

County Council – 18th July 2023

Public Question Time

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Councillor Chris Seaton Fenland District Council	Councillor Alex Beckett Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	What action will Cambridgeshire County Council take to rectify the appalling state of road-markings (such as single and double yellow lines) and on-street parking restriction signs in Fenland, where a recent report by the County Council's contractor indicated that more than 90% of the signs and markings are no longer legally compliant and therefore not legally enforceable.
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Councillor Chris Seaton Fenland District Council	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
2.	Dr Sara Lightowlers	Councillor Richard Howitt Chair of Adults and Health Committee	<p>Good morning. My name is Sara Lightowlers, and I've been a doctor in the NHS for 13 years - I'm now an oncologist and cancer researcher. I also have two children, the older of whom is starting school in Cambridge this September.</p> <p>I'm worried for the future for my children. The climate and ecological emergencies threaten the security of our society, and meanwhile the UK is becoming a more difficult and less healthy place to live, and life expectancy is faltering. Our food system is at the centre of three global crises: health, climate, and ecology.</p>

Globally around 1 million cancer deaths per year are due to a poor-quality diet with 20 million years lost in disability and premature death. Cancer Research UK states that healthier diets could prevent 1 in 20 cancers which is 50 new cases per day in the UK. Yet when surveyed, the public are unaware of the extent of the impact of diet and lifestyle factors on cancer risk, with less than 50% being aware that processed red meat is a direct cause of cancer and that fruit, vegetables and fibre are protective. Poor diet starts from an early age - almost a third of children aged 5-10 eat less than one portion of vegetables per day, predisposing them to health problems in future. We need to encourage people to eat more plants!

The science is clear that meat and dairy are major contributors to the climate and ecological emergencies. In the UK, the food system contributes around 19% of human made greenhouse gas emissions. The biggest part of this is agriculture due to the nitrous oxide and methane emissions from livestock. There have been substantial evidence-based recommendations calling for a move away from meat and dairy, with the National Food Strategy concluding that public organisations need to lead the way.

Councils around the UK are taking action to promote the benefits of healthy plant-based eating & to help normalise it. Some councils have committed to ensure that any food & drink that may occasionally be provided at council meetings & events will be plant-based. Waltham Forest Council worked with their school catering provider to launch a new eco-friendly and nutritious menu, which has won national awards. Other councils are increasing, improving & promoting the plant-based options on menus at leisure centres, care homes, and cafes in parks and libraries over which they have influence. Oxford City Council is working with local organisations to establish a plant-based free food service, tackling the climate crisis & food poverty in one. It is also working with local farmers to encourage & support the production of more local plant-based produce. Manchester City Council has used billboards around the city encouraging people to eat more plant-based. Several London boroughs have used social media to promote the health, environmental & cost saving benefits of eating more plant-based meals.

There are many, many ways that, as a local authority, you can encourage, support and enable people to make healthier, more sustainable food choices ... my question is, what will you do?

	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Richard Howitt Chair of Adults and Health Committee	Dr Sara Lightowlers	To be provided at the meeting.