

Food and Physical Activity Councils: Promoting 'Full engagement'

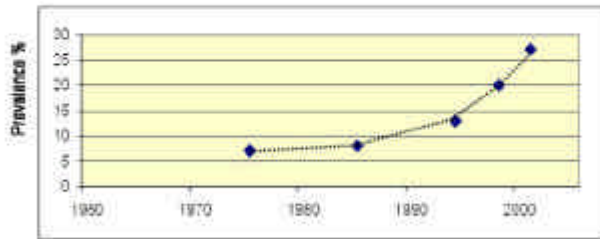
Geof Rayner PhD FFPH
Visiting Research Fellow, City
University

What is the problem?

- The UK seems to be following the USA in what Popkin has called 'the Nutrition Transition'
- WHO Technical Report 916 alerted the member nations of WHO to the health consequences of this transition
- Many good things are being done, but there is widespread resistance to change, from the NHS and central government to local schools, as highlighted by the Jamie Oliver school meals programmes
- Policy Councils may be the route to more consistent policy, strategy and action

The obesity 'take off' among English children

Increase in overweight children aged 7-11
in England 1974-2002
© International Obesity TaskForce



US and worldwide ad spend

WORLDWIDE AD GROWTH: 1990-2003

	U.S.A.		OVERSEAS		TOTAL WORLD	
	BILLION	%	BILLION	%	BILLION	%
	US\$	CHANGE	US \$	CHANGE	US\$	CHANGE
1990	\$130.0	+ 3.9%	\$145.9	+ 11.8%	\$275.9	+ 7.9%
1991	128.4	- 1.2	153.9	+ 5.5	282.3	+ 2.3
1992	133.8	+ 4.2	165.4	+ 7.5	299.2	+ 6.0
1993	141.0	+ 5.4	163.2	- 1.3	304.2	+ 1.7
1994	153.0	+ 8.6	179.0	+ 9.7	332.0	+ 9.1
1995	165.1	+ 7.9	205.9	+ 15.0	371.0	+ 11.7
1996	178.1	+ 7.9	212.1	+ 3.0	390.2	+ 5.2
1997	191.3	+ 7.4	210.0	- 1.0	401.3	+ 2.8
1998	206.7	+ 8.0	205.2	- 2.3	411.9	+ 2.6
1999	222.3	+ 7.6	213.8	+ 4.2	436.1	+ 5.9
2000	247.5	+ 11.3	226.8	+ 6.1	474.3	+ 8.8
2001	231.3	- 6.5	209.6	- 8.6	440.9	- 7.9
2002	236.9	+ 2.4	213.6	+ 1.9	450.5	+ 2.2
2003*	247.7	+ 4.6	222.1	+ 4.0	469.8	+ 4.3

* In current local currencies

Universal McCann 2004

Health promoting (Council) Leisure centre?



Health promoting NHS?



Health promoting NHS?



Health promoting social services/housing department?



The health promoting celebrity?

WALKERS The Lineker FactFile

Gary Lineker, His True Story

Gary Lineker has been a great ambassador for Walkers Crisps over the years. We have found him around the park, a park, a factory, a headmaster's, a renegade devil and of course Mr Lineker with those memorable mustaches and even playing football against his own club Arsenal Owen.

But before we reveal how much he loves it, he made a bit of a name for himself as a soccer star, and that's what HE did and try all accounts he was a bit of a popular boy - never short of an even a haircut, a true Walkers boy!

Lineker's Stats . . .

- Personal
- Broadcasting Career
- Footballing Career
- Awards & Trophies

- International experience of Policy Councils on food and nutrition has developed over recent decades but they have not received the attention that is due to them.
- The 1992 International Conference on Nutrition recommended that governments create Food Policy Councils but few have been created.
- There has been more experience in local and sub-national policy councils, particularly in North America.
- Developing country experience of attempting to improve food policy integration stems from the 1970s.
- The UK's House of Commons' (Parliamentary) Health Committee, in its 2004 report on obesity, reviewed current policy determinants of the rise in obesity, concluding that national food and health policy lacked coherence, integration and effectiveness. To address this vacuum, it proposed the creation of a new 'Council of Nutrition and Physical Activity to improve co-ordination and inject independent thinking into strategy'.
- The case for creating such a Council in the UK is reviewed, as are possible organisational options, functions and remit.

Norway

- Norway set up its National Council on Nutrition and Physical Activity in 1999, incorporating the National Council on Nutrition set up in 1937. The new merged Council's objective is to 'give expert advice and produce evaluations for public authorities, research environments, health and social services, schools, places of employment, voluntary organisations, the catering trade, the food industry, the grocery trade, the media and consumers'. Council members are appointed for a limited period and drawn from independent bodies and

Denmark

- Structure similar to the Norwegian. The Swedish Government began to create an integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy in 2002 and is currently deciding what the policy framework and working of the new body will be. Nutrition and physical activity – not just exercise - are linked to promote sustainable development and environmental goals.

Toronto, Canada

- Toronto set up a city Food Policy Council in 1991. [\[i\]](#) It is funded by the Board of Health but works in partnership across communities, professions and business, as well as across the city administration. [\[ii\]](#)

[\[i\]](#) Toronto Food Policy Council. How we work. Toronto: TFPC, 2004. http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm [\[ii\]](#) Basrur SV. *Progress Report on the Food Policy Council. Board of Health Staff Report.* Toronto: Board of Health, February 9, 2004.

Connecticut State, USA

- Created in 1997 by the state legislature, the Connecticut Food Policy Council works to promote the development of a food policy for the State of Connecticut and the coordination of state agencies that affect food security. Food Policy refers to government actions that influence the availability, affordability, quality and safety of our food supply. Food Policy addresses such concerns as: farmland preservation, urban agriculture, emergency food supply, transportation, markets for locally-grown food, food education, child nutrition and inner-city supermarkets.

City of Berkeley, USA

The Berkeley Food Policy Council (BFPC) is a coalition of residents, non-profit agencies, community groups, school district and city agencies formed in May 1999 to increase community food access. Studies by Berkeley Public Health Department revealed serious discrepancies in life expectancy in South and West Berkeley in comparison to the rest of the city, dietary problems playing a significant role. The BFPC creates a forum for action and policy development, for example to:

- Increase availability of fresh affordable produce to *all* members of the community.
- Improve linkages between local organic farms and means of distribution throughout urban areas.
- Expand opportunities and support for urban gardening and farming.
- Improve the quality of the food at the public schools.

Table 1 Some arguments for and against a Policy Council

For	Against
Give coherence and co-ordination across hitherto discrete policy sectors	Create tensions with other advisory bodies (e.g. food safety agencies)
Provide leadership for policy development and reflection	Act as just a 'talking shop'
Promote public engagement	Lacks a champion inside government
Provides strong health focus on determinants of (ill) health	Adds to 'policy cacophony' and multiplicity of advice
Provides an overview of both sides of the energy consumption/energy use equation	Possibility of 'policy over-stretch'

Table 2 Function and scope

To provide policy advice, not just technical and scientific advice
To build consensus on the actions needed
To be a forum for policy learning
To encourage and stimulate good practice
To monitor implementation
To identify any relevant processes or policies which undermine progress
To advocate improvements
To liaise with international bodies, particularly at EU level
To conduct and encourage policy research programmes
To take evidence and hold hearings
To provide leadership and 'voice' for rational, evidence-informed policy
To offer clear, simple messages and a policy framework for industry, consumers and government

Table 3 Some existing UK bodies, with Denmark and Norway Councils as benchmarks

Body	Founded	Cross-sectoral remit?	Department sponsor	Commission members	Staff	Budget	Of which secretariat cost
Commission for Integrated Transport Sustainable Development Commission	2000	yes	Department for Transport	18	NA	£1.5 million	£0.3 million
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution	2000	yes	Prime Minister/ DEFRA	18	11	£0.7 million	£0.7 million
National Consumer Council	1970	yes	DEFRA	14	10	£0.9 million	£0.9 million
SEF (Norway)	1956	yes	Department of Trade & Industry	12	39	£3 million	£1.66 million
National Nutrition Council 1937)	1999 (based on earlier National Nutrition Council 1937)	yes	Ministry of Health & Social Affairs/ Directorate for Health and Social Welfare	24 (12 each for nutrition & physical activity)	18	40 million krone (£3.2 million)	NA
Danish Nutrition Council	1998	no	Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries	11 (+9 observers)	4	DK 3 million (c. £400,000)	NA

SEF - ?; DEFRA - Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; NA - not applicable.

Table 4 Weaknesses and strengths of possible Policy Council remits

Possible Council remit	Possible weaknesses	Possible strengths	Previous experience
Nutrition	Ignores physical inactivity as factor in obesity	Single issue focus	Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark
Nutrition and Physical Activity	Responds to obesity but not other health agenda	Integrates food intake with energy output	Norway; in creation in Sweden
Food (in all aspects)	Too general; hard to delineate where the food remit stops	Provides the overview currently lacking across the food supply chain	At local level, e.g. California and New England, USA and Toronto, Canada. At global international level, the International Food Policy Research Institute (created 1975)
Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and their environmental implications	Too broad?	Coherence and consumer-friendly	Untried but Sweden and Norway are moving in this direction

Immediate work for local policy councils

One example:

- Conduct a ‘activity mapping and policy audit’

Example questions from an ‘activity mapping and policy audit’

1. What has been done on nutrition in your PCT/LA/LSP? What are the existing policies and targets? Who are the champions? What is profile or priority?
2. Schools/LEA. Are schools committed to Healthy Schools standards, including nutrition? Is there nutritional guidance for school breakfasts and tuck shops? Has all school food been surveyed?
3. Is there a history of participation in unhealthy food sponsorship (Walkers Crisps ‘Books for Schools’, etc.) What measures are there to stop this happening again?
4. Water in schools. Do all classrooms have easy access to water? Are there links with the Water for Health campaign?
5. Who sets the policies on school/college vending machines? Review vending machines in all public facilities.
6. Is the level of PE per week in the school curriculum measured? Who has influence?
7. Does school inspection cover physical activity and nutrition in schools?
8. Have School Councils/PTA/School Governors have considered health issues/nutrition.
9. How successful are the arrangements for fruit in schools?

Example exercise: Auditing and promoting healthy eating and physical activity

10. What training have school/college catering staff had on nutrition/healthy eating?
11. Is there communication with parents on healthy eating e.g. around healthy snacks/lunch boxes?
12. Are there opportunities for development of cooking skills among different age groups locally?
13. Hospitals, Cafes, meals, snacks. What is provided and by whom? What are the incentives to promote healthy eating?
14. How active are school nurses on diet and physical activity?
15. Are there family education/family activities around healthy schools? Is there a policy on free swimming? How can this be extended? What are the policies on food/snacks in leisure centres?
16. Is there training and information for teachers, catering staff, youth workers, and other staff to ensure consistency of the healthy eating message?
18. Who is responsible for food/snacks procurement?
19. What is the culture of food in schools? Is there a programme of visits from people who produce food? Are there opportunities for school allotments?
20. Are there City Farms locally? What food producers are there?

Thanks!

Geof@GRAssociates.net