

Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Report subject	Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: action plan – annual review and recommendations
Meeting date	9 th September 2026
Status	Internal Update Report
Executive summary	Following the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29 October 2025, an agreement was reached to implement the Council position to ‘encourage and promote plant-based diets’. A plant-based diet position statement and associated set of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) actions were drafted and agreed by Cabinet, and subsequently implemented. Action 11 of the action plan was an annual review and adjustment of the plan. This report seeks to update the Environment and Plan O&S committee regarding the progress of the plant-based diets action plan. Specifically, it presents a review of the effectiveness, appropriateness and feasibility of each action.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: The Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider recommendations presented to reduce, remove, add to or amend one of more of the plant-based diet actions within the plant-based diets action plan.
Reason for recommendations	As part of an annual review of the effectiveness, appropriateness and feasibility of each plant-based diet action to align with the plant-based diet position statement. More precisely to ensure alignment with the ‘aim to lead by example in promoting and prioritising plant-based eating where it has influence and it is financially viable to do so’.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive Report
Contributors	Gail Scholes, Interim Head of Climate and Sustainability Martin Gardner, Sustainability Officer
Wards	[Overtyp e with names of applicable wards]
Classification	For Recommendation and Information

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. The existing 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 the 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 5th and 19th 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. The plant-based diets action plan seeks to continually realign its interventions and actions in reflection of the available data, insights and feedback to shape solutions to service offerings. Individual actions must seek to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART), with the aim of encouraging and promoting plant-based diets where it is financially viable and the Council has the influence to do so.
7. This 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.

Summary of financial implications

8. The financial implications will be considered on an action-by-action and case-by-case basis. Each action will be checked with the responsible service for implication to ascertain financial viability. Actions will only be presented as recommendations or proceed if they have been confirmed as being financially viable to do so.

Summary of legal implications

9. No legal implications have been identified at this stage. However, any actions proposed will be subject to further assessment to establish any legal implications.

Summary of human resources implications

10. No human resource implications have been identified at this stage. However, any actions proposed will be subject to further assessment to establish any legal implications.

Summary of environmental impact

11. 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. On the original action plan Decision Impact Assessment (DIA) no. 734 was completed and resulted in an amber rating. As the recommendations made within this report are felt to be minimal, no additional DIA has been lodged.

Summary of public health implications

12. The 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.

Summary of equality implications

13. 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 4 availability of plant-based foods is in line with diversity and inclusion objectives. An EIA conversation/screening document was submitted. The recommendation to review the scope of the action plan in relation other protected groups has been considered. Due to little identified meaningful change, a further EIA assessment has not been undertaken.

Summary of risk assessment

14. 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:
 - o 20/02/2024 (Item 71. Public Issues)
 - o 23/07/2024 (Item 13. Public Issues)
 - o 25/02/2025 (Item 73. Public Issues)
 - o 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
- BCP Council Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper
- [Plant-based diet action plan](#)
- [Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: draft position statement and action plan](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Plant-based diet action plan: 2026 annual review and recommendations