

Leeds Food Strategy and Food Procurement Guidelines

Date: 19th October 2022

Report of: Director of Resources

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

Food is one of life's pleasures providing cultural and social connections, enhancing well-being and enjoyment. However, we know that inequalities exist in our city and people on the lowest incomes experience many barriers to eating a satisfying and balanced diet. Food also accounts for around 1/3 of global carbon emissions and therefore the sustainability of our food also needs to be a key consideration.

The Leeds Food Strategy has been developed to bring together the wide range of work currently being undertaken in the city on food to maximise the impact of the current action and to set the strategic direction for the city from 2023 to 2030, based on the vision below.

"Leeds has a vibrant food economy where everyone is able to access local, healthy and affordable food, produced in a way which improves our natural environment and embraces innovation".

Currently many people struggle to access food – over 20% of the population live in poverty. These lowest-income households are spending on average 19% of their income on food. Secondly, once people access food, this food may not be the nutritious food that they need to benefit them and protect their health from diet related conditions. Despite the long term success of the obesity strategy among children, 14.9% of Reception age children in Leeds that were identified as living with obesity. Only 33.8% of the adult population in Leeds is a healthy weight, with 11.5% underweight and 54.6% living with overweight or obesity.

Leeds Food Strategy addresses the three pillars of Leeds City Council's Best City Ambition: health and wellbeing, food security and economy (inclusive growth), and sustainability and resilience (zero carbon). Three working groups made up of a wide range of stakeholders came together to create the objectives and content of the draft strategy for consultation (see appendix A).

Leeds City Council's Food Procurement Guidelines, included in this report, are an example of early work delivering on the objectives of the strategy.

Recommendations

- a) To approve the draft Leeds Food Strategy (appendix A)
- b) To approve the public consultation of the Leeds Food Strategy

- c) To note the introduction of the food procurement guidelines at Leeds City Council (appendix B)

What is this report about?

- 1 The Leeds Food Strategy has been developed to bring together the wide range of work currently being undertaken in the city on food. It articulates work currently ongoing across the city and identifies current gaps and areas for improvement. The aim is to better join up all work to maximise the impact of the current action and to set the strategic direction for the city for 2023 to 2030.
- 2 The vision for the strategy is that “Leeds has a vibrant food economy where everyone is able to access local, healthy and affordable food, produced in a way which improves our natural environment and embraces innovation”. This was written and agreed by a group of almost 100 stakeholders at an event that launched the strategy work in January 2022.
- 3 The Leeds Food Strategy is a strategy for the whole city, not just the council, and was developed with partners from across the food system in Leeds.
- 4 The timing of the local strategy is in line with national steer. One of [The National Food Strategy's](#) recommendations was for Local Authorities to produce a local strategy. [The Government Food Strategy](#) was also published recently, in June 2022.
- 5 The Leeds Food Strategy and accompanying Leeds Food Action Plan will be an important part of Leeds achieving Silver and then Gold Sustainable Food Places status by 2030. As a city Leeds currently holds the [Sustainable Food Places](#) Bronze award, which demonstrates the partnership work and action across the food system.
- 6 Leeds Food Strategy follows the three pillars of Leeds City Council’s Best City Ambition: health and wellbeing, food security and economy (inclusive growth), and sustainability and resilience (zero carbon). Three working groups, made up of a wide range of stakeholders, came together to create the objectives and content of the draft strategy (appendix A) under these three areas, which is now ready for wider public consultation.
- 7 Health and wellbeing
 - a) Food is central to our health and wellbeing and key to Leeds’ aspiration to help people live longer and have healthier lives. Eating a safe, healthy, balanced diet is key to improved health and wellbeing and important to reduce the risk of malnutrition, obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some cancers.
 - b) It is estimated that in the UK, 70,000 lives per year could be saved if we followed the Eatwell Guide. Only 53.7% of adults in Leeds are meeting the recommended 5 fruit and veg a day. This is lower than the England average of 55.7%. 54.6% of adults in Leeds have been identified as living with overweight or obesity. To stop this increasing trend, residents’ diets need to become more in line with national guidance.
 - c) A healthy, nutritious diet is important at every stage of life, to give children the best start in life, to help them learn and grow through adulthood and to promote healthy independent ageing. In 2020/21, 14.9% of Reception age children in Leeds were identified as living with obesity. Leeds has previously bucked the European trend of greater obesity among children through the Henry (Health, Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young) programme, but the figure rose in line with the national trend post Covid by 4.8% from the year before. Data for 2021/22 is not available until November however preliminary data indicates a reversal of this increase. Children who are living with obesity are much more likely to continue to be in adulthood.
 - d) In this section of the report there are five objectives which hope to address the issues outlined. See point 11 (a) of this report.

8 Food security and economy

- a) Community food security is the foundation for a healthy, sustainable economy. This means that everyone has access to and can afford enough safe, healthy and nutritious food for themselves and their families. We believe that choice is important and that everyone should be able to have food that meets their own preferences and dietary requirements.
- b) In Leeds 22% of the adult population and 24% of children and young people live in poverty. With the cost of living crisis becoming ever more present for residents, low-income households are spending on average 19% of their income on food. In April 2022, 10% of the adult population in the UK said their household had gone without food or could not physically get it in that month. To ensure all Leeds residents have food security, we need to address poverty, inequality and promote fair and inclusive economic growth. We can do this by ensuring people can physically access, afford, and cook food without compromising other basic needs or relying on food aid and emergency food parcels.
- c) We also need to celebrate and support a vibrant local food economy which creates economic opportunities for residents, promotes collaboration and encourages innovation for our city and its people. There are 37,775 people employed directly in food industry in Leeds across the 8,055 food businesses (agriculture, manufacturing (with processing), wholesale and retail).
- d) In this section of the report there are five objectives which hope to address the issue of food insecurity and promote a prosperous local food economy. See point 11 (b) of this report.

9 Sustainability and resilience

- a) Leeds has declared a climate emergency and we have an ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions as quickly as possible and to boost our city's resilience to the changing climate. The impact the food we eat has on the planet must be considered. The carbon footprint of food procured by LCC in 2020/21 was 4,990 tonnes of CO₂.
- b) Our food system is responsible for around 20% of UK emissions. Food waste from households and businesses alone in the UK releases more than 25 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year. Energy used to transport and process our food does also of course contribute to the food sector's carbon footprint. However, the biggest portion of greenhouse gases related to the food system are released before our food leaves the farm, from things like land use change, fertilisers and methane from livestock.
- c) Leeds produces 49% of the calories it demands, that means we are reliant on food imports for half of what we eat in the city. Not only is a locally produced, seasonal diet good for the planet but it also is good for the city's food security. Our changing climate means that extreme weather will be more frequent across the globe, damaging harvests that disrupt supplies and raise food prices. By creating a resilient food system (sourcing produce from a wide range of local, national and international suppliers) we can reduce the impact of supply disruption when it occurs, especially for those in food poverty.
- d) In this section of the report there are five objectives which hope to reduce the negative impact of our diets on the climate and contribute to a more established local, sustainable food system. See point 11 (c) of this report.
- e) Objective 5 of this chapter (see 11 c) notes the importance of community-led food production, which strongly links with the recent Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2022-2023). The Parks and Countryside strategy has committed to produce and deliver a Leeds City Council Allotment Management Plan with the aim to ensure allotment sites across the city are well-managed in order to facilitate local food-growing. It is recognised that local food-growing is not only beneficial to the environment but also benefits health and wellbeing and food security, therefore linking to all three chapters of the food strategy.

10 The Leeds Food Strategy has been created alongside stakeholders since work began on the document in January 2022. The strategy will be available on Leeds City Council's website for wider public consultation until December 2022. The public are invited to review the strategy and complete an online questionnaire. On the ground community and stakeholder engagement will complement this online survey.

What impact will this proposal have?

11 The Leeds Food Strategy has 5 objectives under each of the 3 key themes. These objectives will be implemented through an annual action plan:

a) Health and wellbeing

1. Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing.
2. Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.
3. Offer targeted support that helps people most likely to develop diet-related diseases.
4. Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.
5. Develop a skilled local workforce that works collaboratively to advocate for healthier eating and changes which enable it.

b) Food security and economy

1. Tackle the root causes of food insecurity.
2. Improve access to, and inclusivity of, emergency and affordable food initiatives to help more people in need of support.
3. Continue to build a strong partnership approach across all sectors and with the people of Leeds.
4. Support inclusive growth within Leeds' food economy.
5. Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city—celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.

c) Sustainability and resilience

1. Empower residents to choose healthy diets by raising awareness of choices that are good for the planet.
2. Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food.
3. Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient procurement.
4. Support local farmers to transition to resilient and profitable agriculture which improves the environment.
5. Encourage and enable innovative and community-led food production.

12 Examples of some of the work that will sit on the first annual action plan of the strategy are:

- a) Connecting with interested businesses and organisations that provide or sell food to encourage them to prepare and promote safe, healthy, nutritious food more prominently. Leeds City Council will lead by example within its own venues (linked to objective 2 of health and wellbeing).
- b) Developing and sustaining programmes such as Healthy Holidays (linked to objective 2 of food security and economy).
- c) The introduction of carbon labelling in schools and at council food venues using the carbon calculator developed in partnership with the Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) at the University of Leeds (linked to objective 1 of sustainability and resilience).

13 The impact of the strategy and its consultation have been considered in the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment (appendix C). It was identified that there is a risk of certain groups missing the opportunity to take part in the consultation, but that planning and monitoring of the consultation will minimise any potential impacts to EDCI.

14 Leeds City Council's Food Procurement Guidelines

An early example of the council delivering under the objectives of the Leeds Food Strategy is the Leeds City Council's Food Procurement Guidelines. A cross-cutting group of council colleagues worked together to create a set of guidelines (appendix B) that should be referenced whenever procuring food or where a new food supplier is being chosen. This work falls under 'Championing environmentally sustainable and resilient procurement' in the sustainability section of the strategy. In 2020/21, Leeds City Council spent an estimated £4,718,809 on food. The 2,133 tonnes of food purchased amounted to a carbon footprint of 4,990 tonnes of CO2. Setting council wide guidelines for this spend will help ensure the money is spent with the right suppliers and on the right foods, that will keep our city and our planet healthy.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

15 The strategy has been built with these 3 pillars at its core – see 'Brief Summary', 'What is this report about?' and 'What impact will this proposal have?' sections of this report.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: N/A

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

16 The strategy work began with an event in January 2022 to let stakeholders across the city know that this work was being undertaken and that LCC welcomed input from any interested parties throughout Leeds. Another event was held in July as an opportunity for the wider stakeholder group to comment and contribute to the draft objectives which had been worked up in the interim by the 3 working groups (health and wellbeing, food security and economy, and sustainability and resilience). Each of the 3 working groups were made up of representatives of a multitude of organisations.

17 Throughout the strategy development the progress and draft objectives have been taken to the following groups:

a) CEAC Food and Biodiversity Group

b) Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce

c) Healthy Population Board

18 Once the strategy has been approved an 8-week wider general public consultation is planned to take place from October 24th until Dec 18th. This will be an online questionnaire as well as engagement with communities and stakeholder groups.

What are the resource implications?

19 The strategy development has been managed within current resources. The final strategy will be published in early 2023, after consultation, alongside the first annual action plan. Foodwise Leeds will monitor the Leeds Food Action Plan and ensure the work continues forward. Each year there will be a new annual action plan to ensure the strategy does not stagnate. Foodwise Leeds is funded by Leeds City Council for this work. In 2023/24, £5,000 has been committed

from Resources, Public Health and Communities; to a total of £15,000. For this funding FoodWise Leeds will:

- a) Monitor the Leeds Food Action Plan
- b) Provide feedback to the Food Strategy Steering group on progress
- c) Deliver on some specific projects that support the Leeds Food Action Plan

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

- 20 There is the risk that the consultation does not reach a wide enough audience within Leeds and only those already engaged are those that respond. This will be mitigated through consulting via lots of different methods and channels.
- 21 There is a risk that the [Government Food Strategy](#) conflicts with Leeds Food Strategy which could impact on funding opportunities. This can be managed by the team developing the annual action plan referring back to national documents regularly.
- 22 The Leeds Food Strategy sets out objectives and actions for various partners across the city, not just Leeds City Council. Others could potentially not take the action set out in the strategy which would soften its impact. Due to the way in which the strategy was created, alongside various partners throughout, LCC hopes to have investment from partners to deliver on their actions.

What are the legal implications?

- 23 There are no legal implications to the Leeds Food Strategy.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 24 The only other option for the strategy was to not produce one. In doing so the city wouldn't maximise the work being done on food and impact would be reduced.
- 25 Instead of Food Procurement Guidelines being produced, Food Procurement Rules could have been made. This would have potentially been too restrictive and detrimentally effected food procurement, therefore guidelines seemed more suitable. Also, no guidelines could have been produced however then as a council we would not be moving towards our targets to serve healthier, more nutritious food that is better for the planet.

How will success be measured?

- 26 Each year from 2023-2030 there will be a Leeds Food Action Plan to sit beside the Leeds Food Strategy. The Leeds Food Action Plan will include KPIs and success will be measured based on these.
- 27 The success of the Leeds Food Strategy consultation will be measured by the number of online surveys completed and by the spread of different demographics that have completed it.
- 28 The success of the Food Procurement Guidelines will be measured by the number of new or renewed food contracts that have used the tool.

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

- 29 Chief Officer of Sustainable Energy and Air Quality will be responsible for the progression of the Leeds Food Strategy work. Timetable for work is as follows:

October 2022	Draft Leeds Food Strategy to Executive Board and hosted on LCC website
October – December 2022	Wider public consultation taking place
January - February 2023	Alterations to strategy being made
March 2023	Final Leeds Food Strategy to Executive Board
April 2023 – March 2024	First year of Leeds Food Action Plan delivery, monitored by FoodWise Leeds
2024 – 2030	Development of annual Leeds Food Action Plan and delivery of workstreams under objectives

Appendices

- Appendix A: Draft Leeds Food Strategy
- Appendix B: Copy of Leeds City Council Food Procurement Guidelines
- Appendix C: Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment

Background papers

- N/A