

# LEICESTER'S FOOD PLAN



2014 - 16



City Mayor

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# INTRODUCTION

Levels of interest in food are arguably as high as ever. Here in Leicester, as in other places, people are taking more interest in where their food comes from, how it is produced, how much it costs and how healthy it is. Whilst I welcome this growing interest and awareness in food it reminds us of important challenges.

Over the past year the number of food banks in the city has increased dramatically. This reminds us of the alarming and unacceptable levels of food poverty. Levels of obesity are also too high and we face significant health challenges in the city including high rates of diabetes and heart disease.

We are determined to address these challenges through a citywide approach to food policy that recognises the links across these different areas. Our vision is for Leicester to be a healthy and sustainable food city. Food production should help support the local economy and at the same time protect the environment and natural resources.

I am pleased to introduce Leicester's first Food Plan. To deliver this plan, new partnerships will be required across Leicester's communities. The Leicester Food Plan Board brings together a partnership from different sectors and I am grateful

for the input from a wide range of organisations into shaping this plan.

As a founding member of the national Sustainable Food Cities Network we have also demonstrated our commitment to working with other cities and partners to learn from experience in other parts of the country.

Over the next three years we are aiming to see more community food projects in place across the city, more land under food production and a growing programme of cookery skills courses. We also want to see the city's food economy grow with existing and new food-related enterprises thriving.

Ensuring the city has a food supply that is sustainable, healthy and affordable is important. It spans a number of policy areas and will require the development of strong partnerships across different sectors. We face some significant challenges. This plan sets out our response to those challenges and we look forward to working with a wide range of partners as we work to deliver this plan.

**Rory Palmer**  
Deputy City Mayor and Chair,  
Leicester Food Plan Board



Deputy City Mayor Rory Palmer at the Bloomin' Eyres Monsell project

# ABOUT THIS PLAN

This is Leicester's first Food Plan. It marks the start of a long term programme to make Leicester a 'healthy and sustainable food city': a place where the production, distribution, purchase and use of food supports better health, stronger communities and a successful economy - while protecting the environment and conserving natural resources.

The plan sets out 10 ambitions for Leicester in an updated *Food & Drink Charter*. These are the long term goals. 10 specific commitments, linked to the ambitions, are then presented. They cover the first three years of the programme from 2014. A detailed action plan follows, showing what will be done in the first year.

## Developing and implementing the plan

This plan has been put together by the Leicester Food Plan Board, a partnership involving representatives from Leicester City Council, the voluntary and community sector and the business

community. Through its members, listed later in this document, it can co-ordinate with other bodies which have priorities in common, including Leicester City's Health and Wellbeing Board, Leicester Child Poverty Commission, the Environmental Experts Reference Group and Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

To ensure the plan is tailored to Leicester's specific needs and challenges, the Food Plan Board has listened to a wide cross-section of views from individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, food businesses, schools, colleges, universities and health services. This culminated in a workshop: "Creating a Food Plan for Leicester" in October 2013.

It will meet regularly to support the delivery of actions in the plan, to oversee progress towards the three-year commitments and to identify further actions for 2015 and 2016. At the end of each year, it will publish a progress report alongside the next year's action plan.



The board is keen to share experience with other cities and towns working on similar programmes. To this end, Leicester has been part of a National Lottery-funded pilot scheme: *Our Food Plan*, which has supported the action planning process. In July 2013 the city also became one of 13 founding members of the Sustainable Food Cities Network, through which Leicester will share information nationally.

## Background to Leicester's food challenges

Leicester is a large and growing city with a relatively young and ethnically and culturally diverse population. The city is the 25th most deprived out of 326<sup>1</sup> local authority areas and in the period September to December 2013 had an unemployment rate of 15.7%: considerably higher than the 7.9% UK average<sup>2</sup>.

The following sections outline some of the key issues and challenges facing the city, describing how they relate to food and also the opportunities to address them through a programme around healthy and sustainable food.

## Health issues

It is estimated that nearly a quarter of adults in Leicester are clinically obese and nationally levels of overweight and obesity are still increasing. By 2050 obesity is predicted to affect 60% of adult men, 50% of adult women and 25% of children<sup>3</sup>. Obesity levels in children in the city are higher than the national average, with nearly 11% of children in reception year (age 4-5) and over 20% in year 6 (age 10-11) being classified as obese following weighing and measuring programmes in schools.

The personal and societal costs of obesity are high in that obesity is a risk factor for a range of diseases including cardiovascular disease, type two diabetes and some cancers. It is estimated that mortality rates would decrease by 14% if all the population was a healthy weight. There is also a recognition that some

Black and Minority Ethnic communities, including South Asians, develop these obesity-related diseases at a lower body mass index than white populations. NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year.

As a result of the high prevalence of heart disease, diabetes and other obesity-related conditions in Leicester, actions for preventing and tackling obesity are prioritised within "Closing the Gap" - Leicester's Joint Health and Well Being Strategy 2013-2016. Leicester's Healthy Weight Strategy is currently being revised and Leicester's Food Plan will link into this. Along with levels of physical activity, diet and the food environment are the most significant contributing factors to levels of obesity. Diet, however, also has a wider impact on health than the link with obesity. Even in the absence of obesity a poor diet is linked with a range of diseases including heart disease, strokes and some cancers. Oral health is also associated with diet. Five year old children living in Leicester have the highest experience of dental decay observed in England. The cause of dental decay is well understood and is related to the frequent consumption of sugary food and drink, as well as poor tooth brushing and a lack of dental attendance.



<sup>1</sup> Index of Deprivation 2010

<sup>2</sup> Based on ILO definition. Source: Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics (NOMIS)

<sup>3</sup> Foresight - Tackling obesity: Future choices. Government office for science, 2007

The importance of good diet begins antenatally and in babies. Optimal infant nutrition, especially breastfeeding, is a protective factor for the health of babies and mothers. It increases children's chances of leading a future healthy life. Breastfeeding reduces such potential health risks as gastroenteritis and respiratory disease in infants and obesity and type two diabetes in later life. Rates of breastfeeding in Leicester are comparable to the national average with nearly 75% of mothers starting breastfeeding. However by 6-8 weeks the rates have reduced significantly to around 55%. Healthy weaning at around 6 months is another key element of setting the foundations of good health. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Infant Feeding Strategy and action plan outline the current position and plans for how to improve infant nutrition locally.

In Leicester, less than a quarter of adults eat the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day and this is much lower in some of the most

disadvantaged areas of the city. Improving diets requires action by a whole range of organisations. There are many reasons why people do not adopt a healthy diet including lack of knowledge; poor access to affordable, healthy food; easy access to cheap, fatty, sugary and processed food; limited cooking skills and a lack of time to plan, shop for and cook meals. Improving diets is not just about education, it is essential that the healthy choices become the easier choices, for example making healthy school meals the most affordable and tastiest choice and developing growing schemes in our most disadvantaged communities, ensuring ready access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables for all.

There is a clear association between levels of obesity and deprivation, with higher levels of obesity in our most disadvantaged areas. By tackling poverty through mechanisms such as the Child Poverty Commission an associated improvement in diet and a reduction in obesity is expected.



# CASE STUDY



## Eat Better, Start Better

Leicester was one of 20 local authorities invited to take part in the Children's Food Trust's roll out of the *Eat Better, Start Better* voluntary food and drink guidelines for early year settings in England and the *Let's Get Cooking* family cooking courses. Early years settings include nurseries and children's centres.

Evaluation in Leicester has shown that in the settings involved there was:

- Increased food, nutrition and healthy cooking knowledge, as well as skills and confidence, for the early years and childcare workforce
- Improved healthier food provision for children aged one to five years in childcare settings and at home
- Increased food and nutrition knowledge and practical cooking skills for parents and families attending early years settings.

The Leicester Food Plan includes ambitions, commitments and actions that will build on this success and further enhance the level of knowledge, healthier food provision and cooking skills in early year settings and amongst families and the wider community.

## Food poverty

The current economic climate and recent welfare reforms have contributed to a great many households in the city facing increasing financial pressures and poverty. Over 43,000 households in the city are in receipt of a welfare benefit as their main source of income with 26,000 children in the city growing up in poverty. These households are facing increases in general cost of living, they pay the highest tariff rate for fuel, the majority now contribute to their council tax bill and around 2,500 are subject to the under occupancy rule (bedroom tax). There is also a hidden population in the city: people who are working and were coping financially, but since the recent increases in food and fuel costs they are now at a tipping point and are no longer able to manage within their budget. As a consequence many households are now struggling to afford to feed their families. These households are increasingly turning to food distribution locations across the city to help them cope.

The Child Poverty Commission report 2013 recommended that “In response to the growing demand for emergency food aid, Leicester City Council should work with partners, including FareShare, to provide citywide co-ordination of food banks with an agreed local referral framework.” As a result, the food distribution sites in the city have been mapped and demand assessed to inform the development of a Food Banks Strategy.

Research shows there are three types of food outlets in the city: waste food distribution, emergency food banks and meals provision. In total there are upwards of 41 outlets and of these 12 are dedicated to meals, with the remainder distributing food and five distributing food and providing meals. Historically the majority of the food distribution locations in the city were set up by community groups or volunteers to prevent food going to waste; they do not operate with the intention to provide an emergency food provision. Their only access criterion is that the recipients live in the community they serve. These schemes often run for just a few hours each week or fortnightly with a nominal contribution of 50 pence per bag.

Many of the original schemes were set up in conjunction with FareShare Leicester who provided an agreed tonnage of food delivered to the scheme for distribution for a set annual licence fee. The food is surplus to supermarket requirements and is provided to prevent good food being sent to landfill.

Leicester City Council Community Support Grant crisis provision helps feed people who are facing immediate need:

- on a low or no wage, especially where children or young people are at risk
- homeless or vulnerably housed
- supporting vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life
- supporting vulnerable people in the local community
- at risk due to mental health problems, learning difficulties, or HIV/AIDS
- women and children affected by domestic violence
- help people through personal and difficult events





# CASE STUDY



## Plot to Pot

Plot to Pot is a community allotment project in New Parks ward. The project started in 2011. It is a joint venture between the ward councillors and the New Parks community panel. The volunteers have a team leader and they are supported by staff from the community services section.

The project started as a way of teaching local people how to grow food to help people eat more cheaply and have a healthier diet. What we quickly found was that it also served to create friendships, develop confidence and make a big positive impact on the lives of the people who got involved. Rather than just concentrating on growing, although that is still very important to the project, we now also use the project to help people get over issues of isolation.

This year the project has been working with adults with learning disabilities as part of the integration project in care services. Some of the people who used to use day centres are now the proud gardeners on some of the plots.

Each year Plot to Pot is assessed under the Britain in Bloom scheme called It's Your Neighbourhood. So far Plot to Pot has scored four stars each year.

The group have plans for the coming years. They now have three plots together and are looking to get a poly tunnel on one of the plots to lengthen the growing season.

There has been a steady and sustained increase in demand for food aid over the past years, with an increasing number of new food distribution schemes being set up in the city in 2013. The emphasis for the new schemes has changed to that of emergency food provision. In some cases existing established schemes have changed their purpose from distributing waste food to providing emergency food aid.

The increased demand means schemes now have to increasingly rely on supplementing resources through organising food drives, direct contact arrangements with local stores or using their own cash resources to supplement and make up the food bags for distribution. The reason for this is that waste food cannot guarantee the type or quantity of food supplied and where emergency food is required households look for regular staple items in their bag e.g. pasta, rice, tinned fruit and vegetables, cereals, meat and fish etc.

The city council is developing a Food Banks Strategy to deliver better co-ordinated provision. This will include providing improved support to staff and volunteers of existing schemes e.g. provision of health and safety training. Assistance will be provided with the setting up of new schemes including advice on accessing funding opportunities and how to provide customers with more holistic support e.g. money advice, cookery training, advice on healthy eating on a budget and access to growing schemes which altogether can potentially help recipients move forward so they no longer need the provision.

## Environmental issues

A further set of challenges lies around the environmental impact of food systems. Humanity is using natural resources faster than they can be replenished and the impact of the 'food cycle': farming, processing, manufacturing, distribution and waste disposal - on climate, water quality and biodiversity threaten the security and quality of life of future generations.

For example:

- Farming generates about 9% of UK greenhouse gas emissions<sup>4</sup>
- Food transport accounts for a quarter of miles travelled by heavy goods vehicles<sup>5</sup>.
- 60% of UK farmland wildlife species in a recent study were found to be in decline<sup>6</sup> and 75% of European fish stocks remain overfished<sup>7</sup>.
- An estimated fifth of food purchased by UK households (7.2 million tonnes per year) goes to waste,<sup>8</sup> with another 4.3Mt wasted in the food supply chain<sup>9</sup>.
- The carbon saving of preventing all avoidable food waste would be equivalent to taking one in four cars off the road<sup>10</sup>.

To avoid potentially catastrophic changes in sea level and global temperatures resulting from climate change, major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will be needed. The Government has set a target to reduce UK emissions by 80% by the year 2050 and this will require big reductions in the impact of food systems in Leicester and elsewhere, including :

- Significantly cutting energy and water use in food and drink manufacturing – making best use of new, more efficient technologies and redesigning production processes;
- Reducing waste at each stage of the food cycle: on the farm, during manufacturing, at the retailer and at home; and, where waste is unavoidable, keeping it out of landfill through environmental treatments such as composting and anaerobic digestion<sup>11</sup>;
- Cutting the carbon emissions of food transportation, for example by growing the market for locally produced food to reduce 'food miles' and modernising freight transport to take advantage of the latest fuel-efficient and low carbon vehicle technologies.

4 Meeting Carbon Budgets – 2013 Progress Report to Parliament, Committee on Climate Change

5 The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development, DEFRA, 2005

6 State of Nature, RSPB, 2013

7 State of Nature, RSPB, 2013

8 New estimates for household food and drink waste in the UK, WRAP, 2011

9 Estimates of waste in the food and drink supply chain, WRAP, 2013

10 Taken from: Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom, WRAP, 2012

11 These break down food waste using bacteria to generate 'biogas' which can be used as a fuel.

In Leicester, organisations are already working to address some of these issues. The Climate Change Programme of Action is delivering actions towards the city's target of halving its carbon dioxide emissions by 2025 and the universities, city council and other organisations are developing new projects together through the Environmental Experts Reference Group. Food banks are daily redistributing surplus from the food industry – alleviating food poverty while reducing waste and community food growing projects such as the Saffron Acres Project and Bloomin' Eyres Monsell are helping to increase supplies of local produce.

Even if efforts to cut carbon emissions are successful, scientists predict that the world is already 'locked in' to a certain degree of climate change. For the East Midlands, this is likely to mean hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters<sup>12</sup>. Farms, market gardens and community food growing will all need to adapt and water availability (and cost) for both food producers and manufacturers is likely to become a bigger risk factor. Similarly, flood risk will increase for some food producers. So the agricultural sector and community food projects will need support to prepare for these changes and become more resilient, while investment and modernisation programmes looking to improve process efficiency in the food and drink manufacturing sector will need to address water as well as energy use.

## Economic issues

Food and drink is also important to Leicester's economic future. The food and drink manufacturing sector is worth £600m in the Leicester and Leicestershire economy and provides 2.7% of employment - twice the national share<sup>13</sup>.

Leicester is home to world famous food and drink companies and also produces a range of ethnic foods, with the city benefiting from a diverse range of small start-up businesses. There are over 100 food and drink manufacturing businesses in the city and the sector has expanded rapidly<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> UK Climate Projections 2009

<sup>13</sup> Economic Growth Plan 2012-2020, Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership

<sup>14</sup> Business Register and Employment Survey (2011)



There is potential to accelerate growth in this sector and create jobs through developments in food technology, speciality ethnic foods and through links with the tourism and hospitality sectors. As a result of this potential, the food and drink industry has been identified as a priority sector for investment by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

The LLEP Food and Drink Strategy 2011-2016 identifies a number of key barriers to business growth including: low investment in research and development, weak local supply chains and the lack of affordable food grade units as clear barriers to business growth. The strategy also identifies a priority to strengthen local supply chains - reducing food miles and increasing sales of local produce.







A key theme of the City Mayor's Economic Action Plan 2012-2020 is an Enterprising Leicester; a place where people, businesses and communities thrive and are supported to grow. The action plan identifies food and drink as one of four key priority sectors for investment. It establishes the council's intention to establish a Business Investment Area (BIA) to support food and drink manufacturing in the city. The BIA is focused on the development of a 20,000 square foot development of nine high quality food grade premises, ranging from 1,000-5,000 square feet available for lease to new or expanding companies. The £5.8m food park in the north east of the city will open in autumn 2014 and will be at the heart of the city's support for the food and drink sector. Companies locating there are able to benefit from a range of support services including financial assistance programmes, accelerated planning and specialist advice.

Support for the food and drink industry does not end at the food park. Help for this sector is available throughout the city and as new locally-led funding streams come on-line i.e. City Deal, Single Local Growth Fund and EU Structural Funds, new opportunities will present themselves to offer support to businesses within the food and drink industry to grow. Food and drink has been identified in each of these plans as a priority sector with the potential for substantial growth. As funding becomes available the research base that exists, and is being developed through engagement with local businesses, will be utilised to put forward the business case for investment to overcome known barriers to growth; from technical advice to supply chain support, from skills development to capital investment, from enhancing the local food offer to developing sustainable technologies.

## Community issues

Closely related to the issues outlined in the previous sections: health, poverty, environment and economy, is the strength, resilience and well-being of Leicester's communities. So a common theme running through the delivery of this Food Plan is the role of working at a community level: bringing diverse communities together, teaching and sharing skills, increasing knowledge and understanding, bringing underused land into productive use and developing local scale solutions. This needs to happen through community food projects, in schools and training programmes and via public services.

Leicester already has a good foundation to build on, with examples amongst the case studies in this plan. Across the city the Food Plan Board is already aware of over 20 community food growing and horticultural projects turning plots of land into community food growing and horticulture assets. Some of these are next to community centres, while others use small plots in public spaces. Allotments also play a key role, with 45 sites across the city between them providing nearly 3200 plots – most managed by community-run allotment societies and many with waiting lists.

As the city population continues to grow and the pressures on the use of land intensify, a challenge will be to identify and protect enough land for growing food at a community level.



# CASE STUDY



## Bloomin' Eyres Monsell

Interest from Eyres Monsell residents in learning how to 'grow your own' led ward councillors Virginia Cleaver and Rory Palmer to start Bloomin' Eyres Monsell. Based at the community centre, the project started with a series of events during 2013 in which volunteers built raised beds in the centre's garden. They grew carrots, peas, beetroot, lettuce, turnips, potatoes, tomatoes and courgettes as well as a variety of herbs. Help was enlisted from BBC Radio Leicester's Grow Your Own team: Ben and Aide, who answered the growers' gardening questions and added to the publicity.

The project is now firmly established with volunteers meeting weekly at the community centre and produce shared with community groups. Plans to develop the whole of the garden are ready for discussion and phase two is developing well with work on the Featherstone Orchard – where fruit trees are being planted and raised beds made. Further plans include involving families at Sure Start on Hillsborough Road by growing vegetables there too.

The project shows that community interest in growing your own is strong – and with help and support to get things started it can develop and flourish.

# LEICESTER FOOD & DRINK CHARTER

Leicester Food and Drink Charter promotes healthy, nutritious, affordable food, produced with care for the environment and natural resources in a thriving local food economy. It seeks to unite people in growing, cooking and sharing good food – celebrating the city’s diverse food cultures.

## 10 ambitions for food and drink in Leicester

- 1** Work towards the eradication of food poverty – improving access to affordable, healthy food for all, whilst seeking to influence the underlying causes.
- 2** Reduce food waste in businesses and households and encourage more redistribution of food, composting and recycling of packaging.
- 3** Reduce obesity and diet-related ill health by supporting people to make healthier choices across all stages of life – raising awareness about healthy eating, encouraging breastfeeding, developing growing and cooking skills and improving access to fresh, healthy food.
- 4** Bring people together through food projects - developing inclusive, resilient communities sharing knowledge, experience and skills in growing and cooking and creating links with farms.
- 5** Maximise the use of food production space within the city, looking at opportunities for using green spaces and brownfield sites for community growing projects and small enterprises.
- 6** Develop a vibrant local food and drink economy, supporting food businesses in and around the city and encouraging healthy products at the heart of a nationally renowned food offer.
- 7** Promote skills and learning for those in the food industry or looking to enter it and supporting the job opportunities the industry can provide.
- 8** Support food and drink production that conserves resources, enhances biodiversity and minimises pollution – while adapting to the potential impacts of climate change.
- 9** Reduce food miles and support producers in and around the city - raising awareness of local and seasonal products and encouraging their use by the public, food businesses and institutions.
- 10** Support Fairtrade for products that can't be grown in the UK.

# CASE STUDY



## Saffron Acres Project

Organisers describe the Saffron Acres Project as a “six acre working farm” on former allotments in the Saffron Estate. Launched in 2006 with National Lottery funding, the project brought a derelict “no-go area” back into use while aiming to use food growing to tackle poverty and disadvantage in the local community and to create a better environment.

The project provides volunteering and training opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds including: school children, young people, the long term unemployed, those with disabilities and ex-offenders. In the words of one volunteer:

*“You get well-being and a sense of achievement [by coming to Saffron Acres] and it gets you out, doing something you like, helping the community. It keeps you busy – if you put something in, you get more out of it.*”

*I’m not saying I’m fitter, but I’m eating more properly by coming here, I’m not going vegetarian or anything but I’m eating more veg and that. I’ve met people from more different walks of life and countries than before.”*

Produce grown on site is not only shared with the volunteers; kitchens at a local school and a day care centre are supplied on a social enterprise model and buyers have been found amongst city restaurants too.

In an exciting new development, Saffron Acres spiced plum jam and spiced apple chutney were produced by trainees for sale in Midlands Co-operative stores in and around Leicester over Christmas 2013 – part of the Co-op’s “Locally Sourced” range.



# THREE YEAR COMMITMENTS

By January 2017, through this plan, we will have:

- 1 A bigger network of community food and horticulture projects, with at least 9 more projects supported; and more land under food production, with at least 3900m<sup>2</sup> of new allotment space provided.
- 2 A support programme available to schools – to help them achieve a whole school approach to healthy, sustainable food through their teaching, the running of the school and its community links.
- 3 More children choosing school meals, with at least 10% higher take-up of free school meals from key stage 2, in schools taking part in the support programme.
- 4 Increased support for women and their families to encourage an improvement in rates of breastfeeding and good infant nutrition.
- 5 At least double the proportion of early years settings (children's centres, nurseries) meeting Children's Food Trust nutritional standards.
- 6 A jointly planned and promoted annual calendar of events, open days and awareness campaigns about healthy, sustainable food involving numerous partners.
- 7 A growing pool of staff and volunteers trained up and delivering healthy food and cooking skills sessions in the community.
- 8 More Food Plan partners with health and sustainability policies, standards, and good practices in place for their food procurement, catering or retail.
- 9 Programmes in place to help food businesses grow, create jobs and gain a commercial benefit from adopting health and sustainability good practices and technologies.
- 10 A programme to reduce food waste.

# CASE STUDY



## Indoor market redevelopment

In December 2012, Leicester City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, announced a £7million investment plan for Leicester Market.

A key element of the plan is the construction of a brand-new food hall, to replace the current 1970's indoor market, which will aid in making the historic Corn Exchange building the focal point of Leicester's 700-year-old market.

The new food hall will be a glass and timber pavilion offering an attractive and practical space for meat, fish and deli stalls, with flexible exterior units for hot food stalls or temporary trading. Suspended lamps and natural daylight will ensure the space is well lit, insulated floors and ceilings will keep working conditions comfortable and new layouts will create an authentic market atmosphere.

Outside, the demolition of the 40-year-old indoor market hall – which is no longer fit for purpose – will allow an attractive public space to be created at the back of the Corn Exchange, framed by trees and opening up views of the surrounding heritage buildings.

Permission for the work to commence was granted in early 2013, with preliminary work commencing in May that year. At the time of writing, phase one of the project, involving construction of the food hall, is well underway – with its opening scheduled for later in 2014.

The redevelopment project will not only regenerate a key area of the city centre, but also secure the market's future as a focal point for fresh food retail to city residents and visitors alike.

# ACTION PLAN FOR 2014

The actions below will be delivered by the Food Plan partners during the first year of our three-year programme. The Food Plan Board will publish a summary of progress at the end of 2014, along with an Action Plan for 2015.

ACTION	WHO WILL LEAD?	FOOD CHARTER AMBITIONS SUPPORTED
1. Delivery of <b>'Food Routes'</b> training and <b>family cooking skills</b> courses within schools to help embed a whole school approach to healthy eating.	Leicester City Council, public health; Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service; primary schools	3,4
2. Build on the pilot <b>'Eat Better, Start Better'</b> programme to ensure an increase in number of early years settings achieving the <b>Children's Food Trust nutritional guidelines</b> and develop a programme of <b>family cooking skills</b> courses including how to reduce food waste.	Leicester City Council children's centres and public health; Children's Food Trust	1, 2,3,4
3. Launch a revised <b>infant feeding strategy and action plan</b> aimed at improving rates of breastfeeding and overall infant nutrition.	Leicester City Council, public health; children's centres; Leicestershire Partnership Trust; University Hospitals of Leicester	1,3
4. Develop a comprehensive <b>breastfeeding peer support programme</b> .	Leicester City Council, public health	1,3
5. Work towards achieving the <b>Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark</b> for school meals.	Leicester City Council, City Catering; Food for Life Partnership	1,3,9
6. Work towards achieving the <b>Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark</b> for catering at the University of Leicester.	University of Leicester, residential and commercial services	1,3,9
7. Work towards developing 19,250 square feet of <b>new food grade workspace</b> for food and drink manufacturing businesses.	Leicester City Council, economic development	5,6
8. Explore a programme of wider support for the Food and Drink Manufacturing <b>Business Investment Area</b> .	Leicester City Council, economic development	6,7
9. Complete and open the new <b>Food Hall</b> at Leicester Market to provide an attractive new food retail space - as part of a wider programme to improve Leicester Market as a focal point for fresh food retail in the city centre.	Leicester City Council, markets	6,9
10. Take account of Leicester's Food & Drink Charter as part of a review of Council standards and systems for <b>procuring food and catering services</b> .	Leicester City Council, procurement	3,9,10
11. Offer <b>training for farmers and growers</b> about adapting their businesses to a changing climate.	Permaculture Association	8

ACTION	WHO WILL LEAD?	FOOD CHARTER AMBITIONS SUPPORTED
12. Take account of Leicester's Food & Drink Charter and the promotion of healthy food options as part of developing the new <b>Local Plan</b> .	Leicester City Council, planning	3,5,9
13. Create a new <b>Allotments Strategy</b> to support and encourage allotment gardening.	Leicester City Council, parks and open spaces	1,3,4,5,8,9
14. Create a new post to further develop support for community horticultural and food growing groups through the <b>It's Your Neighbourhood</b> scheme.	Leicester City Council, parks and open spaces	1,3,4,5,8,9
15. Continue encouraging schools to include food growing in the curriculum through the <b>Grow Your Own Grub Competition</b> .	Leicester City Council, parks and open spaces with City Catering	3,4,5,8,9
16. Find a site to develop a <b>Community Food Champions</b> project in Leicester, to involve local people in growing their own food.	The Conservation Volunteers	1,3,4,5,8,9
17. <b>Community Harvest Whetstone</b> will recruit new crop-sharers and bid for funding to work up options for expanding the project.	Community Harvest Whetstone	1,3,4,6,8,9
18. Develop a <b>Food Forum</b> to involve food businesses, community projects and public services in Leicester's Food Plan.	Leicester City Council, environment team and public health	All
19. Publish a regular <b>bulletin</b> to keep Food Forum supporters informed and to highlight opportunities and successes.	Leicester City Council, environment team	All
20. Hold a series of <b>networking events</b> for those involved in community food projects, designed to share ideas and boost community-led action.	Leicester City Council, environment team with f3	1,3,4,8,9
21. Jointly plan and promote an annual <b>calendar of events</b> to raise public awareness about healthy, local, sustainable food including: Summer and Winter Food Festivals at Leicester Market, Belgrave Hall Good Food Fair, allotment and community project open days and the monthly Farmers Market.	Leicestershire Food Links, Leicester City Council, allotment societies, community growing projects and others	3,4,6,8,9,10
22. Run a campaign to raise awareness of the <b>health and sustainability implications of food choices</b> – influencing consumer behaviour and widening availability of healthy, sustainable food.	Leicester City Council, University of Leicester, De Montfort University, local media and other partners.	3,6,8,9,10

ACTION	WHO WILL LEAD?	FOOD CHARTER AMBITIONS SUPPORTED
23. Run a <b>Smart Start</b> campaign to promote healthy nutrition for pre-school children and provide <b>healthy, nutritious breakfasts</b> for children attending <b>nursery</b> .	Smart Start campaign partners with Leicester City Council and nursery providers.	1,3
24. Continue to run an annual campaign encouraging <b>take-up of school meals</b> .	Leicester City Council, young people's services	1,3
25. Look for resourcing to run a pilot scheme providing <b>healthy packed lunches</b> to replace free school meals during school holidays in a target area of the city.	Leicester City Council, in partnership with a school holidays activity scheme provider.	1,3
26. Commission an <b>integrated food, health and sustainability support service</b> to help schools implement a 'whole school' approach including curriculum activities, the running of the school and links into the surrounding community.	Leicester City Council, public health	1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10
27. Treat <b>food and drink manufacturing firms</b> as a priority sector when assessing applications for any future support starting in 2014.	Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.	2,6,7
28. Launch a programme to promote the adoption of <b>healthy and sustainable food procurement</b> , including local, seasonal produce and responsibly sourced fish, by <b>restaurants</b> and other hospitality businesses and larger employers.	Leicester City Council, environment team with partners.	3,6,8,9,10
29. <b>Consult local growers and community food projects</b> about future land allocation as part of developing the new Local Plan.	Leicester City Council, planning	5,8,9
30. FareShare Leicester will continue to <b>prevent waste and support those in food poverty</b> by expanding their operation, planned to increase by 30% in 2014 and by similar amounts by 2015/2016.	FareShare Leicester	1,2
31. FareShare Leicester will pilot the support of <b>school breakfast clubs</b> .	FareShare Leicester	1,2
32. Saffron Acres Project will scale up its <b>production of local jams and preserves</b> , developing local supply chains and a production facility – leading to a regional launch.	Saffron Acres Project, Midlands Co-operative	4,5,6,7,8,9
33. Run a <b>seasonal food awareness program</b> with local schools in the Saffron area and pilot the <b>supply of local, seasonal food</b> to a school kitchen.	Saffron Acres Project	3,4,9

ACTION	WHO WILL LEAD?	FOOD CHARTER AMBITIONS SUPPORTED
34. Consult the local community about ideas for <b>food growing activities</b> on additional land at Saffron Acres and begin site preparation – in conjunction with plans for sustainable housing at <b>Saffron Heath</b> .	Saffron Acres Project	4,5,7,8,9
35. Implement the <b>Food Bank Strategy</b> , including widening the sources of food available to Food Banks.	Leicester City Council, revenue and benefits, food banks	1,2,3,4
36. Work with Adult Social Care and Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the <b>identification and prevention of malnutrition</b> , and early intervention, in both the elderly and high nutritional risk groups.	Adult social care, strategic commissioning and public health	1,3
37. Encourage providers of residential, day care, lunch clubs and mobile meals to adopt <b>healthy and sustainable food standards and practices</b> in line with Leicester’s Food Plan.	Adult social care, strategic commissioning and corporate procurement	1,3,8,9

# CASE STUDY



## FareShare Leicester

FareShare Leicester was established in 2008 as a project of the Diocese of Leicester and a franchise of the national FareShare charity. It is entirely dependent upon income generated, grants and donations.

The project takes good quality surplus food from the food industry to be used for those in need rather than being sent to landfill. All food is within its “use by” date and complies with strict hygiene legislation.

In 2013 FareShare Leicester...

- Redistributed 205 tonnes of food
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by keeping the food out of landfill
- Supported 60 member groups with a low cost food solution

- Helped to feed 3,700 people in need
- Were supported by 35 volunteers, working a combined 140 hours per week
- Provided opportunities for work experience and training, leading to a 60% employment success rate.

The project couldn't do what it does without the loyalty, enthusiasm and commitment of its volunteers, who drive vans, sort food, manage the distributions and help with administration and fundraising. It relies on funding from donors, grant funders and the Diocese of Leicester, as well as on the food industry for entrusting it to re-distribute their surplus food in a safe and ethical way.

The acquisition of a fully fitted out warehouse is allowing FareShare Leicester to continue developing.

# FIND OUT MORE

Organisations and individuals are invited to get more involved:

- **Sign up for e-bulletins:** To keep up with news about Leicester's Food Plan and find out about events and opportunities to get involved, register for Food Plan e-bulletins. To sign up, contact [environment@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:environment@leicester.gov.uk)
- Visit [leicester.gov.uk/foodplan](http://leicester.gov.uk/foodplan) and [leicester.foodplan.org.uk](http://leicester.foodplan.org.uk) to find out about upcoming events, read latest news and contribute to on-line discussion.
- If you've got questions or want to discuss any aspect of the plan, you can contact either the public health or the environment team at Leicester City Council:

**Public health:** ☎ 0116 454 2032

**Environment team:** ☎ 0116 454 2110 E: [environment@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:environment@leicester.gov.uk)

## Further reading

Read more about healthy eating and sustainable food issues locally or nationally:

- **Sustainable Food Cities Network** [sustainablefoodcities.org](http://sustainablefoodcities.org)  
Explains more about health and sustainability issues surrounding food and the 'sustainable food city' concept. Provides details of Leicester and other UK cities involved in the network, including key projects and contacts for further information.
- **Leicestershire Food Links** [leicestershirefoodlinks.org.uk](http://leicestershirefoodlinks.org.uk)  
Provides a directory of local food suppliers including farmers, farm shops, farmers markets, retailers and restaurants.
- **Food for Life Partnership** [foodforlife.org.uk](http://foodforlife.org.uk)  
A partnership led by the Soil Association, offering information and services including standards for caterers and a programme for schools.
- **Children's Food Trust** [childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://childrensfoodtrust.org.uk)  
A national charity protecting every child's right to eat better and so do better. They provide specialist advice, training and support to anyone who provides food for children.
- **School Food Plan** [schoolfoodplan.com](http://schoolfoodplan.com)  
School Food Plan is an agreed plan that has the support of the Secretary of State for Education and of the diverse organisations that are going to support head teachers to improve food in their schools
- **Fish Online** [fishonline.org](http://fishonline.org)  
Provides a buyer's guide to choosing sustainably-sourced fish and avoiding products from threatened fisheries.
- **Sustain: the Alliance for Better Food and Farming** [sustainweb.org](http://sustainweb.org)  
Details of campaigns and initiatives to promote healthy, sustainable food.
- **Change4Life** [nhs.uk/Change4Life](http://nhs.uk/Change4Life)  
Advice on eating well, moving more and living longer
- **NHS Choices** [nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating](http://nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating)  
Includes advice on healthy eating, healthy recipes, food safety and losing weight.





# THE FOOD PLAN PARTNERS

Leicester's Food Plan is co-ordinated by a Board made up of the following people:

Leicester Food Plan Board		
Representative	Service and/or Organisation	Relevant Roles and Responsibilities
Councillor Rory Palmer (Chair)	Deputy city mayor and executive member, Leicester City Council	Deputy city mayor and executive member for health and climate change. Chair of Leicester City Council Health and Wellbeing Board and Leicester Child Poverty Commission.
Jo Atkinson	Public health, Leicester City Council	Public health improvement services relating to healthy diet and nutrition.
Stephanie Dunkley	Public health, Leicester City Council	Public health improvement services relating to healthy diet and nutrition.
Duncan Bell	Environment team, Leicester City Council	Environmental policy and management including climate change and waste reduction.
Andy Rose	Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership	Economic development including Food and Drink Sector Strategy.
David Wright	Economic development, Leicester City Council	Economic development including food and drink sector projects.
Neil Bayliss	Corporate procurement, Leicester City Council	Council procurement policy and procedures, including food and catering services. Chair of Leicester City Council Food Procurement Board.
Jane Faulks	Education catering, Leicester City Council	School meals.
Bob Mullins	Parks and open spaces, Leicester City Council	Allotments, parks development and support for community growing projects.
Alex Hewins	The Conservation Volunteers	Community growing projects.
Kay Jaques	Early years, Leicester City Council	Children's centres.
Liz Warren	Learning services, Leicester City Council	Schools Development Support Agency.
Roman Leszczyszyn	Regulatory services, Leicester City Council	Environmental health service.
Caroline Jackson	Revenues and benefits, Leicester City Council	Council representative on Food Banks Forum.
Alec Duthie	F3	Advice and support from the Our Food Plan initiative.
Helen Dickens	Diabetes UK	Advice and support on health promotion best practice.

The following organisations are delivering the 2014 programme of actions in the Food Plan:

- Adult social care, Leicester City Council
- Children's centres
- Children's Food Trust
- Community Harvest Whetstone
- The Conservation Volunteers
- Corporate procurement, Leicester City Council
- Economic development, Leicester City Council
- Education catering, Leicester City Council
- Environment team, Leicester City Council
- Estates department, De Montfort University
- F3
- FareShare
- Food banks
- Food for Life Partnership
- Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
- Leicestershire Food Links
- Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service, Leicestershire Partnership Trust
- Markets service, Leicester City Council
- Midlands Co-operative
- Parks and open spaces, Leicester City Council
- Permaculture Association
- Planning service, Leicester City Council
- Public health, Leicester City Council
- Residential and catering services, University of Leicester
- Revenues and benefits, Leicester City Council
- Saffron Acres Project
- Smart Start campaign



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[leicester.gov.uk/foodplan](http://leicester.gov.uk/foodplan)

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