

Policy Foresight Programme

Director: Sir Crispin Tickell

JamesMartinInstitute
for science and
civilization

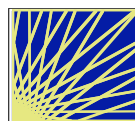
Record of the Symposium on
Obesity:
Origins, Policies and Implications
for the Future

31 October 2008

James Martin 21st Century School

University of Oxford

ForeSight



THE JAMES MARTIN
21ST CENTURY SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Introduction

On 31 October 2008 the James Martin Institute Policy Foresight Programme together with the British Government's Foresight Programme (within the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) held a one day symposium on **Obesity: Origins, Policies and Implications for the Future**, inspired by the publication of the Government's Foresight report *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices* published in October 2007.

Sir Crispin Tickell chaired the event. Participants came from a wide spectrum: government, policy advisers, academics, the food industry, non government organizations and civil society generally. All recognized the scale of the obesity problem, the need to see it in the broadest context, and its significance for the good health of modern society as a whole.

A year on from the Launch of the Government Foresight Report on "Tackling Obesities: Future Choices".

Sir David King

Sir David King opened the symposium with a brief introduction about his experience as the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor. During his time there he had found a need for a specific umbrella programme which brought together all the evidence-based research which supported and strengthened government policy making and strategy development. Out of that need he had set up the British Government Foresight Programme. To date this programme had set up nine very different projects, one of which had been the report on obesity.

The need for a new comprehensive report on obesity had come about because statistics were now alarmingly pointing towards obesity reaching epidemic levels. Most adults in Britain were already clinically overweight. As a nation we were in danger of regarding this as the norm. Despite all efforts, little progress had been made in coping with the

problem. There were regional variations, and obesity hotspots, but overall the trend was growing nationally. Britain lagged just behind the United States in worldwide comparisons.

The Foresight obesity report had flagged up significant new key messages which made it clear something different had to be done urgently to change our behaviour. For the first time the report took in very wide ranging issues including psychological understanding of our background: in short as hunter gatherers, with the instinct to eat whenever and as much as we could, we now found ourselves living in an era of abundance. We should be saying No but our programming told us to make the most of it while we could. This triggered an innate tendency within the brain to signal an acceptance of being in a state of overweight. Simply appealing to individuals not to over eat did not work. Society needed many different kinds of help. People living in older parts of towns who could walk to work, school and the shops, were healthier and less obese than their counterparts living in sprawling suburbs, who had to hop into their cars to do all those things. Urban design influenced obesity. Many modern jobs involved passive physical input by sitting at a computer for hours at a time: modern culture saw mothers out at work and families eating pre-cooked supermarket meals which were high in sugar, salt and fats. The ethos of home cooking was all but disappearing. Transport, local architecture and food standards needed a complete overhaul if obesity was to be successfully tackled. Re-education to what constituted a good diet was key not only to the health of children but to that of the whole family and society in general.

There was no set precedent or known formula for success, either here or abroad. This was a new worldwide dilemma which was on the same gigantic scale as climate change with its cross government issues. The increasing national crisis of obesity could result in an extra colossal annual health bill of £50 billion in this country alone. The Foresight report, for the first time, made it obvious that it would take a huge number of government departments to come together to change the current trends in obesity. The report had been welcomed and commended nationally and internationally.

Developing a Strategy to Prevent Obesity

Dr Susan Jebb

As a key contributor to the Foresight obesity report, Dr Jebb focused on its end analysis and the framework it had identified on how to move government policy forward to tackle the obesity problem.

The Foresight report was born of many previous papers which had often ended up simplistically blaming individual choice and industry. Years of shouting louder and louder to eat less, eat better and exercise more, hadn't got the problem any further forward. A whole new approach was needed, backed by sound science, and putting all the individual facts into the greater picture. This is what the Foresight report had achieved. In the report, for the first time, it was accepted that free will was strongly driven by wider influences, and that it was underpinned by biological susceptibilities of ancient physiology moulded by famine, and overlaid by cultural and social influences.

The concept of individual responsibility had to be taken in the wider context of how local planning decisions shaped local lifestyle choices: how physical activity was driven by built environment; how food choices often resulted in choosing the palatability of junk foods; and how the incessant bombardment of advertising underlay not only poor food choices but poor lifestyles. All this had to be set against the global environment, global resources, global food systems and the global economies. The Foresight report had persuaded the Minister for the Department of Health, and other Ministers to concede that obesity wasn't just the result of people's inclination for low food but brought in the wider responsibility of government. The report, again for the first time, took the tension away from the individual and put it into the public domain by developing an ethical framework of when and how the state should act. It brought about a totally new understanding about the environment in which people found themselves. It provided a new and comprehensive framework which balanced individual responsibility with public responsibility. It included all age groups, all classes, individuals, family groups, schools, national and international accountability.

The report involved a range of possible interventions and focused initiatives to enable improved policy with corrective social marketing and campaigns of education. These could shift social attitudes and cultural values and encourage the public to have the will and ability to change. But however comprehensive the report, there were as yet no complete answers and no set examples of success in this field. This was a completely contemporary problem. But if public health were integrated with business goals, enormous progress could be made. It would be a long term endeavour which would need faith and confidence. Monitoring the new arrangements would be very important to the system as a whole together with tweaking the system where and when needed.

Overall Dr Jebb believed the Foresight report had brought the full surrounding issues of obesity to a tipping point where change would happen. It was now well understood that the problem had to be tackled on many national and international levels. The report had set out a framework which brought in cross-government participation for a plausible long term strategy for tackling obesity.

Foresight Modelling for "Tackling Obesities: Future Choices Report"

Professor Klim McPherson

Professor Klim McPherson said that the obesity epidemic began around 1984. Before that obesity levels were largely dependent on age, sex and social class, as well as stable intrinsic effects, and demonstrated no particular trend with time. Since that time health risks related to excess fat in the body, had grown exponentially. This brought the government to call for research into a solution to the problem of obesity.

Future modelling scenarios were now vital tools to aid government policy decisions. The modelling for the Foresight report was based on sound science and a mass of diverse statistics about age, sex, ethnicity, class and geographic regions. The model could reflect known age profiles, birth, death and health statistics, and was capable of making projections into the future about costs and epidemics determined by certain predictions and specified scenarios. The model could simulate and

compare the impact of various public health interventions. It could predict National Health costs of diseases per year, disease incidence, prevalence and mortality, current period of life expectancy, obesity distribution, the wider total costs, and so forth.

The modelling for the Foresight report had brought about the key messages which went to the core of the recommendations of the report. It found that, alarmingly, most adults in Britain were already overweight. It illustrated 'passive obesity' being that of successive generations getting heavier and heavier. It brought out that an obesity epidemic could not be tackled by individual action but would need a societal approach. Tackling obesity required changes in personal, family, community and national levels. It would require cooperation between government, science, business and civil society. It made the link that the change was on a par with that required to tackle climate change in that it would require the same scale of cross-government strategy. The changes would have to involve personal lifestyle, the community people lived in, the local activities available, the local economy, the built environment, the natural environment and the global ecosystem. Investment in, and reform of, infant feeding, exposure to junk foods, snack foods, industrial works, schools, hospitals, and institutional canteens, was needed. A programme of constant monitoring and developing synergies with other policies would be crucial. All this should happen without Big Brother becoming too prominent.

In discussion the following points were made:

- This report had already brought about a plethora of possible bottom-up actions. There was evidence of a lot of heroic individuals and communities starting initiatives with many applications from town partners for matching funding for projects.
- There was a confirmation that a tipping point in society had been reached where most people really wanted to start to do something about tackling obesity. This report had provided an accessible framework in which action could be initiated.
- The report had also made intelligent provision to bridge huge divides such as those between imams and their communities, and

within local parent teacher associations. The report had brought about new thinking regarding unusual conjunctions.

- A tipping point in the food industry had been attained with new pre-prepared recipes containing much less salt and fats. Perceptions were changing within food corporations. New ways of working took things well beyond just the immediate concept of food.
- There was a new push from fitness clubs, and the public were responding. It seemed a new wave of healthy awareness was starting to sweep the country. The public were better educated about the fat and sugar content of pre-prepared foods.

The Magnitude of Environmental Changes Needed to Prevent Obesity

Professor Philip James

Professor James, another contributor to the Foresight report, began by outlining how huge the problem of obesity was becoming. He gave statistics from Africa, North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and Oceania. All showed troubling increases in overweight populations. The recent phenomenon of overweight children worldwide was on the increase and Britain figured about mid way in all the charts. Out of a world population of around six billion, over two billion adults were obese and about 20% of the world's children. There were cultural and ethnic susceptibilities but by and large the increase in obesity was increasing worldwide.

Research into the problem showed that the answer was complex. The main reason was high energy dense diets. These were replacing traditional healthier diets, and brain function and physiology were not coping. As we put on weight, the brain changed its signals and set in motion a complicated thyroidal and autonomic shut down on any attempt to slim, coupled with an intensification of desire to eat. In short the brain was comfortable with the new weight and even liked building on it. The take up of fast foods, full of fat, sugar and salt, had rapidly increased

worldwide, mainly due to big businesses controlling influences on governments, which resulted in fast food chains being able to sell fast foods cheaply. This resulted in changing national diets, culminating in metabolic difficulties, and a huge increase in diseases related to obesity. Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer, coronary heart disease were all on the increase worldwide. Reports of resistance to symptom relieving drugs such as insulin were also on the increase. Sedentary habits worldwide exacerbated the effects of these new diets.

The recent desire of China and India to incorporate meat into previously meat free diets had risen exponentially, and this was having a worldwide environmental effect, linking obesity to climate change. All this had led governments worldwide to set out techniques for their populations to curb obesity. The WHO had set out guidance on ideal national diets. People were encouraged to reduce consumption of restaurant meals, keep records of food consumed and exercise done, weigh themselves regularly, simply not keep fat foods in the cupboard, buy unprocessed food as much as possible: and cut down on car use, domestic mechanical devices, watching TV, using computers. World wide modern living patterns had brought about a fundamental change in physiology.

The food industry now needed to be tackled on the low cost of calories derived from oils, sugars and starches. Supermarkets needed to be tackled on subconscious 'free choice' editing, their availability of healthy food options, and marketing methods in their food displays. Agricultural policy needed to be tackled over production of fats and sugars. Farmers grew what the supermarkets dictated. The ethos of total availability of unhealthy snack foods everywhere, from garages to hospitals, the culture of walking down the street with food and giant sized coffees in hand, the huge sizes and portions of fast foods, all needed curbing. Global food companies, farmers, retailers should come under a centralized regulating system. Some supermarkets had begun to respond to the clamour for action against obesity by offering such initiatives as traffic light labelling, but what was needed was a single common labelling system, easily recognisable world wide. A much bigger push for the education of what a good food culture really was had become paramount.

How Obesity is Linked to Climate Change

Dr Mike Rayner

Dr Mike Rayner said that companies generally encouraged people to eat more: the casualty, apart from ourselves, was the Earth.

Humans were programmed to make the most of abundant times. Food companies manipulated this primeval instinct. By nature we were greedy. We used up everything we could find from raw construction materials to foods. We all too readily fell victim to crude consumerist ploys. As far back as Aristotle we had explored why civilizations rose and fell. Today we were witnessing a corporate culture dedicated to ever increasing consumption throughout the world. This was fuelled by our instinct to accumulate, and growing affluence and greater buying power in poorer countries. Huge corporation showed scant responsibility towards the planet and its dwindling resources, or human lifestyle, welfare or diet when flogging their goods.

Dr Rayner said that the links between the impact of food production and climate change were now established. Meat consumption generally rose with increased income, and the recent demand from poor countries to include meat in their diets was set to double by 2050. Meat consumption and global carbon impact were linked by such green house gases as methane and nitrous oxide accumulating through increased livestock production. Already it was estimated that green house gases from agriculture accounted for about 15% to 20% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions. There were calls to set up a global treaty to limit the production of meat in a bid to help meet international green house gas reduction targets.

A change back to more traditional plant based diets and a shift away from modern energy-dense diets high in fat and animal foods would relieve not only the adverse effects on human health but also those on the planetary environment. Meat was a very carbon intensive commodity: it used the land and water to grow animal feed crops which could be directly fed to humans. Deforestation in South America, which was another contributory factor in CO² emissions, was largely driven by global food corporations for meat production. Livestock feed production embedded huge amounts

of often scarce supplies of water causing desertification in fragile soils. In short over production of livestock would result in increasing the symptoms of climate change with more frequent droughts, land degradation, floods, storms and harvest diseases and failures.

All this had to be seen together with crazy food trading agreements which amounted to no more than food swapping formulas to keep everyone selling the same goods back to each other. This might increase economic growth, but it also increased a lot of other adverse effects including food miles and fossil fuel consumption, resulting in a huge and unnecessary global carbon impact. Could we be witnessing the roots of our own self destruction and that of the planet, merely by overindulging at a time of abundance? Nature was fragile and our greed could easily distort its balance. We had lost our connection with nature: we needed to reconnect with the Earth.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Many consumers had now taken up the challenge. The consumer had been identified as a big part of the problem in the past, but now many knew as much about healthy options as their doctors or supermarket managers. The links with, and choice of healthy options, was now more obvious in choices bought off the shelves.
- The need for good connections across government departments had been recognised, but cross-government cooperation in this area was still a new concept and there was little practical knowledge to be drawn upon.
- The balance between government funding and private funding was significant. Government had set aside seed funding for charities and organizations to get the new messages over: the industry had not been backward in coming forwards on this point and had pledged millions of pounds worth of support.
- This new venture to cope with obesity was to be a partnership between the supermarkets and the government, and there were many joint initiatives already active and planned for the future.

- Dealing with the media was different to dealing with other partners, and care would have to be taken to create a thoroughly coordinated programme for dissemination of information.
- The advertising authorities were already giving support. Advertising junk foods to the young was being restricted and work to bring the internet under tighter control was on going.

Future Objectives for a Good Food Strategy

Mr Andrew Jarvis

As the head of a team in the Cabinet Strategy Unit set up to review the main drivers in the production and consumption of food in the Britain, Andrew Jarvis said it was necessary to define the important part food played in a society. Not only was it essential to sustain life, but it had wide personal and cultural significance. Throughout history it had also played a major part in indulging life's pleasures. The choices of what and how a society ate was an expression of its wealth, its aspirations, its tastes, even its politics. Food choices defined who we were and where we stood in the social order. A quick look at British food choices quickly pointed out how they were failing a desired national image.

He said that his team had found weaknesses all through the system which directly led to sickness in the nation which in turn led to pressure on the National Health Service. Despite numerous campaigns and initiatives, there remained a haziness and an uncertainty about just exactly what a healthy diet was. Britain's food system appeared to be led by supermarket choice editing. Most of the food choices were made by a handful of huge food corporations, which influenced government policy, formed our farming patterns, shaped our countryside economy, and influenced our national diet. There was a bewilderment of competing demands in the food chain from corporate invested interests, to the host of issues championed by NGOs and the public.

These various connections had not previously been fully comprehended. The main drivers in the system had fuzzy concepts about what a good food system was. There were obscure concepts about food security and about to how best to feed a rising world population of 9 billion. The

whole structure lacked coherent coordination. The economy, public health and the environment didn't seem linked to any common goal for the good health of the nation or the planet. The present food system would not be robust enough to face the predicted future demands of quantity or quality. Gradually a set of new objectives for a future British good food strategy and a supportive framework emerged. The benefits outlined for a better national diet would be substantial. They would cut the predicted extra costs to the Department of Health, improve quality of life and self esteem for the individual and society, improve food security and aid reduction targets for green house gases. The new plan fully took British farming interests into consideration: it would involve changing the crops we grew, how we distributed and marketed the food to consumers, how the consumers cooked and ate the food, and how the waste was dealt with.

The responsibility for these separate but related issues in the food chain were scattered about in various different government departments. It was directly connected with DEFRA through environment and farming, the Department of Health through public health, and the Treasury because it held the purse strings. But many other departments were drawn in including departments which covered overseas aid, development and trade, scientific research, families, children, schools, higher education, work, leisure, sport, community, the built environment and transport. Having identified the core objectives for a better British food system, a complex and multi-layered system emerged into a cross-government framework. To work effectively the new system would have to sit within a different environmentally sustainable world food chain. It would have to allow for many diverse cultural attitudes, values and aspirations, and would work at many levels, that of individuals, community and neighbourhood, national and international. The report had recommended that a Cabinet Office-chaired Food Strategy Task Force should oversee delivery of the work and manage the 'joined-up' cross-government new food policy.

'Change4Life' and 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives'

Sian Jarvis & Clara Swinson from the Department of Health

Sian Jarvis, Director General of Communications for the Department of Health, and Clara Swinson, Department of Health, reported on two new initiatives of the Department of Health. 'Change4Life', and 'Healthy Weight Healthy Lives' which had been developed in direct response to the Foresight report. Government policy would, they hoped, follow on. The Department of Health had set about identifying various areas where a national campaign could make a difference. They wanted to reframe the obesity issue to switch from casting blame to re-education. It wouldn't be about fat on the body or bodies racked with obesity related diseases, nor about a few bad parents who had let their kids get far too fat. Their research had shown that people did not identify obesity as applying to themselves: it was somebody else's problem; people underestimated the amount they ate and overestimated the amount they exercised. People didn't recognize unhealthy behaviour patterns: snacking, large portions, inactivity. Obesity was regarded as a class thing: thinness being middle class, expensive and unobtainable to many, and obesity being lower class.

So the campaign had a very wide remit: it had to carry a positive message of what could be achieved, not negativity or blame, and it had to reach all parts and all ages in society. The focus was be on encouraging images, building up personal confidence and trust in ability to change, rephrasing 'exercise' as 'activity', creating personalised care and support programmes for weight management, building the infrastructure of a supportive environment, drawing out the benefits of change for health reasons, not just for the way people looked. This required a huge backing programme to provide people with the right information and supportive material about the campaign. It had been set up to be a cross societal, cross government partnership. Above all, the heart of the message had to be so simple that children and adults alike could understand it clearly. They came up with "Eat Well, Move More, Live Longer". The campaign would be rolled out to the nation using all the razzmatazz of media exposure with a Saturday night TV launch, supported by national press coverage, and a follow up campaign of interactive internet programmes,

with add-on tool kits for local initiatives, record keeping and feed back. A comparison with and lessons learnt from the stop smoking campaigns had been useful. They were involving eight other government departments to help form a coalition for public and societal health.

Creating a national movement for change was a huge challenge. They hoped all their planning would result in a national voluntary movement in which individuals took personal ownership of the problem of obesity.

Obesity: The Role of the Media

Mr Tom Heap

Mr Heap said that the bizarre mass activity of seemingly everyone walking down the street consuming quantities of food and drink could be seen on any city street up and down the nation. Where had this gluttonous behaviour sprung from? We never used to be like this. Had we fallen victim to the sneaky and dastardly corporate marketing ploys of making snacks totally available from every conceivable nook and cranny, at each street corner, each office floor, each school corridor, each hospital ward and even each health club, gym and garage? Or was this something deeper like a primeval public show of prosperity? Whatever it was we didn't seem to be able to say No to food when it was displayed. Snacks were invariably in the form of junk food: crisps, chocolate, fries, hamburgers, milkshakes and coffees smothered in cream and marshmallows; and all now came in packets and cups twice the size they used to be. A medium coffee was about half a pint, a large one about a pint. Coca Cola was sold in litre beakers at cinemas. Why were there not small sized drinks and snacks anymore? It seemed to be a kind of madness that everything had to be bigger, better, greater than before. The result was we got larger, fatter and sicker. We felt uncomfortable and worried and turned to the of the media to find solutions. Women's slimming magazine sales and men's fitness or health magazine (to use the euphemism) sales had gone up three fold over the last three years. But were not getting slimmer or fitter. These magazines offered quick fixes which didn't work. Marketing campaigns bullied and cajoled us to look like this, behave like that, eat this, eat that, and confronted us with skinny celebrities, all with a plan to sell. But nothing seemed to reduce our

headlong course towards obesity. We were left helpless and hopeless. Messages on health, obesity or skinniness were completely contradictory, dishonest and phoney.

Nor did TV drama and light entertainment help. TV soaps were hugely influential with massive followings, and were supposed to reflect everyday life. Yet obesity was almost nowhere to be seen. Soaps only had token fatties. Slim was the norm for soap and drama characters. So why didn't soaps tackle the obesity issue when they tackled every other repugnant subject? It all pointed to a collective cross-programming editing decision. Soaps had to reflect an image of how we would like to see ourselves, not of how we were. This all helped us to delude ourselves and leave us unperturbed about the issue.

Consequently we all grew fat together following the crowd instinct. Perversely if you let your dog get too fat and obese, then you could be prosecuted under the Cruelty to Animals Act. You could find pictures of obese dogs but when it came to featuring pictures of obese humans, they were headless, editors having chopped them for reasons of politeness and niceness. We might do better in the war on obesity if we instead started shaming and naming those headless characters. This cover up had only produced a national conspiracy to leave us in peace, and not to alert us to the creeping crisis of obesity.

TV programming was littered with junk food adverts for, fries, take-aways, crisps, chocolate, ready made TV dinners etc. Then the manufacturers bombarded us with unrealistic skinny images. We were constantly receiving disjointed messages from all around us, from posters on the streets, to the transport we used, the TV we watched, and the press we read. No wonder the public was bemused about how they should best behave and eat. Current advertising policy made no sense, but no one seemed to make the connection about how ludicrous and disjointed the overall message really was. We needed a coherent and cohesive governance which worked towards creating a properly informed society which could make healthy choices.

In discussion the following points were made:

- The media in all their various guises were beginning to recognise a moral obligation on this subject and were beginning to tighten up their act. Sadly they seemed to be led by consumer demand rather than their own approach.
- TV was making links to work with government initiatives to raise awareness.
- There was now general recognition that if nothing was actively and positively done children would naturally grow up fat. There was recognition that a prevention message was as vitally important as a campaign against obesity itself, and this was being adopted at all levels.
- There still seemed to be a wide belief in around 90% of the general public that obesity was self induced. It was on this point that the Foresight report's recommended framework for re-education would do much good work.
- Economics were also playing their part. A host of financial incentives were now being marketed by private health schemes and insurance companies which put the emphasis and responsibility on individuals to take care of themselves, reducing premiums for those who partook in health checks and healthy initiatives.
- There was a whole host of 'obesity collaborative practices' that could be reversed. Examples were clothes sizing being recalibrated upwards so as not to embarrass customers; hiding escalators in buildings not the stairs; the suggestion that being bigger was natural; giving large portions of takeaways, fast food and meals in restaurants. At present these marketing decisions lay with individual organizations but a national umbrella strategy should be set up.
- The link had been rightly made that diet choices affected green house gas emissions. What was less established was how different choices in types of farming also affected green house gas emissions. Farming animals in a humane and compassionate way would help reduce global green house gas emissions.

- The various and numerous financial and social penalties that obesity cost the nation were all flagged up in the Foresight report.
- Fiscal policy should favour the right incentives and disincentives.
- Education in schools and higher establishments and the working population were vital tools.
- The Department of Health needed to lead by example but at present seemed to be missing a trick or two. For instance there were already reforms in industrial canteens and institutional feeding establishments, but sadly hospitals seemed to be lagging behind. This was ironic. There was little evidence that the Department was reforming its guidelines on operations to reduce obesity as it had done with transplants for smokers and drinkers. Unless it got its own house into more order there would be wide general concern about the Department spending its money wisely. There were now huge amounts of money at the disposal of the Department from the industrial sector as well as from government sources: great care had to be taken to distribute these resources wisely. There should be plenty to go around if correct and astute distributions was made.
- So far it was not clear where state intervention should begin and end. This raised major political issues.
- The many programmes to combat obesity that had already been run by enterprising individuals or institutions up and down the country were now being given light of day. Academics and celebrity chefs alike were bringing out the depths to which our national diet had fallen. Poor obese people very often lived mainly off chips and bread and butter; the middle classes had forgotten how to cook; while the richer classes simply just overindulged. Some TV had started to give obesity the right place in its scheduling giving some programmes prime time TV slots. These programmes had highlighted how the public, not the government, had first acted upon this problem: while the government had only just recognized it, many ordinary people had already taken up the cudgel.
- It seemed that the government had been caught out and had only reacted very late in the day to growing public concern.

In Conclusion

By the end of the meeting it was generally agreed that the Foresight report had pointed the way ahead, and a year after its publication the public mood had already changed. People felt a new sense of awareness and responsibility about obesity. Government now needed to support and build on this.

Importantly Obesity had been taken a step further. The issue, with all its scale and complexities was now accepted as a cross-government concern. This integrated obesity into the much wider context of connecting food consumption to global climate change.

Participants

(Speakers denoted with an *)

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<i>Prof Kilm McPherson*</i>	Oxford University, Visiting Fellow Nuffield Dept of Obstetrics & Gynaecology
<i>Prof Philip James*</i>	Chair International Obesity TaskForce
<i>Dr Mike Rayner*</i>	Director of the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, University of Oxford
<i>Andrew Jarvis*</i>	Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office
<i>Tom Heap*</i>	Freelance Broadcaster, formerly BBC Science & Rural Affairs Correspondent
<i>Sian Jarvis*</i>	Director General of Communications at the Department of Health
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<i>Professor Christopher Fairburn</i>	Centre for Research on Eating Disorders at Oxford
<i>Melanie Leech</i>	Director General of Food & Drink Federation
<i>Graham Lawton</i>	Features Editor New Scientist

<i>Audrey O'Brien</i>	Head of Service Innovation, Weight Watchers (UK) Ltd
<i>Baroness Peta Buscombe</i>	Chief Executive for the Advertising Agency
<i>Dame Deirdre Hutton CBE</i>	CEO Foods Standards Agency
<i>Tom MacMillan</i>	Executive Director of the Food Ethics Council
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<i>Prof Tim M Frayling</i>	Professor of Human Genetics, Genetics of Complex Traits
<i>Dr Jenny Poulter</i>	Nutrition Works, Consultant to Weight Watchers
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Policy Foresight Programme

Director: **Sir Crispin Tickell**

The Policy Foresight Programme, part of the James Martin Institute for Science and Civilization at the University of Oxford, is designed to facilitate interaction between government, business, industry, the media, and academia on issues of science, technology, and the environment. The purpose is to identify leverage points in current policy that could have significant long-term benefits for civilization. Under the direction of Sir Crispin Tickell, the main activity of the Programme is to host up to six 1-day seminars a year, where around 25 people engage in constructive debate to further integrative thinking on a particular issue. The emphasis of the seminars is to look anywhere from 10 to 50 years into the future to see what will be the major decisions we will be faced with then and what can be done now to direct policy along a resilient path. The Programme covers all major areas of the James Martin School for the 21st Century.

<http://www.21school.ox.ac.uk/outreach/policy-foresight/>



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James Martin Institute for Science and Civilization

Director: **Professor Steve Rayner**

The James Martin Institute for Science and Civilization is part of the James Martin 21st Century School. The Institute focuses on identifying what have been called the “wicked problems“ (those that are persistent and intractable) of the 21st Century; the “uncomfortable knowledge” which challenges existing institutional arrangements that are ill-prepared to deal with such problems; and the pluralistic institutional arrangements that encourage emergent innovative responses known as “clumsy solutions”.

The Institute focuses these lines of inquiry in relation to four quadrants:

- Science, Technology, and Risk
- Futures
- Complex Social and Technological Systems
- Institutional and Behavioural Change

Each topic is approached in partnership with other institutes and centres at Oxford, and with an international network of collaborating organisations from academia, government, business and civic society.

www.martininstitute.ox.ac.uk



James Martin School for the 21st Century

Director: **Dr Ian Goldin**

It is likely that the 21st century will be an unusually challenging one in the history of mankind. The goal of the School is to develop strategies for responding to the most serious problems, some of which even have the potential to threaten the future of humanity itself. At the same time, we also seek to harness the most promising opportunities facing the world in the new century.

The James Martin 21st Century School, founded in June 2005 at the University of Oxford, is a unique collaborative research effort. The focus of the School is on stimulating Oxford's research, by giving the University's scholars the resources and space to think imaginatively about the problems and the opportunities that the future will bring.

The work must meet the best Oxford scholarly standards, must be original and additional to work done elsewhere, and is expected to have a global impact. The 21st Century School has been designed to:

- Initiate new and collaborative research and encourage members of the University to take up new areas and new styles of thinking
- Operate a research grant programme to stimulate innovative research at the Institutes
- Facilitate lectures, seminars and other teaching activities to encourage students and faculty to focus on future challenges. Workshops and other outreach will ensure ideas generated by the School inform public and private decision-making and that the School's work is informed by the global challenges facing governments and society.

The central hub of the School consists of the Director, Dr Ian Goldin, along with a small secretariat and a number of James Martin Fellows. It provides overall leadership and facilitates cross-cutting and interdisciplinary perspectives and supports the work of research Institutes. The Research Institutes, each undertake leading-edge research in their own subject area, and are typically funded for a number of years. There are currently ten Institutes, each of which is located in a department of the University: The James Martin Institute for Science and Civilization; The Environmental Change Institute; The Institute for Ageing; The Institute for Emergent Infections in Humans; The Institute for the Future of the Mind; The International Migration Institute; The e-Horizons Institute; The Oxford Future of Humanity Institute; The Programme on the Ethics of the New Biosciences; and The World Education Institute.

The School also has an affiliation with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. The Center contributes its perspective on the dangers of weapons of mass destruction to the work of the School in exploring the potential consequences of emerging technologies that could shape the future of mankind.

www.21school.ox.ac.uk