

Terms of reference for:



Background

FoodFutures (formally known as Sustainable Food City (SFC) Lancaster) is part of a network of places that aim to create cross-sector partnerships in towns, cities, boroughs and counties that use food as a vehicle for driving positive change. Through collaborative partnerships between local authorities, charities, businesses and community groups, places within the [Sustainable Food Places Network](#) are working to tackle some of the biggest social, economic and environmental issues today: from an epidemic of food poverty and diet related ill-health to the loss of independent high street food businesses and family farms through to climate change, biodiversity loss and food waste.

FoodFutures started in 2014 and was initially comprised of a small steering group that met monthly to oversee the development of collaborative food work locally. In January 2018 SFC Lancaster began the process of developing its partnership structure and action plan which evolved rapidly following a June 2018 REFRESH event. It has since been rebranded as FoodFutures: North Lancashire's Sustainable Food Partnership and wider support network.

In 2021 FoodFutures facilitated a process to co-create a 2030 food vision for North Lancashire and a strategy for getting there. More than 250 people of all ages and backgrounds fed into the process that led to the publication of '[Our Food Futures](#)': a community food strategy for North Lancashire. This sets out a 10-year route map for creating a thriving food system for our region.

FoodFutures vision: a thriving local food system that is healthy, resilient and fair.

FoodFutures mission:

- **Cooperation, connections and action.** We connect initiatives and catalyse action across the food system; supporting the development of a collaborative cross-sector food partnership that oversees the cultivation and delivery of Our Food Futures: [A community food strategy for North Lancashire](#).
- **Fair food: for people and the environment.** We think globally and act locally. We promote and support the fair and equal distribution of healthy food; treating consumers, animals, workers and the land fairly. We harness local passion and expertise for healthy, resilient and fair food in order to help it spread and grow so that more people, places and organisations within our District can benefit from being part of a resilient food sector.
- **Innovation.** We are an ambitious, dynamic organisation promoting a resilient and sustainable food system now and for the future.

FoodFutures is a cross-sector partnership, with the heart group and active working group members including representatives from:

- LESS (Lancaster District) CIC
- Lancaster University
- University of Central Lancashire
- Lancaster City Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions
- Royal Lancaster Infirmary
- Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission

- Morecambe Bay Curriculum steering group
- Northern Real Farming Conference steering group
- Global Link
- Eggcup
- Lancaster District Food Club Network
- Claver Hill Community Food Project
- Scotch Quarry Community Garden
- Backsbottom Farm
- Morecambe Bay Food Bank
- Filberts Bakery
- Growing Well
- The Landworkers' Alliance
- Feedback Global

All members support FoodFutures broad Vision and Mission and agree to collaboratively work towards achieving these goals and the visions laid out in the Our Food Futures strategy. In doing so, it is recognised that members have a diversity of views on what is meant by 'healthy' 'resilient' and 'fair' food, and the partnership will seek to create spaces to hold discussions around these terms to support co-learning and understanding between members and a wider support network; supporting us in collectively shifting to a more healthy, resilient and fair food system.

The coordination and admin role of the FoodFutures partnership lies with LESS – a Lancaster based not-for-profit Community Interest Company. LESS employs core coordination roles where appropriate, and seeks to fundraise to support the long term coordination of FoodFutures and key strategic projects and working groups. Key strategic funders currently include Lancaster City Council, Sustainable Food Places, SHED and the National Lottery.

The number of members attending FoodFutures monthly heart group meetings will be limited to 15 and will include representatives from all working groups, the private sector, public sector and third sector organisations. Quarterly partnership meetings will be kept open and thematic working groups will set their own terms of reference.

FoodFutures partnership chair

The FoodFutures partnership will elect a Chair(s) every two years. They are required to attend monthly heart group meetings and quarterly partnership meetings.

Working groups

Working groups will be convened to address key FoodFutures issues, and to develop and deliver the Our Food Futures strategy. These include food poverty and access to food; regenerative food economy and transforming local food procurement; reducing the ecological footprint of food; increasing access to healthy and sustainable food; community food skills; communications and engagement.

Each group will be convened by a member of the FoodFutures partnership, who will report on progress at monthly heart group meetings and quarterly partnership meetings.

The coordinator of the FoodFutures partnership – employed by LESS - will support the activities of the working groups as appropriate.

Working Group Conveners

The Convener will assemble a proactive and engaged group of relevant individuals and bodies to develop and deliver the thematic elements of the Our Food Futures strategy.

The Convener will ensure that the working group meets often enough to deliver the agreed strategic priorities and ensure that action points are disseminated in a timely fashion to the working group members and the FoodFutures coordinators.

FoodFutures Heart Group Responsibilities

- Meet monthly to oversee the development and delivery of the Our Food Futures strategy.
- Facilitate an annual review and celebration process – to track progress across thematic working groups and celebrate successes and learnings.
- Develop and strengthen cross-sector collaborative partnerships in Lancaster District and beyond that can help to deliver the Our Food Futures strategy.
- Promote the Our Food Futures visions, activities and the importance of healthy, sustainable food.
- Help to develop clear communications, particularly with partner organisations, through a website, newsletters and social media platforms.
- Assist in identifying and leveraging funding and other resources to support the delivery of the Our Food Futures strategy.

FoodFutures Heart Group & Quarterly Partnership Meeting Arrangements

- Heart Group/ Steering Group meetings will take place monthly on the first Wednesday of each month.
- Quarterly (open) partnership meetings will take place every three months and will be held online, except for an annual celebration event.
- Dates of future meetings will be confirmed in meetings.
- The quorum for making decisions at Heart Group meetings and Quarterly Partnership Meetings will be 7 active members (or 50%).
- Meeting agendas, minutes and papers will be sent out one week before each meeting.
- The Partnership will at all times seek consent when making decisions, but if there is a fundamental difference that requires to be resolved, a voting process may be used.
- Members who have not attended four consecutive meetings without apologies will be assumed to have resigned from the group, unless, on the basis of information, the group decides otherwise.
- A member of the group must declare 'conflict of interest' on discussion items where relevant and if deemed necessary will leave the room for discussion on that item.

Management

LESS fundraises for and coordinates the FoodFutures partnership and is as such the accountable body. As the accountable body, the governance responsibilities for the project lie with the Directors of LESS. At least one LESS Director should attend the FoodFutures Heart Group meetings to provide an appropriate link to the project.

The role of the FoodFutures Partnership is as otherwise described above.

This document will be regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect changes in the partnership's thinking, function and structure.

Date last reviewed: August 2023.