods, especially red meat, dairy, and farmed shrimp, are generally associated with the highest greenhouse gas emissions. This is because:

- Meat production often requires extensive grasslands, created by cutting down trees, releasing carbon dioxide
- Cows and sheep emit methane as they digest grass and plants
- Cattle waste on pastures and chemical fertilizers used on crops for cattle feed emit nitrous oxide
- Shrimp farms often occupy coastal lands, formerly mangrove forests which had stored huge amounts of carbon.

Plant-based foods – such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, nuts, and lentils – generally use less energy, land, and water, and have lower greenhouse gas intensities than animal-based foods. Below is a chart showing the carbon footprint of different food products based on weight (per kilogram of food).



Source: United Nations Climate Action

Note: 'Beef' combines beef and dairy cattle, 'Shellfish' and 'fish' are farmed, Cheese and milk include all dairy sources such as cow, goat, sheep, buffalo and camel

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food>

## 2 How to reduce food-related emissions

Reducing emissions from the food sector requires changes at all stages, from producers to consumers.

The western diet has since World War 2 tended towards eating a lot of meat, whereas our ancestors ate more sparsely, exercised more in the course of undertaking their daily tasks, and for many people meat was an occasional treat. Reducing obesity and over-eating would also have a part to play.

Shifting food systems towards plant-rich diets – with more plant protein (such as beans, chickpeas, lentils, nuts, and grains), a reduced amount of animal-based foods (meat and dairy) and less saturated fats (butter, milk, cheese) – can lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to current dietary patterns in most industrialised countries.

Alternative proteins – such as plant-based meat and dairy substitutes, insect-based proteins, and cell-based/cultivated meat – provide promising prospects and are attracting growing demand, financial investment and technological innovation.

But animal products remain an important source of food security, nutrition and livelihoods for large numbers of rural populations around the world. In these countries, improved feeds and feeding techniques can reduce methane generated during cattle's digestion as well as the amount of gases released by decomposing manure. Smaller herd sizes, with fewer, more productive animals can also help. And better agricultural practices, such as improved manure and fertilizer management, rotational grazing to maintain healthy soil to store carbon, and the restoration of degraded lands can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, reducing food waste is key. Almost 1 billion tons of food – 17% of all food available to consumers worldwide – is discarded every year. Producing, transporting, and letting that food rot contributes more than 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. **If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitting country in the world.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food>

### 3 Proposals for the UK

In order to achieve the UK target of becoming Net Zero, the UK Climate Change Committee has published scenarios illustrating the need for a 20-50% reduction in all meat and dairy consumption by 2050<sup>3</sup>, with the following comments:

- 'Policies for the 2020s must be designed to encourage the sorts of societal and behaviour changes that would reduce emissions while also providing co-benefits in some cases (e.g. to health). These include... healthier diets that contain significantly less meat and dairy...'
- '... switching away from meat (e.g. 28% by 2035) would release around a fifth more land out of agricultural production... This allows for increased afforestation, trees on-farm, and the planting of energy crops.'
- 'Shifting meat consumption more in line with Government guidance would have significant health impacts. A 2013 report that the Committee commissioned from Ricardo indicated that the health impacts of reducing red meat consumption by 50% amounted to an annual monetised benefit of 0.5% of GDP.'
- '...reducing meat and dairy consumption needs to involve substitution with healthy, low-carbon alternatives that are affordable and accessible...'
- 'Income to livestock and dairy farms could be affected if meat and dairy consumption falls by the 20-50% envisaged in our scenarios. The UK's farms and their 450,000 workers will need to be engaged and supported in the transition to low-carbon farming practices.'
- 'Multiple opportunities exist, including transitioning to plantbased food (e.g. cereals and legumes), growing bioenergy crops, lower-carbon livestock production and receiving income for low-carbon land management (such as increased treeplanting or peatland restoration, much of which in our scenarios occurs on land released from raising livestock).'

### National Food Strategy

In 2021, the National Food Strategy<sup>4</sup>, a Government-commissioned independent review into the food system, concluded: 'The food system we have now has evolved over many years. It won't be easy to reshape it. But time is not on our side. The effects of climate change are already becoming apparent around the world. Diet-related disease is putting an intolerable strain on our nation's health and finances – and COVID-19 has only increased the pressure. For our own health, and that of our planet, we must act now.'

Key environmental and health findings included:

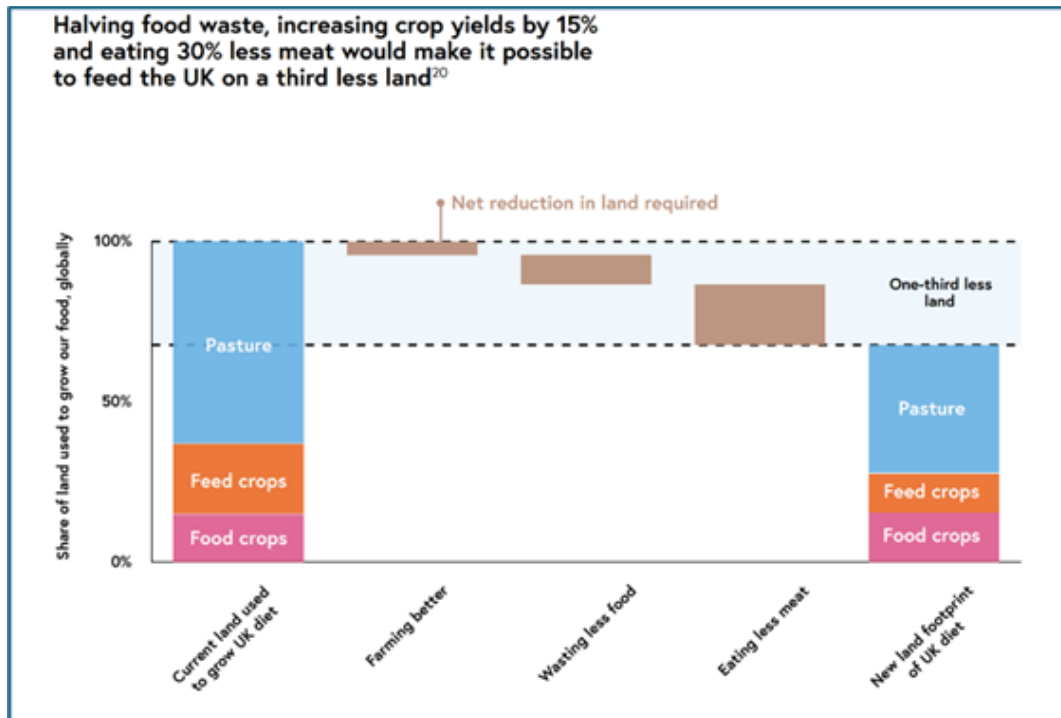
- Agriculture alone produces 10% of UK greenhouse gas emissions, despite constituting less than 1% of GDP
- 80% of processed food sold in the UK is unhealthy

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

- The UK is now the third fattest country in the G7, with almost 3 in ten adults being obese
- 85% of UK land in food production is used to graze livestock and produce crops to feed livestock
- In the UK the food system accounts for about one fifth of the country's emissions, rising to 30% if we include emissions from all the food we import.

The National Food Strategy recommends a 30% decrease in meat consumption over the next 10 years. This could be achieved as illustrated below:



Source: National Food Strategy, 2021

#### 4 Action taken by UK local authorities

Movements, both supporting and opposing, have emerged in response to the call for more plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets.

##### Plant Based Treaty

One such pro-vegan campaign is the Plant Based Treaty<sup>5</sup>, calling for creation of a global Treaty as a companion to the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement. Advocates explain: '... the Plant Based Treaty aims to put food systems at the forefront of combating the climate crisis to halt the widespread degradation of critical ecosystems caused by animal agriculture and to promote a shift towards healthier, sustainable plant-based diets.'

The Plant Based Treaty (full text attached at Appendix A) can be endorsed by individuals, groups, businesses and cities. In doing so, they are expressing their support for national governments to come together to negotiate a global Plant Based Treaty, including the three core principles of 'Relinquish, Redirect and Restore' and 40 further proposals including:

- No building of new animal farms
- No expansion or intensification of existing farms
- Shift away from monoculture-based arable farming that depletes soil, decreases biodiversity and is reliant on external inputs such as animal manure and agrochemicals towards diversified, agroecological, veganic (vegan and organic) farming using regenerative, permaculture and natural principles that restore soil and ecosystems, enhance food security and provide nutrient-dense foods
- Calculate greenhouse gas emissions based on consumption and develop a food strategy for Climate Action Plans that prioritizes a switch to plant-based foods and public education
- Mandate honest labelling of food products including carbon labelling and cancer warning labels on all processed meats which have been declared carcinogenic by the World Health Organization
- Introduce a meat (including fish) and methane tax with proceeds funding restoration of land destroyed by animal agriculture
- Reforestation and restoration of the oceans is prioritised by designating additional areas of the oceans as zero fishing Marine Protected Areas (known as Highly Protected Marine Areas – HPMAs)
- Subsidies made available for farmers and landowners who practise good land stewardship and are actively restoring the land and the associated ecosystem services (such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, flood defence, general climate change resilience)
- Repurpose available land freed up from animal grazing and animal feed production for: rewilding, reforestation (if appropriate), returning land to Indigenous people, nature reserves, hiking zones, community growing, allotments (if appropriate), agroecological veganic food growing (where possible)

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<sup>5</sup> <https://plantbasedtreaty.org/the-pbt/>



The UK towns & cities that have endorsed the Plant-Based Treaty are: Belfast, Edinburgh, Exmouth, Haywards Heath, Lambeth and Norwich. Locally, 8 current BCP Council Elected Members have personally supported the Plant-Based Treaty.

### **The Countryside Alliance**

In direct opposition to the Plant-Based Treaty, the Countryside Alliance<sup>6</sup>, a campaigning group that aims to promote and protect the rural way of life, co-ordinates a campaign to support local farmers and discourage councils from moving away from meat consumption. It's stated aims are to: challenge bias and misinformation, campaign for a sustainable countryside, and educate about the countryside.

Local authorities that have passed motions in accordance with the Countryside Alliance aims commonly include clauses committing them to:

- Support local farmers and food producers
- Engage and work in partnership with poultry, arable and livestock farmers to ensure their ability to enhance our countryside, and with the fishing industry to protect the oceans
- Strive to support farmers by being sympathetic to diversification opportunities and promotion of local produce
- Be vocal in opposing excessive regulation by central government and attempts to diminish the role our meat, dairy, and arable farmers play in our rural way of life, enabling them to prosper
- Ensuring food provided at all council events is sourced from local suppliers. This includes meat, fish, dairy and plant-based produce
- Encourage local residents to shop locally, where possible, taking advantage of home-grown, affordable, and nutritious produce, with an aim of reducing food miles to plates.

Local authorities that have passed motions of this nature are: Wiltshire, Dorset, Fenland, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Cornwall and North Northamptonshire councils.

### **An alternative approach**

A number of local authorities have been asked by residents to consider endorsing the Plant-Based Treaty, and have debated this. Some, such as Edinburgh and Exmouth have endorsed the Treaty whilst acknowledging that many of the commitments made are not within their power to achieve (Edinburgh<sup>7</sup>) or selecting only those that they feel they can commit to and drawing up a 'reduced' Treaty (Exmouth<sup>8</sup>). Others have declined to endorse the Treaty and have drafted their own commitments. These include:

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.countryside-alliance.org/resources/news/wiltshire-becomes-latest-to-council-to-defy-plant-based-movement-in-show-of-support-for-farmers>

<sup>7</sup> <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s53255/Item%207.5%20-%20Endorsement%20of%20Plant-based%20Treaty%20Response%20to%20Motion%20by%20Councillor%20Burgess.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://exmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Exmouth-Plant-Based-Treaty-.pdf>



### **Manchester City Council<sup>9</sup> in July 2024, which passed the following motion:**

This Council resolves to:

- Campaign to end Food Poverty and ensure that every resident has access to healthy, nutritious, good quality food to flourish
- Continue citywide communications campaigns that promote sustainable and affordable opportunities that encourage people to make change
- Continue to support Manchester to become a carbon literate city
- Build upon and strengthen actions relating to food in the new Climate Action Plan for 2025-2030
- Work with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Manchester Climate Change Agency to ensure that actions at an organisational, ward, city wide and regional level are as aligned as possible
- Work with the new Labour Government to deliver Manchester's target to be a Zero Carbon City by 2038.

### **Oxfordshire County Council<sup>10</sup> debated plant-based food in March 2022, deciding to offer:**

- Plant-based food only at the 7 full council meetings per year and any occasional events held by the Chair of the Council (Mayor)
- In the future, plant-based options on school menus for part of the week (Council provides meals at 14% of the county's schools)

### **Bristol City Council<sup>11</sup> received public requests to sign the Plant Based Treaty in March 2024, and the Mayor responded at Full Council:**

- 'Bristol has been leading the way on sustainable food production - as well as decarbonisation in general – as is evidenced in it being only the second city in the UK to achieve Gold Standard for food sustainability. While I agree that emissions from animal agriculture do need to be tackled, I have some reservations that some of components of this treaty will harm society's poorest.
- Changing behavioural habits, such as diets, takes time. Blunt instruments such as a tax on meat could well have no effect on meat consumption but will make already-struggling low-income families struggle even further. The focus should instead be on making fruit and vegetables as cheap as possible, so that healthy, sustainable diets are an option for everyone – this is the approach we're taking in Bristol.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=14557>

<sup>10</sup> <https://news/oxfordshire.gov.uk/plant-based-food/#>

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<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/b34822/Response%20to%20Public%20Forum%20Submissions%2012%20March%202024%20Full%20Council%2012th-Mar-2024%2018.00%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=9>

- However, I would stress that the principles in the treaty are a matter for central Government rather than local. I suggest you email your Member of Parliament about this – three of Bristol’s four Labour MPs are vegan, so I’m sure will have sympathy with the treaty’s aims.
- On a local level, the Labour administration is committing significant resources to make our food systems more sustainable. As I stated, we’ve received Gold Standard Award for food sustainability – only the second city in the country to do so – for our efforts to reduce food waste, grow the city’s good food movement, address food inequality, increase urban food growing, improve catering and procurement, and tackle the impacts of our food system on public health, nature, and climate change…’

**The City of Edinburgh Council, having endorsed the Plant-Based Treaty in 2023, published their Action Plan<sup>12</sup> in 2024.**

Limiting actions to issues that the local authority can influence, the City of Edinburgh Council Action Plan is broken down into four key themes:

- Awareness raising and capacity building
- Food waste reduction
- Increased provision of plant-based food
- Influence and leadership.

Actions include:

- Continue to actively promote the Veg Power campaign
- Develop a leaflet on low carbon, sustainable food, as well as information on healthy diets
- Share resources on reducing the environmental impact of food to partners (menu ideas, reports, case studies, training resources etc)
- Explore options to allow pupils to take any fresh (uncooked) left-overs from the counter back home at the end of the day to reduce food waste
- Share and implement best practice around food waste where appropriate
- Ensure all food & drink provided at meetings and events hosted by the Council include plant-based options, and where possible, sourcing sustainable local ingredients
- When re-tendering for food concession contracts under Culture, specify that plant-based options are available
- Develop customised sustainability checklists for Council cultural venues’ clients, promoters, and artists.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s65215/Item%207.2%20-%20Plant%20Based%20Treaty%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

## 5 BCP Council's declared position

Resident's questions concerning plant-based diets were put to the Full Council Meeting on 23 July 2024, (and had also been raised previously at Council on 12 September 2023, where they were answered by the Portfolio Holder). The Leader reiterated the Council position that **'changing to a meat and dairy free diet is an important component in reducing our personal carbon footprint. However, we do feel we should promote and encourage rather than mandating plant-based options.'**

The Leader's responses to specific questions that the Panel should consider for debate were as follows:

- As an administration we welcome the challenge and will **look into the implications of prioritising climate-friendly advertising on assets we own and utilising our Council communications channels** to promote the benefits of a low meat and dairy/plant-based diet to residents in its climate-related messaging
- We will need to **explore the current methods of carbon labelling** and its effectiveness before considering promoting to schools or using in our own catering and food menus
- Any Councillor is welcome to **bring a motion to supply and serve 100% plant-based food at all internal meetings and internal events**, and further debate with colleagues on this matter is welcomed
- **The Council is not able to endorse the Plant-Based Treaty** or production of a stand-alone strategy, however we do endorse encouragement towards a low meat and dairy/meat free diet. We prefer to work with the community whilst not attempting to impose veganism, and **promotion of a low meat and dairy-free/plant-based diet will form part of our Climate strategy going forward**
- The Council does ask for **a variety of food options when tendering large events** and sustainability forms part of the quality assessment for all our tenders
- The Council is not able to endorse production of a stand-alone action plan but will **aim to lead by example in promoting and prioritising plant-based eating where it has influence and community support to do so.**

## 6 BCP Council's plant-based food offers and procurement

BCP Council has responded to the climate crisis by introducing plant-based and reduced meat and dairy products into its food operations. The timing of this paper has not allowed for a comprehensive examination of all trials, but the following are views and findings provided by Catering Managers.

### Commercial Operations: Seafront outlets and Civic Centre Terrace Cafe

Maxime Froger, Catering Manager for the Council's Commercial Operations provided the following information and assessment of vegan products as part of the Council's Seafront catering operations and internal Terrace Cafe at the Civic Centre.

The approximate percentage of the current offer that is vegan (containing no ingredients derived from animals) is: less than 10%.

Assessment of the implications of increasing the vegan offer:

- In the Catering Department, vegan products currently offered are: ice cream, 'sausage' bap, full breakfast, spicy bean burger, 'sausage', chips and beans, KitKat, toasted teacake, 'sausage' roll, Keralan cauliflower bhaji pasty, pastries (croissant, pain au chocolat and cinnamon swirl), jacket potato with smoked bean chilli, chips, falafel wrap. These are not particularly high-volume sales (except chips and 'sausage' baps)
- Vegan products currently cost more to purchase so reduce the profit margin
- It would not be currently desirable to increase the vegan offer, since a vegan-only offer was trialled at the Durley Hub in 2023 and was unsuccessful with negative customer feedback. Staff received many comments as to why only vegan products were available and some customers who wanted meat products would leave because we were just offering the vegan option. Following this, some meat and non-plant-based items were introduced to the menu. Sales figures for Durley Hub from 1st April to 31st December 2023 were: £2,953 for vegan items and £9,060 for meat or non-plant-based items
- The Prom Café on Bournemouth Pier Approach offers all the vegan products listed above. Other Seafront units offer fewer vegan options due to capacity and volume of trade. In 2023/24, the Prom Café sales percentages were: 91% non-vegan sales, compared to 9% vegan sales (mainly chips and 'sausage' baps).

The possible implications of all internal catering (Council's own meetings and Terrace Café) becoming vegan:

- From current sales at the Terrace Café, there is an established demand for non-vegan products and there has been no feedback from users about increasing the offer. If the café changed to vegan-only products, it would impact sales, increase costs and risk making the operation unviable.

## **Queen's Park Golf Course (Woodpecker Café)**

Bryony Betts, Venue and Operations Manager of Woodpecker Café at Queen's Park Golf Course provided the following information and assessment of vegan products as part of their daily café trade, 'grab-and-go' retail, and events catering and buffets.

The approximate percentage of the current offer that is vegan (containing no ingredients derived from animals) is: Daily Café Menu: 25%, Grab-and-Go Packaged Items: 35%, Events Buffet Menu: 33%.

Assessment of the implications of increasing the vegan offer:

- There is currently no significant interest in vegan options amongst our larger customer demographics and daily visitors. Products tested and subsequently withdrawn from daily café trade include: vegan 'bacon' alternative (expensive to buy in and not popular), vegan sausage rolls (high wastage), wide range of alternative milks (high wastage)
- Vegan alternative products (e.g. cheese and meat alternatives) from our current suppliers are typically more expensive than their non-vegan equivalents. Cost of specifically vegan products is typically 155% - 230% more than non-vegan products
- Slow sales on an increased vegan offering would also increase wastage, adding to cost of goods
- It would not be viable for Queen's Park Catering to operate as a fully vegan outlet as this does not reflect the demographic of visitors or events bookings at Queen's Park. This would also have a significant negative impact on the attraction of Queen's Park Golf Course as the offerings are closely tied
- Vegan items that have proved successful include: Alternative milks for coffees – popular among vegans and non-vegans as many now actively choose a non-dairy alternative, cheaper vegan menu options that can be held for a long period of time/prepared on demand to minimise wastage – e.g. vegan chilli (frozen portions), vegan sausage baps (from frozen), menu items that are vegan by default and therefore appealing to vegans and non-vegans alike (e.g. smoothies, flapjacks, crisps).

The possible implications of all internal catering (Council's own meetings) becoming vegan:

- For reasons of storage space, wastage etc. it is not practical to run a separate menu for internal and external functions or daily trade catering at Queen's Park
- Costs for internal catering would increase
- Reputationally, public reaction may be mixed. Some people would favour the environmental benefits, but others may be cynical about any increase in internal spending at a time when Council budget cuts are visible.

## **Food Procurement**

The Council currently has three contracts for supply of food relevant to this topic as set out below:

**Contract DN475683 - Supply of Fresh Meat and Poultry to Council Catering Establishments**

Supplier - County Foods Ltd

Estimated Value of Contract - £40,000 per annum

Expires: 2025

This contract supplies fresh meat and poultry to Day Centres, Upton Country Park and TwoRiversmeet Leisure Centre.

**Contract DN485684 - Supply of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables to Council Catering Establishments**

Supplier – Harvest Fine Foods

Estimated Value of Contract - £35,000 per annum

Expires: 2026

This contract supplies fresh fruit and vegetables to the trading outlets along the seafront and in the parks, Upton House Tea Rooms, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Day Centres and the Terrace Cafe in the Civic Centre.

**Contract DN561888 - Supply and Delivery of Ice Cream Products for BCP Council**

Suppliers – Unilever (Lot 1), New Forest Ice Cream Ltd (Lot 2)

Estimated Value of Contract - £500,000 per annum

Expires: 2027

This contract supplies 20 trading outlets along the seafront which the supplier(s) will be required to supply as well as five park cafés, two museums, a country park and a visitor centre.

These specifications contain sustainability clauses, including:

- The Supplier will work with the Council to suggest ways of delivering sustainable procurement including the use of more sustainably sourced and produced/harvested products
- The Council has a preference for seasonal produce to be supplied where possible.



## 7 Current food initiatives in the BCP area

The Council is active in delivering, communicating and supporting food initiatives in the area, including Government-funded schemes such as the Household Support Fund. These have mainly addressed food affordability, poverty and health, but are expanding to embrace sustainability concerns. These initiatives could be instrumental in increasing public awareness and acceptability of vegan and reduced meat and dairy diets through demonstrating the economic, environmental and health benefits when approached correctly. Initiatives include:

### **Access to Food Partnership<sup>13</sup>**

The Access to Food Partnership consists of BCP Council, Public Health Dorset and local community groups, established in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and building on work from the Dorset Hidden Hunger 2019 conference. The partnership aims to make sure that everyone in our area can get healthy food for themselves and their families, at any time. The partnership mission is to:

- make sure everyone can get food in a crisis
- help people learn how to find, cook and eat healthy food
- bring local communities together to find local solutions and use local strengths
- share good information about local community food options
- make food access a priority in local policy and decisions
- develop a strong community food network.

### **The Feeding Dorset Partnership<sup>14</sup>**

BCP Council supports The Feeding Dorset Partnership, which has recently joined the network of Sustainable Food Places<sup>15</sup> across the UK. A large number of people, groups, and organisations work to feed everyone across the area. The Feeding Dorset Partnership aims to build a better understanding of the scale and scope of this web of food projects, businesses, and networks across the area and to move towards a more resilient, sustainable and affordable food future. The Partnership will use the areas of focus for a Sustainable Food Place to build connections between people and organisations:

- Food Governance and Strategy: good food governance and action
- Good Food Movement: Building public awareness and a local good food movement.
- Healthy Food for all: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health.
- Sustainable Food Economy: Creating a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.
- Catering and Procurement: Revitalizing local supply chains.
- Food for the Planet: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/communities/cost-of-living-help/access-to-food-partnership/access-to-food-partnership-mission-meetings-and-reports>

<sup>14</sup> [www.helpandkindness.co.uk/feeding-dorset-partnership](http://www.helpandkindness.co.uk/feeding-dorset-partnership)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/>



## 8 Plant-based diets and the Council's climate commitments

Commitments made in the 2019 BCP Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration call upon the Council to make its operations carbon neutral by 2030 and work with others to make the area carbon neutral by 2045. Reducing the amount of meat and dairy products consumed within the Council and in the wider area will contribute towards these targets (forming part of what are termed the Scope 3, or 'indirect' emissions).

However, when the Council calculates the annual greenhouse gas emissions for the organisation and wider area, emissions from food consumption are not included, as data is not readily available, as it is for other sources, and methodology for reliably calculating these is only now emerging. One such tool is The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) Scope 3 Protocols for Food and Drink businesses.<sup>16</sup>

It should therefore be accepted that whilst contributing to overall emissions reduction locally and globally, promoting the adoption of plant-based diets will not immediately be reflected in the Council's own performance.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.wrap.ngo/resources/guide/scope-3-ghg-measurement-and-reporting-protocols-food-and-drink>

## **9 DRAFT Position Statement for consideration by the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

It may be appropriate for the Council to have a position statement on plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets. The following has been prepared as a template for further discussion:

### **DRAFT BCP Council position statement on plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets**

This Council recognises that the food system is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions.

Adopting a plant-based or reduced meat and dairy diet, as recommended by the United Nations and UK Climate Change Committee, is an important component in reducing our personal and collective carbon footprint.

To assist in reducing emissions from the food system, BCP Council will:

- Aim to lead by example in promoting and prioritising plant-based eating where it has influence and community support to do so
- Promote and encourage a plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diet as part of our climate strategy going forward
- Ensure food & drink provided at meetings and functions hosted by the Council includes plant-based and reduced meat and dairy options, and locally sourced ingredients where possible
- Continue to offer plant-based and reduced meat and dairy options from Council catering outlets
- Specify that plant-based options are available when re-tendering food contracts, wherever appropriate
- Continue to ask for a variety of food options when tendering large events
- Promote and encourage food waste reduction wherever possible
- Encourage residents to shop locally where possible, taking advantage of home-grown, seasonal, affordable, and nutritious produce.

## The Plant Based Treaty

Individuals, groups, businesses and cities that endorse the Plant Based Treaty are expressing their support for national governments to come together to negotiate a global Plant Based Treaty, including the three core principles and 40 proposals as outlined below.

### Demand 1 Relinquish

Stop the problem increasing

***No land use change, including deforestation, for animal agriculture***

- No building of new animal farms
- No building of new slaughterhouses
- No expansion or intensification of existing farms
- No conversion of plant-based agriculture to animal agriculture
- No conversion of any land for animal feed production
- No clearing of forests or other ecosystems for animal grazing, animal rearing or animal farming of any kind
- No new fish farms or expansion of existing aquaculture farms
- Protection of Indigenous Peoples; their land, rights and knowledge
- Ban all live exports
- No new large-scale industrial fishing vessels

### Demand 2 Redirect

Eliminate the driving forces behind the problem

***Promotion of plant-based foods and actively transition away from animal-based food systems to plant-based systems***

- Declare a climate emergency – join the 1,900+ local governments in 34 different countries that have already done so
- Address the methane emergency: According to the United Nations, a 0.3°C temperature rise could be averted by 2045 if methane emissions were cut by 45% this decade. As the leading source of human-caused methane emissions, a transition away from animal agriculture to a sustainable plant-based food system would help us meet these goals as soon as possible
- Food security should be placed as a priority for all nations, with a focus on ending poverty and hunger and making nutritious food accessible for all
- Acknowledge and support the pivotal role small farmers have in feeding the planet; support them to maintain (or restore) autonomy over their lands, water, seeds and other resources
- Shift away from monoculture-based arable farming that depletes soil, decreases biodiversity and is reliant on external inputs such as animal manure and agrochemicals towards diversified, agroecological, veganic (vegan and organic) farming using regenerative, permaculture and natural principles that restore soil and ecosystems, enhance food security and provide nutrient-dense foods
- Calculate greenhouse gas emissions based on consumption and develop a food strategy for Climate Action Plans that prioritizes a switch to plant-based foods and public education

- Update government food and dietary guidelines to promote wholefood, plant-based food
- Design public information campaigns to raise awareness about the climate and the environmental advantages and health benefits of plant-based food, nutrition and cooking
- Aim to reduce the public's consumption of animal-based food through education in schools
- Transition to plant-based meal plans in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, government institutions, universities and businesses
- Mandate honest labelling of food products including carbon labelling and cancer warning labels on all processed meats which have been declared carcinogenic by the World Health Organization
- Introduce a meat (including fish) and methane tax with proceeds funding restoration of land destroyed by animal agriculture
- Subsidize fruits, vegetables and legumes to make a wholefoods, plant-based diet more affordable and end food deserts that hurt low income communities
- Redirect government subsidies for animal agriculture, slaughterhouses and industrial fishing to environmentally-friendly production of plant-based food
- End government subsidized advertising for the meat, dairy and egg industry
- Create green bonds to fund a transition to a plant-based economy
- Provide financial support and training for farmers, ranchers and fisherpeople to move away from animal production to diversified agroecological, plant-based (veganic) systems

### **Demand 3    Restore**

Actively healing the problem while building resilience and mitigating climate change

#### ***Restore key ecosystems and reforest the earth***

- Reforestation projects to be rolled out in appropriate ecosystems using native tree species to restore habitats to a previously similar state
- Reforestation and restoration of the oceans is prioritised by designating additional areas of the oceans as zero fishing Marine Protected Areas (known as Highly Protected Marine Areas – HPMAs)
- All existing Marine Protected Areas should be declared strictly no fishing zones and converted to HPMAs
- Active programs rolled out to replant critical carbon absorbers in the oceans, such as seagrass beds
- Restore key degraded ecosystems which are essential for carbon sequestration cycles: mangroves, peat bogs, forests, some types of grassland
- Focus shift on nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Subsidies made available for farmers and landowners who practise good land stewardship and are actively restoring the land and the associated ecosystem services (such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, flood defence, general climate change resilience)
- Subsidies made available for rewilding and reforestation projects
- Incentivised subsidies / grants for farmers to switch from animal agriculture to diversified plant production

- Cities: increase trees and wildflowers, increase green community projects, wildlife corridors, green rooftops, local growing schemes, work towards biodiversity increases
- Enhance food justice by providing access to healthy food for all, especially low-income communities of color
- Repurpose available land freed up from animal grazing and animal feed production for: rewilding, reforestation (if appropriate), returning land to Indigenous people, nature reserves, hiking zones, community growing, allotments (if appropriate), agroecological veganic food growing (where possible)
- Shift of some land ownership into community hands so the land can be repurposed for reforestation, green space and community food gardens and allotments