

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

Local Knowledge and Local Futures Network Password Change

In order to maintain continuity of service, and security of access, all Local Knowledge and Local Futures Network users will soon be prompted to amend their log-in password. All users will be invited to complete an online form; please do respond to this as failure to do so will cause your account to be temporarily disabled.

Local Futures!

We continue to work with organisations and partnerships across the country in developing long-term visions and strategies for their place. We are about to complete a major programme of work for the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities on a Strategy for Sustainable Economic Prosperity, and in neighbouring Buckinghamshire we have collaborated on a major Buckinghamshire Futures conference.

Work in Nottinghamshire is about to commence on a 'Nottinghamshire Thinks' initiative, while in Tunbridge Wells we are working with the Local Strategic Partnership on a new vision for the Sustainable Community Strategy. If you would like to know more about our work in this area, please visit our [website](#).

Coastal Towns

Our work with the Leadership Centre on Coastal Towns is now entering a new phase, as we develop case studies and plan a major 24 hour event for the autumn. A programme of background research has highlighted some of the common challenges faced by coastal authorities. The project aims to raise the profile of coastal towns in national policy and, ultimately, inform a blueprint for place shaping in these areas.

Local Futures Barometer

Our latest Barometer looks at local services and amenities. Using the Local Future's Group Local Amenities index, we have assessed the levels of access to cultural and leisure activities by geographic location. [More](#)

You can also view the report, together with an article by Sara Gaines, on the SocietyGuardian website. The link to the brief commentary is now live; look out for further reports in the coming weeks. [More](#)

Local Futures Website

In order to allow easier access to events information, we have integrated a Google Calendar tool into our website. By using this new tool you will be able to access information on forthcoming Local Futures Group events and Local Futures Network events. Also on the calendar will be a selection of events from other organisations that you may find of interest. [More](#)

Latest 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 drivers of change. [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 18th and aims to assess the practical implications of the SNR for local authorities in the run up to its passing into law and its relationship to the wider place-shaping agenda. [More](#)

Local Futures Network event: Sustainable Places

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to our Local Futures Network event regarding Sustainable Places, on Wednesday 9th July. The presentations from the day are now available on our website. [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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New services 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 using your email address and user password.

Our new 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:

Communities in control: real people, real power - White Paper

Communities in control tells the story of power, influence and control and how people can use existing and new tools to access it. The White Paper looks at who has power, on whose behalf is it exercised, how is it held to account, and how it can be accessed by everyone in local communities.

Transforming Places; Changing Lives – A Framework for Regeneration

This document sets out an ambitious package of proposals – for consultation – that aim to shape the way that regeneration is carried out in future in England. The new approach builds on what is already known to work, and aims to improve the value-for-money of regeneration investment. It contains a renewed focus on ensuring that regeneration tackles the underlying economic challenges to increase social mobility and support people to reach their potential, regardless of where they live.

Crossrail given go ahead by Parliament

Crossrail, the largest addition to the transport network in London and the South East for more than 50 years has completed its Parliamentary process, with the Crossrail Bill receiving Royal Assent.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last October that a £16bn funding package had been secured for the construction of Crossrail, Parliamentary approval of the Bill means that the project is on track to be operational for passengers in 2017. It will mean more capacity and faster journeys for passengers, as well as a £20bn boost to the wider UK economy.

The Crossrail Act grants powers to acquire land and for Crossrail to be built and maintained. Enabling works will take place next year, with main construction works set to begin in 2010.

[>> Content List](#)

Research

New reports included in our research section include:

Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK: The rhythms and realities of everyday life

This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is about understanding the relationship between recent immigration and social cohesion in the context of other social and economic transformations that affect everyday life for everyone living in the UK.

Current public debates often associate increasing ethnic diversity resulting from immigration with the erosion of social cohesion. This research suggests that issues of deprivation, disadvantage and long-term marginalisation, unrelated to immigration, must also be considered – as well as how people relate to each other – to ensure social cohesion.

Fair Shares? Barnett and the politics of public expenditure

There are growing concerns that the current disparities in funding across the UK are not fair and that this is creating a tension between the four nations, especially between England and Scotland, which could serve to undermine the Union unless addressed. The paper, published by the Institute for Public Policy Research, argues that the Barnett formula, used by the Treasury as the mechanism to fund the devolved administrations, is in need of reform as in its present guise it is no longer efficient, accountable nor fair.

How can cities thrive in the changing economy?

Published by The Work Foundation, this report looks at the differing approaches and fortunes of UK cities in terms of the Knowledge economy. The expansion of knowledge intensive industries, from financial services and professional services to high tech manufacturing, has made cities increasingly important to the UK economy. Certain cities have provided industries with access to skilled workers, affluent consumers, the chance to exchange ideas and a thriving cultural offer.

[>> Content List](#)

Local Strategies

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

Newham Sustainable Community Strategy 2008

A refreshed vision for Newham is looking to the post Olympic Games horizon, where the opportunities and conditions for higher rates of employment, more housing, improved education, raised skills levels and better health will allow local people to realise their aspirations. Over the next ten years Newham must take the right actions to enable communities to be prosperous, stable, safe and connected to the mainstreams of civic life.

Shaping our future together: Hampshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018

The Hampshire Sustainable Community Strategy looks to the sort of place people want Hampshire to be; drawing on community planning processes from across the county and from a wide range of consultation processes. It provides a picture of the quality of life in Hampshire today, and then considers the challenges to that quality of life over the coming years. Finally it sets out nine strategic ambitions.

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed – A vision for Darlington 2008-2021

This strategy sets out a vision for the future reflecting views on what is precious about the borough, and on what could be better. It is about supporting hopes and aspirations, the well-being of the community and, ultimately, about happiness and fulfilment as a citizen of Darlington. The plan is a framework for action by the whole community. A strong borough-wide community that is diverse and cohesive, vibrant and caring is about individual citizens being able to pursue their own aspirations, live active and confident lives, make the choices that are right and have opportunities to participate in many different ways in the life of the community.

[>> Content List](#)

Future drivers of change

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

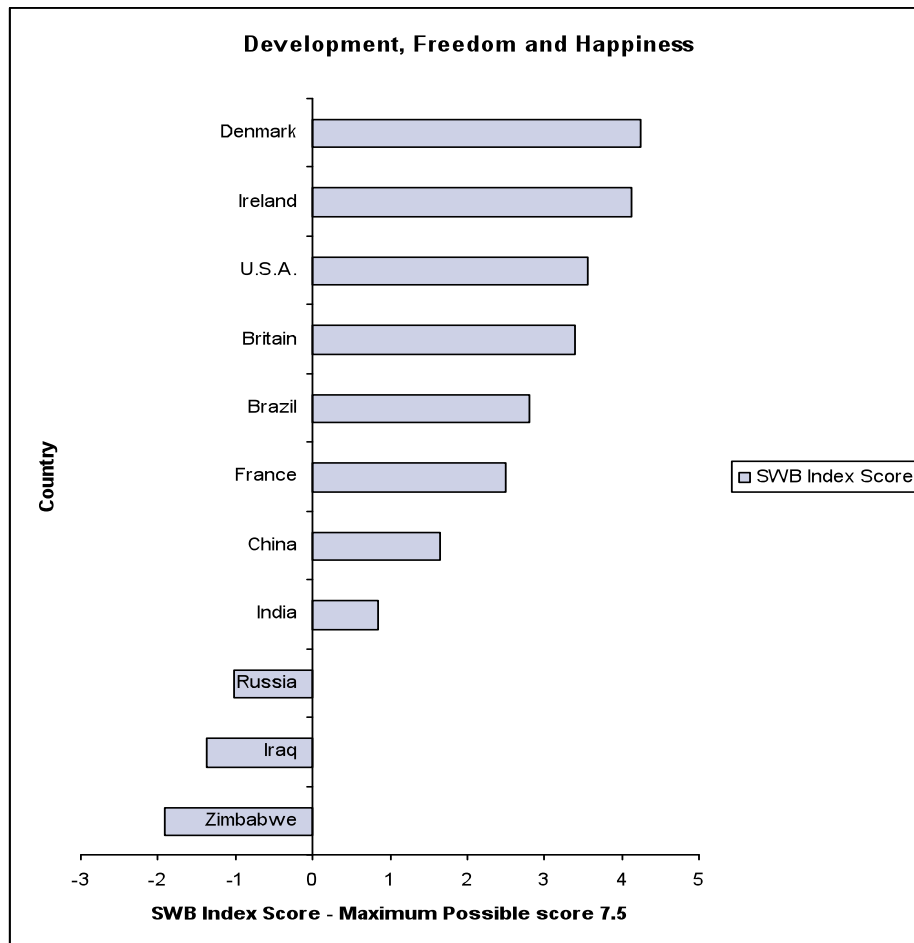
Subjective well-being

Britain finds itself lagging behind the leading nations in the latest *World Value Survey* published by the United States National Science Foundation. Identifying reported happiness and life satisfaction, the *subjective well-being* index suggests Denmark is the world's happiest nation, with Britain placed a distant 21st. Near neighbours Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland come in a respectable 5th and 6th, whilst our transatlantic cousins Canada and the USA place 9th and 16th. At the other end of the spectrum are Iraq, ranked 92nd, and Zimbabwe ranked in 98th, and last, place.

The World Value Survey covers 90% of the world's population and has datasets beginning in some instances as early as 1946. It charts a nation *perceived* level of well-being over time by asking individuals to rate their level of happiness and life satisfaction. This subjective well-being score is shown in the graph below.

It is thought that factors conducive to human choice, such as economic development bring with them a rise in the level of subjective well-being. More important however is a feeling of personal freedom – for example political freedom through establishment of democratic systems or through freedom of choice.

Longitudinal evidence from 52 countries with substantial time series data demonstrates that over the last 30 years, as feelings of free choice have increased, there has been a marked rise in subjective well-being in the vast majority (77%) of these countries. Conversely, countries with widespread poverty and authoritative governments achieve negative *subjective well-being*, and are in essence unhappy nations.



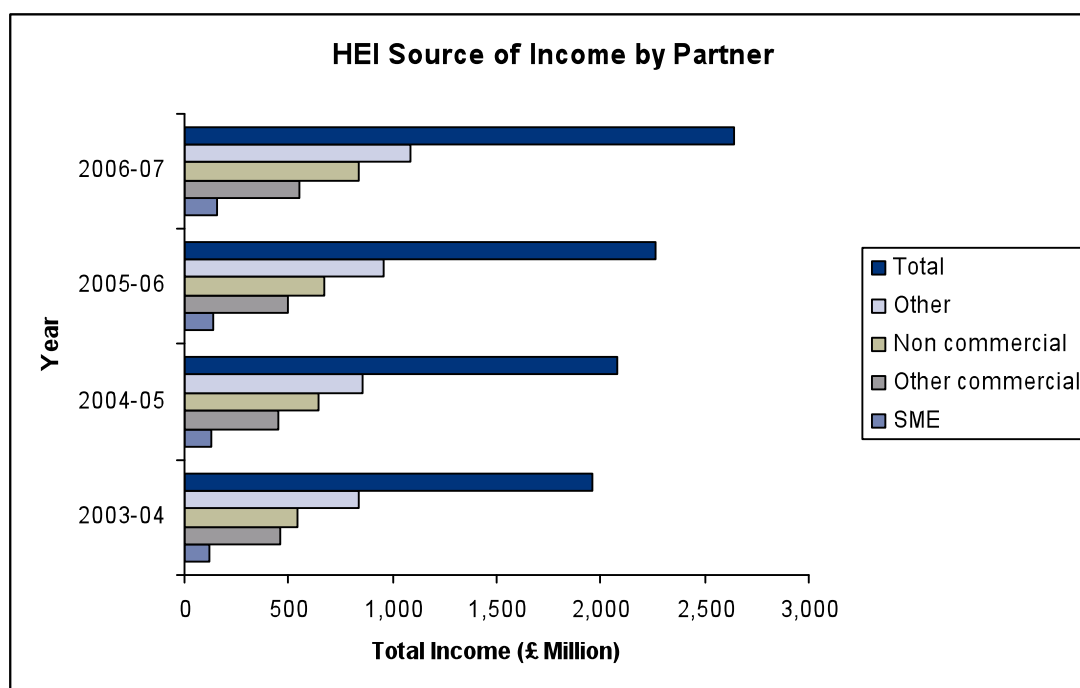
Source: Combined data from 1995 – 2007 World Values Surveys.

Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are becoming increasingly prominent in their role as drivers of the UK knowledge economy. The latest *Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction Survey* (HEBCI) published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England shows that over the last year investment in HEIs has increased by over 17 per cent, up £374 million on the previous year.

HEBCI analyses a range of knowledge exchange activities, including consultancy and the delivery of professional training. By monitoring the exchange of knowledge between higher education institutions and the wider world of business and the community, HEBCI provides an in depth commentary on trends of knowledge exchange activity within the UK economy

The total UK investment for 2006/07 was £2,641 million, with non-commercial (public and third sector) organisations accounting for the largest increases over the last year, with their total investment up by 25 per cent to £842 million. Other sources of income for HEIs are funding from businesses and the public sector for collaborative research, and from European and UK Government funds for regeneration and development programmes. These alternative sources of income totalled £1,086 million in 2006/07.



Source HEFCE - Higher Education - Business and Community Interaction Survey 2006-07

[>> Content List](#)

Barometer: Amenities

Our latest Barometer looks at local services and amenities. Using the Local Future's Group Local Amenities index, we have looked at the levels of access to cultural and leisure activities by geographic location.

Apart from creating employment and business opportunities, a high quality leisure and cultural amenities offer can have more far reaching benefits for an area. Recent research on urban competitiveness in the UK shows that the social, cultural and environmental aspects of quality of life are increasingly important factors in attracting the skilled workforce that is key to success in a knowledge economy. Participation in cultural and leisure activities has also been shown to strengthen communities, reduce crime and improve education and health outcomes.

The article demonstrates the spatial divides that exist in access to amenities across England - with a clear rural/urban divide - and outlines the difficulties these disparities pose for the government.

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

Local Futures, in conjunction with the LGA, will be holding a national conference on *Creating Local Economic Prosperity: Delivering the Sub National Review* held on Thursday September 18th 2008. The conference will be held in London and aims to assess the practical implications of the SNR for local authorities in the run up to its passing into law and its relationship to the wider place-shaping agenda.

Please note all LGA members will receive a discounted delegate rate. [More](#)

[>> Content List](#)

[>>Top](#)