

Green choices in the UK food system

Final Report for Office for Environmental Protection

**Green choices in the UK food system, Final Report for Office
for Environmental Protection**

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Executive Summary

The aim of this project was to support the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to comment on the application of the green choices principles of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23) in the context of a sustainable food system. A second aim was to identify opportunities for further analysis to inform future OEP outputs in this area.

Approach

A rapid review was conducted between August and October 2024 to assess the extent to which the Government Food Strategy, and the actions it contains, embodies the green choices principles. A small selection of key wider documentary sources was then reviewed to identify actions that could be used to strengthen expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy.

The Government Food Strategy was published in June 2022. It is intended to help deliver on the government's ambition for a prosperous agri-food sector, and that healthier and more sustainable diets can be achieved by all.

'Making Green Choices' is one of the six cross-cutting themes intended to tie delivery across EIP23 and wider government strategies and plans. The six green choices principles are:

1. We will make our society greener by design, reducing the ask of individual citizens by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business.
2. We will make green action easier by addressing major practical barriers.
3. We will make green action affordable, supporting this across all sectors of society.
4. We will empower people and businesses to make informed choices, by providing clear information about the environmental impact of different products, services, and actions.
5. We will build public acceptability for major changes, inviting those affected to inform policy making, including the most marginalised.
6. We will present a clear vision of a sustainable society, including the role of different actors in achieving our environmental goals.

Expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy

Each of the green choices principles is reflected at a high-level across the Government Food Strategy and they can be seen in the actions the strategy contains. The strength of expression for each principle varies but overall is weak. Areas where significant improvements could be made include to:

- Improve the clarity, specificity and expression of the overall causal logic of actions from inputs, through activities, to outputs and outcomes to delivery of objectives.
- Provide greater clarity on the problems that actions and expressions of the principles are designed to address, and the vision of what success looks like.
- Address, unpack and make explicit the potential tensions between competing objectives, e.g. keeping the price of food low and the affordability of green choices, and the balance between short- and long-term objectives.
- The engagement and roles of stakeholders in policy development.

As well as weaknesses in the individual actions that express the green choice principles, the Government Food Strategy's overall expression of the principles is weak. This is not just due to the weakness of the individual actions but that the principles are not seen to be cutting through all actions and aspects of the document.

Strengthening the expression of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy

There is a plethora of actions that can be used to strengthen expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. A rapid review of only a limited selection of the available literature has identified over 150 actions which express at least one of the green choices principles and are supported in the original sources by more detailed information on their objectives and mechanisms of delivery.

The review has grouped these actions into 17 headline action areas under 7 broad themes in which the expressions of green choice principles could be strengthened in the Government Food Strategy as shown in the box below.

Themes and headline actions that could be used to strengthen expressions of green choices principles in Government Food Strategy

Theme 1: High-level strategy and governance

- [Set up] a joint food systems cross-government commission to bring considerations of population and planetary health together.
- Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all policy development.
- Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.

Theme 2: Targets, standards and regulations

- Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.
- Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.
- Implement existing legislation on junk food advertising and volume promotions.
- Ensure that regulatory bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out inspections and act on non-compliance.

Theme 3: Using financial instruments to remove barriers and create enabling conditions

- Ensure that price isn't a barrier to choosing more sustainable and healthy options, especially for people on low incomes.

- Use environmental taxes and fiscal measures to incentivise and enable desired behaviours and outcomes

Theme 4: Data and Innovation

- Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.
- Create a National Food System Data programme.

Theme 5: Local action and food citizenship (including procurement and schools)

- Support local authorities in adopting food partnerships and plans.
- Mainstream progress in school food.
- Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.

Theme 6: Sustainable Farming Practice

- Introduce a horticulture strategy to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption.
- Incentivise and adopt sustainable farming practices.

Theme 7: Waste

- Food Waste Reduction Roadmap – ‘Target Measure Act’ approach, to tackle food waste across the whole value chain, including household.

The wording of the actions is as given in the original source document

The review of this wider literature has also highlighted the need for a menu of cross-cutting options to be used to deliver food policy objectives. There are no simple magic bullet solutions. The above actions have therefore not been prioritised or linked to the individual actions they could strengthen in the Government Food Strategy. Instead, the reviewed literature is clear on the need for action in multiple areas and consideration of the independencies, co-benefits and trade-offs of these actions taken together. An important additional message from the review is that the actions identified result from development processes that have engaged stakeholders and have a clarity of overall vision for what is trying to be achieved.

Conclusions on use of green choices principles in policy development and review

Considering the expression of the green choices principles has been of value in understanding the strengths and weakness of Government Food Strategy and options for strengthening them. Assuming the green choice principles remain a cross-cutting theme for government environmental policy, future policy statements should be expected to be address the principles more explicitly. This will require clarity in both policy development and publications addressing:

- the actions that express each of the principles and their causal logic,
- consideration of the interdependencies between these actions and how they add up to more than the sum of their parts,
- a demonstration that these actions cut across all aspects of food policy,
- capturing of the process used to develop and implement policy and the engagement of stakeholders in these processes.

The review approach has allowed a large body of material to be reviewed, providing structure to it and capturing a broad set of actions which could strengthen the expressions of principles in the Government Food Strategy. It has also provided some insights on how policy in such complex, interlinked areas needs to be developed and the role principles can play. The review's approach could be developed for application to other policy areas.

The review also highlights a need to consider more explicitly how the green choices principles specifically, and principles generally, could or should be used to guide, integrate and strengthen responses to the challenges presented by complexity of food and other policy areas. To enhance their use clearer guidance from Government would be useful on:

1. The ways the principles could and should be used in policy development processes,
2. Approaches to documenting the development and delivery of principles in policy so it is clear how they are informing and shaping policy.

Existing evaluation techniques such as principles-focused evaluation could be used to explore and develop this work.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project aim

The overall aim of this project was to support the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to comment on the application of the green choices principles of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023¹ (EIP23) in the context of a sustainable food system. A second overall aim of the project was to identify and describe opportunities for further analysis that can inform future OEP outputs in this area.

1.2 Overview of our approach

There are two key steps to our approach. First, we conducted a rapid review to assess the extent to which the Government Food Strategy², and the actions it contains, embodies the green choices principles. We then considered a small selection of key wider documentary sources to identify actions that could be used to strengthen and develop the expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy.

The project was conducted between August and October 2024 and as such is a rapid review of the expressions of the green choices principles in policy. It has been used to develop and test an approach to exploring how principles are used in policy and the value of doing this for the OEP. It has piloted an approach that could be developed and conducted on a more extensive timeline.

1.3 The Government Food Strategy

The Government Food Strategy was published in June 2022. It is intended to help deliver on the government's ambition for a prosperous agri-food sector, and that healthier and more sustainable diets can be achieved by all. Its stated objectives are to deliver:

- a prosperous agri-food and seafood sector that ensures a secure food supply in an unpredictable world and contributes to the levelling up agenda through good quality jobs around the country,
- a sustainable, nature positive, affordable food system that provides choice and access to high quality products that support healthier and home-grown diets for all,
- trade that provides export opportunities and consumer choice through imports, without compromising our regulatory standards for food, whether produced domestically or imported.

These objectives are reflected in the structure of Strategy's main sections which are:

1. Food security and sustainable production,

¹ Environmental Improvement Plan 2023: First revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>

² Government Food Strategy, June 2022, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-food-strategy>

2. Healthier and sustainable eating,
3. The UK as part of a global food system.

The Government Food Strategy responds to the independent review which in 2018 the UK government asked Henry Dimbleby to carry out. This comprehensive review of the food system included designing recommendations so that the food system, ‘Delivers safe, healthy, affordable food; regardless of where [people] live or how much they earn’ and ‘restores and enhances the natural environment for the next generation in this country’. The scope of the review focused on England but included consideration of the relationship with the devolved administrations, the European Union and other trading partners. The analysis and recommendations from this review were published in July 2021 as the National Food Strategy for England³.

1.4 The green choices principles

‘Making Green Choices’ is one of the six cross-cutting themes intended to tie delivery across EIP23 and wider government strategies and plans. The other EIP23 cross-cutting themes are green jobs, green finance, Greening Government Commitments and biodiversity net gain.

Making Green Choices is articulated in EIP23 as ‘Enable all parts of society to play their part in line with our six principles for green choices’ (EIP23, p. 18). The six principles, which are based on ones given in the Net Zero Strategy⁴ from 2021, are stated in EIP23 (p. 25) as:

1. We will make our society greener by design, reducing the ask of individual citizens by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business.
2. We will make green action easier by addressing major practical barriers.
3. We will make green action affordable, supporting this across all sectors of society.
4. We will empower people and businesses to make informed choices, by providing clear information about the environmental impact of different products, services, and actions.
5. We will build public acceptability for major changes, inviting those affected to inform policy making, including the most marginalised.
6. We will present a clear vision of a sustainable society, including the role of different actors in achieving our environmental goals.

The wording of the principles is slightly different in the Net Zero Strategy and EIP23. This is partly to reflect and accommodate the different policy content of the documents. However, some of changes are more substantive and in places slightly weaken the principles in EIP23 and others slightly strengthen them, the latter through a longer and

³ National Food Strategy for England, July 2021, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-food-strategy-for-england>

⁴ Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, October 2021, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>

hence clearer expression⁵. Each of the principles in the Net Zero Strategy has text below it to indicate how the principles are being acted on, forming a six-page section of the document. This is not done in EIP23 or the Government Food Strategy, hence this review to identify how, or whether, the green choices principles are expressed.

It is important to note the timing of these documents. The Net Zero Strategy was released in October 2021, the Government Food Strategy in June 2022, and EIP23 in January 2023. Given this timing, the Government Food Strategy cannot be expected to explicitly reflect or use the wording of green choices principles contained in EIP23. However, any updates or development of the Government Food Strategy's content and policy could be expected to more explicitly reflect the principles stated in EIP23.

1.5 Structure of this report

The following sections of this report review the expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy (section 2), then their expressions in the wider food policy literature (section 3), drawing conclusions (section 4) on how the expressions of the green choices principles could be strengthened in the Government Food Strategy, use of principles in policy evaluation and options for future work. Supporting materials are given in the Appendices including the green choices principles as given in the Net Zero Strategy and EIP23 and the full list of actions expressing green choices principles identified during the wider literature review.

⁵ See Table 4 in the Appendices which gives both versions of the green choices principles and notes on their differences.

2 Green Choices Principles in the Government Food Strategy

2.1 Aim and approach

Research Questions

The research questions for the review were:

- Are the green choices principles reflected in the Government Food Strategy and if so in what ways are they expressed?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of expression of the principles?

What is an expression of the green choices principle?

The Government Food Strategy and wider sources reviewed do not explicitly use the wording of the green choices principles. As noted above the principles were not published until after the release of the Government Food Strategy. The presence of expressions of the principles in these documents therefore required an interpretative assessment. To reduce the subjectivity of this assessment we developed a set of criteria to help judge whether a principle was being expressed or not.

For principles 1-5 we consider that an expression of a principle involves not only a statement that commits to the importance of principle, ‘warm words’, but that it also commits to doing something as a result, an action. We consider that principles are expressed as a combination of a commitment and action. We therefore developed a set of criteria that these actions should meet to be considered a (strong) expression of a principle.

Actions that express principles state:

1. What will be done, for example, SMART actions, i.e. ones that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound,
2. Who will do it or needs to be involved,
3. Why and how it will be done – what is the mechanism of delivery? Is a causal chain from problem through inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts articulated?,
4. Evidence for the action – is the action supported by an evidence base, for example, on why it is needed, its ability to achieve desired outcomes with respect to cost, popularity or political considerations, or suitability compared to other options?

Expressions of principles should also ideally be consistent with and supporting of the other principles – or at the very least not in opposition to one another.

For principle 6, ‘vision and roles’, we considered the commitment element more important than the action element. This can be expressed through the clarity of change sought in terms of its scale, ambition and timescale, a response to or aim to resolve an identified challenge and/or the overall direction of travel.

We developed a coding structure to apply to the Government Food Strategy to capture information relevant to the research questions. The full version of this is given in the appendices but the main categories of codes used covered:

- Action type,
- Action maturity,
- Decision making,
- Expressions of the six principles.

The Government Food Strategy is a relatively short (33 pages from cover-to-cover) but wide-ranging policy document. It often lacks detail on the specifics of actions, the problems they are intended to address, issues addressed in their development and mechanisms to deliver the articulated objectives. This limited the degree to which we were able to full utilise the detailed coding structure.

What are ‘green choices’?

We have only given limited consideration to the ‘greenness’ of the expressions of green choices principles. We have sought to identify actions that express principles that are intended to generate environmental improvements rather than consider how fully they may be able to resolve the scale of environmental challenges we currently face. The green choices principles are also framed in general terms meaning they are accommodating of a wide range of types and levels of ambition for action. ‘Addressing Practical Barriers’, and its full expression, for example, could relate to resources, regulation, institutional responsibilities, skills, technology or awareness. These points mean the review has necessarily involved subjective judgements on what constitutes an expression of the principles. We return to this point in the conclusions.

The approach to the review has allowed us to identify individual expressions of the principles. It is a reductive approach. We report below on the expressions of the principles found on this basis. In the conclusions to this section we consider the expression of principles in the Government Food Strategy as a whole.

2.2 Expressions of Green Choices Principles in the Government Food Strategy

For each principle we have developed a two- or three-word summary phrase to capture its essence. We have used these phrases as shorthand in the subheadings below and in the body of the text when commenting on the principles to enhance readability.

2.2.1 Principle 1, ‘Greener by Design’

Principle 1: We will make our society greener by design, reducing the ask of individual citizens by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business.

Presence of Principle 1, ‘Greener by design’

There is evidence across all three sub-sections of the Government Food Strategy of principle 1, ‘Greener by Design’ being present. Its presence is stronger in chapter 1,

‘Food security and sustainable production’, and chapter 3, ‘The UK as part of a global food system’, than chapter 2, ‘Healthier and sustainable eating’.

In chapter 1, expressions of principle 1 centre around finding ways to reduce CO₂ emissions through greener energy mechanisms (the use of more renewable energy technologies) and alternative means of farming (e.g. organic based farming), the need for smarter business and sustainable food production approaches (e.g. land use changes, seafood initiatives and industrial horticulture) as well as an overall improvement to the wider food chain through welfare interventions.

In chapter 2, principle 1 features significantly less, with expressions of it focused on the use of public reporting mechanisms to highlight the health benefits, sustainability aspects and animal welfare of different food productions with the onus being on food producers and processes.

In chapter 3, expressions of principle 1 centres around the implementation and support for international trade agreements post-Brexit to ensure food diversity, environmental and animal welfare standards, tackle illegal and inequitable trade (e.g. deforestation and fishing), as well as to consider any carbon leakages within the food system through mechanism indicated in chapter 1 (displacement of production and through emissions).

Action types and maturity

Across the Government Food Strategy, principle 1, ‘Greener by Design’, is expressed through different types of actions and are at different states of maturity. For instance, the act of working with the UK industry to identify pioneering ways to reduce CO₂ emissions within fertilisers that are inputted into the food system is in progress via long-term organic based farming initiatives:

‘We will work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and fertiliser. This will include a specific long-term plan on CO₂ in 2022 and a focus on pioneering more organic-based fertilisers’ (p. 13⁶).

Additionally, ensuring the UK is at the forefront of innovative protein sources, that will contribute not only to sustainable farming objectives but also benefits for people’s health through the supportive provision of financial investment in the research sector to gather related evidence for food producers:

‘The government will keep the UK at the front of this growing and innovative sector by supporting alternative protein research and innovation, including as part of our partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to invest over £120 million in research across the food system. British grown beans and pulses are another great

⁶ All references to page numbers are to those of the PDF version of the Government Food Strategy available at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62a6eb4be90e07039944ed5c/government-food-strategy-print-ready.pdf>.

example of low carbon sustainable proteins that contribute to healthy diets, contribute substantially to farming objectives’ (p. 17).

In general, many of the actions expressed relating to principle 1 are either framing existing problems through solutions (e.g. gathering research evidence for future land use changes) or putting measures in place (e.g. financial support for research, incentivisation schemes, and control or reporting measures) to work towards more sustainable food production practices and diversifying the food supply chain. It is noteworthy, that there were few actions which expressed the support for the delivery of programmes focused around either international trade agreements (e.g. tackle deforestation globally), or assisting farmers to transition towards more sustainable land use practices:

‘Our aim is that farmers will broadly maintain domestic production at current levels as we deliver our climate and environmental goals. We are confident that our plans for the future of farming and the farm budget – as set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan, which focuses on support for productivity improvement, sustainable farming and land-use change – are consistent with this outcome’ (p. 15).

Overall, most actions expressed were ‘in progress’ when reviewing their level of maturity, either through exploring options, or consulting with partners on actions to take forward (e.g., build a coalition of support for enhancing environment and animal welfare standards globally). Equally, albeit fewer, there were actions that were ‘in development’ phases in which data was readily being collected and published (e.g. continuing to measure the global environmental impact through recently published indicators). Conversely, only one action was considered as ‘under consideration’ whilst the government assessed global environmental impacts:

‘We will consider options to address risks of carbon leakage (displacement of production and emissions due to unequal pricing/ regulation across jurisdictions) within the food system. Our reporting on the environmental and health impacts of the food system will include an assessment of our global environmental impact.’ (pp. 31-32).

2.2.2 Principle 2, ‘Addressing Practical Barriers’

Principle 2: We will make green action easier by addressing major practical barriers.

Expressions of principle 2 feature mostly in chapter 1 of the Government Food Strategy, ‘Food security and sustainable production’ with fewer instances in chapter 2, ‘Healthier and sustainable eating’ and chapter 3, ‘The UK as part of a global food system’.

In chapter 1 the expressions of principle 2 are spread across a range of areas. These include:

- measures to support innovation in farming related to productivity and low carbon practices,
- provision of better evidence on best practice and practical advice to achieve it,

- collaborative working to allow benefits of trade deals to be taken up and increase the uptake of skills and training,
- consistent and proportionate application of regulations to ensure a level playing field for farmers who do the right thing,
- requirement on local authorities to arrange separate collection for food waste and recycling and funding to support this.

In chapter 2 the expressions of principle 2 are focused on research to understand green choices and building evidence for interventions in healthier and more sustainable diets. In chapter 3 expressions of principle 2 focus on enabling international action and supporting the UK agri-food sector as it responds to new free trade agreements (FTA) and the transition from the Common Agricultural Policy to Environmental Land Management.

Action types and maturity

The text that contains expressions of principle 2 are short with limited evidence of their status of implementation. However, some are activities where funding is committed and timescales are specified, suggesting they are in progress, for example, in relation to research:

‘A new £11 million UKRI-BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council) initiative, the Diet & Health Open Innovation Research Club, will help address this gap. It will support new research across businesses and academics to drive improvements in understanding the relationship between food and health, how we can improve the nutritional value of the food we eat and explore what underpins food choices.’ (p. 23).

Additionally, another example indicates that:

‘Over the next three years, we will undertake a programme of randomised control trials of interventions in the food system to encourage and enable healthier and more sustainable diets for all. This programme will build a suite of evidence based and value for money interventions that can be developed into largescale and long-term policy.’ (p. 23 – 24).

Or on legislative requirements and funding to address food waste:

‘To help consumers, we are continuing to work with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to help households waste less food.’ (p. 21).

‘On top of this, the Environment Act introduces a requirement for all local authorities in England to arrange for the separate collection of food waste for recycling or composting.’ (p. 21).

‘Our net zero strategy announced £295 million of capital funding which will allow local authorities in England to prepare to implement free weekly separate food waste collections for all households from 2025.’ (p. 21).

Other expressions of this principle are less specific in terms of what will happen, when or how, indicating aspirations or the outcomes desired but not clear mechanisms of delivery:

‘The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) will play an important role in developing a What Works Centre to share best practice across the industry, which was recommended by Henry Dimbleby to improve the quality of advice on the practical implications for agriculture of goals such as net zero.’ (p. 15).

‘The Grimsby Cluster, working closely with government, will play an important role in ensuring the sector can take advantage of new trade deals, adapt to climate change, and increase uptake of skills training to ensure the cluster has the right people to continue to provide quality seafood to the UK and beyond.’ (p. 18).

‘Where regulations are in place, we will ensure these are consistently and proportionately enforced to protect a level playing field for farmers who do the right thing and take pride in the quality of their local environment.’ (p. 20).

2.2.3 Principle 3, ‘Affordable Across Society’

Principle 3: We will make green action affordable, supporting this across all sectors of society.

The issue of affordability of food and cost of living cuts across the Government Food Strategy with references to it in each of its main sections. The objective of healthy and sustainable food for all, which can be considered to be aligned with principle 3, is clearly stated:

‘Through this strategy, we are setting out long-term measures to support a food system that offers access to healthy and sustainable food for all. It will complement the measures we have already taken to support those struggling to afford food and help them eat healthily – through the Healthy Start Scheme, breakfast clubs, and the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.’ (p. 5).

It is indicated that future policy will seek to reward green choices by farmers:

‘Our future agriculture policy will seek to financially reward sustainable farming practices, make space for nature within the farmed landscape, and help farmers reduce their costs.’ (p. 6).

While affordability and sustainability objectives are combined in the stated objectives, the actions that address them focus almost exclusively on the immediate affordability and cost of living dimensions, not the affordability of green choices relative to other options. Securing resilience of food supply and measures to ensure markets and international trade continue to operate smoothly to maintain low prices are the main focus.

Furthermore, a tension between green choices and affordability is hinted at with the suggestion that maintaining low price to consumers in the short term will take precedence over making green actions affordable:

‘Whilst we strive to transform the food system in the long-term and unlock the benefits of healthier and more sustainable diets, we will, at all phases of policy development, champion consumer interests and seek to minimise food prices impacts.’ (p. 8).

However, action is being taken to understand changes in food prices and ways of reducing their impact, although little detail is given of how this will be done:

‘We are engaging closely with the food industry to understand price impacts and any mitigating measures, including through our Food Industry Resilience Forum and UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group. We are also working closely with third sector organisations to understand challenges related to food access.’ (p. 7).

The role of farmers as custodians of the natural environment is acknowledged and that they need to be treated fairly in commercial relationships, i.e. be able to afford to farm:

‘As the custodians of our natural environment and important contributors to our food security, farmers must be treated fairly. We have introduced powers to regulate commercial relationships between producers and processors where necessary and to prevent unfair trading practices; and consulted on contractual practice in the UK dairy sector. Subsequent regulations will build sustainable commercial relationships across the dairy supply chain that reflect an equitable share of risk between producers and processors. We will shortly consult on the need for similar action in the pig sector and have already begun engagement to identify key issues in the pork supply chain. Any interventions will be designed to ensure farm businesses can engage in smart business planning and risk management, supporting a competitive and resilient sector that delivers benefits for producers, consumers, and taxpayers.’ (pp. 15 – 16).

In summary, while the affordable across society principle is reflected in aspirations and objectives for the Government Food Strategy the mechanisms to achieve this are weak. The short-term focus is on basic affordability of food, not the affordability of green choices over other choices.

2.2.4 Principle 4, ‘Informing Choice’

Principle 4: We will empower people and businesses to make informed choices, by providing clear information about the environmental impact of different products, services, and actions.

There is clear evidence of action being taken that embodies this principle largely contained in Chapter 2 of the Government Food Strategy. Central to this is the launch of the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP):

‘This provides a unique opportunity to leverage the collective energy and enthusiasm found across the food system and drive a real transformation in health, animal welfare and environmental outcomes through our food. We will consult on implementing

mandatory public reporting against a set of health metrics and explore a similar approach to sustainability and animal welfare’. (p. 11).

This will also provide information to consumers:

‘We will also provide consumers with the information they need to make more sustainable, ethical, and healthier food choices and incentivise industry to produce healthier and more ethical and sustainable food. The partnership will ensure we have a robust framework for tackling some of the fundamental questions for our food system, raising transparency and responsibility.’ (p. 11).

It is also intended that this partnership both provides information to consumers and prompts responses from the food industry:

‘The measures we now set out are aimed at supporting better informed food choices with the dual objective of shifting consumers towards healthier and more sustainable choices and prompting a supply response from the food industry, where food production and consumption become healthier and more sustainable’. (p. 23).

The Strategy provides some details of the approach the FDTP will use and activities it will engage in:

- ‘The partnership will also consider consumer information across the range of metrics for both retail and the out of home sectors.’,
- ‘In England, we will ensure that food information (such as labels, online information, QR codes) is optimised and based upon a set of established overarching principles which will be defined by government, working with industry and other key actors in partnership. These principles will include ensuring that information is consistent, accessible, easy to understand and does not mislead.’,
- ‘We will build on what we have learnt from existing methods of consumer information and work closely with the DAs to minimise divergence across the UK.’,
- ‘In England: On sustainability: we will develop a mandatory methodology that must be used by those who want to produce eco labels or make claims about the sustainability of their products. This will drive integrity in the food system by preventing ‘green washing’ claims whilst we work with industry to improve environmental information for consumers. Working with the sector and existing assurance schemes, we will consider the role of Earned Recognition to acknowledge environmentally sustainable farming and look at how sustainable practices can be communicated to consumers.’ (p. 26).

This represents a higher level of detail and commitment to actions around the FDTP and detail on the expression of the green choices principles than is found for most of the

other actions in the Government Food Strategy. There is also detailed publicly available information on the development and implementation of the FDTP⁷.

In addition to the FDTP, other measures reflect the informing choice principle. In chapter 1, a programme of research is specified:

‘We will undertake a programme of randomised control trials to develop a suite of evidence based and value for money interventions to encourage and enable healthier and more sustainable diets. The findings will enable government to channel resources towards the most effective interventions as we work towards developing largescale and long-term policies to shift diets.’ (p. 11).

Is interesting to note that this programme of research may be more focused on the choice architecture around food, i.e. action to affect the default options consumers are offered and the taking away of ‘bad’ choices, rather than more neutral role of enabling consumers to make informed choice.

Activity to ensure farmers and growers have access advice and skills that inform they choices in producing food are also given:

‘The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) will play an important role in developing a What Works Centre to share best practice across the industry, which was recommended by Henry Dimbleby to improve the quality of advice on the practical implications for agriculture of goals such as net zero. This will be complemented by the new Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH), due to launch in 2023, which will help farmers and growers to access the right skills to run professional, sustainable, and profitable businesses.’ (p. 15).

In chapter 3, the approach to ensuring Free Trade Agreements protect domestic standards on environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards is outlined. It is also highlighted that reporting ‘on the environmental and health impacts of the food system will include an assessment of our global environmental impact’ (p. 32).

In summary, the informing choice principle is the most strongly expressed of the green choices principles in the food strategy. There is clarity on objectives and actions in progress with more developed mechanisms of delivery, details of which are documented in the public domain.

2.2.5 Principle 5, ‘Build Public Acceptability’

Principle 5: We will build public acceptability for major changes, inviting those affected to inform policy making, including the most marginalised.

⁷ Details of Food Data Transparency Partnership’s work are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/food-data-transparency-partnership>

Although the Government Food Strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the vision of a sustainable society, it often falls short of involving these stakeholders in decision making around the changes towards it.

There are some expressions of intent to invite stakeholders to inform policymaking, for example:

- ‘We will consult on Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF). This consultation will include whether to widen the scope of GBSF mandatory organisations to cover the whole public sector and introducing an aspirational target that at least 50% of food spend must be on food produced locally or certified to higher environmental production standards, while maintaining value for money for taxpayers.’ (p. 11),
- ‘We will work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and fertiliser.’ (p. 13),
- ‘Our Environmental Land Management (ELM) offers will remain responsive to farmer demand through co-design whilst ensuring we remain on track to achieve our objectives for Net Zero, biodiversity, and animal health and welfare.’ (p. 15),
- ‘We are working closely with farmers and growers to ensure regulation is outcome-focused, proportionate, and clear, whilst encouraging greater responsibility across the agri-food supply chain.’ (p. 20),
- ‘We will [...] work closely with the DAs to minimise divergence across the UK’ (p. 26),
- ‘To improve accountability and inform future policy changes, we will require public organisations to report on the food they buy, serve and waste in a similar way as we will expect large companies to report on food sales under the Food Data Transparency Partnership.’ (p. 27).

Some of the stakeholder consultations outlined in the Government Food Strategy focus on health and economic sustainability, rather than explicitly on environmental, green or sustainability issues.

The principle is frequently expressed as ‘we will work with’ which lacks clarity around what degree of involvement stakeholders will have in decision-making. Lower levels of involvement are likely to lead to lower levels of stakeholder buy-in and public acceptability for changes.

The principle adds ‘including the most marginalised’ and there is some discussion of marginalised groups with respect to healthy food choices and related issues, but this is largely lacking for sustainability/environment/green choices.

2.2.6 Principle 6, ‘Vision and Roles’

Principle 6: We will present a clear vision of a sustainable society, including the role of different actors in achieving our environmental goals.

This principle is expressed, to varying degrees, in all three main sections of the Government Food Strategy. The vision of a sustainable society is largely expressed in high-level terms as a series of outcomes and objectives. It also brings together and re-

articulates several existing targets and commitments, such as meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goal of halving global food waste by 2030.

In some of the more detailed elements of the Government Food Strategy's vision of a sustainable society, domestic food production is intended to help to reduce the offshoring of food production to countries that fall short of the UK's environmental and animal welfare standards. Promoting and improving supply-side uptake of alternative low-carbon sources of protein such as seafood and British grown beans and pulses will help meet the need for more, and healthier, food without sacrificing environmental targets and commitments. Meanwhile, free trade agreement negotiations and international development work are expected to influence environmental standards abroad.

There are many references to the roles and responsibilities of different actors, for example:

- To 'incentivise farmers to improve soil quality, invest in hedgerows, encourage optimal use of fertiliser and pesticides, and support regenerative practices such as agroforestry' (p. 14),
- 'The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) will play an important role in developing a What Works Centre to share best practice across the industry, which was recommended by Henry Dimbleby to improve the quality of advice on the practical implications for agriculture of goals such as net zero.' (p. 15),
- 'We are committed to helping consumers better understand where the food they buy comes from and its production impacts' (p. 16),
- 'We will also tackle other forms of waste in the food system through Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging, which will hold food producers to account for the packaging they produce.' (p. 21),
- 'The [Food Data Transparency] partnership will champion consumer interests, providing people with the information they need to make more sustainable, ethical, and healthier food choices, and incentivise industry to produce healthier and more ethical and sustainable food' (p. 25),
- 'Finding opportunities for children and young people to better understand sustainable food and its connection to nature.' (p. 24),
- 'the Environment Act introduces a requirement for all local authorities in England to arrange for the separate collection of food waste for recycling or composting' (p. 21).

If you were to map out the expressions of principles as a theory of change or logic chain, there is an imbalance of material at the beginning and at the end of the logic chain, but not much in between. That is to say objectives and desired outcomes are given but the mechanisms (inputs, activities, outputs) to drive action from the current situation to the desired one is not clear.

Ambitions and objectives are often vaguely expressed. Clarity and detail are often lacking on the 'what and how' e.g. 'healthier and more sustainable diets for all'. This may fail to convince stakeholders that sustainability is important and/or fall short of

being a useful vision which stakeholders can understand, follow and buy into. For example:

‘We will consider options to address risks of carbon leakage [...] within the food system. Our reporting on the environmental and health impacts of the food system will include an assessment of our global environmental impact.’ (pp. 31-32).

On their own, these fall several steps short of a 'vision', but they are nonetheless necessary steps on the road towards defining or making progress towards a vision of a sustainable society.

Tensions and competing priorities are often bundled together, e.g. for environmental sustainability vs economic sustainability and food security. These are real challenges for government and society to address but it is not done convincingly. Competing priorities are often mentioned together in passing and not expressed with much detail or clarity except perhaps around the agriculture and land-use change discussion

Some parts of the Government Food Strategy were clearer about the underlying delivery mechanism, for example: ‘farmers will broadly maintain domestic production at current levels as we deliver our climate and environmental goals’ which will involve ‘increased output in sectors with sustainable growth opportunities such as horticulture and seafood’ (p. 15)

However, others were less detailed and therefore less convincing of a clear and coherent underlying vision, for example:

- ‘The international development strategy, published in May 2022, affirms our commitment to promote climate-resilient, sustainable food systems globally, whilst accelerating green growth, trade and economic opportunities, especially for women, in agriculture and food.’ (p. 31),
- ‘Decisions on the liberalisation of products through FTAs will consider factors such as climate change, animal welfare and the environment alongside the broader economic and strategic benefits of our trading relationships. For example, in our FTAs with Australia and New Zealand we have eliminated tariffs on a range of environmentally friendly goods including wind turbine parts and electric vehicles.’ (pp. 30-31).

The food system is complex, with many interacting elements and trade-offs. This complexity underscores the need for a clear strategy and vision which are crucial for transitions towards sustainability. Clarity on the overall vision and stakeholder roles can also help to increase transparency, which is an important element in growing public acceptability and buy-in for proposed changes (overlap with principle 5).

2.3 Strengths, weaknesses and gaps of expression of the green choice principles

Overall, each of the green choices principles can be seen to be reflected at a high-level across the Government Food Strategy and they can be seen in the actions the strategy contains. However, the strength of expression for each principle varies. The principles

can be seen in a diverse range of actions across the strategy, for example, research and evidence generation, funding allocations, innovation support, collaboration and stakeholder engagement, better regulatory action, action on affordability, and articulation of desired outcomes and objectives.

While the principles can be seen in a variety of actions their expression is of variable strength and often quite weak. Table 1 below, provides a high-level summary of the expressions of the principles in the Government Food Strategy, how they are expressed, strengths, weaknesses and gaps.

Principle 4: 'Informing choice' is the principle expressed most strongly in the Government Food Strategy's actions through the Food Data Transparency Partnership. The other principles can be seen but the expressions and actions associated with them are often weak, lacking clarity, specificity or mechanisms to translate aspirations or objectives into outcomes. Table 1 lists 'strengths', however, we note these strengths are captured in the overall context of what we consider to be a weak expression of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. Table 1 also summarises weakness and gaps in the expressions of the principles. These are more significant and highlight areas where significant improvements could be made.

The approach we have taken to identifying the expressions of green choices principles is reductive, as noted above. It has identified actions that are consistent with the principles and strengths and weaknesses in their expressions. It has considered the expressions in isolation rather than what they add up to as a whole. The weaknesses identified against each principle raise some significant questions about how well the Government Food Strategy as a whole expresses the green choices principles. We return to this point in the conclusions section. However, to inform this discussion, first we consider in the next section how the green choices principles are expressed in a wider selection for food policy documents.

Table 1: Summary of expressions of green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy

Principle	Principle expressed?	How?	Strengths?	Weaknesses/gaps?
Principle 1: 'Greener by Design'	Yes, across the Government Food Strategy, more prominently in chapter 1.	Through a range of actions – research, funding, control or reporting measures.	Range of measures across the Government Food Strategy.	Commitments to future actions and outcomes either without, or lacking detail of, specific delivery options/ mechanisms. Actions about framing and understanding problems rather than driving change
Principle 2: 'Addressing Practical Barriers'	Yes, across the Government Food Strategy, more prominently in chapter 1.	Range of actions to support innovation, evidence, collaboration, better regulatory action, local authority roles.	Some specific and funded actions, e.g. research, action on food waste collection.	Actions aspirational, lack clarity, specificity or clear mechanisms to deliver.
Principle 3: 'Affordable across society'	Partially. Affordability features across the Government Food Strategy but affordability of green choices relative to other choices is underdeveloped.	Short-term focus on food affordability, but not the longer-term affordability of green choices. Resilience of food supply and keeping markets and international trade flowing.	Food affordability cuts across the Government Food Strategy and a clear priority. Action to ensure farmers treated fairly in commercial relationships.	Potential tension between green choices and low prices not resolved. Low prices trump green choices affordability. Lack of mechanisms to drive affordable green choices.
Principle 4: 'Informing choice'	Yes, a significant focus of chapter 2.	Food Data Transparency Partnership intended to inform consumers and prompt responses from industry. Research activities and provision of advice to farmers and growers.	Clear articulation of specific steps towards developing FDTP. Process has been taken forward and detail of process and action in public domain.	Mechanisms to translate FDTP into forms consumers can engage with or act on.
Principle 5: 'Build public acceptability'	Yes, most prominently in chapter 1.	Statements of intent to invite stakeholders to inform policy. Consultations with roles and responsibilities articulated for different actors and actions government will undertake.	Intent to invite stakeholders to inform policy.	Degree of stakeholder engagement in decision-making lacks clarity. Focus on health and economic sustainability not explicit green/ sustainability considerations. Lack of action on marginalised groups and green choices.
Principle 6: 'Vision and Roles'	Yes, expressed to varying degree in three main sections of the Government Food Strategy.	High-level expression of outcomes and objectives, rearticulating several existing commitments and targets.	References to roles and responsibilities of different actors.	Ambition and objectives expressed in vague terms, a lack of what and how vision will be will delivered. Tensions and competing priorities often bundled together rather than made explicit.

3 Strengthening the Green Choices Principles - insights from the wider food policy literature

3.1 Aim and approach

The aim of this stage of the review was to identify lessons from the wider literature on food policy that could be used to strengthen the expressions of green choices principles⁸ in the Government Food Strategy. This was a rapid review which was intended to identify illustrative examples of expressions of the green choices principles rather than a comprehensive and systematic review of the extensive literature that could be used for this task.

Documents for review (Table 2) were selected for their relevance to the Government Food Strategy based on the researchers' expert knowledge and in consultation with OEP. The National Food Strategy Independent Review: The Plan ('The Dimbleby Review'), for example, was selected given its significance in advance of the Government Food Strategy. We also sought to gain a variety of perspectives by reviewing documents from food/environment NGOs, academic research and processes involving cross sectoral representation.

Table 2: Sources reviewed for expressions of green choices principles

Title and link to original source	Date	Author/Organisation
Government Food Strategy	June 2022	Defra
The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	July 2021	National Food Strategy
Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	Feb 2019	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems
The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	2023	Doherty, B., Jackson, P., Wagstaff, C. et al. Nature Food 4, 824–825 (2023)
10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	Jan 2024	Food Foundation
Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	July 2024	Sustain
Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	March 2023	WRAP

⁸ Table 4 in the appendix gives the list of green choices principles in full and the summary titles used in this note.

Title and link to original source	Date	Author/Organisation
Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	No date	Eating Better
Eating better in the nations: a policy review	2024	Eating Better
Behind the scenes of the National Food Strategy: lessons from the UK's experience	2024	Green Alliance
45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability: co-benefits and trade-offs	Feb 2023	Sebastiano Caleffi, Corinna Hawkes, Stephanie Walton, City
42 policies and actions to orient food systems towards healthier diets for all	Dec 2020	Corinna Hawkes, Stephanie Walton, Lawrence Haddad, Jessica Fanzo, City
The Broken Plate 2023	2023	The Food Foundation
Our Future in the Land	2019	Food, Farming & Countryside Commission
Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature	April 2024	Green Alliance
UK government food strategy lacks ambition to achieve transformative food system change	2022	Bob Doherty, Peter Jackson, Guy M Poppy, Carol Wagstaff, Martin White Nature Food 3, 481–482 (2022)

We have reviewed the above sources looking for expressions of the principles using the criteria in section 2.1 above as guidance. While we have used these criteria to help identify expressions of the principles, we have not used them to assess their quality or potential effectiveness of an action in delivering objectives and impact which is beyond the scope of this short project.

3.2 Expressions of principles in the reviewed sources

There is a plethora of actions that can be used to strengthen expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. Our rapid review of only a limited selection of the available literature has identified over 150 actions which express at least one of the green choices principles and are supported in these sources by more detailed information on their objectives and mechanisms of delivery.

We captured these actions and the principles they contribute to in a spreadsheet. For each action the spreadsheet captured:

1. A unique action identifier number,
2. The source of the 'action in a sentence' and its location in the original source
3. A short title for the action ('action in a sentence') which uses the exact wording of the original source,
4. Which of the six principles it expresses, both on the basis of the 'action in a sentence' description and longer material in the source,
5. Which headline action the 'action in a sentence' contributes to (see below for explanation of this process),

While the 'action in a sentence' may be similar for some actions the more detailed information in the original sources can highlight differences in the action, for example, in terms of level of detail, mechanisms of delivery proposed or the emphasis of the action.

We have not included the detailed actions from [Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union](#) as they are focused on the EU context, policy and processes and are now, obviously, less relevant to the UK. However, the headline objectives have been included in the spreadsheet as they provide useful strategic level expressions of the principles.

There is a lot of duplication in these actions and different levels of detail are given for each. To give a more manageable structure to the actions that could strengthen the expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy we have therefore reviewed these 161 actions⁹ to identify ones which can act as headline themes for the wider actions and used these to group the remaining actions.

This has resulted in 17 headline action areas under 7 broad themes in which the expressions of green choice principles could be strengthened. It should be noted this is an exercise to help provide structure to the actions rather than a definitive characterisation of each action and the green choice principles it contributes to. The 17 headline actions and seven themes are presented in Table 3 below.

⁹ The full list of actions from the spreadsheet is give in Table 5 in appendix 5.3.

Table 3: Summary of headline actions that could be used to strengthen expressions of green choices principles in Government Food Strategy

Action in a Sentence (wording from original source)	Principle action expresses (for this individual action not wider similar actions)						Source of action	Action Identifier Number	Action Identifier Number of similar or more specific related action
	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles			
Theme 1: High-level strategy and governance									
[Set up] a joint food systems cross-government commission to bring considerations of population and planetary health together.	X	X			X		The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	19	29, 37, 39, 58, 72, 140, 144, 146
Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all policy development.	X					X	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	73	33, 74, 76, 79, 85, 100, 101, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 159
Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.	X	X				X	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	3	2, 23, 31, 32, 51, 56, 57, 77, 100, 101, 132, 151, 160
Theme 2: Targets, standards and regulations									
Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.	X	X					The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	4	80
Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.	X					X	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	8	38, 45, 49, 50, 54, 59, 63, 64, 131, 132, 158
Implement existing legislation on junk food advertising and volume promotions.	X			X	X		10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	24	
Ensure that regulatory bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out inspections and act on non-compliance.	X	X					Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	66	65, 70, 89, 132, 136, 137
Theme 3: Using financial instruments to remove barriers and create enabling conditions									
Ensure that price isn't a barrier to choosing more sustainable and healthy options, especially for people on low incomes.			X				The Broken Plate 2023	129	46, 79, 118, 128, 133, 141

Action in a Sentence (wording from original source)	Principle action expresses (for this individual action not wider similar actions)						Source of action	Action Identifier Number	Action Identifier Number of similar or more specific related action
	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles			
Use environmental taxes and fiscal measures to incentivise and enable desired behaviours and outcomes.	X			X			New grouping action created in this project	162	87, 90, 92, 96, 103, 116, 107, 120, 122, 123, 134, 150
Theme 4: Data and Innovation									
Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.	X	X	X	X	X		The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	5	2, 40, 56, 57, 62, 67, 68, 86, 91, 97, 104, 112, 126, 148, 152
Create a National Food System Data programme.	X	X		X			The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	6	1, 20, 22, 28, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 59, 60, 69, 71, 88, 117
Theme 5: Local action and food citizenship (including procurement and schools)									
Support local authorities in adopting food partnerships and plans.	X	X		X	X	X	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	36	54, 64, 78, 130
Mainstream progress in school food.	X	X		X			Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	75	21, 26
Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.	X	X					The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	7	25, 34, 74, 119, 124, 143
Theme 6: Sustainable Farming Practice									
Introduce a horticulture strategy to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption.	X	X				X	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	27	30
Incentivise and adopt sustainable farming practices.	X	X					New grouping action created in this project	163	93, 94, 95, 97, 98. 99. 100. 101, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110, 142, 148
Theme 7: Waste									
Food Waste Reduction Roadmap – ‘Target Measure Act’ approach, to tackle food waste across the whole value chain, including household.	X	X		X			Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	38	42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118
Number of actions for each principle	127	96	21	45	37	31			

Table 3 covers the actions and themes that some major reviews of food policy have identified as being necessary and appear consistent with the green choices principles.

We considered linking these to the weaknesses of the Government Food Strategy highlighted in section 2, and also trying to prioritise the actions that might strengthen the expression of the principles. We decided not to do this because of a conceptual point about the expression of principles and challenges of delivery of the Government Food Strategy being resolved and strengthened by a small number of ‘magic bullet’ actions. One report we reviewed in the project, ‘45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability’ notes that:

‘Making explicit and highly specific recommendations to increase the environmental sustainability of food systems is challenging due to the number of variables at play and the complex ways in which they interact. In this Brief, we sought to address this challenge by presenting a menu of 45 actions which can be taken to re-orient food systems towards environmental sustainability’ (p. 2).

We would concur with this point and note that it indicates a breadth of measures are required and that these are also clearly focused on environmental sustainability.

A further observation we note about the expression of principles in the sources reviewed is not just that individual commitments and actions are made but how they are made and why is also important. The expression of vision of some of the sources comes from the overall whole and the processes by which they are generated not the individual elements. The National Food Strategy Independent Review, for example, is a substantial and comprehensive piece of work making recommendations developed through an extensive and inclusive process. As Doherty et al. (2022) note:

“The independent review, which was led by businessperson and non-executive board member of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Henry Dimbleby, involved a comprehensive synthesis of evidence, coupled with public dialogues across the nation (limited, in accordance with the review’s remit, to England). It presented evidence of the food system’s contribution to biodiversity loss, deforestation, drought, freshwater pollution, the collapse of aquatic wildlife and climate change, and of the adverse effects of highly processed food on human health. The review identified four strategic objectives with 14 well-reasoned recommendations”.

Its vision is captured in this expression which is not just a set of recommendations but a significant process to develop and support them built on a clarity of the challenge to be addressed.

The ‘45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability’ report utilises a systematic process that identified potential actions from significant international reviews, conducted a co-benefits analysis and searched for evidence of potential trade-offs, excluding actions without a clear pathway to impact, while at the same time acknowledging delivery of food policy is complex and non-deterministic.

The 'Better by Half' report has a clarity of vision, outcomes and targets to be met by 2030 with clear actions to get there. It is strong on public acceptability and while this is not mentioned explicitly in the actions it is captured as an aspect that cuts through the document as a whole.

These observations clearly suggest that the strengthening of the expressions of the green choices principles is best done, not through a small number of actions focused on green choices, but instead, or as well as, their presence cutting across delivery. The green choice principles, as the EIP notes, are intended to be cross-cutting. This said, the above summary table combined with the long list of actions provides some a resource from which a package of measures could be drawn to strengthen the green choice principles in the Government Food Strategy. For example, filtering actions for principles that are particularly weakly expressed (e.g. affordable for all) or selecting actions which address multiple principles. The selection of additional actions will need to be located in a process that has a clarity of vision – the 'why?' underpinning action - combined with a process that considers independencies and the effect of the policies as whole considering co-benefits and trade offs and adapts as more is known about the effect of the implementation of the policies.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Summary of findings from review

This review has found expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. However overall, the individual expressions of the green choices principles are weak. The following general weaknesses were identified:

- There is a lack of clarity, specificity and overall causal logic from inputs, through actions, outputs, and outcomes to the delivery of objectives,
- In relation to objectives, there is a lack of clarity on the problems that actions and expressions of the principles are designed to address and the vision of what success looks like,
- Addressing, unpacking and making explicit any tensions between competing objectives, e.g. keeping the price of food low and affordability of green choices, and the balance between short- and long-term objectives is only done to a limited degree,
- The engagement and roles of stakeholders in policy development and the overall process used to develop and implement the principles and actions expressing them is unclear.

As well as weaknesses in the individual actions that express the green choice principles, we consider the Government Food Strategy's overall expression of the principles to be weak. This is not just due to the weakness of the individual actions but that the principles are not seen to be cutting through all actions and aspects of document.

A small set of wider food policy sources has been reviewed for options for strengthening the expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. This has revealed a wide range of actions that could be used for this purpose. The review of this wider literature has also highlighted the need for a menu of cross-cutting options to be used to deliver food policy objectives. There are no simple magic bullet solutions but instead a need for action in multiple areas and consideration of the independencies, co-benefits and trade-offs of these actions. We have also observed in this wider material that these actions result from development processes that engage stakeholders. The actions are complemented by processes which have a clarity of overall vision for what is trying to be achieved.

4.2 Commentary and concluding points on the use of green choices principles in policy development and review

In this section we capture our observations and lessons learned through conducting this review in relation to the use of principles to guide policy development and review.

The Government Food Strategy was released in advance of the articulation of the green choices principles in the EIP. The Strategy cannot therefore be expected to explicitly articulate how it contributes to the principles. However, considering the expression of

the green choices principles has been of value in understanding the strengths and weakness of Government Food Strategy and options for strengthening them.

Assuming the green choice principles remain a cross-cutting theme for government environmental policy, future policy statements should be expected to be address the principles more explicitly. This will require clarity in both policy development and publications addressing:

- the actions that express each of the principles and their causal logic,
- consideration of the interdependencies between these actions and how they add up to more than the sum of their parts,
- a demonstration that these actions cut across all aspects of food policy,
- capturing of the process used to develop and implement policy and the engagement of stakeholders in these processes.

Good policy-making and the green choices principles are complementary. Good policy-making and delivery is about processes which may be related to specific challenges and problems. Principles are about informing decisions and direction. They can be used to steer the policy process and can be used to help make choices between competing policy options or prioritising certain goals and articulating why those choices have been made.

In the case of the green choices principles, they are intended to be generally applicable across the breadth of different government policies where opportunities for green choices can be shaped or influenced. They are necessarily high-level and general so that they can be widely applicable – this is both a strength and a weakness.

Our experience from conducting this review is that the general nature of the principles means they are accommodating of a wide range of strength of expressions. The judgement on strength of expression can therefore be subjective, hence our need to develop some criteria to assist with identification.

We have also observed that it's easy to consider the individual principles separately and to try and place actions and expressions of them into single principles. However, this reductionist approach of allocating actions to single principles risks overlooking the fact that ideally actions are supportive of, or at least consistent with, multiple principles and when put together they may need to add up to more than the sum of their parts. The importance of applying system thinking to food policy and considering the trade-offs, interdependencies, and delivery of co-benefits is a recurrent theme in the wider literature considered. This points to using the principles as an integrative tool rather than allocating actions to the individual principles.

Other than the Government Food Strategy, the sources reviewed in this work are from outside government and they make recommendations for policy actions. They are not responsible for putting them into action. In the non-government sources we can only assess the expression of principles on the basis of future potential rather than assessing the maturity of delivery and impact of actions which was a factor considered when reviewing the Government Food Strategy.

The principles expressed in government documents not only need to meet the above criteria but also need to be supported by evidence that they are being progressed. Are they informing decisions? What would have happened in the absence of the principles, i.e. the counterfactual of the principles not existing? This requires evidence of process, for example, how are decisions made, who is involved, what options were considered and did ensuring consistency with principle affect the decisions made in any way?

The green choices principles can be compared with the Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) and the Explanatory Memorandum on using it¹⁰. The environmental principles duty came into force in November 2023 and ministers and policy makers must consider the environmental impact of new policies, following the principles in the statement. The statutory duty to consider the principles in policy-making places contrasts with green choices principles which are non-statutory. The statutory basis of the duty means there is more extensive supporting information on the requirements of the duty and how to ensure it is met¹¹. Material such as this which covers the context and rationale for the principles and what is required to demonstrate the duty is being met could usefully be developed for the green choices principles. It would provide greater clarity on the role of the green choices principles and how to apply them and ensure they are used more actively in policy development across government.

4.3 Options for future work

This review has sought to identify expressions of the green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy. We have largely found the expressions of the principles to be weak and uncoordinated because the actions contained in the Government Food Strategy lack detail of how they will be developed or delivered. This assessment is largely based on a documentary review of the Government Food Strategy. Further work could address these wider questions on the processes and documentation required to support the more detailed evaluation of the expressions of the principles. This would likely require conducting primary research to collect evidence from policy makers on the use of the principles to complement the documentary evidence which currently only gives limited evidence of process.

There is also the option to explore the expressions of the green choices principles where more detailed information on specific policies is in the public domain. One example of this from the Government Food Strategy is the Food Data Transparency

¹⁰ The Environmental Principles Policy Statement is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-principles-policy-statement/environmental-principles-policy-statement> and the Explanatory Memorandum to them at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-principles-policy-statement/explanatory-memorandum-to-the-environmental-principles-policy-statement>

¹¹ For example, see <https://moderncivilservice.blog.gov.uk/2024/04/22/environmental-principles-putting-nature-at-the-heart-of-our-policy-making/> which summarises the requirements of the duty and provides links to further resources; or the Environmental Principles Assessment Guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d595d6c63bb34da0709e74/National_Classes_Environment_Impact_Assessment.pdf

Partnership which is an ongoing process with its activities and meetings documents in the public domain¹².

The approach used has allowed us to rapidly review a large body of material and provide structure to it and capture a broad set of actions which could strengthen the expressions of principles in the Government Food Strategy. It has also provided some insights on how policy in such complex, interlinked areas needs to be developed and the role principles can play. The review's approach could be developed for application to other policy areas.

These observations also point to the need to consider more explicitly how the green choices principles specifically, and principles generally, could or should be used to guide, integrate and strengthen responses to the challenges presented by complexity of food and other policy areas.

Clearer guidance from Government to accompany the principles would be useful on:

1. The ways the principles could and should be used in policy development processes,
2. Approaches to documenting the development and delivery of principles in policy so it is clear how they are informing and shaping policy.

The 'GUIDE' criteria for the effectiveness of principles developed in Principles-Focused Evaluation may have value here¹³. Principles-focused evaluation examines:

1. Whether principles are clear, meaningful, and actionable, and if so
2. Whether they are actually being followed and, if so
3. Whether they are leading to desired results.¹⁴

GUIDE is an mnemonic for the attributes of effective principles which should be **G**uiding, **U**seful, **I**nspirational, **D**evelopmental (i.e. adaptable over time and to different contexts), and **E**valuable.

We have also not questioned the principles themselves in this review. We have taken them at face value and used them to explore whether, as a result of their statement and commitment to use, the behavioural science they reflect is expressed in a policy. The principles themselves could be explored in further work for example to see how well they meet the GUIDE criteria for effective principles. This could be used to refine, develop, or even add, to the existing green choice principles and to provide clearer guidance, adapted to specific challenges of delivery. Additionally, further exploration of

¹² Food Data Transparency Partnership details are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/food-data-transparency-partnership> including membership details, terms of reference and working group papers.

¹³ See Michael Quinn Patton, 2018, Principles-Focused Evaluation: The Guide, The Guilford Press, New York/London.

¹⁴ See <https://www.utilization-focusedevaluation.org/principles-focused-evaluation>

how multiple principles interact and could be used alongside one another to deliver more than the sum of their parts could be considered.

5 Appendices

5.1 Green Choices Principles in Net Zero Strategy and EIP23

Table 4: Comparison of Green Choices Principles in Net Zero Strategy and EIP23

Principle No.	Net Zero Strategy	EIP23	Differences to note
1	Minimise the ‘ask’ by sending clear regulatory signals	We will make our society greener by design, reducing the ask of individual citizens by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business.	‘Minimise’ vs ‘reducing’ weakens EIP version, but more detail provides clarity
2	Make the green choice the easiest	We will make green action easier by addressing major practical barriers.	‘Easiest’ vs ‘easier’ weakens EIP version
3	Make the green choice affordable	We will make green action affordable, supporting this across all sectors of society.	EIP version longer, more actively phrased and explicit about affordability across all sectors. Clearer and therefore slightly stronger as a result.
4	Empower people and businesses to make their own choice	We will empower people and businesses to make informed choices, by providing clear information about the environmental impact of different products, services, and actions.	Own choice vs informed choices
5	Motivate & build public acceptability for major changes	We will build public acceptability for major changes, inviting those affected to inform policy making, including the most marginalised.	EIP version longer, more actively phrased and explicitly inclusive. Clearer and therefore slightly stronger as a result.
6	Present a clear vision of how we will get to net zero and what the role of people and business will be	We will present a clear vision of a sustainable society, including the role of different actors in achieving our environmental goals.	‘A clear vision of how’ to ‘a clear vision’, i.e. a shift from how to get to an objective to just the objective.

5.2 Coding Structure

Initial Coding Structure for Review of Government Food Strategy

Objective of coding and analysis: To assess the extent to which the Government Food Strategy, and the actions it contains, embodies the green choices principles. This may require some targeted gathering of additional publicly available information about the actions contained in the strategy, including noting whether they are reserved matters or devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive. The assessment should be organised around three research themes/questions:

- a. Greener by design (principle 1): to what extent is the Government Food Strategy reducing the ask on individuals by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business?
- b. Influencing behaviour (principles 2,3 & 4): to what extent does the Government Food Strategy reduce practical barriers, improve affordability, and provide clearer information to promote food choices that are better for the environment?
- c. Collaborative design (principles 5 & 6): to what extent does the Government Food Strategy develop buy-in through development of a shared vision, stakeholder involvement in decision making and providing clarity on roles and responsibilities of different actors?

The coding structure was developed in advance of a close reading of the Government Food Strategy. On a more detailed reading it was found the material in the strategy didn't contain sufficient detail to warrant coding using the full structure below. However, its development informed thinking on how document could be reviewed.

Coding Structure

Bold = code

Indented = subcode

Italics = notes on what is being coded

Action Type

Framing the problem and solutions

E.g. Strategies & Frameworks; Research, evidence, testing & piloting, Consultation, engagement & collaboration

Putting interventions/measures in place

E.g. Designation and management of an area; Conservation or management of a species; Green Finance, funding or incentive scheme; Regulation, legislation and control measures (noting these examples were derived from Thriving Plants and Wildlife not Food)

Supporting successful delivery of programmes and interventions

E.g. Advice, guidance and other support; Monitoring and evaluation

Action Maturity

Under consideration

Ideas the government is exploring. There may be acknowledgement or awareness of a gap, or a potential solution may have been identified, but no direct action has been 'agreed'.

In development

Some agreement for action has been achieved, and the solution or aspects of it are being clarified e.g., development of proposals, exploring options, scoping exercises.

In progress

The action is underway with published information available.

Decision Making

Reserved Matter

Decisions that are still taken by the UK Parliament at Westminster even though they have effect in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or the regions of England.

Devolved Northern Ireland

Areas of government where decision-making has been delegated by Parliament to the devolved institutions such as the Scottish Parliament, the Assemblies of Wales, Northern Ireland and London or to Local Authorities.

Green Choices Principles

1. Greener by design

Full principle 1: We will make our society greener by design, reducing the ask of individual citizens by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business.

2. Addressing Practical Barriers

Full principle 2: We will make green action easier by addressing major practical barriers.

3. Affordable across society

Full principle 3: We will make green action affordable, supporting this across all sectors of society.

4. Informing choice

Full principle 4: We will empower people and businesses to make informed choices, by providing clear information about the environmental impact of different products, services, and actions.

5. Build public acceptability

Full principle 5: We will build public acceptability for major changes, inviting those affected to inform policy making, including the most marginalised.

6. Vision and Roles

Full principle 1: We will present a clear vision of a sustainable society, including the role of different actors in achieving our environmental goals.

Expression of principle

Direct

I.e. exact or close wording of principle used

Indirect

I.e. expressed in different terms but clearly aligned with principles - this is probably for the analysis rather than coding but useful to capture

Principle linked to specific action

I.e. a clear link, e.g. we will make x greener by design by doing y

Principle stated but not linked to action

I.e. aspirations to fulfil principles but not linked to a clear of specified mechanism of delivery.

5.3 List of actions to strengthen expression of green choices principles in the Government Food Strategy

Key to action colours in Table 5
Headline action
Action that duplicates or develops a headline action
Individual action that doesn't easily fit into a group
Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union action areas – useful headings but specific actions are not considered as EU-policy focused
Text from coding but not expressing a clear action - retained to maintain continuity of numbering

Table 5: Actions in a sentence from wider literature reviewed expressing the Green Choices Principles

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
1	Introduce mandatory reporting for large food companies.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan		X		X	X		28
2	Guarantee the budget for agricultural payments until at least 2029 to help farmers transition to more sustainable land use.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X	X		X		3
3	Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X				X	2, 23, 31, 32, 51, 56, 57, 77, 100, 101, 132, 151, 160

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
4	Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X					80
5	Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X	X	X	X		2, 40, 56, 57, 62, 67, 68, 86, 91, 97, 104, 112, 126, 148, 152
6	Create a National Food System Data programme.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X		X			1, 20, 22, 28, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 59, 60, 69, 71, 88, 117
7	Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X	X					25, 34, 74, 119, 124, 143
8	Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.	The National Food Strategy independent review: The Plan	X					X	38, 45, 49, 50, 54, 59, 63, 64, 131, 132, 158
9	Integration across policy areas: a common food policy is needed to put an end to conflicting objectives and costly inefficiencies.	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X			X	X	
10	Integration across governance levels: a common food policy is required to harness grassroots experimentation and align actions at eu, national, and local levels.	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X			X		
11	Governance for transition: an integrated food policy can overcome short-term thinking and path dependencies in a way that sectoral policies cannot	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X					
12	Democratic decision-making: a common food policy can revive public participation in policymaking, reconnect citizens to the European project, and reclaim public policies for the public good.	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union					X	X	

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
13	Building a new governance architecture for sustainable food systems	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X			X	X	
14	Ensuring access to land, water and healthy soils	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X				X	
15	Rebuilding climate-resilient, healthy agro-ecosystems	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X		X	X		
16	Promoting sufficient, healthy and sustainable diets for all	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X		X	X		
17	Building fairer, shorter, and cleaner supply chains	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X	X		X			
18	Putting trade in the service of sustainable development	Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union	X					X	
19	a joint food systems cross-government commission to bring considerations of population and planetary health together	The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	X	X			X		29, 37, 39, 58, 72, 140, 144, 146
20	HM Treasury to conduct a full economic analysis of the recommendations evidenced in Dimbleby's review versus the full costs to the economy of food system negative externalities	The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	X		X				
21	Free School Meals for all primary school children in England, revolutionizing catering in schools underpinned by a new public food procurement strategy	The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	X	X		X			
22	integration of mandatory health and environmental metrics into the FDTP	The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	X	X		X			6

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Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
23	a comprehensive land-use framework to reverse our status as the worst-performing G7 country in terms of species depletion	The UK Government's 2022 food strategy a year later	X	X				X	2
24	Implement existing legislation on junk food advertising and volume promotions	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	X			X	X		
25	Update government procurement standards to apply to all public settings	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	X	X		X			7
26	Update the School Food Standards and introduce monitoring of compliance	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	X	X		X			
27	Introduce a horticulture strategy to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	X	X				X	30
28	Introduce mandatory reporting for food businesses on health and sustainability metrics	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation	X			X	X		6
29	Establish a cross-government working group on food, as a first step towards developing a new Food Bill	10 cost free policies for nourishing the nation		X			X	X	19
30	We call on the new Government to revive the Horticulture Strategy to boost both production and consumption of healthy and sustainably produced fruit and vegetables.	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X		X		X	
31	We also call on the Government to establish much-needed Land Use Framework - as pledged in the Labour Party manifesto - to move towards more strategic land-use decision-making.	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X				X	3
32	It is essential that the new Government secures sufficient funding for the Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes to give farmers confidence from the start and more incentives for farmers to	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X	X			X	2

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
	accelerate the much-needed transition to agroecological farming.								
33	We urge immediate action to reduce industrial, intensive meat production	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X				X	
34	Public sector food procurement should lead the transition to planetary health diets and support nature-friendly farming	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X				X	7
35									
36	support local authorities in adopting food partnerships and plans	Sustain's blueprint for the first 100 days of a new government	X	X		X	X	X	54, 64, 78, 130
37	Courtauld Delivery Signatory Participate in collaborative working groups to drive the strategy, create an action plan and lead on implementing the changes required.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X				X	
38	Food Waste Reduction Roadmap – ‘Target Measure Act’ approach, to tackle food waste across the whole value chain, including household	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X		X			42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118
39	Collaboration/Convening working groups – to identify barriers to action and work together to find practical solutions to remove them	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X				X	
40	Research – evidence and insights to inform decision making and focus on high-impact changes	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X					
41	Guardians of Grub – catalysing moments of transformation through the 3 step model ‘Identify/Catalyse/Scale’	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X			X		
42	Changes to the way products are packaged and sold to reduce household food waste e.g. changing/removal of packaging, date labels and storage advice	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
43	Create a step-change in household food waste prevention	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X		X	X		
44	Secure action in the Hospitality and Food Service sector, at scale	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
45	Target Identify, set and embed corporate targets to reduce operational food waste, including plate waste	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
46	remove barriers and continue to increase the redistribution of surplus food	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X	X				
47	Put the necessary policies in place to help businesses start or accelerate their journey towards reducing food waste such as separate food waste collections and potential business food waste reporting.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
48	Identify and be active in the areas of policy required to support the behaviour change activity needed to see progress in household food waste reduction, e.g. selling fresh produce loose.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X					
49	Embed food waste prevention targets and reporting in public procurement.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
50	Set a 1.5 degree aligned Science Based Net Zero Target as soon as possible to publicly state GHG reduction ambitions through an independent recognised process.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X					X	
51	Help WRAP scope the full potential of Courtauld 2030 to drive collective action on GHG emissions by contributing to the landscape map of sector action on GHG emissions (consultation underway).	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X				X	
52	Participate in working groups and other actions to develop and implement new best practice, such as securing action towards reducing GHGs caused by animal feed.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan					X		

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
53	Courtauld 2030 signatory businesses across the value chain to utilise the latest version of the WRAP scope 3 GHG measurement and reporting protocols and inform WRAP of the level of understanding; highlighting areas where more support and guidance is needed	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
54	Target Set time-bound national and local targets for GHG impact reduction.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X				X	
55	Measure Develop government-led standardisation of scope 3 reporting under the food data transparency partnership, drawing from Courtauld 2030 GHG experience.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X					
56	Adopt financial support mechanisms which reward farmers for good environmental practice including collaboration with their peers, such as through Environmental Land Management Schemes.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X	X				3
57	Develop financial markets for environmental and land use outcomes	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X		X				3
58	Work with the participating retailers to scope the priority areas for collective action on the most material issues for the sector and publish a multi-year programme in January 2024.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan		X					19
59	Map and monitor the known GHG-focussed initiatives which are driving 'Target, Measure, Act' activities to reduce emissions in the food system.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
60	Link government-led standardisation of scope 3 reporting under the food data transparency partnership Courtauld 2030 GHG to ensure proposals are pragmatically scoped and feasible for the sector.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X			X		
61	Co-ordinate a Meat in a Net Zero World working group on the important issue of reducing GHG emissions from animal feed.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
62	Identify water risk hotspots in supply chains using the WWF Water Risk Filter or similar tools and use this information to prioritise catchments requiring investment in collective action.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
63	Set targets for action to reduce impact on water risk in their own operations AND supply chains.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X						
64	Target Set time-bound national and local targets for sustainable outcomes, such as reductions in pollutant concentrations.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X						
65	Enforce regulations for water governance and water quality to provide a threshold of good practice.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X						
66	Ensure that regulatory bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out inspections and act on non-compliance.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					65, 70, 89, 132, 136, 137
67	Adopt financial support mechanisms which reward farmers for good environmental practice including collaboration with their peers.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X	X				
68	Develop financial markets for environmental outcomes such as water quality and flood resilience.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X	X				
69	Monitor progress against indicators including water quality, water availability and flood risk.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan				X			
70	Evaluate water risks and the impact on national food security.	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X					
71	Strengthen guidance on company financial disclosures on water that require transparency on supply chain risks and actions taken; and agree common metrics for reporting	Courtauld 2030 - Food System Transformation Plan	X	X		X			
72	Deliver a cross-departmental food and farming strategy	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X				X		

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Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
73	Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all policy development	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X					X	33, 74, 76, 79, 85, 100, 101, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 159
74	Normalise sustainable diets through public procurement	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X	X		X	X		7
75	Mainstream progress in school food	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X	X		X			21, 26
76	Rebalance agricultural policy towards plant production and better meat and dairy	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X	X	X		X		
77	Develop an integrated land-use plan	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X	X				X	3
78	Local authorities improve access to fruit and vegetables	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X	X		X			
79	Make vegetables and better meat affordable	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap		X	X		X		
80	Assess future trade deals for their impact on human health and the environment	Eating Better: Better by half roadmap	X					X	4
81									
82									
83	Provide subsidies to farmers and landholders for restoring degraded or unproductive croplands and grazing lands to natural habitats and ecosystems, such as through set-asides, by rewilding forests and grasslands, or by re-wetting peatlands	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X		X				3

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
84	Designate and enforce the boundaries of forests, peatlands and grasslands through strong monitoring and policing, establishing penalties for transgressors and using independent judicial bodies and watchdog organizations	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					3
85	Phase out meat and milk production subsidies to remove incentives for farmers to increase production, to reduce the amount of land used for meat/dairy production	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X		X				
86	Develop investment, funding and accounting policies or tools (such as True Cost Accounting) within financial institutions that encourage conservation and rewilding by financing businesses that incorporate environmental outcomes into agriculture while withholding financing from companies driving land conversion	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X		X				
87	Institute taxes that support the production and purchase of deforestation-free products such as higher taxes on food products made with deforestation-linked commodities or removing taxes on forest-positive products	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			
88	Develop accountability, traceability, and transparency mechanisms to monitor and publicly report on businesses across major commodity supply chains (such as palm oil, beef, soy, cocoa, coffee, etc) that may be driving landscape conversion of intact lands and wilderness areas for agricultural production.	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			
89	Develop industry-wide standards, company policies, disclosure requirements and verification methods among agribusinesses and buyers along the supply chain to prevent future agricultural land conversion of remaining intact lands and wilderness areas	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X			X		
90	Pay farmers for delivering public environmental goods such as increasing soil carbon sequestration or using watershed protection strategies to reduce pollution from fertilizers and manure	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X	X				

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
91	Integrate low-carbon and renewable energy sources into all new government-led agriculture investment programmes, promoting technologies such as zero-energy cooling chambers, manure digesters, and solar- and wind-powered irrigation systems or water pumps, to reduce direct on-farm GHG emissions	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
92	Tax GHG emissions from agricultural inputs, technologies, and production methods (e.g., fertilizer production, machinery) to incentivize the adoption of innovations and practices that reduce emissions (e.g., renewable energy sources) and to drive a shift in production towards less GHG-intensive foods	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			
93	Adopt agriculture practices that improve soil quality and structure such as zero-till arable farming, cover cropping and mulching, manure recycling, crop rotations, rotational livestock grazing, and maintaining crop residues, to increase carbon sequestration, nutrient fixation and cycling, and to reduce soil erosion	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
94	Incorporate a diversity of trees and hedges within farms to provide habitats for biodiversity, support the delivery of ecosystems services, and to reduce overall GHG emissions through increased carbon capture	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
95	Adopt practices to increase water use efficiency in irrigated production systems, such as drip-fed precision irrigation, rainwater harvesting and storage, water capture and recycling, lowering evapotranspiration (for example through mulching), and selecting less water-intensive or more locally adapted crops, to reduce freshwater consumption	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
96	Tax non-point source agricultural pollution of waterways either through ambient taxes to be paid by all potential polluters in a region, or taxes on polluting material such as fertilisers, to reduce water pollution from Nitrogen and Phosphorous leakage	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			

Action Unique Identifier Number	Action in a Sentence	Source of action	1. Greener by Design	2. Addressing Practical Barriers	3. Affordable Across Society	4. Informing Choice	5. Build Public Acceptability	6. Vision and Roles	Similar or more specific related action
97	Adopt manure management practices in livestock production that reduce water contamination such as keeping manure away from areas with high groundwater, investing in riparian planting and fencing off waterways from cattle to reduce water contamination from manure	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
98	Adopt agriculture practices that reduce environmental damage from synthetic fertilisers such as crop rotation, cover cropping, using bio-fertilisers, using organic manure and compost, nutrient recycling, using fertilisers and plant species that secrete nitrification inhibitors, and precision fertiliser application technology, to increase soil fertility while reducing Nitrous Oxide emissions and water pollution	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
99	Adopt agriculture practices that reduce environmental damage from synthetic pesticides such as reducing their prophylactic use, using integrated pest management and natural predators, introducing bio-protectants, and precision pesticide application technology, to support the delivery of ecosystem services from biodiversity and to enhance soil biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
100	Adopt livestock management practices or technologies that reduce environmental damage from meat/dairy production such as alternative feeds that reduce land used for feed production, feed additives that can reduce Methane and Nitrous Oxide emissions, rotational grazing that reduces soil erosion, or silvopasture that provides natural habitats for biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
101	Adopt livestock management practices that increase productivity such as providing more nutrient-dense feed, better veterinary care, and raising improved or locally adapted animal breeds, to reduce the amount of land used for meat/dairy production and decrease Methane and Nitrous Oxide emissions	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						3

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102									
103	Incentivize farmers to share knowledge, tools, and equipment to support the transition towards desirable agricultural practices by adopting practices such as facilitating knowledge exchange, instituting public seed banks for crop rotations and cover cropping, or sharing zero-till machinery or mechanical weeders, to improve soil health and reduce GHG emissions and chemical pollution	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			
104	Invest in R&D and innovation in areas that would increase agricultural productivity while delivering on specific environmental targets such as regenerative agronomic practices and bio-fertilizers that could enhance soil health, or Internet of Things (IoT) technologies and water/nutrient recycling infrastructure that could increase precision and efficiency of input use, to reduce freshwater use and chemical pollution	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
105	Adopt strategies to ensure that fish stocks reach and maintain sustainable levels, such as closing off breeding areas, avoiding harvest during important breeding seasons, or placing key habitats under direct governmental control, to reduce overfishing and protect biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
106	Adopt strategies to limit the overexploitation of wild fisheries such as establishing access rights, setting total allowable catches, introducing gear restrictions and seasonal limits, to protect biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
107	Redirect capacity-enhancing subsidies that incentivize overfishing (such as fuel subsidies) towards technologies that maintain sustainable yield levels such as fleet control infrastructure, port improvements and new sensing, tracking, mapping, simulation, and ledger systems, to protect biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			

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108	Adopt aquaculture management practices that reduce environmental damage from fish farming such as using settling ponds, adopting alternative feeds to substitute crop-based feeds and fishmeal, converting aquaculture ponds to integrated aquaculture-agriculture operations, and improving fish health, to reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
109	Adopt aquaculture practices to increase productivity such as better health diagnostics, improved breeding techniques, better sanitation, improving feed conversion rates and using dietary supplements and vaccines to reduce overfishing for fishmeal and land use for crop-based feed production	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
110	Adopt aquaculture practices to restore degraded aquatic environments such as expanding the cultivation of bivalves or seaweed to increase water filtration and uptake of excess nutrients, or adding seaweed to aquaculture operations, to reduce ocean acidification and preserve biodiversity	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
111	Reduce food losses across the supply chain by improving harvesting techniques and on-farm and warehouse storage, developing cold chain infrastructure and packaging, or processing foods into products with a long shelf-life using traditional methods (such as canning, pickling, drying, etc.)	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
112	Invest in waste management infrastructure and recycling strategies that can separate and redistribute organic food waste for alternative uses such as composting for use by local farmers or converting to animal feeds or energy sources	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					
113	Adopt practices to better match food supply and demand, such as developing early forecasting systems, optimizing inventory management and procurement, or establishing new farm-to-fork virtual marketplaces, to reduce food loss and waste	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X					

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114	Deliver education and awareness programs to farmers (such as ag extension services, demonstration sites, training courses) on improved storage tactics and technologies, to reduce food losses	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			
115	Launch public awareness and communication campaigns about food waste to promote improved planning of purchases, understanding of 'best before' and 'use by' labels, storage practices, food preparation techniques, and knowledge of how to use leftovers, to reduce food waste	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability				X	X		
116	Incentivize food businesses to redistribute food surplus to food banks and those affected by food poverty by offering tax breaks for redistribution and clarifying liabilities in case the end consumers are harmed by the donated food	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			
117	Incentivize companies to measure food loss and waste and implement food loss and waste policies through demonstrating possible cost savings, strengthening company reporting and disclosure to investors, or reinforcing third-party monitoring	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X	X		X			
118	Reduce portion sizes in food outlets to simultaneously reduce market demand for excess food and reduce food waste at point-of-service by adopting practices such as offering smaller portion sizes at lower prices, or eliminating cafeteria-style trays	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X	X		
119	Adopt public food procurement guidelines that create a market for sustainably produced foods such as purchasing from producers who implement practices that regenerate soils and reduce fertilizer/pesticide use, to increase soil health and reduce chemical pollution, and purchasing from local urban and peri-urban producers to shorten supply chains and reduce transport-related GHG emissions	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			7

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120	Institute a border tax on food imports that have a high environmental cost, particularly carbon emissions, to discourage their consumption and reduce overall GHG emissions	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			
121	Launch public awareness and communication campaigns to reduce the demand for animal-source foods - particularly red meat - in populations that already display high levels of consumption	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability				X	X		
122	Establish labelling and certification of meat and other protein sources based on their GHG emissions and other environmental factors, to reduce the demand for animal sourced foods	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X	X		
123	Among populations that currently consume more than recommended daily amounts of animal-source foods, introduce retail taxes – prioritizing red meat and dairy – and remove taxes on or subsidize alternatives (such as legumes) to encourage smaller animal-source foods portion sizes and reduce animal-source foods overconsumption, while encouraging a switch to protein sources with lower environmental impacts	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X			
124	Adopt public food procurement guidelines to reduce purchases of animal-source foods - particularly red meat - in favour of other sources of proteins, to drive down the costs of alternative proteins and reduce the consumption of animal-source foods	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X			X	X		7
125	Among populations that currently consume more than recommended daily amounts of animal-source foods, limit the amount spent on advertising and marketing that promote overconsumption and redirect budgets towards increasing the desirability of plant-based foods and educating consumers on appropriate portion sizes	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability				X	X		
126	Invest in research and development on alternative protein sources such as plant-based proteins, insects, microbial or cultured proteins, to increase the pace of development and decrease costs to consumers	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability		X					

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127	Reformulate products that use animal ingredients with plant-based alternatives (such as incorporating vegetable fat into butter)	45 actions to orient food systems towards environmental sustainability	X						
128	Rebalance the cost of food so healthy options are the most affordable.	The Broken Plate 2023			X	X			
129	Ensure that price isn't a barrier to choosing more sustainable and healthy options, especially for people on low incomes.	The Broken Plate 2023			X				46, 79, 118, 128, 133, 141
130	Use local authority planning powers to prevent further proliferation of unhealthy fast-food outlets.	The Broken Plate 2023	X			X			
131	Increase transparency around the types of food businesses sell, with targets for boosting sales of healthy and sustainable foods.	The Broken Plate 2023		X		X	X		
132	we call for a strong and escalating regulatory baseline, and a level playing field, so that business activities which deplete public value are curtailed	Our Future in the Land	X					X	3
133	Levelling the playing field for a fair food system – good food must become good business	Our Future in the Land	X		X				
134	Carbon pricing	Our Future in the Land	X	X					
135	Mineral accounts	Our Future in the Land	X	X					
136	International antitrust regulation	Our Future in the Land	X			X			
137	An enhanced supply chain adjudicator	Our Future in the Land	X	X					

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138	Clear signposts for citizens	Our Future in the Land				X			
139	Net positive companies	Our Future in the Land	X						
140	Citizens assemblies on healthy and sustainable diets	Our Future in the Land				X	X		
141	Universal community food bond	Our Future in the Land					X		
142	Committing to grow the UK supply of fruit, vegetables, nuts, whole grains and developing and supporting UK sustainable agriculture	Our Future in the Land	X	X					
143	Implementing world-leading public procurement, fully using this powerful tool to transform the market	Our Future in the Land	X	X					7
144	Establishing collaborative community food plans to help implement national food strategies	Our Future in the Land	X	X			X		
145	Reconnecting people with nature to boost health and wellbeing	Our Future in the Land					X		
146	Designing a ten-year transition plan for sustainable, agroecological farming by 2030	Our Future in the Land	X	X				X	
147	Backing innovation by farmers to unleash a fourth agricultural revolution	Our Future in the Land	X	X			X		
148	Making sure every farmer can get trusted advice by training a cadre of peer mentors and farmer support networks	Our Future in the Land		X		X			
149	Boosting cooperation by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors	Our Future in the Land	X	X					

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150	Establishing a National Agroecology Development Bank (NADB) to accelerate a fair and sustainable transition	Our Future in the Land	X	X	X				
151	Establishing a national land use framework in England that inspires cooperation based on the public value of land, mediating and encouraging multipurpose uses	Our Future in the Land	X	X			X	X	3
152	Investing in rural infrastructure to underpin the regenerative economy	Our Future in the Land	X	X					
153	Creating more good work in the regenerative economy	Our Future in the Land	X		X				
154	Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need	Our Future in the Land	X	X	X				
155	Establishing a National Nature Service employs the energy of young people to kickstart the regenerative economy	Our Future in the Land	X	X			X		
156	Taking the Public Value Framework to the next level	Our Future in the Land	X	X				X	
157	Act on the analysis underpinning the NFS review's recommendations in areas where the 2022 Government food strategy did not go far enough	Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature						X	
158	Use the review and its evidence base as a starting point for a globally relevant analysis to inform the FAO 1.5°C food system pathway that commands widespread confidence and leads to policy change in countries across the world	Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature	X					X	
159	Reduce emissions with better choices for lower meat diets	Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature	X					X	
160	Diversify land use and adapt farming	Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature	X	X					3

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161	Cut public health costs by changing food industry incentives	Rethinking the food system for health, climate and nature	X			X			
162	Use environmental taxes and fiscal measures to incentivise and enable desired behaviours and outcomes	New group	X	X		X			87, 90, 92, 96, 103, 116, 107, 120, 122, 123, 134, 150
163	Incentivise and adopt sustainable farming practices	New group	X	X					93, 94, 95, 97, 98. 99. 100. 101, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110, 142, 148
Number of actions expressing principle			125	95	20	45	36	30	