Obesity Action Scotland

Healthy weight for all

Scoping a Healthy Local Advertising and Sponsorship Policy in Ayrshire & Arran

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Who we are

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

- National organisation who provide independent advocacy on preventing and reducing overweight and obesity
- Convene Scottish Obesity Alliance
- Based at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
- Focus on changing the food environment and tackling health inequalities



www.obesityactionscotland.org

Scottish ObesityAlliance
Advocating for healthy weight

Obesity Action Scotland
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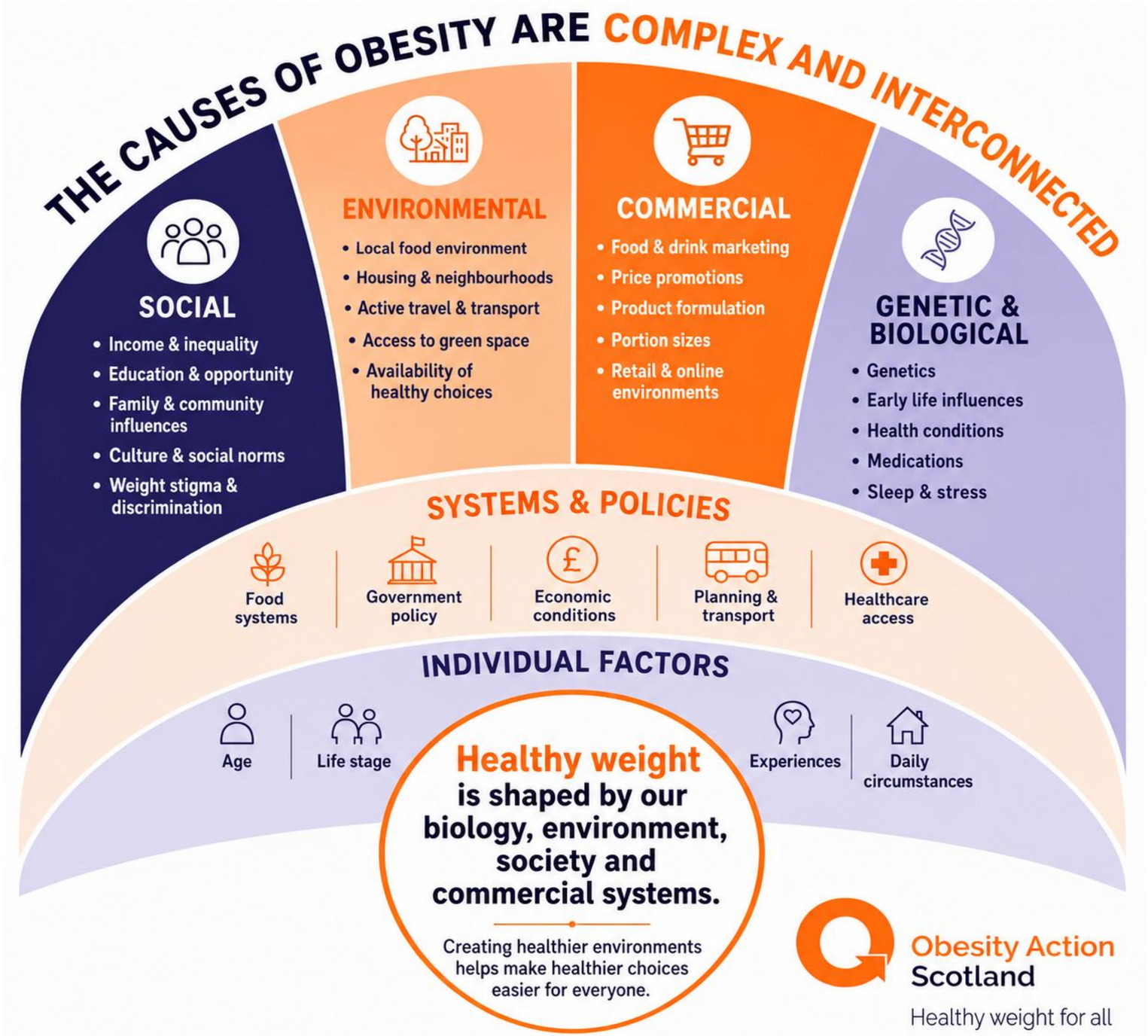

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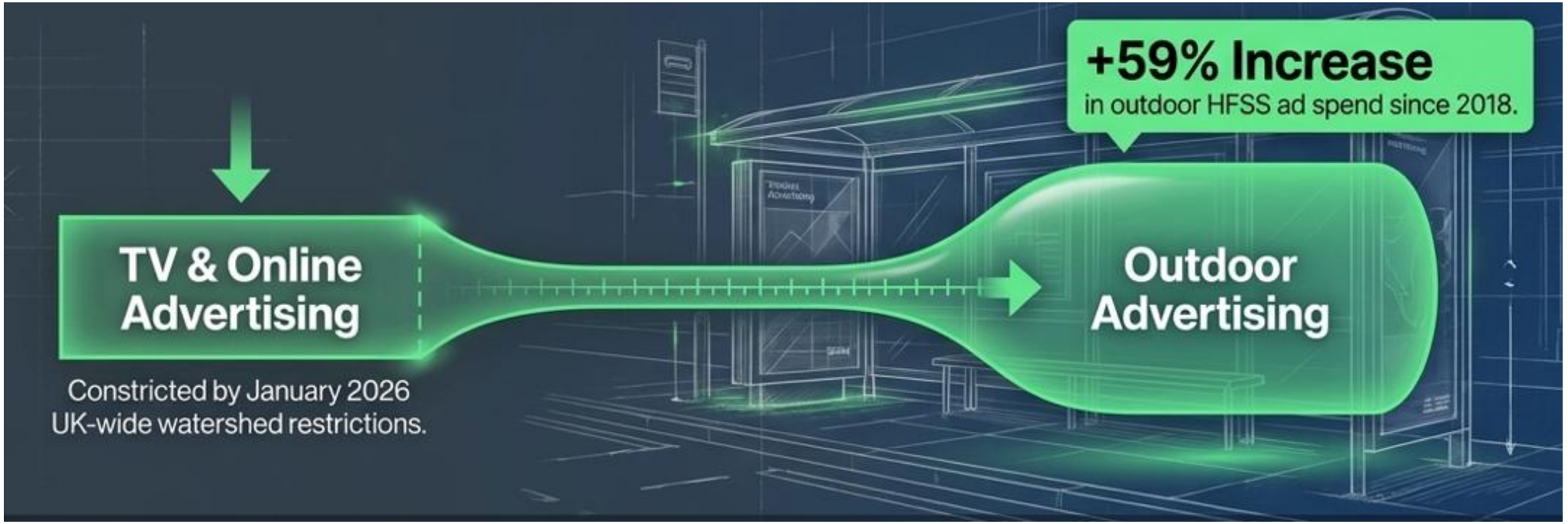
Food marketing is changing



Graphic generated using Gemini Notebook

https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/mind-the-gaps-food-advertising/

Research Questions

1. What process was undertaken to develop and implement healthier food advertising policies in England and Wales?

2. What steps would be required to develop and implement a healthier food advertising policy in Ayrshire and Arran?



Irvine bus shelter, 1 June 2026

What we did

Commissioned research

University of Edinburgh – Lindsay Jaacks and Tilly Robinson-Miles

Desk review

Academic and grey literature of the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of healthier advertising policies in England and Wales

Stakeholder interviews

13 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders across the three local councils in A&A and NHS A&A

Knowledge sharing

Shared findings back with stakeholders from A&A to discuss next steps for policy development and implementation



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Headline stats: Ayrshire and Arran

- Population – 368,690 people (2021)

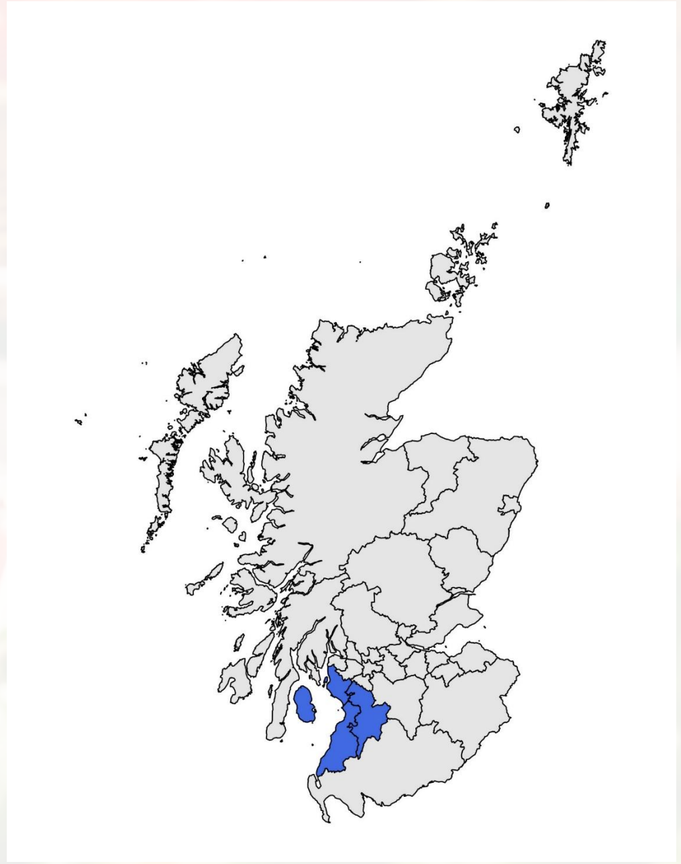
- 73% of adults live with overweight or obesity (national 66%)

  36% have obesity (national 31%)

- 72% of Primary 1 children have a healthy weight (national 74%)

  14% at risk of obesity (national 12%)

  13% at risk of overweight (national 13%)



- Scottish Health Survey
- Dashboard - Primary 1 Body Mass Index (BMI) statistics Scotland - School year 2024 to 2025 - Primary 1 Body Mass Index (BMI) statistics Scotland - Publications - Public Health Scotland

Findings

- Local implementation is feasible with significant learning from England and Wales (beyond TfL), limited examples in Scotland.
- Barriers to adoption are perceived concerns around:
  - Loss of income
  - Long term advertising contracts
  - Uncertainty around responsibility for monitoring and enforcement
  - Lack of clarity on definitions of HFSS products
  - Tensions between public health objectives and wider economic development plans
- Despite this there were clear opportunities aligned to work already taking place including GFN plans

Conclusion

A national and local approach running in tandem is required to progress this agenda in Ayrshire and Arran

National guidance is a clear enabler, but **local authorities don't need to wait** for national legislation



Irvine bus shelter, 1 June 2026

National Recommendations: A clear and consistent approach

National guidance should:

- Define what counts as **HFSS**
  - use the UK Nutrient Profiling Model
- Consider **brand advertising**, not just individual products
- Cover different types of **product and brand representation**
- Consider **incidental HFSS advertising**



National Recommendations: Build on what already exists

National guidance should:

- Link to **existing frameworks**
  - Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act; Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act; Population Health Framework; National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Use **existing tools and learning**
  - Sustain's Healthier Food Advertising Policy Toolkit.

Local Recommendations: What could this mean for A & A?

Start with **what they already have:**

- Use the **Good Food Nation plans** as an opportunity
  - 1st April 2028 deadline
- Identify **local champions**
- Bring the three councils and HB together
- Involve **legal, procurement, commercial and other relevant services early**
- Use existing **Community Planning Partnerships**

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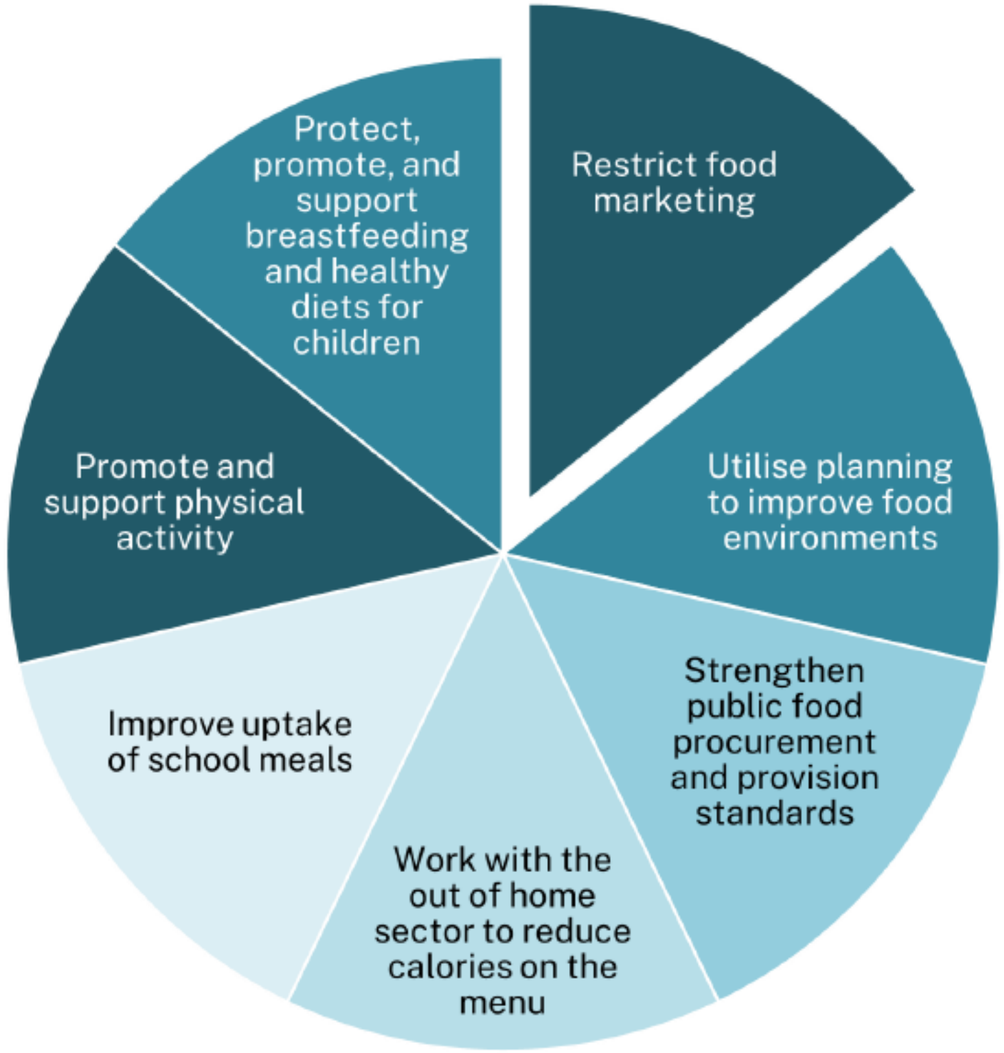
No one of the local levers alone will have a huge impact



https://www.obesityactionscotland.org/news/local-levers-for-diet-and-healthy-weight/

Local Recommendations: Where can councils start?

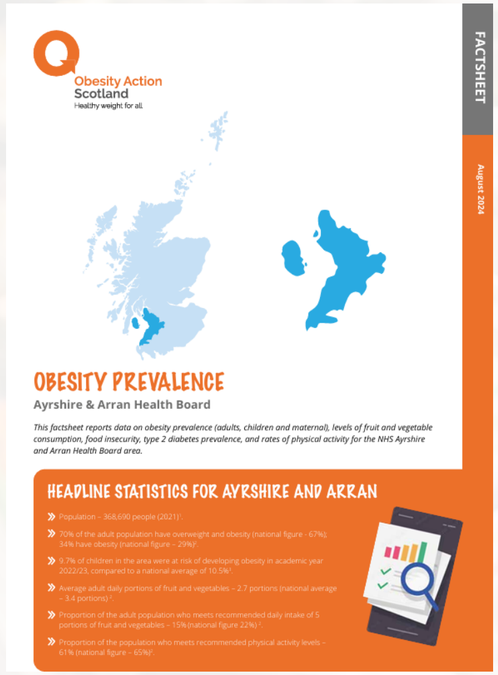
- Start with what **councils can influence**
  - Map existing **advertising and sponsorship arrangements**
  - Look at **council-owned advertising space**
  - Understand **contracts and renewal dates**
  - Consider healthier advertising requirements when **contracts are renewed**
  - Start with areas where councils have the **most control**

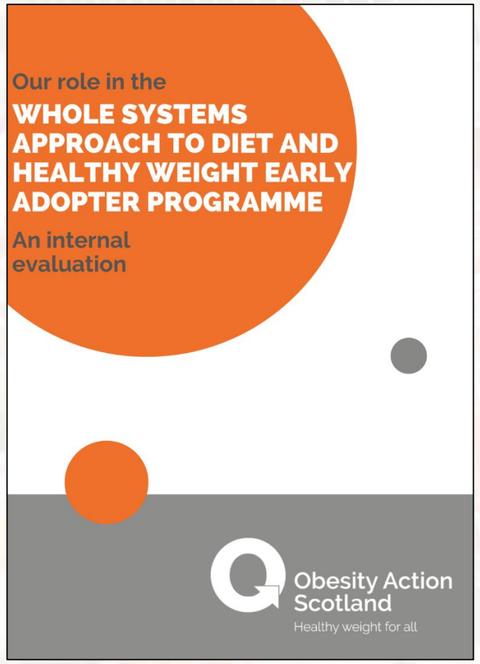
- Framing of the policy should **focus on healthier products**
- Opportunity for **local business exceptions**

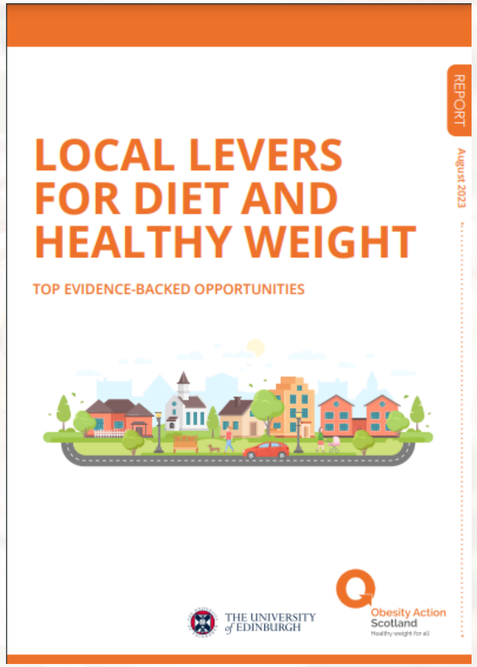
HOLYROOD 2026 MANIFESTO

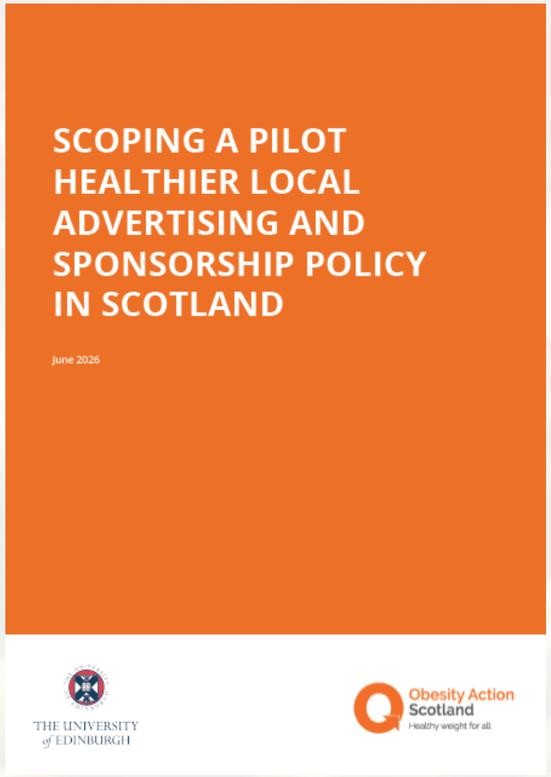
SCOTLAND'S GOOD FOOD FUTURE

Making healthy eating the NORM









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