

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

Surviving the recession

Our assessment of the geographical impact of the recession – on both businesses and communities – has been well received at a number of national conferences and is helping to shape strategies for local authorities/LSPs across the country. As a result Local Futures is now part of a CLG Expert Reference Group on the role of LSPs in responding to the recession. For more information on our recession offer please contact info@localfutures.com and to view our Recession Tracker visit [here](#).

Changes in Local Knowledge

In the past year, we have made exciting changes to Local Knowledge: adding Output Area Classification data (OAC), increasing the number of indicators available and adding new geographies such as NUTS3 (County level). These developments can directly help your work and help you to beat the recession, to the best of your abilities - for example, the OAC typologies enable you to easily summarise the characteristics of differing local neighbourhoods and enable the more effective targeting of resources and services. We will shortly be launching training to allow you to make the most of OAC in Local Knowledge. [More on new developments](#)

Despite all these new developments, we have decided **not** to raise our subscription rates for the next financial year. We are introducing 2 and 3 year licences that give you a discount on the total cost of a subscription - and protect you from price rises in the future, making it easier for you to budget in these times. We have also introduced a special licence for partnerships, to make it easier for you to take out a joint subscription with multiple organisations. This is particularly relevant if you want to use Local Knowledge in your Local Strategic Partnership. If you want to know more about the new partnership subscription, or how you can save money by taking out a multiple year licence, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Next Local Futures Network event: Housing and Economic Futures

Our next Local Futures Network event will look at the relationship between housing and prosperity and examine the potential for a more integrated approach to housing and economic development. This is a key challenge for the Homes and Communities Agency and for growth and regeneration areas across the country. The workshop will examine the changing national context, present best practice case studies and suggest a new approach to connecting these important agendas. For further information please contact phil.gregory@localfutures.com.

Customer Insight

With the new CAA coming into effect in April councils are required to show a collective understanding of their citizens, customers and communities. The Output Area Classification system (OAC) provides a powerful common language for achieving this understanding (and has now been embedded in our Local Knowledge system). To help organisations take advantage of this powerful free resource we have created 'Collective Insights', and developed a special programme of strategic advice and support to get you up and running. For further information please contact collectiveinsights@localfutures.com.

Data Packs

Local Futures now supplies a range of Data Packs, containing specialist information not available via national statistics. These initially comprise a Recession Pack, for those interested in assessing the vulnerability of their area to the downturn, and a range of data supplied in association with Axiom, including income; debt and savings; civic engagement; e-society; and environmental behaviour. If you are a Local Knowledge user the packs can be supplied as an add-on to your annual subscription. For further information contact laura.edwards@localfutures.com

Place Profiles

Our new Place Profiles service provides a cost effective analysis of your area – economically, socially and environmentally. Visit [here](#) to view examples and for a free sample for your own area contact placeprofiles@localfutures.com.

Creative Places

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to our first Network event of 2009, on the topic of Creative Places. The event proved highly successful, offering an interesting insight into the role played by the arts and culture in regeneration. For members who were unable to attend the seminar all the presentations, plus brief notes, are now available when logging in to our website [here](#). We will shortly be adding Creative Places reports to our Place Profiles, enabling you to assess the creative employment and people in your area. For further information on these reports contact laura.edwards@localfutures.com

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](#)

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

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

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](#)

Policy

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

Building Local Jobs

This All Party Urban Development Group (APUDG) report asks how regeneration can be better used to deliver job opportunities for local residents. Its findings are nuanced for what can be done now, and what can be used during an upswing. The report suggests that councils, health trusts and other public sector agencies should lead by example and promote use of local labour on their own property development projects. Local planners should assess a planning application's potential to spark employment in a regeneration area and ensure employment commitments through their negotiations with the developer.

Healthy lives, brighter futures – The strategy for children and young people's health

This joint Department of Health/Department for Children, Schools and Families strategy presents the Government's vision for children and young people's health and wellbeing. It sets out how we the Government will build on progress through: world-class outcomes; high quality services; excellent experience in using those services; and minimising health inequalities

Assertive Citizens; New Relationships in the Public Services

Written by The Social Market Foundation, this report documents the rise of the "assertive citizen". Improved access to information, increasing prosperity and greater social freedoms have produced citizens who are more assertive of their rights and less deferential to traditional forms of authority than before. The rising expectations of British citizens have created profound challenges for the public services, particularly health and education. This report focuses on primary care and education and on the English experience.

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Research

New reports included in our research section include:

Tired of Hanging Around

This study, from The Audit Commission, focuses on the role of sport and leisure activities in preventing anti-social behaviour in young people aged 8 to 19 years. These activities are part of the actions that councils and their partners can use to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour. This study recognises, but does not cover, local agencies' work with families and young children or the role of schools in helping to prevent or address anti-social behaviour.

National Accounts of Well-being: bringing real wealth onto the balance sheet

Written by the New Economics Foundation, *National Accounts of Well-being* presents a proposal to guide the direction of modern societies and the lives of people who live in them. It outlines why national governments should directly measure people's subjective well-being: their experiences, feelings and perceptions of how their lives are going. It calls for these measures to be collected on a regular, systematic basis and published as National Accounts of Well-being.

Survey of mosques in England and Wales

The Faith and Social Cohesion Unit of the Charity Commission has published the first detailed survey of mosques in England and Wales. The survey is an independent piece of research by BMG Research and provides useful insights into mosques and their activities, and identifies areas for further research and exploration.

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Local Strategies

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

Braintree District Council: Affordable Housing Strategy

Braintree District Council has developed a Draft Affordable Housing Strategy for 2009 until 2014. The council's specific approach to the housing strategy has allowed them to be more analytical about the provision of affordable housing to be adopted.

Shropshire Council Housing Strategy: Foundations for our Future

The inaugural Shropshire Council Housing Strategy for 2009 - 2011, "Foundations for our Future" recognises and seeks to address the fundamental housing challenges that the county faces in trying to achieve balanced and sustainable communities within Shropshire.

London Borough of Hillingdon: Draft Climate Change Strategy

This draft Strategy sets out what Hillingdon council has been doing and will continue to do to protect the environment in the borough from the impacts of climate change, and what action will be taken to mitigate against future changes.

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Future drivers of change

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

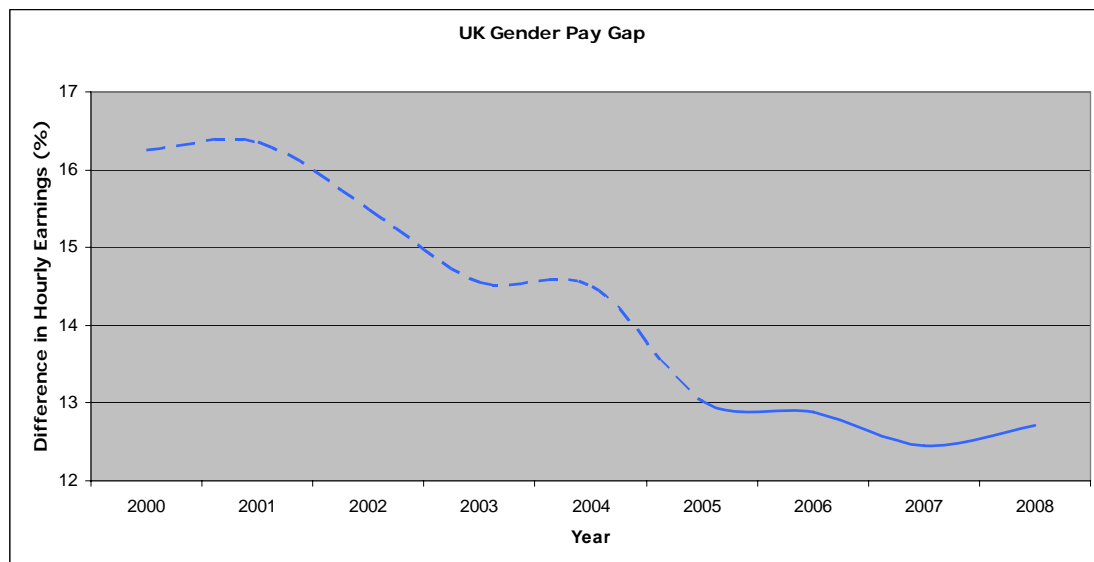
Gender Pay Gap Widening

The 2008 Annual Survey of Hours and Earning shows that the UK gender pay gap (as measured by the median hourly pay excluding overtime of full-time employees) has widened. The average male hourly wage is currently £12.50, with the female average at £10.91 per hour. This puts the difference in hourly wages at 12.7 per cent, up from 2007's mark of 12.5 per cent.

After years of slow and steady progress towards pay equality this represents the first time, since the publishing of ASHE began in 1997, that the gap has increased. Over the course of a year the difference in wages equates to almost £3000.

The cause of this sudden about turn is explained by the movement of a significant number of females into lower paid, full-time jobs. The impact of this movement has been to reduce the overall growth in earnings of full-time female employees.

The rise in female employment in lower paid jobs may be linked to the affects of the UK recession on the labour market. Traditionally a UK recession would impact upon manufacturing and construction, sectors considered to be male dominated – thus we would see increased levels of unemployment amongst males. However, the current recession is impacting upon all UK sectors. As more females are in employment in the UK than males, wide scale redundancies are resulting in higher levels of female unemployment. The impact of the latest swathes of job cuts has seen the female redundancy rate increase by 2.3%, almost double that of the rate for men.



UK lagging in social well-being

Results from the New Economics Foundation's first exercise in assessing national well-being suggest UK citizens suffer more than the majority of its Western European neighbours when it comes to issues surrounding individual social and personal well-being.

Out of 22 European countries examined the UK ranks only 13th in terms of overall well-being, with only France and Portugal from Western Europe ranking lower. Leading the way in the rankings, and thus the most contented people in Europe, are the Nordic countries, Ireland, Switzerland, and Austria. The results present UK policy makers with challenges in formulating ideas in how to engender a greater sense of well-being within the UK population.

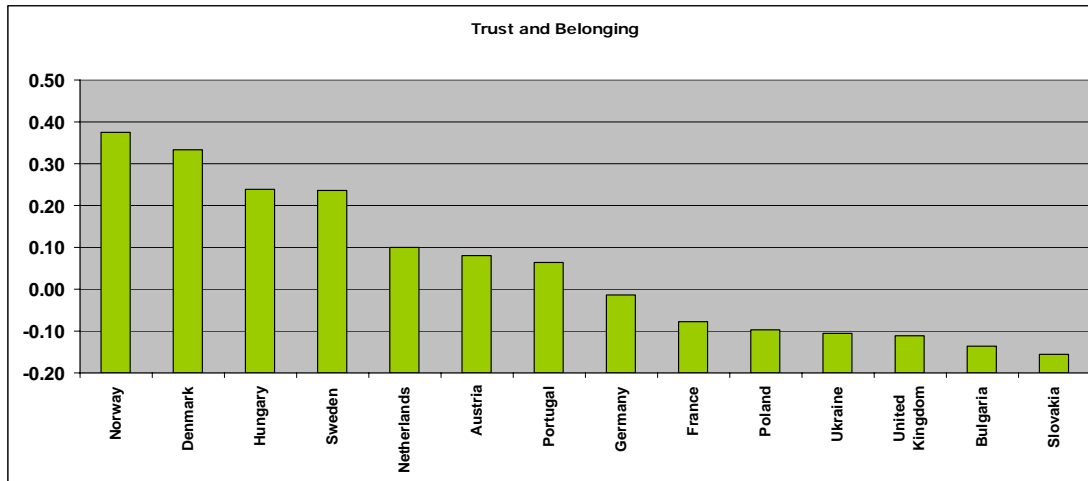
The *National Accounts of Well-being* report, based upon answers gathered from the European Social Survey, attempts to assess levels of life satisfaction amongst European citizens by analysing responses to questions regarding personal and social emotions.

The UK performs particularly poorly in three areas:

Ranking 20th for 'trust and belonging' the report suggests that UK citizens do not share a sense of camaraderie with people from their locality, lack support and respect from those around them, and thus have formed an inability to trust and hold no sense of belonging.

Ranking 18th for 'Vitality' UK citizens do not live the healthier lifestyles of countries such as Switzerland and Austria. A lack of physical activity has led to poor energy levels and loss of a sense of feeling well-rested.

And, ranking 18th for 'Engagement' UK citizens do not generally feel absorbed in what they are doing, and are not presented with opportunities to learn. Performing poorly in thus category impacts upon an individual's 'Positive Functioning' – which can be described as a feeling of "doing well".



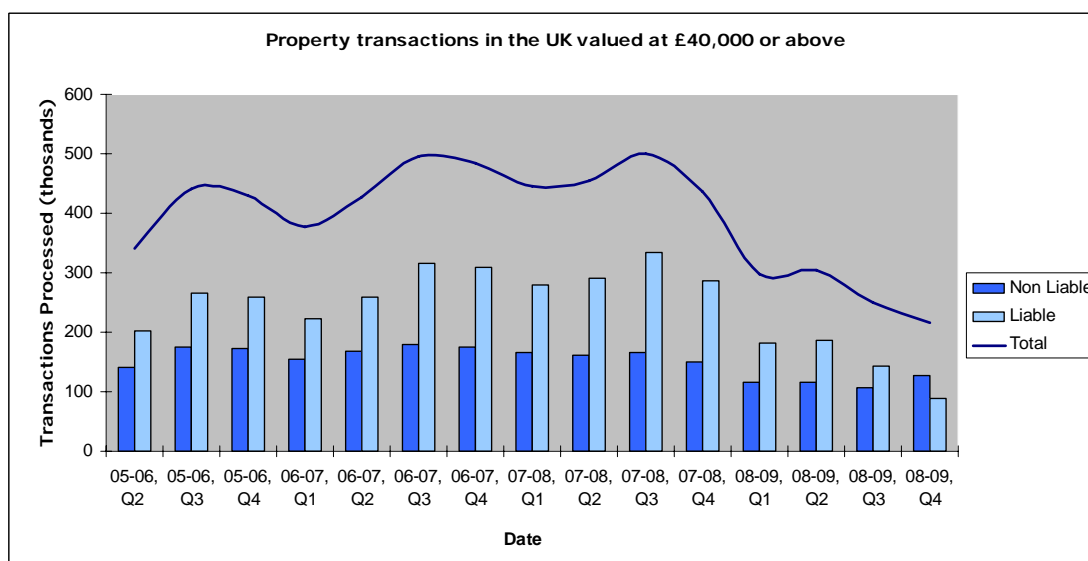
UK Property Transactions Slump

Recession and the impact of the credit crunch is continuing to have a severe effect upon the UK housing and commercial property market, with the latest data from the Office for National Statistics showing property market activity at its lowest level since the mid 1990's.

Following a peak in market activity during the third quarter of 2007, where quarterly transactions in the UK valued at £40,000 or above reached levels close to half a million, the figures for the fourth quarter of 2008 have plummeted to 217,000. This fall represents a decrease of 56 per cent.

The UK property market has always been susceptible to temporary shifts in the economic cycle, given the tendency for UK residents to take on large levels of mortgage debt in order to own their property outright, however the scale of the current collapse is almost without precedent.

With a reduction in the availability of mortgages, and implementation of stricter controls on those mortgages that are available, property buyers are struggling to find the necessary funding for purchases. Combined with a general sense of uncertainty amid falling house prices, a volatile rental market, and significant losses amongst major property developers, some organisations are predicting that we may not see a full recovery in the UK property market for at least the next decade.



Source: ONS

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