



Feeding growth

**Labour's plans for the
food & drink sector**

Citypress

The numbers influencing the political landscape:

40p

OF EVERY POUND SPENT
IN RETAIL IN THE UK IS
SPENT ON FOOD

4.5m

JOB'S ARE SUPPORTED BY THE
FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR

19%

OF THE UK'S MANUFACTURING
OUTPUT IS FOOD AND DRINK

13%

OF GROCERY SALES ARE
NOW ONLINE

45%

OF VOTERS SAID THE COST OF
LIVING WAS MOST LIKELY TO
IMPACT THEIR VOTE

41%

OF FARMERS HAVE REDUCED
THE AMOUNT OF FOOD THEY
PRODUCE DUE TO LABOUR
SHORTAGES

3/4

OF PEOPLE THINK THE
GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN
INADEQUATE ACTION ON OBESITY,
ALCOHOL, DIET AND EXERCISE

1 in 5

LIST THE ENVIRONMENT AS ONE
OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES
FACING BRITAIN

68%

OF VOTERS THINK GOVERNMENT
SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR
KEEPING PRICES UNDER CONTROL

Mission driven government

The Government has promised to focus on measurable, long-term challenges with an approach to government that is more joined up, more local, and which harnesses technology. As part of this, they have identified five Missions:

1) Kickstart economic growth by securing the highest sustained growth in the G7 – with good jobs and productivity growth in every part of the country.

2) Make Britain a clean energy superpower by cutting bills, creating jobs and delivering security with cheaper, zero-carbon electricity by 2030, accelerating to net zero.

3) Take back our streets by halving serious violent crime and raising confidence in the police and criminal justice system to its highest levels.

4) Break down barriers to opportunity by reforming our childcare and education systems, to make sure there is no class ceiling on the ambitions of young people in Britain.

5) Build an NHS fit for the future that is there when people need it; with fewer lives lost to the biggest killers; in a fairer Britain, where everyone lives well for longer.

Labour's plans for the food and drink sector



"The Government is juggling quite a few competing interests in the food and drink sector. Record levels of public concern over food pricing despite the fact supermarkets and their supply chains are often operating on tiny margins. Public support for government intervention to tackle obesity and binge drinking but dropping Labour support amongst the voters these measures usually hit the hardest. Voters who are concerned about immigration but a widespread shortage of workers in the supply chain, particularly on farms. Governing is about picking sides and Labour will have to start doing so soon."

Tom Anelay, Head of Public Affairs, Citypress

Advertising and sales

Labour are pressing ahead with many of the Conservative Government's plans on advertising and sales but have added a few more for good measure, with Health Secretary Wes Streeting warning that he will "steamroll" the food and drink industry into promoting healthier options with "the heavy hand of state regulation". Much of Labour's activity in this area is driven by a belief that prevention is key to reducing pressures on the NHS and that the soft drinks levy was a huge success, resulting in widespread product reformulation. However, after positioning themselves as being the party of business, Labour's plans are asking a lot of the sector.

Confirmed policies include:

- Banning fast food outlets near schools
- Banning the advertising of junk food to children
- Banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under 16s
- Restricting the advertisement of nicotine and vapes to children
- Introducing a progressive smoking ban



Boosting business

Britain's agri-food chain accounts for 13% of the UK's jobs and £20bn in exports, while the nation is also home to over 23,000+ food and drink manufacturers, so Labour's top team recognises the vital role the sector plays in the British economy. As many voters remain concerned about the cost of living, Labour has prioritised measures to support growth across the sector and food security for consumers. What this looks like in practice is less clear. There is talk of a "new deal for farmers," increasing public procurement of local food and protecting farmers in international trade deals. For food retailers, perhaps the most significant measure may come in the form of Labour's planned shake-up of business rates, which could help level the playing field between online and high street players.

Confirmed policies include:

- Planning reform
- Cutting energy bills via GB Energy
- Empowering communities to buy empty shops, pubs and community spaces
- Mandating public procurement of local food
- Introducing new retail crime offences
- Introducing the National Wealth Fund
- Setting up Skills England to inform immigration and education policy



Protecting the environment

Protecting the environment is often quite expensive. Saving the bees, reducing water, fertiliser and pesticide use, and promoting biodiversity and rewilding are likely to continue to have their moments in the sun. However, the bigger challenges are likely to arise from elsewhere. How will issues with nutrient neutrality and farming interact with the government's wider housebuilding plans? Will green energy help manufacturers, the majority of whom are SMEs, cut their costs? Will introducing new recycling and packaging rules feed inflation? What next for extended producer responsibility and will Labour administrations in Westminster and Wales make a joined-up approach to a deposit return scheme possible?

Confirmed policies include:

- Introducing legislation to protect the waterways and put water companies in special measures
- Planning reform including using development to fund nature recovery
- Cutting bills via GB Energy
- Mandating public procurement of environmentally sustainable foodstuff
- Ending the badger cull



Key figures

The sector is under broad scrutiny and influence from many groups representing multiple interests. The challenge and opportunity for brands and businesses is to engage with those that can meaningfully shape the policy landscape. Here are just a few that will continue to have an important voice.



**Wes Streeting
(Health
Secretary)**

In opposition, Streeting was vocal in his criticism of the food and drink industry for not doing enough to encourage healthier eating. In February this year Streeting warned that a Labour Government would ‘steamroll’ the food industry if it was unwilling to do more to promote healthier diets and implement a ban on online and TV advertisement of junk food to children. He has vowed to build a coalition of food industry leaders to tackle obesity. Policy Spads Sarah Harrison and Kirsty O’Brien – both of whom worked with Streeting in opposition – will be key in shaping the Department’s approach.



**Daniel Zeichner,
Minister for Food,
Fisheries and Farming)**

Zeichner has already told the Food and Drink Federation’s annual Parliamentary reception that the government is ready to work with food and drink businesses to boost the UK’s food security. He has vowed to remove “unnecessary regulatory burdens” to support imports and exports, and create new education and training programmes to plug the sector’s skills gap. He also acknowledged the vital role that the industry will play in creating a “zero waste economy”.



**Henry Dimbleby
(campaigner and former
government adviser)**

Dimbleby, founder of Leon and health campaigner, authored a National Food Strategy in 2021 for the then-Conservative government. Many of the recommendations were not implemented or were delayed but it remains highly influential and has significantly informed Labour’s policies. Expected to take a formal role within Government, he is a prominent and influential voice in the media when it comes to food and health who will continue to hold significant sway in debates about the sector.



**Rachel Reeves
(Chancellor of the
Exchequer)**

At the centre of decisions about tax and spend, Reeves has indicated a strong personal preference for support for bricks and mortar businesses over online retailers.



**Sarah Jones
(Minister
for Industry)**

With dual remits covering both trade and industry and the department of energy security and net zero, Jones has responsibility for both manufacturing and consumer goods. The sector will be wise to engage with her to showcase both its important contribution to UK plc and the role it can play in cutting emissions.



**Trade
associations**

The Food and Drink Federation, British Retail Consortium, UKHospitality and NFU all have well-established relationships and effective track records. The breadth of the sector ensures that Labour will continue to engage closely and they will remain key in representing industry views.



**Jeremy
Clarkson**

No-one has done more for increasing public and political awareness of the issues facing farmers than the TV presenter has through Clarkson's Farm.



**Bite
Back**

Bite Back is a campaign group, co-founded by Jamie Oliver, which has been campaigning against the growing prevalence of UPFs in the diet of young people in the UK.

Speaking Labour's language

Demonstrating how your organisation can measurably contribute to achieving Labour's Missions nationally and locally will be the cornerstone of successful political engagement. **This means asking:**

How are you contributing to sustainable economic growth?

How are you investing and innovating to boost productivity?

Where are you creating growth? Which communities are benefitting?

Are you helping people become healthier, wealthier or happier?

How are you cutting bills and helping consumers?

Are you paying your share of taxes?

How many jobs are you creating and do they provide your employees with “pride and dignity”? Are they green jobs?

Are you helping the UK achieve energy security and playing your part in reaching net zero?

How we can help

We offer a full range of full range of corporate and public affairs services to meet your business needs.

Strategy and Messaging	Regional Advocacy and Engagement	Intelligence	Training	Events and partnerships
Policy development	Consultation support and engagement	Monitoring and analysis	Select committee training	Conference and event planning and execution
Risk assessment	Stakeholder relations and coalition building	Stakeholder mapping	Team development	Speechwriting
Strategy and analysis	Legislative, regulatory and policy engagement	Constituency and regional research	Media training	Party Conference programmes
Purposeful political campaign	Media relations	Planning	Public speaking	Partnership and sponsorship support
Narrative and messaging	Crisis communications and issues management	Issues tracking	Policy overviews	Collateral development



Want to talk?

To enjoy a free one hour consultation on what a new Labour Government means for your organisation and what you should do about it, get in touch.

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Thank you