



THRIVING  
PLACES  
INDEX

SUMMARY

# THRIVING PLACES REPORT

A summary of findings based on  
Happy City's Index Results 2017

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This is a summary report. The full Thriving Places Report is available to read and download at [www.thrivingplacesindex.org](http://www.thrivingplacesindex.org) where you'll also find a range of interactive ways to explore the data from across England.

"At last - a vision of our living-places that puts people first.

It fills me with hope, inspiration and energy.

Brilliant, vital and long overdue!"

**Emma Thompson**

Actor, Writer and Activist

# FOREWORD

By Liz Zeidler, Co-founder of Happy City



For over 50 years there has been talk about the need to 'measure what matters'. US Senator Robert Kennedy's bold speech in 1968, challenged society to find a better measure of progress than merely the sum of our consumption of goods and services.

While some progress has been made in meeting Kennedy's challenge over the years, it still falls short of his original vision. Some progress has been made. The OECD reports on its 'Better Lives Index', the 'World Happiness Report' makes headlines each year and nations, including the UK, are now measuring wellbeing.

But just as it took many decades after the development of GDP as a measure, for it to become the compass by which we steer our society, so any challengers to its supremacy have a long hard road ahead. It will surely be a long time before a sufficient global accord is reached, to conceivably allow new measures to sit at the centre of our economic or political psyches.

When Happy City was founded in 2010, we recognised that a new measure of progress was urgently needed on the ground, where innovation was happening – and decisions could be made more swiftly and with more immediate effects on people's lives. We searched for a place-based measure that encompassed far more of what Kennedy described as 'the things that make life worthwhile', and failed to find one.

Since then, others have joined this endeavour. Some good recent examples are from big retailers<sup>1</sup> or accountancy firms<sup>2</sup>, others from richly funded 'think tanks'<sup>3</sup>, or from individual cities or places<sup>4</sup>. These are welcome moves but not enough for us to happily hang up our boots and declare the work is done. Many of these new measures are important steps towards a 'softening' of the edges of our economic model. They put human and environmental elements into a model of growth to make it 'inclusive growth', 'green growth', 'sustainable growth'. They are largely focused on what economic growth is delivering – which is important, but only part of the wider question.

Too little is asked about the fundamental assumption behind this model – that growth is the goal, regardless of the context or needs of the place that is aiming to 'grow'. As the economist Kate Raworth

<sup>1</sup> Including Sainsbury's Living Well Index

<sup>2</sup> Including Grant Thornton's Vibrant Economy Index

<sup>3</sup> Including Legatum Institute's Prosperity Index

<sup>4</sup> Santa Monica in California and a group of London boroughs forming the 'London Prosperity Board'



"Happy City's Index of Thriving Places is a brilliant tool for debating what we think matters most in our lives, exploring just how different parts of the UK are doing, and asking why there are such vast differences between them. This is just the kind of metric needed to steer us wisely through the 21st century."

**Kate Raworth**  
Economist and Author of Doughnut Economics

says: "we need to move from an economy that grows whether or not we thrive, to an economy where we thrive whether or not it grows<sup>5</sup>".

Happy City's Index of Thriving Places is designed to ask this more fundamental question: What is it all FOR? What is politics, economics, business, education, health services, community, civil society for – what are we all trying to achieve? If we are clear on the answer to this question, then we can design our economy, our political and public life, our public services, our communities and the very streets we live in, to deliver that.

Our answer to that big question is that all that collective endeavour and investment (of time, money, resources and wisdom) is to support everyone to thrive – now and in the future.

We have, with the help of so many others<sup>6</sup>, designed a broad measure of the local conditions that most influence this aim.

But our societal focus on GDP growth as an end in itself has also led to an almost inexorable rise in inequality and degradation of the environment. These are not accidental by-products, but an inevitable consequence of putting the maximisation of consumption-based profit at the heart of the decision making process.

Happy City's Index puts the conditions for wellbeing at the heart, but equal importance is given to growing a more equal distribution of those conditions and ensuring they are delivered in a way that does not compromise the capacity for future generations to thrive.

Our model is not for the faint hearted. It is designed to support those pioneers who really want to 'measure what matters' and 'make what matters count'. It is a practical tool, that can be used today, to help leaders who want to ensure the sum of our work – in every sector – is a better life for today's and tomorrow's generations.

To those leaders we say – join us. Join us in embedding these very different goals and measures of growth, progress and success at the heart of how your organisation, your area and our society – works.

<sup>5</sup> Kate Raworth. Doughnut Economics. 2017 Random House

<sup>6</sup> See final page on the Full Report for list of advisory board and partners

“Our continuing obsession with GDP as the principal, near-exclusive measure of progress becomes more and more problematic, mandating the suicidal pursuit of economic growth at all cost. Decision-makers know this, but seem powerless to do anything about it. The Thriving Places Index could be the means by which we break that stranglehold, providing practical measures of progress to illuminate what it is that makes life work for UK citizens in the places where they live. This is not a static league table, but a dynamic project to get people and their politicians to focus on the things that really matter, for us today and for future generations.”

**Jonathon Porritt**  
Founder Director Forum for the Future

# INTRODUCTION

Happy City is a UK charity with a big mission, to ‘make what matters count’. It offers a place-based model of change that puts the wellbeing of current and future generations centre stage. It does this by providing a focus on creating equitable and sustainable conditions for people to thrive.

Happy City’s measurement tools deliver a practical and achievable way to refocus the economy at a local scale. They bridge academic rigour and practical action, linking the best thinking on new economics and resilient communities with the people building those communities on the ground.

**This report shares the results from the first national-scale pilot of Happy City’s ground-breaking Index, a report on how well areas across England are doing at growing the conditions for equitable, sustainable wellbeing.**

Truly thriving places provide a range of local conditions that are multi-dimensional. They include people’s mental and physical health, work and the local economy, education and learning opportunities, the qualities of the place and its environment, and the connections between people and community.

Taken alone, these vital elements can mask deep inequalities in the distribution of those conditions that jeopardise both individual and social long-term wellbeing. They can also mask unsustainable means of creating those conditions, thus jeopardising the chances of future generations to thrive. Crucially, and uniquely therefore, this Index balances these local conditions with local equality and environmental impacts.

We need an economy where we thrive whether or not it grows. Happy City’s Index and the annual Thriving Places report aims to call us all to account – from small community groups, to powerful mayors – for how well we are making progress towards that aim, within the limits of our planet.

“Debate about our communities’ progress still – far too often – focuses on the richness of our economies, not our lives. This new index challenges that, and rightly so!”

**Jon Hall**

Human Development Report, UNDP

# BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

On a national and international scale, policymakers are increasingly focusing on measures of prosperity beyond traditional economic indicators such as GDP and wealth creation. A focus on economic growth **as an end in itself** has delivered neither equality nor sustainable wellbeing. The global economy has doubled in 25 years whilst carbon emissions have gone up 40%, and 60% of our eco-system has been degraded<sup>7</sup>. Inequality is reaching such epidemic proportions that a handful<sup>8</sup> of the richest people on Earth now own more wealth than the bottom half of the world’s population – 3.7 billion people. Further, the top 1% now have more money than the bottom 99%. This global trend is repeated at national and local level in the UK and elsewhere.

Wellbeing is emerging as the front-runner in the search for a better way of defining success and prosperity in our communities. In the last decade, significant progress has been made in our understanding of what the key drivers of wellbeing are, and how to measure them<sup>9</sup>. In the UK, the National Wellbeing Programme uses national level indicators to ‘measure what matters’. These measures can be used to monitor the nation’s progress, and to assess and develop policy.

## **We know what counts and NOW we also know how to count it.**

While a lot of effort is going into finding alternative models at a national and international scale, far less has gone into supporting a practical place-based shift at a local and regional scale. This is despite urbanisation and localism being global trends that are putting local leaders at the coalface of innovation in policy and action. This is where change is happening now.

Until now there has been no consistent and accessible framework that uses local level indicators to measure and inform progress towards supporting the wellbeing of all citizens, now and in the future.

Happy City’s Index of Thriving Places is designed to fill this gap. To provide a robust reporting framework for local areas to support decision makers in their work to improve lives on the ground AND to help shift the focus, place by place, towards measuring what matters.

<sup>7</sup> Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet, Tim Jackson, March 2009

<sup>8</sup> Estimates vary from six people to forty two.

<sup>9</sup> For more details see Appendix 3 of full report.

"The Thriving Places Index offers a real opportunity for local government to promote public dialogue shaped around evidence, giving local people and organisations the opportunity to develop a shared vision. It also gives the means of measuring and understanding whether they are making progress. We look forward to learning how a deeper local understanding can contribute towards moving to a more equal and sustainable society from those who put it into practice."

**Rosie Maguire**  
Wellbeing Manager, New Economics Foundation

# AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Happy City's **Thriving Places Index** (TPI) is designed to be used. It is not a PR stunt, campaign tool or merely some interesting research to add to the office shelf.

TPI is designed to support both a radical system change in how we run the society of tomorrow AND to support TODAY's change-makers from local government, business and civil society to start to better monitor local progress and implement policies that improve people's wellbeing in the here and now.

## PROJECT AIMS:

- **Challenge the current growth at all costs paradigm**
- **Grow awareness of the role of what we measure on our values and decisions**
- **Provide better measures that are more widely used, starting locally**
- **Challenge society to develop more measures of what matters to real progress**

The Index can deliver these four interconnected aims here and now, using a practical methodology that shifts the focus at a local level. It shows the impact of measuring more of what we value and using that to guide decisions. By being open about the imperfections of our current indicators, we also aim to support continual improvement in the quality of the data we gather on the conditions for thriving places now and in the future.

However its real power may lie in its capacity to support very new conversations across very old divides:

### CROSS-SECTORAL

A cross cutting index like this can spark new conversations among people who might not normally meet in other ways. Community groups and local government, environmental experts with health officials and economic advisors. The Index recognizes that our lives – and communities – are not silo-based but complex and interconnected. We need ways of working and thinking that reflect this.

### WITHIN COMMUNITIES

The index, like any index, is partial and selective. It tells just a piece of the story, but much more of the story that a narrow economic index does. The Index is a step towards having ongoing, challenging and vitally important conversations in the heart of our communities, about much more of what really matters to people's lives.

### POLITICAL

Too much discussion in society argues about the facts. An index like this helps provide a common starting point for all sides in the political debate. Once people have a common set of facts that they trust, examples around the world have shown that it is easier to find agreement on a new direction on the foundation of common ground.

“Happy City’s Index of Thriving Places allows local authorities to track their social and economic progress on a comprehensive range of metrics, and enables local actors to scrutinise them. It also highlights how the bad effects of a broken economic model are skewed unfairly towards certain parts of the country, and why reform is so urgently necessary. Finally, it will allow evidence-based assessment of policies and initiatives trialled at a local level.”

**Robert Macquarie**  
Chief Economist at Positive Money

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Alongside these big picture aims of the Index are a range of practical and immediate objectives at a local scale across the UK. These include supporting as many local areas across the UK to use the Index to:

1. **Monitor local progress towards delivering the conditions for equitable, sustainable wellbeing and use the framework as a shared roadmap towards it**
2. **Develop integrated local wellbeing policy across and between sectors**
3. **Develop and deliver tailored policies and initiatives to improve local conditions for wellbeing**
4. **Highlight innovative and successful policies and practice**
5. **Encourage responsible progress towards better shared goals.**

Together, these five uses of the Index can create a powerful force towards implementing joined-up, innovative, evidenced-based wellbeing policy. In this way we can re-shape how local development is delivered. By assessing the conditions for thriving communities at a ‘whole-place’ level, different local actors – from civil society, local government, academia and business, to citizens and small community groups – can collaboratively tackle even very entrenched problems. It provides a consistent and comparable way of agreeing, measuring and tracking progress towards shared goals, a ‘common currency’ across and between sectors and geographies.

For more information on the different uses of the Index please see Full Report Chapter 7.

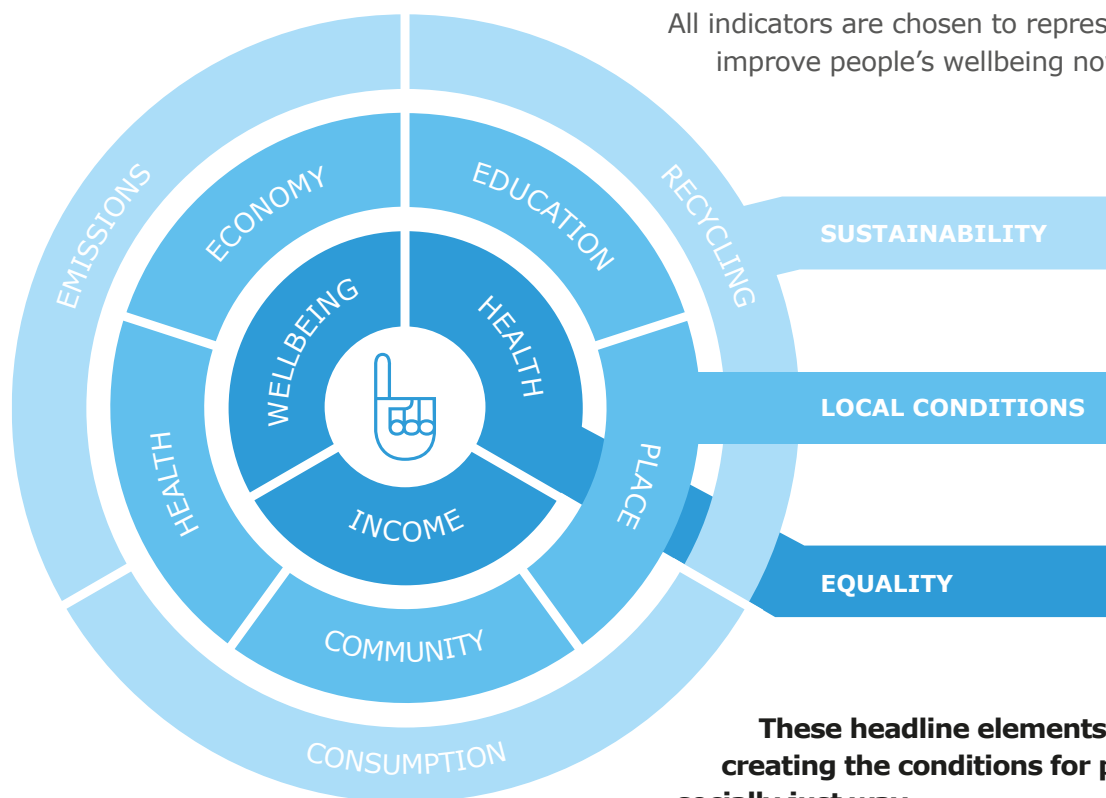


# FRAMEWORK OUTLINE

The Index is designed as a measure of the drivers of wellbeing.

The framework is designed to create a powerful and accessible shared narrative by arranging a broad range of dimensions into clear, and focused and intuitively relevant domains. It consists of a set of 48 indicators that use existing and accessible data from established national data agencies such as Office for National Statistics (ONS), Public Health England (PHE) and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

All indicators are chosen to represent the **drivers of wellbeing** – factors which are known to improve people’s wellbeing now and in the long term.



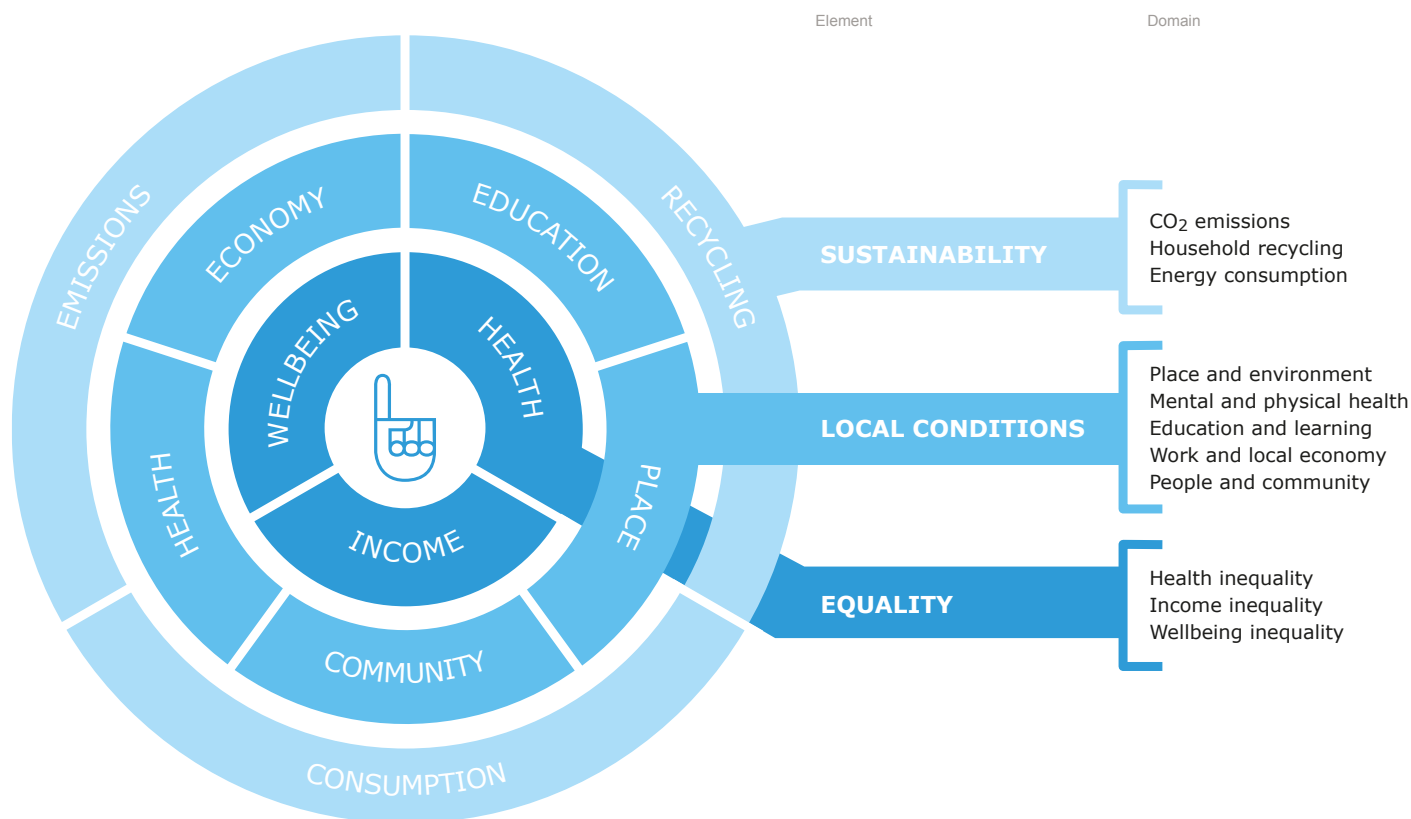
These indices are arranged into three headline *elements*:

**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**LOCAL CONDITIONS**  
**EQUALITY**

**These headline elements support a broad dialogue about whether an area is creating the conditions for people to thrive, within environmental limits and in a socially just way.**

We then use a layered approach to drill down to the detail: within each headline element there are *domains* – **with a focus on what can be influenced at local scale.**

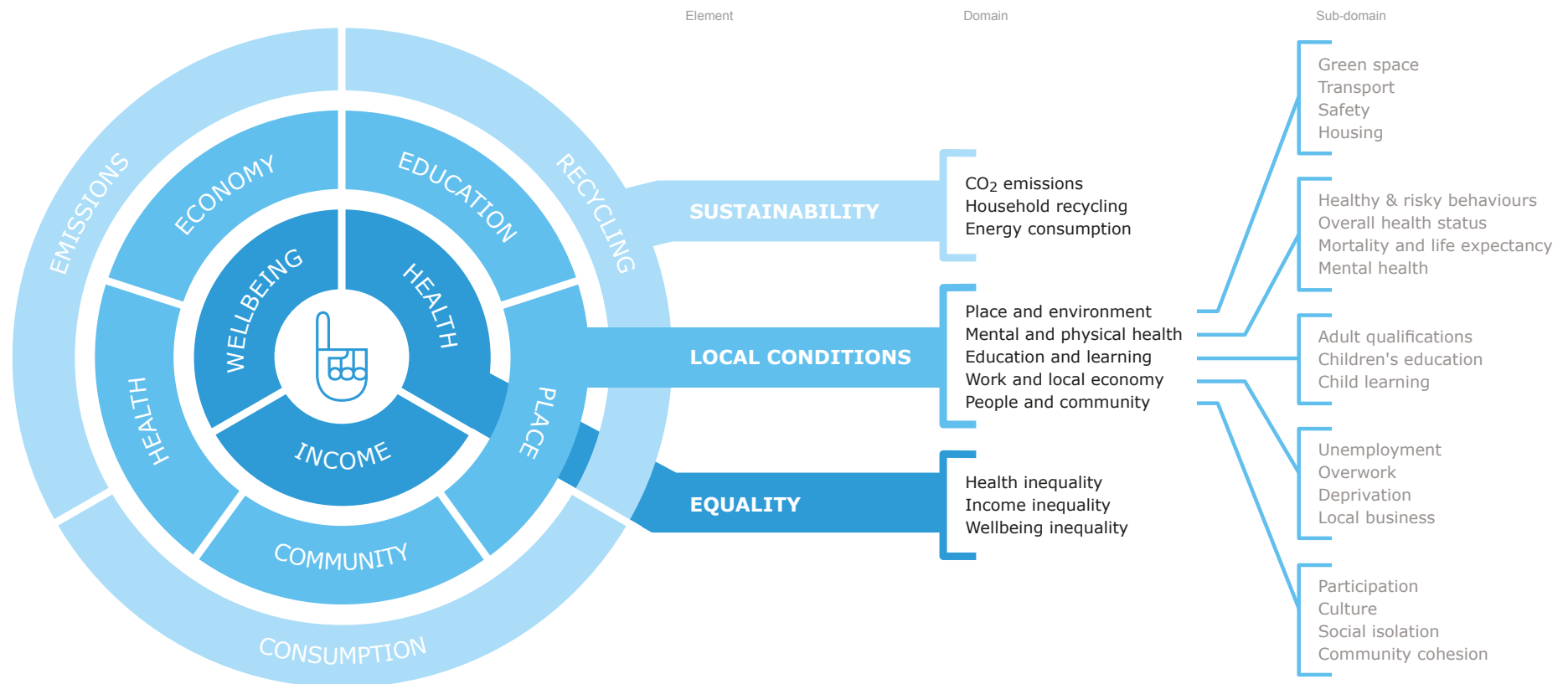
Elements are further broken down into a series of sub-domains (see diagram on page 11). This enables us to capture the key dimensions of wellbeing within the topic area of the overall domain. This is especially the case for the Local Conditions domains which have 17 sub-domains, for example Place and Environment comprises transport, safety, housing and green space. Sustainability and Equality currently have three domains each.



This is done in order to make the breadth of information the Index holds accessible to non-specialists and to support the cross-sector use of the framework as a roadmap for collaborative change.

The Local Conditions domains are therefore broken down into the following sub-domains:

This layered structure of the framework is intended to support the use of the tool both as a data tool AND a communication tool.





# SAMPLE SCORECARD

Headline Elements	Domain	Subdomain	Hartlepool
LOCAL CONDITIONS			3.59
	Place and environment		5.02
		Local environment	3.94
		Transport	5.13
		Safety	4.72
		Housing	6.28
	Mental and physical health		3.03
		Healthy and risky behaviours	2.93
		Overall health status	2.64
		Mortality and life expectancy	2.73
		Mental health	3.81
	Education and learning		3.88
		Adult education	3.49
		Children's education	4.27
	Work and local economy		1.81
		Employment	0.27
		Good Jobs	0.69
		Basic Needs	3.49
		Local business	2.77
	People and community		4.22
		Participation	3.17
		Culture	4.46
		Community cohesion	5.02
SUSTAINABILITY			4.06
		CO2 Emissions	4.67
		Household recycling	3.22
		Energy consumption per capita	4.3
EQUALITY			4.79
		Health Inequality	4.14
		Income Inequality	7.24
		WB Inequality	2.98

Each Local Authority gets a headline results graphic and an easily understood scorecard<sup>10</sup>:

You can find the headline results for 150 Local Authorities across England in the Full Report, and the scorecards online at...

For more information on the Framework and the indicator selection criteria, see the full report.

The detailed scoring and methodology including the formula used to produce the scorecards can be found in Appendix 2 of the Full Report and the full set of Indicators within each sub domain, see Appendix 1.



<sup>10</sup> For all headline results see Chapter 4 of the full report and for more case studies and example scorecards see Chapter 5.

"This report helps to shine a light on the many drivers of well-being and gives insight into the places that are thriving, from which we can all learn."

**Sophie Howe**

Future Generations Commissioner, Welsh Government

# RESULTS & ANALYSIS

**Happy City's Index is a place-based tool**, to be **USED** by individual local places - to explore their own strengths and needs, to help guide decisions and make priorities around a shared framework of progress.

Happy City's index is not designed to be used purely as a league table. It is the start of a discussion and a tool for change. It creates domains in order to help prioritise action, not create winners and losers. Yet it is also designed to help encourage greater sharing of good practice, and as such it can be used to unearth places that are succeeding in creating the conditions for equitable and sustainable wellbeing.

Comparisons to other areas should only be used to understand what others are doing well and to learn from them, as well as to benchmark targets and progress against agreed norms.

The Full Report contains an analysis of the results for the whole of England. It looks at some of the geographical and thematic patterns emerging across and between some of the 150 Local Authority areas covered.

We recommend any area interested in using the Index does so by **focusing on its own scores**, or working with us to understand and improve its own individual indicator results behind those scores.

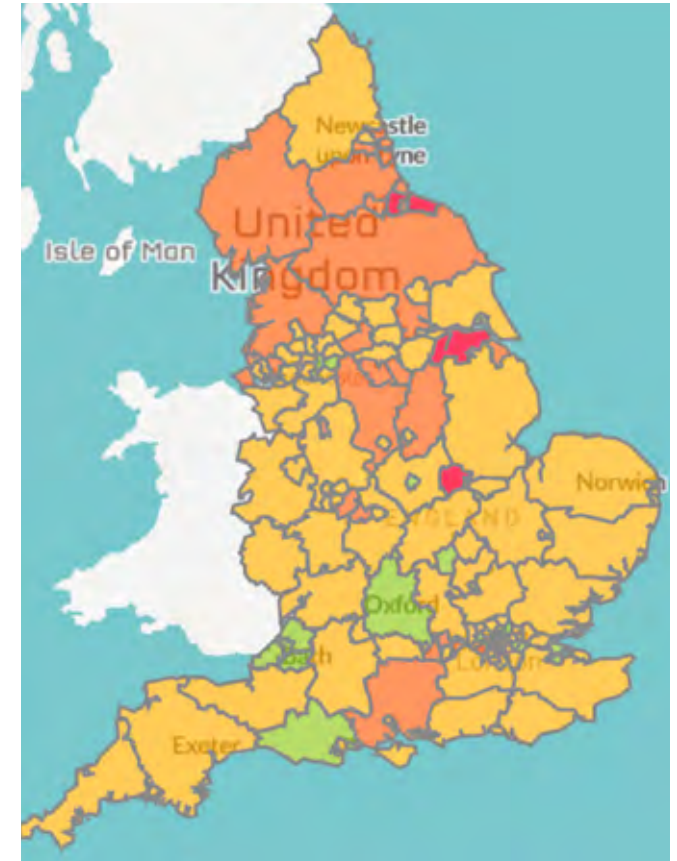
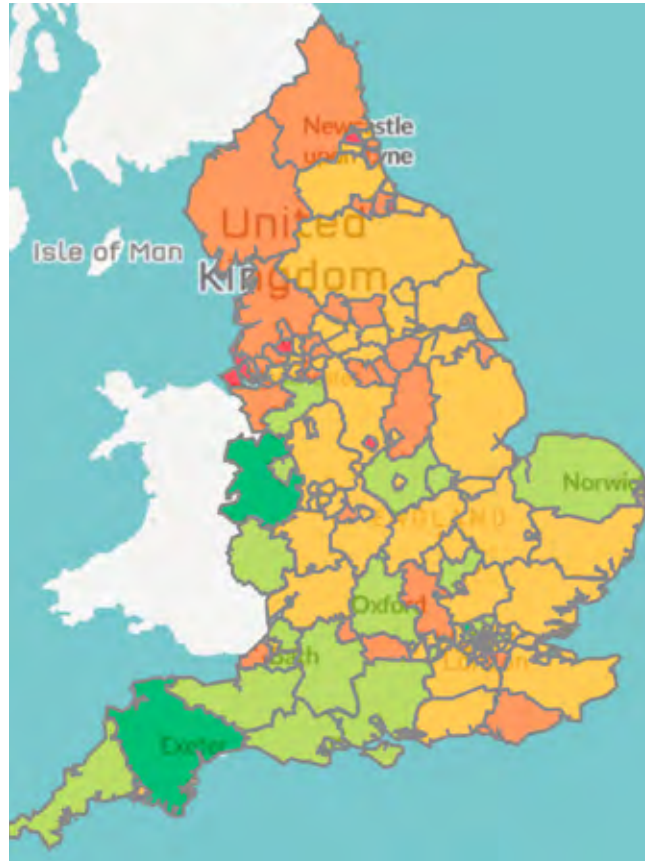
The following pages contain a summary of the headline results and some case studies to give a **small taste** of the depth of insight the Index can provide.



## LOCAL CONDITIONS

## EQUALITIES

## SUSTAINABILITY



# HIGHLIGHTS

Move to the city for good education and jobs, but to the country for health and community.

The damaging psychological impacts of poverty are highlighted in the strong correlation between 'work and local economy' and 'mental health'.

Strong correlation between community cohesion and good housing.

North West has many hotspots for culture, an important element of a thriving place.

Trafford shines for Education and Learning (whilst neighbours Liverpool and Knowsley are close to the bottom).

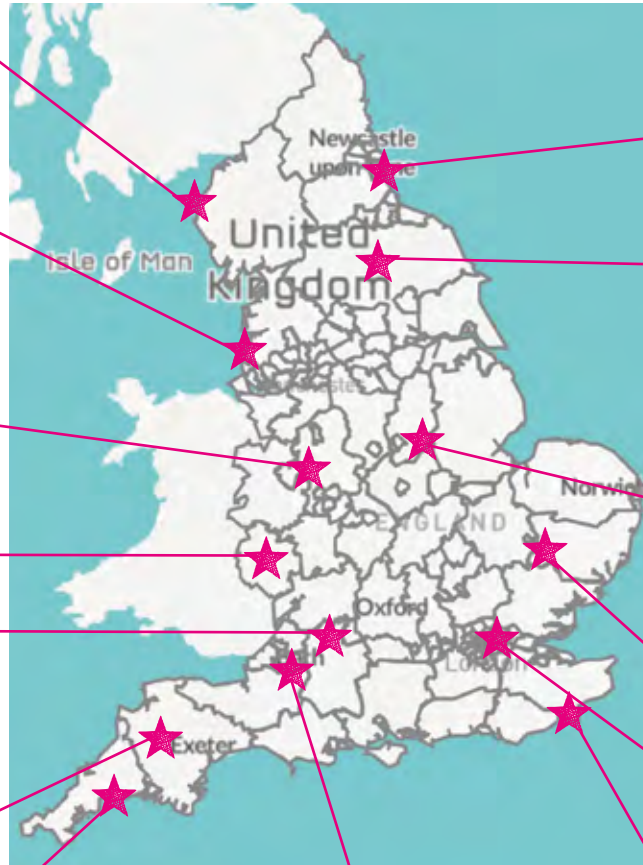
West Midlands is getting it right for Equality, but work to be done on Sustainability and the local conditions for residents.

Herefordshire tops the national rankings for People & Community.

Swindon delivers for current citizens on housing, adult education and unemployment, but needs to work harder on ensuring sustainability for future generations.

Devon leads the way in the South West for participation and a good local environment

South West is best for people and community.



North East of England shines for housing with decent homes and very low homelessness. Despite that more people enjoy the fresh northern air outdoors than most parts of the UK!

North Yorkshire bucks the North : South wellbeing divide.

East Midlands typifies the urban rural divide with Rutland, Leicestershire and Derbyshire thriving, while Nottingham, Leicester and Derby struggle.

East of England results show how important work and a strong local economy are for producing better health.

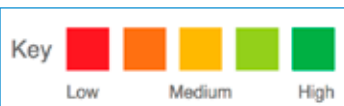
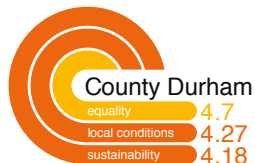
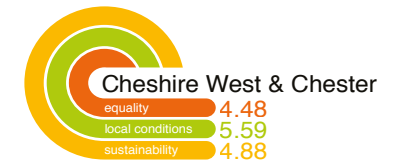
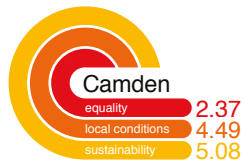
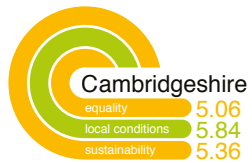
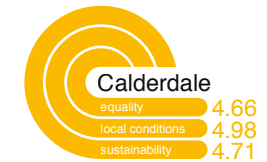
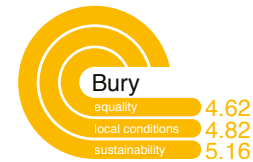
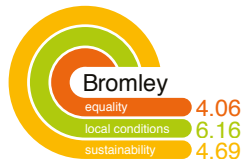
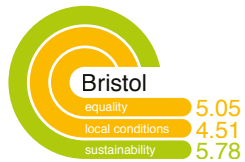
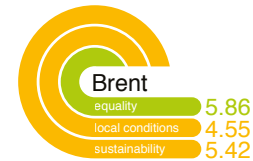
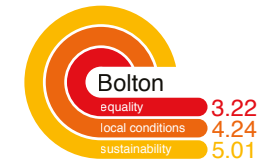
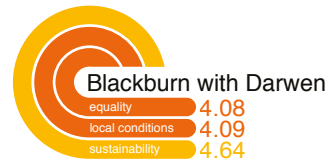
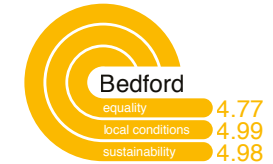
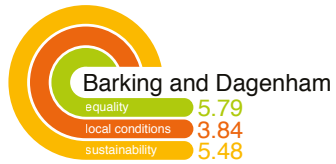
London's smaller houses and drive to reduce cars shows up in positive sustainability results.

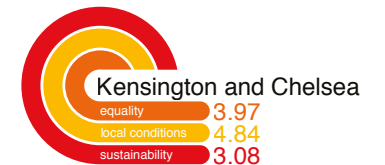
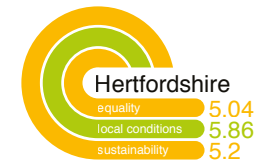
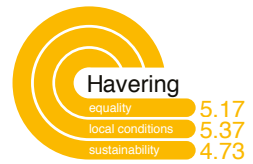
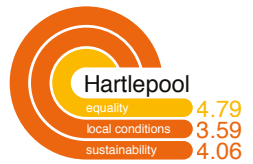
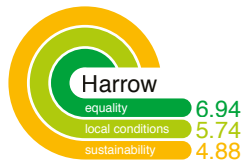
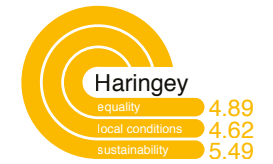
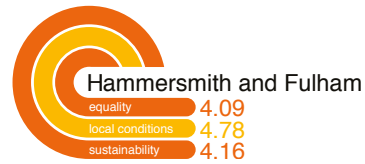
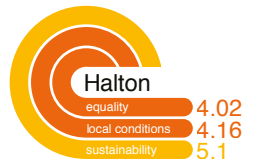
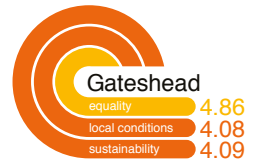
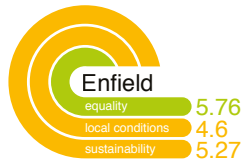
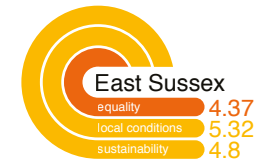
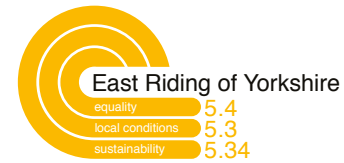
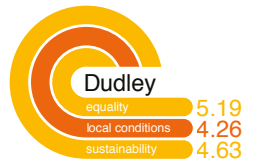
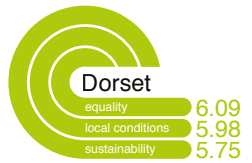
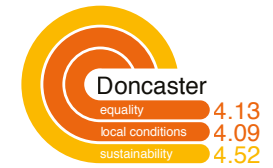
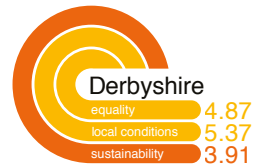
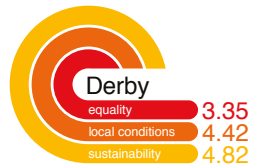
The South East has the highest average Local Conditions Index score.

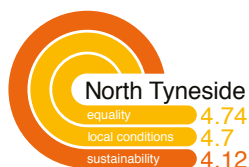
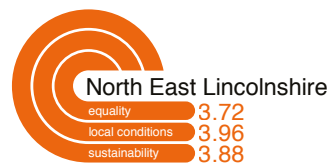
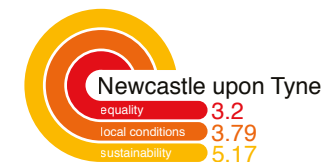
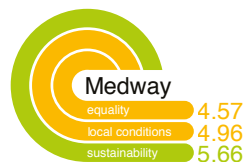
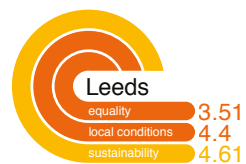
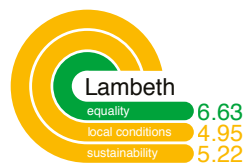
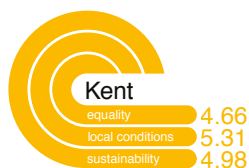
Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset, South Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Devon and Kingston upon Thames are the only LAs to score highly on all three core elements.

# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

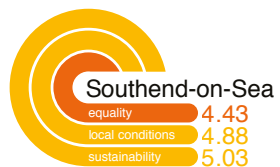
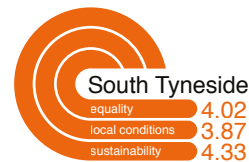
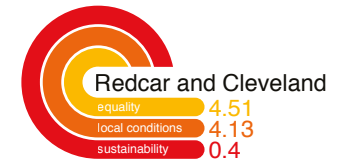
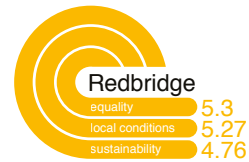
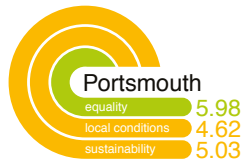
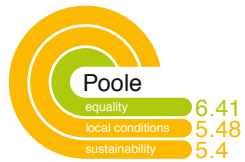
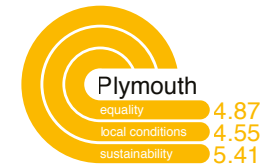
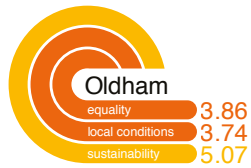
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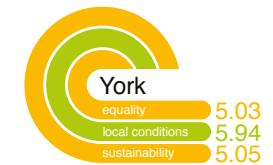
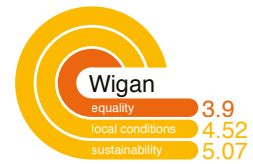
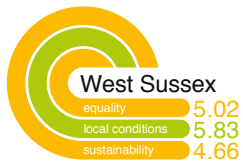
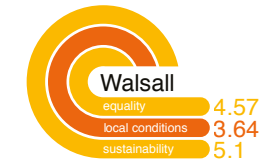
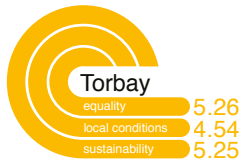
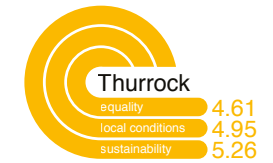
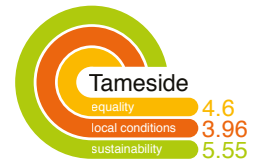
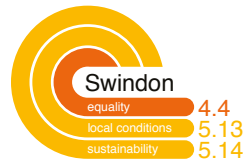
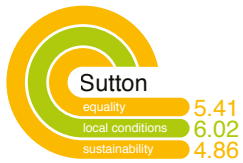
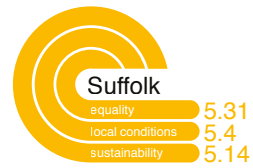
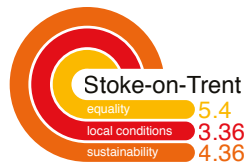
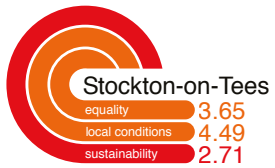












# SAMPLE RESULTS

	LOCAL CONDITIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	EQUALITY	Place and environment	Mental and physical health	Education and learning	Work and local economy	People and community
Top of table								
1st	Wokingham	Tower Hamlets	Harrow	Wirral	Richmond upon Thames	Trafford	Wokingham	Herefordshire
2nd	Buckinghamshire	Bournemouth	Shropshire	Bracknell Forest	Wokingham	Richmond upon Thames	Sutton	North Yorkshire
3rd	Surrey	Southwark	Lambeth	Central Bedfordshire	Buckingham shire	Kingston upon Thames	Central Bedfordshire	Cornwall
4th	Richmond- upon-Thames	Ealing	Devon	Thurrock	Rutland	York	Bracknell Forest	Wokingham
5th	Rutland	North Somerset	Rutland	Wokingham	West Berkshire	Southwark	Surrey	Devon
Bottom of table								
146	Manchester	Rutland	Newcastle upon Tyne	Nottingham	Middlesbrough	Bradford	Manchester	Bournemouth
147	Kingston-upon- Hull	Kensington and Chelsea	Middlesbrough	Islington	Manchester	Liverpool	Nottingham	Manchester
148	Nottingham	Stockton-on-Tees	Wirral	Hackney	Knowsley	Knowsley	Hartlepool	Newham
149	Middlesbrough	North Lincolnshire	Liverpool	Westminster	Liverpool	Wolverhampton	Middlesbrough	Hammersmith and Fulham
150	Liverpool	Redcar and Cleveland	Camden	Kensington and Chelsea	Blackpool	Sandwell	Kingston upon Hull	Tower Hamlets

# CASE STUDY 01



Bath and North East Somerset is one of only six local authorities in England to achieve a High score in all three core elements – Local Conditions, Sustainability and Equality. This balanced performance can be seen as a success on Happy City's Thriving Places Index.

Across the domains, it also does consistently well. It has High scores for three of the five domains, and only

marginally misses the mark for a High score on Place & Environment. On Mental & Physical Health, it scores in the Highest category. It ranks third in the country for Healthy & Risky Behaviours and for Culture, seventh for Adult Education, and ninth on Employment.

But what makes Bath and North East Somerset stand out from nearby similarly wealthy councils that also do well on Local Conditions (for example Wokingham, Hampshire and Windsor and Maidenhead, etc) is its excellent performance on Sustainability – where it ranks 6th overall. By contrast, Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead and Hampshire rank 128th through 130th. The difference can be seen in all three Sustainability indicators we have. Bath and North East Somerset recycles 54% of waste, compared to an average of 48% for the local authorities that outperform it on Local Conditions. Domestic energy consumption is about 10% lower than them. But the biggest difference is with respect to CO2 emissions. Bath and North East Somerset's per capita emissions are 25% below the national average, whereas most of the other authorities that have Local Conditions scores are above the average.

So what can Bath and North East Somerset do to improve its score? Out of 48 indicators, it is only below the English average on five. Perhaps most important of these is income inequality. Whilst the council does well on health and wellbeing inequality, income inequality is 10% above the English average. How can Bath spread the benefits of its strong economy better? Bath also performs poorly on our indicator of volunteering, but this indicator is only a proxy (it does not include all kinds of volunteering), so better data is required before making any clear recommendations. Lastly, Bath falls in the Low category for Community Cohesion. The indicator we use here is again a proxy – based on census data which is known to correlate with social fragmentation, rather than being a direct measure of how people feel. However, it is worth noting that the council does have a higher residential churn rate than the English average – 15% of people had moved in the previous year, compared to the English average of only 12%. Whilst this is not atypical of towns, it is a much higher rate of churn than neighbouring boroughs such as North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

As noted, four other local authorities achieve a High score on all three core elements: South Gloucestershire, Dorset, Oxfordshire and Kingston upon Thames. Of these four, all except Kingston upon Thames in London are particularly close to Bath and North East Somerset suggesting a regional pattern.

Local conditions	6.1
Place and environment	5.46
Local environment	4.64
Transport	5.64
Safety	6.21
Housing	5.37
Mental and physical health	6.51
Healthy and risky behaviours	7.63
Overall health status	5.97
Mortality and life expectancy	6.64
Mental health	5.81
Education and learning	6.34
Adult education	6.98
Children's education	5.7
Work and local economy	5.78
Employment	6.73
Good Jobs	5.46
Basic Needs	6.23
Local business	4.68
People and community	6.42
Participation	5.17
Culture	9.67
Community cohesion	4.42
Sustainability	5.85
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	5.4
Household recycling	6.84
Energy consumption per capita	5.33
Equality	5.78
Health Inequality	8.0
Income Inequality	2.5
WB Inequality	6.85



# CASE STUDY 02



Lambeth in South London is a perfect example of how Happy City's TPI presents a different picture to traditional measures of local conditions, such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Whilst Lambeth ranks 115th out of 150 local authorities in the IMD, it rises to 72nd place in Local Conditions. Furthermore, this is complemented by good scores on the other core elements, 49th overall for Sustainability and third for Equality.

How is this possible? Like many inner London boroughs, Lambeth's per capita impact on the planet is below the national average. Per capita domestic energy consumption is almost 20% below the English average and CO2 emissions are almost half the English average (though recycling levels leave something to be desired). These results may not be too surprising. Lambeth's high ranking on Equality may be more surprising. It can be explained predominantly by very low health inequality – measured in terms of variation in life expectancy. Lambeth has the fifth lowest health inequality in England, only bettered by affluent places such as Richmond upon Thames, Bath and Windsor. It is tempting to wonder whether this is because everyone's health is bad in Lambeth, but that's not the case – average life expectancy is 80.8 years only marginally below the English average of 81.3.

Within the Local Conditions element, Lambeth's better than expected performance is mostly a result of indicators that are not included in the IMD. For example has the highest score in the country for Adult Education, the sixth best score for Local Business, and 11th best for Transport.

But of course, Happy City's TPI does not ignore the issues which provide challenges for inner city boroughs such as Lambeth. Lambeth ranks fifth from bottom for Safety – somewhat lower than neighbouring Southwark, and a lot lower than its other neighbour Wandsworth. It has the second worst youth offending rate in London (behind Lewisham). It also comes 14th from bottom for Housing – noise being the worst indicator here. Deprivation affecting older people, road accidents, teenage pregnancies and social fragmentation are four more indicators where Lambeth scores more than two standard deviations below the English average.

These low scores make it clear which areas Lambeth needs to focus on to improve its Local Conditions and the wellbeing of its residents.

Local conditions	4.95
Place and environment	4.26
Local environment	5.5
Transport	6.24
Safety	1.94
Housing	3.35
Mental and physical health	4.5
Healthy and risky behaviours	4.1
Overall health status	5.43
Mortality and life expectancy	4.02
Mental health	4.44
Education and learning	6.83
Adult education	8.98
Children's education	4.68
Work and local economy	5.43
Employment	4.62
Good Jobs	6.0
Basic Needs	3.8
Local business	7.32
People and community	3.73
Participation	5.19
Culture	4.81
Community cohesion	1.17
Sustainability	5.22
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	5.69
Household recycling	2.48
Energy consumption per capita	7.51
Equality	6.63
Health Inequality	7.87
Income Inequality	4.66
WB Inequality	7.35

Key ■ Low ■ Medium ■ High



Local conditions	4.35
Place and environment	5.52
Local environment	6.13
Transport	5.2
Safety	4.27
Housing	6.47
Mental and physical health	4.21
Healthy and risky behaviours	4.22
Overall health status	4.84
Mortality and life expectancy	3.81
Mental health	3.95
Education and learning	4.89
Adult education	5.39
Children's education	4.4
Work and local economy	3.29
Employment	3.41
Good Jobs	2.88
Basic Needs	4.62
Local business	2.26
People and community	3.82
Participation	3.41
Culture	3.15
Community cohesion	4.91
Sustainability	4.07
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	4.99
Household recycling	3.96
Energy consumption per capita	3.26
Equality	3.61
Health Inequality	1.72
Income Inequality	4.97
WB Inequality	4.13



## CASE STUDY 03



Darlington, a town of around 90,000 inhabitants in the North East of England, ranks 106th out of 150 in Local Conditions, scoring 4.4 out of 10. Whilst this score is below average, it scores higher than most of its neighbours in the Tees Valley – only Stockton-on-Tees ranks six places higher. But what is interesting is that Darlington doesn't do nearly as poorly on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). There it ranks 79th out of 150, closer to the English average, and much further ahead of its neighbours. What explains the difference?

Darlington has some quite contrasting scores across the five domains. It scores 5.5 for Place & Environment, placing it in the top 30 for England. But it scores only 3.3 for Work & Local Economy, placing it in the bottom 30. It is also in the bottom 30 for People & Community.

The low score on People & Community – which is entirely comprised of indicators which are not in the IMD – goes a long way to explaining why Darlington scores much less well in Happy City's Local Conditions, than on the IMD. Like the other local authorities in the Tees Valley area, it scores low on Culture – ranking 17th from bottom overall (though this is higher than next door Stockton-on-Tees here). It also follows the pattern of low Participation scores. But perhaps less typical, is that it also scores low on Community Cohesion – scoring 4.9 on this indicator, compared to 6.0 for Stockton-on-Tees.

Other indicators where Darlington scores low include Local Business – 15th from bottom, and Good Jobs – 19th from bottom. Both these are new indicators developed for Happy City's TPI, and revealing previously unidentified challenges in Darlington. Indeed, on both these indicators, most of its neighbours also do poorly, underlying a local trend.

But the North East in general, performs quite well on Place & Environment, and Darlington is typical of that too. Its best performance is in Housing, where the town ranks second overall in England, nestled between Wokingham and Windsor and Maidenhead. It scores well above average on three of the indicators here – only 17% of houses are categorised as being in poor condition (compared to 23% in England overall), housing affordability is high and it has some of the lowest levels of homelessness in the country.

Happy City's TPI goes beyond the IMD in another way – it considers Sustainability and Equality. Here, further challenges for Darlington are revealed: it is 12th from bottom for Equality, and 16th from bottom for Sustainability. Despite being a small borough, it has particularly high health inequality (so do Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees), and above average inequality in subjective wellbeing. It has higher income inequality than its neighbours. As for Sustainability, domestic energy consumption is higher than that of any urban LA in the North East and one of the highest for any urban local authority in the country.

"Understanding where investments and policy actions need to be targeted is all the more critical for local authorities in today's funding environment. Happy City's Index of Thriving Places gives interesting insights into the comparative performance of different localities on a range of metrics – enabling easy comparisons across 150 local authorities – and the identification of domains where actions may be needed to improve wellbeing."

**Dr Tim Taylor**

Senior Lecturer, European Centre for Environment & Human Health

# CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

This is the inaugural publication of the national results for England. We have secured sponsorship from Triodos Bank, to enable us to independently publish annually until at least 2020. This vital support means we can continue to use this annual publication to highlight the central importance of better measures of progress at every level of society.

Our measurement tools are always 'in development'. We always seek to respond to the best current research into wellbeing, and to make use of the fast evolving world of data capture by incorporating the very best indicators for any particular domain. For this reason we will continue to work closely with our advisors, academic and community partners and the What Works Centre for Wellbeing to ensure the indicators we use are the best they can possibly be for our users. We feed developmental changes into our tools on an annual cycle. In the next year we hope to develop a more 'real-time' data update process for the Index, as well as far greater interactivity with the data online. Watch this space also for a partnership project to create a bank of best practice to guide improvements in each of the Index's domains.

But this is not just an annual progress report, to wave at politicians. This is a live project, aiming to support change – place by place, city by city, region by region – until local governance, UK-wide (and beyond) is driven by a shared goal of improving the wellbeing of current and future generations. Perhaps then, national and international governance will follow the lead of pioneering local leaders<sup>11</sup> such as the ones already working with us, and any of you, who would like to join this leading group of thinkers and doers, changing how things work where you are.

11 To find out more about who we are already working with to embed the Index and its sister tool, the Happiness Pulse, to gain an unprecedented picture of wellbeing in communities and embed the measures into their strategy and delivery see the final section of our Full Report.

"There are 1.1m citizens in Birmingham of which 408,000 - almost half - are in the top 10% poorest households in the country. This presents huge challenges in terms of inequalities, income, life expectancy and health, but it also means there is huge potential for change. The Thriving Places Index is a huge step forward in being able to measure whether our work is having an impact, and what we need to rethink to really improve the lives of citizens."

**Karen Creavin**

Wellbeing Services Lead, Birmingham City Council

# GET INVOLVED

If you'd like to benefit from using Happy City's measurement tools, get in touch about any of the following ways we can help:

**Detailed data support:** We can share with you and your teams the detailed data findings behind your scorecard, and support them to better understand, analyse and use that data to improve performance and impact

**Training:** We offer training in the use of our tools, in improving practice to grow wellbeing and in supporting the wellbeing of individuals, teams and communities

**Hyper-local community wellbeing measurement:** Our groundbreaking Happiness Pulse is an online subjective wellbeing measurement tool. It can be used to map the strengths and needs of a place – from a street, to a team, to an organisation, community or local area – giving insights into the mental, emotional, behavioural and social wellbeing of all who take it. It is designed to support individuals to understand and improve their own wellbeing, as well as providing data that can help decision makers tailor support to their needs.

To find out more about the Thriving Places Index, visit **[thrivingplacesindex.org](https://thrivingplacesindex.org)**.

For more information or to get involved with our wider wellbeing work, visit **[happycity.org.uk](https://happycity.org.uk)**, or just get in touch via **[info@happycity.org.uk](mailto:info@happycity.org.uk)**.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## PARTNERS & ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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# HAPPY CITY

Happy City is a small UK charity with a big mission: to 'make what matters count'. It offers a place-based model of change that puts the wellbeing of current and future generations centre stage. It does this by developing new measures of progress and delivering training, projects and campaigns to help embed them into how places work.

Based in Bristol, Happy City is now working with organisations large and small from the public, private and community sector, right around the UK. They have received interest in their work from around the world.

**To find out more go to:**

Online:	<a href="http://happycity.org.uk">happycity.org.uk</a> <a href="http://thrivingplacesindex.org">thrivingplacesindex.org</a>
Twitter:	@HappyCityUK
Facebook:	HappyCityUK
Email:	<a href="mailto:info@happycity.org.uk">info@happycity.org.uk</a>

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