

## Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment by Sarah Foy

Hello. My name is Sarah Foy, I'm a charity worker and I live in South Normanton.

Bolsover prides itself on being one of the more forward thinking districts in the UK and has put climate considerations at the heart of governance. The Council's Carbon Reduction Plan has an objective to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

However, this awareness needs to include every aspect of council activities, including the provision of food, which is currently omitted from the plan. The science is clear that meat and dairy are major contributors to the climate and ecological emergencies. Other councils, for example Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City, Cambridge City, Exeter City and the London Borough of Lewisham are ensuring that all food and drink provided at events is plant-based, and I'd like Bolsover District Council to do the same.

This is the logical & necessary next step to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, of carbon as well as methane and nitrogen. It will help normalise plant-based eating, which according to an Oxford University study, is the single most effective thing an individual can do to reduce their environmental impact.

There have been substantial evidence-based recommendations calling for a move away from meat and dairy. The review of the National Food Strategy, led by Henry Dimbleby in 2021, recommended a reduction in meat and dairy of 30% within ten years, and that food provided in the public sector should be plant-based by default. If we are to achieve even this modest target, we need public organisations to lead the way. The government failed to implement these recommendations, and is now facing a legal challenge with lawyers arguing that its failure to adopt measures to reduce meat and dairy production and consumption is unlawful. A new Oxford University study published in July 2023 shows that the environmental impact of a meat-diet is far higher than one which is plant-based.

We are currently in a cost of living crisis. Meat and dairy products are almost always the most expensive part of a meal - whole food plant-based meals are considerably cheaper. By doing the right thing for the planet, and promoting eating for good health, the council can also save money by serving more plant-based foods. We can and must move away from meat and dairy, towards climate-friendly eating, and I believe councils can lead the way with this.

I understand that this council does not regularly serve food at meetings, so the main change this council can implement is to exclusively serve plant milk for tea and coffee offered at meetings. Oat milk uses 13 times less water, 11 times less land, and creates 3.5 times less emissions than dairy milk. I would also ask at events where food is served, for it to be exclusively plant based.

**Therefore, given the Climate and Ecological Emergency and Bolsover's stated aim to reduce their emissions, will Bolsover District Council ensure that all food and drink provided at internal events is fully plant-based, as other councils have done?**

This will be a small, but positive and forward-thinking step that sends a powerful message, bringing our food policy into line with other climate-aware policies. Thank you.