



Local amenities Barometer

With Liverpool European Capital of Culture for 2008 and the upcoming 2012 Olympics, boosting an area's image and economic performance through culture and leisure is high on the 'place-shaping' agenda. Indicators of the availability of cultural and leisure facilities show an intense concentration in major urban centres of the country with rural areas seriously lagging behind, implying that only parts of Britain can reap the benefits of a vibrant cultural offer.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sports set as its strategic priorities to 'increase and broaden the impact of culture and sport, enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve the places where people live, now and for future generations' (DCMS, 2006). Maximising the contribution that the tourism, creative and leisure industries can make to the economy is also a focal point of this strategy.

Apart from creating employment and business opportunities, a high quality leisure and cultural amenities offer can have more far reaching benefits for an area. Recent research on urban competitiveness in the UK shows that the social, cultural and environmental aspects of quality of life are increasingly important factors in attracting the skilled workforce that is key to success in a knowledge economy¹. Participation in cultural and leisure activities has also been shown to strengthen communities, reduce crime and improve education and health outcomes.

The Local Futures Group's Local Amenities index provides a measure of an area's offer, in terms of leisure and cultural facilities. It includes the number of national heritage sites; the concentration of cultural amenities such as cinemas, theatres museums and galleries; retail floorspace; leisure centres; and the percentage of employment in hotels and restaurants. In a sense, it captures the vitality and "buzz" of a place, which is an important indicator of quality of life.

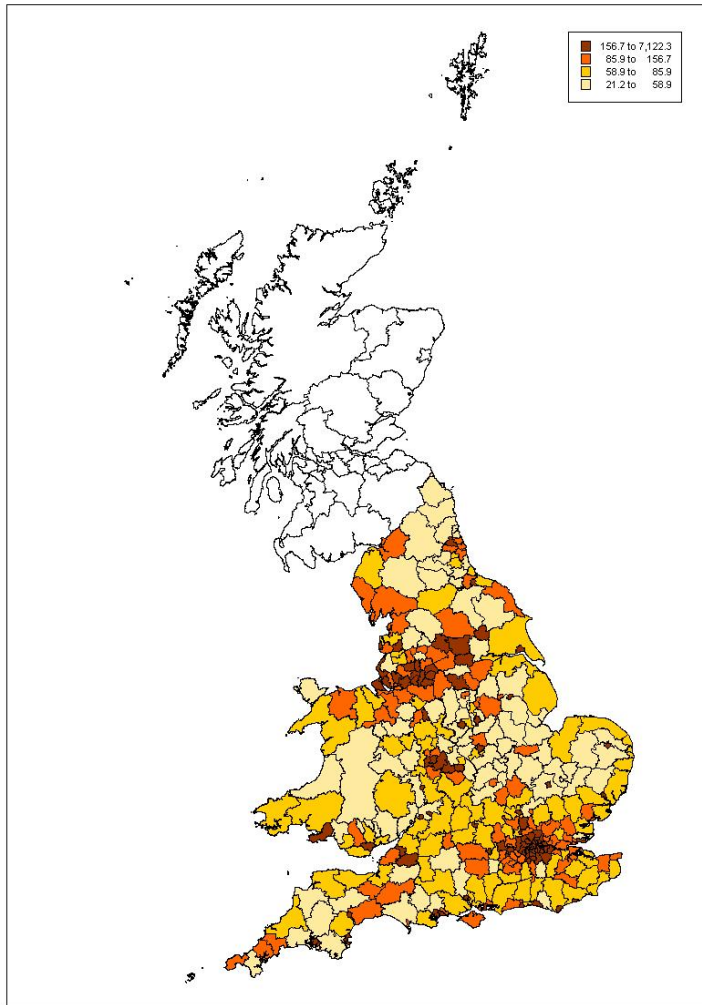
As would be expected, London's dominance in terms of its cultural landscape is apparent. The ten of areas that score highest on the local amenities index is comprised almost entirely of London Boroughs. At the bottom of the ranking we find rural areas of the North East and East Midlands.

Rank	Top 10: Highest Local Amenities score, 2008	
1	City of Westminster	7122.2
2	London city	6762.1
3	Kensington and Chelsea	4977.4
4	Camden	2628.4
5	Islington	1771.2
6	Tower Hamlets	1144.3
7	Hammersmith and Fulham	1108.1
8	Hackney	892.0
9	Manchester	870.2
10	Southwark	840.6
Rank	Bottom 10: Lowest Local Amenities score, 2008	
367	Selby	31.0
368	Boston	30.8
369	North Dorset	30.6
370	Melton	29.8
371	Torfaen	29.7
372	West Lindsey	27.9
373	Corby	27.0
374	South Cambridgeshire	26.2
375	Fenland	23.5
376	South Holland	21.2

Source: *Local Knowledge; Treasures of Britain; BFI Film & Television Handbook; UK Theatres Online; Michelin Guide to Hotels, Restaurants and Pubs; ArtGuide.co.uk; Annual Business Inquiry; Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, Green Flag awards*

¹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002), *Competitive European Cities: Where do the Core Cities Stand?*

The map shows the spatial variation at a district level, in the quality of the local leisure and cultural offer across England and Wales, with localities in the darkest shading scoring highest on our local amenities index. An urban-rural divide is apparent, as the highest performing areas are typically the urban hubs of each region. Apart from most parts of London, high performing areas are also found in the South East and the Northwest, with the city of Manchester ranking 8 among 376 local authorities.



Conversely, areas with the lowest score are found in Scotland and Wales (with Cardiff an exception), most rural parts of the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, as well as in the South West. The lower levels of provision in these areas will affect their ability to retain residents and especially young people, and tend to reinforce urbanisation and patterns of deprivation.

When taking into account the index of cultural amenities (cinemas, theatres, museums) per 1000 square kilometres, the same geographical pattern applies; however the gap between the urban centres and the rest of the country becomes even wider.

The picture changes dramatically when looking at the proportion of employment in hotels and restaurants. Rural and coastal areas, predominantly in the South West, North West and Wales record a high percentage of employment in this sector, while at the same time having a low concentration of other amenities. An economic

strategy focussing entirely on tourism alone can jeopardise the potential for achieving sustainable development within these areas, as the case study of Blackpool shows. Indeed, some of the districts in this group, such as Penwith, are also among the most deprived in the country.

These spatial disparities in the provision of local amenities poses great challenges, particularly in view of the government's ambition to build 3 million new homes by 2020. The quality of the local amenities offer takes time to respond to changes in housing supply. Strong local leadership and vision, as well as a commitment to partnership working, is needed in order for the cultural needs of communities to be integrated into wider regeneration programmes at an early stage. Initiatives such as the DCMS "Living places" partnership with the Academy for Sustainable Communities and national cultural agencies, aiming to ensure that communities experiencing housing-led growth and regeneration can benefit from cultural opportunities, are to be welcomed. However, until the lack of amenities is addressed in a broader range of areas, including rural communities, the goal of the Sustainable Communities Agenda to create places where people will want to live and work seems harder to reach for large parts of the country.

Case Study: Brighton versus Blackpool

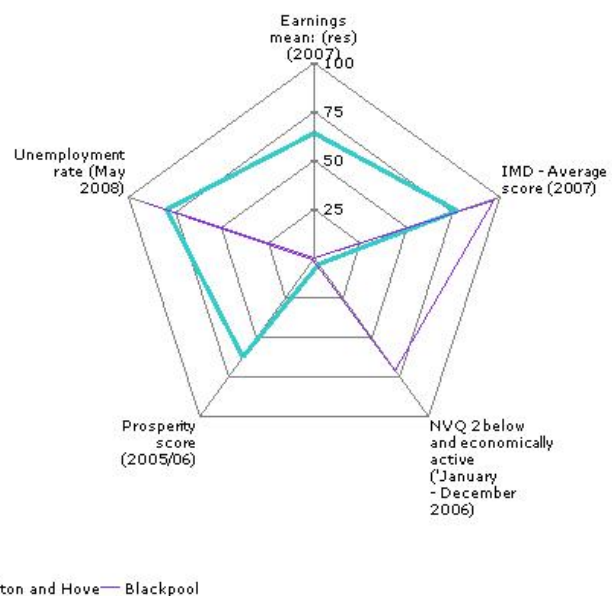
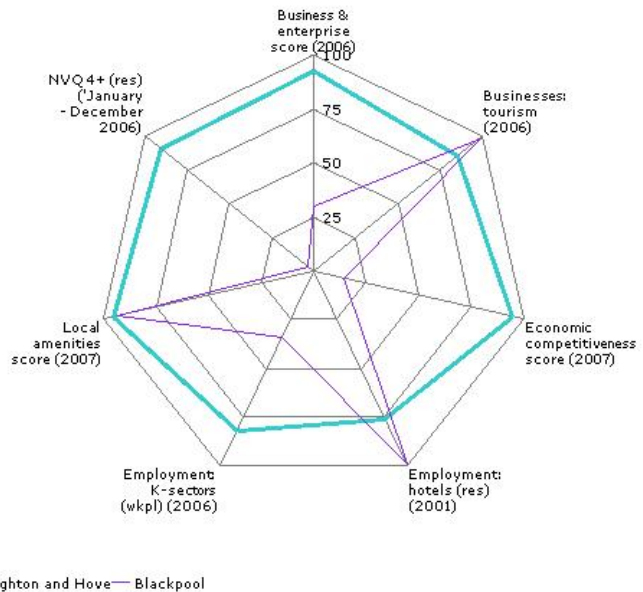
English coastal towns have faced important social and economic challenges. A comparison between two of them, Brighton and Blackpool, shows how different responses to these challenges, notably a difference in reliance on tourism and its related amenities, can lead to different economic and social outcomes.

Tourism plays a central role in both economies. As the spider diagram shows, both districts are ranked in the top percentile of employment in hotels and restaurants as well as in the share of business in tourism, with Blackpool ranked slightly higher.

Brighton, however, benefits from a more diverse economy, as it has built on a vibrant creative sector and has a large share of employment in knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy. Its workforce is also more highly skilled than that of Blackpool, as it is in the top quartile of districts nationally with residents having NVQ4 level of qualifications. This leads to greater economic competitiveness and greater prosperity.

The differences in the dynamism and diversity of the localities' economy are played out in the areas' economic and social well being. Dependence on tourism brings mainly low-skilled, low-paying, seasonal employment. This is evident by Blackpool's lower average earnings and higher share of individuals with NVQ level 2 qualifications that are in employment. Worryingly, Blackpool's unemployment rate was also one of the highest by national standards. As a result the area faces great challenges in tackling the high levels of deprivation recorded and in increasing its residents' prosperity.

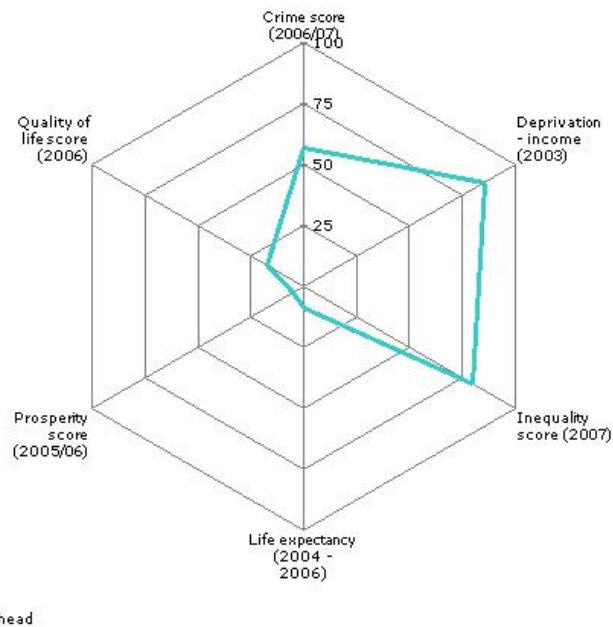
Part of Brighton's better performance is due to its geographical location, as it benefits from proximity to London. The comparison with Blackpool however shows that tourism and its supportive amenities alone cannot underpin sustainable and inclusive development.



Case Study: Gateshead; regeneration through cultural infrastructure

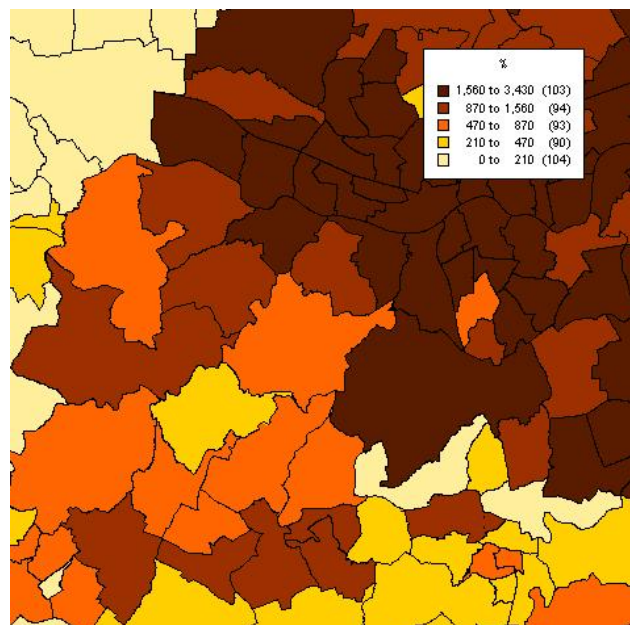
Projects with landmark buildings and cultural infrastructure as their main focus have long been seen as an effective way of delivering physical and economic regeneration. The image and local economies of cities such as Manchester, Bristol and Birmingham have benefited from such approaches, improving their appeal as tourist destinations.

Gateshead is an example of an area that has undergone a major economic and physical makeover in the past decade. Its declining traditional industries have been replaced by high-tech companies and there has been significant public and private investment in major projects such as the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and new arts and cultural facilities in the Gateshead Quays. This has given a boost in the local economy by attracting investment in new firms and by increasing the mean average earnings index of its population by 39% between 1998 and 2007.



However, physical and cultural make-over does not necessarily mean a simultaneous transformation of social conditions. Gateshead still scores poorly in indicators of social well being. It is characterised by above national average levels of crime, low life expectancy rates and high levels of inequality. The district also ranks 52nd most deprived amongst 354 English districts. As a result, despite the significant investment in area and cultural regeneration, Gateshead is ranked in the bottom quartile of districts nationally in terms of quality of life.

The map on the right shows the geographical pattern of income deprivation within Gateshead. A clear spatial polarisation in the amount of residents in income deprivation is shown, which demonstrates that the benefits of physical and cultural regeneration do not spill over evenly through the entire population.



Coming up

Our next Barometer will look at crime Britain. For further information, visit www.localfutures.com or contact the Local Futures Group on 020 7440 7360.

[Amenities Barometer] – Data Annex

Local Amenities Score, 2007

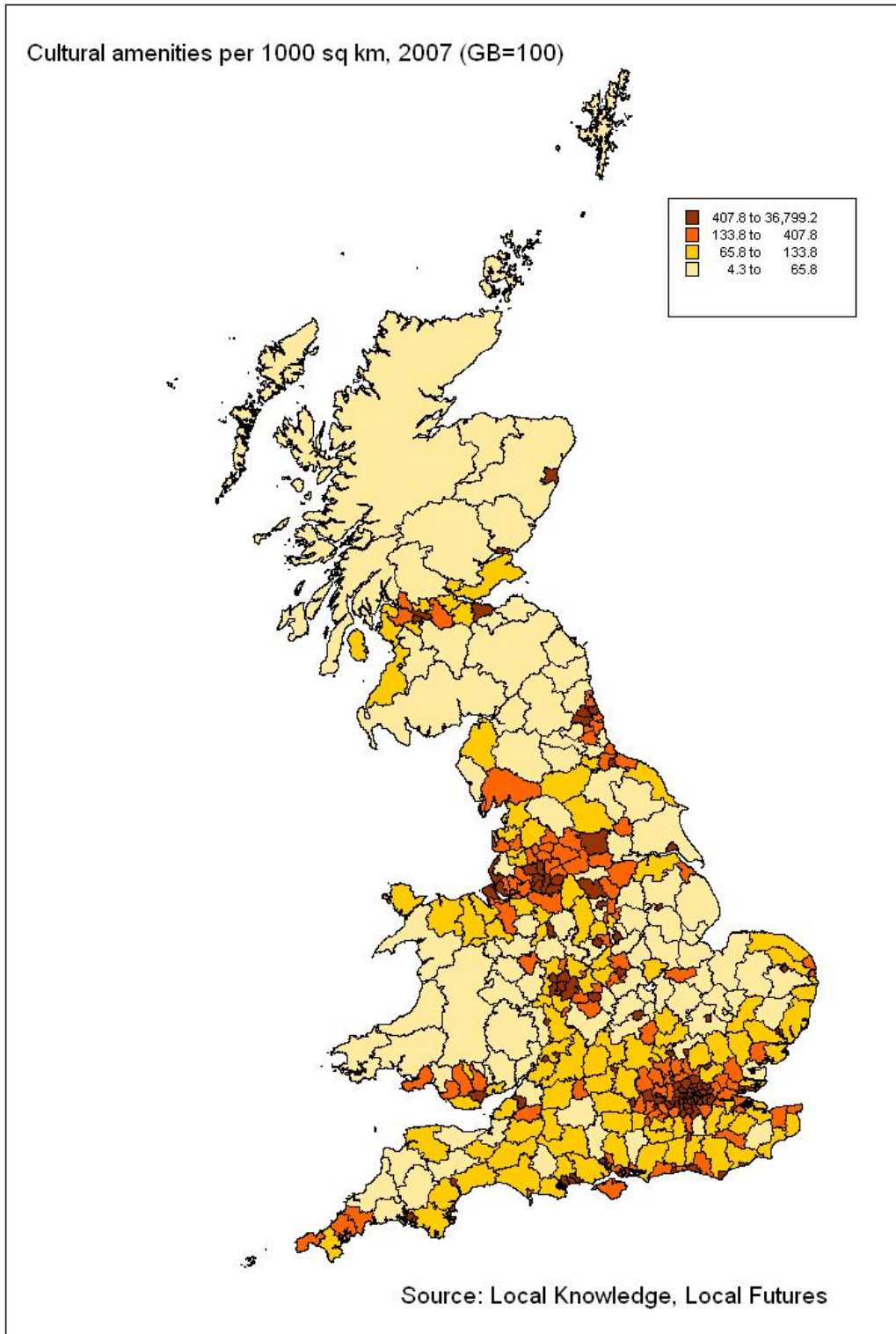
Local Authority	Score (GB=100)	Rank (out of 376)	Local Authority	Score (GB=100)	Rank (out of 376)
Adur	68.16038	238	Caerphilly	74.55777	216
Allerdale	61.20502	270	Calderdale	142.3939	106
Alnwick	31.72979	366	Cambridge	469.3632	18
Amber Valley	53.57549	301	Camden	2628.406	4
Arun	90.28812	175	Cannock Chase	82.95291	195
Ashfield	70.86295	230	Canterbury	132.1981	117
Ashford	63.87392	258	Caradon	46.1324	335
Aylesbury Vale	70.16113	233	Cardiff	304.2909	34
Babergh	59.31817	279	Carlisle	110.0016	136
Barking and Dagenham	118.0295	127	Carmarthenshire	65.14469	256
Barnet	334.7138	29	Carrick	87.56744	182
Barnsley	50.56746	316	Castle Morpeth	43.62326	341
Barrow-in-Furness	87.0035	184	Castle Point	91.2197	170
Basilton	91.75444	165	Ceredigion	50.59098	315
Basingstoke and Deane	86.33529	187	Charnwood	96.0913	158
Bassetlaw	42.55312	344	Chelmsford	156.6866	94
Bath and North East Somerset	165.718	88	Cheltenham	301.0142	35
Bedford	91.30974	168	Cherwell	79.06115	204
Berwick-upon-Tweed	51.80671	311	Chester	103.3708	142
Bexley	199.1558	66	Chesterfield	111.7379	132
Birmingham	517.6718	14	Chester-le-Street	69.37297	235
Blaby	63.83727	259	Chichester	73.89425	217
Blackburn	135.439	112	Chiltern	63.9689	257
Blackpool	311.9645	33	Chorley	70.65772	231
Blaenau Gwent	37.2084	354	Christchurch	110.9134	134
Blyth Valley	56.47465	292	Colchester	127.2161	118
Bolsover	46.74969	329	Congleton	84.90995	191
Bolton	172.4596	84	Conwy	91.27732	169
Boston	30.76549	368	Copeland	90.47475	173
Bournemouth	431.3836	21	Corby	27.00016	373
Bracknell Forest	140.2102	107	Cotswold	66.76707	244
Bradford	202.5156	62	Coventry	182.3774	75
Braintree	67.23208	243	Craven	40.95605	347
Breckland	42.83435	342	Crawley	145.6561	102
Brent	296.9501	38	Crewe and Nantwich	52.71435	306
Brentwood	61.6357	269	Croydon	298.2172	37
Bridgend	72.45026	223	Dacorum	86.52157	186
Bridgnorth	55.58835	295	Darlington	58.71887	283
Brighton and Hove	477.9299	17	Dartford	98.11369	153
Bristol	390.9161	22	Daventry	57.90789	284
Broadland	45.19012	336	Denbighshire	59.40726	277
Bromley	186.8355	72	Derby City	173.4167	83
Bromsgrove	88.47385	178	Derbyshire Dales	57.21692	288
Broxbourne	89.46712	177	Derwentside	47.60547	325
Broxtowe	49.53239	319	Doncaster	105.9984	139
Burnley	124.9503	120	Dover	71.10434	229
Bury	255.5641	47	Dudley	179.9754	80

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Durham	85.86372	188	Hertsmere	86.63131	185
Ealing	242.5346	54	High Peak	88.23484	179
Easington	40.63785	348	Hillingdon	262.6232	46
East Cambridgeshire	51.00833	312	Hinckley and Bosworth	56.57497	291
East Devon	107.1783	138	Horsham	60.61606	273
East Dorset	39.93956	351	Hounslow	298.2462	36
East Hampshire	62.68949	263	Huntingdonshire	54.64176	298
East Hertfordshire	62.17617	267	Hyndburn	96.48576	157
East Lindsey	66.32875	248	Ipswich	252.6338	48
East Northamptonshire	49.47547	320	Isle of Anglesey	53.62714	300
East Riding of Yorkshire	85.24969	190	Isle of Wight	95.15632	159
East Staffordshire	59.13554	280	Isles of Scilly	275.8631	43
Eastbourne	182.2632	76	Islington	1771.231	5
Eastleigh	82.39573	197	Kennet	35.90086	357
Eden	57.5888	286	Kensington and Chelsea	4977.429	3
Ellesmere Port and Neston	88.14875	180	Kerrier	52.48756	308
Elmbridge	133.7462	116	Kettering	34.70198	359
Enfield	198.421	67	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	60.67291	272
Epping Forest	105.8181	140	Kingston upon Hull	262.709	45
Epsom and Ewell	172.2988	85	Kingston-upon-Thames	287.0569	40
Erewash	71.17706	228	Kirklees	135.1085	114
Exeter	248.4336	52	Knowsley	143.327	104
Fareham	67.26836	242	Lambeth	697.5809	11
Fenland	23.51285	375	Lancaster	90.31728	174
Flintshire	60.04116	274	Leeds	363.8006	23
Forest Heath	57.3171	287	Leicester City	352.3692	27
Forest of Dean	36.65105	355	Lewes	56.3447	293
Fylde	101.7991	146	Lewisham	249.4395	49
Gateshead	149.1604	99	Lichfield	46.89033	327
Gedling	49.30511	321	Lincoln	233.1488	56
Gloucester	181.9946	77	Liverpool	481.8286	16
Gosport	123.9475	121	London city	6762.125	2
Gravesham	75.01298	213	Luton	248.6341	50
Great Yarmouth	77.79798	207	Macclesfield	110.19	135
Greenwich	342.9763	28	Maidstone	80.80425	201
Guildford	136.8039	111	Maldon	74.64862	215
Gwynedd	58.94515	282	Malvern Hills	44.25887	338
Hackney	892.0304	8	Manchester	870.1853	9
Halton	137.4303	109	Mansfield	98.68425	151
Hambleton	48.58377	322	Medway Towns	91.33276	167
Hammersmith and Fulham	1108.177	7	Melton	29.80586	370
Harborough	54.28034	299	Mendip	54.66369	297
Haringey	441.7298	20	Merthyr Tydfil	46.28943	333
Harlow	149.6355	98	Merton	248.4528	51
Harrogate	107.4444	137	Mid Bedfordshire	58.94679	281
Harrow	183.5271	74	Mid Devon	33.17418	361
Hart	52.532	307	Mid Suffolk	31.78593	365
Hartlepool	71.52664	227	Mid Sussex	78.06665	205
Hastings	178.6703	82	Middlesbrough	201.3041	65
Havant	96.84934	156	Milton Keynes	156.3092	96
Havering	155.1909	97	Mole Valley	66.50302	247
Herefordshire, County of	80.44163	202			

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Monmouthshire	51.0079	313	Rochford	46.9536	326
Neath Port Talbot	40.07454	350	Rossendale	52.76262	305
New Forest	75.02585	212	Rother	68.69417	236
Newark and Sherwood	102.4527	145	Rotherham	123.8761	122
Newcastle-under-Lyme	92.81909	162	Rugby	48.43553	323
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	358.6125	25	Runnymede	102.7904	144
Newham	324.0767	31	Rushcliffe	52.38493	309
Newport	68.69174	237	Rushmoor	71.98213	225
North Cornwall	59.36898	278	Rutland	42.56425	343
North Devon	73.77357	219	Ryedale	40.21438	349
North Dorset	30.64107	369	Salford	209.7819	61
North East Derbyshire	46.76572	328	Salisbury	62.54748	265
North East Lincolnshire	77.92733	206	Sandwell	162.8442	91
North Hertfordshire	46.51861	331	Scarborough	92.42209	164
North Kesteven	36.26109	356	Sedgefield	44.03917	340
North Lincolnshire	85.47534	189	Sedgemoor	66.73974	245
North Norfolk	80.90825	200	Sefton	201.7492	64
North Shropshire	33.72235	360	Selby	31.03168	367
North Somerset	114.4363	130	Sevenoaks	66.09727	250
North Tyneside	144.8336	103	Sheffield	282.7619	41
North Warwickshire	46.17091	334	Shepway	83.07237	194
North West Leicestershire	50.41182	317	Shrewsbury and Atcham	59.67249	276
North Wiltshire	65.79145	252	Slough	142.9307	105
Northampton	114.1234	131	Solihull	169.0501	87
Norwich	363.7795	24	South Bedfordshire	71.99635	224
Nottingham	507.1845	15	South Buckinghamshire	135.4152	113
Nuneaton and Bedworth	73.83908	218	South Cambridgeshire	26.1607	374
Oadby and Wigston	82.01164	199	South Derbyshire	49.7869	318
Oldham	187.7948	70	South Gloucestershire	70.5515	232
Oswestry	35.75471	358	South Hams	56.88347	290
Oxford	543.128	12	South Holland	21.20914	376
Pembrokeshire	66.2385	249	South Kesteven	44.25812	339
Pendle	53.10621	304	South Lakeland	115.0422	128
Penwith	120.7527	124	South Norfolk	47.6143	324
Peterborough	118.1422	126	South Northamptonshire	31.95735	364
Plymouth	242.134	55	South Oxfordshire	77.42686	210
Poole	187.3605	71	South Ribble	83.77561	193
Portsmouth	356.3439	26	South Shropshire	32.95139	362
Powys	57.87852	285	South Somerset	98.6076	152
Preston	164.0004	89	South Staffordshire	65.69861	253
Purbeck	63.16467	262	South Tyneside	97.61776	154
Reading	328.752	30	Southampton	323.8629	32
Redbridge	137.2078	110	Southend-on-Sea	222.5249	59
Redcar and Cleveland	75.83766	211	Southwark	840.5755	10
Redditch	62.30324	266	Spelthorne	104.4879	141
Reigate and Banstead	89.47856	176	St Albans	159.5897	93
Restormel	90.81203	172	St Edmundsbury	53.23095	303
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	93.14127	161	St Helens	178.9484	81
Ribble Valley	44.88842	337	Stafford	72.76885	222
Richmondshire	63.76426	260	Staffordshire Moorlands	41.34268	345
Richmond-upon-Thames	455.0702	19	Stevenage	125.0177	119
Rochdale	146.0014	101	Stockport	266.9434	44

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Stockton on Tees	137.9115	108	Walsall	148.2006	100
Stoke on Trent	185.8141	73	Waltham Forest	287.3175	39
Stratford-on-Avon	68.03526	239	Wandsworth	532.9032	13
Stroud	66.53914	246	Wansbeck	52.31668	310
Suffolk Coastal	69.41126	234	Warrington	160.7756	92
Sunderland	156.4641	95	Warwick	121.9157	123
Surrey Heath	99.4187	150	Watford	191.1944	69
Sutton	180.8539	78	Waveney	62.55783	264
Swale	65.22941	254	Waverley	74.81021	214
Swansea	172.1439	86	Wealden	73.23539	221
Swindon	114.4639	129	Wealden	73.23539	221
Tameside	219.2088	60	Wear Valley	38.50366	353
Tamworth	82.74627	196	Wellingborough	55.28393	296
Tandridge	46.31	332	Welwyn Hatfield	90.88251	171
Taunton Deane	111.1761	133	West Berkshire	87.17537	183
Teesdale	31.98755	363	West Devon	41.06601	346
Teignbridge	84.896	192	West Dorset	57.1417	289
Telford and Wrekin	61.13343	271	West Lancashire	50.8651	314
Tendring	67.82122	240	West Lindsey	27.89574	372
Test Valley	46.63642	330	West Oxfordshire	63.59463	261
Tewkesbury	56.17716	294	West Somerset	65.21282	255
Thanet	100.4665	148	West Wiltshire	67.72411	241
Three Rivers	65.97758	251	Westminster, City of	7122.235	1
Thurrock	100.6447	147	Weymouth and Portland	134.5944	115
Tonbridge and Malling	96.98018	155	Wigan	100.2917	149
Torbay	281.3452	42	Winchester	73.7471	220
Torfaen	29.72975	371	Windsor and Maidenhead	180.439	79
Torridge	39.16268	352	Wirral	195.3722	68
Tower Hamlets	1144.351	6	Woking	93.97485	160
Trafford	230.3347	57	Wokingham	71.90598	226
Tunbridge Wells	103.2065	143	Wolverhampton	119.578	125
Tynedale	53.4262	302	Worcester	246.9806	53
Uttlesford	61.80091	268	Worthing	226.633	58
Vale of Glamorgan	82.29789	198	Wrexham	92.62198	163
Vale of White Horse	59.7162	275	Wychavon	79.77006	203
Vale Royal	87.94889	181	Wycombe	91.67863	166
Wakefield	162.8869	90	Wyre	77.76426	208
			Wyre Forest	77.43681	209
			York	201.81	63

Cultural amenities per 1000 sq km, 2007, GB=100



Proportion of Employment in Hotels and Restaurants, 2006

