

# Leeds Food Strategy

Our plan to work towards a better food future for all



## About the Leeds Food Strategy

The Leeds Food Strategy sets out our vision for the future of how we produce, consume, and dispose of food across the local authority district.

**At the heart of this strategy is our vision for Leeds to have a vibrant food economy where everyone can access local, healthy, and affordable food that is produced in ways that improve our natural environment and embrace new techniques and technologies.**

This means that we believe the foods that we eat should reflect our rich and diverse culture, nourish our social connections, enhance our physical and mental well-being, and make our lives better. It means that our food system should enable people, producers, and our planet to prosper. The Leeds Food Strategy sets out what the local authority area can do to work towards this better food future for all.

We will work towards our vision by focusing on three core missions. These missions have been designed to complement our [Best City Ambition](#), whilst also demonstrating how Leeds will work collaboratively to support the aims of the [Government Food Strategy](#) and [independent National Food Strategy](#).

# Achieving our vision: our food missions

## Health and wellbeing



Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing through eating well.

[Find out more about our plan around health and wellbeing](#)

## Food security and economy



Working to give everyone in Leeds access to nutritious food as part of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant food economy.

[Find out more about our plan around food security and economy.](#)

### **Sustainability and resilience**



Ensuring Leeds' food system is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan.

[Find out more about our plan around sustainability and resilience](#)

### **Why we need a Leeds Food Strategy:**

An introduction by Cllr. Abigail Marshall-Katung, Food Champion at Leeds City Council & Gareth Batty MBE FRSA, CEO at FareShare Yorkshire.

“Wherever you go in the city, you’ll see that food is central to life in Leeds.

“Food sustains both lives and livelihoods. It nourishes and reflects our rich and diverse culture. No matter where in the world you come from, you’ll be able to enjoy a taste of home here in Leeds. Whether you’re looking for Michelin-recommended fine dining or a little-known independent gem of an eatery, Leeds has a lot of good things on the menu.

“Food plays an important role in our economy too. Thousands of Leeds businesses employ tens of thousands of local workers in the production, selling, and serving food. The city’s vibrant food sector

supports our thriving visitor economy. It's really no wonder that we've sometimes been called [the Foodie Capital of the North](#).

"Yet while we have plenty to celebrate, we must acknowledge that too many people in Leeds struggle to put good food on the table. Everybody should be able to access and afford nutritious food. Nobody should ever have to choose between heating or eating, yet this is the grim reality sadly facing many people that we work with today. Across the UK, the number of people in relative poverty is increasing and has been for more than 10 years. Even before the pandemic, it is estimated that 174,000 Leeds residents lived in relative poverty. Industry data shows that food prices are inflating faster than wages and that those on the lowest incomes are being hit the hardest. Non-financial barriers (like living far away from places that sell affordable, nutritious food) also make the problems of food insecurity worse for many. Paradoxically, however, we collectively throw huge amounts of good food away—enough to almost fill one in three rubbish bins collected by the council.

"When good food is affordable and conveniently available, our health and wellbeing thrives. By helping more people in Leeds to eat a healthy, nutritious diet that aligns with the [NHS recommended EatWell guidelines](#), we can save lives and improve quality of life for thousands of people. And because foods that are good for us tend to be better for the planet too, doing so will accelerate our journey to become a net zero city.

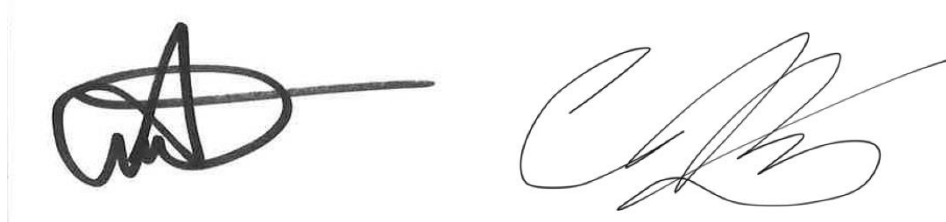
"Until the causes of global warming are addressed worldwide, our climate will continue to change and impact harvests everywhere. Climate change will therefore make our economic and health challenges harder to address unless we grow and source foods in a more sustainable and resilient way. British farmers will continue to produce most of the food we eat in the future, but they must be supported as they transition to more sustainable and climate-resilient practices. Leeds City Council has pledged to, by 2030, reduce the carbon footprint of the food it sells or serves in half, and is the first local authority in the country to make any carbon related food commitments. Leeds City Council has also signed the [Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration](#), reiterating its commitment to taking local action on food and climate.

"Local efforts are already making a real difference. Organisations like FareShare Yorkshire help: in the last year they provided more than 4.2 million meals across the region, preventing nearly 1,800 tonnes of food from going to waste and helping families. But FareShare Yorkshire is just one of many fantastic charities and community groups. Since 2017, FoodWise Leeds has brought together many of these local charities and policy makers to address some of the city's big challenges and to pursue a better food system. Their amazing efforts—supported by the council—has already seen Leeds given the [Sustainable Food Places 'Bronze' Award](#).

"All of these issues that we've mentioned above are challenges which this ambitious Leeds Food Strategy seeks to address. This strategy includes policies and initiatives to build on our past successes and move towards a local food system that is better for people, producers, and our planet. It's laid out across three, mission-driven, interlinked sections that tackle each challenge in turn.

“Across the whole document, you’ll see our commitment to abide by three fundamental principles: collaboration across the city’s food system, use of local insight and evidence as the basis for solutions, and the transparent monitoring and evaluation of our work.

“We believe that the Leeds Food Strategy is a recipe for success, but we’ll need the support of the whole city to turn our ambitious vision into a reality. We hope you’ll join us.”



**Cllr. Abigail Marshall-Katung** | Official Food Champion, Leeds City Council

**Gareth Batty MBE FRSA** | Chief Executive Officer, Fareshare Yorkshire

## **Delivering the strategy:**

The Leeds Food Strategy has been co-developed by Leeds City Council and FoodWise Leeds.

FoodWise Leeds formed in 2017 as the city’s food partnership to create a healthy, sustainable, and fair food system for everyone in Leeds. The partnership is made up of representatives from the third sector, academia, business, and the council.

Leeds City Council and FoodWise Leeds will work in partnership to oversee the review and development of the annual Leeds Food Action Plan that will be key to the strategy’s delivery from now until 2030. They will also share and present an update detailing the Plan’s progress every year at a public meeting of Leeds City Council.

## **How this strategy was developed:**

The Leeds Food Strategy has been co-produced with individuals and representatives from third sector organisations, business, academia, the public sector and the council to create a shared vision for putting healthy, sustainable, and fair food as central to the city’s success.

More than 70 stakeholders from the local food system gathered in 2022 to share their knowledge and collectively develop a vision for what our local food system should look like to help address some of

the city's biggest challenges. Attendees also celebrated Leeds' many successes such as community gardens and farming initiatives, the support of community food aid projects, the vibrant independent food businesses, and the support for children and families offered through the [Healthy Holidays programme](#).

Following this meeting, working groups were set up, each co-chaired by both an independent organisation and a council representative, to represent and develop each of the three strategic 'missions' of the strategy into the format you see today.

Organisations that contributed to the Leeds Food Strategy steering group include:

- [Fareshare Yorkshire](#)
- [Food Aid Network](#)
- [FoodWise Leeds](#)
- Leeds City Council
- [Rethink Food](#)
- [University of Leeds](#)

The Leeds Food Strategy also incorporates the [six key issues assessed as part of the Sustainable Food Places award scheme](#). Our aim is for Leeds to achieve the Silver award in 2023 and the Gold award in subsequent years.

A public consultation was held between October and December 2022 which incorporated an online questionnaire, public meetings, and face-to-face engagement. More than 90% of respondents to the questionnaire agreed with the vision and missions of the strategy.

Even though we are no longer consulting on the Leeds Food Strategy, we are always interested to hear feedback and suggestions. Further comments can be submitted by emailing [LeedsFoodStrategy@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:LeedsFoodStrategy@leeds.gov.uk)

## **Get involved:**

We believe that the Leeds Food Strategy is a recipe for a better local food system, but we'll need the support of communities, businesses and decision makers across the city to turn our vision into a reality. Every action counts.

**Take action to make our food system better**

Whether you're a Leeds resident, a food business owner or part of a local organisation, discover easy ways to become FoodWise and take action to help us create a healthy, sustainable and fair food system for our city, that tackles social, economic and environmental issues. There's plenty of ways for you to [take action and be more FoodWise](#).

**Talk to someone about this strategy**

The more people know about the Leeds Food Strategy, the bigger an impact that it can have. If you think that our approach is interesting, we'd love you to share this strategy with your friends and networks—and encourage more people to get involved.

# Leeds Food Strategy: Health and wellbeing

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in our city through eating well.



## Why it is important

Food is essential for health and wellbeing.

Eating good, healthy, and nutritious food helps to keep us well, protecting both our physical and mental wellbeing.

Knowing and understanding what to eat, along with the practical skills needed to prepare healthy and balanced food are all skills that we believe should be universal.

There are many influences that affect what we eat daily. Evidence shows that our environment and living conditions are key to this. Good food might be less visible, harder to afford or access. These conditions are not equally experienced and are often related to existing inequalities present in our city.

We can improve health and wellbeing by working together to find solutions, remove barriers, improve quality of life, become more socially connected and less lonely through food.

By supporting and creating the conditions that allow more of us to eat healthy, nutritious and tasty food the Leeds Foods Strategy aims to give children in Leeds the best possible start and help everyone to live healthy, independent lives for longer.



Food choices that are good for us tends to be better for the planet too. Meeting these objectives will accelerate our city's journey to net zero—reducing the future health impacts that we know climate change will cause.

## **Our plan:**

### **Objective 1: Ensure people of all ages know how to access, prepare, and eat food that supports health and wellbeing.**



The first step to eating well is understanding what to eat, how much of it, and having the practical skills required to buy and prepare good food. This understanding also needs to be tailored to an individual's culture, faith, income, community, and stage of life.

The NHS-recommended Eatwell guide shows how much of different food groups are needed to achieve healthy, and balanced eating—except where a health professional has advised otherwise. Other tools, such as the [School Food Plan](#) and [5 A Day campaign](#), also exist. Understanding and having an awareness of these recommendations are some of the first steps to eating healthier. This will need to be considered across the different stages of life. For example, the importance of promoting breastfeeding and nutrition in the early years.

We will work across sectors to create more opportunities to develop and learn the skills needed to eat healthier. This could include meal planning, budgeting and food preparation. We can raise awareness of how to access support for healthier eating across our city, enabling the opportunity and capability to achieve EatWell guide recommendations.

#### **Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Working across sectors to improve knowledge and awareness of Eatwell recommendations and adapting these to individual lives.
- 2) Working across sectors to give people the skills and opportunities to overcome barriers to buying, preparing, and eating healthy, nutritious, and affordable food.

### **Objective 2: Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating**



Alongside working with partners, community-led initiatives will have a vital role to play in furthering the objectives of the Leeds Food Strategy.

They enable people to develop cooking skills, grow food, and share food as part of activities like cooking skills, luncheon, and family clubs. They also bring people within communities together, which has huge social benefits.

There are already many great community-led initiatives taking place across Leeds. Further collaboration and community involvement will be key to building on these initiatives as we move forwards. We will work together to identify new funding opportunities and learn from what has worked well.

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Raising awareness of, and celebrating, community-led food initiatives in Leeds and the impact they have.
- 2) Supporting community-led food initiatives to identify new funding opportunities
- 3) Encouraging and enabling better co-ordination and sharing of best practice between groups.

**Objective 3: Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing**



Our environment influences what we eat. There are many opportunities to improve our environment to make healthy eating easier and more accessible. For some of us, good food is less visible and might be harder to access. It is important that we all have opportunities to eat well and diversely in our daily lives. Healthy food options should be readily available and affordable wherever we live, work, study, and relax.

Organisations and businesses advertising, providing, or selling food have a role in promoting and offering affordable, healthy, and nutritious food more prominently—creating more demand for good food. Those buying, making, or serving food could adopt the best practice [Government Buying Standards for Food](#) to make their food healthier, higher quality, and more sustainable.

Workplaces—where many of us spend a lot of our time—should also recognise their key role. In many workplaces, information and access to healthy food can be limited and this impacts people's ability to consume a healthier diet.

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Work with interested businesses and organisations that provide or sell food to encourage them to prepare and promote healthy and nutritious food more prominently. Leeds City Council will lead by example within its own venues.
- 2) Work with employers to recognise their role in helping to create a food environment that improves access to, and encourages, healthy eating.
- 3) Explore opportunities to advertise and promote healthier and sustainable eating.

**Objective 4: Offer targeted support to those of us who are most at risk**



Healthy eating is important for everyone, but some of us are more at risk of developing health conditions and require additional support. Malnutrition is a major driver of diet-related health conditions including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease (heart diseases), stroke, and some

cancers. Living with these conditions can be life changing and lead to premature death. Managing them costs our NHS more than £6 billion per year.

We can reduce diet-related deaths, improve the quality of life for those diagnosed, and save NHS resources by offering targeted support to help people most likely to develop these diseases. These 'at risk' individuals include those experiencing food insecurity or who live in a more deprived area.

**Actions to support this objective:**

1) Continuing to invest in prevention and treatment programmes that reduce the impact of diet-related ill health in the people most at risk.

## **Objective 5: Develop a skilled local workforce who advocate for healthier eating**



Many organisations in Leeds already promote information on eating well, but this can sometimes be complex due to the variety of information sources available. We also need to ensure the wider influences on healthy eating such as culture, income, and environment are always considered and addressed.

By developing a local workforce with all the skills necessary to advocate for, promote, and support healthier eating, we can empower professionals to have an even greater impact.

We believe that workforce development should include providing consistent information and support which is tailored to their audience and appropriate for their role.

Training opportunities shouldn't be provided in isolation. Workers should also be equipped to identify and support opportunities that influence behaviour such as changing the food environment where they work.

**Actions to support this objective:**

1) Providing a range of training opportunities that enable the local workforce to deliver consistent, holistic, and evidence-based support on healthier eating.

## Leeds Food Strategy: Food security and economy

Our mission is to ensure we can all access affordable, nutritious food as part of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant food economy.



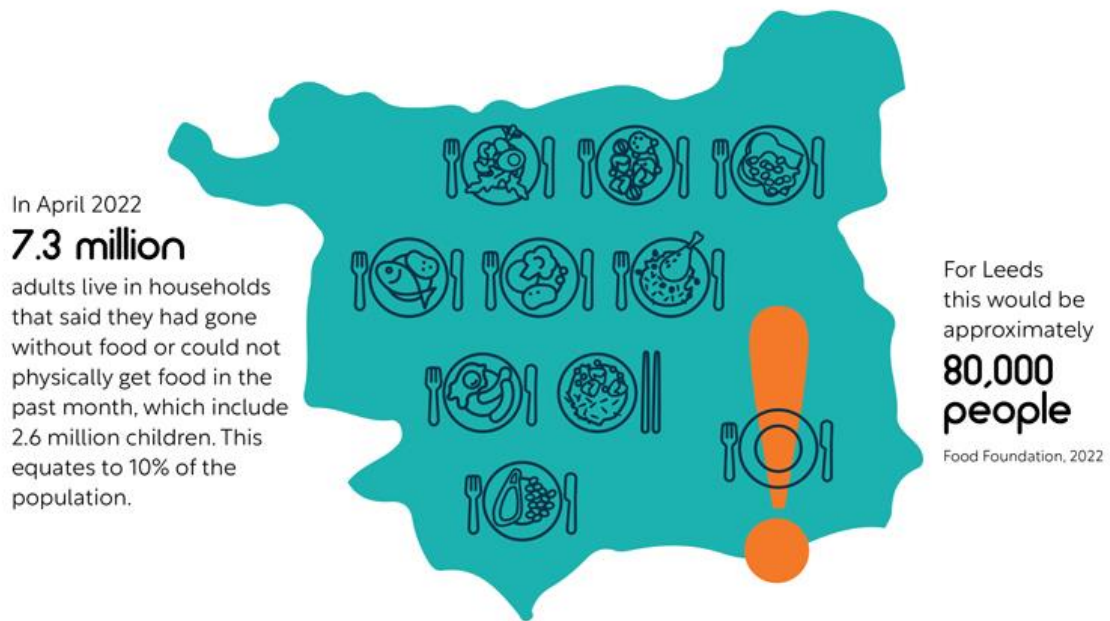
### Why it is important

Food security is our ability to access food, pay for it, and prepare nutritious meals.

Having food security allows us to contribute economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally to society. It is essential to the foundations of a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable economy. Tackling

poverty, inequality and improving the quality of life for all of us is at the heart of the Leeds Food Strategy.

Increasing numbers of us are experiencing poverty, and Leeds is no different, too many of us struggle to put food on the table. Local charities, community groups together with the council are already making a real difference every day to help those most in need.



Despite this, food bank use is currently at an all-time high after an unacceptable and unsustainable year-on-year increase. Programmes to distribute food aid and give emergency food parcels will continue offering a lifesaving service, but we shouldn't have to rely on these services to get by.

Ultimately we need to tackle the causes of food insecurity and not just its impacts. This means helping to ensure that more of us can and know how to physically access, afford, and prepare healthy nutritious food—without compromising our ability to meet other basic needs.

As part of this mission, we also need to do everything we can to help more of us become financially secure and independent. We can support our vibrant food sector (every business and organisation involved in the growing, production, cooking, serving, or selling of food in Leeds) to grow and help them to embrace new and better ways of producing, selling, and serving food. By choosing local and regional food producers more often for what we eat, we help local businesses to create more jobs and keep more money within Yorkshire. A successful, innovative, and diverse economy is one that it is fair, pays well, and works for all of us. By choosing local and regional food producers more often for what we eat we help local businesses to create more jobs and keep more money within Yorkshire.

By working together with partners across the city to reduce food insecurity and grow an inclusive food economy, the Leeds Food Strategy aims to improve the quality of life and financial resilience of Leeds households. We're proud that Leeds has some of the best food in the country and with our plans,

many more of us will be able to enjoy more of it.

## **Our plan:**

### **Objective 1: Tackle factors limiting people's ability to afford the food they need.**



Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, pay hadn't been keeping up with the rising cost of living and many people had little job security. Currently around 20% of Leeds employees earn below the real living wage.

On top of that, public sector funding cuts and welfare reform has reduced much of the support available to people in poverty. Barriers including a lack of awareness or difficulties accessing financial support prevents some residents from receiving what they do qualify for.

All of these factors combine to mean that fewer people can afford good food, which is the biggest expenditure for households after housing, fuel, and energy. Official statistics show that low-income households spent much more of their earnings (18%) on food than the average household (13%) in 2021, and this trend is expected to have worsened since.

To tackle the root causes of food insecurity, we need to reduce poverty and economic inequalities. We need to encourage more organisations to pay the real living wage and help businesses (including in our food sector) to create good new jobs that mean more people can live happier and healthier lives.

#### **Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Championing actions and initiatives that help address poverty and food insecurity, including fair wages and financial support.
- 2) Raising awareness of how residents can increase their incomes, including helping them to access

any financial support they may qualify for.

3) Developing and sustaining programmes that improve access to healthy food for people on low incomes.

4) Ensure food security and poverty are considered when developing local plans and policies.

## **Objective 2: Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives**



With more people experiencing food insecurity and sometimes having to choose between heating and eating, rising numbers of people are turning to food aid services.

Local organisations are making a real difference to help those most in need, often working in partnership with the council. Leeds has a wide range of food aid provision available including emergency support via food banks, the [Local Welfare Support Scheme](#), food pantries, and community cafes. In 2021, it is estimated that more than 64,000 food parcels were distributed via food aid providers.

We believe that food aid provision could be even more helpful if providers in Leeds were better connected with each other and with financial advice or support services. We could also improve these services if they were made more inclusive of cultural and dietary requirements.

### **Actions to support this objective:**

1) Working together with partners to improve, and make more inclusive, affordable food initiatives so that everyone can access the help they need.

2) Connecting food aid providers with other free, impartial, and confidential support services to help residents access information and support to prepare and afford healthy meals.

3) Developing and promoting a new Leeds Food Aid Charter setting out consistent key principles and best practice for local food aid providers to follow.



### **Objective 3: Continue to build a strong partnership approach across all sectors and with the people of Leeds.**



Leeds prides itself on its well-established partnership approach to tackling food insecurity. Currently this includes Leeds Food Aid Network which brings together a wide range of food aid organisations—including FareShare Yorkshire, Rethink Food and FoodWise Leeds—all working in collaboration with the council, universities, businesses and the third sector.

This partnership approach increases awareness, efficiency, and effectiveness of all the good work being done across the city. It was crucial throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when Leeds providers experienced an unprecedented demand for emergency food aid.

We need to continue building and strengthening this collaborative, partnership approach across every sector and with the people of Leeds to unite efforts towards the missions of the Leeds Food Strategy.

#### **Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Developing the Food Aid Network and Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce to raise awareness of our approach to food aid and improve citywide coordination and collaboration.
- 2) Ensuring public participation in, and engagement with, the Leeds Food Strategy.
- 3) Work with organisations to promote goods and services from local producers.
- 4) Working in partnership with the public, voluntary, education and private sector to collaborate on actions that further the objectives of the Leeds Food Strategy.

### **Objective 4: Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.**



By supporting retail, food and drink, and social entrepreneurs to start-up and grow successful businesses we can facilitate inclusive growth within our local economy. This means creating new and better jobs, contributing towards reduced poverty and inequality in the city, and nurturing the food culture we want.

We can support businesses by connecting them to relevant advice and help entrepreneurs to start up, grow, and develop innovative businesses. We can also explore and support new opportunities for innovative and sustainable food production.



**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Helping food businesses grow and support jobs by connecting them to relevant support and advice.
- 2) Working to create and expand pathways to market for locally produced food.
- 3) Promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local

food sector.

4) Supporting innovation and research that promotes the viability of local food enterprises.

### **Objective 5: Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city—celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.**



Leeds offers one of the best independent restaurant, café and bar scenes in the country.

We enjoy a diverse and innovative food hospitality sector featuring everything from world-class fine dining to mouth-watering street food. You can enjoy familiar cuisines from all over the world or sample something new here in Leeds. We're proud of our impressive food heritage too.

This varied food offer supports Leeds' thriving visitor economy by helping to draw people and investment into the city and supporting inclusive economic growth. In turn, this generates opportunities for creative, enthusiastic food and drink entrepreneurs to launch and grow their businesses in the city. The many independent food businesses in Leeds help keep money circulating within our local economy.

Food is widely celebrated in Leeds through a variety of festivals and community led events. All across the city, food pop-ups, farmers markets, cookery classes can be enjoyed throughout the year. We will continue to build on what Leeds already does well to support the city's local food economy. We will proudly celebrate our food culture, heritage, and diversity, and work to raise the city's profile as a vibrant food city.

#### **Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Working with the food sector to increase visitor demand for local food and drink across the city.
- 2) Celebrating the culture and diversity of Leeds by promoting the local food offer available in different parts of the city.
- 3) Champion the economic, social, and environmental benefits of consuming locally and sustainably produced foods to residents, businesses and institutions.

# Leeds Food Strategy: Sustainability and Resilience

Our mission is to ensure the way Leeds produces, consumes, and disposes of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan.



## Why it is important

Our climate is changing. Warmer temperatures, changing rain patterns, and more extreme weather events are already affecting food security across the world—and will increasingly do so until global climate action means that the amount of planet-warming gases in our atmosphere begins to decrease.

Leeds has declared a climate emergency and, as part of [our climate action plan](#), the council's ambition is to achieve net zero carbon emissions as quickly as possible and to boost our city's resilience to the changing climate.

Yet as well as being vulnerable to the impacts of climate change our food system is also partly responsible, currently accounting for around one-fifth of all the emissions in our national carbon footprint.

We can enable the transition to a more sustainable food system by wasting less food, making healthier food choices, and producing food in better and more environmentally friendly ways. Leeds is one of the biggest cities in one of the world's richest countries. We can't change the food system alone, but we can have real impact if we lead by example. Every action counts.

Energy used to transport and process our food contributes to the food sector's carbon footprint, so we will reduce these emissions by transitioning to zero emission transport and power as part of other strategies. However, most greenhouse gas emissions from food are released before produce even leaves the farm gates because of factors like fertiliser use, the methane emissions from livestock, and converting environmentally important land like peat bogs and rainforest into farms. We must consider what foods are grown and how they are grown—not just how far foods have travelled.



Food production is essential, and the agricultural community in the UK has made great strides in reducing its impact on the environment. However, farming uses a lot of land and, dependent on how it is done, can be detrimental to nature. This includes the very bees and other pollinators that play a vital role to make foods more affordable and abundant.

The growing of food across the globe will be increasingly impacted by our changing climate, damaging harvests that disrupt supplies and raise food prices. We need to create a more resilient food system by considering the changing climate when we plan which foods to grow where, and by sourcing produce from many different places and suppliers. By doing this we can reduce the impact of supply disruption when it occurs—especially for those experiencing food insecurity.

Ultimately, ensuring the way we produce, consume, and dispose of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan is not only necessary and beneficial long-term, but will also help us to improve the quality of life for everyone across the district right now.

## **Our plan:**

## Objective 1: Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food



It doesn't matter what kind it is, throwing any food away contributes to climate change and wastes land, water, money and energy. 25 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year are emitted from the food wasted by households and businesses in the UK. Meanwhile, many families in Leeds experience food insecurity and depend on food aid.

Did you know that the average household in Leeds threw away around 190kg of food in 2021? By buying only what we need and using our leftovers, we could reduce the largest source of post-farm gate food waste. Together we can all do a little more and make a big difference.

Households in  
Leeds throw away  
**3.76 kg**  
of food waste  
in their bins  
each week



Retailers, manufacturers, and food growers all have a big part to play in tackling food waste across the system too. For example, supermarkets and their suppliers can help consumers to reduce food waste through better product information, packaging, and portioning.

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Promoting ways to reduce food waste, working with partners including organisations and businesses.
- 2) Redistributing surplus food to those in need, working with partners including organisations and businesses.
- 3) Expanding food waste collections (in line with national policy and dependant on government funding) and community composting initiatives to more areas of the city.

**Objective 2: Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet.**



Every meal we eat is an opportunity to make a difference. Some types of food will always be more resource intensive to produce than others. Yet most of us are unaware of the impact our food choices have on the environment. Many foods that are better for the environment can be better for our budget too—such as using local and seasonal ingredients.

Organisations and food businesses can also help by making it easier for us all to choose healthier, more sustainable foods. For example, they could introduce some form of ‘carbon labelling’ highlight the contribution of different food items on global warming—similar to how many manufacturers and venues display the calories in their foods.

The types of food we eat is our own choice. Some of us may prefer to eat mostly or all plant-based foods. Others may prefer to also include meat, fish, or dairy too. But as a population, our collective health and the health of the planet would improve if we ate a balanced diet consistent with the NHS-recommended [Eatwell guidelines](#). For some of us, this may mean eating less (but better quality)

animal products and more plants. Simply adopting the Eatwell guidelines is estimated to reduce the average person's carbon footprint from food by almost a third.

Finally, while it cannot be assumed that reducing meat and dairy intake will lead to substitution with healthier foods, if half of UK meat and dairy consumption were replaced with fruits, vegetables and cereals, diet-related GHG emissions could be reduced by 19% and roughly 37,000 premature deaths from cardiovascular disease and cancer averted each year

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Introducing carbon labelling at council food venues, such as on school and café menus.
- 2) Raising awareness of the environmental impact of different food choices.

### **Objective 3: Encourage and embrace new ways of producing, selling and serving food within local communities**



Like many cities, Leeds collectively consumes far more food than we produce. This fact might not be surprising as a large and populous district. However, this fact could make the city more vulnerable to future food price rises and supply chain issues. Going forwards, we will work to make the difference between production and consumption as small as possible.

Fortunately, food growing doesn't have to be limited to farms. Allotments, gardens, balconies, windows, greenhouses, urban farms, community spaces and innovative systems can all contribute to Leeds' food security, improve community wellbeing, and help to create employment opportunities.



**Action to support this objective:**

- 1) Promoting 'grow your own', community, and urban growing.
- 2) Work with partners to raise awareness of, and support, cutting-edge innovative food production.

## **Objective 4: Support local farmers to transition to resilient and**

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Serving more quality, sustainable, regional produce that is certified to higher production standards in Leeds City Council venues and services.
- 2) Working with suppliers to better understand—and reduce—the environmental impact of the food purchased by Leeds City Council.
- 3) Encouraging the city's biggest organisations to join Leeds City Council in their procurement commitments.

## **profitable agriculture which improves the environment.**



British farmers already produce some of the most environmentally friendly and highest animal welfare food in the world and they are now on a journey to become even more sustainable as part of the national [Agricultural Transition Plan](#).

It is important that we support local farmers as they transition to more sustainable agricultural practices that are profitable and suited to our changing climate as quickly as possible. Yorkshire's farmers have a proud history and their future success is essential for our food security.

**Actions to support this objective:**

- 1) Work with national, regional, and local partners to support best farming practice by engaging

policymakers and decision takers, helping to remove barriers to the agricultural transition faced by farmers in Leeds.

2) Explore opportunities to influence land use planning policies to enable the better use of land for agriculture.

3) Help local farmers get a fair price for quality products bought by the council and partners.

4) Explore ways to make it easier for local farmers to sell produce locally.

## **Objective 5: Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying**



We can all help shape the way that food is made and sold for the better by voting with our wallets to raise standards, cut carbon, and support local producers.

Organisations can make an even bigger difference than those who buy only for their family. For example, Leeds City Council bought more than two thousand tonnes of food in 2021. The council has produced a set of food buying guidelines to be followed to ensure that any food purchased by the council is aligned with the commitments made in this strategy

Buying local also supports higher animal welfare and quality agriculture, keeps money in our Yorkshire economy, and boosts the resilience of our food system.

### **Actions to support this objective:**

1) Serving more quality, sustainable, regional produce that is certified to higher production standards in Leeds City Council venues and services.

2) Working with suppliers to better understand—and reduce—the environmental impact of the food purchased by Leeds City Council.

3) Encouraging the city's biggest organisations to join Leeds City Council in their procurement commitments.

Taking time to find out where food comes from is important. Even if you don't buy local all the time,

simply choosing to buy foods that are seasonal to the place they're grown can be cheaper and can make a positive environmental difference.