

## Local Futures Network Newsletter: July 2007

The members' area of the Local Futures Network site is constantly updated. If you would like to be notified of changes more regularly, please register to receive an [RSS feed](#). We have highlighted some of the new content included in the site below, but if you want to view all new content please log in to [www.localfutures.com](http://www.localfutures.com) using your e-mail address and user password.

Our new content includes additions to the following:

- [Policy](#)
- [Research](#)
- [Strategies](#)
- [Future drivers of change](#)
- [Events](#)

### **Policy**

In the policy section we have included links to a range of recently published reports, including:

#### *Our Shared Future: Final Report from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion*

The final report from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion was released last month, and is now available in our policy section. One of the key recommendations of the report is for all local areas to map and analyse their community at the small area level in order to identify tensions and opportunities, and develop strategies to foster social cohesion.

#### *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*

The recent HM Treasury report looks at ways to reform powers and responsibilities within all levels of government to encourage economic growth and foster neighbourhood renewal at all levels. Crucially, the Government sees a stronger local authority role underpinning the drive for spreading economic prosperity, along with streamlining regional government and supporting sub-regional and partnership working where appropriate.

#### *Our Future: a prospectus for local government*

The LGA have produced a prospectus built around four core propositions – 'A Framework for Excellence', commitment to programmes enabling local government to 'stay ahead' on service improvement and place-shaping, strengthen and embed the relationships of local government, the LGA, and other central agencies, and 'developing the local alternative' in public services. The report brings together key findings from earlier local government reviews, and aims to stimulate debate across local government and its partners

### **Research**

New reports included in our research section include:

#### *Two Track Cities*

ippr has produced a new discussion report on the challenge of sustaining growth and building opportunities in UK cities. The paper demonstrates that Britain's cities are divided between those that have experienced a renaissance through prolonged economic growth, and those which have arguably stagnated over the past decade.

#### *State of the Countryside 2007*

The Commission for Rural Communities report uses a wide evidence base to draw up the latest picture of rural England and provide an in-depth analysis of its emerging trends and challenges. In particular, the report finds that 400,000 fewer young people live in rural areas than 20 years ago, indicating future changes for the demography and sustainability of rural England.

#### *Poverty and wealth across Britain 1968-2001*

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published a spatial analysis of the changing pattern of poverty and wealth. The findings show that the wealth gap is at its widest in 40 years. Increasing clusters of poor and wealthy households have led to spatial polarisation from each

other, and from the rest of Britain, leading to worrying implications for the future sustainability and cohesion of local areas.

### **Local Strategies**

We continue to update our library of local strategies and have recently included:

#### *Haringey Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016 (June 2007)*

This is a long-term vision for a very diverse London Borough suffering from the challenges of deprivation and crime. The strategy's main aims evolve around a vision with people at the heart of change; "A place for diverse communities that people are proud to belong to".

#### *West Devon Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2011 (July 2007)*

The new strategy for this Devonshire district embraces a 2026 vision that focuses on creating sustainable and inclusive rural communities. The strategy works through five main priorities that speak of the issues facing the ruralised district; the economy, housing, environment, services and community wellbeing.

#### *North Tyneside Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010, Towards the North Tyneside Vision 2030 (2007)*

The North Tyneside Strategic Partnership appreciate the relatively high quality of life on offer within the Borough, owing to a good natural environment and a high skill levels. However, they are also aware of the challenges faced by an ageing population and growing inequality. Within the strategy, 2030 has been set as the target year for major improvements.

### **Future drivers of change**

New drivers of change included in the 'Futures' section of the site include:

#### *Half UK companies are foreign-owned*

Recent HM Treasury figures show that foreign ownership of the British corporate sector has dramatically increased over the past decade, from around 30 per cent in 1995 to 50 per cent in 2005. The trend signifies broader developments within the global economy, where an increasing proportion of trade is conducted between multinational corporations rather than between countries. This puts pressure on national economies to adapt to this change, and create economic environments which attract foreign capital.

#### *Housing still out of reach for first-time buyers*

Whilst income inequality has begun to stabilise, the UK has seen a marked increase in asset inequality. A new housing advisory unit has been set up in response to the prevailing crisis in housing affordability, and their recent research shows that housing affordability for first-time buyers is set to decline further if current house-building plans remain in place.

#### *London's wi-fi leads the way*

London has overtaken New York for the first time to become the world's wi-fi capital, with the number of wireless networks growing in London by 160 per cent in 2006. However, research suggests that wireless security is not keeping pace with network development. There is also room for improvement in the availability of public 'hotspots', which are being explored as the next generation approach to bridging the digital divide in areas that lack sufficient broadband capability.

### **Events**

#### *Place Shaping and the Knowledge economy, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2007*

Organised in association with the Leadership Centre for local government this June seminar explored place shaping in the context of a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy.

Joe Simpson, Director of Partnerships, the Leadership Centre set the place shaping agenda within a wider government and policy agenda. He outlined some of the key principles involved and a process for delivering the agenda within local authorities and local partnerships.

Paul Spencer, Special Adviser, Norwich City Council outlined the Council's case for unitary status, where developing a strong and prosperous knowledge economy was considered key to the city's wider sustainable development ambitions.

Mick Burrows, Strategic Director of Communities, Nottinghamshire CC, described some of the practical difficulties in delivering the place shaping agenda within a large and diverse county. Understanding places at different spatial levels, from districts down to neighbourhoods, was crucial. The review of the County's Economic Regeneration Strategy provided an opportunity to set Nottinghamshire's place as an economy within a wider social and environmental context.

Phil Roberts, Director of Strategy and Performance, Creative Sheffield reflected on the City's history and its unique sense of place. He outlined the new economic vision for Sheffield to create a competitive and diverse economy, where prosperity was linked to broader inclusion and sustainability ambitions.

Copies of all speaker presentations are available in the research section of the Local Futures Network site.

*Enterprising Places! 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007*

The next Local Futures Network seminar aims to position enterprise more centrally within the place shaping agenda. Organised in association with Government sponsored Make Your Mark Campaign we will analyse the geography of enterprise in Britain, highlighting the key factors that contribute to a culture of enterprise.

Speakers will outline the Government's agenda for creating a culture of enterprise, with case studies demonstrating innovative approaches at a local level to embedding enterprise and business development within the broader place shaping agenda.

To reserve your place, contact [kate.fisher@localfutures.com](mailto:kate.fisher@localfutures.com)