

Leeds Food Strategy

Date: 27 November 2023

Report of: Chief Officer, Climate, Energy & Green Spaces

Report to: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The council approved Leeds Food Strategy in March 2023, and the strategy was launched in the city in July 2023. A joint approach between Foodwise Leeds and the council, Leeds Food Strategy is a long term aim 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 first Leeds Food Strategy update since the strategy was approved and launched sets out the partnership, the three key missions, and the detailed actions to deliver the strategy. It also draws attention to the roles played by FoodWise Leeds, Public Health, Financial Inclusion, and Climate Energy & Green Spaces in leading the partnership.

Recommendations

- 1 To note the contents of the report, particularly the three overlapping themes of Health & Wellbeing, Food Security & Economy, and Sustainability & Resilience.
- 2 To note the progress made to date, as well as the longer term ambitions for partnership, engagement and policy alignment so that the strategy delivers for the city.
- 3 To seek support for communicating, delivering and developing the strategy by members of CEAC.

What is this report about?

- 4 The council's 2019 Climate Emergency declaration highlights both the considerable social and economic implications of failing to tackle climate change and air quality problems, and the aim of the council in setting out strategic improvements to deliver the required outcomes for the city.
- 5 The approval in March 2023 of Leeds Food Strategy in March 2023 identifies the city's approach to production, distribution, consumption and disposal of food as being important to the council's pillars of Health & Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Net Zero.
- 6 This report sets out an update for members of CEAC on the partnership delivering the strategy, and on the missions, objectives and themes. A brief set of slides also summarises the report.
- 7 The strategy is led by Foodwise Leeds and Leeds City Council, and is intended to run until 2030. The steering group is chaired by Cllr Marshall-Katung, sponsor of the strategy. FoodWise Leeds (an unincorporated local voluntary organisation with a range of partner organisations) and the three lead council services (Public Health, Financial Inclusion, and Climate Energy & Green Spaces) each support working groups involving a much wider set of organisations, institutions and groups, as shown in the diagram below. The steering group plans to meet twice a year, and the working groups three times a year each.



8 The strategy has three missions, each with a set of objectives and actions. The table below summarises the missions and objectives. The **Appendices A to C** at the end of this report detail the three missions' actions.

Health & Wellbeing	Food Security & Economy	Sustainability & Resilience
Ensure people of all ages know how to access, prepare, and eat food that supports health and wellbeing.	Tackle factors limiting people's ability to afford the food they need.	Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food.
Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.	Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives.	Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet.
Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.	Continue to build a strong partnership approach across all sectors and with the people of Leeds.	Encourage and embrace new ways of producing, selling and serving food within local communities.
Offer targeted support to those of us who are most at risk.	Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.	Support local farmers to transition to resilient and profitable agriculture which improves the environment.
Develop a skilled local workforce who advocate for healthier eating.	Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city—celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.	Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying.

What impact will this proposal have?

9 The strategy states 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 city of Leeds can do to work towards this better food future for all.

- 10 The strategy states that the partnership, led by FoodWise Leeds and the council, will work towards our vision by focusing on three missions, outlined in section 8 above, and provided in more detail in the appendices. These missions have been designed to match the council's pillars and Best City Ambition. The missions and objectives also demonstrate how Leeds will work collaboratively to support the aims of guidance regarded as good practice, such as the Government Food Strategy, the National Food Strategy, and Sustainable Food Places.
- 11 An embedded and compelling Leeds Food Strategy will contribute to a wide range of council and city measures of health and wellbeing, financial inclusion, and climate action. Over time, as the strategy matures and develops, the intention is to develop and refine measures of progress and outcome.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

12 Leeds Food Strategy aligns closely with the three pillars.

13 **Health & Wellbeing** – the Health & Wellbeing mission (**Appendix A**) details how the strategy and its objectives and actions would contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes in the city. The strategy states:

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.

14 **Inclusive Growth** – the Food Security and Economy mission (**Appendix B**) details how the strategy and its objectives and actions would contribute to improved financial outcomes in the city. The strategy states:

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.

15 Zero Carbon - – the Sustainability & Resilience mission (**Appendix C**) details how the strategy and its objectives and actions would contribute to improved climate outcomes for the council and the city. The strategy states:

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.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 16 The council and FoodWise Leeds undertook consultation on the Leeds Food Strategy lasted for 8 weeks (October 24th –December 18th, 2022) and comprised of an online survey, face to face/virtual sessions, and community engagement. Food Wise Leeds, the city’s food partnership delivered the consultation alongside Leeds City Council (LCC), with a focus on sessions in the community. A total of 307 individuals and 28 businesses/organisations completed the online survey and approximately 700 people were verbally updated about the consultation at the face to face/virtual sessions.
- 17 The findings of the consultation were reported to the Executive Board meeting in March 2023. See the link to the report for details of the consultation and analysis of representation across different groups and characteristics.
- 18 Overall, the consultation showed a high level of agreement to the missions and objectives. 90.7% of those that completed the survey agreed with the vision statement (62.3% strongly). 89.2% of those that completed the survey agreed on focusing on these three missions (61.4% strongly). The weakest scoring objective still had a significant majority (83%) of respondents’ support.

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 19 The partnership intends to continue to engage widely with stakeholders, partners, households and businesses as part of the monitoring and review of Leeds Food Strategy. The evidence from other cities’ food strategies is that the stronger the engagement, the better the understanding and buy-in to the requirements of the strategy.

What are the resource implications?

Financial implications:

- 20 The Leeds Food Strategy was developed and consulted upon without any significant financial spend. The council has provided some financial support to FoodWise Leeds, and FoodWise also benefitted from some funding from Sustainable Food Places, and neither can be viewed as certain to be provided in 2024 and beyond, given national and local financial challenges.
- 21 Some of the objectives in the strategy can be developed and delivered through alignment of policies and strategies. For example, there is a clear correspondence between households

undergoing fuel and food poverty and those with poor health outcomes. Targeted action in some households or at some lower super output areas would contribute towards more than one outcome. Similarly, alignment of the council's procurement, catering and land use planning with the strategy could contribute towards the strategy outcomes, without necessarily incurring significant additional spend. FoodWise, the council and the universities have also been able to develop some capacity in the city through applying successfully for grants and awards.

22 However, to explore, develop, deliver and monitor the results over the next few years will undoubtedly require both time resources and finances, on the part of the FoodWise Leeds partnership or the council, or it will not be possible to deliver against every area of the strategy.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

23 A number of risks can be identified at this stage of the strategy:

- Failure to maximise the partnership between Foodwise Leeds and the council due to funding restrictions.
- Changes in national UK government direction, guidance, definition, measurements.
- Loss of officer/partner time and capacity.
- Failure in citizen, business and community engagement and action, including ability to manage expectations.

24 It will be the role of the steering group to ensure that the partnership remains engaged, aligned to Leeds Food Strategy, and has sufficient capacity to focus on the key actions.

What are the legal implications?

25 There are no specific legal implications for the council of the Leeds Food Strategy. The strategy is strongly aligned to the council's pillars.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

26 The council has not previously had a Food Strategy. However, FoodWise Leeds has developed and worked to a Leeds Food Charter since 2020. It is possible for the city and the council to

deliver the work without an underpinning strategy, however, the evaluation of and consultation on mission, objectives and actions is considered to be the preferred way of identifying the work programmes, aims, objectives, measures, timescales.

How will success be measured?

- 27 Success will be measured by achievement against the specific measures and objectives set out in the Leeds Food Strategy. FoodWise Leeds and the council have submitted the strategy, action plan and supporting evidence to Sustainable Food Places, with the aim of meeting the standard for a Sustainable Food Places Silver award, recognition which only 9 UK authorities have achieved.
- 28 In the first few months of the strategy's timespan, many of the actions involve improving information, raising awareness, seeking innovation. The strategy includes three commitments on behalf of the council, such as reducing the carbon footprint of the food and meals we provide (which would triangulate with the food component of scope 3 emissions), sourcing food locally, and refusing to serve air freighted food.
- 29 Over time, as the strategy, missions and objectives develop, it is anticipated that a clearer set of health and wellbeing, food security and economy, and sustainability and resilience measures will be developed and used to track progress and impact, and tie in to the Best Council and Best City Plans.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 30 The strategy is planned to run until 2030. The proposed schedule for review and update of the strategy is annually, reporting to the council's Executive Board.

Appendices

Appendix A Health & Wellbeing Mission

Appendix B Food Security & Economy Mission

Appendix C Sustainability & Resilience Mission

Appendix D List of Leeds City Council and FoodWise partner organisations

Background papers

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2022) [Government food strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

Foodwise Leeds [FoodWise \(foodwiseleeds.org\)](https://www.foodwiseleeds.org)

Executive Board Report, including Leeds food Strategy (2023) [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 15/03/2023 13:00 \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

Leeds City Council [Leeds Food Strategy](#)

National Food Strategy [The National Food Strategy - The Plan](#)

Sustainable Food Places [Home | Sustainable Food Places](#)

Appendix A Health & Wellbeing Mission, Objectives and Actions

Objectives	Actions
1 Ensure people of all ages know how to access, prepare, and eat food that supports health and wellbeing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
2 Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Raising awareness of, and celebrating, community-led food initiatives in Leeds and the impact they have. 4. Supporting community-led food initiatives to identify new funding opportunities. 5. Encouraging and enabling better co-ordination and sharing of best practice between groups.
3 Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 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. 7. Work with employers to recognise their role in helping to create a food environment that improves access to, and encourages, healthy eating. 8. Explore opportunities to advertise and promote healthier and sustainable eating.
4 Offer targeted support to those of us who are most at risk.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Continuing to invest in prevention and treatment programmes that reduce the impact of diet-related ill health in the people most at risk.
5 Develop a skilled local workforce who advocate for healthier eating.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Providing a range of training opportunities that enable the local workforce to deliver consistent, holistic, and evidence-based support on healthier eating.

Appendix B Food Security & Economy Mission, Objectives and Actions

Objectives	Actions
6 Tackle factors limiting people's ability to afford the food they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Championing actions and initiatives that help address poverty and food insecurity, including fair wages and financial support. 12. Raising awareness of how residents can increase their incomes, including helping them to access any financial support they may qualify for. 13. Developing and sustaining programmes that improve access to healthy food for people on low incomes. 14. Ensure food security and poverty are considered when developing local plans and policies.
7 Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Working together with partners to improve, and make more inclusive, affordable food initiatives so that everyone can access the help they need. 16. 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. 17. Developing and promoting a new Leeds Food Aid Charter setting out consistent key principles and best practice for local food aid providers to follow.
8 Continue to build a strong partnership approach across all sectors and with the people of Leeds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. 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. 19. Ensuring public participation in, and engagement with, the Leeds Food Strategy. 20. Work with organisations to promote goods and services from local producers. 21. Working in partnership with the public, voluntary, education and private sector to collaborate on actions that further the objectives of the Leeds Food Strategy.
9 Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Helping food businesses grow and support jobs by connecting them to relevant support and advice. 23. Working to create and expand pathways to market for locally produced food. 24. Promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local food sector. 25. Supporting innovation and research that promotes the viability of local food enterprises.







Objectives	Actions
<p>10 Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city—celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.</p>	<p>26. Working with the food sector to increase visitor demand for local food and drink across the city.</p> <p>27. Celebrating the culture and diversity of Leeds by promoting the local food offer available in different parts of the city.</p> <p>28. Champion the economic, social, and environmental benefits of consuming locally and sustainably produced foods to residents, businesses and institutions.</p>

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Appendix C Sustainability & Resilience Mission, Objectives and Actions

Objectives	Actions
<p>11 Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food.</p>	<p>29. Promoting ways to reduce food waste, working with partners including organisations and businesses.</p> <p>30. Redistributing surplus food to those in need, working with partners including organisations and businesses.</p> <p>31. Expanding food waste collections (in line with national policy and dependant on government funding) and community composting initiatives to more areas of the city.</p>
<p>12 Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet.</p>	<p>32. Introducing carbon labelling at council food venues, such as on school and café menus.</p> <p>33. Raising awareness of the environmental impact of different food choices.</p>
<p>13 Encourage and embrace new ways of producing, selling and serving food within local communities.</p>	<p>34. Promoting 'grow your own', community, and urban growing.</p> <p>35. Work with partners to raise awareness of, and support, cutting-edge innovative food production.</p>
<p>14 Support local farmers to transition to resilient and profitable agriculture which improves the environment.</p>	<p>36. 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.</p> <p>37. Explore opportunities to influence land use planning policies to enable the better use of land for agriculture.</p> <p>38. Help local farmers get a fair price for quality products bought by the council and partners.</p> <p>39. Explore ways to make it easier for local farmers to sell produce locally.</p>
<p>15 Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying.</p>	<p>40. Serving more quality, sustainable, regional produce that is certified to higher production standards in Leeds City Council venues and services.</p> <p>41. Working with suppliers to better understand—and reduce—the environmental impact of the food purchased by Leeds City Council.</p> <p>42. Encouraging the city's biggest organisations to join Leeds City Council in their procurement commitments.</p>

Appendix D List of Leeds City Council and FoodWise partner organisations

Organisation	Logo (if supplied)
Catering Leeds (Leeds City Council)	
Climate Action Leeds	
Eat Well Forum	
Fare Share Yorkshire	
Feed Leeds	
Feel Good Factor Leeds	
Food Aid Network	
FoodWise Leeds	

Organisation	Logo (if supplied)
Leeds Beckett University	
Leeds Cookery School	
Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce	
Leeds Indie Food	
Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust	
School Health and Wellbeing Service	
School Wellbeing Service	
HWD Steering group	
Public Health (Leeds City Council)	
Internal Council Food Group	
Maternal healthy weight group / Eat Well Forum/ Best start	
Anchor institutions working groups/ health population boards	

Organisation
HWD – LCC
Rethink Food
LEEDS INCLUSIVE ANCHORS NETWORK Climate sub Group
Urban Agriculture Consortium
University of Leeds
Veg Cities
Zest Leeds

Logo (if supplied)

