

Report subject	<b>Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: draft position statement and action plan</b>
Meeting date	29 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>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 &amp; Place Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel requested a preliminary discussion paper on the issue in order to stimulate debate.</p> <p>A review of this discussion paper by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on 11 September 2024, resulted in the committee requesting that officers review the suggested draft position statement and develop a set of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) actions to be considered by BCP Council aimed at encouraging and promoting plant-based diets.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p>The Environment &amp; Place Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee review and consider the revised position statement and set of eleven suggested actions, whether actions are suitably SMART and whether they have been developed with appropriate scope. Recommended proposals will then be considered by Cabinet for acceptance.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To provide a clear position statement and set of agreed-upon actions to implement, relating to plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets. Action in this area will contribute to improved climate change, civic leadership and equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

## Background

1. According to the United Nations, approximately one third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions are linked to the global food system. Animal-based foods, especially red meat, dairy, and farmed shrimp, are generally associated with the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In order to meet national government's Net Zero by 2050 target, the UK Climate Change Committee recommends a 20-50% reduction in all meat and dairy consumption.
2. Developing a draft plant-based diet position statement and action plan therefore aligns with BCP Council's commitment to net zero in GHG emissions and the Corporate Strategy ambition that climate change is tackled through sustainable policies and practice.
3. The Corporate Strategy seeks to position the council as forward-thinking, alongside intervening as early as possible to improve outcomes, which this draft position statement and action plan seeks to achieve.
4. Under the Equality Act (2010) veganism is a legally recognised protected philosophical belief, with individuals adhering to veganism entitled to certain legal protections, particularly related to workplace service provision. Providing vegan options therefore supports BCP Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion laid out in its Equality and Diversity policy and aligns with the Corporate Strategy objective to provide accessible and inclusive services.
5. According to the Vegan Society, BCP Council have already made good progress in providing plant-based options within their food service offerings, ranking in the top 10% of councils (ranked between 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> position of the 216 councils reviewed). The Vegan Society's 'Catering for Everyone' campaign calls on local and national governments to guarantee at least one nutritious plant-based option on every public sector menu. This option should be made available to everyone, every day, without the need to make a special request.
6. Following previous recommendations from the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, this draft position statement and plan seeks to base its action on data, insights and feedback to shape solutions to service offerings. Individual actions have therefore been assessed against Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic,

and Time-bound (SMART) criteria. Where data, insights and feedback are currently lacking in some areas, these baselines have been sought to be established.

7. This draft position statement and action plan contributes, or has the potential to contribute to, the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and Wellbeing; 12. Responsible Consumption and Production; 13. Climate Action; 14. Life below Water; and 15. Life on land.

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

The proposed draft position statement for BCP Council on plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets is as follows – the Council will:

- Aim to lead by example in promoting and prioritising plant-based eating where it has influence and it is financially viable to do so.
- Promote and encourage a plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diet as part of our climate strategy going forwards.
- Ensure that food and drink provided at meetings, functions and offices within Council premises includes plant-based and reduced meat and dairy options.
- Require BCP Council managed food outlets to provide for sale plant-based options of each food type and seek to progressively increase its plant-based food offering when it is commercially viable to do so.<sup>1</sup>
- Specify and require that plant-based options are available when re-tendering food contracts, excluding meat-only contracts.<sup>2</sup>
- Specify and require during the tendering process that a proportion of all food sold at major, licensed events by short-term concessions be plant-based, with the appropriate proportion to be determined by Commercial Operations and subject to annual review.
- Advocate for and promote plant-based diets through appointed ‘vegan champions’ internal to BCP Council, alongside additional promotional and educational campaigns.
- Baseline, monitor and annually review the state, ongoing progress and commercial viability of plant-based food sale and consumption within BCP managed food outlets and among the wider BCP area.

The above statement intends to outline BCP Council's position on plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets for the next three years, until 8 October 2028.

A set of eleven actions developed to support the implementation of this position statement are provided in Appendix 1 for the consideration of the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee. These actions, if agreed, will be subject to annual monitoring and review, to assess their ongoing commercial viability and appropriateness in reflecting the stated position.

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<sup>1</sup> This will not apply to food outlets operated by third parties under lease or licence by concession.

<sup>2</sup> Any standards or minimum threshold requirements will not apply to contracts already awarded for their duration, only to newly awarded contracts.

## **Options Appraisal**

8. Option 1: Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel and subsequently Cabinet discusses and reaches consensus on the position statement, alongside the scope and likely effectiveness of the eleven recommended actions in promoting and encouraging plant-based diets, in order to help to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.
9. Option 2: Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel and subsequently Cabinet discusses but is unable to reach consensus on the position statement, alongside the scope and likely effectiveness of the eleven recommended actions in promoting and encouraging plant-based diets, which will not help to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Summary of financial implications**

10. The proposed actions have been discussed with key commercial officers, and the financial implications have been assessed for the upcoming year. It has been agreed that these should be minimal and commercially viable. The ongoing financial implications will be reviewed annually.

## **Summary of legal implications**

11. None identified at this stage. However, dependant on the views of the Panel, any actions proposed will need to be subject to further assessment to establish any legal implications.

## **Summary of human resources implications**

12. None identified at this stage. However, dependant on the views of the Panel, any actions proposed will need to be subject to further assessment to establish any human resources implications.

## **Summary of sustainability impact**

13. Adopting plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen the environmental impact of food production and consumption on the planet, therefore their promotion and encouragement should be of benefit. However, dependant on the views of the Panel, any actions proposed will need to be subject to further assessment to establish sustainability impact. Decision Impact Assessment no. 734 has been completed and resulted in an amber rating for this proposed policy and related action plan.

## **Summary of public health implications**

14. Adoption of plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets can have health benefits if implemented correctly, ensuring essential nutrient levels are maintained for good health. Any recommendations will be subject to consultation with the appropriate bodies to ensure this is achieved.

## **Summary of equality implications**

15. The suggested actions to increase the availability of plant-based foods in Council catering and promotions, would carry positive equalities outcomes. Faiths and cultures that are not able to consume certain animal products would be assured of suitable food and drink at Council functions and outlets, as ethical veganism is a protected belief under the Equalities Act 2010. Therefore, action to increase

availability of plant-based foods is in line with diversity and inclusion objectives. An EIA conversation/screening document has been submitted, and advice was provided to review the scope of the position statement in subsequent iterations in relation to the inclusion of other protected groups.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

16. Failing to achieve the Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration commitments will contribute to an increasingly hostile global and local environment, population displacement, biodiversity loss and risk to life. The Council risks reputational damage from negative publicity (locally, nationally, and internationally). However, if we act in a timely manner, many actions to tackle climate change, including a reduction in meat and dairy consumption, will contribute to social, economic, and environmental benefits, reducing the likelihood of actual and perceived risks. Dependant on the views of the Panel, any actions proposed will be subject to a further risk assessment.

### **Background papers**

Published works:

- Minutes of Council meetings where issue was raised:
  - 20/02/2024 (Item 71. Public Issues)
  - 23/07/2024 (Item 13. Public Issues)
  - 25/02/2025 (Item 73. Public Issues)
  - 25/03/2025 (Item 98. Questions from Councillors)
- The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero – Climate Change Committee
- The National Food Strategy: The Plan - National Food Strategy Team
- The Plant-Based Treaty
- BCP Council Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: action plan