Fore*sight* Programme

Tackling Obesities: Future Choices

Local Government Association Community Well-being Board

Jon Parke
Team Leader: Project follow-up

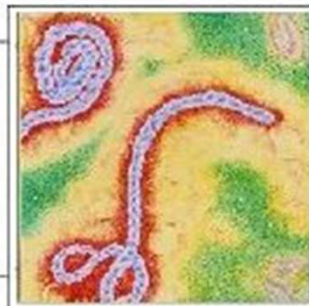16 November 2007, London

Foresight Projects

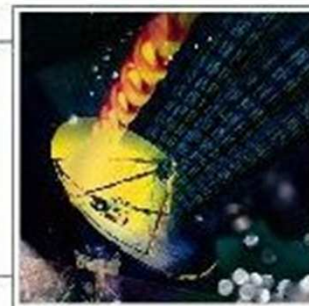## "Challenging visions of the future, to ensure effective strategies now."

Mental Capital and Mental Wellbeing
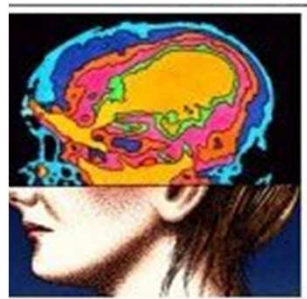
Sustainable Energy and the Built Environment

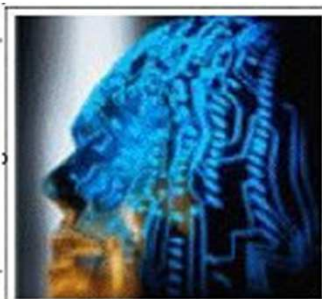**Detection and Identification of Infectious Diseases**

Intelligent Infrastructure Systems

Tackling Obesities: Future Choices
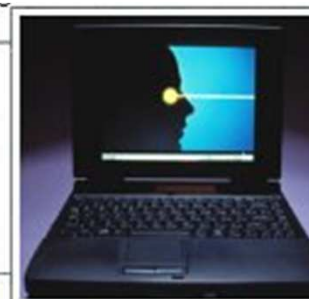
Brain Science, Addiction and Drugs

Cognitive Systems

Flood and Coastal Defence

Cyber Trust and Crime Prevention
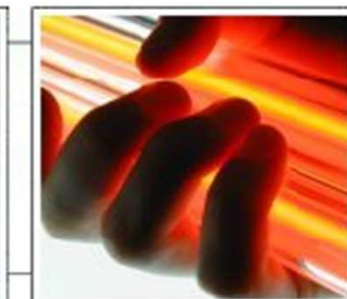
Exploiting the Electromagnetic Spectrum

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Why a project on obesity?

| 1994-96 | 1997-99 | 2000-02 |

Female
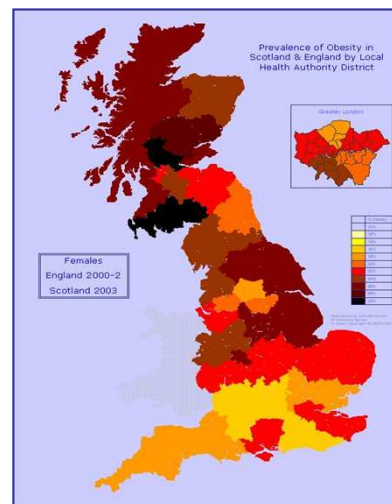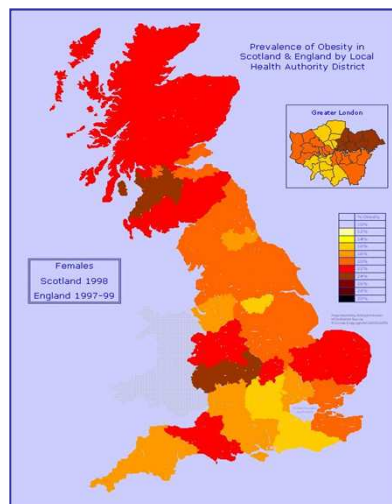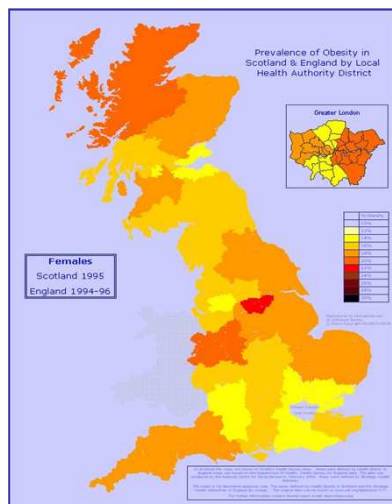
Male

Data shown
for England
and
Scotland

Source: IOTF

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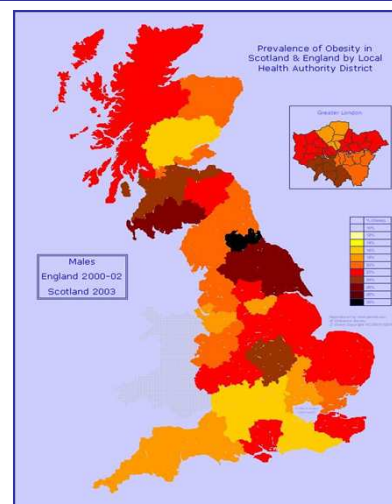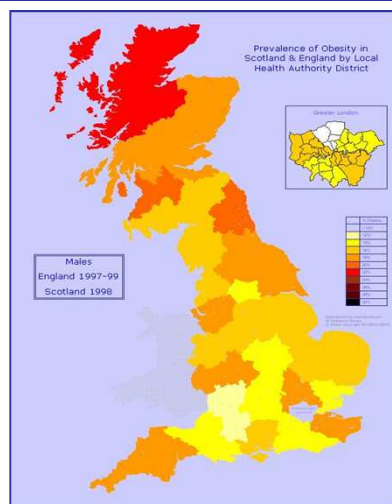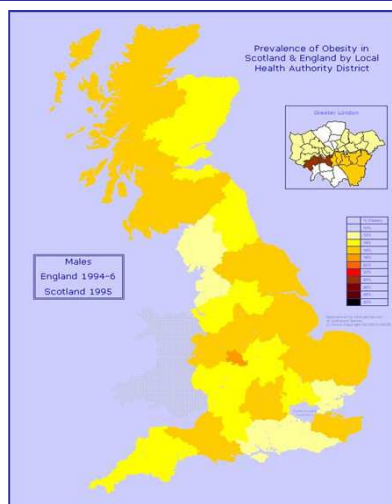
Project Aim

"To produce a long-term vision of how we can deliver a sustainable response to obesity in the UK over the next 40 years."

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What we did

Underpinning review of evidence base

Scoping

Systems mapping

Qualitative modelling of policy response impact

Scenario development

Development of quantitative model and analysis

Analysis and implications for policy

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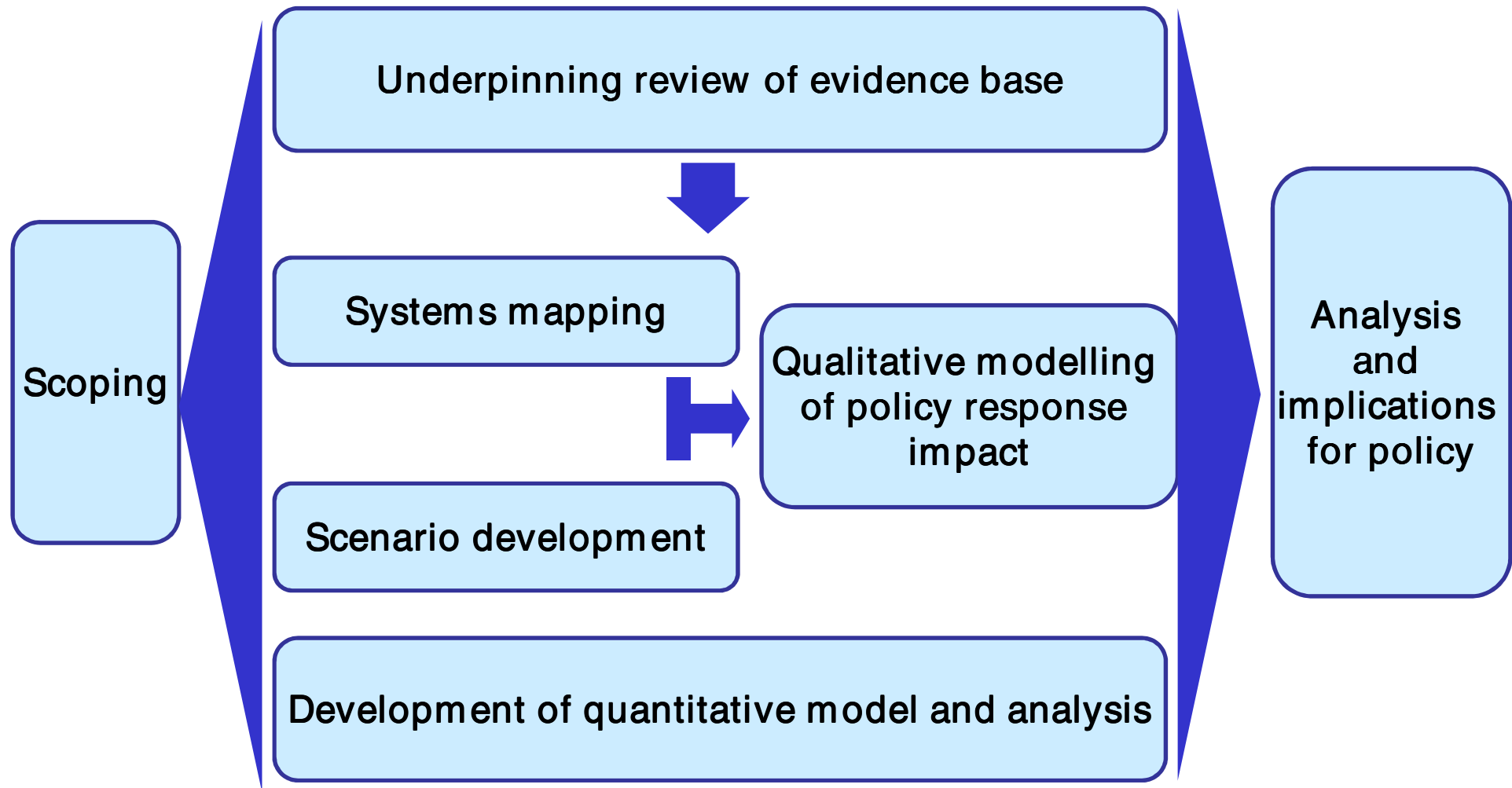
Scale of the problem: Quantitative analysis suggests half of adult female population could be obese by 2050

Numbers of obese overtake healthy weight around 2016

BMI Categories
- BMI < 20
- BMI 20–25
- BMI 25–30
- BMI 30–40
- BMI >40

Proportion of population (%)

80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

93 95 97 99 01 03 05 07 09 11 13 15 17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31 33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47 49

Time (1993–2050)

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Data source: HSE
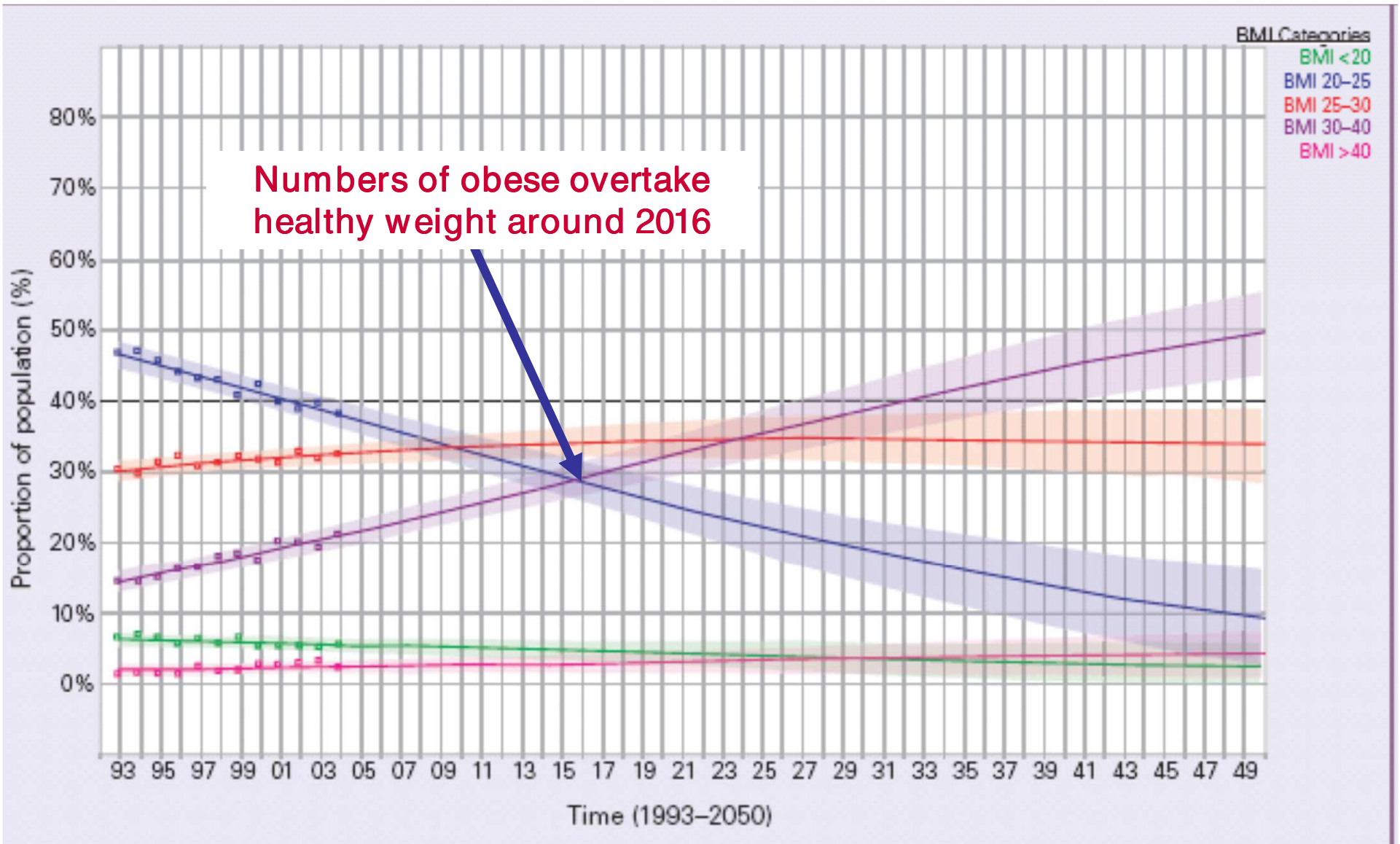
Chronic disease levels and policy impacts

- Significant time lag to seeing effect of intervention on BMI to impact on disease levels.

  Disease incidence:
  no intervention (**purple**) vs preventing obesity in children 6-11 (**green**)

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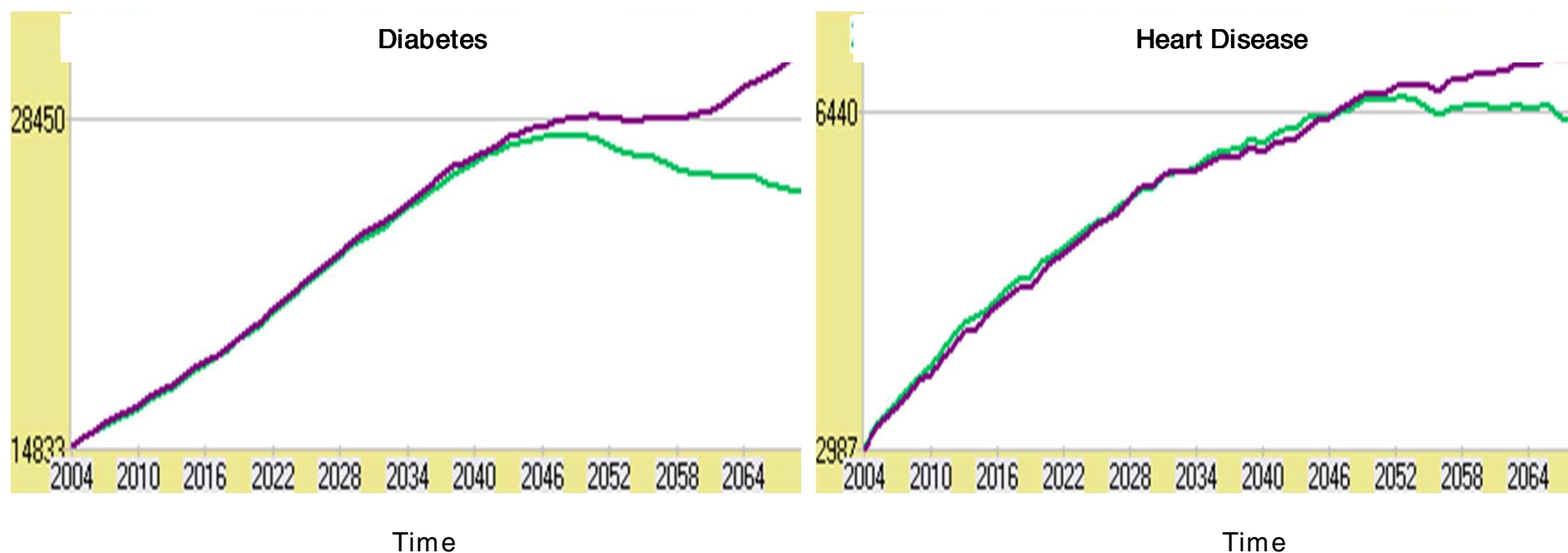
As individuals and society, we are locked in to a positive feedback cycle

Which can only be overriden by conscious control
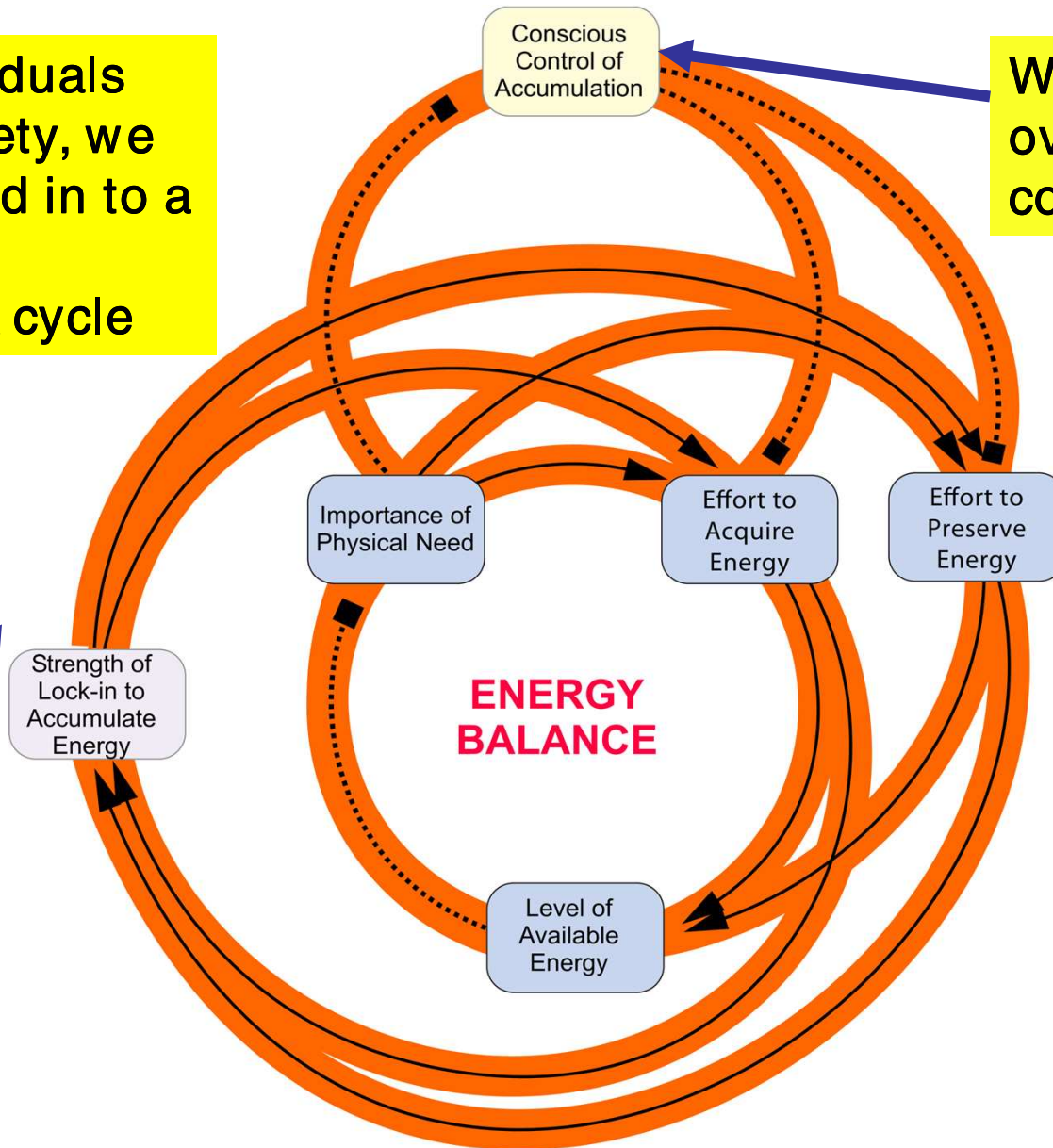
Conscious Control of Accumulation

Importance of Physical Need

Effort to Acquire Energy

Effort to Preserve Energy

Strength of Lock-in to Accumulate Energy

ENERGY BALANCE

Level of Available Energy

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Map 0

Full Generic Map
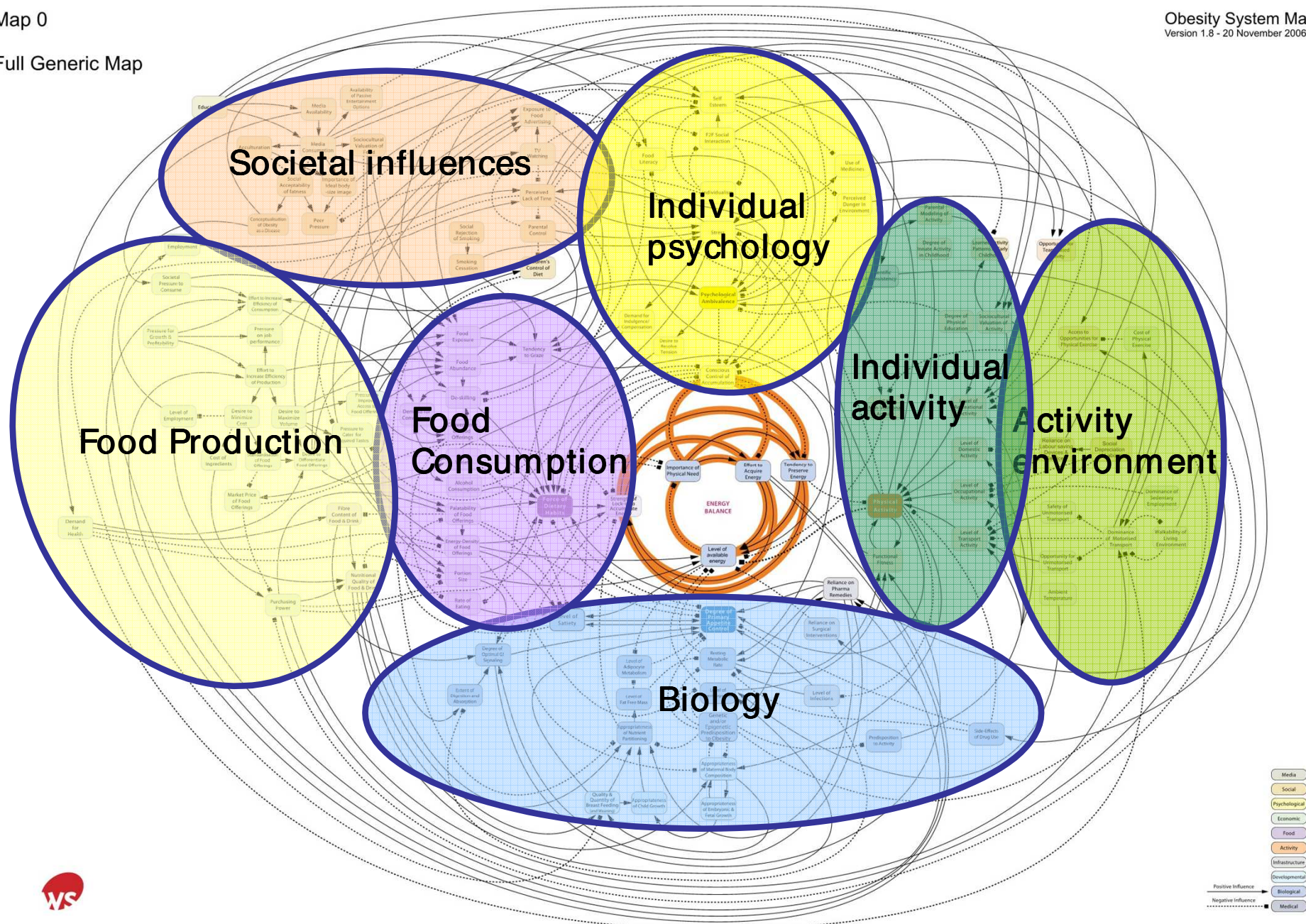
Key messages

- Most adults in the UK are already overweight. Modern living insures every generation is heavier than the last – "Passive Obesity".

- By 2050 60% of men and 50% of women could be clinically obese. Without action, obesity related diseases will cost an extra £45.5 Billion per year

- The obesity epidemic cannot be prevented by individual action alone and demands a societal approach.

- Tackling obesity requires far greater change than anything tried so far, and at multiple levels; personal, family, community and population.

- Preventing obesity is a societal challenge, similar to climate change. It requires partnership between government, science, business, and civil society.

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Core Principles for tackling obesities

- A system-wide approach, redefining the nation's health as a societal and economic issue

- Higher priority for the prevention of health problems, with clearer leadership, accountability, strategy and management structures

- Engagement of stakeholders within and outside Government

- Long-term, sustained interventions

- Ongoing evaluation and a focus on continuous improvement

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What can we do about it?

- No precedent has been set (internationally)
- No single response will work
- Good alignment with other agenda inside and outside government.
- Whole system approach, focused on prevention, could deliver success including
  - Whole population as well as targeted
  - Physical and social environment change
  - Behaviour change
  - Early life intervention
  - Value shifts

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Definitions

Examples

Amplifiers

Amplifiers are key to shifting the system and population profile as a whole but cannot act if the other elements are not in place

- Control of advertising high fat, salt and sugar foods.
- Introduction of congestion charging for vehicles in towns.
- Incentivising organisations to report on and consider health outcomes as well as environmental outcomes as part of the bottom line.

Enablers

Enablers are ineffective alone but essential to underpin the effectiveness of other interventions (necessary but not sufficient)

- Efforts to improve knowledge and education around food and activity.
- Provision of cycle lanes.
- Raise awareness in employers of productivity benefits of promotion of healthy lifestyle staff.

Focused initiatives

Focused initiatives are Interventions aimed directly at tackling obesity or a particular at risk group

- Provision of healthy school meals.
- Targeted active travel planning assistance (such as 'travelsmart')
- Public sector takes lead on providing healthy working environment for their employees from health food to gyms to promotion of flexible working practices

What does it mean for the LGA?

- Opportunities for local leadership
- Need to engage all interested organisations
- Build on local strategic partnerships
- Align and integrate with existing initiatives
- Overarching strategy and long-term planning
- Scale and sustainability
- Ongoing evidence gathering

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- Follow-up opportunities

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