

SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2023

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at sfpawards@soilassociation.org to discuss the process.**



Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#)
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#)

SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (*= compulsory):

Name of your partnership*:
Good Food Leicestershire
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Gavin Fletcher, gavin.fletcher@leics.gov.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Leicestershire
Award you are applying for*:
Silver

Please provide us with background information about your place*: Advisory word limit: 400 words

This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

ANSWER:

Since gaining the Bronze SFP award in May 2022, partners across the Leicestershire Food System have progressed with many aspects of our journey towards greater sustainability. This application demonstrates the incredible support and efforts of partners pulling together across the County to improve our sustainable food supply. Benchmarking this activity against other Silver applications has been difficult as there are no successful County Silver applications to review, however we feel the efforts described represent a significant progress from Bronze across what is a diverse and challenging geography.

Leicestershire is located in the East Midlands and is an Upper Tier local authority with seven lower tier Districts and Boroughs, and a unitary authority in the middle (Leicester City – a separate Upper Tier local authority). Good Food Leicestershire therefore covers the area of the District and Borough Councils but not Leicester City. The population of Leicestershire is approximately 712,300 (from the 2021 census) made up of –

- Blaby – 102,900
- Charnwood – 183,900
- Harborough – 97,600
- Hinckley and Bosworth – 113,600
- Melton – 51,800
- North West Leicestershire – 104,700
- Oadby and Wigston – 57,700.

Each District/Borough has a main town, and Charnwood is home to the largest urban population in the county due to Loughborough University, however the county also has huge areas of rurality and subsequently large areas of farming (82% of the land is farmed – from the recent Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership - [LLEP High Level Natural Capital Assessment](#)).

There are known areas of deprivation located in the urban areas of the county, however there are also pockets of deprivation less mapped and masked by statistics.

Good Food Leicestershire demonstrates elements of universal activity, alongside ambitious exemplars of great practice – this enables the demonstration of food system development so partners can support their peers to replicate those areas where success can be celebrated. It also enables the partnership to start pushing for deeper policy changes backed up with practical impact and broader active support. As Good Food Leicestershire

covers a large county working in partnership with seven Districts/Boroughs we can't do everything everywhere, however the Management Group agreed that, in the first instance, there should be two core focus areas of Food Poverty and Food Production and Procurement. These two focus areas enable us to work in a broader fashion to drive for change that can impact across the geography, it will enable us to pick up other aspects across all 6 SFP Key Issues and it develops the areas of most importance to partners as identified through our first Summit. These focus areas don't preclude activity developing in other subject areas as is demonstrated through this application, but it gives a steer for the resource available and links to broader strategies.

Since Bronze, Good Food Leicestershire can show much greater reach across partners and projects, as well as integration of the work and ethics within policy and practice of numerous 'place leaders'. Indeed, the understanding of the need for a more sustainable food system is now a given across a number of key partners resulting in projects gaining in prominence.

The table below details the seven districts/borough areas showing where areas are involved in particular projects/activity (grey indicates positive involvement) –

Project	Local area	Local Authority (LA) led	Community (Comm) led	Private (Pr) led (including farmer/grower)	Blaby	Charwood	Harborough	Bosworth	Hinckley and Bosworth	Meton	Leicester-shire	North West Leicester-shire	Oadby and Wigston	Leicester-shire
Food for Life (schools and gold school food)	LA				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food Poverty	LA and Comm				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income maximisation	LA and Comm				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
External Steering Group	LA, Comm and Pr				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Venner (plant forward cooking boxes)	LA and Pr				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food and Farming report	Pr						✓			✓				✓
Market Towns Group	LA				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Kitchens/Cooking	Comm							✓			✓		✓	✓
Community Fridge	LA, Comm				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Community Pantry	Comm					✓	✓				✓			✓

Veg Power campaign	LA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Love Food Hate Waste	LA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food for the Planet campaign	LA								✓
Community Growing	Comm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Farmers Markets	LA and Pr		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Fair trade	LA and Comm		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Climate Emergency Declaration	LA		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food Waste collection	LA						✓		✓
Refill Shops and services	Comm and Pr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Charnwood Landscape Partnership	Comm, LA and Pr		✓		✓		✓		✓
Environmental Footprint of Food consultancy	LA and Pr			✓		✓			✓
Leicestershire Food Summit	LA and Comm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slow cookers	LA and Comm	✓					✓	✓	✓
Taste the Place	Comm, LA and Pr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health in All Policies - local	LA	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Food and Drink Manufacturers	Pr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeanMeals	LA Comm and Pr	✓	✓						✓

How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership *? Advisory word limit: 300 words

ANSWER:

Leicestershire is a diverse County with large areas of rurality and farming interspersed with villages, and larger Market Towns and other Town Centres including Loughborough which largely operates like a city.

Statistics in a county like Leicestershire are mixed –

Economically –

At the county level in 2020, the average median gross annual resident earnings were £25,970, whilst higher than East Midlands (£24,500) are lower than that of England (£26,055). In comparison, Melton experiences the lowest median earnings in Leicestershire at £21,504, almost £4,700 lower than Blaby and much lower than the corresponding figures for Leicestershire, the East Midlands and England.

Areas in Charnwood and NW Leicestershire in the 10% most deprived Local Super Output Areas are - Loughborough Bell Foundry (E01025699) and Loughborough Warwick Way E01025725) in Charnwood and Greenhill Centre (E01025932) and Greenhill North East (E01025934) in North West Leicestershire - [leicestershire-socioeconomic-summary.pdf \(lsr-online.org\)](#)

Ethnicity –

According to the latest [2021 census](#), the population in Leicestershire is predominantly white (87.5%), with non-white minorities representing the remaining 12.5% of the population. Asian people were the largest minority group in Leicestershire accounting for 8.2% of the population, 1% of the Leicestershire population are black (England averages are white is 81%, 10% are Asian and 4% are Black). [Leicestershire Demographics | Age, Ethnicity, Religion, Wellbeing \(varbes.com\)](#)

However there are large differences across locations – the table below shows the difference between Loughborough and Coalville –

Ethnic group	Loughborough %	Coalville %
White	76.2%	94.1%
Asian	15.7%	2.5%
Black	2.9%	1.1%
Mix/multiple	3.3%	1.7%
Other ethnic group	1.9%	0.6%

With such a diversity of communities, there is an associated diversity of food activity across these communities which represent the people they serve. Good Food Leicestershire showcases and works in partnership across these communities and as such there are a number of areas of activity where this diversity can be actively seen, although it permeates all our activity –

- Taste the place celebrates ‘The World on a Plate’ as one of its four themes – exploring the world food offer in Leicestershire and the communities that make it
- Markets and Street Food events often include a diverse food offer including the East Midlands Food Festival which has a diverse [cultural mix of exhibitors](#)

- Our work in schools supports diversity of food and the BeanMeals project has included more diverse schools where the diet is generally closer to a pulse forward menu
- Some centres in Leicestershire have a particular focus on developing culturally diverse events and activities such as [Fearon Hall](#) in Loughborough.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read **SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants:** [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants.docx](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact:* [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

Good Food Leicestershire (GFL)

GFL is the partnership that incorporates activity towards a more sustainable Food System across the County of Leicestershire. GFL has a governance structure that ensures key partners are supporting and steering activity, but also referring back to a wider group of partners. As in the table above, the groups making up the governance are listed below – (partners from Private sector are denoted Pr, those from the charity/community sector are denoted Comm) -

Group	Function	Membership
Management Group – Meets quarterly	To manage GFL, the Leicestershire Food Plan 2020-2025, and resources	Leicestershire County Council (Chair), Harborough District Council, Melton Borough Council and Food

	allocated	for Life (comm).
External Steering Group – Meets quarterly	To support both Leicester and Leicestershire Food Plans, provide external voice into the management of both plans, and to challenge.	NFU (Pr), Food for Life (Comm), Loughborough University, TCV (Comm), Trussell Trust (Comm), Fareshare (Comm), Food and Drink Forum (Pr) and the Integrated Care Board.
Internal Steering Group – Meets 3-4 times a year	To network across different departments in Leicestershire County Council and support activity in the food plan.	Environment and Waste Team, School Meals Service, Children and Family Services, Adult and Communities Department, Public Health, Tourism.
Leicestershire Food Summit – once a year	To enable networking across all different actors in the food system.	Open to all partners across public, community and private.

All groups work to the [Leicestershire Food Plan](#) as their governing document with the Internal Steering Group having Terms of Reference in place.

Working Groups

As activity is developed within GFL, work will either be absorbed into existing groups (so avoiding duplication of effort) or new groups are formed. The Food Poverty agenda is a case in point – when our work commenced there was a Financial Inclusion Cell, but no particular Food Poverty Group. Therefore a group formed to steer the work of LCC’s Food Poverty Officer, the group includes a representative of the Financial Inclusion Cell in order to keep both groups up to date. However the Food and Drink forum already have a Strategy Group which includes university representation and the LLEP – so GFL attends in order to support sustainable and healthy food initiatives within the food and drink sector.

Funding

Good Food Leicester is resourced through three posts based in Public Health in Leicestershire County Council – the Sustainable Food Partnership Coordinator (paid for in full by Public Health with a steer from both Public Health and Environment departments), the Sustainable Food Partnership Officer (part funded by SFP) and the Food Poverty Officer (funded through Public Health).

Activity in the food plan is funded through multiple routes – some is core funded (Food for Life is a Public Health commission, and Love Food Hate Waste is funded through the

Environment Team), some is seeded through small grants (through Public Health budget or activity such as [Shire Grants](#)) and some is developed in partnership with other organisations (e.g. the BeanMeals research project developed in partnership with University of Oxford and funded through UKRI).

Influencing strategies

GFL supports a number of other strategies and approaches locally. Priorities and projects have been incorporated into the [Leicestershire Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan](#), the whole system approach to a [Healthy Weight Strategy](#) and there is an element looking at food within the Health in All Policies work – this includes policy consideration across all departments, a learning package across different tiers of management, and support for Districts and Boroughs as they consider their health priorities. GFL is also working with the Education Effectiveness Team to support a greater understanding of food within schools and to support them to engage more with Food for Life, School governors have been engaged to prioritise a good food culture in schools this will be followed up with Headteachers and school leaders supported to ensure that School food Standards and sustainable procurement is part of school catering contracts as per [Sustainable procurement: the Government Buying Standards \(GBS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Finally, GFL has been incorporated into a [Net Zero Ecosystem](#) approach to look at how governance across all elements of Net Zero can support scale and speed of delivery.

Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan

Leicestershire's Food Plan

The [Leicestershire Food Plan](#) runs from 2020 to 2025 and incorporates an over-arching vision and principles (which also forms our 'Charter').

The Food Plan is a strategy setting out objectives for internal focus (i.e. Leicestershire County Council) and for external focus (i.e. held in partnership across LCC and partners). All of GFL activity feeds into these objectives – which are designed to be broad enough to encompass all our food system actors. The External Steering Group and Food Management Group manage the activity feeding into the food plan and set focussed activity. The Leicestershire Food Summit ensures a broader cohort of partners inform the GFL plans for each year, as well as providing the opportunity for partners to inspire each other through presenting their progress.

Alongside the Food Plan, the [Good Food Leicestershire branding and charter](#) provide an external face for engaging partners and public.

The Food Plan principles directly relate to the SFP Key Issues – and these are referenced directly in the Food Plan, as is our membership of SFP.

Bronze to silver

As GFL has progressed from Bronze to Silver application it has been important to understand the key elements of policy/practice holding back progression of the sustainable food system – this resulted in an early paper taken through Public Health Department Management Team and Food Plan Management Group setting out the Leicestershire County Council priorities for food system development to support work towards Silver application. These were agreed as –

- Food Poverty – to analyse and develop a common approach towards alleviation of food poverty working across District and Boroughs and community agencies.
- Local and sustainable procurement – to develop an understanding of the opportunity to support changes across the food system which can contribute to more sustainable food procurement for school meals (initially).

Both of these priorities are expanded upon in the relevant sections of the application however they have both led to work supporting external partners through mechanisms such as joining the Feeding Britain Network (and therefore opening up access to the resources available through Feeding Britain) and discussion with external partners about their procurement (Universities and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust).

Further to priority activity, GFL looks to support Food System activity through other enabling activity. Two examples of this work –

- Engaging the 6 Public Health Apprentices in the BeanMeals research programme, partly this has enabled them to gain an understanding of practical methods for researching nutrition within schools, but as a thank you they attended a day-long food systems training day.
- Agreement to hold a Food Systems Workshop for senior leaders in Public Health, Corporate Resources (both LCC departments) and the Integrated Care System – to help understanding, strategy and decision making.

External priorities

Further to this, the External Steering Group has taken information from the Leicestershire Food Summit and determined two priorities for action –

- Accessible and nutritious food for those in food poverty.
- Supporting farming and the Food (and Drink) sector with supply chain and skills.

Plus 3 cross cutting themes where the partnership would draw out common messaging and/or broader support – Education of the food system (e.g. farming, case studies,

celebrating good food news), work towards funding bids, lobbying for system changes (e.g. planning, feeding into Midlands Engine etc).

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

As the Leicestershire Food Plan is developed and delivered across multiple departments and partners – more opportunities for integration and exploration emerge. An area that is currently being supported by GFL and wider food system partners (enabled by the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission) is the link between food systems work and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) with growing interest in incorporating Land Use Framework (LUF) activity to help understanding of food, farming, wildlife and other land pressures. Whilst nationally a LUF isn't yet aligning with the LNRS process, locally LCC colleagues can see the benefits of linking these processes together to make best use of resources and to help partners to understand the potential for significant co-benefits to be realised.

Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food

Place based campaigns

Multiple aspects of good food awareness –

- [Taste The Place](#) – operated by the Place Marketing Company, this runs across Leicester and Leicestershire promoting the rich food culture of the place including 'Food for Thought' and 'The Home of Veganism' as distinct threads demonstrating businesses working towards healthy and sustainable food.
- Local promotion and activity – there are a number of activities that happen at a local level incorporating sustainable food messaging and activities –
 - [Harborough Big Green Week](#) – this involves allotments, community gardens, Edible16 and the Eco Village in activity including sustainable food
 - [Charnwood Sustainability Fair](#) incorporating local and/or vegan/vegetarian food stalls and community growing projects.
 - [Incredible Edible Loughborough](#) – involving local growers in food

production in unused urban spaces

- Leicestershire Food Summit – this is an annual event bringing together different parts of the sustainable food system, in particular this event showcased a number of aspects of the Good Food Movement in 2023 covering approaches to Food Waste, exploring sustainable farming techniques, community gardening, approaches to food poverty and research into systemic innovation transforming the food environment.
- For 3 years we ran a local Eat Them To Defeat Them campaign alongside the national work – this culminated in 100 schools taking part in 2022. The following link is a video put together from the ETTDT team visiting [Birchwood Special School](#)
- Our Food for Life commission engages schools in multiple campaigns through the year including Grandparents Gardening Week which this year saw 15 events and 300 grandparents taking part. Cook and share autumn and grow and share in spring terms, campaigns that evolved from Leicestershire Grandparent Gardening Week was launched in 2022. These national Soil Association Campaigns are extending growing and cooking activities through schools to the wider community

Active Food Citizenship

Generating active food citizenship through local examples and storytelling -

- Leicestershire Food Summit – On Tour – following on from the interest generated at the Food Summit GFL has organised a series of smaller events exploring individual projects – starting with '[Brooksby Agriculture College – Regenerative Agriculture Tour](#)', 'A Place To Grow – Community Garden and Sustainable Food' and 'Manor Farm – Award Winning Organic Farming'.
- Our [Facebook](#) page and [Newsletters](#) (every 2/3 months) explore different aspects of the local sustainable food system. These are our primary channels for keeping in touch with our large and broad collection of partners, and our Facebook page is particularly used to tell stories and help develop a greater understanding of different parts of the food system with topics as diverse as Community Fridges and Edible Insects!
- Food for Life also supports schools, teachers and children to gain an understanding through various links including linking with a [local bee farmer](#) (who located hives with schools and delivers education packages) and composting and soil science linking with local regenerative farms.

Spotlight on [Incredible Edible Loughborough](#)

There has been an Incredible Edible group in Loughborough, affiliated to the national network of that name, since spring 2022. We are local organic growers of fruit and vegetables committed to a vision of making food local, healthy and freely available to all. Incredible Edible grows food on local public spaces in urban settings. We started with two

projects in Loughborough, the garden on the corner of Cambridge Street and Charles Street and one outside Fearon Hall in Rectory Road. On both we have grown a wide range of vegetables throughout the year. Local people have been invited to pick the produce and send us messages with chalk board signs and they have been doing so. Conversations show how enthusiastic the local community have been about this project.

In 2023 the group has expanded considerably. We have created a partnership with Fearon Hall, where we have a large greenhouse. We have about 20 volunteers and a host of supporters who donate seeds and seedlings. We now have six growing sites in the town, all fully planted up with fruit and vegetables and constantly replenished with fresh plantings. We are exploring starting an after school “kids’ club” with a local school. We are becoming a well known presence in the town and are often approached to give talks and presentations, be present at sustainability events and to explore the possibility of setting up new edible gardens. We never lose sight of the fact that this is fundamentally a sustainability project, aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of our food, make local green spaces more biodiverse and bring social justice to our food system.

Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement

Good Food Movement

The annual [Leicestershire Food Summit](#) is our primary mechanism for engaging the local Good Food Movement. This year’s event saw over 130 people sign up representing over 85 organisations across the Voluntary and Community Sector, the public Sector and the private sector. The event was opened by Councillor Louise Richardson – portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing, and our keynote speaker was Kim Kettle – Farm Liaison Director at Long Clawson Dairy and Chair of the Stilton Cheesemakers’ Association (more about Long Clawson’s work in Key Issue 6A). We followed with a number of speakers before a tour of Loughborough University’s Fruit Routes project (a wandering orchard) which was followed by lunch - plant forward (promoting catering which focussed on vegan plant forward central offer with additional meat and dairy accompaniments) and incorporating local ingredients. After lunch we held a series of workshops to discuss topics such as food waste, food poverty and regenerative agriculture but with a local theme – these enabled us to pull out key priority activities to drive our work over this next year. The report linked here was sent to all partners for comment and support.

Aside from the summit we keep in regular contact with the movement through our Facebook (382 followers) and newsletter (246 members) and we are investigating setting up a digital networking platform such as a Rise Up list to support interactions between

partners.

Food for Life in schools

Alongside the detailed work in schools (listed in 3B) the team have created a number of producer videos which enable schools and the wider community to understand more detail about Leicestershire producers and food processes – see [Manor Organic Farm bread video](#).

Local food movements

Across the County there are numerous groups all playing an expanding role in the Leicestershire Good Food Movement –

[Sustainable Harborough Community](#) – There has been an eco movement in Market Harborough with a strong food theme running through it since 2013 when the Lottery funded [Sustainable Harborough Challenge](#) project started. This initiated a number of food projects which have continued and grown as more members of the community and businesses join forces to celebrate local food and understand how they can make a difference to the food system.

[Charnwood Eco Hub](#) - Charnwood Eco Hub was set up in early 2023 by friends Sarah Goode and Emma Ward. Its primary objective is to encourage residents to adopt eco-friendly practices by offering education and training programmes, community events, and workshops that facilitate sustainable living. They engage with local organisations, businesses and individuals to collaborate on initiatives that positively impact our environment, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, sustainable food systems, and biodiversity.

[The Stockyard](#) – This is an economic regeneration project focussed on the cattle market in Melton Mowbray. One of the few remaining town centre cattle markets is being added to with multiple food retail and ‘food experience’ elements to generate a deeper understanding of quality food products.

[The National Forest](#) – with an increasing focus on making the links between heritage, sustainable and biodiversity focussed land management and farming, plus celebrating ingredients and products with National Forest provenance there is a compelling narrative and interest in demonstrating the food movement from this area of Leicestershire.

Community food growing – Leicestershire has many formal and informal growing projects. These include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects in [Whetstone](#), [CLOGs at Botcheston](#) and [Stanford Hall](#); [Incredible Edible in Loughborough](#) (and being explored in Blaby); [Greenlife Innovations](#) in Whitwick who provide alternative education using food growing and cooking; Community Gardens operating in all Districts/Boroughs in Leicestershire; and a wide range of allotments (operating through Parish/Town Councils

and charities). Many of the people involved come together at the summit, and we support connections between these growing spaces.

Spotlight on [Eco Village](#) – Market Harborough

The Eco Village in Market Harborough is an example of a community-based food movement. Starting from a Plastic Free refill business, they quickly started working with multiple small businesses forming a Community Interest Company in order to establish a collaboration with a strong environment and food focus. The space is now used for businesses, events, community groups and a [Community Fridge](#) (since opening they have diverted 4 tonnes of food with approximately 600 people using the fridge a month). The Eco Village has developed the following projects/partnerships –

- Working with community growers and allotments as well as the local Shambala festival to give people access to fresh produce
- Creating a community garden on site which is managed by the local [Women's Institute](#)
- Linking to [Stanford Hall CSA](#) and the BeanMeals project helping schools to understand local bean growing, processing and meals
- Initiating a Green Schools cluster supporting schools to plan and initiate sustainability and food strategies and projects.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Apprentice activity

Over the past 6-12 months Leicestershire County Council have taken on 6 Public Health Apprentices – they have a dual role being partly a central Public Health resource, and partly a resource for 6 of the 7 Districts/Boroughs (one is still to be recruited). As part of their role the apprentices have been hugely supportive of Good Food Leicestershire –

- Supporting BeanMeals research at the schools – taking part in observation, data collection and supporting school lunch-time supervisors
- Participating in a day long food systems workshop led by Oxford University
- Working with their Districts/Boroughs to gather information about local Sustainable Food activity on their patch, helping to coordinate activity and signpost across their local network.

Good Food Leicestershire and beyond

Over the past year GFL has been increasingly involved in national food system events and activity – supporting various events with SFP partners but also celebrating the great work

of GFL's partners. Presentations have been given at the [Sustain Meat Conference](#) in October 2022, [Oxford Real Farming Conference](#) in January 2023, the SFP Annual Conference in March 2023 and the SFP [Day of Celebration and Action](#) at Portcullis House in June 2023. This not only showcases the great work happening in Leicestershire, but also raises the profile of partners.

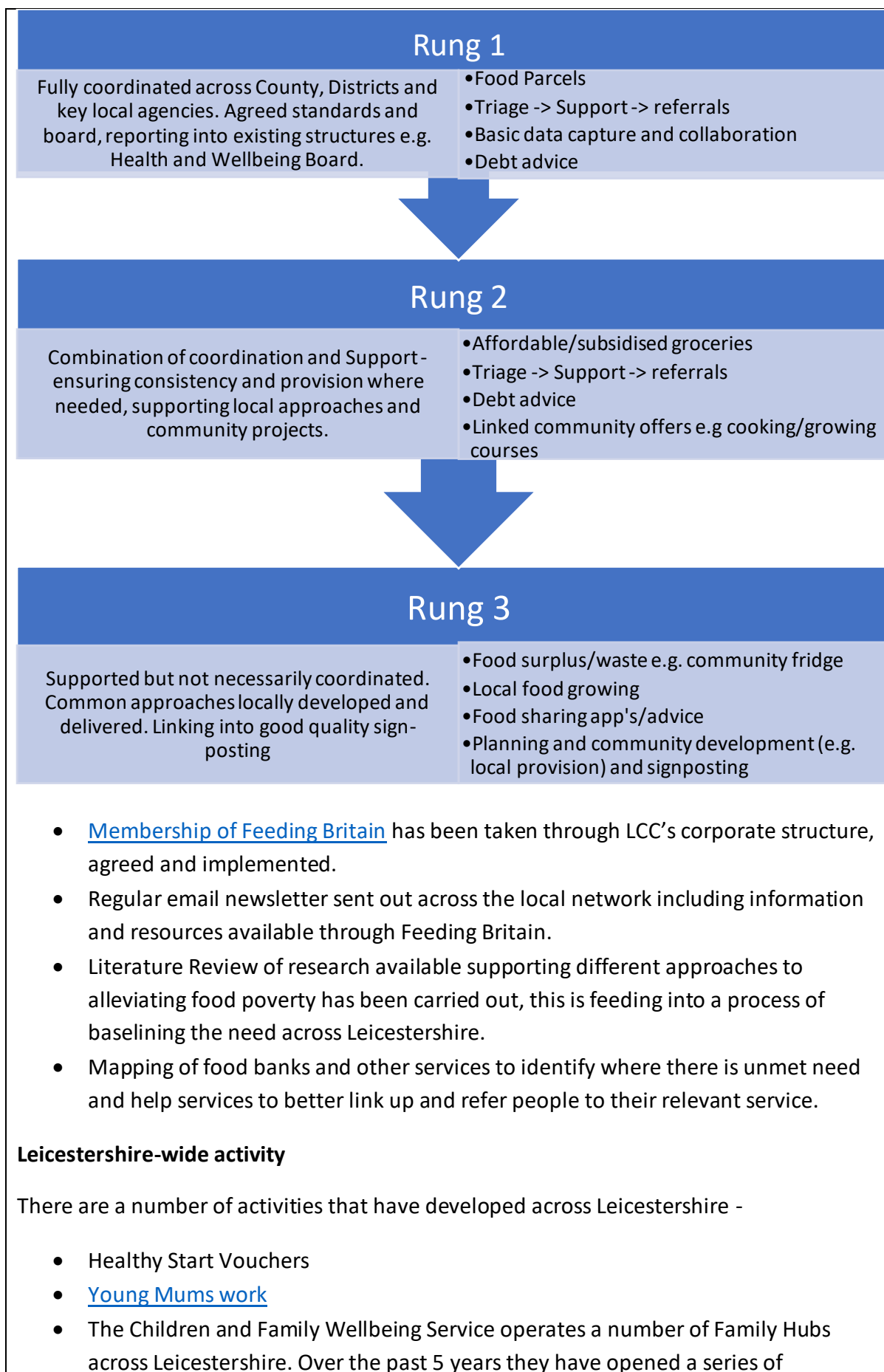
Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

Collaboration and coordination

As described above in section 1B, development of a collaborative approach to alleviating food poverty is a key strategic priority for Good Food Leicestershire – this is particularly important across a County area with a two-tier local authority structure. As this develops GFL is working towards the following key areas of activity –

- A common approach to be agreed across both tiers of local government, and across the community sector. This approach is summed up in the following diagram –



[Community Fridges](#) in 4 of the hubs to give families access to surplus food from the local area. In the year 22/23 the fridges distributed 42,741kg of surplus food and had 11,452 visitors.

- [Holiday Activity and Food](#) programme developed prior to national funding and continues to deliver in partnership with community and school partners

Local work

There are numerous areas of activity across the Districts and Boroughs in Leicestershire supporting the wider food poverty approach –

- North West Leicestershire District – running slow cooker courses where participants take home a slow cooker at the end of the course – 22 people taking part, the course has also sign-posted people to other services locally. Slow cooker courses are now spreading to Blaby and Oadby/Wigston. A Food Poverty Officer supports wider activity and collaboration. Debt advice is now integrated with Food Banks and wider signposting to other services to best support users.
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council – The Trussell Trust operate the majority of food banks in this district as a coordinated service. Coordination enables Income Maximisation work, comprehensive data collection and signposting so that people are given the wider support they need. Various other services link in e.g. the Community Fridge at the Children and Family Wellbeing Centre.
- Charnwood has a Food Poverty Group where partners come together to share information and updates on their services. Debt advice and linking to greater coordination across Food Banks – Food Pantries – Community Delivery Services.
- Melton is working with partners to develop a mobile pantry to enable resources to reach those in food insecurity in rural areas
- Leicester South Food Bank has 6 debt and benefit advisors who have maximised over £200,000 for people using the food bank this year

Spotlight on Trussell Trust Regional Distribution Centre

The idea for a central distribution centre to be a resource for other food banks began in 2019. It became clear that food banks in Leicestershire were struggling with lack of storage space, vehicles to make collections and deliveries, staff and volunteers spending too much time buying food in sufficient quantities to make up the shortfall in donations. Alongside this donations from food producers were being turned down due to the logistics needed to accept them.

In June 2021 the Leicester South Food Bank (one of 7 Trussell Trust – TT - food banks locally) opened the Leicestershire warehouse. One of the trustees put a proposition to Toyota manual handling UK and they provided some of the pallet trucks but more importantly a forklift truck. The warehouse now have pallet size donations from Britvic,

Aldi, Amazon, Pladis global, Costco, County Foods, M&M international Plc and the Hygiene bank, Red Cross and Blue cross. The other TT Food Banks and area managers are now able to pass on details of companies wishing to make donations or find ways of fulfilling their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This ensures the answer is always yes, which has led to significant corporate relationships developing. An example is a large storage company who approached the TT Coalville food bank, but their offer far exceeded the potential benefit to that food bank so it was passed onto the warehouse.

Since opening the warehouse two years ago, none of the 7 TT food banks has run short of any item on the packing list. Prior to opening, staff and volunteers would have either purchased out of their own pocket or rushed to the local supermarket to make up the shortfall, making their service more stressful and time consuming.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

Healthy Weight Strategy

[Leicestershire's Healthy Weight Strategy](#) is a whole systems approach to Healthy Weight and runs from 2021 to 2026. It has three themes –

1. Promoting a Healthy Weight Environment
2. Support for people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight
3. Prioritise healthy weight through systems leadership.

This is a partnership approach which includes the Integrated Care System.

A key strand which has recently been approved through the Healthy Weight Strategy board, and through Public Health management has been to begin work on a scheme to encourage and support healthier takeaways.

Weight Management Service

Leicestershire County Council manages the [Weight Management service](#) which works with referred individuals and families. The Weight Management Service has three levels of support -

- Level 1 WMS: Information and self management
- Level 2 WMS: Access to interactive website 12 week programme + 3 calls
- Level 3 WMS: support from a Nutritionist.
- Children if eligible can be referred onto the Healthy Eating Healthy Activity (HEHA) programme.

Health in all policies

Leicestershire County Council is embedding a [Health in All Policies](#) approach within the organisation and across the District Council areas - all departments and sectors need to demonstrate they have considered the potential impacts on population health on all new proposals, strategies, programmes, decisions and policies of their work within every Cabinet report.

To underpin this process, a tiered training approach has been created to ensure organisation awareness across all sectors around the wider determinants of health and to upskill all employees to be able to recognise what shapes and influences health outcomes. The tiered training created comprises of:

- Health in all our work an e-learning course – for all staff to increase knowledge of wider determinants of health and how health links to every department and function of the council
- Health in All Our Decisions training for a more in-depth understanding of health influences and health priorities for Leicestershire.
- Health in All Policies Training for senior leaders which provides a strategic viewpoint around HiAP, collaborative opportunities on complex upstream issues, shared goals and access to ‘good food’ exploring topics including food insecurity, food education, food deserts/food swamps, access to green space for physical activity, walkability of area and the impact of obesity.

Early Years Food programme

Programme of work developed across [Early Years Settings](#) includes the following activity –

- Provision of HENRY training (healthy eating nutrition in the really young) to Children and Family Wellbeing Service to deliver to families across Leicestershire – 2 programmes fully delivered and more planned from Sept 2023
- Work with community settings such as community fridges and food banks to provide volunteer training, cooking utensils and recipes alongside cook and eat sessions. Support volunteers to engage with more families and link into signposting
- Develop healthy eating training packages for settings including face to face workshops, resources and eLearning packages to enable maximum uptake

Spotlight on Food for Life

Food for Life has operated in Leicestershire over the past 10 years – a recent infographic ([link here](#)) demonstrated that in numbers the commission has achieved –

- 90 Bronze school awards

- 24 Silver awards (77 schools working towards silver) – this includes one Special School
- 4 Gold awards (41 working towards gold) – these 4 Gold represent over half of the Golds in the country
- 106 schools are taking action to increase free school meal uptake
- 42 schools actively discourage unhealthy lunchboxes
- 30 schools have a food policy
- 26,716 pupils across 95 schools discuss healthy and sustainable food
- Over 27,000 pupils in 102 schools are cooking, growing and composting

Alongside the numbers above, Food for Life has been working more intensively with those schools where data shows higher levels of obesity –

One school reported increased levels of fussy eating among pupils, high levels of food waste and reluctance among parents and pupils to eat a balanced diet. Food for Life supported senior leaders and the wider school team to gain confidence in challenging unhealthy behaviour practices from the home, increasing pupils’ willingness to consume more fruit and veg.

Results –

- school has seen benefits to pupils’ health and wellbeing
- Poor behaviour has decreased by 66% since September 2022
- food waste has decreased by 40%
- Parental resistance to healthy food has reduced
- Higher school meal uptake

In one case, a pupil with severe eczema which resulted in numerous absences exchanged high-sugar packed lunches for healthier ones with lots of fruit, and teachers have reported that this pupil’s attendance has also improved.

The Headteacher is now planning cooking sessions for parents and a separate one for bereaved dads, all of whom have requested recipes and the opportunity to how to make school meals at home as the children enjoy them so much.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Healthy Start Vouchers

We have been developing activity to increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers – uptake currently sits at 71% average across Leicestershire (March 2022) – however the average

over the period August 2021 to March 2022 was 60%.

- Delivered briefings to LCC staff and partners including Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Social Care, Homestart, Foodbanks, Family Learning Team, District and Borough Councils and Weight Management Team
- Promotional banners have gone out to the Family Hub buildings and libraries and are being rotated across the county
- Identifying all community food provision and map out where the HS payment card is currently accepted and then where we can support the provision to get this instated to allow families to gain even more items with their entitlement
- Promotion of Healthy Start Scheme
- Organised a series of pop up sessions in North West Leicestershire to sign families up to the scheme when they visit social supermarkets, if this works well then we will roll this out across other areas
- Incorporating Healthy Start information in Family Food Activity Packs and recipe cards which are being piloted through foodbanks and cook and eat sessions in North West Leicestershire

Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy

Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development

Taste the Place (also see 4B)

Taste the Place operates across Leicester and Leicestershire - it engages local people and visitors alike with our food heritage, food stories and food businesses. The Food for Thought category features -

- [Pratik and Bee](#) who transformed a family newsagent into a thriving showcase of local produce featuring 57 local producers
- [The Duffin family](#) behind the unique farm-to-plate experience at Stonehurst Farm and John's House restaurant, pioneers in sustainable food and dining
- [Bill Allingham](#) who through the Stoughton Grange Farm Shop, Cow & Plough Pub and Distillery aims to connect customers with local food and offer the sort of produce people enjoyed 80 years ago. Much of the fruit and vegetable used in the menus is grown on site.

The Food and Drink Forum

Over the past 18 months the Food and Drink Forum has run Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and Go Green projects to identify the challenges food and drink manufacturers face when working towards more sustainable production methods and healthy food products. The key deliverables for the CRF project was -

- Diagnostic approach to finding out key information from the businesses
- Identification of key areas for improvement
- Development of an action plan to remedy areas for improvement

The Go Green initiative afterwards continued to discover additional strategies that enabled manufacturers to strive towards a more healthy and sustainable food supply chain by identifying changes across production and consumption systems with the assistance of subject matter experts.

Leicester and Leicestershire Food Plan's have joined forces to commission some follow-on work from the Food and Drink Forum. This will develop deeper work with a cohort of 5 businesses review their health and sustainability plans to assess progress, and to support them with their next steps, measure performance and develop case studies demonstrating longer-term commitments. This will include accessing specialist practical support e.g. decarbonisation, supply chain and product reformulation.

Melton Mowbray

Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire is the 'Rural Capital of Food' and as such has a long history of putting good food at the centre of it's local economic development -

- Melton Borough Council (MBC) established a Food and Drink Networking event for small and large businesses to share best practice, analyse trends and connect.
- A collaboration across MBC and the LLEP created the Food Enterprise Centre to support food and drink businesses with production challenges and enhance the visitor experience
- The Stockyard followed on from the Food Enterprise Centre and is described more in 5B
- Melton has a number of [festivals and markets](#) through the year – annually there is one of the largest Food Festivals in the UK, alongside PieFest and ChocFest. The town also has regular Street Food markets, a regular Vegan market and a twice weekly farmers market.
- A [Little Less Waste](#) is a plastic free shop in the town which has regular events such as pop up supper clubs, pumpkin decorating event and a Sustainable Christmas market.

Spotlight on Oko Protein

[Oko Protein](#) has developed world-first technology revolutionising the production of cricket protein.

The interest in creating cricket protein is -

- Crickets can help UK achieve protein independence – omnivorous and can be fed on domestically sourced inputs.
- Require no vaccinations or antibiotics
- Avoids risk of shortages caused by disease
- Tiny CO2e footprint – no methane produced, fantastic feed conversion ratios (as low as 1.3:1 in ideal conditions)
- 100% edible (chicken, the most efficient source of meat currently farmed, only 55% edible)
- Taking into account both feed conversion ratios and percentage edible output, 7x more efficient than chicken.
- Crickets can be concentrated into a versatile powder, 69% protein, containing all amino acids, rich in omega 3, B12, iron, calcium and prebiotic fibre.

About Oko Protein -

- Oko's technology uses just 4% the energy of traditional insect farming systems to maintain required environmental conditions for maximum growth.
- Successfully received funding through innovate UK for two projects worth £400,000 to bring the new technology to commercialisation.
- Working with Food and Drink Forum, developed successful tester protein products, preparing health mark and hygiene standards
- Working with University of Nottingham school of bioscience to develop feed types based on domestically sourced agricultural coproducts, utilizing inputs that would otherwise be wasted in a sustainable feed mix; perform nutritional analysis of cricket protein powder to ascertain optimal harvest times and feed types; and produce a complete nutritional profile in the world's first high-level comprehensive industrial study
- Working with Nico's Protein Pizza Ltd, produced a high protein low calorie frozen pizza targeting sports nutrition market. Sold out in 4 days.
- Working with local farmer near Market Harborough, creating what will become Europe's largest insect farm providing a blueprint for a British technology that can be copied around the world.

Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers

Taste the Place

[Taste the Place - Visit Leicester](#) is run by the Place Marketing Company for Leicester and Leicestershire and showcases the best of Leicestershire's independent food and drink offer to stimulate visits and support local businesses (almost 180 businesses are engaged in the campaign to date).

There are 4 campaign themes:

- **A Taste of England** explores traditional food and drink made in Leicestershire. It includes **pork pies, cheeses, ales and ciders** that are made in the area but also promotes **traditional pubs and coaching inns**.
- **The World on a Plate** is a theme that explores our **world food offer** and **the communities that make it**, providing an opportunity to look at Leicester/shire as a multi-cultural city/county. **Many migrants have settled in the area from across the world, bringing their distinctive cuisine with them**. Our food offer reflects our **South Asian, Turkish, African, Jamaican, Indonesian, Czech, Italian and Portuguese** communities. Leicester was a former **Curry Capital of Britain and is second on the list of cities with the most Indian restaurants in the world per capita outside of India**.
- **Food for Thought** is a theme that looks at **fighting climate change from the kitchen**. It looks at **environmentally sustainable food consumption** that **reduces food miles**, supports **sustainable farming** and promotes a **"farm to fork"** approach. The campaign highlights **markets, food producers with retail outlets, delis and farm shops** where locally produced, seasonal products can be purchased as well as businesses that use a local supply chain.
- **The Home of Veganism** Veganism has seen a huge growth in popularity in recent times as more people switch to a plant-based diet. **Leicester is consistently in the top 10 UK vegan cities** and was the place where **veganism was first invented by Donald Watson in the 1940s**, a fact celebrated by the newly opened **Donald Watson Vegan Bar** in Leicester. The **Vegan Society** was also founded in Leicester.
- In addition to the four themes, the campaign promotes a wide range of food and drink related activities and events and **food experiences and activities** related to the theme including pie making workshops, brewery tours, gin schools, cookery schools through a **Food and Drink Event Calendar**.
- UKSPF funding is being used to create itineraries, trails and interactive maps called **Taste Adventures in Leicester & Leicestershire**, curated 1-hour walks from some of our best independent pubs called **Pub Walks for Foodies**, and **Pick Up and Picnic**, suggestions of where to buy locally sourced food in markets, delis and farm

shops with suggestions of the best local picnic spots to eat it in.

Themed videos have been commissioned to be used on social media to reach a wider, and more diverse, audience - [Food for Thought - Visit Leicester](#).

Other local food business promotion, markets and food festivals

[The Great Food Club Leicestershire](#) showcases a vast number of food retailers, eateries and farmshops across city and county.

There are various markets in operation across Leicestershire –

Locations for Farmers Markets include Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Blaby, Loughborough, Burbage, Market Bosworth, Hinckley and Melton.

There are food festivals in Melton Mowbray (as described in section 4A), Hinckley (Feast Hinckley), Market Harborough (Summer Food and Drink Festival) and Oadby (Sausage and Cider Festival).

There are Vegan markets in Market Harborough, Loughborough and Melton and in 2022 Stanford Hall in Leicestershire hosted the worlds [biggest Vegan festival](#).

Finally, the National Forest company and Sustainable Harborough both support local food businesses through hosting directories. [Sustainable Harborough](#) is actively linking with local food and drink businesses and worked to set up [Edible16](#) – a click and deliver scheme for local produce. The national Forest has it's [Food from the Forest](#) pages.

Spotlight on [March House Farm](#)

Dan Belcher is a farmer in Leicestershire currently transitioning from traditional farming to regenerative farming practices. This transition has been necessitated by numerous factors – but mainly the finances of the farm weren't working. Through working to identify the needs of the soil on the farm and linking into local supply chains and the needs of local customers Dan is supplying people and businesses with lower carbon produce which has been shown to have higher nutrient density. Alongside this work Dan also engages with local schools such as [Birchwood School](#) who created a buffet using the farms produce to celebrate achieving the silver Food for Life award.

Finally, Dan has been supporting other initiatives such as Leicestershire County Council's work to understand the carbon and environmental footprint of produce, and the Taste the Place tourism campaign.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for

guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains

Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

Coordinated work

Activity aimed at understanding and developing robust policy and practice focussed on local sustainable supply is developing against a backdrop of increasing food prices and difficult decision making within schools and other public sector food consumers. Our activity currently focusses on demonstrating the opportunities to bring significant impact through sustainable food purchasing; work towards a Dynamic Purchasing System and enabling local suppliers to sell through this platform; engaging with partners such as Leicester City Council, local Universities and University Hospitals Leicester; and working with school leadership to help them understand the importance of good school food cooked from fresh ingredients.

Food for Life Served Here

Up until Jan 2023 Leicestershire Traded Services (LTS – the trading arm of Leicestershire County Council providing school meals to 35,000 children a day) held [Gold Food for Life Served Here accreditation](#). When the cost of food started to rise it was no longer able to continue to use some of the ingredients that qualified at Gold – however the service is still committed to the programme, still holds many of the criteria important to the Served Here accreditation and is keen to engage schools with the unique and healthy food offer they have.

Table and Kin

[Table and Kin](#) is a dynamic online marketplace in Leicestershire committed to championing local food producers, farmers, and artisans. Their primary goal is to deliver the highest-quality, ethically sourced products directly to local customer's tables. Table and Kin benefits both consumers and local producers by creating a platform that fosters community connections while supporting sustainable food systems. Customers who shop via Table and Kin not only savour exceptional flavours but also contribute to the livelihoods of local producers, helping to cultivate a resilient and thriving local food

ecosystem. In essence, Table and Kin invites individuals to become part of a growing community that values quality, celebrates local producers, and appreciates the narratives behind each product. With Table and Kin, the focus is on creating a tastier, more interconnected world where conscious choices make a significant impact. In a world where fast-food is everywhere, they're encouraging people to shop local, cook at home, eat well, be well and gather around a table. Table & Kin is set to expand into counties across the UK

Stanford Hall CSA

Stanford Hall grows produce for the local community and educates about sustainable food systems. They grow regeneratively using traditional methods and link into numerous innovative projects –

- Wildfarmed – Stanford were instrumental in bringing [Wildfarmed Grain](#) to Leicestershire
- They work with animals e.g. horse drawn ploughing
- They trialled early work with the beans in BeanMeals – growing a crop, bringing school children onto the farm to pick, thresh, cook and eat the beans and have kept regenerative principles on the agenda through the BeanMeals project

Spotlight on BeanMeals

[BeanMeals](#) is a £2.2M research project which began in May 2023 and is led by University of Oxford - it focusses on the Leicester and Leicestershire food systems. It aims to look at the role of UK grown pulses in instigating food systems change by taking a 'farm from fork' approach. Starting with school meals and families BeanMeals has created recipes working with Food for Life and both city and county school meal providers, and working with 6 schools the researchers have developed in-school resources to help children to explore the food system. Beans have then been served at lunch-times and the 'acceptability', nutritional benefits and behaviour of children has been captured. A crucial part of the project has been the creation of a game to help with understanding and decision making within food systems. Alongside this work researchers are liaising with farmers and growers to identify opportunities for scaled local growing and the infrastructure needed to process native pulses, alongside the 'missing middle' of food processors and distributors to assess where intervention is needed. The policy environment at local, regional and national level is being incorporated to identify where lessons can be learnt and how we can start to prioritise healthier and more sustainable food production and consumption. Finally, taking a systems approach and understanding the innovative methods that can be employed to support partners to reimagine local/national food systems will support understanding of replicable activity. Recent press celebrating the recent harvest of UK bred pulses which are central to this project

can be seen [here](#).

Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain

Food, farming and procurement

Connecting people from every corner within the supply chain is vital to move sustainability forwards within the county. A key partner of GFL is the [Allerton Project](#), with a focus on knowledge exchange and sharing learnings from sustainable farming practice. Using practical on farm research and engaging the local farming community they are able to pro-actively encourage regenerative food production which supports wildlife and the climate. Through the visitor centre they host events, establishing valuable networks between farmers and the rest of the supply chain. In September 2022 Allerton hosted a procurement event for GFL, with over 40 attendees from across the supply chain and council, the collaboration within the room was a credit to the forward-thinking nature of the county. Farmers keen to provide those living in the county access to the best of their produce and therefore initiating networks with those in the surrounding supply chains. Events at Allerton are catered for by a local farmer who grazes his sheep on the farm, and butchers them himself in his newly set up facility. This circular economy is something that sits in the heart of the Allerton ethos. Supporting food producers to grow quality produce whilst supporting natural ecosystems and regenerating our soil and wildlife for generations to come.

Melton – local supply chain at ‘The Stockyard’

[The Stockyard](#) in Melton Mowbray is the epicentre of a thriving agricultural economy, dating back 1000 years to the Domesday Book playing a key role in the food chain and supply, supporting 2,500 vendors and 1,500 buyers from the region. Its importance has grown with the move to twice weekly livestock trading and market, weekly artisan markets with a focus on the local food supply, farm shops and butchers prospering alongside and home to several artisanal food and drink producers; award winning [Round Corner Brewery](#), [Fur & Feather Cocktail Bar](#) and [Feast and the Furious BBQ Smokehouse](#), who are all doing their bit to contribute to this wonderful community. It already attracts thousands of visitors every year – people who come to experience the very best of the region’s gastronomy, most notably during the many food and drink festivals, including East Midlands Foods Festival, held in October every year.

Its future development is the realisation of several initiatives over the last 5 years to deliver upon Melton Mowbray’s reputation as The Rural Capital of Food. The Government’s award of over £12m in the 2nd round of Levelling Up funding has provided

the opportunity to lift The Stockyard from a space for food and drink producers to operate, into a centre of excellence. Combining events, festivals, tourism, education, innovation, and enterprise ecosystem in one location.

The National Forest

One of the key aspects of the National Forest Company's work is to support the development of micro and small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to service a burgeoning visitor economy. The National Forest has become a popular destination, attracting over 9 million visitors annually. To enhance the visitor experience, the company has partnered with local food and drink producers to create products that reflect the region's unique flavours including –

- A [National Forest-inspired gin](#) crafted using the Burleighs recipe as a base and enriched with flavours derived from the National Forest surroundings, such as elderflower, blackberries, and wild cherry
- [Tollgate Brewery](#), another partner of the National Forest Company which operates as a microbrewery with a strong emphasis on traditional brewing techniques and sustainable practices - leftover hops, malt, and spent yeast being repurposed for pig feed or compost on the nearby Calke Abbey Estate.

Spotlight on Long Clawson Dairy

[Long Clawson Dairy](#) was founded in 1912 as a cooperative owned by its farmers. It has Protected Designation of Origin status and this is defined on the basis that the cheese can only be made in Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. All the 33 member farmers in the cooperative are within 30 miles of the factory – most are within Leicestershire.

Long Clawson is now engaged in a process towards Net Zero Carbon, with a target of [30% reduction by 2030](#) and as part of this process they are supporting the farmers to understand on-farm carbon emissions. The cooperative is also working with its farms to understand how to improve biodiversity impacts. This best practice is obviously having on the 33 member farms, but this is also being shared wider through Good Food Leicestershire – they presented as the key note speaker at the Leicestershire Food Summit and have offered to keep partners updated with practices and progress.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste

Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency

Sustainable Food Systems in Leicestershire

A strong aspect of the work of GFL is the interactions with food and sustainable farming, along with the links made through the supply chain. This is incorporated into the Leicestershire Net Zero Strategy, it is linked into the wider work of a growing Net Zero partnership along with the previously described links into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This is important because it raises the profile of the environmental heavy-lifting that action on the food system can have across the complex picture of the way we grow and produce food. Partner activity –

- Brooksby Agriculture College runs a Degree level Regenerative Agriculture course, and has a growing [regenerative agriculture ethos](#) on the farm operations including mob grazing, agro-forestry, fruiting hedgerows and research links (which include trialling different varieties of elder for linking into the local Belvoir Farms cordial and drinks business). Brooksby have organised tours to help peer learning.
- [Ruth Grice](#) is a farmer in the Long Clawson Dairy cooperative – she is a forward thinking dairy farmer who is helping with local understanding about sustainable dairy practices linking to biodiversity benefits.
- The Allerton Project carry out significant research on sustainable farming and land practices and upskill, educate and encourage farmers and landowners in the surrounding areas to adopt more regenerative farming methods includes more agroecological farming methods, agroforestry, more no-till farming cultivations, larger cropping rotation including a variety of crops that give back to the soil and support farmland wildlife and a water friendly farming project working with the East Mercia Rivers trust.
- The Food and Drink Forum’s work with food producers mentioned in 4A
- The BeanMeals project mentioned in 5A.
- Loughborough University’s [catering subsidiary](#) holds the Green Tourism Gold award – sustainability initiatives include –
 - 20percentless – reducing single use plastic by 20% a year to zero by 2025
 - Fairtrade products, Red Tractor meat and MSC approved fish
 - Local and seasonal produce

Sustainable School Meals report

In November 2022 Leicestershire County Council (LCC) determined to explore opportunities to gain a better understanding of the carbon and nature benefits of local food procurement and improved land management and how to measure and monitor improvements. Tomson Consulting were commissioned to produce a report looking at the route to more sustainable procurement, and what the impact could be if LCC were to purchase from local regenerative growers versus the national average for products.

An example from the report showed that March House Farm Beef had an emissions intensity of 17.16 kgCO₂e/kg product vs a national average of 32 kgCO₂.

The report identified a number of next steps needed to realise the potential impacts which included a need to understand the processes involved with getting produce from farm to kitchen, the prices of local products versus the 'business as usual' products, and an understanding of the standards frameworks – what local partners would want to see, how these match with different frameworks and how to support suppliers with achieving and measuring them.

A publicly available report will be made available soon.

Spotlight on the National Forest

The [National Forest](#) host and support a range of opportunities -

- Helping to establish community orchards
- Supporting hedgerows and shelter belts, which also provide nutritional diversity for animals
- Grants for trees in the landscape with parkland and woodland pasture schemes (also providing shade and shelter for animal welfare)
- Supporting planting for woodland areas and strips, at a variety of scales, that can help improve soils and water quality, whilst providing woodland habitat for livestock, and pollinators.

Within their own land the National Forest hosts two community allotments, have a partnership with a local bee keeper, and wildlife systems on many sites including a portfolio of landscape initiatives, such as wide open rides, biodiverse rich fringes and parkland areas that are grazed for food production. These systems all highlight integrated land use/agroforestry approaches, that demonstrate the importance of livestock in a system and sustainable food production within Forest landscapes.

This coming year's plan includes -

- Further agroforestry trials
- Grass lays for dairy production (at their Newchurch site),
- Changing beef cattle densities in all year round grazing for animal health
- Landscape biodiversity alongside food production (at their Boothorpe site).

This all builds on a long tradition of the forest showcasing integrated land use opportunities with trees as an enabler for change and food production.

Providing integrated approaches that cater for food production, landscape resilience, alongside the protection and restoration of nature to increase biodiversity, provide places for people, whilst crucially helping sequester carbon in the fight and adaption necessary in the climate crisis.

Overall, the National Forest Company's collaboration with local food and drink producers showcases how environmental regeneration projects can catalyse economic growth, community engagement, and sustainability, all while preserving and celebrating the unique sense of place of the National Forest.

Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste

Waste in Leicestershire

The [Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy](#) reflects this global current thinking and describes the recycling and waste management services which will be delivered by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP) from 2022 up to 2050 and the vision - .

To work towards a circular economy and contribute to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 in Leicestershire. This means fully embracing the waste hierarchy by preventing waste and keeping resources in circulation for as long as possible, through reuse, repair and recycling, to realise their maximum value whilst minimising environmental impacts

The partnership is comprised of the seven borough and district councils of Leicestershire, and the County Council and funds the LessWaste.org.uk website which has information on a wide range of topics including:

- The Environment Action Volunteer programme with currently over 60 volunteers (including [Leicestershire Master Composters](#))
- Information about waste reduction, reuse, repair and recycling
- Circular economy

Leicestershire County Council is also a signatory of [Courtauld 2030](#) – working towards a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions from the food system and food waste. LCC sits on a Household Food Waste Prevention Working group looking at new approaches to reducing household food waste in the UK.

Other Food Waste initiatives

- Harborough District Council has made a [Plastics Pledge](#).
- [North West Leicestershire](#) is pioneering food waste collections locally: the scheme has seen a trial being rolled out to 4,000 households across the district, which has seen 550 tonnes of food waste sent to Anaerobic Digestion creating biogas and

fertiliser – saving 413 tonnes of CO₂. The scheme is feeding into the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy

- [FareShare](#) operate in Leicestershire and is a key strategic partner diverting surplus waste food to local food banks, community fridges and community pantries..
- Refill shops – Ekojoe operate in Groby, Rothley and Blaby; Refill Revolution have a shop in Market Harborough and a mobile store covering the villages surrounding; [A Little Less Waste](#) in Melton; [Eco Replenishers](#) in Loughborough; [Replenish Refills](#) operate a mobile store that visits Kirby Muxloe, Hinckley, Lubbethorpe and Kirby Mallory; [No Frills Refills](#) have a shop in Ibstock and [Real Refills](#) run a mobile store covering Charnwood and Melton. A Leicestershire collaboration of refill shops has started.
- [Community fridges](#) operate across Leicestershire having diverted over 45 tonnes of food from landfill
- Oxford University have been running a [Nutrient Flows](#) project in Leicestershire looking at different waste streams in a circular economy

Spotlight on Love Food Hate Waste

Public awareness of food waste prevention is enhanced through the Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) campaign. Campaign delivery in Leicestershire is spearheaded by the County Council, who provide a wide range of educational and behavioural change focused resources and activities for residents; ranging from social media and online resources through to face-to-face engagements with residents at events and classes supported by Environment Action volunteers. The campaign follows a rolling schedule targeting seasonal food waste pinch points throughout the year including Halloween, Christmas, and Food waste Action Week (FWAW) each March. As part of our 2023 FWAW campaign an online [recipe hub](#) was developed. This hosts recipes created by residents and council staff which aim to creatively make use of commonly wasted food items. The County Council's Adult and Family Learning Teams continue to deliver food waste prevention themed cooking classes and courses for residents. This has recently extended to include the inclusion of food waste prevention messages in [Multiply sessions and courses](#) focused on adult numeracy skills.

Alongside this, the Children and Family Wellbeing Centres are developing Community Fridges in each District/Borough – this enables surplus food to be donated into the fridge where people are able to use what they can. Collaboration between community fridges and LFHW is increasing with volunteers and LCC family learning tutors in Coalville working with LFHW to develop a community fridge food waste prevention cooking class toolkit. In Hinckley, community fridge volunteers work with Environment Action Volunteers to establish on site hot composting facilities; converting food and garden waste produced on the fridge site into compost, which will be used for growing fresh produce on site.

A key project developed through LFHW was the establishment of 7 [community kitchens](#).

These were developed in partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth using a ‘train the trainer’ model. Community volunteers were trained to offer cooking courses to members of their community to make better use of shopping lists, and leftovers in order to reduce household food waste. The project showed that attendees typically managed to reduce their food waste by a third (by weight) and reduced their shopping bills by 10% or more. During the course of 2022, a team of Public Health researchers found multiple benefits for the health and wellbeing of participants - see https://phirst.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NIHR-Community-Kitchen-infographic_FINAL.pdf

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

FOR PANEL USE ONLY

Comments from the panel on your application:

Outcome of application:

Recommendations for onward progress: