

Welcome to the Local Futures Network Newsletter. In this month's issue:

### **Local Futures Barometer**

Our latest Barometer looks at the geography of school-leaving qualifications, using the latest GCSE figures. The article demonstrates the varied pattern of local skills across England and highlights continued spatial divides. [More](#)

You can analyse the level of GCSE attainment in your own area, down to ward level, using our Local Knowledge online service. [More](#)

### **SocietyGuardian**

The Local Futures Group's relationship with SocietyGuardian continues, with last month's Barometer on deprivation covered on the SocietyGuardian website. The link to the brief commentary is now live; look out for further reports in the coming weeks. [More](#)

### **New resources for Network members**

The 'intelligence' and 'resources' sections of the Local Futures Network site are regularly updated. Some of the latest additions include new policy reports, the latest research and new future drivers of change. [More](#)

### **National Indicators in Local Knowledge**

All the currently available data on the national indicator set, as used in the new performance framework for local authorities and local strategic partnerships, have been incorporated in our on-line Local Knowledge system. As the remaining indicators are published, these will be made available to LK subscribers. [More](#)

### **Local Knowledge on-line**

With the start of a new financial year, and the current consultation on the *Sub National Review* proposing local economic assessments from as early as 2010, this could be a good time to consider taking out a subscription to our Local Knowledge online service.

As an introductory offer, we will include our new automated reporting service free of charge, which generates area summaries across LK indicators and themes (to be launched in early summer). [More](#)

### **Typologies of Place**

The place-shaping agenda and recent policy reviews have focused on greater evaluation at the small area level to inform local policy and service delivery. In line with this, the Local Futures Group is developing economic and social typologies of place, down to the neighbourhood level. Initial findings were presented at our latest Local Futures Network seminar and can be found on our website. [More](#)

### **Coastal Towns**

Local Futures Group is currently undertaking a research project reviewing the state of coastal towns. Following up our [briefing](#) for the SocietyGuardian, the project will look at a wider cross-section of coastal areas with a view to identify the key issues and challenges they face. [More](#)

### **'Place-Shaping and the Sub National Review' Conference: Now booking**

Local Futures is organising a national conference, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, on *Creating Local Economic Prosperity: Delivering the Sub National Review*. The conference will be held in London on September 18<sup>th</sup> and aims to assess the practical implications of the SNR for local authorities in the run up to its passing into law in November and its relationship to the wider place shaping agenda. [More](#)

### **Next Local Futures Network event: Sustainable Places**

Our next Local Futures Network event, on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July, will look at local environmental sustainability. Further details of how to join the Network are on our website. [More](#)

The main event will be followed by an afternoon session on how to analyse local sustainability within your own area, using our Local Knowledge online system. [More](#)

For the latest update on our work, go to the [Local Futures Group](#) website and log in with your username and password.

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You are receiving this email because you are a Network member. If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply to this email with 'Unsubscribe' in the subject field.

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## Latest resources for Network members

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 latest content includes additions to the following:

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

## Policy

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

### *Draft Legislative Programme*

The Draft Legislative Programme was announced this month, organised along four themes. One of the themes is the personalisation and improvement of public services, which becomes ever more important in a tight fiscal climate. Other proposals include the Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill, the Business Rate Supplements Bill and Equality Bill, all of which indicate important changes for local government.

### *Guidance on community cohesion contingency planning and tension monitoring*

This guidance, released by the CLG, provides advice on using information to improve service delivery focusing on cohesion. The paper follows the final report from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion last year, and outlines the aims and implementation of community cohesion contingency plans.

### *Building sustainable transport into new developments*

The DfT has published a report directed at those involved in planning new housing developments, particularly growth points and eco-towns. The report proposes a number of transport options to integrate and adopt according to the location and needs of the specific development.

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## Research

New reports included in our research section include:

### *Hitting the target, missing the point: How government regeneration targets fail deprived areas*

This New Economics Foundation report looks at why levels of inequality are increasing when investment in deprived areas is growing. The report focuses on the experience of St Helens to evaluate the Local Economic Growth Initiative funding, proposing a more sophisticated approach to evaluate regeneration programmes in order to improve their effectiveness.

### *Migration myths: Employment, wages and labour market performance*

The Work Foundation has published a report arguing that high levels of immigration over the past ten years have been beneficial for the UK economy. The research suggests that wages have not fallen due to migration, nor has there been a significant impact on unemployment. The main 'losers' from immigration are found among 'workless households' and earlier generations of migrant workers.

### *Ten years of Labour's youth justice reforms: an independent audit*

This report, published by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies at King's College London, makes an independent assessment of the Government's youth justice reforms. The research considers the impact of the radical restructuring carried out since 1998 and argues that success has been far more mixed and ambiguous than Government claims.

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## Local Strategies

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

### *Improving Our Communities Together: North Somerset Community Strategy 2008-2026*

The new strategy sets out the long-term vision for North Somerset to be 'sustainable, inclusive, safe, healthy, prosperous communities thriving in a quality environment' and the area's progress to date.

### *A Breath of Fresh Air: A Sustainable Community Strategy for West Berkshire to 2026*

The strategy sets out a long-term vision for the district up to 2026, providing a clear framework for promoting sustainability. The strategy recognises the various influences facing West Berkshire both

nationally and locally, and includes views of local people in its recommendations down to the community level.

#### *Economic Development Strategy for North East Derbyshire 2008-2013*

The strategy, prepared by European Regional Business & Economic Development Unit at Leeds Metropolitan University, sets out the new vision for the district and raises key issues for the longer-term future of the local economy.

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#### **Future drivers of change**

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

##### *Rising food prices*

The price of food has been rising steadily over the 18 months; the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Food Price Index suggest that prices have increased by 53 per cent in the past 12 month period alone, starting April 2007.

##### *Rural areas take the lead in British household connectivity*

Spatial disparities in digital connectivity are narrowing, with rural households in Britain being now as well connected as those in cities. For the first time in 2008, and despite previous fears of a geographical digital divide, the percentage of homes with a broadband connection in rural areas exceeds that in urban areas of the country.

##### *Tourism economy facing competition from emerging countries*

The UK is predicted remain in the top 10 national tourist economies worldwide in 2018, but the dominant position of the USA and western European countries is set to be challenged by emerging markets from countries such as China, India and Mexico. Conversely, developed countries may face constraints due to the impact of economic recession, environmental concerns and fears of terrorism.

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#### **Barometer: School-leaving qualifications**

Our latest Barometer looks at GCSE figures, producing a geographical pattern of school-leaving qualifications within the UK. The latest data suggests that school services in many local areas in England are still falling short of the key GCSE benchmark of five good GCSEs.

The data reveals that the highest levels of GCSEs are concentrated in suburban and some rural areas. Larger urban areas and some coastal and rural districts conversely record the lowest levels of school-leaving skills. Notably, the data does not reveal a significant north-south divide.

Comparing GCSE data with last month's [analysis of local deprivation](#) and the latest NEETs data (those not in education, employment or training) demonstrates the mutually reinforcing barriers to education and employment faced at school and then by young adults, leaving significant numbers of young people at risk of social exclusion.

Network members may download the report [here](#) (PDF doc, opens in same page), complete with case studies and a data annex of data tables and related maps.

If you are interested in accessing similar spatial data on the latest economic, social and environmental indicators, see our [Local Knowledge](#) online system.

#### **Events**

The next Local Futures Network seminar will be held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008, addressing the issue of *Sustainable Places*. The event will look at local environmental sustainability, from the national perspective via the Sustainable Development Commission, a Local Futures take on the geography of local sustainability, and local case studies.

The main event will be followed by an afternoon session on how to analyse local sustainability within your own area, using our Local Knowledge online system.

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

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