

Feed Leeds 2021



Monday 6th September 4pm (zoom meeting)

Attendees:

Adam Ogilvie (FL Chair, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm (MVUF)), **Sonja Woodcock** (FL Treasurer, Leeds Food Coordinator at FoodWise Leeds), **Sarah-Jane Mason** (FL, RHS), **Rachael Fox** (FL minutes), **Rosie Atkins** (FL, Leeds Rotters, LESSN), **Penny** (Horsforth Community Café and Garden, Leeds Rotters), **Cllr Ann Forsaith** (Burley Ward and Zero Carbon Leeds)

Apologies:

Tom Bliss (FL, SowX), **Emma Andrews** (Growing Friendship), **Joe Foster** (FL, Leeds Allotments Federation), **Alan and Gini** (Fruitworks), **Becky Mears** (FL, IE Aireborough / Season Well CIC), **Sue Ottley-Hughes** (Friends of Stanks Barn)

1) Approval of minutes from last meeting

Minutes had one amendment – Apologies received from Dan Robinson, FL and Incredible Edible Garforth
All other items approved

2) Updates on current projects; LVL / SowX / LHV

LVL We received an update from Bramley Elderly Action following the installation of a new LVL @ Bramley Community Centre

“We had some plant donations before the box was ready - a few tomatoes and courgettes at the beginning of June. These (and a second tray) were all taken by users of the Food bank. The box has now been finished and all the seed originally put in were taken by visitors to the building, there have been a small number of veg plant donations but not any great quantity and mainly from staff and volunteers here. Now we are getting to the end of summer, I would expect a few houseplant cuttings and maybe some brassicas but not much else. Whilst this year has been slow to start, I have more confidence that next year, with the box in place early, we might get some more interest - I'm already saving my own seeds to make up some packets for the box”.

Action Ann to help spread the word and share this information with Armley Helping Hands

3) Updates from Feed Leeds members

Leeds Local Plan consultation –FL committee would like to thank Tom for submitting responses on behalf of Feed Leeds. We also encourage our members to take part by completing the online consultation. [See appendix A for FL responses.](#)

Action FL members can have their say here <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/local-plan-update> submit by 13th September

Urban Agricultural Consortium (UAC) researching potential for Farm Start project in Leeds. Visited the Woodbridge project in Stockport ([Kindling Trust](#) Farm Start project) to learn about best practice and practicalities of organic commercial horticulture. At kindling trust trainee farmers spend 2 years on the farm and receive training in Commercial hortic, beekeeping and enterprise such as veg box schemes.

UAC looking at a funding bid to get a post grad student to carry out a feasibility study for Leeds.

Foodwise & Zest have received funding through the Healthy Holiday clubs to develop a toolkit to share best practice and healthy food options with projects.

As part of the food them work for the Climate Action Leeds project, FoodWise will be hosting quarterly food themed events. It would be advantageous if these were co-hosted with Feed Leeds to reach a wider audience. The first event/public meeting will be co-hosted with Hyde Park Source who lead on the environment theme. We will be looking for event ideas for the spring – SowX perhaps?

MVUF The veg box project is well subscribed and is now supplying crops to the junk food project in Headingley.

Fruitworks Alan, Gini and Tom are continuing discussions with Danny and Oscar from the LCC Woodland Creation team. A draft Schools and Community Orchard Project proposal has been prepared, based on the excellent work that Fruitworks have been doing in Bradford. It's quite ambitious and comprehensive and they will update us when they know more.

Community Composting Sonja and Emma Andrews are meeting with Cllr Emma Flint to discuss options for Leeds and to find out if any funding is available which could be used to kick start a community composting scheme.

Horsforth Community Café the café which has been closed since the first lockdown will re-open on Monday 13th September. This winter they are developing a community edible garden in Hall Park.

Also new community pantry opened in Butcher Hill, Kirkstall, one of the 33 community hubs used during lockdown to help people in crisis.

Ann confirmed that the COVID response via community hubs was a real success and great achievement, but one barrier was about communication with communities. There has now been a ward audit carried out in all 33 wards – looking at venues / services available / social media and schools provision. Community teams hold this data if anyone wishes to access it.

Zero Carbon Headingley - holding a car free day on Sunday 19th September and North Street will be closed for the day. Lots of stalls, live music and activities for all the family. Follow on social media for more details. <https://www.facebook.com/zerocarbonheadingley> and <https://twitter.com/zeroheadingley/status/1421199847223439366>

Action Any FL members available to attend on 19th September?

COP26 Walk to Glasgow to highlight climate change Leeds will be hosting a group of around 15 people walking from Spain to COP26 in Glasgow!! There will be an event at the Sikh centre (Harrogate Road) on Saturday 16th October with stalls, food and more to wish them well on their journey.

Action Any Spanish speakers wishing to attend and welcome the walkers?

Action Any FL members available to attend the Saturday 16th October event ?

Incredible Crossgates meeting with Cllr Nicola Sharp to discuss installation of edible beds outside Skyliner fish and chip shop.

LCC Food Production and Biodiversity group Ann attended the latest meeting and will update us at the next FLL meeting

4) AOB

Enquiry from Friends of Kirkstall Abbey regarding getting Orchard signage created for their site similar to that at Burley Park. The Burley Park sign was donated by LCC and created using Leeds City Signs.

Action Adam to contact and share details of Leeds City Signs

Rosie highlighted '**Kiss the Ground**' film about the state of the worlds soils and remedial action being taken to restore them. " by regenerating the world's soils, we can completely and rapidly stabilize Earth's climate, restore lost ecosystems and create abundant food supplies. Using compelling graphics and visuals, along with striking NASA and NOAA footage, the film artfully illustrates how, by drawing down atmospheric carbon, soil is the missing piece of the climate puzzle. "

Rosie commented "it was a really scary comprehensive info on degraded state of world soils... followed by REALLY optimistic analysis and solutions for soil regeneration, food supplies etc .('No till' and no agro-chemicals, reducing pollution of soils and waters, increasing biodiversity, etc ..) It's 'spot on"

https://kissthegroundmovie.com/?_cf_chl_managed_tk__pmd_2rz.SrYAwnxpaLeqhWjyY0pSOB4tTLwQlafi.5EeTPU-1630674011-0-gqNtZGzNAqWjcnBszRJI

Leeds Sustainable Food Places – running a national day of action on Weds 29th September at Kirkgate Market including speakers, council action plan and low carbon lunch prepared by Young Chefs from Leeds City College. There will also be satellite events at Zest and other community venues. Schools will also be taking part with ReThink Food and learning about why LCC offer 2 meat free meals a week for school lunches. See social media for more details.

Feedback from XR event on Briggate in August great opportunity to renew contacts and network with similar organisations who have not met up over the last 18 months. However

the location on Briggate was not ideal for passers by so not massive engagement with the public.

Climate Action Funding - £2.5million National Lottery-funded programme to support communities across the UK take action on climate change, ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), in Glasgow this November. Building on interest and excitement for COP26, the [‘Together for Our Planet’](#) funding programme is offering grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to support local community projects. It aims to create a legacy of ongoing climate action in hundreds of communities, beyond COP26, supporting the UK to reduce its emissions on its part to Net Zero by 2050.

The programme is open for applications until 5pm on Thursday 18 November.

5) Date of next meeting

Monday 4th October 4pm zoom meeting

Many thanks,
Sarah-Jane and Rachael

Leeds Local Plan Update

<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/local-plan-update>

Response on behalf of Feed Leeds (www.feedleeds.org) by Tom Bliss, Vice Chair Lecturer in Landscape Architecture and Urban Design at Leeds Beckett University

NB: Quotations from the LLPU are in italics

FL responses are highlighted in yellow

Topic 3: Green infrastructure

Background

Protecting, enhancing and increasing green infrastructure (GI) plays an important role in delivering the Council's strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of its citizens and to address the climate change emergency as well as creating high quality, attractive places for people to live, work and relax in. Through this Local Plan Update we are aiming to adopt and improve policies that will help development adapt and mitigate against the impacts of climate change by creating a better more sustainable environment.

Strategic green infrastructure

The current Local Plan already contains a broad suite of policies aimed at protected and enhancing Green Infrastructure. However, they are located across a range of different documents and policies. We would like to explore how we might bring this together to form a single strategic policy that would set a clear definition of GI, set out a clear network of uses and provide increased emphasis on improving existing GI and delivering high quality GI through new developments. We are particularly keen to embrace concepts such as ecosystems services and natural capital and apply them to Leeds.

Question: Do you agree that enhanced policy for the protection, improvement and enhancement of GI should be included in the Local Plan Update?

Feed Leeds strongly agrees that enhanced policy for the protection, improvement and enhancement of ALL GI within Leeds District; urban, peri-urban and rural should be introduced. The enhancement of GI, especially major enhancement of biodiversity and carbon capture / storage through plant growth and harvesting (fruits and timber), should be a central policy of the Plan. It should include the provision of many more private gardens and allotments, as well as spaces for community, corporate and commercial food production - with measures in place to ensure a broad range of wild and managed techniques, from conventional horticulture via permaculture to silviculture and agroforestry, in the ground (open and wooded), in raised and display beds, on green roofs and walls, and in temporary / 'meanwhile' / mobile units.

Question: If so, do you have any thoughts or ideas about what you'd like to see included in such a policy?

Feed Leeds advises that LCC should adopt the check list for GI development set out in Arup's 'Cities Alive' (Armour, T) - with food and other crops prioritized at every feasible juncture.

<https://www.environmentandurbanization.org/cities-alive-rethinking-green-infrastructure>

Trees

Through the White Rose Forest Project the Council is committing to doubling its tree cover by 2050. Trees have multiple benefits for the environment and our mental health. In particular, with regards to the climate emergency, they store carbon dioxide and extract it from the air we breathe.

Whilst the planning system can only provide limited protection for existing trees, we are keen to explore options for how that protection could be enhanced. Equally, planning policies could be used to increase tree planting. Current policies require the replacement of lost trees through development on a 3 new trees for every 1 lost ratio. However, with mature trees, this often doesn't reflect the amount of carbon storage lost. In order to better recognise the role trees have in storing carbon, options for future policy could include increasing this tree replacement ratio to reflect the level of carbon stored within trees to be lost.

Question: How could planning policy be used to increase tree coverage across Leeds?

Feed Leeds notes that to date woodland creation has not included sufficient engagement with community groups or productive crops as wild or 'community-owned' orchards and forest gardens. We recommend that

1) all tree schemes - including street trees (of which there are far too few at present) should routinely include fruit, nut and edible berry species - planted in groups as proto orchards 2) shrubs and perennials should be routinely included, along with trees to maximise both biodiversity and productivity. 3) local groups should be fully engaged throughout the process, from design to planting to ongoing maintenance and harvesting - with community orchards as the critical link between people and trees.

4) The optimal disposal of timber to maximise its 'half-life' (the time before carbon is re-released into the atmosphere), should always be considered on an equal footing with tree protection to conserve the carbon store and all decisions around necessary felling and thinning.

Green space

Policy for the delivery of new green space outside of Leeds City Centre was recently updated in 2019 and it is not considered necessary to revise this. However, we're concerned that our existing policies are not providing enough usable greenspace within the City Centre. The City Centre is one of the most sustainable locations for growth across all of Leeds and we want to ensure that current and future residents have good access to green space, particularly in light of the effect Covid-19 restrictions placed on residents within the area.

Question: Do you agree that the Local Plan Update should consider new policies to enhance green space provision within the City Centre?

Feed Leeds believes that this is essential. Also that all new green space should be substantially productive - with adequate provision of allotments and private, community and corporate gardens (the latter also providing safe well-being spaces where colleagues can socialise post lock-down, especially for home workers). Where the land prices suggest that grey infrastructure is a financial necessity, i-Tree and other natural capital valuation tools should be employed to demonstrate the true values of green spaces and bolster the case for change. Ref <https://www.uboc.co.uk/>

Nature conservation

There is widespread recognition of the importance to protect and enhance the natural environment, to ensure biodiversity is fully considered in decisions affecting the use and development of land and to seek opportunities to improve the network of habitats and green infrastructure to increase biodiversity. Sites are identified and formally designated to give protection to habitats, flora and fauna which are important locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

In Leeds there are a number of such sites which are protected against development and activities that would harm the sites under national and international legislation, as well as local policy. In recognition of the importance of land that does not meet the criteria for formal designation, the Council has identified a broader network of habitats within the Local Plan.

It is considered that existing Local Plan policy on designating local wildlife sites and nature conservation designations is effective at protecting species and habitats and if revised would only require minor changes. This changes could consider updating outdated terms, references and documents; emphasising monitoring and updating policy; and considering whether existing maps could be updated more easily.

Question: Do you agree that the Local Plan Update should consider enhanced policy for nature conservation. If so, what would you like to see a revised policy contain?

Feed Leeds advises that all mature trees should be treated as if listed as TPOs for carbon storage reasons, and that biodiversity should be the prime criteria for protection and management. This should include the mowing regime of parks, SLOAP and verges, which has been woefully poor to date, with wild flowers, trees and biodiversity sites being destroyed by LCC contractors on a regular basis. Furthermore, LCC should find ways to discourage the mowing of lawns and also to prevent the paving-over of front gardens. (Owners should be encouraged to rewild their gardens and plant productive plants which enhance natural drainage, promote biodiversity, increase carbon storage and also deliver crops).

Biodiversity

Worldwide we are seeing dramatic losses in the amount and variety of natural life on Earth. Leeds' current Local Plan already reflects this loss by requiring new developments to deliver a net gain for biodiversity. However, we are keen to explore whether this policy should go further by setting higher standards for the amount of net gain that should be delivered on new development sites.

Question: Do you agree that the Council should revise its policies on biodiversity? If so, what would you like updated policies to contain?

LCC should set much higher standards for net gain, and also ensure that gains are very locally applied. They should terminate the practice of creaming off Section 106 money to Parks and Countryside, and use the funds instead to deliver the Nature Conservation objectives listed above.

Local food production

Local food production is an important part of Green Infrastructure because it helps deliver many of the benefits of GI (e.g. for biodiversity and well-being). It is also an important part of cutting carbon in its own right because the travel and processing associated with food generates lots of carbon emissions.

Whilst there is already considerable enthusiasm and commitment to grow food locally the planning system can help remove barriers, such as lack of access to suitable land and through its wider Green Infrastructure policies.

It is proposed that at this initial stage the Plan needs to set a positive framework for local food growing and provide more detail on how this can be achieved within a revised approach to protecting, managing and providing new Green Infrastructure and local place-making policy approaches being advocated elsewhere in this Local Plan Update.

Question: Do you agree that the Council should include policies to positively promote local food production?

Feed Leeds strongly supports this aim, with the major proviso and recognition that not all food can be economically and/or carbon-sensitively grown locally - especially if vegetarian and vegan diets are to be promoted, as they should (many staples are best grown in other countries). There should therefore be equal effort channeled into ensuring that the broader Leeds supply chains, currently largely managed by national corporations, can reliably deliver sufficient low carbon, fair trade, healthy and tasty food to Leeds. Novel high tech growing techniques, such as hydroponics, aeroponics, mushroom farming and similar should be actively promoted and supported in sites not suitable for conventional growing such as abandoned buildings, roofs, underpasses and cellars.

Question: Do you think all new housing should deliver such opportunities or do you think they should be more strategically focused e.g. more allotments?

This is not a binary choice. BOTH are essential - along with generous provision of community and corporate gardens, and orchards / forest gardens.

Question: What else do you think the planning system can do to encourage local food growing?

Leeds needs to map its food-shed and fine-tune a new Food Policy to deliver the right local crops and imports at the right times to the right people.

In addition to the questions above, there is a survey which presents this graphic,

5. Identification, protection, enhancement and extension of green infrastructure

It then asks these questions: *Do you agree that enhanced policy for the protection, improvement and enhancement of GI should be included in the Local Plan Update? What would you like to see included in such a policy?*

- **Strongly agree**

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below. **Comment as above**

Do you think the Green Space protection Policy (G6) should be extended to all Green Infrastructure?

- **Yes**

- No

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below.

Comment as above

6. Trees

How could planning policy be used to increase tree coverage across Leeds?

Comment as above

7. Green Space

Do you agree that the Local Plan Update should consider new policies to enhance green space provision within the City Centre? If yes, how should policies best achieve this?

- **Strongly agree**

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below.

Comment as above

8. Nature Conservation

Do you agree that the Local Plan Update should consider a revised policy for the protection of nature conservation designated sites and species? If so, what would you like to see a revised policy contain?

- **Strongly agree**

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below.

Comment as above

9. Biodiversity

Do you agree that the Council should revise its policy on biodiversity and biodiversity net gain, linking to the Leeds Habitat Network? If so, what would you like updated policy(s) to contain?

• **Strongly agree**

• Agree

• Neither agree nor disagree

• Disagree

• Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below.

Comment as above

10. Local food production

Do you agree that the Council should include policies to positively promote local food production?

• Strongly agree

• **Agree**

• Neither agree nor disagree

• Disagree

• Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons in the comments box below.

Comment as above

Do you think all new housing should deliver such opportunities or do you think they should be more strategically focused?

Comment as above

What else do you think the planning system can do to encourage local food growing?

Comment as above

*Do you have any further comments, ideas or anything we may have missed? **Comment as above***

Topic 4: Placemaking

Background

We want to minimise carbon emissions by guiding new development to locations that offer the best opportunity for active travel, for use of public transport and for minimal use of private motor vehicles. To do this we need to capitalize upon a local community's assets, inspiration and potential and create high quality, sustainable and resilient places that people want to live, work and play in and promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

Strategic placemaking

All development plans produced in Leeds, as part of the Local Plan to-date, have sought to provide a framework for sustainable and healthy communities, having regard to quality of life and to protect and enhance the environment. This is achieved through a strategic and spatial approach and a suite of policies relating to the overall scale and distribution of development, location, layout and fabric of places.

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's access to services and facilities, coupled with the threat of climate change have placed greater emphasis on a concept known as the '20-Minute Neighbourhood'. The purpose of the concept is to ensure that residents have quick access to essential facilities and services via walking, cycling or public transport. This, in turn helps support strong communities and local economies, recognising that easy and safe walking and cycle access to services/facilities is good for health, and that physical activity and less reliance on the private car reduces air pollution and carbon emissions. This approach to local growth and place making around service centres and hubs is gathering support across the world and is an easily understood way of planning for the way places change.

For Leeds to meet its objective of minimising carbon emissions it is considered that spatial growth, in line with the emerging Leeds Transport Strategy, should continue to follow a pattern of concentration particularly around the City and town centres and with less development in relatively unsustainable locations, and promote walkable neighbourhoods. In this context, we think now is the right time to consider whether existing policy needs updating to reflect how best to apply the 20-minute neighbourhood concept to Leeds' Local Plan.

Question: What does a '20-minute neighbourhood' mean to you? Do you agree that Leeds should aim to create 20 minute neighbourhoods?

Feed Leeds strongly supports this concept, which needs also to include the provision of affordable fresh food, grown and where viable sold within the neighbourhood. Redundant buildings in the city centre should be made over to hydroponic and similar growing.

Question: Should Leeds introduce a presumption against car dependent development?

Yes.

High quality, resilient and healthy places

There is also much research on the relationship between planning and good design and health benefits (Healthy by Design, NHS England, 2018) that share the benefits of addressing climate change (mitigation and adaptation) through improvements to the layout and form of buildings and spaces and better use of resources that has clear health benefits.

Leeds' current Local Plan has sought to provide a framework for sustainable and healthy communities, having regard to quality of life and to protect and enhance the environment. All development proposals are subject to a suite of specific and more detailed place making policies on the layout and fabric of places (covering design, housing, employment, natural environment,

green space/public open spaces, transport) to achieve a layout, design and fabric efficiency which both mitigates climate change and addresses impacts, such as flooding. However, existing design policy P10 of the Core Strategy lacks explicit reference to climate change, health and well-being. It also lacks clear signposting to other technical policies which are directly related to good design. There may also be the opportunity to introduce Sustainable Development Checklists to ensure that health and wellbeing and climate emergency measures are fully addressed in all development proposals.

Question: How would you priorities these users of residential streets, in order of importance? Buses, Cars, Cyclists, Pedestrians.

1) Greenery, 2) Pedestrians, 3) Busses (electric only, 4) Cycles and e-bikes, 5) Delivery vehicles (electric only, 6) Cars (electric only, time limited and on 'shared area' principles)

Question: Do you agree that more emphasis should be placed on climate change and health and wellbeing matters in future design policies and guidance? If so, how would you like to see this happen?

There is ample evidence for best practice. The simplest approach by far would be for all development to simply adopt Living Building Challenge principles, the greenest system yet devised which centres on climate change, wellbeing, water, food and more. <https://living-future.org/lbc/>