

Leeds Food Strategy - report on progress

Date:

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

Report to:

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 was adopted in 2023, following consultation and approval at Executive Board. The strategy is a long term vision for the city, and extends to 2030, aligning very closely to the council's strategic three pillars, with three overlapping missions of

- Health and wellbeing
- Food security and economy
- Sustainability and resilience

This report updates Executive Board on the governance and delivery of the strategy by the council and local partner organisations, including the proposed key performance indicators. It also details progress of the actions contained in the strategy and proposes changes in specific actions.

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 of the actions in the strategy and approve the amendments to the action plan.

What is this report about?

- 1 The Leeds Food Strategy was adopted by the council as the lead organisation in 2023 following a process of consultation, and partnership working. A draft version was initially proposed to Executive Board in October 2022, promptly followed with public consultation between October and December 2022, with subsequent revisions and final version approved in March 2023.
- 2 At Executive Board, it was agreed to provide updates against the strategy progress, which extends to 2030. This report is, therefore, the first of several updates on the progress of the strategy.
- 3 The Leeds Food Strategy sets out a shared vision with bold intentions 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 on 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 model. It sets out the specific actions, indicators of progress, 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, Food Security and Economy and Sustainability and Resilience.
 - **Health and Wellbeing** – 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 purpose and supports our climate action plan.

- 7 The United Nations¹ 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 strategy² highlights the importance of food for 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 for promoting highly palatable processed unhealthy foods. The UK aims, among other things, 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.
- 9 The governance of the Leeds Food Strategy involves a partnership agreement between the council and FoodWise Leeds, who act as a steward for a wider network of local groups, businesses and organisations. Our city also has a well-established food charity network, much of it developed during the 2010s, in response to increasing poverty and inequality. The diagram under figure 1, illustrates the governance structure for the Leeds Food Strategy.

Figure 1: Diagram to illustrate the governance for the Leeds Food Strategy



¹ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [Goal 2 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

² Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2022) Policy Paper: Government Food Strategy. Available at: [Government food strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

10 As sections 12 to 15 below detail, the Leeds Food Strategy partnership between the council and FoodWise Leeds (explained under point 10) holds accountability for delivering the strategy and action plan. A large number of council services are involved in different areas of food policy and service delivery, and an internal council food steering group is led by officers from:

- Climate, Energy & Green Spaces;
- Public Health
- Financial Inclusion; and
- Economic Development.

11 **Appendix A** lists the organisations working with the council and FoodWise in support of the strategy and action plan.

12 FoodWise Leeds (Local Food Partnership) continues to be hosted by Zest, a third sector organisation who specialise in community health development. The Council has been match-funding the partnership coordination alongside [Sustainable Food Places](#) (SFP) to the value of £15k annually. This was a shared responsibility whereby CEGS, Financial Inclusion and Public Health funded £5k each. However, as the SFP funding has now come to an end, and due to the financial pressures within the council, it was agreed in February 2024, that Public Health would fund the full 25k required to fund the coordinator post from April 2024. A contract, managed by Public Health, has now been established between Public Health and Zest, with quarterly performance management meetings to progress the work. This arrangement will be reviewed in December 2024.

13 The funding that SFP provided for the coordinator role, was to support the Leeds partnership to obtain the Silver Sustainable Food Places Award. The award is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of places who take a joined up and holistic approach and achieving significant change on a range of food issues. Leeds was awarded SFP Bronze award in 2019, and has been working towards SFP Silver. The development of long-term food strategy was one of the requirements for achieving the higher award of Silver. However, a submission was required by September 2023, and whilst an attempt for obtaining Silver was progressed with an application, this was not successful. Leading up to the application, the council was aware that some of the criteria for the award would not be met, and whilst the outcome was disappointing, it was expected to some extent.

14 Since then, there was a further opportunity to reapply, which was encouraged by SFP, however it was agreed at both the FoodWise and Leeds Food Strategy steering groups collectively that

we would not pursue this at this time. The previous application required significant time and resource, which we agreed would be better spent on developing the strategy and partnership. We have identified strengths and weakness against the criteria and are working to address these.

15 Since this decision was taken considerable progress has been made to strengthen the strategy. This includes the following:

- Whilst developing the action plan (see **Appendix B**), 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. We have therefore reviewed the Food Strategy objectives and agreed to reduce these from 15 to 12 (detailed in **Table 1** below).
- A performance framework including 16 indicators has been developed for monitoring the strategy (see **Appendix C**).

Table 1: Leeds Food Strategy Objectives

Health and Wellbeing	Food Security & Economy	Sustainability & Resilience
1. Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing.	5. Tackle factors limiting people's ability to afford the food they need.	9. Tackle waste by reducing, redistributing, and utilising surplus food.
2. Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.	6. Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives.	10. Raise awareness of how we can eat nutritious foods that are good for the planet.
3. Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.	7. Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.	11. 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.
4. Develop a skilled workforce with the offer of targeted support for people most likely to develop diet-related diseases.	8. Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city - celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.	12. Champion environmentally sustainable and resilient food consumption by 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.
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How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

16 There are examples of work that support across all three of the Food Strategy missions, and specifically within them which support the three pillars of the Best City Ambition. For examples of work programmes that support across the three pillars, see below:

- Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust food and drink strategy is in development and has been aligned to the 3 key missions with the Leeds Food Strategy. 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
- HATCH Local Care Partnership aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live in Chapeltown, Burmantofts, Harehills and Richmond Hill. The group has agreed a food priority and have used the Leeds Food Strategy key missions to plan its local action which includes the development of a “Food is Everyone’s Business Training course”, which could be expanded city wide once developed.
- Public Health are leading the development of an All Age Healthy Weight Strategy which supports multiple outcomes that relate to both the Leeds Food Strategy and the Best City Ambition.

17 The report now addresses an update for each of the three missions.

Health and wellbeing

Purpose

18 Food is essential for health and wellbeing. Eating good, healthy, affordable and nutritious food protects both physical and mental wellbeing. Knowing and understanding what to eat, along with the practical skills needed to prepare healthy and balanced food are all skills that should be available to all. But a healthy diet is not always easy to achieve, and 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.

- 19 Many people find it challenging to access healthier food, primarily because we are living in an unhealthy food environment, 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’s sold, government policy, societal norms, and cultural influences. The food environment has become increasingly saturated with ultra-processed, energy dense foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt. 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.
- 20 Improving health and wellbeing through food involves working across the local food system to shift food culture so the healthiest options are affordable, available and appealing. Working together we are looking to co-develop solutions, remove barriers, improve quality of life, become more socially connected through harnessing the many benefits that food brings.

Table 2 key measures/indicators, Health and Wellbeing

Key measures/indicators
% of adults in Leeds who consume at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily.
% of year 6 children recorded with a healthy weight in 10% most deprived compared to 10% least deprived and the Leeds average.
% of adults in Leeds living with diabetes (diet-related disease) in 10% most deprived compared to the Leeds average and 10% least deprived.
Number of health promoting and sustainable (planet friendly) community food projects.
Food Environment – Number of Hot Food Takeaway (HFT) applications declined city wide and in high priority areas using the Council Supplementary Planning Document and Food Data Matrix (in development).

Table 3: Key areas of progress, Health and Wellbeing

Objective	Actions
Ensure people of all ages know how to access and eat food that supports their health and wellbeing.	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>Ongoing promotion of Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly by the Leeds Bosom Buddies (breastfeeding peer supporters) have approximately 100 venues signed up.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Thinking about specific life stages where access to nutrition is especially important, there has been a focus on early years and older people which has included the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Champion community food initiatives that support healthier eating.</p>	<p>Food Wise 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 Food Wise website as a portal for all food related information linking to relevant website such as the Food Aid Network.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Change our city environment to help make healthier food more available and appealing.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 Mark 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.</p> <p>Planning have been working with Public Health to review the Leeds City Council 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 Planning Authority 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.</p>

<p>Develop a skilled workforce with the offer of targeted support for people most likely to develop diet-related diseases.</p>	
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Challenges

- 21 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 conditions driving consumption of highly processed foods and beverages. The availability, accessibility and desirability of highly processed foods and beverages is increased by practices such as supply chain consolidation, marketing and advertising, corporate social responsibility, and corporate political activity. Therefore, the food industry plays a huge role in producing and promoting the food and drinks available for us to eat. UK government action is required to help reduce the impact of commercial practice on people’s diets. Examples include introduction of a 9pm watershed restriction for TV and online adverts for high fat, salt, sugar foods which was first introduced in 2022 and has been now postponed until October 2025.
- 22 Progress has been made to establish a working group between Public Health and Planning, but it is important to note what planning might/might not be able to help with, regarding the quality and composition of food sold and advertising (for e.g. takeaway names and frontage advertising) in terms of role and regulation.
- 23 An ongoing challenge highlighted by multiple stakeholders through the Eat Well Forum, is the current lack of cooking provision in Leeds.

Food security and economy

Purpose

24 The Food Security and Economy 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 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

Key measures/indicators

25 The framework for the strategy includes a food security strand, which encompasses the following three indicators:

- Number and percentage of families accessing healthy start Scheme: as of June 2024, Healthy Start data shows in Leeds 8,699 families are eligible to claim healthy start of these 6001 eligible families are on the digital scheme, totalling a 69% uptake. Nationally the uptake is 66.5% meaning that the uptake in Leeds is 2.5% higher than the National Average.
- Percentage of eligible children and young people taking up Free School Meals (FSM): In Leeds FSM are administered by the Council Tax and Benefits Service and schools are supported by the Health and Wellbeing Services. Information on FSM take-up is recorded annually by data provided by schools as part of the January census. Data from January 2024 showed 34,967 Leeds pupils were registered as entitled to a FSM. Of these pupils, 8,435 (24.1%) did not take up the offer of an FSM on the day of the school census. This is a decrease in percentage take up from previous years, as shown in the table below.

Table 5: Percentage of Leeds pupils entitled to free school meals who take them up

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Primary Schools	80.6	81.1	79.8	78.7
Secondary Schools	87.3	70.5	75.8	72.0
All Through Schools	99.4	77.8	83.3	80.6
Specialist Schools and Provisions (SILCS)	57.1	72.1	70.9	74.5
City Wide	82.7	76.8	78.2	75.9

- Work is underway to better understand why the percentage has reduced. However, a known reason is transitional protection for all claimants of free school meals whilst Universal Credit is being rolled out. This has been in place since 1st April 2018, and means that some families may no longer require the support even though eligible In addition locally in the next academic year there are plans for a campaign to encourage take up.
- 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:. The baseline for this indicator is to start at zero, as the charter is yet to be launched. Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) gathers data on Food Poverty and Insecurity in Leeds, which is available on the Leeds Observatory. While this data isn't included in the strategy's framework, it is provided below for reference.

- 67,596 people have accessed a foodbank by referral in 2023/24. This is a 14% increase on the support level required during 2022/23.
- 142,459 meals were given out through a drop in or through Street Outreach, up 54% on last year.
- 81,959 food parcels were given out informally without the need for referral, this is up 21% on last year.
- 38,935 allocations were accessed from Food Pantries in 2023/24, up 27% on last year.

26 The framework for the strategy also includes a strand relating to the food economy, with an objective around supporting and unlocking opportunities for local food businesses and workers. As part of the implementation of the Food Strategy, we are monitoring the data which shows how many food and drink and associated businesses (for example, food and drink manufacturers, wholesalers, retail, restaurants) in Leeds have been supported across our regional business support programmes, since the launch of the Leeds Food Strategy in 2023, see summary table below.

Table 5: Support to food businesses

Business Support Service	Service Description	Baseline Date	Number of Businesses Supported
Start Up West Yorkshire	Provides fully funded business support that can help any type of business under three years old and those who have not yet launched their business	July 2024 (between Jul 23 – May 24)	14
AD:Venture	Provides support to growth-focused new businesses that trade with other businesses	June 2024 (between Jul 23 – Jun 24)	13
Other regional support services	For example: Skills Service, Growth Service, Business Sustainability Service	June 2024 (between Jul 23 – Jun 24)	35*

* Note that there are duplicate businesses included within this dataset due to them engaging in multiple programmes over time

27 Another key action under this objective is promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local food sector. We are also monitoring the number

of hospitality and food and drink or associated businesses in Leeds that have been engaged by Leeds City Council’s Employment and Skills Service. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the service has engaged with 16 food and drink and associated businesses.

Key areas of progress

28 Since the strategy was formally launched in July 2023, several key initiatives have been progressed under each objective, as summarised in the table below.

29 Table 6: Key areas of progress, food security and economy

<p>Tackle factors limiting people’s ability to afford the food they need</p>	<p>A key part of delivering this objective is a co-ordinated partnership approach at both a strategic and operational level. The Food Insecurity Taskforce has adjusted its focus to strategically align with the objectives set out in the Leeds Food Strategy and action plan. Chaired by the Council, the group will continue its work with partners to support food aid initiatives in the city and enhance the food insecurity aspect of the strategy.</p>
	<p>Whilst at an operational level the Leeds Food Aid Network (LFAN) brings together a range of food aid providers, agency workers, the city Council, and members of the wider public, to help tackle food insecurity and support people to food independence effectively in the city of Leeds. This forum feeds directly into the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network, which in turn is connected to the national initiative Feeding Britain.</p>
	<p>It’s also vital to make sure people and families are aware of where to find appropriate support, advice, and guidance when they need it, as well as making sustainable programs that increase access to healthy food available.</p>
	<p>Types of activities that supports this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>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 to partner organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 support, fuel poverty support etc. • Campaigns have been developed around uptakes on underclaimed benefits such as pension credit and healthy start. • The application for Free School Meals has been automated in Leeds. Leeds has been administering free school meals with a combined application process with Council Tax Support, whereby free school meals are automatically awarded, unless a family proactively opts out. Which tries to ensure that those eligible for free school meals receive them.
<p>Help those in need of support to access affordable and inclusive food initiatives</p>	<p>Achieving this goal involves collaborating with stakeholders to develop various programmes and projects within the city that aid individuals in need by providing affordable and inclusive access to food. It is also crucial to work alongside these partners to offer practical help and support for frontline workers, volunteers and organisations providing food aid to people experiencing food insecurity. Ensuring we are all working to shared fundamental principles and exchanging best practice.</p> <p>Key areas of work Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of Community Shop, part of Company Shop Group, offers social supermarkets that help members save an average of £212 per month on groceries, at no membership fee for those on means-tested benefits. They stock excess goods from leading supermarkets, but also double as hubs for local communities by providing low-cost cafes (with free meals for children) and courses focused on fostering independence and employability. Operating 13 locations across the UK since 2013, Community Shop aims to be an early intervention before food banks, offering products at about one-third of the

retail price. More than half their customers manage to become economically self-sufficient within a year, resulting in 54% moving beyond the need for its services due to improved circumstances.

- Community Shop plans to open at least one location in Leeds and has received an offer from a major supermarket chain to provide stock. Community Shop is exploring options in Leeds, with a preference for being situated within a community centre alongside other relevant services, utilising insights from their existing shops in different areas. 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 that others will follow.
- The FoodSavers scheme which offers high quality fresh and store cupboard food for a low weekly membership fee (typically £6) via a food pantry. Much of the food is unwanted or surplus food, intercepted from being wasted. Membership also gives the opportunity to attend cookery classes, save in a recognised Credit Union bank account, and other benefits, such as cookery classes, haircuts or volunteering. Currently, five pantries in Leeds operate under the FoodSavers program, with plans for an additional twelve to adopt it. Within the five pantries currently operating in Leeds there are 157 members who have saved a total of £2790 collectively. 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.
- The updated Food Aid Provision Map, LFAN, Leeds City 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 helping to ensure people get the right support at the right time. To help

	<p>Neighbouring organisations collaborate more easily e.g. sharing excess surplus, connecting users to other local support etc and to understand the full picture of the provision in the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collaborative creation and launch of a Food Aid Charter 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 • Revision of the Building Food Resilience toolkit which aims to support the delivery of food aid provision encouraging a shift away from emergency food aid to longer term food options such as Food Pantries to help build food resilience. • Delivery of programmes including the Department for Work and Pensions Household Support Fund, and Department for Educations 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.
<p>Support and unlock opportunities for local food businesses and workers.</p>	<p>Helping local food businesses grow and support jobs by connecting them to relevant support and advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Working to create and expand pathways to market for locally produced food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 HE sector and compliance. Through a contract with the University, the business now employs an additional 17 staff from the local community. • 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.
	<p>Promoting opportunities for recruitment, workforce development, and apprenticeships in the local food sector</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Department for Work and Pensions, 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.
	<p>Working with the food sector to increase visitor demand for local food and drink across the city</p> <p>The Visit Leeds team are 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, the team has been able to drive forward several activities:</p>

<p>Promote Leeds as a vibrant food city - celebrating our independent food, drink, events, and culture.</p>	<p>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 35 businesses participating in the scheme.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Additionally, two delegate experience guides were developed promoting independent businesses and local experiences.</p>
	<p>If these funding streams were able to continue into the long-term, the Visitor Economy Team has identified the opportunity to potentially build on these initiatives. For example, the Digital Restaurant Guide could include more restaurants and be expanded to different parts of the city. Furthermore, the team has expressed interest in strengthening its understanding of and relationship with suppliers of locally and sustainably produced food in the city.</p>
	<p>Celebrating the culture and diversity of Leeds by promoting the local food offer in different parts of the city</p>
	<p>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 UK Shared Prosperity Fund. 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 including North Leeds Food Festival, the new Peddler Market in Armley and Kirkstall Brewery Beer Festival.</p>

Key challenges

- 30 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. The Household Support Fund (HSF) was extended for 6 months covering April – September 2024, however there is no further information/confirmation available beyond this. Over a 12-month period ending 31st 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.
- 31 In addition, the Healthy Holidays programme which provides activities and food for children eligible for income related free school meals over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays is funded by DfE's Holiday Activity Fund, for which the current funding ends Christmas 2024. Throughout 2023 alone this funding reached just over 22,000 children, with over 127,000 portions of food served.
- 32 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. The issue is not necessarily a decline in physical donations; but rather that monetary contributions are buying less, resulting in fewer food items being received.
- 33 Turning to the food economy strand of the strategy, there is an opportunity to further embed the Leeds Food Strategy in the work of economic development services that have a relationship to food. This would ensure that activity aligns to the missions of health and wellbeing, food security and economy and sustainability and resilience 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.
- 34 More specifically, there could be future opportunities to deliver activity around the strategy 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 also aligns with. The council could explore the potential to support new opportunities for innovative and sustainable food production, for example through future rounds of its innovation@leeds grant funding.

Sustainability and Resilience

Purpose

- 35 The Sustainability and Resilience mission aligns to the Zero Carbon pillar of LCCs ambition, the terminology was amended prior and during extensive public consultation during late Oct 22-Dec 2022 to ensure it was understandable and accessible for residents and responders to the consultation offered online and in person.
- 36 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.
- 37 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.
- 38 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.
- 39 Enabling the transition to a more sustainable food system by wasting less food, making healthier food choices, and producing food in better and more environmentally friendly ways we can reduce the 1/5 of our current national carbon footprint impact which is attributable to food.
- 40 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.
- 41 Ultimately, ensuring the way we produce, consume, and dispose of food is fit for the future and supports our climate action plan is not only necessary and beneficial long-term, but will also help us to improve the quality of life for everyone across the city.
- 42 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 mission.

Key measures/indicators

43 The framework for the strategy includes a number of measures and indicators, shown in the table below.

Table 7 key measures/indicators, Sustainability and Resilience

KI1 % of adults in Leeds who consume at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily.
KI2 % of year 6 children recorded with a healthy weight in decile 1 compared to decile 10 and the Leeds average.
KI8 % 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.
KI11 Number of Compost Collective sites and number/ % of household capacity available.
KI12 Volume of surplus food waste diverted to food aid by Leeds providers
KI16 Volume of domestic (April 2026) and non-domestic food waste (April 2025) collected. in line with Defra PIs. Pending introduction of government policy
Volume of surplus food waste diverted to food aid by Leeds providers
KI3 % of adults in Leeds living with diabetes (diet-related disease) in decile 1 compared to the Leeds average and decile 10.
KI4 Number of health promoting and sustainable (planet friendly) community food projects.
KI13 Number of new 'grow your own' community initiatives by Incredible Edible
KI14 Number of LCC premises (cafe sites) including additional food menu carbon impact information for customers.
KI5 Food Environment – Number of Hot Food Takeaway (HFT) applications declined in high priority areas using LCC Supplementary Planning Document and Food Data Matrix (in development).
KI9 Number of food and drink / related businesses in Leeds supported across our regional business support services;
KI10 Number of hospitality / food and drink / related businesses our employment and skills service has partnered/engaged with
KI15 Number of food procurement contracts supported by the LCC procurement guidelines

Key areas of progress

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

45 Support for additional developments of community growing opportunities including further sites in Leeds parks.

- Over the last year July 23-July 24 Incredible Edible (IE) have expanded the number of community led growing groups from 13 (Aireborough, Bramley, Crossgates, Garforth, Headingley, Moortown, Kippax, Meanwood, Micklefield, Morley, Pudsey, South Milford, Whinmoor) to 18 with the addition of raised beds in the following areas of the city (Alwoodley, Leeds (City Centre), Rothwell, Seacroft, Shadwell) with another 2 due imminently in LS16 and Wortley. This totals 20 groups, 68 sites and just over 150 beds exact locations can be found on IEs website [Bed Locations – Incredible Edible Leeds](#).
- Some of these sites are linked in our parks areas and their developed has been supported alongside community volunteers with IE by LCC Green Spaces officers in line with LCCs reconfirmation of support for community growing developments in our parks sites as highlighted in Parks and Green Spaces Overview to LCC Executive Board 7th February, 2024 Corporate report template for committee and officer decisions (new) ([leeds.gov.uk](#)). 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.
- It is expected that plans for another group will be finalised before August 2025 in Richmond Hill and while other communities are in discussion with IE there are no further confirmed sites as yet.
- IE has also worked to develop raised bed fruit and vegetable growing in some of the city's community orchard sites with groups expressing an interest in Crossgates (Manston Park) which is confirmed and also Rothwell (Springhead Park) is at discussion stage. Additionally, the Garforth group maintains three recently planted fruit trees at Barley Hill Park as does the Moortown group at Queenshill, the Aireborough group at Nunroyd Park (Guiseley) and the Meanwood group in Meanwood park. Parks and Green Spaces Overview to LCC Executive Board 7th February 2024 Corporate report template for committee and officer decisions (new) ([leeds.gov.uk](#))

46 There has recently been a resurgence of interest in community food growing in Leeds, so we would like to confirm that, in line with the actions in the Leeds Food Strategy relating to promoting 'grow your own', community and urban growing, and working with partners to raise awareness of, and support, cutting-edge innovative food production, 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.

- 47 Waste/ Enviro serves links to future waste strategy with existing expectations set within LFS regarding waste, reduction, collection, recycling and redistribution. Waste was an area of response interested in catering award consultation so may be able to add and strengthen here for NB of liaison with Environ Services CDN
- 48 Work is currently underway to produce a Waste Strategy for the city, meanwhile the LFS already incorporates existing expectations with a number of objectives and actions with regard to food waste, reduction, collection, recycling and redistribution, seeking to make the best of the current national food waste hierarchy. The LCC Catering Mark currently being coproduced intended for implementation in summer 2025 will also include waste elements and the survey undertaken this Spring highlighted that food waste was a key area of interest to respondents.
- 49 Proactive preparation of options for future domestic food waste collections (Environmental Services).
- Following the Government announcement earlier this year with regard to arrangements for all LAs to commence domestic food waste collections by March 2026 unless a transitional arrangement applies. LCCs Environmental Waste colleagues have begun undertaking extensive modelling and planning work to prepare and implement this change. Further detail and funding arrangements is awaited from Government with regard to whether single stream or comingled food waste will meet the requirement. Arrangements, where LCC is the waste collection service, for businesses and non-domestic premises by 31 March 2025 and micro-firms by 31 March 2027 is also underway.
 - While these final arrangements and plans are being made Environment Services are also developing a pace kerbside domestic glass collection services from August 2024 as announced in February Leeds bins: Everything you need to know about new glass recycling collections - when does it start, costs, collection days (yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk)
- 50 Funding secured and approved for various community based growing projects and expansion of community composting possible with LA administered grants from WYCA.
- Close working and support of CEAC
 - Inception of Allotment Development Plan

Key challenges

- 51 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 LCC as a corporate landlord of tenanted land.
- 52 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 LFS action plan. Commercially available carbon calculators for food have also been explored however the cost associated with these is prohibitive. 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 always 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 etc. However since the IGD work began a number of large commercial suppliers have sought to work with other commercial carbon impact providers and made commitments to start labelling their own products in the future Sysco partners with Nutritics for sustainability labelling system - Better Wholesaling and Bidfood & CarbonCloud initiate transformation in supply chain carbon management.
- 53 Removal of the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) funding which had previously allowed for a Sustainable Food Places Co-ordinator role based with third sector partner FoodWise Leeds. Until the SFP funding ended in June 2024 Public Health, Financial Inclusion and CEGS teams had supported the SFP funds by match funding a total of £15,000 (£5,000 per service area) to support the coordinator role. However due to the financial challenges faced across the council CEGS and Financial Inclusion were no longer able to offer funding towards the costs particularly as without any SFP element the level of funding needed would have been higher. However, PH have successfully allocated sufficient budget provision to pay for the Co-ordinator role for the current financial year to support implementation of the LFS action plan and enable FoodWise time to actively seek out alternative funding sources for future years to enable the Co-ordinator role to continue in future years.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 10 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.
- 11 The engagement and consultation involved a range of methods, including face to face events at a number of locations and surveys. In total, more than 700 people took part.
- 12 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.
- 13 Face to face re-engagement event in July 2023 to launch the LFS action plan and re-energise all LFS partners in taking forward the objective and actions.
- 14 The strategy has also been discussed at other fora:
- a. Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) November 2023, July 2024;
 - b. Add in others...
 - c.

15

What are the resource implications?

- 16 There are considerable resource implications of supporting and delivering the actions contained in the Leeds Food Strategy.
- 17 Funding to the council, e.g. Household Support Fund; Comprehensive spending review
- 18 Funding from the council, e.g. departmental budgets, freezes on spending, closure of some budgets
- 19 External funding to universities, foodwise and other groups. Can include here end of Sustainable Food Places funding, options for WYCA climate grants, other small funds.
- 20 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. This may be the best place to detail the 'money no object' shopping list, inc. a commercial carbon calculator.

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

- 21 Major risk is risk of FoodWise Leeds being unable to continue or to operate without funding from the council.
- 22 Food and health. Risks include constraints on the council and the partnership's ability to promote healthy affordable food choices, and limit unhealthy food choices, options, adverts, outlets.

23 Food and poverty. As the council's Cost of Living reports show, food poverty is closely linked to fuel poverty. Food poverty is also deeply engrained in some households in the city, where eating healthily and sustainably is out of reach of their ability. Maybe reference Food Foundation, heating or eating, hierarchy of needs, etc.

24 Food and sustainability.

What are the legal implications?

25 To check in Exec Board clearance – are there any other legal implications? E.g. does the content of any part of the strategy reflect a statutory or legal LCC responsibility, for which there is a risk of neglect of duty if we don't perform it?

26 A reference to the Public Sector Equality Duty and our work on an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration (EDCI) assessment.

27 While the Leeds Food Strategy is a cross city partnership, the provision of council services as public functions mean the council has a responsibility to have due regard to the need to:

- a. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act;
- b. advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic; and
- c. foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

28 The relevant protected characteristics are:

- a. age
- b. disability
- c. gender reassignment
- d. pregnancy and maternity
- e. race
- f. religion or belief
- g. sex
- h. sexual orientation

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

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

30 The Leeds Food Strategy was developed because the partnerships and relationships across the city were so strong and well developed.

31 It is possible that the city could have made progress, for example, on each of the objectives or actions, without an overarching strategy.

32 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, it would be better able for the council and partners to deliver the outcomes.

How will success be measured?

33 Success for the strategy will be measured against the key performance indicators set out in this report.

34 The KPIs 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?

35 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.

36 The steering groups for Leeds Food Strategy and FoodWise Leeds will remain responsible for implementation.

Appendices

Appendix A List of foodwise Leeds members/partners

Appendix B List of objectives and actions

Appendix C EDCI assessment

Background papers (AW I usually include a longer list of background papers in drafts than Exec Board governance usually permit, but will be useful for our cleaning/approval committee/group)

[Leeds Food Strategy](#)

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s242709/Executive%20Board%20Climate%20Emergency%20Final%20v1.1%20March%202023.pdf>

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s243086/Cost%20of%20Living%20Cover%20Report%20060323.pdf>

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s255952/Cost%20of%20Living%20Update%20Cover%20Report%20080424.pdf>

[THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#)

[Government food strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)