

What makes people feel contented where they live, and what makes people deep-rooted and proud?

Research on Place and Identity
Local Government Association
Neighbourly Lab
Final Report, 16 May 22



One-Page Summary of Findings



Key findings from this research

From the conversations we had with people around England, we saw that “Contentedness with Place” was the primary determinant of how a place supports people to live well. We identify four place-based conditions which have to be met to achieve this Contentedness

People who are contented are rooted in their place deeply or shallowly. This rootedness is a function of people’s life-course and personalities, not of the place.

Some people may feel Pride in their place. This comes about organically in ways that are different for each person.



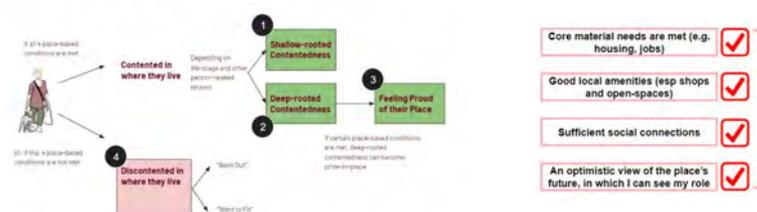
Recommendations for local councils

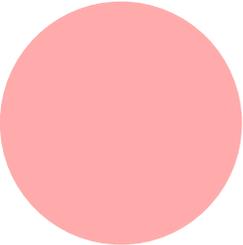
Local Councils have a crucial role in ensuring the conditions for Contentedness. Especially:

- Meeting everybody’s core material needs (e.g. housing)
- Providing adequate local amenities, especially open-spaces and shops (need to collaborate well with private-sector to deliver this)
- Increasing and maintaining social-connectedness

“Pride in Place” is a secondary policy-objective, because (1) it’s not necessary for people’s flourishing; (2) it’s not always feasible for national or local Government to bring about.

For Local Government, its USP is in its ability to be closely tuned-in to what matters in their residents’ lives, and to respond to these “emerging signals” of what people need to feel contented, rooted and (perhaps) proud.





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 - a. Focusing on the conditions for Contentedness
 - b. Focusing on the drivers of Deep Rootedness
 - c. Focusing on the boosters towards Pride-in-Place
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Research Context and Method



The LGA's Objectives for this Research:

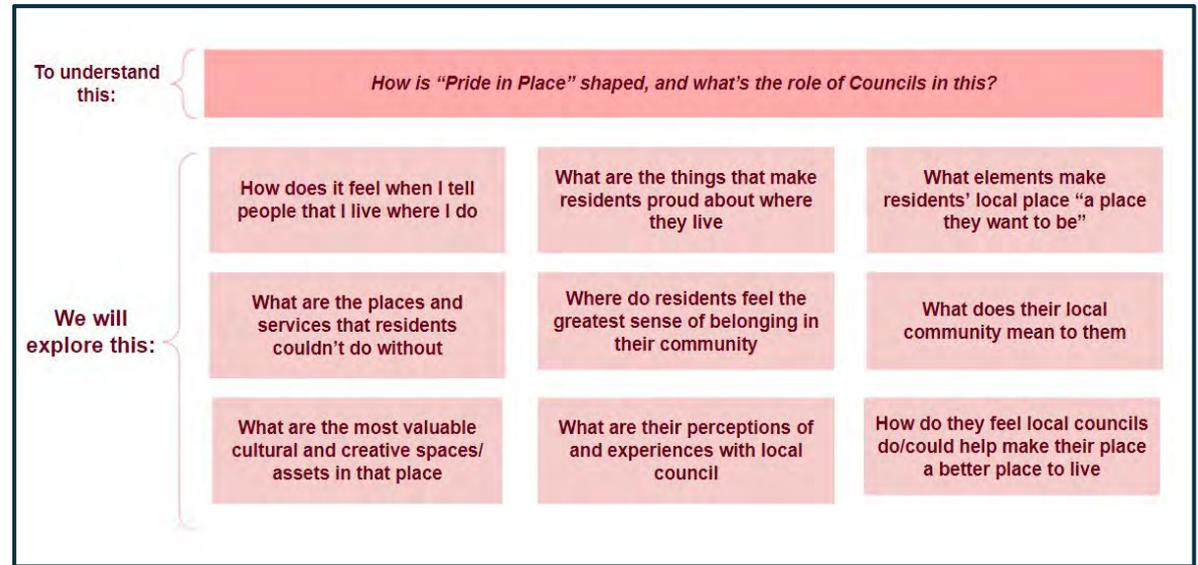
Objective:

Opinion research to capture and explore in more detail the views of a politically resonant sample of the public relating to **the role of councils in shaping local place and identity.**

This should include looking at **the factors that contribute to a sense of local pride in place, and the role of place identity in building a strong community.**

From LGA's research ITT, Feb 22

Initial framing of the Key Question



Research Method: place-based ethnography

Neighbourly Lab were commissioned by the Local Government Association to conduct ethnographic research with **14 households** in three different parts of England: Yardley (Birmingham), Batley (W. Yorkshire) and Margate (Kent).

We met with a mix of people, ensuring a representative spectrum across age, ethnicity, and SES income-level.

We spent two days in each place, and spent time with residents in their homes and local cafes; walking about their neighbourhood with them and meeting their friends. We supplemented this with a c. 90min interview with each participant, and also invited them to share assets and reflections with us pre- and post- interview.

We'd like to thank all the people we interviewed; all their names and PII have been changed.

Neighbourly Lab is an independent research and evidence organisation focused entirely on social-connectedness and community. We are non-profit and based in the Evidence Quarter, and work for Councils and charities all around the UK. www.neighbourlylab.com



Ethnographic Site 1: Yardley

Location	Suburban town in East Birmingham, five miles from Birmingham City Centre
Population	113,000
Life Expectancy	79.5
IMD rank	3516
Local Authority	Birmingham City Council



The Swan Shopping Centre is popular to meet family and friends.



This refurbished block was cited as an example of the area being improved.



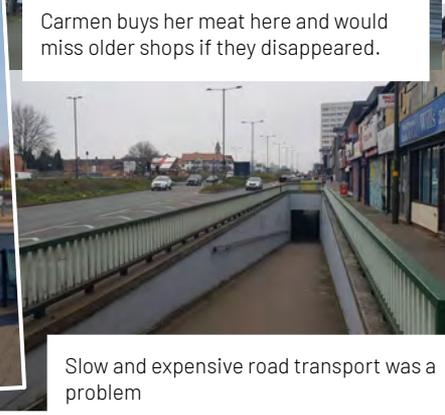
People valued highly Yardley's green spaces and recent improvements



Carmen buys her meat here and would miss older shops if they disappeared.



People recognised the Yew Tree area as the centre of Yardley, but spend more time at the Swan Shopping Centre.



Slow and expensive road transport was a problem

The people we met with in Yardley



Kayla, 45

Has lived in Yardley for 16 years, after moving from a nearby town. She still visits to see her mum. She lives in a cul-de-sac with her three children in their 20s and works outside of Yardley in children's care.



Carmen, 36

Has lived in Yardley for 20 years and grew up nearby where her mum still lives. She has a football-mad 14 year old boy and works as a barista. Her partner travels a lot and his dad is also close by. She finds that the area gives her most of what she needs even though there's "not much sense of community".

Ralph, 56



Owns his house in Tile Cross, lives there with partner and his daughter and his 4 year-old grandson. Career as a HGV driver and transport manager; been unable to work due to workplace injuries. Loves the green-space and parks close his home.

Murad, 28



Has been living in Yardley with family for 10 years. He recently finished university, but has struggled to find a job in his field and currently works in a call centre. Most of his friends live outside Yardley, in his university town or other areas.

Zain, 35

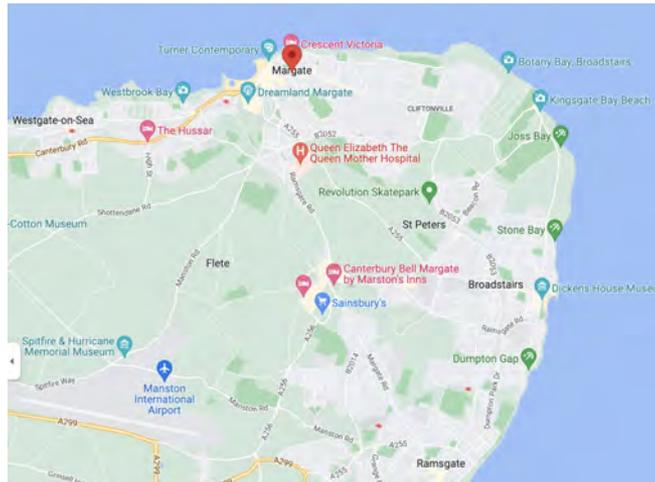


Has lived in Yardley for 11 years, since moving with his family from another area of Birmingham. He lives with family and has two jobs working for the Civil Service and in a car shop on weekends. He enjoys playing football and cricket in the local park with friends.

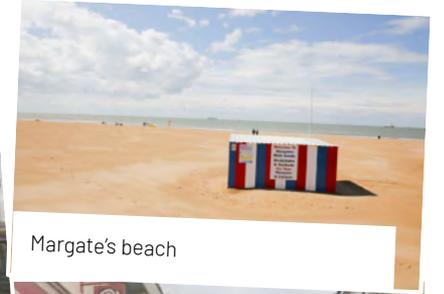


Ethnographic Site 2: Margate

Location	A seaside town on the north coast of Kent, south-east England
Population	65,000
Life expectancy	73
IMD rank	67
Local Authority	Thanet District Council



Part of Margate's old town, Gary takes his mum here for "overpriced coffee"



Margate's beach



Margate's beach area



Part of Margate's high street where there are more affordable shops



A food bank on the high street



The amusement park where Rory spends time with his partner and child

The people we met with in Margate



Aria, 65

She has lived in five different countries, but has been settled in Margate for the past ten years, living with her long-term partner. She doesn't work and spends her time doing hobbies, such as her knitting group.



Gary, 29

Currently homeless, spends some time staying at his mum's and some time staying with friends. Has lived in Margate for the past 10 years. Has a six year old son in Wales who often comes to visit him in Margate.

Rory, 27



Has lived in Margate for the past 20 years, when his family moved across from Ramsgate. He recently moved in with his partner and her young son. He works full time in customer service.



Jill, 59

Lives alone, but has a lodger who she doesn't see much. She has lived in Margate for 30 years and is divorced but has three grown-up children who have moved away from the area. She visits them when she can. She doesn't work, but volunteers in a charity shop to keep busy.



Ethnographic Site 3: Batley

Location	Market town in West Yorkshire, within the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees
Population	50,000
Life expectancy	79.4 years
IMD score	5771
Local Authority	Kirklees Council



Batley's Town Square



The new shopping centre under construction



Abdullah on the high street



Kristie and Scott's close



Radika's boys have outgrown their BMX

The people we met with in Batley



Dan, 33

Lives with his parents in Heckmondwike and works in building-maintenance in Batley. Has a partner and two children that he doesn't live with because he says the Council won't find a house for them.



Mina, 39

From a conservative Pakistani family, Mina has made a successful career in procurement. She's 39 and single and starting to get engaged in schemes to help disadvantaged local teenagers.



Scott and Kristie

In their late 50s. They moved to Batley 20 years ago and felt it took them at least 10 years to get accepted locally. They own a home in cul-de-sac and have rescue-greyhound. Proud of the area's trajectory towards cohesion, and volunteer with local park.



Radika, 41

Mum of two teenage boys, she lives with her husband who works in a local supermarket. She works as an advocate for carers. She is part of a big local Gujarati family all living in Batley.



Abdullah, 18

First year uni student, keen footballer and Haffiz (has memorised the Koran), lives with his parents and younger siblings. Very close with his 30 first-cousins in Batley; part of a well-established Gujarati community that centres on worship and family.



Key questions covered in the ethnographic interviews

- What does it mean to be a person who lives where they do?
- What makes them most/least proud about where they live?
- What are the places, spaces, services, people that make this place what it is to them? Which of these elements are most important to them?
- What's challenging about living where they do?
- What is the community like in this place?

- How connected do they feel to this place and the community that lives there? Where do they feel most/least connected?
- How do people spend their time in this area?

- What are the most valuable cultural and creative resources here?
- What are their perceptions and experiences of Local Council in that area?
- How does their council help to make this place somewhere they want to live? What else could councils do to help promote this?



Towards an Explanatory Model of Contentedness, Rootedness and Pride



How the ethnographic-research led us to this explanatory model:

From the ethnography, we were able to discern what matters most to people about where they live; and what they expect or hope that their place can bring to their lives and wellbeing.

From this we explored and hypothesised different possible models of how people fit in place, and what matters most for people, and what the conditions or drivers are. We then iterated and refined these models by fitting the people and their stories.



The outline of this model:

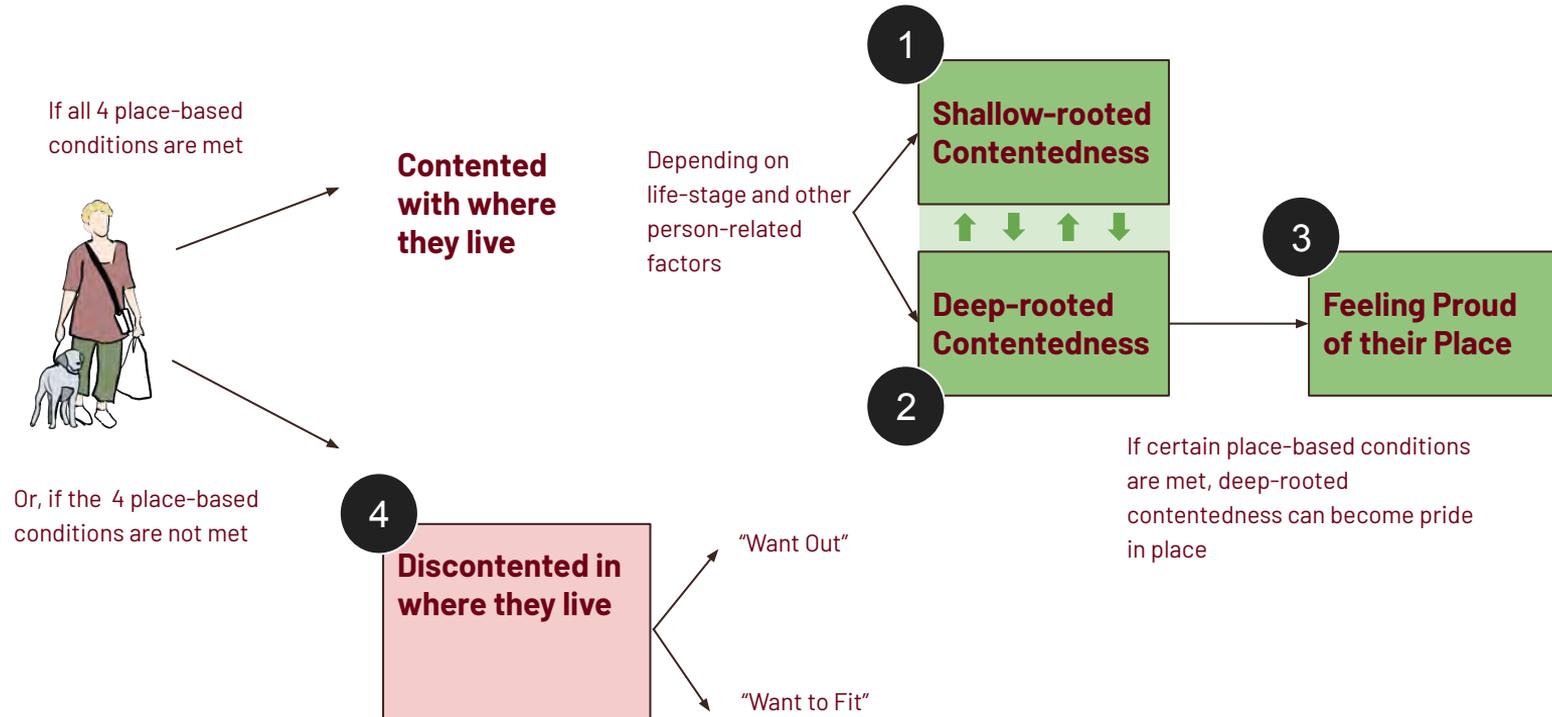
The most important feeling for people is to feel contented in where they live: a sense that their place meets their needs and supports their aspirations. We call this feeling “Contentedness with Place” and identify four necessary place-based conditions for people to feel this contentedness.

Of the people who feel this contentedness, there are two types. People who feel deep-rooted in their place, and people who feel more shallow-rooted. We don’t make a value-judgment here – either type seems just as likely to bring contentment, and the determinants of rootedness are more person-attributes than place-based.

Then, for some people who are contented and deep-rooted, they may feel Pride in Place, and we have suggested three factors that bring about this Pride.



So: there are **four states** people can feel when it comes to how they fit and feel about their place. The first three are different flavours of contentedness; the fourth is discontentedness



We can map all the people we met in Batley, Yardley and Margate into one of these four states. An example of how this typically is expressed:

1

**Shallow-rooted
Contentedness**



Aria in Margate

Aria likes Margate but knows she wants to move to Italy eventually and dreams of in a little cottage by the Mediterranean.

2

**Deep-rooted
Contentedness**



Rory in Margate

Rory has plenty of family nearby. His parents live 20 minutes away, his aunt and his uncle lives in the next street. He sees himself staying in Margate and building a family with his partner.

3

**Feeling Proud
of their Place**



Radika in Batley

Grew up here, surrounded by family and memories; and boasts that Batley is the only town in Yorkshire that can still lay on a full-scale Gujarati wedding festival.

4

**Discontented in
where they live**



Murad in Yardley

Murad doesn't have local friends around him, and has trouble finding a job in Yardley. He feels that Yardley is going downhill due to crime and people not taking care of the area.

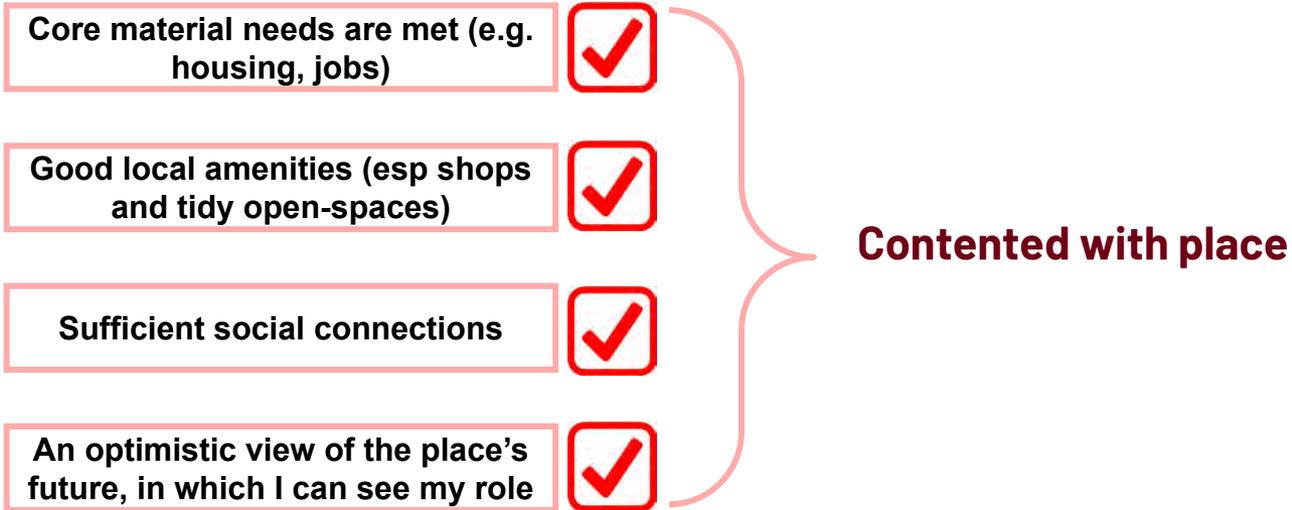


So: the drivers of Contentedness

Contentedness refers to one's sense of satisfaction about the place where they live.

It's a state that can be achieved in any place, as long as the place meets the necessary conditions.

Our research showed **four necessary conditions** in order for people to feel contentedness with place:



In our research, we didn't hear anything about civic-engagement or cultural assets. For the people we met with, these seemed not to be "necessary conditions" for contentedness.



(Although we acknowledge that these are important for meeting other objectives or needs)



There are two types of discontented people, depending on whether people “want out” or “want to fit”

For both types, the four necessary conditions are not all met

- ✗ Core material needs are not met (e.g. housing, jobs)
- ✗ Poor local amenities (esp shops and open-spaces)
- ✗ Insufficient local social connections
- ✗ A pessimistic view of the place's future, in which I can see my role

“Want out”



In some cases, people feel the place won't ever meet their needs for contentedness, so they **want out**, i.e. *want to leave the area*.

“This place is going downhill, I want to move somewhere else”

- Murad

“Want to be able to fit”



In other cases, people feel that they persevere to get contented in this place, so they **want to fit**

“I wish I could stay but I can't afford to live here anymore, I may need to move somewhere else”

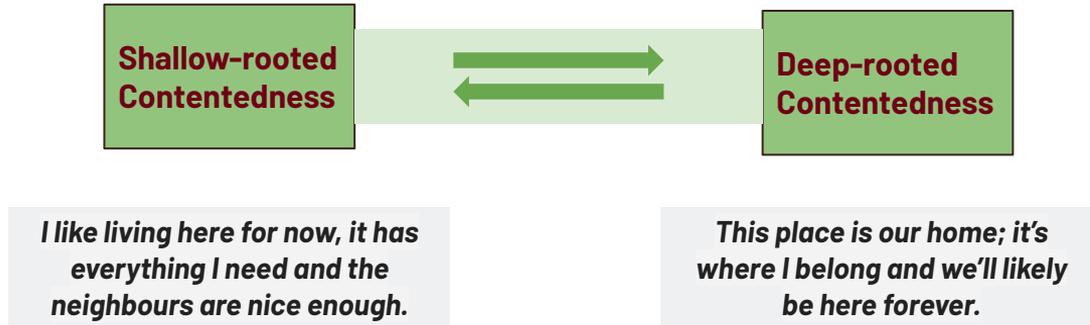
- Gary

Shallow and Deep-rooted contentedness with place

People may fall into two categories of contentedness with place: shallow-rooted or deep-rooted.

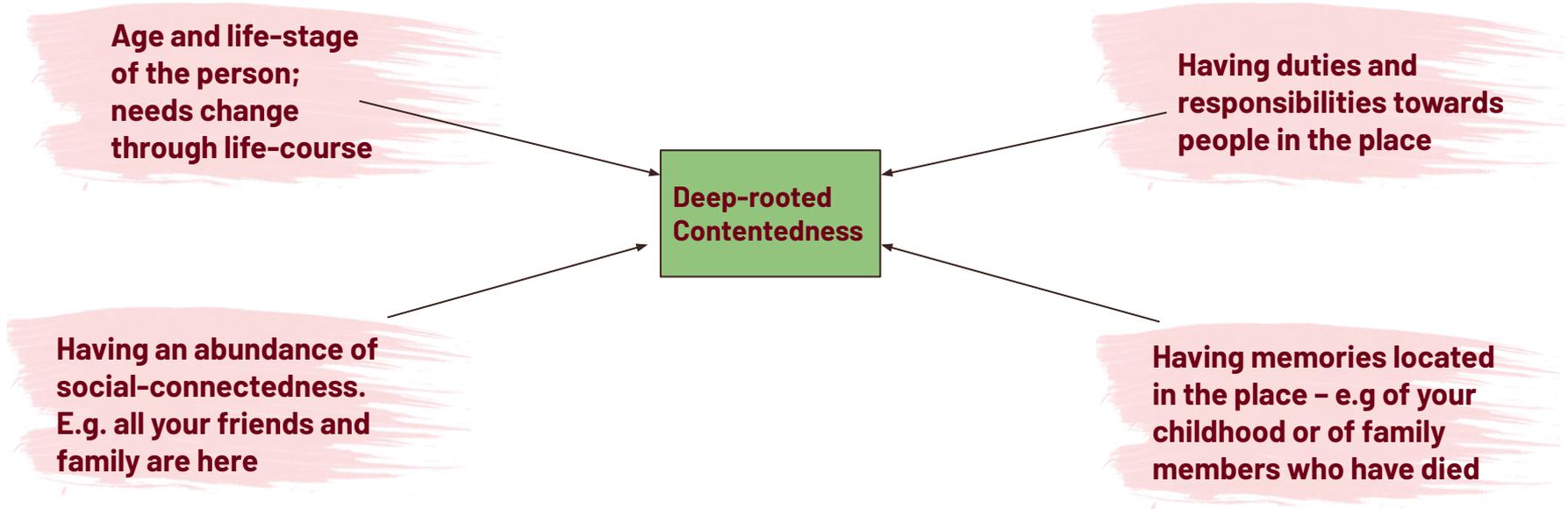
Neither category is necessarily superior to the other, especially as different levels of contentedness may suit people where they are in their particular life stage.

These categories are also not fixed and people may move between the two depending on their life-course or outlook.



There are four forces which may drive contented people to become deep-rooted

These drivers are mainly intrinsic, i.e. independent of place. Any one of these drivers can move a person from shallow-rooted to deep-rooted contentedness.



Councils can help to massively increase Social Connectedness. Here are some suggested approaches:



Support the local 'social institutions' around which connections are built.

As well as the well-known settings like libraries, community centres, these may also be the busy local cafe, or a shopping-centre where teens hang out, or a kids football club. Or they may be online activities like neighbourhood Whatsapp Groups. So: in-depth local understanding of place is critical.



Build connection into physical spaces; We all know places that are comfortable to linger, chat to neighbours and strike up conversations and places that aren't. In planning policy, housing, public realm and highways councils should build in the 'bumping places.'



Elevate the **Relationships between your front-line staff and residents.** Upskill your staff in community development techniques: your repairs staff could be addressing homelessness, your parks staff could be engaging with young people who have too little to do. For inspiration, see the [Essential Mix](#), run by Neighbourly Lab and funded by NLCF.



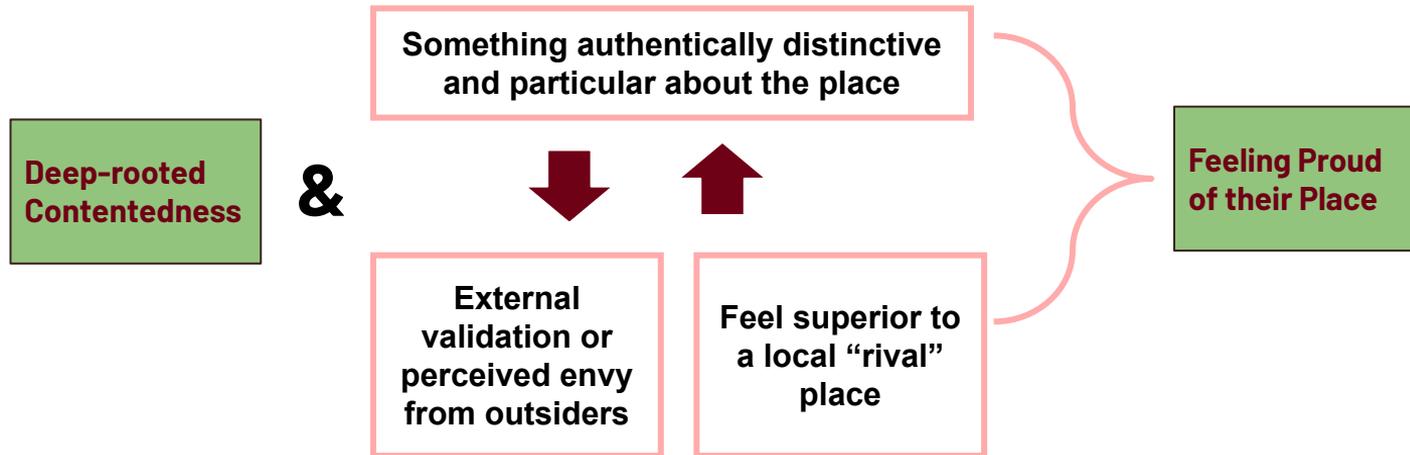
Experiment and join the growing community of organisations pursuing this mission. See the recommendations in this recent GLA report [Reconceptualising Loneliness](#) on ways to prevent loneliness; or see the work of the [Relationships Project](#) and of [Neighbourly Lab](#)



Deep-rooted contentedness → Pride in Place

For some people who have deep-rooted contentedness, they may develop Pride in Place. Pride in Place often exerts a feedback effect, reinforcing deep-rootedness.

Developing Pride in Place occurs through extra factors or “boosters” which are extrinsic and highly dependent on the particular place they live in.



So: the pre-conditions for Contentedness are mainly about place; the drivers of Rootedness are mainly about people; then place comes back again as a determinant of Pride-in-Place

**Contentedness
with Place**



**Deep-rooted
Contentedness**



**Feeling Proud
of their Place**

**Any place can make people feel
contented, if the four
necessary place-based
conditions are met**



Place based Conditions

**This contentedness may
become deep-rooted for
anyone, if they are deeply
invested in and connected to
their place**



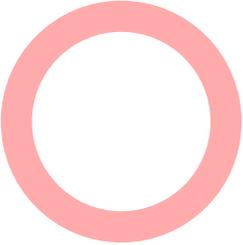
People-related Drivers

**And if the place has
something special about it,
this can alchemise into
Pride-in-Place**



Place-related Drivers





How people in Yardley, Margate and Batley experience these different states:

Focusing on the conditions for Contentedness with Place



The necessary conditions for people to feel Contentedness with place



We'll look at stories about each in the following 4 slides



Kayla is a tenant of Birmingham City Council and found a job supporting young people in care, after volunteering at a Yardley youth project.



“ I used to volunteer in a youth centre, and that gave me experience working with young people. I've worked my way up and in my current job I'm a deputy.

Jill initially moved to Margate from London due to its good value housing and low cost of living.



“ My ex-husband and I were looking for places to live, my son was one at the time. It was a chance to have a bigger house and raise our children somewhere nicer than London.

But when the condition isn't met:

Dan describes Heckmondwike as “a dying town, nothing good about it”.. Because the Council won't find him adequate housing



“ They're giving the houses to the wrong people... I'm sorry, I'm just so annoyed about it, I keep thinking about it when I'm driving around the town”



Good local amenities (esp shops
and open-spaces)

For Krystal in Yardley, the Swan **Shopping Centre** is important as well as the older shops around the Yew Tree.



“ There’s always someone you know when you come here [Swan Shopping Centre]. There’s the Costa and the Greggs where you can hang out and in the day lots of older people do. I’d miss the Yew Tree Butchers and Ripe and Ready [a florist] if they ever went.

For Gary in Margate, it’s about having the **beach** and play centres nearby where he can take his six year old son.



“ Margate is just a friendly, seaside town, I love the beach and the amusement park. Plus there’s a play centre for me to take my son to when he’s visiting.

But when the condition isn’t met:

For Murad there are **too few places to hang out** and just be with people. Green space is important to him, but it needs more in it. He compares Yardley negatively to the different places his siblings live.



“ There’s nowhere to just sit around and I’d like more facilities in the parks, not just tennis courts, but cricket too.



For Aria in Margate, she has been able to find **local groups** online to meet new people, such as her weekly knitting group.



“ I’m very introverted but I’m still part of a local knitting group. There’s just eight of us so we know each other well, sometimes we go out for lunch.

For Abdullah, his week revolves around a constant rhythm of mosque and **family meals**



“ Every Saturday it’s lunch at Nan’s and there’ll be 20 cousins, and Sunday is with my mum’s family. There’s usually about 30 cousins and we’ll probably watch a football game on TV.

But when the condition isn’t met:

For Jill, her children moved away to find jobs and start families. Many of her closest friends are now also leaving Margate.



“ My friends are moving away, one of just moved to Portugal. Some are moving abroad and some are moving somewhere else in the UK. I don’t think they’ll end up coming back.



An optimistic view of the place's
future, in which I can see my role

Mina in Batley – she's looking forward to **starting to volunteer and give back to the place** – to helping girls in Batley find opportunities that she didn't have



“
Batley, this is my home
and always will be..
There's no feeling like it
on earth”

Rory is **excited for Margate's future growth** and is optimistic that the new movie being filmed in Margate will bring more tourists, which will help local businesses.



“
The film will be good for Margate.
People will watch it and then decide to
come down for the weekend, which
will bring in business. Margate's got
itself into a good place.

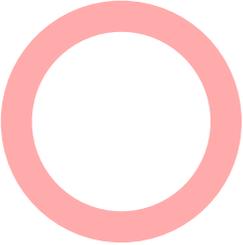
But when the condition isn't met:

Gary likes that Margate is improving, but worries about it becoming **more expensive** as his family might have to leave Margate and move somewhere cheaper.



“
My mum lost her job recently. She's
considering moving to Sittingbourne
for the lower rent prices, but I'd miss
it here, I'd miss the beach. Margate
feels like home.





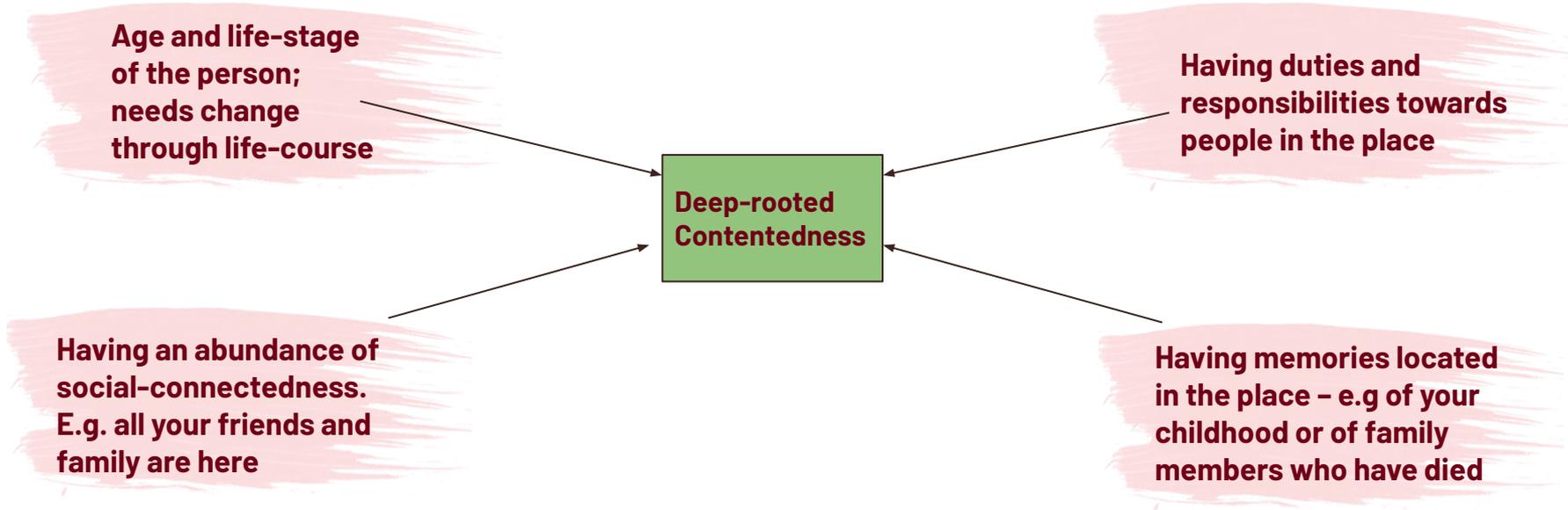
How people in Yardley, Margate
and Batley experience these
different states:

**Focusing on the drivers of
Deep-Rootedness**



There are four forces which may drive contented people to become deep-rooted in their place

These **four drivers** are mainly intrinsic, i.e. independent of place. Any one of these drivers can move a person from towards deep-rooted contentedness.



**Drivers towards
Deep-Rootedness:**

**Age and life-stage of the person; needs
change through life-course**

For Rory in Margate, he has an area where he has a stable job, is surrounded by family and **can start a life with his partner.**



“ I’m in Margate because my family are here, my partner is here, we just moved in together last year.

For Ralph, aged 56 in Birmingham, he’s starting to **plan for his grandson’s schooling** in the place where his grandson will grow up



“ The local primary is Ofsted Outstanding C of E school, but we have a 50/50 chance of getting inside the catchment.



**Drivers towards
Deep-Rootedness:**

**Having an abundance of social-connectedness in
the place where you live**

For Radika in Batley, the big wedding banquets are iconic of the extraordinary **power of the community**:



“

When people from Bradford or Birmingham come and see the Batley weddings we can do here, they're blown away... other communities can't manage a massive wedding because they can't rely on getting the community to help.. Here in Batley, we can.

For Zain in Yardley, he is **surrounded by family and friends** who will join him on weekends to play football and cricket in the local recreation ground.



“

I could spend hours in Yardley. If I had an extra day in the week I'd spend it with family. Maybe I'd take my siblings to the park or to the little farm nearby.



**Drivers towards
Deep-Rootedness:**

**Having duties and responsibilities
towards people in the place**

Aria is part of a **local knitting group** in Margate where she teaches the less-experienced knitters in the group.



“

I've been knitting since I was 12 years old so I give advice to some of the newer knitters and teach them how to do it.

Carmen regularly **helps her mum who is in poor health**. Her mum lives a mile away and in the past was very active in the community. People still know her. Her partner's Dad is also nearby and needs help from time to time.



“

My mum had a seizure two years ago and I help her now with her shopping and preparing her meals



**Drivers towards
Deep-Rootedness:**

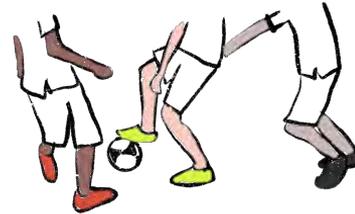
**Having memories and important past-experiences located
in the place where you live**

Radika's parents lived all their lives in Batley, but died young, 16 and 20 years ago. She is constantly reminded of them in the families' homes and around the town.



“ *This place is my home; I can't see myself living anywhere else.*

Abdullah doesn't have children yet, but has a commitment that his **children should grow up in the very same environment that shaped and supported him.**



“ *I know every corner of Batley, every street and every hiding place” .. and in 10 years time I see my children playing on the same street where I played”*



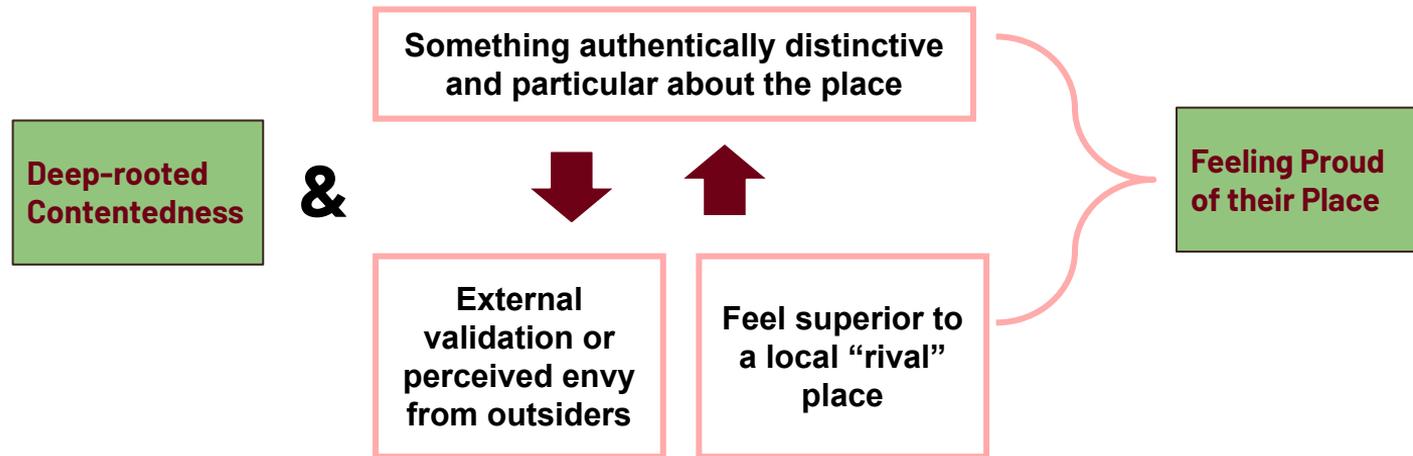
How people in Yardley, Margate and Batley experience these different states:

Focusing on the boosters towards Pride-in-Place



Recapping on how Pride-in-Place can emerge out of Deep-Rooted Contentedness:

Pride in Place seems to come about through extra factors or “boosters” which are extrinsic and highly dependent on the particular place they live in.



The sources of local pride are varied and often seem insignificant

These boosters are plural and personal: different for different people.

- Often pride comes from something surprising and left-field: For example in Margate: Rory talked about an episode of “Only Fools and Horses” from over 30 years ago (and before he was born) showing the town; Jill showed the lighthouse pictured on a £20 note.
- Pride seems to emanate most strongly from a sense of momentum and progress: for example in Batley, the emerging food-scene and the town’s progress cultural harmony is far more salient than attention on heritage eg. textile industrial history.

The “big-bang” events or assets often feel remote or polarising for local people

- Everyone in Yardley was aware of the Commonwealth Games - it is a major cause of travel disruption. Those people who felt rooted in Yardley and Birmingham as a whole, felt the Games were a chance to ‘showcase’ what Birmingham can offer. Others felt it was something being brought in from the outside and they weren’t very interested
- While several of our participants were deep-rooted and proud of Margate, the Turner Gallery didn’t feature as a source of pride. Rather people highlighted the longer standing attractions, such as Dreamland, the amusement park.



The common-features for these boosters of Pride in Place

The three “boosters” for pride in place are

1. Something being **authentically distinctive** and particular about the place. Especially things which are about looking forward to what the place is becoming, not looking back to where it came from.
2. **External validation** or perceived envy from outsiders
3. Sense of **superiority** compared to a local “rival” places

“Only Fools and Horses” filmed in Margate

“ People know Margate from the Only Fools and Horses episode Jolly Boys’ Outing. They’ve filmed other things here too - Top Boy, Killing Eve. It’s a nice feeling seeing it on TV, you think ‘oh there’s our beach, there’s the train station, there’s Dreamland’.

The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham

“ I’m glad the Commonwealth games is being held in Birmingham. Birmingham has a lot to offer, it just takes one person to drive the vision and take us into the next chapter. I’d like to see football and boxing trials, opportunities to push young people in the area and get them involved. We have a lot of local talent, we just need to invest in them.

The emerging food-scene in Batley

“ The change makes me feel proud, to see people from outside Batley coming in for food... they used to come to Bradford for a night out but now they come here... and also to see white couples and families.. eating in places that used to be where only Asians would go.



Therefore Pride in Place cannot be easily “manufactured”

Why it’s difficult to “manufacture” Pride in Place



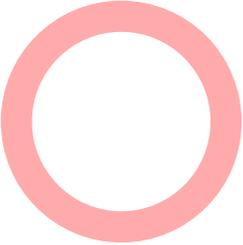
- The boosters are different for different people. It’s rarely “one size fits all”.
- The things that make people proud are often peculiar and could not be anticipated (like the people in Margate who are proud of the town being on “Only Fools and Horses”)
- Big interventions are often polarising - e.g. the range of responses in Yardley to the Commonwealth Games, with complaints about its disruption to traffic.

Recommendations for Councils:

Ensure that the conditions for contentedness are met, and then Pride-of-Place may “bubble up” organically.

Councils can try to “tune in” to emerging signals about new sources of pride-in-place, and encourage them. For example, Kirklees Council could encourage the emergence of the new Batley “food-scene”.





**People's perception of their
local Council and its role in
making people feel
contented, rooted or proud**



Perceptions of Councils, and the role they play towards Contentedness and Rootedness and Pride

In general people had **low levels of interest** in the council and the council was not mentioned unless prompted.

- Some people are experiencing a **personal** problem which means they have close involvement with the council (e.g. Dan and Gary with their housing).
- Others are generally **suspicious** of the Council and/or politicians generally, especially if they haven't had much personal engagement with a Council representative.
- However, for most, they only mention the Council for what they consider to be **basic responsibilities** of the Council e.g. issues with litter or potholes in the road.

The Council was **easily blamed** for things it had done badly; especially poor street cleaning, rubbish connection, charges for services.

The Council **didn't always get credit** for positive changes it had brought about, for example in Yardley participants thought the Oaklands Park had been greatly improved, but no one mentioned the Council.



When the necessary conditions for contentedness go unmet, the council's role becomes negatively talked about:

Core material needs are **not met**
(e.g. housing, jobs)



The experiences of Gary in Margate and Dan in Batley – both young men who were frustrated by the **lack of council support with housing**. And Murad in Yardley, who has **struggled to find a job**, wishes there were community initiatives or a citizens advice bureau to help jobseekers.

Poor local amenities (esp shops and open-spaces)



When shopping-areas or parks become **untidy** or **old-looking**, residents look to the Council to do more to **maintain or rejuvenate** them (e.g. Ralph and the “70’s-style” Lea Hall shopping centre).

A **pessimistic view of the place's future, in which I can see my role**



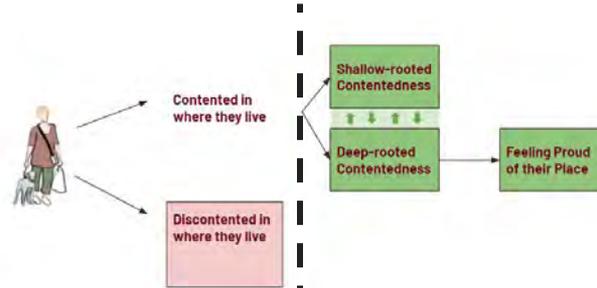
Jill in Margate is frustrated that there are **no job opportunities** in Margate for young people, they all grow up, get their degrees and move somewhere else. Her own children left already. She says **the council should be doing more**, they could re-open Manston Airport nearby to create more jobs.



Summary of recommendations for local government



The priority is ensuring the conditions for contentedness-with-place. Seeking to foster pride-in-place is much less important



Local Councils have a crucial role in ensuring the conditions for contentedness-with-place. Especially:

- Meeting everybody's core material needs (e.g. cleanliness and housing)
- Providing adequate local amenities, especially open-spaces and shops (need to collaborate well with private-sector to deliver this)
- Increasing and maintaining social-connectedness (which also increases people's deep-rootedness)

"Pride in Place" is a secondary policy-objective for Local Councils, because (1) it's not necessary for people's flourishing; (2) it's not always feasible for national or local Government to bring about.



So: Councils have a key role in ensuring that these 4 conditions are met, so people feel contented with their place



3

Sufficient social connections



Recap on what Councils can do to help to massively increase Social Connectedness.



Support the local 'social institutions' around which connections are built.

As well as the well-known settings like libraries, community centres, these may also be the busy local cafe, or a shopping-centre where teens hang out, or a kids football club. Or they may be online activities like neighbourhood Whatsapp Groups. So: in-depth local understanding of place is critical.



Build connection into physical spaces; We all know places that are comfortable to linger, chat to neighbours and strike up conversations and places that aren't. In planning policy, housing, public realm and highways councils should build in the 'bumping places.'



Elevate the **Relationships between your front-line staff and residents.** Upskill your staff in community development techniques: your repairs staff could be addressing homelessness, your parks staff could be engaging with young people who have too little to do. For inspiration, see the [Essential Mix](#), run by Neighbourly Lab and funded by NLCF.



Experiment and join the growing community of organisations pursuing this mission. See the recommendations in this recent GLA report [Reconceptualising Loneliness](#) on ways to prevent loneliness; or see the work of the [Relationships Project](#) and of [Neighbourly Lab](#)



And if they're able to tune-in closely to what matters for local people, Councils can help to foster Pride in Place

Don't depend on big-bang or "one size fits all" interventions to try to manufacture pride-in-place.

Councils can try to "tune in" to emerging signals about sources of pride-in-place, and encourage them.

For example, Kirklees Council could encourage the emergence of the new Batley "food-scene".



Thank you



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