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**Negotiating Perceptions of Local Food Production and Sustainability
in Local-Level Food Strategies:
An Examination of Five UK Food Coalitions.**

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Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Food Policy

Centre for Food Policy

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The Leader

I wanna be the leader

I wanna be the leader

Can I be the leader?

Can I? I can?

Promise? Promise?

Yippee, I'm the leader

I'm the leader

OK what shall we do?

Roger McGough (1989) in Poems on the Underground, Fourth Edition (Cassell, 1994)

DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this thesis, except those elements specifically declared, is all my own work carried out and finished at City University London.

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Abstract

This research was set within the growing movement of UK communities joining the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Network and developing food policies. As an examination of local food policy development, it examined five cases from within the SFP Network (Bristol, Belfast, Bath and Northeast Somerset, Durham and Devon). These cases represent three different coalition structures, ranging from Council-led to Civil society-led and a hybrid partnership.

This dissertation has examined how the concept of sustainability, and local food production (LFP) actions were understood and linked by Civil Society (CS) and Local Authority (LA) actors to achieve local objectives, and how these were translated into local food strategies (LFSs). Attention was given to the dynamics of the coalition model as actors' beliefs were negotiated in the process.

This research has drawn on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) developed by Sabatier (1988), with case study coalitions categorized according to a food policy group model developed by MacRae and Donahue (2013). Actors' beliefs were identified as 1) unsustainable issues, 2) food production actions, and 3) sustainable outcomes drawing on diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames, respectively, offered by Snow and Benford (1988).

This research found that LFSs of the case studies were shaped based on their context as either rural, peri-urban, or urban, the unique circumstances and issues of communities, and the coalition structure driving the effort. This was reflected by the pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) being skewed to local needs and capacity, rather than balanced. With issues largely identified as originating from the global level, this prompted a sense of powerlessness to address these, meaning actions were focused on local elements over which the municipality had some control. Uneven power dynamics existed in the coalition structures themselves, particularly for CS in council-led efforts. Within coalitions, the complexity of the food system and sustainability were simplified for a variety of reasons and framed for the audience of the strategy. In addition to deliberate use of frames, this approach was employed to mobilise support and action and to appeal to the strategy audience(s).

Acronyms

ACF – Advocacy Coalition Framework

AFN – Alternative Food Network

BAG – Bath Area Growers

BSP – Belfast Strategic Partnership

BNES – Bath and Northeast Somerset

CS – Civil Society

CSA – Community Supported Agriculture

CSO – Civil Society Organization

CDD – Devon County Council

DSP – Devon Strategic Partnership

DWT – Durham Wildlife Trust

EC – European Commission

EPH – Ecological Public Health

ESP – Environmental Sustainability Partnership (of BNES City Council)

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

FPC – Food Policy Council

GHG – Green House Gas

GYO – Grow your own

HiAP – Health in All Policies (WHO initiative)

HWBB – Health and Wellbeing Board (of BNES City Council)

IAASTD – International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Science and Technology Development

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LA – Local Authority (Council)

LFN – Local Food Network

LFS – Local Food Strategy

LFP – Local Food Production

LFPG/FPG – Local Food Policy Group/Food Policy Group

NFE – New Food Equation

NFU – National Farmer's Union

NHS – National Health Service (UK)

PPT – Policy Process Theory
RUA – Rooftop Urban Agriculture
SDC – Sustainable Development Commission
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
SDH – Social Determinants of Health
SFP – Sustainable Food Places (Formerly Sustainable Food Cities)
SI – Sustainable Intensification
SME – Small-Medium Enterprises
SPRU – Science Policy Research Unit
UA – Urban Agriculture
UFS – Urban Food Strategy
UPA – Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture
WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development
WHO – World Health Organization

Terminology

While many terms are explained in text, some have been used in this research with particular nuance, and so are explained here for clarity.

Food production – Used as a general term covering a wide range of production activities from horticulture, market gardening to animal husbandry, and arable production and similar farming activities. Referred to also as ‘Local Food Production’ and abbreviated herein as LFP.

Growing – Used generally in relation to fruit and vegetable production activities including horticulture, market gardening, urban agriculture (UA), community gardening, Guerrilla gardening, allotment use, and other small-scale individual or community-focused projects. Also, used: ‘*local growing*’, ‘*community growing*’ (where applicable).

Food strategy – In reference to the documents being reviewed within the case studies, as well as this type of policy document more broadly. Used synonymously with ‘policy’. Also used: ‘*Local food strategy*’ (LFS). ‘*Urban food strategy*’ (UFS) is also used where relevant. Differs from charters and action plans as policy instruments. ‘Strategy’ is also used to refer to a strategic approach taken by actors and this is noted where relevant to distinguish this from a strategy document.

Beliefs – The use of the term ‘beliefs’ does not imply the psychological connotation of the concept as a measurable evaluation of values, but rather is used in this research in the context of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. In this sense, ‘beliefs’ refer to the Core, Policy Core and Secondary policy beliefs of actors involved in coalitions.

‘hypothesis’/es – This is used in the context of the Advocacy Coalition Framework and its use of a set of specific testable ‘hypotheses’ relating to coalition structures, learning and change (see Chapter 4 for detailed explanation of these).

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1. Introduction

Increasingly, civil society (CS) and local authority (LA) actors have come together to make local-level policy change, and they have been using ‘food’ as a tool to do this. This chapter presents the context of this movement in the United Kingdom, situating it within the broader context of ‘intractable policy issues’ which inhabit the global to local scale of the food system. Having situated the importance of these local food coalitions, the research questions and approach of this work are explained. From this, an overview of the dissertation structure is provided.

1.1 The Rise of Local Food Policy

Many developed nations, including the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland, are seeing a surge in local food policy development and food-related initiatives, which has been growing since the late 1980s (Schiff, 2008; Burgan and Winne, 2012; Hatfield, 2012; MacRae and Donahue, 2013). This movement to take greater control of the local food system has been attributed to greater awareness of issues stemming from the level of the globalised economic system, which have been extensively documented in academic research and reports (Smit and Nasr, 1992; Curry, 2002; Lang and Heasman, 2004; UK Cabinet Office, 2008; IAASTD, 2009; Lang, 2010b a; Brinkley, 2013). The food system, whether at the global or local level, refers to “[t]he chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities” (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000, p. 113). Through this system, the overlapping nature of the three standard ‘pillars’ of society, environment and economy (henceforth “the pillars”) are in constant interplay making this generalised¹ concept of ‘sustainability’ a useful framework for addressing food issues (Caraher, 2008).

This focus on food at the local level warrants asking, ‘why has it become such an attractive area for policy action at this ‘micro’ scale’, particularly when so much is beyond the jurisdictional and practical control of council level policy? The many touch points of the food system on daily life is a key factor. For this reason, food has been referred to by Hinrichs (2014) as “the low hanging fruit of transition” (p. 146), suggesting its great potential to drive change. A number of activities and innovations have emerged to shift

¹ A wider view of sustainability in the context of food studies, including ethics, values, governance and beyond is also discussed within this research.

food-related efforts toward more sustainable alternatives (Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Seyfang, 2006; Seyfang and Smith, 2007; Levkoe, 2011; Veen and Derkzen, 2012; Kirwan *et al.*, 2013). Some actions are driven by the deliberate intention of challenging the conventional food system (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2012; Renting, Schermer and Rossi, 2012), and others to simply gain a greater sense of autonomy, control (Schindler, 2014), or personal satisfaction, even when not associated with a political agenda (Veen and Derkzen, 2012). Local food strategies (LFS) typically combine several policy themes, including health and wellness, environment, economy, community development, social and cultural, education, as well as local and regional food, nutrition and public health, policy advocacy, urban agriculture, waste disposal, and others (Hatfield, 2012; Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2019). Dowler, Caraher and Lincoln (2007) found that across the UK, changes to government funding priorities has over time shifted the focus of food policy initiatives, from nutritional health including breastfeeding policy and obesity, to local procurement in schools and hospitals. Now greater focus is being placed on ecological sustainability based on its impact across many public policy areas, including the climate crisis and Net-Zero goals (Lang and Rayner, 2012; Mason and Lang, 2017). This has prompted advocates to promote the food system as “a vehicle to integrate the... dimensions of sustainability... justice and health issues” with an acknowledgement of the power that cities and city regions have in driving change (Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013, p. 4).

Attention to the concept of the ‘City-Region’ in research presents the notion of “a spatial representation” which looks beyond standard administrative boundaries, but rather considers one of more urban centres as well as urban, peri-urban and rural areas (Hebinck and Page, 2017, p. 1). In the context of food, the term frames these as a continuum of production, related infrastructure and economic contribution, rather than separate or oppositional landscapes. For the last thirty years, the case has been building for urban areas as important actors in policy development (Smit and Nasr, 1992; Morgan, 2009; Sonnino, 2016; Hebinck and Page, 2017). An increase in the concentration of individuals living in urban areas, and the associated economic power of cities, has given elected officials significant power to drive change through policy. Policy changes at this level have been found to be more efficient and more responsive to local needs when compared to actions of central governments (Barling and Lang, 2010; Barber, 2013; Hebinck and Page, 2017). In Canada and the UK for example, local food policy development has also been associated

with the National level of government distancing itself from local level governance, leaving councils with the task of managing a greater number of responsibilities with reduced resources and no increase in revenues (MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Halliday, 2015; Caraher, 2019). In light of this, LA and CS groups have been banding together in partnership to address local issues often manifesting from the global level. Recognition of the unique skills and capabilities brought to the policy table by each ‘side’ underlie these arrangements and have been found in many cases to be mutually beneficial (MacRae and Donahue, 2013). In the UK, this is reflected in the mission of the SFP of “developing a cross-sector partnership of local public agencies, businesses, academics and NGOs” (Sustainable Food Cities, no date b). Governance structures underlying local policy initiatives may have varying degrees of formality (MacRae and Donahue, 2013) and may include the council, local and regional food partnerships, Food Policy Councils (FPCs), civil society organizations, or combinations thereof (Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2015). Among those seeking to drive change through local food policy are members of the UK’s Sustainable Food Places (SFP) network² (Sustainable Food Cities, no date b), many of which have in the last few years created first or even second-generation food strategies.

1.2 ‘Sustainability’ and Local Responses to Global Problems

Policy analysis literature aims to identify and grapple with “intractable policy controversies” (Schon & Rein, 1994) or “wicked problems” faced by policy makers. These issues are complex and nested within other problems, without clear information to guide resolution, nor do they have a ‘right’ answer but rather ‘better or worse’ options (Rittel and Webber, 1973). The normalization of the 1987 World Economic Development Commission (WEDC) definition of ‘sustainability’³ revealed inherent tensions between the global neoliberal productionist paradigm and environmental limits. When considered in terms of the food system, the costs to the environment and society are notably ‘externalised’ and not factored into the production of food at an industrial scale (Marsden, 2013, p. 123). Whether rightly or wrongly, local food has become closely associated with sustainability. For

² Formerly ‘Sustainable Food Cities’ and known as SFC up to the original submission date of this dissertation in 2020. The change to SFP took place during the corrections phase of this work and so was integrated to keep the document and research current and relevant.

³ “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WECD, 1987. P. 43). Detailed further in Chapter 2.

example, the local-scale is viewed as having great potential for implementing closed-loop systems in line with the ‘circular-economy’, with reduction of food waste across all parts of the food system identified by the European Commission (EC) as crucial (European Commission, 2015). A shift to more sustainable food systems has prompted a growing movement toward ‘relocalization’ (Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Clapp, 2012; Viljoen and Wiskerke, 2012). Relocalization is characterized by shorter food supply chains, a focus on self-reliance and resilience (of communities, rather than individuals) through local production and procurement (Clapp, 2012; Ward, 2015), policy supports, and changes to city planning approaches in order to better integrate food system elements (Morgan, 2009; Viljoen and Wiskerke, 2012).

Despite being often vague and subjective, the concept of sustainability has been recommended widely as a central framework to food policies at the international, national, and local levels (Rayner, Barling and Lang, 2008; UK Cabinet Office, 2008; DEFRA, 2011; White and Natelson, 2011; Hinrichs, 2014; Mason and Lang, 2017), and as a guiding principle toward local visions of progress. As a result, many LFS outline food system issues, needs, and actions according to the standard three themes of sustainability (Hatfield, 2012; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2019). The flexibility of the concept allows for bespoke approaches to be developed, and scholarship expanding upon the historic three-pillar model has highlighted the need to address ethics, justice, human and animal welfare and many other factors into an evolving lens of sustainability (Sustainable Development Commission, 2011; Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b; Mason and Lang, 2017). The SFP Network offers the term in the very name of the network, indicating that sustainability and food are inseparable and central to its membership objectives.

1.3 Subject and Scope of the Research

In this context, in order to examine the emergence of ‘sustainable’ LFS development across the UK, this research presents the experiences of five case studies. These cases (all members of the UK’s SFP) are Bristol, Belfast, Bath and Northeast Somerset, County Durham and Devon. As local initiatives being created independently of central government, the significance of the ‘coalition’ groups behind the creation of these strategy documents is of interest. The governance models that underpin the coalition groups vary and have been characterised in this research according to features developed by MacRae and Donahue

(2013)⁴. These range from fully embedded within the local authority structure, to independent CS organizations with no links to the council, and a variety of hybrid-models in between.

In particular the coming-together of CS actors and LA actors to address a policy gap highlights a common desire for change at the local level, and suggests an effort to communicate, represent and reconcile potentially varied agendas. For this reason, understanding what individual actors from these two groups believe sustainability is in the context of the local food system, and how local food production (LFP) can help to achieve it contributes to the discussion of food relocalisation and the emergence of local policy mechanisms.

Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) as a policy process theory (PPT) to examine the five case studies, this research has sought to understand the following:

- *In what ways do the representations of sustainability and food production vary amongst the actors who took part in developing the strategies?*
- *How have sustainability and local food production been represented in the food strategy documents?*
- *How were differences in beliefs negotiated by actors in the policy process and subsequently translated into the strategy documents?*

These questions were addressed using interviews with actors involved in the development of these strategies, and analysis of the documents themselves. A comparison of the content of these revealed how beliefs were negotiated within the coalitions to determine what was translated into the final strategy. Focus was placed on how each coalition model defined LFP in the context of local sustainable food system development within their strategies. Additionally, attention was given to how the different coalitions managed participation and the inclusion of actors' beliefs. Interviews with actors within the wider coalition (beyond the immediate steering committee) illuminated the cultures of participation in local food system dialogues.

⁴ These structures are detailed in Chapter 4 (in relation to the Advocacy Coalition Framework as a theoretical framework for this work), and 5 (as a tool for case study selection, in Methods).

1.4 Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has provided a background on the emergence of local food policy initiatives as the basis for further understanding of this work. Concepts have been illustrated that will be drawn upon throughout, such as the food system, sustainability, relocalisation and the city-region. Local food policy development has been identified as a response to concerns at various levels in the food system, with local actors forming coalition groups to drive change.

Further from this, the dissertation is divided into four sections: a review of literature, detail on how the research was designed and carried out, and the findings of the research and its conclusions.

Section one consists of two chapters. Chapter 2 examines documentation and scholarship surrounding the rise of sustainability as a political concept in the latter half of the 20th century, and its application in response to issues with the global food system. Attention is given to the relocalisation movement, exemplifying actions taking place at the city-region level, with specific focus on the UK. The development of food policy, with attention to local-level initiatives, is the focus of Chapter 3. This includes discussion of coalition structures, and the roles of actors coming together to instigate local policy change.

Section two presents the design and methodological processes underpinning this work. Chapter 4 presents the ACF as the theoretical basis of this work, and links it to framing approaches put forward by Snow and Benford (1988) as a complimentary approach to examining the beliefs of actors within coalitions. Drawing on research of local food partnerships, this research applied a categorisation structure put forward by MacRae and Donahue (2013). Chapter 5 details the approach taken to studying the five cases (Bristol, Belfast, Bath and Northeast Somerset, Devon and County Durham), including data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations.

Section three presents the findings of this research in four chapters. Chapter six provides a background of each case study, providing detail on the local context, including drivers which influenced the need for a LFS, and coalition structure behind the development of the document. It also addresses the first question of this research for each of the five case

studies. These findings are drawn from interviews with participants involved in the strategy development process. This chapter presents how sustainability is understood and linked to LFP and growing, and whether these beliefs differ amongst actors based on whether they are from CS or council positions within their LFS coalition group. This is further examined through testing a 'hypothesis' of the ACF.

Chapter seven uses document analysis to illustrate the second research question, relating to how sustainability and LFP are presented within the final output of the LFS for each case.

Chapters six and seven build upon one another to offer a comparative illustration which is expanded in Chapter eight, exploring the process through which individual beliefs of coalition actors were negotiated and distilled into a strategy document. The dynamics and tensions within coalitions and between CS and LA actors are examined through the experiences of those involved in the strategy development process for each of the five case studies. Additional focus is given in overview to conceptions of sustainability, framing approaches and power within the coalition structures.

Section four consists of two chapters. The ninth chapter presents a discussion of the dissertation's findings which emerged from the research questions and engages these with existing scholarship across policy studies via the ACF, food research, and sustainability.

The tenth and final chapter concludes this research by offering a summary of the findings, and the key empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this work, as well as offers lessons from the policy coalitions and makes recommendations for practical policy work at the local level and identifies future research avenues. This includes reflections upon the process as a research project and a formative experience. This section is followed by the list of references used in this work, and the collection of appendices.

2. Evolving Understandings of Sustainability

This chapter presents the concept of sustainability in a brief historic overview and explores how it has in various formulations been put forward as a framework for addressing the impacts of the globalised industrial structure of the food system. Scholarship is examined relating to transitioning the food system to a more sustainable model in response to a multitude of global issues, with food system (re)localisation as an avenue to achieving this.

2.1 Defining Sustainability

The Brundtland Report, Simon Dresner points out, highlighted the importance of sustainability being about “equity between generations and within generations” (2002, p. 2). This is a defining narrative of our time, where the resources of the earth are being depleted more quickly than they can renew themselves.

Sustainability has been applied and studied vastly: applied across all industries, considered across academic disciplines and policy, measured by indicators, tracked backwards in time and projected into the future (Dresner, 2002; Schot and Geels, 2008; Grober, 2010; DEFRA, 2011; Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012; Landert *et al.*, 2017; Mason and Lang, 2017). The concept has been put forward as a solution to issues originating from the global to the local level and is repeated by International NGOs and the grassroots alike as essential to ensure the long-term survival of beings and systems on Earth (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Cohen and Reynolds, 2015). The concept of sustainability has been called “the emerging 21st century business paradigm” (Elkington, 1997, p. 20), and a “normative concept” (Lafferty, 1996, p. 186). Utilised as a popular notion (or the subject of “rhetorical excess”, according to Lafferty, p. 185) in the policy forums from the late 20th century, its origins as a philosophy of care for the earth has existed for centuries⁵ (Grober, 2010, pp. 35–58).

A decade after Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* (1962) as a wake-up call, the Club of Rome report *The Limits to Growth* stated, “[w]e are searching for a model output that represents a world system that is 1. Sustainable without sudden and uncontrollable collapse; and 2. capable

⁵ Grober cites Saint Francis of Assisi in his *Laudes Creaturarum*, dated 1225 (p.35-36), and Baruch Spinoza’s *Ethica* in 1677 (p. 54-56). In practice, it was largely associated with forestry management in the time of European expansion to meet the fuel and ship building needs of European nations (Grober, 2012, p.59-75). This underscores that even centuries ago, concern for supplies was pushing rulers and administrators to consider how best to manage stocks of finite resources.

of satisfying the basic material needs of all of its people” (Meadows *et al.*, 1972, p. 158). Reflecting upon this, Grober observes that here “‘[s]ustainable’ is introduced as the antonym, the opposite of ‘collapse’” (2010, p. 117). Although criticized on the basis of its Malthusian assumptions by the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex (Cole *et al.*, 1973), the message of the report, being a need to live within planetary limits, resonated widely. Shortly after, the Club of Rome report, the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987), commonly known as ‘The Brundtland Report’, was released. This report articulated the now most frequently quoted definition associated with sustainability:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987, p. 43).

Both these formulations express a need for policy structures to support moderation in the consumption of resources in order to ensure future availability and thus, stability and security of over the long term as our responsibility to posterity. This need to balance “ecosystem integrity” with “human progress and quality of life” has been presented as the key challenge of sustainability science as a discipline (Weinstein and Turner, 2012, p. viii).

A tension within sustainable development discussions centres on the inequity between nations, and the contrast in living standards between the developed world and the developing world (WCED, 1987, pp. 49–50). Additionally, the outsourcing of unsustainable practices to the developing world to meet consumer demands of the developed world further drives inequality and degradation (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Mason and Lang, 2017). A number of global initiatives have sought to address this in an effort to make advances in sustainable development, including the launch of Agenda 21 at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992), Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2002), and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Brazil (United Nations, 2012). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN in 2015, included the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the first of which begins with “*Ending Poverty*” (United Nations, 2015). In 2016, the Paris Agreement was ratified, aiming to hold countries accountable to reductions in GHGs to address climate change (UNFCCC, 2016).

All of these summits had their roots in The Brundtland Report's three-pillar approach to sustainability. This was advanced from the time of its publication as a political concept with the overlapping themes of society, environment and economy being presented as interdependent and equal (see Figure 1). The idea being simply that, according to one of the participants of this study, *"if it's not all of them, then it's not sustainable"* (DEVCS1).

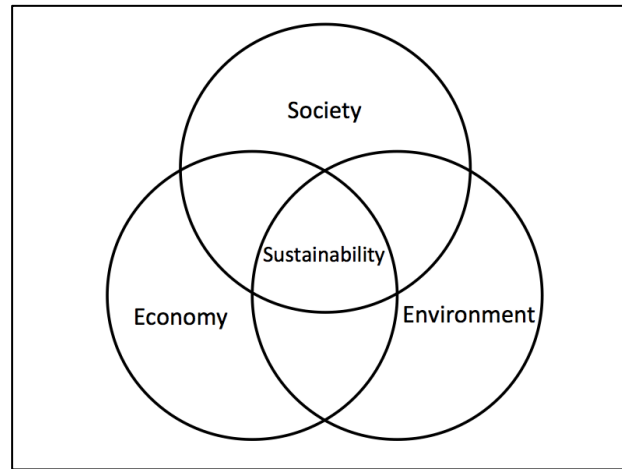


Figure 1: A Standard Model of the Pillars of Sustainability. Adapted from: Carter and Moir (2012).

This approach, however, has been criticised not only for being overly simplistic (Mason and Lang, 2017, p. 21), but for elevating the global economic system and its model of continued linear growth to the same level as the environmental, ecological and social themes (Grober, 2010, p. 9). Linking this to the 17th century politics of John Locke, Dresner (2002) argues that this thinking is based on the outdated view that the earth is without limits, despite the fact that we now know better. Professor Tim Jackson was unequivocal in his debunking of "the myth of economic growth", stating that this "pursuit of growth has been the single most important policy goal across the world" for the last fifty years, and needed to end (Jackson, 2009, p. 5). Jackson and others argue that the current economic model turns a blind eye to our reliance on ecology and the resources of the natural world. The Brundtland report defends its equally weighted three-pillar position, stating that "[t]he environment does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs, and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns have given the very word "environment" a connotation of naivety in some political circles" (WCED, 1987, p. 7). This association is a hangover from the ecology movement of the 60s and 70s (Belasco, 2006) and, as this

research will show, persists to this day, and which continues to be fought by those who want to assert the legitimacy of an eco-centric view of consumption (Dresner, 2002, p. 30). Tensions such as these become visible when one pillar is prioritized over the others based on the interests of those making decisions (Dresner, 2002, p. 59).

Sustainability has been both praised and criticized for its flexibility as a concept, allowing it to be applied to any industry, system or process. Beyond the commonly recited Brundtland definition⁶, sustainable development (used often as an equivalent term for sustainability), has been defined as:

“[t]o enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations”
(UK Parliament, 2005, p. 16)

“[t]he use of resources at rates that do not exceed the capacity of the Earth to replace them” (Foresight, 2011, p. 9)

In practice, it is felt that *“the existence of multiple definitions leads to much confusion on possible strategies”* (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012, p. 4). In a study of sustainability and healthy diets, Bene et al., found that the concept “remains poorly defined, and applied in different ways and usually based on a relatively narrow interpretation” (2019, p. 116). Grober warns, *“[o]nce the term has been hijacked and robbed of its substance, there’s not much you can do with it. Or rather, nothing you can’t do”* (2010, p. 18). As a nebulous catch-all, ‘sustainability’ has become a ‘buzzword’, defined as “a term whose power derives from a combination of ambiguous meaning and strong normative resonance” (Cairns and Krzywoszynska, 2016, p. 164). In an editorial about urban planning policy, Simon Jenkins calls sustainability a *“weasel word”*, and sustainable development *“a contradiction in terms”* (2011). Similarly, the notion of ‘sustainable intensification’ is felt by Marsden (2013, p. 123 a) to be an *“oxymoron”* when considering the “bio-economic productivism” of the food system in our current period (ibid).

⁶ For an extensive cataloguing of the definitions of sustainability and sustainable development see Sharpe (2016).

Springett and Redclift (2015) argue that when those in power are faced with competing or 'radical' views on sustainability actions, that discrediting the language of sustainability can be used a tool for diminishing the legitimacy of others within discursive fora. It is through laying claim the meanings of words, the authors state, that dominion can be held over concepts, although "dismissing that concepts on account of its *lack* of clear definition also restricts any inherent potential for change from being liberated" (2015, p.17). This, in effect, "deflects the radical core" of sustainability into "a confusing, deenergizing struggle for 'meaning' rather than action" (2-15, p. 19).

Beyond definitions revolving around the pillars, scholarly examinations unpack what sustainability represents more widely as a theoretical and practical construct. Noted as "a very anthropocentric conception" (Gillespie, 2010, p. 6) it is often presented as a diverse way of thinking about actions and systems, and as "*a multidimensional integrative concept*" considering time, space, scale and actors (Gibson, 2006, p. 262). In an effort to present a more detailed representation than Figure 1, Weinstein and Turner offer the 'sustainability equation' in an effort to address the "paradox of the dual mandate", which they describe as the management of society's need for goods and services alongside the preservation and rehabilitation of the ecosystem (2012, p. ix). It is at this intersection of consumption and ecosystem integrity that the greatest tensions exist, making political progress and policy work fraught with conflict and opposing interests.

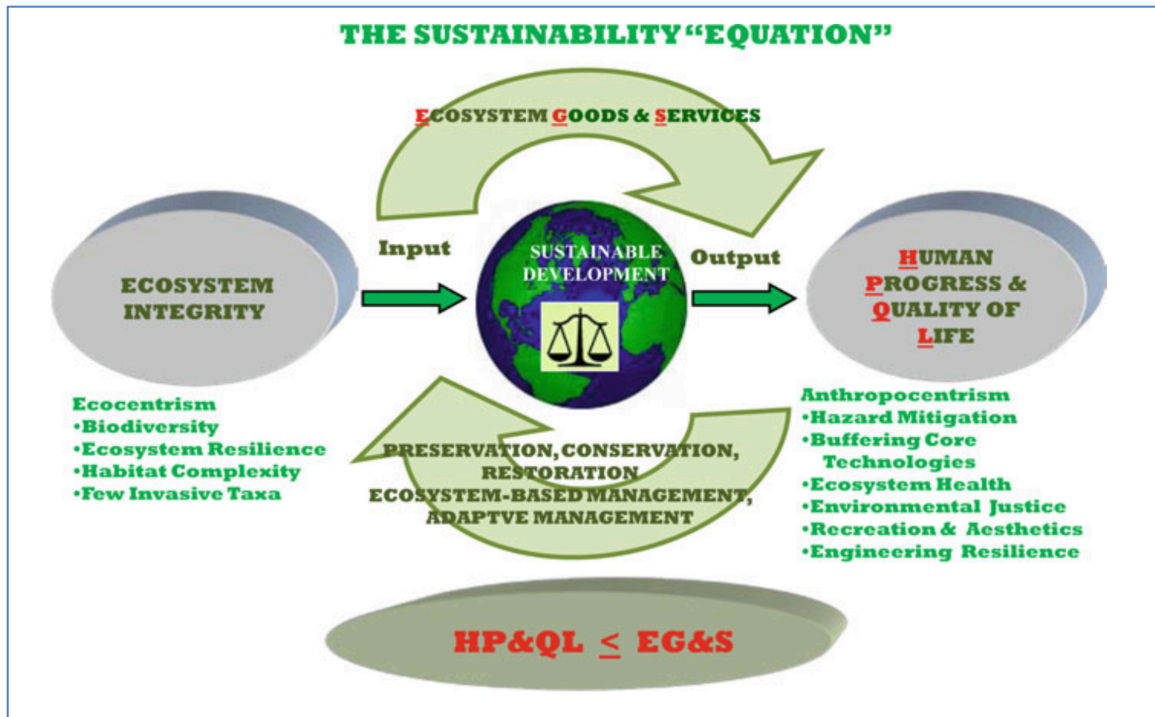


Figure 2: The "Sustainability Equation" (Source: Weinstein and Turner, 2012).

Likewise refusing to diminish the central role of the environment, Lang explains the time frames for consideration within which sustainable development exists, explaining that it is:

"an intellectual perspective which sees the environment as the infrastructure of life; proposes ecology as the science to help unlock the interconnectedness of existence; takes long time horizons when making present decisions; centres on the local but takes a global geographic framework for events; situates human activity within millennia of planetary development" (2008, p. 272).

Considering these timeframes in the context of humans and food, Sage points out that humanity's relationship to food (and thus, the environment) has changed more in the Twentieth Century to present, than it had since the Neolithic Revolution 12,000 years ago and farming began (2012). This puts in perspective the extent to which humans have accelerated their consumption of the Earth's resources over a relatively short period, and how reclaiming a long view is imperative to restoring balance.

Building on Lang's definition is Strange and Bayley's view of sustainable development as:

"(i) a conceptual framework, a way of changing the predominant world view to one that is more holistic and balanced; (ii) a process, a way of applying the principles of integration across space and time to all decisions and (iii) an end goal, identifying and fixing the specific problems of resource depletion, health care, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, etc." (Strange and Bayley, 2008, p. 30)

The notion of sustainability as both process and end goal is valuable in policymaking. The Brundtland Report argued a need for long term commitment, explaining that "[s]ustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change" (WCED, 1987, pp. 8–9). Of this, Dresner asks, "[w]hy is it that sustainability and sustainable development have been such easy ideas to talk about, but so difficult to bring closer to reality?" (Dresner, 2002, p. 66). A lack of overall operational guidelines to achieving the WCED's vision of sustainability has been offered as one explanation (Ben-Eli, 2018, p. 1338). Another reason is the incredible complexity of applying the concept of sustainability to any given situation. In response to this, the field of Systems Thinking is defined as having an "emphasis on the question of relationships between parts and wholes, on understanding the cause-and-effect relationships between components that make a whole, and on disclosing the underlying structures which make for system identities" (ibid). In this sense, approaching sustainability critically is hugely complex, as it encompasses "a dynamic, multivariable universe involving multiple social, political, economic, and cultural aspects interacting among themselves, across sectors, and with the physical and non-human living parts of the world" (ibid). The issue of climate change brings similar complexity (Harrabin, 2020).

Lafferty asserts that while the concept of sustainability is vague, it is the moral character of sustainability which continues to give it such widespread appeal (Lafferty, 1996, p. 185) – a simple view that there is a 'good' and 'bad' binary when considering what is or isn't sustainable. While this is overly simplistic (Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b), what most of the above definitions fail to incorporate is the ethical complexity imbedded in the transition to a more sustainable system. The environmental, economic and social pillars are historically considered standard, however qualifying ethics in the food system is emerging as a metric that academics argue should be incorporated into sustainability measures (Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017a). At this stage of human development characterised by

consumption beyond the limits of a finite planet, the need for sustainability as a comprehensive approach is increasingly becoming framed as an ethical obligation for the human race.

2.2 Feeding the World: Sustainability and the Food System

“Food consumption is embedded in everyday life and represents a collection of daily routines, culturally embedded practices and economic calculations” (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012, p. 8). Beneath this obvious and seeming simple statement of fact lies a massively complex reality of the social, cultural, political and economic links that humans have with food. The globalized economy, being one where “regional economies, societies and cultures become integrated through a worldwide network of exchanges of material goods, people, ideas and information” (Robbins, Hintz and Moore, 2011), relies on economies of scale, which has gone hand in hand with industrial-scale agriculture. The phenomenon of ‘McDonaldization’ has come to represent a homogeneity of human culture from this global network of access and exchange (Ritzer, 2007). Spaargaren et al argue that globalisation and the concept of sustainable development are the two greatest factors shaping the modern food system (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012, p. 3). The food system has been described as one which:

“...gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of foods, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.” (HLPE, 2014, p. 29)

Figure 3 shows a model of the food system which illustrates the stages as well as the inputs, steps or participants in those stages.

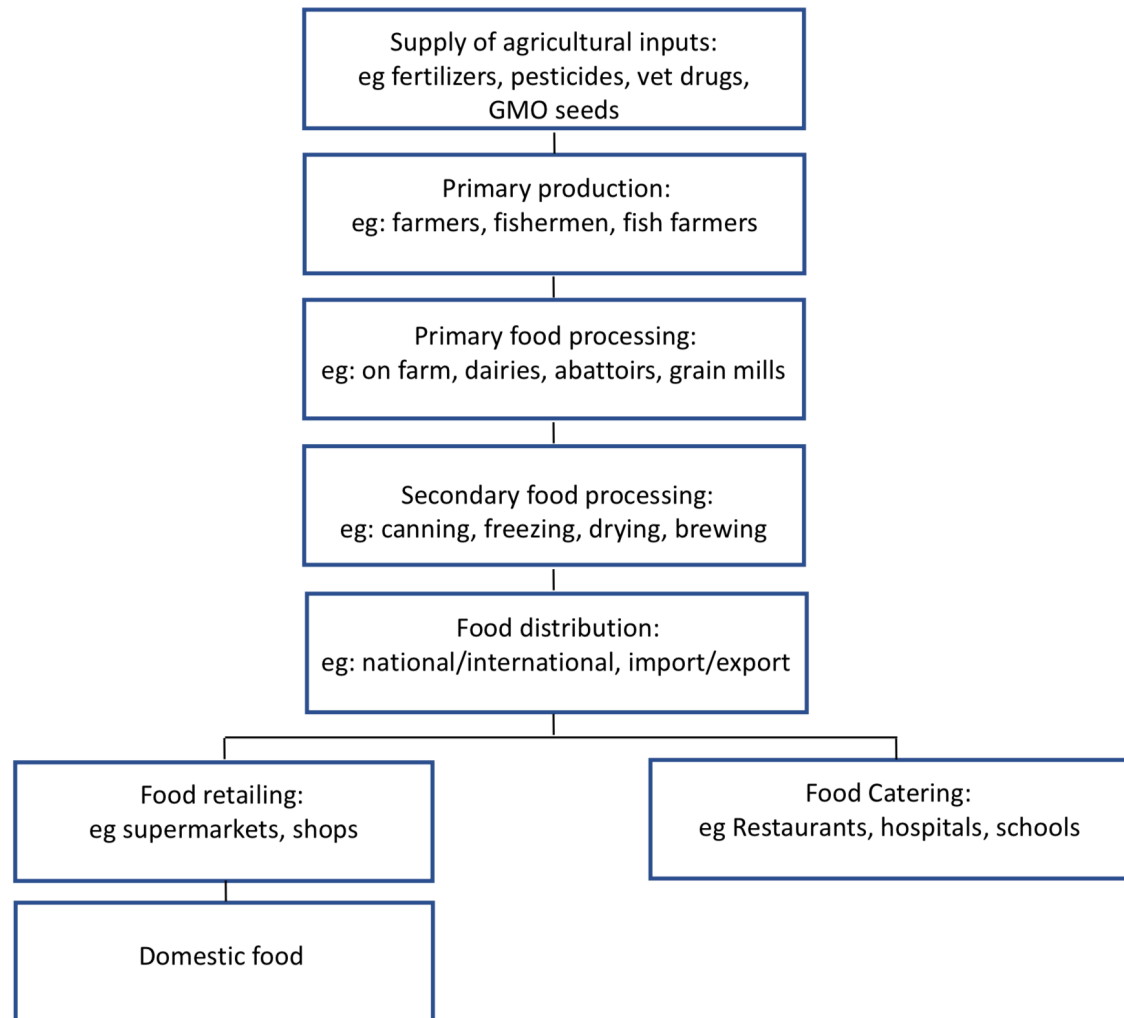


Figure 3: A Simplified Model of the Food System (Source: Lang and Heasman, 2004, p. 18)

What this representation fails to represent is the power and control of corporations and retailers in this system, and the reduced power of farmers who are expected to produce food more quickly and cheaply (Caraher, 2008). Kirwan et al (2017, 2017b) also see food supply chains as necessarily involving policy, science, market and public dimensions, with ethical implications across each of these areas relating to “animal welfare, responsibility, labour relationship, territoriality, food security and governance” (2017, p. 367). The structure of the food chain and its associated ‘dimensions’ illustrate the many connection points where food is tied to sustainability.

Referencing the “political economy of food”, Friedmann wrote of the rise of the post-WWII international food order which was based upon food aid from the United States to developing nations (Friedmann, 1982, p. S248). By the 1970s, crop failures and famines in African nations led to a global narrative of food scarcity, which drove the ‘productionist’ paradigm⁷ based upon the need for food security⁸ (Friedmann, 1982; Clapp, 2014). The productionist paradigm, “in which the food supply chain became production-led in order to increase the quantity of food over other priorities” (Lang and Heasman, 2004, p. 19) has driven the central argument for the continued need for fossil-fuels and synthetic inputs. Intensive livestock-rearing and deforestation, animal welfare issues, anti-biotic resistance, transport emissions, food waste, biodiversity loss, soil loss and pollution due to agri-chemical use and the acknowledgement of the juggernaut of climate change are all highly publicised concerns associated with this model. These, among other issues, have led to questions on the long-term viability of such an intensive and large-scale food system, as the global population and its demands continue to increase (Morgan, 2009). This is typically presented along with reference to the projected global population of 9 Billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2019), and the extent to which food production will supposedly need to increase, estimated to require a rise of 70% by 2050 (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012, p. 1). These figures do not however, take into account the current amount of food produced that is wasted, rather than consumed and distributed equitably worldwide. Harkening back to the productionist narrative of the 1970s, Lang and Barling argue that a focus on food security singularly in terms of production centres the debate squarely on agriculture and is not a true ‘food systems’ approach (Lang and Barling, 2012, p. 314). A frequently used example of the imbalance of the global food system, is the “triple burden of malnutrition”: the fact that over 820 million people are under-nourished, while estimates suggest that 680 million adults are obese (IAASTD, 2009, p. 12). These numbers are given particular poignancy when linked with the fact that one third of food produced globally is wasted (HLPE, 2014), emphasising a need for a wider systems lens in addressing issues. This, along with new ‘obesity-regime’ has debunked the narrative of scarcity which was prominent in

⁷ A global shift which started in the post WWI era of the 1930s and continues to the present, based out of the industrialisation of the food system which began around 150 years before that (Lang and Heasman, 2004, p. 19).

⁸ Defined as when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations World Health Organization, 1996, p. 1).

the later 20th century⁹ (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012, p. 1). The current state has been described simply as “food systems failure” (Rosin, Campbell and Stock, 2012). Table 1 illustrates the challenges currently affecting the food system, with the expectation that these will be exacerbated if systemic change is not undertaken. Of particular note is climate change, presented as the foremost challenge in the ability to supply sufficient food calories to the ever-growing population (ibid)¹⁰. A significant challenge is changing the consumption habits of consumers (Weinstein and Turner, 2012; Willett *et al.*, 2019).

Table 1: The Fundamental Challenges Facing the Food Supply. Adapted from: Barling, Sharpe and Lang (2008)

<i>Supply</i>	<i>Demand</i>
Climate change	Land use
Fuel / oil / energy	Labour
Water	Population (9bn 2050)
Soil	Urbanisation
Biodiversity/ ecosystems support	Affluence + Nutrition transition
	Healthcare costs

In the aptly titled *‘Crisis? What Crisis? The Normality of the Current Food Crisis’* Lang dubs such systemic fault-lines the “new fundamentals” within which the current system operates¹¹ (2010a, pp. 90–94). He asserts that these are major arguments against the continuation of business as usual in the food model. Similarly, Morgan and Sonnino speak of a “New Food Equation” which considers food price increases of 2007/2008, food insecurity, national security (relating to protests over food stemming from the economic crisis), climate change, and land conflicts (mostly relating to developing countries and their exploitation by wealthier countries) (2010, pp. 209–210). The common theses of these,

⁹ The authors note that this is in reference to OECD countries, at least.

¹⁰ Which, even from the start of this research (2014) to its conclusion (2021), the language surrounding this has shifted from ‘climate change’ to ‘climate crisis’ and ‘climate emergency’.

¹¹ Friedmann argues that the perception of a persistent food crisis has been present since the early 1970s (1982, p. S248)

along with other food policy-related literature¹² is a lack of resilience in the food system in the face of such instabilities.

Often associated with warnings about the costs of poor production and consumption practices are what researchers identify as the growing appetites for Western-style middle-class diets. This desire for meat (particularly beef) and dairy in the hugely populous countries of Brazil, China and India is a worry for emissions and land use (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012; Pretty and Bharucha, 2014). Agriculture has been found to cause approximately 30% of GHG emissions, relies on “92% of available global water” and uses “38% of the planet’s ice-free land” (Mason and Lang, 2017, p. 120). Over the course of the 20th century, “the area under irrigation and number of agricultural machines has grown by approx. 2-fold, fertilizer consumption by 4-fold and nitrogen fertilizers by 7-fold” (Pretty and Bharucha, 2014, p. 5). Mason & Lang argue that “[d]ietary consumption patterns, more than population growth, will increasingly have a significant impact on land requirements globally” (Mason and Lang, 2017, p. 133).

Spaargaren and colleagues argue that the Brundland concept of ‘sustainable development’ represented a shift at the landscape level of the post-WWII global regime characterised by the intensification in agriculture (2012, p. 3). Referring to the work of Ullrich Beck (1994) and Anthony Giddens (1990), Spaargarten et al. (2012, p. 14) identify their notion of ‘Reflexive Modernity’ as a process associated with globalisation and linked to the food system. This concept speaks to society’s diminished trust in conventional food systems¹³ based upon a realisation of the significant and wide-reaching impacts (p. 22). In addition, this has prompted a shift in society’s views of the roles of government, science and technology and the relationship between society and nature, among others (ibid). Within this concept as it relates to food are the historic concerns for food safety, availability and affordability have expanded to include concern for climate, animal welfare and a desire to shift a more ethical food system (ibid, 2012. p.21). This consideration of ethical elements, Kirwan and colleagues (2017) found, was relevant across all dimensions of FSCs, including public, scientific, market and policy (Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b). This ethical lens is especially crucial when considering the often invisible and distant activities of intensive

¹² See Lang, Barling & Caraher (2009) in particular.

¹³ Associated with an increase in labelling initiatives indicating alternative values, such as animal welfare standards, organic, fairtrade, local and other features (Kjærnes and Torjusen, 2012, p. 94).

agriculture where people, wildlife and landscapes are impacted for demanding export markets (Goodman and Sage, 2014; Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b, 2017a).

These issues associated with the industrial and globalised agri-food system are linked to notions of disconnection, distancing (Clapp, 2014; Page, 2019) and “placelessness” (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 360). These are terms often put forward to describe the sense that people no longer know where their food comes from, how it is grown, or have the skills to use it. The stretched nature of food chains is, as Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber argue, “challenging the local, natural, and place-based (traditional) meanings and attributes of food because of the ‘lifting out’ of social relations of production and consumption from their local embeddedness” (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012, p. 3, referencing Giddens, 1990). They refer to a “socio-ecological ‘rootedness’” that has become a values-based point upon which the globalized food system is being challenged (ibid, 2012). As a result of these changes of attitude, it is within this context that academics argue that major systemic change is taking place within the food system and must continue (van Otterloo, 2012; Mason and Lang, 2017).

The era of industrial globalised agriculture not only ushered in the present era of cheap food, but one in which ecosystems and people suffer and the costs of inequality and exploitation are not factored into the prices of food. Beyond a sense of disconnection, the corporate ownership of and financialisation of the globalised food system have rendered the impacts of food production largely invisible in such a geographically dispersed structure, making it difficult to seek accountability for the consequences of harmful practices (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Clapp, 2012, 2014). The hidden cost of these externalities in the production of food is estimated by the Food and Landuse Coalition to be almost \$12 trillion a year (FOLU, 2019, p. 47). Examples of these “externalities” are explained in a recent editorial in the Journal *Nature*:

“When industrial-scale farms draw copious quantities of water to irrigate crops... it is taxpayers who foot the bill for the water scarcity that can follow. It’s the same for agrochemicals and their effects on the health of people and ecosystems. Governments find themselves shouldering the costs of biodiversity loss, and mopping up agriculture’s

contribution to greenhouse-gas emissions.” (‘Counting the hidden \$12-trillion cost of a broken food system’, 2019, p. 296)

Caraher and others offer that a more nuanced approach to food would go beyond the usual government foci of food safety, supply and nutrition¹⁴ to consider the concentration of power in the food system and the externalised nature of costs to health and the environment as a result of cheap food (Caraher, 2008; Mason and Lang, 2017). Despite its modern origins as a policy concept, the resistance of governments to embrace sustainable development on a systemic level is felt to be a hindrance to meaningful change (Marsden, 2012). Marsden argues that while the evidence of “sustainability stresses” has mounted, we are in “a period of institutional and corporate denial” which maintain business as usual approaches as the only viable option (2012, p. 293). Some scholars attribute this to the power of the food industry holding sway over governments (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Caraher, 2008; Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012). Associated with this is the typical governmental policy approach of focusing on the individual choices of the consumer for making responsible choices, rather than holding industry to account (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009; Oosterveer and Spaargaren, 2012). Hinrichs states simply that “the economic, social and environmental challenges now facing food systems intersect and magnify one another” and that ignoring this fact is “ethically out-of-tune” (2014, p. 144). Kirwan and colleagues, like many authors researching more inclusive policy practices (Dubbeling and de Zeeuw, 2007; Hebinck and Page, 2017; Page, 2019) assert that a reflexive governance approach involving multiple stakeholders is necessary to advance discussions surrounding sustainability and food systems. Reflecting the notion of Reflexive Modernity (Beck, 1994; Giddens, 1990) in relation to a shift to more ethically-conscious FSCs, Kirwan et al (2017) argue the need for a discourse revolving around ‘the common good’ and concern for others, however distant (Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b). An assumption of a more inclusive and reflexive policy process is that actors will become more aware of the impacts of consumption choices and conclude that a sustainable transition is needed in FSCs. This highlights tensions where those seeking to maintain the status quo for economic reasons and those focused on systemic change (Kirwan et al, 2017), and in this way reflects the longstanding struggle between the standard pillars of health and environment in the

¹⁴ As put forward by the FAO/WHO World Declaration and plan of action for Nutrition. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations World Health Organization, 1992).

face of economic powers. Springett and Redclift, in a review of the history and evolution of the concept of sustainability note that it is through discourses which oppose the control and the ideologies of those in power, that the narrative of sustainable development is prevented from becoming rigid (2015).

2.3 Rethinking Sustainability in the Context of Food

The structure of the food system and its associated failings (occurring at all scales of its operations, see Figure 3) is no small task to address. To examine how food and sustainability are linked, many authors have sought to answer the questions of “what exactly is *sustainable* food?” or “what does a sustainable food system look like?” A description of a *sustainable* food system by the HLPE harkens back to Brundtland, suggesting that “[a] sustainable food system is a food system that ensures food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition of future generations are not compromised” (2014, p. 31). Another definition of a sustainable “agroecosystem” is one “tending to have a positive impact on natural, social and human capital” whereas unsustainable systems “feed back to deplete these assets, leaving fewer for the future” (Pretty and Bharucha, 2014, p. 1). Underscoring the *system* focus in his definition with consideration to inputs and outputs of the food system, Sage argues that “each stage of a sustainable food system must endeavour to minimise the use of non-renewable resources... ensuring that the utilisation of renewable resources... is within their capacity to regenerate stocks” (2012, p. 5). In addition, he identifies the need to reduce waste and pollution in the food system, as well as to commit to social justice and food security for all (ibid. p.5)

Healthy eating has become a central part of discussions of sustainability and the food system, for the simple fact that while we all must eat, the global food system influences what we eat, and what we eat impacts the system (Mason and Lang, 2017; Meybeck and Gitz, 2017, p. 1). This can be illustrated through multiple studies and reports relating to obesity, malnutrition and non-communicable lifestyle diseases, and action by governments to address these through policy (HM Government, 2010; And and University, 2014; Dobbs *et al.*, 2014; Hawkes and Popkin, 2015). Studies of the economic impacts of poor diet paint a stark picture of current costs of NCDs on national health systems, with staggering projections into the future (Marmot, 2010). The estimated burden of non-communicable lifestyle diseases has been calculated at a cumulative total over US\$30tn between 2010 and

2030 (Bloom *et al.*, 2011). Mason and Lang use the term “sustainable diet(s)” to refer to “both health and environment, and to encapsulate the multiple goals of eating well for human health, in a manner that causes least environmental damage or, at best, even promotes environmental resilience, and that meets other socio-economic and cultural goals” (2017, p. 9). In short, a sustainable diet is “one that is health-enhancing, has a low environmental impact, is culturally appropriate and economically viable” (*ibid.* p.13). This moves away from the traditional production-centered view of food toward one that is more holistic in its consideration of the food system and human interactions with food.

Spaargarten *et al.* 2012 define sustainability as a “quality of qualities” (p.25). This is scarcely better illustrated than the six-value formulation showing the complexity of the food system presented by the UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) (Lang, Dibb and Reddy, 2011, p. 14), followed by Mason and Lang (2017, p. 21). Represented in Figure 4, this includes not only social values, environment and economy (reflecting the pillars) but adds quality, health and governance as qualities which need to be considered in association with food. Each of these categories comes with a sub-set of considerations for policy makers to take into account in the face of such a complex system.

Quality	Social values
Taste Seasonality Cosmetic Fresh (where appropriate) Authenticity/provenance	Pleasure Identity Animal welfare Equality and justice Trust Choice Skills (for food citizenship)
Environment	Health
Climate change Water Land use Soil Biodiversity Waste reduction	Safety Nutrition Equal access Availability Social status/affordability Information and education
Economy	Governance
Food security and resilience Affordability (price) Efficiency True competition and fair returns Jobs, skills and decent working conditions Fully internalised costs	Science and technology evidence base Transparency Democratic accountability Ethical values (fairness) International aid and development

Figure 4: Multiple Values for a Sustainable Food System (Source: SDC, 2011)

New approaches to food based on “value-orientations” are being put forward as alternatives moving beyond the established economic and production foci to address a sustainability transition in the food system (Spaargarten et al, 2012, p. 2). These value-orientations have been referred to a new “organizing principles” and associated with product innovations and consumption practices (Spaargarten et al, 2012, p. 2-3), and are simply another way of referring to the ethical considerations at different stages of the food system, along with their multiple dimensions and attributes (Kirwan et al, 2017; Kirwan et al, 2017b). The rise

of vegetarianism and veganism offer examples of ethically driven consumer-led change in response (and resistance) to a wide range of issues with the food system, albeit often associated with white middle-classness and the privilege of dietary choice (Pirani and Fegitz, 2019).

The 2019 EAT-Lancet Commission on 'Healthy diets from sustainable food systems' titled *Food in the Anthropocene* (Willett *et al.*, 2019) illustrates the extent to which food, human health and environment are interconnected. This report does nothing short of calling for "a global transformation of the food system" (2019, p. 447) based on planetary boundaries to achieve the global SDGs and objectives of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2016). The recommendation of a drastic shift in eating habits has become an uncomfortable but sobering assertion to the (developed) world, calling for massive reductions in meat and dairy products in order to combat emissions and environmental degradation from industrial-scale livestock farming. Although this recommended diet has been criticised as being beyond the economic reach of approximately a third of the global population (Hirvonen *et al.*, 2019), the argument underlying the need for a change in consumption habits for ecosystem health is not in question. The responding Lancet study, along with others, recommends systemic changes (higher incomes, nutritional assistance, and lower food prices) to bring up the economic standards of this third of the world so that they *could* afford a change to a more sustainable diet (Meybeck and Gitz, 2017; Hirvonen *et al.*, 2019). What the above research indicates is that sustainability is a complex concept in itself but rendered all the more so when considerations of the food system are superimposed. While some embrace the values of an alternative diet and food system, transitioning to a more sustainable food system has significant challenges pertaining to power flows (Caraher, 2008), capacity and willingness to change. The role of the "empowered, demanding, concerned consumer" and their consumption practices has been presented as a starting point this food transition (Spaargarten *et al.*, 2012, p. 19). As such, appealing to the values underlying sustainability and food may offer inroads in this matter (Brunori, 2007; van Otterloo, 2012).

In addition to consumer-led change, scholars argue that a shift to more sustainable production methods is essential, expressed as "major transformational change... along more ecological, social and environmental lines" (Marsden, 2013, p. 124). Another essential

consideration is equity, which would involve addressing exploitation in the food system, such as seasonal migrant labourers (Consterdine and Samuk, 2018) and loss of land for farmers in the Global South due to corporate land grabs (Morgan and Sonnino, 2010). Climate change, according to David Barling, provides the “overriding structural challenge to production” (2011, p. 15), the evidence for which is now recognised as irrefutable (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2014). While food production is affected by climate change, it drives it in turn, with food affecting 31% of the global warming potential of products (Tukker *et al.*, 2006) presenting perhaps the most compelling argument for the need to change the food system.

Food production, as a necessarily spatial activity (Marsden 2013, p 125), must be considered as both *how* and *where*. The notion of sustainable intensification (SI) has been offered as one avenue to meeting the food requirements of a growing population. SI is defined as “a process or system where agricultural yields are increased without adverse environmental impact and without the conversion of additional non-agricultural land.” (Pretty and Bharucha, 2014, p.1571). The ‘Sustainable Intensification Research Platform’, funded by DEFRA and the Welsh government put forward that SI offers the potential of ability of “simultaneously increasing farm output and competitiveness, whilst protecting the countryside and enhancing the environment” (DEFRA, no date). Noting the lack of a prescriptive path in terms of farming methods, technologies, species or design, Pretty & Bharucha state that SI focuses on the ends, rather than the means of production (2014, p. 1571). It is exactly this that makes the notion controversial, as it factors in the continued usage of agro-chemicals, is highly technologically focused (utilising the genetic modification of crops, for example), and is concentrated on large-scale intensive agriculture. To transition to a more sustainable food production system, Marsden argues that for the UK as an example, “it will be necessary to increase capacity and yields while... there will be considerable pressures to reduce inputs and maintain more extensive systems of farming” (2013, p. 124). This reduction of inputs and shift to more extensive farming methods could align with the theory of ‘ecological modernization’, to “reorientate production to the new demands and constraints posed by public health, environmental concerns and animal welfare” (Evans, Morris and Winter, 2002, p. 327; Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005). These concerns form one part of a wider discussion relating to, as put by Barling (2011), “[t]he security and resilience of the food supply and its sustainability”, noting that these concerns have become a public policy hot-point (p.15). Regardless of the rhetoric behind such

agricultural approaches, Marsden argues that changes at the local level would have to be very significant and far reaching to achieve a significant disruption of the current unsustainable production practices which are causing issues within and beyond the UK (2013).

Food production has historically been thought of as a rural activity, allowing for the production of large volumes of staple crops, animal feeds and livestock. Within the lens of sustainability research, the focus on *rural* production is typically linked to agricultural practices, namely types of production and associated emissions (including transport) and input usage (Mason and Lang, 2017). This subject has been approached from many angles of scholarship, including life-cycle analyses of foods (Tukker *et al.*, 2006) and the multifunctional nature of farming essential to rural economies (Spaargarten *et al.* 2012. p. 21). Social sustainability, in terms of the socio-economic inequalities experienced in often remote rural communities are also identified (Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005, p. 25). However, the movement of the global population into cities has brought the study of urban agriculture (UA) into focus, with an extensive body of scholarship, often associated with sustainability. The 1996 UNDP report titled *Urban Agriculture: Food, Jobs and Sustainable Cities* examined the broad potential of UA in developing countries, finding that at the time UA was providing between 15 – 20% of global food intake (Smit, Ratta and Nasr, 1996). This research has been carried out in a number of cases where impressive changes have occurred as a result of UA (Rocha and Lessa, 2009; De Zeeuw, Van Veenhuizen and Dubbeling, 2011; Viljoen and Bohn, 2012). Likewise, studies of UA in the developed world have shown action taking place in innumerable cities in order to target food system issues and illustrate the possibilities of urban food production (Vitiello, 2008; MacRae *et al.*, 2010; Gorgolewski, Komisar and Nasr, 2011; Ladner, 2011). Activities such as urban livestock keeping (Grace *et al.*, 2015), aquaculture (Bunting and Little, 2015) have received some attention, but horticultural activities have received the bulk of attention due to the ability to adapt unconventional urban spaces into gardens (Nasr *et al.*, 2010; Pearson, Pearson and Pearson, 2010; Gorgolewski, Komisar and Nasr, 2011; Cohen, Reynolds and Sanghvi, 2012). Community gardens, allotments, urban farms, parks, verges, private front and back yards, rooftops and bus stops have all been researched as spaces for UA (Pearson, Pilgrim and Pretty, 2010; Gorgolewski, Komisar and Nasr, 2011).

UA has been embraced as a way to get city-dwellers involved with and consuming local food, with a great deal of attention given in literature to the benefits of urban growing. UA has been associated with poverty reduction, social inclusion, food security through improved access, as well as recreation, improvement in mental health, dementia care, skill building for enhancing employment opportunities, and increases in biodiversity (Jarosz, 2008; Vitiello, 2008; Schmutz *et al.*, 2014; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers, 2014; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Lin, Philpott and Jha, 2015). To this list, Tornaghi adds “the potential to partially solve problems associated with food quality and affordability, reduce ecological footprints, increase community cohesion, achieve greater community resilience and promote urban sustainability (2014, p. 552). These benefits, bolstered by community interest, have led many to recommend that urban areas incorporate a UA element into local planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Bulkeley and Betsill, 2005; Morgan, 2009, 2013; Hodgson, Caton Campbell and Bailkey, 2011; Hatfield, 2012; G. Morgan, 2014). Studies in support of UA are many, however Tornaghi argues that a critical and pragmatic view must be taken, explaining that UA is often portrayed in research as “benevolent and unproblematic” (2014, p. 552).

Through an examination of UA projects in the United States, it was found that most will not contribute to the standard economic measure and municipal goal of job creation because of the scale of most projects and the limited funding opportunities available (Vitiello, D; Wolf-Powers, 2014, p. 519). While urban food production has been acknowledged as having limitations in its production capacity and ability to provide fully for cities (MacRae *et al.*, 2010), it has been identified as a way to supplement a city’s food. Examples of this include individual domestic garden plots and allotments where surplus is often shared amongst neighbours (Vitiello & Wolf-Powers, 2014. p. 519), rooftop urban agriculture, and community gardens (MacRae *et al.*, 2010). Oft-cited to illustrate the potential of production is the example of ‘victory gardens’ in the United Kingdom and Canada due to the large quantities of produce generated in urban areas during the two world wars (Steel, 2009; MacRae *et al.*, 2010). UA has been put forward as a logical production approach, particularly for horticultural products (salad greens, tomatoes) which are fragile, have short shelf-lives, and subject to damage during shipping (MacRae *et al.* 2010). While a great deal of literature has focused in the last two decades on urban agriculture, in reality production activities are taking place all over, forming a spectrum of urban to rural, at various scales, business and

social models (Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Blay-Palmer *et al.*, 2018). The city of Toronto has been a leader in recognising not only the potential of UA, but of the essential role of its peri-urban and rural hinterland (Walton, 2012).

Detailed across a well-established body of scholarship, is a rethinking and restructuring of food systems to form “Alternative Food Networks” (AFNs) (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2012; Volpentesta, Ammirato and Della Gala, 2013).¹⁵ Unpacking this concept requires examining what is meant by ‘alternative’, as well as the role of networks. AFNs have been associated with resistance to the conventional food model (Roep and Wiskerke, 2012), where the political objective is one where production and consumption are reconnected (Kjærnes and Torjusen, 2012). The movement toward organically produced foods as well as fairtrade foods have become standing examples of alternative food movements that have received mainstream acceptance and marketshare through corporate adoption (ibid, 2012). DuPuis and Goodman note the normative trend within AFN research where, “the global becomes the universal logic of capitalism and the local the point of resistance to this global logic” (2005, p. 359). Based upon this, a feature of AFN structures is often to shorten supply chains and move away from long-distance transport and imports within the conventional food retail system. As a result ‘relocalization’ via local food networks has become a part of this movement (Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Brunori, 2007). Such ‘alternative’ efforts frame LFP as a transgressive act in the fight against the capitalist system was identified by Schindler (2014), with acts like Guerrilla gardening, community gardening and GYO initiatives being a means of seeking alterity (Belasco, 2006). Goodman and Sage identify transgressive actions as a form of exerting power, with transgressive food acts as a way to resist dominant food structures (2014). Expressed as “a romantic anti-politics” Dupuis and Goodman offer that the local food system offers an outlet to reject the global corporatist food regimes but warn of an “un-reflexive localism”, arguing that a lack of reflexivity about local food-based activism could lead to unfounded “standards of purity and perfection”, as well as “reactionary politics and nativist sentiment” (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 360). On the other end of this spectrum, Veen and Derkzen (2012)

¹⁵ Volpentesta (2013) notes an expanding lexicon when referring to such alternative formations including “‘alternative food initiatives’, ‘alternative agro-food networks’, ‘alternative food networks’, ‘alternative strategies’, ‘short food supply chains’, ‘short agrifood supply chains’ (SAFSCs), or ‘alternative food supply chains.’” For the purpose of this research, AFN will be used as shorthand, albeit with recognition that many of these above expressions hold nuances and variations to the AFN concept.

caution against the assumption that all those involved in urban food production harbour political or activist motivations associated with the urban GYO movement, despite its increasing popularity.

In their study of territorially embedded foods in the South West of England, Sonnino and Marsden explain the difference between the ‘conventional’ food system as one where foods are ‘disembedded’, or of unclear or distant geographic origin, whereas the ‘alternative’ is ‘embedded’ within a specific (and implicitly local) territory (2006, p. 303). The authors found that “alternativeness is *created* and *constructed* through the development of embedded social, ecological and economic relations” (2006, p.301). This implies an active process where actors define a relationship (often by utilising a historically, geographically and culturally associated narrative) with a particular food or “niche product” (p.302).

In the European Union of the 1990s, a push to ‘relocalisation’ was made in order to prompt economic growth in rural areas and encourage a sense of value and pride from locally produced foods (Watts et al 2005, p. 25). Acknowledged as a form of AFN (albeit, developed at the EU-level), this initiative included speciality labels¹⁶ to identify and promote traditional quality food and drink (EC, no date). This term has been specifically associated with the “territorial embeddedness” of *specific* local foods (such as the case of Cornish Clotted Cream, and Westcountry Farmhouse Cheddar, presented by Sonnino and Marsden, 2006). Incidentally, Watts, Ilbery and Maye consider the EU relocalisation focus on individual foods to be a weaker form of AFN than those focusing on supply chains (2005, p. 23). As a result, terms such as “localised” and “food chain localization” (Tregear, 2011, p. 419) have been used to illustrate this shift toward local food systems, however the term relocalization is used in scholarship and policy initiatives, regardless of its EU program connotations (Pothukuchi, 2004). This focus on local action is still reflected by the EC, albeit with a greater focus currently on the circular economy and closed loop systems (European Commission, 2015)

Despite the inability to define clearly what ‘local food’ is (Mason & Lang, 2017, p. 142), research has identified positive values and perceptions associated with locally produced

¹⁶ ‘Protected designation of origin’ (PDO), ‘Protected geographical indication’ (PGI), and ‘Traditional specialities guaranteed’ (TSG) (EC, no date).

foods. Associated terms include 'localism', 'foodsheds', 'food miles' and often, whether rightly or wrongly, 'sustainable' (Born and Purcell, 2006). These have been found to offer a "a form of resistance to the disembedding forces of globalization" (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2004, p. 267). A perception of increased quality associated with AFNs, for producers and consumers alike, has been a point of study (Goodman, 2003; Winter, 2003; Watts, Ilbery and Maye, 2005). On the back of the "quality turn" addressed by Winter (2003) in relation to the re-embedding of food systems, Brunori offers 'the local turn' where ideas and understandings of quality are communicated about locally produced food in particular (2007, p. 2). Although speaking in reference to the EU relocalisation structure, it is these perceptions of improved qualities that Brunori argues have the potential "to detach consumers from conventional food networks and attach them to alternative food networks" (ibid. p.8). These are presented in Table 2 and speak to the values consumers are associating with locally produced foods. Perhaps at the EU-scale such initiative may have wide-reaching impacts, however Marsden argues that this is unlikely at the "micro-level". While actors may be "pulling against the mainstream and seeking radical departure from it" (2013. P. 124), he observes that small-scale and specialised alternative efforts¹⁷ in the food system have not been proven to be scalable in order for them to be viewed as "true competitors" to the dominant food system (2013. p.123).

Table 2: Perceived Qualities Associated with 'Local Food'. Adapted from: Brunori, 2007.

Functional	Health
	Taste
Ecological	Food miles
	Biodiversity and landscape
Aesthetic	Diversity vs Standardisation
	Distinction
Ethical	Authenticity
	Identify and solidarity
Political	To change the balance of power in the food chain
	To orient production and consumption patterns

¹⁷ Marsden refers specifically to 'niches', in the context of the term within Transition Studies.

Many of these qualities overlap with the more detailed list of values associated with a more sustainable food system, offered by the SDC (2011) and Mason and Lang (2017) in Figure 4. These values underpin a movement toward food localisation that is taking place within communities across the UK and beyond (Starr, 2010; Kirwan *et al.*, 2013; Hinrichs, 2014). The association between local food and sustainability is widely identified or implied in food literature, however some scholars warn of “the local trap” in such a unquestioning belief as a false binary (Born and Purcell, 2006; Carroll and Fahy, 2014). Despite a number of arguments for relocalisation of food systems and food production, evidence for the sustainability of these (based on claims of social, economic and environmental benefits) has been found to be lacking (Edwards-Jones *et al.*, 2008). Once again, the complexity of production methods (organic, conventional), geography, seasonality, land-use, embedded-water, storing, shipping and food types all have bearing on the sustainability of a particular product or process.

Beyond the sustainability of food products themselves, AFNs have been credited with “fostering social interactions between people and boosting innovation processes.” (Volpentesta, Ammirato and Della Gala, 2013, p. 217). DuPuis and Goodman identify elements of activist rhetoric surrounding the creation of AFNs such as “[n]ew ways of thinking, the ethic of care”, as well as discussion of “value chains” where re-localisation links to rural livelihoods (2005, p. 359). Research of local food systems suggests that a restructuring of the food system based on values is necessary and observation of practical shifts suggests these are fuelling change (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2008). Kneafsey and colleagues report that actors get involved in AFNs to build “relationships and practices ... better suited to meeting their everyday needs, sustaining their lifestyles, addressing their anxieties and satisfying ... ethical dilemmas” (2008, p.2). This includes care “for close and distant ‘others’” (2008, p.3). This supports the notion of the shifting values and growing reflexivity that is emerging and driving food system change (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012).

A number of scholars have explored the discipline of Transitions Studies to gain insight into food system sustainability (Seyfang and Smith, 2007; Connors and McDonald, 2010; Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012; Marsden, 2013; Hinrichs, 2014)¹⁸. As a discipline,

¹⁸ Despite these obvious connections, some academics have identified an under-representation of food in transitions scholarship (Hinrichs, 2014; Markard *et al.*, 2012; Marsden, 2013).

Transition Studies focuses on multiple, nested levels of systems¹⁹ and technological changes which have the potential to shift a system to a new paradigm (Geels, 2002). Espousing a multi-disciplinary lens to addressing food system change, Hinrichs identifies the relevance a Transition Studies perspective, as one that “recognizes the diversity of options, approaches, places, voices and historical contexts in any change that flies the sustainability flag” (2014, p. 153). Viewing transitions as having a temporal element, Marsden echoes the ‘policy windows’ approach to change (Kingdon, 2014), suggesting that transitions take place when “opportunity for change opens up within a system” (2013. p. 124). Integrating sustainable values and practices into the local food system is increasingly being viewed as a necessary way to confront the unsustainability of the global industrial food system, and as such, food is being linked to the sustainability transitions movement (Markard, Raven and Truffer, 2012; Hinrichs, 2014). Indeed, Hinrichs identifies food as “the low-hanging fruit of transition” because of its many connections within the local system (2014. p. 146).

2.4 Chapter Summary

This examination of sustainability and food system literature underscores a need for system-level changes to address the entrenched global structures that have caused deleterious effects to the environment, health and ecosystems. A number of actions taking place within the food system seek to address these, based on the changing understandings, attitudes and values of consumers (Kjærnes and Torjusen, 2012; Oosterveer and Spaargaren, 2012). Marsden argues that global pressures (climate change, population growth, the ‘nutrition transition’) are pushing ‘down’ on the global food system, while those concerned with sustainability are pushing ‘up’ from the grassroots to incite a system-shift (2013, p. 125). If anything, this review of sustainability and the food system highlights that the environmental, social and economic facets of food cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. Nor for that matter, can issues of social justice, equity, health which are so often displaced, distanced and diminished within the globalized food system (Mason and Lang, 2017). When considering population growth, environmental limits and past sins, sustainability as an evolving framework and ideology becomes imperative.

Returning to the definitions of sustainable development which opened this chapter, Gibson (2006) argues that proper sustainability implementation is a collaborative effort between

¹⁹ For more detail on this Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) see Geels (2002), which how niche innovation taking place at an often small-scale or grassroots levels have the potential to shift the existing paradigm relating to that system.

public and private sectors, civil society and individuals, or through what James Meadowcroft calls “practical politics” (Meadowcroft, 2011). It is from this point of departure that the following chapter on policy seeks to illustrate the role of local level actors in addressing food system issues.

3. Public Policy and Local Food Policy Initiatives

Due to its importance to social organisation and care, a vast literature exists on the subject of public policy, including the policymaking process itself, the framing of policy issues, actors involved, theories for analysis and many more subject areas besides. For this reason, this chapter selectively focuses on some basics of public policy, but mostly uses this as the contextual basis for an examination of food policy efforts taking place at the local level in the Global North. The growth of such policy efforts is examined through research on local food policy governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and practical policy tools for actors. Through examining literature in these areas, this chapter builds a background for this overall research project based on its focus on local food policy initiatives.

3.1 What is Public Policy?

The examination of social policy requires first addressing what exactly *is* 'policy'? Most definitions echo that given by Cairney to some degree, presenting public policy as "the sum total of government action" (2012, p. 5). This can refer to "an aim, a decision or an outcome" made by actors with or without formal authority and may include the *lack* of action or decision (ibid. p.22). Policies are, according to Walker et al., "the set of forces within the control of policy makers that affect the structure and performance of the system of interest ... to control the system, to help solve problems within it or caused by it, or to obtain benefits from it" (2003, p. 6). Particular 'policy instruments' may include legislation, regulation, self-regulation, fiscal (tax) measures, education, labelling and advice" with these varying on how effective and binding they are as 'hard' or 'soft' policy tools (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009, p. 10).

Many refer to the nested nature of policy, wherein policy exists within a number of interconnected and overlapping contexts - geographic, political and institutional, with all of these adding levels of complexity and consideration in drafting, debating and delivering, and evaluating (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009; Cairney, 2012; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014). Policy occurs at micro, meso and macro levels, notes Bell, reflecting the local community level, the regional or state level and the national, international and supranational levels respectively (2010, p. 6). Seemingly independent policy areas, or 'silos', such as transportation, agriculture, health, environment, national security, and others, are indeed

overlapping and influence one another. In the context of health policy, Bell presents the view that policy can either be organised according to typology (such as jurisdictional, financial, delivery or program policy vehicles), or conceptualised through the stages of the policy process (ibid, p.6). The ‘policy cycle’ view of policy, which Cairney explains was once a prescriptive approach used by policymakers, is now used more by scholars in researching policy (2012).

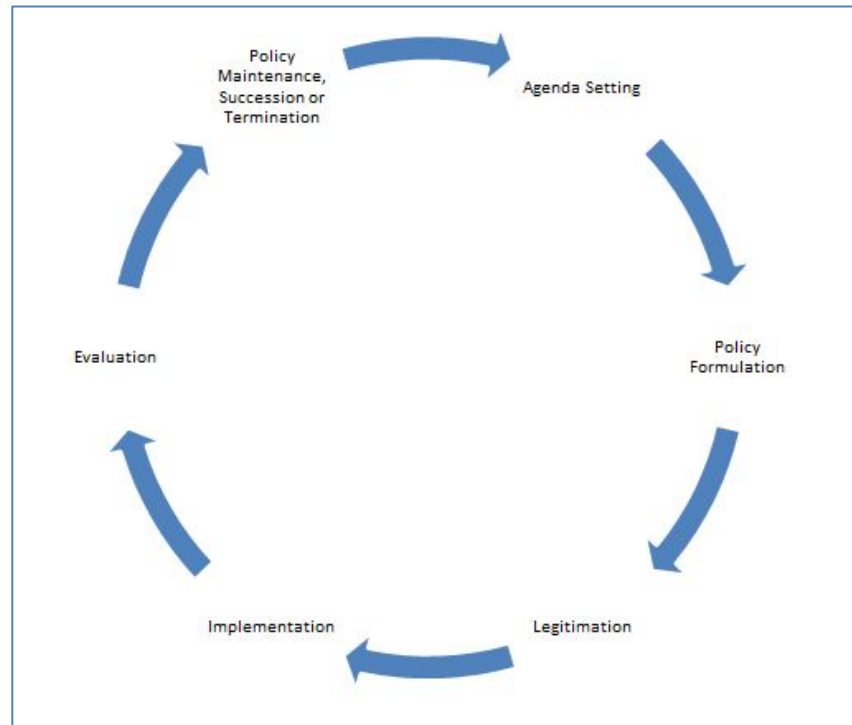


Figure 5: The Generic Policy Cycle (Source: Cairney, 2012)

Addressing policy is typically a result of the identification of a ‘policy problem’, explained as “what needs to be overcome to achieve ...policy ends” and is “a set of tensions, barriers, and challenges associated with a particular goal” (Bell, 2010. p. 5). However, assuming that a policy problem is singular, straightforward and unchanging inevitably presents issues for policy makers. In reality, these problems are “amorphous” and “ideologically defined”, and so demand rigorous research to deliver evidence-based policy (Bell, 2010. P.29). Bell also refers to policy making as “chaotic” (2010), with Cairney noting its “messiness”, attributing this to the actors involved, noting their behaviour, problems, influences, and their governmental, socio-economic and local contexts (Cairney, 2012. p.4).

Using theories to examine policy offers a lens (or lenses, if using multiple theories) of deciphering the complexity of policy decisions (Cairney, 2012; Weible, 2014). It is important to note that, “there is no single unifying theory of public policy”, making the multiple policy theory options all valuable for answering policy questions from different vantage points (Cairney, 2012, p.2). These theories each offer a common language or vocabulary to apply across studies that allows for comparison (Cairney, 2012, p. 3-4). Some of the most commonly applied policy theories include Multiple-Streams Theory/Policy Windows (Kingdon, 1984), Punctuated Equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier, 1988). Each of these has been covered extensively in policy literature with excellent summaries being offered by Parsons (1995), Cairney (2012), Sabatier (1988), Sabatier and Weible (2014, 2018) and others. Policy theories each carry their own assumptions about why policy change occurs as well as the actors involved (individuals and/or institutions, for example), their capacities, influences and motivations. Generally, theories vary based on to what extent they accept the policy cycle as a premise for policy making and whether actors can be viewed as rational or ‘bounded’ in their rationality and prone to simplification of concepts (Birkland, 2020).

Lang, Barling and Caraher point out that the dynamics of the policy making process that take place behind closed doors are rarely “seamless, rational products” and are “less linear and orderly” than is often portrayed externally (2009). The reason for this, they note, is that “policy is subject to power relations, conflicts as well as consensus, irrational alongside logical thinking” and “sectoral interests triumphing over the public good” (ibid. p.4-5). It is these asymmetries of power, their associated tensions, and other ‘policy realities’ which must be explored to present as genuine a representation of the policy process as is possible (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009, p.9). Recognising these tensions amongst policymakers, this research has drawn on the ACF as a policy process theory (PPT), based on its focus on the beliefs of actors and the behaviour of coalitions as groups of actors seeking to drive policy change. The ACF is presented in detail in the following chapter, along with explanation to its suitability as a PPT for application to this research.

Noting that many policy frameworks did not focus enough on the role of actors, Walt and Gilson developed the ‘policy triangle’ (1994, p. 354) to better examine the issue of power in policy settings and how these can impact the success or failures of policy efforts. Offered as an alternative framework to more linear models of the policy process, the policy triangle

encourages researchers to consider the interactions of actors as they relate to the policy context, content and process, and is particularly helpful in understanding agenda setting.

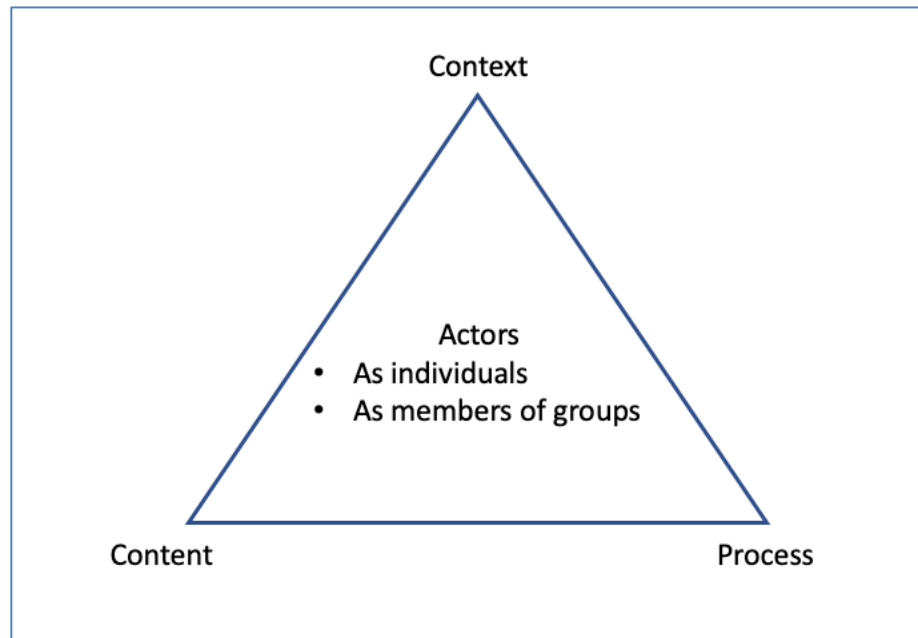


Figure 6: The Policy Triangle as a Model for Policy Analysis. Adapted from: Walt and Gilson (1994)

This model presents a useful simplification of policy components, and presents the centrality of actors, both as individuals with unique beliefs and objectives, as well as members working in groups which have wider, and differing, agendas. In this research for example, this model would position CS and LA actors at the centre forming the single coalition for each of the five case studies. For these, the 'context' would represent the global, national and local political systems within which the food policy effort sits, including associated policy drivers. The 'process' would relate to the partnership model and the associated power relations between the two 'sides' of the coalition. The 'content' of the policy, would be the 'translated beliefs' (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014, p. 192) pertaining to sustainability and LFP of those actors involved. While not a guiding framework for this research, the 'triangle' offers a useful heuristic for considering key elements of the policy process, and as such parallels elements of the ACF.

Some scholars argue for the need to research and decipher narratives of actors and their

experiences in various areas of policy making through qualitative research (Cairney, 2012; Shanahan *et al.*, 2018). Such narratives may be in agreement or in competition, and also hold differing accounts of the same event (Cairney, 2012, p. 13). It is these divergences and convergences that illustrate the tensions in the process, and the points of momentum or traction in policy making. Birkland notes that within the ACF, for example, a suitable policy broker can maintain harmony in the policy process by acting as a go-between for opposing coalitions (2020, p. 391). Important to success is that both sides feel as though they have been able to achieve their policy core aims, and that there is at least some alignment on which actions to deploy to achieve these (*ibid*). Within this research, this dynamic is reflected within a single coalition group, and does not necessarily include an actor in a broker role.

Along with an appropriate policy framework as a tool for policy study, researchers note a need for a multi-disciplinary approach to policy analysis, asserting that “[o]ne cannot understand the drivers and dynamics at local, subnational, national, regional or global levels from within any one particular disciplinary standpoint” (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009). This has been the case for both sustainability (Weinstein and Turner, 2012) as well as food policy (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009). Reflecting upon the structure of the food system, MacRae and Donahue define systems thinking as a process that “reflects an awareness of how actions by one group in the system affects other groups, as well as the environment, the economy, the fabric of society, and the health of the population, and ultimately, consumers” (2013, p.4). Incorporating disparate policy areas has become a strength of food research. By identifying how the food system links to many other policy areas, scholars such as Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009), Rayner and Lang (2012), Mason and Lang (2017), have offered the concepts of ‘ecological public health’ and systems thinking approaches to food policy and sustainability. As these same authors have also shown, food researchers find a natural overlap and ally-ship with the fields of Public Health and Nutrition.

Birkland explains that “[w]ho gets to define what issues our society and our governments should address, what dimensions of problems are the most important to focus on, and what solutions to those problems will be selected, is central to the questions of power, problem definition, and agenda setting in politics” (p.207). Power is explained as “the capacity and potential to act... as a resource to be used” (Cairney, 2012. P49). This can be exercised directly or indirectly through manipulation and understanding the extent of an actor’s

power on a policy outcome may only be seen when analysing the outcomes (ibid, p.49). In the case of this research, this is exemplified through the sustainability and LFP content of the case study strategies as an output of the coalition partnership. Acknowledging the relational nature of this concept between a 'principal agent' and a 'subaltern', the latter "may seek concessions as part of the interaction or relationship", if they are aware of having power exercised over them in the first place (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009, p. 69). A flip-side of this power relationship is the notion of 'transgression' as a form of challenging normative boundaries, power structures, and holds power in itself (Goodman and Sage, 2014).

3.2 Food Policy

Like policy in general, asking "*what is food policy?*" is a helpful starting point to examining relevant concepts and literature. Definitions of food policy echo those of public policy in general. Food policy is "any decision made by a government agency, business, or organization which affects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased and protected" (Hamilton, 2002). It "can take place at any scale" and "can be legislative, regulatory, or visionary" and holds within it established normative cultural assumptions (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.5). Policy in the context of food is diverse and wide ranging due to the complexity of the food system, as illustrated in Chapter 2 (Figure 3). Like any policies, food policy exists at and across multiple levels, and interact with other adjacent policy topics, jurisdictions and departments.

A focus of agricultural policy in the 1970s was on food security via aid from Western countries (namely the USA) to developing nations, and policies were designed accordingly to address hunger and supply (Friedman, 1982; Clapp, 2012; Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009). This attention to quantity in production links to the first of four phases of food policy has gone through. These are identified as 1) nutrition; 2) community development; 3) the environment and 4) food safety (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009, pp. 38–42). It is this third phase which the authors describe as "confused", where tensions between the environment (and a number of unsustainable systemic issues) emerged alongside the established neoliberal market structure.

As shown in the previous chapter, a changing set of global circumstances has been highlighted in policy scholarship as driving the need to change the food system and its underlying policy structures. These issues echo the assertion that sustainability and

globalisation are the two greatest narratives of the food system in our time (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012). Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009) present a changed landscape, citing the “new” issues of climate change, obesity and ill-health, water shortages, environmental degradation and social inequality as areas of study in the policy field, which desperately need to be addressed in a wide-reaching “reconfiguration of policy” (p.1). The trifecta of environment, health and society are put forward as the basis of ecological public health which needs to be addressed in policy, and this is inseparable from the movement toward sustainability (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009). These authors argue however that CS is increasingly more informed and conscious in their consumption practices, and has a greater role in policy activism, thus forming a state- supply chain- and civil society triangle (2009, p. 11). In ‘Food Policy’, they suggest that perhaps the future of the food system as a more equitable, ecologically-linked, and health-focused entity is dependent on consumers exercising their desire for change to the historic powers of the food system (2009). Although, it can be argued that falling back on consumers as the responsible actors for driving change absolves governments and markets of the poor practices underlying the food system. Indeed, it is these corporate and retail powers that are “editing food choice and food policy” (p.75). Government reticence to dictate food choices to consumers has been associated with ‘soft’ policy approaches (education, labelling, advice) in the name of democracy and individual freedom of choice (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009, p. 10, 12). Consumer-driven change based on values has been dubbed “values for money” to contrast with the market-based view of “value for money” that has been the hallmark of the industrial system based on cheap abundance (Lang, 2010b). While malnutrition was historically viewed as an issue of the Global South, obesity, its economic impacts from non-communicable diseases, and its increasing rates for children, has brought the issue of food security to the attention of Western countries. Research suggests that as a response to issues associated with globalisation, that local food policy action is a step that is being taken at the municipal level toward food security, as well as a multitude of other aims (Mougeot, 2006; Sonnino, 2009; Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2019). Similar to the WHO ‘Health in all policies’ (HiAP) approach, ‘*Food in all policies*’ could be considered, with a similar ‘toolkit’ for local policy practitioners (WHO, 2014). This would complement the direction in which food policy is moving, being one that has moved from single issues to being more integrated (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009, pp. 38–42) as a recognition of its broad scope across a multitude of systems (MacRae, 2011).

Recognising the expansive body of food policy scholarship, for the purposes of this research, further examination of literature is focused on the actors, coalition structures and policy models emerging as ways to address local food systems in the context of city regions.

3.3 The Emergence of Local Food Policy Initiatives

Engagement with food policy at the local level has been increasingly taking place in towns, cities and city-regions. Since the 1990s, civil society groups and local level government have become far more engaged with food issues, as can be shown through a large volume of case studies and research on local level food policy groups and action (Lang *et al.*, 2005; Rocha and Lessa, 2009; MacRae *et al.*, 2010; Levkoe, 2011; Carey, 2013; Kirwan *et al.*, 2013; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Moragues-Faus, 2017). This is occurring for various reasons, with scholars identifying “growing tensions between global and local dynamics of food” (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012. P. 4). There are a great many reports and studies which highlight impacts on local food systems originating from the global level while presenting opportunities for policy action and change. National governments have been criticized for being complacent about food and reluctant to engage with it seriously at a policy level (Oosterveer & Sonnenfeld, 2012, p.1).

Policy tends to get made in urban political forums for both urban and rural areas. This has been a historic tension for rural and more remote areas where the true nature of their local context is poorly understood, the relative economic power is low, and where the power of numbers as voters is limited by comparison with urban zones. Citing an “institutional separation” of urban and rural policy, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999, 2000) identified a need to reintegrate food networks and planning back into the urban spaces²⁰. In the journal of International Planning Studies, Morgan acknowledged that this omission was largely based on the perception that food production was regarded as a rural issue (2009, p. 342). The importance of urban food planning has been acknowledged by the American Planning Association in 2007 (American Planning Association, 2007; Hodgson, Caton Campbell and Bailkey, 2011). The result is many food planning documents having a slant toward urban agriculture, along with a great deal of food policy literature overall (Smit, Ratta and Nasr, 1996; Mougeot, 2006; Morgan, 2009, 2013; Cohen and Reynolds, 2014; G. Morgan, 2014).

²⁰ See Carolyn Steel (2007) for an excellent historic illustration of the urban relationship with its food and how this has been sanitised and removed from sight over recent decades.

Simply, “[c]ities are food players” and “municipalities are becoming food policy entrepreneurs” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 30). Some argue that cities and urban metropolitan areas are crucial actors in addressing social issues, and that in some cases cities can have more impact than the nation-state due to greater autonomy in policy making (Hebinck & Page, 2017, p. 931). Moreover, this population balance has given cities a great deal of power in decision making and bargaining power on the global stage (Barber, 2013). This increased power has converged with an increased awareness of a need for action at all levels, the realisation that it is not happening (or happening quickly enough, at least) at the global or state level (Caraher, 2008; Barber, 2013; Marsden and Franklin, 2013).

Literature bridging social geography and policy has addressed the notion of the ‘city region’ as a “spatial representation” that “looks beyond cities’ administrative boundaries” to single or multiple urban centres, as well as peri-urban and rural areas (Hebinck and Page, 2017, p. 931). It is at this level that Morgan argues is appropriate for action “to develop and implement an integrated and comprehensive solution for a future-proof urban food system” (ibid, 2009, p. 12). In the preface to “Designing Urban Food Policies”, Morgan advocates for the “new urban food movement” which he argues “champions a sustainable food system in which cities are able to reconnect with their regional hinterlands ... [su]stainable city-region food strategies pose a challenge because they contest one of the deepest divisions in capitalist society—between town and country” (in Brand *et al.*, 2017, p. vii). Despite the focus of many local food case studies on the *urban*, the notion of a ‘city-region’ explicitly acknowledges and incorporates the rural and peri-urban. The goals of the local food system both affect the activities contributing to feeding the city region and are affected by it, providing the context for change in an ongoing process (de Zeeuw and Dubbeling, 2015).

Many scholars acknowledge the limitations of urban food production but recognise some of these policy efforts “shift realities within the municipality, many help municipalities realize their multiple goals, and others have wider regional effects.” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.14). Examples of this come from Toronto’s incorporation of its wider Golden Horseshoe region (Walton, 2012), and the Ottawa Food Policy Council, both of which aim to integrate their peri-urban regions into food plans in order to have greater impact (Ottawa Food Policy Council, 2019). Associated with this is often the notion of ‘localisation’, or ‘relocalisation’, which as the previous chapter has shown, has been put forward as an approach to address a number of food system issues and for potentially changing the

balance of power in the food system. It has been found that supporting these initiatives falls on consumers, although consumers understand the concept of 'local' differently depending on their geographic and social contexts, and that these understandings are highly "elastic" (Carroll and Fahy, 2014).

Lang, Barling and Caraher identify the tensions pulling policy in various directions "to base food policy on science or market economics or social justice, or ethics or culture" (2012, p. 2). In response to this they argue that if food policy is not serving the issues of health, environment and society, then it is likely counter-productive to unifying policy efforts (ibid, p. 2-3). In a study looking at connections between food networks across Canada, Levkoe and colleagues identify this use of policy as a tool for broad-reaching change:

"A transformative food politics works to institutionalize ideas about alternative food into both policy and practice, and it encourages the development of solutions that simultaneously address social justice, ecological sustainability, community health and democratic governance in a comprehensive and contextualized way." (2012, p. 5)

These characteristics go beyond the standard pillars of sustainability to integrate values relating to governance structures and changing political and food systems.

Research has shown that these policy efforts take on a number of forms and functions. Through an examination of a number of urban food policy case studies, Halliday identifies eight common objectives of urban food policies: regeneration, economic development, food supply resilience, food security and access, environmental protection, public health, food safety and social inclusion (2019, p. 56). Taking a thematic approach to urban food policy aims, Hatfield's 2012 study of local food policies resulted in the identification of ten main themes commonly found in such documents (see Table 3). Some of these overlap with Halliday (the environment, food security/access, public health), although with the addition of others (mobile vending, waste management, and urban agriculture). Similarly, based upon an analysis of food strategies in the Global North and Global South, Baker and de Zeeuw compiled a list of four focus areas used in urban food strategies (UFS) and associated program actions, identifying 'equity', 'nutrition', the 'City Region Food System' and 'strategic planning' as the main categories for focus (2015). These may appear as a narrowed list

compared to that of Halliday, however these headings act as a wide umbrella for a number of policy actions and programs which offer a significant amount of detail relating to program activities.

Table 3: Areas of Focus for Urban Food Strategies. Adapted from: Hatfield, 2012.

Areas of Focus for Urban Food Strategies	
Policy Themes	Program Example
Access and equity	healthy retail initiatives, food desert mapping, senior food assistance programs
Economic development	small business marketing assistance/financing, food hubs, food employment training programs
Environmental sustainability	sustainable food sourcing, food system environmental footprinting, climate change planning
Food education	urban homesteading classes, healthy cooking demonstrations, school gardens
Local and regional food	farm-to-table programs, institutional purchasing programs/legislation
Mobile vending	enabling mobile food carts, licensing fee reductions
Nutrition and public health	menu labeling, early childhood nutrition programs
Policy advocacy	municipal food charters
Urban agriculture	zoning code revisions, community garden programs
Waste management	food composting programs, curbside collection of food waste

The variation across these three lists illustrates that if nothing else, there is great diversity in the intentions, aims and actions behind such policies, although some are directed at behavioural change rather than structural change. Similarly, the concept of sustainability has been recommended widely as a central framework to food policies at the international, national, and local levels through the now-familiar framework of its three themes (Barling, Sharpe and Lang, 2008; UK Cabinet Office, 2008; DEFRA, 2011; White and Natelson, 2011; Hinrichs, 2014), and as a guiding principle toward local visions of progress (Pothukuchi *et*

al., 2002; Pothukuchi, 2004; Hopkins, 2008; Pinkerton and Hopkins, 2009). In approaching local food policy analysis, Halliday warns that “there is a lack of consistency in how cities express their aims, their entry points and framing of the issues... [s]ometimes a city’s entry point is not the identification of a problem to be addressed, but rather an aim, a strategy, or a desire to implement an available instrument” (2019, p. 54). All of the above approaches suggest that it is unlikely a straightforward task to identify a single central purpose within a local food policy. This emphasises the point that local food strategies are bespoke documents and, in the flexibility of this policy format, can offer a useful tool for the specific needs of an individual community.

The UK has been a focus of some study on local level food policy efforts. A number of academic publications have come from the SFP experience (Morgan, 2014; Moragues-Faus and Morgan, 2015; Moragues-Faus, 2017; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019; Santo and Moragues-Faus, 2019), as well as SFP reports (Davies, 2017). Cities such as Brighton and Hove and Bristol (Carey, 2013; Jegou and Carey, 2015) are often referred to as models because of their place in the UK as ‘first movers’ in food strategy adoption (Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013), and their membership with the SFP from its inception. Bristol was the first UK city to have a Food Policy Council, and to have produced the ‘Who Feeds Bristol Report’ (Carey, 2011), offering a model for a UK FPC structure as well as a strong evidence-based examination of the local food system as a guiding document to other municipalities. Earlier examples of food strategy documents being used as reference points for UK cities often originate from North American cities, including Toronto and Vancouver, Canada, and Philadelphia, New York, and Portland, USA (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2010; Cohen, Reynolds and Sanghvi, 2012; Hatfield, 2012; MacRae and Donahue, 2013). What this means for this research is a strong national and international precedent for developing local food policy, as well as a large collection of examples from which to draw to model bespoke local food policy efforts. This increase in such efforts underscores the timeliness of this research, particularly as food system change is highlighted as essential to address a variety of pressing issues, and as local groups seek to pick up the slack where they feel national and international governments are failing.

3.3.1 Governance Structures and Coalition Groups

With so many factors nudging action at the municipal level, a great deal of scholarship has emerged on the processes of governance and the roles of actors in these environments and

efforts (Koc *et al.*, 2008; Durrant, 2014; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Bauermeister, 2015; Page, 2019). From a practical institutional standpoint, an examination of a number of local authorities in North America conducted by Hatfield identified two ‘internal’ and two ‘external’ catalysts for local food policy action. Internal drivers included the presence of a ‘champion’ within the political arena advocating on behalf of local food issues, and ‘organizational necessity’ where fragmented food-related programs required the creation of a strategic vision to organise them. External drivers were identified as ‘community demand’ where citizen pressure on government prompted action to address food-related wants and needs, and ‘grant funding’ where funding was made available and provided the impetus for a local food policy and program (Hatfield, 2012. p.11). Often more than one of these drivers line up to bolster the creation of a food policy.

Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld assert that local responses to global factors are acting as a launch-point for “innovative governance arrangements” (2012. P. 4), which offers a view into ‘who’ is doing local level food policy. Morgan highlights this and the importance of such developments:

“One of the most rapidly growing social movements of our time is the advent of food policy councils, or food policy partnerships, where civil society organizations are joining forces with municipal politicians and officers to fashion a more sustainable urban foodscape, one in which the values of public health, social justice and ecological integrity are treated more seriously in the food policy equation. New forms of co-governance are beginning to emerge in our cities as politicians realize that they have to design policies with rather than for civil society—and urban food policy is in the forefront of this process.” (in Brand *et al.*, 2017, p. vii)

In an examination of “Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs”²¹ across Canada, MacRae and Donahue categorised six coalition structures of food policy councils (2013). These ranged from fully council initiated and embedded, to independent CS initiatives. In between these two poles were hybrids with direct links to government, indirect links to government, links through a secondary agency and civil society efforts with limited government funding and

²¹ The inclusion of ‘entrepreneurs’ in the title is an acknowledgement of the novelty of such food policy work taking place in Canadian municipalities (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.2).

participation²². While these categories are represented in a seemingly defined format, MacRae and Donahue note that the lines between these are often blurred. As an illustration of these structures, based on data from 2015, a third of food partnerships within the SFP network were led by local authorities and others were represented through a mix of civil society actors, including academics, volunteers and community groups (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019. p. 785). The authors note that these “city-wide food partnerships could be considered governance networks – that is, relatively stable horizontal articulations of public and private actors” (2019. p. 785). Carroll and O’Connor also identify this same range of structures, noting that “[t]here is no single model of how food policy councils (FPCs) are constituted or function” (2016, p. 12). They discuss pros and cons of these models in the Irish context, explaining that those FPCs “officially sanctioned by a state or local government” may be “answerable” to these public bodies, but as a benefit from this responsibility these groups have a ‘seat at the table’ of local food issues, so to speak. Those FPCs which are less embedded in the government structure may have “greater freedom to set their own agenda and to critically appraise government policies and actions” (ibid). Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, explain that the partnership models are often changing based on the shifts in support from their local groups, the struggle with conflicting priorities and interests across the coalition and the need to “reconcile their public-private status” (2019. p. 785).

Research on FPCs show that these structures can sit alongside councils as partners, or independently as the drivers of strategies. FPCs are defined as formal structures, while less formal Local Food Policy Groups, or LFPGs, as coined by Halliday (2015) can play similar roles. It has been found however that some LFPGs recognise the limitations in their informal status and seek to establish formal FPCs in order to establish legitimacy (MacRae and Donahue, 2013). Expanding on Harper *et al* (2009) who presented four main functions of FPCs, MacRae and Donahue (2013) added additional detail to explain their roles:

- *to discuss food issues – balancing the interests of different actors (government, business, non-profits), and ultimately the mechanisms of regulatory pluralism*
- *to create opportunities for sectors in the food system to collaborate across the full range of sectors (silos) and rural/urban divides*

²² This spectrum of coalition formats is illustrated in greater detail in the following chapter, along with characteristics associated with each (see Table 8, in Chapter 4).

- *to analyze, influence, and create policy*
- *to create or support existing programs and services that address local needs, including helping with fundraising, program design and execution, and advocacy*

Deploying these partnerships in functional, democratic and productive ways has been the subject of much research, with particular recognition of institutional structures, power dynamics, and often diverging ideas and interests between CS groups and municipal government (Meadowcroft, 2011). The research focus on FPCs must not imply that these are the only structures. From Morgan's quote above, less formal initiatives such as food policy groups and civil society organisations also lead on food initiatives and indeed may not find that a formalised food policy council structure is the right thing for them, as was the case in this research explained by one CS actor of the Durham Food Policy Group.

One element underlying food action at the LA level relates to overlapping areas of departmental responsibility. Where council departments have some interaction with the local food system, ie: health, nutrition, environment, economy, planning there is often a recognition that collaboration. To overcome departmental silos could be beneficial and cost effective (Hatfield, 2012. P. 16). LA association with CS groups comes about for a number of reasons: through recognition of mutual need based on skills, access to networks and social capital, knowledge, and the levers of power to drive change. MacRae and Abergel found that "many government units are actively seeking non-governmental assistance in program delivery and policy development" as a result of "[l]acking sufficient internal resources and expertise to solve pressing municipal problems, such units engage with civil society in the hope of finding mutually acceptable solutions to such problems" (2012, pp. 18–19). Similarly, CS groups seek to "demonstrate value" to local authorities with the aims of establishing stronger support for projects (MacRae and Donahue, 2013).

3.3.2 Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

The inclusion of 'the citizen' in participatory policy processes has been a growing development at the global governance level, down to local politics, with the study of governance gaining prominence from the 1990s (McKeon, 2014; Agné, Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2015; Mckeon, 2015; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019). Literatures of multi-stakeholder participation identify these participants as crucial contributors in the democratization of policy processes, for increasing accountability and contributing to a

sense of public purpose (Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019 p. 781). In addition to democratising the policy process, Hebinck and Page explain that participatory processes in local food policy development are increasingly being used to “legitimize and increase effectiveness” when addressing challenges in the food system (2017, p. 930), largely through their collaborative value for creative problem solving. Such multi-stakeholder participatory processes have, according to Dubbeling and de Zeeuw (2007; de Zeeuw and Dubbeling, 2015), been characterized through:

- “The participation of various stakeholders in the agro-food system in the city region including local government authorities, civil society actors and private enterprises.
- In a transparent and open strategic planning process: situation analysis/problem diagnosis, formulation of vision and objectives, identification of development strategies, etc.
- In these, the final (political) decisions take honour – to the greatest extent possible – of the contributions of all participants”

In a model reminiscent of the traditional stages of the policy process, de Zeeuw and Dubbeling (2015, p. 61-62) offer a representation of the policy planning process, specific to the multi-stakeholder model addressing the city region agro-food system (Table 4). The “basic principle of multi-stakeholder planning” they argue, “is that the various stakeholders in the agro-food system enter into exchange and dialogue, develop a better understanding of each other’s viewpoints, practices and needs, and identify joint strategies to strengthen the local agro-food system” (ibid, p.60).

Table 4: Overview of the multi-stakeholder agro-food planning process (Source: de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015)

Phase	Main actions
1. Getting started	The initiative Stakeholder inventory; raising awareness Inter-institutional cooperation agreement; establishment of working group
2. Assessment of the current agro-food system in the city region	The vertical dimension The Horizontal dimension The policy and institutional dimension
3. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and strategic planning	Stakeholder consultations Establishment of a Multi-stakeholder Forum on Urban Food and Agriculture Identification of key issues (problems and potentials) to be attended Joint visioning; objective setting Identification of policies to be applied to transform the agro-food system in the city region Drafting the strategic agro-food plan
4. Formalization, operationalization and institutionalization of the proposed food and agriculture policies	Formalization of the strategic plan Operationalization Creating an institutional home for urban food and agriculture
5. Implementation, monitoring and renewal of the strategic agro-food plan	Implementation; monitoring progress and impacts; Renewal of the strategic plan (start at 1)

Traditional policy development focused on government policy makers at various levels and often assumed a rational and linear approach (1974), however through the inclusion of bottom-up participation in coalitions, the ACF considers the contributions of a multitude of actors. In this sense, the term ‘coalition’ itself is “used metaphorically in reference to the individuals comprising the coalition” (Jenkins-Smith *et al*, 2014. p. 190). Although in an application of the ACF, Koebele (2016) offers the term ‘collaborative policy processes’, which suggests, like ‘participatory governance’ a more citizen-inclusive implication, and illustrates the compatibility of an ACF approach to such participation structures. The multiple roles played by individuals as professionals and citizens allow for social capital to be shared and specific expertise to be applied to local level issues (Hebinck and Page, 2017).

Additionally, the inclusion of marginalized or vulnerable citizens offers a forum for oft-unheard voices to be represented in policy²³ (ibid). The contributions, time commitment and duration of involvement in the coalition varies from actor to actor (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014). While government actors at all levels remain important, coalitions may also include academics and researchers, members of the media, the private sector, consultants, non-profit organisations, or the judiciary (Cairney, 2012; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014). Tensions do arise, as “many of those involved are either confined by organizational silos or working in competition with each other” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.2-3). Cairney states that the structure of “the decision-making environment” can have an impact on the agency of actors, which he defines as “the ability of an actor to act to realize its goals” (2012, p.10).

3.3.3 Trans-Local Networks

In their study of four provincial food networks in Canada, Levkoe and colleagues (2012), examined how networks (rather than individual projects) have sought to address food issues and mobilise in opposition to the global agri-food system. Examples of these include The SFP network and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, both of which have sought to help cities take ownership over food system issues where there was a national gap in action. These food networks, the authors explain, are akin to a ‘rhizome’ structure (ibid). Building on this scale of food system action is an emerging area of research that warrants some mention, particularly in the context of this research and its focus on members of the SFP network. These initiatives are what Santo and Moragues-Faus (2019, p. 75) prefer to as “trans-local assemblages” of LFPGs. These organisations offer a central organisation that assists with horizontal knowledge sharing amongst LFPGs, and vertically to other levels of governance and have the potential to foster connections amongst groups, resilience and transformative potential (2019, p.75).

The Sustainable Food Places network was created in 2013 by the UK’s Soil Association, Sustain and Food Matters as national level organisations seeking to encourage “healthy, humane and sustainable food”, “better food and farming” and national food advocacy, respectively (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019. p. 784). In aiming “to create cross-sectoral

²³ Feminist and intersectional approaches to food studies are an exciting emerging area of scholarship that brings greater attention to justice, ethics and historic imbalances and exclusions in the food system (see Parker et al, 2019). Such research gives attention to groups which have lacked visibility in normative policy arenas.

partnerships and multi-level networks” (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019. p. 784), SFP has been credited with “creating opportunities for cities to co-produce knowledge, share resources and construct collective visions” (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019. p. 786). As expressed through its website those involved in these partnerships include “local public agencies, businesses, academics and NGOs” (Sustainable Food Cities, no date b). This illustrates the diversity in these groups and the movement away from traditional top-down governance approaches to local policy.

Table 5: Six Key Issues and SFP Award Structure (Source: Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019)

1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public; e. g.: mapping sustainable food initiatives, running healthy eating campaigns
2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable healthy food; e.g.: promote the living wage, provide advice on food access
3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects; e.g.: improve food education in schools, provide training on cooking skills
4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy; e.g.: support independent food businesses, protect food infrastructure
5. Transforming catering and food procurement; e.g.: persuade caterers to source sustainable, local, healthy food
6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system; e.g.: establish a food waste collection scheme, redistribute surplus food

The SFP offers policy development and program guidance to over fifty members²⁴ seeking to change their local food systems. These numbers illustrate the growing interest in local food initiatives and policy in the UK and represent a network across which information on the topics are shared. These groups are all working in different local contexts and are at different stages of implementing policies. This research adds to this by examining five SFP case studies, across three different coalition models. The findings of this research may be useful to other communities or network members when developing a new food policy group or evaluating existing partnership structures. With sustainability and food production being

²⁴ At the time of submission, February 2020.

important components of most local food policies, the evaluation of these cases can also inform projects in the network and more widely.

While not directly the focus of this research, the SFP is the overarching network to which all five case studies of this research belong and was the basis for case study selection (see Chapter 5). By highlighting the example of the SFP network as a trans-local initiative, this work recognises the important policy function that such an organisation has as a support for a wider movement toward local level food policy efforts. This is an area of scholarship that is likely to expand in its importance and scope.

3.3.4 Local Level Policy Tools

As local actors come together to implement policy efforts, the local context, aims and capacity of those involved tend to define which approaches are taken. How to 'do' local food policy, and which policy tools to use has seen a wealth of publications aimed at both CS groups and LAs. A number of important practical guidance documents have been put forward for local food system work including community food assessment (Cohen, 2002; Pothukuchi *et al.*, 2002; Carroll and O'Connor, 2016), Food Policy Councils (Biehler *et al.*, 1999; Harper *et al.*, 2009; Burgan and Winne, 2012; Hatfield, 2012; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Davies, 2017), policy guidance (MacRae, 2011; Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013; Sustainable Food Cities, 2013, no date a), planning guides (American Planning Association, 2007; Hodgson, Caton Campbell and Bailkey, 2011; G. Morgan, 2014), Community support and participation toolkits (URBACT, 2013; Jegou and Carey, 2015) and the emerging area of trans-local networks, as noted above (Levkoe *et al.*, 2012; Santo and Moragues-Faus, 2019). All of these documents contribute to the forward movement of local food policy efforts by allowing a wide range of stakeholders to evaluate their local food system, collaborate and utilise resources. Such publications are testament to the growing attention being given to the local food movement.

A typical approach to local food strategy efforts begins with "either a community food assessment, building the food system network, identifying projects and educational events, and then creating a food charter or a municipal food strategy and action plan" (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.3). This description reflects the process illustrated in Table 4, illustrating the multi-stakeholder agro-food planning process. A community food assessment can provide the research basis to inform decision making around policy strategies and identify

the structure of the local food system in order to include key people (Pothukuchi *et al.*, 2002). An important feature of strategies and action plans is their ability to “galvanize diverse actors, set a vision for their actions, and help leverage additional resources...[b]oth can be endorsed by city council, committees of council, or municipal departments. ...[b]oth address policy and programming” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 20). As a lead authority on the food policy structures emerging from the SFP, Moragues-Faus and her colleagues use the term ‘urban food strategy’ as a process consisting of how a city envisions change in its food system, and how it strives towards this change” (2013, p.6). They distinguish this process from the strategy as a document, in addition to other policy formats, including “charters, actions plans, or full strategies” (ibid). Each of these formats is suited to particular objectives (Sustainable Food Cities, 2013). Charters, as short (1-2 page), informative documents, are typically developed to showcase “the local priorities and the basic principles that the local partnership is supporting” (Sustainable Food Cities, 2013, p. 3) and to rally support from local groups or businesses. Strategies “tend to be larger documents, providing background history, case studies and mapping of the current situation, outlining where there are problems or opportunities relating to the local food system” (Sustainable Food Cities, 2013, p. 3). The detail of these documents provides local context through a clearer overview of its food system, examples of activities taking place, rationale behind the need for action, and plans to address a variety of issues across several themes. When written by CS, strategy documents often are written with local government as the intended audience (with the aim of adoption or endorsement of the aims), with more and more created by councils themselves. An action plan “details what activities to implement in order to create change ... often in addition to existing strategies, and in some cases the action plans are renewed every few years, where a strategy may have a longer shelf life” (Sustainable Food Cities, 2013, p. 3). The organisation explains further that action plans tend to highlight specific actions and link them to groups and people who will be accountable for their completion, and these are often linked to council priorities.

In order to achieve transitions to more sustainable (food) systems, Meadowcroft (2011) discusses “practical politics” and what factors influence the adoption of policies. The notion of a well-framed problem, action and outcome has been offered by some as a way to gain policy support (Snow and Benford, 1988; Schon and Rein, 1994). Meadowcroft highlights the need to understand institutional contexts and norms, to learn from experience working

with various actors, and to recognise that beliefs and ideas vary for individuals and across roles (2011). These notions reflect the tenets of the ACF and are important considerations when working in partnership to develop local food policies. As no two cities are alike, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy, and the ways in which local policies address various overlapping themes depends on the unique needs and goals of the municipality (Sustainable Food Cities, no date a; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2019). All of the above tools form a part of the approach to developing and implementing local food policy efforts.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an overview of public policy as a concept and a field of research although focused on food policy specifically. This is an emerging development in the UK at the local level and brings with it innovative governance structures to address bespoke local circumstances and objectives. CS and council actors have been shown to form a variety of partnerships as features of democratic policy making processes. In an effort to equip local food policy actors, a variety of 'tools' for policymaking have been developed, enabling the development of strategies (as both a process and a policy document format), along with action plans and charters. This introduction to local food policy group structures is a central facet of this research, as are the roles played by actors coming together to drive local level policy work. This chapter has presented the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which will be detailed further in the next chapter.

4. The Advocacy Coalition Framework

This chapter explains the application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework as the Policy Process Theory (PPT) used in this research. This section provides a background of the ACF including a brief overview of its historic applications, key concepts, theoretical emphases, 'hypotheses', and their relevance to this work. Also presented are two additional 'tools' used in this research to dovetail with the ACF's focus on beliefs and coalition structures, respectively in order to operationalise the ACF for local food policy analysis. The first of these is a framing approach introduced by Snow and Benford (1988), which is used in this work to analyse the ideological elements of the case studies. The second is a means of categorization of food policy groups, developed by MacRae and Donahue (2013). This chapter illustrates the suitability of these tools as the combined framework used to answer the research questions underlying this work, and the contributions that this brings to the existing body of ACF work, its development, and its use in local level food policy research.

4.1 Background to the Advocacy Coalition Framework

The ACF is a contemporary PPT that sits alongside other well-known and much-applied theories such as Punctuated Equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) and Multiple Streams Theory (Kingdon, 1984). The ACF differs from these in its rejection of the classic view of the policy process as a cycle, as well as the notions of 'comprehensive rationality' as a policymaking ideal (Cairney, 2012, p.4, p7). The framework has been described as "a research program for synthesizing aspects of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation and for integrating contemporary thought about learning and policy change" (Jenkins-Smith *et al.* 2014, p. 186).

The framework is typically represented diagrammatically, although it has been adapted in Figure 7 to represent the ACF's application to this research through the policy subsystem box and the research questions that it addresses. The left 'half' of the diagram remains unchanged from the standard ACF representation (Sabatier and Weible, 2007; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014, 2018), which present external variables to the policy subsystem such as stability, change, and opportunity in political, social (including values and social structure), and natural contexts. This figure diverges from the usual ACF diagram in the 'policy subsystem' column, which typically positions two coalitions competing for dominance in a policy environment, however due to the nature of local food policy groups in these case

studies, here this is shown as a single coalition. The policy subsystem in this research involved coalition actors seeking to address local food system issues and had a unique territorial scope for each case study, defined by the council's political boundaries, thus determining its 'reach'. On the far right, this figure shows which aspects of the policy subsystem were examined via the research questions of this dissertation. The coalition structures of the five case studies were defined using MacRae and Donahue's food policy group categories (2013).

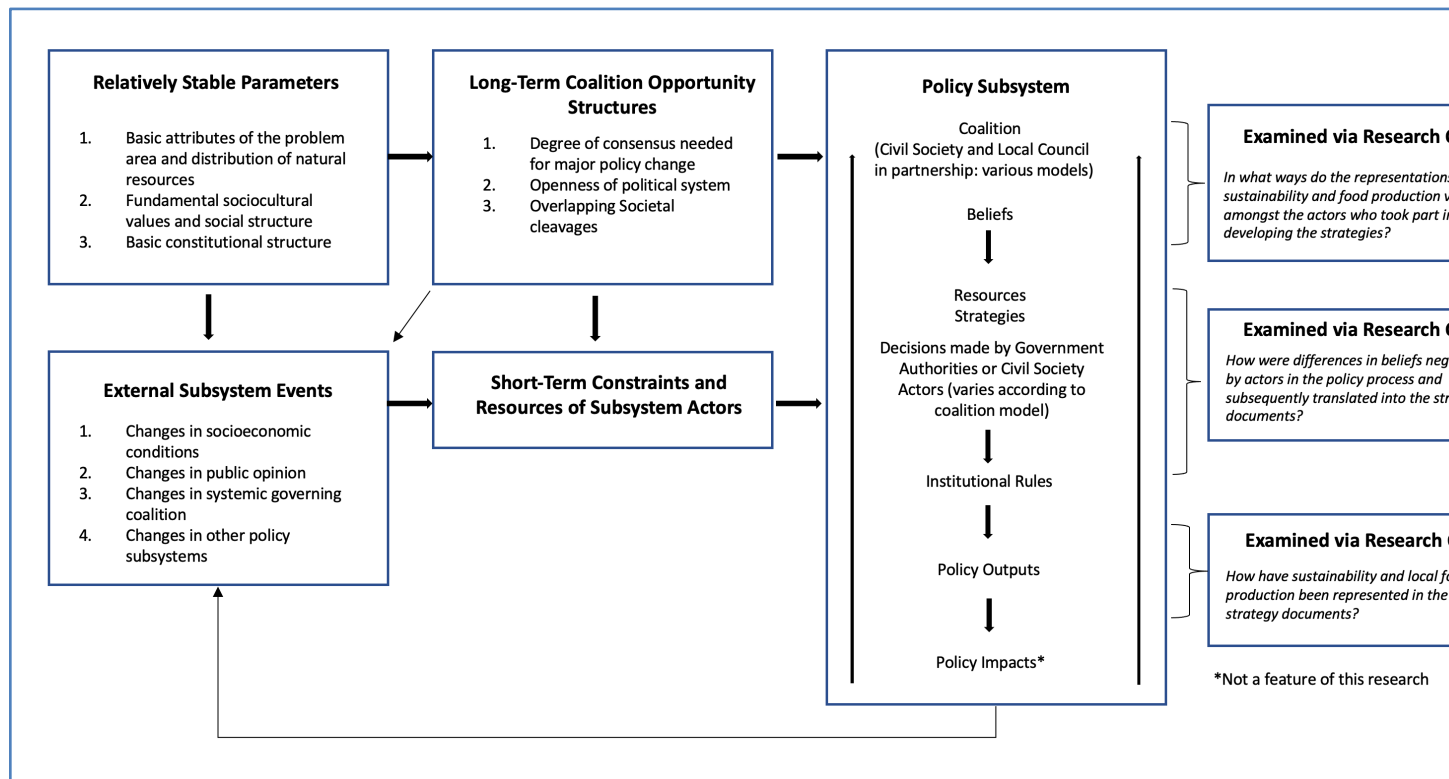


Figure 7: The ACF with additional context of this research. Adapted from: Sabatier and Weible (2007)

The central focus of the ACF is on the actors within coalitions who “hold strong beliefs and are motivated to transfer those beliefs into actual policy...before their opponents can do the same” (Sabatier and Weible, 2007, pp. 192, 196). Through drawing on Snow and Benford’s (1988) framing approaches (addressed in detail below), Research Question 1 (using interviews) and Research Question 2 (through document analysis of strategies) could be addressed through identifying and categorising beliefs of actors and strategy content. Through this common approach, data from these two sources could be compared, allowing for insight into the policy development process whereby beliefs of actors were translated into the policy output (strategy), thus corresponding to Research Question 3. In addressing this question, the resources, strategies²⁵, decisions and rules as elements of the subsystem were examined. As another distinction from the original representation of the ACF, this figure notes that these decisions go beyond just those of formal government authorities, but also includes those of CS actors, although the balance of these actors and their decision making power varies based on the coalition model, of which there are three represented in this research (detailed below).

The ACF has three theoretical areas of focus that form the ‘traditional scope’: the ‘Advocacy Coalition’, ‘Policy-Oriented Learning’, and ‘Change Over Time’ (Weible *et al.*, 2011; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014), noting that these have been expanded upon since the introduction of the ACF (Sabatier, 1988). Application of the ACF typically addresses one or two of the three policy theory areas at a time, which Wieble et al (2011) acknowledge is necessarily dictated by the research agenda of scholars²⁶. They attribute this to the understanding that “parallel attention to all three theoretical categories within the ACF is generally arduous” requiring researchers to impose limits on their research scope (2011, p. 354). Of these three areas, this research focuses primarily on the Advocacy Coalition. Of specific interest is the process of negotiation of beliefs surrounding sustainability and its links to local food production between CS and council actors within the policy coalitions of each case study.

4.1.1 Assumptions

These three theoretical areas involve ‘assumptions’ that form the body of the ACF. Sabatier began with four core assumptions (1988), which remain largely unchanged but have been

²⁵ In this specific context in the diagram, the term refers to political manoeuvres, rather than the document as a strategy, referred to in the figure as the ‘output’.

²⁶ Additionally, see Jenkins-Smith et al., (2014), for a breakdown of research studies and approaches taken in relation to the application of ACF themes and avenues of inquiry.

added to over the years to total seven (Weible *et al.*, 2011; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014)²⁷. Each of these assumptions has served to define boundaries for this research by providing a deeper understanding of how actors and coalitions operate, and how policy decisions may be influenced within the duration of the policy process. These statements underpin the three thematic areas of the ACF, being the Advocacy Coalition, Policy Learning and Change Over Time and are detailed in Table 6. These three theoretical areas of the ACF allow for a selective approach to be taken where one or more can be prioritized as the emphasis, depending on the underlying questions of the research (Weible *et al.*, 2011). Reflecting the tendency of researchers to focus on only one or two of the main ACF topic areas, likewise they select which (if any²⁸) ‘hypotheses’ to test. As a note, within the context of this research, the terms ‘hypothesis’ or ‘hypotheses’ directly relate to their association to the ACF in this context and for this reason have been placed in inverted commas to reduce confusion over the use of the term in this study. It has been acknowledged that ‘coalition formation’ has received greater application relative to the areas of the ACF intended to examine ‘policy-oriented learning’ and ‘policy change over time’ (Weible *et al.*, 2011). This research focuses on the Advocacy Coalition theme, to the exclusion of the other two.

Table 6: ACF Assumptions, with characteristics and application to this research.

ACF Assumption	Characteristics	Applicability in this Research
The Coalition: 1. <i>The policy subsystem is the primary unit of analysis for understanding policy processes</i>	- Defined by “a policy topic, territorial scope, and the actors directly or indirectly influencing policy subsystem affairs” (Jenkins-Smith <i>et al.</i> 2014. 189) - Subsystems may be nested within other larger policy systems and policy areas often overlap (Sabatier and	- Policy scope is food policy; territorial scope is the United Kingdom, although more specifically, the geographic areas of the six case studies²⁹ - Food policy may be nested within wider international, national, regional and local policy initiatives

²⁷ Significant theoretical contributions spanning nearly three decades have been presented in Jenkins-Smith *et al.* (2014, p. 211) and Weible *et al.* (2011).

²⁸ In a review of 80 ACF applications between 1987 and 2006, Weible *et al.* (2009) found that 55 percent “do not explicitly test any of the ‘hypotheses’” (2009, p. 128)

²⁹ The geographic scope of each case study is defined by its own respective food strategy.

	Weible, 2007, p. 193) • Correctly identifying the scope of a subsystem is essential (ibid)	
2. <i>The set of relevant subsystem actors includes any person regularly attempting to influence subsystem affairs</i>	• Analyses the coalition at the individual actor level • Actors “hold strong beliefs and are motivated to translate these beliefs into actual policy” (Sabatier and Weible, 2007, p. 192) • ACF allows for a synthesis of top-down and bottom up approaches	• Individual-level examination of beliefs lends to the use of qualitative interviews for data collection • Relevant to both top-down and bottom-up coalition models in the five case studies (identified as per MacRae and Donahue, 2013) • Complements the local-level nature of this research
3. <i>Individuals are boundedly rational with limited ability to process stimuli, motivated by belief systems, and prone to experience the “devil shift”</i>	• Individuals actors have policy goals but are unsure how to achieve them because of limitations to their knowledge/information available, and experience (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014 p. 191). • Results in a simplification of concepts, ideas and experiences based on an actors’ belief system³⁰ and, so is biased in favour of the actors’ world view (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014 p. 191). • Three tiers of beliefs:	• Policy Core and Secondary beliefs are examined through frames (Snow and Benford, 1988) (applied to interviews and strategy documents - see Table 7). Deep Core beliefs not a part of this analysis.

³⁰ It is for this reason that the ACF acknowledges the importance of scientific and technical information in influencing and guiding the beliefs of actors, as well as academics and researchers as participants in the policy development process (Sabatier and Weible, 2007, p.192).

	Deep core: predominantly normative “worldview” (Weible et al, 2009. 122), very stable over time (ie: religion, political persuasion). Not specific to a single subsystem. Policy Core: Specific to the subsystem via causes, possible solutions and perceived level of threat (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p.191) Secondary beliefs: relate to policy implementation mechanisms, and most subject to change in the face of new information (ibid)	
4. <i>Subsystems are simplified by aggregating actors into one or more coalitions</i>	• Change is driven by people and not organisations, but like-minded actors organize to form coalitions and cooperate in “non-trivial ways” • The strength of coordination can range from weak to strong • Beliefs of actors are influenced by: context of the coalition setting (conflict, institutional norms, and “the broader political and socioeconomic system”), which in turn influence policy decisions (Sabatier	• Case study coalitions defined via MacRae and Donahue (2013) for the focus on food policy partnerships of CS and LA actors • Case studies are focused on a single coalition due to the partnership structures (ie: there are no competing coalition groups in the policy arena at this micro scale) • Relates to the dynamics and (real and perceived) power within the coalitions

	and Weible, 2007, p.191).	
5. <i>Policies and programs incorporate implicit theories reflecting the translated beliefs of one or more coalitions</i>	• “[p]olicies and programs incorporate implicit theories reflecting the translated beliefs of one or more coalitions”. • Incorporates <i>causality</i> through actions taken or not taken (Jenkins-Smith, 2014, p. 192). • Involves beliefs and theories of those involved about what has caused the issues that need addressing, how they should be targeted, and what the outcomes should be as a result.	• Relating to sustainability and local food production, these link to what is unsustainable to the actors, how it can be addressed, and what would be the more sustainable outcome. Snow and Benford (1998) refer to these as ‘diagnostic’, ‘prognostic’ and ‘motivational’ frames used by actors (see Table 7). • These are integrated with the pillars of sustainability
Policy-oriented learning: 6. <i>Scientific and technical information is important for understanding subsystem affairs</i>	• Beliefs are resistant to change, making information essential to support policy arguments • Researchers, journalists and academic play important roles in policy making	• Not a focus of this research
Change over time: 7. <i>Researchers should adopt a long-term perspective (e.g., ten years or more) to understand policy processes and change</i>	• Subsystems can be characterised as ‘nascent’ or ‘mature’ based on the length of time participants have been seeking to influence policy as a community	• Not a focus of this research • None of the strategies being examined in this research could be classified by this ACF standard as ‘mature’ subsystems. • Much LFS development in UK is associated with the SFP Network (est. 2013).

4.1.2 The Advocacy Coalition

As a framework itself is not testable (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014. P.189), in addition to its assumptions, the ACF offers a number of 'hypotheses' relating to the structure of the coalition, policy learning within the process, and change within the coalition over the lifetime of a policy cycle. 'Hypotheses' linked to the latter two areas are beyond the focus of this research, and as noted by Jenkins-Smith et al (2014, p. 196) as a typical research approach, only a selection of 'hypotheses' are being tested in this research.

The advocacy coalition is defined by Jenkins-Smith et al., as "actors sharing policy core beliefs who coordinate their actions in a nontrivial manner to influence a policy subsystem" (2014, p. 195). Many reviews of the ACF identify several levels of actors working within a policy subsystem, starting from the national level (as the policy sovereign) through its interactions downward to state level and below (Weible *et al.*, 2011; Cairney, 2012; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014). The focus on actors and their beliefs offers many avenues of investigation for ACF researchers, such as the stability of coalitions over time, levels of coordination and strength of coalition ties, capacity of coalitions (such as resources, strategies, leadership), and levels of conflict (See Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014, 197). Reflecting upon the area of research into dominant and minority coalitions, Jenkins-Smith et al., note "the attributes of various types of coalitions remain underdeveloped, particularly the comparison of beliefs, resources, strategies and activities" (2014, p. 197). This research diverges from the typical two-or-more coalition comparative approach in ACF studies to examine the workings and beliefs of a single group within the unique context of each case study. It is within these single coalition formats that two 'sides' are compared (their beliefs, the negotiation of these), making a novel contribution that responds to Jenkins-Smith's observation. In this way, this research also offers a novel application of the ACF to gain insight into largely bottom-up local level groups working in food strategy development, operating in isolation to the policy sovereign of the national government³¹. For each of the case studies, the background context to what has influenced the development of a food strategy within the local subsystem is addressed in Chapter 6.

³¹ The increasing devolved nature of the municipal from the national level of government in the United Kingdom has increased the level of policymaking taking place in communities and councils as independent activities. This has a basis in the movement toward 'Big Society' initiated by the David Cameron coalition government of 2010.

In this work, the second and third ‘hypotheses’ from the Advocacy Coalition theme were tested for each of the case studies. These are:

Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 2: Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects.

Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 3: An Actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of her (its) belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core.

These reflect the research questions of this study relating to beliefs surrounding sustainability and local food production (‘hypothesis’ 2, corresponding to RQ 1), as well as the how these beliefs have been negotiated within the different coalition structures of the case studies (‘hypothesis’ 3, corresponding to RQ 3). A complete list of the ACF ‘hypotheses’ can be found in Jenkins-Smith et al (2014, 2018).

4.1.3 Policy Learning

The theme of policy learning is defined in the ACF as “enduring alternations of thought or behavioural intentions that result from experience and which are concerned with the attainment or revision of the precepts of the belief system of individuals or of collectives (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 42-56). This may relate to new information about an issue, as in the case of new technical information, or in relation to learning from experience or political manoeuvres (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 198). New information may influence a change in beliefs either about the issue at the policy core belief level, but more typically at the secondary policy belief level relating to how it should be addressed by policy tools. The ability to learn ‘across’ coalition groups has been linked to the level of conflict between coalition groups: lower levels of conflict being more amenable to knowledge-sharing (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 199). Higher levels of conflict may lead actors to defend their positions and reject information that conflicts with their world view (coming back to the concept of ‘Core Beliefs’) (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 199). Policy learning, while discussed where relevant to some findings of this research (see chapter 9) is not a focus of this work, and so its ‘hypotheses’ are not tested³².

³² For further detail on the policy learning theme, see Jenkins-Smith et al, (2014; 2018).

4.1.4 Change Over Time

As stated above, the ACF states that policy change should ideally be looked at over a decade or more, considered by Sabatier and his co-developers of the ACF to be ‘a full policy cycle’. The ACF rejects the notion that policy examination must begin at the point of its creation, but rather must be considered along a longer timeline which can provide insight into “the nature and causes of policy change within and across political subsystems” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 201). As stated above, the strategies being studied are relatively recent developments in their respective subsystems. The ACF describes change as taking place from one policy incarnation³³ to the next, rather than being the event which brings a first-generation policy into being – although this could be argued to be a major policy change. While none of the ‘hypotheses’ relating to Change Over Time are being tested in this research, this would be an interesting avenue for further research into local food strategies as they mature.

4.2 Rationale for ACF Framework Selection

Noting that the aim behind the choice of theory is to understand the ‘why’ behind policy decisions (Cairney, 2012, p.4), Jenkins-Smith et al., echo this, stating that “one of the purposes of a framework and its theories is to ... help solve puzzles concerning the policy process” (2014, p.189). The puzzles, in this case, being the research questions of this work concerning how beliefs of sustainability and LFP are negotiated and translated into policy by local councils and CS members (See Chapter 1). At a basic level, Jenkins-Smith et al (2014) offer that a framework serves as a template through which researchers may “work together in describing, explaining, and sometimes predicting phenomena within and across different contexts” (p. 188). Through using a common vocabulary, the assumptions of the ACF, its three theoretical foci, various assumptions and ‘hypotheses’, it allows users of the framework to proceed from a position of common understanding, regardless of geography or academic discipline. Despite seemingly rigid theoretical categories, the ACF allows for “methodological pluralism” – that is, a great flexibility in the methods used to examine aspects of advocacy coalitions, including both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Cairney (2014) notes that the focus on energy and environmental policy within ACF scholarship has shown a tendency toward study of natural systems in policy, rather than “areas that primarily affect people” (p. 211). Up to 2013, the most significant applications of

³³ For further detail on the pathways to policy change, see Jenkins-Smith et al, (2014; 2018).

the ACF have been to environment (57%) and health (11%) policies, with the majority of ACF application taking place in North America and Europe (each at 42%) (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 210). Compared to these and other policy areas³⁴, food policy has been under-represented in ACF research. However, recently, contributions have been made including the use of the ACF in a case study of agriculture and nutrition in a school meals program in Brazil (Hawkes *et al.*, 2016), and featured as one of several PPTs used to examine advocacy in public health nutrition policy (Cullerton *et al.*, 2018).

While the ACF has been used to analyse pluralist, Corporatist and Westminster coalition structures (Weible *et al.*, 2011), this research applies elements of the ACF to local level policy development initiatives, as illustrated in Table 6. The case studies being presented in this research differ from the coalitions typically examined in ACF literature in several ways. As shown in Figure 7, the ACF is traditionally based upon the examination of at least two opposing coalition groups vying for dominance in a policy subsystem³⁵. These relationships are characterised in the ACF according to their resources, power/authority and rules, and may operate within significant levels of conflict between or amongst them. In this research, each case study analysis is made up of a single coalition group, but with a focus on two groups coming together within each. Being small scale initiatives taking place at municipal levels (being below the level of interference from the national government), the obvious oppositional structures or lobby groups present in traditional ACF research or higher-level governmental structures are not present in these cases. Instead, these efforts were fairly low-conflict and built around cooperation. The openness of the ACF to both top-down and bottom-up policy examination (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2014) makes this a highly useful tool for application at the local level where there has been a significant increase in multi-stakeholder and grassroots-level participation in food policy activity in recent years (Hebinck and Page, 2017). In this sense, the ACF is a suitable choice of theory when seeking the views of individual participants in a policy development setting, for example through the qualitative interview approach (detailed further in Chapter 5, Methods)³⁶.

³⁴ See Jenkins-Smith et al (2014, p. 210) for a quantitative overview of ACF applications according to disciplinary fields and geographic regions from 1987 to 2013.

³⁵ Sabatier and Weible note that there will usually be two to five advocacy coalitions in any subsystem (2007, p. 196).

³⁶Weible et al (2011) presented studies contributing to the body of ACF literature according to subsystem studied, theoretical emphasis, and methods used. Notably, only two of these eight papers used interviews to obtain a more actor-focused narrative approach to exploring the coalitions in

4.3 The ACF as a Combined Framework

Using the ACF as the foundational theoretical framework of this research, this work incorporates Snow and Benford's framing approaches (1988) and MacRae and Donahue's food policy group categorization system (2013). These tools dovetail with the beliefs-focus of the ACF and the need to define the coalition(s) being studied. With consideration to the methodological flexibility of the ACF, it is important to note that the framework has no mandated device to examine beliefs or to define the boundaries of coalition groups (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014). As a combined method, this allows for the five case studies to be analysed individually and compared.

4.3.1 Framing Theory: Diagnostic, Prognostic and Motivational Frames

Snow and Benford's (1988) three-level approach to framing was devised by the authors for application to social movements and used to analyse the public facing expression or communications of movements. Similar to coalitions, Snow and Benford describe movements as "carriers and transmitters of mobilizing beliefs and ideas" (p. 198). It is through the task of framing that they "assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (p. 198). Despite the scale at which it is applied, Snow and Benford's approach remains relevant to the individual level, and important to policy development (Schon and Rein, 1994). Similarly, while using the language of the coalition as a collection of actors influencing policy (much like a movement), the ACF is based on the micro-scale of analysis of the individual actor. Snow and Benford propose that the beliefs or ideologies communicated by social movements can be deconstructed and sorted into three categories or 'framing tasks' (1988, p.199):

question (see Albright, 2011, and Shanahan et al, 2011). This suggests a place for more qualitative and narrative-focused analysis tools while using ACF to investigate the experiences of actors involved in coalitions.

Table 7: Three Frames described and their relevance to this work. Adapted from: Snow and Benford (1988)

Frame	Features of the Frame (Snow and Benford, 1988. p.199)	Interpretation in this Research	Examples (From B&NES Local Food Strategy; Environmental Pillar)
Diagnostic	“a diagnosis of some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of alteration”	- Unsustainable issues or behaviours - Links to ‘Policy Core beliefs’ of ACF	“Food production systems are vulnerable to climate change impacts” (Bath and Northeast Somerset Environmental Sustainability Partnership, 2012, p. 12)
Prognostic	“a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem at specifies what needs to be done”	- Recommended actions to address issues, including <i>who</i> should take these actions - Links to ‘Secondary Policy Beliefs’ of ACF	“Sustainable food production methods, including low agro-chemical use, the provision of wildlife habitat space, improvements to energy efficiency, effective soil and water management and high animal welfare standards...” (ibid, p.13)
Motivational	“a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action”	- The sustainable outcome of action; a guiding sustainable vision - Links to ‘Policy Core beliefs’ of ACF	“... will help to create farm systems that are healthy, robust and resilient to future changes in climate” (ibid, p.13)

These frames are intended to serve specific functions for the groups that deploy them. For example, Snow and Benford argue that “the diagnostic and prognostic framing tasks are directed toward achieving consensus mobilization” and the motivational frame “provides the ... impetus for participation” (p. 199). Summarising this process, Schon and Rein

describe a “normative leap” whereby some basic information is formed into a recommendation based on values: from what “*is*” to what “*ought*” (1994, p.26-27). The notion of ‘frame alignment’ is offered as a term for shared beliefs across actors, and ‘frame resonance’ is the term given for a successful effort at framing a problem (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 199).

4.3.2 Coalition Structures by Levels of Public-Sector Involvement

Just as the ACF allows for researchers to study ‘beliefs’ on their own terms, so too does it give the freedom to define the boundaries of the coalition groups being studied. Noting that “there are no predefined criteria for who can or cannot be a broker within a subsystem” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 199), this allows the researcher to set the parameters for the coalition group(s) being studied. The ACF asserts that subsystems do not necessarily include “all people interested and affected by the policy decisions” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014. 190). This reinforces the need for a researcher to define the limits and scope of their analysis. For the purposes of this research, the coalition groups are defined as those individuals taking part in a collective effort to write a LFS, with the recognition that individual participation levels may be variable, as actors may come and go throughout the process as they provide relevant expert knowledge. For this work, actors are categorised as either being CS members or as council actors.

In order to analyse the case study cities based on the structure of their respective coalitions, this work adopted a system put forward by MacRae and Donahue in their 2013 study of “Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs” in Canada. This study was so-named because the authors acknowledged that where the research took place, “municipalities do not have a long history of this work” and so the novel or innovative nature of local-level policy making could be “characterized as “food policy entrepreneurship”” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 2). This parallels the situation in the United Kingdom where the majority of local level food strategies have been developed since 2013, many as a result of the SFP Network.

MacRae and Donahue categorized food policy groups according to their level of public-sector involvement through an extensive case study of Canadian FPCs. They note that “[i]n some cases, municipal staff and politicians are the driving forces; in others, a multi-stakeholder operating unit is attached to the municipality, with municipal staff support and a budget” (p.3). These categorisations have been operationalised for this study and dovetail

with the methodological opening left by the ACF (see Methods, Chapter 5). The table below shows the categories, and corresponding details relating to the resources, institutional placement, and the balance of civil-society and municipal³⁷ government participation that distinguish the group formats from one another. Through drawing on these categories, this research is able to define the coalition for each case study, meeting an essential requirement of the ACF.

³⁷ As a note on language used within this table, the term ‘municipality’ reflects the Canadian context of this study. In the UK this would be equivalent to the political structure of a local council.

Table 8: Coalition Structures of Local Food Policy Groups. Adapted from: MacRae and Donahue (2013)

	Description	Detail
Category 1	Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiatives	• Financed by the municipality and directed by municipal staff with a conduit to council from external groups. • Municipal government sets the mandate and provides financing and resources. • Housed within existing municipal government units and external organizations advise and interact with municipal officials.
Category 2	Hybrid Model with Direct Links to Governance	• A hybrid of civil society organizations and government with a conduit to decision makers through municipal council, • with municipal financing, political champions, and supportive staff. • Characterized by formal municipal endorsements, structural links, accountability to a government body, including a conduit into the municipal government structure.
Category 3	Hybrid Model with Indirect Links to Governance	• A hybrid of civil society organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements • Conduit to council is less direct, via departments and government staff • Linkages with government are still significant, but less so than for Category 2. • Public health structures and staffing are particularly important, with financial support from a mix of sources, including grants.

Category 4	Food Policy Organization Linked to Governance Through a Secondary Agency	• Not formally connected to government but linked through secondary agencies. • May have important ties to government (such as a municipally endorsed food charter) or receive some government grants.
Category 5	Civil Society Organization with Limited Gov't Funding and Participation	• Consists of a civil society organization roundtable or project committee on which government officials may participate. • Organization may receive some government grants.
Category 6	Civil Society Organization with no Direct Gov't Involvement	• Not formally connected to government and do not seem to partner with government or receive funding. • Initiatives are developing a clearer structure and the ability to engage regional government in food system change.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the background of the ACF and the justification for its selection as a PPT based upon its relevance to this research. It introduced the additional methodological tools incorporated into the ACF to examine the beliefs of actors and to define coalition structures so that case studies could be analysed and compared. Two ACF 'hypotheses' relating to the Advocacy Coalition were introduced and placed within the context of the research questions that they relate to. Finally, original methodological, theoretical and empirical contributions were presented.

5. Research Design and Methods

The previous chapters presented the three research questions driving this work. This chapter outlines the rationale and methodology used to address them and illustrates how the work was carried out in several stages to build upon itself and ensure continuity. The chapter goes into the details of the research design associated with a multiple case study methodology, as well as the approach to data collection and analysis using the ACF and associated tools. Ethical considerations are addressed due to the involvement of human participants using a semi-structured interview method. The section concludes with a discussion of the approaches taken, and challenges experienced throughout the research process.

5.1 Research Design

The design of a research study is identified by Creswell (2013, p. 44) as both the *processes* and *procedures* devised and followed throughout a project. Yin notes this simply as the “plan” of the research driven by the research questions (2009, p. 2), remarking that the correct formulation of the research questions offers insight into the type of method that would be most appropriate for answering them. This has been based upon the focus on food policy as a form of public policy and informed by the previous chapters of this research. From the perspective of policy analysis, Cairney explains that as policy researchers “[o]ur task is to explain policy decisions as fully as possible... to that end, we first produce a series of questions to guide research” (2012, p. 3). He identifies the policy process as “messy” and “complex”, which is why a case study approach is often used “to make sense of specific events” (p. 4). In this regard, Yin presents the case study method as a tool to answer “how” and “why” questions about contemporary events, and events over which the investigator has no ability to manipulate or control (p. 13). The research questions driving this research, and the parameters – the time and space being studied (Creswell, 2013, p.98) – reflect this compatibility with a case study design.

This section presents in brief the four broad stages of this research (literature review, study design, data collection, and analysis), represented in a flowchart format in Figure 8 as a broad overview of the operational process of this study. Each phase is explained in terms of the rationale of the design process, as well as adjustments that took place throughout the research.

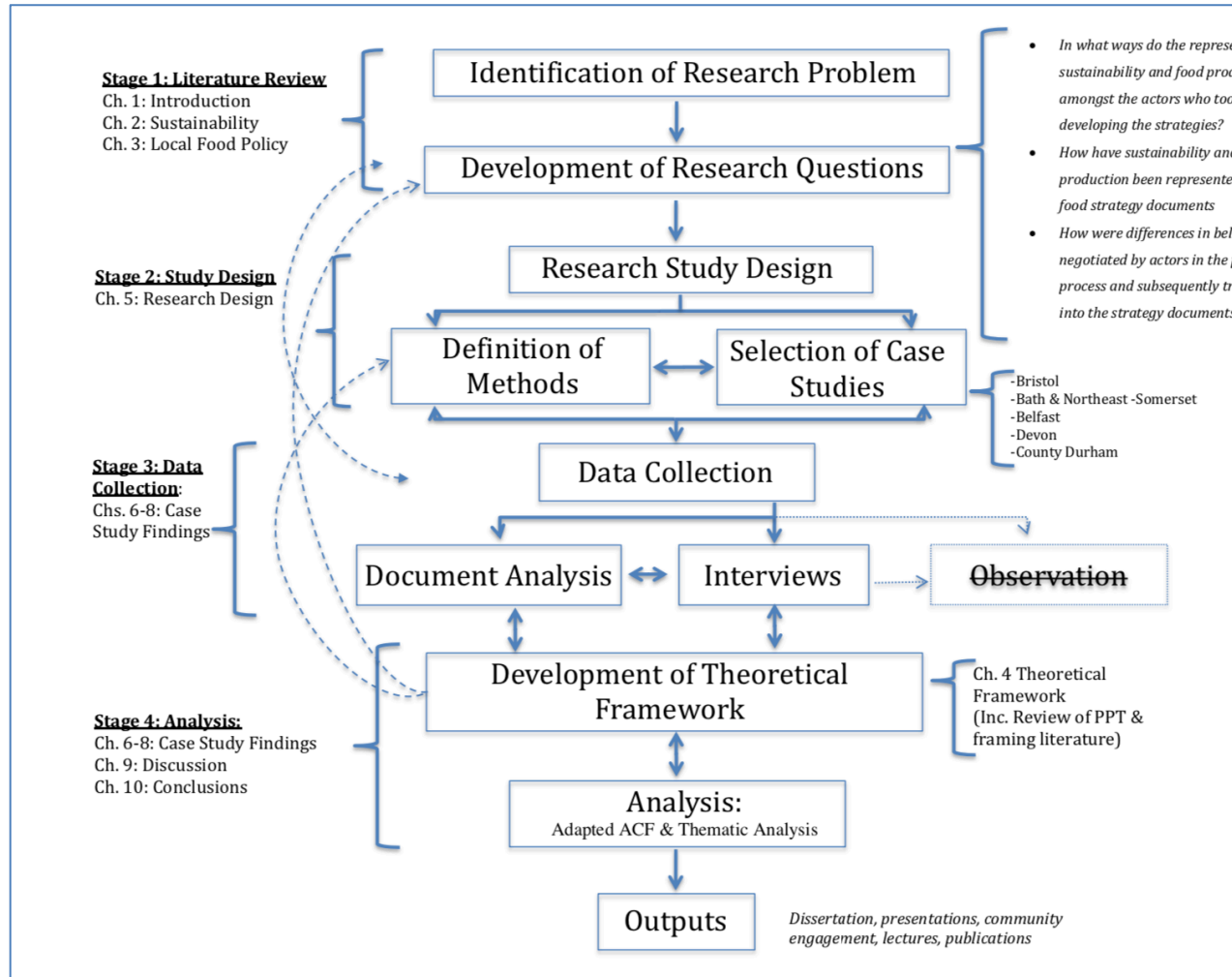


Figure 8: Stages of the Research Process

Figure 8 shows the research process beginning with the identification of the research problem through a review of relevant literature. The areas of focus for the literature review included the food system and globalisation, sustainability (as a political concept, and particularly in relation to food), and food policy (generally, and then more specifically local-level policy). Exploring these areas of scholarship, in addition to various web-resources (local food group web pages, for example) built context for local food policy in the UK, and for preliminary research questions to be formulated. Online materials relating to the SFP as an organization with a growing membership base suggested that a multiple case study format would be an interesting approach to investigate the experience of members. As such, familiarisation with these online resources also represented some early data collection, specifically for Chapter 6, which provides the background for each of the case studies.

Refinement of the research questions occurred in tandem with the development of the research methods, and also defined the methods selected. Ultimately, a multi-method approach within the multiple embedded case study format was chosen to address the research questions. Five case studies (Bristol, Belfast, Bath and Northeast Somerset, Devon and County Durham) were selected from the SFP body of members based upon three criteria. Figure 8 shows that to approach these case studies, two methods were used to draw out data to address different elements of the research questions. Methods included semi-structured interviews with three different types of participants, and document analysis of local food strategies. Observation was included as a data collection method, but for reasons that are explained in section 5.5.3, this was discontinued. This method is identified, but ultimately crossed out in Figure 8, indicating the termination of this line of data collection.

Creswell explains, “the research process for qualitative researchers is emergent...that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases may change and shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data” (2013, p.47). An example of this within this work is the adoption of the ACF as a framework, introduced later in the research process rather than prescribed from the beginning, as is the format proffered by Yin (2009, p.57). Feedback loops in Figure 8 (represented by dashed lines) serve to illustrate the evolving and iterative nature of this part of the research process, involving a review of ACF literature, and the creation of a unique model for its application (Page, 2020).

Most significantly, the adoption of the ACF and its adaptation (detailed in Chapter 4 and section 5.5.1 of this chapter) allowed for a structured approach to data analysis. The findings from this analysis process are presented in Chapters 6 through 8 and address each of the three research questions. The final outputs noted in this figure represent how this research will be disseminated. The following sections detail the above process in greater depth in order to provide the rationale for decisions made throughout the research, and to document the steps taken.

5.2 Literature Review

The literature review process developed and expanded in an iterative manner throughout the course of this research. It began with a search of literature informed by the researcher's prior research and learning in this area. Furthermore, being a dissertation in food policy, this suggested the necessary step of examining literature on the global food system, as this is the dominant paradigm in which all food matters are embedded.

Initial readings centred around five main areas:

1. the concept of sustainability and its association with the food system in its globalised context;
2. "local food" and the movement toward relocalisation of the food system;
3. food policy, with particular attention to local-level food policy development;
4. the food policy context in the United Kingdom;
5. the SFP Network and its membership base

There was often significant overlap within the first three subject areas, which were drawn upon mostly in the form of academic literature. Documents illustrating the UK policy context were largely reports and government policy documents, available online in the public domain. In the early days of this research, information on the SFP and its members was almost exclusively web-based, non-academic material, however it became the focus of several publications³⁸ as the organization has matured and gained membership. As a point of reference, throughout the duration of this research up to its submission in May 2020, the Sustainable Food Places network was called the Sustainable Food *Cities* network. This was changed as corrections to this dissertation were taking place and so the organisation name

³⁸ See the works of Moragues-Faus, 2017; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019; Santo and Moragues-Faus, 2019.

and abbreviation were updated throughout the body of the text. This adjustment ensures that the terms used in the dissertation in regard to the network remain current and relevant. References to material published by the then *SFC* and used during the course of the research were left unchanged in-text and the reference list.

Some reading around these themes in the context of the Global South was undertaken. This provided background context to the study of LFP due to early research material being focused in these areas (Smit, Ratta and Nasr, 1996³⁹; De Zeeuw, Van Veenhuizen and Dubbeling, 2011), as well as to its applications, associations to sustainability, and importance to livelihoods. However, a deliberate focus on scholarship of the Global North was chosen because of the UK context in which this research took place. As agriculture (mostly urban) and local policy development has received significant attention in recent years in the UK, Canada and the United States, much of the scholarship drawn upon in the literature review chapters originated from these countries.

Additional fields of literature were incorporated throughout the course of the dissertation to develop specific chapters and processes. Readings on methodology were a crucial part of developing the research design, and literature on the ACF and Framing Theory were accessed in order to develop a structure for data analysis.

Readings were identified thorough several different strategies:

- 1) Key word, title, or author search using the City University Online Library Database to identify publications relevant to the themes of interest, including a review of abstracts to further determine germane articles;
- 2) Reviews of reference lists from especially pertinent articles and texts to identify further frequently cited titles and authors;
- 3) Books on food policy and policy development written by key scholars in the field of study;
- 4) Web-based searches for UK policy reports relating to the above themes were conducted based on references within UK-based articles and texts;

³⁹ Self-described as a “first effort” to collate material on urban agriculture from a variety of practitioners in developed countries, and a “wake-up call” to its importance. (Smit, 1996. Foreword, pp. xviii).

- 5) Web-based research on the SFP Network and its members was conducted through accessing materials on the organization's website and acted as a gateway to the websites of members⁴⁰, as well as Google key word searches.

The literature review process allowed for the expansion of existing knowledge and understanding of key issues. Being an iterative process, it aided in the development and refinement of the research questions. This review of books, journal articles, reports and additional materials contributed to the introduction and literature review chapters of this work (Chapters 1-3), the background of the ACF and associated 'tools' in the theoretical framework chapter (Chapter 4), and this methods section (Chapter 5). These are revisited in Chapter 9 which situates the findings of this work within the broader context of scholarship.

5.3 Case Study Design

Explanation of what constitutes a case study is presented by drawing on methodological literatures, and why the selection of five case studies was felt to add depth and rigour to this work. Scope for the case study selection is identified, and boundary criteria are illustrated based upon three conditions for selection.

5.3.1 A Multiple Case Study Approach

The nature of the research questions of this dissertation, being as noted above as 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin, 2009. P. 9), recommended the case study as an "explanatory" approach (2009, p.9) to investigate a phenomenon. Case studies are a frequently used research design in qualitative research, where an issue or concern is identified, and one or more cases are used to explore these in depth (Creswell, 2013, p.99).

Yin offers four different case study types to suit different research needs: the single holistic case design, the single embedded case design, the multiple holistic case design, and the multiple embedded case design (Yin, 2009. P. 46). Holistic cases address a single unit of analysis within a broader context, while embedded models involved one or more integrated "units of analysis" within a case. For the purposes of this research, these are thought of in terms of the elements being addressed by the research questions. Single cases are used

⁴⁰ Specifically, the 'Find a City' search Function on the website. This examination of non-academic literature also informed the case study design process and some early data collection on case study backgrounds and context (Chapter 6). See Figure 8.

when seeking to test a specific theory, or when a case is unique or extreme, or conversely, typical and representative and being used for illustrative purposes, or in longitudinal research (Yin, 2009. 47). A multi-site, or multiple case study approach (Creswell, 2013. P. 97) was chosen to allow the variation across municipalities, their strategies and experiences to be represented, offering the ability to compare across cases for similarities and differences of experience (Creswell, 2013. p.99). Specifically, multiple case studies, rather than the single study approach, allow for “different perspectives on the issue” to be revealed (Creswell, 2013, p.99), as each case sits within a unique context, separate to the other cases being analysed. Yin suggests that this multiple case study approach offers a built-in ‘replicability’ to cases, allowing for a common approach to be deployed across the cases being studied and thus creating a more robust and compelling design to the overall study as processes are repeated for each case (2009, p. 53). This view mirrors that of Weible et al (2011), in relation to the methodological flexibility of the ACF, where the authors note that in order to expand comparative applications of the ACF framework, clear tracking of methods for replicability is essential. Using a case study approach serves to “illustrate a contemporary phenomenon...in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2014). Creswell explains this as a case being ‘bounded’ to a particular time and place of investigation (Creswell, 2013, p.97). This was the case with the five case studies used in this research, allowing this work to capture the experiences of policy actors as a snapshot in time.

Three basic boundaries were built into the case study selection criteria for this research, which required the prospective case to: 1) be a member of the SFP, 2) to have a food strategy, and 3) include local growing content (approach amended, detailed further in section 5.3.2). The main spatial boundary for each case, as illustrated in Figure 9, is the local municipality-level (or in the case of Durham and Devon, the county-level), which is based on the ACF’s parameters which define a policy ‘sub-system’ level, being “a policy topic, territorial scope, and the actors directly or indirectly influencing policy subsystem affairs” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014. 189). Within each case study are embedded the coalition, built of CS and LA actors, and the food strategy documents, representing the different components analysed in order to address the research questions. However, it is acknowledged that case studies are *nested* within the boundaries of the SFP as an organisation⁴¹, the UK, and EU etc

⁴¹ Although some only joined the network after the creation of the food strategy.

(the “*Wider Context*”). Figure 9 illustrates a consistent format, exemplifying the ‘replicability’ of the multiple case design, as per Yin (2009, p. 53). Further boundaries presented as ‘assumptions’ of the ACF also serve to define parameters of this research, including what is the system being studied, who is considered to be involved with the policy process as a coalition actor, how can their beliefs be categorised for analysis, and how is the coalition itself defined. These assumptions and how they relate to this research are outlined in detail in Chapter 4.

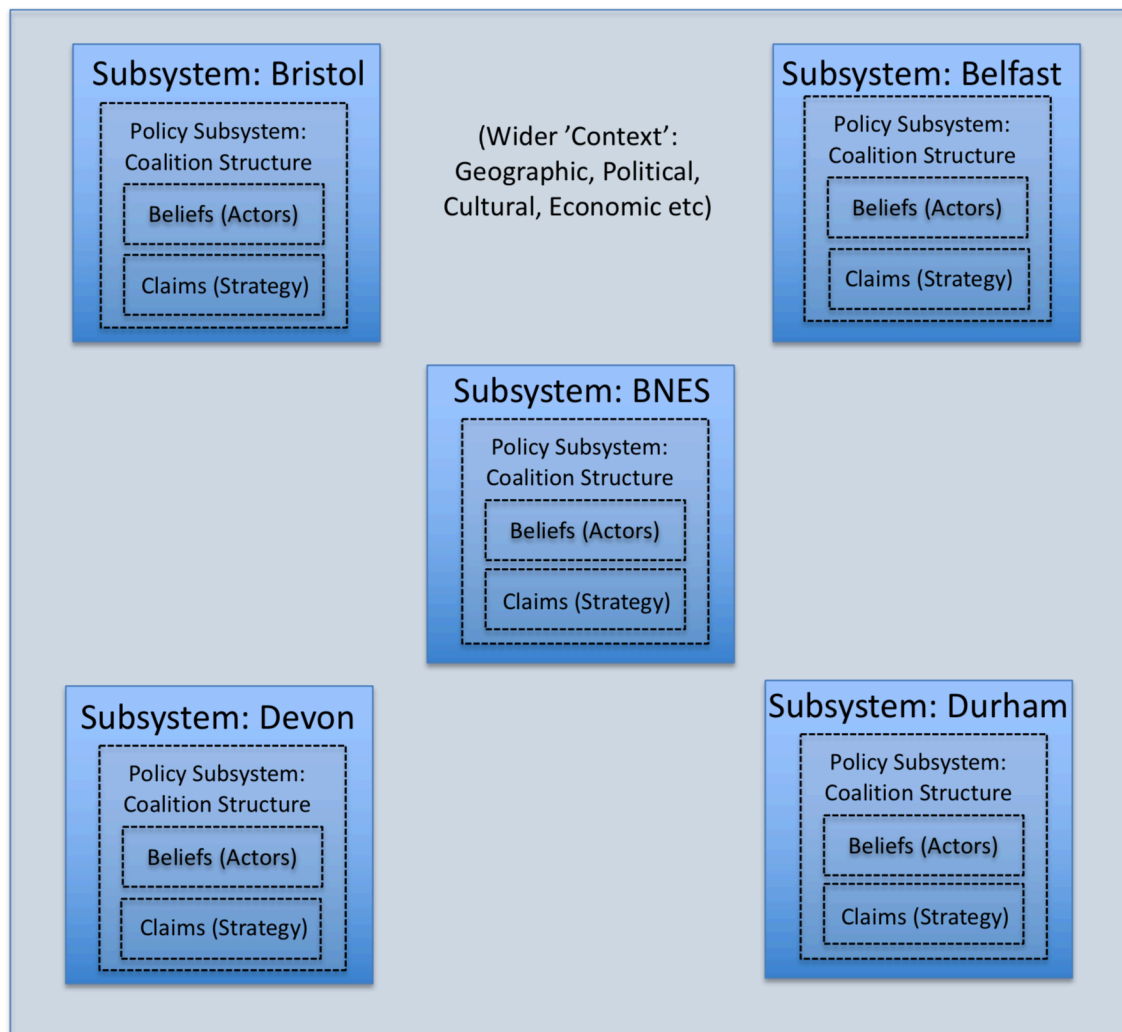


Figure 9: The Multiple Embedded Case Study Design. Adapted from: Yin (2009)

Temporal boundaries were present on two levels. The first being that recently completed strategies⁴² were prioritized for these case studies during the selection process (detailed further in Section 5.3.2). This was crucial as it allowed for interviews to take place while the memory of creating the strategy was still relatively fresh. Additionally, the timeline over which the research took place bounded the cases with clear beginning and end points. Data collection in the form of case study selection, data collection and review of strategy documents, and interviews was undertaken from October of 2015 January to August 2016, with analysis taking place from August 2016 to July 2017.

A criticism of the case study approach identified by Yin (2009, p. 15) is that individual case studies tend to be a poor basis from which to generalize about broader phenomena. Multiple case studies may offer greater insight and a form of internal validity; however, Yin specifies that this approach can only generalize about theoretical propositions, not broader “populations or universes” (2009, p.15). These case studies, for example, would not be able to speak to the experiences of all other members of the SFP, nor of local-level food policy coalitions more widely. A key strength to the case study approach is “its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews and observations” (Yin, 2009, p.11). To address the research questions, this dissertation used a multi-method approach, applying both interviews and document analysis, which allowed for examination of each separately as well as for comparison. These approaches are associated with the research question that they correspond to Table 9⁴³.

Table 9: Methods Used and Corresponding Research Questions

Method	Corresponding Research Question
Semi-structured Interviews with Coalition Actors: Analysis of ‘beliefs’ (using ACF + Framing tools) relating to Sustainability and Local Food Production; role of actor in coalition (civil society or council, with coalition structure	1. <i>In what ways do the representations of sustainability and food production vary amongst the actors who took part in developing the strategies?</i>

⁴² At the time of case selection, most SFP members with food strategies had only created these documents recently and these were in most cases first-generation policies.

⁴³ Not represented in this table are the interviews that took place with ‘Local Experts’ and ‘High-Level’ (SFP) participants. Ultimately, these interviews were not used in this dissertation.

categorized according to MacRae and Donahue, 2017)	
Document Analysis: Strategy document - Analysis of content (using ACF + Framing tools) relating to Sustainability and Local Food Production	<i>2. How have sustainability and local food production been represented in the food strategy documents</i>
Comparison of strategy content and Coalition Actor 'beliefs', along with interview material relating to 'negotiation' between coalition actors (civil society or council)	<i>3. How were differences in beliefs negotiated by actors in the policy process and subsequently translated into the strategy documents?</i>

Based on the research questions, semi-structured interviews and content analysis of documents were determined to be the most suitable methods.

This research drew upon a total of 28 interviews, conducted in a semi-structured format (see Table 12 for detail of participant categories). This method was selected as a qualitative approach as neither surveys nor rigidly structured interviews would have adequately captured the richness of the beliefs and experiences of the actors who developed these documents and others with expert local-level knowledge. Interviewing as a research method allows the researcher to collect various types of information, including “the interviewee’s own behaviour, or that of others; attitudes; norms; beliefs; and values” (Bryman 2016, p. 198). According to Bryman (2016), a semi-structured qualitative interview approach offers flexibility through using open-ended questions, with these sometimes shifting in order or wording depending on the responses of the participants. This method allowed interviewees to express their perspectives and personal stories at length, focusing on what they felt was most relevant and important (ibid. p.465-466). This approach allows for the interviewer to ask further questions to clarify or expand on particularly relevant themes as they are touched upon by the participant (Bryman, 2016). According to Bryman, it recognises the uniqueness of each participant and reduces ‘pigeon-holing’, and in the context of this research this method allows for the uniqueness of each locality and policy development process to be expressed. While this approach does take longer to code and analyse, a standardised structured interview model would have diminished the detail received and ultimately the quality of data for the study overall.

Interviews were conducted either in person or over the phone and recorded for later transcription. A drawback of phone interviews is that the natural process of rapport-building is more difficult than when interviews are conducted in-person, and as such interview responses may not go into the same level of detail. The interview process and categories of interview participants are presented in section 5.5.3 to 5.5.5. Ethical considerations of this data collection method are addressed in section 5.6 of this chapter.

With this research being focused from outset on LFS documents, this necessitated examination of these documents for the selected cases. Qualitative content analysis of documents involved examination of materials and, like interview transcripts, the identification of frames. These processes were guided by the research questions and drawn out through the application of the theoretical framework. Examination of these revealed a number of shared themes (Bryman, 2016, p. 563). These findings are reflected upon in Chapter 9.

5.3.2 Case Study Selection

Beyond the three case study selection criteria noted above, in a final stage of the selection process, the remaining cases were further reviewed and categorized based upon the structure of their coalition models. This selection process is shown in Figure 10, with each explained in further detail in this section.

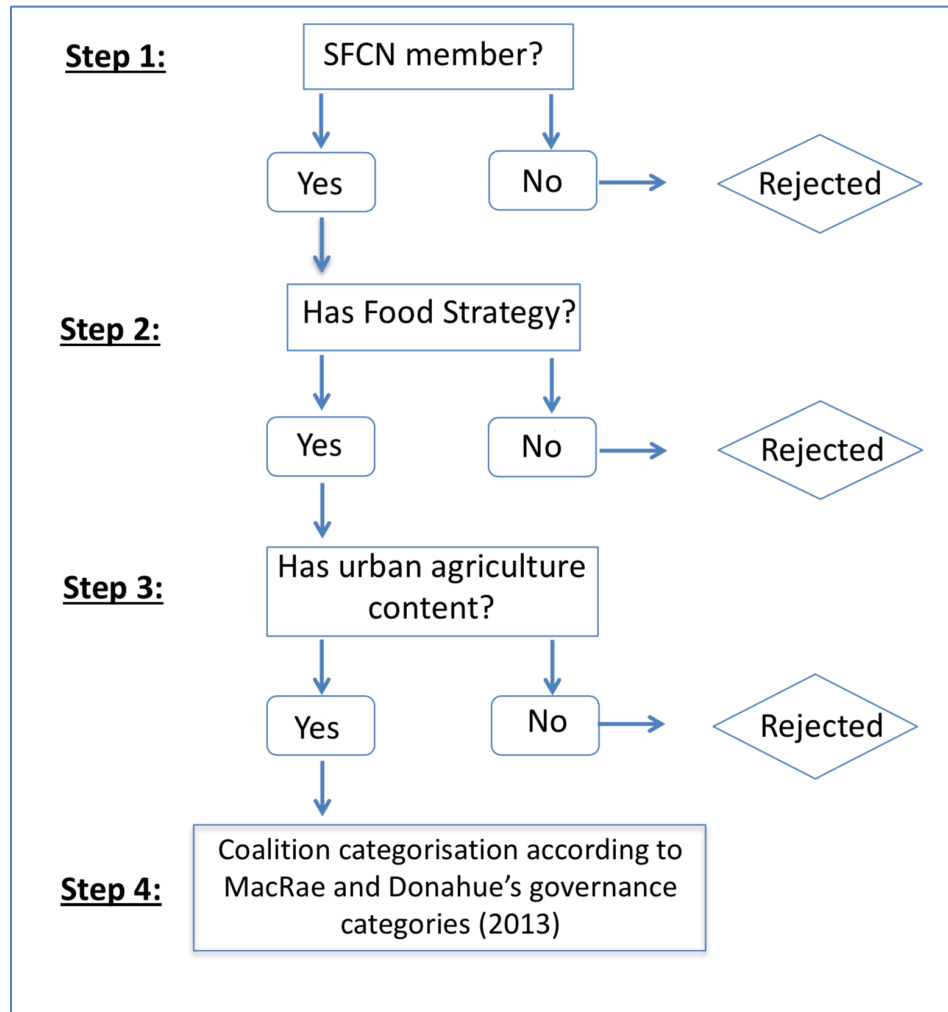


Figure 10: Selection Criteria Flow Chart

The surge in growth of the SFP⁴⁴, and its promotion of local food plans (and the inclusion of sustainability within these) made it an attractive starting point for more focused case work. The SFP 'Find a City' portal (<http://sustainablefoodcities.org/findacity>) presented a list of all existing members⁴⁵, each of which was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This allowed for Step 1 to be completed simply. Only these municipalities were considered as potential cases, rather than non-member municipalities and so each was investigated further for the presence of a food strategy as the second step in the selection process. To

⁴⁴ With 38 members as this case selection process took place, and over 50 at the time of submission.

⁴⁵ 'City' was used on the SFP (previously Sustainable Food Cities) website as a blanket term, but members vary in size from towns to city-regions, thus the change of name for the organisation.

investigate the criterion for Step 2, the page for each 'City' in the SFP portal was accessed⁴⁶. This provided access to additional details, contacts and, where available, documents such as policies and studies. Links to external websites of local food groups, such as those behind the development of the strategies, projects, and programs were also accessed to ensure that there were no omissions of strategies that had not yet been uploaded to the SFP website and to confirm that documents obtained were the most up to date versions available.

As can be seen in Figure 8, there was a 'back and forth' process that took place during the development of the methods plan and the case study selection. This was due to the need to define the specific types of policy document that would be the focus of this work and best support the research questions. Initial review of SFP members revealed a variety of 'policy' documents, such as strategies, action plans and charters⁴⁷ – all varying significantly in their content, including length, detail, purpose, formality, and intended. Charters were felt to be too limited and would not provide a deep enough level of analysis for the purpose of this research, and so were excluded. Action plans could be described as the 'how' documents, explaining what specific actions, including in some cases those responsible and accountable for the completion of those actions, would need to be put into place to achieve certain goals. Strategies were found to be more comprehensive than charters and action plans, as they illustrate the rationale for seeking change, associated actions, and the vision for the future. For these reasons, it was determined that only strategy documents⁴⁸ would be considered for document analysis in this research. Therefore, those that were omitted from further consideration as case studies (identified generally as 'non-strategy' in Table 10 below) included:

- cities had no policy documents yet created;
- cities with only a charter (whether formally adopted or as a statement of intent);
- cities with only an action plan, or an action plan and charter.

⁴⁷ Definitions of each of these document formats can be found in Chapter 3, based on policy guidance from SFP (Sustainable Food Cities, 2013).

⁴⁸ In this case, documents that identified themselves as strategies either by title or explicitly stated within the document content.

Table 10: Case Selection Review

Step 2: Case Selection Review		
Strategy: Include	Non-Strategy: Exclude	
Bath and North East Somerset (Bath and Northeast Somerset Local Food Strategy 2014 - 2017)	Birmingham (Birmingham Food Charter)	Middlesborough (Food Sustainability Action Plan for Middlesborough)
Belfast (Growing Communities: A Citywide Strategy for Belfast 2012-2022)	Bournemouth and Poole (Action Plan)	Oxford (Oxford Good Food Charter)
Bradford (Bradford District Food Strategy 2012)	Bridport (No Policy documents)	Peterborough (Peterborough Food Partnership Action Plan)
Brighton and Hove ('Spade to Spoon: Digging Deeper' - A Food Strategy and Action Plan for Brighton & Hove)	Cambridge (Cambridge Sustainable Food Charter)	Plymouth (Plymouth Food Charter and Action Plan)
County Durham (Sustainable Local Food Strategy 2014-2020)	Cardiff (Cardiff Food Charter)	Portsmouth (No policy documents)
Durham/Exeter (Devon Strategic Partnership: Feeding Devon's Future)	Carlisle (Carlisle Food Charter)	Sheffield (No policy documents)
Greater Manchester/Manchester (Food Futures Strategy 2007)	Cork (No policy documents)	Stockport (No policy documents)
Herefordshire (Sustainable Food Strategy for Herefordshire)	Glasgow (Glasgow 2014 – Commonwealth Games Food Charter)	
Islington (Food: A Strategy for Islington)	Greenwich (Greenwich Food Policy - Outdated, not in use)	
London (Healthy & Sustainable Food for London)	Hull (No policy documents)	
Sandwell (Growing Healthy Communities. A Community Agriculture Strategy for	Kirklees (Kirklees Food Charter)	

Sandwell 2008-11)	
West Sussex (Eating Local, Living Better Strategy)	Lambeth (No policy documents)
Bristol (Bristol Good Food Plan)	Lancaster (No policy documents)
Edinburgh (Edible Edinburgh: A Sustainable Food City Plan)	Leeds (No policy documents)
Leicester (Leicester's Food Plan 2014-2016)	Liverpool (No policy documents)

During this review process, three documents, belonging to Bristol, Edinburgh and Leicester, were ambiguously titled as 'plans' (rather than specifically 'action plans'). These were comprehensive documents similar in structure and content to many of the documents identified by title as strategies and differed from the more 'task-oriented' structure of action plans. For this reason, despite the wording of their titles, these cases were included as potential candidates. The separation of strategies from non-strategies reduced the number of potential candidates from 38 to only 15, with Sandwell being eliminated due to its strategy being inactive ("under review"), leaving 14.

Step 3 saw the remaining candidates undergo a review to ensure that the documents had sufficient relevant content to be used in this research. This was accomplished through a read-through of each document and digital word search using the key word search tool in the document viewer⁴⁹. Key words used to scan for production related content in documents included: "Urban Agriculture", "Community Growing", "Horticulture", "Urban Horticulture", "Local Growing", "Community Garden", "Gardens", "Gardening", "Allotment". These key words allowed for a quick review of the content of a strategy, and while these weren't quantified, it allowed the researcher to form an impression of the extent of the relevant content in each document, and relative to one another.

⁴⁹ An exception to the key word search was Belfast, as the strategy is dedicated fully to local growing, unlike other strategies where food production was approached as just one part of the wider food system.

As a point, it is necessary to note that the original intent of this research was to focus on UA-related content within strategies, as is reflected in these terms (see Figure 10). However, as the research progressed, particularly through insight from interviews, some strategies were found to take a wider regional approach rather than a single city or town focus. Due to this, in some strategies a significant rural agricultural angle emerged^{50 51}, at times in conjunction with an urban growing element within the same document. For this reason, the research developed from this initial focus and grew to encompass what is termed throughout as “food production” or “growing” to be more inclusive of farming and growing activities taking place⁵².

In a fourth step, the 14 remaining cases were reviewed to determine the structure of the group behind the development of the strategy. The aim being to present a variety of different coalition structures across case studies and to address the governance components of the research questions. This applied MacRae and Donahue’s categories of local food policy group structures, each operationalized using descriptive characteristics outlined in their 2013 study (see Table 8, in Section 4.3). While not extensive, these points identified in the ‘Detail’ column provided the guiding characteristics allowing for candidate cities to be examined and their different models to be identified. MacRae and Donahue note that the boundary characteristics are not rigid, but that groups may display characteristics of the next closest category (2013, p. 13). These governance structures presented six participation categories ranging from civil society to council-led, and a spectrum of hybrid partnerships in between. This approach offered a way to categorise the coalition groups⁵³.

Again, this stage used the SFP website’s ‘Find a City’ tool to view the information pages of the candidate cities, along with local food group websites (including council webpages, as applicable), and content within the strategy documents. These sources provided

⁵⁰ Likely unsurprising to a UK native, but had not been considered due in large part to the researcher’s lack of knowledge of rural England and UK geography in general at the time this research began.

⁵¹ This early-stage realisation allowed for the analysis of interviews and strategies to reflect this more inclusive view of production activities.

⁵² This acknowledges the varied priorities of municipalities, as well as the continuum of production, rather than a simplistic and false urban-rural binary.

⁵³ As noted in Chapter 4, the ACF does not prescribe a way to identify coalition group types, making this a compatible tool.

information on the local coalition groups, although each varied in subtle ways regarding where the information was found. The process of evaluation of these groups was not an exact science, as the extent of council involvement was not always apparent. Additionally, the criteria listed in MacRae and Donahue (2013) often position the composition of groups in relative terms, using wording like “fewer formal attachments”, “still significant, but less so than for Category 2”, which presented a methodological challenge. Funding structures as an indicator of council involvement were an important part of the categorization process, although details of funding (particularly with regard to more difficult-to-measure supports such as staffing, use of space, in-kind services) were often unclear. Where needed, clarification about the nature of the local food governance body was sought by email, directed at the contact person listed on the SFP website for that city.

Table 11⁵⁴ illustrates the 14 candidate cities that were reviewed in this part of the process. This categorization allowed for candidates to be viewed across the spectrum of governance models. The intention behind this process was so that a case study could be chosen from each category in order to explore the different experiences and views of those involved with strategy development. Where there was only a single candidate in a category, this was chosen by default. This table incorporates details of Steps 2 and 3 (food strategy dates and UA content) in the ‘Points of Consideration’ column, which helped to distinguish between multiple candidates to select the one most suitable (having a more current strategy, and more UA content, relative to others). One exception was made in the selection process, which was for Brighton and Hove (identified as Category 4), which was both current and had UA content. This case was rejected in favour of Devon in this category, as Brighton and Hove had been identified as having been heavily researched city in relation to its food activities, and most recently by a City University Food Policy researcher. This was decided in order to avoid ‘interview fatigue’ amongst participants involved in its strategy development (Bryman, 2016). No candidate for Category 6 could be identified.

⁵⁴ Table 11 uses the term ‘municipality’, which like Table 8 (illustrating the coalition categories devised by MacRae and Donahue) reflects the language of the study origin (Canada) and the jurisdictional terms in use there. In the UK, the ‘local council’ or ‘local authority’ would be synonymous.

Table 11: Final Case Study Selection

	Candidate Cities	Points of Consideration	Selected City	Rationale
Category 1: Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiatives	Bath and North East Somerset	Current (2014-2017); detailed UA content	Bath and North East Somerset	Recent publication of the strategy, detail of UA content, links to other local policies. Detailed.
	Bradford	2012 UFS	-	
	Islington	Lacked UA content	-	
	Leicester	Current (2014-2016)	-	
	London	2005 UFS	-	
	West Sussex	Lacked UA content	-	
Category 2: Hybrid-Model with Direct Links to Gov't	Belfast	2012 – 2022; Fully UA-focused document	Belfast	Based on being uniquely focused on UA.
	Edinburgh	Limited UA detail	-	
	Manchester / Greater Manchester	2007 UFS	-	
Category 3: Hybrid-Model with Indirect Links to Gov't	Bristol	Only candidate	Bristol	Only candidate

Category 4: Food Policy Org Linked to Gov't Through a Secondary Agency	Brighton and Hove	Current, although heavily researched	-	
	Herefordshire	Little UA content (Rural-focused strategy)	-	
	Devon/ Exeter	Current (2014)	Devon	Significant local partnerships and collaboration as an interesting feature of this strategy. Recent document. Preference given to Devon/Exeter over Brighton and Hove due to significant research attention already having been focused on B&H.
Category 5: CS-led Org with Limited Gov't Funding and Participation	County Durham	Only candidate	County Durham	Only candidate
Category 6: CS-Led Org with no Direct Gov't Involvement	No Candidates			

The outcome of these four stages was the selection of the five case studies used in this research: Bath and Northeast Somerset, Belfast, Bristol, Devon and County Durham.

It is necessary to note that over the course of this research, particularly through information received during interviews, it was found that the coalition models as they were assessed and categorised initially, varied from the reality on the ground for certain cases. The information available online through a desk analysis was at times unclear or misleading⁵⁵, and thus skewed the initial categorisation. Interviews with participants clarified the coalition structures. Belfast was recategorised as a Category 1 case, Devon as a Category 2, and Durham joined Bristol as Category 3. Ultimately, three of the six categories were represented (categories 1 through 3).

5.3.3 Ensuring Quality within the Research Design

This section addresses how validity and reliability were integrated into the design of this research at various stages. Within empirical social science work, Yin (2009, p. 40) identifies four “tests” used to verify the quality of a research study: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.

Construct validity is described by Yin as, foremost, “identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (2009, p.40). He notes that a criticism of case studies is often linked to what is believed to be a lack of sufficiently developed operationalised approaches in the research, and “subjective judgments” by the researcher in collecting the data. In this case, operational approaches were designed based upon the content of the research questions, to address the specific concepts within the work. Characterisations of “sustainability” and “local food production” were determined by the definitions and examples given in the strategy documents and interviews and were based upon an operationalized examination of beliefs. Beliefs are central to the ACF, making it an appropriate selection of theoretical model when pursuing such lines of inquiry in research on policy development. This study devised the adapted-ACF approach detailed in Chapter 4. This applied Snow and Benford’s (1988) framing tools, which offered a guiding framework to distinguish ‘diagnostic’, ‘prognostic’ and ‘motivational’ expressions of belief relating to sustainability and local food production⁵⁶ in and across interviews and strategy documents. This allowed both sources of data to be approached with consistency to enable later comparison. Beliefs surrounding sustainability were organised according to the three pillar

⁵⁵ Material relating to the strategy development at times over- or under-represented the roles of CS or LA, leading to a lack of clarity over aspects of the coalition structure.

⁵⁶ Relating to the categories of ‘policy core’ and ‘secondary’ beliefs.

model of sustainability focused on society/health, environment and economy. This was both for ease of data analysis, and because upon initial review of strategy documents in the early stages of this work, the pillars were found to be present as a framework rather than more complex or detailed versions. An additional element adding construct validity to this work was the inclusion of MacRae and Donahue's (2013) categorisation of local food policy groups. This served to address research questions which pertained to coalition structure and comparing beliefs and experiences of CS and LA actors.

Further to these 'operational measures' relating to the research themes, Yin also advocates as principles of data collection, using "multiple sources of evidence", "creating a case study database", and establishing "chains of evidence" (2009, 41). These, the author points out, occur in the data collection stage. Through examining both interview content and strategy content using common tools, comparison were made between the two sources and inferences could be made (ibid. p. 72). This accomplished what Yin explains as "encouraging convergent lines of inquiry" (ibid. p.42) to make the research findings more convincing. It is important to not only record the data, but a researcher must be able to interpret the data (ibid, p. 71). This requires being thoroughly informed about the nature of the research and to be able to identify contradictory or corroborative elements, areas in need of further investigation, and to apply that "unspecified element" of common sense (ibid, p.72).

Maintaining a "formal, presentable" (Yin, 2009, p. 119) case study database as a source of research material separate to the final research report is important to research validity. Clear documentation allows other researchers to view the sources of data and analysis, which reinforces the reliability of the work. This research has organized both digital and hard copy folders for each case study. Within the digital case study folders for each case, these are divided into interview materials (audio files, transcribed and anonymised documents and scanned ethics consent for each participant; 'High Level' interviews with SFP actors are separate as they weren't associated with any single case), strategy documents, as well as folders for supporting documents pertaining to local background context. Physical files for each case study (stored at the researcher's home) include coded transcribed interview texts and coded strategy documents. From this hand-coding process in hard-copy, content was once again digitized by using Excel. Digital notes relating to the individual chapters and case studies are stored securely on a password protected external

harddrive at the researcher's home. Like the multiple volumes of hand-written journals available, these documents contain details of the process, ideas, and notes on scholarship use in and relating to the research. These files are, as Yin expects, "organized, categorized, complete, and available for later access" (2009, p. 120).

Creating 'chains of evidence' simply refers to expressing steps of the research process from the research findings back to the research questions in a clear, logical way (Yin, 2009, p.122). This involves clear referencing to materials used in the study (ie: to specific interviews, food strategies or other sources of information), clarity of the research database, that the protocols outlined within the research were adhered to, and that these logically reflected the structure and content of the research questions guiding the study. Each of these is a step back, cross-referencing the construction of the study from the conclusions of the research, backward to the questions that initiated the work, and around which it was constructed. This is visible throughout the structure of this research through the frequent references back to the research questions within the final report, from the conclusions making reference to supporting evidence. The 'Findings' chapters 6, 7 and 8 reflect the research questions 1, 2 and 3 respectively, building on one another progressively. Throughout these, the reader is referred to relevant reference material in the appendices or in-text for support. Taking this combination of systematic, operationalized approaches, as well as using different sources of data, has offered an element of "quality control" (Yin, 2009, p.124) to this research by reducing what could be labelled as a lack of objectivity, thus addressing the above criticism of the case study method noted by Yin.

External Validity pertains to "defining the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized" (Yin, 2009, p40). Based on the purposive selection of these cases, and the qualitative nature of the methods, it cannot be claimed that this study has external validity. In this case, the beliefs of actors, their relationship to the strategy output, and the experience of these actors within their unique coalition structures are not representative of any other local food policy experiences. The findings of this research based on these case studies cannot be generalized to a wider population, but rather are unique. However, consistent application of the theoretical framework within and across each of the cases, or "pattern matching" as it is referred to by Yin (2009, p. 41) (see Figure 9) and cautious

examination of data means that *internal* validity can be claimed, as this centres largely around inferences and explanations built by the researcher through logic (ibid).

5.4 Data Collection

Data collection for this research, involved document analysis of food strategies, and semi-structured interviews. As noted by Yin, using a mixed methods approach “forces the methods to share the same research questions, to collect complementary data, and to conduct counterpart analyses” (2009, p. 63). A benefit of this approach is that it allows the researcher to answer more complex questions and present analysis of greater depth. This section details how the document and interview portions of this research were planned and approached during the data collection stage of this research.

5.4.1 Documents

The strategy documents for the five selected case studies were retrieved through the SFP Network website, local food group, or council websites, as relevant. These were:

1. Feeding Devon's Future: Devon Food Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2016;
2. A Good Food Plan for Bristol;
3. Growing Communities: A city-wide Strategy for Belfast 2012-2022;
4. Sustainable Local Food Strategy 2014-2020 (Durham);
5. Bath and Northeast Somerset Local Food Strategy 2014-2017.

Familiarisation with these documents to gain greater depth of understanding of the local context was necessary in order for the researcher to be informed when speaking to interview participants about these documents and their development. This content also informed the case study background of this work in Chapter 6. Creswell highlights the importance of the case description to a study (2013, p. 99), as this gives depth and contextual meaning to the findings.

The use of document analysis as a method presented several benefits. For one, it was a non-intrusive method, unlike research involving human participants, and so required no ethical review. Documents were reviewed and analysed multiple times to ensure the appropriate elements were being considered, which unlike interviews cannot be done over once

completed. The retrieval of documents, particularly those available online, was a simple and direct process.

5.4.2 Interviews

Three participant types were selected to take part in semi-structured interviews to inform different aspects of this research. Each is described, with their individual selection and data collection processes detailed below.

1. **Coalition Actors:** These participants were personally involved with the development of the LFS of their area and identified in this research as either *civil society* (CS) or *local authority* (LA) actors⁵⁷, depending on their professional roles at the time of their involvement⁵⁸. This core group are considered ‘policy champions’ driving the food strategy efforts through their roles on steering committees and in creating the policy documents. Interviews with these actors formed the backbone of this research through their insights into the strategy development process and coalition dynamics.
2. **Local Experts:** These participants were ‘outsiders’ to the strategy development process⁵⁹ and were not members of the coalition group at the time of strategy creation. The inclusion of these participants was intended to be complimentary to the reflections of the Coalition Actors, as they provided local context in relation to its food system, including issues, projects and programs. As people with in-depth knowledge of the strategies (post-development) through their application, they held significant insights into the tensions between the coalition actors (LA and CS) and the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy through its implementation.

⁵⁷ Acknowledging that there are roles that extend outside of these two categories of participants, the ‘civil society’ label has been applied as a blanket term in this case as actors not in a formal government role within the council.

⁵⁸ Notably, some participants were working outside the council at the time of involvement, but since moved into council roles due to restructuring of services in their areas. As such, they were able to provide unique perspectives. Similarly, some actors were CS actors but were commissioned by the council to do work for the strategy process. In these cases, actors were considered to be CS.

⁵⁹ Several of these participants became involved with the strategy programs after their development or have since become involved with the council or civil society through local food initiatives, such as FPCs.

3. High-Level (involved with SFP organization actors): Recruitment of these participants was a later addition to this research⁶⁰. These were opportunistic interviews and based upon referrals that presented themselves from the other participant groups. These individuals were asked to participate in order to obtain more information on the SFP as the broader network to which the case studies belonged as members. This provided context for the UK's local level movement toward sustainable food systems action and policy.

These participant groups were sought in order to address specific areas of this research based on the initial design. Ultimately, only coalition actors were suited to address the research questions, however Local Expert and High-Level interviews were drawn upon to add context to case studies and additional insights into the LA and CS relationship from their positions as outsiders (see section 8.8).

The sampling process for prospective interview participants included collecting names from various sources:

Table 12: Sources for Participant Recruitment

Coalition Actors	Strategy documents; council websites; local food group websites; SFP city-profile web pages; Snowball method referrals
Local Expert	Snowball method referrals; local food group websites (often based on recommendations from participants due to the known-affiliation of actors being referred)
High-Level (SFP)	Snowball method referrals; SFP website

Online resources for participant recruitment stemmed from the SFP own 'Members' webpage (<https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/members/>). This list provides general

⁶⁰ See '5.6 Ethical Considerations' for details of the ethics amendment made for inclusion of these participants.

information for each member 'city': its initiative, contact details for the local project lead, and often uploaded copies of current policy documents, including strategies, action plans or charters. Additionally, links to the leading local food group's webpage, whether it is council-led or grassroots-initiated (for example, the Active Belfast Website: <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitygardens>). For some case study cities (Devon and Durham, specifically), documents themselves had a list of involved actors which could be searched for through Google for contact email addresses or publicly listed telephone numbers.

Participants were contacted on a rolling basis⁶¹ from January 2016, with interviews taking place from that time until June 2016. Contact for interviews was made by email, phone, and via referral through email introduction from other participants as part of the snowball approach. 'Local Expert' participants were often referred to in conjunction with their affiliation to a specific local organisation, where this was the case ('Sustainable Northern Ireland', as an example), the group's website was accessed and the contact details for that person were found. 'High Level' participants, being individuals working for the SFP organisation directly were identified by obtaining their contact details from the SFP website. Interviews were conducted by Skype, phone, or in person (one-on-one, or in a small group). These were recorded and transcribed using Apple iPlayer and Microsoft Word.

As illustrated in Table 13, a total of 18 participants took part in the case study portion of this research as coalition actors, 8 as 'Local Experts', with the addition of 2 'High-Level' interviews pertaining more broadly to the SFP to provide context. This yielded a total of 28 interviews which all contributed to the depth of this work. Within the coalition actor group, the recruitment process sought to obtain a balance between CS and LA participants in order to represent the beliefs and experiences of both (for comparative purposes and to explore negotiation processes). As Table 13 shows, the recruitment for Bristol and Durham only succeeded in interviewing Civil Society actors, although in both cases, participants who were working in civil society roles at the time transitioned to council roles shortly after the development of the strategy. So, while it cannot be said that they represented the council's

⁶¹ Due to the use of the snowball method of recruitment.

view on the strategy's development at the time of its creation, they provided valuable insights into the council priorities and organisational structure, nonetheless.

Table 13: Participants Types by Case Study

	BNES	Belfast	Bristol	Devon	County Durham
Coalition: Civil Society	2	2*	2**	5*	3**
Coalition: Council	3	1	0	1	0
Local Expert	1	3	3	1	0
Total	6	6	5	7	3

*(One or more participants) working within a Civil Society group hired by/provided with funding from the council to fulfill a specific role in the UFS development

** (One or more participants) Not in a council role at the time of strategy development, but due to restructuring, role became a council-run service

For each of the participant groups, this process began with greeting the participant, thanking them for their willingness to take part, reviewing the background and purpose of the research (Appendix A), their role in it, and any ethical implications in order to ensure fully informed consent, confirming the above through verification of the signed ethics consent form (Appendix B). Bryman notes that this initial process of building rapport is important to establishing trust within the interview process (2017). Only at this point did the formal interview questions commence. Content of the interview questions themselves varied according to the participant groups involved and interviews guides used open-ended questions to allow for participants to elaborate as needed, serving to provide more material and a richness of detail for analysis. All interviews followed a semi-structured format to allow for participants to expand on their ideas and experiences. The interview guide for coalition actors (Appendix C) was specifically designed to draw out reflections surrounding the experience of developing the LFS of their municipality alongside other coalition actors, their perceptions of the concepts of sustainability, local food production, and how these

were associated. Local Expert questions were an adapted version of this question set as contextual questions posed to both Coalition Actors and Local Experts were the same, as the local context of the case study was common to both. The semi-structured interview format allowed for flexibility in adjusting the line of questioning as necessary. High Level interviews with members working within the SFP organization were by comparison less structured than with the other two participant groups. Interview questions for these participants focused largely on the background of the SFP, the movement toward relocalisation of the food system, and the growth of membership across the UK in a short time. All interviews were concluded with a request for further referrals to case study participants, with specific focus on coalition actors, thanking the participant for their time, and letting them know that results would be shared with participants upon completion of the study. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher, with participant names removed and coded during the process to maintain the anonymity of participants.

Notably, recruiting coalition actors was more of a challenge than local experts for two main reasons. Firstly, several participant referrals that were thought to have been involved in strategy development denied any involvement when contacted. Often referrals were made to very informed individuals, as participants often 'ran in the same circles' and were involved in similar projects, however this did not necessarily guarantee their involvement in the strategy's creation. Secondly, there appeared to be a bias in favour of those recognised as the leaders or as local champions who were often referred to multiple times by others. Less often were those beyond a very core group being named due to the reduced 'visibility' of these actors relative to the leaders. This was consistent across recruitment for all case studies. Actors who were peripheral relative to the core steering group (those who attended occasionally and perhaps only contributed moderately – such as farmers, chefs), or were transitory in the process (meaning they attended periodically or only for a short period of time to contribute key information - academics, for example), were rarely referred to in the snowball process. If they were referred, often names of such actors were forgotten, and they were instead referred to by their job title or business sector. The most reliable source of additional recruitment for these oft-forgotten 'non-leaders' was the participant list in the strategy document, which was only available a couple of the case studies. Uniformly across all strategies and case studies, the names of those who participated in wider consultation (and so could be argued to have been involved in the process, or the coalition in a wider sense) were unavailable as a reference list. This limitation was in fact

helpful in defining the boundaries of the coalition, an issue identified in ACF literature (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014, p. 190).

5.4.3 Observation

As indicated above in Figure 8, one method that was engaged with for a time but ultimately discontinued was observation. During interviews with participants from the Devon case study, the researcher was invited to attend meetings for a new food strategy development process in Exeter (as a main urban centre in Devon) as an observer. The process involved workshops, steering committee meetings of the Exeter Food Network, and email updates from the EFN on the development of the strategy as it took place from June 2016.

With meetings ongoing while other aspects of the data collection were concluding for the other five cases, with no clear end point in sight for the Exeter strategy's completion, it was decided to exclude this case from further analysis and inclusion in the research. The experience following Exeter's process was enlightening as it provided exposure to an active strategy development process, unlike the other cases for which this process had ended. The strategy development process concluded with the publication of a strategy in 2017, and the activities of the group are ongoing at the time of writing.

5.5 Data Analysis

This section details the analysis process undertaken for strategy documents and interviews with CS and LA actors. An initial review of both types of data, along with reference back to the research questions led to the selection and application of the ACF as a theoretical framework for deeper analysis. This section explains how it was applied to and operationalised for data analysis using the addition of framing tools offered by Snow and Benford (1988).

While Yin presents the development of a theory as a part early in the design process of a study, preceding case study selection and data collection, (2009, p.57), Bryman (2016) refers to an inductive research approach where the observations or findings of the research process inform the choice of theory used. This was the path taken in this work, forming an iterative process involving "weaving back and forth between data and theory" (Bryman, 2016, p. 23). The decision behind this was to let the data express itself based upon a preliminary appraisal and to select an appropriate framework in order to investigate these

with a more targeted approach. The intent being to yield rich data that could be linked and make a contribution to an existing theoretical model rather than pursuing a general thematic analysis. As highlighted in Chapter 4, policy research relating to food in ACF case studies is under-represented, and this work aimed to expand its representation amongst the existing body of research.

5.5.1 Theoretical Framework: ACF and Framing Tools

Chapter 4 provided significant detail on the ACF, its assumptions, 'hypotheses' and its relevance to this research as a framing theory. That same chapter also explained how the framework was adapted for application to this work using:

- 1) MacRae and Donahue's (2013) food policy group categorization structure as a means of defining the case studies as coalitions, and
- 2) Snow and Benford's (1988) framing lenses: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational

This section discusses the application of these as methodological tools for collecting and analyzing interview and strategy data. The coalition categorisation was in section 5.3.2 as a tool to define the case studies in an ACF-relevant format. By examining the beliefs of CS and LA actors using frames, comparisons could be made to address Research Question 1 addressing whether views differed between these two. These same frames were suitable for analysis of the strategy content (Research Question 2). This shared methodological approach allowed for comparative examination of these two data formats, which highlighted which content was included/excluded in the document and allowed for consideration as to why this was the case in relation to the coalition structure and dynamics (Research Question 3).

While the simplification of concepts is one frequently identified in policy making in general it is often helpful and necessary from a methodological perspective, such as through the use of frameworks (Cairney, 2012; Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014; Birkland, 2020). In this sense, when using the pillars of sustainability as a framework for analysing interview and strategy content, the social pillar of sustainability was taken to include material referring to health and wellbeing. This was based on two main justifications, the first being that in a practical sense, health and wellbeing content were found to be inextricable in the initial strategy

review process involved in case study selection. This broad scope for the social pillar was found to be helpful in the case of interviews, as actors often grouped this content together, suggesting a normalized association of health, physical and mental wellbeing with 'society'. From the lens of food policy research, society and health are regarded as inseparable (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009; Mason and Lang, 2017)

5.5.2 Document Analysis: Food Strategies

The content of interest within these documents pertained to 1) sustainability and 2) local food production. For this reason, content relating to other parts of the food system was excluded from the analysis. Data were obtained by separating sustainability content into the three pillars of society/health, economy and environment, and examining each of these according to diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing claims. This process is illustrated in Figure 11.

This use of Snow and Benford's (1988) framing model was applied as a means of operationalising the data analysis of content in the strategy documents, as well as beliefs of coalition actors who took part in interviews.

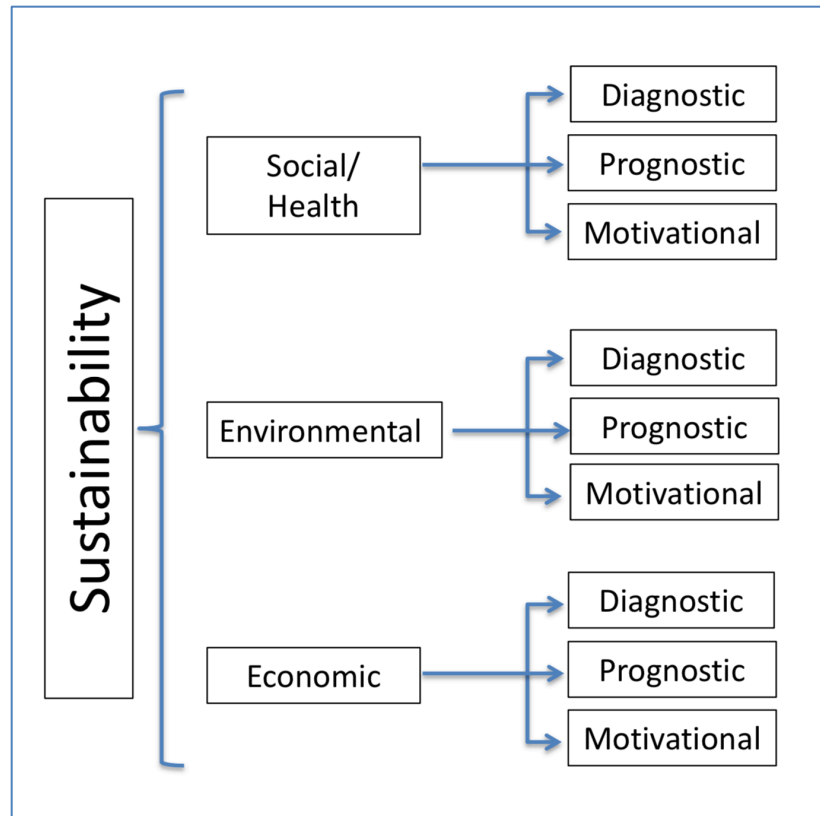


Figure 11: Data Collection Approach used for Strategy Documents and Interviews

The three categories or “framing tasks” and how they corresponded to sustainability and LFP in the following ways⁶²:

- Diagnostic: what is or isn’t sustainable (socially, environmentally, or economically);
- Prognostic: what local growing-related actions are being proposed or associated with the problem as a potential solution (again, pertaining to one of more pillars); and *who* is put forward to implement these actions, and
- Motivational: What is the sustainable outcome (socially, environmentally, or economically) of applying these local growing actions to the diagnosed problem

Data were catalogued using Microsoft Excel. Simplified tables showing these responses are presented within Chapters 6 and 7, pertaining to interviews and case study strategy analysis respectively. Using this tabular format, data could be analysed across pillars and

⁶² Represented in Chapter 4, Table 7

frames, allowing a visual guide to priorities and framing approaches for the strategy audience(s).

5.5.3 Interviews

Interviews were analysed from audio files transcribed by the researcher. This step formed an important early form of analysis through familiarisation with the content (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002). Transcripts were coded to ensure the confidentiality of the interview data for participants and to meet ethical standards. Data extraction from interviews of coalition actor participants followed a two-part process.

Step 1:

Step 1 involved data collection of individual actors' beliefs relating to sustainability and local food production. As with the data analysis for strategy documents, interviews were examined using the three framing tasks coupled with the three pillars of sustainability, as illustrated in Figure 11.

Initially, core, policy core and secondary beliefs were part of the analysis process but identifying core beliefs presented issues. Noting the need for caution in social research, Michael (2017, p. 5) states that it is important to avoid "the temptation" to make assumptions about an actor's character, giving the examples of class or gender. In the case of engaging with the ACF in this work, the issue of core beliefs and the desire to make assumptions of what these may be for participants (for example, their political leanings, or "green" stance being taken through the food strategy development) led to this category of belief being discarded as potentially too speculative.

Policy core beliefs were identified through explicit statement of priority areas or implicit focus on an issue or pillar to the exclusion of others. Secondary beliefs⁶³ were presented through 'prognostic' actions being used to bridge issues ('diagnostic' framing, or unsustainable elements identified) and the desired aims ('motivational' framing, or sustainable outcomes).

⁶³ Jenkins-Smith et al. note that "secondary beliefs deal with a subset of the policy subsystem or the specific instrumental means for achieving the desired outcomes in policy core beliefs" (2014, p. 191).

In order to address Research Question 1 fully, interviews of CS and LA actors were organized into separate categories for each case study to facilitate comparison of their policy core and secondary beliefs as they related to particular pillars. This allowed for associations between issues, actions and outcomes to be viewed in a clear way, or to identify gaps.

Step 2:

Within these same interviews, participants spoke of their experiences working in partnership. Content relating to negotiation of beliefs was identified in transcripts and analysed thematically (Attride-Stirling, 2001) to identify issues for each case study expressed by participants. These themes were then compared across cases. This information supplemented the data pertaining to Research Question 1 (also from the interviews) and Research Question 2 (strategies) to build a picture of coalition dynamics and negotiation. This additional layer of examination of interview material was undertaken with consideration to the objectives of Research Question 3, which revolved around the dynamics within the coalition, with attention to the power structures and roles of actors. Srivastava and Thomson note that when in the process of identifying themes that a-priori issues, being the driving questions of the research, will likely guide the process; however, the researcher must allow for flexibility should additional themes or issues appear (2009). As such, while the research question was a guide, the researcher approached this process with an open mind, allowing for relevant themes to reveal themselves.

5.5.4 ACF 'hypotheses'

In an additional application of the ACF, two of its established 'hypotheses' that were relevant to this work were selected and examined relating to the Advocacy Coalition.

(2) *"Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects"*

(3) *"An actor or coalition will give up secondary aspects of its belief system before acknowledging weakness in the policy core"*

These ‘hypotheses’ required no additional data gathering, but simply offered a perspective from which to view the data already collected. ‘Hypothesis’ 2 was addressed using the Excel data collected from interviews which illustrated policy core and secondary beliefs for all actors in a case study. This allowed for CS and LA actor beliefs to be compared. ‘Hypothesis’ 3 was addressed largely through the findings of Research Question 3, which linked the negotiation process and the coalition structure to which beliefs had been carried through the development process to the final output.

5.5.5 Local Experts and High-Level Interviews

Local Expert interviews were transcribed and reviewed with a focus on local context including background, drivers, and coalition formation. It was intended that these interviews would provide supplemental information to the main interviews, particularly for the background vignettes for each case study. As outsiders to the strategy process (and all CS actors), these participants were typically highly critical of the council’s efforts in relation to food action, the strategy outcome and the council’s efforts in fostering participatory processes. Additionally, these individuals largely spoke of the strategies in terms of their *implementation* (or lack of) as they were not a part of the strategy development process. The ACF notes that it is difficult to identify the boundaries of a coalition (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014), a point reiterated by MacRae and Donahue’s research (2013) on municipal food policy groups. For this reason, discussions with a wider group of local experts and community food champions beyond the strategy steering groups offers a wider view of food actions and dynamics in the territorial context of the food strategy initiative.

Similarly, High-Level interviews with SFP actors (staff) were undertaken and reviewed with the intent of gaining background on the UK local policy context and the movement toward relocalisation that the organisation advocates. While most of the strategies examined formally joined the SFP network after the completion of their strategies, these actors noted the organisation’s role in supporting and guiding in the coalition and strategy implementation process. This resulted in the role of the SFP as an organization being diminished in participant narratives relative to what was originally expected by the researcher. These high-level actors from the SFP network were able to offer insight into the development of local food policy councils and the framework of sustainability their the organisation encourages. These interviews, in addition to scholarly publications (Moragues-

Faus, 2017; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019) and the SFP website provided a great deal of background context to this movement in the UK.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

This research was reviewed through the City University Research Ethics approval process and ethical approval was granted in November 2015 (see Appendix D). Ethical approval was sought because of the need to conduct interviews with local policymakers. Participants were all adults, working in a variety of sectors (public service, private industry, civil society, academia, for example), and were not identified as vulnerable.

Participants were not exposed to any risk beyond everyday normal levels, nor was there any expectation of lingering negative effects from participating. It was acknowledged that individual discomfort could arise due to variations in personal comfort levels within an interview format or through recalling episodes of conflict from the strategy development process. It was impressed upon participants that if they felt in anyway uncomfortable, that could discontinue the interview at any time, either temporarily or permanently. Participants were informed that they could skip any interview question which they were not comfortable answering.

As a snowball method was employed to include previously unknown participants, those recommended were not told the name of those who had suggested them, as this would compromise the anonymity of the initial participant. Some participants whose to waive this right to anonymity by offering to facilitate an email introduction to a prospective participant.

Within the transcribed documents, as well as the research text, participants were coded, rather than named, to provide anonymity. Each interview participant signed a participation agreement, which informed them of research ethics considerations of the study. This document detailed the purpose of the study, which informed them of the steps being taken to ensure that their personal details would be kept confidential and secure.

In addition to the interview process that included coalition actors and Local Experts, additional ethical approval was sought and granted (July 2016) for two additional High-Level interviews with individuals working for the SFP network. These individuals were

sought out in order to gain insight regarding the broader movement of LFS development, the growth of SFP membership, and local food initiatives taking place across the UK and Ireland.

5.7 Reflexivity and The Researcher

Methodologists acknowledge the existence of assumptions and biases that a researcher brings with them to the research process, such as social and political leanings, but prescribe 'reflexivity' as a counter measure (Becker, 1967; Yin, 2009; John W., 2013). To cultivate reflexivity in research is to acknowledge the existence of these and to put them aside, not letting them interfere or influence the research process in a way that would compromise its validity. Underlying this is the role of the researcher as a "key instrument" within the study, and the interpretive lens taken in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013, p.44). Going a step further, the interviewer is the translator. In the case of qualitative research such as this where interviews are used, it is also the responsibility of the researcher to respectfully represent the life experiences and stories of those who have so generously shared them for the benefit of research.

In terms of methodology, a reflexive process was undertaken throughout this work as a 'reflection-in-practice' approach (Schon, 1987) by frequently returning to the research questions was undertaken to keep the research grounded to these. This again echoes Yin, who argued that the starting point of good research is an appropriately formulated question. Similarly, having a suitable analytical framework helped to organize data, adding rigour to data analysis. The design of this research was such that one research question built upon the next and the next. As such, for each findings chapter, this involved a process of repeatedly going back over data to draw upon findings and to ensure continuity for accuracy. Creswell explains that the "end conclusions formed by the researcher about the overall meaning of the case(s)" can be thought of as "general lessons learned from studying the case(s)" (2013, p.99). This underscores the importance of a cautious approach to analysis, as the lessons are part of the legacy of the research. As researcher from abroad conducting research on elements of the UK food system, many gaps in knowledge existed relating to UK policies, local politics, food initiatives, organisations and leading figures, for example. This position as an outsider offered a blank slate upon which to build understanding in this regard. A 'reflection-on-practice' (ibid) is included in Chapter 9.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the process of conceptualizing, researching, designing, carrying out and analyzing this research project. This entailed a multi-methods approach to analyzing five unique case studies in order to answer the three driving research questions. Analysis was undertaken using a novel theoretical and analytical design focused upon the ACF. Ethical considerations of the project were discussed, as well as the reflections on the roles and responsibilities of the researcher. Based upon the methods outlined above, the following section presents the findings of this research across three chapters.

6. Sustainability, Local Food Production and Actors Beliefs

This chapter presents the policy core and secondary beliefs of actors involved in LFS development across five case studies, representing three different coalition models. BNES and Bristol represent ‘Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiatives’ (Category 1), Durham and Bristol’s strategies are “*a hybrid of CS organizations and government*” (Category 3) but with weaker ties to government than other hybrid models. Devon sits in between these as a “Hybrid Model with Direct Links to Governance” (Category 2). The section is prefaced with a background vignette for each case study to provide context, including why a local food strategy was created, as well as detail of the coalition structure behind its development. This is based on the ACF’s parameters which define a policy ‘sub-system’ level, being “a policy topic, territorial scope, and the actors directly or indirectly influencing policy subsystem affairs” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014, p. 189). From this, findings are presented pertaining to the first research question of this dissertation:

- *In what ways do the representations of sustainability and food production vary amongst the actors who took part in developing the strategies?*

Referring back to Snow and Benford’s three framing tasks (see Table 7, Section 4.3.1), actors’ *policy core* beliefs of what is understood as “sustainability” are presented, both from explicit descriptions as well as implicit reference as per the diagnostic (unsustainable issues), and motivational (sustainable outcomes) frames. Prognostic actions presented by actors reflect the *secondary beliefs*, as per the ACF, to address policy core beliefs. Policy core and secondary beliefs were drawn from narratives relating to the social, environmental, and economic pillars of sustainability and are shown throughout this chapter as tables.

As a means of exploring the views of participants across coalition models, this chapter draws upon the second Advocacy Coalition-related ‘hypothesis’:

“Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects.”

This 'hypothesis' prompts examination not only of what actors believe is the main strategy aim⁶⁴ in relation to sustainability, but how it is to be achieved⁶⁵ through, in this case, LFP. In particular, this is examined with attention to the CS and LA divide within the coalition models of each case study, as these are formed along a sort of continuum of partnership of these actors.

⁶⁴ Referred to in the ACF as a 'policy core' belief. See 'Theoretical Framework', (Chapter 4) for further detail.

⁶⁵ Referred to in the ACF as 'secondary beliefs'. See 'Theoretical Framework', (Chapter 4) for further detail.

6.1 Background Vignettes

6.1.1 Bath & NorthEast Somerset: BNES Local Food Strategy 2014-2017

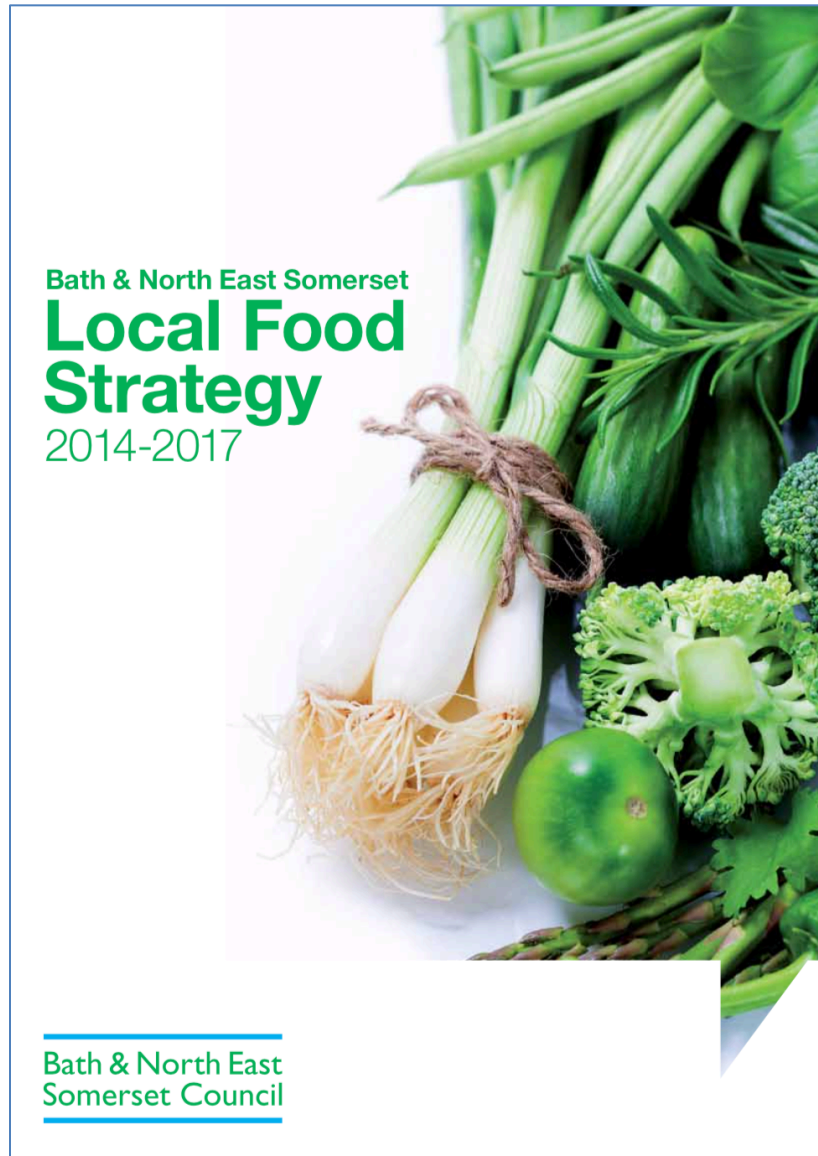


Figure 12: BNES Local Food Strategy Cover (Source: Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014)

6.1.1 Background to Case Study: Defining the Policy Subsystem

Inspired by action in Bristol, an active grassroots sector in BNES played a pivotal role in convincing the local council to take on local food as a policy issue. In 2012, Transition Bath's food branch approached the BNES Sustainability Officer and Deputy Director of Public Health to propose a more strategic integration of food into local policy. According to a

report published by Sarah Davies of 'Food Matters' for the SFP, community sector groups Transition Bath and Saltford Environment Group "galvanised the community and submitted consultation documents requesting a more coordinated approach" to food policy in BNES (2017, p. 5). Public interest in the local food system had been building around this time, and several baseline research projects were conducted by student interns working for the council. These factors influenced the launch of a council meeting on the topic and in 2013 a full-time local food coordinator position was created by the council to support the development of a LFS. A range of actors from the grassroots and from the council took part in this process.

Aside from the demand from CS groups, the strategy speaks to the council objectives that were identified as its priority drivers:

"[T]he need for a B&NEs local food strategy arose from the synergy between the Environmental Sustainability Partnership objectives to reduce greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions and environmental impacts from the food sector and the Health & Well-Being Board (HWBB) objectives to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality. In addition, the importance of a thriving local food economy to local economic well-being is included in the Economic strategy" (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 2)

In addition to presenting the council departments behind the strategy, this statement summarises the policy topic being addressed, indicating a recognition that the environmental and health objectives overlap and are connected by the food system.

In 2013, BNES was not yet a SFP member, but the network was in its first year and did provide some support to the BNES initiative through offering a source of guidance and expertise. BNES has since joined the SFP and the LFS was a key part of its successful membership bid. As the name of the strategy suggests, the territorial scope of the effort encompasses Bath and Northeast Somerset as a local authority catchment area, rather than a single urban area.

The Coalition Structure: Category 1

The Bath and Northeast Somerset Local Food Strategy (2014 – 2017) was a council-led initiative. Davies identifies the BNES Sustainable Food Partnership as one of several “[f]ood partnerships housed within the public sector” (2017, p. 3) across the UK. The effort was launched by the BNES Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) as a joint effort by the Sustainability team in Bath Council and the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). A steering group was convened involving local CS groups, such as Transition Bath, Sirona (a local health services provider), community gardening groups (BAG and others) as well as members from the National Farmer’s Union (NFU) and representatives of the Duchy of Cornwall. This coalition arrangement reflects MacRae and Donahue’s (2013) categorisation description (referred to herein as Category 1):

"Financed by the municipality and directed by municipal staff with advice from external groups. Municipal government sets the mandate and provides financing and staff resources. Housed within existing municipal government units and external organizations advise and interact with municipal officials" (p.8)

While CS was involved with the development of the strategy through steering group meetings and consultation events, the council held ownership over the process and the strategy as an output.

Interview Participants

Interviews took place with three council members (suffix ‘LA’ in Table 14) and two CS actors (suffix ‘CS’), who had been involved with the development of the BNES LFS. One of the two CS actors worked in a capacity where the council contracts with their employer, but this individual was considered CS due to their primary role being in a CS context. These five interviews provide a near balance in representation from both sectors. An exhaustive list of actors involved in the strategy’s development was not available either in physical or digital form, or through interviews, therefore the number and range of actors or organisations involved is unknown⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ This is an example of the difficulty of defining the boundaries of a coalition, as actors are not always documented or remembered clearly.

Table 14: Participant Codes - BNES Interviews

Participant Code
BNESLA1
BNESLA2
BNESLA3
BNESCS1
BNESCS2

6.1.2 Belfast: Growing Communities: A Citywide Strategy for Belfast 2012-2022

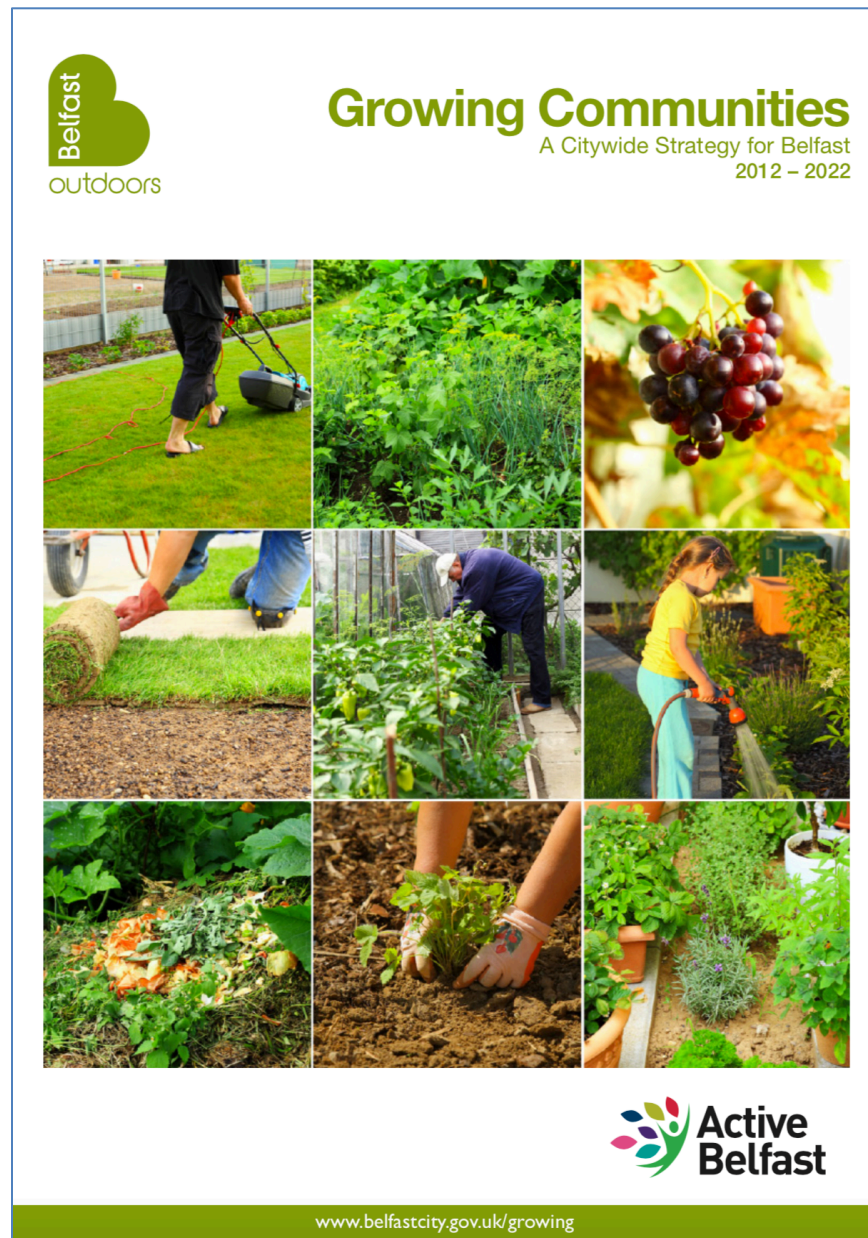


Figure 13: Belfast's Growing Communities Strategy cover (Source: Belfast Outdoors, 2012)

Background to Case Study: Defining the Policy Subsystem

The Growing Communities Strategy is unique amongst the five case studies of this research in that it is not a *food* strategy in the sense that it covers the breadth of the local food system, addressing concerns from production through processing, transport, disposal and

so on. Rather, it is a *community* growing strategy, aimed at one specific part of the food system, being small scale, community-level cultivation. This is the policy scope of the subsystem. In terms of territorial scope, the document is focused only on Belfast, and not the peri-urban or rural agricultural areas beyond the city. As the capital of Northern Ireland, Belfast is the only case study herein not located in England. As of 2015, it had an estimated population of just over 333,000 (Office for National Statistics, 2019).

While it is not stated explicitly in the strategy document, participants clarified that the strategy initiative was conceived of and launched by the Parks and Leisure Department within Belfast City Council. The idea for a Growing Communities Strategy was proposed by this department to the wider council and received permission to proceed. One actor explained the parallel event of forming the “Active Belfast Partnership” to make the effort wider reaching:

“In the meantime, it also started an Active Belfast Partnership, and the public health agency were on, the health and social care trust were on, the department of regional development – a wide ranging partnership.” (BELLA1)

Public demand for increased allotment provision was a main driver. This was supported by a scoping study conducted by Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI)⁶⁷ prior to the development of the strategy (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 32). One CS actor explained,

“the community growing strategy was in response to a specific demand from citizens... it was much more to do with political influence being exerted.” (BELCS1)

Belfast’s history of sectarian conflict between Loyalist and Nationalist communities was also a driver to the development of a community growing strategy. The approach taken to the document was explained by a council actor:

“the strategy wasn’t created as a food strategy, or part of a food strategy, it was created as a community development approach. And the food part of it was really important for various reasons ... that started communities working and thinking on

⁶⁷ A Not-For-Profit organisation focused on sustainable development in Northern Ireland (Sustainable Northern Ireland, no date).

these issues, and sometimes working across what are quite difficult community boundaries, you know, the nationalist-loyalist thing.” (BELLA1)

Within the document the links to sustainability objectives at the international (EU), national, regional and local policy levels are identified (Figure 14) and place the strategy within this wider policy context. Identification of sustainability, biodiversity, and public health policies show an awareness of the benefits and overlapping policy subsystems as areas of impact that community growing may have, but other than the social focus, these are not explored in detail in the strategy.



Figure 14: Strategic Policy Context - Growing Communities Strategy (Source: Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 11)

The Coalition Structure: Category 1

Based on the origins of Active Belfast as the partnership group behind the strategy, this coalition model reflects the structure most embedded within the local authority structure. Like that of BNES, this is a “Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiative” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013), and identified here as a ‘Category 1’ coalition type. Active Belfast is a group

composed of various council units. The strategy notes Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) form the group. These give indication to the leading actors within the policy subsystem. The Council's Active Belfast webpage outlines its role and branches:

"We work with the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and a number of statutory, community and voluntary groups to form the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) to build a healthier city, address life inequalities and to make a difference to peoples' lives. Active Belfast is one of the BSP's key projects." (Belfast City Council, no date)

These descriptions show that the Growing Communities Strategy and the Active Belfast group are council initiatives and have links to multiple branches of the council. The initiation of the strategy's formal process is outlined in the document, identifying the key council actors and timeline:

"The process of developing a strategy for community growing formally began in March 2011 when Belfast City Council, Belfast Healthy Cities, the Public Health Agency delivered a community gardens and allotments seminar, to consider opportunities for working with the community in developing future provision in the city." (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 12)

Figure 15 shows a diagram illustrating the timeline of the strategy's development process:



Figure 15: Development Timeline - Growing Communities Strategy (Source: Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 13)

Where mention is made by MacRae and Donahue to “advice from external groups” (2013, p. 8), evidence of this can be found within the wider steering committee that was convened for this purpose. *Growing Communities* notes that in September 2011, a steering group of “of 40 representatives drawn from the private, community and voluntary, and statutory sectors was established to shape the development of a strategy for future community growing provision in Belfast” (2012, p.12). No list was provided within the strategy document identifying those steering committee members who took part⁶⁸. This is an example of how it can often be difficult to define the boundaries of a coalition as a collection of actors (Jenkins-Smith *et al*, 2014, p. 190). However, interview participants did explain that steering committee members were identified and selected by the council to participate in the process and was therefore not a process that was open more widely to interested stakeholders from the community. One council actor explained the umbrella-like role of the council in creating a steering group, and noted the limited level of public consultation throughout the process:

“We created a steering group which had representatives from the community gardens, voluntary organisations ... We didn’t from memory do anything – we didn’t hold any public meetings ... we posted the strategy online so that people could make comments on it, but beyond that I think it was all done through the steering group that was established.” (BELLA1)

Several community groups were identified by interview participants who had been selected to sit on the steering committee, such as SNI and Groundwork.⁶⁹ Both of which were given contractual roles in the strategy’s development and deployment. SNI was commissioned by the council to conduct the research for the baseline study that was used to inform the strategy’s direction⁷⁰. Similarly, Groundwork was given a contract for training and maintenance of public gardens created as an outcome of the strategy. As such, these groups were selected by the council to fulfil specific roles, rather than simply offer input.

One unique feature of Belfast’s strategy development was the involvement of Belfast

⁶⁸ Despite several requests by phone and email to Belfast City Council through Active Belfast and the Parks and Leisure Departments to obtain the list of those who had been involved, no response was received.

⁶⁹ An organisation of various charities focused on national and local ‘greening’ projects in disadvantaged UK communities (*Groundwork*, no date)

⁷⁰ An Executive Summary of the findings of this study was included in the *Growing Communities Strategy* as ‘Appendix 2’ (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 32).

Healthy Cities, a local branch of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network initiative. Belfast Healthy Cities, a charity initiative, was brought into the strategy development process as a steering group member and was tasked with applying the WHO Health in All Policies (HiAP) (WHO, 2014) five-step approach to policy development. This involved a lead role in developing the strategy to ensure that health and social equity considerations were embedded throughout the process, as well as the final document and program deployment.

Interview Participants

The case study of Belfast brought together the perspective of two CS actors (suffix 'CS' in Table 15) and one council actor (suffix 'LA'). One of the CS actors was contracted by the council to organise consultations with the stakeholders group, and to research and draft the strategy. For this reason, this participant worked closely with the council and so had unique insights into both CS and council experiences of the process. Despite being commissioned by the council for the purpose of this research they have been considered CS due to their primary role being charity work (identified by *, in Table 15).

As with BNES (being the other Category 1 case study), no individuals are named within the Belfast strategy as having been responsible for its development, leaving the document's contributors as largely anonymous. As such, the three actors who took part in interviews were part of an unknown number involved in the strategy's development. With personal details obfuscated behind departmental headings and impersonal partnership names, determining who was involved in the coalition was a challenge, particularly since access to a list of steering group participants was denied by the council.

Table 15: Participant Codes - Belfast Interviews

Participant Code
BELCS1
BELCS2*
BELLA1

6.1.3 Devon (County): Feeding Devon's Future: Devon Food Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2016

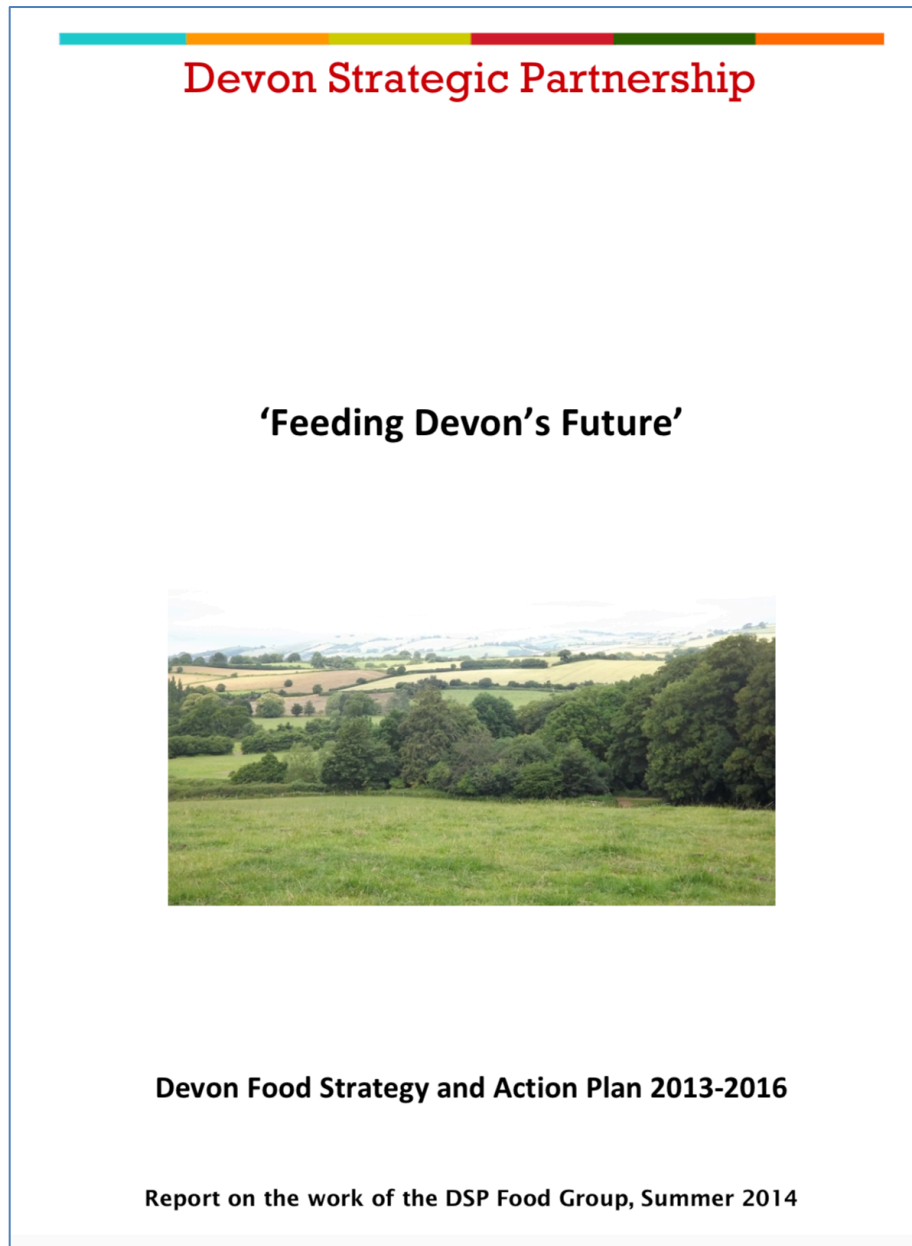


Figure 16: 'Feeding Devon's Future' Strategy Cover (Source: DSP Food Group, 2014)

Background to Case Study: Defining the Policy Subsystem

Devon is the largest county in the South West of England and is a predominantly rural agricultural region (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 4). According to one interview participant, the city of Exeter is considered *“very much the major centre in a very larger rural hinterland”*

(DEVCS1), despite Plymouth being the larger city in the county. This territorial scope is not focused just on a single city, but rather has strong connections to the rural agricultural aspects of its territory. While interviews were taking place, Devon was one of few remaining counties in England with two-tier regional government (County Council and District Councils) rather than a unitary authority. As is shown below, this had implications for the structure of the coalition and the development of the strategy.

The policy scope of the Feeding Devon's Future Strategy looks at the local food 'strands of activity' which, while not explicitly linked to the pillars of sustainability, reflect them in a general sense, with the additions of 'learning' and 'health' as focus areas. Significant focus is placed on food poverty, which is a complex area where the social, economic and food subsystems overlap. Throughout interviews and the strategy, frequent reference was made to the need for a 'strategic approach', indicating the desire to 'join up' policy and departmental areas, as well as organisations and initiatives for more long-term and stable actions across Devon's food system.

Interview participants identified several drivers to the development of a LFS for Devon, although principal among these was the issue of food poverty in Devon. This issue was the central focus within the strategy, receiving several pages unto itself before other issues were presented. One participant attributed this to the 2008 recession, which changed citizen expectations and behaviours:

"Food banks were increasing all over the place and all of a sudden we'd gone from a time of everyone consuming food liberally and really more and more and expecting it to be cheaper and cheaper, and throwing so much away, to a whole bunch of people not having enough to eat." (DEVCS4)

A high level of food waste from all points in the food system was also identified as a problem, but with a potential for waste to be redirected where possible to support those living in food poverty.

The Coalition Structure: Category 2

The format of the coalition that created Devon's strategy would be most suitably categorised as a "Hybrid Model with Direct Links to Governance" (Category 2) within MacRae and Donahue's six governance categories for FPGs:

"A hybrid of CS organizations and government with a conduit to decision makers through municipal council, and with municipal financing, political champions, and supportive staff. Characterized by formal municipal endorsements, structural links, and accountability to a government body, including a conduit into the municipal government structure." (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 9)

In 2012, the 'Devon Strategic Partnership' provided the initial forum for the idea of a LFS for Devon. This was presented by an individual working within the charity sector, who through their role had noticed that food poverty in Devon had become a significant issue. At a DSP meeting this actor suggested that a group be organised in order to discuss local food issues. From this point, it was acknowledged by those interviewed that *Feeding Devon's Future* was formally initiated by the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP).

The DSP is a "Local Strategic Partnership seeking to resolve strategic issues", and "brings together public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations, to improve the quality of life for those who live, work in and visit Devon" (Devon Country Council, no date). The DSP website further notes that it is "Supported by Devon County Council" and has several council members and departments represented on its board. While it is difficult to identify political champions, the strategy lists two supporting DCC members as group members. This indicates direct council involvement in the coalition through its origins with the DSP, and through the coalition's responsibility to report to the DSP, the group had further conduits to the council members in the above roles.

To initiate the formation of the coalition (the DSP 'Food Group') that would develop the strategy, the DSP approved a 'task and finish group'. The individual who suggested the idea was described by several people as a "local champion" and was put in place as its leader. The group divided the strategy process into subject-specific work streams, each of these was led by an individual with expertise in that particular area, with the support of knowledgeable members of the food working group.

Financial support from the DCC was contributed in the form of research funding on the Devon Food Economy undertaken by academics at Exeter University. Through the funding received for this research project, two academics that took part in the food group were compensated for their involvement and contribution of knowledge based on their research. Regarding “formal municipal endorsements, structural links, and accountability to a government body” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 9), details are somewhat less clearly defined. The DSP *approved* the strategy⁷¹, and according to interview participants, some recommendations from the document have been taken on by the council, giving the example from the strategy of “[f]urther investment and support for Devon County Farms” (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 14).

Describing this process, it is not as straightforward as a full adoption by the council:

“It was received firstly by the partnership, and the partnership was more than the local council – so it involved the police, it involves emergency services, it involves health, and other sort of key public agencies, so it was endorsed by them, and then was commended to the DCC and it went to one of their scrutiny committees where it was adopted and some of the recommendations were endorsed.” (DEVCS2)

The element of “structural links” in the form of a joined-up food strategy connecting to other policy areas was felt by participants to be absent, although public health and the county council’s environmental department were involved in the strategy process. The notion of the strategy having “a conduit into the municipal government structure” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 9), was identifiable only through the DSP as the group provided some links to council members, but this was not an embedded policy-based structure within the council. The structure of the strategy was presented as a report to the DSP, referring to ‘public agencies’ and ‘other appropriate partnerships’ as actors being called upon to address recommendations. While the council had, according to interview participants, agreed to endorse some of the recommendations, these agreed-upon points were not formally noted in a publicly available format. This absence of documentation on which aspects had been

⁷¹ The DSP website hosts the Feeding Devon’s Future strategy, with copies of the document available.

endorsed, and the fact that an updated, council-approved version of the strategy has not been developed, means that accountability to a government body is difficult to pin down.

The DSP website notes that one of its aims is “[f]ocussing on transition management as Devon develops a smaller public sector, and enabling and ensuring delivery of a small range of targeted work streams” (Devon Country Council, no date). This statement, indicating the shrinking public service and reduction of projects, gave some indication as to why the task of creating *Feeding Devon’s Future* was taken on as a voluntary task by a primarily CS core steering group, and ‘supported’ by the council. Unlike the council-led strategies of BNES and Belfast, *Feeding Devon’s Future* lists individuals as members of the Devon Strategic Partnership Food Group who took part in its development⁷². These individuals represent several charity or non-profit organisations, social enterprises, an academic institution, private sector groups, along with DCC and local representation of the NFU.

Interview Participants

Beliefs from CS actors were represented through interviews for this case study, along with an interview from one county council actor. While balanced representation was sought in recruitment, CS actors were more forthcoming in their willingness to participate. For this reason, the case study of Devon presents the beliefs of five CS actors, and only a single council actor. One CS participant was being funded by the council in their capacity within the coalition, and so offers insight into both sides of the coalition. This case study drew on interviews from six of the twelve individuals who took part in Devon’s strategy development process. Table 16 below presents the codes that are used to refer to participants throughout the following chapters. These represent one local authority actor (suffix ‘LA’ in Table 16) and five CS actors (suffix ‘CS’). Two of the five CS actors were being funded at the time by the council for work relating to the strategy’s development (identified by *), but are being considered CS due to their primary roles being outside the council remit.

⁷² See page 15 of “Feeding Devon’s Future” (DSP Food Group, 2014).

Table 16: Participant Codes - Devon Interviews

Participant Code
DEVLA1
DEVCS1*
DEVCS2
DEVCS3
DEVCS4
DEVCS5*

6.1.4 Bristol: A Good Food Plan for Bristol



Figure 17: 'A Good Food Plan for Bristol' Strategy Cover (Source: Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013)

Background to Case Study: Defining the Policy Subsystem

Bristol, in the Southwest of England and is regarded as one of the most progressive cities in the United Kingdom with regard to its local food system activities (Carey, 2013; Foodlinks *et al.*, 2013). The city's efforts were recognised through its being awarded the European Green Capital Award in 2015, and it is the home of the Soil Association, the UK's organic certification scheme and advocacy group. The Bristol FPC dates back to the 1990s, and was the first FPC in the UK, having taken inspiration from the Toronto FPC in (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 32) and Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992).

“A Good Food Plan for Bristol” was developed as a result of the ‘Who Feeds Bristol Report’ (Carey, 2011), commissioned by the Bristol NHS out of interest in the “wider determinants of health” as they were linked to Bristol’s food system. The report involved a wide range of contributors, with the aim to apply “food systems planning” to Bristol and the surrounding area (Carey, 2011; Good Food Plan for Bristol, 2013, p.4). This scope was taken with the aim to bring together under one umbrella the many smaller food system efforts taking place within Bristol being led by various groups. The recommended actions from this report prompted the Good Food Plan and became its framework (BRICS1).

The Good Food Plan was written by CS and as a result was not one that could be formally adopted by Bristol Council (BRICS1). Despite the strategy gaining recognition from the council, the coalition model posed a barrier in this regard. Participant (BRICS1) explained that for the council, its own food charter (Bristol County Council, 2010) was an *“internal document that became their default policy on food ... it was the kind of shortest cut to getting to policy without having a formally agreed policy because that can take a very long time for the council.”* The Good Food Plan was developed and released the same year as the SFP Network was founded. Bristol’s already established efforts and track record on food issues allowed it to become one of the six founding cities of the network, which included funding and support. Bristol was identified by several actors across these various case studies as having been an influence and model for their local food system work and strategies.

The Coalition Structure: Category 3

The Good Food Strategy for Bristol was created by the Bristol Food Policy Council (BFPC). This group is independent from the local council, but with some council representatives sitting as members. For this main reason, the coalition structure behind the creation of this strategy falls within Category 3 of MacRae and Donahue’s categorisation descriptions:

“A hybrid of CS organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements. Conduit to council is less direct, via departments and government staff. Linkages with government are still significant, but less so than for Category 2. Public health structures and staffing are particularly important, with financial support from a mix of sources, including grants.”
(2013, p.10)

Within the Good Food Strategy, the group structure is explained:

“The Bristol Food Policy Council was launched in March 2011, in order to help drive forward the recommendations from the Who Feeds Bristol report... The Council members are drawn from different sectors of the food system, and give their time voluntarily. Administrative support is provided by Bristol City Council.” (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 32)

Explaining this further, BRICS1 noted that the coalition was formed of *“a mixed group of stakeholders... the FPC is kind of championing the food plan, but it’s been developed by many people, the core group would be the FPC members & Bristol Food Network ... and our current action plan has about 50 different organisations participating in working toward this bigger picture.”* Council involvement included a secretariat function, and an elected member who from the mayor’s cabinet, and the chair (at the time of the interview) from the Bristol NHS Trust and vice-chair from Bristol Public Health (BRICS1). The limitations of the council in terms of attachments to the strategy are explained above, and so its role as a partner is, in a sense, curtailed. Based on the historic link with the NHS that financed the Who Feeds Bristol Report, it was acknowledged that Bristol Public Health remains *“our strongest ally”* as *“public health is where the food agenda is most visible... and to a lesser extent the Sustainable Cities team”* (BRICS1). Within the Good Food Plan, the financial links to the council are acknowledged, noting that it has been *“produced with the support of Bristol City Council and Urbact”*⁷³ (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 5). One supportive council member was cited as having helped to secure funding for printing costs, which suggests that not a great deal of funding came from the council otherwise.

Interview Participants

Two individuals who had been involved with the development of the Good Food Plan for Bristol took part in interviews for this research. Both at the time were CS actors, and have worked closely over the years with the council in relation to the food agenda. Additionally, one became employed by the council after the document was created, and so was able to offer insights into council positions in relation to the Plan (identified by * in Table 17). This small number of participants limited the perspectives available for analysis, particularly due to the council side of the coalition not being specifically represented, however both

⁷³ “Urbact is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.” (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 5).

participants played leadership roles in the creation of the Good Food Plan, and so were highly valued contributors to the case study.

Table 17: Participant Codes - Bristol Interviews

Participant Code
BRICS1
BRICS2*

6.1.5 Durham (County): Sustainable Local Food Strategy 2014-2020

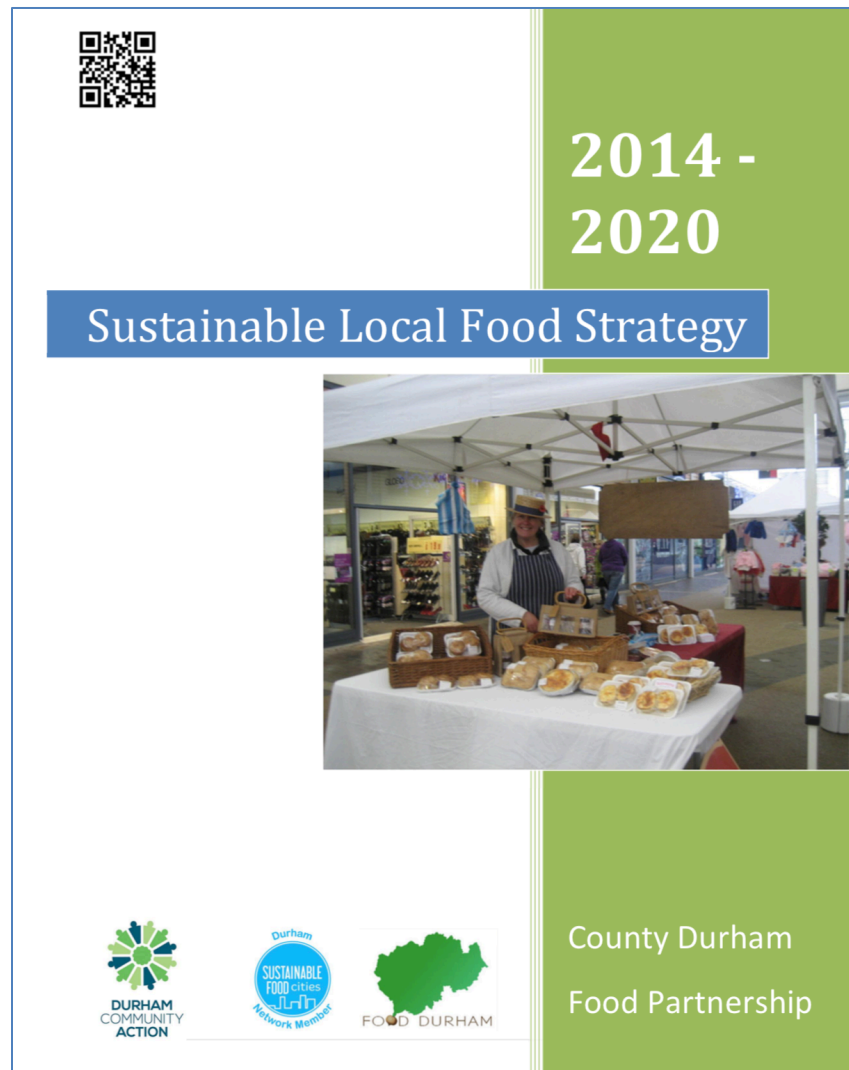


Figure 18: County Durham Sustainable Local Food Strategy Cover (Source: County Durham Food Partnership, 2014)

Background to Case Study: Defining the Policy Subsystem

Durham is a county in the Northeast of England and is largely rural. The territorial and policy scope of Durham's Sustainable Local Food Strategy clearly overlap, as the document was specifically aimed at the 'local' element of the food system – "about food that is produced and consumed in or near county Durham" (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 3). This is highlighted in contrast to other strategies, which one actor explained are

“food strategies for a local area, but they’re not necessarily about local food... [l]ocal food is just one strand of their strategy” (DURCS1).

Durham’s food strategy illustrates the county’s production context and frames this as a point of departure for relocalisation efforts.

“As a region, the north east exports most of its agricultural production and most of the food consumed in the region is imported from outside. Agriculture is predominantly red meat production (beef and sheep), especially on the higher land: 12% of the national production of sheep is from the region. Arable has been dominated by cereal production for the past 30 years, mainly winter wheat, with only a small number of specialist growers in the vegetable, salad and fruit market... This small sub-sector is dominated by potato growing (40%).” (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 4)

All cases acknowledged as an issue the heavy reliance on imports by the UK, and the paradoxical nature of buying in more food than is shipped out. As a county with a significant rural agricultural tradition, Durham, like Devon noted the small scale of the horticulture sector in comparison to livestock and dairy production. This rural focus was a significant consideration when developing the strategy and examining what local and sustainably produced food would look like.

Resurgence of interest in local food was associated with increased public awareness of issues: *“with climate change, with political and social unrest, it’s to do with concern over unhealthy diets – and all these things are sort of coming together to make people think a bit more about food”* (DURCS1). This increased awareness ironically was recognised as running parallel with the issue of a lack of connection to food and the food system and the repercussions that this has for individual health and the environment. These concerns and the rural context of the region’s production and food system were the departure points for the development of Durham’s food strategy.

The Coalition Structure: Category 3

The coalition group behind the creation of Durham’s Sustainable LFS has, like Bristol, has been classified as “Category 3” of MacRae and Donahue’s food policy group structure

system: *"A hybrid of CS organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements"*⁷⁴ (2013, p. 9).

The Durham Food Partnership ("Food Durham") formed over the period of 2011 to 2014 (County Durham Food Partnership, 2015, p. 2) and saw the creation of the Sustainable Local Food Strategy 2014-2020. This period was described by one of its founders as one where they spoke to a large number of individuals to understand the issues of the local food system (DURCS1). This was a CS effort from its inception, and Food Durham joined with Durham Community Action (DCA) (County Durham Food Partnership, 2015). The structure of the coalition was explained within the strategy document:

"The project is overseen by a Steering Group including representatives from Durham County Council (Public Health, Spatial Policy, Sustainability), Durham University, Durham Local Food Network, Love Food, Food for Life Partnership, and Groundwork. During the course of the project three groups have formed which meet regularly (Public Sector Procurement, Food and Health, Community Growing) and there is a wider stakeholder group of around 150 members." (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 6).

This was detailed further by one the leaders of the coalition:

"At the moment we're a network. It isn't a local authority partnership at all. I am employed by a charity, it's a totally independent charity, and we stayed within that structure, so food Durham is an unconstituted network, which is hosted by Durham Community Action. When the partnership was set up in 2014... we chose to remain under the protection or umbrella of Durham community action, the charity, because it gave us the – you know when you have to go out and look for funding, if you're a brand new organisation, that's quite difficult, you've got no track record, whereas we've got 80 years track record at this organisation. So when you have to provide that information, it's a lot easier for us to apply for funds under the name of the charity if you see what I mean." (DURCS1)

⁷⁴ As detailed in the Methods section, this was originally labelled as Category 4 when selecting the case studies, but through additional information gleaned during interviews was found to more appropriately reflect a category with more council involvement.

In addition to the practicalities of funding, further justification for the coalition being housed within an existing charity related to momentum. Leaders recognised that establishing a formal organisation with government from scratch can take significant amounts of time, and this in turn can *“kill the whole thing off by spending hours trying to decide how to set up”* and dampen enthusiasm (DURCS1).

The 2015 Food Durham report describes the partnership as being “comprised of a Partnership Board with representatives from the public, private and voluntary and third sectors, three sub-groups... and a general membership” (County Durham Food Partnership, 2015, p. 2). Although not a council-led group, there were members of the council involved in the food partnership at the time the strategy was written. As with Bristol and BNES, Food Durham has allied itself with Public Health, and like Devon, this coalition approached the effort through the creation of thematic sub-groups which drew on the expertise of individuals. In particular, links to Public Health and Procurement involved council actors leading ‘sub-groups’ of the strategy on these topics⁷⁵. As a unique variation in this coalition model, these sub-groups provided an overlap function for the Council through reducing duplication of meetings and personnel for other Council efforts. This is explained by DURCS1:

“The places where we’ve worked closely with the local authority is public health and we have a food and health sub-group, which is chaired by someone from public health, and that also is a sub-group of something else that the council has set up which is called the ‘Healthy Weight Alliance’ so that food and health subgroup feeds into both the Food Partnership and into the Healthy Weight Alliance. And then we have a public sector procurement subgroup, and that’s chaired by someone from Durham County Council’s Procurement team, and that involves the county council, the university, the hospital, - that’s actually chaired by the council”.

The strategy was endorsed by the Country Durham Partnership which has council actors as sitting members, but is not a council group in itself, therefore no formal council endorsement had been given for the document.

⁷⁵ The three sub-groups are Public Sector Food Procurement, Food and Health, and Community Growing (County Durham Food Partnership, 2015).

Interview Participants

While representation of both CS and council actors was sought in the recruitment stage, only CS actors were willing to participate. For this reason, the case study of Durham presents the beliefs of three CS actors. One of these actors has since moved into a council role and so also draws on their insights of council priorities in relation to the strategy from this perspective (indicated by * in Table 18).

Table 18: Participant Codes - Durham Interviews

Participant Code
DURCS1
DURCS2
DURCS3*

6.2 Representations of Sustainability

Within interviews sustainability was presented in a number of ways, shown here in an overview across cases. Firstly, the concept was put forward through various ‘conceptualisations’, explicitly stating or implying what sustainability was perceived to be.

Table 19: Sustainability perceptions from interviews

Definition Format	Example
As a complex or nebulous concept making it difficult to define	<i>“there are so many different definitions of sustainability” (DEVCS2)</i> <i>“It’s a word that can be used in lots of different contexts” (DEVCS3)</i> <i>“You may have ten people and they probably carry ten different visions of sustainability in their heads that will vary from each other” (DEVCS1)</i> <i>“I’ve got my view on what sustainable food is, but that may well be very different – it probably is – very different to everyone else in that room.” (DEVCS5)</i> <i>“If you’re talking specifically about food and sustainability, ... it’s too big a picture to make into one neat sentence.” (BRICSCS1)</i>
As a ‘generic’ concept, lacking specificity	<i>[re: the food system] “it’s an area that the word sustainability is bandied around so much and is open to misuse and misinterpretation” (DURCS3)</i>
As a “given” within the policy process, a necessity	<i>“I think all the panel members were quite well informed, so it probably didn’t really feel like it needed to be defined.” (BNESCS2)</i> <i>“...it would just be now taken as implicit that we are looking at a sustainable food and farming sector and that means it has to be</i>

	<i>socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, and if it's not all of them, then it's not sustainable"</i> (DEVCS1). [re: the food system] <i>"it is central to policy making and more than just an add-on" and "a driver for economic growth, and environment improvement and health and all the rest of it"</i> (DURCS1).
• Linking to the sustainable development of the city	<i>"The green capital has led to talking about a liveable city, a happy city is another angle that comes in – low carbon city – these are different angles on sustainability that you'll find on different websites and different documents now."</i> (BRICS1)
• Linking to the sustainability of the policy itself (funding, participation, administrative)	<i>"it's ironic that it's a Sustainable Food Cities policy, but our projects are not necessarily sustainable."</i> (BNESCS2)
• As an 'Incidental' (A bonus outcome of necessary actions)	<i>"So, the community garden strategy...responded to a demand from citizens for more growing spaces. It was not the sustainability agenda that was driving the need for community gardens"</i> (BELCS1).
• As a divisive concept (linked with the above)	<i>"You can't define sustainability; it means something different to everyone. But you can put down sustainable growing. I mean, we can identify what sustainable food production looks like, and sustainable land use, but the word sustainability – if we got into that, you'd never get an agreement that comes up."</i> (BNESLA1) <i>"You have different interpretations of what the word sustainability means...So for</i>

	<i>instance, the farming industry who were involved in this felt very strongly that you couldn't have a sustainable food strategy without talking about sustainable farming. And sustainable farming meant profitable farming ... but my counter argument would be, well, what some people say is profitable farming is the very same thing that is causing a lot of the same problems that we're talking about."</i> (DEVCS4)

From the above examples, expressions of sustainability from interviews could be categorised as 1) relating to perceptions of sustainability as a concept (including limitations); 2) relating to the sentiment or idea through time, often as a philosophy of care; 3) relating to its application in place; 4) relating to the policy process; 5) binary examples of what sustainability is or isn't. Underlying all of these is the normative agreement in sustainability as a desired objective, albeit challenging and nuanced.

6.2.1 Sustainability as a Concept

When asked about the inclusion of the concept of sustainability in the development of the strategies, coalition actors typically referred to the standard pillars and what a move toward sustainability would achieve. Individual participants all expressed a focus or prioritisation (whether implicitly or explicitly) on one or two of the main pillars over others. This shows an understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the concept in theory, but that in practice actors skewed toward their personal or professional areas of interests. The concept of sustainability was explained as having the potential to be applied to a variety of circumstances, but at the same time could be co-opted by biased actors to make a case for irresponsible practices. In particular, conventional farmers were identified as having a bias toward sustainability as being economic in nature, rather than having an environmental or social agenda (as shown above, as a divisive concept).

As the above table shows, the concept of sustainability was at once felt to be too complex to define and too vague. As a result, few actors recalled an explicit discussion of what sustainability was in the context of their food strategy discussions. One actor ironically felt

that this was because everyone in the room was “on the same page” about the importance of concept.

Language and clarity played an important role for actors in conveying the concept to the audience of the strategies. The flexibility of the term ‘sustainability’ was noted by a CS interviewee (BNESCS1), stating that from some perspectives the concept of sustainability is simply regarded as “*a good thing*”. The term itself was felt to be “*non-technical*” and holds “*a sort of public meaning*”, and that such flexibility allows for it to be widely applied, as in the context of food security in BNES.

6.2.2 A Philosophy of Care

While the ‘pillars’ component of the Brundtland definition was acknowledged by most interview participants, interestingly the second ‘half’ of the definition relating to “future generations” was seldom mentioned. Perhaps the universal and normalised nature of the concept now implies this, and it need not be said, as was suggested by some participants about the concept of sustainability overall. Some CS actors expressed concern over the ability of council actors to think beyond term limits, thus limiting any truly long-term sustainability vision. However, taking a short-term view offered practical benefits of appealing to peoples’ desire for a sense of immediacy or control in the face of unsustainable issues, and offered the policy practicality of updating and revising the strategy to ensure its continued relevance. These approaches to defining sustainability varied and weren’t linked by a common coalition type.

6.2.3 Application in Place

Despite the unique territorial qualities, circumstances and needs of each case study as local level entities, their place within the global economic and food system was an important contextual tethering point. Regardless of increased public awareness of global issues, local level issues were the primary drivers for the food strategies according to actors, and these varied little across cases. There was a consistent recognition that systems-level top-down issues had repercussions at the local level, although bottom-up efforts had the potential to address many problems across all three pillars. However, these actions were felt to be limited in impact to the local level, and not necessarily back up to a global level. One exception to this was the environmental focus on GHG emissions that a more localised SFSC could offer.

The demand for allotment space and a lack of knowledge of or disconnection from the food system for citizens were factors identified for all cases. This lack of knowledge and the rising rates of obesity were the key social issues relating to public health. Environmental issues cited were most often climate change and GHG emissions, with agricultural imports and exports, and polluting or degrading farming practices being key culprits. Economic problems were most commonly identified as food poverty and the rural economy with particular reference to poor market access for locally produced agricultural products. SFSCs were key to this, and were associated across several of the cases with local resilience or self-sufficiency, as in this example:

"I know that there are so many different definitions of sustainability, but for me it would be something like the ability of the local environment and the local community to be more resilient in its own food production and consumption." (DEVCS2)

The application or non-application of sustainability pillars and objectives varied across cases based on their unique local characteristics, including history. As an example, Belfast's history of sectarian violence was a concern unique to that case, which led actors to speak of sustainability from a social perspective to the near-complete exclusion of other pillars. The result was a strategy aimed at community building through community garden projects. A holistic approach to sustainability was not a priority in this case.

Notably, the council actor from Belfast specifically identified a "project-life" element of sustainability beyond the three standard pillars, which was an important consideration to establishing long-term solutions for local level change:

"I saw it in terms of sustainable development of the city and all these different aspects which lead to the social, economic and environmental sustainability. And it only works for me if it's something that contributes to the sustainable development of the city and it's also in terms of the initiative itself whether it's sustainable. It's not here today and gone tomorrow." (BELLA1)

Whether a case study area was considered primarily rural or primarily urban appeared to have the greatest influence on what actors viewed as issues, actions and objectives. Urban

areas tended to have a stronger link to social concerns surrounding food and food poverty as a socio-economic issues, whereas rural areas focused on the rural economy and the environment through the lens of agricultural production, emissions and landscape stewardship.

6.2.4 As a Part of the Policy Process

Each strategy was the bespoke outcome of the reflection of actors upon their local circumstances, issues and objectives.

Interviews with actors across the five cases revealed that all viewed sustainability as an important concept in itself, but only in BNES and Durham did actors state that the concept was deliberately and explicitly chosen as a framework to underpin the strategy. According to actors in Devon and Bristol, using sustainability as the framework for the strategy was set aside in favour of highlighting objectives or areas of activity, but with the recognition that sustainability still fed into these under the surface. In application within the strategy, these same actors stated that explicit use of the term sustainability was deliberately avoided in Devon and Bristol to keep from confusing or alienating readers.

One actor explained how the political context in Northern Ireland and Belfast were associated with sustainability but emphasised that the practice of integrating sustainability into policy and in a joined-up way across the council was poor. Placing this within the wider policy context, they highlighted that Belfast

“...has an obligation under legislation in Northern Ireland to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development in Northern Ireland – all councils must do that, but they don’t ‘must have’ a sustainable development strategy. And in the case of Belfast, it doesn’t have one. What it does have is a theoretical commitment to sustainability” (BELCS1).

While coalition actors in Devon were aware of the complexity of sustainability as a concept, several indicated that it was not discussed in any great detail within the process of developing the strategy. One reason for this may have been the decision to structure the strategy around different ‘strands of activity’, rather than using the pillars of sustainability

as the framework for the document. One actor explained this decision and the implications that it had:

"We identified... 5 themes within the document - none of those were actually tied to sustainability, but sustainability was feeding into education, to community, to health, to economy and whatever the other one was ... we tried to interweave it into the recommendations, and into the report." (DEVCS2)

This shows that while the participant understood that sustainability was linked to the priorities of the document and felt to be relevant, it was largely supplementary, rather than a primary driver. Although the concept was felt to be important, an alternative framework for structuring the document was chosen instead. One actor from Devon referred to this approach as being *"objective-led"* (DEVCS4) in order to appeal to a wider audience to participate, rather than alienating some by being too strongly tied to a specific definition of sustainability. Similarly, participants from Bristol explained how they created a definition ("Good Food") to communicate a sustainable vision. This approach was based on the sense that the term sustainability and its associated pillars were too generic and could limit the ability of community members to identify where they 'fit' into the Plan's objectives. One participant clarified this decision:

"...if you look at our plan, you can map everything to social economic and environmental – were not missing that, but it's not as if we use that as our first port of call when we're talking about it unless we have to... And it gives us a much clearer purchase on what we're trying to achieve and the different outcomes." (BRICS1)

As can be seen from these quotes, sustainability was not the primary driver for Devon, Belfast and Bristol, but rather was viewed as a positive byproduct of the initiative via its activities.

In BNES, council actors tended to speak of sustainability in relation to various agendas and council aims, often suggesting an integrated view beyond a single department. For example in BNES, referring to the partnership between the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and

the Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) and their shared sustainability aims, one council actor explained to how this joined-up approach added strength to the strategy:

"I think what you've got there is very much a coming together of the environmental sustainability agenda and the public health agenda... when you do things that are right for the environment ... that it's better for people and it's better for the economy."
(BNESLA2)

One actor from Belfast went on to explain how the political context in Northern Ireland and Belfast were associated with sustainability but emphasised that the practice of integrating sustainability into policy and in a joined-up way across the council was poor. Placing this within the wider policy context, they highlighted that Belfast

"...has an obligation under legislation in Northern Ireland to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development in Northern Ireland – all councils must do that, but they don't 'must have' a sustainable development strategy. And in the case of Belfast, it doesn't have one. What it does have is a theoretical commitment to sustainability" (BELCS1).

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While views of CS and council actors could be expected to diverge in the context of a definition of sustainability or favoured pillar, no clear pattern emerged across cases in this regard. The variation of approaches to the concept of sustainability and its application to

the local strategies could not be grouped as common ‘council-driven’ approaches, being that BNES and Belfast varied greatly, or ‘CS-driven’ approaches, as Bristol and Durham took such different approaches. Actors from Devon, illustrating its place between the other cases on the coalition model scale, seemed to describe approaches and considerations across the other categories. As such, each approach to sustainability was bespoke based on the coalition group, the local objectives and the intended audience of the strategy (discussed further in the following chapter).

6.2.5 Sustainable vs Unsustainable Binary

Using the framing approach offered by Snow and Benford (1988), it became apparent that a binary of ‘sustainable versus unsustainable’ was the driving narrative across all the cases in interviews and strategies, showing little acknowledgement of nuance, or existence along a spectrum. Schon and Rein write about how policy actors frame issues in these ways, using “normative dualism” to position “what is wrong and what needs fixing” as obvious (1994, p. 28). They argue that this approach to framing issues is used for “persuasion, justification and symbolic display” (ibid) by a coalition to appeal to large numbers of people. The authors note that common oppositional frames, or “value polarities” illustrate basic values that tend toward the universal and are “relatively constant over long periods of time” (p. 28). Examples given by the authors which are often used in policy narratives as metaphors for specific issues include health and sickness, justice and injustice, poverty and wealth, fragmented and whole (1994, p.33-34). They call these ‘metacultural frames’. Included in the views represented were some non-standard ‘pillars’ or considerations of the food system which speak to values, ethics, governance and other views, several of which reflect the omni-standards offered by Mason and Lang (2017) as well as Kirwan et al (Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b, 2017a).

Within this research, binaries reflecting unsustainability and sustainability that could be addressed through local food were presented as:

Table 20: Diagnostic and Motivational Binaries Representing Sustainability Narratives

Global vs. Local	Relating to the global economic system and its impacts on the local level, with the local level being idealised as more sustainable. Diverse local economies were prioritised over global economic monopolies.
Natural vs. Artificial	Related to the environment in relation to agricultural inputs, and for quality of food consumed in relation to processing
Local vs. 'Foreign'/Imported	Related to carbon emissions, the local economy, awareness of food production
Ignorant vs. Knowledgeable or Disconnected vs. Aware	Relating to knowledge of food production, food related skills and the implications of distant production. This also was related to an awareness of the true value of food, rather than a lack of awareness that leads to thoughtless waste.
Healthy vs. Sick	Relating to poor diet, lack of skills, mental health through disconnection
Resilience vs. Vulnerability	A narrative closely linked to lack of food supply or concerns about 'shocks'. These were associated with climate change, terrorism, sudden inflation, livestock diseases. Ultimately, a narrative of control and security.
Isolation vs. Community	Linked to community-focused growing projects as having the potential to address isolation and associated mental health issues.
Fragmented vs. Unified	In the context of the joining up of departments with overlapping food mandates, as well as the need to bring together activist groups for greater momentum on shared issues. This view of governance was often presented as a concern over progressive or 'business as usual'/ tokenistic policy displays.
Just vs. Unjust	Speaking of ethics and a responsibility to posterity in the face of climate change, animal

	welfare, human welfare and working conditions, environmental degradation.
Present vs. Past	Underscoring the present as unsustainable, and the past idealised, as a more sustainable time and one that should be aspired to. This narrative was recognised by Schon & Rein as hinging on the myth of a lost Golden Age of the past.

The binary of the global and local is reductive, like all of these oppositional frames. It was not reflective of the complexity of the global system or food system as a continuum. Simplifying concepts in this way is reflective of bounded rationality as a policy theory concept subscribed to in the ACF, and a useful tool when constructing clear policy narratives and reducing complexity. Similarly, where actors and strategies tended to present simplified categories of food production as ‘rural’ and ‘urban’, implicitly representing large scale agriculture and small scale growing, there was a lack of nuance regarding location, scale and type of food production. This meant that as urban or rural or large or small growing efforts were associated with particular pillars (the environment and economy associated more with large scale rural food production and small-scale production with social and urban aims), the potential prognostic actions outside such simplistic binaries may not have been seen. The food-system basis of these binaries are presented in greater detail below.

6.3 Local Food Production and Sustainability Links

Across interviews, participants framed their beliefs about their local food system and sustainability objectives in three main ways, reflecting the format of ‘diagnostic’, ‘prognostic’ and ‘motivational’ frames put forward by Snow and Benford (1994). These represented, respectively, what is unsustainable and needs to be addressed, which actions can be taken using local food production as a tool (and who will take these actions forward), and what the sustainable outcome will be if these actions are undertaken. For each of the case studies, the responses of CS and LA actors illustrated their personal beliefs and priorities across the three standard pillars of sustainability, which in turn influenced the content of their local food strategies (to varying degrees).

The following tables compare the beliefs of CS actors and LA actors for each case study across the themes of society, the environment, and the economy as they relate to food production.

Table 21: BNES Sustainability and Food Production Beliefs

BNES Sustainability Beliefs		
	Civil Society	Local Authority
Social Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BNESCS1: Lack of growing space	BNESLA1; BNESLA2; BNESLA3: Community demand for allotments/lack of growing space, poor use of allotment sites
	BNESCS1: Lack of skills/training	BNESLA1: Disconnection from growing, seasonality
	BNESCS2: UFS relies on community growing, with little focus on commercial agriculture	BNESLA1: Distrust for council initiatives
		BNESLA2: Social deprivation/reaching those who would benefit most from food programs
		BNESLA3: Public health/ obesity
Prognostic	BNESCS1: Provision of training	BNESLA1: "get more people growing food in more gardens"
	BNESCS1: Target programs at homeless, those with mental health difficulties, disadvantaged communities	BNESLA1: Overcoming distrust for the council to achieve genuine engagement with citizens
	BNESCS2: Programs linked to diet, reducing health inequalities/childhood obesity, ie: community cooking courses, parenting skills and diet, wellbeing and physical activity, growing and cooking (inc. adults and families)	BNESLA2: Getting families/children engaged with food/cooking programs
		BNESLA3: Community food growing via allotments/community gardens
Motivational		BNESLA3: Physical and mental health benefits; reduction in inequalities
Environmental Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BNESCS1: Climate change	BNESLA1: Lack of space in BNES for growing
		BNESLA1: Impacts on water courses from high intensity agriculture
		BNESLA2; BNESLA3: Climate change and carbon emissions

Prognostic	BNESCS2: Maintaining agricultural heritage as a historic link to the past	BNESLA1: Soil management for improved freshwater retention/reduced flooding
Motivational		BNESLA3: Reduction in GHGs by 45% by 2029; Reduced emissions due to local production/self-provisioning
Economic Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BNESCS1: Planning and agricultural buildings/Sale of agricultural buildings for holiday homes	BNESLA1: Budgetary constraints in council
	BNESCS2: Economic deprivation	BNESLA1: Unrealistic consumer expectations of food prices/costs
	BNESCS2: Reduction in market gardens	BNESLA2/BNESLA3: Lack of access to markets for small producers
	BNESCS2: Regulations restrict local procurement for public services	BNESLA2/BNESLA3: Planning permission restrictive to farmers
	BNESCS2: Lack of funding for food programs	BNESLA3: Flaws in planning structures for new developments re: inclusion of growing space
Prognostic	BNESCS2: Promote local food tourism	BNESLA1: Local procurement contracts
		BNESLA3: More local producers and reducing barriers to local market access
Motivational		BNESLA2: Increased skills
		BNESLA3: More local food in the local supply chain

Table 22: Belfast Sustainability and Food Production Beliefs

Belfast: Sustainability and Local Food Production in Interviews		
	Civil Society	Local Authority
Social Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BELCS1/BELCS2: Demand for allotment provision (no laws requiring provision in Ireland)	BELLA1: Demand for allotments, but insufficient provision from Parks dept. Community garden efforts "fragmented" with loss of participation over time
	BELCS1/BELCS2: "Historic tensions and divided communities" and related mental health issues	BELLA1: Community divides (Nationalist/Loyalist conflicts)
Prognostic	BELCS1: "Handholding needed" for participants to make community gardens successful	BELLA1: the council making use of space for communities to interact and grow; Commitment to find new allotment sites
	BELCS1/BELCS2: Increase in allotments/community growing space across conflict lines; "appropriate placement" of gardens in line with community needs	
	BELCS2: Piloting the (WHO) HEiAP approach from the beginning of the UFS process	BELLA1: Hiring voluntary groups to facilitate community involvement
		BELLA1: Community gardens over allotments to address social isolation
Motivational	BELCS2: Increased cohesion for divided communities; Reduced social isolation, and improved mental health and wellbeing	BELLA1: Social behavioural purposes: "we could use growing as a tool to help community development and improve health and well-being";
	BELCS2: Skill building	
	BELCS2: Improved physical health	
Economic Sustainability		
Diagnostic		BELLA1: Parks Department not managing well financially and not serving the community well; Council had minimal resources for support of projects
		BELLA1: Council priorities favour economic development
Motivational		BELLA1: "Sustainable food growth is important to a city, particularly in areas of deprivation"

Table 23: Devon Sustainability and Food Production Beliefs

Devon: Sustainability and Local Food Production in Interviews		
	Civil Society	Local Authority
Social Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DEVCS2: Food poverty	DEVLA1: Food poverty
	DEVCS2: Lack of knowledge of where food comes from, externalised costs of food (human health, environmental health, food waste) and diet (children)	DEVLA1: Disconnection to growing process results in lower sense of the value of food, and leads to food waste.
	DEVCS2: Food Waste	
	DEVCS4: Expectation of cheaper and cheaper food	
	DEVCS3; DEVCS5: A need for health and wellbeing content through the council	
Prognostic	DEVCS2; DEVCS3: School programs for food education; education experiences: farm visits, seasonal cooking workshops; "individual conversations, and the individual and small group experiences that take place"	DEVLA1: "Showing people how to grow their own food and value their own food" in allotments; food education and healthy eating.
	DEVCS3: Council involvement in community development	DEVLA1: Actions to jointly tackle food poverty and food waste
	DEVCS4: "we want to get more people involved in active food growing because it's good for their health"	
Motivational	DEVCS3: Improved understanding and connection due to education on local food and growing: "The actual impact of things can be huge if they happen in the right places in the right times with the right support"	DEVLA1: For people to learn to value their food through better understanding of growing
Environmental Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DEVCS2: foot and mouth outbreak	DEVLA1: Food Waste
	DEVCS2: "food miles" and emissions produced depending of production method	DEVLA1: Pressures on soil, water and land from intensive food production; flooding risks
	DEVCS4: "Hellishly un-environmental" ways of producing food; crop decisions based on profit rather than appropriateness for landscape	DEVLA1: Climate Change
	DEVCS4: Externalised costs of environmental impacts	
Prognostic	DEVCS1: Agri-tourism/food tourism and landscape management	DEVLA1: (referring to climate change and risk of flooding) Need to raise awareness about being more sustainable about managing food
	DEVCS1: Short food supply chains for the environmental and economic sustainability of farms	DEVLA1: Local food as more sustainable option linked to the local economy because of provenance; when imports are required the most sustainable choice should be made
	DEVCS4: Questioning whether local is in fact more sustainable; questioning the international origins of inputs and their impacts abroad	

	DEVCS4: Growing the right crops for the right landscapes, rather than leaving growing to be dictated by commodities markets	
Motivational	DEVCS4: "We want to make sure that the way we farm has less of a carbon footprint"	
Economic Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DEVCS1: Gaps in the local food system (imports, exports, consumption), 'value add' taking place outside the county often travelling significant distances and at high cost to producers DEVCS1; DEVCS5: "Food Poverty issues" caused by structural inequalities in society; DEVCS4: Recession, food banks increasing, and food poverty DEVCS1; DEVCS3: Access to market difficult for producers; need greater access to export market DEVCS2: LAs selling off farmland for development; reduces opportunities for new farmers DEVCS2: Procurement not in the hands of local schools DEVCS3; DEVCS5: Lack of council funds to support projects; existing CS action reduces need for LA to take action	
Prognostic	DEVCS1: Food banks for food poverty (a "sticking plaster approach") DEVCS1: Need for a strategic approach to developing the agricultural sector in Devon, including agri-tourism, processing DEVCS1: Short food supply chains for the environmental and economic sustainability of farms DEVCS2: Maintain local farms for starter farms and people wanting to move into agriculture; DEVCS5: Recommendation to council to stop selling off family farms DEVCS3: Increase availability of local food via procurement (schools) and getting shops to sell local/seasonal food	
Motivational		DEVLA1: "in Devon, everybody, they value their local shops and local produce, they value food that is locally made, whether that's local bread or cheese, or whatever they choose, they are prepared to pay that little bit extra to get what is produced in Devon" (environmental and economic linked)

Table 24: Bristol Sustainability and Food Production Beliefs

Bristol: Sustainability and Local Food Production in Interviews		
	Civil Society	Local Authority
Social Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BRICS1: A lack of skills and jobs, and a diminished sense of control as a result	
	BRICS2: Lack of understanding by people of what is meant by "good food"; Ill-informed assumptions about the amount of land it takes to feed a city the size of Bristol	
	BRICS2: Invisibility of the industrial food system	
Prognostic	BRICS1: Transforming the food culture by getting people growing and cooking, learning new skills; BRICS2: Encouraging reconnection with food through growing	
	BRICS2: Expressing the aims of the strategy and "Good Food" in way that could be broadly understood	
	BRICS2: Growing opportunities for children - Urban food growing in every school, normalising vegetable consumption for children; Young gardener competitions in schools"	
Motivational	BRICS1: "one of our objectives is to transform the food culture in the city by getting people to have a go at growing their own food, learn new skills, get inspired, have fun, get involved, so it's very much the social side, and it's often connected with cooking as well"	
	BRICS2: "Skilling people up, providing health, enhancing gardening activities for all kinds of people, including vulnerable groups. Some significant production"	
Environmental Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BRICS1: Climate change; Food waste	
Motivational	BRICS2: "would be the ecological at the biggest, biggest picture – that humans are part of the natural world and the health of ecological systems is fundamental to human health. And so sustainability means living in such a way that we don't jeopardise the ability of future generations to live healthily on this planet"	
Economic Sustainability		
Diagnostic	BRICS1: Lack of council funding for projects means having to set very narrow priorities, responsibility falling to volunteers and civil society and having to find 'openings' for areas of policy action within the council.	

	BRICS1: "too many super-markets in the city and loss of independent retailers" (Noted "Tesco Riots")	
Prognostic	BRICS1: Application of European Green Capital funding to growing projects	
	BRICS1: Commercialise local food production	

Table 25: Durham Sustainability and Food Production Beliefs

Durham: Sustainability and Local Food Production in Interviews		
	Civil Society	Local Authority
Social Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DURCS1: Wait lists for allotments	
	DURCS3: Little in terms of programs to address the social determinants of health when the NHS was outside the LA.	
	DURCS3: NHS priorities were more focused on individuals rather than systems, and a disease context, rather than the social determinants	
	DURCS3: Difficult to articulate health as a crosscutting issue (linking to environment and economy): both verbally and in the UFS	
Prognostic	DURCS1: Facilitating community growing through projects	
	DURCS1: Seeking out alternative space for allotments/growing space	
	DURCS2: Procurement and healthy catering in schools, with associated awards scheme	
Motivational	DURCS1: "We want more people to be growing some of their own food"	
Environmental Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DURCS1: Perception by some that climate in Northeast isn't right for growing fruit and veg	
	DURCS3: Food production: "This is farming" - "Mostly grazing, rather than growing"	
Economic Sustainability		
Diagnostic	DURCS1: Belief by some that community growing and self-provisioning to be 'economically irrelevant' (linked to lack of understanding of the food system)	
	DURCS1: A lack of Alternative Food Networks - varied/clustered distribution throughout the country - low economic base in the northeast; "no easy routes to market for producers"	
	DURCS1/DURCS3: Importing a lot of food and exporting a lot of food	

	DURCS3: Lack of awareness in LA of how to support the rural economy through agriculture	
Prognostic	DURCS1: Setting up a business to business food hub - "Local Food Links": Educating people about how to connect with what is being grown locally so that local businesses can be created/supported	
	DURCS1: A need to promote agricultural jobs and for more locally produced food consumed locally	
	DURCS2: Importance of food tourism and food in supporting the local economy	
Motivational	DURCS1: "making the local food chain more efficient, giving businesses a one- stop shop where they can procure local food, because there is a demand for more locally produced food – especially from eateries, hotels, restaurants and in the tourist sector especially. And enabling them to get that food from one place and also hopefully longer term to encourage more growers, farmers, and producers to produce food for that market"	

As is shown across these five case studies, local food was presented as a tool to accomplish a variety of sustainability objectives, often with an action having cross-over potential from a main associated pillar to others. The cause of many issues was felt to be systemic, resulting from the globalised-nature of the food and agriculture system. As a result, SFSCs were central to all strategies⁷⁶ in an effort to focus on relocating the food system. Durham's approach was felt to be unique compared to others within the SFP, noting *"a lot of the, if not all, of the other strategies are ... food strategies for a local area, but they're not necessarily about local food. Local food is just one strand of their strategy"* (DURCS1).

Interviewees spoke of food production largely in binary terms of rural or urban with only those in Bristol stating that agriculture existed on a spectrum, rejecting the binary⁷⁷ and citing the value of peri-urban areas. Many actions across the pillars were similar for the case studies, but variation was most apparent between cities and counties. Unsustainability was often associated with imported foreign foods, and sustainability with locally produced foods. Additionally, large-scale agriculture, viewed as rural, was implied as unsustainable through its association with industrial-scale, conventional farming methods. For Devon and Durham, environmental and economic concerns were associated more strongly to rural

⁷⁶ For Belfast this issue was irrelevant due to the exclusively social-focus of the strategy.

⁷⁷ Again, with the exception of Belfast.

agricultural production due to the geography of these two case studies. Small and medium-scale agriculture was felt to be the opposite and was linked to resilience, self-sufficiency, and reduced emissions through lower reliance on imports. The food production activities referred to by participants across cases were largely consistent across small scale and large-scale food production methods. UA was felt to be important because of its visibility and its role in educating the public. Variation in the scale of UA efforts was explained by one actor from Bristol, and gives an idea of the types of projects taking place across Bristol:

"At one end you've got the more commercial – they're the businesses and they're about growing and selling food for money, and buying into the local economy, so there's that at the top level, and at the bottom level, you've got very much grow your own, and you've got your own garden and window boxes. And the categories in between are the allotments, being the scaled-up grow your own, so, it's very much individual people growing food ... and then up again to community food growing projects" (BRICS1)

This element of scale was repeated by participant BRICS2, in the context of the 'bigger is better' productionist paradigm: *"the dominant discourse is that it's these giant industrial farms that produce everything and that anything small is too small to be useful."* Both comments highlight the value in small, as well as grassroots efforts, and recognise their role in local change. As a result of a distancing from systems of food production, one actor in Durham explained the challenge of perceptions and geography which hinder production activities: *"...sometimes people think we don't have the right climate for growing up here [for] fruit and veg... but historically that doesn't bear up, because there used to be a lot more produced here... we've got a big variety of soils across the county... different growing environments."* (DURCS1)

There was a division amongst interview participants with some being pragmatic about avoiding the local-trap way of thinking, and others romanticising local food. Importing was often linked to the concepts of the "food-print" or "food-miles", but with the caveat that these may not provide a full picture of how sustainably food has been produced. For this reason, DEVCS4 argued for a mixed approach to food procurement, based on a deeper awareness of impacts. This participant acknowledged that the global level food system

based upon international trade is unlikely to change any time soon, but that flaws in this system need to be addressed:

"the food system is a lot more complicated... it's not just about the direct impact of land management, it's everything that happens once the crop or the product leaves the farm gate and everything that happens on the journey between there and to your fork... local food production is PART of the solution, but it's not the only solution... I mean, everywhere is local to someone, but ... we shouldn't just assume that something is sustainable just because it's local to us... That whole international dimension, not just environmentally, but socially as well, needs to be brought into the discussion as well when we talk about sustainability. (DEVCS4)

Some recognised that while local growing would not solve all problems, or that urban growing was not expected to feed the municipality, there were enough associated benefits to make a strategy viable. As an example, one council actor in BNES expressed a detailed list of positive outcomes associated with "community food growing":

"... food security, so to ensure that we're more resilient in the community in terms of our food supply... to ensure that we're able to withstand shocks within our current food supply... if a family can feed themselves very locally by growing then obviously then there will be all those environmental sustainability benefits in terms of reducing reliance on transportation and heavily industrialized food production, and all the carbon emissions associated with that... all the wider environmental benefits in terms of green infrastructure ... flood mitigation... soil sequestration... infiltration capacity. And forests and other green infrastructure sustainability benefits as well, in terms of the environment, and carbon emissions... And there's also all the health benefits in terms of physical activity, mental health, providing a fresh and affordable ready access to fruits and vegetables ... high fruit and veg consumption is associated with allotment gardening or food growing. All the evidence around BMI and food growing and that it helps contribute to a healthy weight... So, it's around those key health and environmental objectives as well as food security – which is why community food growing is part of the strategic approach." (BNESLA3)

This statement offers a broadly representative list of the range of activities and benefits offered by actors across cases, and an awareness of the interconnected nature of the three pillars. Ultimately, although actors across cases noted many similar elements which they considered to be unsustainable, specific local issues drove the development process. Local-specific research informed actions, council actors brought forward public sector priorities, and CS brought grassroots experience and a wide range of concerns that included and went beyond those affiliated with the council aims. A general assumption would be that the issues identified by actors would track in a linear way to the necessary actions and expected sustainable outcomes, although this was not always the case.

6.3.1 Local Food Production and Social Sustainability

As the above tables show, social issues were significant areas of concern for all cases and largely related to:

- Disconnection from food (including production, value, cooking skills and community)
- Mental and Physical health (including obesity and long-term non-communicable lifestyle diseases)
- Social inequality (relating to food poverty)
- A lack of growing space

These can all be characterised by a sense of 'lack': of skills resulting in reduced job prospects, of health, and of knowledge about quality food, growing and the food system. For all cases, social prognostic actions to address these issues were largely associated with urban growing projects. LFP efforts referred to by participants included 'meanwhile gardens'⁷⁸, guerrilla gardening, the use of planters, raised beds, allotments and community gardens. Most actors recognised the limitation of local food production in terms of complete self-sufficiency, but that the significant benefits associated with small-scale growing were valuable and a step toward local resilience.

An urban-social link was consistent across all the cases, suggesting that participants view areas of denser population as having greater potential for positive social impact through

⁷⁸ For use 'in the meanwhile', until development opportunities reclaimed the space for other uses.

growing projects. Partly due to the issue of disconnection from food, these approaches were intended as public-focused education initiatives as tools to encourage lifestyle changes and community connection. These changes were often associated with building a new “food culture”, based on reclaiming knowledge and practices around food. Across cases, disconnection was associated with a loss of the intrinsic value of food, food waste, and the expectation of consumers for ever-cheaper foods, despite the externalised costs of production.

Interview participants in Bristol explained that both urban and rural food production were identified in their strategy process as relating to different aspects of the food system. Recognising the largely urban association with community growing projects, one CS participant from BNES called for a more critical view of the urban to rural food production scale, noting: *“there’s been an emphasis and even a reliance on community gardening to act as the local food component... I haven’t seen that the council is really engaging with agriculture”* (BNESCS1). This view was underscored by a council actor who stated the simple need to *“get more people growing food in more gardens”* (BNESLA1). Similarly, Belfast’s strategy focused uniquely on social issues, with community gardens as the specific lever. Here food production was simply a bonus, rather than the main objective. For Devon, Durham and Bristol, there was a wider recognition of growing scales and methods, and a recognition that both urban and rural (and by some, peri-urban) agriculture had important and distinct roles to play. The context for Devon and Durham as rural counties centred upon food production as a form of resilience. Despite this, the social aims were largely urban and linked to food poverty and growing as a form of self-provisioning.

As there were many community garden projects already existing in both BNES and Belfast before the strategy process began, both CS and LA actors acknowledged that the council took an opportunity to build upon the success of existing local initiatives.

One council actor from Belfast explained how social issues influenced the community-driven focus of the strategy:

"Belfast is a city still emerging from a 30-year conflict, and there are significant problems around mental health, and quite a few organisations have found that gardening is a terrific help to people with mental health issues" (BELLA1)

The issue of disconnection was linked to a lack of understanding of how and where food is grown, as well as seasonality. This was due to the globalised nature of the food system and international imports, and the ubiquity of processed foods. The issue of how to integrate marginalised, isolated or vulnerable groups was of particular concern to community growing projects was noted. Use of the HiAP approach (WHO, 2014) in Belfast addressed these groups, as well as children and the elderly. For BNES and Belfast as Category 1 cases led by the council, and Devon as a Category 2 case, Public Health was a driving force behind the initiation of the strategies. For all five cases, the local PH department had a role within the coalition, and so health concerns were central. Participant DURCS3 identified the issue of health as relating to the NHS having a narrow approach, focused on *"health as defined in terms of disease and lifestyle – so focused on individuals, rather than systems"* and the social determinants of health.

Community food growing projects were also consistently associated with the voluntary sector for their delivery and were developed with programmatic structure. This "hand-holding" was felt to be essential to achieving health and educational objectives and long-term engagement with the community. BNESLA1 expressed frustration that the efforts of volunteers and community groups were often difficult to sustain for the life of projects. This illustrated the dependence of the council on the efforts of CS groups to carry out initiatives, whereas LA actors described the council role using words such as "leadership" and "facilitation". In this same vein, the council actors noted issues of a more institutional nature that could best be described as problems *with* citizens, rather than problems *of* citizens. Specifically, a lack of trust in the council and its motivations, and a lack of trust in data, meaning that citizens tended to be skeptical of solutions for which the successful outcomes are not immediately apparent. Engaging with community groups was presented as a way to overcome this barrier, which one LA actor expressed pride in:

"these things come from a history of working with our community, and what that does is that it gives us some quite good feedback ... once you've got over the distrust. People

by and large don't trust their local council, so if the council is coming, it's quite often not for the right reasons ... [but]... if someone is approached about a sustainability partnership... it's about a genuine engagement.” (BNESLA1)

A demand for more growing space was framed across all cases as a need for more allotments. This demand was associated as being “*on the back of an upsurge nationally on the idea of growing your own food*” (BELCS1). Increased citizen awareness of the benefits of growing and LFP was felt to create “*a compelling case for creating more space for individual growing*” to the council (BELCS1). Demand for allotments was a multidimensional issue, as not only was more space required, but the spaces had to also be appropriate in terms of distance, security and allocation. Empowering communities with a “sense of ownership” over a project was believed to be a way to encourage more positive community links and reduce anti-social behaviour (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 5).

6.3.2 Local Food Production and Environmental Sustainability

Across the case studies, environmental concerns were largely focused on:

- Carbon emissions resulting from food production and long-distance transport (SFSCs and “Food miles”), associated with Climate Change
- Agricultural practices including rural heritage, farming methods, landscape degradation
- Chemical inputs

Environmental concerns were central to most case studies but proved to be the most contentious area. While not a single actor dismissed the environment, the tensions between economic development and environmental conservation and sustainable food production were presented as challenging. All cases recognised the link between long-haul transportation of food and carbon emissions, as well as “*high intensity agriculture*” in terms of soil loss, compaction and chemical inputs into the environment. Within the interviews the reliance on imported food and industrialised production systems were identified and illustrate the belief that local level action can counter global-level issues. At the small scale, even changing food procurement practices at the household level were seen as a step toward a more sustainable environment. Unlike the social pillar, environmental narratives

from interviews took on a largely rural a focus in association to food production, and for this reason this pillar was discussed in greater detail by participants from Devon whose strategy reflected the more rural geography of the county.

BNESLA3 believed that LFP could have a variety of beneficial environmental outcomes:

"If a family can feed themselves very locally by growing then obviously then there will be all those environmental sustainability benefits in terms of reducing reliance on transportation and heavily industrialized food production, and all the carbon emissions associated with that." (BNESLA3)

This view of greater self-sufficiency through home production was a key argument across cases for reducing emissions associated with food imports and is one area where an urban focus in implied in the environmental discussions.

Participants from Belfast remained focused on social issues and so shared very little content relating to environmental sustainability, as was the case with Bristol. As food and the activity of growing were felt to be tools and secondary to the social aims, perhaps it was felt that small-scale urban growing could have little impact on broader environmental issues in the city setting or beyond. Notably, Council actors in BNES provided little insight into their environmental position, echoing the view of CS actors that the LA had little grasp of rural agriculture taking place in BNES.

Participants in Devon approached the environmental pillar from a systems-view, showing concern for how local actions may have global impacts, rather than a narrower, local-only focus within the social and economic pillars. Diagnostic issues centred around *how* food is produced, in sometimes "*hellishly un-environmental*" ways (DEVCS4). It was specifically noted by some participants that the manner in which food is produced may matter more than where it travels from, showing that consideration must be given to lifecycle analyses. Actors suggested a need for education for farmers on good practice in agriculture alongside educating the public on environmental impacts of conventional food production and the externalisation of costs was viewed as important for changing consumption habits. Through flagging social, economic and environmental impacts of food produced abroad, participants

in Devon illustrated a moral or ethical angle that needs due consideration within the framework of what makes a sustainable food system. This emphasises our moral responsibility to distant landscapes, people and creatures. For Durham, concern revolved around misconceptions about what could be grown, and the resulting lack of variation in production activities, specifically horticulture. This too was felt to be an educational hurdle to overcome aimed at producers, in order to create a more biodiverse local food system and to reduce imports of food items that could be produced in the county.

Locally, a prognostic action to support Devon's environment relied upon farmers based upon their close personal connections to the landscape (DEVCS1, DEVL1A1). Beyond simply seeing sustainability in economic terms (as was argued by DEVCS4), it was stated that farmers' awareness of sustainability was also linked to maintaining natural, green landscapes for tourism. SFSCs were proposed as being more environmentally *and* economically sustainable for farmers and these incentives were seen as having the potential to prompt local farmers to change their production models (DEVCS1). Participant DEVCS1 highlighted an increased awareness of farmers of environmental consequences of production over the last ten or twenty years:

"[S]ome of them will use the same kind of vocabulary, in terms of sustainability – some of them may talk about resilience. Some of them are even starting to talk about sustainable intensification... they may just talk about it in more common-sense kind of terms, but yeah, it's definitely right up there on the agenda." (DEVCS1)

The fact that out of the five cases, only the participants interviewed in Devon laid out a strong position on food production's links to environmental sustainability suggest that this is an area that participants struggle to conceptualise and develop, particularly in more urban-focused policy settings. The fact that the 'environment' and intensive farming lie in contention is likely a reason why this is not engaged with in-depth.

6.3.3 Local Food Production and Economic Sustainability

The tables above show that some main themes of the economic pillar shared across cases stemmed from:

- The global food economy and the commodification of food
- Food Poverty
- Rural livelihoods

With the exception of Belfast, all cases identified economic issues relating to the food system, although the range of recommended actions to address these issues was limited. The global economic system and the associated structure of the food system (with reference to the global economic recession of 2007-2008), the power of large grocery retailers, and systemic poverty were presented by participants as causes of local-level economic issues stemming from the global and national levels. All cases but Belfast identified that production decisions of farmers were felt to be market-driven and focused on exports. Actors from Devon and Durham felt that infrastructure for processing, adding value, and routes to market had been diminished locally and moved further afield, resulting in greater costs for farmers and reduced returns. Participants from Devon were at times conflicted over what would be best for the local food economy, particularly in relation to the issue of transporting food products. These positions at times contradicted the environmental concerns expressed, particularly regarding climate change and emissions.

As a result, the main action presented to overcome economic issues was relocalisation of the food system with a focus on SFSCs. This was associated with increasing local production and routes to market in an effort to connect local producers with local consumers, resulting in improvement to rural livelihoods. This also had links to other pillars via reduced emissions as an environmental element, and health for communities. For some cases, this included discussion of public sector procurement. The association with farming and food production as a economic activity was a rural-focus within the economic pillar, however systemic (food) poverty was an issue which was linked to urban environments as well as rural dwellers.

The role of farmers to this pillar was central, and the challenges faced by food producers were many: a loss of producers, difficulty for new entrants to farming such as planning permission barriers and land costs, consumer and retailer expectations for ever lower food prices and greater output. To illustrate this, BNESCS2 pointed out a worrying shift away from local horticultural production, explaining that *"historically there were a lot of market*

gardens around bath and now there's only one". A focus on "re-skilling" in horticulture and agriculture was put forward by participants in BNES as a way to increase local food production at a commercial scale. This food-education thread is one that runs through all three pillars.

Devon and Durham identified the rural economy as a significant area of focus in their strategies. This resulted in a focus on rural agriculture as the economic engine of the counties. In contrast, participant DEVCS1 noted that UA was *"not on the agenda of the economic players on the whole, in the southwest or in Devon"*. Similarly, one participant in Durham noted the issue of attitudes toward food production that the steering committee heard throughout the strategy development process. One participant relayed that many in Durham felt that agriculture was such a small part of the economy that it was *"seen as irrelevant"*, and that community growing and self-provisioning were likewise too small to have impact (DURCS1). In other words, this individual has experienced attitudes that view both the urban and the rural capacity for Durham-produced food as diminished or pointless from an economic perspective. Similarly, DURCS3 felt that the local authority had no understanding of how to support the rural agricultural sector in Durham. In Devon, the council's prioritisation of the rural economy was apparent through its commissioning of research on Devon's rural economy by academics at Exeter University. This research on Devon's food and farming industry provided baseline data to inform the strategy, and linked social issues and environmental impacts, such as the livelihoods of farmers as associated with routes to market and infrastructure (such as processing), loss of farmland to development, and poor farming practices. Noting the findings of the "Who Feeds Bristol?" Report, Participant BRICS2 explained that routes to market for producers was the focus, as *"[t]hat whole infrastructure supporting independent food producers, linking them to independent local food retailers, has vanished."* This economic angle was reflected in the Good Food Plan, as it was based upon the findings of the earlier report.

BNESCS1 identified a disconnection within the council where, despite a desire to support local farming and the food system, there remained an issue of agricultural land being sold for development. The same issue was a concern in Devon, affecting new entrants to farming. Interestingly, this was associated with power dynamics within the council that was based on revenues:

"There's a hierarchy of council departments, and the top one is something called property services which owns all the buildings and all the lands and therefore is the generator of all the money. So while there will be ... a cluster of people within planning who have the sustainability remit, they don't have a very high profile, whereas the people within planning who have a housing remit are very strong ... the developers don't want to waste any money by setting land aside to grow vegetables when they could be maximising from housing." (BNESCS1)

A lack of funding for food-related programs due to council-level budget reductions was a challenge that actors across all cases, identified as limiting the potential impact of their activities over time. Recognition of the need for CS to 'pick up the slack' where the council is less willing or able to support food efforts was expressed by BNESCS1. When speaking of barriers in relation to the local food strategy, one CS actor summarised the issue simply: *"there's no money attached to this"* (BNESCS2). Similarly, BELLA1 noted that projects tend to "get squeezed by economic development" by the Belfast Council, being "driven by the need to create jobs and grow the economy." For Belfast, this perception underscores the importance of the social focus on the food strategy, as it over-rode the economic mandate so often prioritised by the council.

Food poverty was an economic issue was identified by BNES, Devon and Durham, and one that was associated with global level factors affecting peoples' ability to afford food. As such this was a complex issue to tackle. DEVCS1 explained:

"My feeling was that food poverty in this country is largely caused by things that are beyond the control of any of us sitting around in that group – these are big structural things to do with inequalities in society and income distribution... and so I felt that although we might have been able to do something in terms of food banks and stuff, that's very nice, but it's a sticking plaster approach, and we weren't able to tackle any of the causes."

One motivational vision was simply *"[t]o make local food producers accessible in the context of food poverty"* (DEVCS3). However, due to the complexity of the global economic system,

and its trickle-down effect from national to local level, for local food to be affordable for those struggling economically, significant systemic changes are needed beyond what is likely possible for the local level (DEVCS1).

6.4 Coalition and Council Beliefs: ACF 'hypothesis' 2

The second 'hypothesis' of the ACF states: *"[A]ctors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects."* This allowed for examination not only of what actors believed was the main strategy aim in relation to sustainability (a policy core belief), but how it was to be achieved through LFP (as actions representing secondary beliefs). To address the research question pertaining to whether the beliefs of CS and LA actors diverge within coalitions for each of the case studies (Research Question 1), this second coalition 'hypothesis' offered a helpful lens. As the coalitions represented a continuum of partnership, this gave insight into some internal dynamics, which are discussed further in Chapter 8.

Across the cases, the agreement over a need for a local strategy brought together CS and LA actors into their respective local coalitions. Conflict levels appeared to be low across all cases, but nevertheless, differences in beliefs were present. At times these were internal to the CS and LA groups. This research recognises that only a partial sample of actors involved in the coalition took part from each study, making the findings of this 'hypothesis' an illustration of the tendency of those involved, rather than a representation of the full coalition. So, while the ACF uses the terms 'proven' and 'disproven' when making conclusions on its 'hypotheses', this research uses the terms 'aligned' or 'diverged' to distinguish that this is not conclusive for the coalition as a whole but represents the sample of actors interviewed.

The following tables (26-30) illustrate the beliefs of CS and LA actors for comparison for each case study.

Table 26: Coalition 'hypothesis' 2 - BNES LA and CS Beliefs Comparison

BNES: Category 1	Policy Core Belief (Diagnostic, by sustainability pillar)	Secondary Beliefs (Prognostic, by sustainability pillar)
	<u>Social:</u> -Lack of allotments -Disconnection to food/lack of skills	<u>Social:</u> -Local food production (in general)

Local Authority Actors	-Public health	
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Climate change	<u>Environmental:</u> -Flood control
	<u>Economic:</u> -Lack of access to local markets for farmers -Competition for farmers with large scale producers (imports)	<u>Economic:</u> -Procurement -Supporting the development of local routes to markets for farmers
Civil Society Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Lack of allotments -Disconnection to food/lack of skills -Public health	<u>Social:</u> -Local food production (various specific projects, ie: horticultural training for vulnerable groups)
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Climate change	<u>Environmental:</u> -Protection of the environment and landscape (local heritage)
	<u>Economic:</u> -Lack of access to local markets for farmers -Competition for farmers with large scale producers (imports)	<u>Economic:</u> -Promote tourism
Result	Aligned	Diverged

Across the five case studies, only BNES met the criteria of the second ACF ‘hypothesis’ to confirm as accurate, being one where policy core beliefs are aligned, and secondary beliefs to address the policy core diverge between CS and LA actors⁷⁹. LA actors presented general recommendations for food production actions, where CS actors were more specific about projects and target groups. This is likely attributable to their grassroots expertise in this area. For both, the concern of climate change as a policy core issue was only supported by limited and quite general actions, and these were different between CS and LA actors. Economic actions differed between the groups, with CS speaking of food tourism for Bath, whereas the LA actors focused on points seemingly more within its policy remit.

Table 27: Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 2 - Belfast LA and CS Beliefs Comparison

Belfast: Category 1	Policy Core Belief (Diagnostic, by sustainability pillar)	Secondary Beliefs (Prognostic, by sustainability pillar)
Local Authority Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Lack of community cohesion -Mental health concerns -Lack of allotments	<u>Social:</u> -Community gardens & allotments

⁷⁹ So too did Durham, as is shown below, however this was not a comparison between CS and LA actors.

	<u>Environmental:</u> -	<u>Environmental:</u> -
	<u>Economic:</u> -	<u>Economic:</u> -
Civil Society Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Lack of community cohesion -Mental health concerns -Lack of allotments	<u>Social:</u> -Community gardens & allotments
	<u>Environmental:</u> -	<u>Environmental:</u> -
	<u>Economic:</u> -	<u>Economic:</u> -
Result	Aligned	Aligned

Within a coalition built of CS and council actors, beliefs could fairly be expected to diverge as individuals come to the process with different views and agendas. For this reason it was surprising to find that CS and LA actors interviewed appeared to be in overall agreement in the case of Belfast. Coalition actors appeared to have aligned understandings of the policy core issues faced in Belfast that were drivers for the creation of the strategy. These were believed by all to be social in nature, namely, the need to build community and address mental health as issues resulting from decades-long sectarian conflict in Belfast, and the demand for allotment provision. By omission of any discussion around environmental concerns, actions or motivations, participants illustrated the lack of focus on environmental sustainability within the strategy dialogue. Economic views were expressed only by the council actor, however only in the context of these being put aside in favour of the social focus of the strategy. As actions linking to secondary policy beliefs, these revolved around a limited range of activities for those interviewed in council and civil society alike. Food production, it was made clear, was a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

In BNES and Belfast, actors in both CS and the local authority agreed on the policy core aims. Notably, common across these two cases was that these had been decided upon and handed down by the council prior to the coalition being fully formed and any wider public consultation taking place. As a result, there was little room for actors to debate these priorities and so CS actors appeared to accept these. The process in Belfast continued this trend through to the secondary beliefs, as these were based upon research undertaken by Sustainable NI prior to the strategy process and so these actions (community gardens as a

delivery mechanism in particular) were all the more rigid. In BNES, research had also taken place to inform the strategy process, but more room appears to have been built into the process for public consultation and CS feedback. As a note, the views of BELCS1 largely mirror the beliefs of the council, which may be attributed to their role as a contractor, as the council objectives were communicated to this person to be written into the physical strategy document. This presents the possibility that the beliefs of this actor blurred the line between CS and LA beliefs.

Table 28: Coalition 'hypothesis' 2 - Devon LA and CS Beliefs Comparison

Devon: Category 2	Policy Core Belief (Diagnostic, by sustainability pillar)	Secondary Beliefs (Prognostic, by sustainability pillar)
Local Authority Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Public health & welfare (Imposed by LA via the DSP) -Lack of appreciation/awareness of the value of food (DEVLA1)	<u>Social:</u> -Community growing and food education programs -Use of council land for food growing
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Food waste (DEVLA1)	<u>Environmental:</u> -Reduce/redistribute food waste (DEVLA1)
	<u>Economic:</u> -Rural Economy (Imposed by LA via the DSP)	<u>Economic:</u> -
Civil Society Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Public health & welfare -Food Poverty	<u>Social:</u> -Community growing and food education programs (esp. in schools) for various benefits
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Food miles -Production (inputs, pollution and international ethical standards of production)	<u>Environmental:</u> -Promote tourism -Food 'printing' to address 'local trap'
	<u>Economic:</u> -Lack of access to local markets for farmers -Sale of agricultural land by LA -Lack of training for farmers -Food poverty	<u>Economic:</u> -Retain more food in the local economy (SFSCs) -Promote tourism -Redistribute food waste -Support new farmers
Result	Diverged	Diverged

In the case of Devon, the social and economic policy core areas were handed down by the Council via the DSP and so were not subject to negotiation. The one council actor who took part in interviews had diverging views to these, emphasising food waste and lack of appreciation of food. This represented a divergence internal to the council policy core. The

Devon coalition utilised a work-streams model to develop the strategy where actors contributed specialist knowledge to a specific strategy theme. For this reason, those interviewed had policy core beliefs which closely reflected their area of focus, leading to diverging policy core beliefs across CS and LA, and within these groups. This divergence was largely based on the priorities handed down from the council (economic and social), and those with environmental policy core priorities (one CS actor, and one LA). As actors in Devon diverged on policy core beliefs, logically the secondary beliefs did not align.

Table 29: Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 2 - Bristol CS Beliefs Comparison

Bristol: Category 3	Policy Core Belief (Diagnostic, by sustainability pillar)	Secondary Beliefs (Prognostic, by sustainability pillar)
Local Authority Actors	-	-
Civil Society Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Disconnection to food/lack of skills -Public health	<u>Social:</u> -Community growing and food education programs
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Climate change -Food waste	<u>Environmental:</u> -
	<u>Economic:</u> -Loss of independent local retailers to large chains	<u>Economic:</u> -Commercialise local food production
Result	Aligned	Aligned*

For the cases of Bristol and Durham, no council members agreed to be interviewed, and so for this reason comparisons could not be drawn between LA and CS. For these two cases, comparisons were made only between those CS actors who took part.

The two civil society participants who took part in interviews shared a policy core belief that citizens lack knowledge of what “good food” is, including skills relating to food production and preparation. This, they felt, was central to issues of poor health and an unhealthy food system. Both participants felt strongly about these as social issues, and the actions to address these were similarly based upon creating opportunities for citizens to grow food and gain knowledge. Actions to address environmental issues were absent from both, and only one (BRICS1) suggested actions relating to the economic pillar, although this was not an area of significant focus within the interview. BRICS1 spoke of the economic pillar, and BRICS2 spoke of the environmental pillar in isolation, with neither addressing

the other to any degree. Despite one actor being focused on social issues and the other on the economy, the application of local food production as a means to achieving objectives was mirrored by both interviewees, with one actor (BRICS1) simply offering a couple of additional suggestions. It is in this regard (*) that Bristol presented an issue in relation to the wording of the ACF 'hypothesis', which argues that actors will agree "*less so*" on secondary aspects that policy core beliefs. It is difficult in a qualitative study to conclusively prove what would be considered *more-so* or *less-so* in these cases of agreement. In this case, actors agreed on policy core and secondary beliefs for implementation of local growing efforts, however one interviewee offered *additional* suggestions for implementation in relation to other policy core areas.

Table 30: Coalition 'hypothesis' 2 - Durham CS Beliefs Comparison

Durham: Category 3	Policy Core Belief (Diagnostic, by sustainability pillar)	Secondary Beliefs (Prognostic, by sustainability pillar)
Local Authority Actors	-	-
Civil Society Actors	<u>Social:</u> -Lack of allotments -Public health (individual focus, rather than system via social determinants of health)	<u>Social:</u> -Community growing -Procurement and healthy catering in schools
	<u>Environmental:</u> -Perception of unsuitable climate in Durham for horticulture	<u>Environmental:</u> -
	<u>Economic:</u> -Lack of access to local markets for farmers -Too much exporting & importing -Poverty	<u>Economic:</u> -Retain more food in the local economy (SFSCs) -Promote tourism -Establish a food hub -Support new farmers
Result	Aligned	Diverged

Across the CS interviews, relocalising Durham's food system appeared as the main policy core aim, along with a variety of additional priorities that were echoed by participants. Secondary beliefs were few for the social pillar, and these ranged from provision of growing space to changes in procurement for schools. No environmental actions were offered by any of the three actors. The economic pillar received the widest range of prognostic actions. There was no apparent *disagreement* over how food production activities would contribute

to a more sustainable local food system, however participants simply had their own separate areas of concern and knowledge, which they represented with little crossover into other pillars. This is similar to Devon where actors contributed through a work-streams model.

In the cases of Bristol and Durham, while comparisons between CS and the local authority actors could not be drawn, those interviewed still gave insight into their alignment of beliefs. In Bristol, actors interviewed had similar views of both the policy core and related actions, while in Durham actors supported the 'hypothesis' position that actors agree on the policy core, but diverge on secondary beliefs.

A theme throughout cases relating to secondary beliefs involved '*who*' was believed to be the party responsible for or best suited to deliver the recommended actions. Participants spoke of this in association with prognostic actions, illustrating that actions and *who* was expected to deliver these could not be separated. A divergence in views of who should be the 'feet on the ground' was a resources issue, as well as a function of the partnership, and an illustration of a co-dependent relationship between the council and CS. This is addressed further in Chapter 8.

6.5 Chapter Summary

The five cases examined above illustrate three different coalition models. BNES and Bristol represent 'Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiatives' (Category 1), Durham and Bristol's strategies are "*a hybrid of CS organizations and government*" (Category 3) but with weaker ties to government than other hybrid models. Devon sits in between these as a "Hybrid Model with Direct Links to Governance" (Category 2). Responding to the first research question involved asking interview participants about their policy core beliefs relating to what sustainability meant to them in the context of the policy development process. Some references were made to other aspects of sustainability, such as values, ethics, responsibility (including that of those in power within governance mechanisms and corporate institutions), and care for distant others and biomes. However, these were less significant subjects of focus and were not used as tools or frames to the extent that the three standard pillars were applied.

In their framings of local diagnostic issues, prognostic actions and motivational visions, actors spoke of sustainability both explicitly and implicitly through the use of its pillars. Often these were simplified into binaries as what was or was not sustainable, with little nuance or recognition of sustainability as something which exists along a spectrum. Definitions of sustainability given by actors ranged from it being presented as a concept (typically aligned along the three standard pillars), a philosophy of care, a practical consideration unique to in-place application, and a part of the policy process.

There was a consistent recognition even where systems-level top-down issues were identified that bottom-up efforts had the potential to address many problems across all three pillars, although not necessarily back up to a global level of impact. Despite recognition of increased public awareness of global issues, local level issues were the primary drivers for the food strategies according to actors, and these varied little across cases.

As a local tool to accomplish sustainability objectives, local food was defined variably in terms of scale and scope, and the activities referred to by participants were largely consistent within these. Interviewees spoke of food production largely in binary terms of rural or urban with only those in Bristol stating that agriculture existed on a spectrum. Large-scale agriculture was implied as unsustainable through its association with industrial-scale, conventional farming methods as well as foreign imports. Small-scale agriculture was felt to be the opposite and was linked to resilience, self-sufficiency, and reduced emissions through lower reliance on imports. While some actors did imply that local food was by default more sustainable, several actors identified this “local trap” line of thinking. Some recognised that while local growing would not solve all problems, or that urban growing was not expected to feed the municipality, there were enough associated benefits to make a strategy viable.

Interviews with actors across the five cases revealed that all viewed sustainability as an important concept in itself, but only in BNES and Durham did actors state that the concept was deliberately and explicitly chosen as a formal framework to underpin the strategy document. According to actors in Devon and Bristol, using sustainability as the framework for the strategy was set aside in favour of highlighting objectives or areas of activity, but

with the recognition that sustainability still fed into these under the surface. In application within the strategy, these same actors stated that explicit use of the term sustainability was deliberately avoided in Devon and Bristol to keep from confusing or alienating readers. Sustainability was not the primary driver for Devon, Belfast and Bristol, but rather was viewed as a positive byproduct of the initiative via its activities. While views of CS and council actors could be expected to diverge in the context of a definition of sustainability or favoured pillar, no clear pattern emerged across cases in this regard. The variation of approaches to the concept of sustainability and its application to the local strategies could not be grouped as common 'council-driven' approaches, being that BNES and Belfast varied greatly, or 'CS-driven' approaches, as Bristol and Durham took such different approaches. Actors from Devon, illustrating its place between the other cases on the coalition model scale, seemed to describe approaches and considerations across the other categories. As such, each approach to sustainability was bespoke based on the coalition group, the local objectives and the intended audience of the strategy (discussed further in the following chapter). The first research question also addresses how the beliefs of CS and LA actors diverged on their beliefs of sustainability (relating to policy core beliefs) and local food production (as actions to achieve sustainability, representing secondary beliefs). This linked to the second 'hypothesis' of the ACF.

The following chapter departs from the individual actor beliefs and examines the strategy as the output of the strategy development process across the same framing criteria and sustainability pillars.

7. Food Strategy Content

Having provided a background of coalition actors' beliefs (Chapter 6), this chapter moves on to an analysis of the strategy documents of the five cases with the aim of answering the second research question of this dissertation:

- *How have sustainability and local food production been represented in the food strategy documents?*

As such, this chapter isolates LFP and growing content from the wider body of material in the strategies that (with the exception of Belfast) encompasses the broader elements of the local food system⁸⁰.

This chapter places the five cases in dialogue with one another using Snow and Benford's three frames as tethering points (1988). This allows for prompt comparisons to be drawn in relation to what strategies identify as unsustainable (diagnostic), sustainable (motivational) and actions to bridge these (prognostic). The social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainability underpin these. For reference, this structure was presented in Table 7, (see Section 4.3.1). As a note on language, as these objects don't have beliefs, per se, the term 'beliefs' is not used for reference within this chapter, but rather refers simply to 'content' to more accurately represented the static points.

Analysis of a static document offers what by comparison to interview analysis feels like a lack of vitality, but it presents an opportunity for clarity. These are public documents, which are fixed in time, unchanged, whereas memory is imperfect.

As a note, rather than continually referring to case study documents by their full titles or as "The Bristol strategy" or similar, this chapter often refers to the cases simply by the name of the case study area ('BNES', Bristol, Devon etc).

⁸⁰ As a result, if this analysis may at times appear to be lacking detail of content, this is not necessarily a reflection of the strategy as a whole but simply that content relating to food production and its related pillars.

Each of the five strategies shows a different approach to local food and sustainability: these are bespoke documents to address a variety of needs. As will be shown in Chapter 8, they largely reflect the priorities identified by those leading the coalition and responsible for their development.

7.1 Expressions of Sustainability

Throughout the strategies, sustainability was either referred to explicitly (identified by name, defined, and through statements of what is or isn't sustainable) or implicitly through the use of the terms indicating the three pillars. As the table below shows, each case study took a unique approach, which as the following chapter will illustrate, was based on deliberate decisions to frame and represent content for particular audiences alongside communicating key objectives.

Table 31: Sustainability Definitions across case studies

Case Study	Sustainability Definition	Associated Definitions	Strategy Themes
BNES - Category 1 Coalition: "The Bath and Northeast Somerset Local Food Strategy 2014 - 2017"	Not Defined, but the term is used consistently throughout document.	Sustainable Production: "Agricultural and food production systems that enhance and sustain the agricultural resource base over the long-term including air, water and soil quality, biodiversity, landscape character and climate. Examples of sustainable food production methods include low agro-chemical use, the provision of wildlife habitat space, improvements to energy efficiency, effective soil and water management and the practice of high animal welfare standards." (ibid, p. 8)	1) Health, wellbeing and equality; 2) Environmental sustainability and Security; and 3) Strong and prosperous economy

Belfast - Category 1 Coalition: "Growing Communities"	Not Defined in full, only elements. The term is largely avoided throughout document.	Sustainable Development: "Development which ensures that people today can satisfy their basic needs, whilst making sure that future generations can also look forward to the same quality of life. It normally takes into account three inter-dependent 'pillars'- economy, society and the environment." (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 27); Environmental sustainability: "A state in which the demands placed on the environment can be met without reducing its capacity to meet people's needs, now and in the future – ie the environmental 'pillar' of sustainable development." (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 27)	1) "Supporting healthier lifestyles" 2) "Empowering communities and capacity"; 3) "Environmental Sustainability", 4) "Engaging the wider community" 5) "Communication and management" 6) "social-economy"

Devon - Category 2 Coalition: "Feeding Devon's Future"	Not Defined, but the term is used sparingly throughout document. A proxy definition through the concept of "social value" echoes aspects of the Brundtland (WCED, 1987) vision: "Social value is achieved when communities or organisations source their goods, services and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and generates additional benefits to society and the economy, while at the same time minimising damage to the environment" (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 11, emphasis added).		"Strands of Activity": 1) "Community and Culture"; 2) "Health and Wellbeing"; 3) "Learning and Skills"; 4) "Ecological-Footprint"; and 5) "Food Economy"

Bristol - Category 3 Coalition: "A Good Food Plan for Bristol"	Not Defined, but the term is used sparingly throughout document. A proxy definition through the concept of "Good Food" is used.	Sustainable food: with only implied criteria of what this would be, based on the content of the vision statement: "fresh, seasonal, local, organic and fairly traded"; Good Food, defined as: "... being vital to the quality of people's lives in Bristol. It should be tasty, healthy and affordable, as well as good for nature, good for workers good for local businesses and good for animal welfare" (ibid, back cover)	1) Transform Bristol's food culture 2) Safeguard the diversity of food 3) Safeguard land for food production 4) Increase urban food production 5) Increase urban food production Redistribute, recycle & compost food 6) Protect key infrastructure for local supplies; 7) Increase the market opportunities and regional suppliers; and 8) Support community food enterprises

Durham Category 3 Coalition: “Sustainable Local Food Strategy, 2014 – 2020”	Defined explicitly “What is a Sustainable Local Food Strategy?”: “To avoid spending too much time becoming embroiled in debates about the meanings of “sustainable” and “local food” we adopted a pragmatic working definition of “local sustainable food” that served the purpose of this strategy: Food that is produced and consumed in or near County Durham that is healthy for people and the planet, and supports our local economy.” (p. 2)	Local Food: “...What we are concerned with in this instance is not only geographic location, but also other criteria such as the quality of the food (e.g. is it healthy?), its impact on the environment, how the people who produce it are rewarded, and how animals reared for food are treated. We are also concerned about supporting the local economy by protecting jobs and growing the demand for local goods that will in turn create opportunities for new jobs. In other words, Durham local food should fulfil the three pillars of sustainability by having economic, social and environmental benefits” (p. 3); Good Food: “[f]ood should be safe, nutritious, of good quality, and environmentally sustainable. In this document we call this “good food”” (p.10)	1) Supporting the local economy; 2) Environmental Sustainability; 3) Health and wellbeing; 4) resilient and active communities; 5) Education and skills development; 6) Food Fairness

This table shows that across the five cases, different approaches were taken to defining sustainability, and to utilising the pillars as a framework to structure the strategy documents. As a concept, sustainability was presented often in deliberate formulations, or avoided. These approaches can be understood as representations with a specific purpose, including:

- An explicit and unique definition fashioned on the 'Brundtland' pillars and using these as a framework (Durham).
- No explicit definition of sustainability itself but used implicitly as a framework through use of the standard pillars (BNES, Bristol, Devon).
Both Bristol's and Devon's approaches were coupled with:
- A bespoke, or 'proxy' definition for the purposes of the strategy, specific to the policy subsystem and city-region ("Good Food" in Bristol, "Social Value" in Devon)
- A piece-meal definition, selecting elements of sustainability to highlight (such as "environmental sustainability" or "sustainable development") to the exclusion of other elements (Belfast)

Creating a definition that is intended to communicate a sustainable vision, while avoiding the concept of sustainability in its definition was an approach used by both Devon and Bristol. For Bristol, this was a deliberate choice, based on the sense that the term sustainability and its associated pillars were too generic and could limit the ability of community members to identify where they 'fit' into the Plan's objectives. Devon's concept of "social value" not only highlights the primary importance of the social component within this strategy, but it also hints at a definition of sustainability through citing the three pillars. This invokes, like Bristol, a sense of a 'proxy definition' of sustainability.

The definition of Sustainable Development presented in the Belfast strategy shows an awareness of the three pillars of sustainability and reflects the WCED definition (1987), yet only *environmental* sustainability is included in the definitions, highlighting the absence of social and economic sustainability explanations. Indeed, neither term is linked to the word sustainability in the document, showing a deliberate decision by the council to use it only in an environmental context, although it is unclear why this choice was made, and why it was

not developed within the strategy. Its inclusion (and omission of a social sustainability definition) is particularly out of place considering the all-encompassing social focus of the strategy.

Bristol's Good Food Plan uses the term sustainability throughout the document, indicating it as something that is highly desirable, but like BNES omits a specific definition. The pillars of sustainability are presented throughout the document but are not explicitly linked to the concept of sustainability through any specific statement. For example, recognising "*the pivotal role that food can play in driving positive social, economic and environmental change*" (ibid, p. 7) the plan presents the pillars, but makes no mention of their association with the concept of sustainability. Unlike other strategies that use the three pillars as a framework, the themes and objectives listed within the Bristol strategy do not all map neatly onto these. The themes are quite specific, unlike the more general umbrella-style headings of other strategies ("Environmental Sustainability", "Health and wellbeing", "Local economy", for example). Some are obviously economic in nature and others have a clear social focus however others are less easily categorized in this way.

In the document, "*good for people, places and planet*" and in the 'Good Food' definition, "*good for nature*" are offered as environmental acknowledgement (ibid, p.3). Beyond these, the absence of an environmental theme or environmental content in the strategy places it in contrast to the other case studies. The first page of content in the Plan notes issues of health and the loss of quality jobs in and around Bristol and notes the need for change to address these. This prioritisation of economy and health are apparent throughout the document. There is no mention of the environment in this statement of local issues.

Similarly, strategies also utilised, adapted or avoided the standard pillars of sustainability. In the column titled "Links to Pillars", the table above illustrates the different approaches (variously called in strategies "delivery themes", "themes and objectives", "strategic aims"), to using the standard pillars of sustainability as a framework for food strategies and links to food production. The Bath and Northeast Somerset Strategy uses the three pillars as the framework for the strategy, whereas Bristol avoids them, instead identifying much more specific local themes for achieving local objectives. Durham's strategy uses the three main pillars, but goes beyond them to include resilience, fairness and equity, illustrating a broader awareness of sustainability, beyond just the standard pillars. Belfast's City Council's

strategy contrasts significantly with that of BNES. From four of the six 'Key Priorities', and throughout the strategy generally, it is shown that the document embodies a primarily social focus. The name of the document itself, "Growing *Communities*", reinforces this position. Devon acknowledges the importance of the pillars and their interconnections, but like Bristol uses only a 'proxy definition' to express a vision of what is sustainable. For all cases the strategy themes, whether framed according to the pillars or through different language, were the organising tool under which food production actions (where relevant) were presented. Rarely did a strategy present a balanced approach to all three pillars (whether explicitly stated or not)

Across cases, statements of sustainability are often framed in a binary format, and often are implicit, rather than explicitly stated. For example, in Devon, a need to feed a growing population '*more sustainably*' is offered, however the concept of sustainability is presented as being both complex, and subjective (ibid, p3). Additionally, in the negative, referring to what is *not* sustainable, the document identifies the "current food system", but without clarification of why this is so. It states, "*Our view is to take action now to prevent further costs later, and not to depend too simplistically on the current food distribution systems which in the longer term are neither safe, nor secure, nor **sustainable***" (ibid, p.14).

As is shown in the above table, Durham's food strategy took a direct approach to the concept of sustainability, by outlining "What is a Sustainable Local Food Strategy?" (ibid, p. 2). In this section of the document, sustainability and its association to local food was given its own working definition to suit its specific local context. Using a concept applied by Bristol, the strategy notes that "*[f]ood should be safe, nutritious, of good quality, and environmentally sustainable. In this document we call this "good food"*" (ibid, p.10). Likewise, it mirrors the 'people and planet' element of the Good Food Plans' vision. The three pillars are reflected clearly in the six strategic aims of the document, along with additional themes which overlap with these, but have been distinguished as specific workstreams. From the explicit definition of sustainability given, the consistent reference to and use of its pillars, and the very title of the document ("Sustainable Local Food Strategy, 2014 – 2020"), it is clear that Durham has taken a considered and deliberate position regarding sustainability to frame its strategy approach.

From these brief examinations of each strategy's presentation of sustainability, it's apparent that each case study has a unique approach to this concept. These vary from views of sustainability drawing on the three pillars (BNES, Devon), to piecemeal definitions intended to highlight a priority area (Belfast), to definitions of sustainability created for the unique purpose of the strategy (Durham) and normative use of the term as simply a positive thing (Bristol). Additionally, Devon and Bristol offer their 'proxy definitions' of sustainability where a vision is provided but holds back an explicit use of the term. Why these were chosen as courses of action are discussed in the following chapter.

While the use of the term sustainability may have been varied, the use of the social, environmental and economic pillars as points of reference throughout the strategies were shared across all cases. However, the extent to which these were balanced within the strategies or tied explicitly to the concept of sustainability varied.

7.2 Expressions of Local Food Production

The notion of LFP differed from case to case depending on the municipal context and existing growing activities. Here the urban and rural compositions of the municipalities was a main factor in how food production was presented, along with the scale and types of farming operations taking place along this continuum. Identifying how food production was conceptualised in the strategy documents gave insight into the local situation and related to how issues were framed.

From the outset of the BNES strategy, it was made clear that the pillars of sustainability and the role of food production are associated:

"Food is not only essential to survival and health but it shapes our environment and landscapes, underpins our economy, helps build resilient communities and is at the heart of our culture and society." (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 2)

While the term sustainability is not itself defined, the strategy chooses to outline intensive agriculture":

"Intensive farming: Energy intensive farming systems based on a high-input- high output model. Intensive farming is characterized by a low fallow ratio and the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides relative to land area." (ibid, p. 8)

Within the 'Glossary of Terms', "sustainable Production" (see Table 31, above) is offered as the antithesis of intensive farming and is presented as the objective in a transition in agricultural production. It is presented alongside definitions of 'organic food', 'fairtrade food', 'healthy food', 'Good Food' (using Bristol's definition, similarly to Durham), and terms for diverse food selling models. This shows significant attention to the production side of local food. Unlike most of the other strategies presented herein (Durham excepted), the BNES document specifically identifies what 'local' means, being in this case, *"food that is produced, processed, distributed, traded and sold within a 30-mile radius of Bath and North East Somerset"* (ibid, p. 8). Additionally, a simple statement of what LFP can do to support local sustainability is offered in the priorities section of the document:

"Local and sustainable food production, including community food growing can reduce B&NES's contribution to GHG emissions, decrease negative environmental impacts, increases food security and generates an increase in community food growing and associated health benefits." (ibid, p. 6).

These statements offer examples of what BNES believes LFP is and what it can accomplish in relation to the pillars of sustainability. Highlighting "agricultural and food production systems" suggests agriculture as a part of wider food network taking place both within and beyond Bath. Multiple references are made throughout the document to "food and farming", not only reinforcing the importance of food produced locally, but the practice of agriculture and those who work in this sector. This is coupled with reference to urban agriculture activities such as "community food growing", "allotments, community gardens and communal orchards" (ibid, p. 16) and illustrates the view that together urban and rural agriculture contribute to achieving sustainability objectives in BNES. Additionally, this shows an awareness of the diversity of food production activities taking place and the roles that these efforts of differing scale, location, and production type, have in the BNES vision. Through numerous case study vignettes, the document presents examples of good practice by local projects across the food system including farms and markets.

The first of the BNES strategy's three themes ("Local food production", see Figure 19) shows three approaches. Each of these is reflected across the pillars of sustainability within the strategy and through these shows how sustainability and LFP are being associated in the BNES document. The other two themes, while they do have some production-related

actions, are less focused on this aspect of the local food system. Sustainability is linked to other terms in the third theme in particular, through the concepts of ‘sustainable food culture’ and ‘sustainable food behaviours’, although these are not defined and don’t necessarily have links to production.



Figure 19: BNES Strategy Delivery Themes (Source: Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 15)

Of the themes and objectives in the Good Food Plan for Bristol, several include elements of food production, and consideration to both urban and rural production are shown. For example, “Objective 3” is “[s]afeguard land for food production”, noting in particular ‘agricultural land’, implying rural land, and “Objective 4” aims to “[i]ncrease urban food production and distribution” (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 17). Again, citing its definition of “good food”, “local” food is identified as one element that makes for a

sustainable food city, along with food that is “fresh, seasonal...organic and fairly traded” (ibid. p.3). Throughout the document, LFP is identified in different ways, illustrating variation in growing practices and recognising these as “sustainable locally produced food” and part of “a sustainable and resilient food plan” for the region (ibid. p.7). Through these a spectrum of rural to urban is illustrated, along with different scales and forms of production activity.

The Good Food Plan identifies small and medium farms, as well as farm workers as key components to LFP. Organic farms, dairy farms, and abattoirs are given consideration in the plan in the context of a need to improve market access for rural products. As urban initiatives, GYO projects are advocated, and use of derelict land, allotments, and space in schoolyards are offered as urban areas to grow. Fruit and nut trees and community orchards in parks and “shared green spaces” (ibid. p. 16) are recommended for food production in urban areas. Market gardens and community supported agriculture (CSAs) suggest a scale in between rural farms and GYO or allotment initiatives, indicating the potential for commercial development of such efforts. Notable inclusions are rooftop agriculture, as well as beekeeping as urban food producing activities. In this sense, the Bristol food strategy illustrates a range of LFP along a broader continuum than other strategies, which tend to present the urban and rural in a polarised way. Consideration of specific food-related infrastructure such as abattoirs shows an awareness of the components of Bristol’s agricultural landscape.

Access to land is referred to in the Good Food Plan and indicates the importance of both retaining rural land for agricultural use, as well as more urban plots for growing, rather than these being sold off for development. Retaining rural agricultural land was also a key concern within Devon’s strategy and a clear recommendation was put forward within the document to the County Council to cease selling land for development. Likewise, all case studies identified the demand for more urban growing space, particularly in the form of allotments. Throughout the Good Food Plan, examples of good practice in food production are provided, noting over 30 community food projects in Bristol, and presenting vignettes of CSA and market garden enterprises as models. Mention of ‘good practice’ in agriculture was highlighted in all case studies. All cases provided vignettes as examples of current projects to be viewed as models and inspirational examples of what is possible. Bristol joined other

cases in stating a need for responsible agricultural practices, often with farmers being key participants in changing practices and sharing knowledge.

The Devon food strategy identified the county as a major food producer for the UK. Commercial agriculture is therefore an important business sector and employer in the county. The strategy offers a historic view of the production activities of Devon and details its suitability of the county for food production because of “[t]he ecology of the country is richly diverse and conducive to growing productive plants, raising food-generating livestock and providing sustainable resources such as fish, fruit and fungi” (ibid, p.9). In this example and others in the strategy, local produce is identified as sustainable, but with no rationale for why this is the case, or what this implies more broadly in terms of its production. This diverse array of food producing activities reflects a broad rural capacity. Notably, the strategy refers to the historically low horticultural production relative to fodder crops as well as grains and livestock, such references to growing plants, fruits and fungi, suggest a nudge toward more diversified forms of production. Associated with this are numerous references within the strategy to farmers, agricultural jobs, succession planning, land access and supports needed for new farmers to maintain Devon’s rural livelihoods. In this sense, Devon and Durham share similarities as rural agricultural counties, although Durham’s strategy identifies a greater focus on commercial livestock rearing, followed by cereal production. Both strategies note minimal commercial fruit and vegetable production. In *Feeding Devon’s Future*, urban agriculture is given some, albeit considerably less attention in the strategy than commercial-scale conventional agriculture. References to urban food production include “[g]rowing and sharing food in communities” (ibid, p. 9), gardening, a need for “more self-grow and community growing schemes” (ibid, p.2), as well as growing activities in schools. “Produce-centered” social activities such as seed swaps, regional cuisine, “food and drink festivals, markets and fairs, plan and livestock competitions” (ibid, p.8) are also mentioned as initiatives linked to the social or cultural life of Devon. There is no reference to peri-urban agriculture or indication that urban and rural activities may overlap or form a continuum of production in the county.

Durham’s food strategy begins by acknowledging the context of the global food system, and some of the flaws within it that make relocalisation attractive:

“Much of the food we eat in the UK is part of a highly complex globalised food system where food chains can become long and not always transparent ... Food production in developed countries has become industrialised with farms becoming larger, mixed farming giving way to monoculture, and power concentrated in the hands of large multinational companies, notably retailers.” (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 3)

Implied in this statement is that smaller-scale, mixed farming with shorter supply chains to the end consumer are preferable to the current conventional format. The Durham strategy specifically points out that there is no nationally accepted definition of “local” in the context of food, and as is shown above creates its own definition of “Sustainable Local Food” that centres simply on “[f]ood that is produced and consumed in or near County Durham” (ibid, p.3). The document states that the strategy “has locally produced food at its core and considers the wider issues in relation to local production and consumption” (ibid, p.2). Associated with the global food system is Durham’s links to export markets, which in its introduction notes, results in “too much” of Devon’s food being consumed “out of the region” (ibid, p. 2).

Durham’s agricultural context is identified primarily through the production of livestock, cereals, oil seed rape, potatoes, and a very minor horticultural sector (ibid, p.5). From this description, Durham’s rural focus is illustrated, and placed within the context of imports and exports. In addition to rural agricultural production, throughout the document a number of references are also made which indicate a place for UA. As with its definition of sustainability, the strategy makes a clear statement about what it feels local *community* food production does:

“Community food production strengthens food security and access to “good food” and it can assist people on low incomes to reduce their food costs through partial self-provisioning. Involvement in such activities can improve mental and physical health, social inclusion, and contribute towards crime reduction. Projects can offer formal and informal training and be a stage on the route to employment. At grassroots level it re-connects eaters with the food on their plate and can lead to healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.” (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 30).

The focus on community in this definition, and the inclusion of ‘projects’ implies an urban focus, rather than rural agricultural production at scale. In this regard, “sustainable intensification” (ibid, p. 4) is offered as a way to enhance rural food provisioning in Durham without “adverse environmental impact” and increased land use. The wide range of potential outcomes that are offered from ‘community food production’ show, as with the other four cases, that UA is presented as a panacea to address many social, environmental and economic issues. Likewise, for those four cases that consider rural food production⁸¹, a wide range of benefits are identified to suggest that relocalisation of the food system holds great potential for sustainability on a number of levels.

In contrast to the other strategies, Belfast, with the exception of a few mentions of access to “fresh, organic, local, seasonal (and inexpensive) vegetables” (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 15), appears to be less focused on the actual food produced in Belfast, but more the act of growing as a means to achieving a variety of (social) benefits. As a strategy for the City of Belfast, the focus of this document is specifically urban, and has no rural focus, unlike the other case studies. Examples of food production approaches presented in the strategy include allotments, home gardening, container gardening, garden sharing, community gardens, guerrilla gardens and growing space at schools. Figure 20 offers a range of general and specific community gardening activities on a spectrum of which age groups will be targeted for their use and benefit. This fits with the vision statement of the strategy: *"All people in Belfast will have the opportunity for improved health and wellbeing through involvement in growing activities throughout their lifetimes and within their local neighbourhoods"* (ibid, p.5).

⁸¹ Once again, recalling that Belfast is focused exclusively on urban initiatives.



Figure 20: Community Growing Actions (Source: Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 14)

The strategy notes a “renewed interest in community growing”, citing “developing public awareness of health, environmental and food security issues” (ibid, p.5), which itself gives an implicit acknowledgement of sustainability through the social and environmental pillars.

From this examination, it is apparent that all five strategies took unique approaches to the concept of sustainability, and that this varied across cases regardless of the type of coalition model. This included whether or how it was defined, how the pillars were utilised in the strategies, and how these were linked to some food production activities.

7.3 Sustainable Food Strategies: Diagnostic, Prognostic and Motivational Framings

All strategies presented justification for why a LFS was needed and framed the core diagnostic issues that acted as drivers, including problems spanning from the global to the local levels. Documents mostly presented the key unsustainable issues explicitly in introductory scene-setting content, as well as throughout where relevant to a particular context (for example, issues relating to a specific pillar).

Actions within strategies to address unsustainable issues were presented through prognostic frames, and these related to LFP in various forms, as well as who would be expected to *do* this work.

Motivational frames differed from diagnostic and prognostic frames as they were typically presented not as lists (like issues and actions), but rather through an overarching vision statement along with subject-specific statements throughout, typically relating to key objectives. In this way, motivational content was used to landmark throughout the strategies to emphasise to the reader the value of the policy and its actions.

The following tables (32–36) present content from each strategy to illustrate the diagnostic, prognostic and motivation approaches taken linking sustainable objectives of the three pillars to LFP. From these tables it can be seen simply through the volume of content in one particular pillar over others where a strategy's objectives are focused, and how associations to LFP are being made.

Table 32: Sustainability and Local Food Production in the BNES Food Strategy

Sustainability and Local Food Production in the BNES Food Strategy			
	Diagnostic (Problem)	Prognostic (Actions)	Motivation
Social	•Poor diet, ill-health and rising obesity levels (and associated costs) – Multiple causes including cultural and systemic factors	•“healthy and sustainable places” priority to increase the production and consumption of local food”; “increase the demand for healthy and sustainable food... (p. 4) •Continue to incorporate edible and fruiting plants into public spaces to provide residents with a source of fresh, local food.	•... raise the profile of good sustainable food behaviour to cook from scratch, grow and develop food related skills to make informed food decisions and •Community food growing to increase production of local and healthy food, co-ordinating provides dietary and mental health improve opportunities for community social engagement
	•Lack of knowledge on food production systems and impacts	• Improve food culture by increasing opportunities ... to develop food related knowledge and skills, ... co-ordinating communal events that promote good food to the public and by providing more community food growing space and opportunities for people to reconnect with local producers."	•"... can contribute to community engagement. •...to equip people with the knowledge to healthy and sustainable food
	•High demand for allotments, long wait lists	•To increase the amount of community food growing space across the district such as allotments, community gardens and communal orchards to meet the demand for community food growing and to enable a wider number of people to realise the benefits of food growing. •Develop initiatives and guidance to support community and commercial food growing.	•... can reduce B&NES's community decrease negative environmental security and generates an income growing and associated health

Environmental	•Impact of food production and supply on environment and climate change	• The use of sustainable farming methods/Local and sustainable food production and supply, including community food growing	• "reducing our impact on t •... will help to create farm s robust and resilient to futur
		• Encourage farmers to adopt high environmental and animal welfare standards and to enhance the agricultural stewardship of land and reduce carbon emissions	•can reduce GHG emissions distance food transportation production; reduce the neg of farming, and improve the increase the environmental locally grown food
		•Develop planning policies further to support the development and diversification of agricultural businesses and to protect high-grade agricultural land and supply chain infrastructure	•improves long-term food s resilience to shocks and sho chains
		•Increasing provision of community food growing space, protecting local food infrastructure and seeking market opportunities for local food	
	•Lack of awareness of impacts of producing food ("intensive food production methods"), processing and distribution has on the world's resources and environmental quality	•"Reducing and recycling food waste [reduces GHG emissions caused by the break-down of waste food in land-fill.]"	•... will reduce GHG emissio impacts associated with foo
		•Education on food systems to increase demand for local and sustainable food.	•... to reduce the negative e local food sector
	•UK dependence on imported food (transport emissions, traffic, pollution) and is a threat to food security	•Upscaling local food production and supply ...	•... can contribute to local f decrease GHG emissions, po transport; can enhance our shortages in global food sup

Economic	•"economic challenges facing some local food and farming businesses": Impact of small and medium farms due to: Food importation, rising agricultural input prices and a consolidation in food retail, increasing pressure and competition from large and/or international businesses	•Championing and supporting local farming, distribution, processing, retail and catering businesses (championing local independent businesses, encouraging people and businesses to “buy local”, raising awareness of local food and influencing policy making to better support local business)	•"a thriving local food economy" • A fairer economic return from food production, processing, distribution and retail sectors, contributing to local economic containment and job creation • Opportunities to local food production contributes to the local multiplier effect
		•Develop a B&NES Local Food Partnership to facilitate joint action on local food supply chain development.	
		•Develop planning policies further to support the development and diversification of agricultural businesses and to protect high-grade agricultural land and supply chain infrastructure	

Table 33: Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Belfast Food Strategy

Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Belfast Food Strategy			
	Diagnostic (Problem)	Prognostic (Actions)	Motivations
Social	•Health and Wellbeing "issues"	•Support healthier lifestyles by providing growing opportunities to people of all ages, marginalised groups; Promoting links with community growing and healthy eating and physical activity	•Improved/increased: health-related quality of life/ fitness/surgery recovery/ reduced death from cardiovascular disease/ II diabetes/high blood pressure/ and relaxation"/mood/civic wellbeing)/ reduced depression with specific reference to disadvantaged groups)
	•Barriers to participation/inclusion in growing: Older people, people with disabilities, BME groups and newcomers	•Engage the wider community through inclusiveness in the development of shared growing spaces; Use of the Health Equity in all Policies (WHO) framework for systematic consideration of health inequalities in relation to community growing	•Community development/capacity/cohesion/ networks/relationships (intergenerational)/confidence in community/language and culture (reference to newcomers from different cultures and backgrounds), social groups
	•"lack of control over shared space can have a negative impact on mental health" (p.15)	•Delivering events to promote growing; skills development	•Skills/transferable skills/ knowledge reference to between generations employability skills as a "stepping stone" education and/or employment
	•Increased demand for community growing space	•Developing innovative means of sharing information on growing/Supporting new models of management which meet community needs	•Access to "nutritious fresh food" (lower income groups)
	•Food security "issues"	•Promoting projects aimed at low-income groups	

Environmental	•Environment "issues"	•"Work to support environmental sustainability by ensuring that growing spaces and activities contribute positively to the local environment and support the attainment of sustainable development targets set for local government"	• Improved/increased: bio... environmental services from "sustainable development"/ sustainability"; "Sustainable protection/development of repurposing of derelict land green spaces
	•"impact of machinery and transportation" of commercially produced food	•Identifying new, sustainable sites for growing/Promoting sustainable practices in growing projects	• Reduced: energy demand, to mechanical cooling, environ... trees), risk of flooding (link... services of plants, "green sp... climate change and support... contributing to lower energ... carbon emissions."
		•Promoting integration of green space provision in planning	
Economic		•"Encourage the development of the social economy in local neighbourhoods and suitable training and skills development for employability" (p. 5)	•Improved/increased: "sus... prosperity"/economic deve
		•Identify social enterprise opportunities for growing/Provision of financial support for growing	•Access to inexpensive, loca
			•Social entrepreneurship/C "community-run businesses activities"

Table 34: Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Devon Food Strategy

Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Devon Food Strategy			
	Diagnostic (Problem)	Prognostic (Actions)	Motivational
Social	•Poor health (malnutrition, obesity, disease - children noted in particular)	•School food activities (growing, learning, cooking, diet, etc., with a focus on schools in deprived areas)	•Improved mental and physical health, improved nutrition and active lifestyles, "Rich" learning opportunities, appreciate the natural cycle of growing and growing" (p.14).
	•Food insecurity (household level: food access, food deserts, fear of crime/global supply: linked to climate change)	•Develop more community growing schemes; •Social, educational and entrepreneurial food activities	•Affordability and access to food improves health and well-being
	•Possibility of "civil emergency"		
	•"Fractured" human relationship with food (loss of knowledge of production, preparation, sense of value, loss of cultural links to agricultural skills etc)	•Linking people and land to promote food education and activity through schools, community and self-help projects.	•Food as a cultural bridge; 'sense of place' in communities (including food) cultural and spiritual value
Environmental	•Resource intensity of meat and dairy production/Greater food-prints and long-term consequences/Declining resources: oil, water, soil (includes quality) and impacts on agriculture/Increasing human population and resource use/pollution for food production/	•Increase food produced to high environmental sustainability standards ("that protect wildlife and nature"; enhance biodiversity); "Need to minimise the loss of best quality productive land and maximise the potential of land use for producing food that respects and protects the natural environment" (p.11)	"Social value is achieved when organisations source their goods in a way that achieves value for additional benefits to society at the same time minimising damage" (p.11)

	•GHG emissions and Climate change (storms, floods, droughts, pests, diseases) (links to farmers), and long-term impacts of events not yet known	•Increase food produced to high environmental sustainability standards ("that protect wildlife and nature"; enhance biodiversity); •Analyse ecological impacts (good/bad practice; food-print)	
	•Growth in food waste at all points of the food cycle		
	•Loss of intrinsic beauty of landscape and security of food supply	•"Mixed farming businesses ... could be a model for more sustainable farming depending upon how sustainability is judged" (p.3)	
Economic	•Rural livelihoods/Low, increasingly volatile incomes in food and farming sector	•Support local producers through public and private procurement	•Market opportunities for p human population, increasing consumption of middle class Devon's rich land and sea resources and sustainable produce from keeps value in the local economy
		•Clear farm succession planning; Promote new entrants to farming and horticulture; Support knowledge transfer (notes 'good practice')	
		•High quality land to not be sold for 'inappropriate' development	

Table 35: Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Devon Food Strategy

Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Devon Food Strategy			
	Diagnostic (Problem)	Prognostic (Actions)	Motivations
Social	•Poor diet: Obesity, diabetes, some cancers, heart disease, prevalence of ready cooked, convenience meals	•"Bristol should lead the way in creating opportunities for people of all ages to learn new skills and experience the pleasure of growing and cooking good food" (p.11)	•"To build a food culture for the benefit of people and planet at its heart"
		•"Fresh, local, good food, cooked from scratch" (p.11)	•"A healthy, viable and equitable food system"
		•"communities could plant orchards in their shared green spaces, there could be an expansion of allotments with links to community kitchens."	• "Involve every school in the food strategy approach to food and make it a regular visits part of every child's education"
			•"Halt and reverse the rise in food poverty"
Environmental	•Food system as contributor to carbon emissions, biodiversity loss and waste	•"we need to understand and value the multiple benefits that arise from sustainable agriculture and land management"	•"To build a food culture for the benefit of people and planet at its heart"
		•"quality food growing land has to be protected and available for food production" (p.15)	•"Supporting local food production in a healthy environment" (links to transport)

		•"All Bristol Development Framework documents, including local plans, have to reflect 'good food' values and include land allocation for food growing that is in line with demand from community groups and individuals" (p.15)	•"good for people, places and the environment"
		•farm good quality land to protect it from non-food development	
	•Food waste	•"All energy and nutrients from domestic & commercial food waste would be returned to food production in or around the city and the vast majority of the city's residents would participate in food waste reduction"	
Economic	•Disappearance of small and medium farms, processors, wholesalers, retailers due to importation of food; loss of local vegetable market and impact on jobs	•Increase urban food production & distribution/ grow and distribute Bristol grown fruit and vegetables to restaurants, cafes, markets, households	•"The potential to produce food on land and rooftops in the city"
	•Supermarket monopoly causing shop closures on high streets; fewer jobs, jobs of low value and low status	•"Access to start-up support could enable new enterprises to develop and innovate, increasing the number of food-related jobs and training opportunities"	• "It should be ... affordable and good for workers, good for the community"
	•Food Deserts		•"The city should have fresh food, local, regional, organic and fairly priced available at affordable prices in all centres."

Table 36: Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Durham Food Strategy

Sustainability and Local Food Production in the Durham Food Strategy			
	Diagnostic (Problem)	Prognostic (Actions)	Motivation
Social	•Health: Diet related ill-health and non-communicable diseases; costs to the NHS; low rate of healthy food consumption; Health impacts of farm workers to agricultural pesticides and those living in close proximity to intensively farmed land, concerns over consumption of pesticide residues	•"encouraging actions that enable more people to become directly involved in producing some of their own food, moving to shorter supply chains, providing opportunities for learning for all, promoting healthy diets"	•Food should be safe, nutritious, environmentally sustainable, this "good food" •Residents in County Durham should have access to a more sustainable diet, combat diet related ill health.
	•Lack of clarity to end consumer about where food comes from	•Encourage and support new community-based food production by sharing of knowledge and skills, promoting sources of support, information and funding	•All residents in County Durham should have access to nutritious, affordable, sustainable food through opportunities for community involvement in food production
	•Food accessibility: Cost, Difficult for consumers to find reliable local food sources	• Explore how Social Housing providers can improve access to local food, growing and cooking skills for their residents	•The establishment of more local food projects, especially in areas with low access to affordable, fresh, local food
	•waiting lists for allotments (unmet demand)	•Identify and facilitate the identification of local plots of land for community gardens or allotments	•Increased opportunities for residents to grow their own food close to home.
	•loss of skills relating to food production and preparation	•Identify resources to provide training opportunities within communities (e.g. growing, composting, poultry/bee keeping, preserving, marketing, food safety etc); •Encourage schools to create pathways to career development in agriculture and horticulture	•People have a right to information and skills to develop the skills, understand food systems and be able to recognise and choose healthy food

	•Rise in food banks and their use	•Research demand for a model of a system enabling redistribution of excess produce from allotments and other community food projects;	•Improvement in the coordination of food supply and unmet need.
Environmental	•'Environmental costs' of food production: GHG emissions, high water inputs, reliance on non- renewable energy sources (oil), transportation, congestion, damage to transport infrastructure, pollution from transportation	•Choosing seasonal, locally produced food grown in gardens, allotments etc., or purchased direct from the producer, or from a local independent retailer can minimise or even eliminate transport costs	•"This Strategy supports a continually exploring way of using renewable inputs and protecting natural ecosystems."
	•Pressures on food production from rising populations, climate change, resource depletion	•Encourage and support farmers and growers to access training on sustainable production methods, including reduction of input costs, and potential impacts of climate change	•Local food producers learn from each other implementing more sustainable production.
	•loss of biodiversity on extensively farmed land	•Utilise Environmental Stewardship data for farmers to demonstrate the existing contribution farmers are making to the natural environment and guide additional management for sustainability	•"This Strategy supports a continually exploring way of using renewable inputs and protecting natural ecosystems."
	•food waste (all points in the food chain); Rejection of crops by retailers due to size/shape	•Research feasibility of setting up a web-based network for providing a clearing house for suppliers with contract rejects, seasonal gluts and surplus food to be accessed by variety of tiers from voluntary services, small business and local families/public	•Create systems and services to reduce food waste at every stage in the food chain

Economic	•Rising unemployment, welfare reform, low, wages, rising food prices	•A more consistent approach to sustainable food procurement across the whole public sector in the County.	•To improve access to "good" food, regardless of income or place of residence; Refer to the County Durham and rural communities strategy: "The County is flourishing so that food security is a reality for all" (p75)"
	•Difficult for producers to access markets	•Identify resources to research and test models for short supply chains in County Durham. One example of such a model would be a wholesale hub allowing smaller producers to achieve economies of scale and share risk by working co-operatively •Build upon and develop the Taste Durham Award (Restaurants, Cafés, Pubs) for marketing to tourists and visitors, including targets for increasing the number of establishments awarded "Local Food Champion" status. •Assist local food businesses by: Developing Planning policies that encourage and support local food, Tailored business development support	•To support and develop a food sector that is flourishing, competing in the local economy of County Durham and support for the development of short supply chains.

7.3.1 Social Issues, Actions and Aims

Unsustainable Social Issues

Across the five cases, the social pillar of sustainability was a key focus with several common diagnostic concerns presented, illustrating what was believed to be unsustainable. Issues ranged from the global system level to local-specific concerns. These were quite often related, and associated with one or more pillars, illustrating an awareness of overlap and connectedness of the food system at multiple levels. Society was referred to generally in some strategies as community or citizens, while some noted particular qualities, such as age, ethnic and minority groups, as well as socio-economic status to identify vulnerable groups.

Health as a consideration often used in conjunction with the social pillar, was represented consistently across all cases, with issues most often stemming from the structure of the global level of the food system. Poor physical health was associated with unhealthy eating habits across the cases. Even for those coalition groups with weaker connections to their local authority, the NHS or Public Health departments all had some level of involvement. For those cases led by the council (Categories 1, being BNES and Belfast, and Category 2, Devon) these departments were involved in setting objectives, highlighting particular social issues. These were primarily health-related concerns such as obesity and non-communicable lifestyle diseases, represented across all cases (Belfast excepted) through local-specific statistics and figures to highlight the extent of the problem. Durham and BNES strategies identified the need to view issues of health according to wider 'social determinants'. Amongst the cases, Durham uniquely mentions health problems related to chemical use in agriculture by farmers, and residues of these chemicals on food.

As the culprit behind a wider shift in 'food culture' (a term used in BNES and Bristol documents), the global food system was linked to processed foods and large supermarket retailers causing citizens to be more disconnected from food than at any other point in history. Feeding Devon's Future identifies "fast and convenient foods" as associated with reduced health, weakened community connection, and diminished individual skills. Echoing the other strategies, this statement describes a cascade of problems stemming from this change in how food is consumed. Further to this, the notion of disconnection appeared to be one that existed spatially, with reference made often to foods grown abroad and imported,

via large retailers. A temporal element of disconnection was particularly emphasised in the Devon strategy as something that has happened in recent generations resulting in young people having comparatively poor knowledge of food. As a result, a lack of knowledge of food and food skills (from growing to preparation) was agreed to have had significant impacts on public health across all cases. Belfast identifies generational connections and intergenerational sharing of knowledge as important but does not go into detail regarding what types of knowledge is being sought through the strategy. Some strategies identified specific concerns such as disconnection from food *heritage* (Devon, BNES, Durham), and these spoke to rural traditions. Similarly, this cultural shift was identified in a unique way within the Devon strategy as distancing people from the intrinsic value of food. This was associated with greater levels of food waste, suggesting an overlap with the environmental and economic pillars. Notably, only Durham identified the issue of a lack of information to consumers about their food and linked this to health, suggesting that responsibility lies above the individual level and in the hands of manufacturers and retailers, and that information must be framed a right.

This disconnection from food was also noted by Devon and BNES as having an impact on social cohesion, by means of a cultural shift away from communal meals. Like physical health, the theme of social cohesion was echoed across all cases and strongly linked to issues of mental health regardless of where strategies landed on the rural to urban spectrum. This was a central focus for the Belfast strategy. While not mentioned explicitly in the strategy itself, its social focus was explained by actors in the previous chapter as being borne out of the history of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland between Loyalist and Nationalist groups. Social cohesion of Belfast communities was linked to the issue of the exclusion of particular groups (the elderly, newcomers, BME groups, and low-income groups). Identification of particular vulnerable groups being disproportionately impacted was common, with those of lower socio-economic status (including farmers, in the case of Devon and Durham, identifying the concern of rural poverty) being the most widely acknowledged. This was a common framing strategy across all cases.

Food poverty was an issue presented by all strategies, with several associations made to its connections to economic, social, and public health considerations. Increased food bank use was offered as an illustration of the increase in food poverty in Durham and Devon, having

roots at the national policy level and the global economic system. Devon approached this issue in exceptional detail with several pages dedicated to the concern early in the strategy⁸² prior to its other strands of activity. Associated with food poverty for some cases was the notion of food security, which was presented as an access issue with both geographic and financial aspects. Food security was also interpreted across cases as being related to reduced yields from climate change and supply disruptions. For Devon, a hypothetical “civil emergency” (2014, p. 3) was presented at points within the strategy. While being somewhat separate from the other social concerns, the worry expressed in relation to food access in the event of an emergency recommends it to the social pillar. While this statement concerns itself only with distribution rather than production systems, throughout the strategy, the need for increased focus on local production for food security and food sovereignty is argued. This theme of resilience is common across most cases, although not one presented by Belfast. The focus on distribution implies the shipping of food products into Devon from other areas, and the claim that this is not sustainable aligns with the call for more localised food system. With such a general statement, no specific single action is offered, but rather, it can be assumed that the strategy itself is seeking to address such concerns from a number of angles.

In the conclusion of the strategy, it argues that it would not be advisable “to depend too simplistically on the current food distribution systems which in the longer term are neither safe, nor secure, nor sustainable” (ibid, p.13). In this way, Devon emphasises the unsustainability of the global food system, and frames this concern more explicitly than other cases. Associated with this is a wider acknowledgement of global and local level issues across the many parts of the food system: “our society in general and communities in Devon in particular, face serious challenges regarding the production, circulation and consumption of food and food waste” (ibid, p.2). Through these statements, Devon strikes a different diagnostic tone than other strategy documents, which use less alarmist wording. Durham also makes direct statements about the issues stemming from the global food system.

A lack of food knowledge and food disconnection were also associated to the issue of a lack of growing space, with all cases citing citizen demand for allotments. Viewed as a single

⁸² It is positioned prior the other five ‘strands of activity’ and their associated actions, separating it and allowing it space to be laid out in greater detail. Food poverty has been set up as a stand-alone issue in this document with its own actions.

issue this was one which has uniquely clear prognostic actions associated with it, and clear motivational outcomes. Other social issues are not addressed so simply or directly by nature of their complex origins and impacts.

Local Food Actions for Social Change

Prognostic actions relating to the social pillar of sustainability are consistent across the five cases. Recommendations shared by all include a range of community level growing activities as well as education and skill building programmes. These actions centered around allotments, community growing spaces, and growing in schools. BNES and Bristol also recommend community orchards. This illustrates the belief that LFP can have a range of positive social impacts. Through identifying and framing these in relation to their positive social outcomes, the strategies argue for the need to invest in them.

These actions variously correspond with the above diagnostic frames. As a representative example showing the common position shared by the five cases, in the BNES strategy, food production is claimed to promote greater access to fresh food, increased community cohesion and social links, improved health and overall food security. An example of increased connection to food and producers was put forward by Durham through the specific recommendation of supporting the establishment of more CSAs as a food production model⁸³. In every case study strategy, benefits of one food-related activity such as growing were found to overlap across pillars, suggesting wider-reaching impacts than just a single outcome.

A significant focus within this pillar was on educating citizens through food production in order to improve their lives in a variety of ways: particularly through better health via access to fresh produce. With education being such a strong focus (relating to a loss of skills and food system knowledge), training on growing sites and in schools are repeated throughout the actions. Bristol notes training on how to grow and use produce for meal preparation, and for both Devon and Durham, training and growing was linked to an increase in the sense of connection with and value of food, as well as improved food access. Several of the prognostic actions in Feeding Devon's Future involve programs that

⁸³ Through the CSA model, buyers pay up front for a share in a farm's production, investing in the harvest (come what may) and sharing the risk with the farmer while ensuring a more stable livelihood for the producer.

encourage residents to grow food, resulting in them regaining an understanding of natural cycles and local capacity for food production. This also ties to the issue of ‘cultural loss’ in relation to Devon’s rural heritage, which, if addressed, is framed as having the potential to enrich the county and act as a cultural bridge. Sharing meals and sharing stories about food was noted in Devon as a way to reconnect. This notion of looking to the past is a significant theme found in the Devon Strategy.

The demand for allotments was echoed across all cases above, with the strategies responding to this through the promise of additional provision of space. However, Belfast’s concerns with mental health and a need for improved social cohesion resulted in the council taking the route of community gardening as a vehicle to address these issues, rather than individual allotments⁸⁴. Again, through the application of the HiAP framework, Belfast sought approaches to community gardens and training that could integrate disenfranchised and vulnerable groups. Establishing community gardens across the boundaries of struggling areas was felt to be the best way to meet these needs. However, the strategy goes on to state: *“whilst here may be limitations to the amount of urban land available for allotments or community gardens, emerging regional development policy offers opportunities to protect and develop urban green space in Belfast, particularly as commercially less-attractive land may be cost-effectively transformed...”* (2012, p. 19). Notably, with regard to the provision of space, no firm commitments are made, but rather a setting of expectations and illustration of barriers, and tentative opportunities are framed. This paragraph appears to set the expectation that spaces will be small and unsuitable for in-ground growing.

BNES sought a combined approach to the complaint of a lack of growing space, with the strategy offering the provision of allotments, but placing an emphasis on community growing projects for education and skill-building needs. Actions linked to an increase in allotment space appear to act as a gateway to address a range of concerns through an increased involvement in growing activities. Examples include the redistribution of surplus food from allotments to those in need (Durham), providing access to growing space for different groups (public sector employees, social housing residents, offered by BNES), improved knowledge of food through training efforts and others noted above. These recommended actions suggest a greater focus on small to medium scale growing efforts.

⁸⁴ This was based on recommendations from research conducted by SNI which informed the strategy.

Across all the strategies, the implication within the social pillar is that it is predominantly urban and focused on small-scale projects that community members are encouraged to become involved in and would benefit from. This was the case even for Durham and Devon which are strongly rural in their focus. In the case of Devon, of the five ‘strands of activity’ presented in the strategy, three had a primarily social focus (see table 31)⁸⁵. A limited number of social actions for Devon may be a direct result of an overall social-urban emphasis in the strategies, as its rural focus ties its aims more strongly to the environmental and economic pillars. Durham on the other hand presents the most detailed list of social actions of all the cases, despite its rural emphasis. As a result of being often very specific, this list is quite detailed and extensive (such as noting specific schools and colleges to work with on particular projects).

Sustainable Social Outcomes

All strategies claim significant potential for social improvement at the local level through food production.

The BNES strategy states that a “healthy and sustainable food culture” involves, among other things, the ability of people to grow food by having access to space. Although what is meant by ‘culture’⁸⁶ isn’t expanded upon, this statement offers local growing as a specific action, and the strategy goes on to provide more detail about its outcomes:

“[c]ommunity food growing provides people with a source of local and healthy food, contributes to physical activity, provides dietary and mental health benefits and can improve opportunities for community cohesion and social engagement” (2014, p. 18).

From the perspective of the social pillar, it appears that BNES sees local growing as a means of ticking many boxes with a single ‘type’ of action⁸⁷, and like Durham has used Bristol’s concept of “good food” as a wider term. Illustrating engagement with the social pillar, the strategy seeks to

⁸⁵ See “Community and Culture”, “Health and Wellbeing”, “Learning and Skills” (DSP Food Group, 2014)

⁸⁶ However, linking back to the diagnostic frames for this case, the impact of the global food system on food culture was outlined, allowing links to be made.

⁸⁷ As is shown in the prognostic frames for the social pillar, these actions are largely focused on urban community growing projects.

“raise the profile of good food, increase engagements in sustainable food behaviours, and increase opportunities for people to cook from scratch, grow food, celebrate food, and develop food related skills that enable them to make informed food decisions and to improve their diet” (ibid, p. 4).

This statement presents many topics shared across the five case studies in the social motivational frame. As was shown in the diagnostic frame, the issues of poor physical and mental health and a lack of knowledge relating to food were important areas of focus, as well as a lack of growing space. Stemming from this, deeper awareness of the food system is linked by all to improved health, but for some cases is also associated with wider implications about responsible, more sustainable consumption. For Durham, for example, such motivational aims are restated in a number of formulations throughout the document, with many overlapping (for example, the aim of increased access to growing space has a knock-on effect that feeds into other aims of education and health). Bristol, BNES and Devon shared similar content relating to consumption, although Belfast did not approach the theme in this way.

The Good Food Plan appears to recognize Bristol’s established position as a model in local-level food system work and seeks to empower its reader by drawing on this record:

“Bristol should lead the way in creating opportunities for people of all ages to learn new skills and experience the pleasure of growing and cooking Good Food” (2013, p. 11).

Notably, its motivational aims range from quite broad and aspirational in their presentation (*“[a] healthy, viable and equitable food system”*) to more specific (*“[h]alt and reverse the rise in childhood obesity”, “[s]ee a year on year increase in the proportion of households eating meals cooked from scratch...”*). In contrast to the single diagnostic frame, being poor health due to poor diet, the social motivational frames are more multi-faceted illustrating a number of areas where food can have an impact (in schools, at the household level, for childhood obesity). The implication within the Plan is that a reconnection with food through growing and cooking will shift consumers to healthier choices. What is meant by some

terms, such as “*viable*” and “*equitable*” are not expanded upon but left to the interpretation of the reader.

The Growing Communities strategy was built around improved community connection through growing activities. These were associated with improved health and wellbeing – expressed predominantly from a mental health perspective and physical health from improved diet and exercise. Belfast presents a series of evidence-based statement relating to local food and its associated benefits, such as “*improved health-related quality of life*”, “*Reduced mortality from high blood pressure*”, “*reduced depression*”, “*reduced barriers between social groups*” (2012, pp. 14–15). These and a number of other benefits framed in a similar language (‘improved’/‘increased’, ‘reduced’/‘decreased’) present the social advantages of community growing in Belfast. These motivational frames reflect the stated issues, but provide significantly more detail, suggesting that Belfast sees a great number of social benefits associated with local growing relating in particular to physical health, mental health, social inclusion and skills development.

In Feeding Devon’s Future, food growing is offered through a motivational lens, claiming, “[s]ocial bonding around growing food or sharing a meal brings added value” (2014, p. 8), however this concept of “added value” isn’t expanded upon and remains unclear. This reminds of the notion of “social value” presented above as a veiled interpretation of sustainability, which offers a broad positive vision (hinged on local procurement) across the three pillars, albeit with a social focus. Despite this, what ‘social value’ is vague.

Most cases used the welfare of children as a motivational tool to prompt action to increase local food growing initiatives. These largely related to childhood obesity rates and education through food growing programs.

Other vulnerable groups were highlighted in the motivational frames to illustrate how the needs of various groups could be met through local growing. With its focus on inclusivity via the HiAP (WHO 2014) approach, Belfast presents the beneficial outcomes for all ages, and emphasizes intergenerational knowledge exchange, reduced isolation, and improved integration of newcomers or those with mental health issues. Durham’s was the only strategy to highlight farmer’s health and safety as local issues, but no prognostic actions or

motivational outcomes were linked to this. Another concern unique to Durham which highlighted the vulnerability of the population as a whole was in relation to (mis)information about food. Within the document it argues that *“people have a right to information and opportunities to develop the skills, understanding and knowledge to be able to recognize and choose good food”* (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 10). This statement acts as a frame to charge its readers with a sense of injustice over the relative lack of information and choice relating to their food and spark a motivation for change.

7.3.2 Environmental Issues, Actions and Aims

Unsustainable Environmental Issues

The five case strategies varied in their approaches to diagnostic framing of environmental issues. The Belfast and Bristol strategies possessed limited environmental content in comparison to BNES, Durham and Devon. However, common across all were the issues of climate change, GHG emissions, biodiversity loss and the impacts of long-distance transport of food on these.

In terms of explicit acknowledgement, for Belfast, only a vague and guarded mention of “environmental issues” is stated in the foreword and executive summary as an area that could be positively impacted by food growing activities. “Environmental impacts of travel” (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 6) is also expressed, associated to the movement of individuals to community growing spaces, as well in relation to the production and transportation of commercial food products. Environmental sustainability was included as a key priority for Belfast and comprised the sub-themes of biodiversity, climate change, food security, land use and sustainable travel, although why these were identified was not detailed. A lack of detail indicates a narrow view of how food production interacts with the environment, and diagnostic framings in relation to this pillar appear to have been deliberately simplified or diminished. Bristol is similarly minimalist in its approach to the environment, with only a select few issues identified. Food waste is presented, linked with resource over-use and climate change, and the food system generally is associated with carbon emissions and biodiversity loss. Reference to the ‘food system’ is general and can indicate production, transport, processing, retail, preparation and/or waste. As such, production is not specifically indicated as being the source of any particular environmental issues. No further detail is given of the extent of these issues, or further details of their implications.

The remaining cases present comparatively more diagnostic content, identifying multiple issues relating directly to agricultural production, and taking much stronger and more explicit positions. BNES, Devon and Durham all commonly identify the major source of problems as large-scale conventional agriculture. Poor production methods (reliance on fossil fuels, over-exploitation of natural resources) and transportation of food over long distances are tied to environmental degradation (soil, water, air), biodiversity loss and increased carbon emissions. As global-level problems, some of these are presented as having the potential to be mediated by reforming actions at the local level.

As an example, the BNES strategy is bold in identifying conventional food production methods as an issue, asserting that BNES is no exception to poor production practices:

“The majority of emissions (80-86%) are associated with food production. Energy-intensive production methods including the use and manufacture of agro-chemicals, inefficient soil management that releases rather than absorbs greenhouse gas emissions, slurry storage and factory farming of animals are major causes of GHG emissions and contribute significantly to climate change, water pollution, soil erosion, biodiversity loss and poor animal welfare.” (2014, p. 12)

These three cases support their assertions by drawing on global and regional statistics, for example linking agricultural production to GHG emissions and to climate change. For BNES, this links to the ESB objectives of GHG emissions reductions as a driving objective of the strategy. Using data to illustrate their local agricultural contexts in this way frames a need for action and draws clear links to efforts that could mitigate environmental problems.

Devon’s strategy identifies multiple negative environmental impacts of poor farming practice, including pollution, food waste, carbon emissions and climate change. The document asserts that “[a]griculture is a significant source of greenhouse gases and dependency on fossil fuel is universal and this needs to be reversed” (2014, p. 4). This, and similar statements in this strategy lack detail and avoid being overly critical of specific production methods and are cautious in their wording. Considering the rural agricultural base in Devon, and the fact that issues identified within the environmental pillar imply rural production of some scale, this strategy appears to limit aggressive assertions against production practices to avoid alienating local producers.

All five case studies identify the long-distance transportation of food as an issue which affects the environment through vehicle emissions. Belfast and Bristol limit the amount of attention given to this issue, where again Devon, Durham and BNES are more detailed. The BNES strategy delves deeper to associate imports with the potential for disruption of the food supply and thus food insecurity. The term “reliance” is used in the strategy to refer to the importation of food, and “vulnerable” to describe the position in which this leaves BNES. It is for these reasons that for BNES, this pillar is titled as “Environmental Sustainability *and* Food Security”: the two are framed as linked and are used always in conjunction. While for Devon resilience is framed as a social issue, for BNES this is positioned as an environmental one.

The demands of a growing population are identified by both Devon and Durham, with the latter using the term “a perfect storm” in reference to population increase converging with environmental pressures from large-scale intensive agriculture (2014, p. 4). Like Bristol and Devon, Durham notes food waste is an issue at all points in the food chain. This shows concern for an issue which spans the food system and is associated the exploitation of natural resources and its associated environmental degradation. These trends in consumption can be linked to the social notion of disconnection above. Citing this, BNES identifies a lack of citizen awareness of the impacts of their food choices and their impact on the environment from production through to disposal.

Local Food Actions for Environmental Change

Unsustainable environmental issues were framed by most cases as being largely attributable to conventional and large-scale intensive agriculture. Prognostic actions again illustrated urban and rural divisions of activities, but environmental content was heavily focused on rural food production overall. BNES, Devon and Durham emphasised this approach, whereas Belfast again presented exclusively urban recommendations, in line with its stated scope. Bristol appeared to fall in the middle ground.

Prognostic actions were widely related to farming and agricultural practices, which in turn linked to land management and agricultural land preservation (rather than development). Relocalisation via SFSCs was a recommendation to reduce reliance on imports and long-distance transport to reduce GHG emissions and the impacts of climate change. Care for natural resources, biodiversity and the landscape underpinned several recommendations.

Durham's 'Environmental Sustainability' strategic aim recommends actions associated with larger-scale, rural agricultural activities taking place in that county. As an example, the Durham strategy states that it will "[e]ncourage and support farmers and growers to access training on sustainable production methods, including reduction of input costs, and potential impacts of climate change" (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 22). This scale and rural view is similarly reflected by the prognostic environmental frames used within the BNES and Devon document, which also take a proactive position on training farmers. Recognising the extent of rural agriculture taking place in BNES, the council offered a statement of what sustainable food production entails. The strategy states:

"[s]ustainable food production methods, including low agro-chemical use, the provision of wildlife habitat space, improvements to energy efficiency, effective soil and water management and high animal welfare standards, will help to create farm systems that are healthy, robust and resilient to future changes in climate." (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 13)

These recommendations coming from the council are bold, as they implicate farmers in poor production methods, while recognising the significant contribution necessary from them to make change. For example, the suggestion of low agro-chemical use stops short of saying 'organic' but makes the council's position clear that farmers are expected to reduce harmful inputs. The strategy identifies the feedback loop where farming practices affect and are in turn affected by climate change. This presents an argument whereby it is in the long-term best interest for farmers to change their production methods sooner, rather than later. The term "stewardship" is used to describe a less exploitative relationship of the environment by farmers which is being advocated in the strategy.

In Feeding Devon's Future, language highlighting the practice of farming is used, such as "sustainable food production" (2014, p. 3), "ecological impacts" (ibid, p.10,12) and "good/bad practice" (ibid, p.12). Multiple production-related actions are offered to address environmental problems, with several of them overlapping with more than one diagnostic issue. For example, referring to the need for increased food production:

"[production] must be achieved sustainably to retain landscape and biodiversity features such as Devon's hedges, good water quality, etc. Food production will need to

be within a sustaining landscape-scale web of multifunctional 'green infrastructure' and will require skilled integrated land management from Devon's farmers and farm workers" (2014, p. 3).

This consideration to how food is produced in Devon, highlighting a holistic practice with the natural landscape as central, reflects the strategy's position that Devon depends on its environment. By comparison to these detailed descriptions given within the BNES and Devon strategies, Bristol offered a prognostic suggestion for "sustainable agriculture", but with no clear indication of what this would entail.

For BNES, Durham and Devon prognostic actions are directed primarily toward farmers. Many of these actions relate to supporting 'good practice', and included training on and application of standards, information-sharing through networks, and reforming "unsustainable growing methods". With consideration to the variation in farming models available, and statements regarding land management, production, it is notable that the language of actions is quite soft regarding how best to farm in harmony with the environment. While attention is called to "*industrial processes which pollute or destroy the balances which sustain our food supplies*" (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 10), nowhere is organic or a chemical-free approach held up as a model, for example. Instead the strategy suggests a need to "[e]ncourage low-carbon agricultural technologies" (ibid, p.12). This can be viewed as actions that all farmers, regardless of production creed, could get behind. When speaking of mixed farming as a sustainable model, the strategy cautiously offers "*depending upon how sustainability is judged*" (ibid, p.3). In effect, it appears that the language used in relation to environmental sustainability and farming is approached in such a way as to avoid offending farmers over their choice of production method. Despite a few strong statements on Devon's reliance on the environment, the strategy avoids making claims about a right or wrong way to produce food, other than avoiding those that "*pollute or destroy*". In a manner suggesting a need to 'read between the lines', the strategy recommends small-scale mixed agriculture on family farms as its recommendation to be more sustainable. This is an implicit recommendation to move away from large scale conventional agriculture. Similarly expressed at a high level by Durham is the recommendation for a reduction of non-renewable inputs, which like the other strategies, distances it from support of conventional methods of agriculture. So, while these three documents identify the essential role of farmers in achieving environmental sustainability, production methods present an area of

tension which is approached with a fair amount of consideration. While Bristol does offer 'organic' in its vision (p.3), the strategy does not discuss production methods and the stewardship role of farmers/producers. In keeping with an economic theme in the document it notes that "[s]upporting local food producers is better for the environment" as a result of emissions relating to food transport in lorries. This shows an overlap of economy and environment that was put forward across all cases.

A concern over loss of quality agricultural land in Devon was expressed implicitly through a recommendation to *"minimise the loss of best quality productive land and maximize the potential of land use for producing food..."* (2014, p. 11). Tacked on to the end of this action is *"...that respects and protects the natural environment"* (ibid, p. 11), suggesting a strong view toward conservation being conveyed to the audience, in this case, the Council. Bristol and Durham also cite the council as having an important role to play in supporting both urban and rural agriculture through the provision of growing space and land provision, respectively. Bristol in this case calls for its Council to enshrine growing space within public policy. Retaining rural agricultural land for food production rather than development was highlighted by Bristol, Devon and Durham, Bristol as an example asserts that *"[t]he best and most suitable quality food growing land has to be protected and available for food production"* and calls for *"[a]ll Bristol Development Framework documents including local plans"* (2013, p. 15) to include this consideration. However, land development is not so specifically addressed by BNES. Interestingly, the strategy identifies a "key barrier" to local food supply for BNES as *"restrictive planning policies"* (2014, p. 13), thus putting the onus for some of the struggles back on the council. This strategy recommends actions relating to public sector procurement, provision of growing space, *"protecting local food infrastructure"* (ibid, p.13) and looking for ways to expand market opportunities in BNES. All of these are examples of actions the council would be in a position to lead on in response to existing policy barriers. It is here that BNES is vague on the specific subject of safeguarding agricultural land, and in particular, against development. It appears that the council has opted not to implicate itself in any commitments of this nature. Its reference to provision of growing space suggests urban allotment and community garden initiatives. Council responsibility for the issue of agricultural land loss is explicitly stated by Bristol, Devon, Durham and BNES, and these strategies additionally indicate both urban and rural needs for growing space.

As was shown in the analysis of the social pillar, community food growing is a favoured approach for addressing a variety of issues. While perhaps small in its environmental impact in comparison to rural agricultural practices, these community growing initiatives are still offered by all cases (to varying degrees) as having a role to play for this pillar. The focus on land use and provision for growing are where links to food production are made. While the focus for Durham is mostly on larger-scale rural production, the strategy does note that smaller-scale production through gardens and allotments can reduce transport of food. In this way, Durham also highlights the importance of SFSCs in local food security, but this can be associated to either urban or rural growing. Beyond this, no mention is made to how small scale, or urban activities can address environmental issues outlined in Durham's strategy.

Within the environmental pillar, prognostic frames used by Belfast are narrow. Due to the explicit scope of the strategy, these are by default urban in nature and directed only toward small-scale community growing. It can be assumed that the action areas were kept to a minimal number in order to keep aims manageable and achievable for the council.

Sustainable Environmental Outcomes

As shown above, BNES, Devon and Durham shared similar primarily rural-based concerns over the environment. The reduction of carbon emissions is one of several motivations relating to the environment for BNES and was noted by all cases to varying degrees. Between BNES and Durham, LFP was commonly linked to a reduction in long-distance transport of imported foods and thereby lower emissions and climate impact. Environmental stewardship by farmers was associated with a reduction in *"the negative environmental impacts of farming, helping to increase biodiversity and improve the quality of natural resources"* (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 6) as well as a reduction of environmental impacts of poor farming practices, and more ethical production. This variety of outcomes shows how LFP can have diverse positive impacts across the local system and shows an awareness of these interlinkages.

Increased resilience was a theme for BNES that was represented in this pillar. The strategy states that *"[l]ocal and sustainable food production and supply improves long-term food security and can enhance our resilience to shocks and shortages in global food supply chains"* (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 6). The global nature of the food system was

identified by most cases as a point of origin for many local problems, and so BNES presents multiple points which could be shifted to a more sustainable situation if more local production is adopted. This offers a compelling argument for why efforts should be undertaken. Durham's document strongly associates sustainability with the environment, as well as with locally produced food. This is reinforced by several explicit claims made via motivational frames in the strategy, and the inclusion of *"environmentally sustainable"* in its definition of *"good food"*. For example, it states that the strategy *"...supports a local food system that is continually exploring ways of reducing non-renewable inputs and protecting biodiversity and natural ecosystems"* (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 21). Specifying the target of *"environmental protection"*, it states that sustainable food production activities would *"support and enhance biodiversity and allow for sufficient space and resources for non-human life to flourish"* (p.10). Both these statements promote a less anthropocentric view of food production than is commonly put forward across the selected case studies (although all mention biodiversity). Such a framing approach serves to remind the audience of a broader sense of responsibility, and of humans being only one of many species reliant on the natural environment.

In the Growing Communities Strategy, again, many desirable environmental outcomes are identified, and from these the reader can infer threats that the council is aware of, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, energy uses and carbon emissions, and impacts on the beauty of the natural landscape. In this sense, this framing approach could be viewed as *'Diagnostic via Motivational'* content, as the strategy avoids explicit acknowledgement of or details pertaining to specific issues. Like motivational content in the social pillar, the environmental outcomes of actions read as a well-researched and measured list intended to sway the audience through a large volume or logically desirable points.

Bristol's narrow view of environmental content results in minimal use of motivational frames for this pillar. The *"Good Food"* definition highlights *"planet"*, but this suggests more of a tagline with an implied general meaning, rather than clearly expressing specific environmental aims or outcomes. In one example of a very specific vision relating to the issue of food waste, the document states

"All energy and nutrients from domestic and commercial food waste would be returned to food production in or around the city and the vast majority of the city's

residents would participate in food waste reduction." (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 19)

This presents a clear aspiration for readers to get behind, but in isolation this statement stands out in relation to the other fairly general statements. This suggests that the environmental pillar is not the main one being used to appeal to the strategy's audience in the case of Bristol.

Little motivational framing is put forward for the environmental pillar in Feeding Devon's Future in contrast to its many prognostic recommendations. Again, the "*social value*" definition mentioning the need to minimize environmental damage is the main vision offered, presenting overlapping benefits to community food action. All the prognostic actions listed seek to address the unsustainable issues identified in the strategy, however specific outcomes of what LFP would accomplish are lacking. This is a curious omission, considering the extent of environmental concerns and the rural nature of the strategy. Reflecting the alarmist tones of the diagnostic content, overall motivational framing was also based upon warnings identifying "the seriousness of not taking action... to repair the damage to environmental and human well-being" (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 13). Terms such as "risks" and "danger" are used to motivate action in relation to threatening diagnostic issues. Statements such as this seek to motivate through fear, largely, using language of risk to ward off complacency or 'business as usual'. As an example, the document concludes with a motivational call to arms calling for the need to "take action now to prevent further costs later" and "not to depend too simplistically on the current food distribution systems which in the longer term are neither safe, nor secure, nor sustainable" (ibid, p. 12). Only the "*social value*" definition offers some motivation through empowerment using a positive vision.

Where in the social pillar motivational content was associated to particular groups, content in the environmental pillar appears to focus on the environment itself as the actor receiving the benefits. To a lesser extent, strategies implied security of the local population and increased resilience through a well-managed local food supply.

7.3.3 Economic Issues, Actions and Aims

Unsustainable Economic Issues

Similar diagnostic framings relating to the economy were shared by Bristol, BNES and Devon. Each of these documents presented local economic issues as originating from the level of the global economy. Cases described the squeeze on the domestic agricultural sector as being linked to external competition from imports and economies of scale making farming less profitable. Price fluctuations and volatility in the commodities market also caused farmers to struggle. The resultant loss of small and medium family farms was a key theme for Bristol, similarly, considered through rural agricultural employment and “the food and farming sector” in BNES. For Bath, this forms the basis of the “Strong and prosperous economy” section of the strategy. Devon’s rural agricultural context resulted in economic sustainability in the strategy being primarily framed in relation to the impact on farming and rural livelihoods. Echoing the notion of “rural heritage” articulated in the Devon strategy as a point of pride, the loss of farms was a concern expressed in the BNES strategy as well. This loss was underscored for both economic reasons (including rural poverty), and for the effect that this has on the character of the rural landscape of the area. This suggests an area of overlap with the social pillar, as this links to the cognitive association, or sense of place, that citizens have with their region (Page, 2019).

The Good Food Plan for Bristol highlights these issues through identifying a singular but significant change: the development of the supermarket. “The picture changed from diversity and balanced competition to consolidation and monopoly” (2013, p. 6) and is associated with the issue of “fewer jobs of low value and low status” (ibid, p.6). In addition to job loss across the food sector, Bristol links this development with the phenomenon of food deserts, which disproportionately affect those in poverty. As a unique issue expressed amongst the strategies was the cost of food waste disposal noted in the Good Food Plan for Bristol. This suggests an issue that is meaningful for the local authority but is given little additional detail.

Diagnostic framing of economic issues was limited in comparison to the multiple concerns identified across social and environmental pillars. Within this pillar, the rural to urban spectrum is represented through a variety of issues, where above, social issues are most

associated with urban spaces and environmental issues appear to have strongest links to rural areas.

In the Durham strategy, beyond mention of sweeping systemic problems such as rising unemployment, welfare reform, low wages, and rising food prices (none of which are linked to production-related prognostic actions), the main economic focus presented is the difficulty for producers to access markets. This issue implies a hurdle for rural producers in Durham, and was a parallel issue for BNES, Bristol and Devon.

No economic problems were identified explicitly in the Growing Communities Strategy for Belfast. For a council to not acknowledge in any great detail the topics of job creation, social housing needs or food poverty makes such an omission notable, particularly as other strategies linked these issues to LFP.

Local Food Actions for Economic Change

Economic prognostic frames within the case study documents largely focused on actions relating to supporting the food and farming sector. Some cases also brought in urban growing recommendations, although these were fewer. In this sense, it can be assumed that larger rural food production initiatives were prioritized over smaller urban initiatives for their economic potential. The economic pillar was largely tied to the global food trade system of imports and exports⁸⁸.

With the exception of Belfast, the strategies focused on the aim to relocalise their food systems. Unsurprisingly, with Durham's food strategy, being focused above all on *local* food, relocalising was the central priority. While Durham makes a point that supports are needed for smaller producers, actions appear to prioritise larger-scale producers, particularly those that export their products. The aim was to reverse this and keep locally produced food within Durham, with BNES making a similar suggestion. As a unique prognostic action, Durham suggests engaging in research activities to better understand how local food can be integrated into procurement, as well as actions to establish networks for producers. The development of CSAs and food hubs were market-related infrastructure recommendations for producers to sell their products locally, rather than abroad. Devon presents a

⁸⁸ As such, overlaps often with the environment via the issue of transport emissions, as can be seen in the previous section

contradiction in this regard, as it seeks to relocalise its food system, yet situates the county as being a “*part of the globalized food system*” (2014, p. 1) seeking export market opportunities for farmers. In another contradiction, Devon cites increasing demand for meat and dairy for a growing global population as an opportunity for producers, but counters this by suggesting that reduced meat and dairy consumption could help “*feed more people for less*” (ibid, p.4). In this way, the ‘eco’ voice of the Devon strategy seems to be in conflict with its efforts to appease its economic mandate as per its council audience.

The majority of economic prognostic actions associated with food production in Devon’s strategy are production and producer related. The role of the producer cannot be separated from the activity of production, nor from the land where production takes place. In a continuation of the theme of the language of the Devon strategy relating to farmers, the strategy avoids making an explicit recommendation that farmers should drop higher-profit conventional growing methods and transition to more sustainable mixed-farming models.

The answer to the economic problems framed in the BNES strategy is presented in a two-pronged approach: Increase trade of local food and support local food and farming businesses. These points also resonate with the Durham and Devon strategies and their rural aims. Showing variations on these themes, the Bristol Good Food Plan shows the value placed on LFP for addressing issues: 1) Increase *urban* food production and 2) safeguard land for food production. As in the environmental pillar, these prognostic frames suggest urban and rural production, respectively, showing the strategy as aiming to seek a balance between the actions meant to address these. The many issues identified surrounding job loss in the agricultural and broader food sector are met with a number of corresponding actions relating to job creation. Specifically identified are “land-based jobs” which suggest a farming focus, as well as more jobs generally “in the food sector”, which includes production, but extends beyond it to other roles across the food system. Prognostic actions relating to job creation are primarily through retail opportunities for producers, such as routes to market. Common to these four cases (BNES, Bristol, Durham, Devon) is that the local economy could be bolstered by reconnecting buyers with local producers in order to encourage trade in locally produced foods and encourage producers to sell locally rather than export. These strategies all frame these opportunities as being linked to education of the public about locally produced foods to increase interest and demand.

Bristol's strategy recognizes the role of urban food production through a statement indicating progress and regeneration in this area in recent years:

"More market gardens supplying increasing volume of fruit and vegetables to Bristol are being re-established as viable enterprises in and around the city" (2013, p. 17)

A specific reference to increased urban agriculture for local distribution is noteworthy as it indicates the potential for economic returns from smaller parcels of land in the city alongside rural food production. This acknowledgement of the economic value of smaller growing initiatives and enterprises is noteworthy and describes urban and peri-urban growing. Durham, as noted above, agrees that urban growing offers potential in this way, as does Belfast, although only in a cursory way. Little attention is given in Feeding Devon's Future to the economic benefits of smaller-scale urban agriculture in the more populated parts of the county. One exception notes the recommendation "[t]hat public agencies be encouraged to make more land available for community food use, including allotments and community gardens, especially when making decisions about selling land for commercial development" (2014, p. 14). It can be drawn from this that small scale urban growing initiatives should be considered in the face of commercial economic development by the council. Overall, viewing the balance of rural to urban food production content in the economic pillar, it could be inferred that economic benefits from urban agriculture may simply have not been a significant consideration in comparison to the actions needed for Devon's rural economy.

Prognostic actions relating to the economic pillar within the strategies all shared a common link to the local authority as the actors required to take on these recommendations. Unlike the social pillar which can rely heavily on grassroots volunteers or charity organization, or to a degree, the environmental pillar where farmers can have an impact, recommended economic changes were such that they needed to be driven by the LA. Feeding Devon's Future presented prognostic actions for how farmers can be better supported locally to secure their livelihoods, and recommendations are made to address barriers to new farmers and the struggles of those retiring. These recommendations identify the council's role. Notably, the BNES council acknowledged its position of power in its ability to drive policy change from within, such as land use, public sector food provisioning, and the joining-up of overlapping food-relevant policy areas.

As many actions relating to the local economy fall within the remit of the council, the strategies⁸⁹ commonly proposed efforts such as procurement, infrastructure for the development of the local markets and allotment provisioning. These hinge on relevant policy changes, along with investment, with attention to technologies that will help farmers reduce waste and emissions. The BNES LFS, along with Belfast as a Category 1 strategy, includes a section identifying areas where the strategy links to other local policy documents. This shows these councils' interest in connecting its food aims to other policy areas, thus emphasising the role of food. As an example, the BNES Climate Change Strategy and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy are associated with the two council bodies involved in the food strategy. Through its association with these, local food is presented as a way to achieve wider local strategy targets and reflects its use as a tool to join up policy areas across the council.

Associated with the shared social and environmental diagnostic frames of disconnection and a lack of knowledge of food, educating the public about local food was offered by BNES and Durham. This illustrates again the potential reach of prognostic actions across more than just a single pillar. This was viewed as a way to encourage the purchasing of locally produced items and to *"celebrate the link between local food and the local countryside in which they are produced"* (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 24). Through the angle of food tourism and the marketing of Durham-local foods, many actions are related to increasing the visibility of locally produced foods for enhancing the local economy. Durham's strategy refers to 'branding' and the success of the Bristol Pound as examples for action. Bristol's own local currency the 'Bristol Pound' is included in the Good Food Plan as a way to keep money in the local economy.

Belfast again is an outlier amongst the case studies with little economic-focused content. In the forward by Cllr. Gerard McCabe, the list of council groups involved in the development are noted as *"...working together to ensure continued investment in community growing as a key contribution to the sustainable prosperity of the city of Belfast"* (2012, p. 4). This mention of "sustainable prosperity" is not expanded upon or revisited in the document. Furthermore, the term 'prosperity' suggests an economic consideration although this pillar is largely absent in the strategy. Where the economy is considered, it is referred to as the

⁸⁹ Again, Belfast excepted.

“social economy” and linked only briefly to skill building within the growing context for potential employment.

Sustainable Economic Outcomes

Motivational frames relating to the local economy involved supporting local food producers and boosting employment within the local food system. Affordability of food, and food access through locally produced food were also repeated across cases. Continuing the theme of highlighting the plight of the vulnerable through motivational frames, a focus on those in precarious financial circumstances was used as a tool by all five case studies to inspire the reader to action.

The economic pillar illustrates the urban and rural positioned as binary points within motivational frames, with BNES and Devon’s strategies presenting ideals for the rural-economic development of their municipalities, and Belfast looking entirely at urban advantages. Durham offered a vision of CSA schemes to support local producers, and this would imply SME, rather than large scale operations and Bristol suggests the potential for “high cash-value products on land and rooftops in the city” (2013, p. 17). The visions presented suggest that Devon and BNES see little economic benefit coming from small urban growing efforts and that the change to a more sustainable local economy would be achieved through larger scale rural agriculture. Durham and Bristol however see the potential for economic value in smaller-sized operations in urban areas. Belfast notes opportunities to establish “community-run businesses based on growing activities” (2012, p. 23) but does not provide detail. By framing the economic value of production as originating from either the urban or rural, strategies may diminish the potential of other production models by omission. Consideration of how urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture could contribute to the local economy could potentially appeal to a more diverse audience. In the case of Belfast for example, the lack of economic content suggests that this is not a key priority of the strategy and so logically, the strategy does not focus on motivating through the economic pillar.

Durham and BNES use similar language in illustrating their aims to realise “flourishing” and “thriving” local food economies, respectively. The view presented in the BNES strategy is that relocalisation and support for producers can have important economic impacts:

"Increased trade of local food could provide multiple economic benefits; It generates income growth for food and farming businesses, helps to create new jobs in local food processing and distribution and retail trades, and contributes to the local multiplier effect where money is retained and circulated in the local economy" (2014, p. 6)

This attention to keeping money in the local economy and the 'local multiplier effect' were considerations for Bristol, Durham and BNES. This quote touches on multiple potential positive outcomes in an effort to convince the reader that relocalisation of the food system can have legitimate and wide-reaching economic impact. Similarly for Devon, motivational content is largely focused on using food production as a vehicle to support and *"keeps value in the local economy"* (2014, p. 10). Once again, this appears to contrast the importation of food from other areas, however the suggestion that exporting Devon's products would be positive for the county. This suggests an inherent conflict in the views expressed in the strategy, notably the polarised views that importing food is environmentally unsustainable and local growing the more sustainable option (socially, environmentally, economically), however exporting food from Devon is associated with being *economically* sustainable. This ignores the environmental arguments made in relation to carbon emissions from transporting food made throughout the document.

The development of Durham's local economy through a vibrant "good food" sector is the intended outcome of a number of prognostic actions. Notably, Durham links its economic aims to those of the Durham Sustainable Communities Strategy: *"The local food economy is flourishing so that food security is not a worry for County Durham and rural and agricultural jobs have benefitted"* (2014, p. 75). Through this, the strategy illustrates overlap in local policy and the potential for a joined-up approach through food, as well as presenting the legitimacy of this strategy's approach to the local council by framing it as in-line with their own. The strategy claims that if access to local markets was improved, that more producers would choose to shift to short food supply chains and sell more of their produce in Durham, rather than exporting. This upholds the local focus of the strategy, and is a view shared by BNES and Devon. Furthermore, a *"flourishing"* local economy is associated with improved food security and fairness (fair prices for producers), however there is little discussion beyond this of the livelihoods of producers, rural or otherwise. As a unique approach, Durham presented a vision based primarily on building the local economy through food

tourism, although food tourism was put forward by BNES and Devon, albeit to lesser degrees.

Throughout the Good Food Plan for Bristol, the aims to increase urban food production and safeguard land for food production are linked to economic points throughout and appear to associate LFP with greater economic stability for the area. The prospect of more “*viable enterprises*” (Bristol Food Policy Council, 2013, p. 17), and more “*land-based jobs*” (*ibid*, p.15) suggest attention to economic development, however despite the numerous issues identified as being unsustainable through diagnostic framing, and the actions intended to address them, motivational ‘rally calls’ relating to economic claims are few. These note the potential for income from urban agriculture efforts and aspirations for “*fairly traded*” (*ibid*, p.3) local foods. Additionally, the definition of “*Good Food*” – the concept underscoring the Plan – includes “*affordability*” and needing to be “*good for workers*” and “*good for businesses*” (*ibid*, back cover). Rather than highlighting desirable outcomes as with the social and environmental pillars, the Plan chooses to note current efforts as examples of good practice in production that are economically successful. A ‘vision’ for a more economically stable or vibrant Bristol is not presented as clearly as elements from the other pillars are in the document. As an example, the vision statement at the beginning of the strategy (*ibid*, p.3) does not mention any economic elements beyond “*fairly traded*” food. This is a curious omission considering the details provided in the definition of “*Good Food*”.

From the motivational framings, food growing in Belfast’s strategy appears to offer the possibility of some income generating opportunities at the commercial scale, and access to produce at the individual level. Reference to disadvantaged groups was made in relation to food access and income from the sale of produce. Economic activities were presented within the scope of potential social impacts, using language such as “*community-run businesses*” and “*social entrepreneurship*” (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 23). The vague reference to “*sustainable prosperity*” (*ibid*, p.4) in the foreword was presented as a desirable goal but left undeveloped. It can be drawn from this that economic returns from food production were not presented as a high priority, and that food growing in Belfast is framed as having the capacity to achieve primarily social objectives, even when through an economic angle. Like other motivational statements, these are little more than points which offer a snapshot of expected benefits.

7.4 Chapter Summary

“Although there are differing views about solutions, there is a growing consensus that it is no longer an option to continue with business as usual” (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 3)

This statement from the Durham strategy is a sentiment shared by all the cases in some sense, and in its simplicity encapsulates why these strategies were initiated. While the five case studies define and approach the notion of sustainability differently, all present LFP as a way to address wider range of unsustainable issues and move toward a more sustainable local vision, bespoke for that municipality.

Whether using the pillars of sustainability explicitly, or implicitly, the strategies often placed greater priority on a single pillar. This was shown by unambiguous statements of priority areas, such as BNES identifying the reduction of carbon emissions as a driver, as well as simply the volume of content relating to the pillars across diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames. Through selecting particular key objectives and corresponding actions, strategies often emphasised a dominant thematic frame through which to present their strategy. BNES, Belfast and Durham all presented content underscoring how their respective strategies link to wider local, regional and international policy targets. These speak to more pragmatic public sector-serving motivations, rather than appealing to values.

The diversity of ways in which locally produced food was presented as a sustainable solution suggests that relocalisation of the food system is viewed to some extent as a cure-all. Like the tendency to focus on one pillar or other, strategies likewise presented LFP activities as more rural or urban (although rarely as a spectrum of production including peri-urban areas). Rural agriculture implied larger-scale production, while urban growing was presented as small-scale individual or community projects. There was an apparent tension between conventional agriculture and food production with reduced inputs (whether explicitly organic or not). While most cases recognized a place for both scales of production, rural agriculture was associated with greater positive impact for the local economy and addressing environmental issues. This implies the view that smaller agricultural projects were felt to have little economic potential. Across all cases, the food production linked to the social pillar was almost exclusively urban. This analysis has shown

that the roles of urban and rural production are felt to address particular pillars, but these need not be rigidly divided. With the range of outcomes that food production was felt to offer, these strategies show that there is significant potential for overlapping impacts at different scales across different and various pillars.

Diagnostic framing of issues nearly all stemmed from the level of the global food system, although the issue of insufficient allotment space was common to all cases, taking place at the local level. The industrial global food system was associated with a wide range of issues across the three pillars, and with significant overlap across these. With this global-level issue in mind, only the environmental pillar was presented as having the potential to have a positive impact back up from the local to the global through reduced transport emissions. Despite the origin of most social and economic issues being the global level, actions related to these appear as being very locally bound in their scope.

The prognostic framing of 'who' would be responsible for the implementation of actions was shown across all pillars. These were typically presented with a sense of finger pointing between council and CS as the would-be responsible parties, or as a plea or rally call for committed and varied partnerships. While this presents an obvious tension between actors, it also illustrates the dependence that the council and civil-society groups have on one another in local-level food policy implementation. Additionally, farmers were put forward as having an essential role (particularly in the environmental pillar) in relation to production methods for land stewardship, and knowledge sharing for good practice. Farmers, farming and land were three elements in the environmental pillar which were so bound to one another that they could not be separated.

Motivational frames were presented in three main formats: a 'black and white' pragmatic and factual presentation of expected positive outcomes, as inspirational visions appealing to the heart of the reader or relating to those that would be helped by the actions, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. Motivational content was often presented in association with a prognostic action as a way draw linear links between an action and outcome. Strategies are however imperfect and have gaps, meaning that information may not be presented in a linear or complete way. Notably, there are many disconnections where issues are not associated with clear target actions, or actions are not necessarily

linked to a greater purpose. At times, motivational visions offer an attractive goal, but with little substance relevant to their component ideals, although most mirrored to some degree the diagnostic frames which presented the unsustainable realities in need of change.

In conclusion, this chapter has presented an examination of the five case study strategies surrounding the concept of sustainability, along with how it was framed in relation to locally produced food. When considered alongside the beliefs of coalition actors, this chapter forms a picture of what content has been included or excluded in the strategy. Combined, these chapters form the basis of the next, which examines the negotiation process that took place amongst coalition actors in order to translate a number of beliefs into these physical documents.

8. Negotiating Food Strategy Development

Building on the two previous chapters, this segment compares the findings of each to illustrate the coalition dynamics which took place to produce the strategies. This chapter examines which beliefs relating to sustainability and LFP were favoured for inclusion in each of the documents, and why, based on the beliefs of coalition actors. Drawing again on framing tools used in the two previous chapters (Snow and Benford, 1988), priorities and values were examined, with attention to how these were communicated to the desired audience(s) through the strategies. This serves to illustrate power dynamics and tensions that were negotiated throughout the strategy development process between CS and council actors, and what differences this made to the various strategies as outputs.

This chapter addresses the final research question of this work:

- *How were differences in beliefs negotiated by actors in the policy process and subsequently translated into the strategy documents?*

From this, discussion is extended to the level of the coalition group *model* (ranging from primarily CS-led to mostly council-led) in order to gain insight into the dynamics of the strategy process across a variety of formats. Coalition dynamics are linked to the Advocacy Coalition Framework 'hypotheses' 3 that explores aspects of negotiation:

(3) "An actor or coalition will give up secondary aspects of its belief system before acknowledging weakness in the policy core"

As a chapter that focuses on comparing interviews and strategy content, overviews are given relating to perceptions of sustainability, how framing has been used and the dynamics within coalitions. A chapter summary concludes this section.

8.1 Bath and Northeast Somerset

8.1.1 The Strategy Development Process

As a “Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiative” (Category 1) (MacRae and Donahue, 2013), the Bath and Northeast Somerset Sustainable Food Strategy was led by the council, and involved members of CS through its steering group⁹⁰. Three council actors and two CS actors took part in interviews, providing personal impressions of the strategy development process.

BNESLA3 explained the actions of the council in developing the Environmental Sustainability Partnership (ESP) and the stakeholders that were brought into the process:

“[O]ur first key action once the strategy was signed off was to ... formalise that partnership, so through the engagement process we had in that first year we identified some key stakeholders, which included key council departments, such as procurement, trading for public protection, sustainability, green infrastructure as well, and then also some other non-public sector organisations. So, we’ve got the Transition Bath food group present, the chair or Bath District Farmers, the Duchy of Cornwall, because they are the major landowner in the area, and Bath tourism as well, and that’s evolving as a partnership.”

This statement illustrates the process of developing the coalition, with attention to the actors forming a wide catchment of stakeholders comprised of approximately 80 individuals. Reflecting upon this consultation, BNESCS2 recollects this being one single event hosted by the council “*with a council-emphasis*”, followed by a narrowing of those involved to the existing steering committee. They explained, “*that’s when it then lost its broader representation and perhaps became more council orientated ... I would say that the steering group is about 75% council employees.*” These views suggest a disconnection between that the council’s view of its process of stakeholder engagement and what was perceived by CS actors, as well as a lack of balance in representation.

From the perspective of the council, the coalition (or the Environmental Sustainability Partnership “ESP” in the council’s language) was developed in order to have wider

⁹⁰ See Chapter 6 for details of this coalition structure.

engagement on the issue of local food and sustainability. After an initial scoping phase, there was a realisation by those council actors leading the initiative that *“you have bits of the council and bits of other services engaging with the community on food from one angle or another, but there was no strategic overview”* (BNESLA2). Notably, the ESP mandate extends to *“influencing... other departments in the council to do what they do in a more sustainable way”* (BNESLA2). This speaks to the objective of a more joined-up approach to policy within the local authority. This became an aim of the strategy and can be seen through its partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) of BNES Public Health. Council actor BNESLA1 explained the culture of working *“in partnership”* in BNES: *“the idea of the sustainable food partnership came from officers, got endorsement from the cabinet ... but what we do is go out and build up links with the community.”* These quotes clearly position the strategy as coming from within the local authority with the council acting as a gatekeeper to the process and participants involved. As a council-led document, the BNES Sustainable Food Strategy is written largely for its citizens, and so frames are used to present material in a way that speaks to this group. For example, the strategy uses a language of commitment and support for *“our environment and landscapes... our economy”* and *“our culture and society”* (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 2, emphasis added) to foster a shared sense of place.

With a focus on partnerships⁹¹, the strategy seeks to underscore the inclusive nature of participation, noting the roles of CS groups, farmers, businesses and others. This participation is approached both through the ESP and the connections between actors to carry out strategy work, supported and guided by the council. The strategy document also recognises its role of meeting *“district wide targets” to achieving “strategic ambitions”* (ibid, p.3), implying its commitment to wider regional aims and a joined-up approach. In this way, the strategy serves a pragmatic public service accountability function and speaks to an audience of higher-level government authorities.

8.1.2 Sustainability Beliefs: Compared

Due to the partnership of the ESP and the HWBB as two council groups, the LFS brought together elements of existing strategies: the Environmental, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (Bath and Northeast Somerset Environmental Sustainability Partnership,

⁹¹ In this regard, the term ‘partnership’ refers both to collaborative efforts with actors outside of the local authority and ‘The Partnership’, as the ESP.

2012) and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, no date). The key priorities for the food strategy as they were drawn from these were explained by BNESLA3 (and echoed in the strategy almost verbatim on pg 3 as 'Key Drivers'):

"The key overarching ambition of the ESP board is to reduce carbon emissions, so that's that link to local food, but it's also much wider than that as well, and it's also around the wider environmental benefits in terms of green infrastructure and ... the social and economic things as well... and then the Health and Wellbeing Strategy being improving diet related health, obesity and inequalities." (BNESLA3)

As a result, the aims of the strategy were identified based on the priorities of these departments. The three-pillar model was the basis for the strategy's structure, and so it can be inferred that the council views sustainability as being formed of these component elements, regardless of alternative definitions of specific elements and their links to sustainability⁹².

The three council actors interviewed described sustainability as the council's approach to the concept in the context of the strategy, so the beliefs expressed by these individuals mirrored the strategy content without notable variation. In this way, the council actors appeared to be speaking of sustainability from the position of their professional roles, rather than their individual perspectives separate from work. Justification for defining sustainability in a targeted way, such as "*sustainable growing*" or "*environmental sustainability*" were based on a desire to communicate clearly, rather than debate nebulous terms. Explaining this approach, BNESLA1 stated:

" if you're going to waste hours and hours and hours debating what the word sustainable means, you just end up with talking and people give up – so we move beyond that ... I mean, we can identify what sustainable food production looks like, and sustainable land use, but the word sustainability – if we got into that, you'd never an agreement that comes up."

⁹² "Sustainable production", for example, in the glossary of terms (p. 8).

This statement implies that these terms were identified and defined by the council and presented to the wider steering group. Additionally, it suggests that the wider definition of sustainability wasn't open to discussion. A targeted approach was suggested by BNESLA2, who stated *"I don't think it's very sensible to go around bashing people over the head about climate change and carbon emissions because it doesn't mean very much to most people ... you need to find the thing that does matter to people"*. This statement identifies the need to frame a strategy appropriately to connect with the audience.

Where council actors spoke of sustainability and its three pillars with significant detail, CS actors were less verbose. Notably, they expressed mostly what they felt was the council's position on the subject and how the LA approaches it. This framing indicates that these actors felt that the council had ownership over this narrative, although mention of national levels of government suggests that in some ways the local council holds little power to affect change in the long-term.

When BNESSCS1 defined their view of sustainability as relating to the climate and local level food system resilience, this was not reflected in any depth within the content of the environmental pillar, or the strategy overall. The term "resilient" is only mentioned a single time in the BNES strategy in the context of the role of food at the local level (p.2).

8.1.3 Local Food Production Beliefs: Compared

The BNES Sustainable Food Strategy was inspired by the council's earlier Environmental Sustainability Strategy (Bath and Northeast Somerset Environmental Sustainability Partnership, 2012), which prioritised a reduction in carbon emissions. Beyond domestic energy usage, food consumption patterns were identified as a significant contributor to emissions, leading the council to consider how it could integrate food-related actions into its plans (BNESLA2). According to council actors, additional pressure and research from CS groups (in particular, BAG and Transition Bath) further emphasised the need for action on the local food system. This resulted in the development of the BNES strategy and the formation of a steering group and the ESP. *"The food partnership is a sort of sub-partnership to that sort of overarching sustainability partnership"*, explained BNESLA2.

All those interviewed expressed a strong belief that local level food production and relocalisation of the food system could hold benefits, and that developing a strategy was

essential for coordinated action. The scale of food production was viewed as *“two clear different work streams associated with ... the local food supply”* (BNESLA3). Council interviews support the strategy structure separating commercial scale rural agriculture from urban food growing. These were associated with the economic and health aims of the strategy, respectively.

“The distinction we made was commercial agriculture and food growing, and the key objectives there were to get more of our commercial agriculture into the local supply chain, so enhancing the local food supply, and to support more of that and more of that food getting to our local markets, food procurement, and domestic purchasing etc. And the other part was around community food growing, so people growing for their own consumption through allotments or other community gardens and other initiatives and I think the key objective and the reason why we would want to enhance that is again another key thing toward access to a healthy diet and fresh local food and associated benefits of that as well.” (BNESCS3)

Again, this view is a reflection of what was included in the strategy and presents a variety of mechanisms for the integration of locally produced food in BNES. It appears that commercial agriculture is more closely associated with procurement and local market infrastructure, suggesting that this falls under the remit of the council. With council actors stating a need for CS groups supporting urban community growing projects, it is clear that the two streams not only diverge in scale, and associated pillars as points of impact, but also who was best positioned to, or at least expected to, deliver each stream.

8.1.4 Actor Beliefs and Strategy Content: Framing and Negotiation

The strategy's objectives of reducing emissions and improving health in the context of the local food system were based upon, *“a coming together of the environmental sustainability agenda and the public health agenda”* (BNESCS2). As a result, strategy aims were defined by the council to an extent prior to consultation, thus limiting input from outsiders. As a Category 1 coalition, drivers and associated objectives were felt by CS to be *“from inside the council, not from outside”*, illustrating a top-down process, despite CS involvement.

Despite this top-down approach, both the council and CS shared the policy core beliefs (see Section 6.4 on the second ACF coalition 'hypothesis') and felt that significant benefits could

come from a LFS. CS and council actors diverged however on secondary beliefs relating to prognostic actions of what should be done and by whom. Stated simply, BNESLA1 argued a need to *“get more people growing more food!”*, whereas the CS view could easily have been *‘educate people through growing food’*. CS actors present several examples of content which they recommended to council, but did not appear in the strategy, meanwhile the council identified grassroots growing projects that were already operating and integrated them into the strategy.

CS actors offered specific and detailed content relating to local growing initiatives (small scale, urban) that could address (primarily social) issues. These interviewees focused on a small number of issues and related actions that were relevant to their experience working in grassroots food and horticulture initiatives or healthcare. Both were critical of what was felt to be the council’s narrow focus on community growing to the exclusion of rural or commercial-scale agriculture. CS actor BNESCS1 explained concerns relating to a perceived narrow approach to growing taken by the council, and a limited representation on the steering committee:

“I think there’s been an emphasis and even a reliance on community gardening to act as the local food component. I haven’t seen that the council is really engaging with agriculture ... agriculture wasn’t measured as contributing to the local economy and employment or just that major occupation in a largely rural area. So, I decided to stand up at a council meeting and say that I thought it was ridiculous that BNES ignored agriculture.”

Ironically, both CS actors offered limited suggestions for enhancing rural agriculture⁹³, but instead offered specific urban growing programs focused at the community level. Despite this impression, council actors spoke of both commercial rural agriculture and urban community projects, although to varying degrees. Within the strategy, CS work is mostly implicated in the social pillar relating to community growing, and so it may not be surprising that CS actors were left with the impression that this was the council’s focus. CS and council actors agreed that programs designed to educate citizens through growing could have positive social and health impacts, particularly with the support of community

⁹³ Recommendations related to reducing agricultural land sales for development by the council.

growing groups. Some ideas put forward by BNESCS1 and BNESCS2 relating to specific vulnerable groups were not included in the strategy, such as programs for the homeless and disadvantaged, and parenting skills and diet training. Programs relating to formal horticultural training were also missing from the strategy, to the frustration of BNESCS1. Continuing the concerns about planning permissions and agricultural land, this actor explained that they *“pushed for ... things like ... agricultural housing should be kept for landworkers and not sold off for use as holiday homes ... it hasn’t really happened, and people are getting around it”* and that *“there are quite a lot of people who have bought land to grow food on it, but they’re not allowed to build a permanent home”* (BNESCS1). These complaints were excluded from the strategy, and council actors made little mention of planning permission for agricultural land in interviews. Sidestepping these issues may be explained in relation to the audience of the strategy, which was felt to be *“done in a way that appeals to other council officers”* (BNESCS1). This explanation was ended with a tone of resignation: *“you just have to accept that”*. Similar frustration with omissions was expressed by BNESCS2, who said, *“I’m not saying that there’s not good ideas in the strategy and certainly on the health side ... but ... [o]ne of the things that we were pushing for from an early stage is to map the food deserts and where people can buy fresh food and there’s still no way using the planning system to ensure that there is a food area – a shop – in every residential district.”* These statements by CS emphasise areas of concern that weren’t taken on board by the council in the writing up of the final strategy document. Being that such concerns over planning and development were not addressed explicitly in the strategy, this could infer that buy-in from other council departments may not have been a given, despite its expressed aim of a ‘joined-up’ approach. This resulted in certain issues to be approached in a roundabout way or avoided altogether. In a further criticism of the council’s approach, even the choice of pursuing a strategy rather than a policy was a disappointment:

“I think initially, it was going to be a local food policy, which has more status than a strategy, but that seems to be a rather common thing in the council that they say they want a policy and it’s watered down to a strategy... But a strategy is more – I suppose it’s a road map” (BNESCA2).

Despite these omissions, the strategy offers a detailed consideration of issues, actions and outcomes across the three pillars as related to its delivery themes. These exclusions were

not acknowledged by council actors during interviews, but mention was made to deprivation, poor planning of social housing in relation to family meals, and the possibility of reforming of former offenders through local food projects. Notably, these were not included in the strategy either, but instead came across as councillors making a point of illustrating additional touchpoints or benefits of local growing.

It is notable that in interviews, CS actors did not present any motivational beliefs across pillars, instead choosing to focus on prognostic actions. This suggests that these two actors did not feel the need to frame a call to action since they weren't the ones pitching the strategy content. The council actors on the other hand, offered motivational justifications for the strategy as well as detailed diagnostic and prognostic frames across pillars. In this way, the impression is given that the council viewed the strategy's content as needing to be comprehensive. This approach was similarly taken in interviews where council actors presented a veritable laundry-list of overlapping areas and benefits that local food could achieve.

Beyond strategy content, an area of emphasis for the council actors was how effective collaborations were with both CS and other council departments, resulting in positive engagement with the process.

"What we've been successful at doing is engaging with key people from other departments who saw the need. There was a consensus among key council departments and senior officers. So, once the public health team were on board, that was very very strong ... It was a consensus amongst all those different players really, that this is what we needed to move it forward, and they needed someone to do it, and they were happy for us to take that leadership role." (BNESLA2)

"We did spend a lot of time in the early stages talking about it so that you don't have a row in debate when you come to a decision, because all the arguments have been ironed out in the process of reaching a consensus that everyone is happy with." (BNESCS1)

Both of these statements indicate decision making processes taking place by council actors behind closed doors to avoid upheaval and disagreement in meetings. Despite acknowledgement of *“a very engaged population”* which is *“never slow in ... putting their viewpoints forward”* (BNESCS1), an impression is given that these citizen views would not have had significant impact on the strategy’s content.

The council’s pride in having formed a partnership that included CS actors on the strategy steering group and a range of stakeholders was a key point in interviews with these actors. This partnership approach was explained in terms of the council’s role:

“[W]e understand that our role is about leadership ... what is the best way for us to deliver that leadership and enable things to happen? Without necessarily doing it all ourselves, and that’s why partnership working is so hugely important.” (BNESLA2)

This position is repeated in the strategy document:

“The Council and other public sector organisations will provide the leadership to effectively deliver the B&NES Local Food Strategy. These organisations will champion the B&NES Local Food Strategy at a strategic level and will drive positive change within their organisations providing exemplars of good practice.” (Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, 2014, p. 7)

Underscoring this are the headings of *“Partnership working: Bringing together the right people to make things happen”*, *“Community enablement: Enabling residents and community groups to achieve their health and sustainability aims”*, and *“Leading by example: Bold action from the council and our BNES ESP and HWB partners”* (ibid, p.7).

Both CS actors that participated in this research did note that the partnership approach was a largely positive initiative. However, BNESCS2 pointed out that there was no representation of local food producers in the steering group, with the feeling being that *“it tends to be the council officer’s priority to deliver this piece of work, so they tend to end up – not dominating, but over-representing”*. This hints at a tension between the council and CS relationship within the coalition that was expressed on both sides. Recognising *“a very high proportion of experience and talent in the community”* (BNESLA2), involvement of CS actors

“sometimes ... gives us quite a headache because those people can be very demanding ... we’ve taken the approach with people who can be quite awkward and difficult ... to bring them all in and have them on the inside! (laughs). And I think that does work better” (BNESLA2). Apparently, this approach was effective, as BNESCS1 stated that they *“[h]aven’t been nearly as critical – or I haven’t critiqued it as I would some other strategy documents, because I feel that they are doing their best.”* BNESCS2 was not so indulgent, explaining that *“I feel really quite cynical about this, but there’s no point being cynical and not taking part, so I take part.”*

In interviews, and within the document itself, the council acknowledged the practical role of CS and the local stakeholder base for efforts to be successful. This was associated with a frank acknowledgement that *“[t]he strategy has been produced at a time of financial uncertainty for many of the agencies involved” (ibid, p.7).* It reinforced a need for partnership by stating that efforts would only come to fruition if works can take place within this context of resource constraints. It is in this context that the council identified the essential role of CS (and others) through the prognostic frame relating to *who* is expected to carry out the strategy vision:

“The successful delivery of the strategy will be dependent on co-ordinated action and strong working relationships across sectors. We will work with and facilitate partnership working between: public sector organisations, parish and town councils, food, farming and retail businesses, landowners and advisory groups, the voluntary and community sector and individuals and organisations working in the food sector” (p.7).

From the perspective of CS, a tension came from the view that the council was co-opting existing growing activities and projects and taking credit for them:

“[T]here’s a political ideology about community participation and the council - several times I sat in on council meetings where council officers said to the councilors, ‘oh, we’ve enabled the community to do this’, ‘we’ve empowered the community to do that’ and we’re thinking ‘no – we’ve allowed YOU to say that you’re doing something’” (BNESCS1)

“So, we came up with a strategy, but it was very much “what do you do already?” and then we slotted it into the document.” (BNESCS2)

These views were addressed in a way within the strategy, acknowledging *“existing examples of community action to build upon, including community food groups, cookery clubs and community food growing projects”* (ibid, p. 7). This tactful recognition of existing projects gives a nod to the work of established groups and CS work taking place within the local food system. In this way, the document shows an awareness of this segment of its audience, likely through their involvement with the steering group, (however this obviously did nothing to remedy the sentiment). In an effort to illustrate a connection between CS stakeholders and strategy content, BNESLA3 explained that *“[a]spects of community food growing ... are embedded in the strategy, Bath Area Growers ... were all invited to consult and were invited to our stakeholder engagement sessions”*.

Despite a great deal of council rhetoric about partnership and shared belief in the overarching aims of the strategy, there was still a clear “us vs. them” division between LA and CS actors within this coalition. In this sense, points of negotiation in relation to content were worthy of examination, but more notable were the tensions which had to be negotiated within the coalition itself. Nonetheless, despite these tensions, all parties recognised the need to work together as an important component of the process in order to achieve strategy aims. This links back to a shared belief in the need to integrate sustainability via food production into the local BNES food system.

8.1.5 ACF ‘hypothesis’ 3

ACF ‘hypothesis’ three states “An actor or coalition will give up secondary aspects of its belief system before acknowledging weakness in the policy core” (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014, p. 195). In the context of BNES, as a Category 1 coalition, there was little need for the council to ‘give up’ any particular aspects of its beliefs in relation to policy content as it was the leader of the initiative. Policy core beliefs appear to have been decided prior to wider stakeholder consultation, and secondary beliefs were chosen based on council priorities. Being that the council held the position of power over the strategy content, there appears to have been little room for negotiation, in the traditional sense as this implies two equally matched positions. CS was invited to take part in the process and give input and express points of concern along with suggestions for programs and actions, however interviews

suggested that these were selected by the council for inclusion based on what suited the existing narrative. CS actors participated in the process but with a sense of resignation over the outcome, recognizing that the council had the final say.

8.1.6 Case Summary

The Bath and Northeast Somerset LFS offered a strategy developed by the local authority, but that relied significantly upon CS and others for its execution due to finding cuts. Interviews with council actors very closely echoed the content of the strategy document in relation to sustainability and LFP and suggested that these actors were speaking from their professional roles, rather than of their personal beliefs. CS actors reflected a great deal on what they felt the council's motivations were, illustrating their awareness of its position of power in the coalition and in shaping the document narrative.

Tensions between CS and council actors within the coalition were acknowledged on both sides, illustrating a notable 'us-versus-them' divide. Despite this, relationships were managed for the sake of collaborating on what was felt to be an important strategy initiative.

In the case of BNES as a Category 1 coalition group, the policy core and associated content of the strategy were agreed upon and written up by the council. Negotiation of content between CS and the local authority actors was not a feature in any real sense for this reason. Instead, the more apparent area of negotiation within the coalition was interpersonal, or rather, between the authority and CS. Despite tensions, both groups emphasised a co-dependence which necessitated the formation of a partnership (meaning in this case, both the ESP and the strategy coalition) to move the food strategy agenda along. The council relied on CS actors to carry out the grassroots components of policy aspects – namely the socially-focused community growing initiatives. This was due to funding cuts limiting the ability of the LA to take action independently. The knowledge of CS groups and their established projects and networks were important to the council's aims. Similarly, those CS actors interviewed expressed a reliance on the council for actions relating to policy changes needed in procurement, rural agriculture and land management, as well as funding for local growing programs for targeted groups. The two-pronged approach to food production was presented by the council as rural commercial scale agriculture and urban community growing to meet diverse objectives across the pillars of sustainability. CS viewed the rural

agricultural element as lacking, with an over-reliance on small-scale urban growing. In this regard, CS may have had a lack of insight into council-level discussions relating to rural agriculture, as urban growing projects with a focus on health and education were felt to be the area of expertise for these CS actors.

8.2 Belfast

8.2.1 The Strategy Development Process

Like Bath and Northeast Somerset, the coalition structure behind the creation of the *Growing Communities Strategy* is classified as a “Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiative” (Category 1). Coalition participants who took part in interviews included actors from both CS and the council.

As detailed in Chapter 6, the creation of this strategy was initiated by Belfast City Council by suggestion of the Parks Department, and included CS actors as a part of process through stakeholder consultation and its steering committee. Through its origins in the Parks Department, one council actor recognised the need to frame the initiative strategically for the wider council via the Active Belfast Partnership, which included the Public Health Agency, the Health and Social Care Trust, and the Department of Regional Development. By identifying overlapping objectives of these departments this actor “*used that [The Active Belfast Partnership] as a vehicle to start selling these ideas so that it could become more than just a Belfast City Council strategy*” (BELLA1). As a mandated objective of the Parks Department, increasing provision of growing space tied into the approach of the strategy, offering a way to frame the benefits of the strategy to a wider council audience.

The strategy development process for Belfast was a top-down initiative, with participation of CS and other groups being by selection and invitation of the council, much like BNES. This provided the opportunity for the council to gain insight from a range of stakeholders during workshops and to access these individuals for occasional feedback as the document took shape.

The participation process was described by a CS actor who had been commissioned by the council to lead the workshops through the HiAP process. They explained:

“We had people there from the statutory sector, community sector, and voluntary sector– It was kind of a sounding platform for people to say that maybe “this is wrong with this, or we need this, and we’re not happy with this”” (BELCS2).

Meetings sought to be “*as inclusive as possible*” and to “*identify key health and equity considerations in terms of growing, and growing your own in Belfast, and community gardens*”

(BELCS2). One CS participant who had attended some of the steering group meetings felt that the *“a fairly rigorous process getting people involved”* and *“a genuine attempt to see what people wanted”* (BELCS1). In contrast, the council actor explained that public consultation existed only during the end stage, when a largely completed strategy was posted online for feedback from citizens.

Within the Growing Communities Strategy, no individuals - council or CS - are mentioned or credited with the development of the document. The strategy is instead council-branded throughout, with statements emphasising its leadership and the cross-council partnerships that contributed to it. For example, the document foreword indicates, *“under Active Belfast the strategy represents the commitment of Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Strategic Partnership”* (Belfast Outdoors, 2012, p. 4). Statements such as these give an institutional uniformity to the document, leaving little question as to its origins within the local authority. The council’s priorities had the greatest influence on the content of the document. As noted in previous chapters, Belfast’s strategy was the only one of the case studies to be focused exclusively on community (ie: urban) growing rather than it being only one part of the strategy.

8.2.2 Sustainability Beliefs: Compared

Consideration of sustainability was felt by participants to have factored into the process only in a general way as a part of statutory requirements, or, as BELCS1 put it, based on *“a theoretical commitment to sustainability”*. As an obvious acknowledgement of these statutory obligations, the strategy highlighted a selection of policies from the regional to national to EU-levels into which it is nested, by virtue of its food, sustainability and social content (ibid, p. 11). This framing approach targeted higher levels of government in NI, suggesting that the strategy is in a sense a way to emphasise that Belfast is meeting required targets. Like the food produced from growing projects, any sustainability outcomes were seen as a bonus. In this sense, expressed within both interviews and the strategy, sustainability was presented as one-dimensional and approached almost exclusively through the social pillar.

The three pillars together are only acknowledged directly in the definition of *“sustainable development”*. Only environmental sustainability as a pillar was defined individually in the strategy. Neither of these defined terms received much further attention throughout the document to show their integration at a deeper level, suggesting that it was not

foundational to the approach from the perspective of the council via the Active Belfast Partnership. The council actor interviewed appeared to have a vision of sustainability that spanned beyond the environment to include *“sustainable development of the city and all these different aspects which lead to the social, economic and environmental sustainability”* which rely on the strategy initiative and projects being sustainable (BELLA1). This implied reliable funding. For this individual, framing the strategy in terms of *“peace-building work”* and the wider economic and community development aims of the council was a way of securing funding and this, the sustainability of the initiative. This actor did not recall *“a very focused discussion”* of sustainability in the context of the Community Growing Strategy. The limited application of sustainability as a framework is reflected in the document.

8.2.3 Local Food Production Beliefs: Compared

The strategy and those interviewed recognised the scoping study completed by SNI at the request of the council. Recommendations relating to growing provision and projects, specifically the use of community gardens over allotments formed the basis of the document’s approach to projects. Despite citizen demand for allotment provision as a main driver to the strategy, those interviewed did not view this as a betrayal of citizen pleas, but rather supported the approach. It was felt that a community garden approach would be best positioned to bring together individuals struggling with isolation and mental health, whereas allotments are by nature more solitary. BELCS1 and BELLA1 agreed that food growing was not the main aim, but rather a beneficial outcome. BELCS2, a lead-author on the document as commissioned by the council presented views that echoed the document more closely and emphasised a wide range of benefits from growing.

8.2.4 Actor Beliefs and Strategy Content: Framing and Negotiation

The concept of a community growing strategy had been put forward to the council for approval by an individual in the Parks Department. This required appealing to the council’s priorities.

“The whole idea, I suppose of urban agriculture and the notion of having people growing their own food and making more sustainable communities, and making better nutritional choices was in the back of my mind. To be honest, it didn’t really buy the council at all – for them the benefit was in the building social capital aspect of it, and building – trying to draw communities together ... I think their primary was objective was the social one, because they could see that, in a place like Belfast, it’s very hard to

get tools that cross community divides, this was one that certainly had that and a lot of advantages.” (BELLA1)

In this sense, what was felt to be the typical historic council focus on economic priorities was put aside in favour of a social focus in this case. This was based upon recognition of the need to address a range of social issues, and food was felt to have unique capacity to achieve these aims. From this alignment of frames in the initial pitch – highlighting the social issues, related actions (food growing) and potential outcomes – this initiative was taken up by the council and given support for development. Noting the community development priority of the council, this individual pointed out that the Parks Department *“didn’t find it really difficult to get money from the council”* (BELLA1).

Reflecting upon steering group meetings, one actor who was part of the CS group contracted by the council was tasked with writing the strategy:

“[w]e went away and we drafted a draft kind of action as to how we might meet the priorities, and those were presented back again at another meeting ... and they were drafted a couple of times, and then shown to the stakeholders in order to get them right, and they were drafted and drafted again, and redrafted, until the stakeholders felt they that they were right and that they were effective” (BELCS2).

While this description gives the impression of an inclusive public consultation process, it is necessary to bear in mind that stakeholders referred to were predominantly from ‘Active Belfast’, being a group made up of participants from Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the BSP. In this sense, the council outsourced the writing of the document and held control over the final product.

As shown in the two previous chapters, the social focus was the dominant theme throughout the interviews and within the food strategy, and was consistent between CS and council actors. Participants all stated an awareness of the social priorities of the council and their responses reflected this focus. Actors spoke little of economic considerations and not at all of environmental aspects. While the council participants’ attention to the social content could be understood as representing their employer’s position and interests, it is notable that CS actors did not express a range of beliefs beyond just those integrated into

the strategy. This could suggest that CS actors were already resigned to the content having been decided or felt that only the social issues were of high priority for Belfast.

In the strategy document, more environmental material was included relative to the economic, however this was still minimal. As was noted in Chapter 7, this may indicate a deliberate narrowing of the scope of the strategy approach away from these in favour of the social. Alternatively, it may simply imply that compared to the social benefits, economic and environmental outcomes were viewed as unlikely to be significant for the types of projects (small-scale, urban, community gardens) being focused upon in *Growing Communities*. Within the strategy development process, the council's priorities were reflected through their inclusion of the HiAP approach, which had a uniquely social focus. By default, this resulted in a lesser emphasis on the economic and environmental pillars of sustainability but significant attention to inclusivity of social groups and those viewed as vulnerable. Actors driving the HiAP process⁹⁴ also contributed through organising and guiding workshops for the strategy's development, which further focused these meetings upon social equity and inclusivity. Council-commissioned research into the landscape of local growing in Belfast provided data and recommendations, and urged the council to focus on the development of community gardens over allotment space to target community development more specifically (Sustainable Northern Ireland, 2011). These contributions to the process each introduced strong social elements over environmental or economic aspects and ultimately provided the cornerstones of the strategy, as dictated by the council.

As was shown in Chapter 7, diagnostic frames across the three pillars are minimal. Implicit issues can be inferred by working backwards from the motivational frames which showcase sustainable outcomes, but otherwise, issues are avoided. A comment which stands out from the council actor was, that on the whole, local authority priorities tended toward economic development. The lack of economic content in *Growing Communities* suggests that the typical priorities were set aside, or again less relevant. Regardless, a complete lack of acknowledgement of any economic issues in Belfast by the council stands out.⁹⁵ One explanation that could be offered for this is that if the council admits to problems in a publicly accessible document need of change, that these could be used as leverage to seek

⁹⁴ CS actors commissioned by the council for this purpose and the writing of the document.

⁹⁵ This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

further action or commitments from the council. A strategy offers in a sense a map or a public record to hold a council accountable and so it would appear that a cautious approach was used to avoid offering any footholds in this regard.

Having already established that the purpose of the strategy was social from its inception, what is of greater interest is the difference in how beliefs were framed in the interviews and how this threw framings in the strategy into sharp relief. In particular, social issues were identified more explicitly by participants than they were within the strategy document, where they were quite general when stated and at times only alluded to. The most notable example is the historic sectarian violence in Belfast between Nationalist and Loyalist communities. This was identified as a key driver to the development of the strategy by those interviewed, however was not identified as an issue in the strategy. While this may be consistent with the council's reluctance to acknowledge any issues within the strategy, this particular topic may simply have been considered too sensitive to include explicitly.

Where issues were largely muted in the strategy, sustainable social outcomes presented through motivational frames were abundant within both interviews and the strategy. However, the lack of discussion around economic and environmental beliefs in interviews contrasted sharply with the many positive outcomes presented in the *Growing Communities* document. So, while the economic and environmental content of the strategy is minimal, effort was made to note actions relevant to them and list multiple positive outcomes related to each (although fewer than the social pillar in both cases). This can be attributed to how the council sought to appeal to its audience, and with another similarity to BNES, the 'laundry-list' approach seeks to appeal by sheer volume of points. The council uses the strategy as a platform to speak in proactive terms about what it will do for its citizens, how this will benefit them, and to make it abundantly clear that these efforts are council-led. For example, the inclusion of several case studies in the strategy serves to illustrate good works going on in Belfast relating to community growing. It is worth noting that all of these projects highlight the involvement of the council, thus showcasing its support for and connection to these efforts. This focus on the council's efforts and its leadership role is consistent throughout the document and is a framing approach aimed at the citizen-audience. For example, the council's 'Key Priorities' are each introduced with a "commitment" from the council, such as:

"Our Commitment - to provide opportunities for all people in Belfast to benefit from community growing activities" (2012, p. 15).

These statements offer a benevolent tone of civil service. However, the language of the document appears to serve to communicate more subtle messages to the audience. These include managing expectations, communicating roles, and reminding of rules. As an example, in the strategy, two possible approaches to establishing community garden projects are presented:

*"Generally, the establishment of a community garden will take one of two forms. The first is the top-down approach where the local authority (or other agency) leads the process of establishing the garden then invites residents to use it, often handing over management to an appropriate community group. This approach is typical when a garden is established specifically to address particular health and wellbeing or social issues, perhaps as part of a wider programme. The second is the bottom- up approach where **the community approaches the local authority to propose a community garden, then, once a site is agreed, takes on design, construction, cultivation and management themselves** [emphasis added] (with a greater or lesser amount of assistance from the local authority, as required). As much of the work is done by the community, this may minimise the amount of local authority resources required whilst maximising community 'ownership'" (ibid, p.22, emphasis added)*

Here, an opportunity is taken by the council to emphasise its own leadership while identifying what roles CS is expected to play. In short, the council positions itself in a supporting role, but implying that the community do much of the legwork in developing projects. This is stated much more explicitly than BNES, although the sentiment is the same and the reliance on CS groups is apparent. Even through the suggested gardening activities, the expectation of adherence to council process is expected. As is emphasized in the quote above, the council asserts the authority to approve new projects. Similarly, and rather ironically, is the (cautiously) offered activity of guerrilla gardening, which like the BNES council notes, should receive prior approval (ironically negating the 'guerrilla' aspect). So, while suggesting bottom-up efforts, the document manages to impose a top-down tone: support is conditional on adhering to council process, it seems.

While sustainability of the process via long-term council support was discussed by all coalition participants, in practice (and lending to the accusations that this strategy was largely tokenistic and short-term in its vision) one actor stated that CS groups have felt as though the garden projects have fallen to them to maintain after only a short time without council support (BELCS1). While this research is not focused on the implementation of strategies, this shortcoming reflects the unanimous complaint across all cases of a lack of consistent and dedicated long-term funding available through councils – even when initiated by the council itself.

One CS actor suggested a hint of resentment toward the council noting that many community gardens and grassroots-run projects had existed long before the strategy, yet felt that the council was seeking credit for the existing growing culture and efforts. This repeated the sentiment by CS actors in BNES. The sense of partnership between the council and CS appears to be viewed by the council (as per the strategy) as linked to implementation, rather than, as was shown through the participation structure, within the strategy's development. It states this expectation at several points in the document, asserting that “[c]ommitment is required from all those involved in implementing the growing communities strategy” (ibid,p. 14) and that the council values “*working in partnership with the community for implementation of the strategy*” (ibid, p.25). This framing of community ownership and empowerment after an initial launch and support period by the council has been taken by some CS actors as a distancing of the council's long-term involvement. Therefore, the long-term sustainability of the efforts was felt to fall back primarily to the grassroots.

These examples serve to illustrate the dominant voice of the council in the strategy, and the top-down nature of the process. It appears that as a “Municipality-Driven Food Policy Initiative”, Belfast's process left little room in the document for voices from beyond its own institutional structures.

8.2.5 ACF 'hypothesis' 3

As with BNES, there was little room for debate over the policy core aims or actions chosen to achieve them. Without a system for non-council actors to inject their beliefs or challenge those of the council, there was no need for the council to 'give up' any particular elements. The research conducted by SNI gave an evidence base from which the council chose to

proceed, which was primarily relating to greater social cohesion via community gardens. CS actors involved in the strategy development process do not appear to have challenged the social focus at the strategy's core, but rather recognized its importance, considering the unique local context and history. Creation of allotment space, despite being in high demand from the public, and a point of pressure for the Parks Department, was agreed upon as ancillary by all those involved. The consultation process above suggests that the HiAP approach brought together members of the community to consider how these projects could be equitable and inclusive, but there was little apparent flexibility on the approach itself. Although the council commissioned a CS group to draft the strategy, the content was dictated from the top-down. For these reasons, this 'hypothesis' does not hold for the case of the coalition group behind the Growing Communities strategy.

8.2.6 Case Summary

Despite the HiAP approach being used, a lack of diverse representation within the steering group (being largely formed from Active Belfast, a council-based group) was a feature. The document relied on stakeholder input; however, these stakeholders were predominantly council actors. As such, due to the nature of the strategy being a largely top-down initiative, it appears that in the case of Belfast, there was very little negotiation in terms of the strategy priorities or content.

Likewise, as a result of the HiAP approach, a limited view of sustainability was taken as the predominant equity and inclusiveness considerations were dominant, with little attention to environmental or economic pillars. Participant interviews reflected what appeared to be already established social priorities by the council, and a one-dimensional view of sustainability. The views of actors from both CS and the council largely reflected the strategy approach, suggesting that this was not strongly opposed. This may be the result of a sense of resignation resulting from decisions having already been made.

In framing the strategy content, two audiences appear to have been taken into account, being higher-level government and the citizens of Belfast. Mention of "targets" and links to higher-level policy positioned the strategy within Belfast's statutory requirements toward sustainability. The skew toward prognostic and motivational frames suggest that through the strategy, the council sought to present a proactive image and appeal to a wide range of citizens. This research suggests that in limiting diagnostic frames, the council sought to

avoid a kick-back of accountability, where CS would have been able to identify these elements and demand further action. Despite this, actors from both CS and the council felt that the strategy was designed to over the longer term rely on CS efforts after an initial injection of council support. This was felt to lack a sustainable long-term view.

8.3 Devon

8.3.1 The Strategy Development Process

The coalition group involved in developing *Feeding Devon's Future* is classified as a "Hybrid Model with Direct Links to Governance" (Category 2), according to MacRae and Donahue's classification model (2013). Chapter 6 detailed how the idea for the development of a local food working group had been brought forward to the DSP by a member of CS. Presenting a food strategy proposal to the DSP

"brought together a variety of players who wouldn't normally meet and invited them to see together how would a strategy - how would a more strategic approach to food look like - what would it look like for Devon if we aligned our different perspectives, our experiences and our wisdom, and that's really what grew, and what developed into Feeding Devon's Future" (DEVCS2).

Although local services and business interests were represented by the DSP, when describing it, CS participants expressed that the partnership was synonymous with the council. Through the DSP's approval the idea, a strategy development mandate was initiated along with the creation of a steering group. The majority of the coalition was made up of CS actors, with only two county council actors involved in supporting roles. Despite this grassroots initiation and representation, and the partnership between DCC (via the DSP) and CS actors, the process was described as *"quite top-down"* (DEVCS5). This structure, and the sense of accountability to the council influenced the development of the strategy and its content. This presented a number of tensions that had to be managed throughout the strategy development process to achieve a document output that satisfied all parties.

8.3.2 Sustainability Beliefs: Compared

While no specific definition of sustainability was given in the strategy, the term itself and its three pillars were used frequently in conjunction with LFP in the document. This suggests an awareness of sustainability as a framework. Working groups within the coalition

concentrated on specific themes associated with these, along with 'health' and 'learning' as focus areas.

As was shown in Chapter 6, with so much flexibility for interpretation, the concept can be a source of tension, resulting in differing, or even opposing views. Participants expressed a sense that the level of debate or disagreement over sustainability was fairly minimal during the process, mostly due to like-minded people involved in creating *Feeding Devon's Future*. Although one participant admitted that they didn't recall explicit discussion of sustainability as a concept, however, rather than seeing this as a failure of the process, they viewed this as a measure of progress and *"a reflection of where the sustainability agenda has got to"* (DEVCS1). The participant acknowledged that some groups that were present during the process might have *"particular priorities"*, giving the examples of Devon Wildlife Trust and Transition Exeter as having fairly specific environmentally focused views of sustainability. Despite this, they explained that beliefs of those involved were similar enough that it didn't appear necessary to pick apart the concept or discuss it in great detail, *"because most people in the room would have bought into it straight away"* simply because it is understood that *"the concept is a good one"* (DEVCS1). This view is echoed by another participant who felt that debate over the details of sustainability wasn't a significant part of the process, since *"[t]here were enough of us around the table who see sustainability as needing to be embedded in lots of different things"* (DEVCS2). One actor who described themselves as *"on the ecological side"* had strong views about farmers and production methods being environmentally unsustainable, but that these producers would argue that their methods were sustainable if viewed from an economic lens. This was a point that was approached cautiously in the strategy – at once suggesting mixed agriculture and *"sustainable food production"* (DSP Food Group, 2014, p. 2), while avoiding clear prognostic actions for farmers. This stance was taken to avoid alienating farmers as part of the audience for the strategy.

Sustainability and food in the context of local security and resilience was felt to be of little concern to the council but was significant in interviews with both CS and council actors and was likewise represented within the food strategy. DEVCS2 stated that *"whilst there are individuals and organisations that were very interested and engaged in that, overall, it is not on the political agenda, it's not on the agenda of the economic players on the whole, in the*

Southwest or in Devon.” Notably, this element was emphasised several times throughout the strategy document by means of a sobering illustration of issues, and the use of worst-case-scenario examples to motivate its audience into action. While sustainability itself was not a significant council focus, using the pillars allowed for issues to be framed and communicated to the council audience with the intent of appealing to its objectives and areas of responsibility.

8.3.3 Local Food Production Beliefs: Compared

Due to the approval of the strategy’s development and associated support coming from the council, food priorities were framed around council priorities. The focus on the rural agricultural economy featured prominently, and the opportunity was taken to associate it strongly with the environmental impacts of food production.

8.3.4 Actor Beliefs and Strategy Content: Framing and Negotiation

Although the initiative was presented by a CS actor, support from the DSP came with some key aims that were handed down by the council. This suggests a position of power held by the council as the leader in the DSP group. Within the steering group, some council actors who were involved were described as having “supporting” roles, and along with the CS champion leading the steering group, were responsible for feeding back information to the council about progress. It was explained that the DSP was consulted throughout the strategy development process, so that in effect, the council could monitor the process.

As a result of the strategy process being essentially a council directive, the interactions between CS actors and the council experienced particular tensions. These influenced the strategy’s development and the content of Feeding Devon’s Future. CS actors expressed reservation about the leadership of the council in the mandate of developing a strategy, with one explaining:

“[W]e were being asked to do it and it was a good thing to do, but ... we weren’t completely convinced about what they were going to do with that information at the end – it felt like we were being asked to go through a process and there wasn’t a very clear path of what would happen with that information afterwards” (DEVCS5)

As the food group was creating the strategy for the benefit of the DSP, council priorities were strongly represented, resulting in the strategy *“being quite high level and Devon-wide”*

(DEVCS5). CS participants identified public health as a council priority and that some funding was available through the Public Health Department for food-related projects addressing this:

“You’ve got what the county council is seeking...that it needs to have certain things in place, and therefore seeks to get them in place. Looking at the positive, it has the sense of the need for health and wellbeing within the county” (DEVCS3).

Similarly, coalition actors were aware that the council was funding research through Exeter University on Devon’s rural economy. As mentioned in previous chapters, two academics participated in the development of the strategy as advisors on the rural economy portion of the document as a part of their funded work. In an example of evidence-based policy making, one actor argued the importance of this expert knowledge, as *“by having a better understanding of the function of the food economy, then we’ll help inform better decision-making”* (DEVCS1). Inclusion of these priorities as a “hook” was referred to by some CS actors. By appealing to council interests, various forms of support were secured, including funding, staff resources, background data, and meeting space. It was the belief of this actor that the council was *“investing in the process”* and that there were *“probably a number of ways that they were involved that weren’t necessarily visible when you see the report”* (DEVCS1).

The leadership of the CS champion was recognised by several participants. Their knowledge of local food issues, the ability to bring together various actors from relevant but often disparate networks, and their role in the community as a moral authority were all cited as making this person an important figure in the process. The priorities of the council, the ‘champion’ as the process leader, and those of the CS actors within the coalition had to be negotiated throughout this process.

The CS champion involved in the strategy’s development was in a unique position to include their own priorities. In their role as lead author and leader of the steering committee, their priority of addressing local food poverty was prominently positioned in the strategy. As shown in Chapter 7, the issue of food poverty was presented before all other priority themes and given several pages unto itself at the beginning of the document. This illustrates

the power of this person's role and their ability as the lead author and final editor to shape the document according to their personal concern. One individual also noted the complimentary interests of the council and the champion figure, as *"health and poverty often go together"* (DEVCS1).

Despite interest from the council for the above priorities, CS actors (DEVCS3, DEVCS4, DEVCS5) expressed frustration over the message from the council that there was no available funding for projects. This was recognised as an issue stemming from the national level of government due to cutbacks at the local level, with regional government being progressively dismantled. The lack of a national level interest in local and sustainable food was felt to stymie any such focus at the local level. The national interests were concerned with making *"the food industry more internationally competitive, more efficient, more productive...all those classical Adam Smith-type approaches to industry"* (DEVCS4). These cutbacks at the local level presented a tension between the council and CS relating to participation. As can be seen in the case of Devon's strategy, a majority CS group took up the role of creating a strategy for the local council. The council was supportive and endorsed the strategy (DEVCS5), but several CS actors felt that they were doing the work needed to make the initiative happen, rather than it being a council-led effort. CS actors were aware that they were giving their free time as volunteers for this initiative. The process was summarized as being *"pushed by enthusiastic people from the grassroots, on the basis of a conscience, on a problem that they were picking up that wasn't being addressed"* (DEVCS4). Despite the grassroots values underlying the effort, the process was described as *"exclusionary"* (DEVCS5, DEVCS3), as many CS actors lacked the ability to take time away from their paying jobs to be involved consistently. This made attending meetings difficult and affected the quality of participation, leaving participants often to rely on email updates from the steering committee's mailing list.

One actor noted that to be involved *"at a strategic level"*⁹⁶ is *"several steps away from the work that people are doing directly"* (DEVCS3). They felt as though the council's representation (being only two actors) suggested *"an absence of ...strong and direct involvement"*, yet there was an expectation of the CS role in leading local food efforts. The

⁹⁶ A concept referred to often by participants indicating a joined-up approach to policy through various council departments, and coordination across several community projects. The opposite of departments being 'siloed'.

conflict expressed by this actor was that because local level food initiatives are already taking place, led largely by grassroots actors, the council can justify a lack of support, as the projects already exist. This mirrored the experience with the development of the strategy:

“that’s a real danger – that you can assume that a strategy will take place because the people who are good will get on and do it, but people can’t get on and do it without there being a background of structural support” (DEVCS3).

The issue of siloing within the council was mentioned, and so the inclusion of CS actors was felt by one actor to offer a means to guide efforts through experience that the council would otherwise lack.

As a result of the dynamics and tensions within this process, Devon’s food strategy is written in such a way that it speaks to the council as its main audience. Referring to the local food system, the strategy states, “[t]his is a vast and diverse area for social policy and practice” (ibid, p.1), thus implicating the council’s role to create policy. Recommendations at the end of the strategy are directed toward the council, indicating a definitive message regarding the LA’s expected responsibilities.

As shown in Chapter 7, the framing approach used in the strategy was primarily diagnostic, as it identified a number of pressing issues. The tone taken was often alarmist, urging the need for action and using words such as “risk” and “danger”. In an example urging action by the council and others, the strategy states “the solutions to the dangers we face ... will require a lead from influential organisations and public agencies, as well from community and commercial bodies” (ibid, p.14). Frequent mentions of limited resources appear to be nudges toward the council for greater investment in local food efforts. The notion of resilience and food security for the county in the face of potential emergencies and disasters was also put forward. Several of these issues reflect the personal concerns expressed by CS actors. Their inclusion in the strategy, particularly when associated with council priorities, reflect windows of opportunity being taken to increase pressure around food issues and actions needed. Being that the strategy was undertaken as a council-directed initiative (although predominantly CS-led), the knowledge of the council’s support and endorsement for the work likely emboldened participants to include certain content and to use assertive

language in certain areas. Similarly, some messages urge for a stance to be taken on issues, such as in the case of foodbanks, which *“hopefully should not be seen as permanent fixtures in the social landscape”* (ibid, p.7). The strategy is often bold in its language and clear in its demands to council, such as pointing out the need for *“changing policies and practice to encourage better human and environmental health”* (ibid, p.2). These examples and many more suggest pressure being put on the council from the (principally) CS group behind the creation of the strategy. Knowing its audience and having the attention of the council in this project appears to have enabled the coalition group to be direct in its communication of issues and actions needed to address them. Although this relationship also resulted in a cautious approach that gave contradictory impressions.

As the focus of the strategy was primarily directed at the council, there were discussions within the coalition about priorities and how to present the strategy’s content. Some tensions were revealed, however conflict appeared to be low level, with participants being accepting of more moderate language and choosing to be reserved when criticizing priority areas. For example, the issue of food poverty highlighted a tension and emphasized the value of consistent participation. DEVCS1 questioned the priority of food poverty and how it was set and agreed upon by the steering committee:

“It was never entirely clear to me how it had been settled on... it’s an important issue, but I guess my feeling was that food poverty in this country is largely caused by things that are beyond the control of any of us sitting around in that group. These are big structural things to do with inequalities in society and income distribution, and so I felt that although we might have been able to do something in terms of food banks and stuff ... it’s largely a sticking plaster approach, and we weren’t able to tackle any of the causes. And I suppose from my perspective, I was more interested in things that would allow us to tackle the causes of problems and address them.” (DEVCS1)

This quote illustrates that CS actors within the coalition still experienced disagreement amongst themselves over priority areas and how issues should be approached. However, for the sake of progressing with the strategy, disagreement in this case went un-challenged. A similar sentiment over personal views was expressed by DEVCS4:

“inevitably, as it goes into more detail there are some compromises to be made, there are some messages that I, if it was just my report to myself, that I would have wanted to put across more strongly, but others were not comfortable to do so...so you know, we have these dialogues, and eventually you come to a point that is a version that everyone is happy with, which obviously isn’t perfect for anyone of us individually, but at least it takes the debate forward.”

This actor gave the example of defining sustainability in food production as a way to illustrate this cautious approach (and how they would have liked to take a firmer position in the strategy), noting the need to be moderate in defining the concept to avoid alienating food producers.

“I don’t think the strategy set out to say ‘this is the right way to grow and produce food and this is the wrong way to grow and produce food’, because that can be very alienating for certain groups... when you have an agricultural food growing type place like Devon is, you have all sorts of people coming at this from all sorts of different directions. It’s actually a better way to get things done, otherwise, straight off you start having the divisions coming in between the small and the large scale, the organics and the inorganics, the local-global market type factions and before you’ve even started...the people around the table – it’s breaking up, you’re not getting anywhere” (DEVCS4).

This quote suggests that food producers were considered during the strategy’s development, as well as the content of the output. This indicates that, as a rural-focused strategy, farmers were considered as a part of the audience for the document, along with the council. This shows the importance of their role in achieving change in Devon’s local food system and is reflected within the language of the strategy.

8.3.5 ACF ‘hypothesis’ 3

In the case of Devon, the policy core items were set by the council, leaving little possibility of negotiating these. The leader of the process used their position of privilege as lead author to emphasise their personal pet-cause of food poverty in the strategy. Secondary beliefs, as actions in support of the policy core issues, were more open to creative consideration, particularly due to the predominantly CS representation of the coalition, and its thematic

working-group nature. It is through these working groups, representing the pillars of sustainability (plus health and learning) that the 'how' and the 'who' of the content was shaped around the key aims. This allowed CS to take the council priorities and make recommendations for how the council itself (with help from others, where appropriate) could meet them.

8.3.6 Case Summary

Actors involved with the creation of Feeding Devon's Future faced the challenge of conveying strong beliefs in the strategy relating to the environment and society (particularly health and food poverty), while representing the objectives of the council relating to the rural economy and public health. With the council as its primary audience, the result was a document that framed issues as urgent and potentially catastrophic if not addressed, and a need to return to an idyllic time in the past when it was felt that the people of Durham lived more sustainably. Tensions within the document were apparent, as alarmist diagnostic frames representing the views of the authors (those interviewed) were often followed by recommended actions that were framed using more moderate language to avoid alienating stakeholders. The reluctance to define the term sustainability was an example of this, although the pillars were used as a strategy framework. Devon's rural context resulted in a document that was primarily focused on rural agriculture however the role of urban agriculture was associated with the social pillar and was felt to play an important role in educating the public. Tensions relating to the roles of CS and the council were expressed in relation to developing the strategy and who was expected to take ownership of its execution. Concerns relating to funding cuts were a theme.

8.3.7 Exeter

While this research is not intended to be an assessment of outcomes from food strategies, one result of the development process in Devon was particularly noteworthy. As a result of the top-down nature of Devon's strategy, and the region-wide focus imposed by the DSP as the council's mandate, CS actors that had been involved in the effort chose to initiate a separate strategy with an exclusive focus on Exeter. This was viewed as a way for the grassroots to take ownership of the process and sidestep the objectives mandated by the LA. Additionally, this was felt to be a necessary step to address issues specific to Exeter as an urban area, rather than have it be only a footnote in a more generalised region-wide document.

8.4 Bristol

8.4.1 The Strategy Development Process

As can be seen in the previous two chapters, the beliefs of the two CS actors who participated in this research informed the development of the Plan, along with others in a broader coalition. This coalition was a partnership between the Bristol Food Policy Council, through the inclusion of some council members, and a small group of members of the Bristol Food Network as a wider multi-stakeholder group. Individuals from these groups formed the steering committee that developed the Good Food Plan. This coalition structure influenced the content of the strategy, and sought to communicate particular issues, actions and motivations to an intended audience.

Despite being categorised as a hybrid coalition of CS and council actors (Category 3), this case study of Bristol is limited in its ability to fully investigate the final research question of this study due to the lack of council actors as interview participants. It is acknowledged that without the participation of coalition actors from council roles, this can only be a single-sided illustration of levels of conflict over frames and how the subsequent negotiation of content was perceived and acted upon within the strategy development process. Considering this, framing approaches *for* the council and other stakeholders are discussed in greater detail than the negotiations that took place between CS and coalition actors. The two participants who took part in interviews played leadership roles in the development of the Plan, so their individual views are strongly linked to its content, and their interactions with other coalition members (including council members) was significant. The perspective of these coalition actors and how they experienced interactions with the council, and the response to these interactions through the framing of content in the Good Food Plan for Bristol is discussed here. The Good Food Plan for Bristol identifies its audience through an appeal to *“[a]nyone who can and who wants to make a difference to the vision of a more sustainable and resilient food system in the city.”* Other passages identify the council as a key player, along with local businesses.

8.4.2 Sustainability Beliefs: Compared

When asked to explain their personal views on sustainability and food production, both quoted the definition of “Good Food” created for the plan. Each explained that this definition was put in place in lieu of the concept of sustainability. BRICS1 said that this decision was taken deliberately, explaining, *“we also didn’t go down the route of talking about the*

environmental, social, economic more generically, we tried to be very specific in reflecting the nature of the food system in everyday language." It was felt that framing aims in this way would help prospective participants identify areas of contribution more easily and get involved, rather than being put off by complex or sprawling concepts.

8.4.3 Local Food Production Beliefs: Compared

Similar to sustainability, the explanation of "Good Food" had to be widely accessible, and through consultation was refined so that the public would understand the concept. The resulting shorthand of the definition "good for people, places and planet" became a sort of accessible tagline for the Plan, according to its creators. A participant explained that the term 'Good Food' was used to say *"well, what is it we mean by a stable and resilient food system?"* This view largely echoed the content of the strategy, although the complexity of the food system and sustainability was acknowledged.

8.4.4 Actor Beliefs and Strategy Content: Framing and Negotiation

It is stated that the document is intended as a "call to arms" to stakeholders, using the language of Snow and Benford's motivational framing description (2000, p. 617). Identifying the audience for which the document was intended serves to clarify the framing approaches used and inform any inferences made in relation to how content was presented. This wide net was expressed by both interview participants in how language was used to appeal to local stakeholders as prospective participants in working toward the aims of the Plan. Addressing potentially negative associations with the food agenda was a consideration that also influenced the language within the Plan. One participant explained, *"[i]t just took a lot of very time-consuming dialogue, and events, listening to people to gradually enable people to feel comfortable that they wouldn't be bounced into an extreme anti-capitalist, anti-business stance, or they wouldn't be stereotyped as miserable health zealots"* (BRICS2). In Bristol, negative associations and concerns over what is perceived as the "alternative" angle of the food system were considered when structuring the document. This push-back suggests a negotiation between the creators of the Plan and those being consulted (albeit an unspecified group) on what ideologies they were comfortable being associated with. As creators of the Good Food Plan, BRICS1 and BRICS2 identified this and responded by moderating strong views to build trust and ease the discomfort felt by some.

The strong ecological views expressed by BRICS2 as key to sustainability and human health can be viewed as an example of this moderation. As identified in previous chapters, the

environmental content within the Plan is minimal and focused primarily on the reduction of carbon emissions from food imports. However, it lacks what could be considered a more assertive quality emphasizing environmental health or systems, such as soils, air and water. Likewise, the often-sensitive subject of animal welfare is mentioned once on the back cover, but not included within the document. Activist tones in the prognostic actions frame are noticeably absent in the document. As shown in Chapter 7, the Plan is largely motivational in its content, particularly with consideration to the vision statement illustrating its aims to empower a diverse local audience. The development of the Plan was summed up as *“putting all our aspirations down into one document”* (BRICS2).

The “future generations” view within the sustainability concept articulated by BRICS2, echoing the standard Brundtland definition, is likewise diminished in the Plan. The Good Food Plan talks about the ability to make a change in *“within five years”* (2013, p. 9) but offers several mentions of children and educating them about food, showing an investment in the next generation. Creating the Plan as a five-year plan from 2013 was explained as an approach allowing the document to be updated and revisited. This reduced timeframe suggests an effort to appeal to the audience for more immediate action on the Plan’s vision.

In addition to framing to cultivate a public reach, the Plan notes the important role for the council and politicians to play in certain areas where food-related actions need to be supported by policy. Historic positive efforts in these areas were recognised by both participants, citing council work on Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992), and the creation of a sustainability team within the authority since the 1990s. In this sense, it was surprising that a stronger sustainability tone was avoided. It was felt that *“there have been enough key officers within Bristol city council who have helped make sure that deep definition of sustainability doesn’t get completely deleted”* (BRICS2). This participant complained that *“[p]eople are constantly trying to change the words, water it down, make it less binding”*, yet it appears that this is what the Plan does in deliberately omitting an explicit expression of sustainability. With this level of commitment to sustainability within the council, the choice to diminish the language of sustainability in the Good Food Plan stands out. This reflects back to participant statements regarding the decision to make language more accessible to the wider public. By replacing it with an aspirational vision of a “sustainable food city” (without being clear on what exactly is meant by sustainability, but instead providing

qualities of what this would look like), it could be argued that this dilutes the sustainability content that could be directed toward the council as a sort of common policy language. Rather, avoiding explicit use of sustainability language was deliberate for reaching the wider public, but BRICS1 clarified that it was still important and reflected in the document when communicating to council members:

“[Y]ou can map everything to social economic and environmental – were not missing that, but it’s not as if we use that as our first port of call when we’re talking about it – unless we have to – so with city council, you actually have to start with more policy language.”

As an example, the Plan highlights planning and land management in the context of the environment, citing the need to retain agricultural land for production rather than it being sold for development. Similarly, food production and increasing routes to market are emphasised through an economic lens and are supported by the findings of the “Who Feeds Bristol” report (Carey, 2011). This use of evidence from research to influence policy makers is an important tool for framing diagnostic content. These examples illustrate areas of action where only the council has the capacity to affect change, whether through policy and/or financial investment. This shows a reliance on the council’s participation to make headway in particular areas of the food system (including food production), where CS (through advocacy or volunteer efforts) can only take the effort so far. Framing content through this economic focus, as well as environmental (albeit, with an economic slant), suggests an appeal to the council being at the heart of the Plan, as the roles of other local stakeholders (CS and businesses) are far less specific or targeted.

Despite support and interest from Public Health⁹⁷ being *“consistent all the way through”* (BNESCS1) food efforts over the years, the health content in the strategy appears as limited by comparison to the economic emphasis, as was shown in Chapter 7. Beyond Public Health, it was noted, *“...there are also conversations going on with planning, economic development, but from those different departments there’s no resource”* (BNESCS1). This issue of resource scarcity was identified across all cases, and for Bristol, Devon and Durham as primarily CS

⁹⁷ Including the NHS as a separate entity from the council before its integration into the local authority.

driven efforts, reinforced the need for aggressive framing (often using the language of sustainability pillars) to appeal to council priorities.

Participant BRICS1 explained that national level policy impacts local governance in significant ways, reducing the council's capacity to support local food efforts:

"Absolutely everything is locked down – no penny can be spent without going through a panel – they just can't fund anything... they've got to choose their priorities...It's [food] just not a priority. Food poverty, yes – but that's about poverty."

Again, this participant emphasized the economic frame as a way to appeal to council priorities. What is notable is that the specific issue of food poverty receives little attention in the Plan, instead focusing on jobs, skills, and a thriving local economy. In a sense, this is approaching food poverty through the backdoor of increasing earnings via council action. This same participant, noting these funding cuts, said, *"while we can get a bit grumpy that Bristol can't do more, they've been consistent on their support on food, even if it's been limited"* (BRICS1). This suggests that historically, the council has been sympathetic to food issues to an extent, but due to funding cuts, it has fallen as a priority, and like sustainability, as was noted earlier, gets 'watered down'. This shows that despite having representatives of Bristol City Council on the BFPC, and being in dialogue with certain council departments, the relationship with the council was not without tensions. For this reason, convincing frames were still necessary when making appeals for support, particularly in a climate of austerity.

The issue of funding cuts to local councils was also felt to have an impact on social capital, limiting ability of the BFPC to seek out and cultivate long-term allies in the council. Voluntary redundancy for often senior, educated and well-informed staff members impacts relationships between CS and council actors and slows progress. While outside of the three 'standard' pillars⁹⁸, the sustainability of food initiatives (programs, projects and impact) in Bristol was felt to be affected by these issues. Also, as a result of funding cuts, participants noted that many activities were being shifted from the council to the voluntary sector. Using the example of the Good Food Plan, CS actors under the leadership of the BFPC have

⁹⁸ Although reflecting a crossover between the economic and the governance pillar offered by Mason and Lang as one of the supplementary facets of sustainability in their 'omni-standards' (2017)

stepped in to take on a wide-reaching social care role, spanning social, environmental and economic aims. However, as shown above, aspects of the Plan are still reliant on council funding and policy action.

Despite council members being involved in its development, the Plan has not been formally adopted by the Council as it was felt to be a CS document, and as such the council couldn't endorse what it didn't itself write. This presents both limitations and opportunities, as the BFPC is both separate from the council and so limited in its impact, but still connected to the local authority through council actors who sit on its steering committee. This in turn offers opportunities, such as insight into council priorities and policy "windows" through those council allies.

"The FPC helps us to not get stuck in any politics of the council, because it's a little bit separate, but it's not without its problems... We've got 3 key bodies in addition to the council itself who relate to food. So, we're in a very live process of working with how these different groups relate to each other and how the agenda on food is best addressed by each of these different groups." (BRICS1)

In terms of LFP, the participants acknowledged that many projects and programs were already in place, and *"fulfill certain types of outcomes"* (BRICS1) for Bristol (and by extension, acting in a support capacity to the council). Examples of these efforts were worked into the Plan as vignettes, illustrating existing good practice. Of the council, one participant noted, *"they're saying to us all the time that they can do very little ... we just get on with it"* (BRICS1), referring to the work CS (BRICS1). Recognising these limitations within the council has meant having to look more broadly for support, and so in both interviews and the Plan document itself, the business sector is mentioned and appealed to as a stakeholder, along with CS groups.

8.4.5 ACF 'hypothesis' 3

As a result of the strategy being driven by CS, policy core elements were not open to negotiation to the local authority, however in framing the strategy for the council as an audience, it appears that aspects of it were voluntarily moderated. In this sense, to frame the strategy with a strong economic tone, for example, and choosing to avoid an explicit position on sustainability suggest confirmation that actors gave up secondary aspects of

their belief system. Based on interviews, the aim of this appeared to be a means of leveraging council support by speaking in a language it would understand (ie: the economic pillar) and appealing to a wider audience to bring in actors from different local groups.

8.4.6 Case Summary

The case study of Bristol presents a food plan that targets a wide audience, yet still implicates the council as having the central role in making food system change in partnership with the BFPC. The CS actors interviewed for this research identify how particular content was framed within the plan to appeal to stakeholders, the result being a largely motivational framing approach. As no council actors involved in the coalition took part in interviews, their views of how this framing process was negotiated have not been represented. While the negotiation process of the frames is not possible to determine in the sense of an interplay between coalition subgroups, a deliberate framing process has been taken, according to CS actors.

Based upon the insights of these participants, it can be inferred that the council's interest in food system issues (as shown through past efforts), has been affected by budget cuts from the national level of government. This has in turn caused a tension between CS expectations for the support of the local food system, and the council's ability to deliver. The need to frame local food action in terms of its economic benefits, as was apparent in the Good Food Plan and through interviews, is in response to this institutional barrier faced by the council. Under the circumstances, this approach presented the greatest potential to appeal to the council audience. For this reason, the economic content of the Plan was the most developed of the three pillars of sustainability, however the additional focus of sustainability of local food effort overall was also emphasized. This included the need for support through policy action, social capital (reliable contacts within the council, aligned grassroots networks), and funding.

The two coalition actors interviewed exemplified a belief in the need for a LFS, as well as wide-reaching support to achieve a more sustainable food system. This came at the expense of moderating some content or even sacrificing personal priorities to create a more convincing and impactful final document (note BRICS2 and their ecological and public health focus).

8.5 Durham

8.5.1 The Strategy Development Process

Durham's coalition has been identified as a *"hybrid of CS organizations and government, but with fewer formal attachments and lower levels of financing and government staffing arrangements."*⁹⁹ (Category 3 of MacRae and Donahue's 2013 food policy group structure system). As shown in Chapter 6, the coalition included a small number of council actors involved in sub-groups relating to public health and public sector procurement. Participants were quick to point out that despite this involvement, this was not a council-led group and the strategy process and structure was not prescribed by the Local Authority. Rather, the Durham Food Partnership is run through a charity organisation. Likely as a result of this participation structure, only CS participants responded to requests to take part in this research, and the few council actors involved in the coalition chose not to respond or take part. Unfortunately, this has meant that only CS views of the strategy development process are represented, although these individuals share their perceptions of their interactions with the council, their interests and their capacity in relation to contributing to the food strategy. One actor moved into a council role after the development of the strategy.

The strategy identifies its audience according to the 'wide ranging' nature of its content. It calls upon a *"diverse range of organisations to be involved in its implementation from large public sector bodies, private businesses and farmers, to smaller voluntary and community sector groups and volunteers"* (County Durham Food Partnership, 2014, p. 3). One participant explained that the rationale behind the food strategy group was *"to build up a network of people who did have an interest in this from whatever angle"* (DURCS1).

Ultimately, a sense that at the national and local council levels, governments were failing to support local food systems was identified as a driver for CS action in Durham. So, while the role of government was felt to be essential to implementing policy and ushering in high-level change, CS actors in Durham chose to act rather than wait for change to come from the top-down. DURCS1 explains, *"... I think that must be one of the reasons why there's such a lot of activity at regional and local level. Because you do what you can."* Despite this sense that CS needs to step in to fill a gap left by government bodies, the automatic adoption of a

⁹⁹ As detailed in the Methods section, this was originally labelled as Category 4 when selecting the case studies, but through additional information gleaned during interviews was found to more appropriately reflect a category with more council involvement.

strategy is not guaranteed. Durham's Sustainable LFS, while endorsed by the County Durham Partnership (of which the council is a member) has not been endorsed or adopted explicitly by the County Council. This leaves the strategy in ambiguous territory.

8.5.2 Sustainability Beliefs: Compared

As was shown in chapters 6 and 7, the content of interviews contrasted from the detailed and systematic presentation of sustainability pillars that was found in the food strategy document. Participants were forthright in the identification of specific issues (notably the local economy and public health) that they felt the strategy needed to address, but these lacked the complexity and detail of the strategy content. The economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability as they were presented within the document were detailed with numerous diagnostic issues, extensive prognostic actions and clear motivations as outcomes. Interviews revealed that participants tended to focus on one particular area of concern (ie: social focus on health, economic focus on developing local markets). It is likely that actors focused on these areas due to the design of the strategy development process, as they were involved with working groups focused on specific content areas relevant to their expertise.

8.5.3 Local Food Production Beliefs: Compared

The strategy showed a detailed and multi-faceted consideration of sustainability, with local production as a means of addressing various concerns at both the global and local levels. Interviews with CS actors offered limited content relating to food production. What was put forward for the society pillar was based upon local growing and space to encourage "more people to be growing some of their own food" (DURCS2). The rural agricultural context was explained as being mostly livestock grazing, but actors sought to challenge the perception that Durham wasn't geographically or climatically suitable for activities beyond this, such as horticulture. Similarly, actors wanted to challenge the belief (felt to be one held by the council) that community level urban growing was "economically irrelevant" and that agriculture as a whole was a "small part of the economy" of Durham. It appears that challenging established perceptions relating to the capacity and contribution of food in the region was a main aim of those interviewed. This was reflected in the strategy document, which had an emphasis on rural agriculture (although acknowledgement of the role of urban growing for individual provision). Relocalising the food system to keep food produced in Durham within the county was put forward in both interviews and the strategy.

The strategy went into greater detail on the subject of production than did interviews, as it was structured in a systematic way to justify the need for relocalisation.

8.5.4 Actor Beliefs and Strategy Content: Framing and Negotiation

Rather than extensive discussion about their perceptions of sustainability and LFP's role in achieving it, participants spoke largely of the process and interactions that made up the strategy's development. This involved reference to the council and the participation of stakeholders. Other strategies make similar statements and suggest potential stakeholder roles throughout in quite general terms, however Durham's document explicitly identifies groups or actors as 'lead partners' to take ownership of specific actions¹⁰⁰. The majority of those tagged are working groups with a mixed base of CS actors, council members and private businesses or institutions¹⁰¹ and have mandates focused on relevant areas to the associated strategy theme. As such, the Durham Food Partnership draws upon a network of similarly structured organisations. The strategy appears to be largely directed at these groups with the aim to unify those involved for coordinated action. With this extensive list of stakeholders, interview participants were aware that an accessible approach needed to be taken with regard to language and content in the strategy. Referring to its wide stakeholder base, this is explained within the document itself early on:

"[I]t is important to adopt language that is easily understood by all parties and not to use terminology that is open to different interpretations. With this in mind you will not find any reference to objectives, tasks, outputs, outcomes, or the like. Instead, we ask two straightforward questions What do we want to achieve? and How will we do it? The detail is left to the lead partner(s) to spell out in their own delivery or action plans." (ibid, p.3)

This speaks to the prognostic and motivational framing approaches within the strategy and shows a consciousness of the audience when seeking to present information. An example of this straightforward framing approach is offered through the strategy, where when defining sustainable food, the strategy provided a "pragmatic working definition" to "avoid spending

¹⁰⁰ This is shown in Durham's strategy document where for each strategic aim a table illustrating actions and those actors who are entrusted to deliver them. These are ranked according to priority using a 'traffic light' system.

¹⁰¹ Groups include: Food Partnership, Devon County Council (DCC), Durham University, Durham Community Action (DCA), County Durham Public Sector Procurement Group (DPSPG), Visit County Durham, Business Support Network, NFU and others.

*too much time becoming embroiled in debates about the meanings of sustainable and local food” (ibid, p.13).*¹⁰² This rationale is expanded upon by one participant, noting that “[y]ou can delve into them [definitions] in great complexity, and can lead to all sorts of time wasting in some ways from arguing over details – We agreed quite quickly on our definitions and we kept them quite loose.” (DURCS1)

The role of council was recognised as important by those CS actors involved, particularly in regard to creating longer-term, more integrated policy. Participants reflected on challenges during the development of the strategy such as how to represent material to actors with different values and how to address complexity. In the case of the council as a stakeholder, awareness of the local authority’s position and priorities was a subject that participants were aware of and made efforts to address. The concept of sustainability presented an opening for discussion however it was also felt by CS actors to add a level of complexity that the council struggled with. Noting the broad applicability of food to several of the county’s policy areas, a role for the council in joining-up policy efforts was underscored:

“What we’re trying to do is bring things together and see food as central to policy making and more than just an add on – so that food can be a driver for economic growth, and environment improvement and health and all the rest of it.” (DURCS1)

Here the pillars of sustainability are identified as considerations when appealing to the council, however expressing these connections to the council and the broader stakeholder base was felt to be a challenge. In one example, health is used to illustrate the overlapping connection to other pillars of sustainability, *“but often, that’s a difficult concept to grasp”* (DURCS3). This actor felt that articulating the extent of the interconnections of sustainability themes to stakeholders during the development process and within the strategy document may have fallen short. This issue of complexity was also felt to be a barrier to integrating the strategy within the council. From a structural perspective, the

¹⁰² “Food that is produced and consumed in or near County Durham that is healthy for people and the planet, and supports our local economy.” See Chapter 7 for further detail.

siloeing of government departments was found to hinder a joined-up approach when seeking to weave sustainability and food into local policy:

“one of the difficulties in getting it integrated into the council I think is not so much overlap, it’s just that it doesn’t fit – Government comes in silos. There’s education, economy, environment and health – and in theory they should all be working together and in practice it’s very rare for them to do so, and that’s not just here, but I’d say it’s true of most councils. It’s always been a problem. So, having something like this strategy that goes across all those areas, means that it’s quite difficult to fit it in anywhere in their structures.” (DURCS1)

Despite this difficulty in joining up strategy content to the broader policy context in Durham, participants referenced existing policy as leverage for the Sustainable Food Strategy. These included the Sustainable Communities Strategy, which was identified as the *“overarching strategy for the county”* (DURCS3) and the Health and Wellbeing strategy in order to link the strategy to the NHS disease agenda. Considering these connection points, actors spoke of the struggle with council priorities (being perceived as predominantly economic, as expressed by DURCS3). Referring to the council’s focus on *“jobs jobs jobs as the top priority all the time”*, one actor explained:

“[T]he mantra is very much around economic growth, so that’s the key driver. They also talk about sustainability, but the two, I’m not convinced sit too well together and I think sometimes we can sacrifice the values that underpin the original idea around sustainability, because there’s an overarching emphasis on the economic aspects – so yes, councils will sign up and say “sustainability: very virtuous, yes we support reducing carbon emissions”, but if we’re going to go for growth at all costs, which is very much the driver, then I just feel that those other elements of that sustainable development ethos have been sacrificed really.” (DURCS3)

An absence of action around the local economy in relation to food by the council was felt to be in conflict with this, particularly considering Durham’s rural agricultural context:

"[w]e live in a predominantly rural economy. Agriculture surely has a role in that - So how do you see the role of agriculture supporting local people? People just glaze over - people are lost - it's not recognized as an area, it's almost a forgotten - it's pushed off to one side - forgotten about." (DURCS3)

This suggests that there is a perceived disconnection between the council and Durham's rural reality of the county, and that the council may be more focused on economic activity in the county's urban areas. Contrasting this perceived one-dimensional economic angle is a more holistic view offered by one CS actor: DURCS1 notes *"[t]here's not one overarching theme that really trumps the others, so they're all important."* This harkens to WCED position that true sustainability exists at the intersection of its three pillars (WCED, 1987), however this appears to be an obstacle in practical application where stakeholders have vested interests in one pillar or other.

Beyond the involvement of the small number of council actors on the steering committee, impressions given in the interviews with CS actors suggest that negotiation with the council appeared to be limited. As a CS led effort, the priorities of the council were considered, (largely for the purpose of framing for this group as an audience to be appealed to) but were not imposed as the guiding framework of the document. The local economy was included as an important focus of the document, but at a level of detail beyond what it was felt the council understood in regard to the reality of Durham's rural agricultural livelihoods, noted above. This can be attributed to the level of research and dialogue with stakeholders undertaken by the leader of the partnership over several years prior to the writing of the document. In this sense, CS brought a level of expertise, time and resources to the initiative that the council perhaps wasn't willing or able to commit or was simply not aware of a need for.

As a response to a lack of council resources available and the resulting nature of the food partnership as a grassroots effort, a considered approach was taken to framing in order to appeal to a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to the council:

"It's a partnership, so there are lots of different players and people come into it for lots of different reasons. So, for some people the environment is the most important thing, for other people it's health, for others it's the economy. So, we have to present

depending on who we're talking to. We have to really stress that aspect...We have to sell it." (DURCS1)

This framing approach speaks to the need to appeal to the interests of a variety of actors and using the pillars of sustainability as a tool to do this. This was coupled with structuring the process as one that is democratic and consensus-driven:

"When we did the strategy, I was obviously working quite closely with people – nothing that went into the strategy went in without people's agreement. So, there's not a level of detail in there that can lead to a conflict." (DURCS1)

This participatory and consultation-focused approach came with one exception, being the selection of the strategic aims. As a privilege of an individual in the strategy's lead role, it was explained, *"that was one thing I did not consult on – I put forward those... as a framework. Everything else in the document came from other people"* (DURCS1). This was justified through having researched existing strategies and wanting to present Durham's with a measure of uniformity to give it legitimacy. *"I wanted to make sure that ours was recognisable as a strategy if you like, to make sure we cover the same areas"* (DURCS1). Speaking of its association with the SFP as a national organisation¹⁰³, Durham's strategy initiative identifies itself as being *"part of that wider movement."* Seeking to mirror the format of existing strategies speaks to a desire to add legitimacy to the document and for it to be recognised by its audience as a formal initiative addressing common action areas. This approach speaks to both the role of a leader in having the power to determine the overall direction for a strategy, as well as the inclusion of stakeholders through a wider consultation process. As a bottom-up process, such a level of flexibility was possible. Both the length of time given to the strategy's development (in this case, several years of research and dialogue) and how the process was undertaken were more flexible than perhaps a council-led initiative would have been. Within the strategy, this priority is made explicit through two value statements on the topic of 'cooperation' (ibid, p.10):

"In developing this Strategy we acknowledge a diversity of views and seek to

¹⁰³ Note that Durham's strategy was completed shortly after the launch of the SFP and so much of the strategy efforts pre-dated the organisation. Regardless, Durham was one of the first members of the SFP.

encourage transparency, honesty, open-mindedness, respect, and a willingness to learn from others. The Strategy will remain adaptable and flexible.”

and

“We value co-operation and collaboration in the development of the Strategy and across all parts of the local food chain.”

The notion of reducing conflict through an inclusive process speaks to a process built around discussion and compromise. Likewise, this could explain the extensive level of detail included within the strategy (in particular, action items) as a means of appeasing many stakeholders.

Although a great deal of time was put into gathering information for the strategy, a common complaint remained. In Durham, as with all cases within this report, an absence of farmer involvement was identified:

“I think we found it difficult to engage with farmers, quite naturally - we didn’t have any representation from the NFU at the time, or indeed from individual farmers. So, it’s difficult when you’re developing something like this to not have them as a key stakeholder, because really they should have been represented in some format or other.” (DURCS3)

From the above participant statements and the content of the strategy itself, it can be inferred that the factors that influenced the final content of the LFS were very much associated with the format of the coalition.

8.5.5 ACF ‘hypothesis’ 3

In this case, the policy core elements (by way of the strategy themes) were set by one main actor and based on significant personal research, including a review of existing strategy models. For this reason, only secondary beliefs as related actions were open to wider discussion. This reflects the privileged position of the lead actor as author to shape the policy core. While this reflects the processes of BNES and Belfast where the council determined the strategy aims prior to consultation, this strategy initiative was based upon inclusivity. Rather than priorities being determined based on vested interests,

instead the themes of the Durham strategy were intended to be recognisable signposts from which the details of the plan could be drawn.

8.5.6 Case Summary

Actors appear to have recalled the subject matter of their own areas of expertise and pet causes as these were the subjects of the thematic working groups that they were involved with. Although content from interviews and the strategy diverged to a significant degree in how much detail was provided, the central aim of relocating the food system and developing the Durham's food economy was consistently represented across both data sources.

CS actors interviewed were quite critical of what they believed was the council's position on LFP and its awareness of the county's rural agricultural context. This was countered by significant research by those involved and a very detailed strategy document. As a result of the coalition structure being grassroots-driven, actors appear to have used the freedom from the council to convey a strong position on sustainability and actions driven by relocation of the food system in order to achieve it.

8.6 Framing: Binaries and the Power of the Audience

Through what Schon and Rein call a process of "naming and framing", they explain that framing approaches such as these that utilise a "diagnostic-prescriptive" approach allow stories to translate data into recommendations (1994, p.26). This is done through structuring a narrative that prompts a "normative leap ... from facts to values, from, "is" to "ought" ... in such a way as to make it seem graceful, compelling, even obvious" (1994, p.26). Each of the five case studies accomplished this according to their unique local issues, capabilities and aims when framing for their respective strategy audiences.

The recognition of those in power and associated windows of opportunity underscored the framing approaches taken by CS and LA actors. Tailoring the strategies to their desired audience(s) was a key feature of how and why issues, actions and opportunities were framed. Framing related to boosting the legitimacy of an effort, and the need to garner wider support. Both of these related to the perceived power of the audience to make change happen. For example, a common driver for all strategies was the demand for greater allotment space by citizens, illustrating the power of this group. It is for this reason that

citizens or the community can be identified as a key audience segment being appealed to across each strategy.

Category 1 cases indicated looking for windows of opportunity within the administrative set-up of the council, seeing other departments that would contribute and make for a more joined up policy and to address the issue of siloing in local councils, as well as using framing to 'sell' the idea to higher levels of the council. Seeking CS buy-in – not necessarily *approval* but *buy-in* – was important for LA actors in BNES, as the role of these actors was necessary for successful deployment of projects. It was felt that having CS actors involved would also promote a greater sense of trust in the LA and the initiative from CS groups and citizens. CS actors who took part in the BNES strategy process as a Category 1 case study stated that it was important to take part, if only to have a place 'at the table'.

Category 2 and 3 cases noted deliberate framing efforts, or what was referred to as finding 'the hook' to appeal to the local council for support. Support was sought either as financial, human resources (as council actors on the steering group), or through endorsement of the strategy to give an increased legitimacy to the document. MacRae and Donahue acknowledge that attachment to a formal governance authority adds legitimacy to a policy initiative (2013), which explains why so many CS efforts seek such links. This was expressed by CS actors across Category 2 and 3 case studies in relation to framing their efforts to appeal to the council. CS actors also took the opportunity within strategy documents to frame content in a way that would underscore the responsibility of the council for the health, security etc., of its citizens. CS groups used various windows to increase pressure surrounding food issues and the local food system to justify a need for a council response. At times, such framing was accompanied with a tone of expectation, even guilt, highlighting a need to change policies.

Strategies of the five case studies framed sustainability issues/actions/aims using one or more unique approaches, which can be viewed as 'tone' of the strategy and brings together content (via frames) and direction (the audience). The following approaches, at times in conjunction, were observed:

1. Alarmist or urgent tone: Content was diagnostic, highlighting what was unsustainable, and associated this with a sense of threat (as a motivational frame) to prompt action
2. Idyllic past: The current unsustainable ways have diverged from the practices and values of bygone days. Sustainability via motivational framing suggests as a return to these past practices/values
3. Tactful/non-radical: A Cautious approach to content to ensure wide audience appeal and to avoid alienating a segment of the audience through too radical an approach (ie: avoiding language of sustainability as “hippie”, avoiding language condemning conventional farming practices)
4. Exhaustive: Frames (diagnostic, prognostic and motivational) were multiple and detailed to ensure wide appeal to the audience.
5. Targeted & strategic: Specific actions linked to a specific audience as the most capable of carrying out said actions, in order to prompt responsibility and accountability
6. Simplified: Structuring and framing of content in simplified concepts and language in order to be accessible and promote wide audience appeal (ie: avoiding language of sustainability as jargon)
7. One-dimensional: Focusing on a single area of concern (pillar) to the exclusion of others
8. Omitted: Lack of acknowledgement of diagnostic issues or motivational frames (which would imply unsustainable aspects). Reduces the opportunity for such admissions to be identified and used as leverage for further action.

These frames make assumptions about the beliefs, knowledge and assumed power and capacity of the audience(s) of the strategy. These are based on what can only be the best available judgement and strategic planning. As a strategic use of framing, Snow and Benford (1988) note that it is when diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames are equally well developed and aligned, that a movement (or in this case, coalition), stands the greatest chance of successfully convincing their audience of their position.

8.7 Coalition Structures: Power, Partnership and Compromise

As discussed above, coalitions were influenced by a number of external drivers. In addition to these, some important *internal* drivers prompted CS and council actors to come together out of a shared interest in addressing issues affecting the local food system. The result is, as illustrated across these five case studies, groups of actors working together to develop policy strategies suited to local needs, based upon local capacity, and within local constraints.

For all of these case studies, actors in civil society and the council came together out of a recognition of mutual need. This partnership driver warrants mention in relation to the ACF and the formation of these groups as coalitions, but also underpins narratives which emerged relating to the dynamics of these groups that influenced the strategy outputs.

The national context of devolution in the UK played a significant role in the development of these partnerships. Civil society and local authorities have been thrust together by the distancing and defunding of municipal councils from the national level of government over the course of the last decade of Conservative government rule. This prompted a recognition of a mutual need for partnerships to bridge the funding gap, where CS groups have taken on a greater role in 'picking up the slack' where councils were faced with reduced ability to meet their responsibilities. Within interviews and strategies, it became apparent that CS and LA actors recognized a number of qualities in one another that could contribute to more effective policy efforts. This phenomenon has been similarly identified by MacRae and Abergel (2012), in the Canadian context. Essentially, this recognized what each was bringing to the (policy) table. For CS actors, these qualities were recognized by the council actors as including specialist knowledge of the local food system, of gardening and growing, and of existing projects and networks. Recognised as the 'feet on the ground', CS actors and groups were identified as the right people to run projects as a part of the strategy implementation. CS actors included community leaders and champions of the local food cause from various angles, and individuals with specialist knowledge, including growers and academics. The lack of farmers in these processes as CS actors was identified as a gap in an important area of knowledge, and one reflected in other such research (MacRae and Donahue, 2013).

Through the structure of the Council, formal power via governance mechanisms and elected representatives were important features recognised by CS actors, and by LA actors themselves when seeking to 'join-up' departmental efforts. LA actors were felt to have access to financial resources to enable projects, and the power to make change through formal structures. The latter was associated with insider knowledge of areas of organizational policy interest, departmental capacity, and associated windows of opportunity.

Recognising the capabilities of one another, LA and CS implicate each other a fair amount in terms of expected roles and who should be leading on actions. It was found that LA actors and strategies selectively identified their own roles based on capacity and interests, recommending much of the groundwork and project activity to CS actors and groups. The ability to make changes to local policy was uniquely within the capability of the council, and included recommendations relating to public sector procurement, sales of agricultural land for development, and joined-up food related efforts across departments. These actions were recognized by CS actors and identified as areas where CS actors and strategies could place pressure. Interviews across all cases made a point about such windows of opportunity, albeit in different ways.

Despite this recognition of a need for partnership, a tension was revealed within coalitions as a narrative of 'us vs. them' where CS actors and LA actors expressed a sense of opposition based on their roles that was being overcome for the sake of the effort. This showed a distinct line dividing the coalitions based on the individual roles of actors, as well as grouping them together with their 'like', suggesting that despite being in partnership, a division – resting along the lines of beliefs and power – was present in all cases, regardless of the balance of the coalition in terms of representation from each camp.

Table 37: Coalition Structures and Leadership

	Key Priority & Associated Pillar	Lead Department (LA)	Partnering Departments (LA)	Partnering Groups (CS)	Lead Group (CS)	Audience the Strategy
Category 1: BNES	Carbon Emission Reduction (Environment) and Health (Society)	Sustainability (Origin)	Public Health; others	Sirona; BAG; Transition Bath; Individuals on steering group		Citizens; Higher level government
Category 1: Belfast	Community Connection (Society)	Parks and Leisure	Various under “Active Belfast”: PHA, Belfast Health Development Unit; Belfast Healthy Cities	Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI); Local branch working on WHO HlaP approach		Citizens; Higher level government
Category 2: Devon	Rural Economy (Economic Pillar) and Public Health (Social Pillar); Food Poverty (Social Pillar)		Devon Strategic Partnership	DSP ‘Food Group’ as the strategy steering group, mostly CS		Council; Communities

Category 3: Bristol			PHA	Bristol Food Network	Bristol Food Policy Council (Origin)	Council; Communi Third Sec (local businesses
Category 3: County Durham			PHA; Procurement; Individuals on steering group		Durham Food Partnership (Origin)	Council; Private se voluntary groups; farmers; Communi

This table illustrates the leadership underpinning each coalition and offers a view of the sliding scale of power in these coalition groups. The coalition structure was found to have bearing on which actors could effectively participate in agenda setting. For all cases, evidence from research was used to inform the agenda and to frame content. These structures are discussed below in relation to their implications on dynamics within the coalitions, negotiation processes between actor beliefs and the final strategy document as an output.

At this local level lay further illustrations of power and powerlessness. These related to the coalition structures, particularly in relation to the ownership of the strategy development process and which segment of the coalition group held power (Table 37). These structures had implications on the level of inclusion or exclusion of actors, and thus the sense of ownership, trust and agency experienced by these actors within the process. The strategy documents further reflect who held control over the process.

As discussed in previous chapters, Category 1 cases of BNES & Belfast resulted in CS actors having less ownership over and agency within the strategy processes, as decisions relating to the policy core and often associated actions, had already been made. This gave the sense that at times the consultation processes were viewed as tokenistic, although in both cases these served a function of drawing on local expertise and fostering a sense of inclusion.

The Category 3 cases of Bristol and Durham experienced a comparable issue relating to the relative lack of formal LA-attachment. Neither was endorsed formally by their local council. In Bristol this was explained as being the result of the LA not being the body in control of the document. This distance from the council was a double-edged sword for these CS-led efforts. It allowed for a measure of freedom in framing issues, actions and objectives, yet the power of the council as a key audience for the strategy led to the moderation of language and content. This was similar for Devon as a Category 2 group. The oversight of the process from the LA dictated the policy core elements, but due to its heavy CS representation on the steering committee, content was framed in some unique ways. This appeared to create a struggle between the narratives in the strategy document, as content sought to both cater to both council-aims while also using (at times) alarmist frames to motivate the LA into action on particular actions.

The ACF focus on the individual actor level is important to address in relation to power and participation, as the beliefs and roles of the people involved have a great deal of influence on the process and the content of strategies. Some individual actors were identified as champions for local food and programs, and for being leaders in the community. One example includes the perception of an actor as having a moral authority due to their position as a religious leader. The role of individual actors as the leaders of the steering group/strategy initiative, correlated for most cases¹⁰⁴ with these actors being the lead author(s). This granted these actors a great deal of influence not only over the strategy development process, but over the final content through the simple virtue that they were the main author and editor.

Within the strategy development process, particularly within steering group discussions, individual actors appeared to negotiate priorities and actions with minimal conflict. Several actors recognized the important role of dialogue and compromise as an element of sustainability of the policy process itself. Three forms of compromise were identified: 1) Active; 2) Passive; and 3) Lack of compromise. These forms of compromise were illustrated both through defining and discussing sustainability as a concept in the meetings-portion of the policy development process, as well as defining it in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames within the coalition and in the documents themselves. These were associated with the different coalition models.

Active compromise: This process was based on collaborative dialogue to ensure that the widest range of people were being appealed to/appeased in order to ensure buy-in to the vision of the strategy and agreement on the strategy content as an output. That was described as coming to “a version that everyone is happy with” and was relevant to Category 2 (Devon) and 3 (Bristol and Durham) case studies, which were less top-down. Even Devon, being ‘in between’ as a coalition structure, was felt to have sought a general consensus within the steering group, although this core group was formed mostly of CS actors. For Bristol and Durham, the participatory nature of these as more grassroots CS-led efforts did seek contributions and consensus from actors on much of the content. However, there were certain elements that were put down by the leaders as a framework and based out of

¹⁰⁴ Not the case for Belfast

research, and therefore less open to negotiation. This again illustrates the power of the lead author in these cases.

Passive compromise: This form of compromise was exemplified through a lack of challenge to ideas that were disagreed with so that the process didn't get disrupted or experience conflict. This was identified within coalition groups widely, as well as between individual CS actors in a coalition. At times, it was noted, this was in deference to the authority of the steering group leader. These reflect to an extent the ACF 'hypothesis' 3, noting the willingness of actors to give up secondary aspects of their beliefs to avoid disrupting the policy core, however, rather than the policy core this could be interpreted as the sustainability of the process.

Lack of compromise: In Category 1 case studies, the pre-established issues and objectives left little room for CS input. For example, the process of having the strategy content approved for Belfast, as a council-led effort meant that although a CS actor was writing it as a commissioned role for the council, the wording had to be sent back and forth several times for review and edits. This suggests a much narrower scope of compromise, particularly when this document was only put forward to the public for consultation through an online platform after it had gone through this council-approval process. In these contexts of a lack of compromise relating to content on the part of the council when leading the process, the participatory elements of these efforts were at times viewed as tokenistic or performative. Despite this being the most rigid, it remained low-conflict, suggesting that perhaps CS actors appeared to recognize that it was a council-led effort and therefore their power over the outcome was negligible.

These three forms of compromise do not address a practical issue of participation which was identified. While only mentioned by a small number of CS actors this issue is worthy of mention as it has significant implications for CS participation in local level policy making. The nature of voluntary participation presents a disadvantage for some actors who seek to contribute to a policy dialogue and process, but who are unable to participate consistently due to work obligations. Two actors from Devon noted that this led to unavoidable exclusion from in-person discussions and left them relying on emails summarizing the

efforts (where decisions had often already been made). This had an impact on their contribution to decisions in meetings and representation of their views in the final document. This underscored the importance of being physically present in these local processes, at the risk of losing one's voice. This appeared to be a challenge for individual CS actors and was not noted by LA actors, who were paid to attend their meetings as a part of their professional role. Additionally, this may be attributed to the organizational structure of the council and the top-down origins of priorities and objectives.

8.8 Local Experts and High-Level Perspectives

When determining the boundaries or extent of a coalition, Jenkins-Smith (2014) notes that those actors who influence a policy subsystem may be numerous and disparate, thus presenting a challenge. When asked to share contacts for further interviews, coalition actors involved in local food strategy development were often convinced that particular actors had been involved where in reality they were simply key figures within the wider territorial scope of the local food subsystem at the point of the strategy's development or since. This suggests that perhaps participants did not think of their local coalition as simply the strategy steering group, but rather of the wider network of food systems actors as having a hand in its influence or development – as the broader view of the coalition within the ACF would imply. As an even broader view, two participants offered their observations on the development of a wider movement and network of influence relating to local food policy across the UK from their vantage point of the Sustainable Food Places Network, as a national-level group.

As an outcome of the snowball method used in this this research, eight 'Local Expert' actors were interviewed across the five cases. While not involved in the development of the strategy documents, they did bring unique perspectives about the dynamics between CS and LA actors in their communities, about the challenges and successes of the food strategies and partnerships. Their knowledge of their local areas, food systems and networks offered this research a deeper understanding of the case studies and their local circumstances. As within the case study coalitions, these actors represent LA (n=3) and CS (n=5) perspectives and have had experiences with the strategy documents and related programs *since* their development and implementation, rather than during. Several key

themes emerged from these interviews which mirror and reinforce those in the previous chapters, relating to power and partnerships, as well as knowledge of local food systems and sustainability.

A common theme was the mutual need of CS and LA to join forces with one another to effectively address food issues. Like their counterparts involved with food strategy development, these Local Experts identified the lack of funding and resources available to councils as a driver for partnership. One Local Expert from within the Council was pragmatic about the limitations faced by Bristol city council and offered explanation as to why the Bristol Good Food Plan, along with other CS initiatives, are at times left in the hands of CS.

“The council can influence, but it can’t do everything. I think that’s probably the reason why they haven’t formally adopted it [The Good Food Plan] because if the council takes ownership over it, then everyone will want the council to do everything and the council can’t – it can guide and support and help, but sometimes they’re more powerful if they’re not owned by the council.” (BRIEx2)

However, perhaps as a result of being outsiders to the process, CS experts were far more openly critical of council shortcomings than those CS actors in the coalition groups. The sentiment of an ‘Us versus Them’ divide was a strong theme, and one acknowledged by Local Experts from within the council.

Continuing the example of Bristol’s strategy, BRIEx1 explains “the council will give the impression of having adopted it, but they cannot be held to it.” This statement implies an element of distrust in the council’s motives, which was shared by BELEx3:

“I don’t think it would be unfair to say that there maybe was and to some extent still is some tension between grassroots activists and their community gardens, and the approach that was taken in the growing communities strategy... community gardens are very sort of locally driven and grassroots driven but somebody trying to systematize them, people aren’t sure about that approach.”

The suspicion in the council's approach was often linked to the perceived lack of specialist knowledge in food growing and grassroots community links within the council itself. This coupled with what was felt to be a lack of due process for participation and community engagement were tension points for Belfast. These were linked to poor outcomes and frustration on the part of CS actors from the Belfast Food Policy Advisory Board observing the aftermath of program delivery. While this study is not an evaluation of strategy outcomes, the ripples through the broader food community (as a part of a wider local coalition within the food subsystem) leave lasting impressions of the capability and collaborative capacity of the council.

BELEx2 explained of the council, "they basically developed 13 new gardens with almost zero community engagement whatsoever... Out of the 13 sites, at least 4 of them, possibly 6 of them, are abandoned because they were just randomly built in space with no community engagement and no volunteers in place or nothing... And it's basically because they didn't engage the communities." This lack of connection was further explained by the council culture of outsourcing the consultation process and creation of policy documents.

"I don't even think that anyone in the council is fully aware of what their own strategy says ... They usually get outside consultants to write it up." (BELEx2)

In the case of Belfast, public consultation using the Health Equity in All Policies approach and the writing of the document was completed by 'Belfast Healthy Cities', a civil society organisation. The impression given by this person was that those working within the council departments (that are represented as *partners* on the strategy) is that the departments still lacked an understanding of community gardens and their own role in the delivery of the strategy, let alone a joined-up approach across the council. As BELEx1 pointed out, when it comes to the actual implementation, support of a concept does not mean successful action by councillors. This individual recognised "the development of community gardens, allotments etc all contribute to the aims and objectives of what we're trying to do within the [Belfast] Food Network." However, while the council is technically a member of the BFPAB, it sits in absentia, and so is not making a strong link with parallel CS food system efforts.

These criticisms reinforce the the value of CS actors in guiding the council with their local knowledge. It suggests that councils would benefit from a more embedded culture of dialogue in their multi-stakeholder partnerships. These comments from local experts express the desire for more *equal* engagement from the part of the council in terms of time and commitment given to the creation of food initiatives and policy, rather than the expectation that CS actors will simply do the leg work for the privilege of council support.

The three LA actors who took part as Local Experts spoke of how framing plays an important role in the deployment of the food strategy. BNESEx1 explained that presenting the issue of local food as a non-partisan issue is crucial and also encourages cross-party cooperation. By making it “a non-political issue”, they explain, “that allows everyone to buy into it”. In Bristol, having the “Who Feeds Bristol Report” and the resultant Good Food strategy was felt to be a powerful tool for the local Green Party in campaigning on the platform of a stronger local food system. Based on the feeling that the Devon Food Strategy had no actual implementation plan, DEVEx1 explained how the development of the Exeter Food Network “looked to the SFP model to give us some sort of framework.” This approach offered the EFN to focus on the local food system at a smaller scale, rather than the wider region as was the case for the DSP (see Section 8.3.7 for details). The guidance of the SFP objectives offered a way to frame issues and define approaches.

Supporting the views expressed by those (largely CS actors) involved in the strategy development of the case studies, these ‘outsider’ views serve to underscore some potentially wider systemic or cultural issues within the council governance structures. These participants drew parallels with the issues that they knew of from the policy process (based on their peripheral knowledge and exposure to it) and beyond it, within the realm of the local food system. Particularly for Category 1 cases, the internal council culture was perceived as limiting progressive partnership structures and holding back effective action on local food issues (despite the LA participants’ opposite perception of the same problem, or at least their official position on the matter). One participant expressed that this was tied to the four-year terms of elected parties, meaning that very little headway could be made in that short period before political upheaval put the efforts at risk (BRIEx3). As a result, a sense of distrust in the council’s motives and capabilities was echoed by key informants, just as it was with some CS actors involved in strategy-making.

Food and sustainability were lesser points of focus within these interviews, although some Local Expert participants did discuss these. BELEx1 expressed concern that sustainability was a poorly understood concept, and that there were significant systemic barriers to local food being integrated to any significant degree in Northern Ireland, citing public sector procurement as the main area where impact could be made. This participant emphasised that sustainability and public health are inseparable, and while the three pillars need to be addressed holistically, typically it is viewed primarily through the lens of the environment. Identifying senior policy makers and politicians, they felt that there was a lack of understanding of where food could be employed to have the greatest impact.

The two High-Level experts interviewed in this research from the SFP network observed how sustainability was being approached across the network by communities. From their positions overseeing membership and guiding policy development, SFP1 explained that areas of focus for strategies can be viewed as trends which respond to funding availability and public attention. Specifically, they noted that local food strategies have often begun within Public Health departments and so have had a focus on health and diet. From this a shift to sustainability emerged more widely as the concept was popularised and as Public Health departments across England were joined up to Local Authorities. They observe, however that strategies have begun to shift back to a health focus due to LA cuts to what are viewed as non-essential areas. This echoes what Caraher (2008) stated about the historic areas of food policy focus shifting over time. SFP2 expressed concern about this approach:

“I think that they [local food initiatives] are recognizing that ... an awful lot of public health work around food has manifestly had not much of an impact. And I think more and more places are realizing that you have to take this really holistic approach – that you can’t just think about 5 a day and all those sorts of things – you have to think about what is the food environment in which people exist in every moment of their lives.”

When questioned about the different approaches to sustainability that communities are taking, SFP1 observed that “where it’s local authorities the drive is mostly from the health side and if it’s civil society, it’s more likely to be the sort of sustainability agenda... There’s a

range of different issues around sustainability and food, but they definitely have different focuses.” One of the SFP objectives is to bridge this divide between CS and LA:

“We are always pushing toward that cross-sector partnership approach... So it might start with grassroots and mostly project related stuff, and then move into institutions and policy and all the rest of it, or it might start from the policy end, but in the end, it’s just about filling the gaps from wherever you start in that process. And the tendency is to start the sort of narrative in the language and against the outcomes that whichever initial partner or partners are engaged with.” (SFP2)

The importance of ‘language’ surrounding sustainability was a key point shared by SFP1:

“Agenda 21 agenda was just another label for sustainability. It’s being aware that a lot of these things are very similar, it’s just changing the labelling and the focus of the government or national or international issues of the day. It’s re-framing basically. Reframing the same sort of issues, you just come back to the principles of sustainability.”

In order to encourage a more holistic approach to food and the local food system, the SFP network has six main target areas which it encourages members to consider¹⁰⁵ however SFP2 notes that as local food strategy initiatives mature, they tend to become more holistic over time. These actors recognised the need to incentivise local food initiatives, and mostly with a focus on LAs through structuring the SFP as a membership-based network. SFP1 explains that “local authorities like to be seen to be doing things, so if you want to be part of a national movement, it galvanizes people at a local level.” By holding up particular member cities as models and illustrating successful initiatives with particular areas of focus (public health, the environment, the local economy etc), that these can act as a ‘lever’ for other communities seeking to target similar issues. This was indeed illustrated in Coalition Actor interviews where strategies such as Bristol and Brighton and Hove were referred to often as models, and the ‘Good Food’ concept in particular. This openly available content was felt to “build momentum” for a broader local food movement across the country.

¹⁰⁵ See Table 5, section 3.3.3 on Trans-Local Networks for more detail.

Through their experience witnessing many early efforts of members across the network, SFP1 and SFP2 highlighted some key issues which they felt limited the success of local food efforts. These included the “false urban-rural divide”, concern over the “local trap” way of thinking rather than a broader conception of sustainable food, and human resources. In particular, SFP1 observed that volunteer roles were important but “unsustainable in the long term” if the work fell on a single local champion, and the more successful initiatives usually had one or more paid officer roles where funding was available in LAs. All of these issues were indeed repeated by CS and LA actors alike, across all case studies. Like Coalition Actors and Local Experts, these High-Level participants recognised the importance of language and framing of issues, and of the mutually beneficial cross-sector partnerships between CS and LA actors. Reflecting on the last two decades of local food efforts in the UK, SFP2 observed that where food initiatives were historically dominated by the grassroots, there has been a movement towards more inclusive structures. While this partnership structure doesn’t appear to be in question to any of the participants in this study, what does reappear often is *how* to navigate these partnerships more effectively and equally.

8.9 Chapter Summary

Across the five case studies, it was found that approaches to negotiating between the beliefs of actors in CS and the LA varied according to the coalition structure, with these influencing the extent of negotiations.

In Category 1 coalitions, being those of BNES and Belfast, there was little if any negotiation of content between CS and LA actors within the process in relation to food production and sustainability, as the aims of the strategies had already been determined by the council based on their priorities and targets prior to any consultation. These were top-down processes. CS actors participated to varying degrees across these two cases as the consultation processes differed between BNES and Belfast, however there was a clear sense that their beliefs and priorities were not represented to any significant degree in the final strategies. In the case of BNES, it appeared that the LA had benefited from the involvement of CS groups by way of their specialist local knowledge of projects and networks, but this did not necessarily translate to their priorities being included, based on those interviewed. The involvement of CS actors appeared to be more strongly associated with gaining background context for the strategy by way of existing projects and networks.

Notably, the motivational frames used by CS actors, which represented future sustainable visions typically used as a “rally call” for action to the cause were largely absent for these cases. This suggests that they were not empowered to communicate such a call to arms. This may be because they did not have a significant part in shaping the initiative, or perhaps did not share the same vision as the LA.

Factors which influenced the final content of these strategies appeared to link to departmental and wider council aims, public pressure (particularly in relation to the need for growing space) and signalling to higher levels of government that efforts are being put in place.

As a Category 2 coalition, CS actors in Devon appeared unified in their purpose and desire to make change via the local food system. These actors appeared to tactfully work secondary beliefs as prognostic actions around the policy core aims of the LA (which had been handed down when initiating the project), while also including additional priorities which had been agreed upon by the largely CS steering group (environmental aims, for example). In this case, a theme was the moral authority and power of the CS leader in this process. At times the views of this person went unchallenged, and this mirrored a wider response to differing views where a CS actor would simply remain silent to avoid stirring conflict. Despite these examples, actors viewed the process as one centred around common beliefs and a need for action.

Factors which influenced the final content of the strategy included the council’s directives (a focus on the rural economy and public health), the working group format of the steering group which focused on specific areas based on the expertise of individual actors, and the leader of the effort as the lead author. Between interviews and the strategy document, it was found that the voice of the lead author was very strong, with their personal concerns having prominent representation. Additionally, particularly alarmist language used by some CS actors found its way into the strategy, building the diagnostic frames around tone of urgency. This tone was used alongside what actors described as a deliberately cautious approach to certain concepts (like sustainability and farming models) to avoid alienating certain audience groups.

Category 3 coalitions both presented the challenge of not having representation of the local authority in interviews with coalition actors. Therefore, a 'dialogue' between CS and LA actors relating to the negotiation process could not be established, although CS perceptions of council priorities and capacities were discussed.

Like with Devon, these strategies brought forward similar findings relating to the power of the lead author. While both Durham and Bristol were focused on inclusivity in wide partnership model, lead authors as process leaders used the privilege of this position to structure the framework according to what they felt were appropriate for the strategy. These decisions were based on significant local-level research and, in the case of Durham, what was viewed as a recognisable 'strategy' format to give the document greater credibility. Both cases shared the desire to make their respective strategy document as accessible as possible, noting a wide audience being appealed to for participation. As grassroots efforts, these coalitions were not formally accountable to their local councils but did frame content of the strategies to appeal to them for support, particularly through relevant policy changes.

Across all cases, the factors which most greatly influenced content were:

- the global drivers
- the local drivers
- the local context (being primarily rural or urban)
- the lead author(s)
- the audience of the strategy

This local context influenced the way pillars were associated with food production. Urban agriculture was presented typically as small-scale growing and linked most often to social issues and aims. Rural production contexts were associated most often with the environment (via farming methods) and the rural economy (and import/export markets) based on the perception that these were large-scale farming operations.

Framing, or, finding the "hook to hang food on" (BRICS1) was important to appeal to those in power to both convey priorities and associated actions and to gain support for strategies. Who the audience was varied across cases based on coalition structure. Binaries were a key

framing tool, which linked sustainability and food. Sustainability as an approach in strategies differed across cases, with views that it was complex, inaccessible or held negative 'eco' connotations as the main reasons to avoid it. Despite this, the pillars still underscored most strategies, although rarely through a balanced approach. Compromise was a key part of negotiating within partnerships, suggesting low levels of conflict.

9. Discussion of Research Findings

This chapter assesses the contributions made by this research to the study of local food policy coalitions in the UK. Firstly, attention is given to the ACF as the theoretical underpinning of this work with various assumptions and ‘hypotheses’ discussed as they relate to the findings of this work. The novel methodological adaptation of this PPT to the study of local food policy is discussed by way of its coalition categorisation for food policy groups, and its application to such partnerships in the UK context. Findings relating to sustainability and food production are put in dialogue with existing food policy scholarship, as are points on the coalition groups as multi-stakeholder efforts in food policy.

9.1 The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Adaptation

The ACF is based on a number of assumptions, the first of which focuses on subsystems, defined as “a policy topic, territorial scope, and the actors directly or indirectly influencing policy subsystem affairs” (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2018, p. 139). Within the context of this research, this can be summarised as food policy taking place at the local level across the five UK-based case studies (Bath and Northeast Somerset, Belfast, Bristol, Devon and County Durham), and the coalition groups involved in making these food policies as partnerships of civil society and council actors. Food policy has been under-represented in ACF research, although recent contributions have been made that focus on food systems (Hawkes *et al.*, 2016; Cullerton *et al.*, 2018). This research on local food strategies further addresses this deficiency and to the knowledge of the author, this is the first application of the ACF to LFS development, both in the UK and elsewhere. By bringing sustainability into this research of local food systems, this study examines two subsystems which overlap, but also offers a model for other ACF studies, many of which are based on policies relating to natural resources and systems (Weible *et al.*, 2011), and to which sustainability is a crucial consideration.

Where the ACF seeks to simplify subsystems into coalitions as one of its key assumptions, this research drew upon MacRae and Donahue’s (2013) food policy council models to categorise the case study groups, linking these to the “bottom-up and top-down” processes prioritised by the ACF (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014). This approach also underscored this study’s position within food policy, and relayed its unique methodology in a subsequent publication (Page, 2020). Reflecting the assertion that subsystems or policy

environments/actors are not independent of context (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2018, p.140; Walt and Gilson, 1994), this research found that these local coalitions, as partnerships of CS and LA actors, have been brought together through mutual need in a climate of austerity, and recognition of what each 'side' could bring to the policy process. For this reason, these local level coalitions, having no other competing coalitions, are what would be viewed in ACF terms as "collaborative" structures, and with low levels of conflict. The focus of this research at the local 'micro' level expands the ACF dialogue into an area flagged as a potential area to expand the ACF research agenda (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2018). Jenkins-Smith and colleagues argued the need to expand into "non-traditional settings" such as "nascent subsystems... marked by low to moderate levels of conflict" which may prompt theoretical innovations to the ACF. Being that local level food policy is an emerging area in the UK (largely linked to the efforts of the SFP since 2013), these policy subsystems would be considered 'nascent', in the language of the ACF, rather than 'mature'. Where the ACF recommends study of a subsystem for a decade or more to gain a deep understand its development, this research has engaged with them from an early stage. While this is a departure from the recommended ACF view to examine 'change over time', Jenkins-Smith et al., (2018) do note that this assumption has been taken too literally by some researchers and has held them back from pursuing application of the ACF to nascent policy subsystems. In defying this, this work offers a valuable snapshot in time of a growing local-level policy trend and examines the approaches to policy development and the behaviour of actors in these unique partnership models. Based on this, these local food policy initiatives can be revisited in the future to examine change in the strategies, the coalitions and their approaches to sustainability and local food production. This is particularly relevant as it has been found that in the context of local food policy groups, "older initiatives... have the most significant impact because food policy agendas take time to develop" (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p.9).

Of their six categories of municipal food policy councils, this research represented three: Belfast and BNES as Category 1, Devon as Category 2, and Bristol and Durham falling into Category 3. Weible et al (2011), in their review of ACF research from the early 1990s to 2011, note that comparative analyses of different coalition groups are rarely seen in ACF research, as are studies looking at the behaviour of coalition groups in policy making (p. 206). By examining and comparing five case studies across three coalition structures, and

how the actors within them negotiated their beliefs to create a policy output (CS and LA compared), this research addresses the gap identified.

The ACF acknowledges complexity in subsystems, and that “a large set of components interact in non-trivial ways to produce outputs and outcomes for a given policy topic” (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2018, p. 139). This was mirrored in this research through the identification of global, national and local level drivers which influenced strategy development, as well as internal ‘components’ in the coalition groups, such as institutional norms and power structures. These presence of these external and internal drivers reflects the findings of Hatfield in her examination of local level policy development in the United States (2014).

Snow and Benford’s (1988) framing tasks, devised for application to the study of social movements as a collective action frame, proved to be a valuable tool for addressing the ACF focus on beliefs at the level of the individual (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014). These frames reflected the format in which sustainability and food production were presented in interviews and strategies, as policy core and secondary beliefs, respectively. This research avoided ‘deep core beliefs’ as it was felt that these were too speculative in the case of this research and not relevant to the research questions. Working from the ACF assertion that policies and programs reflect the “translated beliefs” actors (Jenkins-Smith *et al.*, 2014, p. 192), comparing the beliefs of actors and the content of food strategies offered a way to examine the dynamics underlying policy processes of compromise and negotiation. The ability to compare these two data formats was a key advantage of this approach and offered a view into the binary presentation of issues/solutions, as well as actions to address these (Schon & Rein, 1994). By drawing on framing for these local policy examples, this research identified framing formats such as binaries reflecting the metacultural narratives underpinning the unsustainability of the food system, as well as framing ‘tones’ used in local level food policy (Page, 2019). These were positioned in relation to their role in framing for the audience of the local food strategies, and this was associated with the coalition models and the power relations within these, as well as differing views of ‘sense of place’ between actors in relation to urban and rural connection. Identifying these frames illustrated one aspect of bounded rationality which the ACF proffers is the simplification of complex concepts. Examples of this found in this research included:

- the simplification of the concept of sustainability to a binary format with little acknowledgement of this as a process or continuum, and neglect temporal aspects of sustainability;
- the simplification of agricultural production to an urban-rural binary, with little acknowledgement of peri-urban agriculture. This linked to small scale production being predominantly urban and socially-focused, and rural agriculture being large-scale and associated with environmental and economic pillars.
- of sustainability in the three-pillar model, where in reality is more complex and evolving within the context of the food system than is readily acknowledged in local-level policy-making.

Based on a view from the field of systems scholarship, Ben-Eli warns that simplistic thinking about sustainability can result in reductive thinking, and puts actors at risk of creating “simplistic, fragmented, non-systematic” policies (2018, p.1338). This is particularly a risk for nascent policy effort such as these in an emerging policy area, where no doubt future local food initiatives will be looking to these cases as models. As such, these simplistic formulations could be more accurately considered as a continuum, as well as in relation to where they fit into various nested systems, rather than simply as opposing points.

The structures of the coalitions were central to the development of the strategies in terms of “*whose* beliefs were translated into policy?” One assumption of the ACF notes that actors within a coalition are likely to “remember losses more readily than gains” and are likely to “exaggerate the power and maliciousness of their opponents” (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014. p. 191). These tendencies were illustrated largely by CS actors when relaying their sense of powerlessness in the face of council decisions (in the cases of both Category 1 coalitions), and in framing of strategy content for a council audience (as with CS-led coalitions). The inverse of this was not observed for when LA actors were a minority in a mostly CS-led effort, but this is limited by the participant sample available for these cases.

Through examining the negotiation processes of the five case studies across three coalition models, this research responded to the ACF occupation with the behaviour of actors and

addressed the second and third ‘hypotheses’ relation to the Advocacy Coalition¹⁰⁶. These stemmed from the policy core and secondary beliefs, as well as the inclusion of a dimension of negotiation between CS and LA actors. Jenkins-Smith *et al* note that based on a review of ACF application that ‘hypotheses’ 2 and 3 are rarely confirmed, often found to be false and “at best” yield findings of “partial support” (2018, p. 149). This finding of partial support was indeed the case in this research, as Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 2 (linked to Research Question 1) was found to be variable. This was largely attributable to the ‘working group’ format of some coalitions and to the top-down nature of agenda setting in Category 1 cases where CS actors were at times found to be resigned to the priorities of the council as a result of real and perceived lack of power. The final research question was linked to the third ACF ‘hypothesis’ (Weible *et al*, 2011; Jenkins-Smith *et al*, 2014). This question simplifies the negotiation process by looking at priorities and trade-offs but fails to consider wider context and power structures. In this sense this work found that this ‘hypothesis’ could not be confirmed for Category 1 coalitions, as the negotiation process was largely non-existent. In these cases (Belfast and BNES), the Local Authority held agenda setting power, and many key decisions were made before CS consultation took place. Nevertheless, this ‘hypothesis’ offered a useful way to view the negotiation process based on CS and LA actors’ beliefs. In short, by examining ‘hypotheses’ 2 and 3 of the Advocacy Coalition, this work has found that coalitions at the local level which are made of CS and LA actors have novel dynamics that don’t necessarily conform to these established theories. Jenkins-Smith and colleagues put forward two interpretations for the variable results on these ‘hypotheses’ which pertain to variability in measuring beliefs, such as difficulty in distinguishing between policy core and secondary beliefs. This was not found to be the case in this research, as the application of Snow and Benford’s framing lenses served to distinguish between unsustainable issues (relating to the policy core) and associated food production actions to address these (presenting secondary beliefs). The issue that was identified in dealing with the ‘hypotheses’, and that prevented further investigations into ‘hypothesis’ 4, was the imprecise language of the ‘hypotheses’ which made rulings difficult. For example in ‘hypothesis’ 2 when weighing “*substantial* consensus” on the policy core or

¹⁰⁶ *Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 2*: Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects; and *Coalition ‘hypothesis’ 3*: An Actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of her (its) belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core.

“less so on secondary aspects” [emphasis added]. These relative terms proved difficult to negotiate or quantify when working from qualitative data.

9.2 Sustainability and Local Food Production

This research has focused on SFP members, which holds implications about how these cases value sustainability in association with food, which extends into their policy making efforts. The SFP has been the subject of some research (Halliday, 2015; Moragues-Faus, 2017; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019; Santo and Moragues-Faus, 2019), but none have addressed specifically how the concept of sustainability and LFP have been associated and negotiated by differently affiliated actors of a single coalition. This is important particularly as CS and LA actors are increasingly working together on such initiatives. In addition to these elements not having been addressed in conjunction in previous research, neither have these specific UK case studies been examined or contrasted in this context.

The food system has been recognised as a key battleground for transitions to a more sustainable planet (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009; Spaar)garen, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012; Moragues Faus *et al.*, 2013; Hinrichs, 2014; Mason and Lang, 2017). The examination of these cases has offered insight into local responses. Recognising that production is only one part of the local food system, it nonetheless holds important attachments and implications for communities and health, the local environment and the local economy, making it worthy of examination in its own right to understand its perceived links to sustainability.

Definitions of sustainability reflected Strange and Bayley’s description as “(i) a conceptual framework, a way of changing the predominant world view to one that is more holistic and balanced; (ii) a process, a way of applying the principles of integration across space and time to all decisions and (iii) an end goal, identifying and fixing the specific problems of resource depletion, health care, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, etc” (2008, p. 30). Although, contrasting Lang, the view that sustainability decisions take “*long time horizons when making present decisions... and situates human activity within millennia of planetary development*” were not significant narratives (2008, p. 272). Recognition of what Psarikidou and Szerszynski call the “semantic plasticity” of the concept (2012, p.30) this research found that many participants acknowledged the flexibility of sustainability as both a

hindrance (in the policy development process and as potentially confusing or off-putting in strategies) or a help (as a framework, a normative “good thing”). In this sense it added tensions to the strategy development process. As a contribution to discussions on sustainability and local food systems, this research presented a list of binaries which represent associations made between unsustainable issues affecting the food system and their alternatives. As framing configurations, these expand on Schon and Rein’s list of ‘metacultural narratives’ (1994) (see section 8.7). Reflecting on the metacultural frames presented in this research as essentially ‘unsustainable’ and ‘sustainable’, and that this has become normalized as a key binary of our time, this binary deserves a place in Schon and Rein’s list for consideration in framing policy narratives. However, in the context of local food policy development, rather than a binary of sustainable or collapsed, these narratives could be better served through the view that “[s]ustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change” (WCED, 1987, p. 8-9). This positions local sustainability efforts along a spectrum of progress rather than ‘is’ or ‘isn’t’.

Associated with definitions of sustainability in relation to food was the *departure* from these standard pillars through a number of concerns such as animal welfare, democratic participation, landscape, the right to knowledge, seasonality, justice, skills, and more. While not found in this research as being prioritised or utilised to the same extent as the three standard pillars, these additional values reflect an extension in thinking of the traditional sustainability pillars for a policy context. This reflects the argument from a number of scholars that sustainability in food systems is evolving to include a wider scope and must be integrated into mainstream food policy thinking (Oosterveer and Spaargaren, 2013; Kirwan, Maye and Brunori, 2017b, 2017a; Mason and Lang, 2017). Implicit in these comments is the acknowledgement of a deeper level of complexity that is inherently associated with food as a policy subsystem, as well as a sense of the *values* being associated with food in relation to what is and isn’t sustainable about the food system. These additional sustainability considerations reflect those shown in Figure 4 (see Section 2.3), as recommended by the SDC (2011) and Mason and Lang (2017) for inclusion in food policy making. While not identified explicitly as such by actors or the strategy documents, their inclusion is noteworthy and indicates a widening view of sustainability and food, and its application at the local policy level. This supports the assertions made by scholars (Lang, Barling and Caraher, 2009; Lang, 2010b; Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber, 2012) that a shift to a more values-

based food system is viewed as important and is indeed taking place alongside. This research also found evidence of the normalization of sustainability as a desirable state and process in contrast to the historic “commonly endorsed focus” of conventional production (Spaargarten et al. 2012, p. 21). This was exemplified in this research by actors citing an increased public knowledge of issues driving pressure to address food systems at a local and global level. Spaargarten, Oosterveer and Loeber (2012) associated this with the concept of ‘reflexive modernity’ put forward by (Giddens, 1990; Beck, 1994).

By examining what actors felt was unsustainable, this research revealed the external drivers (see Hatfield, 2012) to a) the formation of the coalition group and b) the development of the strategy. Its application was associated with 1) the aims of the coalition group developing the strategy and 2) its intended audience (via framing). The local context of the municipality (urban-rural) and its issues (often linked to global origins) played a role in setting the aims of the group, and influenced which pillars were the focus. These in turn influenced which food production actions were recommended. In practice, sustainability was utilised and presented in different ways across all five cases, reinforcing the bespoke nature of these initiatives in relation to their local circumstances. Most simplistically, ‘sustainability’ and its three standard pillars put forward by the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) offered a framework in the sense defined by Jenkins-Smith (2014) and Cairney (2012): as a common language for those using it. Notably, actors and strategies did not adhere to the standard model of sustainability (Figure 1), but rather focused on one or two. This was not found to be a weakness, but rather an example of focusing on priority areas, and often, in the policy development process this was linked to the working group model where individuals focused on their area of expertise. So while Gibson identifies sustainability as an “essentially integrative concept” and by extension “an integrative process” in its application, this was not found to be the case in this work (2006, p. 259). Nor did it appear to be used for *decision making* purposes in most cases (judging by the minimal explicit discussion of sustainability in meetings, according to actors), but an organising framework at best within strategies.

The single most repeated diagnostic issue across the interviews and strategy documents was the unsustainability of the global economic system and its effects, including those at the local level. This reflects a local association with aspects of what Lang has referred to as ‘the

new food equation' (2010a), similarly mirrored by Morgan and Sonnino as the 'new fundamentals' (2010). In identifying binaries in relation to unsustainable issues and sustainable outcomes, this work reflects the notion of "vulnerability" put forward by Marsden (2013) contrasted by local food system resilience (Tendall *et al.*, 2015). This aligns with Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld's view that sustainability and globalization the two most significant global challenges of our time and that they act as drivers for innovative governance structures to address these (2012, P. 4). Likewise, this repeated concern reflects Lang's view that sustainability "*centres on the local but takes a global geographic framework for events*" (2008, p. 272). This presented the most overarching and significant tension across case studies in regard to content, being the local level pitted against and being impacted by the global level, which it is bound to economically, environmentally and socially, but remains largely beyond its control. Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld (2012, p.4) identified this tension and it was consistently repeated across these five cases as a driver for local policy development and was expressed by actors across a number of binary themes and examples. This research observed that these macro- and meso- power dynamics position the local level as at times powerless but emboldened to take control where possible. This suggests that Marden's (2012) view that inaction at the level of national governments is not necessarily standing in the way of local efforts, but rather may be encouraging them. These case studies are further examples of the capacity of 'cities' in driving food system change and sustainability actions, adding to a wider body of literature recognising the phenomenon (Barber, 2013; K. Morgan, 2014; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Hebinck and Page, 2017). Through the work of translocal networks such as SCF and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, cities and communities are part of a wider movement to take back jurisdictional control over food (Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019). In this research, food was believed to be a 'bridging tool' to address multiple issues, often across pillars, confirming what various other scholars have found about local food potential (Cohen, Reynolds and Sanghvi, 2012; Ackerman *et al.*, 2014; Hinrichs, 2014; Schmutz *et al.*, 2014). Prognostic action frames were also identified relating to *who* was implicated in *doing* the activities intended to boost local sustainability, and in the context of this research, this played heavily into coalition dynamics, addressed below.

This work contributes to the dialogue of the binary of urban and rural food systems, mostly through recognition that while this binary is in reality, false, that in the practice of food policy development the embedded beliefs of actors perpetuate it. This simplification of the

food production model in policy making has been shown to relate to differing conceptions of 'place', as actors vary in their understand the local agricultural landscape (Page, 2019). This binary has implications for policymaking and planning (Redwood, 2009; Morgan, 2013). The notion of the city-region food system aims to view cities not at solitary, but part of a wider peri-urban and rural structure (Hebinck and Page, 2017). While most case studies within this research focused beyond a single urban centre (excepting Belfast), the urban-rural divide was largely upheld by actors. Reflecting the observation in research that crossover between urban and rural food networks was limited (Psarikidou and Szerszynski, 2012), addressing this narrow view offers the potential for greater crossover in meeting sustainability targets (Page, 2019).

Ultimately, to contrast the global level origins of issues, relocalisation of the food system through the development of SFSCs was put forward as a central approach to case studies (except Belfast) to achieving greater local level sustainability, albeit to varying degrees. This research suggests that for all its recognized limitations, relocalisation was presented within these cases as a form of taking back some measure of control and power in face of the global system in which municipalities are in many ways powerless. In how pillars and actions were linked, this research mirrored what Psarikidou and Szerszynski found in a review of AFN studies, which identified that environmental and economic sustainability in relation to SFSCs was usually tied to producer-led rural agro-food networks (2012, p. 31). Tregear (2011) likewise argues that SFSCs usually reflect a view of reducing imports and exports for the benefit of the local rural economy, again a finding reflected in this research relating to how actors and strategies positioned actions in relation to pillars. In examining the social pillar, Psarikidou and Szerszynski (2012) assert that understandings of society in relation to local food policy are often neglected in relation to the environmental and economic pillars. This was not found to be the case in this research, although the social focus was linked primarily to urban environments.

Building upon AFN-associated themes such as "respatialisation, resocialisation, and reconnection" (Psarikidou and Szerszynski, 2012), this research observed that while actors identified an increased public awareness over global food issues, this was contrasted by the sentiment that people are more ignorant than ever about food production, origins, preparation and healthy eating. This underscored the concept of placelessness in relation to

the spatial distancing from food production addressed by DuPuis and Goodman (2005) and Goodman *et al* (2012). Contrary to 'placelessness' is the notion of "embeddedness", which Winter (2003), Sage (2003), and Brunori (2007) found was associated with perceptions of increased quality of foods. This was also a belief held by participants in this research, although more often re-embedding was associated with the rural economy and reconnecting citizens to food and skill-building. The (usually urban) growing initiatives put forward as ways to educate citizens about food production speak to the "transitions of everyday life" addressed by Shove and Walker (2010) and how these link to consumption practices. Notably, these actions place much of the responsibility on individuals to learn and develop skills but do little to address the systemic origins of these problems. This underscores the complaint made by Lang, Barling & Caraher (2009, p. 10, 12) as well as Ossterveer and Spaargarten (2012) in relation to soft policy measures made by governments which place responsibility on individuals rather than addressing systemic issues relating to the processing and retail of unhealthy foods. The objective to address individual level health reflects an acknowledgement of the need to move toward aspects of sustainable diets (Mason and Lang, 2017). This illustrates the local effort to address what is within its scope, but the overall powerlessness to go up against factors in the global, and even national level of the system.

Running in parallel to this theme of public knowledge was that of knowledge within the coalition. This research found that actors were both pragmatic about local capacity recognising the limitations of local (particularly UA) production (MacRae *et al.*, 2010), as well as vulnerable to the "local trap" way of thinking (Born and Purcell, 2006). Scholars have illustrated that local provenance does not always equate with a more sustainable product, yet this research shows that coalition actors at the local level, even those with significant knowledge of the food system, are not immune to this way of thinking. This finding reflects the notion of "unreflexive localism" which DuPuis and Goodman warned about as a facet of the 'local trap' (2005, p. 360). As a result, this was translated into most of the case study strategies and so runs the risk of carrying over bad habits to other food policy coalitions seeking out existing policy models.

Studies of local food policies have revealed that approaches range from a focus on a singular issue to more holistic approaches to the local food system (Hatfield, 2012; Foodlinks *et al.*,

2013; Baker and de Zeeuw, 2015; Halliday, 2019). Three of the five case studies utilised Sage's notion of "Good Food" (2003), although this was typically attributed to Bristol's use of the term and it being referred to as a model in the UK for local food policy work. In terms of food production (as just one of many local food policy components), this research found that despite the recognition of a great many issues stemming from the global level, social and economic actions remained the focus. Only within the environmental pillar were some actions identified as also having the potential to have a positive global impact. This research suggests labelling this phenomenon as the "mobility of actions" 'hypothesis', where a sense of powerlessness in relation to the global level system means that actors will choose not to bother considering or putting resources towards aiming for such an impact. Rather, efforts are focused within their local sphere of influence. Notably, through frames associated with the environmental pillar, the issues of climate change and pollution defied this. It is perhaps the simplification of systems to a local-global binary that prompted of a sense of powerlessness for actors in the face of the global economic system, which was transferred to the strategy documents. Similarly, only a small number of actors highlighted the need for national level policy action to create a framework for change on a larger scale. Rather than being addressed, this content was merely absent from strategy documents. This omission from most interviews and from all strategies may be associated once again with the sense of powerlessness in the face of making change beyond the local realm.

9.3 Coalition Groups: Power and Participation

By examining these coalitions through the lens of the ACF and according to their governance structures, this work identified ways in which power was concentrated and exercised within these partnerships. The study of power is central to policy research (Cairney, 2012, p. 46) and was an important theme in this work which revealed itself in a number of ways, having important implications for the actors involved and the strategy output. Agreeing with Lang, Barling and Caraher (2009), what went on behind the closed doors of the policy process was not necessarily reflective of the orderly strategy that came as a result. In reality, the process was much more complex due to its human actors. This research identified that the power dynamics in these coalitions stemmed primarily from the structures of these groups, and in doing so this extends the work of MacRae and Donahue (2013), which does not delve into the power dynamics underlying these coalitions. Additionally, this work applies MacRae and Donahue's Canadian-based categorisation system in the UK and found that many of the same structures are present shown by the

presence of Categories 1-3 in this research. Notably, the difficulty in finding Category 4-6 structures in the UK's SFP network suggests that the UK context may vary from that of Canada in the extent of fully CS-led groups driving local food policy with few, if any links to municipal governance. MacRae and Donahue found that inversely, there were a greater number of CS-led efforts ranging from Category 3-6. This suggests that in the UK, there is a greater skew toward local authority-led efforts or reliance on partnership links to the local authority where CS is initiating, or that simply CS-led efforts weren't well represented in the SFP but were working independently. Investigating why this is may provide insight into how local food policy partnerships differ between the UK and Canada. This may relate to reductions in funding to local councils, although this mirrors the Canadian context as per MacRae and Donahue (2013), or the role of the SFP as a trans-local UK network emphasising the need for LA and CS partnerships (Moragues-Faus and Sonnino, 2019).

This work recognises parallels in research on multi-stakeholder participation in food policy development (MacRae and Donahue, 2013; de Zeeuw and Dubbeling, 2015; Hebinck and Page, 2017) and the expansion of ACF studies into 'collaborative policy processes', which Koebele (2016) notes is increasingly taking place in environmental policy development. Despite this emergence in ACF studies, the partnership structures identified in this research appear to be more 'micro' than those typically researched using the ACF, being those in higher level governance structures, rather than the local council government. Study of participation within local food policy groups is however well-established in food policy research (Dubbeling and de Zeeuw, 2007; Harper *et al.*, 2009; Hatfield, 2012; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; de Zeeuw and Dubbeling, 2015; Hebinck and Page, 2017). This research adds to this body of work through looking at differences in how different coalition structures negotiate, and the impacts of power imbalances on the content of the strategies. Additionally, this presented these cases within the UK context of austerity, which was recognised as a driver which brought the sides together, and their acknowledgement (albeit at times begrudgingly) of mutual need. This confirms a similar finding from MacRae and Donahue (2013) from Canada. However, when this research examined the views of the broader coalition through the Local Expert group (still within the local food community, but outside of the immediate steering group), tensions were revealed. These included criticisms of implementation, exclusionary processes and tokenistic policy performance on the part of the LA in several cases.

As an extension of what Psarikidou and Szerszynski (2012) found to be a weak social pillar in food system work, they explain that a lack of meaningful participation in local food policy development often holds back dialogue. This was found to be the case in Category 1 coalitions, where power imbalances between LA and CS held back CS participation, particularly in agenda setting. This form of power has been well-documented in policy literature (Cairney, 2012). Like the powerlessness identified as a limitations to local actions for global level impacts, so too did powerlessness within coalitions limit the extent to which CS actors expressed actions and aims. In category 2 and 3 groups, various forms of compromise were employed to reduce conflict and ensure progression in the policy process. This reflects both the third ACF 'hypothesis', and through this study's identification of the "three forms of compromise", offers insight into a negotiation approach employed within low-conflict coalition models.

Contrasting this narrative of powerlessness was the theme of collaboration. Underlying this was the participation narrative of *empowering* action in relation to the strategy development process and participation in its implementation. MacRae and Donahue identified Category 2 coalitions as "a preferred structure for a food policy organisation because of the way they blend municipal and civil society organization resources and expertise" (2013, p.9). Motivational frames were used throughout the strategy documents to appeal to a variety of actors to encourage participation in driving forward the strategy aims. Associated with empowering action and fostering participation was the theme of trust. While this was presented in a number of forms, such as between the council and CS or the council and citizens, the notion of framing the strategy's environmental and sustainability content to build trust was noteworthy. Bristol as a Category 3 case, where it was associated more with the food agenda and convincing people that those developing the policy weren't radical "anti-capitalist, anti-business.... Or that they wouldn't be stereotyped as miserable health zealots" (BRICS2). This involved convincing citizens that it was 'safe' to be associated with the effort. Suggests that the association between food and eco-activism of decades past (see Belasco, 2006) is still one being made by the public and that these traits make some uncomfortable through their associations with transgression (Goodman and Sage, 2014). This expression supports the assertion of Veen et al (2012) in their study of AFNs in two towns in The Netherlands which found that such "politicization" of food was something that not all participants want to be identified with. This suggests that even with

sustainability's now normative place in society and national and international policy, that it is still viewed as a subject that must be approached tactfully at the local level. In the case of Bristol, an active compromise was made to overcome this concern, and to ensure the sustainability of the project in relation to the participation and support of this citizen-audience.

9.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the culmination of the Findings section of this research. It addressed the central themes of this research which emerged from study of the research questions. Presented here were reflections on the findings in relation to existing scholarship and theories in order to position these results within a broader body of food policy and local food system research, as well as the applicability of this work within the policy process theory of the ACF.

The following chapter concludes the dissertation with a review of the work, as well as lessons drawn from this research for the benefit of local food policy coalition groups, contributions and reflections as a way of clarifying future applications and identifying new research avenues.

10. Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this dissertation by reflecting on lessons drawn from this work for practical policy, followed by the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions made by this research, and discussion of research outputs. The research process is reflected upon to illustrate what went well and which elements could have been improved. Finally, relevant areas of future research are identified.

10.2 Lessons & Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, a number of lessons have emerged. These are put forward with recommended actions with the belief that they could be applied by coalition groups seeking more balanced collaboration and consideration of local food and its links to sustainability.

This research found that balancing the pillars of sustainability was not felt to be particularly important to actors developing strategies in the case studies. Rather, specific local issues dictated which pillar(s) were the focus, whether explicitly or implicitly through linking issues with actions. Echoing Mason and Lang's values for sustainability in food policy (2017), actors spoke of several of these themes without associating them to a model of sustainability. This research recommends that in addition to discussing sustainability definitions and beliefs explicitly in a strategy development forum, that this wider list of values be considered and integrated into the process to encourage broader thinking about sustainability in food policy. This serves to also move actors away from a simplistic binary way of thinking about sustainability and food, to a more nuanced systems view.

In this sense, it would also benefit actors to address their understandings of local food production in an open dialogue within the coalition. Based on the differing conceptions of food production, often presented in a simplistic urban-rural binary, and concerns that some actors were not well informed about the local food production landscape of their municipality, this approach could broaden thinking and build a sense of collaboration. By fostering discussion of production as a spatial continuum, rather than a binary, this could encourage actors to consider how production efforts could have more diverse project applications and impacts, particularly when the three pillars are linked to the above wider set of food policy values (Mason & Lang, 2017).

The coalition structures as partnership models offered insight into how power influenced not only the policy outputs, but the sense of ownership experienced by actors in the process and the relationships between CS and LA. Looking these dynamics can guide future coalition groups to structure their participations balance more mindfully to foster a greater sense of equity, collaboration and dialogue. Noting that CS and LA groups recognized a wide range of potential contributions from one another to benefit the creation and deployment of local food strategies, this research has identified some lessons for groups according to the coalition structure.

Category 1 case studies could foster greater collaboration and a sense of ownership in the strategy process by integrating CS actors earlier in the process, with particular attention to the agenda setting process. In this way, strategies could reflect broader community concerns and aims, rather than just those of the council. Category 3 cases, tended to 'speak' to the council more at the back end of the strategy process, by targeting the council as the strategy audience and framing accordingly. This model presents a challenge where actors are trying to predict the priorities of the council and adjust the strategy content to appeal. MacRae and Donahue (2017) found that Category 2 models operated most effectively as collaborative groups because of the more equal representation from CS and LA. As such, this research recommends that a middle ground reflecting a Category 2 model be sought where possible in order to balance participation between CS and LA actors, although it is acknowledged that getting the right 'balance' of people and skills is difficult (MacRae and Donahue, 2013, p. 19). This also allows the overall coalition to benefit from the formal power, legitimacy and resources of the council, and the capabilities, networks and local-specific knowledge of CS.

Knowing how to get the most out of these partnerships will become all the more crucial as further budget cuts can be expected to impact municipal councils, and as global level issues become more pressing in the face of climate change and instability. MacRae and Donahue note that "[t]he most fundamental contribution of food policy initiatives is the creation of opportunities for discussions and action that would not typically occur" (p.20). Recognising that it is from these discussions that more formal policy developments emerge, this only emphasises the importance that these dialogues a) take place and b) go into depth to reveal the complex realities of the local food system. For this to happen, coalitions must be

structured so as to be amenable to such in-depth open and collaborative dialogue on topics so central as sustainability and local food production.

10.3 Contributions

This dissertation has made a number of novel contributions to research, including theoretical, empirical, methodological, and practical advances, and overlap with one another through the themes of sustainability, food production and policymaking.

This application made a unique methodological contribution which combined the ACF, with Snow and Benford's framing approaches (1988) and MacRae and Donahue's food policy group categorization system (2013) to address the research questions. As the ACF does not have pre-set methods for analysing beliefs or defining coalitions, these tools bridged this gap and complement the beliefs-focus of the ACF (see Page and Caraher, 2020). Besides these novel adaptations to the ACF, the qualitative interview approach was found to be complementary to the ACF focus on actor beliefs although one which according to Weible has not been applied with great frequency in ACF research (2011), making this a contribution to a relatively small pool of studies using this approach (see Shanahan *et al.*, 2018). Through the use of MacRae and Donahue's food policy group categories to five UK-based case studies, this research demonstrated their applicability in a setting beyond Canada. This work also added the dimension of power as a part of investigating these structures, which was new to how this categorisation had previously been studied. This work brought a number of novel insights to the ACF based on the micro (local) level of food policy analysis and engagement with two of the 'hypotheses' of the ACF.

Empirical contributions relate to the case studies themselves by way of documenting and analysing the strategy development process of the case studies, including the experiences of coalition actors. By maintaining a methodologically consistent approach across the five cases (reflecting the guidance of Yin, 2009), this research can claim internal validity for the case studies presented but is not more widely externally generalisable. While these case studies cannot be claimed to be representative of local food coalition groups more widely, even within the SFP or within their coalition category, they offer valuable experience and information. This dissertation represents a snapshot of a particular point in time, when the development of local food policies in the UK was on the rise and as the power of cities as drivers of change is being increasingly recognised. In the language of the ACF, this research

has focused on 'nascent' subsystems, with these strategies being mostly first-generation efforts in a policy area that has become more a part of the municipal focus only in recent years.

As shown, each case has a unique local context, network of actors (including their own unique beliefs) and thus a bespoke approach was taken in developing each strategy and in the documents themselves. This research offers these case studies as reference models to members of the SFP network and others local food policy groups who may be seeking guidance on partnership models, strategy approaches and learning points. This work offered a number of recommendations for the consideration of new coalition groups relating to productive and balanced CS and LA collaborations, and a built-in process of dialogue relating to sustainability and local food production.

Through the many interviews drawn upon for this research, it is important to acknowledge that these stories are valuable in and of themselves. These conveyed the lessons and experiences of those who had been involved from both the public service and the grassroots level in a practical policy making process. It is the hope of the researcher that by sharing their experiences on a topic that they cared about that those involved felt that their contributions had a wider impact than they had originally expected and that their expertise and contributions were appreciated.

The findings of this research illustrated a variety of ways that sustainability and food production were framed by actors and within strategies. Understanding these in the context of the pillars of sustainability and going beyond these pillars to a wider view of sustainability values in food (Mason and Lang, 2017), as well as in relation to the urban-rural divide offers insight into how actors involved in local food strategy development may be limiting its potential for more effective cross-pillar impact.

This work has put forward a couple of novel 'hypotheses' or observations based on findings which could offer interesting avenues of further examination. Firstly, the notion of three forms of compromise in coalition partnerships was put forward as an observation from these cases (being low-conflict situations, having been based out of a need for partnership and cooperation) that could be examined further in other local food policy coalition settings.

Additionally, the “mobility of actions” ‘hypothesis’ identified a sense of powerlessness in relation to the global level system, which meant that actors appeared not to bother addressing systemic issues, despite them being a drive for policy action, choosing instead to focus on the local. This was observed across the five case studies herein, although was not the focus of this research. As such, it was not rigorously tested for.

Referring back to Figure 8 which outlined the research stages, there have been several research outputs as a result of this research process. Three publications have addressed elements of this dissertation:

Hebinck, A and Page, D. (2017) *Processes of Participation in the Development of Urban Food Strategies: A Comparative Assessment of Exeter and Eindhoven*. In *Sustainability*.

Page, D. (2019) *Conflicting Conceptions of Place between Civil Society and Council Actors Involved in Local-Level Food Policy Development: The Cases of Devon and Bath, UK*. In *SCOPE*.

Page, D and Caraher, M. (2020) *A Novel Approach to Local level Food Policy Case studies: Application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework*. In *Novel Techniques in Nutrition & Food Science (NTNF)*.

The first two publications, addressing participatory processes and conceptions of ‘place’ within CS and LA coalitions, respectively, further serve to support food policymakers through lessons on communication in policy partnership scenarios. The third paper presents the application of the adapted ACF framework used in this work so that it may be useful to others studying local micro-level policy systems, and specifically those with a focus on food.

On a practical note, this research was an important influence to setting up my own farm: Little Woodbatch Market Garden in Bishop’s Castle, Shropshire. This allowed me to understand food production and the food system from an entirely new perspective, helping me to better understand literature that had previously only been theoretical. This research experience has also been helpful in supporting local grassroots policy groups in my community (the Bishop’s Castle Community Food Resilience Plan, as an example) and building community momentum around sustainable and resilient local food systems.

10.4 Reflections

Beyond a number of contributions, this research was not without its challenges. Reflecting on the process, a number of practical elements had to be overcome, particularly with regards to methods in the early stages. Drawing on Schön's notions of reflection-in-practice and reflection-on-practice (1983), this section considers the research process as it was taking place, and in retrospect.

Three main challenges presented themselves 'in-practice', which had to be considered and overcome: case selection, recruitment, and too narrow a view of food production.

As a methodological note relating to the selection of cases, it became apparent early on that there would be difficulty in finding representation of the six categories for case studies. Certain categories were either non-existent in conjunction with an existing and current food strategy at the time of selection, or those selected were thought to be of a particular category upon initial inspection, but during analysis were found to have a different structure. This reflects what MacRae and Donahue noted as the 'soft boundaries' between categories. The descriptions of these categories are at times flexible and open to interpretation with language like "more or less" linked to government. This posed a challenge in categorizing some cases. Additionally, material available in the public domain regarding the coalition (partnership structures, participants, funding mechanisms and the extent of links to government and local cs groups) was often unavailable or portrayed in a way that was misleading or unclear. This resulted in what was initially thought to be a representative selection of categories (five of them, no case study was found for category 6 from the outset), but upon deeper examination through interviews the coalition structures were revealed to be different, resulting in two cases illustrative of Categories one and three, and one for Category 2. No case studies could be found within the Sustainable Food Places Network members to represent Category 6, which are almost exclusively civil society-driven and have the lowest levels of connection to local councils. This in itself illustrates the extent to which a partnership coalition model has been taken up across the country, with councils and civil society working together. When selecting cases, terminology posed a challenge, all cases used the term 'strategy' within the documents, however some also used 'policy' or 'action plan'. In this regard, the term "food strategy" must be acknowledged as a loose term in practice, despite that in food policy literature it is distinguished from other formats. For example, despite using the term strategy and policy, Feeding Devon's Future

could be more realistically regarded as a report with recommendations to the local council. At the time of case study selection, being faced with these issues meant compromising on the range of cases being studied. In retrospect, the lack of cases from categories 4-6 is a finding in itself as this categorisation approach was applied in the UK, and being able to compare two category 1 and two category 3 cases offered depth and nuance to the work, and with one Category 2 case showing interesting elements of both. This allowed for a better understanding of coalition dynamics and the subtleties of the different coalition types with ties to the LA.

Within these cases, recruitment posed a challenge, and especially so for council actors. These individuals were either not forthcoming or were (in the case of 'council-branded' category 1 strategies, were by default anonymized with no individual contributors named. This brought a bureaucratic anonymity and branding to the documents, resulting in methodological difficulties of identifying and accessing actors. This is in contrast to the other categories of coalition groups where participants as individuals were listed openly. For CS-led efforts, having a lack of LA actors for Bristol and Durham meant that comparisons could not be made regarding beliefs and the translation of these into policy. At the time of recruitment when this issue was identified, two approaches were taken: the first being to continue recruitment for a longer period of time to expand the number of coalition actors, and the second was to obtain ethical approval for additional non-coalition actors who were being recommended via the snowball method. Looking back upon this issue, while more balanced participation would have helped comparative aspects of this research, a great deal of valuable insights were gleaned regardless. To this effect, it was felt that the Local Expert and High-Level interviews were not necessary, as the number of coalition actors as research participants and the quality of their testimonies was of high and addressed the research questions effectively.

The early stages of devising this research project were focused on the role of urban agriculture (UA) in local food policies. This was intended to guide case study selection based on strategy content, but within this exercise it was found that UA content was typically too minimal within strategies to warrant its consideration based solely on this, and that b) there was typically a balance of urban and rural food production and that these would need to be considered together for a more complete view of 'food production' in the context of

these policy efforts. This realisation came during the first few interviews when the language of 'urban agriculture' frankly confused participants and resulted in some commenting that this scope would not adequately capture the UK context with its strong rural agricultural traditions. As a result, the approach to the research was adapted to be more inclusive of a wider range of food production formats. The outcome of this change was a more realistic representation of what municipalities are encouraging in order to address sustainability for their diverse local contexts. In light of these changes, this wider view was most appropriate for the UK context and these case studies (except Belfast which was only focused on UA), and added a great deal more nuance to the complexity of local food production and its ties to sustainability at the local level.

Another element of reflexivity as a practitioner presented by Bryman (2016, p.388) is the need for a researcher to reflect upon their methods, values, biases, particularly in relation to research participants when conducting qualitative research. This is, Bryman argues, a 'methodological self-consciousness' (ibid). In this sense, being a foreign citizen investigating UK policy structures and geographic areas offered an advantage. This allowed for a blank slate of sorts, based on a lack of understanding of council structures, or UK-specific terminology (region, local authority, county, 'The North', 'The Midlands' etc), or prior awareness of the case study areas. By asking for these to be explained (and participants kindly obliged), this provided understanding without the cultural biases that a UK-native may have brought into the research.

Reflecting upon the methodological approaches taken in this research through the lens of sustainability and local food production, it is acknowledged that this research looked at only one part of the local food strategy and food system for these city regions. Ultimately, to get a *complete* understanding of a strategy's aims and motivations, it must be looked at as a whole as these intersect and are woven throughout different actions and approaches. Just as the pillars overlap, so too do the parts of a food strategy as they encompass the components of the food system. The production component is only a part of a more complex initiative, but for the purposes of this work, to understand the links being made between production and sustainability, this targeted approach served the aims of the project. Additionally, in approaching sustainability as the three-pillar model, this research limited a wider line of inquiry drawing on the SDC's and Mason and Lang's wider list of values for sustainable food

systems. As it stands, only occasional reference was made to pillars beyond the standard three, and this was noted, but a deliberate aim to advance a more complex model would have been a desirable contribution to sustainability and food research. As an advantage, the three-pillar model allowed for a simplified framework for analysis. In addition to this, relating to interviews, adding greater complexity to what actors already described as a complex system may have been a struggle for interviewees (many of whom said that memory of the events was already a struggle considering time elapsed since making the strategies).

First and foremost, this research was based on the efforts of individuals working to drive local-level change through the development of food policy. This work has sought to present their experiences and stories in a way that would shed light on the policy development processes of the five case studies herein. Conducting this research was felt to be important because it could add the stories of these actors and coalitions to the larger social and policy story of communities taking local food policy action. In particular, with local level food policy emerging as a growing trend (and an important one in the context of a number of global-level crises), it is the belief of the researcher that the findings of this research could provide some guidance to municipalities and coalition groups seeking to take action.

Ultimately, this research has told the story of people involved in shaping change in their communities, through translating beliefs and ideas into policy. Each actor told the story of their community, its place in the world, their concerns, their hopes and their plans for change. They spoke of common ground, the need to work together, and of personal and institutional barriers. Those interviewed spoke of defiance, power and powerlessness. They all shared a belief in the power of community and of food to solve problems. During the course of these interviews, the volume of content was felt to be overwhelming. Having been immersed in the material for several years, the individual and combined experience of these individuals is looked upon with a great deal of respect and admiration for their personal efforts and the change they are driving as groups. As a researcher, it is hoped that these stories were interpreted and portrayed accurately and respectfully. As a consideration of the research design, if this research could be conducted over it would draw from the approach taken by Levkoe et al, (2012) to include a roundtable or second round of discussions with the participants to present the research findings and to ask if these did

indeed reflect their experiences. This would allow for feedback on the process and the findings.

A final point of reflection-on-practice, the process of identifying a theoretical framework after data collection was, while not unheard of in research, based in this case out of inexperience in the field of policy research (having come from a background in environmental sciences). However, data collection and an initial foray into analysis brought valuable learning experiences and insights into local policy dynamics, which pointed to the ACF as an appropriate PPT. The adaptation of this strategy to link to MacRae and Donahue's categories (used earlier in the case selection) offered continuity with the ACF and valuable links between the PPT and food policy. The addition of framing tools to analysing beliefs came out of numerous frustrated discussions with supportive colleagues with broader understandings of sociological concepts. In the end, this unique adapted theoretical framework is the bones of this research and offers a contribution to wider scholarship across a number of areas, despite the fact that it was the result of a long and often painful iterative process.

10.5 Future Research

This research culminates at a time of great uncertainty for the UK as it solidifies its exit from the European Union and the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic which has shaken the food system at all levels. Agricultural policies relating to production standards and imports and exports have been a focus of many reports¹⁰⁷, and the need for stable and resilient local food systems are obviously relevant to the average person now than they have been for many years. Food prices are expected to rise as common market negotiated relationships with European suppliers change. This suggests that the UK will need to revise its approach to food and domestic production, possibly making local food initiatives all the more important for community food security as well as overall domestic provisioning. In light of this, a time may be coming that will see the National level of government return to food policy which in recent years has become the responsibility of municipalities. However, municipalities have become much more aware and engaged with the food system and will likely continue their local level food policy efforts.

¹⁰⁷ See the multitude of briefings based out of the Food Research Collaboration (FRC), City, University of London.

The ACF advocates a long-term view of policy change, looking at a decade or more. As such, this research may offer a starting point which can be returned to in several years for further analysis. Similarly, for food projects, MacRae and Donahue found that “the longer an organization has been in existence, the greater its impact” (2013, p.15). This suggests that future rounds of research will see local food system efforts become more sophisticated, with future policy incarnations learning from these earliest efforts, particularly in light of National policy and food system changes.

Cairney writes of the “bandwagon effect” (2012, p. 13) where “the action of one often catch the attention of others” leading to policy change – in these cases, development of food strategies, particularly under the guidance of the SFP as a translocal network shows great potential to advance local food system work. Through its unique position, the SFP holds the potential to integrate a wider understanding of sustainability beyond the three pillars by sharing knowledge across a wider network, as well as communicate best practices for partnerships across coalition models. Ultimately, if local level food policy is to advance, partnerships must become more equitable (Hebinck and Page, 2017). If power imbalances are not recognised and addressed, this may limit the willingness of individuals and groups to come together for future policy efforts and see the maturation of local food policy over the coming years when it will become all the more important.

This research has shown that there still appears to be a gap in understanding of the urban and the rural as a continuum, rather than a binary. While this is an issue of knowledge and perception relating to sense of place that needs to be overcome by actors (Page, 2018), this is most appropriately addressed at the local level where policy makers can be more directly connected to the full spectrum of production that their local landscape offers. This reflects the view that sustainability is itself a binary as either sustainable or unsustainable. Framing sustainability in policy circles (local and otherwise) as a process or a progression may help to guide more focused initiatives through a series of steps based over a longer term, rather than short term policies overwhelmingly crammed with content.

In terms of theoretical investigations that would benefit from further exploration, the model of ‘Three forms of compromise’ in coalition partnerships could be further developed based

on observation of policy development processes. Additionally, the “mobility of actions” ‘hypothesis’ could be an interesting avenue of future study for a wider selection of local level food policies and research on local ambitions.

Elements of the ACF which would benefit from further exploration based on the observations of this research include: further testing of the ACF ‘hypotheses’ 2 and 3 with ‘complete’ coalition groups. This would be best undertaken by a researcher observing a LFS development process so that the complete coalition (steering group, consultation group etc) could be analysed.

Apart from the individual civil society or council actors involved in the coalition groups examined, other less obvious “actors” became apparent throughout the analysis. These ‘non-human’ actors are identified by Schon and Rein (1994) and exert influence. The sustainability pillars themselves were revealed as players in the local food system (most notably the Earth and the physical local landscape, as extensions of the environmental pillar), some acting upon or being acted upon, but most notably not having a voice in the process and needing to be represented. These included, the environment, the economy actors, with notably more sympathy going out to the environment as an actor needing to be represented. The “global economic system” was often framed as a source of issues. In the more human sense of the word actor, society was (at least theoretically) considered in a fair diversity for program delivery, with reference to children, the elderly, BAME groups, refugees and newcomers, the poor, the sick, the disabled, mental health patients, criminals. Essentially those vulnerable where food system shocks are concerned, and in need of support or protection. Other actors included supermarkets, community groups, farmers, the national and regional governments, the National Farmers Union. This wider conception of ‘actor’ presents what Jenkins-Smith and others identify as a struggle with the application of the ACF in defining the boundaries of a coalition. Greater examination of the role of these ‘actors’ would have been an interesting inclusion in this work but would have required a different approach to research design and analysis. As these actors were not foreseen and only revealed through the analysis process, the ability to examine their role was limited for this research.

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APPENDIX A:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Participant information Sheet for PhD research study

Research Title: Exploring the Perceived Link between Urban Agriculture and Sustainability in Municipal Urban Food Strategies within the United Kingdom's Sustainable Food Cities Network

Researcher: Daphne Page, City University London, Centre for Food Policy

What is the purpose of the study?

This research focuses on the links that are being made between urban agriculture and sustainability within local food strategies in the United Kingdom. Since a growing number of municipalities (towns, cities, regions, etc.) are creating strategies under the umbrella of sustainability, I am interested in how those writing the policies are associating urban agriculture (as just one part of the overall strategy) with local sustainability objectives. I have found that most strategies don't seem to define what sustainability is in their local contexts, but instead express this implicitly through social, environmental, and economic goals for their communities. Since what is sustainable can be very subjective, I'm interested in exploring how this varies among food policies. Specifically, I would like to determine how this differs based on the type of governance model driving the creation of the strategy, whether it is a fully council-led and embedded strategy, or a completely independent civil society organization, or a hybrid of both.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participate in this study based on your role in developing the local urban food strategy for your municipality. Five municipalities have been selected, and their policy development teams are also involved in the interview process. There is a total of 50 people taking part.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any stage, or avoid answering questions that are felt to be too personal or intrusive. This will not in any way affect any future relationship with City University London, the researcher, or the Sustainable Food Cities Network, should you choose to withdraw. Your withdrawal from the project will not result in you being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

- The interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours to complete. There will be only one interview. And you will need only speak to or meet with the interviewer once. Please note that if you have requested to be asked permission prior to the use of any quotes, the interviewer may follow up with you to obtain this permission, as needed.
- You will be interviewed in relation to your involvement in the development of your municipalities urban food strategy, in a semi-structured format.
- Research methods being used for this study are semi-structured interviews and document analysis of urban food strategies for five municipalities, and these two methods combined will act as case studies for this research.
- This research is focused on cities within the UK's Sustainable Food Cities Network, and includes case studies in the UK and Northern Ireland. Interviews will take place in person or over the phone.

Expenses and Payments (if applicable)

No compensation or travel costs will be paid.

What do I have to do?

You will be asked to answer a series of questions relating to your experience in the development of their municipal food strategy, your perceptions of sustainability in the context of the strategy, as well as the links that urban agriculture may have with sustainability at the local level.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Risks and disadvantages are minimal, though you will be giving your time to participate, which the researcher recognizes may be an inconvenience.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Benefits of taking part may include gaining some personal perspective from recollecting the policy development process of your municipality's local food strategy, as well as contributing your expertise and experience to an emerging area of study and of policy development. Through this research, your input may provide insight to other municipalities seeking to develop their own urban food strategies or sustainable local food system transitions.

What will happen when the research study stops?

When the study is complete, you will be informed and a summary of the final study results will be provided to you. Data collected during this research will be stored for a period of three years in a locked desk drawer in the researcher's personal

residence. After this period, all digital and audio files, and hard copy documents will be deleted or shredded, as appropriate.

Confidentiality:

- Your participation in this study will be kept confidential.
- Only the researchers will have access to the interview content before it is anonymised.
- Audio recordings and transcribed files will be kept as password protected files on a password protected personal laptop.
- Your personal information will not be released, although the researcher may contact you for follow up questions, such as requesting your permission to use particular quotes.

What will happen to results of the research study?

The completed PhD will be archived with the British Library, as per standard public domain process, and so will be publically available. Further publications from this research will maintain participant anonymity, as will any future lectures or conference presentations arising from this study.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City University **London School of Arts & School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.**

Further information and contact details

For further information on this research, including any questions you may have, please contact the researcher:

Daphne Page

Daphne.page@city.ac.uk

Or:

Dr. Martin Caraher (direct supervisor)

m.caraher@city.ac.uk

0207 040 4161

Thank you,

Daphne Page, M.A.Sc
PhD Candidate
City University London
Centre for Food Policy

APPENDIX B:
ETHICS FORM – PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT



Title of Study: Exploring the Perceived Link between Urban Agriculture and Sustainability in Municipal Urban Food Strategies within the United Kingdom's Sustainable Food Cities Network

Researcher: Daphne Page, City University London, Centre for Food Policy

Please initial box

1.	I agree to take part in the above City University London research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records. I understand this will involve • being interviewed by the researcher • allow the interview to be audiotaped	
2.	This information will be held and processed for the following purpose(s): Qualitative analysis (content analysis) of responses to determine the perceived links being made between sustainability and urban agriculture in my municipality's urban food strategy, and any difference in these amongst case study cities based on the type of governance body responsible for writing the strategy. I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.	

	AND I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write-up of the research.	
3.	I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.	
4.	I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.	
5.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

Name of Participant Signature _____ Date

Name of Researcher Signature _____ Date

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEW GUIDE – COALITION ACTORS

Interview Guide: Coalition Actors

Section 1: Background & Governance

1. What was your role in the development of your city's local food strategy (name of specific strategy)?
2. What sort of governance structure was behind the strategy's creation (ie: is it council-led, civil society-led, or a hybrid of both)?
3. If council-led, what department(s) is it housed within?
4. Does your city have a local Food Policy Council? If yes, is it housed within the local government structure? Which department?
5. Was the development of a LFS initiated by the local government, by civil society, or another other group?
6. What did the policy development process look like (expert consultation/Public consultation/Community food assessment, etc)?
7. Are there other stakeholders (industry, local businesses, civil society organisations, institutions, academics, planners etc) who were involved with the creation of the strategy with the policy development group?
8. Who funded the LFS development and related processes (ie: Consultation/Community Food Assessments, etc)?
9. What were the key local issues that the LFS sought to address (driving needs, objectives)?

Section 2: Sustainability

1. Can you tell me about the decision to integrate the concept of sustainability into the UFS?
2. Why was this concept felt to be important or useful?
3. What would you personally identify as 'sustainability'?
4. When creating the LFS, was the definition or meaning of 'sustainability' discussed by the policy development group?
5. If yes, was there a difference of opinion amongst the policy development group over what sustainability meant?

6. If yes, was there a process of discussion to agree on the definition and what it means in the local context?
7. What does 'sustainability' mean in the context of your local food strategy?

Section 3: Urban Agriculture

1. What does food production look like in your municipality?
2. What is the primary role of UA within the UFS?
3. During the policy development process, was a connection made between food production and its potential areas of contribution to local sustainability?
4. If so, what contribution is food production/UA felt to offer as a means of achieving local sustainability goals?
5. Does food production/UA feature in other municipal mandates? (ie: Comprehensive plan? Sustainability plan? Public Health? Community building?)?
6. If so, why?

Section 4: Conclusion

1. Do you have anything that you would like to add?
2. Is there anyone who was involved in the development of this UFS that you would like to suggest be contacted in order to participate in this research?

APPENDIX D:
RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

11th November 2015

To whom it may concern:

Principal Investigator: Daphne Page
Project Title: Urban Agriculture and Sustainability in the Sustainable Food Cities Food Strategies
Supervisors: Prof. Martin Caraher and Prof. Tim Lang
Degree: PhD
Start Date: September 2014
End Date: August 2017
Approval Date: 11th November 2015

This is to confirm that the research proposal detailed above has been granted formal approval by the Sociology Research Ethics Committee. Please note the following:

Project amendments

You will need to submit an Amendments Form to the Chair/Secretary if you wish to make any of the following changes to your research:

- (a) recruit a new category of participants;
- (b) change, or add to, the research method employed;
- (c) collect additional types of data;
- (d) change the researchers involved in the project.

Adverse events

You will need to submit an Adverse Events Form to the Chair of the Committee, copied to the Secretary of Senate Research Ethics Committee (Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk), in the event of any of the following:

- (a) adverse events;
- (b) breaches of confidentiality;
- (c) safeguarding issues relating to children and vulnerable adults;
- (d) incidents that affect the personal safety of a participant or researcher.

Issues (a) and (b) should be reported as soon as possible and no later than 5 days after the event. Issues (c) and (d) should be reported immediately. Where appropriate, the researcher should also report adverse events to other relevant institutions, such as the police or social services.

Should you have any further queries relating to this matter, then please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the Sociology Research Ethics Committee, I hope that the project meets with success.

Kind regards



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