



THRIVING PLACES INDEX

PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

It 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 paradigm which sets the compass of progress towards how much we grow consumption by the many, wealth for the few and use of earth's resources
- Grow recognition that what we measure influences what we value, and the direction in which we develop
- Provide better measures of what people most 'value' and help make those measures more widely used - starting with the local scale
- Challenge society to grow the number of quality indicators of real progress year on year

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 recognises 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 than 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.

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 as possible 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 reshape 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.

AUDIENCE

The Index is designed with the following audiences in mind:

- Local Authority decision makers and officers
- Local Public Health leaders and teams
- Health & Wellbeing Boards
- Private Sector organisations who are interested in place-based development or cross-sector partnerships
- Civil Society organisations large and small, who play a crucial role in improving the conditions for citizens to thrive