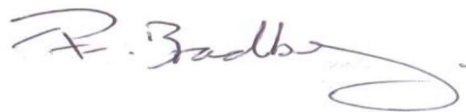


LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Update on the Plant Based Councils Movement	
REPORT OF Director of Environment and Sustainability	
FOR SUBMISSION TO The Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	DATE 14.07.2025
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report updates the committee on the progress being made towards improving the sustainability of the food provided to staff by Camden Council. It also outlines how the Camden Food Mission is providing a platform to improve the sustainability and nutritional quality of the food provided by Camden Council through decreasing meat consumption and increasing the number of plants eaten.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Polly Reynolds, Public Health Programme Lead, Health & Wellbeing Department, Email: Polly.Reynolds@Camden.gov.uk Contact no: 020 7974 1314</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Committee note the report and comment on the progress made, as part of the wider Camden Food Mission, towards increasing the sustainability of the food provided by Camden Council.</p>	



Signed:
Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 3rd July 2025

1. Purpose of Report (and Reason for Urgency)

1.1 Background and Context

This report is to update the committee on the progress being made towards improving the sustainability of the food provided to staff by Camden Council. Including the progress being made to move to a 100% plant based internal catering offer.

Camden Council were approached by the Plant Based Councils Movement via a Deputation to Full Council in August 2023. This was followed by a Deputation to the Culture and Environment Committee in December 2023. The deputation called on the council to lead the way with climate action on food by switching to 100% plant-based catering for internal meetings and events. The Plant Based Councils Movement believe this shift will enable councils to prioritise seasonal British produce, supporting farmers and normalise plant-based eating, an important step in addressing the climate and nature emergencies.

2. Other Section Headings

2.1 The Camden Picture

The goal of the Camden Food Mission is that everyone in Camden eats affordable, sustainable and nutritious food every day. The Food Mission, through its work, has been driving forward ways to increase the sustainability of the food consumed by residents and staff alike. Much of this work is focussing on creating demand side shifts in consumption. The council's main levers with which this can be achieved are through contracts such as School Food and through policy changes.

The Food Mission team are currently working to finalise a set of Food Buying Standards for Camden Council, which provide detailed guidance for all Council staff on:

- meeting National Standards and Camden's own Enhanced Standards where appropriate
- Improving Nutritional Quality and Reducing the Consumption of Ultra-processed Food
- Diet and Cultural Needs
- Reducing the Consumption of Meat and Increasing the Consumption of Plants
- Ensuring Animal Welfare Standards and Sustainability
- Reducing Food and Packaging Waste

The draft Camden Food Buying Standards provide guidance on reducing meat consumption in favour of increasing the consumption of plants. This work already demonstrates a clear direction of travel towards a significant decrease in the meat

consumed as a council and an increase in minimally processed plant consumption, which we know has both positive impacts on health as well as sustainability.

The Camden Food Buying Standards were developed through a cross council working group and in-depth consultation with those teams who will be most impacted by the adoption of the standards. The Camden Food Buying Standards are being presented for final corporate approval in Summer 2025. A policy to move to only plant based internal catering will be included as a potential area of progression within this discussion.

2.2 The National Picture

At the time of this report, 13 Councils have adopted policies to decrease meat consumption, either through a move to plant based or vegetarian catering policies. This includes the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Hackney, both adopting policies in 2020.

The London Boroughs who have adopted a plant based internal catering policy have reported wide ranging benefits which often stem from starting conversations around what makes food sustainable, including food miles, seasonal eating, plastic and single use packaging, food waste, water usage etc. Other benefits have been boosting the local food economy, engaging with local businesses and helping the development of small and emerging businesses. These boroughs have experienced a limited number of complaints about the change in the food provided, none of which have been sustained.

2.3 The Policy Proposal

When considering the progression of the Camden Food Buying Standards to include a move to a plant-based internal catering policy the proposed wording is being developed from the policies adopted and successfully implemented by other Local Authorities around the country.

The broad policy proposal would be for the catering provision at all London Borough of Camden internal meetings to be 100% plant based.

This policy would not impact on food purchased by staff for their own consumption or drinks, however, plant-based alternatives to milk would continue to be provided.

2.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been completed and reviewed by the Equalities and Disproportionality Team. We are now working through areas of the assessment to ensure that the impact of any policy change is mitigated.

2.5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Moving to plant based internal catering would support the Councils work, through the Food Mission, to improve both the nutritional quality and sustainability of the food purchased.

It is possible that there will be many associated benefits including raising awareness and stimulating conversation and curiosity around sustainability and boosting the Camden small business sector.

3. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report.

4. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Borough Solicitor's department has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report.

5. Environmental Implications

This proposed policy change is envisaged to have positive environmental impact.

Reducing the consumption of meat and other animal products, through a plant-based diet, is one way to cut green-house gas emissions and reduce the Council's carbon footprint. Contributing to the Council's net-zero pledge and the Food Mission goals of everyone in Camden consuming sustainable food every day by 2030.

REPORT ENDS