

Leicestershire Food Plan

Introduction

This is Leicestershire's second Food Plan, it recognises the huge role that food plays across the whole County and the impact it has on the work of Leicestershire County Council departments and services as well as stakeholders across the County. In working towards this Food Plan we have followed the Sustainable Food Places approach which emphasises the need to tackle the whole food system recognising that many of the large-scale challenges we face as a county – poverty, health inequalities, economic development, climate change, biodiversity loss and waste management – have a food dimension meaning that these challenges are interrelated and cannot be tackled alone. The creation of a Leicestershire Food Plan aims to facilitate more joined up strategic planning alongside supporting and developing community capacity and greater sustainable food infrastructure – it sets a direction of travel rather than a specific destination.

Leicestershire's Food Plan explains how we will work across the County and Districts to support and develop partnerships using the Sustainable Food Places framework – it brings together work within Leicestershire County Council with wider community work carried out by District/Borough Councils and other key stakeholders.

About the plan

Leicestershire's Food Plan links into the national Sustainable Food Places (SFP) framework, which Leicestershire is working closely with and is a full member of, working towards the Bronze/Silver SFP Award. Our vision and aims link closely to the SFP 6 key issues (see appendix 1) as part of our work towards the Bronze/Silver Award, this is collective work across all partners engaged and aims to bring broad participation in a view of what Good Food in Leicestershire means.

Because of the nature of Leicestershire as a County and two-tier authority, we have developed a different approach to those of City/unitary members. We are developing the Leicestershire Food Plan as a two pronged approach, one strand being the creation of Leicestershire County as a "Regional Member" of SFP, with a predominantly strategic and facilitating role (Leicestershire County Council objectives), alongside development of locality/community based food work representing a more "grass-roots" approach and reflecting local priorities (external objectives).

The two cannot be separated when looking at sustainable food systems across a largely rural county with dispersed urban centres – therefore part of this plan is about supporting localities to develop plans to tackle challenges in their own food systems. These locality plans will inevitably differ dependent upon their own unique issues. The two pronged approach recognises the important issues and priorities that localities are best placed to develop at a community level, as well as the strategic elements that can only be progressed at a county level. The two support and strengthen each other and need to work together.

Our vision and aims are set out in the Good Food Leicestershire Charter (below). This informs our Leicestershire County Council and external objectives which will lead to shorter term projects/actions.

The Good Food Leicestershire Charter sets the vision and principles (or aims) for this Leicestershire Sustainable Food Plan. The Charter is appended to this food plan.

Our Vision

Good food supports and sustains the local economy; reduces the impact of poverty; helps people towards better health; has a reduced environmental impact; and is affordable, accessible and nutritious. The charter sets out how everyone can play their part.

This vision is designed to bring people together to enable everyone to enjoy the benefits of great local food and drink, to support communities to be healthier and to flourish, and to help local food and drink businesses to thrive.

Our aims -

- 1. People are supported and encouraged to grow, cook, buy and eat good food**
 - Skills and training are offered to help people gain the knowledge they need to eat well and affordably
 - High quality, fresh and nutritious food is accessible for all, particularly reducing health inequalities and food poverty
 - Positive messages are used to encourage the use and provision of high quality, fresh and nutritious food

- 2. A thriving local food and drink economy that works for people as much as they work for it**
 - The network of food and drink businesses and producers contributing to the local food chain are supported and celebrated to strengthen the local economy and promote local jobs including allowing for the workforce of the future
 - Local food and drink businesses and producers contribute to healthy lifestyles, healthy choices and actively support access to good food for all

- 3. A food system which has a reduced environmental impact**
 - Food waste is prevented and reduced where possible, with any waste produced being dealt with responsibly through surplus being redistributed
 - Food production, processing, distribution and disposal has a reduced environmental footprint
 - The food system's contribution to climate change and biodiversity loss is reduced

Our Objectives

The Leicestershire Food Plan details Leicestershire County Council and external objectives recognising that there are elements of the food system within Leicestershire County Council's control, but equally there are elements that work across multiple partners to effectively develop.

The food plan runs from 2020 to 2025, with an accompanying set of projects (and associated actions) giving the detail of what we intend to do within Leicestershire County Council to achieve the Leicestershire County Council objectives. Externally – there are broad objectives that set out routes to supporting and enabling food systems change, but beyond that we will be steered by partners to set out the best way to progress actions. Project plans will be for shorter timescales reflecting the need to be able to change our approach depending on delivery, impacts, learnings, partners and availability of funds.

Leicestershire County Council objectives

Objectives shaping our work cut across all three aims. We will develop project plans that set out more detail about what we intend to do within our objectives.

We will provide leadership and a strong voice on the need for broad food system change and bring partners together to help shape and demonstrate this change by enabling partners to play their part. We will do this through the following objectives -

Objective 1 – we understand where and how food impacts across our activities, and all departments understand the need to take a food systems approach.

Objective 2 – council policy reflects the needs of partners and supports actions towards a more sustainable food system.

Objective 3 – we are developing, supporting and enabling projects which demonstrate food systems work within our own departmental operations or in the wider community (or both) by linking to the aims and objectives within this Food Plan.

Objective 4 – we have specific sustainable food systems communications, marketing and events which engage our partners and stakeholders in developing a collective Good Food Movement – part of this work included our Bid for Bronze and supports our current application for Silver which is central to engaging partners in a collective ambition.

Objective 5 – metrics and measurements are in place that enable us to track progress, but more importantly demonstrate the value of taking a food systems approach.

External objectives

External objectives are broad and also cut across all three aims. They are jointly held by Leicestershire County Council and a broad range of stakeholders including District/Borough Council representatives.

Leicestershire County Council and a broad partnership are working towards an understanding of the actions, enablers and support needed to bring about Food System Change across the wider community. The objectives that will initiate projects and actions external to Leicestershire County Council are -

Objective 1 – identify areas of priority within the food system and develop projects, stakeholder groups and actions to progress and demonstrate tangible outputs.

Objective 2 – inform actions to ensure that Leicestershire County Council work supporting projects and wider systems change are included.

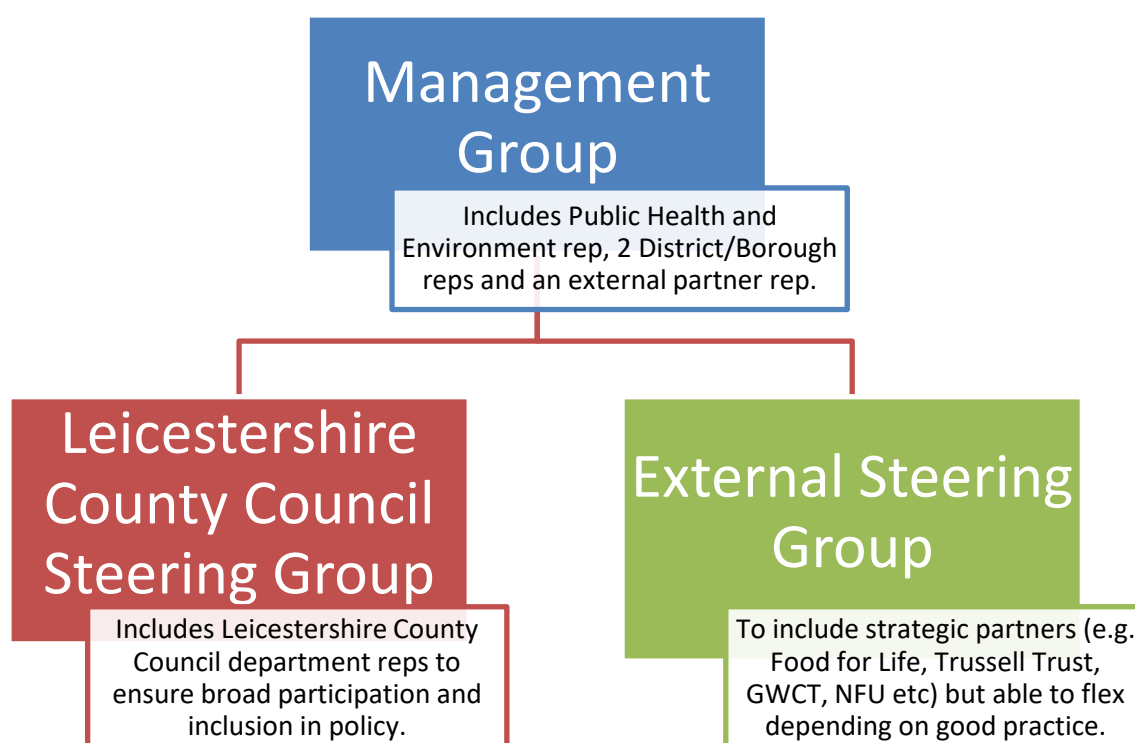
Objective 3 – share examples, best practice, news stories and case studies to inform policy making, communications and marketing and to champion collective efforts to improve Leicestershire’s Food System as we all work towards Leicestershire’s Bronze and Silver SFP award.

Objective 4 – support the generation of local Good Food Movements through engaging with community partners, establishing common tools and marketing and publicising of events.

Objective 5 – metrics and measurements are in place that enable partners to track progress, but more importantly demonstrate the value of taking a food systems approach.

Governance

Governance of this food plan will involve the structure below – a Management Group informed and advised by two Steering Groups (one made up of external stakeholders and one made up of Leicestershire County Council stakeholders).



Appendix 1 – Sustainable Food Places 6 key issues

The six 'key issues' of the SFP framework for action:

- Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action
- Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement
- Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
- Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local supply chains
- Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.