

Leeds Food Strategy - report on progress

Date: 18 September 2024

Report of: The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Leeds Food Strategy (LFS) was adopted by the Council in 2023, following consultation and approval at Executive Board. LFS was developed as a collaborative strategy with a wide range of city food partners and stakeholders, the strategy and associated actions will be delivered, monitored and measured with the same partnership approach within the Council and beyond. The strategy is a long-term vision for the sustained provision of healthy and affordable food in the city and extends to 2030. It aligns very closely to the council's three strategic pillars, with three overlapping food missions of:

Health and Well-being – Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing through eating well.

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

Sustainability and Resilience – Ensuring the Leeds Food System is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan.

This report updates Executive Board on the governance and delivery of the strategy by the council and local partner organisations. It includes amendments to the objectives, progress against the actions contained in the strategy and key performance indicators.

The report draws attention to several key issues through the strategy delivery plan, notably of the need to take actions in the context of food poverty and health inequalities, the benefits of healthy, seasonal, local and sustainable food, the impact of commercial determinants of health and the Council's leadership and place-shaping role in the provision and promotion of nutritious food across settings (healthy food environment) in Leeds.

Recommendations

- a) That Executive Board approve the governance, delivery and key performance indicators of the Leeds Food Strategy.
- b) That Executive Board note the progress against the actions in the strategy and approve the amendments to both the objectives and action plan.

What is this report about?

1. The Leeds Food Strategy 2023-30 was adopted by the Council as the lead organisation in 2023 following a process of consultation, and partnership working.
2. Executive Board agreed to receive updates against the strategy progress, which extends to 2030. This report is the first of several updates planned through to 2030 on the progress of the strategy.
3. The Leeds Food Strategy 2023-30 sets out a shared vision for delivering a strong, vibrant and prosperous food system, where the true value of food is celebrated. Good, healthy, accessible food is vital for health and wellbeing, economic growth, the reduction of inequality and for protecting the planet. All three of the Leeds Food Strategy missions are of equal importance and interdependent upon one another, providing essential foundations for the city to prosper.
4. This report seeks Executive Board support for the continued progress of the strategy, including its governance and delivery. The report sets out the specific actions, progress and indicators of progress. **Appendix A** provides more detail on the actions, initiatives and challenges.

What impact will this proposal have

5. The vision of the Leeds Food Strategy is 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'*.
6. The [Leeds Food Strategy](#) has three core missions to achieve our vision, developed to mirror the Best City Ambition strategic pillars: Health and Wellbeing, which mirrors the council pillar; Food Security and Economy, which corresponds closely to our Inclusive Growth pillar; and Sustainability and Resilience, which aligns with our Net Zero pillar.
7. The [United Nations highlight the importance of food to worldwide sustainability](#), including food security. Food is a key component of a wide range of policy areas – wellbeing and healthy living, schools and educational attainment, the cost of living and financial inclusion, sustainability, waste and emissions and therefore contributes to many aspects of people's lives in Leeds.
8. The [UK government Food Strategy](#) highlights the importance of food in relation to the cost of living, recovery from the Covid pandemic and energy price inflation. It also discusses the issues that arise from the current food system, including the impact of the commercial sector in promoting highly palatable processed unhealthy foods. The UK government aims to maintain food standards post Brexit, halve childhood obesity by 2030, reduce the gap in

healthy life expectancy between richest and poorest areas, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions arising from the food system.

Governance

9. The proposed governance of the Leeds Food Strategy is illustrated in **Appendix B**.
10. A Senior Group has been established to provide accountability and assurance for the delivery of the Leeds Food Strategy against its objectives. This is chaired by the Elected Member Food Champion with cross-council Chief Officer representation as well as the FoodWise Leeds Chair.
11. The partnership arrangement between FoodWise Leeds and the Council is fundamental to the delivery of the Leeds Food Strategy. Central to the Leeds Food Strategy governance is [FoodWise Leeds](#) which acts as a steward for a wider network of local groups, businesses and organisations. It also has an independent role as a dynamic, multi-agency partnership dedicated to inspiring and advocating for transformative change towards a more sustainable and resilient food system. It primarily represents the third sector, but also involves the universities, and local businesses. **Box 1** includes specific information from the FoodWise Leeds Terms of Reference.

Box 1 Extract from FoodWise Leeds Partnership Terms of Reference

Legal Form: Unincorporated Association

Purpose: FoodWise Leeds is a dynamic, multi-agency partnership dedicated to inspiring a transformative good food movement across the city. We lead on the SFP six key priorities and provide visionary leadership for the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the Leeds Food Strategy and Action Plan.

Vision: To create a healthy, sustainable and fair food system for everyone in Leeds.

Mission: To share our appetite for good food by bringing people together from all corners of the city to celebrate and promote the abundance of good food work in Leeds. Together, we will transform policy, contribute to research, motivate businesses and communities to become FoodWise, and inspire pride in our Sustainable Food Places status.

12. FoodWise Leeds has appointed a new chair following an application and interview process to support the partnership governance as an independent group and drive forward its ambitions. Since this appointment, the FoodWise Leeds governance structure has been reviewed by members. In the new structure, there are three groups that form the partnership;

- A core group including; the FoodWise Chair, Chief Executive Officer for Zest (host organisation), FoodWise Leeds Coordinator, and a Communications Lead (hosted by Zest).
- An advisory group; including the members of the core group, the Council mission leads and system representatives from across Leeds. Appendix B lists the organisations working within the FoodWise partnership.
- And the development of an expert network of professionals and individuals with lived experience to represent the communities of Leeds.

13. The Leeds Food Strategy partnership between the Council and FoodWise Leeds holds accountability for delivering the strategy and action plan.
14. Leeds has a well-established food aid network, much of it developed since 2010, in response to increasing poverty and inequality in the city. This network supports the Food Security & Economy mission alongside the Food Security Taskforce. The Leeds [Food Aid Network](#) also has representation at FoodWise alongside additional food aid providers working in the city.
15. The Eat Well Forum, led by Public Health, implements the Health and Wellbeing mission of the Leeds Food Strategy. This involves a range of stakeholders that support health and wellbeing through food and provide support in the community including NHS, third sector and Council colleagues. There are inter-linkages with the other missions through this group.
16. Supporting the Sustainability and Resilience arm of the strategy is Feed Leeds. This is a sustainable food growing network which encourages and connects individuals, communities and organisations in Leeds.
17. Whilst developing the action plan (see **Appendix D**), it became clear that the objectives required some revisions. This included a need to reduce the volume of objectives due to some duplication both within and between the missions. The mission leads have reviewed the Food Strategy objectives, with the FoodWise coordinator and agreed to reduce these from 15 to 12 (detailed in **Table 1** below).
18. A monitoring framework including 16 key indicators has been developed through the Mission Leeds Steering Group to measure progress against the strategy (see **Table 2 and Appendix E**). These include a combination of new and existing indicators, and will require some initial monitoring from baseline with a view to refine and develop as the strategy progresses.

Table 1: Leeds Food Strategy Objectives

Health & Wellbeing	Food Security & Economy	Sustainability & Resilience
1. <i>Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing.</i>	5. <i>Tackle factors limiting people's ability to afford the food they need.</i>	9. <i>Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food.</i>

2. <i>Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.</i>	6. <i>Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives.</i>	10. <i>Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet.</i>
3. <i>Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.</i>	7. <i>Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.</i>	11. <i>Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient commercial food production.</i>
4. <i>Develop a skilled workforce with the offer of targeted support for people most likely to develop diet-related diseases.</i>	8. <i>Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city - celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.</i>	12. <i>Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying.</i>

Equalities

19. Members of the council steering group have undertaken an EDCI assessment, and it is attached at **Appendix G**. The assessment covers the strategy, its three missions, 12 objectives and 36 actions.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

20. The strategy aligns to the Council's three pillars of Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Net Zero.

21. The health and Wellbeing mission has a direct role in supporting the Health and Wellbeing pillar of the Best City Ambition. It also supports Public Health priorities to reduce health related inequalities, prevent diet related disease, ensure all children have the best start in life and an age friendly city.

22. Access to nutritious and healthy food is essential for maintaining a healthy weight, assuring quality of life, emotional wellbeing, and productivity. There are government evidence-based recommendations to eat well for optimal health and wellbeing. Unfortunately for a lot of the population this can be challenging to attain due to the significant barriers to eating well. These barriers include the influence of the unhealthy food environment and acquiring the knowledge and practical skills required to prepare healthy foods. People from lower income groups face substantial challenges when it comes to accessing healthy food. The percentage of adults meeting the '5 a day' fruit and vegetable target in Leeds has reduced from 35.1% in 20/21 to 28.3% in 2023.

23. The unhealthy food environment has become increasingly normalised, where processed foods high in fat, sugar and salt is the default. The term 'food environment' is a combination

of physical, economic, and sociocultural surroundings, opportunities and conditions that affect food intake. For example, where food is available, what it costs, how it is sold, government policy, societal norms, and cultural influences. Furthermore, marketing, sponsorship, and promotions are consistently and intensively driven towards the sale of these products with multi-national companies controlling a significant amount of the landscape that shapes behaviour.

24. Improving health and wellbeing through food involves working across the local food system to shift food culture so that the healthiest foods are affordable, available and appealing. Working together the Council, alongside the FoodWise Leeds Partnership, are looking to co-develop solutions, remove barriers, improve quality of life, become more socially connected through harnessing the many benefits that food brings.
25. The Health & Wellbeing mission also has inter-linkages with both the Food Security and Economy and Sustainability and Resilience missions. For example, Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust food and drink strategy is in development and has been aligned to the Leeds Food Strategy missions. The NHS contract requires hospital trusts to develop food strategies that cover; the nutrition and hydration needs of patients; healthier eating for the whole hospital community, especially staff and sustainable procurement of food and catering services.
26. HATCH Local Care Partnership (LCP) aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live in Chapeltown, Burmantofts, Harehills and Richmond Hill. The LCP is also prioritising action on food inspired by the Leeds Food Strategy including a “Food is Everyone’s Business Training course”, which could be expanded city wide once developed.
27. Fruit and vegetables are often low carbon and contribute to climate friendly actions. Foods that have a high carbon footprint such as dairy, and red meat are only recommended in small quantities due to their associations with increasing risk of cardio-vascular disease and some cancers. There are actions under the Health & Wellbeing mission that support Sustainability & Resilience objectives such as the “Just One More” campaign (see key areas of progress). Additionally, actions regarding the provision and procurement of food under Sustainability & Resilience also supports Health & Wellbeing.
28. The inability to access healthy nutritious foods is a major barrier for adopting a healthy diet as well as increasing stress and affecting overall wellbeing. Therefore, actions to develop and promote the food resilience toolkit under Food Security & Economy supports the Health & Wellbeing mission, whilst the commissioning of health and wellbeing services by Public Health (Better Together Community Development and School Health and Wellbeing services) improve access to food.
29. The Food Security & Economy food mission aims to ensure that everyone in Leeds has access to nutritious food as part of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant food economy. The mission is crucial for contributing economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally to

society. Public Health are leading the development of a Healthy Weight Plan for all ages which supports multiple outcomes that relate to both the Leeds Food Strategy and the Best City Ambition.

30. The Food Security & Economy mission also addresses the challenges of poverty and food insecurity, aiming to ensure that more people can physically access, afford, and prepare healthy nutritious food without compromising other basic needs. It is part of a broader vision to create a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable economy in Leeds.
31. The Sustainability & Resilience food mission aligns to the Zero Carbon pillar of the Council's ambition. The terminology was amended prior to and during extensive public consultation during late October 2022-December 2022 to ensure it was understandable and accessible for residents and responders to the consultation offered online and in person.
32. It is essential for the sustainability and resilience of our food to ensure the way Leeds produces, consumes, and disposes of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan. 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.
33. Leeds declared a climate emergency in 2019, 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. Enabling the transition to a more sustainable food system by wasting less food, increasing availability of healthier foods, and producing food in better and more environmentally friendly ways we can reduce the 1/5 of our current national carbon footprint impact which is attributable to food.
34. 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.
35. Ultimately, ensuring the way we produce, consume, and dispose of food is fit for the future is not only necessary and beneficial long-term, and will also help us to improve the quality of life for everyone across the city.
36. In making amendments to the objectives and actions for sustainability and resilience, account was again taken of the extensive public consultation for LFS undertaken in late 2022. This ensured that the priority and order of areas of interest, and their importance commented on and rated by respondents was retained within the amendments made to the Sustainability and Resilience food mission.

37. Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient commercial production, sale and consumption of seasonal, local foods by promoting the economic and social value benefits within the city.
38. Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying embracing and showcasing robust supply chain and buying systems to encourage the city's biggest organisations to join Leeds City Council in their procurement commitments of the benefits of consuming local and seasonal produce.
39. Since the strategy was approved, a set of 15 performance measures has been developed to assess progress. More information about the measures is provided in **Appendix D**.

Table 2: Leeds Food Strategy Key Indicators

KPI number	Indicator
1	Increase the percentage of adults in Leeds who consume at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily. <i>Enquiries are being made with Public Health Intelligence to consider whether this can be categorised by index of multiple deprivation.</i>
2	Increase the percentage of year 6 children recorded with a healthy weight in the 10% most deprived communities compared to the Leeds average and the 10% least deprived communities.
3	Initially monitor the percentage of adults in Leeds living with diabetes (diet-related disease) in the 10% most deprived communities compared to the Leeds average and the 10% least deprived communities.
4	Capture and monitor the number of health promoting and sustainable (planet friendly) community food projects. <i>Consideration is being taken to capturing this by geographical area, with a focus on areas of higher deprivation.</i>
5	Increase the percentage of Hot Food Takeaway (HFT) applications refused using the Council Supplementary Planning Document. <i>Consideration is being taken to the role of dark kitchens and other out of home food outlets that may not be captured in the HFT criteria.</i>
6	Maintain the percentage of eligible children and young people taking up Free School Meals (FSM).
7	Monitor the number and percentage of food aid providers supporting people with food security in Leeds, that are listed on the food aid map and are signed up to the food aid charter.
8	Monitor the number of food and drink / related businesses in Leeds supported across our regional business support services.
9	Monitor the number of hospitality/ food and drink/ related businesses our employment and skills service has partnered/ engaged with.
10	Increase the number of Compost Collective sites and monitor percentage of household capacity that sites are operating at.
11	Monitor the volume of surplus food waste diverted to food aid by Leeds providers over the previous 12 months.
12	Increase the number of new 'grow your own' community initiatives by Incredible Edible
13	Increase the number of Council premises (cafe sites) who include additional food menu carbon impact information for customers.

KPI number	Indicator
14	Increase the rolling number of food procurement contracts supported by the LCC procurement guidelines. <i>Develop system/ method for capturing the value and impact on food provision from the Council procurement guidelines. Consideration to the role of anchor institutions in this indicator will be taken at later stages in the strategy development.</i>
15	Monitor the volume of domestic (April 2026) and non-domestic food waste (April 2025) collected, defined in line with Defra PIs.

40. The report now provides an update on progress for each of the three food missions. A more detailed update including purpose, progress, initiatives and challenges is provided at **Appendix A**.

Health & Wellbeing - key areas of progress

41. The Council and FoodWise Leeds have made the following progress on the Health and Wellbeing food mission.

“Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing”.

42. The Eatwell Forum has been re-established in Leeds to support the delivery of the Health and Well-Being section of the Leeds Food Strategy. It ensures a Leeds-wide coordinated approach to food and health work, enabling the delivery of consistent evidence-based messages and effective practice tailored to meet local community food needs. The group will be responsible for reviewing and developing the resources available to promote healthier eating in the city including cultural food resources.

43. The 3rd year of delivering the local “Just One More” campaign to encourage an additional portion of vegetables across a range of setting including schools, markets, LCC cafes, NHS and Third Sector.

44. Ongoing promotion of Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly by the Leeds Bosom Buddies (breastfeeding peer supporters) have approximately 100 venues signed up.

45. School Health and Well-being service in partnership with the University of Leeds are mapping school breakfast club provision across schools, to consider appropriate actions.

46. There has been a focus on early years and older people which has included the development of an Older People Food Action plan to support the nutrition and hydration needs of older people across settings, and a Healthy Start Action plan to increase uptake of the national Healthy Start scheme. This aims to increase access to fruit and vegetables for low-income families.

“Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating”.

47. FoodWise Leeds are taking a lead on raising awareness of all the fantastic community food activity taking place across Leeds using stories and social media. This includes reviewing the FoodWise website as a portal for all food related information linking to relevant website such as the Food Aid Network.
48. Through the Eatwell Forum community food initiatives are developed and supported including a range of Third Sector provision i.e. Leeds Cooking School at Kirkgate Market, Flourishing Families and West Leeds Recipe Station. Moving forward, the group will map food initiatives and look at opportunities for new projects and ensure appropriate access to signposting information.

“Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing”.

49. Leeds City Council have developed Healthier Vending Standards based on Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF). The GBSF sets out standards for public sector organisations to apply when procuring food and catering services. These standards relate to food production, processing and distribution, nutrition, resource efficiency, and socio-economic considerations. The Healthier Vending Standards are reviewed annually and enable the availability of healthier food and drink options through vending across the Council.
50. Public Health have undertaken a survey amongst the public to capture views on the food and drinks available from council cafes across leisure services and tourist attractions to inform a Healthier Catering Award due to be launched next year. This will support a range of actions including enabling healthier food availability, considering planet friendly menus and waste management.
51. Public Health have been working with Council colleagues to consider options for implementing an updated Council advertising and sponsorship policy to reduce the promotion of food and drink that are high in fat, sugar or salt. Advertisements of food and drink that meet recommended guidelines would be required to replace those that are high in fat, sugar or salt. Implementing a policy would have benefits across all the missions of the strategy.
52. Planning Services have been working with Public Health to review the Councils Supplementary Planning Document on Hot Food Takeaways (SPD) and consider how this can be strengthened through the Local Plan Update. The SPD provides detailed guidance to businesses, applicants, agents and the local community on how the Council will assess applications for hot food takeaways where planning permission is required. Public Health are leading on the development of a Data Matrix to inform decision making on Hot Food Takeaway applications.

“Develop a skilled workforce with the offer of targeted support for people most likely to develop diet-related diseases”.

53. This is led through the coordination and engagement with multi-stakeholders through the Eat Well Forum. The HATCH partnership is currently acting a test site for developing bespoke training focused on food for the workforce.

Food Security & Economy - key areas of progress

54. Since the strategy was formally launched in July 2023, several key initiatives have been progressed under each Food Security & Economy objective, set out in the sections below.

“Tackle factors limiting people’s ability to afford the food they need”.

55. Achieving our goal relies significantly on a collaborative partnership, strategically and operationally. The Food Insecurity Taskforce chaired by the council has realigned its priorities to match those of the Leeds Food Strategy and its action plan. Whilst at an operational level the Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) brings together a range of food aid providers, distributors and the Council, to help tackle food insecurity and support people towards food independence effectively in the city of Leeds. LFAN reports into the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network and is connected to the national initiative Feeding Britain.

56. It is vital that residents and families know where to find appropriate support, advice, and guidance, as well as making sustainable programs that increase access to healthy food available. Activities that support this include the Leeds Advice Contract led by Citizens Advice Leeds in partnership with Better Leeds Communities, Training Awareness Sessions: Facilitated by Financial Inclusion Team continue to be delivered in partnership with relevant organisations/experts on sessions including poverty and financial inclusion, cost of living, food and fuel support.

“Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives”

57. Achieving this goal requires collaboration with stakeholders to develop programmes and projects that provide affordable and inclusive access to food. In addition, working together to offer practical help and support for frontline workers, volunteers and organisations providing food aid to people experiencing food insecurity.

58. The introduction of *Community Shop*, part of Company Shop Group, which helps members save an average of £212 per month on groceries, offers free membership for those in the local area on means-tested benefits, and provides low-cost cafes and courses aimed at fostering independence and employability. It offers products at about one-third of the retail

price, and more than half of its customers move on within a year. Community Shop plans to open at least one location in Leeds.

59. The [FoodSavers scheme](#) which offers high quality fresh and store cupboard food for a low weekly membership fee (typically £6) via a food pantry. Membership also gives the opportunity to attend cookery classes, and save in a recognised Credit Union account. At present, Leeds has five pantries that are part of the FoodSavers initiative, with the first one commencing in October 2023, and there are intentions for another twelve to join the program.
60. There is a Cultural Food Hub Provision within the city, facilitated by organisations such as [Give a Gift](#) and [Hamara](#), which supplies culturally suitable food to groups throughout the city. This contributes to a more inclusive offering of food assistance.
61. The updated Food Aid Provision Map, LFAN, the Council and partners collaborated to update the resource which maps food provision across Leeds to show where projects and services are based, along with further useful information about each provision. The aim of the map is to help direct the public to food support and to help neighbouring organisations collaborate more easily.
62. The collaborative creation and launch of a [Food Aid Charter](#) in partnership with Public Health to set out key principles and best practice to support local food aid providers to work towards the long-term goal of building food resilience.
63. Led by Public Health the revision of the Building Food Resilience toolkit focusing on encouraging the transition from emergency food aid to sustainable options like Food Pantries, fostering long-term resilience in food security.
64. Delivery of programmes including the DWP's Household Support Fund, and DfE's Holiday Activity and Food Programme, in collaboration with council services and the third sector in Leeds to ensure they reach households most in need of support.

“Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers”.

65. We are helping local food businesses grow and support jobs by connecting them to relevant support and advice:
 - Through working with Start-Up West Yorkshire to reflect on its business model, and through grant funding from AD:Venture, local mobile bar business Tchin Tchin has been able to progress from business to customer trading to business to business, targeting weddings and corporate events.
 - As a start-up, local food business Little Bao Boy worked with AD:Venture and received a £25,000 growth grant to invest in their business. Through this support, the company was able to launch an extra arm of their business in wholesale and purchase equipment to continue their business growth.

- Amity Brew Company, a local brew pub, received an AD:Venture growth grant as well as business advice and loans from the partnering Business Enterprise Fund. As a result of this support, the business established its site in North West Leeds, and has also been able to maximise the wholesale potential of the business and recruit new members of staff.

66. We are working to create and expand pathways to market for locally produced food:

- The Leeds Anchor Network was established in 2018 to connect large organisations rooted in the city to increase their collective contribution towards the city's economy and local communities. One of the practical areas that Leeds Anchors are focused on making progress towards is procurement, as Anchors often have large discretionary spend which can be directed towards the local economy.
- Through funding from the Health Foundation, the Council is generating evidence and learning through evaluation, including identifying case studies.
- Leeds Beckett University have amended their Strategy, Policy and Procedures to ensure local and SME suppliers are considered at every spend threshold. Through their support, a local food supplier called Tiffin Sandwiches has grown from a tiny shop to a nationwide supplier employing 450 staff.
- Leeds Beckett University has also supported Artisan Bakes, a wholesale craft bakery, to gain a better understanding of the Higher Education sector and compliance.

67. In 2023, a Business Anchor network was established for the private sector to maximise its positive contribution to the city. There could be a future opportunity to promote local food procurement amongst these businesses given that procurement is an area of interest to the network.

68. We are promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local food sector:

- The Council's Employment and Skills Team continues to support hospitality due to ongoing challenges facing the sector. Despite some positive signs in terms of job postings in the regional hospitality, food and tourism sector in previous months, Deloitte has signalled that nation-wide labour market issues are expected to last beyond 2025.
- Employment and Skills works closely with the Leeds Hotel and Venues association to support the sector including seasonal recruitment campaigns and regular promotion of opportunities.
- The team assists Leeds City College in promoting the Hospitality Ready Programme and in enrolling candidates. This initiative bridges recruitment and skills shortages by providing accredited training, work placements, and guaranteed interviews with hospitality venues.
- Through collaborating with the DWP, the Employment and Skills Team are supporting unemployed residents to access employment opportunities in the hospitality sector.

Activity has included registering new customers for Employment Hub support and a Hospitality Jobs Fair.

- The "Connecting Schools to Hospitality" programme was established to link six Leeds schools with six hospitality venues, aiming to provide experiences that will encourage and inspire students to take up careers within the Hospitality industry. A celebratory event was held in July 2024 at Leeds City Colleges Printworks campus to celebrate the achievements of the students from the schools involved.

“Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city - celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture”.

69. The Council is working with the food sector to increase visitor demand for local food and drink across the city. The Visit Leeds team is responsible for destination marketing and the visitor economy, with food and drink a key part of this, through recent funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

70. We are celebrating the culture and diversity of Leeds by promoting the local food offer in different parts of the city. The Visit Leeds team recently launched a new campaign called ‘Leeds, the city that loves to entertain’ which has also been bolstered by funding from the UKSPF. A core aspect of this campaign is celebrating ‘a thriving independent food scene you won’t find anywhere else’, and a range of food and drink-centred events and festivals taking place around the city are spotlighted, such as the North Leeds Food Festival, food and drink experiences and tours and Leeds International Beer Festival.

Sustainability & Resilience - key areas of progress

71. The Council and FoodWise Leeds partnership have made considerable progress in this food mission.

“Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food”.

72. The Council’s Environmental Services are developing a long term Leeds Waste Strategy, that will focus on household waste, including food waste. The plans relating to food waste collections will be incorporated into a larger strategy and work programme within Leeds Food Strategy for waste reduction, collection, recycling and redistribution.

73. Food waste issues were also an area of particular interest from participants in the Council’s Catering Mark consultation. The Council Catering Mark currently being coproduced between Public Health and CEGS is intended for implementation in summer 2025 and will also include waste elements, and the survey undertaken in spring 2024 highlighted that food waste was a key area of interest to respondents.

74. Funding has been secured and approved making various community based growing projects and expansion of community composting possible with the Council administered climate grants from West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). To date £123,000, specifically for these food and waste related projects, has been approved and initiatives are in a range of areas across the city.
75. Following the Government notice in May 2024 councils are now expected to commence domestic food waste collections by April 2026 unless a transitional arrangement applies. Earlier, in March 2024, DEFRA provided councils with a share of the one-off capital allocation to support the purchase of infrastructure required to collect food waste, i.e. refuse collection vehicles, bins and caddies. Leeds has been allocated £7.1m. The Government has committed to providing councils with ongoing, new burden revenue funding to pay for the collection of food waste, but has yet to provide any information on how much that would be. An update is expected following the Spending Review in November 2024. In terms of collection models/options the expectation from DEFRA has moved towards the comingled collection of organic garden and food waste where that makes the most sense locally and supports the Simpler Recycling aims (in particular to keep the number of bins to a minimum). The future requirement remains for a weekly collection where food waste is included, despite fortnightly comingled garden/food collections being successfully delivered already in places such as Hull, East Riding and the Manchester area.
76. The Council's Environmental Services team has undertaken extensive modelling of service delivery options to prepare and adapt to the changing national position. This work has included the establishment of an annual composition analysis of household residual (black) and recycling (green) bins; which provides invaluable data on the contents of these bins, including how much food waste is in them. As any confirmation or detail on the timing or amount of funding for food waste collections has yet to be provided, it is likely the Council will look at a phased/incremental approach, utilising the existing infrastructure and available resources to enable as many residents as possible to begin the recycling of food waste through their kerbside household waste collections and the change in habits and behaviours that requires.
77. While these final arrangements and plans are being made Environment Services introduced kerbside domestic glass collection services through the green recycling bin in August 2024, thus completing the Simpler Recycling requirements for dry recyclable materials ahead of the 2026 commencement date.

“Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet”.

78. Implementation of additional information regarding carbon impact of food for customers at Temple Newsam (Green Spaces) café in summer 2024.

79. Support for additional developments of community growing opportunities including further sites in Leeds parks.
80. Over the last year July 23-July 24 Incredible Edible (IE) have expanded the number of community led growing groups from 13 to 18 with another 2 due imminently. This totals 20 groups, 68 sites and just over 150 beds exact locations can be found on IE's website [Bed Locations – Incredible Edible Leeds](#).
81. Some of these sites are linked in the Council parks areas with development supported alongside community volunteers with IE by Council Green Spaces officers in line with the Council's reconfirmation of support for community growing developments in our parks sites as highlighted in [Parks and Green Spaces overview to the Council Executive Board](#) in February, 2024. The additional number of IE sites since July 23 has been extensively supported by a successful Lottery award of £70,000, this however has recently come to an end and so progress over the coming year is expected to slow considerably unless a further funding source can be identified. IE has also worked to develop raised bed fruit and vegetable growing in some of the city's community orchard site.
82. There has recently been a resurgence of interest in community food growing in Leeds. We continue to support local food growing, both through the provision of allotments and through identifying other areas of land within 4000 hectares managed by the Green Spaces service that are suitable for community food growing (e.g. for orchards, of which there are over 35 on Council green spaces, or raised vegetable beds). Successful examples of community food growing projects include the 'edible beds' at Grove Road recreation ground which were installed and managed by Halton in Bloom and the orchards at Burley and Kirkstall Abbey parks that were developed by park Friends groups.
83. For the inception of an Allotment Development Plan, initial scoping has begun the development and implementation plan for the city's allotment sites, and this work will continue to be explored over the coming year.

“Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient commercial food production”

84. Extensive work has been undertaken over the last year seeking to engage sector representative organisations as well as commercial growers/ farmers direct, however this has limited success.
85. Discussions with planning colleagues within the Council have been positive and future consideration will be incorporated into the Local Plan to develop this action further.
86. Further elements of the strategy and how it links to the broader city economy promoting Leeds as a destination city with the focus on consumption of local produce by businesses and institutions is also underway. This has been incorporated into the city's submission as part of the [Global Destination Sustainability Index](#) for the last two years. The GDS-Index is

a destination-level programme that measures, benchmarks, and improves the sustainability strategy and performance of tourism and events destinations.

87. Its purpose is to inspire, engage, and enable destinations to become more regenerative, flourishing, and resilient places to visit, meet, and live in. At our first submission, Leeds was awarded a GDS-Index score of 52.6 across all the environmental sustainability areas giving Leeds a ranking of 5th in the UK and 34th in Western Europe and was recognised for the strength of the detail in an initial submission, particularly for the environment section and adapting to a changing climate.

“Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying”

88. The Council is seeking through contract management discussions to understand and reduce the environmental impact of the food purchased by the Council in line with our food procurement guideline commitments. This is at initial stages to clearly identify where our current suppliers, procured to provide food across the council including schools, council attraction cafés, are currently sourcing foods from.

89. Further work will be undertaken to explore how ‘local’ and ‘seasonal’ this is to determine how further improvement can be made. The Council remains an active and lead organisation in the Leeds Anchors Network (LAN) Climate Sub-Group; through our participation and engagement with other large food buyers and consumers in the city we will seek to explore sustainable and resilient food consumption more widely.

90. Across all our partner engagement and networks, the council is seeking to embrace and showcase robust supply chain and buying systems. Other LAN Climate Sub-Group members will be encouraged to join the council in our procurement commitments of the benefits of consuming local and seasonal produce.

Wards affected: ALL

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

91. The Council consulted on the draft Leeds Food Strategy October-December 2022. The findings of the consultation were reported in the Executive Board report, March 2023. The engagement and consultation involved a range of methods, including face to face events at several locations and surveys. In total, more than 700 people took part. The findings of the survey at the end of the consultation were largely supportive of the proposed missions and objectives of the strategy. Each of the three missions and fifteen objectives had a majority of respondents in support of them, ranging between 70% and 95% in favour.

92. There was a face-to-face re-engagement event in July 2023 to launch the strategy action plan and re-energise all LFS partners in taking forward the objective and actions.

93. The strategy has also been discussed at other fora:

- Climate Emergency Advisory Committee November 2023;
- Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, July 2024

What are the resource implications?

94. There are considerable resource implications of supporting and delivering the actions contained in the Leeds Food Strategy:

- The loss of funding to the Council, e.g. Comprehensive spending review.
- The loss of funding from the council, e.g. departmental budgets, freezes on spending, closure of some budgets
- The loss of external funding to universities, foodwise and other third sector groups, including possible future funding, options for WYCA climate grants, other small funds.
- The resource implications for the steering group, also financial constraints, e.g. severe limitation of the Council's ability to provide seedcorn funding for packages of work.

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

95. There is a risk that FoodWise Leeds is unable to continue or to operate without funding from the Council. The Council would need to forge individual relationships with each of the FoodWise partners, focusing on those actions which would have the strongest impact.

96. Food and health. Risks include constraints on the Council and the partnership's ability to promote healthy affordable foods, and limit unhealthy food availability, adverts, outlets. The risk is being managed through regular procurement and resourcing exercises.

97. Food and poverty. As the Council's Cost of Living reports and the Equality Diversity Cohesion and Integration assessment show, food poverty is closely linked to the increase in poverty and inequality. The Corporate Risk Register houses the most significant and cross cutting risks facing the council and city. The register includes a risk on Escalating Poverty - 'The impact of poverty in the city escalates due to factors such as inflation, fuel, food and energy prices increases.' The risk is managed through a range of activities as outlined in this report, including regular strategic and operational group meetings. The risk is regularly reviewed, updated and reported within the council.

98. The commercial influences that cause a high availability and promotion of processed foods with poor nutrient content pose a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Leeds with long term consequences for health and social care. This is being managed through raising awareness of the issue, and through driving forward the local government Healthy Weight Declaration.

What are the legal implications?

99. The recommendations set out in this report are eligible for call in. There are no other legal implications arising.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

100. The Leeds Food Strategy was developed because the partnerships and relationships across the city were so strong and well developed.
101. It is possible that the city could have made progress, for example, on each of the objectives or actions, without an overarching strategy.
102. However, it was considered, in the light of the Covid pandemic, and before the cost-of-living crisis, that by developing a single, long-term food strategy for the city, the Council and partners would be more able to deliver the outcomes.

How will success be measured?

103. Success for the strategy will be measured against the key performance indicators set out in this report and in **Appendices D and E**.
104. The monitoring of the strategy will be reported annually and monitored in line with the steering group meetings for the Council and FoodWise Leeds.

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

105. The intention is for the Leeds Food Strategy to run to 2030, and so the strategy contents are expected to change over time, as new objectives, measures and actions are developed.
106. The steering groups for Leeds Food Strategy and FoodWise Leeds will remain responsible for implementation.

Appendices

Appendix A Detailed update on the Food Strategy Missions

Appendix B Governance Structure

Appendix C List of foodwise Leeds members/partners

Appendix D List of objectives and actions

Appendix E Leeds Food Strategy Monitoring Framework: Key Indicators

Appendix F Leeds Food Strategy Plan on a Page

Appendix G EDCI assessment

Background Papers

None

Appendix A Detailed update on the Food Strategy Missions

A Health and Wellbeing Mission

1.1 Health & Wellbeing purpose

1. This mission has a direct role in supporting the Health and Wellbeing pillar of the Best City Ambition. It also supports Public Health priorities to reduce health related inequalities, prevent diet related disease, ensure all children have the best start in life and an age friendly city.
2. Access to nutritious and healthy food is essential for maintaining a healthy weight, assuring quality of life, emotional wellbeing, and productivity. There are government evidence-based recommendations to eat well for optimal health and wellbeing. Unfortunately for a lot of the population this can be challenging to attain due to the significant barriers to eating well. These barriers include the influence of the unhealthy food environment and acquiring the knowledge and practical skills required to prepare healthy foods. People from lower income groups face substantial challenges when it comes to accessing healthy food. The percentage of adults meeting the “5 a day” fruit and vegetable target in Leeds has reduced from 35.1% in 20/21 to 28.3% in 2023.
3. The unhealthy food environment has become increasingly normalised, where processed foods high in fat, sugar and salt is the default. The term ‘food environment’ is a combination of physical, economic, and sociocultural surroundings, opportunities and conditions that affect food intake. For example, where food is available, what it costs, how it is sold, government policy, societal norms, and cultural influences. Furthermore, marketing, sponsorship, and promotions are consistently and intensively driven towards the sale of these products with multi-national companies controlling a significant amount of the landscape that shapes behaviour. These are often referred to as the commercial determinants of health (CDoH).
4. Improving health and wellbeing through food involves working across the local food system to shift food culture so the healthiest foods are affordable, available and appealing. Working together the Council, alongside the FoodWise Leeds Partnership, are looking to co-develop solutions, remove barriers, improve quality of life, become more socially connected through harnessing the many benefits that food brings.
5. This mission also has inter-linkages with both the Food Security and Economy (FS&E) and Sustainability and Resilience (S&R) missions. For example:
 - Fruit and vegetables are often low carbon and contribute to climate friendly actions. Foods that have a high carbon footprint such as dairy, and red meat are only

recommended in small quantities due to their associations with increasing risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers. There are actions under the H&W mission that support S&R objectives such as the “Just One More” campaign (see key areas of progress). Additionally, actions regarding the provision and procurement of food under S&R also supports H&W.

- The inability to access healthy nutritious foods is a major barrier for adopting a healthy diet as well as increasing stress and affecting overall wellbeing. Therefore, actions to develop and promote the food resilience toolkit under FS&E supports the H&W mission, whilst the commissioning of health and wellbeing services by Public Health (Better Together Community Development and School Health and Wellbeing services) improve access to food.

1.2 Health & Wellbeing areas of progress

6. The Council and FoodWise Leeds have made the following progress on the health and wellbeing food mission.

“Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing”.

7. The Eatwell Forum has been re-established to support the delivery of the Health and Well-Being section of the Leeds Food Strategy. It ensures a Leeds-wide coordinated approach to food and health work, enabling the delivery of consistent evidence-based messages and effective practice tailored to meet local community food needs. The group will be responsible for reviewing and developing the resources available to promote healthier eating in the city including cultural food resources.
8. The 3rd year of delivering the local “Just One More” campaign to encourage an additional portion of vegetables across a range of setting including schools, markets, LCC cafes, NHS and Third Sector.
9. Ongoing promotion of Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly by the Leeds Bosom Buddies (breastfeeding peer supporters) have approximately 100 venues signed up.
10. School Health and Well-being service in partnership with the University of Leeds are mapping school breakfast club provision across schools, to consider appropriate actions.
11. There has been a focus on early years and older people which has included the development of:
 - An Older People Food Action plan to support the nutrition and hydration needs of older people across settings.
 - A Healthy Start Action plan to increase uptake of the national Healthy Start scheme. This aims to increase access to fruit and vegetables for low-income families.

“Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating”.

12. FoodWise Leeds are taking a lead on raising awareness of all the fantastic community food activity taking place across Leeds using stories and social media. This includes reviewing the FoodWise website as a portal for all food related information linking to relevant website such as the Food Aid Network.
13. Through the Eatwell Forum community food initiatives are developed and supported including a range of Third Sector provision i.e. Leeds Cooking School at Kirkgate Market, Flourishing Families and West Leeds Recipe Station. Moving forward, the group will map food initiatives and look at opportunities for new projects and ensure appropriate access to signposting information.

“Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing”.

14. Leeds City Council have developed Healthier Vending Standards based on Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF). The GBSF sets out standards for public sector organisations to apply when procuring food and catering services. These standards relate to food production, processing and distribution, nutrition, resource efficiency, and socio-economic considerations. The Healthier Vending Standards are reviewed annually and enable the availability of healthier food and drink options through vending across the Council.
15. Public Health have undertaken a survey amongst the public to capture views on the food and drinks available from council cafes across leisure services and tourist attractions to inform a Healthier Catering Award due to be launched next year. This will support a range of actions including enabling healthier food availability, considering planet friendly menus and waste management.
16. Public Health have been working with Council colleagues to consider options for implementing an updated Council advertising and sponsorship policy to reduce the promotion of food and drink that are high in fat, sugar or salt. Advertisements of food and drink that meet recommended guidelines would be required to replace those that are high in fat, sugar or salt. Implementing a policy would have benefits across all the missions of the strategy.
17. Planning Services have been working with Public Health to review the Councils Supplementary Planning Document on Hot Food Takeaways (SPD) and consider how this can be strengthened through the Local Plan Update. The SPD provides detailed guidance to businesses, applicants, agents and the local community on how the Council will assess applications for hot food takeaways where planning permission is required. Public Health are leading on the development of a Data Matrix to inform decision making on Hot Food Takeaway applications.

“Develop a skilled workforce with the offer of targeted support for people most likely to develop diet-related diseases”.

18. This is led through the coordination and engagement with multi-stakeholders through the Eat Well Forum. The HATCH partnership is currently acting a test site for developing bespoke training focused on food for the workforce.

1.3 Health & Wellbeing challenges

19. In addition to the progress made, there are significant challenges that affect the delivery of the Health & Wellbeing mission. Most importantly, tackling the Commercial Determinants of Health (CDoH). The Commercial Determinants of Health are private sector activities which impact public health, either positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, and the enabling political economic systems and norms. Food industry practices create the conditions that drive high consumption of unhealthy processed foods and beverages. The availability, accessibility and desirability of these foods and beverages is increased by practices such as supply chain consolidation, marketing and advertising, corporate social responsibility, and corporate political activity. UK government action is required to help reduce the impact of commercial practice on food and drink consumption, for example, the introduction of a 9pm watershed restriction for TV and online adverts for high fat, salt, sugar foods postponement until October 2025.

20. A working group has been established between Public Health and Planning Services to look at what further planning controls could be introduced. However, it will be important to assess what is feasible in terms of the areas that planning might/might not be able to help with, regarding the quality and composition of food sold and advertising in terms of role and regulation.

21. An ongoing challenge highlighted by multiple stakeholders through the Eat Well Forum is the current lack of cooking skills provision in Leeds due to the Local Authority financial challenge and the absence of other funding opportunities.

B Food Security and Economy

2.1 Food Security & Economy purpose

22. The Food Security and Economy food mission aims to ensure that everyone in Leeds has access to nutritious food as part of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant food economy. The mission is crucial for contributing economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally to society. The food mission also addresses the challenges of poverty and food insecurity, aiming to ensure that more people can physically access, afford, and prepare healthy

nutritious food without compromising other basic needs. It is part of a broader vision to create a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable economy in Leeds.

2.2 Food Security & Economy areas of progress

23. Since the strategy was formally launched in July 2023, several key initiatives have been progressed under each objective, set out in the sections below.

“Tackle factors limiting people’s ability to afford the food they need”.

24. Achieving our goal relies significantly on a collaborative partnership, strategically and operationally. The Food Insecurity Taskforce chaired by the council has realigned its priorities to match those of the Leeds Food Strategy and its action plan. Whilst at an operational level the Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) brings together a range of food aid providers, distributors and the Council, to help tackle food insecurity and support people towards food independence effectively in the city of Leeds. LFAN reports into the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network and is connected to the national initiative Feeding Britain.

25. It is vital that residents and families know where to find appropriate support, advice, and guidance, as well as making sustainable programs that increase access to healthy food available. Activities that support this are:

- The Leeds Advice Contract led by Citizens Advice Leeds in partnership with Better Leeds Communities which supports over 27,000 clients a year on a range of advice subjects including benefits, universal credit, housing, debt, immigration and employment queries.
- The Leeds Money Information Centre (MIC) continues to be the main signposting opportunity to assist families and frontline workers in accessing quality assured, free, confidential and impartial help and advice on a range of money related matters such as debt, energy, food and utilities. Printed MIC resources are also available and distributed.
- Training Awareness Sessions: Facilitated by Financial Inclusion Team continue to be delivered in partnership with relevant organisations/experts on sessions including poverty and financial inclusion, cost of living, food and fuel support.
- Income maximisation: Campaigns have been developed around uptakes on underclaimed benefits such as pension credit and healthy start. The application for Free School Meals has been included on our combined application form with Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit for many years. Since 2019 Free School Meal eligibility has been considered on all applications received, unless a family proactively opts out.

“Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives”

26. Achieving this goal requires collaboration with stakeholders to develop programmes and projects that provide affordable and inclusive access to food. In addition, working together to

offer practical help and support for frontline workers, volunteers and organisations providing food aid to people experiencing food insecurity. Key areas of work include:

27. The introduction of *Community Shop*, part of Company Shop Group, which helps members save an average of £212 per month on groceries, offers free membership for those in the local area on means-tested benefits, and provides low-cost cafes and courses aimed at fostering independence and employability. It offers products at about one-third of the retail price, and more than half of its customers move on within a year. Community Shop plans to open at least one location in Leeds, with a preference for being situated within a community centre alongside other relevant services. Locations have been explored based on mapping existing food aid provision against food poverty data to identify gaps in Leeds. Gaps were identified in East and South Leeds and locations are being explored in Swarcliffe and Holbeck initially. It is hoped that the first shop will open by the end of October 2024 and others will follow.
28. The *FoodSavers* scheme which offers high quality fresh and store cupboard food for a low weekly membership fee (typically £6) via a food pantry. Membership also gives the opportunity to attend cookery classes, and save in a recognised Credit Union account. At present, Leeds has five pantries that are part of the FoodSavers initiative, with the first one commencing in October 2023, and there are intentions for another twelve to join the program. As of June 2024, the existing pantries within Leeds have accrued 157 members who have collectively saved £2790. Many of these members have never had savings and as the scheme grows the number of members and amount of savings will continue to grow.
29. There is a Cultural Food Hub Provision within the city, facilitated by organisations such as Give a Gift and Hamara, which supplies culturally suitable food to groups throughout the city. This contributes to a more inclusive offering of food assistance.
30. The updated Food Aid Provision Map, LFAN, the Council and partners collaborated to update the resource which maps food provision across Leeds to show where projects and services are based, along with further useful information about each provision. The aim of the map is to help direct the public to food support and to help neighbouring organisations collaborate more easily.
31. The collaborative creation and launch of a Food Aid Charter in partnership with Public Health to set out key principles and best practice to support local food aid providers to work towards the long-term goal of building food resilience.
32. Led by Public Health the revision of the Building Food Resilience toolkit focusing on encouraging the transition from emergency food aid to sustainable options like Food Pantries, fostering long-term resilience in food security.
33. Delivery of programmes including the DWP's Household Support Fund, and DfE's Holiday Activity and Food Programme, in collaboration with council services and the third sector in Leeds to ensure they reach households most in need of support.

“Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers”.

34. We are helping local food businesses grow and support jobs by connecting them to relevant support and advice:

- Through working with Start-Up West Yorkshire to reflect on its business model, and through grant funding from AD:Venture, local mobile bar business Tchin Tchin has been able to progress from business to customer trading to business to business, targeting weddings and corporate events. The business plans on bringing in additional staff and is closer to its goal of being able to employ a small team.
- As a start-up, local food business Little Bao Boy worked with AD:Venture and received a £25,000 growth grant to invest in their business. Through this support, the company was able to launch an extra arm of their business in wholesale and purchase equipment to continue their business growth. Little Bao Boy now has 22 staff members and has ambitions to move into retail.
- Amity Brew Company, a local brew pub, received an AD:Venture growth grant as well as business advice and loans from the partnering Business Enterprise Fund. As a result of this support, the business established its site in North West Leeds, and has also been able to maximise the wholesale potential of the business and recruit new members of staff.

35. We are working to create and expand pathways to market for locally produced food:

- The Leeds Anchor Network was established in 2018 to connect large organisations rooted in the city to increase their collective contribution towards the city’s economy and local communities. One of the practical areas that Leeds Anchors are focused on making progress towards is procurement, as Anchors often have large discretionary spend which can be directed towards the local economy.
- Through funding from the Health Foundation, the Council is generating evidence and learning through evaluation, including identifying case studies:
- Leeds Beckett University have amended their Strategy, Policy and Procedures to ensure local and SME suppliers are considered at every spend threshold. Through their support, a local food supplier called Tiffin Sandwiches has grown from a tiny shop to a nationwide supplier employing 450 staff.
- Leeds Beckett University has also supported Artisan Bakes, a wholesale craft bakery, to gain a better understanding of the Higher Education sector and compliance. Through a contract with the University, the business now employs an additional 17 staff from the local community.

36. In 2023, a Business Anchor network was established for the private sector to maximise its positive contribution to the city. There could be a future opportunity to promote local food

procurement amongst these businesses given that procurement is an area of interest to the network.

37. We are promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local food sector:

- The Council's Employment and Skills Team continues to support hospitality due to ongoing challenges facing the sector. Despite some positive signs in terms of job postings in the regional hospitality, food and tourism sector in previous months, Deloitte has signalled that nation-wide labour market issues are expected to last beyond 2025.
- Employment and Skills works closely with the Leeds Hotel and Venues association to support the sector including seasonal recruitment campaigns and regular promotion of opportunities.
- The team assists Leeds City College in promoting the Hospitality Ready Programme and in enrolling candidates. This initiative bridges recruitment and skills shortages by providing accredited training, work placements, and guaranteed interviews with hospitality venues.
- Through collaborating with the DWP, the Employment and Skills Team are supporting unemployed residents to access employment opportunities in the hospitality sector. Activity has included registering new customers for Employment Hub support and a Hospitality Jobs Fair.
- The "Connecting Schools to Hospitality" programme was established to link six Leeds schools with six hospitality venues, aiming to provide experiences that will encourage and inspire students to take up careers within the Hospitality industry. A celebratory event was held in July 2024 at Leeds City Colleges Printworks campus to celebrate the achievements of the students from the schools involved.

“Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city - celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture”.

38. The Council is working with the food sector to increase visitor demand for local food and drink across the city:

- The Visit Leeds team is responsible for destination marketing and the visitor economy, with food and drink a key part of this. Through recent funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the team has been able to drive forward several activities:
 - A key initiative working with the local food sector is Eat Leeds Restaurant Week, which returned in February 2024. The purpose is to drive more footfall towards hospitality businesses in Leeds and make restaurants more accessible to new customers, with 40 businesses participating in the scheme. Over 7,500 Restaurant Week vouchers were downloaded across the campaign generating over £100,000 revenue.

- In May 2024 Leeds once again hosted UKREiiF, the national Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, which welcomed over 13,000 people and had an estimated economic boost of £20m for the city. Using UKREiiF as a focal point for Destination Marketing activities, the Visit Leeds team produced a Digital Restaurant Guide for visitors as well as locals, featuring 100 local restaurants.
- Additionally, two delegate experience guides were developed promoting independent businesses and local experiences.

39. We are celebrating the culture and diversity of Leeds by promoting the local food offer in different parts of the city:

- Further to the activities listed above, the Visit Leeds team recently launched a new campaign called 'Leeds, the city that loves to entertain' which has also been bolstered by funding from the UKSPF. A core aspect of this campaign is celebrating 'a thriving independent food scene you won't find anywhere else', and a range of food and drink-centred events and festivals taking place around the city are spotlighted, such as the North Leeds Food Festival, food and drink experiences and tours, and Leeds International Beer Festival.

2.3 Food Security & Economy challenges

40. In terms of Food Insecurity, the city is experiencing a strain on services due to financial instability and funding cuts in local government, healthcare, and the third sector, during times of high demand. The continuation of insecure, short-term funding and timescales is a barrier to the sustainability and planning of supportive measures.
41. Considering the financial instability and reduced funding, it's important to acknowledge that the present 'food parcel' approach is not sustainable. Collaborating with partners is essential to create a more sustainable solution.
42. There is currently no indication from government of whether the [Household Support Fund](#) (HSF) which provides support to low-income households in the city will be extended past September 2024. Over a 12-month period ending 31 March 2024, £13,386,794 was spent directly supporting 187,196 households. A total of 218,438 awards were made 40% of these were categorised to include food.
43. In addition, the Healthy Holidays programme's current funding ends Christmas 2024. Throughout 2023 this funding reached just over 22,000 children, with over 127,000 portions of food served.
44. Organisations like [Fareshare](#) and [Rethink Food](#) are seeing changes in the surplus food landscape and availability, while Food Aid groups note a decline in donations. Not necessarily a decline in physical donations; but rather that monetary contributions are buying less, resulting in fewer food items being received.

45. Turning to the food economy strand, there is an opportunity to further embed the Strategy in the work of economic development services that have a relationship to food. This would ensure that activity aligns to all three strategy missions and progress captured goes beyond business as usual. A key barrier is resource, however there could be opportunities to build buy-in through undertaking another round of targeted engagement, inviting service representatives to relevant Food Strategy meetings, identifying 'quick win' actions across areas, and learning from the best practice of other cities.
46. More specifically, there could be future opportunities to deliver activity on the action 'supporting innovation and research that promotes the viability of local food enterprises'. The city has an innovation vision to 'stimulate innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and more inclusive future', which the Food Strategy aligns with. The council could explore the potential to support new opportunities for innovative and sustainable food production, for example through future rounds of innovation@leeds grant funding.

C Sustainability & Resilience Mission

3.1 Sustainability & Resilience areas of progress

47. The Sustainability and Resilience food mission aligns to the Zero Carbon pillar of the Council's ambition. The terminology was amended prior to and during extensive public consultation during late October 2022-December 2022 to ensure it was understandable and accessible for residents and responders to the consultation offered online and in person.
48. It is essential for the sustainability and resilience of our food to ensure the way Leeds produces, consumes, and disposes of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan. 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.
49. Leeds declared a climate emergency in 2019, 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. Enabling the transition to a more sustainable food system by wasting less food, increasing availability of healthier foods, and producing food in better and more environmentally friendly ways we can reduce the 1/5 of our current national carbon footprint impact which is attributable to food.
50. 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.

51. Ultimately, ensuring the way we produce, consume, and dispose of food is fit for the future is not only necessary and beneficial long-term, but will also help us to improve the quality of life for everyone across the city.

52. In making amendments to the objectives and actions for sustainability and resilience, account was again taken of the extensive public consultation for LFS undertaken in late 2022. This ensured that the priority and order of areas of interest, and their importance commented on and rated by respondents was retained within the amendments made to the Sustainability and Resilience food mission.

- Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient commercial production, sale and consumption of seasonal, local foods by promoting the economic and social value benefits within the city.
- Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying embracing and showcasing robust supply chain and buying systems to encourage the city's biggest organisations to join Leeds City Council in their procurement commitments of the benefits of consuming local and seasonal produce.

Sustainability & Resilience areas of progress

53. The Council and FoodWise Leeds partnership have made considerable progress in this food mission.

“Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food”.

54. The Council’s Environmental Services are developing a long term Leeds Waste Strategy, that will focus on household waste, including food waste. The plans relating to food waste collections will be incorporated into a larger strategy and work programme within Leeds Food Strategy for waste reduction, collection, recycling and redistribution.

55. Food waste issues were also an area of particular interest from participants in the Council’s Catering Mark consultation. The Council Catering Mark currently being coproduced between Public Health and CEGS is intended for implementation in summer 2025 and will also include waste elements, and the survey undertaken in spring 2024 highlighted that food waste was a key area of interest to respondents.

56. Funding has been secured and approved making various community based growing projects and expansion of community composting possible with the Council administered climate grants from West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). To date £123,000, specifically for

these food and waste related projects, has been approved and initiatives are in a range of areas across the city.

57. Following the Government notice in May 2024 councils are now expected to commence domestic food waste collections by April 2026 unless a transitional arrangement applies. Earlier, in March 2024, DEFRA provided councils with a share of the one-off capital allocation to support the purchase of infrastructure required to collect food waste, i.e. refuse collection vehicles, bins and caddies. Leeds has been allocated £7.1m. The Government has committed to providing councils with ongoing, new burden revenue funding to pay for the collection of food waste, but has yet to provide any information on how much that would be. An update is expected following the Spending Review in November 2024. In terms of collection models/options the expectation from DEFRA has moved towards the comingled collection of organic garden and food waste where that makes the most sense locally and supports the Simpler Recycling aims (in particular to keep the number of bins to a minimum). The future requirement remains for a weekly collection where food waste is included, despite fortnightly comingled garden/food collections being successfully delivered already in places such as Hull, East Riding and the Manchester area.
58. The Council's Environmental Services team has undertaken extensive modelling of service delivery options to prepare and adapt to the changing national position. This work has included the establishment of an annual composition analysis of household residual (black) and recycling (green) bins; which provides invaluable data on the contents of these bins, including how much food waste is in them. As any confirmation or detail on the timing or amount of funding for food waste collections has yet to be provided, it is likely the Council will look at a phased/incremental approach, utilising the existing infrastructure and available resources to enable as many residents as possible to begin the recycling of food waste through their kerbside household waste collections and the change in habits and behaviours that requires.
59. While these final arrangements and plans are being made Environment Services introduced kerbside domestic glass collection services through the green recycling bin in August 2024, thus completing the Simpler Recycling requirements for dry recyclable materials ahead of the 2026 commencement date.

“Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet”.

60. Implementation of additional information regarding carbon impact of food for customers at Temple Newsam (Green Spaces) café in summer 2024.
61. Support for additional developments of community growing opportunities including further sites in Leeds parks.

62. Over the last year July 23-July 24 Incredible Edible (IE) have expanded the number of community led growing groups from 13 to 18 with another 2 due imminently. This totals 20 groups, 68 sites and just over 150 beds exact locations can be found on IE's website [Bed Locations – Incredible Edible Leeds](#). It is expected that plans for another group will be finalised before August 2025 in Richmond Hill.
63. Some of these sites are linked in the Council parks areas with development supported alongside community volunteers with IE by Council Green Spaces officers in line with the Council's reconfirmation of support for community growing developments in our parks sites as highlighted in [Parks and Green Spaces overview to the Council Executive Board](#) in February, 2024. The additional number of IE sites since July 23 has been extensively supported by a successful Lottery award of £70,000, this however has recently come to an end and so progress over the coming year is expected to slow considerably unless a further funding source can be identified.
64. IE has also worked to develop raised bed fruit and vegetable growing in some of the city's community orchard site.
65. There has recently been a resurgence of interest in community food growing in Leeds. We continue to support local food growing, both through the provision of allotments and through identifying other areas of land within 4000 hectares managed by the Green Spaces service that are suitable for community food growing (e.g. for orchards, of which there are over 35 on Council green spaces, or raised vegetable beds). Successful examples of community food growing projects include the 'edible beds' at Grove Road recreation ground which were installed and managed by Halton in Bloom and the orchards at Burley and Kirkstall Abbey parks that were developed by park Friends groups. Going forward, we will work with Food Strategy partners and community groups to promote further opportunities to grow food on our sites.
66. For the inception of an Allotment Development Plan, initial scoping has begun the development and implementation plan for the city's allotment sites, and this work will continue to be explored over the coming year.

“Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient commercial food production”

67. Extensive work has been undertaken over the last year seeking to engage sector representative organisations as well as commercial growers/ farmers direct, however this has limited success. Further discussed under the key challenges section.
68. Discussions with planning colleagues within the Council have been positive and future consideration will be incorporated into the Local Plan to develop this action further.
69. Further elements of the strategy and how it links to the broader city economy promoting Leeds as a destination city with the focus on consumption of local produce by businesses

and institutions is also underway. This has been incorporated into the city's submission as part of the Global Destination Sustainability Index for the last two years. The GDS-Index is a destination-level programme that measures, benchmarks, and improves the sustainability strategy and performance of tourism and events destinations.

70. Its purpose is to inspire, engage, and enable destinations to become more regenerative, flourishing, and resilient places to visit, meet, and live in. At our first submission, Leeds was awarded a GDS-Index score of 52.6 across all the environmental sustainability areas giving Leeds a ranking of 5th in the UK and 34th in Western Europe and was recognised for the strength of the detail in an initial submission, particularly for the environment section and adapting to a changing climate.

“Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food buying”

71. The Council is seeking through contract management discussions to understand and reduce the environmental impact of the food purchased by the Council in line with our food procurement guideline commitments. This is at initial stages to clearly identify where our current suppliers, procured to provide food across the council including schools, council attraction cafés, are currently sourcing foods from.

72. Further work will be undertaken to explore how 'local' and 'seasonal' this is to determine how further improvement can be made. The Council remains an active and lead organisation in the Leeds Anchors Network (LAN) Climate Sub-Group; through our participation and engagement with other large food buyers and consumers in the city we will seek to explore sustainable and resilient food consumption more widely.

73. Across all our partner engagement and networks, the council is seeking to embrace and showcase robust supply chain and buying systems. Other LAN Climate Sub-Group members will be encouraged to join the council in our procurement commitments of the benefits of consuming local and seasonal produce.

3.3 Sustainability & Resilience challenges

74. Effective engagement with local commercial growers and farmers has been limited and problematic, despite channels of communication with sector representative organisations, including unions and networks, elected members and intelligence related to the Council as a corporate landlord of tenanted land.

75. Digital and technological updates as well as staffing resource changes within the University of Leeds regarding the collaborative food carbon emissions calculator have led to delays in delivery of this aspect of the strategy action plan. Commercially available carbon calculators for food have also been explored, however the cost associated with these is prohibitive.

76. The national agenda around providing additional information to customers about the carbon impact of their food through Defra and Institute of Grocery Distributors (IGD) has already begun. However, from the scope and food labelling consultation Defra undertook earlier this year it seems this will offer retail only labelling e.g. packaged items in supermarkets & stores and will not include commercial suppliers e.g. those the council uses for food buying into schools, children's centre and café sites with Green Spaces, Museums and Galleries.