

Why Every City Needs a Food Strategy

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Rethinking Food Policy:

A Fresh Approach to Policy and Practice

Brief 1: Tackling food systems challenges: the role of food policy

What is the problem?

Food systems are at the heart of many of the major challenges facing the world today. A fresh approach to food policy is needed to provide real solutions to these challenges. The purpose of this series of Briefs is to suggest ways forward for doing food policy differently in the 21st century.

Poor diet causes more ill health and mortality than any other risk factor; using antibiotics in food-producing animals presents a major threat to the ability to fight human infection; over 800 million people face chronic food deprivation; food production generates around one-third of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change; in major conflicts, food becomes a weapon of war; many millions of people working in food systems are badly paid and poorly treated, despite the wealth food systems generate.

Food is implicated in the most important health, environmental, economic, social and political challenges of our time.

The role of food policy in tackling these problems is gaining traction at many levels, but the persistence of food-related problems – and increasing pressures on the food system – makes clear that better policy is needed. If inadequately addressed, these problems will only get much worse.

“Food policy - all the policies which influence the food system and what people eat”

“Collectively, food policy ...affects our nutrition & health, our livelihoods & communities, our cities & countryside, our nature & climate – now & for future generations”

10 steps to a fresh approach to food policy

1. Take a systems approach
2. Understand the connections
3. Recognise tensions and manage tradeoffs
4. Make policies coherent
5. Embed food in all policies
6. Join up the process of making food policy
7. Advocate for better governance structures for the food system
8. Use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework
9. Put people at the heart of policy-making
10. Keep focused on finding solutions to specific problems

A city food strategy

- Food policy = any policy which influences the food system and/or what people eat
- A food strategy = innovates this fresh approach by bringing together food policies into one place and take account of the interconnections in the food system to enable nutrition, health, environmental, social and economic goals to be delivered more coherently

1. A city food strategy starts a conversation about “what can food do for you”?

1. Good diets mean people are healthy



2. Producing, processing and selling food can provide people with economic opportunities & assets

4. The what and how of food production can help protect the planet



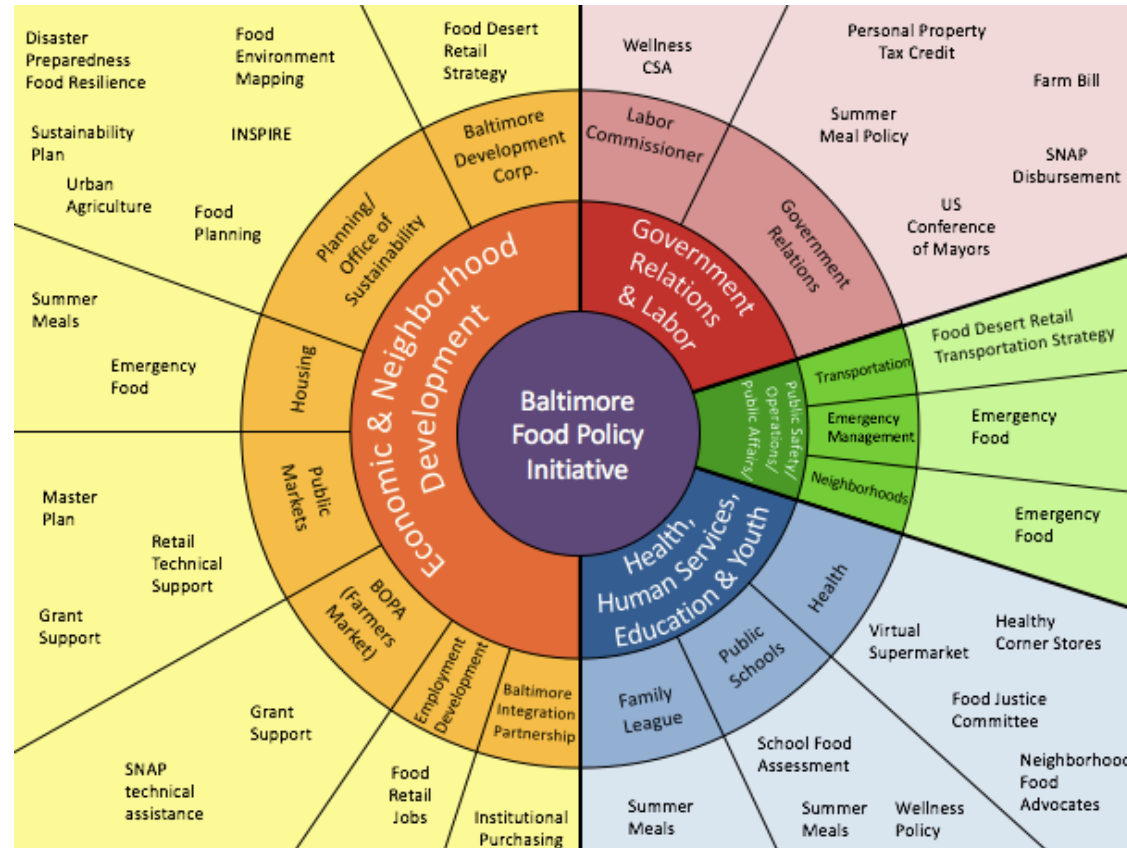
3. From production to consumption, food can nurture community & social stability

Food policy in Ede



“We believe a **solution** can only be found by approaching food as a single system which includes the **economic, health and sustainability [social, environmental]** factors. A strong **economy** based on agriculture and food is not possible without **healthy** inhabitants and a healthy **environment**. A strong, innovative **society** can only be achieved within the context of a healthy **economy**.”

2. A city food strategy pieces together the array of different food policies in a city



Source: Courtesy of Holly Freishtat, Baltimore City Food Policy Director



**THE LONDON
FOOD STRATEGY**

HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD FOR LONDON

- Good Food at Home
- Good Food Economy
- Good Food in Community Settings and Public Institutions
- Good Food for Pregnancy and Childhood
- Good Food Growing
- Good Food for the Environment

3. A city food strategy ensures policies align rather than undermine each other

Nairobi, Kenya

- Farmers wanted to farm
- City wanted to reduce unemployment and food insecurity

....but urban farming was illegal =



**THE NAIROBI CITY COUNTY URBAN AGRICULTURE
PROMOTION AND REGULATION ACT, 2015**

No. 4 of 2015

Date of Assent: 12th August, 2015

Date of Commencement: 27th August, 2015

4. A city food strategy finds way of addressing problems in synergy

City of Toronto

Immigration –
unemployment, lack
of integration, social
isolation

PLUS

Skills demands in
industry

Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement



5. A city food strategy finds way of addressing problems at source

NYC Watershed Agricultural Program

- Much of New York City's drinking water comes from reservoirs in upstate watersheds adjacent to productive farmland.
- To preserve the quality of its source water, the Program supports and maintain well-managed family farms as beneficial land uses, to advance water quality protection and rural economic viability.
- Since 1992, the program has developed over 445 Whole Farm Plans on watershed farms and implemented over 7,500 BMPs that reduce agricultural pollution and protect water quality

6. A city food strategy ensures all are working to the same set of goals, with reporting requirements

Food Metrics Report 2018



The City of New York
Mayor Bill de Blasio

NYC
Food Policy

**Centre for
Food Policy**

Educating, researching & influencing
for integrated and inclusive food policy

7. A city food strategy provides an opportunity for engagement with citizens

Baltimore Food Policy Initiative meets consistently with a cohort of 16 **Resident Food Equity Advisors** to discuss its work in a transparent way, giving residents voice in government and policymaking, as well as in-depth knowledge of the complexities of food access issues. RFEA acknowledges that top down policies can fail to achieve their desired results, but that resident-driven policies can be transformative.

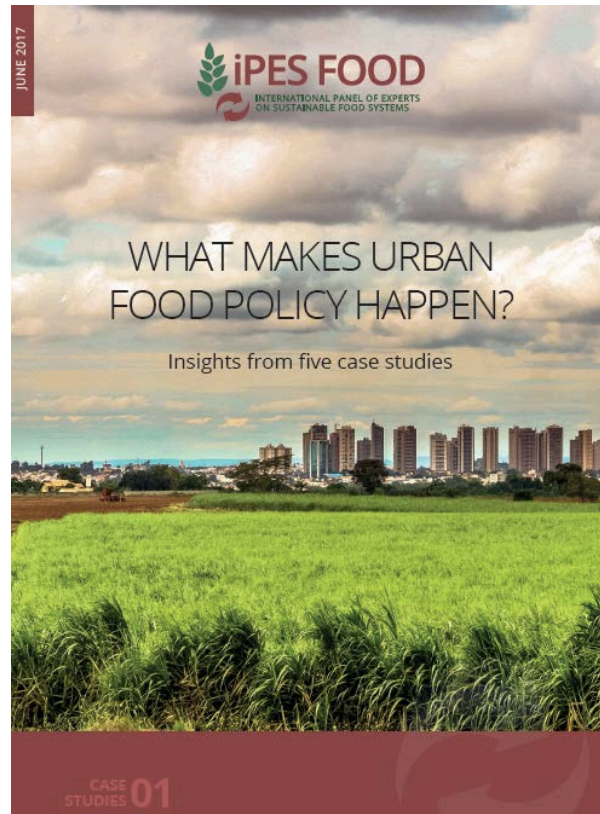
8. A city food strategy enables politicians to garner political support

“The main enablers for developing **Belo Horizonte’s** approach to food and nutrition security... were political commitment of the then-mayor, and strong support from within the community and the civil society sector which **made the very idea of addressing food security a powerful one that politicians would be wise to address.**”

(Hawkes & Halliday, 2017)



How to make city food strategies happen?



1. Assess & monitor
2. Identify policy levers across government
3. Carefully manage governance & cross-government engagement
4. Secure political commitment
5. Manage funds wisely
6. Involve everyone

A challenge to Glasgow

Other cities have developed strategies –
but they can be bettered

Can you?