

Leicestershire Food Conversations

In 2023 the Food Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) developed the National Food Conversation, deliberations with citizens about our food system to draw out an understanding of what people actually want when it comes to the food system.

Following the publication of the findings (linked [here](#)), the FFCC released materials to support communities with holding their own local deliberations, partly to enable more citizens to feed into the national picture, but also so that places could start to build local consensus to help shape local policy and practice.

Leicestershire County Council Public Health teamed up with Leicester City Council Public Health to hold a trial food conversation – held in November 2024. Following this work Leicestershire partnered with local environmental trainer [Caroline Harmon](#) to develop a Train the Trainer package, including localising the national material. This was supported with the creation of a local experts video which can be seen [here](#). Through March and April 2026 three Train the Trainer sessions were organised with 26 attendees.

Between March and September 2026 10 Food Conversations have been held including specific sessions focussed on young people and minority ethnic communities. A total of 108 participants took part across these sessions – below is a summary of the findings from these session.

Food conversations will continue in Leicestershire – this will enable citizen voice to feed into our Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight, Food and Nutrition and shape our Strategic Plan for Food and the actions being taken forward.

Common themes across the reports

Overall findings cover seven cross-cutting themes -

1. Reconnecting people with food

Understanding where food comes from, how it is produced, seasonality, growing, cooking and its real value repeatedly emerges.

2. Food education and practical skills

Schools, parents, cooking skills, growing skills and intergenerational knowledge recur across several conversations.

3. Affordability, access and healthy food

There is a recurring tension between cheap/available food and nutritious, sustainably produced food that people can genuinely afford.

4. Fairness and power within the food system

Participants repeatedly question the power of supermarkets and large corporations and call for fairer returns, relationships and opportunities for farmers and growers.

5. Local food, growing and shorter supply chains

Allotments, community growing, relationships with local farmers and shorter supply chains repeatedly appear as practical alternatives or complements to the existing system.

6. Environmental sustainability

Food waste, food miles, farming methods, packaging, meat consumption, land management and environmental impacts all feature.

7. Individual action is not enough

Perhaps the strongest strategic message is that **people need knowledge and opportunities to act, but responsibility cannot simply be placed on individuals**. The reports repeatedly point toward a combination of community action, education, producer involvement, business change and government policy/regulation.

The overall story

People want a food system that reconnects communities with how food is grown, produced and prepared; makes healthy and sustainable food affordable; gives farmers and communities a fairer and stronger role; and combines education and individual action with systemic change by government and business.

There is also a useful progression running through the reports: **awareness → understanding → skills and participation → local action → wider system change**. That provides a particularly strong framework for presenting the collective findings.