



Media Release

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SHOULD HARROGATE DISTRICT BE GM FREE?

A public meeting is to be held as part of Harrogate Borough Council's investigations into GM food

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission has arranged for the meeting to be held on 30 November at 7.00 pm in the Sun Pavilion, Cornwall Road, Harrogate. Although interested groups have been invited, including the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, the Chair of the Commission is issuing an invitation to the wider general public who may be interested in this issue.

In June this year, Friends of The Earth requested the council to adopt a policy to ensure that no GM crops are grown on land over which it has control; that all goods and services for which it is responsible are GM free; and to declare that the Harrogate district be a GM Free Zone.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Health, Councillor Les Ellington, has asked the Scrutiny Commission to undertake an investigation into issues surrounding GM food before the council takes a formal decision.

Speakers on the night will include Professor Vivian Moses, Visiting Professor of Biology at the University College of London and Director of the Centre for Genetic Anthropology; and Emily Diamand from Friends of the Earth, Leeds.

At the conclusion of its full investigations, the Commission will be giving a view to the council on whether a policy decision should be taken for it to become a GM free council.

As part of the process, they have been seeking evidence from other authorities, including the government's position and seeking legal advice regarding the implications of any possible recommendations which may be made to council.

Information has been sought from the National Farmers' Union and other interested bodies. **ENDS**

FURTHER INFORMATION about the meeting is available from Mr Mark Codman, Scrutiny Officer on 01423 556153. Councillor Heather Adderley, Chair of the Commission is available for comment on 01423 525443.