

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: Plant-based food

Proposer: Councillor Catt

Seconder: Councillor Osborn

An amendment has been received from **Councillor Oliver**.

Councillor Oliver is amending the motion as follows:-

Adding the words “**paying the Real Living Wage and sourcing sustainable local ingredients**” at the end of resolution 1)

Adding the words “**while also appropriately highlighting the crisis of ever-increasing food poverty in this city and the support available to respond to it**” in resolution 5)

Replacing the word “**support**” with the words “**meet the wider demands posed by the social, economic and environmental crisis, including that of supporting**” in resolution 7)

Adding the words “**Continue to**” at the start of resolution 8)

Adding the words “**Continue to**” before the word “**engage**” at the start of the resolution 8)

Replacing the words “**educate people on**” with the words “**encourage people through information about**” in resolution 8)

So that the revised motion becomes:-

It is increasingly recognised that meat and dairy production is a significant contributor to climate breakdown, with the livestock sector accounting for at least 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions, as well as being a major contributor to global deforestation. The catastrophic effects of climate breakdown mean climate and risk experts predict a world with systemic cascading risks related to food insecurity including food shortages, societal tensions, hunger and malnutrition, unrest and conflict (according to a Chatham house report from 2021), which furthermore predicts a 50% chance of synchronous crop failure in the decade of the 2040s. Producing a kilo of beef creates, on average, 12 times more CO₂ than a kilo

Item 9c

of tofu or other soya based proteins. Meanwhile, producing a litre of dairy milk uses, on average, at least four times as much land as producing a litre of plant milk. Growing numbers of people are adopting plant-based diets, which do not include meat or dairy.

As well as a smaller carbon footprint, eating more plant-based foods also reduces the land footprint of our diets and would improve UK food security and self-sufficiency, thereby making our diets more local. As a country, we currently import much more food than we export. In 2021 we had a trade deficit for all dairy products of £1.04 billion and a trade deficit for just beef, pork and lamb of £1.7 billion. Only 55% of the world's crop calories feed people directly with 36% going to feed livestock; only a fraction of the calories in feed given to livestock make their way into the meat and milk that we consume which is a huge food waste issue on top of making our food production much more carbon intensive. While some people criticise people who follow a plant-based diet for eating imported soy, the vast majority of soy - 77% - goes to feeding livestock, which research has shown is an inefficient use of resources. East Anglia has predominantly arable farming and there are many local predominantly plant-based food businesses we could support.

Henry Dimbleby, in the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy concluded that a 30% reduction in meat consumption is necessary for future food security. The National Food Strategy also states that obesity alone accounts for 8% of annual health spend in the UK, or £18bn. Savings to the NHS will come from healthier, plant-based diets. Sustain estimates that meat over-consumption costs the NHS directly £1.2 billion, and is responsible for 45,000 deaths annually. Over 40% of Britons are trying to reduce their meat consumption and 14% already follow a flexitarian diet, but plant-based food options are not consistently available at all events or food venues. Other countries have taken a stance; for example, in Portugal it is a legal requirement for all public catering – including local authority facilities – to provide plant-based food options, and other local authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council and Cambridge City Council have decided to promote plant-based food via serving a fully plant-based menu at Council meetings and events, where cost-effective. Locally, the University of Cambridge Catering Service reduced food-related greenhouse gas emissions by a third via replacing beef and lamb with plant-based products.

In September 2021, Norwich City Council formally adopted the Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate which committed the council to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food. Norwich City Council can build on its achievements to date and lead by example to promote and normalise consumption of plant-based food, recognising that plant-based meals are frequently nutritious and low-cost food options. This is in line with its vision for Norwich City to be net-zero carbon by 2045.

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Follow the lead of other councils around the country in ensuring that food and drink provided at all meetings and events hosted by the city council, including those hosted by the Mayoralty, is plant-based, and where possible, provided by a local caterer paying the Real Living Wage and sourcing sustainable local ingredients.
- 2) After engaging with a wide variety of catering options (including consideration of social enterprises), use Norwich City Council civic events to promote and showcase environmentally friendly plant-based food and drink options, alongside displayed information about the climate and health benefits and relative cost of different protein/food sources and educating people about how to achieve a balanced plant-based diet.
- 3) When events occur on City Council open spaces, and where catering is provided, ensure that environmentally friendly plant-based options are available (i.e., minimum from at least one caterer), secured through the use of terms and conditions of hire (where reasonably possible).
- 4) Secure through a contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers that environmentally friendly, locally sourced plant-based food and drink options are to be available at providers on City Council open spaces (where reasonably possible). Similarly, when possible, via future contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers for council-run cafes, kiosks or leisure centres, specify that vegetable/legume rich plant-based options are listed prominently on menus, above non plant-based options.
- 5) Continue to use council communications channels to promote sustainable (and affordable) food and drink practices throughout the city, including details of the climate and health benefits of plant-based food and drinks and educating people on the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet, while also appropriately highlighting the crisis of ever-increasing food poverty in this city and the support available to respond to it.
- 6) Write to Norfolk County Council requesting that they assess the carbon impact of meat and dairy industries on the county and ask what steps are being taken to reduce this in line with the target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 7) Work with community groups across the city to promote the establishment of new community gardens, especially on sites that have been previously derelict or contaminated so that these sites can be quickly brought back into

Item 9c

beneficial use to meet the wider demands posed by the social, economic, and environmental crisis, including that of supporting the growth of cheap and accessible plant-based food and drinks for all our communities.

- 8) Continue to recognise Norwich as a city with businesses leading the way in the provision of plant-based foods and drinks. Continue to engage with Norwich BID and the Norwich Market Traders' Association to investigate the opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based foods, encourage people through information about the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet and improve the availability of plant-based options at Norwich businesses; and
- 9) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supporting UK endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty and invite all Party Group Leaders to sign the letter.