

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2023

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 18 April 2023

Report of: Director for Net Zero Exeter & City Management

Title: Report of the Plant Based Food Task and Finish Group

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Work undertaken by the Plant Based Food Task & Finish Group in developing a City Council Sustainable Food Policy to deliver the Notice of Motion by Councillor Wood Under Standing Number 6 at the Council meeting on 13 December 2022:
 - Ensure that by the Exeter City Council Annual Council in May 2023, food provided at catered internal Council meetings will be plant-based and that it will showcase plant based foods at catered events.
 - Ensure that all Council run external sites including Leisure Centres, cafes and restaurants have plant-based options available as part of their regular catering offer and advertised clearly on their menu.
 - Set up a cross-party Task and Finish Working Group, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, of officers, elected Members including other relevant Portfolio Holders and invited experts to promote and embed these principles in Exeter City Council's food provision where practicable.

2. Recommendations:

That Executive recommends to Council that:-

- 2.1 Members note the work undertaken by the Plant Based Food Task & Finish Group and endorse the new City Council Sustainable Food Policy.
- 2.2 The Sustainable Food Policy is reviewed after six months and is brought back to Executive on 28 November 2023.
- 2.3 The City Council raises awareness within the local business community of the work undertaken by the South West Food Hub <https://www.thesouthwestfoodhub.co.uk/>

and the national Dynamic Purchasing UK <https://www.dpukfood.co.uk/> to support local suppliers and producers to gain new public sector contracts.

2.4 The Net Zero & Business team:

- review the Single Use Plastic Notice of Motion that was carried at Council on 24 April 2018
<http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=114&MId=5356&Ver=4;>
- develop a range of KPI's to monitor the Sustainable Food Policy and carbon emissions associated with the City Council buying food and drink for consumption through Council meetings, Council events and within Council run sites;
- work with Procurement in developing an approved supplier list for the catering of Council meetings and Council events, in line with the 6 month review of the Sustainable Food Policy. Information to be made readily available for staff on the City Council's intranet;
- The City Council will work towards the HOSW declaration of at least a minimum of 50% of all food spend to be procured from growers, producers and manufacturers within the South West local region by 2028;
- co-ordinate customer surveys of City Council venues to understand customer demand for plant based food and drink, results available for the 6 month review;
- work with the Waste & Recycling team to develop food waste collection from City Council venues, once food waste has been rolled out to residential homes;
- research options of developing a Devon Fruit & Veg Wholesale Market, utilising the Matford Centre;
- review options of installing a filtered water dispenser at the historic Guildhall;
- explore the potential of registering all public facing Council catering venues as Refill stations under the refill water scheme <https://www.refill.org.uk/get-involved/add-refill-station/>

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 That Council Meetings adhere to the Notice of Motion passed at Council on 13 December 2022.
- 3.2 The Sustainable Food Policy is monitored and updated to ensure best practice across all City Council services.
- 3.3 Council events and Council run sites have consistency (where appropriate) across menus for labelling.
- 3.4 City Council carbon emissions, as a result of buying food and drink, is effectively monitored and reduces.
- 3.5 The City Council's Sustainable Food Policy supports local food and drink suppliers, producers and manufacturers.

3.6 In surveying our customers, the City Council understands our customers in their dietary needs.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

4.1 Net Zero & Business Officer time will be required to deliver the recommendations of this report.

4.2 To adhere to the new Sustainable Food Policy, costs may rise to purchase food & drink. This will form part of the review over the next 6 months to understand implications on revenue budgets.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The section 151 Officer notes the proposals. Members must be aware that there is no increase proposed at this stage to budgets to cater for any increased costs. Therefore budget managers will need to reduce what they buy to remain in budget if the costs do increase. There is still £5 million of reductions to identify over the medium term financial plan, therefore members will have to identify what they wish to reduce in order to increase these budgets.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 Where the Council intends to procure supplier(s) to provide catering for Council meetings and events, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedures must be complied with.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring officer

8. Plant Based Food Task & Finish Group

8.1 In developing the new City Council Sustainable Food Policy, a Plant Based Food Task & Finish Group was established, chaired by Councillor Wood. Cross parties attendees included: Cllr Asvachin, Cllr Bennet, Cllr Holland and Cllr Parkhouse. Officers in attendance for all 4 meetings included the Service Lead for Net Zero & Business, the Sustainability Officer and Democratic Services Officer.

8.2 Four Plant Based Food Task & Finish Group meetings were held during February and March 2023, to learn from City Council Officers and external contributors/experts in their field; for the Task & Finish Group to learn from them and to implement the Notice of Motion. Each of these meetings were themed:

Date of meeting	Purpose of meeting	Discussion Points	Actions
13 Feb 2023	To learn from City Council officers that lead a service that has some form of food and catering offer	Confirmation of what constitutes a Council, meeting, event and venue. Private hire will not be included within the Policy.	Develop easy to read and use policy Develop an approved supplier list for catering at Council

		<p>Confirmation that Fairtrade is still important to the City Council</p> <p>Menus provided from City Council venues that sell food, and offer food for meetings and private hire.</p> <p>Council Meetings – constituted as a meeting that is chaired and has minutes. Meetings covers both Cllr and Officer meetings. Refreshments provided at meetings is limited.</p> <p>Guildhall – approved caterers for all Council events and Private Hire, focus on quality. Kitchen available. 80% vegetarian and 20% meat offered. Ethos of ‘Feed You, Not Fill You’. Dietary requirements asked of attendees. Leftover food offered to Julian House & St Petroc.</p> <p>RAMM – concession café. Approved caterers for private hire, focus on quality. No kitchen</p> <p>Leisure – City Council café provided at St Sidwell’s Point and ISCA. Limited catered meetings and events held at leisure venues. Emphasis on local suppliers, vegetarian food offered in SSP. Small kitchen SSP</p> <p>Corn Exchange – food offered for some Council run events. Catering provided for private hire meetings and events.</p> <p>Matford Centre – concession café. Catering provided for private hire meetings and events.</p> <p>Council Events – If not held in RAMM or Guildhall, catering on an ad-hoc basis approved supplier list isn’t used.</p>	<p>meetings and events and Private Hire. Once completed, information listed on City Council intranet.</p> <p>Survey City Council customers to understand their dietary needs (RAMM, Leisure, Corn Exchange & Matford Centre).</p> <p>Consistency on menu’s across all City Council venues, aim for a split of 50% plant-based, 50% dairy, fish and meat options. Abbreviations are also consistent: Vegan - VGN Vegetarian - VEG</p>
22 Feb 2023	To meet local representatives related to plant based food and drink	<p>The UK currently doesn’t grow enough Veg & fruit to eat the recommended 5 a day.</p> <p>There are many benefits of plant based and wholefood in reducing</p>	<p>Council events and Council run sites need more plant based and vegetarian options on menus.</p>

	<p>Lecturer in Human Geography (University of Exeter), Love Food, ProVeg and Grocer on the Green</p>	<p>heart disease and some forms of cancer. The NHS endorses a plant based diet.</p> <p>Processed plant based foods are better for you than processed meat.</p> <p>Discussions took place on the sustainability of imported veg against locally sourced meat and dairy.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence that the demand for vegetarian food is growing through Street Food licences.</p> <p>Pubs, Cafes and Restaurants are contacting local grocers to supply them with local fruit and veg.</p> <p>The development of a local reliable supply chain is needed.</p> <p>Any policy needs to support local businesses, local supply chains and seasonality.</p>	<p>Plant based options to be listed first on menus</p>
<p>27 Feb 2023</p>	<p>To meet local representatives from the National Farmers Union (NFU), British Farm Union (BFU) and local farmers</p>	<p>Topics of discussion included the value of meat, dairy and fish on local ecology and good husbandry practices.</p> <p>The values and benefits of mixed farming, which involves the growing of crops and the raising of livestock on one farm. Many farms in the region are made up of mixed farms, which is a traditional part of the rural landscape and has much more of a focus on the environment – no need to buy in expensive fertilisers.</p> <p>Regardless of the type of farm (arable or livestock), farmers need to be flexible and agile to address extreme and unexpected weather conditions, customer needs and demands and government policy.</p> <p>Farmers continually diversify into veg boxes, camping and holidays lets – supporting wider economic benefits.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Food Policy to emphasise buying locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy and seafood.</p> <p>The City Council to support the work of the South West Food Hub.</p> <p>Messaging through City Council media channels to promote the benefits of buying local and seasonal food & drink, cooking skills and bulk buying (to freeze).</p> <p>The City Council to research options of developing a Devon Fruit & Veg Wholesale Market, utilising the Matford Centre</p>

		<p>UK food security is a concern, with farmers raising their concerns with Central Government with a request of policy change to support UK growers and farmers.</p> <p>The dominance that supermarkets have over farmers. Local producers and suppliers struggle with accessing local, secure and reliable customers. The meeting discussed the South West Food Hub and Dynamic Purchasing UK, and the benefits this could bring to local producers and suppliers.</p> <p>Difficulties in monitoring carbon emissions in the industry.</p> <p>External contributors highlighted the need to raise the awareness of local produce, so that businesses and residents know what is on their doorstep.</p>	
2 Mar 2023	To bring together evidence gathered from officers and external contributors.	<p>Customers shouldn't have to ask for a Vegan or Vegetarian option on menus. Not all Council run sites provide a varied menu.</p> <p>Plant based foods to be showcased at the beginning of menus</p> <p>Importance of surveying our customers, to understand their dietary requirements – RAMM, Corn Exchange, Leisure, Matford Centre, Guildhall. Need to take into account the diversity of Council run venues.</p> <p>Need messaging on healthy eating through comms channels.</p> <p>If a Council meeting, event or venue cannot buy local or seasonal; they buy Fairtrade.</p> <p>Breakdown of plant based food</p> <p>Need to monitor the impact of the new policy on Carbon Emissions – through Green Accord and new KPI's.</p>	<p>Review the City Council Single Use Plastic Policy.</p> <p>Review options of installing a filtered water dispenser at the historic Guildhall.</p> <p>Draw Green Accord into discussions in developing our preferred supplier list.</p> <p>Develop KPI's to monitor carbon emissions associated with the Policy</p> <p>50% plant-based, 50% dairy, fish and meat options on menus</p>

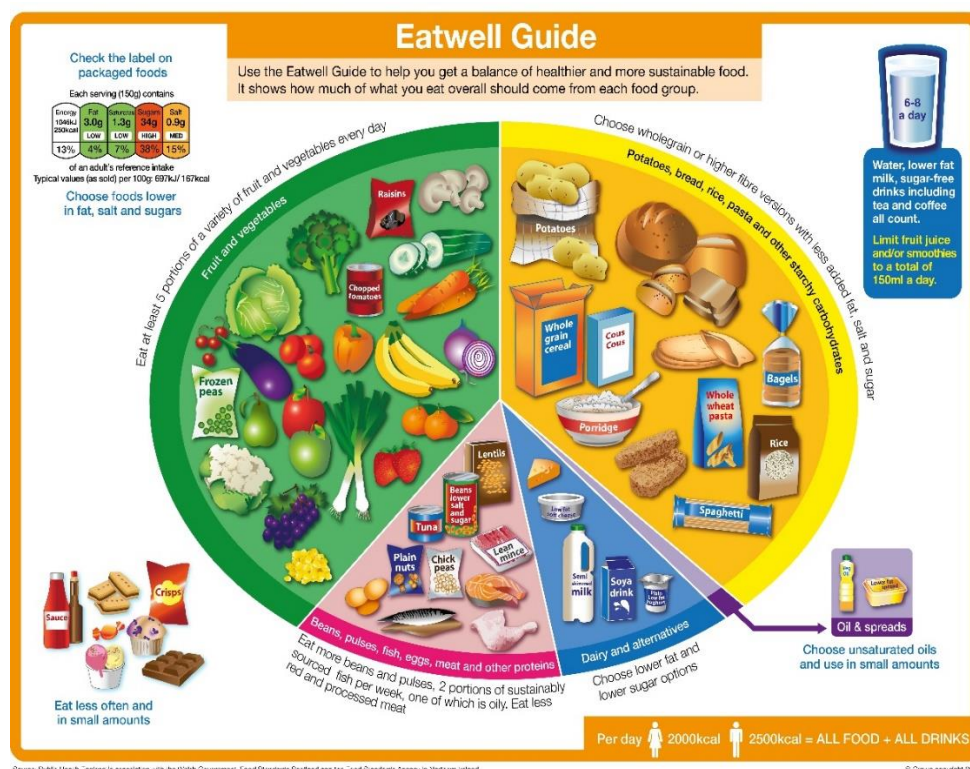
8.3 At the Task and Finish Group meeting on 2 March, discussions took place on the need to provide a well-balanced diet at Council events and at Council run venues. The NHS Eat Well Guide <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide> was seen as an easy to read and understand.

8.4 There are well known reasons for eating 5 a day:

- Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals, including folate, vitamin C and potassium.
- They're an excellent source of dietary fibre, which can help to maintain a healthy gut and prevent constipation and other digestion problems. A diet high in fibre can also reduce your risk of bowel cancer.
- They can help to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer.
- Fruit and vegetables contribute to a healthy, balanced diet.
- Fruit and vegetables taste delicious and there's so much variety to choose from.

The graphic below, is a quick and easy visual to follow

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>.



9. Sustainable Food Policy

9.1 From the four Task and Finish meetings that took place, a new Sustainable Food Policy has been developed, which can be viewed in Appendix Two. The Policy implements the Notice of Motion by Councillor Wood Under Standing Number 6 at

the Council meeting on 13 December 2022, but also takes into account wider City Council events and run venues.

9.2 The Sustainable Food Policy will be reviewed in six months time, and will be brought back to Executive November 2023 to:

- take into account survey work from customer of City Council run venues
- the new Devon's Good Food Strategy
- results of the new approved supplier list
- any address any rises in costs as a result of the Sustainable Food Policy

9.3 A list of local, regional and national strategies that have been taken into account in developing the City Council's Sustainable Food Policy are listed within Appendix One.

9.4 The Heart of the South West Public Food Procurement Declaration was considered in developing the City Council's Sustainable Food Policy, a copy of the declaration is found in Appendix Three. The Declaration aligns with aspirations of the City Council in reducing carbon emissions and in providing security and resilience in our regional supply chains.

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

10.1 In developing and implementing the new Sustainable Food Policy, it supports the City Council Corporate Priorities of:

- Prosperous local economy – in supporting local food and drink suppliers and producers
- Healthy and active city – in providing healthy food and drink to our customers and additional plant based products are provided
- Net Zero Carbon City – in reducing carbon emissions through food and drink purchased

10.2 The Net Zero & Business team are mindful that recommendations within this committee report may increase costs for some services. As previously mentioned within this report, the Sustainable Food Policy will be reviewed in the next 6 months to keep costs to a minimum and a new procurement process will be undertaken to keep costs to a minimum.

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

11.1 There is a risk of services not adhering to the Sustainable Food Policy, this risk was mitigated with services being invited to contribute to the Task & Finish group meetings.

11.2 There is also the risk of some costs increasing to adhere to the Sustainable Food Policy. This will be reviewed over the next 6 months and will form part of the procurement of catering suppliers to the City Council.

11.3 There is a risk of losing a competitive position if the unique nature and location of some of our public facing catering venues are not taken into account. This will be

mitigated by initial flexibility in menu segmentation and surveys of customer preference and the involvement of venue managers in the review process.

12. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

12.1 The recommendations within this report, potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

13. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

13.1 Once the recommendations within this report have been implemented, it should have a small positive impact in reducing the level of carbon emissions for the City Council. The Net Zero & Business team will develop a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to ensure the City Council is able to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the new policy.

13.2 To support the reduction of food waste within the City Council, a food hierarchy has been developed within the policy:

- Portion sizes are monitored to avoid food waste
- Food waste is segregated and diverted from landfill, following a hierarchy of waste:
 - Ensuring we don't over cater in the first instance
 - St Petrocks / Julian House / Community Fridge at Exeter Library
 - Redistribute food where appropriate
 - Anaerobic digestion (review process to achieve)

14. Are there any other options?

14.1 There is the option of not following through with the Motion approved at the Council meeting on 13 December 2022, but this wasn't deemed appropriate.

Director for Net Zero Exeter & City Management, David Bartram

Author: Service for Net Zero & Business

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Council 13 December 2022, Notice of Motion by Councillor Wood under Standing Order No. 6 - <http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56395>

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
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Related Policies and Strategies

A number of local, regional, national and international reports have been taken into account in developing the City Council's Sustainable Food Policy.

The new Devon's Good Food Strategy 2023-2028

<https://www.devonfoodpartnership.org.uk/> was launched early March 2023. The City Council is supportive of the Vision Statement and its Strategic Priorities. The Net Zero & Business team will be making contact with the Devon Food Partnership to understand how we can align work to reduce carbon emissions, but also support the local supply chain.

Vision Statement:

"Our aim is to ensure that nutritious, affordable, local, sustainably produced food is available for everyone in Devon. We support the development of a localised, sustainable food system and seek to tackle the issues of food poverty, diet-related ill health, food waste and unsustainable farming practices. Our focus is on achieving strategic step change across the county."

Key Themes:

- Food Governance and Strategy: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action
- Good Food Movement: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and local good food movement
- Healthy Food For All: Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
- Sustainable Food Economy: Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Catering and Procurement: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local supply
- Food for the Planet: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and end food waste

Public Procurement of Food in the South West: opportunities and barriers to localising food supply

[https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/research/microsites/centrefor_ruralpolicyresearch/pdfs/researchreports/Public Procurement of Food in the South West.pdf](https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/research/microsites/centrefor_ruralpolicyresearch/pdfs/researchreports/Public_Procurement_of_Food_in_the_South_West.pdf)

Research conducted by University of Exeter sought to understand the South West's food supply chains and the interaction between producers and those involved in food storage and processing, large wholesalers, and public sector organisations. The City Council supports the recommendations within the report and will work with other public sector colleagues to make public sector procurement more accessible and to improve local supply chains.

Recommendations:

- Drive culture change, within and between, public organisations in the South West
- Make public procurement more accessible to regional producers and suppliers in the South West
- Support farmer focussed supply chains in the South West

- Continue to develop the South West as a test bed for national change, share findings with government and other regions, and lobby government for changes to procurement processes

National Food Strategy

<https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

The City Council has a keen interest in recommendation 14, in improving public sector food procurement, and will be working with other public sector partners to support this recommendation. The National Food Strategy recommended cutting meat consumption by 30% in a decade. The strategy is also relevant to work undertaken by Wellbeing Exeter.

Recommendations

- Escape the junk food cycle and protect the NHS
 - Recommendation 1 - Introduce a Sugar and Salt Reformulation Tax. Use some of the revenue to help get fresh fruit and vegetables to low-income families.
 - Recommendation 2 - Introduce mandatory reporting for large food companies.
 - Recommendation 3 - Launch a new “Eat and Learn” initiative for schools.
- Reduce diet-related inequality
 - Recommendation 8 - Guarantee the budget for agricultural payments until at least 2029 to help farmers transition to more sustainable land use.
 - Recommendation 9 - Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.
 - Recommendation 10 - Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.
- Make the best use of our land
 - Recommendation 11 - Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.
 - Recommendation 12 - Create a National Food System Data programme.
 - Recommendation 13 - Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.
 - Recommendation 14 - Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.

IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems

<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

Points noted in Task & Finish Group discussions:

- The food system is under pressure from non-climate stressors (population and income growth, demand for animal-sourced products), and from climate change. These stresses are impacting the four pillars of food security - availability, access, utilisation, and stability.
- Practices can contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing crop and livestock emissions, sequestering carbon in soils and biomass, and by decreasing emissions intensity within sustainable production systems.
- Consumption of healthy and sustainable diets presents major opportunities for reducing GHG emissions from food systems and improving health outcomes.
- Action to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, desertification, land degradation and food security can bring social, ecological, economic and development co-benefits. Co-benefits can contribute to poverty eradication and more resilient livelihoods for those who are vulnerable.

University of Oxford (Joseph Poore) and Agroscope (Thomas Nemecek)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325532198_Reducing_food%27s_environmental_impacts_through_producers_and_consumers

Paper on the global impacts of food production and the best ways to reduce food's environmental impacts. The paper highlights carbon emissions between meat, dairy and plant based food production.

New Economics Foundation – The Money Trail, Measuring your impact on the local economy using Local Multiplier 3 Tool

<https://www.nefconsulting.com/what-we-do/evaluation-impact-assessment/local-multiplier-3/>

Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) was developed by the New Economics Foundation as a way of measuring local economic impact. It is designed to help organisations think about how local money flows, as well as influence the public sector to consider the impact of its procurement decisions. The table below highlights the impact of buying and procuring locally, as opposed through a national organisation.

Buying Locally		Buying nationally	
80% of money stays locally		20% of money stays local	
Enters	Remains	Enters	Remains
£10.000	£8.00	£10.00	£2.00
£8.00	£6.40	£2.00	£0.40
£6.40	£5.12	£0.40	£0.08
£5.12	£4.10	£0.08	£0.00
£4.10	£3.28		