

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Question submitted by: Paula Boeira

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Environment

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Vegan diets result in 75% less GHG emissions and land use than diets with 100g of meat daily. They cut wildlife destruction by 66% and water use 54%. Will Plymouth join 24 councils, including Edinburgh, Exmouth and Norwich by endorsing the Plant Based Treaty and developing a plant-based food strategy?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

Thank you for your question.

The City Council recognises that significant emissions are caused by current food production and consumption practices.

We are acting locally to raise awareness of this issue and in particular to promote nature recovery, consistent with many of the Plant Based Treaty's proposals. The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park is leading the way on marine citizenship. The Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest has seen thousands of new trees planted across the city. Poole Farm and our Green Community Hubs give people the chance to feel more connected with nature and to improve neighbourhoods for wildlife.

Through our latest Net Zero Action Plan, we have made a strong commitment to engaging with residents, businesses, and communities to promote a change in all our behaviours, which includes consumption and food habits. Our Climate Connections website includes messaging on how we can reduce the environmental impact of food and supports low carbon food projects.

One of the specific commitments in the Net Zero Action Plan is to “collaborate, as part of the Food Plymouth Partnership and network, on improving access to low carbon food choices and work towards achieving the Sustainable Food Places Gold award.” Cambridge, Bristol and Brighton are the only cities who have reached this prestigious level – which I hope offers some reassurance on how seriously we are taking food sustainability.

Our school meals company CATERED have also committed to exploring new approaches to promoting sustainable food choices, starting with a Veganuary initiative at the start of 2024.

Whilst I appreciate that an increasing number of people will need to transition to more plant-based diets as part of global efforts to tackle the climate emergency, behaviour change can be more compelling and long-term when individuals feel that they have made the choice for themselves.