



Low carbon food infrastructure in Sheffield

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Foreword courtesy of the directors of the Institute for Sustainable Food at University of Sheffield

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Foreword

This year's United Nations COP26 in Glasgow brings the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into sharp focus. With 24% of all global greenhouse gas emissions generated by agriculture¹ and with agriculture recognised as the biggest threat to an estimated 86% of plant and animal species² at risk of extinction through the expansion of the global agricultural footprint, it is now clear that the way we produce our food urgently needs to change. These striking global statistics reveal the need for action now, and although international policy is critical in mitigating the environmental footprint of the food that we consume, local action and innovation will be equally, if not more, important if we are ever to make the food system sustainable and fair.

To achieve food security, “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”³, we all urgently need to reflect on what we can do as individuals and communities to lessen the impact of the food that we eat on the natural world to allow us to exist within the constraints defined by our Planet's limited resources.

The COVID-19 crisis revealed the vulnerability of our food system, plunging people who never imagined that they would become food insecure into food insecurity, almost overnight. The global supply chains on which our current food system is based are fragile and this realisation has highlighted the need to develop our local and regional food production capacity to help mitigate these risks. For example, a recent study from the Institute for Sustainable Food at the University of Sheffield has shown that urban food production is far more than a niche opportunity, revealing that cities such as Sheffield have sufficient usable space to become self-sufficient for vegetable and fruit production⁴ should they so desire.

While this may be overly ambitious, it is clear that a very significant proportion of the food that we eat could be produced locally with lower carbon emissions, with social enterprise and local food partnerships playing a central role in redefining our approach to growing food. By reimagining the way we produce food, and democratising food production, agriculture and horticulture in the urban landscape has a significant role to play in our national food security, breaking down barriers to healthy eating while contributing significantly to a sustainable food future.

This roadmap sets out just such an opportunity, expanding and broadening sustainable, low carbon food production in Sheffield, building social licence, providing education as well as a platform for a city-wide values-based food system that is fair and just. Decarbonising our food system must be a central pillar in our green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis as well as a major opportunity for reducing regional inequalities within the UK.

Professors Duncan Cameron and Peter Jackson,
Directors of The Institute for Sustainable Food at the University of Sheffield



The University
Of Sheffield.
Institute for
Sustainable Food.

- 1) FAO (2006) Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
- 2) Chatham House (2021) ISBN 978 1 78413 433 4
- 3) World Food Summit (1996)
- 4) [Nature Food \(2020\) doi.org/10.1038/s43016-020-0045-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-020-0045-6)

Introduction

ShefFood is the Food Partnership and Sustainable Food Places member for Sheffield. Our mission is “Feeding a Sustainable Sheffield”. We bring a cross-sector partnership of organisations together, including businesses, academic and community organisations, all of whom are committed to celebrating the “good food movement” in our City and working together to create a more fair, healthy and sustainable food system for Sheffield.

ShefFood has produced this discussion paper to stimulate the development of low carbon food production infrastructure in Sheffield. It also forms a starting point for two national programmes being co-delivered by ShefFood partners in Sheffield called Fringe Farming and the Urban Agriculture Consortium.

Fringe Farming is a long term project led by Sustain to promote more commercial, agro-ecological fruit and vegetable production in peri-urban locations, involving the Greater London Authority, CPRE, Shared Assets and the Landworkers Alliance. The programme is providing both support and small grants to ShefFood, Bristol Food Producers and Glasgow Community Food Growers Network.

The Urban Agriculture Consortium (UAC) is a collection of places and people working to upscale regenerative food growing in and around our towns and cities. The project is funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation from June 2020 - 2023, and is coordinated by Green Future Associates CIC, Community Supported Agriculture Network, Open Farm Network, Permaculture Association, Social Farms & Gardens and Regather. In the current phase 1 UAC is working with a cluster of Northern ‘Pathfinder Places’: Lancaster, Leeds, Middlesbrough and Sheffield, to explore how regenerative urban agriculture can upscale with the support of communities and councils. UAC is providing support and a small grant to enable ShefFood’s participation.

This discussion paper has been produced specifically for candidates and elected members of Sheffield City Council in the lead up to the 2021 local elections with a view to raising awareness of the challenges, opportunities and solutions offered by low carbon food production for the people of Sheffield.

ShefFood invites Sheffield City Council to join us in making a collective step change in how all food system stakeholders are supported and enabled to work together in partnership, to recognise and celebrate Sheffield's good food movement and to rise to the challenge and opportunity of creating a more fair, healthy and sustainable food system for Sheffield.

Gareth Roberts
Food Partnership Coordinator
On behalf of ShefFood - Sheffield's Food Partnership



Seizing the moment

In the post-covid recovery period we have an opportunity to shape Sheffield's food system for the benefit of future generations. If low carbon food production is considered as a key component within green infrastructure investment strategies, then it can help secure the city's resilience against the economic and food security shocks that the climate crisis will unleash. The pandemic has been a test-run, exposing the weaknesses within the food supply chain. It has also been a wake-up call to citizens shocked by empty shelves.

In light of the city's announcement of a climate emergency and the continued pressure to declare an ecological and biodiversity emergency, there has never been a better time to engage with urban and peri-urban agriculture. Globally agriculture accounts for nearly a quarter of CO₂ emissions, for this reason alone we can no longer view food production as something that exists primarily outside the city ecosystem. Local production provides a clear path to achieving zero-carbon by reducing transport miles and the energy used to get food from field to plate. Sustainable agricultural practices retain more carbon in the soil and end the reliance upon the artificial fertilisers contributing to greenhouse gas emissions twice over, once when mined and again when applied to the land.

Now that we have left the EU, UK Government is creating a framework that will reward sustainable agriculture. The agroecological approach is anticipated to take on much greater significance as these policies develop. Agroecology works in cooperation with nature and tends to be practised on a smaller scale with increased crop diversity, thereby breaking the monocultural model that depletes the soil and excludes wildlife. Urban and peri-urban agriculture following these principles offers yet more benefits, as it brings food production to where the majority of people live.

Any version of a Green New Deal for Sheffield that does not make room for low-carbon agriculture will miss a vital chance to shift the city's food culture to one that supports both people and environment in line with recommendations made in The EAT-Lancet report¹ and the proposals outlined by the IPCC.² Local policy change is key; we cannot afford to wait for national and international decision-makers to act.

Thanks to its geography and natural resources Sheffield was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution; thanks to its people and its academic institutions the city could lead a Green Revolution, one with urban and peri-urban agriculture and supporting technologies at its core.

1) eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancet-commission-summary-report

2) ipcc.ch/srccl

A summary of principle gains

1. A sustainably produced food source that is local to large populations shortens supply chains, leading to reductions in energy use, fewer transport emissions and less packaging.
2. Employment in the horticultural and agricultural sectors, both sectors need to expand if the UK is to grow more of its own food and improve biosecurity by reducing plant imports.
3. Creating a 'closed loop' production model would convert waste streams into assets, e.g. food waste becomes compost; energy created through incineration and biodigestion is used to heat greenhouses.
4. Providing more urban and peri-urban land for agroecology will increase plant cover, leading to improved biodiversity.
5. Food grown without intensive use of fertilisers, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides maintains the health of soil microbiota and respects the wider ecosystem.
6. Well-managed soils resist erosion, have greater carbon dioxide sequestration capacity and assist the take up of water during heavy rain events (slowing the flow into drainage systems).
7. Local food production creates local jobs and keeps money within the city. The Council and other 'anchor institutions' can procure food from local suppliers, providing a reliable route to market and supporting a circular economy.
8. Growing food promotes healthy exercise and supports mental wellbeing by building a closer connection with nature; growing as a community forges social bonds. Horticultural projects can be recommended as part of social prescriptions.
9. Greater availability of affordable fresh food on people's doorsteps can contribute to sustainable healthy diets. Local crops are more nutritious than ones that have travelled long distances and lost nutrients in transit.
10. Bringing agriculture into the urban landscape will develop a culture with food and environment at its heart, one that values horticultural skills and appreciates nature.

The current picture

Sheffield is no stranger to low carbon food production and it exists at a range of scales. Community growing projects are often located on small pieces of land that rely on volunteers. At the other end of the scale are the peri-urban farms and market gardens, like those of the Moss Valley, the Freeman College at High Riggs and Heeley City Farm's various satellite sites. These projects have blossomed despite facing many barriers to success, typically: difficulties accessing suitable land; insecure tenancies and limited funding. Despite these challenges, food production attracts dedicated people who understand the value of what they do.



When covid struck, extra space had to be found at Regather's premises on Club Garden Road to meet the sudden increased demand for fruit and vegetable box deliveries.

During the pandemic demand for locally-sourced food soared. Take-up of local veg box schemes has been phenomenal - Regather alone went from supplying 320 households at the start of 2020 to 761 in March 2021. This trend has been driven by several factors, including scarcity of produce in supermarkets and a desire to support the local economy.

Many people have responded to the crisis by growing their own food; others volunteer at community growing projects that feed those struggling to access fresh, nutritious food. This I can attest to from my own experience, having set up two community gardens in 2021, both supplying produce for Food Work's Sharrow kitchen.

The underlying current beneath these changes is a mass awakening to the fact that food security is now everybody's concern, not just those who are unfortunate enough to have fallen through society's gaps. This is why cultivating the soil is about so much more than growing food, it also grows hope for a more just and fair society where citizens are empowered to help themselves and their community.

Food production could be the thread that connects us through common interests, yet there is limited infrastructure within Sheffield that allows people to explore this way of contributing to society. It is time to think beyond the role of food as sustenance and recognise its central position in addressing a myriad of social issues.

Urban agriculture's social benefits*

- improved health & nutrition
- reducing food poverty & food bank use
- education & employment
- recreation & culture
- nature appreciation
- social inclusion
with adaptations for the less able
- racial integration
- community development
- civic pride
- crime reduction

**List adapted from: Urban Agriculture in Europe (2017) - Briefing European Parliamentary Research Service*



Photographs from summer and early winter 2020 at the Food Works' Manor Farm. The project has attracted volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, from university students to retirees. As Covid-restrictions lift we will be working with Great Places housing association tenants who live local to the farm site.

East and south Sheffield community gardens

Darnall Wellbeing at Darnall Allotment >>>

As part of their range of activities Darnall Wellbeing runs weekly sessions at Darnall Allotment on Infield Lane, where they work with adults with dementia, their families and their carers.

Dovercourt Surgery Garden, Manor >>>

A small food-growing garden with raised beds and a small polytunnel. It was set up with social prescribing in mind, so that patients can be referred to work in the onsite garden and reap the health and wellbeing benefits.

Food Works farm, Manor >>>

The site was acquired from Green Estate in summer 2020 and cultivation began in early 2021. There are two volunteer sessions every week, led by myself. Produce will go to the Food Work's kitchens, to be used alongside the food surplus they save from landfill.



Gleadless Valley Methodist Church Community Garden >>>

A small food-growing garden created in 2015 on unused land surrounding the church. A staff member is employed by Heeley City Farm to work with volunteers once a week. The project links up with the Trussell Trust Food Bank that is based at the church.



Kenwood Community Garden, Nether Edge >>>

Established in 2020, this garden supplies hyperlocal vegetables free-of-charge to the Food Work's Sharrow kitchen. It is entirely volunteer-run, has limited funding and an informal, insecure tenancy (the site is subject to a planning application for housing).



The Potting Shed: Grow, Nether Edge >>>

The horticultural skills training element of the Grow charity, which works with young adults to improve health and wellbeing. This project offers accredited courses in horticulture and is keen to direct young adults into relevant careers.



A new model for co-operation

To build a low-carbon food system we need get the best out of the city's greatest asset, its people. Sheffield is full of keen novices, skilled enthusiasts and expert growers. This is a huge and largely untapped resource; people who want more growing space or would contribute time to a community agriculture project. With the right kind of support they could become our future farmers, neighbour feeding neighbour.



Left: proving that you are never too young to grow your own food © Rachael Boyce

Right: at Grow, young adults in need of wellbeing support are given an opportunity to cultivate the land © Grow

At present community growers are left to navigate the process with minimal external input. This presents an opportunity for developing peer-support and mentorships between socially-conscious food producers and growing projects throughout the city. Low-carbon food businesses have much expertise to share and can advise other growers at all stages of their project, from inception to first harvest and beyond. Ultimately it is in their interests to do so, as a horticulturally trained workforce combined with an increased awareness and appreciation of local, sustainable food will grow their business ambitions.

Embedding growing opportunities throughout Sheffield's communities requires a partnership between the City Council, socially-focused businesses and engaged citizens. If we are serious about the long-term sustainability of such endeavours then all stakeholders need to work strategically with one another, drawing upon combined resources and creating a framework that can be accessed from any location within the city.

SheffFood proposes to host an Urban Agriculture Taskforce, which exists to:

- identify opportunities
- formulate responses to land that could become available
- act as the link between future farmers and the Council

Working in partnership, as part of a wider strategy of food system change, Regather have the capacity and expertise to lead the development of this Taskforce, the development of the Green Wedge vision and the proposed enterprises outlined below.

As a Community Benefit Society, Regather are committed to cooperative working, promoting the Community Wealth Building agenda and strengthening partnerships with Sheffield's anchor institutions, particularly Sheffield City Council, as the local authority and owner of the proposed sites.

Regather offers a suitable vehicle for both community and anchor institution investment. The development of low carbon food infrastructure presents a significant investment opportunity, particularly for anchor institutions looking to secure food supply, reduce carbon and restructure capital.

A vision for southeast Sheffield: A Green Wedge



An evening view across the Moss Valley from the Regather Farm.

Sheffield has long been described as a city of two halves: simply put, a wealthy west and a deprived east. This reflects how the city fabric developed during the Industrial Revolution, with those that could afford to escape the smoke from coal-fired furnaces preferring to live upwind of its source. The city has changed but these geographical distinctions have remained intact. It is time for a rebalancing of resources and opportunities to locations east of the city centre, bringing new energy into neighbourhoods that have been overlooked.

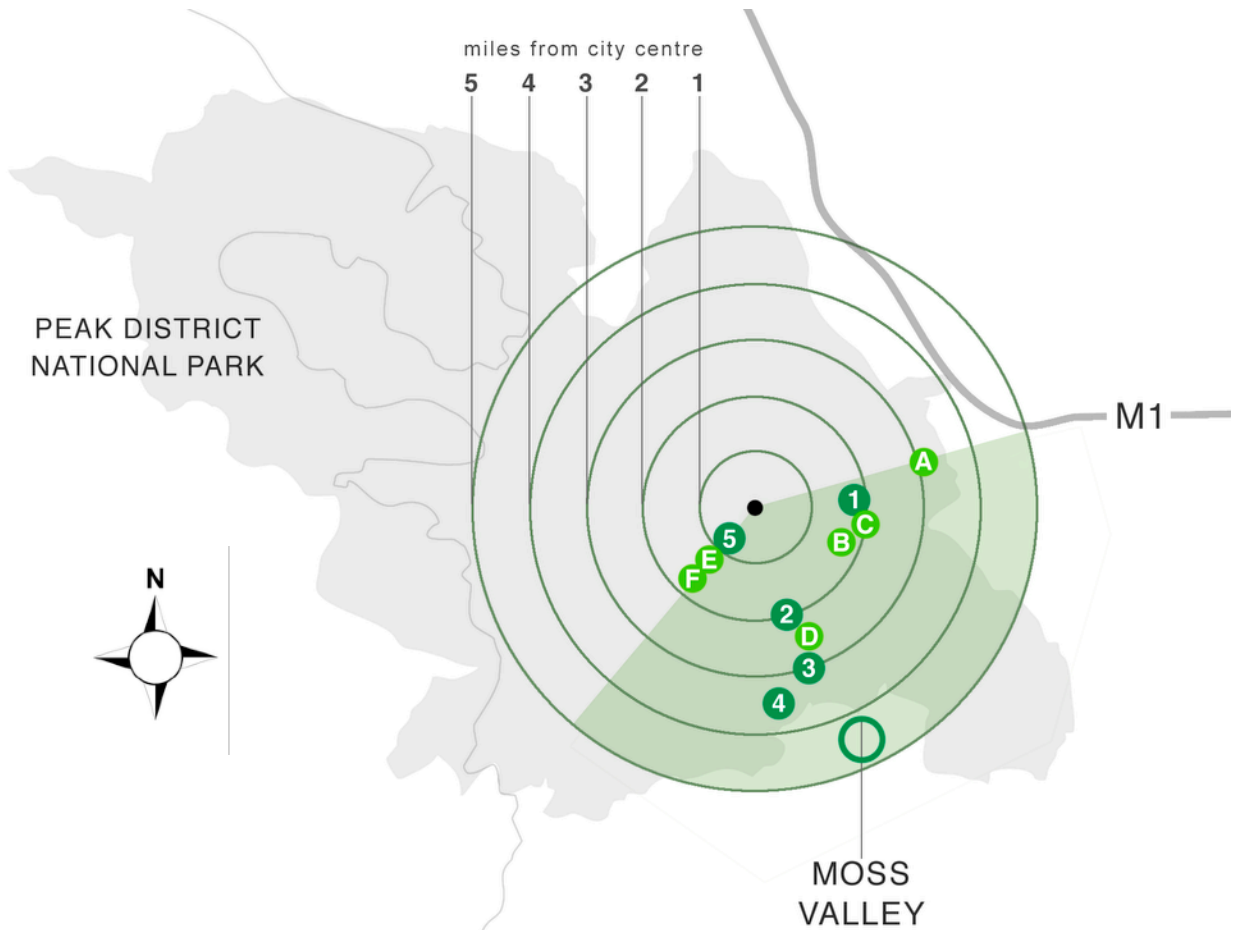
This vision is centred on Sheffield's southeast as this is where much of the land that is suitable for agriculture is immediately available. The main reason that the existing cluster of smallscale agroecological horticulturalists – Sheffield Organic Growers, Moss Valley Market Garden and Regather Farm – was able to start up in the Moss Valley is thanks to a retiring farmer with land to sell and an interest in working closely with neighbouring communities. The cluster is located where there is room to expand and there is a strong will to do just this.

This proposal demonstrates the potential of low-carbon food production centred on the Gleadless Valley. It imagines a 'Green Wedge' linking existing Moss Valley food producers with a mosaic of complimentary growing and educational projects that connect with the heart of urban Sheffield. It will build the infrastructure to expand existing SMEs, open up the market to new entrants and prepare today's community gardeners to become tomorrow's urban farmers.

The focus is on:

- knowledge sharing - professional food producers contributing to the framework that develops the capacity of existing growing projects and incubates new ones.
- training and employment – providing futures in low-carbon food businesses.
- meaning and purpose – supporting engagement with local food production in a way that promotes social cohesion and mental wellbeing.

The Green Wedge



Existing community gardens

- A - Darnall Wellbeing at Darnall Allotment
- B - Dovercourt GP Surgery Garden, Manor
- C - Food Works Farm, Manor
- D - Gleadless Valley Methodist Church Garden
- E - The Potting Shed (Grow), Nether Edge
- F - Kenwood Community Growers, Nether Edge

Proposed enterprises

- 1 - Corker Bottom Allotments Training Centre
- 2 - Orchard, Coneygree Wood, Gleadless Valley
- 3 - Gleadless Valley Food Hub
- 4 - Norton Nurseries
- 5 - Lansdowne Estate Glasshouses

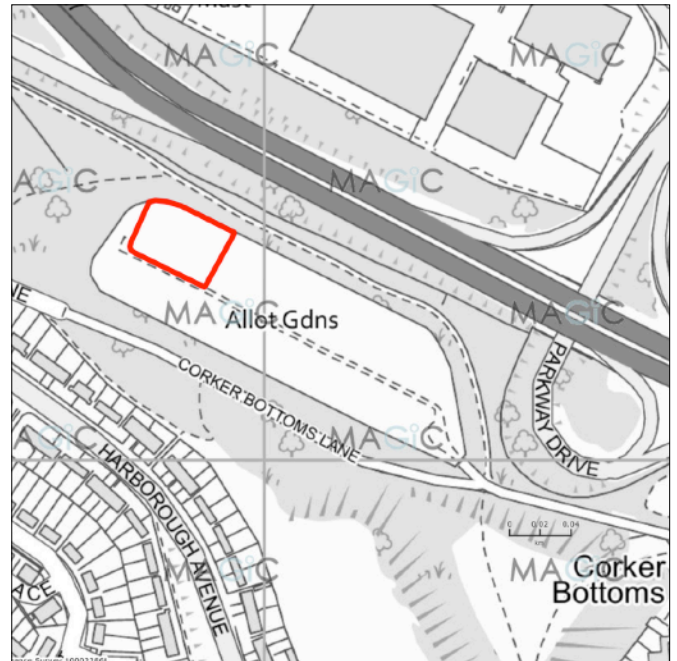
Proposed enterprises

Training Centre, Corker Bottom

Allotments, Manor

SK38018710 : S2 1UU

In agreement with Sheffield City Council Citywide Allotments Manager Ceri Ashton, Regather have secured outline permission for using six adjacent plots at Corker Bottom as a horticultural training centre. It is well-suited to this purpose as it has all the infrastructure to establish an educational centre and the site is secured with fencing. The proposal has the support of the Sheffield Allotment Federation.



The plan is currently paused while applications for allotments, which increased during the pandemic, are processed. Ceri will review the situation in June and determine whether there is enough spare capacity. If plots are available they will remain property of the Council and retain allotment status and protection.

Other than the great work done at Green Estate and Food Works, this part of Sheffield has received far less attention when it comes to forward-thinking projects. The training centre is an opportunity to change this and create a new narrative around providing much-needed skills that will empower people to grow their own food. The training centre is within 0.5 miles of Green Estate, where the Food Works farm is located, and it will build on this connection.

The not-for-profit education centre would have citywide potential but particular efforts would be made to engage the local community, to address the reasons that this site has become somewhat underused. By demonstrating the many benefits of cultivating land as part of a team, it is anticipated that some of those who train here will be inspired, and supported, to develop their own community gardens.

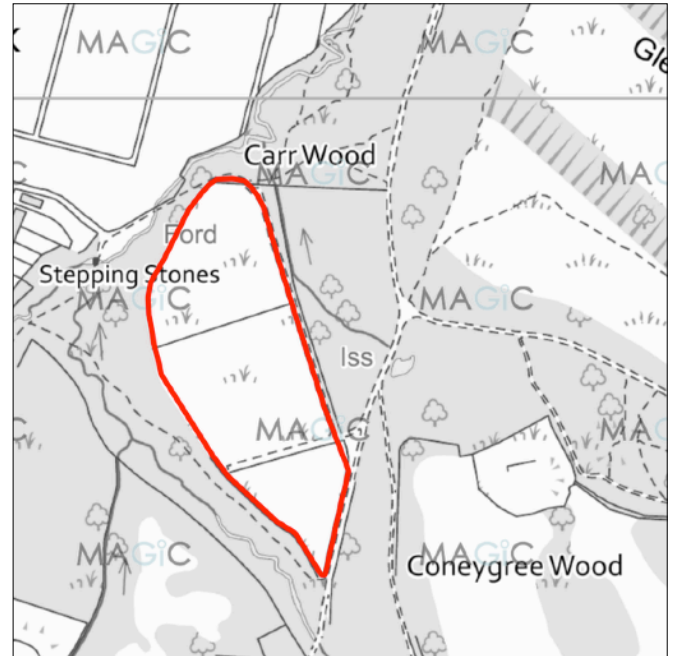
Various educational programmes will be offered to meet different needs: short-duration courses to capture the interest of those who are new to growing alongside accredited courses for those looking to a career in horticulture or as future urban farmers. Revenue from these activities will be used to fund free-to-attend courses for those unable to pay.

Proposed enterprises

Orchard, Coneygree Wood, Gleadless Valley

SK36148383 : S8 9NJ

A community agroforestry project on land owned by Sheffield City Council, comprising an organic fruit orchard intercropped with rows of vegetables and high value mushrooms. While a conventional orchard is limited to harvests during summer and autumn, intercropping prolongs the productive period, maximising the crop yield from the land area.



The orchard is agreed in outline as a key contributor to the Gleadless Valley landscape, and has been endorsed by Woodlands Manager John Gilpin and retiring Countryside Service Manager Dave Aspinall. It has support from the Gleadless Valley Wildlife Trust who have identified a suitable site, fields that were once part of Lees Hall Farm. A Phase 1 habitat survey has been completed and there is no barrier to developing the site.

The site is ideally suited to developing an agroecological enterprise that is within touching distance of the city centre. There is scope for increasing biodiversity by reseeding surrounding grassland with native wildflowers, which will attract the many pollinators that a productive orchard requires. The orchard will consist of heritage and locally-adapted fruit tree varieties, supplied by Sheffield Fruit Trees based in Meersbrook.

The management of this project will create a small number of full time jobs, with work maintaining fruit trees continuing throughout the winter months, and a greater number of seasonal roles when crop production is at its peak. The seasonal roles may be suited to university students – the bulk of fruit harvesting would take place prior to the start of the autumn academic term – and NEETs. The emphasis would be on providing a learning experience, rather than simply just picking fruit.

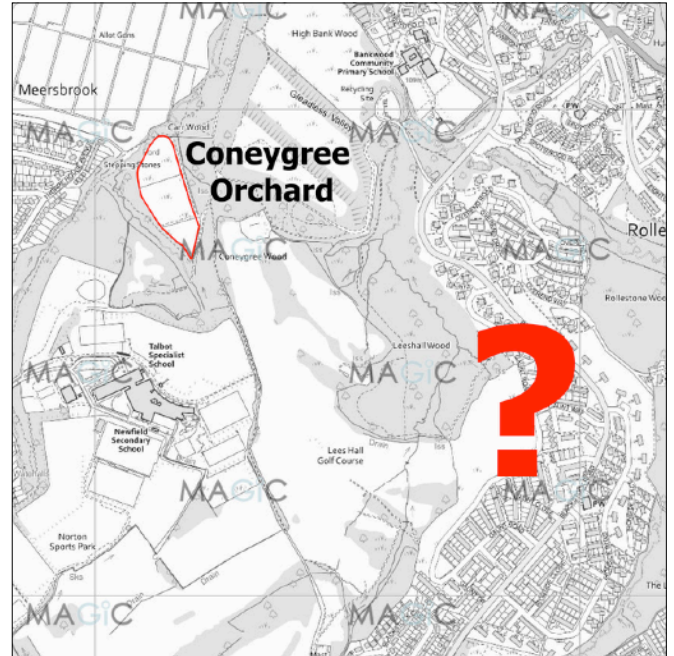
Heritage Challenge Green Recovery funding has been discussed and John Gilpin has indicated that the Gleadless Valley ward funding pot for redrafting the 2021 Green Space Management Strategy may be available.

To maximise their sale and nutritional value, crops need to be brought to market as swiftly as possible. To meet this need harvests would be processed through a food hub local to the site.

Proposed enterprises

Gleadless Valley Local Food Enterprise Hub

A suitable premises is central to the vision for successfully scaling up agriculture in southeast Sheffield. Locating these premises in the Gleadless Valley will serve the Moss Valley's peri-urban food producers, helping them to expand into the large urban market and grow their capacity, whilst creating opportunities for employment and improving health and wellbeing in the Gleadless Valley neighbourhood.



The hub would be a purpose built facility for all stages of a local, values-based food system to operate - processing, picking, packing, consolidation and delivery. This improves the efficiency of SME food producers, by reducing the number of deliveries to different locations, and fewer food miles means less vehicle emissions. Having all services under one roof will allow for more effective collective representation of the city's low-carbon SME enterprises and increase the visibility of their produce within the marketplace.

Initially the hub would be supplied with produce from existing Moss Valley, Sheffield and South Yorkshire producers, followed by fruit and other crops from the Coneygree Wood Orchard as it becomes productive. As other agroecological growing projects come to fruition, the hub would look to expand to its reach and fulfil public sector contracts in time for the nationwide roll out of the Crown Commercial Service's Dynamic Food Procurement (DFP) scheme in 2025.

DFP makes supporting the local food economy more straightforward by removing the barriers that currently discourage SMEs from accessing public sector contracts. Procuring food from low-carbon food producers will be one of the more readily achievable routes for Local Authorities to reach zero-carbon targets, whilst simultaneously contributing to a circular economy.

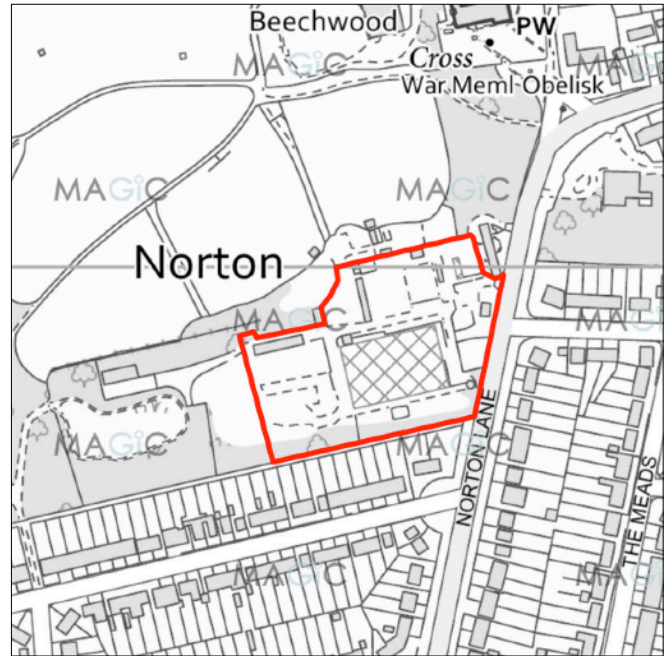
To create a food hub within the Gleadless Valley will require access to suitable existing premises, or securing land and planning permission to construct a new purpose built facility. The Council is the major property and land owner in Gleadless Valley and local planning authority.

Proposed enterprises

Norton Nurseries

SK35798193 : S8 8GY

The Norton Nurseries site, owned by Sheffield City Council and part of Graves Park, is ideally suited to becoming the primary plant propagation and community composting facility for southeast Sheffield. With the potential to grow under glass alongside field scale cultivation in the Moss Valley, it would make an ideal hub for horticultural training in the area..



This proposal is for a meanwhile use of the existing glasshouses and the initial plans require minimal alterations to be made prior to enabling the new site use. The meanwhile use of the site for horticultural activities has in principle support from the Friends of Graves Park.

Some of the seedlings raised here will be planted out as part of the on site educational programme and another portion will be available to various growing projects throughout the city. However, this activity has broader zero-carbon relevance: supplying the domestic market for peat and pesticide-free plants, which is expanding at a rapid rate.

Instead of the familiar 'piled compost' approach, mobile plant and machinery - such as the 'rocket food waste composter', made by Tidy Planet - would be used to both drive efficiency. Both speeding up the process and saving space. The Sustainable Sheffield branded-compost would be available in bulk at minimal cost for community growing projects and be sold direct to retail customers in returnable bags. This is another big retail market to tap into and would increase the local availability of peat-free compost. Both the Royal Horticultural Society and the Soil Association identified access to affordable peat-free compost as a barrier to growing sustainably at home.

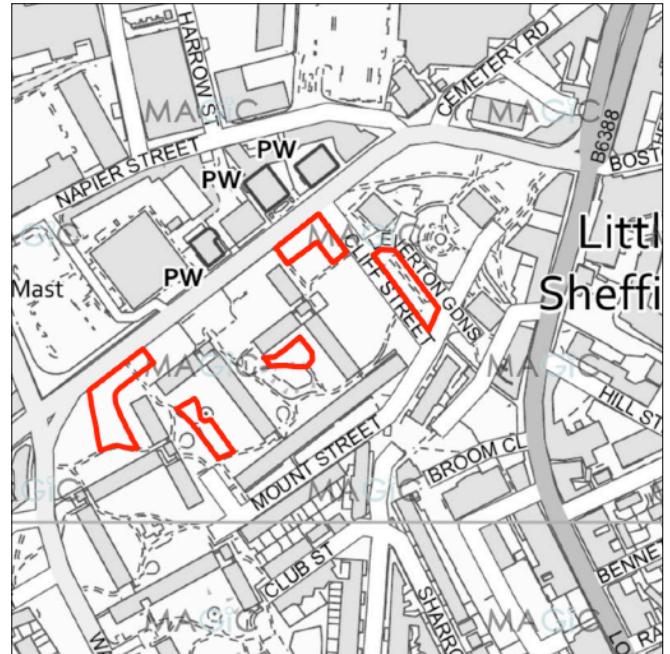
The composting facility has huge potential to create a 'closed loop system' that turns waste streams into a valuable asset. It would process waste from the nursery with green waste and from local parks and food waste from the public sector. Between the plant growing, composting and training strands this enterprise will employ a team of skilled workers paid the Living Wage. Links could be developed between local institutions providing horticultural education such as the Sheffield College and the Freeman College.

Proposed enterprises

Glasshouses, Lansdowne Estate

SK34708612 : S11 8FA

This bold proposal is for two high-specification heated glasshouses: one for use by the community, one for commercial growing. The purpose is to unite community and commercial cultivation, with the former providing expert support and an ongoing source of inspiration for the local population while signalling the value of a horticultural career, especially in emerging technological disciplines.



Previous planting work undertaken by Regather at Lansdowne - bushes, small raised beds, a herb garden - is lost within the landscape's scale. The glasshouses make efficient use of Council owned land by building upwards and growing under glass, allowing year-round cultivation in a temperature controlled climate. This innovative project will be substantial enough to make a striking and positive visual impact on the streetscape, casting the housing estate in a new light. Being located so close to the city centre, and both London and Ecclesall Roads, the Lansdowne glasshouses have the potential to become a destination for all and a source of civic pride for residents.

The community glasshouse would be a lush, welcoming environment with a cultivation centre concentrating on soil-based gardening methods. Plants from the glasshouse will be cultivated on plots of estate land, as they are adopted by residents. The commercial facility will focus on cutting-edge, soil-free cultivation and is an opportunity to extend existing collaborations between Regather and the University of Sheffield's Institute for Sustainable Food, for example on the Minifarm installation located on the Club Garden community greenspace, and the recently announced H3 - Healthy Soil, Healthy Food, Healthy People programme.

As the glasshouses require energy to keep them warm, it is proposed that the district heating network that supplies Leverton Tower be extended. The commercial greenhouse would be fitted with solar PV and supply electricity to electric car-charging points located on the building's ground floor.

Regather is well placed to lead the development of this project as it is an established cooperative enterprise, located next to the Lansdowne estate, with customers, volunteers and employees living in the local community, and is a founding member of the Lansdowne Partnership. £10,000 of funding has been secured through the Community Resilience project for working with Lansdowne residents to increase access to fresh, locally produced food. This will provide the resources to work-up the initial stages of this proposal with full participation of the community. Both buildings will be co-designed with tenants and the surrounding neighbourhood.

About the authors



Gareth Roberts

Gareth is a founder member and co-director of Regather, and coordinator of ShefFood - Sheffield's Food Partnership. Gareth is passionate about cooperation, and has worked collaboratively with people from all walks of life for over 20 years. His various experiences as an arts administrator, event manager, lecturer and serial social entrepreneur bring useful skills and resilience to the Sheffield cooperative economy.

Since 2015 Gareth has led strategic developments around Community Economic Development and Sustainable Food Systems in Sheffield, ensuring Regather and ShefFood lead on innovative economic and social change. His mission is a food system where money is retained in the local economy, land is more productive, food is better quality, health is improved and people have better awareness of and involvement with how the food system, from local to global, can be changed for the better.



Fran Halsall

After a decade-long career as a landscape photographer and writer, Fran completed an MA in landscape architecture at the University of Sheffield. Through her company Naturally Focused she has led interpretative woodland walks, taught wildlife gardening workshops and has created two community vegetable gardens, one with the Kenwood Community Growers and the other at Food Work's Manor Farm.

Aside from advocating for better environmental protections Fran's primary interests are: promoting nature engagement as a path to wellbeing and local food production's role in securing sustainable towns and cities. Fran is ShefFood's Urban Agriculture Co-ordinator, leading both the Fringe Farming and Urban Agriculture Consortium programmes, and is delivering the Community Resilience project with Regather.