Wellbeing, community, mental health and the built environment: understanding and maximising the connection.

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what works wellbeing

Prosocial Place research programme

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Coverage

- [ ] **What is wellbeing?**

- [ ] **What is community wellbeing?**

- [ ] **Some evidence about the relationship between built environment and well-being**

- [ ] **The What Works Centre for Wellbeing - Community Evidence Programme planned outputs.**

- [ ] **How do we understand the links between Wellbeing and Built Environment?**

- [ ] **What policy and practice steps are needed to promote places that are better for us?**
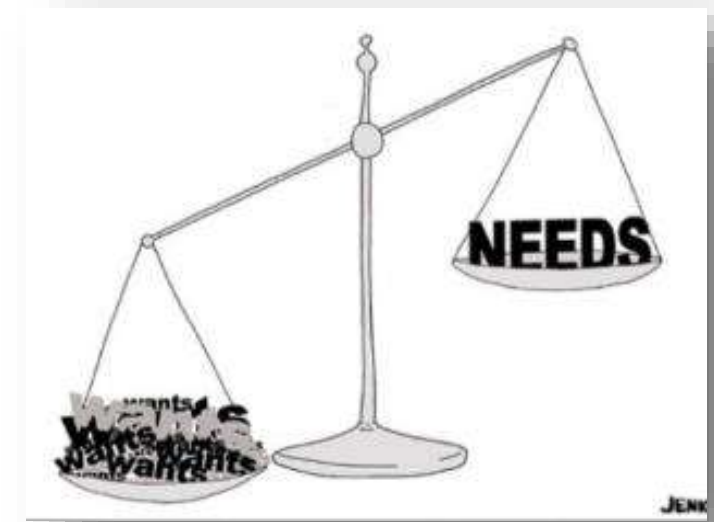
What is Wellbeing, Community Wellbeing & Place?

Definitions - Wellbeing

Feeling good and functioning well.

Depends on having access to the

things that make life worthwhile.

- ❑ **Hedonic approach:** Well-being comes from striving for maximum pleasure and minimum pain. A dominant but short term wellbeing strategy – it is resource depleting.

- ❑ **Eudaimonic approach:** (ancient Greek good 'eu' and spirit 'daimon') Well-being comes from the pursuit of meaningful goals; 'transcending oneself' for the sake of the greater good. A longer term wellbeing strategy - it is resource sustaining.

Community Wellbeing – the Professionals View

❑ 315 professionals/practitioners working in the field of wellbeing surveyed.

❑ What is meant by the term community wellbeing?

❑ 62%: " strong networks of relationships and support between people in a community, both in close relationships and friendships, and between neighbours and acquaintances".

❑ 35%: "people feeling able to take action to improve things in, and influence decisions about, their community".

❑ 30 %: "people's feelings of trust in, belonging to and safety in their community".

Examples of Community Wellbeing

Individual Altruism

"A tower block in which the warden decided to help develop the previously unconnected residents into a community, including a conservatory, cafe, gardens, etc., based on the concept of the world's oldest residential towers in Yemen. The block went from having empty flats to a waiting list to move in."

Mutual Trust

"Being able to trust a number of your neighbours to look after your house or pets when you are away. Small actions like this that engender mutual trust are important to feeling a sense of community."

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The Built Environment & Wellbeing – Some Evidence

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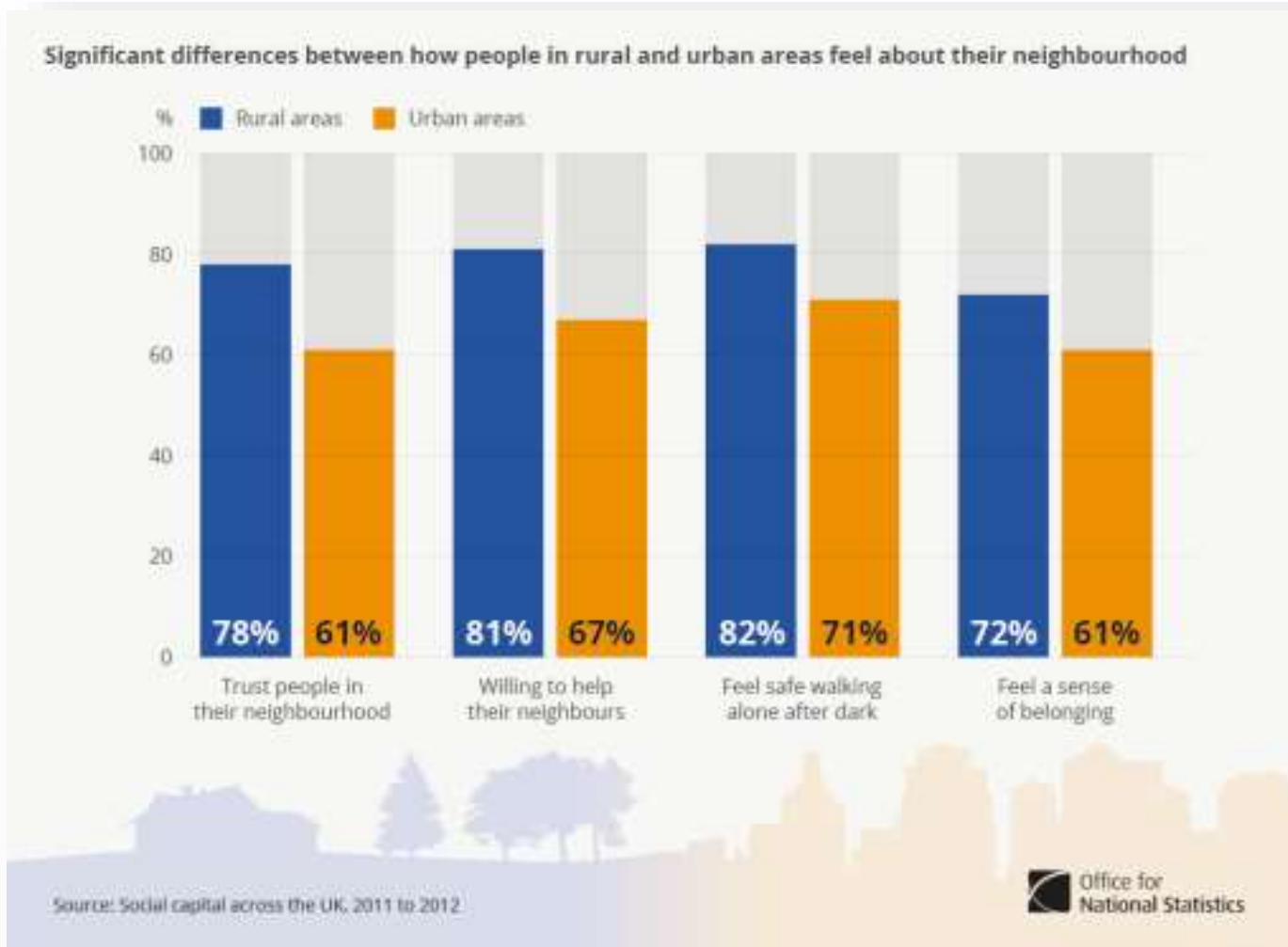
Cities – are they good?

"In great cities men are brought together by the desire of gain. They are not in a state of co-operation, but of isolation, as to the making of fortunes; and for all the rest they are careless of neighbours. Christianity teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves; modern society acknowledges no neighbour."

Benjamin Disraeli

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Urban vs Rural

How we feel about our neighbourhoods?

Significant differences between how people in rural and urban areas feel about their neighbourhood

% ■ Rural areas ■ Urban areas

	Trust people in their neighbourhood	Willing to help their neighbours	Feel safe walking alone after dark	Feel a sense of belonging
Rural	78%	81%	82%	72%
Urban	61%	67%	71%	61%

Source: Social capital across the UK, 2011 to 2012

Office for National Statistics

Understanding Society Survey

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The Urbanicity Effect

❑ **1938** - *Wirth*: **Depression** higher in urban compared to rural settings.

❑ **1939** - *Faris & Dunham*: "Mental disorders in urban areas": **Schizophrenia** was much more common in deprived inner city Chicago than its affluent suburbs.

❑ **2001** *Pedersen & Mortensen*: A **dose-response relationship** between time spent in urban environments in childhood and risk.

❑ **2003/ 2009** - *Evans and Ellaway et al*: The relationship is associated with **perceived quality of place**.

❑ **2004** - *Sundquist et al*: Sweden - 4.4 million adults. Those living in the most densely populated areas had 68–77% more risk of developing **psychosis** and 12 –20% higher risk of developing **depression** than the reference group.

❑ **2010** - *Peen, Schoevers, Beeckman & Dekker*: Meta-analysis of urban-rural differences of **mood and anxiety disorder**.

❑ **2012** - *Vassos et al*: Meta-analysis of **urbanicity in schizophrenia**.

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"85% OF PEOPLE POLLED STATED THAT THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE HAS A DIRECT IMPACT UPON THEIR LIVES AND THE WAY THEY FEEL."

SEEN & HEARD, DEMOS, NOVEMBER 2007

"Mount Fear"
Abigail
Reynolds

Community Wellbeing – the People's Views

"What makes a good place?"

66 views aired

I - Community Spirit; Good People & Neighbourliness

II - Nature & Open Space

III - A Clean Living Environment

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Community Wellbeing – the People's Views

"Where do you go to feel better?"

51 views expressed

I - Nature & Open Space

II - Family & Friends

III - Private Activities Diversions

Community Wellbeing – the People's Views

"Where's Your Dismaland?"

29 Views Aired

I - Aspects/Features Of City Living
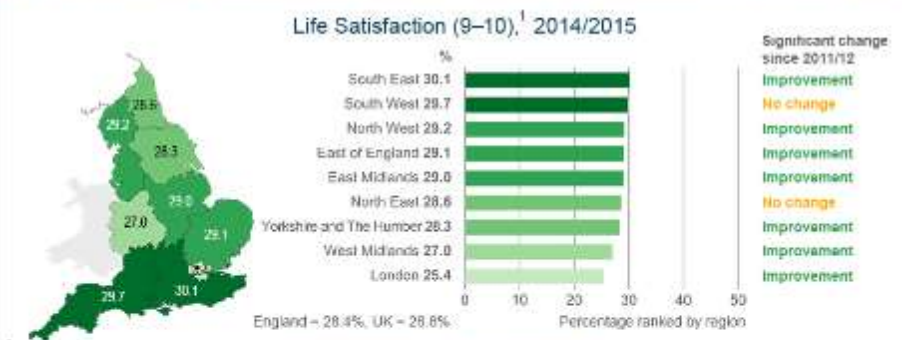
II - Matters Of Governance/ Politics

III - Being Alone

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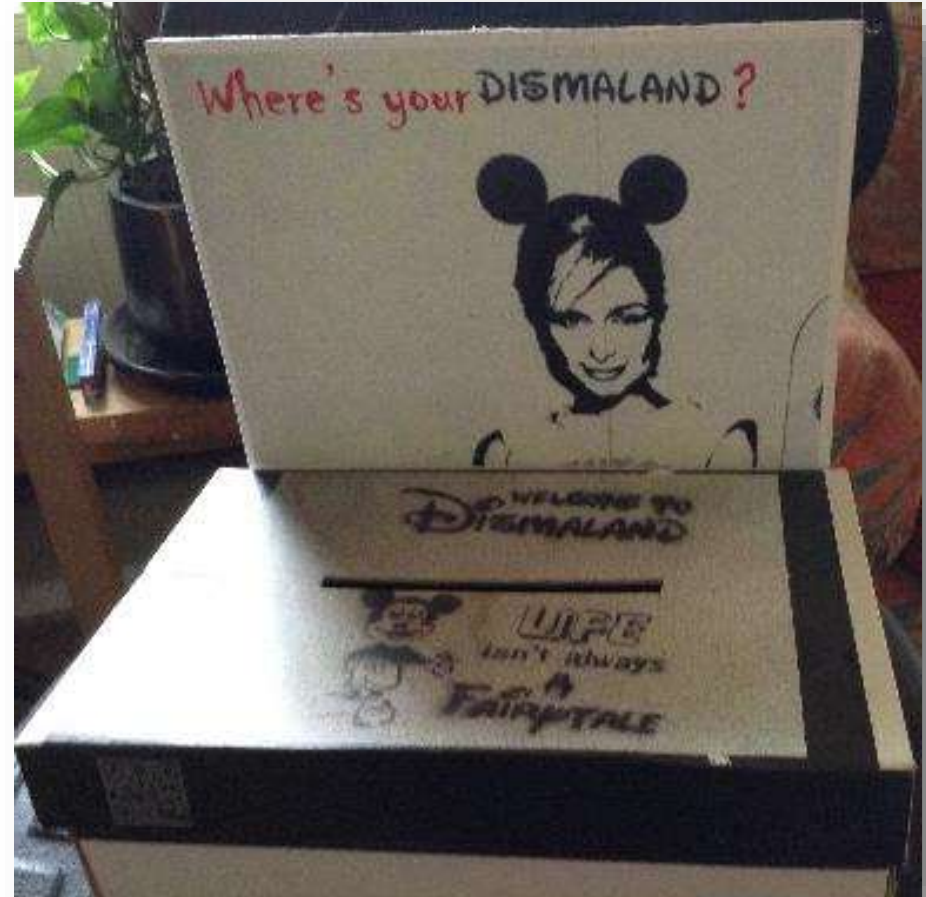
Wellbeing is a Place Variable

National data on subjective wellbeing: ONS

Percentages rating Personal Well-being at highest levels, ranked by region, 2014/15 and significant change since 2011/12, England
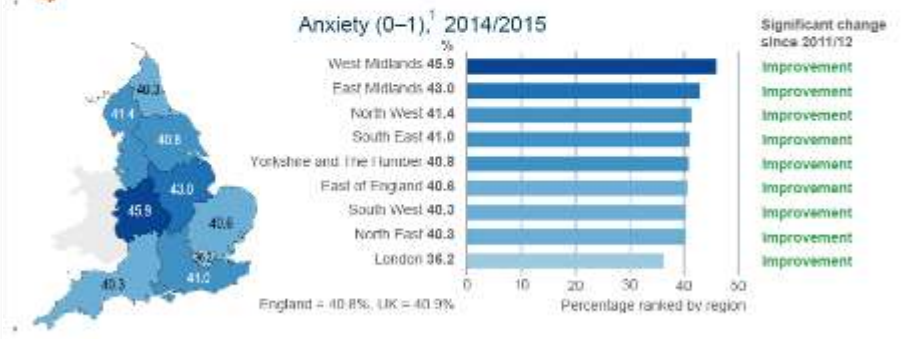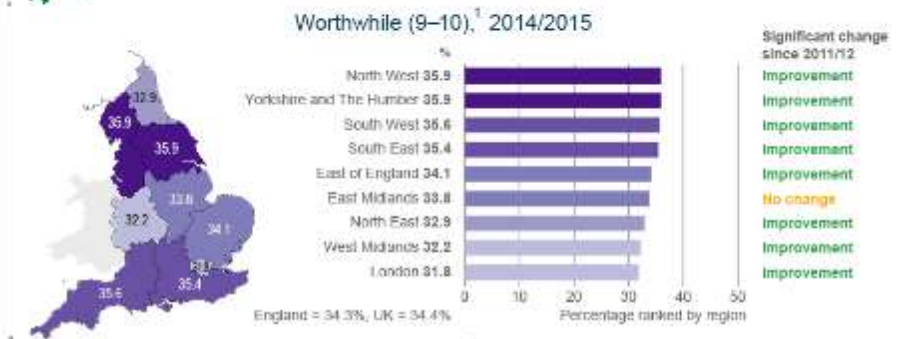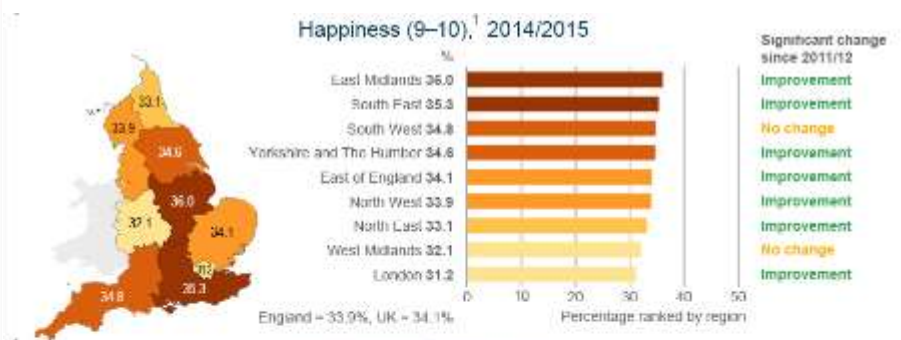
Wellbeing Inequality is a Place Variable

WELLBEING INEQUALITIES REPORT MARCH 2017

Measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

Measuring wellbeing inequality in Britain

overview

What is wellbeing inequality? Why is it important to measure, and which parts of the United Kingdom have higher or lower levels of wellbeing inequality? This paper attempts to answer these questions. It uses the ONS Annual Population Survey to analyse wellbeing inequality in the United Kingdom. We have calculated wellbeing inequality measures for 143 local authorities between 2011 and 2015.[1] We have also calculated wellbeing inequality for a larger number of local authorities (203 or 380) where data from three years of the survey has been pooled together, producing three-year rolling averages.

This paper also shows how these inequalities have changed over time. Additionally, it calculates a set of alternative wellbeing inequality measures, which highlights the many ways the concept can be measured.

Discussion of these alternative measures, and more details on our methodology can be found in our methods paper and the full data set can be downloaded from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing website in Excel format for anyone to use.

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Housing & Wellbeing

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CLAHRC NWC

Wellbeing & Deprivation in Wards
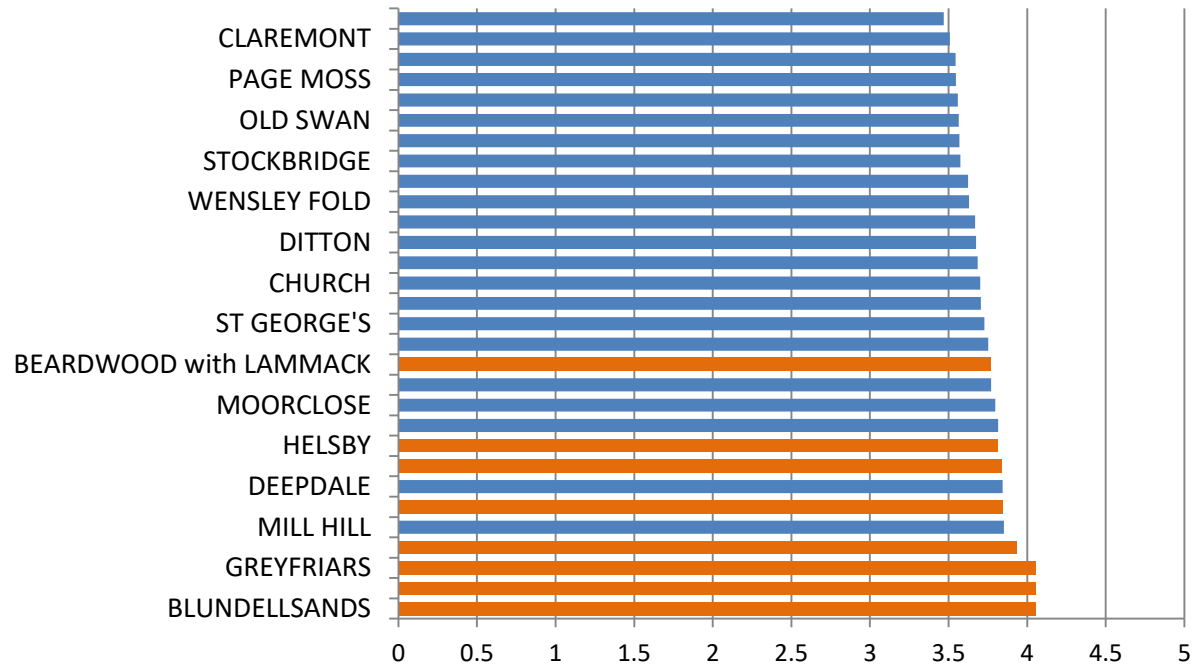
Neighbourhood	Mean
BLUNDELLSANDS	4.0586
NORBRECK	4.0574
GREYFRIARS	4.0571
WILPSHIRE	3.9355
MILL HILL	3.8521
SWANSIDE	3.8478
DEEPDALE	3.8442
CHILDWALL	3.8388
HELSBY	3.8152
WINSFORD OVER and VERDIN	3.8151
MOORCLOSE	3.798
HALTON CASTLE	3.7715
BEARDWOOD with LAMMACK	3.7683
VIVARY BRIDGE	3.7534
ST GEORGE'S	3.7275
CAMBRIDGE	3.7048
CHURCH	3.7016
WORSLEY	3.6856
DITTON	3.6756
VICTORIA	3.6683
WENSLEY FOLD	3.6313
FAZAKERLEY	3.6242
STOCKBRIDGE	3.5748
DUKE'S	3.5688
OLD SWAN	3.5658
SUDELL	3.5599
PAGE MOSS	3.5463
ELLESMERE PORT	3.545
CLAREMONT	3.5087
MOSS BAY	3.4691

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Depression & Deprivation in Wards

Neighbourhood	Mean
GREYFRIARS	1.2356
WILPSHIRE	1.3172
CHILDWALL	1.3193
HELSBY	1.3267
BLUNDELLSANDS	1.3496
NORBRECK	1.3539
BEARDWOOD with LAMMACK	1.3601
SWANSIDE	1.3991
DEEPDALE	1.4077
WORSLEY	1.4367
HALTON CASTLE	1.4462
CAMBRIDGE	1.463
CHURCH	1.4659
VICTORIA	1.4722
MILL HILL	1.4835
VIVARY BRIDGE	1.488
MOORCLOSE	1.5011
WINSFORD OVER and VERDIN	1.5261
OLD SWAN	1.5377
DUKE'S	1.5838
FAZAKERLEY	1.5858
DITTON	1.5904
SUDELL	1.5959
ST GEORGE'S	1.6039
ELLESMERE PORT	1.611
MOSS BAY	1.6181
WENSLEY FOLD	1.667
STOCKBRIDGE	1.7149
CLAREMONT	1.7355
PAGE MOSS	1.7439

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Anxiety & Deprivation in Wards
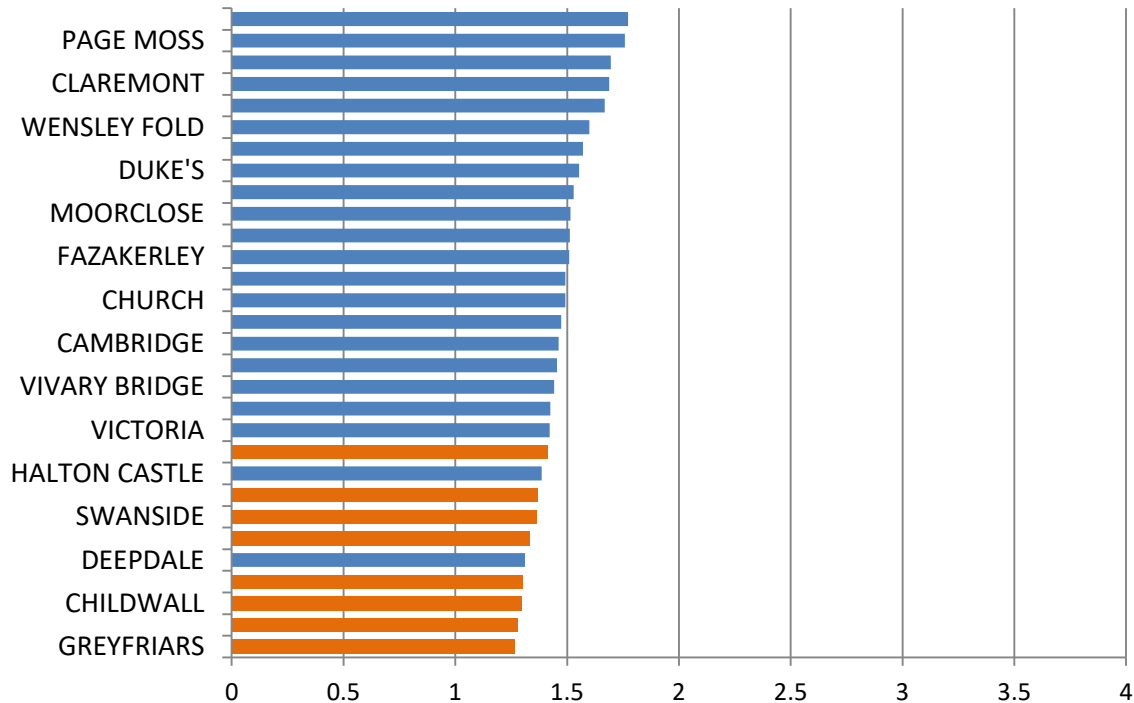
Neighbourhood	Mean
GREYFRIARS	1.2657
BLUNDELLSANDS	1.2814
CHILDWALL	1.2983
NORBRECK	1.3029
DEEPDALE	1.3124
WILPSHIRE	1.3314
SWANSIDE	1.3649
HELSBY	1.37
HALTON CASTLE	1.3869
BEARDWOOD with LAMMACK	1.415
VICTORIA	1.422
WORSLEY	1.4242
VIVARY BRIDGE	1.442
OLD SWAN	1.4546
CAMBRIDGE	1.4615
MILL HILL	1.4736
CHURCH	1.4915
SUDELL	1.4925
FAZAKERLEY	1.5086
DITTON	1.5121
MOORCLOSE	1.5154
WINSFORD OVER and VERDIN	1.5293
DUKE'S	1.5537
ST GEORGE'S	1.5708
WENSLEY FOLD	1.599
ELLESMERE PORT	1.6686
CLAREMONT	1.6888
MOSS BAY	1.6951
PAGE MOSS	1.7582
STOCKBRIDGE	1.7733

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CLAHRC NWC

Place Characteristics - which place variables are related to MH&W?

	Sense of belonging	Use of open space	Level of reported incivilities	Level of community trust
depression	YES	NO	**YES**	MARGINAL
anxiety	YES	NO	**YES**	NO
paranoia	NO	NO	**YES**	NO
wellbeing	YES	YES	**YES**	NO

Reported level of incivilities - the visible cues to impoverishment, threat and poor place stewardship.

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Urbanity or 'Quality'?

❑ Photo contemplation studies show that urban vs rural residential photos matched for perceived quality do not differ in how they change psychological responses.

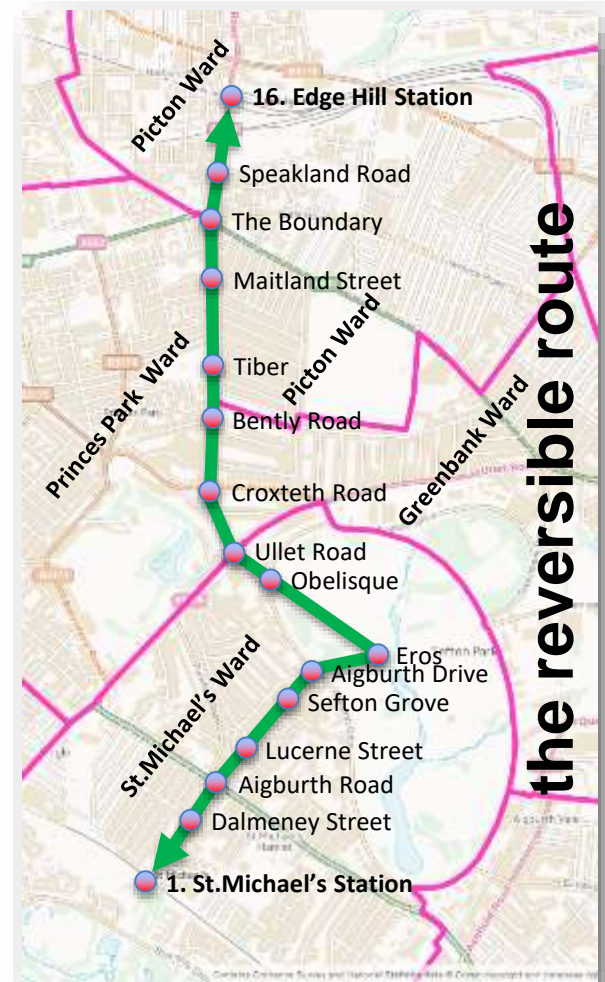❑ While residential photos that differ in perceived quality (matched for greenness) do alter responses differently

Corcoran et al. SAGE OPEN (in press)

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Walking the City: Mobile Data Collection

The South Liverpool Walking Study:

- **Picton Ward.** Almost 40% of the residents here are working class or not working. 76.4% of neighbourhoods in this ward fall within the most deprived 5% nationally.

- **Princes Park Ward.** Very similar to Picton, but with higher rates of child poverty, but reduced reported crime and higher house values.

- **Greenbank Ward.** Whilst the statistics are generally less severe than Picton and Princes Park, the neighbourhoods the walk passes through is indistinguishable from them.

- **St Michael's Ward.** Over 70% of residents are middle and upper middle class. 22.1% of the area is in the 10% most deprived (notably flanking the walk), far less than the Liverpool average 49.6%.

http://www.urbandesignmentalhealth.com/blog/a-tale-of-two-cities-how-place-management-can-shape-our-assumptions-about-neighborhoods-and-their-residents

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What do People Notice?

1. St.Michael's Station
Dalmeney Street
Aigburth Road
Lucerne Street
Sefton Grove
Aigburth Drive
Eros
Obelisque
Ullet Road
Croxteth Road
Bently Road
Tiber
Maitland Street
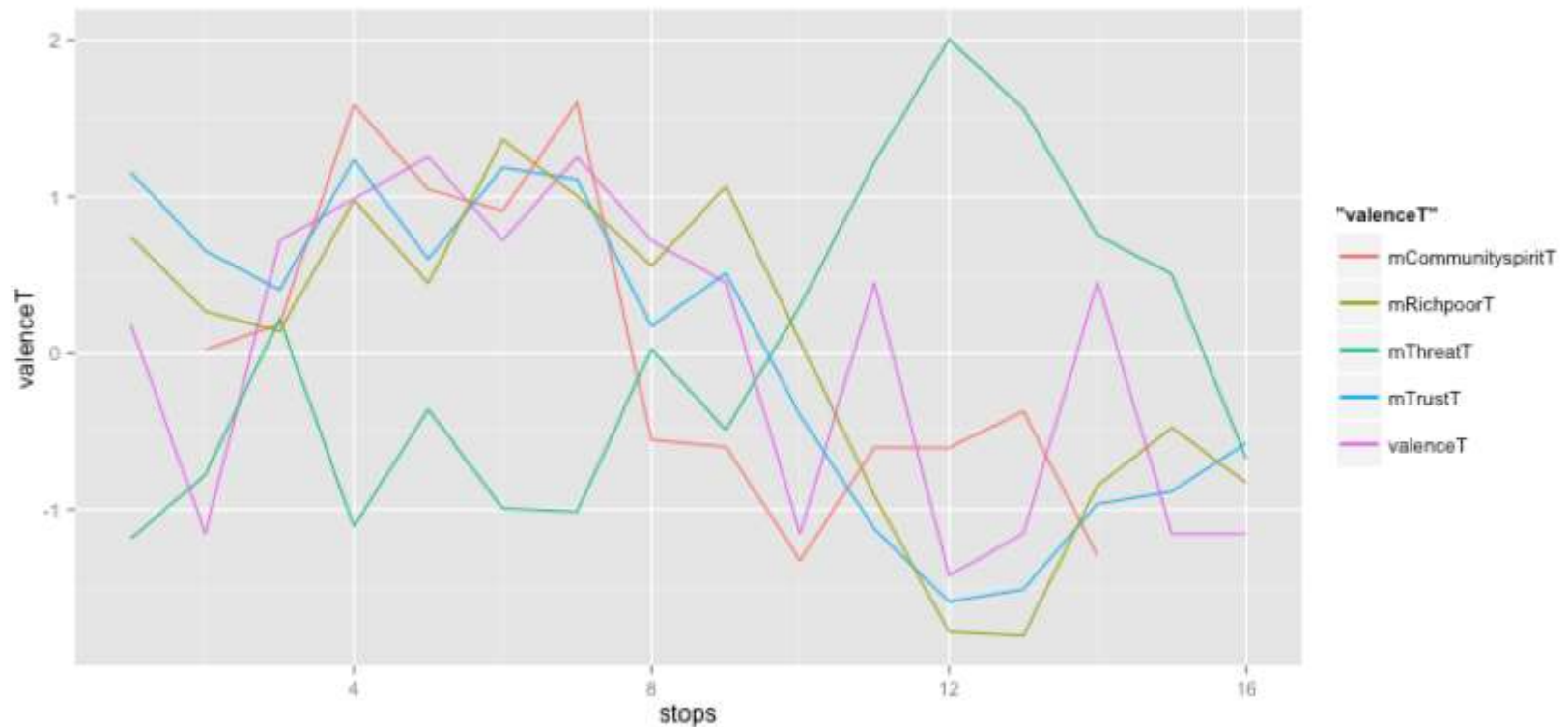The Boundary
Speakland Road
16. Edge Hill Station

Places Change Beliefs

Sentiment Analysis:

Expression of sentiment within **salient feature** descriptors correlates with on-the-spot sense of:

threat = -0.45: **trust** =0.63; **wealth/resource** = 0.65: **community spirit**= 0.58

Desirability as Perceived Resource

Co-Design of Places

Thematic Analysis

- ☐ Increased 'responsibility' for place.
- ☐ Increasing 'implicit mastery'.
- ☐ An 'allocentric' consideration of place.
- ☐ 'Optimism'.
- ☐ 'Co-operative' decision-making.

Figure One: The Developing Group Canvasses

Group 1

VISION – Group 1

The Reader Organisation will create a new heart for Calderstones: building a cultural community for the benefit of the city.

OBJECTIVES

- Create an accessible cultural hub for the local community
- Realise the heritage and landscape assets of the park
- Develop an attractive metropolitan destination within the city
- Establish a sustainable and identifiable home for the reader organisation
- Provide inclusive and equitable wellbeing outcomes

AHRC - CULTURAL VALUE STUDY
CONCEPT PLAN

THE READER ORGANISATION
CALDERSTONES PARK, LIVERPOOL

VISION – Group 2

The Reader Organisation will create a relaxing, inclusive and sustainable home for a cluster of cultural pursuits with reading as its foundation.
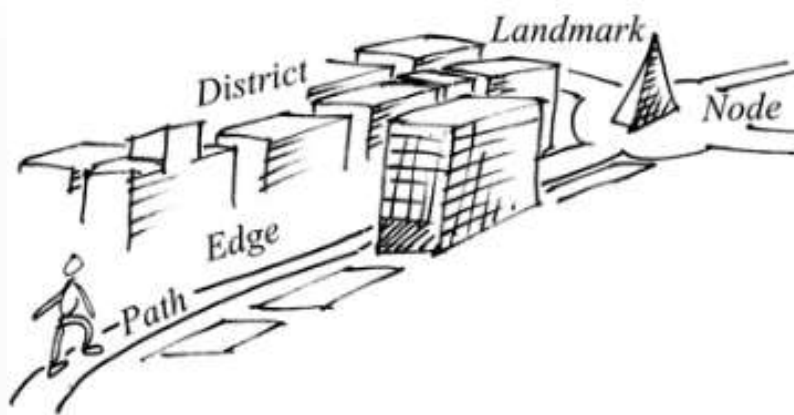
OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate a range of accessible and inclusive cultural activities
- Provide inclusive and equitable wellbeing outcomes
- Provide an exemplar 21st century suburban neighbourhood
- Realise the attractions of the park
- Develop an attractive metropolitan destination within the city
- Establish a sustainable and identifiable home for the Reader Organisation

Corcoran et al. CoDesign (accepted in revision)

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A Common Sense of Place

Kevin Lynch 'The Image of The City'

Connectivity & Movement

The importance of visual cues

Cooperation

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Community Wellbeing Evidence Appearing Soon

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Community Evidence Programme

Systematic reviews

❑ Concepts, definitions, indicators and measurement of community wellbeing.

❑ Housing for vulnerable people.

❑ Encouraging wellbeing via Social relations in the built environment.

❑ Wellbeing and co-production: joint decision making in Places.

❑ Rapid review of the evidence: wellbeing and green spaces.

Community Evidence Programme

Secondary Data Analysis

❑ How do changes in local authority wellbeing inequality relate to changes in local conditions?
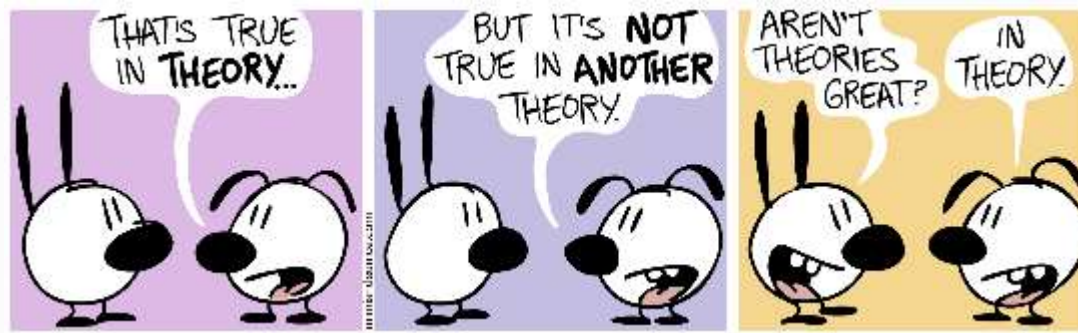
Analysis on the drivers of wellbeing inequality at local authority level. We'll focus on a local level to help policy makers and those working in communities to understand how inequalities can be reduced.

❑ Can variation in average individual wellbeing overtime be predicted by changes in local area conditions?

The question of most importance is what drives wellbeing inequality at the local level, and what can be done to reduce it.

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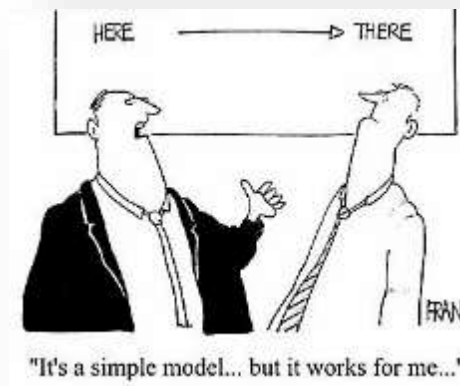
Theory, Wellbeing and the Built environment – Understanding the links

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The Need for Theory: Green Space and Wellbeing Evidence

Evidence Tends to be Epidemiological such as:

...and begs the Questions:

☐ What kind of wellbeing?

☐ How does it enable community wellbeing?

☐ How long does the wellbeing effect last?

☐ How do we understand this?

☐ How do we test against competing hypotheses?

☐ Access to is not the same as using.

☐ Etc..etc..

EVIDENCE BASED PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AND PRACTICE

Green space, urbanity, and health: how strong is the relation?

Jolanda Maas, Robert A Verheij, Peter P Groenewegen, Sjerp de Vries, Peter Spreeuwenberg

J Epidemiol Community Health 2006;60:587–592. doi: 10.1136/jech.2005.043125

See end of article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to:
Ms J Maas, NIVEL, Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research, PO Box 1568, 3500 BN Utrecht, Netherlands; j.maas@nivel.nl

Accepted for publication 16 January 2006

Study objectives: To investigate the strength of the relation between the amount of green space in people's living environment and their perceived general health. This relation is analysed for different age and socioeconomic groups. Furthermore, it is analysed separately for urban and more rural areas, because the strength of the relation was expected to vary with urbanity.
Design: The study includes 250 782 people registered with 104 general practices who filled in a self administered form on sociodemographic background and perceived general health. The percentage of green space (urban green space, agricultural space, natural green space) within a one kilometre and three kilometre radius around the postal code coordinates was calculated for each household.
Methods: Multilevel logistic regression analyses were performed at three levels—that is, individual level, family level, and practice level—controlled for sociodemographic characteristics.
Main results: The percentage of green space inside a one kilometre and a three kilometre radius had a significant relation to perceived general health. The relation was generally present at all degrees of urbanity. The overall relation is somewhat stronger for lower socioeconomic groups. Elderly, youth, and secondary educated people in large cities seem to benefit more from presence of green areas in their living environment than other groups in large cities.
Conclusions: This research shows that the percentage of green space in people's living environment has a positive association with the perceived general health of residents. Green space seems to be more than just a luxury and consequently the development of green space should be allocated a more central position in spatial planning policy.

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The Need for Theory: Green Space and Wellbeing Evidence

Psychological benefits of greenspace increase with biodiversity

Richard A Fuller, Katherine N Irvine, Patrick Devine-Wright, Philip H Warren, Kevin J Gaston

Article Figures & Data Info & Metrics eLetters   📄 PDF

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Abstract

The world's human population is becoming concentrated into cities, giving rise to concerns that it is becoming increasingly isolated from nature. Urban public greenspaces form the arena of many people's daily contact with nature and such contact has measurable physical and psychological benefits. Here we show that these psychological benefits increase with the species richness of urban greenspaces. Moreover, we demonstrate that greenspace users can more or less accurately perceive species richness depending on the taxonomic group in question. These results indicate that successful management of urban greenspaces should emphasize biological complexity to enhance human well-being in addition to biodiversity conservation.

22 August 2007
Volume 3, issue 4

biology letters

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❑ A role for biodiversity?
❑ A link to evolution?
❑ The human drive to forage for resources?

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Perceived Resource in the Living Environment

Behavioural Choices and Wellbeing:

❑ Perceived availability of 'resources' within an environment determines extent of future discounting.

❑ Low resource environments prime implicit choices towards hedonism/ immediate gratification.

❑ We tend to wait better and plan more for the future when we have clear foresight and can predict future resource availability.

People report greater happiness and life satisfaction when they have a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives...pursuing and accomplishing intrinsically meaningful goals, those that are congruent with the innermost self, values and aspirations, or that provide autonomy, competence and relatedness contribute more to well-being than other goal-oriented activity.

Eudaimonic Well-being, Steger, Kashdan, Oishi, 2007

LEAD

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A Theory for Socially Sustainable Places

Life History Theory shows how the qualities of an environment directly determine our life strategies and our wellbeing, emphasising the importance of place design.

Where resources are stable, reliable and predictable, people plan their futures and develop the capacity to adapt to inevitable life stresses, to change and cooperate with other future oriented people they encounter in their communities.

Where resources are unstable, unreliable and unpredictable prime thrill seeking and un-cooperative impulsive, self-centered choices become the norm.

Harsh environments and the behaviours they prime have significantly negative impacts on sustainability.

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A Theory of Change

Changing Places Changes Futures.

South et al. (2017)
Community wellbeing
evidence programme.

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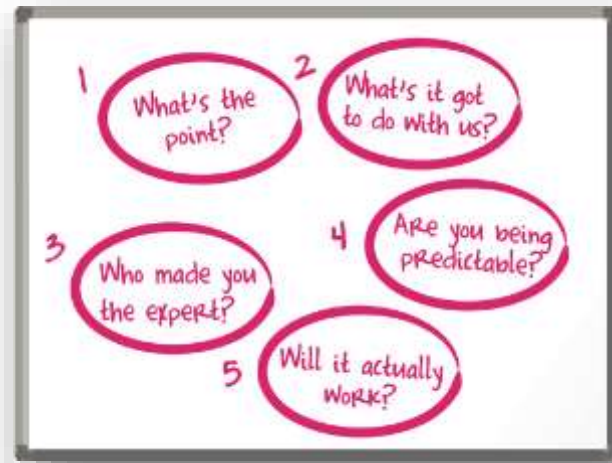
Next Steps in Policy and Practice: Some Ideas

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Cross Sector Collaboration

Town Teams & Place Directorates

❑ What would happen if we were all one authority?

❑ **Lambeth's Wellbeing Network est. 2010 -** The Built Environment and Wellbeing network event Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre 29 .11. 11

❑ *"We exist inside the built environment – it's like asking a tortoise if his shell is important"*

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Recent Policy into Practice Developments

Encouraging Community Wellbeing

From Claiming the Public Realm to Governance of the Commons

"A once run down, crime ridden area has been given a new sense of pride for the individuals to live in due to one street deciding to come together to do little things i.e. plant flowers and shrubs and discourage their children throwing litter around etc. It has made a huge difference over time and led to people appearing to smile more."

"Spread & growth of 'Playing Out' activities. This is where streets are closed to traffic for short periods of time, but opened-up to children and adults to play, talk, interact and socialise. This has the potential to increase exercise for children, reduce isolation and loneliness, allow neighbours to get to know one-another, builds trust, understanding, increases safety in that people look out for one-another and much more."

Clear & Useful Policy Based on Terms & Definitions

❑ Cresswell (2004) Places are spaces with meaning.

What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know better and endow it with value. ... The ideas 'space' and 'place' require ea other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; ea pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed i place.

(Tuan 1977,

❑ Eudiamonic or meaningful/ purposeful/ well places.

❑ NOT Hedonic (aka) HAPPY places – unsustainable.

❑ Avoid easy 'technical' 'branding' fixes.

❑ NOT only economic purpose.

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Well-Design – a Policy Provocation

Can the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' deliver place-making principles?

Corcoran, R. and Marshall, G. (2016) Planning for Wellbeing - Urban Design and Mental Health
http://www.urbandesignmentalhealth.com/journal1-planning4wellbeing.html

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Well-design

Get Connected
Well-Design should prioritise and facilitate legible connections to and between potential hubs and gathering places, and remove barriers to everyday interactions.

Be Active
Well-design should promote active movement to and between potential hubs and gathering places to facilitate the pursuit of everyday physical activity.

Take Notice
Well-design should promote people's conscious awareness of place, of each other and our relationships.

Well-design

Keep Learning

Well-design should embrace 'co-production' to enable individuals to learn about and so develop an allocentric response to and sense of place.

Give

Well-design should include flexible places and environments that prioritise, accommodate and give explicit consent to cooperative community activity.

Well-design should encourage, facilitate and enable people to volunteer their time as a form of 'stewardship' in the pursuit of good places to live.

Conclusions

We can change the association between place, low wellbeing and mental ill-health by understanding:

❑ The connection between individual psychology and our human ecology.

❑ Implicit human responses to place -the importance of cues to threat and low resource.

❑ That what we sense begins with the hard-wired question "Can I thrive here?" – the answer guides our perceptions about place quality and desirability.

❑ That these perceptions drive wider inferences about people in place –embedding stigma as well as resource allocation strategies.

❑ That we can use evidence based guidance and policy to directly address wellbeing in place.

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Prosocial Place
research programme