



Our Strategy 2018 to 2022

DRAFT V.1



Introduction

The contemporary reality is the vast majority of the food we rely upon every day is a product of a complex, interdependent and globalised supply chain dominated by relatively few multinational corporations. They maintain this unsustainable system by exploiting a monopoly of money and power to influence governments, damage the environment and maximise profits out of producers and consumers. The evidence shows this unsustainable system contributes to (and is vulnerable to) the impacts of climate change, depletion of resources such as oil, phosphorus, soil and water, pressures of population growth and geo-political instability such as austerity and post-Brexit uncertainty. As a consequence, the UK and Sheffield food system is impacted in a range of ways, including for example:

- Food Sovereignty – the UK currently produces less than 60% of the food we consume, relies on the EU for nearly 30% of food imports and holds only 3-5 days of food supplies in reserve.
- Food Waste – it is estimated that UK households waste 7 million tonnes of food and drink each year, costing an annual average £470 per household. Most of this waste could be avoided.
- Health Inequality & Food – access to healthy food is a key factor determining the extent of health inequality across different parts of Sheffield, with life expectancy gaps and adult obesity rates amongst the highest in England.
- Poverty & Food – over the past 5 years 19 food banks have opened in Sheffield, with benefit delays, low income and benefit changes being the most common reasons for accessing food bank services.

Developing a sustainable food system for Sheffield is a huge challenge. But thankfully - true to their stoic and independent character – the people of Sheffield are still rising to this challenge. Since the mid-1980s there have been progressive food plans, strategies and policies developed on an understanding that local government, the NHS, universities, business and Sheffield communities must all work together in partnership to create the lasting change needed. This important work continues - today and into the future.

A renewed energy and enthusiasm is present in Sheffield communities where decades of amazing local food work continues to blossom. A major challenge ahead is to turn post-Brexit price increases, farm labour shortages and market volatility into opportunities for the community economic development of urban and peri-urban horticultural enterprise – intensively grown organic fruit and vegetables, developing skills and community resources, creating local employment and promoting sustainable local economies.

An independent and equitable food partnership for Sheffield has been a longstanding ambition, and will be necessary to achieve a holistic outcome that must be greater than the sum of its parts. As more UK cities adopt this partnership approach to becoming sustainable food cities we can learn from each other – and understand how best we can make this happen in Sheffield for ourselves.

Regather Co-Operative is ready to take a leading role in the transformation of a sustainable urban food system for Sheffield.

Vision

We want to help communities to become more resilient by encouraging co-operative involvement in the food system in Sheffield, so that money is retained in the local economy, the land is more productive and people have better awareness of and involvement with local food production. We want to mutualise the local economy through food.

Our aspiration is to address issues of unsustainable food production, unemployment, ill health and unproductive land use in the Sheffield area by improving the resilience and sustainability of the local food system while providing greater opportunities for more people to become more active and make a living from the land.

To that end, the Regather mission is ***to grow the economy of Sheffield by developing a more productive landscape, with particular focus on urban food production, and to transform the resilience and sustainability of the wider urban food system of Sheffield.***

In doing so we will be providing jobs, educational opportunities and leisure activities to communities in and around Sheffield, while reducing the public spend on unemployment, poor health and health related worklessness and increasing knowledge of and access to affordable, nutritious food.

Developing community based food production approaches which do not degrade the environment or depend on import/export models of food distribution will enable us to increase the resilience and sustainability of the food system in Sheffield.

Much of the farmable land in Sheffield is not used to its maximum capacity and is inaccessible to many. By developing effective farming practices around Sheffield, we will be increasing land value by changing the land use to more valuable practices while providing opportunities for people to engage in food production.

In developing our own skills, connections and experience, we will be well placed to support the development of new growers, who in turn will be able to develop their own food production enterprises. We therefore aim to undertake an “incubator” function which will improve the capacity of local people to contribute to the economy.

Beyond this, our vision one of maximising the productive uses of available land such as woodland, brownfield and greyfield sites by exploring innovative and alternative models of food production, packaging and delivery through partnerships with other organisations.

Our Aims & Approach

- Position Regather as “**Sheffield’s Food Co-Operative**”
- Secure suitable **peri-urban and urban land and facilities** across Sheffield and the Moss Valley area of NE Derbyshire, working with anchor institutions and major land / property owners.
- Establish ‘**local food production**’ operations (organic where possible) and offer volunteering, training and employment opportunities to local people.
- Establish ‘**food system hubs**’ to add value to local produce through processing, storage, packing, delivery, wholesale and retail operations and waste reduction / recycling.
- Establish ‘**food system services**’ to meet the operational needs and opportunities created by the development of a sustainable urban food system for Sheffield.
- Establish a ‘**food system platform**’ to provide digital infrastructure for a sustainable urban food system for Sheffield.
- Establish a ‘**sustainable food partnership**’ of key stakeholders to transform policy, strategy, support and governance of a sustainable urban food system for Sheffield.

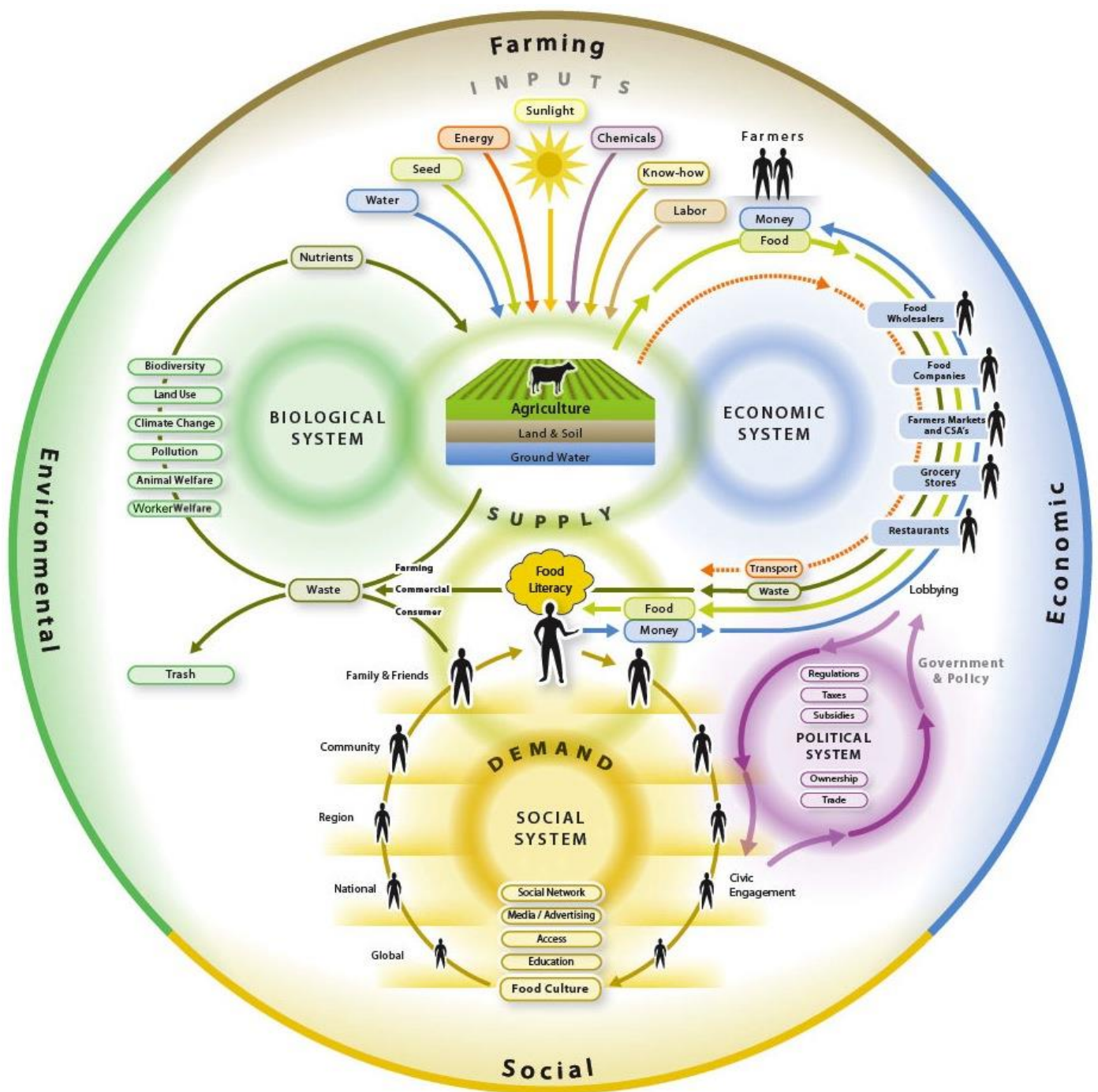
Sites

Regather has secured access to the following sites for local food production activities:

- **The Club Garden** – an urban community greenspace to the rear of Regather Works. Consists of a collection of raised beds, fruit trees and open grassland. Suitable for ‘edible landscape’ style planting and management.
- **Lynwood Gardens** – a ‘pocket forest’ of mature woodland and glades virtually untouched for over 150 years. The site dates back to the 1820s and was the garden of the wealthy Victorian cutlery manufacturer. Suitable for ‘forest garden’ style food production and urban honey production.
- **Corker Bottom Allotment Garden** – a block of 15 unused allotments in the Manor area of Sheffield. Available under an ‘allotment garden’ tenancy agreement with Sheffield City Council, which allows for commercial sale of produce grown on the site. Offers mains water, electricity and security fence. Suitable for wide range of fruit, vegetable and egg production.
- **The Friends Field** – up to 15 acres of organic conversion agricultural land in the Moss Valley, NE Derbyshire, available in single/multiple 1.5 acre plots on a variable year lease for development as a market garden. Requires infrastructure development. Suitable for wide range of fruit, vegetable and egg production. [More Info.](#)
- **New Field Spring Wood** - 30 acre ancient blue bell woodland adjacent to Friend’s Field. Scope for wide range of woodland management activities to enhance bio-diversity at the same time as restoring it as a working woodland with opportunities for education and nature connection. [More Info.](#)

Food Systems Approach

Regather will adopt a **'food systems approach'** to developing hubs, services and a digital platform for sustainable transformation of the Sheffield urban food system. Taking a 'food systems' approach offers an integrated and multi-dimensional perspective on food's origins, how food is grown and the path it follows to our plates and beyond. It covers all stages of food provisioning (production, harvesting, processing and distribution through to the point of retail, consumption and food waste disposal) and well as different dimensions (social, economic, environmental, biological and political) of food systems in urban areas.



Experience & Inspiration

Regather Works Spring 2018 Events Programme

Check out our [Spring 2018 Programme](#) of music, film, comedy and food & drink events at Regather Works.

Mapping Local Food Webs

Regather participated in the Mapping Local Food Webs research project led by CPRE, which informed a report on Sheffield's Local Food Economy

- [From Field to Fork Sheffield Report](#)
- [Growing Sheffield's Local Food Economy](#)

Community Economic Development

Regather participated in the Community Economic Development programme, resulting in a strategic vision for urban and peri-urban food production across Sheffield. Read about Regather's CED experience:

- [New Start Article](#)
- [My Community Case Study](#)
- [Co-Ops UK Case Study](#)

Sustainable Food Cities

Regather is lead delivery partner for the Sheffield Food Partnership, part of the national [Sustainable Food Cities](#) programme. Read why [Sheffield needs a Sustainable Food Partnership](#) and how our strategy will [strengthen the financial sustainability](#) of the Food Partnership.

SAFE Project

Regather is a lead member of the [Self Organising Action for Food Equality](#) action research team to develop digital infrastructure for the Sheffield urban food system.

Food Systems

- The RUAF Foundation [City Region Food Systems Literature Review](#) informs our approach.
- There are a range of strategies to developing the [Local Food System](#)
- And [food system models](#) of varying complexity

Food Hubs

Regather Works is a food hub 'in development'. Regather aims to create further multi-functional food hubs across Sheffield. Here are some inspirational examples:

- Cambridge - <https://cambridgefoodhub.org/>
- Greenwich - <https://gcda.coop/greenwich-kitchen/>
- Newcastle - <https://www.foodnation.org/>

Festival of Debate

Regather is sponsoring the Environment and Science strand of the 2018 [Festival of Debate](#), and will be hosting a range of speaker events including An Evening with Organic, No Dig Gardening Guru Charles Dowding.

The Folk Forest

Regather organises [The Folk Forest](#) – an annual celebration of music, food, drink, arts and heritage

Seikatsu Club

A source of huge inspiration - the [Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union](#) is a federation of consumer co-ops based in Japan with over 300,000 members, most of whom are women. The movement is one of the most successful food co-ops in the world and as well as buying food collectively the co-ops campaign on a wide range of food-related issues.

Sheffield Strategies

In part a result of campaigning by Regather, local food production features in Sheffield strategies:

- [Sheffield Green City](#) "We will explore opportunities to reduce our city's food supply chains and to increase the amount of locally produced, seasonal food" - p.7
- [Green and Open Spaces](#) "Develop the necessary resources and partnerships to deliver local practical skills training such as for horticulture / food growing" - p.63
- [SCR Vision](#) "Developing further Local Food Production initiatives." - p.8

A Productive Landscape for Sheffield

SHOW /
DEMO
GARDENS

ORCHARD
/ FRUITERY

EDIBLE
LANDSCAPING

HOPS

EDUCATION
CENTRE

FRUIT &
VEG
NURSERY

ART AND
EXCITEMENT
TRAIL

EGGS

AQUAPONICS

PLANT
WINES

CAFÉS

GREEN
GYMS

VERMACULTURE

BEE
PRODUCTS

INSECT
PROTEIN

PLANT
BASED
HEALTH
PRODUCTS

MUSHROOM
PACKING

AGICULTURAL
PARK

CUT
FLOWERS













