



QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 5 September 2024

**1. Question from Cathy Mudge (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Safeguarding and DCC Website**

I am following up from my 3+ minute talk and my letter to the council about Safeguarding concerns regarding their website and implementation of their own Safeguarding recommendations to schools regarding children who identify as Transgender.

I have spoken about the Safeguarding fail of Devon County Council website advise for children and young people identifying as Trans, I have sent the documents that explain why this is an issue.

Will Devon County Council accept this is a Safeguarding issue and take appropriate action ?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Thank you for providing the documents that you have referred to, we have reviewed them and taken any relevant action. We take our duty for Safeguarding very seriously and we have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. As a Council, we publish and follow the governments most recent guidance.

The NHS has lead responsibility for referrals for children, young people and their families in gender incongruence or dysphoria. As a partner, where a child, young person or their family reaches out for help to the NHS, it would be incumbent on the NHS, through their work with an individual, to report any safeguarding concerns on a case-by-case basis.

If you have specific evidence of a risk to safety of a child or young person, these must be raised through the appropriate tried and tested channels which are available to everyone in the community. We and our partners are committed to thoroughly investigating any safeguarding risk to an individual that is reported to us, which is the appropriate and proportionate action under current guidelines.

**2. Question from David Endicott (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Safeguarding practices of Devon County Council**

I have previously raised concerns about the safeguarding practices of Devon County Council regarding the funding of LGBTQ+ organisations in Devon.

From 2020-22, the DCC granted over £18,000.00 to Intercom Trust and Proud2Be. In light of the Cass Review, the impending closure of the GIDS Clinic at the Tavistock and the pending legal cases against hospitals, surgeons, doctors and psychiatrists involved in gender reassignment surgery on vulnerable and underage youths, I would like to know what DCC is doing to make sure there is proper safeguarding for children in Devon who are making use of services provided by Intercom Trust and Proud2Be.

I'm a gay man who cares deeply that children are not subjected to bullying. I also care deeply that children who are only just starting to learn about themselves must not be encouraged down a road that is likely to end with them being sterilised and rendered anorgasmic. Children need time to grow up and they most certainly should not be told they were born in the wrong body. I'm also not happy that LGBTQ+ organisations in Devon are holding club events where 25-year-olds are able to mix with 13-year-olds. As I said to the DCC in my statement at the AGM earlier this year, no person in their 20s should be mixing with a child in their early teens. This is a clear safeguarding risk.

Please, can you tell me what the DCC is doing to ensure that vulnerable children are not being encouraged down a road that could lead to a lifetime of regret, a lifetime that is likely to be shorter than it would have been if they had been left alone? Lifespans are shortened by endocrine disruption, health is ruined by puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones and the suicide risk does not fall after gender reassignment surgery. The stats are all there to be found online. Safeguarding is imperative.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The NHS has lead responsibility for referrals for children, young people and their families in gender incongruence or dysphoria. As a partner, it would be incumbent on them, through their work with an individual, to report any safeguarding concerns on a case-by-case basis.

The NHS has recently outlined how it is implementing the recommendations of the Cass Review and we will work with them to ensure that we align any appropriate actions. [NHS England » Children and young people's gender services: implementing the Cass Review recommendations](#)

As a Council, and a Member of the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership, we have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. We ensure that schools and all of our partners who work with children and young people follow the guidance provided.

We will respond appropriately to any changes in legislation or guidance made by the new government.

You have made some non-specific allegations about events organised within the LGBTQ+ community. If you have specific information relating to the safety of a child or young person, we have clear safeguarding processes in place. The contact number for our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is 0345 155 1071. In addition, if

anyone is concerned about an adult working with children and young people, then the please inform the Local Authority Designated Officer, on 01392 384964.

3. Question from Dr Philip Sleight (IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: IPCC recommendations regarding reduced meat and dairy consumption

In response to the accelerating climate crisis, both the IPCC and official government advisers recommend that consumption of meat and dairy should be significantly reduced. How does Devon County Council plan to follow this recommendation? And how will the county farms and others locally be supported to transition to plant-based production?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

The UK Climate Change Committee's 'Balanced Net-Zero Pathway' envisages a 35% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2050ⁱ. This will be a continuation of existing UK trends - the consumption of meat and milk has declined by 17%ⁱⁱ and 11%ⁱⁱⁱ respectively between 2008 to 2019.

The Devon Carbon Plan contains actions to enable people to choose a healthy and sustainably-produced diet, and support farmers with the transition who are fundamental to Devon's identity and food production.^{iv} Devon County Council (DCC) is helping to implement a number of these actions.

For example, the authority:

- Provides plant-based options in its staff eateries and on Mondays all options in its schools are plant based, to ensure a varied diet.
- Convened the Devon Food Partnership that has since produced the Devon Food Strategy, which aligns with the Devon Carbon Plan.^v
- Has been awarded funding to deliver the Future Farming Resilience Project. This is providing free, expert advice to farming businesses to access environmental land management schemes (ELMS).^{vi} ELMS replace previous farming subsidies to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and net-zero ambitions.
- Runs the Devon Agri-Tech Alliance^{vii}. This is a community of research organisations, tech developers, farmers and other agricultural businesses that is collaborating on the research and piloting of practical and relevant innovations in land management and food production that is fit for the future.
- Devised the Agri-Innovation programme that is working with 58 farms (five of which will be County Farms) to implement regenerative and innovative practices which promote healthy soil and reduce carbon emissions. An advisor will work with each business to undertake a thorough farm innovation opportunities study, carbon audit and business plan.

All County Farm tenants are able to access these sector-support initiatives. DCC is presently commissioning research into how the County Farms Estate can best

build resilience to the impacts of climate change and maximise future opportunities presented by a changing food and farming sector.

**4. Question from Catherine Sleigh (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Plant Based Food in Climate Action Plans and Prioritisation Thereof**

Climate scientists tell us that Plant Based eating is the most sustainable food choice.

As our elected leaders you have a responsibility to promote Plant Based food in your climate action plans and to champion change. How will the Council prioritise Plant Based and show residents that it is delicious, nutritious and cost effective?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

The UK Climate Change Committee's 'Balanced Net-Zero Pathway' envisages a 35% reduction in meat and dairy consumption by 2050^{viii}. This will be a continuation of existing UK trends - the consumption of meat and milk has declined by 17%^{ix} and 11%^x respectively between 2008 to 2019.

The Devon Carbon Plan contains actions to enable people to choose a healthy diet. However this has to be a transition that supports farmers, who are fundamental to Devon's identity, to continue producing food, and so the Plan contains actions to support the food production sector as well.^{xi} Devon County Council (DCC) is helping to implement a number of these actions.

For example, the authority:

- Provides plant-based options in its staff eateries and on Mondays all options in its schools are plant based, to ensure a varied diet.
- Convened the Devon Food Partnership that has since produced the Devon Food Strategy, which aligns with the Devon Carbon Plan.^{xii}
- Provides hints and tips via its environment and health-related newsletters and social media outlets about meal planning, cooking simple meals and selecting seasonal and sustainably-produced food.
- Has been awarded funding to deliver the Future Farming Resilience Project. This is providing free, expert advice to farming businesses to access environmental land management schemes (ELMS).^{xiii} ELMS replace previous farming subsidies to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and net-zero ambitions.
- Runs the Devon Agri-Tech Alliance^{xiv}. This is a community of research organisations, tech developers, farmers and other agricultural businesses that is collaborating on the research and piloting of practical and relevant innovations in land management and food production that is fit for the future.
- Devised the Agri-Innovation programme that is working with 58 farms to implement regenerative and innovative practices which promote healthy soil and reduce carbon emissions. An advisor will work with each business

to undertake a thorough farm innovation opportunities study, carbon audit and business plan.

**5. Question from Marilyn Lant (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Floating bus stops**

I would like to express concern about the floating bus stop which has recently been installed in Rifford Road in Exeter at a two way cycleway. It isn't safe for disabled people and I would like to propose an alternative solution suggested by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

All bus stops along Rifford Road are being retained within the cycle route scheme, with the three bus stops on the eastern side of Rifford Road designed as 'floating' bus stops. Floating Bus stops are designed to keep people cycling separate from vehicles as well as from people waiting at bus stops and walking on footways, improving safety for all road users. They will provide space for people to alight from buses before crossing the segregated cycle track, with tactile paving used to highlight crossing points to blind or partially-sighted people.

A public consultation was held in 2022 when the scheme proposals were first introduced, and in May 2023 County Council officers invited representatives of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Living Options to further discuss the scheme including detail on floating bus stops. The RNIB representative who attended the meeting supported the scheme proposals as it offered kerbed segregation for pedestrians and cyclists.

ⁱ Committee on Climate Change, December 2020, The Sixth Carbon Budget The UK's path to Net Zero. Available at: [The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf)

ⁱⁱ Stewart, C. *et al.* (2021) Trends in UK meat consumption: analysis of data from years 1–11 (2008–09 to 2018–19) of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey rolling programme. *Lancet Planet Health*, 5, e699 – 708. Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00228-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00228-X)

ⁱⁱⁱ Defra (2022) *Family Food Datasets 19/20 – UK Household Purchases*. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/family-food-datasets

^{iv} Devon Climate Emergency, September 2022, The Devon Carbon Plan. Available at: [Devon Carbon Plan – Devon Climate Emergency](https://www.devon.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-plans/devon-carbon-plan)

^v Devon Food Partnership, 2023, Devon's Good Food Strategy 2023 -2028. Available at: [Food strategy - Devon Food Partnership](https://www.devon.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-plans/devon-food-partnership)

^{vi} Farming Future Resilience, [Future Farming Resilience - Economy, enterprise and skills \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-plans/farming-future-resilience)

^{vii} Devon Agri-Teach Alliance, [Devon Agri-Tech Alliance \(DATA\) - Economy, enterprise and skills](https://www.devon.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-plans/devon-agri-tech-alliance)

^{viii} Committee on Climate Change, December 2020, The Sixth Carbon Budget The UK's path to Net Zero. Available at: [The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf)

^{ix} Stewart, C. *et al.* (2021) Trends in UK meat consumption: analysis of data from years 1–11 (2008–09 to 2018–19) of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey rolling programme. *Lancet Planet Health*, 5, e699 – 708. Available at: [doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00228-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00228-X)

^x Defra (2022) *Family Food Datasets 19/20 – UK Household Purchases*. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/family-food-datasets

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- ^{xi} Devon Climate Emergency, September 2022, The Devon Carbon Plan. Available at: [Devon Carbon Plan – Devon Climate Emergency](#)
- ^{xii} Devon Food Partnership, 2023, Devon’s Good Food Strategy 2023 -2028. Available at: [Food strategy - Devon Food Partnership](#)
- ^{xiii} Farming Future Resilience, [Future Farming Resilience - Economy, enterprise and skills \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)
- ^{xiv} Devon Agri-Teach Alliance, [Devon Agri-Tech Alliance \(DATA\) - Economy, enterprise and skills](#)