

Green Choices in the UK Food System (OEP027-05)

Final Report



**Green Choices in the UK Food System (OEP027-05):
Final Report**

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1 Introduction

The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) is a public body that protects and improves the environment by holding government and other public authorities to account. Each year, the OEP reports to Parliament on Government's progress against its Environmental Improvement Plans (EIPs) and related environmental targets.

In its Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP23), Government highlighted several cross-cutting themes to support the delivery of its targets and commitments. One of these is Green Choices.

1.1 The Green Choices principles

There are six Green Choices principles, first introduced in the Net Zero Strategy (2021) and later adapted in EIP23. They are informed by behavioural science evidence and intended to make environmental improvement a shared endeavour across society. The 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.

1.2 The use of the Green Choices principles in the developing UK Food Strategy

The Green Choices principles are particularly relevant to the food system, given its wide environmental and social impacts and the distributed nature of decisions and responsibilities across government, businesses and individuals. In its annual report *Progress in improving the natural environment in England 2023/2024*¹, the OEP

¹ <https://www.theoep.org.uk/sites/default/files/reports-files/Progress%20in%20improving%20the%20natural%20environment%20in%20England%202023-2024.pdf>

included findings from supporting research it commissioned, *Green Choices in the UK Food System*², which analysed the extent to which the 2022 *Government Food Strategy*³ reflected the Green Choices principles. This study found that some principles were more prominent than others and there was room for a stronger application. Through a review of the wider literature on food policy, the study also identified 161 actions grouped into seven themes and 17 headline areas that could help strengthen the expression of the principles in future iterations of the Food Strategy.

Following this analysis, the OEP recommended in its 2023/24 progress report to Parliament that Defra revise the Food Strategy to make better use of the Green Choices principles and explain how it supports delivery of environmental targets and commitments. The Government partially accepted this recommendation, confirming that “the green choices principles are part of our [food] strategy”.

In July 2025, Government published its latest food strategy plans in the policy paper *A UK government food strategy for England, considering the wider UK food system*⁴ (‘the 2025 Food Strategy’). This sets out Government’s long-term vision and priority outcomes for the food system. By its own account, it represents an initial high-level framework, with the next key milestone being the development of indicators, metrics and implementation plans for each outcome.

1.3 Project aims

This project follows on from the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, seeking to analyse the extent to which the 2025 Food Strategy embodies the Green Choices principles and the additional actions identified in the previous report. It also aims to identify gaps and develop recommendations and areas for further analysis to strengthen Government’s application of the principles and its implementation plans. The findings will inform the OEP’s 2024/25 progress report to Parliament.

1.4 Our approach

In our analysis, we have considered the core articulation of the 2025 Food Strategy to be the main Food Strategy policy paper⁵ and its Annex A (outcome summaries)⁶. Together these two texts set out the ambitions, rationale for and priority outcomes of the new strategy. In contrast, Annex B presents the results of a mapping exercise linking

² <https://www.theoep.org.uk/commissioned-research/green-choices-uk-food-system>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-food-strategy>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-uk-government-food-strategy-for-england>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-uk-government-food-strategy-for-england/a-uk-government-food-strategy-for-england-considering-the-wider-uk-food-system>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-uk-government-food-strategy-for-england/annex-a-outcome-summaries>

existing government policies to the 2025 Food Strategy's priority outcomes.⁷ As these policies were not designed specifically as part of the current strategy, Annex B was not used as a primary source for assessing the expression of the Green Choices principles. Instead, we draw on it separately to supplement our analysis and insights where relevant.

Assessing the extent to which the 2025 Food Strategy expresses the Green Choices principles

We conducted a documentary analysis of the Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A to assess the extent to which these documents express the Green Choices principles. For each principle, we identified relevant statements of expression in the texts. For Principles 1-5, we then classified the strength of expression as:

- Weak – aspirational only, with no accompanying commitment or action.
- Medium – accompanied by an action, but delivery mechanisms are unclear.
- Strong – accompanied by a concrete, credible action that explains delivery and causal mechanisms.

In contrast, Principle 6 (vision and roles) was assessed on the clarity and quality with which the Strategy articulates its vision and the roles of different actors in delivering it, rather than on the presence of actions and accompanying detail. This mirrors the approach taken in the previous *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report which assessed the 2022 Government Food Strategy.

Assessing the extent to which actions identified in the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report are included in the 2025 Food Strategy

The previous *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report collates 161 actions from the wider literature that could be used to strengthen expressions of the Green Choices principles in the 2022 Food Strategy (see Table 5, Appendix 5.3). Section 3.2 of that report describes the consolidation exercise that was applied to remove duplication and address uneven levels of detail by distilling those 161 into 17 headline actions.

To examine the extent to which recommended actions from the previous *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report were reflected in the new Food Strategy, we used these 17 headline actions as well as an additional 11 individual actions which had not been categorised under any one of the headline actions during the previous consolidation exercise.

We defined an action as 'included' in the Food Strategy when there was clear evidence in the text that Government had either adopted or expressed a commitment to implement that action (e.g. using language such as "we will").

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-uk-government-food-strategy-for-england/annex-b-summary-of-existing-or-ongoing-uk-government-policy-across-the-outcomes>

We applied a keyword-led search to the Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A. For each of the total 28 actions, we searched systematically on a range of selected keywords, and reviewed the context of each match to verify their relevance and assess them as:

- Fully included – the action’s core purpose and mechanism are clearly adopted or implemented through a concrete policy commitment or programme.
- Partially included – one or more elements are present, or the purpose is acknowledged, but the full scope or ambition is not reflected.
- Not included – no meaningful evidence of the action or its components.

We complemented this by reviewing Annex B to identify policies which were judged likely to be relevant to each action, primarily based on their titles, with brief targeted checks of selected policy documents where clarification was needed.

1.5 Scope and limitations

In terms of scope, this report is not intended as a comprehensive critique of the Food Strategy itself, nor as an assessment of the usefulness of the Green Choices principles. The principles were taken at face value and used as an analytical lens to identify where, and to what extent, they are expressed in the 2025 Food Strategy – as this is Government’s stated intent.

Our review is also limited to the direct content of the 2025 Food Strategy and its annexes. As a high-level strategic document, the Food Strategy often sets out broad ambitions without detailing how these will be delivered (or by whom). Our conclusions therefore reflect only what is contained in the Strategy and annexes, interpreted through the subject expertise of the project team. It was not within the scope of this project to assess the implementation, effectiveness, or adequacy of individual policies (such as those listed in Annex B).

1.6 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report contains three main sections. Section 2 examines the extent to which the Green Choices principles are expressed in the 2025 Food Strategy, while Section 3 assesses how far the actions identified in the *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report are reflected in the Strategy. Section 4 draws together the findings to discuss key themes, reflect on the use of the Green Choices principles as an analytical lens, and present conclusions and opportunities for further analysis. More detailed results tables that underpin the analysis can be found in Appendix A.

2 To what extent are the Green Choices principles expressed in the 2025 Food Strategy?

The six Green Choices principles were first articulated in the Net Zero Strategy (2021) to help ensure that environmental improvement is a shared endeavour across society. They were designed as a tool to guide and support Government to create conditions that enable individuals, businesses and communities to shape and make choices that support the transition to a more environmentally sustainable future.

This section assesses the extent to which those principles are expressed in the 2025 Food Strategy. Below, the principles are grouped into three overarching categories that reflect different ways by which Government can enable and support greener choices:

1. Greener by design (Principle 1): reducing the ask on individuals
2. Influencing behaviour (Principles 2–4): making green choices easier and more affordable
3. Collaborative design (Principles 5–6): fostering participation and shared vision to strengthen design and implementation.

The analysis below focuses on the main Food Strategy policy paper and its Annex A (Outcome summaries) since these two documents constitute the core articulation of the Food Strategy, setting out its vision, rationale and priority outcomes.

2.1 Greener by design (Principle 1)

Government and business decisions shape the choices available to individuals, so large-scale environmental improvement will depend on appropriate regulation, infrastructure and market signals that make greener choices the default or easiest option. The rationale behind ‘Greener by design’ is that reducing the ‘ask’ on individuals ensures that progress towards net zero and environmental goals is fair and feasible, delivered through system-level design rather than relying on individual motivation.

Below we review the 2025 Food Strategy for expressions of Principle 1 to explore: *To what extent is the Food Strategy reducing the ask on individuals by sending clear regulatory signals and targeting measures at government, local authorities, and business to deliver greener outcomes?*

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.

Across the Food Strategy policy paper, Principle 1 is expressed primarily through broad aspirations to strengthen the policy and regulatory environment rather than through specific commitments or actions. The Strategy acknowledges the market failures that

result in environmentally damaging practices and emphasises the need for government to “create the right environment”, correct incentives, and align regulatory drivers to support investment in sustainability. However, the document stops short of detailing concrete delivery mechanisms – for example, how environmental costs will be internalised, which regulations will be reformed, or how compliance will be monitored.

Within Annex A, several outcomes refer to elements of this principle:

- **Outcome 1** refers to shifting diets towards more environmentally sustainable options and to the importance of a food industry “incentivised” to channel investment and marketing budgets towards these products. However, these aspirations are framed tentatively, using language such as “*could*” and “*potentially*”, and lack plans for regulatory or fiscal mechanisms that would drive such a shift.
- **Outcome 3** highlights the role of transparency, standards and regulation in creating a “level playing field” for sustainable business practices, but again does not specify how this will be achieved.
- **Outcome 5** notes that government procurement policy will favour products certified to high environmental standards.
- **Outcome 6** outlines ambitions to maintain current standards and “promote high sustainable standards” – for example through the Trade and Agriculture Commission’s scrutiny of trade deals.

While the principle of making society greener by design is acknowledged across both the main policy paper and Annex A, it is expressed more as a conceptual orientation than as an operational commitment. The documents highlight the need for alignment, transparency and standards, but are unclear on how clear regulatory signals will be sent or how the behavioural ask on individuals will be reduced.

2.2 Influencing behaviour (Principles 2-4)

In its Net Zero Strategy, Government highlights reducing practical barriers, improving affordability and providing clearer information to individuals as central to supporting the behaviour change needed for the transition to environmental sustainability. The rationale behind ‘Influencing behaviour’, encompassing Principles 2-4, is that that individuals are more likely to make greener choices when those choices are accessible, affordable and clearly understood.

Below we review the 2025 Food Strategy for expressions of Principles 2-4 to explore: *To what extent does the Food Strategy reduce practical barriers, improve affordability, and provide clearer information to promote food choices that are better for the environment?*

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

In the Food Strategy policy paper, this principle is only partly expressed. The text acknowledges that there are significant practical barriers to greener practices –

including market incentives that favour less sustainable production and uncertainty for businesses about future policy direction – yet the solutions proposed to address these remain broad and conceptual.

The Strategy’s reference to “supporting and creating the right environment” and “[setting] a clear direction” signals awareness of a role for government in addressing barriers to investment. However, few tangible mechanisms are outlined to remove or mitigate specific operational, financial, or informational barriers. There is little detail, for example, on how regulation, funding, or infrastructure will be adapted to make sustainable choices easier or cheaper.

Within Annex A, references to practical barriers appear sporadically across several outcomes, and generally in tentative terms:

- **Outcome 1** briefly recognises that clear and well-phased policy requirements can reduce business costs and risks, indirectly addressing the practical barrier of uncertainty. Yet, as with the main Food Strategy policy paper, such references are framed as possibilities rather than commitments.
- **Outcome 3** points to innovation and technology as means for businesses to make data-driven decisions that deliver environmental and health benefits competitively, addressing information and capability barriers – though again without specifying delivery routes or resources.
- **Outcome 4** touches on investment and skills shortages as obstacles to sustainable innovation, implicitly recognising financial and capacity barriers but offering few concrete mechanisms to overcome them.
- **Outcome 5** extends the lens internationally, referencing the use of the UK’s Official Development Assistance portfolio to support sustainable agriculture and transformation of the global food system. However, Strategy does not explicitly articulate the ways in which this investment would help remove practical barriers to sustainable practice within, or connected to, the UK food system.
- **Outcome 6** offers slightly stronger expression, identifying trade and market frameworks as levers that can lower barriers to sustainable growth by ensuring fair competition and environmental safeguards.

Across these documents, the principle is weakly expressed: some barriers are identified and there is some discussion on enabling conditions such as innovation, investment and information, but expressed only in tentative terms, and little to no detail about how barriers will be addressed. To express this principle more fully, the Strategy would need to both (a) identify the key practical barriers and the actors affected, and (b) outline how these would be removed or reduced in practice.

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

In the Food Strategy policy paper, the concept of affordability features prominently but not in the sense intended by this principle. There are several references to affordability,

including household affordability (especially for vulnerable groups) and business affordability (reducing costs, correcting market failures). Some phrasing links affordability with sustainability – for example, aspirations for a “good food cycle” that supports more sustainable production and makes good food more affordable. However, the relationship between affordability and sustainability is only implied. The Strategy’s focus is largely on affordability and access as economic and social goals with no explanation of how environmentally sustainable options might be made more affordable, nor how it will support this across all sectors of society.

Within **Annex A**, the expression of this principle remains limited and indirect.

- **Outcome 1** states that “under the good food cycle, the food industry will be incentivised to channel resources, investment, and marketing budgets towards healthier and more environmentally sustainable foods that consumers will want and can afford to buy”. However, it does not detail how affordability will be achieved, nor does it explicitly target the affordability of greener choices as a policy goal in its own right.
- **Outcome 2** focuses on maintaining affordability for consumers, noting the risk that green- or health-focused policies could increase costs and reduce access to food. It also highlights the interplay between climate change and food prices, recognising that inaction on sustainability can itself threaten long-term affordability.
- **Outcome 3** links sector profitability to the capacity to invest in sustainability, suggesting that a robust, economically healthy food sector will be “better placed [...] to contribute to better health and sustainability outcomes”.
- **Outcome 5** touches on affordability in the context of the circular economy, arguing that preventing waste can save money while reducing pressure on the environment.

Overall, the treatment of affordability across the policy paper and Annex A is weak. Both documents acknowledge links between efficiency, waste reduction and affordability. However, affordability is framed as a co-benefit of resource efficiency rather than as a means of making green action easier or more attractive than alternatives. Although affordability is recognised as a key concern for households and businesses, there is little indication of how government will act to reduce the financial barriers to sustainable production and consumption. The underlying assumption appears to be that market growth and innovation will eventually make greener options cheaper, rather than designing policy interventions to make them more affordable, and crucially, comparatively so, from the outset.

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.

In the policy paper, the expression of this principle is weak. Although the text recognises knowledge and skills as elements that can help shift consumer behaviour towards healthier and more sustainable diets, it does not set out or elaborate on any

proposed mechanisms. References to transparency and data remain aspirational and focused more on health and productivity than environmental impact.

Within Annex A, the treatment of Principle 4 is partial and largely indirect:

- **Outcome 1** touches on how marketing, product availability and product reformulation (when manufacturers change a product's ingredients or production process) might help shape consumer choices at the broadest level, but makes no explicit corresponding commitment to supporting the sharing of information that would help consumers or businesses make informed greener choices.
- **Outcome 3** engages more directly with the business side of informed choice, referring to the need for greater transparency and traceability within supply chains, and for “data-driven decisions” that can help firms deliver environmental and resilience benefits competitively. Here the Strategy also references “UK food regulations, labelling and standards” as mechanisms to maintain a level playing field for businesses. These could, in principle, also support more informed consumer choices.
- **Outcome 10** frames knowledge and food literacy as central to revitalising food culture. It highlights initiatives such as local food partnerships, community education, and national campaigns like ‘Start for Life’ and ‘Healthier Families’ that improve food knowledge and confidence. While these support informed engagement with food, their emphasis is on nutrition and cultural connection rather than on environmental awareness or sustainability information. The Strategy also highlights civil society initiatives such as Veg Power, TasteEd, Chefs in Schools, Incredible Edible, the Ministry of Food and Sustainable Food Places, which do engage with sustainability alongside health and food culture. However, this is framed tentatively as “there are opportunities to collaborate with”, rather than as concrete goals or plans.

Overall, Principle 4 is weakly expressed across the Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A. Both documents articulate the importance of information, knowledge and transparency as enabling conditions for change, yet neither sets out explicit concrete plans to provide or require environmental-impact information to inform choices by individuals or businesses. The Food Data Transparency Partnership is not named in the Food Strategy policy paper nor Annex A (but is one of the policies listed in Annex B). The documents exhibit some conceptual alignment with the principle, expressing similar values and assumptions, but lack specific actionable commitments to bring it into effect.

2.3 Collaborative behaviour (Principles 5-6)

Transforming the food system requires broad participation, trust and coordination across government, industry, and civil society. The rationale behind Principles 5 and 6 is that environmental improvement is most effective and sustained when change is shaped and delivered collaboratively with those affected. Clarity of vision and of who does what also builds accountability, trust and further buy-in.

Below we review the 2025 Food Strategy for expressions of Principles 5–6 to explore: *To what extent does the 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?*

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

This principle is moderately expressed in the Food Strategy policy paper, with examples of emphasis on inclusion, engagement, and consultation, though without a clear mechanism for reaching the most marginalised groups. The Strategy describes how its development was informed by “over 400 voices from across the food system”, including farmers, businesses, citizens and experts, and commits to ongoing engagement through the ‘Citizen Advisory Council’ and ‘Food Strategy Advisory Board’, for example. It also pledges to “continue to listen, learn and act” as implementation plans evolve. References to “diverse voices” and “the most vulnerable” signal an intent to make policymaking more inclusive, but the Strategy stops short of outlining how the most marginalised will be engaged, or how this engagement will influence the direction of policy development and delivery.

Within Annex A, expressions of this principle are far more limited across the outcomes:

- **Outcome 5** notes that the forthcoming *Circular Economy Strategy* will be published for consultation.
- **Outcome 9** The idea of “strong and positive food cultures” suggests societal engagement and shared norms that support acceptability. While the text doesn’t explicitly mention participation in policy and decision-making, it is about building cultural legitimacy and buy-in for sustainable food choices.
- **Outcome 10** highlights community-led and place-based initiatives. It references local and community restaurants, partnerships between schools and food businesses, and citizen-led initiatives such as ‘Incredible Edible’, ‘Chefs in Schools’ and ‘Veg Power’.

Overall, the Strategy signals an intent to be more inclusive in tone and process, but the approach to engagement remains relatively narrow and largely consultative. Annex A in particular provides limited evidence of expression of this principle across the priority outcomes. While the Strategy offers some examples of ongoing and planned engagement activity, efforts to increase participation in policy design and implementation remain light and largely top-down.

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

The Food Strategy policy paper articulates a clear vision for the food system of the future, describing the goal of a “healthier, more affordable, sustainable and resilient” food system. Multiple actors are named – government, business, farmers,

local authorities, the devolved governments, and citizens – and broad expectations are set for their contributions: government will set direction and create enabling conditions; businesses will innovate, reformulate and invest; and citizens are expected to make healthier and more sustainable choices. However, while the *who* is clearer, the *how* remains vague. The Strategy does not specify which departments, mechanisms or incentives will operationalise government’s role. It provides a clear overarching vision but a limited account of the mechanisms to achieve it.

Within Annex A, this principle is expressed in most outcomes:

- **Outcome 1** articulates a clear, though tentative, vision of “an improved food environment that supports healthier and more environmentally sustainable food sales”. It names key actors – government, consumers, and the food industry – but deals in hypotheticals (“could”, “can”, “potentially”), rather than concrete aims or commitments.
- **Outcome 3** sets out the contribution of SMEs, noting their agility and potential to drive innovation and resilience within the sector, but provides little detail on how these contributions will be supported or enabled.
- **Outcome 5** highlights the need for leadership, direction and collaboration to protect natural systems and secure sustainable food supply. However, the Strategy does not elaborate on what ‘leadership’ entails or who is expected to provide it, and how direction and coordination will be achieved remains unclear.
- **Outcome 6** outlines a vision to uphold environmental and welfare standards while expanding exports.
- **Outcome 7** is almost entirely vision, describing what a resilient domestic food system should look like but offering little indication of the mechanisms or actors that will bring it about.
- **Outcome 9** describes a vision in which local initiatives and strong food cultures are expected to support healthier, more sustainable practices, but does not explain how this will be achieved.
- **Outcome 10** highlights shared roles at the community level, describing how local businesses, partnerships and educational initiatives can strengthen local food systems and reduce waste. However, these efforts are largely portrayed as voluntary or locally driven, with unclear scope for informing policy design or implementation.

Overall, there is a clear sense of direction and a broad understanding of who should act, but the documents generally fall short of clarifying how these will be delivered.

2.4 Summary of strengths, weaknesses and gaps

The table below summarises the extent to which the Green Choices principles are reflected in each of the ten priority outcomes in the 2025 Food Strategy, based on Annex A.

2025 Food Strategy priority outcomes		Green Choices principles					
		Greener by design	Influencing behaviour			Collaborative design	
		1: Greener by design	2: Addressing practical barriers	3: Affordable across society	4: Informing choice	5: Engagement and acceptability	6: Vision and roles
1	An improved food environment that supports healthier and more environmentally sustainable food sales	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	0	Medium
2	Access for all to safe, affordable, healthy, convenient and appealing food options	0	0	Weak	0	0	0
3	Conditions for the food sector to thrive and grow sustainably, including investment in innovation, and productivity, and fairer, more transparent supply chains	Weak	Weak	Weak	Medium	0	Weak
4	Food sector attracts talent and develops skilled workforce in every region	0	Weak	0	0	0	0
5	Food supply is environmentally sustainable, with high animal welfare standards, and waste is reduced	Medium	Weak	Weak	0	Medium	Weak
6	Trade supports environmentally sustainable growth, upholds British standards and expands export opportunities	Medium	Medium	0	0	0	Medium
7	Resilient domestic production for a secure supply of healthy food	0	0	0	0	0	Weak
8	Greater preparedness for supply chain shocks, disruption and impacts of chronic risks	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Celebrated and valued UK, regional and local food cultures	0	0	0	0	Weak	Weak
10	People are more connected to their local food systems and have the confidence knowledge and skills to cook and eat healthily	0	0	0	Weak	Medium	Weak

The Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A are strongest in their articulation of Principle 6 (vision and roles). Together, they set out a clear and coherent vision for a healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system. This is underpinned by an explicit definition of sustainable growth as the ability to “grow over the long term and in a way that protects and restores our environment, health and society on which the

economy depends”. The documents show clear thinking about the outcomes Government wants to achieve and they acknowledge many of the trade-offs and interdependencies between health, sustainability and resilience. Multiple actors are named (government, business, farmers, local authorities and citizens) with some broad roles assigned to each.

However, much of this remains at a very aspirational level in broad terms with little detail around the practical means of delivery. Where causal chains – the links between actions and outcomes – are implied, key gaps and assumptions are not acknowledged (for example, that growth in the food sector will lead to greater investment in more sustainable production). Businesses are expected to bear much of the cost of change, but with little indication of how this will be incentivised or supported.

The Strategy recognises the need to make society greener by design (Principle 1), aligning regulation, incentives and market conditions to support sustainability, but remains broad in its ambitions and offers little indication of how in practice it might make greener behaviour the easier or default choice. It also acknowledges the importance of addressing practical barriers across the food system, but offers little detail around how to reduce the practical barriers faced by businesses and citizens. These gaps reinforce the wider absence of detail about how the Strategy’s vision will translate into delivery. Much of the language in the Strategy is also tentative (“could”, “can”, “could potentially”) – framing ideas as options rather than plans.

There is some evidence of Principle 5 (engagement and participation), particularly in the Food Strategy policy paper’s references to consultation and including “diverse voices” and “the most vulnerable.” However, engagement could be much stronger, both in depth and breadth. The documents say little about how the most marginalised will be reached or how insights from engagement will shape delivery. Indeed, engagement appears to be framed primarily as a means of building support for the strategy rather than shaping its development or delivery. Stronger, more inclusive engagement, both with the strategy but also crucially at the local level of decision-making and delivery and local initiatives, would likely help to surface some of the gaps and assumptions in the current strategy.

Principle 4 (informing choice) is also weakly represented. Both the policy paper and Annex A highlight transparency, data and knowledge as enablers of change but provide little in the way of clear mechanisms, initiatives or tools that would offer people and businesses information needed to make informed decisions.

The Strategy frequently references affordability but almost entirely in relation to healthy and appealing food options rather than the affordability of green action (Principle 3). It rests on the assumptions that a thriving domestic food sector will,

It rests on the assumptions that a thriving food sector will, by extension, drive investment in more environmentally sustainable practices and choices, and that British or domestic production is inherently more environmentally sustainable. This logic is not

unpacked, and it does not elaborate on how the relative cost of greener choices might be reduced for businesses or consumers.

Overall, the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A demonstrate a fairly clear vision and framing of desired outcomes, but they fall short of explaining how those outcomes will be achieved, by whom, and through what mechanisms. The result is a distinct improvement on the 2022 Food Strategy in terms of its sense of direction, but lacks operational clarity on the pathways to achieving that vision.

3 To what extent are the actions identified in the Green Choices in the UK Food System report included in the 2025 Food Strategy?

This section revisits the recommended actions in the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, which drew on a review of the wider literature on food policy to identify actions that could strengthen the expression of the Green Choices principles in the 2022 *Government Food Strategy*. 161 individual actions were identified and consolidated into 17 headline actions organised under seven overarching themes.

In this section, we assess the extent to which these actions are included in the 2025 Food Strategy, using the same seven overarching themes as a structure for presenting results. We also include an additional set of 11 individual actions that were not grouped under any of the headline actions in the 2024 report, making a total of 28 actions.

The results below present the findings from a keyword-led review of the Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A (taken together as the main articulation of the strategy) to identify whether and to what extent the recommended actions are included. Each action is also accompanied by a list of any Annex B policies judged to be potentially relevant (although this is indicative only since the scope of our analysis did not extend to assessing these policies in detail).

3.1 Theme 1: High-level strategy and governance

Unique identifier ⁸	Action	Included in the Food Strategy ⁹	Relevant Annex B policies identified
3	Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.	Partially included	Yes

⁸ This refers to the unique identifier number given to each recommended action in the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report.

⁹ In either the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper or Annex A

19	A joint food systems cross-government commission to bring considerations of population and planetary health together	Partially included	No
73	Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all policy development	Partially included	Yes

All three of the recommended actions from the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report under the high-level strategy and governance theme are partially included in the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A.

References to the Land Use Framework in the policy paper and Annex A lack detail and omit the proposed three-compartment model, but this action is also backed up by a host of further potentially relevant policies in Annex B. There are some examples in the Strategy of what is considered to be a healthy and sustainable diet informing policy direction for production, with a wide range of further examples in Annex B.

However, the Strategy only broadly references the need for a cross-government approach, with no relevant policies identified in Annex B.

3.2 Theme 2: Targets, standards and regulations

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
4	Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.	Partially included	Yes
8	Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.	Partially included	Yes
24	Implement existing legislation on junk food advertising and volume promotions	Partially included	Yes
66	Ensure that regulatory bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out inspections and act on non-compliance.	Partially included	No

All four recommended actions under the targets, standards and regulations theme are partially included in the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A.

There is good conceptual overlap on setting minimum standards for trade, with several references to promoting “high sustainable standards”, “not lowering food standards” and upholding UK standards through trade scrutiny mechanisms. However, the Strategy gives no detail on the standards themselves. This action overlaps with several relevant Annex B policies, including the Trade Strategy, Tariffs and Trade Deals, and the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Commitments or plans to set clear

targets are expressed only in broad terms with no mention of specific legislation, although a number of Annex B policies such as the Environmental Improvement Plan and Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan appear to align. The Strategy touches on implementing existing advertising restrictions, but frames them as possible options rather than firm commitments. Annex B provides clearer coverage of this action through three policies including restrictions on promotions of less healthy foods.

However, while the Strategy mentions regulatory bodies, it doesn't explicitly address resourcing, and no corresponding policies were identified in Annex B.

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

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
129	Ensure that price isn't a barrier to choosing more sustainable and healthy options, especially for people on low incomes.	Partially included	Yes
162	Use environmental taxes and fiscal measures to incentivise and enable desired behaviours and outcomes	Not included	Yes

Only one of the two recommended actions under the financial instruments theme is included in the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper and Annex A, and only partially so.

While the Strategy highlights affordability as a key concern it focuses largely on making healthier food options – rather than greener choices – more affordable. Language is largely aspirational, and when sustainability is mentioned alongside affordability, there is no detail about the mechanisms by which government plans to ensure that price is not a barrier. Annex B contains a range of policies relevant to improving affordability of food in general including: Healthy Start, Free School Meals, and the Household Support Fund.

While there are no explicit references in the Strategy to any environmental taxes or fiscal measures, Annex B lists a few potentially relevant policies such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the Circular Economy Strategy.

3.4 Theme 4: Data and innovation

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
5	Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.	Partially included	Yes

6	Create a National Food System Data programme.	Not included	Yes
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Of the two recommended actions under the data and innovation theme, only one is partially included in the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper or Annex A.

The Strategy recognises the importance of innovation but does not specify any direct government investment in innovation. The main focus is on growing the skilled workforce and encouraging private investment in the food sector. Annex B includes several policies aligned with this goal, such as the Farming Innovation Programme, Made Smarter, and the FSA Food Innovation Hub, providing some further evidence of inclusion of this action.

There is no mention of a national food system data programme in the policy paper or Annex A, although it touches on the broader ambition of improved transparency and coordination. Annex B however explicitly mentions the Food Data Transparency Partnership and two other policies with potential overlap.

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

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
7	Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.	Included	Yes
36	Support local authorities in adopting food partnerships and plans	Partially included	Yes
75	Mainstream progress in school food	Partially included	Yes

All three recommended actions under the local action and food citizenship theme are at least partially included.

The Strategy explicitly commits to strengthening government procurement rules to ensure taxpayer money supports healthy and sustainable food, which is also reinforced by Annex B policies such as the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services and School Food Standards. Out of the 28 recommended actions taken from the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, this is the only action deemed to be fully included in the 2025 Food Strategy,

Some parts of the Strategy indicated conceptual alignment with the importance of local food partnerships and plans and involving local authorities, but lacked detail and any commitment to action. Annex B provides some stronger evidence relevant to this action through Local Food Strategies and Plans and the Plan for Neighbourhoods.

The inclusion of the action to mainstream progress in school food is very weak; schools receive minimal attention in the Strategy, limited to a couple of passing references to the role of schools and education in improving the food system, with no detail. However, Annex B includes a suite of relevant measures including Free School Meals, School Food Standards, and Breakfast and Fruit Schemes, suggesting that this action is included in policy plans even though there is weak evidence of it in the Strategy.

3.6 Theme 6: Sustainable farming practice

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
27	Introduce a horticulture strategy to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption	Partially included	Yes
163	Incentivise and adopt sustainable farming practices	Partially included	Yes

Both recommended actions under the sustainable farming practice theme are partially included.

The Strategy refers broadly to increasing fruit and vegetable production and supporting more sustainable farming but provides no specific commitment to a horticulture strategy. Annex B lists the Farming Roadmap, which may contribute indirectly but does not address this action in full.

Similarly, there are references in the Strategy to sustainable farming practices, linking them to productivity, resilience, and environmental outcomes, but with little detail about exactly how these will be incentivised. Annex B includes a wide range of relevant measures – such as ELMS, the Farming Roadmap, the Land Use Framework, and the Farming Innovation Programme – demonstrating strong policy activity in this area, even though it is not coherently articulated in the Strategy itself.

3.7 Theme 7: Waste

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
38	Food Waste Reduction Roadmap – ‘Target Measure Act’ approach, to tackle food waste across the whole value chain, including household	Partially included	Yes

The Strategy gives some indication of plans to tackle food waste across the value chain but does not provide details of what or how. Annex B coverage is likely to come

predominantly from the forthcoming Circular Economy Strategy, although this will depend to some extent on the specific details.

3.8 Additional individual actions

Unique identifier	Action	Included in the Food Strategy	Relevant Annex B policies identified
41	Guardians of Grub – catalysing moments of transformation through the 3 step model ‘Identify/Catalyse/Scale’	N/A	N/A
135	Mineral accounts	Not included	No
138	Clear signposts for citizens	Partially included	Yes
139	Net positive companies	Partially included	Yes
145	Reconnecting people with nature to boost health and wellbeing	Partially included	No
149	Boosting cooperation by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors	Not included	Yes
153	Creating more good work in the regenerative economy	Partially included	Yes
154	Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need	Not included	Yes
155	Establishing a National Nature Service employs the energy of young people to kickstart the regenerative economy	Not included	No
156	Taking the Public Value Framework to the next level	Not included	No
157	Act on the analysis underpinning the NFS review’s recommendations in areas where the 2022 Government food strategy did not go far enough	N/A	N/A

Of the 11 additional actions reviewed that were not grouped under any of the headline themes in the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, two were excluded from the analysis: as an existing independent voluntary initiative, Guardians of Grub was deemed out of scope and ‘act on the analysis underpinning the NFS review’s recommendations’ is covered under the report’s actions 159-161.

Of the remaining nine actions, five are not included and four are partially included in the Strategy (policy paper and Annex A).

Clearer signposting for citizens is only partially included in the Strategy and indirectly at best. Relevant sections focus narrowly on changes that businesses might make to how

they advertise and market products to consumers. These are framed tentatively and lack detail on which businesses would be incentivised to make changes, and how. Annex B, however, provides more detail with specific examples of marketing policies (e.g. the 9pm watershed for less healthy food or drink advertising on TV and Restrictions on promotions of less healthy foods) as well as policies more directly related to information provision (e.g. Food Data Transparency Partnership, Food labelling, and the Eatwell Guide).

An ambition for net positive companies¹⁰ is only weakly and indirectly included in the Strategy, through high-level statements about creating the conditions for businesses to invest in more sustainable production and supply, and through reference to the agrifood sector being one of six sectors prioritised for interventions in the forthcoming *Circular Economy Strategy*.

Although reconnecting people with nature aligns conceptually with Outcome 10 (“connecting individuals with their local food systems”), the Strategy does not make this connection explicit, and there are no supporting policies identified in Annex B.

In terms of labour and skills, the Strategy’s focus is on growing the workforce in order to boost productivity, investment and innovation, rather than creating work in the regenerative economy *per se*. Annex B lists a number of related initiatives such as Skills England, Making Work Pay, and the forthcoming Circular Economy Strategy, elements of which may support this action more directly.

Five actions are not included in the Strategy: Mineral accounts, Boosting cooperation by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors, Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need, Establishing a National Nature Service, and Taking the Public Value Framework to the next level. Of these, corresponding Annex B policies were identified for only two: Boosting cooperation by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors (Double Mutuals and Co-operative Sector) and Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need (the Land Use Framework).

3.9 Summary of strengths, weaknesses and gaps

Of the 28 actions reviewed from the *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, only one – “strengthen government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food” – is explicitly fully included in the 2025 Food Strategy. The majority of actions are partially included, often reflected as broad intentions or through conceptual alignment with the rationale underpinning the action, rather than through specific, actionable commitments.

¹⁰ “Companies that embed ‘net positive’ strategies take responsibility for finding ways of designing a circular economy that adds to the planet’s capacity to sustain life, not merely reducing how much we extract” ([Our Future in the Land](#), p25)

Of the 28 actions, seven are not included, including actions around fiscal measures, data infrastructure, producer cooperation initiatives and rural housing. However, most of these actions are at least partially supported by one or more policies in Annex B. This points to more detailed thinking about potential delivery mechanisms than is currently articulated in the main Strategy (the policy paper and Annex A). Only three of these actions – Mineral accounts, Establishing a National Nature Service, and Taking the Public Value Framework to the next level – lack any corresponding policies in Annex B.

Overall, while the 2025 Food Strategy reflects many of the 28 actions taken from the *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report, it does so with limited depth. In most cases, the Strategy captures the spirit or rationale behind an action with language that is conceptually aligned, but it falls short of setting specific, actionable goals and commitments.

The language used to describe actions is often tentative (“could”, “can”, “might”) rather than committing (‘we will’, ‘we plan to’). Even where commitments are made, they lack operational detail or measurable targets (e.g. ‘by doing...’).

Annex B provides a more complete picture of delivery, with many policies judged as likely relevant to the actions. These fill some of the gaps in the Strategy’s articulation. However, even where the policy coverage of actions appears relatively good, the Strategy itself largely fails to connect these mechanisms to its aims and priority outcomes.

4 Discussion and conclusions

4.1 General reflections

On first reading, the 2025 Food Strategy and its annexes represent a clear step forward from the previous 2022 Food Strategy, setting out an explicit vision for the food system. This articulation of vision and priority outcomes is one of its main strengths.

However, when examined through the Green Choices principles framework, the picture is less positive. Across most principles, the analysis highlights limited evidence of concrete actions or anticipated delivery mechanisms. Engagement, co-design and public acceptability (core elements of Principle 5) are particularly underdeveloped, even though both the Net Zero Strategy and wider systems approaches emphasise their importance for steering change in a complex system. And although this iteration marks encouraging progress compared to the 2022 Food Strategy, it still falls short on detail; the 2025 Strategy conveys many of the right aspirations but offers little sense of how they will be realised.

These weaknesses may largely reflect the Strategy’s stage of development. It sets a broad direction of travel but stops short of committing to the specific steps, responsibilities and resources needed to deliver that change. This may be acceptable

for a high-level strategy at this stage – but it means that the next step of the food strategy plans expected in Spring 2026 will be the real test of progress. The next iteration will need to move from “a case for action” towards “the detail of action”, with clearer articulation of how the Strategy’s ambitions will be achieved.

Even without delivery detail, a good high-level strategy can still convey clear and strong goal-oriented commitments. For example, the Dimpleby National Food Strategy demonstrated this through its recommended action to “end the junk food cycle”, offering a clear and ambitious, qualitative direction of travel. By contrast, while the 2025 Food Strategy sets out an overarching vision and priority outcomes, these remain relatively broad. The Strategy could be stronger in articulating more specific, goal-oriented commitments that signal what success looks like and make it easier to track and hold Government to account for delivery.

We note that several of the actions and delivery mechanisms that appear absent from the main articulation of the Strategy (the policy paper and Annex A) are current priorities nonetheless, and many of these are captured in Annex B. While relevant activity is underway, the Strategy itself fails to make these links explicit or to show how existing programmes collectively contribute to its overarching goals.

Indeed, much of the Strategy’s intent remains implicit rather than explicit. While it makes some of the ‘right noises’ and acknowledges several trade-offs, the reader is often left to infer priorities and what actions might support the different outcomes. This lack of explicitness risks ambiguity about direction and intended solutions. This is an important concern for a policy challenge of this size and nature that requires shared understanding and coordination both across government and across different sectors and society.

The divergence between the Strategy’s strong vision yet weak articulation of the Green Choices principles invites reflection on whether the principles provide an appropriate lens for analysing the Food Strategy. In the next section we reflect on the use of the Green Choices principles as an analytical lens and consider how the analysis and or the principles themselves could be developed or applied more effectively.

4.2 Reflections on the use of the Green Choices principles as an analytical lens

The Green Choices principles have provided a useful framework for systematically processing and interpreting the food strategies; they have offered a structured way to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps that might not have been apparent from a straightforward reading.

At the same time, the exercise has exposed certain limitations in applying the Green Choices principles as an analytical lens for assessing a high-level strategic document. The principles were originally developed to guide policy design and implementation rather than to assess a system-level strategy. While this framework provides a useful

structure for highlighting alignment and gaps with the Green Choices principles, it offers little analytical depth in relation to behavioural insights or the processes that drive behaviour and system change.

The principles themselves are open to interpretation and would benefit from a clearer definition of what is intended by ‘green’. For example, “Greener by Design” could be understood as a call to radically reshape production and consumption systems, or more narrowly as encouraging minor consumer-facing nudges and small incremental steps. This ambiguity presents challenges for using the Green Choices principles (as currently expressed) as an evaluative (or policy development) tool.

Finally, there is also a question of scope and appropriateness. The Green Choices principles are largely framed around the behaviours and choices of individuals and consumers. This focus makes them less suited to exploring the wider structural, economic and governance conditions that shape those choices, such as the viability of farming livelihoods, patterns of land ownership, differing levels of (economic, political or narrative) power among food system actors or barriers to entry for smaller producers and associated policy interventions that can shape their development. These factors play a critical role in determining whether the food system can become more sustainable and equitable, yet they sit largely outside of the current principles. Addressing them would require a broader set of principles that encompass producers, governance and structural issues, and not just end consumers.

While the Green Choices principles are a useful starting point, they are not a perfect fit for analysing the Food Strategy. A more comprehensive framework – one that integrates behavioural, structural and governance dimensions – may be needed to assess future iterations of the Strategy and the wider set of policies that underpin it. The Environmental Policy System Review (EPSR) Tool is one option. The EPSR is a tool for mapping and reviewing the coherency of policy systems developed for OEP as part of its methodology for producing multi-annual integrated assessments of the UK and Northern Ireland Governments’ progress with delivering their Environmental Improvement Plans (EIP).¹¹ The tool identifies the elements likely to be required for successful design and delivery of government portfolios, programmes, and policies – Evidence, Vision, Strategy, Plan and Evaluation and provides a template for collating and assessing the adequacy of each of these areas and the policy system as a whole.

4.3 Conclusions and recommendations for strengthening future strategies and implementation plans

The 2025 Food Strategy is a high-level strategic document that sets out ambition rather than delivery. This is appropriate at this stage, but future iterations will need to provide more explicit mechanisms for achieving change and how progress will be measured.

¹¹ See <https://www.theoep.org.uk/commissioned-research/developing-environmental-policy-system-review-tool> and forthcoming reports on the application of the EPSR.

The analysis shows that there is significant potential to express the Green Choices principles more clearly within the Food Strategy, both in its framing and in future delivery plans, although we may see some strengthening of their expression simply as delivery plans mature and the mechanisms and outcomes are elaborated in more concrete detail.

Principle 5 (participation and public acceptability) is one of the weaker principles, especially within the detail about the outcomes which is set out in Annex A. In particular, the Strategy offers limited evidence of plans for engagement and meaningful participation in policy design and implementation. Indeed, much of the recent work to build public understanding and dialogue on food system challenges – for example through citizens’ assemblies and juries – has been led by non-governmental organisations rather than by Government. This type of engagement is critical, not only for building awareness but also for understanding the implications of and helping to navigate the more difficult choices and trade-offs that the transformation may require. Future iterations should include clear and substantive plans for both engagement with the Strategy itself but also engagement and participation in support of delivery, enabling policies and initiatives to be shaped and implemented in ways that work with and support local context and priorities.

There is also much greater scope to strengthen both the articulation of, and actions supporting, engagement and collaboration across Government (e.g. action 19). Many of the policy areas most relevant to the food system – such as education, health, labour, and planning – fall outside Defra’s direct remit. Annex B of the Strategy already points to activity in these areas, yet these links are not made explicit in the main articulation of the Strategy (the policy paper and Annex A). A clearer, more explicit articulation of departmental roles, responsibilities, and shared outcomes would also help to embed a genuinely whole-of-government approach.

Strengthening the expression of the principles in the strategy may also have broader implications for government’s role in and approach to enabling and navigating system change. Principle 1 (greener by design) emphasises reducing the ‘ask’ on individuals by targeting measures at government, business and system-level actors. A practical reading of this would point to a stronger role for government as a steward of system transition. Rather than assuming behaviour change will occur organically, government can shape and adjust the enabling conditions and support knowledge exchange, for example. Delivering the scale of transformation described in the Strategy will require government departments to adopt an adaptive and iterative approach in its design and implementation – doing, learning, and adjusting in response to evidence.

Although vision is one of its strengths, the Strategy’s expression of Principle 6 (vision and roles) could be strengthened by addressing trade-offs more explicitly. While the current Strategy recognises tensions between health, affordability, and sustainability, it does not explain how these will be managed.

Finally, it may be helpful for government to expand the Green Choices principles with complementary principles that address the structural, governance, and private-sector

dimensions of system change. Applying these broader principles to the Food Strategy would help strengthen it by strengthening considerations such as farming livelihoods, land access, and the roles of business and government in driving change.

4.4 Opportunities for further analysis

Our review has highlighted a few areas where further analysis could add depth to the how the Green Choices principles are interpreted and applied, and how they relate to the 2025 Food Strategy and its delivery.

Clarifying and refining the Green Choices principles

The principles are open to interpretation. For example, *Greener by Design* could be understood as a call for radical system change or modest behavioural interventions. Further work could explore how each principle is defined and operationalised across government in practice and inform the development of clearer guidance on their desired scope and ambition.

Expanding the Green Choices principles framework

The current Green Choices principles focus mainly on consumers. Future work could examine what complementary principles a producer or governance lens might add.

Exploring structural enablers and constraints

Future research could examine the structural factors that shape the feasibility of greener choices, such as the viability of farming livelihoods, land tenure, and barriers to entry for smaller producers. Understanding these structural barriers would help identify where policy needs to intervene in order to make the food system more environmentally sustainable.

Mapping policy alignment

Finally, there is scope for more detailed analysis of how and where the policies listed in Annex B align with both the Green Choices principles and the Strategy's ten priority outcomes. This would provide a clearer picture of where current policy efforts reinforce or leave gaps in the government's overall approach to creating a more sustainable food system.

Appendix A: Results tables

Table 1: Expression of Green Choices principles across the 2025 Food Strategy's priority outcomes (based on Annex A)	27
Table 2: Inclusion of recommended actions in the 2025 Food Strategy.....	28

Table 1: Expression of Green Choices principles across the 2025 Food Strategy's priority outcomes (based on Annex A)

2025 Food Strategy priority outcomes		Green Choices principles					Number of principles expressed	
		Greener by design	Influencing behaviour			Collaborative design		
		1: Greener by design	2: Addressing practical barriers	3: Affordable across society	4: Informing choice	5: Engagement and acceptability		6: Vision and roles
1	An improved food environment that supports healthier and more environmentally sustainable food sales	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	0	Medium	5
2	Access for all to safe, affordable, healthy, convenient and appealing food options	0	0	Weak	0	0	0	1
3	Conditions for the food sector to thrive and grow sustainably, including investment in innovation, and productivity, and fairer, more transparent supply chains	Weak	Weak	Weak	Medium	0	Weak	5
4	Food sector attracts talent and develops skilled workforce in every region	0	Weak	0	0	0	0	1
5	Food supply is environmentally sustainable, with high animal welfare standards, and waste is reduced	Medium	Weak	Weak	0	Medium	Weak	5
6	Trade supports environmentally sustainable growth, upholds British standards and expands export opportunities	Medium	Medium	0	0	0	Medium	3
7	Resilient domestic production for a secure supply of healthy food	0	0	0	0	0	Weak	1
8	Greater preparedness for supply chain shocks, disruption and impacts of chronic risks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Celebrated and valued UK, regional and local food cultures	0	0	0	0	Weak	Weak	2
10	People are more connected to their local food systems and have the confidence knowledge and skills to cook and eat healthily	0	0	0	Weak	Medium	Weak	3
Number of outcomes in which the principle is expressed		4	5	4	3	3	7	

Table 2: Inclusion of recommended actions in the 2025 Food Strategy

Unique identifier ¹²	Action	Related actions ¹³	Keywords	Included in the Food Strategy ¹⁴	Relevant Annex B policies identified
Theme 1: High-level strategy and governance					
3	Create a Rural Land Use Framework based on the three compartment model.	2, 23, 31, 32, 51, 56, 57, 77, 100, 101, 132, 151, 160	Land	Partially included	Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) Land Use Framework Farming roadmap Farming Innovation Programme Farming Profitability Review Farming water resources planning with EA Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan The Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP)
19	A joint food systems cross-government commission to bring considerations of population and planetary health together	29, 37, 39, 58, 72, 140, 144, 146	Commission, government	Partially included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified
73	Sustainable and healthy dietary guidelines underpin all policy development	33, 74, 76, 79, 85, 100, 101, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 159	Diet, guide*, policy	Partially included	Eatwell Guide Healthy Start School Milk Subsidy Nursery Milk Scheme School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme Universal Infant Free School Meals Free School Meals Holiday Activities and Food Programme National School Breakfast Programme and Free Breakfast Club Scheme Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services School Food Standards National curriculum Start for Life Healthier Families

¹² This refers to the unique identifier number given to each recommended action in the 2024 *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report.

¹³ Other recommended actions included under this headline theme from Appendix 5.3 of the *Green Choices in the UK Food System* report.

¹⁴ In either the 2025 Food Strategy policy paper or Annex A

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Unique identifier ¹²	Action	Related actions ¹³	Keywords	Included in the Food Strategy ¹⁴	Relevant Annex B policies identified
Theme 2: Targets, standards and regulations					
4	Define minimum standards for trade, and a mechanism for protecting them.	80	Standards, trade	Partially included	Trade strategy Tariffs and Trade Deals (incl. UK-EU SPS Agreement) Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Food Standards (Codex)
8	Set clear targets and bring in legislation for long-term change.	38, 45, 49, 50, 54, 59, 63, 64, 131, 132, 158	Targets, legislat*	Partially included	Environmental Improvement Plan Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan The Third National Adaptation Programme Farming Roadmap
24	Implement existing legislation on junk food advertising and volume promotions		Junk, volume, advertis*	Partially included	9 pm watershed for less healthy food or drink advertising on TV Restrictions on promotions of less healthy foods Local Authority powers to block new fast food outlets near schools
66	Ensure that regulatory bodies are sufficiently resourced to carry out inspections and act on non-compliance.	65, 70, 89, 132, 136, 137	regulat*, bod*, scrut*, agency, standards, commission, FSA, FSS, EA	Partially included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified
Theme 3: Using financial instruments to remove barriers and create enabling conditions					
129	Ensure that price isn't a barrier to choosing more sustainable and healthy options, especially for people on low incomes.	46, 79, 118, 128, 133, 141	price, affordab*, low income, poverty, cost	Partially included	Healthy Start Free School Meals Universal Infant Free School Meals National School Breakfast Programme and Free Breakfast Club Scheme Holiday Activities and Food Programme School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme School Milk Subsidy Nursery Milk Scheme Household Support Fund

Unique identifier ¹²	Action	Related actions ¹³	Keywords	Included in the Food Strategy ¹⁴	Relevant Annex B policies identified
162	Use environmental taxes and fiscal measures to incentivise and enable desired behaviours and outcomes	87, 90, 92, 96, 103, 116, 107, 120, 122, 123, 134, 150	tax, financ*, fiscal, incentive	Not included	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Circular Economy Strategy Tariffs and Trade Deals (incl. UK-EU SPS Agreement) Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)
Theme 4: Data and innovation					
5	Invest £1 billion in innovation to create a better food system.	2, 40, 56, 57, 62, 67, 68, 86, 91, 97, 104, 112, 126, 148, 152	Innovat*	Partially included	Farming Innovation Programme FSA Food Innovation Hub supporting precision fermentation FSA/FSS Cell Cultivated Products Sandbox Made Smarter Industrial Strategy Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan
6	Create a National Food System Data programme.	1, 20, 22, 28, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 59, 60, 69, 71, 88, 117	Data, knowledge, information	Not included	Food Data Transparency Partnership Mandatory healthy sales reporting Circular Economy Strategy
Theme 5: Local action and food citizenship (including procurement and schools)					
7	Strengthen Government procurement rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.	25, 34, 74, 119, 124, 143	Procurement	Included	Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services School Food Standards
36	support local authorities in adopting food partnerships and plans	54, 64, 78, 130	local	Partially included	Local food strategies and plans Plan for Neighbourhoods
75	Mainstream progress in school food	21, 26	school	Partially included	School Food Standards Local Authority powers to block new fast food outlets near schools School Milk Subsidy School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme Universal Infant Free School Meals Free School Meals National School Breakfast Programme and Free Breakfast Club Scheme National curriculum Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services

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Unique identifier ¹²	Action	Related actions ¹³	Keywords	Included in the Food Strategy ¹⁴	Relevant Annex B policies identified
Theme 6: Sustainable farming practice					
27	Introduce a horticulture strategy to boost fruit and vegetable production and consumption	30	Fruit, veg*, domestic, horticulture, produc*	Partially included	Farming Roadmap
163	Incentivise and adopt sustainable farming practices	93, 94, 95, 97, 98. 99. 100. 101, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110, 142, 148	farm*, agricultur*, land, practice, manage*, sustainable, circular	Partially included	Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) Sustainable Productivity Growth Coalition (SPG) Farming Roadmap Environmental Improvement Plan Land Use Framework Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan The Third National Adaptation Programme Farming water resources planning with EA Farming Innovation Programme Precision Breeding Regulations Expanding the role of the private sector in nature recovery Circular Economy Strategy
Theme 7: Waste					
38	Food Waste Reduction Roadmap – ‘Target Measure Act’ approach, to tackle food waste across the whole value chain, including household	42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118	waste, circular	Partially included	Circular Economy Strategy Environmental Improvement Plan
Additional individual actions					
41	Guardians of Grub – catalysing moments of transformation through the 3 step model ‘Identify/Catalyse/Scale’			N/A	N/A
135	Mineral accounts		mineral, account, data, information	Not included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified

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Unique identifier ¹²	Action	Related actions ¹³	Keywords	Included in the Food Strategy ¹⁴	Relevant Annex B policies identified
138	Clear signposts for citizens		market, label*	Partially included	9pm watershed for less healthy food or drink advertising on TV Restrictions on promotions of less healthy foods Food Data Transparency Partnership Food labelling (BOP nutrition, FOP voluntary traffic light, calorie content, allergy) Eatwell Guide More accessible allergen information
139	Net positive companies		businesses, circular	Partially included	Circular Economy Strategy
145	Reconnecting people with nature to boost health and wellbeing		connect, nature	Partially included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified
149	Boosting cooperation by extending support for Producer Organisations to all sectors		collaboration, producer,	Not included	Double mutuals and co-operative sector
153	Creating more good work in the regenerative economy		work*, job	Partially included	Making Work Pay UK Seafood Careers Project New Future's Network Seasonal and Skilled Worker Visa Route Skills England Employment Rights Bill Fishing & Coastal Growth Fund Circular Economy Strategy Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) Environmental Improvement Plan Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan
154	Developing sustainable solutions to meet rural housing need		rural, hous*	Not included	Land Use Framework
155	Establishing a National Nature Service employs the energy of young people to kickstart the regenerative economy		service, work, young, experience	Not included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified
156	Taking the Public Value Framework to the next level		public value framework	Not included	No corresponding Annex B policies identified
157	Act on the analysis underpinning the NFS review's recommendations in areas where the 2022 Government food strategy did not go far enough			N/A	N/A