Foundational Economy

Research Report

How an ordinary place works: understanding Morriston

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Luca Calafati, Jill Ebrey, Julie Froud, Colin Haslam, Sukhdev Johal and Karel Williams assert their right to be identified as the authors of this work.

The authors are part of the Foundational Economy Collective. Its membership comprises of academics and practitioners from many countries.

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How an Ordinary Place Works:
Understanding Morriston
Luca Calafati, Jill Ebrey, Julie Froud, Colin Haslam
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Executive Summary

Understanding how an ordinary places works is important because it can open up new possibilities of making citizen lives more worth living. The method of this report is to engage specifics about one place. It is about Morriston, a district town with a 30,000 population some 3 miles north of the centre of Swansea, itself a medium sized Welsh town with a population of around 250,000. But our report is of broader interest because our analytic framework is general and could be applied to analysis of other places. The media and mainstream economic policy misunderstand ordinary places like Morriston through binary stereotyping. They credit such places with a unitary character and label them as ‘left behind’ or ‘uncompetitive’, on the basis of shabby outward appearances and metrics like GVA (gross value added) per capita. Elsewhere we have noted GVA per capita is uninformative about foundational liveability because it hides differences between types of households created by variable housing costs and other inescapable charges on income.¹

This report analyses Morriston in a new framework about the collective drivers of wellbeing. Following Sen, we define household wellbeing as the citizens’ freedom to ‘live the lives they have reason to value’. Within a hard frame of local settlement and activities, wellbeing does not drop out automatically from any given household income level. Instead household wellbeing, now and for future generations, depends on the functioning of three supply side infrastructures which provide foundational services through local networks and branches.

- Grounded local services infrastructure: housing, utilities, health, primary and secondary education and care.
- Mobility infrastructure: private and public transport systems.
- Social infrastructure: parks, libraries, community hubs and the public realm on the high street.

The hard frame

Our analysis begins to engage the specifics of place by considering settlement and activities which are the hard frame in which urban citizens live. Morriston is in no way a representative or typical district. But, like many other North European towns and small cities, Morriston is an ordinary/ extraordinary place whose inner and outer zones have

specific histories which go back several hundred years and culminate in 35 years of disruption and adjustment since the early 1980s.

Morriston is practically defined by developments which have created a new hard frame since the first Thatcher Government recession of 1981-2.

- Large scale redevelopment of derelict brownfield industrial land brought a new kind of car based, ‘off roundabout’ development to Morriston; including a new 20,000-seater sports stadium and big box retail on the largest out of town retail park in Swansea. The old high street was by passed north-south by an improved trunk road connecting with the M4 motorway which acts as an east-west bypass.

- At the same time, Morriston lost high wage, large plant industrial employment with deindustrialisation. The Swansea Bay region lost 30,000 manufacturing jobs between 1990 and 2010 so that only 5.5% of the whole Swansea workforce is now employed in manufacturing, as against 10% in retail where out of town has taken most of the clothing and food spend out of the local high streets.

Morriston is not a planned ‘new town’ because its hard frame is the unintended consequence of unrelated policy initiatives and modernisation projects which were typically part of higher-level government designs with little input from Morriston citizens. This explains the presence of two major local employers, the DVLA which deals with UK-wide driver and vehicle licensing, and Morriston hospital, a 750-bed teaching hospital.

The mobility infrastructure

The mobility infrastructure question is about how citizens move about within and beyond the hard frame, specifically, how do they use private car and/ or public transport to access the economic and social resources of work and leisure within and beyond Morriston? Our survey shows they are car reliant when 85% of our survey respondents usually had access to a car and 40% never use buses (the only locally available form of public transport).

Short distance travel to work is good news from the viewpoints of ecological burden, household expense and intrusion onto leisure time. Despite all Morriston’s adjustments over the past 30 years, in this district town most residents (and those who commute in to Morriston jobs) can work close to home. 70% of Morriston residents travel less than 10 kilometres to work.

Around two thirds of Morriston residents travel to work by car. And the private car is even more dominant when it comes to non-timetabled activities, so that 95% of survey respondents with car access use the car for shopping and 90% for visiting friends and family. Morriston is a place formatted around car use, which explains the irreversible shift of food and clothes shopping away from the high street where parking is difficult.

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When the car is the universal tool for accessing all the economic and social resources of a locality, that creates new problems for policy on public transport in many smaller cities and towns because bus use has been residualised in Morriston.

Bus use remains important for a minority who (through age, youth or low income) do not have a car and rely on the bus to access shopping or leisure. But the inflexibility of bus timetables and routes limit public transport’s reach into the carless group and its capacity to substitute for car journeys. Managing down car use is a huge challenge which probably requires some reformatting of working and living.

The income infrastructure

Morriston is part of Swansea which does have low average per capita income of £20k against an UK average of £28k. But it is wrong to fix on that one characteristic as an identifier of a unitary place. Morriston has a mosaic of variation in incomes according to geographic ward or type of household within wards. Our analysis reinstates these differences so that we can better understand the interaction between income and wellbeing in Morriston as a mixed place which is both kind to the comfortably off and tough for other households on low incomes.

The mosaic is complex even if we consider just the one variable of household income, which is nearly 25% higher in outer Morriston than in inner Morriston. This is just one indicator of how the household on a recently built private development off a roundabout can be near but also far from inner Morriston. If we go down to LSOA levels and units which contain around 650 households, we see more differences within inner Morriston: four of inner Morriston’s 11 LSOAs are in the 25% most deprived in Wales by the income criterion.

The level of employment is high with 65-70% of adults employed, and the mediocre average wages are unsurprising given the shift in the whole Swansea Bay employment base from corporate high wage manufacturing. Local public sector employment does not produce high incomes even in inner Morriston which, courtesy of the DVLA and Morriston hospital, has a remarkable 77% in foundational services.

The upcoming income challenges are about what happens after the current generation of defined benefit pensioners die out. The big corporate plants have closed but firms like Ford and British Steel continue to pay defined benefit pensions and (at a guess) pensioners account for more than 25% of local consumption demand. This stabiliser will be removed over the next 20 years at the same time as retail park employment inevitably shrinks with the expansion of internet shopping.

The challenge for Morriston and many older district towns is not growth and higher incomes but managing an activity mix of working and living for sustainability and one part of that is avoiding income-led collapse which would be hard to reverse.

Grounded services infrastructure (housing)

We did not have the resources for a comprehensive review of grounded local services which would cover housing, utility supply, primary and secondary education, health and care. So we focused on the one service of housing because availability, quality and cost of housing is
important in itself for wellbeing and because the burden of housing costs varies dramatically by type of household within and between regions.

The dominant form of housing tenure in Morriston, as in the rest of Wales, is owner occupancy: around 30% of households own their home outright and 40% are buying with a mortgage. Owner occupancy works to generate liveability for many relatively low-income households, as with pensioners who own their own homes and have high ratios of residual disposable income to gross household income.

More broadly, house prices are relatively modest in Morriston and have not increased since 2008, so that houses remain affordable for first time buyers with modest incomes. Taking a household with two earners on average Swansea incomes, the median house price to income ratios in Morriston are 2.5 for a detached, 2.0 for a semi-detached and 1.4 for a terraced house. The flipside of continued housing affordability is that local sector retail does not benefit from rising house prices which feed the retail and service economies in London and the south east via equity release.

The important qualification is that, while Morriston may be liveable for many, 30% of households are in private rented or social housing and there is no guarantee of affordable housing of the right kind in the right place. Private rents are high and tenure is insecure; in social housing the problem is precarious employment. Morriston is not so much low GVA as a 70/30 place when one third of our survey respondents told us it was not always easy to find the money to feed their households because residual income is squeezed.

If we shift to wellbeing of future generations, the picture is bleaker. Old or new, the housing stock consists of poorly insulated, gas heated homes and (as with car dependence) the eco-foundational issues not yet being systematically registered or acted on by policy makers or citizens.

**Social infrastructure**

When citizens think about how the place where they live works or does not work, they do not separate the economic and social as policy makers often do. Hence the importance of social infrastructure. This includes physical facilities such as the shopping street, meeting places, cafes, libraries, community centres, public parks and squares; plus the activities provided by clubs, organisations and associations, as well as opportunities for less formal and spontaneous interactions.

Social infrastructure is part of the everyday, repeated and taken for granted life of Morriston citizens. For example, despite shopping in supermarkets and retail park chain stores, more than half our survey respondents visited their local high street once a week. And, in Morriston, the condition of that high street and the big local park is a focus for citizen discontent.

Our survey produced many complaints by Morriston citizens that their social infrastructure is in a poor state: austerity cuts have reduced public spend on park facilities and street cleaning; the high street has a limited retail offer and is not an attractive destination for many people; youth clubs have closed and there is not enough for young people to do. The
Morriston public library, housed in a bright modern building with lots of activities attracting many users, is the one public space that citizens can be positive about.

In these complaints, the common theme is decline and decay in a place which is not ‘left behind’ but ‘going downhill’ in terms of social infrastructure. It is possible to disparage these everyday ‘what matters’ concerns with street cleaning and youth clubs which can seem to be small things. But these concerns should be taken seriously because they indicate an attachment to place and a desire for sociability which is an important driver of household wellbeing in Morriston now.

**A district town plan?**

Our aim has been to understand how Morriston works in a new theoretical frame which can provide a basis in argument and evidence for more imaginative policy making to tackle the liveability and sociability that matters to citizens now and in future generations.

Morriston is a liveable, sociable place, which works for many households. For the majority, a modest income is refracted thorough relatively cheap housing, a car-based mobility system and a working social infrastructure. Morriston also faces many upcoming challenges: the loss of pensioner incomes and retail jobs, car-based mobility and housing stock with a heavy ecological footprint and an already degrading social infrastructure.

Morriston needs a district town plan which engages local specifics and connects bottom up with top down. On the demand side, it would be concerned with delivering social infrastructure which is what matters to citizen. On the supply side, a town plan could find economic leverage by mobilising the major investments which are already there (like Morriston Hospital and the DVLA).

The good news is that there is scope for quickly delivering some upgraded social infrastructure - like an improved park and community centres - because the financial requirement is modest and political consensus makes it possible to assemble a coalition of local actors capable of addressing the problem.

There is also potential for a more ambitious plan for reconnecting the centres of activity so that the local anchors - Morriston Hospital and the DVLA – could underpin a substantial investment in refurbishing and repurposing the high street, for example by locating some of their workers on Woodfield St in satellite offices and/ or encourage their employees to live there.

At the same time, this district town plan needs to be complemented by a radical reworking of higher-level economic development policy away from GVA through growth and jobs. Policy here needs to target: regulation of job quality which goes beyond minimum wage standards; a tax funded programme for creation of good, new jobs in the foundational sectors providing essential services like care; recognition of the absolute limits of any policy of diffusing prosperity by getting people into work without some form of basic income and/ or reduction of housing costs; political leadership rather than evasion and buck-passing on the eco-foundational issues which are crucial to the wellbeing of future generations.
Beyond Morriston: what we see now and who sees the future

This report is a piece of experimental social science which is about changing what we see now as well as who is enlisted to see the future of ordinary urban places. Our framework, analysis and recommendations are relevant to progressive policy makers and concerned citizens in other ordinary places.

What we see needs two kinds of knowledge: metis which is local, specific, and granular; and techne which works abstractly through metrics and standard classifications so that it allows knowledge at a distance. Morriston is a place that cannot be understood without engaging local specifics. And it can only be explained to outsiders through the standard categories of the British administrative state integrated into a new narrative based on multiple sources including survey and interview.

GVA per capita is the wrong kind of metric, for many different reasons and higher GVA per capita is almost certainly undeliverable through local or regional policy interventions that would be better directed at other objectives. If we must have income metrics, residual income for different types of household (after housing, transport and utilities) would produce more legibility.

While policy makers obsess about better jobs, Morriston citizens currently in work realistically suppose the good jobs are gone and they have very limited expectations of getting a better job in the near future: only 26 of 117 survey respondents in work believed they had prospects of a better job within the next year or so.

Citizens do not make a sharp binary distinction between the economic and the social domain. They value social infrastructure as the basis of sociability and also consider that their infrastructure is underfunded and neglected. This could and should be fixed in the near future.

It is not fixed because in the UK, for historical reasons, we have all the apparatus of representative democracy and functioning civil society without citizen participation in economic and social priority setting and policy making. After 1945, the state delivered foundational welfare for all without active citizenship; after 1979, government has delivered a consumerist version of citizenship which offered market-based welfare for some.

The question now is whether and how we can combine active citizenship and participation with the objective of wellbeing for all, now and in future generations. There are all kinds of harbingers of a progressive shift in the object of policy but very little sign of the step change in the enlistment of citizens in the struggle to define and deliver wellbeing. The citizens of Morriston deserve no less.
How an Ordinary Place Works: Understanding Morriston

Luca Calafati, Jill Ebrey, Julie Froud, Colin Haslam
Sukhdev Johal and Karel Williams

1. Understanding an ordinary place

This report is about understanding how one ordinary place works in a new kind of framework, so that we can begin to develop different kinds of analysis and open new possibilities of making citizens lives more worth living. The place is Morriston, a district town with a 30,000 population some 3 miles north of the centre of Swansea, itself a medium sized town with a population of around 250,000. The analysis is set in a new framework explained below and then used in subsequent sections of the report to explore how the place works. The aim is to produce a different kind of district study which attends to local specifics but has broader policy relevance as explained in the final section of this report. The approach focuses on what matters to citizens now and for future generations so that policy can be directed towards directly supporting the objectives of foundational liveability and sociability, rather than assuming these are outcomes that naturally drop out of conventional economic policy focused on growth and jobs.

The report starts from double dissatisfaction with how ordinary places are misunderstood in much of the media and in mainstream economic policy. It challenges lazy journalistic clichés about ‘left behind’ places and negative academic judgements about ‘uncompetitive’ places. Both kinds of statements make all kinds of condescending assumptions about how some places have ‘moved on’ while others have not; and incidentally encourage the mislabelling of places as unsuccessful due to internal deficiencies which could mostly be rectified by higher market incomes. More generally, an over reliance on narrow metrics of GVA and GDP per capita in mainstream economic policy set up Morriston and Swansea to compete in a race where they are consistently at the back of the field. Welsh GVA is round 70% of UK regional average and less than half that of London and the gap has not been closed in the last twenty years, while Swansea is currently 42nd out of 44 cities on the 2019 competitiveness index, with Wales and North East England the two least competitive regions.

It is unrealistic to suppose that the outcome in another twenty years will be any different because Welsh underperformance tells us more about the uncritical choice and use of metrics than it does about the controllable workings of the Welsh or London economy. UK

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growth rates are consumption driven through a system of property-based Keynesianism; and London demand is boosted by equity leakage from the untaxed capital gain of £20k a year which the average London home owner made each year for a decade after 2008 at a time when Morriston house prices declined gently. Other metrics are presented without correction for endowment differences like age composition of the population: London predictably generates more business start-ups when 30% of London’s population is aged 25-34 against 20% in Swansea or Wales as a whole.

Negative labelling and ill-judged metrics are more fundamentally misleading because they suggest slow change when it is clear that dramatic changes have taken place in Morriston since 1980. The second section of this report demonstrates this point by outlining some of the developments in the hard frame of settlement and activities. High levels of workforce participation and employment have been maintained despite the collapse of the high wage manufacturing sector in the Swansea Bay area. Reclamation of brownfield industrial land allowed large scale retail park development adjacent to Morriston, which changed everyday life for all households by encouraging a new kind of car reliance. And local citizens did not desert Swansea Bay because they are attached to communities like Morriston and value its social infrastructure greatly.

If Morriston citizens have demonstrated they are both adaptive and attached to place, these positive qualities will be challenged by more disruptive change for citizens in the next generation. Like most places in the UK Morriston has an ageing population, living in poorly insulated housing stock with gas boilers, dependent on car use and struggling to eat healthily. And it has specific problems, such as internet shopping threatening big box retail employment on the Enterprise Park when its high street is already in decline. The current generation of retired local people with decent pensions is the legacy of an earlier high wage employment base in large, manufacturing firms. But the next generation has much worse pension provision so that over the next twenty years, local consumption demand will shrink and an important intergenerational stabiliser will be removed. Economic and social policy needs to engage these UK-wide problems and local specifics so that an adaptive and settled local population can surmount these challenges and thrive.

Instead, mainstream economic policy relies on per capita income and GVA metrics as an indicator of place success and sets the unattainable objective of increased competitiveness with places that are better endowed. The GVA per capita comparisons are fundamentally misleading because they do not engage with the extent to which housing, transport costs and utility bills eat variably into the income of different types of household within and between places. Specific places do not have a unitary character but are always mixed because they can be comfortable for some types of households but not for others: as in Morriston, where older citizens on low incomes with paid-off mortgages are very differently placed from low income young workers with families in private rented accommodation. On

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6 Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age, NOMIS.
the supply side, new jobs in high GVA activities typically attract an immigrant, young workforce who live in islands of relative prosperity; and the evidence from Manchester is that this does not trickle down or spill over into adjacent deprived areas with settled populations.\textsuperscript{7}

We propose in contrast a broader view of how to change the urban mechanics of liveability and sociability and confront the eco-foundational issues. Our starting point is that places are initially formatted by a hard frame of settlement and activities. Income is then a demand side input to the urban mechanism; not just income from work, but also pensions and state income support and transfers which act as stabilisers. Income should be considered as far as possible at household level because the household is the unit of consolidation of income and many households have more than one income. But, the effects of income are refracted through supply side infrastructures so that we cannot simply say high or higher household income is good or better.

Drawing on Amartya Sen’s work,\textsuperscript{8} we define wellbeing as the freedom of citizens to live ‘the lives they have reason to value’. The supply side infrastructures are then important because household wellbeing depends on liveable residual incomes and spaces for sociability. These are not guaranteed by large or rising household incomes because housing costs may be excessive or rise faster than incomes, as they have done for many in London’s private rented sector. As for the spaces of sociability, access to good parks, libraries or community centres cannot be bought from private income because they depend on collective provision. This can be undermined by austerity cuts or underfunding which produces private affluence and public squalor.

The crucial implication is that household wellbeing does not drop out automatically from any given income level but depends on the functioning of three supply side infrastructures which provide foundational services: the grounded local services infrastructure, the mobility infrastructure and the social infrastructure. These supply side infrastructures are all place specific because access, quality and cost depend on availability through local provision, classically through networks and branches. Each infrastructure is analytically distinguishable so it can be examined separately but in practice they interact; as in the case of a care service which lays on a minibus to bring older people to a day centre.

- Grounded local services infrastructure: housing, utilities, health, primary and secondary education and care.
- Mobility infrastructure: private and public transport systems.
- Social infrastructure: parks, libraries, community hubs and the public realm on the high street.


These distinctions are important because infrastructures are key to understanding the mechanics that diffuse wellbeing or create sharp economic and social inequalities within and between places.

All this is a priority for our team as a next step way of developing foundational thinking. Foundational analysis\(^9\) proposes a zonal model of the economy and highlights the importance of the foundational economy zone and its goods and services like education and care, which are daily essentials that should be secured by government as the basis of citizenship. It also recognises the importance of the different infrastructures listed above as drivers of wellbeing. Citizens live in a place not in a zone of the economy and the foundational question is then about how the different drivers work to generate or frustrate the wellbeing of various types of household in specific places, now and for future generations.

2. The hard frame of settlement and activities

Our analysis\(^10\) starts to engage with the specifics of place by focusing on the (changing) pattern of settlement and activities because that is the hard frame within which citizens live. That frame should also be set in a historical perspective so that we can understand change and trajectory. Morriston is a district town three miles north of the centre of Swansea, a larger seaside town and an administrative and commercial centre in South Wales. It is located half way down the 6 mile-long Lower Swansea Valley where the River Tawe runs from Clydach to the sea at Swansea Docks. Much of the granular detail will be difficult for those not familiar with the topography of the district but the maps in Exhibit 1a and Exhibit 1b should help. The detail is fundamental because Morriston can be understood as the result of a historical process of adaptation, reuse and layering over more than 150 years so that this is, like many other towns, an ordinary place with an extraordinary history.

Swansea is ordinary in that medium sized towns are commonplace in all European countries. Agglomeration theory has encouraged a preoccupation with great cities but medium size conurbations and built up areas like Swansea are an important part of the urban ecology in the UK and right across Europe. In England and Wales for example, 22% of the population live in built-up areas with populations of 100-500,000 as against 29% in conurbations of more than 1 million. The administrative area of Swansea (technically, the City and surrounding County which includes the Gower) has a population of 245,000; it is part of a larger built-up area with three adjacent smaller towns (Port Talbot, Neath and Llanelli) adding another 100,000 within a 10-mile radius.


\(^10\) The analysis in this report is based on secondary and primary data. The secondary data includes the 2011 Census, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, HPSSA dataset on house prices, and the very useful ward profiles produced by Swansea Council. The primary data comes from a survey of 200 residents of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ Morriston in the summer and early autumn of 2018 carried out by the authors with Coastal Housing. The survey data is not claimed to be representative of residents, but the sample was based on a good distribution of residents by age and gender. Some of the more interesting survey results are summarised in appendix one.
Exhibit 1a: A map of Great Britain

Exhibit 1b: Morriston and the Swansea Bay Area
Morriston is ordinary in that district towns can be found in most of Europe’s larger towns and all its large cities. European cities are typically not organised so that outer districts are dormitory suburbs for the centre and many movements will be orbital not radial. This is reflected in the political organisation of many larger cities into boroughs and the distribution of major employment sites often now on the periphery of urban areas. Morriston is politically part of the larger borough of Swansea but has a distinct identity which for outsiders is synonymous with its two major public sector anchor employers: Morriston hospital, a regional teaching hospital with 750 beds and the DVLA government agency which provides a UK-wide service for driver and motor vehicle registration and taxation and employs around 5,000 across several sites in the Swansea area.

More precisely, this report is concerned with the wards of Morriston and Llansamlet which can be thought of as inner and outer Morriston and have distinct character. Inner Morriston has a population of 17,000 in a dense residential district built for industrial workers in the nineteenth century. This bequeaths a legacy social infrastructure, including the largest chapel in Wales (Tabernacle Chapel) dating from 1872, a large public park and a spinal local high street (Woodfield St). The high street was the main road from Swansea to Neath before the improvement of the A4067, which allows north south traffic to bypass the centre of Morriston. The construction of the M4 motorway after 1972 had earlier provided an east-west bypass for the town. One mile or more further out from central Swansea is outer Morriston centred on Llansamlet ward which looks more like an edge of town suburb set in a ward with a 14,000 population either side of the M4, combining post-war social housing with millennial housing developments and retail/business parks including supermarkets and other retail chains (see Exhibit 2).

This difference of character between inner and outer Morriston shows this ordinary district town has a history which makes the place distinctive, so that Morriston is not any kind of ideal or representative district town. Morriston is the complex, layered result of a 200-year history of urban settlement and activity where land has been used, and often cleared before reuse around a changing activity base.

The core is the inner Morriston residential district of terraced houses built for workers in the Lower Swansea Valley, which in the nineteenth century was the world centre for copper smelting and tin plate. By the 1950s these activities had ceased, and the Lower Swansea Valley was probably the largest area of industrial dereliction in Western Europe. The valley floor was a ‘distorted, blackened, twisted landscape, dirty and deserted’. An ‘industrial desert’ of soil tips and derelict industrial buildings covered an area which was 1 mile wide at the top and then ran 3 miles down the river Tawe towards the sea. Inner Morriston sits on the west bank of the Tawe just above this 800-acre area of dereliction which has now been almost entirely remediated and redeveloped with a few remaining fragments repurposed as heritage sites.

11 This around Woodfield Street is sometimes described as Wales’ first planned industrial settlement and was laid out in the 1780s. This was designated a conservation area in 1975, though as Swansea Council notes in its very informative 2017 review of the area and its boundaries, this did little to protect the ‘special character and appearance of the area’. See https://www.swansea.gov.uk/morristonconservationarea
12 Stacey, M. ‘Life in a Derelict Valley’, New Society, 3 October 1963
Exhibit 2: The centre of Morriston (Woodfield St) and Llansamlet retail and business park

Morriston as it exists now is practically defined by post-1980 developments which have created a new hard frame.

- Large scale redevelopment of brownfield nineteenth century industrial land on the valley floor has visibly transformed everything around the old residential district of inner Morriston. The stimulus was the Council-led Lower Swansea Valley Project which from the early 1960s cleared large areas of derelict buildings and contaminated industrial land on the valley floor. Crucially, the main road A4067 between Swansea and Neath was then improved and re-routed in the 1980s and 1990s to bypass inner Morriston on a north south axis and connect with junction 45 of the M4 motorway arching east west across green fields in outer Moriston. This allowed a new kind of off-roundabout and off-junction ‘out of town’ development, constructed around easy, longer distance movements by private car. The visible symbols are twofold: first, next to Morriston’s old residential area, the new Liberty sports stadium completed in 2005 has seating for 21,000; second, spanning
Morriston and Llansamlet, the Swansea Enterprise Park dating from the 1980s\(^\text{13}\) includes the largest out of town retail park in Swansea. All of this was predicated on car access and the result, as we shall see, is a society where many Swansea residents are car reliant.

- The other crucial development is the collapse of post-1945 second wave, high wage industrial employment with deindustrialisation under Thatcher and Blair governments. In the 1950s and the 1960s the floor of the Lower Swansea valley was derelict, but, in a second wave of industrial development, blue chip corporate employers were building new factories offering good wages and conditions in an outer arc across Swansea Bay, from Port Talbot east of Swansea to Llanelli west of Swansea. From the early 1980s, Steel Company of Wales, Port Talbot and Steel Company of Wales, Trostre Llanelli downsized and the BP Llandarcy refinery, Ford Jersey Marine and Steel Company of Wales, Felindre closed. This last state of the art electrolytic tin plate plant opened in 1956 and closed in 1989. At its peak in the early 1970s, the Felindre plant employed 2,500 workers in Llangyfelach on the other side of the M4 motorway just three miles from inner Morriston. One relatively small corporate employer (Morganite Electrical Carbon) makes carbon brushes for electrical motors on the Enterprise Park and the remaining manufacturing employs significant numbers in Llansamlet but is by these earlier standards relatively small scale and low wage. The Swansea Bay region lost 30,000 manufacturing jobs between 1990 and 2010\(^\text{14}\) so that only 5.5% of the whole Swansea workforce is now employed in manufacturing, as against 10% in retail. Big box retail has generally created low paid jobs, weakened Swansea’s central shopping district and taken much of the clothing and food spend out of local high streets like Morriston’s Woodfield St, thereby reducing the footfall for the surviving independent retailers like the jewellers or travel agents.

In historical perspective, Morriston and Swansea is all change because the hard frame of settlement and activities has been transformed in the past 35 years, since the first Thatcher Government recession of 1981-2. On the other hand, legacy effects are very important when most of the pre-1980 built social infrastructure, from park to high street, survives in inner Morriston. And change is never complete and instant. The factories closed in the 1980s and 1990s but left behind their stabilisers in the form of the pensioners of large employers like BP, Ford and British Steel. And change won’t stop, with more transitions to come in the next 15 years for example as internet retailing continues to threaten and displace big box retail.


The hard frame as it now exists makes Morriston the opposite of a planned ‘new town’ where citizens live and work according to one design. Morriston is an old town where the hard frame is the unintended consequence of unrelated policy initiatives and modernisation projects whose one common denominator is that they were typically part of larger designs without much or any input from Morriston citizens. The reclamation and re-purposing of the Lower Swansea Valley from the early 1960s was a self-evident good, but the project was initiated by Swansea University and led by the local authority. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the M4 motorway was part of a national transport plan and the DVLA arrived in Swansea as part of a broader government policy of dispersal of public sector clerical work from London to the regions. The hospital was rebuilt as a regional centre after 1981 but on a site which had been hastily requisitioned for construction of a 650-bed emergency war time hospital in 1942. The current Enterprise Park was opened in 1981 as the UK’s first - and largest - enterprise zone when it was part of the Thatcher government’s response to a collapse of manufacturing employment and a retail park was not part of any plan.

3. Mobility infrastructures

How do citizens move about within and beyond this frame to access the economic and social resources of work and leisure? In both inner Morriston and adjacent Llansamlet, the story is of adaptation to the new post-1980 frame which has brought car reliance for most households and residualised bus use so that the car is now the near-universal tool that accesses economic and social resources. The implications of this have not been taken on board by policy makers at all levels who ignore the eco-foundational issues of car dependence and discuss public transport abstractly without recognising it has been residualised by car use in a ‘drive to’ urban society in places like Morriston. The eco-foundational challenge of achieving carbon reduction for the next generation is unrecognised by citizens and policy makers.

Morriston has two overlapping road-based mobility systems with private car and public bus complementing walking. Private cars can use the new, improved by-pass roads, while the regular bus service from Swansea centre to Morriston hospital runs along the old, slow road through Woodfield St to serve inner Morriston residents. Llansamlet has a much lower population density - 961 people per km², compared with 2,249 in Morriston – and less bus connection to crucial amenities. Within the new post-1980 frame, car use is dominant in both Morriston and Llansamlet: 85% of the respondents in our survey owned or usually had access to a car and just over 40% said they never used the bus.

Much official statistical information on mobility patterns is primarily concerned with travel to work because policy makers are narrowly preoccupied with the extent of the labour market. Commuting typically accounts for less than one quarter of all journeys in large towns and it is equally important to understand mobility for other purposes. But travel to work is still important and revealing because long distance commuting weakens identification with place of residence, changes shopping patterns and eats into leisure time. In this context the data on Morriston and Llansamlet illustrates what might be called the mobility base for a close-coupled community because, despite all the employment changes
and a new road infrastructure since 1980, for the majority of residents (and incoming commuters) living and working are not separated by a great distance.

This is good news ecologically and more immediately for low cost of travel and less intrusion onto leisure and other non-work time. In Morriston and Llansamlet, 70% or more of residents travel less than 10km to work (Exhibit 3). With public transport accounting for less than 10% of residents’ journeys to work, most residents - 62% in Morriston and 71% in Llansamlet - drive to work. Llansamlet residents are more likely to drive and less likely to walk than those in Morriston partly because Morriston residents typically work closer to home with 30% travelling less than 5km. If we change the focus from resident population to incoming workforce (Exhibit 4), short distance commuting by car is even more dominant. 70% of the workers coming to Morriston for work travel by car with 47% travelling less than 5km; the percentage of those commuting by car increases to 78% in Llansamlet with 37% travelling less than 5km.

**Exhibit 3: Travel to work patterns for residents of Morriston and Llansamlet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main method of travel to work of resident population</th>
<th>Morriston residents</th>
<th>Llansamlet residents</th>
<th>Distance travelled to work of resident population</th>
<th>Morriston residents</th>
<th>Llansamlet residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly at/ from home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Work mainly at/ from home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train, bus and other public</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Less than 5km</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving a car or van</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>5km to less than 10km</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10km to less than 30km</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30km to less than 60km</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>60km and over</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No fixed place</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Total no. of residents</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>3,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of residents</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>3,384</td>
<td>Total no. of residents</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>3,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

15 Source: Nomis (2011 census)
Note: Morriston residents are in MSOA Swansea 008; Llansamlet residents are in MSOA Swansea 010. ‘Other’ includes motorbike/moped/scooter, taxis and passengers in cars or vans.
Exhibit 4: Travel to work patterns of those who work in Morriston and Llansamlet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main method of travel to work of workplace population</th>
<th>Morriston workers</th>
<th>Llansamlet workers</th>
<th>Distance travelled to work of workplace population</th>
<th>Morriston workers</th>
<th>Llansamlet workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly at/ from home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Work mainly at/ from home</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train, bus and other public</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Less than 5km</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving a car or van</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>5km to less than 10km</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10km to less than 30km</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30km to less than 60km</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>60km and over</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of residents</td>
<td>3,344</td>
<td>10,992</td>
<td>No fixed place</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our survey of 200 residents adds nuance and texture, not least because we inquired about non-work journeys to access child-care or schooling, food shopping and leisure which are all important for citizens. A clear pattern emerged. Car use for going to work or the school run is limited by timetable constraints and the difficulty or expense of parking; so just over half of survey respondents use the car for travel to work and less than half use the car for child care or the school run. But the car is completely dominant when it comes to non-timetabled activities like shopping, visiting friends and family and leisure: 95% of respondents with car access use it for shopping and 90% for visiting friends and family. The eco-foundational issue is that the car is a kind of universal tool for accessing the resources of economy and society except for child minding and primary education, which are more locally distributed so that half of parents make these journeys on foot.

If car use is normalised, the corollary is the residualisation of public transport, which can be looked at in two ways. First, bus is irrelevant for nearly half of Morriston residents when 42% of respondents tell us they never use one, because scheduled services along a few routes do not fit with the journeys they want to make. But, second, bus is of considerable importance for the minority who through age, youth or low income do not have a car and rely on the bus to access shopping or leisure. 54% of our respondent bus travellers use the bus at least once a week and 69% use the bus for shopping. The design of public transport systems and decisions about subsidy are thus hugely more complicated than they were 50 years ago when bus was the universal mass transit system with stands of double deck buses outside the big factories and Swansea town’s shopping centre rebuilt next to a bus station.
While the car offers personal convenience and opportunity, the development of a car-based mobility infrastructure has since the 1990s contributed to a shift in shopping patterns to the detriment of Woodfield St in the centre of inner Morriston. There is overwhelming competition from three nearby supermarkets (Asda, Aldi and Lidl) with free parking which leaves Woodfield St without, for example, a greengrocer. Traders and shoppers alike complain about limited parking in inner Morriston. At the same time, the DVLA and Morriston Hospital are large local employers that generate few benefits for surviving local business in terms of shopping, eating or drinking on Woodfield St.

One major foundational challenge for Morriston (and other district towns) in the 2020s is managing down car use in towns to meet carbon emission and air quality targets. Battery electric cars will bring cleaner urban air by removing tailpipe pollution but that is not the end of the matter. Reducing car use is clearly a major issue for a place that is car reliant and has been hard formatted for use of private vehicles so that it probably requires some reformatting of working and living in the next generation. On the other hand, it may also provide a major opportunity for the revitalisation of the district centre in a place where working and living are already close coupled. More active travel and development of new residential property close to major workplaces might help to sustain and reinvent local businesses and social infrastructure, but that requires purposive actors and plan.

4. Income infrastructure

After considering the frame and the mobility systems, we come to consider the income infrastructure where our analysis adds complications to the stereotype of low average per capita income. By geographic ward or type of household, Morriston is a mixed place which can be both kind to the comfortably off and tough for other households on low incomes. High levels of employment with mediocre wages are unsurprising given the shift in the whole Swansea Bay employment base from corporate high wage manufacturing. The upcoming challenges here are about sustaining incomes as the defined benefit pensioners die out and big box retail shrinks under internet competition. And any consideration of income in this section needs to be contextualised with a consideration of housing costs in the next section.

In mainstream analysis of Morriston or Swansea, the metric of GVA per capita would be taken as the measure of local success or failure and this metric shows that Swansea and Morriston are underachieving places which should do better. Swansea is stuck in the lower reaches of the UK urban league table with GVA per capita in 2017 of £19,600 for Swansea, compared with an average of £19,900 for Wales and £27,600 for the UK. When incomes are usually pooled, household income is a more relevant measure of financial resources, and from this point of view, what stands out is not uniform mediocrity but the income differences between residents in inner Morriston and Llansamlet and within inner Morriston. According to the 2019 ward profile, average household income in inner Morriston was £24,600 in 2015/16 against £30,900 in Llansamlet. Further differences

17 Data for Morriston here is based on Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) Swansea 008, which corresponds, more or less to the Morriston ward.
emerge within inner Morriston and Llansamlet if we break them down into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Exhibit 5.

**Exhibit 5**: Morriston ward lower super output areas (LSOA) relative income levels

Inner Morriston is a mosaic which includes LSOAs that are amongst the most and least deprived in Wales in terms of income, employment, health and education. Four of inner Morriston’s 11 LSOAs are in the 25% most deprived in Wales by the income criterion and three of these wards are in the 25% least deprived in Wales by income. There is a clear geographical pattern to this internal distribution of prosperity with the low-income wards concentrated in a corridor around the spine of Woodfield Street in inner Morriston where only one of five wards is more affluent than the Welsh average.

The local employment base is relevant in explaining these differences of income. As we have seen, not everyone lives and works in the same place, but most commuting is short distance so local employment opportunities are very important. In Inner Morriston and Llansamlet, these opportunities vary in a traditional Welsh way because one or two large organisations employ a substantial part of the local workforce, just as in an old works-centred small industrial town.

Inner Morriston is hugely dependent on foundational services like health, education, fire and rescue and public administration which together account for 77% of employment.

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18 Data for Llansamlet here is based on MSOA Swansea 006, which corresponds more or less to the Llansamlet ward.
19 StatsWales 2014
(Exhibit 6), some 30% or more above what we would expect on average across a larger area. This reflects the local presence of Morriston Hospital and other public service operations such as the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. To illustrate the significance of these key employers: 250 people are employed in human health in Llansamlet, compared with 6,000 in Morriston. Overall, Llansamlet has a much more diversified employment base courtesy of the Enterprise Park: there are 2,000 employed in building and landscape services, 1,750 in retail, 900 in insurance and other financial services as well as 1,695 in manufacturing of various kinds. As a consequence, foundational services account for only 30% of the jobs in Llansamlet, though that is still more than 4,000 in total. The DVLA and the Land Registry together employ large numbers but they do not dominate in Llansamlet as the hospital does in Morriston.

Overall, employment levels are relatively high: 65-70% are economically active in the 16-74 age group; and the unemployment claimant count is 3.5% in Morriston and 2.3% in Llansamlet. Just as interesting is the point that Morriston and Llansamlet have relatively stable, locally born populations. In both cases, 84% of the population is locally born and, according to their ward profiles, between 2007 and 2017, Morriston’s population fell by 2% and Llansamlet’s grew by 9%. Against this background of stability, as in the rest of Wales, the local population is relatively old and unlike the young mobile populations of London or central Manchester: those aged 65+ account for 19.4% of the Morriston population and 15.2% of the Llansamlet population.

**Exhibit 6: Employment in Morriston and Llansamlet, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Morriston</th>
<th></th>
<th>Llansamlet</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundational services</td>
<td>7,245</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>4,205</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundane services</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6,555</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraction &amp; raw materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>9,430</td>
<td></td>
<td>14,065</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Notes: Foundational services includes: health, education, care, public administration, fire, police, post, telecoms, transport and waste. Mundane services include: food services, cleaning, building maintenance, retail and wholesale activities. Other services include: legal, accounting and other professional services. Manufacturing includes: food manufacturing, rubber, metals and plastic based products. Construction includes: buildings and specialised construction activities.
As for the overall balance between comfort and income related deprivation, we do not have the data to make residual income calculations for households of many different types; and it should be remembered that, after labour market deregulation, the problems of many struggling households relate not to low regular incomes but to fluctuating and precarious weekly income. But there is indirect evidence when council tax or rent arrears indicate residual income stress and survey questions about fuel poverty or feeding the family generate telling answers. One third of our survey respondents said they sometimes had difficulty in feeding their family; and, on that basis, we would say that no more than 70% of Morriston households are comfortable.

In terms of the income future, we can identify two challenges relevant to trajectory and sustainability of incomes: first, the erosion of pensions as a source of income; and, second, the threat to employment in the retail sector. If we take a broad perspective on income infrastructures, this covers not only current wages from work but also deferred wages in the form of occupational and private pensions. A substantial minority of current pensioners are not financially comfortable: 16.6% and 15.8% of the population aged 65+ in Morriston and Llansamlet respectively are claiming pension credit. However, in our survey we found that those over 70 were less likely than younger people to find it difficult to heat their home in winter or to find the money to feed their family. The blue chip factories have closed but firms like Ford and British Steel continue to pay defined benefit pensions and (at a guess) pensioners account for more than 25% of local consumption demand. The shift from defined benefit to defined contribution pension schemes and the changes in the local employment base including the rise in self-employment means that this occupational pension income is acting only as a temporary income source for the local economy and intergenerational stabiliser for families.

The retail sector is a major employer. In Inner Morriston, only 350 jobs (3.7%) are in retail, but in neighbouring Llansamlet there are 1,750, more than 12% of the total; some workers from Morriston also commute to retail jobs in Swansea town centre. In earlier waves of industrial change, large numbers of workers were displaced and needed to find new occupations; the prospect of job losses from the retail sector is now a major issue for the area. The growth of online clothes retailing, changes in food shopping habits including lower value and more frequent shopping visits, as well as stagnant household incomes, are as much a threat to the retail park in Llansamlet as to a traditional high street like Woodfield St which is already in a spiral of decline. The increase in beauty and personal services (such as hairdressers, barbers, nail and tanning studios) produces an unbalanced retail offer on Woodfield St that makes it harder to attract new consumers.

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21 Morriston and Llansamlet Ward profile data, Swansea Council.
22 Those who said that they sometimes or often were unable to keep their house warm were 10% of the 70+ group and 21% of all survey participants. Those who said that it was not always easy to find the money to feed their household were 14% of the over 70s and 48% of all respondents to the survey.
23 For an overview of key retail trends and drivers see: House of Commons Library Briefing Paper SN06186, 29 October 2018, Retail sector in the UK. https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06186#fullreport
These challenges for the retail industry are relevant across the UK though, as we discuss later in this report, the possible local responses will need to be place specific. On income, as on the other challenges, the question is whether place-based policy for the 2020s can recognise trajectory, address unsustainability and become preventive so that it anticipates and forestalls decline by intervening to change where citizens live and work in a district town? This would involve a very different approach from that of competitive upward mobility of whole places recommended by the UK Centre for Cities and others, who imagine a version of success on narrow criteria that is not relevant to mixed places like Morriston.

5. Grounded services infrastructure (housing)

A comprehensive review of grounded local services would involve considering housing, utility supply, primary and secondary education, health and care. As we did not have the resource to carry out such a comprehensive survey, we decided to focus on the one service of housing for two reasons. First, availability, quality and cost of housing is important in itself for the wellbeing of each and every household. Second, our earlier work on residual household income had shown that the burden of housing costs varies dramatically by type of household and region, so that high and low per capita incomes are a poor guide to variation in household liveability which must consider housing costs as the first, largest and variably sized deduction from gross income. Third, poorly insulated, gas-heated housing is a major contributor to consumption related emissions in Morriston and the rest of the UK: the three high carbon foundational sectors of food, housing and transport account for 59% percent of the Welsh ecological footprint.  

On this basis the empirics open up another dimension of understanding and further complicate the story of low per capita GVA. Morriston is a place which is liveable for many households because relatively moderate housing costs are in line with lower incomes. The qualification is that although Morriston is liveable for many, the place does not work for all households because those with very low incomes are not guaranteed housing of the right kind in the right place with security of tenure. And just about every house in Morriston comes with a gas boiler that must be replaced in the next generation as part of a zero-carbon strategy.

Housing costs come in the form of costs of mortgages or rents (private or social), so the 2011 census data on the relative importance of different types of tenure is an obvious starting point. It should be remembered that owner occupiers fall into two groups; those buying a property by paying down a mortgage and those who own outright and have low housing costs; the latter group are typically older citizens who have paid off their mortgage. Private renters are likely to pay more for less than social housing renters, not just in cash weekly but also because private renters have very little security of tenure under UK laws. It is also important to know what kind of property is being bought or rented, whether flats or houses of different types.

In both Morriston and Llansamlet wards, owner occupancy was the dominant form of tenure in 2011: 32% and 29% of households owned their property outright in the two wards, while the percentage owning and paying a mortgage was slightly higher in Morriston at 34% and significantly higher in Llansamlet at 45%. Social renting is the second largest form of tenure accounting for 18% in Morriston and 13% in Llansamlet. Private renting is almost as large in Llansamlet though in Morriston it is only two thirds in scale but growing fairly quickly from a small base. If we look at the local types of property, houses dominate over flats in both wards so that flats account for just 10% of the housing stock in Morriston ward. The significant difference is in the mix of housing types in the two wards (exhibit 7). Morriston housing is older, much of it dates from before 1914, and therefore the percentage of terraced houses is higher: almost one third of Morriston’s housing stock is terraced as against only 20% in Llansamlet where more than one third of properties are detached and another 41% are semi-detached.

Exhibit 7: Housing type and tenure in Morriston and Llansamlet, 2011

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25 Source: 2011 Census, ONS
The importance of owner occupancy in Morriston, and especially in Llansamlet, means that the level and trend of house prices is important to an understanding of the (changing) mechanics which determine available residual income and drive wealth generation from property holding. The basic point here is that, in the decade since the 2008 financial crisis, the Swansea area has not had the continuous increase in house prices which we see in London and South East England; in this respect Swansea and Wales is like much of the North of England. The median sale price of a Morriston terrace house actually fell from £96,000 in 2008 and £88,500 in 2018; in Llansamlet, the median terrace house price fell from £108,000 to £90,500 over the same period. Detached and semi-detached houses in both places have seen little if any price increase, reflecting a local housing market that has been fairly flat overall.

As a consequence, houses remain affordable for first time buyers in Morriston on modest incomes. Average full-time employee income in Swansea in 2018 is £31,000 (£26,000 average for all workers) and the ratio of median terraced house price to average income is 2.8, which is higher than in 2002 (1.8) but less than 2007 (3.9) (Exhibit 8).
Exhibit 8: Housing affordability: incomes and house price ratios

Source: Earnings and hours worked, place of residence by local authority: ASHE Table 8, ONS. Median house prices by ward: HPSSA dataset 37, ONS.

Note: Average wages are for all (full time and part time) employees. A dual income household includes two average incomes.
Taking a household with two average incomes, the median house price to income ratios are 2.5 for a detached, 2.0 for a semi-detached and 1.4 for a terraced house. In Llansamlet, the income to house price ratios are 2.9, 2.0 and 1.4 for detached, semi-detached and terraced, respectively. Relatively low house price to income multiples make it easier to pay off a mortgage and, for those with mortgage costs, the ratio of income after housing costs to gross income is relatively high; in general, the two wards are very liveable for any household with two earners bringing in average incomes.

The effects of property prices on wealth (and through equity withdrawal on household consumption) are just as important as the effects on residual income; and these effects are asymmetrical in the flat Swansea property market in the decade since 2018. Relatively low house prices with limited upward growth means that Morriston and Llansamlet owner occupiers gain in residual income and liveability but they have not made the gains in unearned income and wealth that are an important driver of the London economy.
average owner occupier in London has made an unrealised gain of around £20,000 per year since 2008, which allows a large leakage into consumption through equity withdrawal or stores up value for later consumption or inheritance.

Morriston and Swansea retailers do not benefit from the discretionary consumption of kitchens, cars and holidays that equity withdrawal sustains in London. But they do benefit from a large number of outright home owners with paid off mortgages, low housing costs and high ratios of residual to gross income. There is clearly a group of elderly pensioners with paid off mortgages who have low incomes but high ratios of residual income. In our questionnaire, 37 out of 41 respondents over 70 reported it was easy to heat their house in winter and feed the household each week. That impression is confirmed on Woodfield St which has two travel agents where an older clientele who are not web savvy can book their holidays.

If owner occupancy works to generate liveability for most households in Morriston and Llansamlet, there is a tail of deprivation, particularly amongst social and private renters where households depend on one income and/or on social security. As already noted, a significant minority of survey respondents report difficulty in meeting the cost of heating or food. For example, in contrast to the sub-group of older residents, one third of our sample told us it was not always easy to find the money to feed their household each week, and when asked about affording the cost of healthy food or special dietary needs this rose to around two thirds. In social housing the problem is not high rents but precarious, fluctuating incomes, particularly where individuals churn through low grade jobs; a local housing association reports that half its arrears are of tenants in work. In the private rented sector, insecure tenure and higher rents may suit some young and mobile households but is more problematic for families with children.

The generational divide plays out against this background in Morriston and Llansamlet. Housing causes a less pronounced generational divide than in London and other high property price areas where young people are trapped in private rented accommodation while their parents are often owner-occupiers in appreciating homes. However, limited access to good jobs since deindustrialisation sets up a different generational divide for the young. Those with defined benefit occupational pensions and paid off mortgages often live comfortably, drawing deferred wages to spend locally and support extended households; but current workers are less likely to be accruing future pensions and therefore face more uncertain and lower incomes in retirement. Liveable but not clearly sustainable might be the verdict on how the income infrastructure works in Morriston.

This is all the more so if we consider the eco-foundational issues which are what matters for future generations but are not in the frame for the current generation of citizens and policy makers thinking about what matters now. In the write-in box at the end of our survey we had many citizen comments about the condition of the high street and the park (which are considered in the next section). But nobody wrote in the comments box about air quality or gas central heating boilers because these eco-foundational issues are not part of citizen consciousness and are dodged by policy makers at all levels. This absence of focus on the formatting of our lives is nothing new because it fits with Braudel’s perception of the
everyday as the taken for granted in worlds where we do as others do without thinking about it. Given the problems of global warming, resource depletion and reduced bio diversity, in many ways the superordinate challenge for Morriston is broadening the citizen definition of what matters while not losing sight of the many important ‘small things’ like the spaces of sociability.

6. Social infrastructure

The grounded and mobility infrastructures discussed so far in this report are about housing and transport which policy makers would see as economic essentials. In this section we consider social infrastructure as an ensemble of more communal and human resources. These include physical facilities such as a shopping street, meeting places, cafes, libraries, community centres, public parks and squares, plus the activities provided by clubs, organisations and associations, as well as the opportunities for less formal and spontaneous interactions. While policy makers would in all kinds of ways separate economic essentials from social resources, the two are intertwined whenever Morriston citizens think about how their place works or does not work.

There is growing recognition of the importance of social infrastructure in sustaining the sociability that is the precondition of individual wellbeing and community interaction. Eric Klinenberg’s recent book *Palaces for the People* highlights libraries as places for people of all ages to meet, study and connect. And the health and wellbeing benefits of access to open, green spaces like parks and of community capital have been documented in various reports. But sustaining - or, even more so, creating – these resources is difficult because they are co-produced by various actors, with different purposes, regulated within activity specific frames and reliant on diverse revenue streams.

Some pieces of social infrastructure, like cafes or pubs, are typically private businesses and rely on customer revenues. Others – like parks and public spaces – are generally publicly provided with tax funding of construction and/ or maintenance. Civil society organisations – informal collectives, member associations, and interest groups – organise activities like movie nights, sport and music events and regular meetings from their own resources, but often rely on facilities – like meeting spaces – provided by the state or by other institutions like churches.

Social infrastructure works by bringing together physical structures and social networks. In inner Morriston the physical facilities include Woodsfield St (the ‘high street’) and adjacent roads with cafes, pubs, public spaces and meeting spaces. Banks, post office and pharmacy


draw citizens to Woodfield St where they will also find an independent butcher, two bakery chains (Jenkins and Greggs), frozen foods (Iceland), travel agent, jewellers and others. Morriston public library, Morriston Park and other green spaces, and various sports clubs and community halls are scattered across both inner Morriston and Llansamlet. Much, like the local library, is within a 10 to 15-minute walk of Morriston residents and thus meets the European standard for pedestrian accessibility.

All this works to draw in citizens so that most visit Woodfield Street despite the growth of retail parks and online shopping. Woodfield Street is used regularly by many of our survey respondents. As Exhibit 9 shows, more than 60% of our respondents visited Woodfield St at least once a week – and that figure is closer to 80% if we only look at those who are residents of inner Morriston. While this is not much higher than the numbers of regularly visit Llansamlet for supermarket and retail park shopping, it does demonstrate that there remains a strong link between residents and their local high street.

Exhibit 9: Frequency of visits to local shopping area by survey respondents

What retail services do visitors use in the different shopping areas? In Woodfield Street, it is most commonly retail in the form of bank, food and pharmacy, with food continuing to figure despite the limited high street offer; more social facilities like library and cafes are well used along with hairdressers (Exhibit 10). Llansamlet has a different offer, with supermarket food shopping the primary aim of shopping visits; so that any significant shift to online ordering and home delivery of food would leave modern retailing in Llansamlet vulnerable.

29 Source: Morriston survey
Note: the graph shows the % of our survey respondents who answered the relevant question.
Swansea Council’s ward profile describes inner Morriston as a suburb of Swansea, but physical infrastructure and use patterns give Morriston the lively, social feel of a district town not a dormitory suburb or residential area. Survey respondents describe Morriston in this way as ‘it’s a nice town. People are friendly’. Llansamlet is more like a suburb, because it has a different kind of spatial organisation with modern retail park and supermarkets instead of a ‘high street’ or district centre, and more scattered smaller centres within a ward where much of the residential development is post-1945.

Morriston residents have affection for, and connection with, their place; for example, a local Facebook group for ‘Morriston Monkeys’ has 3,400 members. At the same time, our survey produced many complaints by Morriston citizens that the social infrastructure is in a poor state because of austerity cuts which have reduced public spend on park facilities and street cleaning, while Woodfield St is neglected and not an attractive destination. In all of these complaints, about the park, street cleaning or Woodfield St, the common theme is decline and decay in a place which is not ‘left behind’ but ‘going downhill’ in terms of social infrastructure. The Morriston public library, housed in a bright modern building, with lots of activities attracting many users, is (with good reason) the one public space that survey respondents are wholly positive about.

There were repeated complaints about the range and quality of facilities in ‘run down’ Morriston Park where many recreational facilities, including the toilets, had been closed; citizens wanted some simple, cheap improvement like new equipment in the children’s play

Source: Morriston Survey
Note: the table shows the percentage of visitors to each place who use each facility
area. More generally, the everyday environment beyond Woodfield St is another cause for concern in the survey responses. One person, when asked about what Morriston is like as a place to live, responded ‘Not good due to street cleaning of rubbish and refuse boxes. The back streets of Morriston are a disgrace and need to be regularly cleared of rubbish... and dog mess’.

On Woodfield St several respondents complained about the ‘rundown feel and appearance of the street itself’. Changed shopping habits have left Woodfield Street with a limited retail offer and older citizens complain about the loss of variety after the closure of clothes and food shops because they could remember a high street with a greengrocer and fish shop. Many respondents complained about the proliferation of barber shops, cheap cafes and charity shops. Some complained about the rough sleepers and addicts who were an unsettling presence. Hence one survey respondent suggested ‘Morriston is poor and is frequented by people that seem poor and are not very respectful of others’.

As elsewhere in Britain, there is a particular anxiety about inadequate facilities for young people and many survey respondents called for ‘something for older kids to do’. Basketball courts were mentioned, as was the desirability of a ‘bike area’ and a ‘skate park’. The disappearance of youth clubs was noted by several people; some asserted that there were ‘no youth clubs’ here, whilst one person suggested a local community/drop-in centre for teenagers, the vulnerable and the elderly’. This is consistent with the survey results where although two thirds of respondents felt there was a good choice of places for adults and older adults to meet friends and family, only half though that was the case for young people. A smaller number lamented a lack of places where ‘everyone’ can meet.

It is possible to disparage these everyday ‘what matters now’ concerns with street cleaning and youth clubs. They can seem to be small things and optional social extras for local policy makers concerned with the big things of access to jobs through inward investment or transport infrastructure; or they might seem irrelevant concerns compared with the future of the planet. But these current concerns should be taken seriously because they indicate an attachment to place and a desire for sociability which is what makes Morriston for its citizens now. Policy makers concerned with the big things have had limited success in the past twenty years; even if that were to change, they could hit their economic policy targets on big things and completely miss the social point about what matters now as far as Morriston citizens (and not engage with what matters for the future). Besides, a focus on social infrastructure could, as we discuss later, provide ways of meeting some of the challenges for current and future generations.

It is of course not easy to reverse the decay of social infrastructure. Citizens who complain about the decay of Woodfield St will continue to do their weekly shop at the supermarkets of Llansamlet that offer attractive prices, product range, opening times and parking. Improving the neglected park requires not only financial resources but the engagement and participation of the community, through groups like the Friends of Morriston Park. But the importance of social infrastructure means that the challenges of the high street and the park are important in themselves and for the future of civic participation. The final section of the report takes up questions of policy.
7. A town plan for revitalising Morriston’s social infrastructure

Our aim has been to understand how Morriston works in a new theoretical frame which can provide a basis in argument and evidence for more imaginative policy making to tackle what matters to citizens now and in the future. The aim is not to produce specific policy recommendations, but to develop an understanding of place that can be used to sketch some policy ideas and outline possible roles of different actors within this specific context. To do this, we first list the positives and the challenges identified in the previous sections and then outline some ideas for getting started on a district town plan for revitalising Morriston’s social infrastructure. This requires a new kind of approach to the activity base which will only deliver if it is complemented by a more ambitious re-working of existing economic development policy at the upper levels.

Morriston is a liveable, sociable place, which provides many households in a settled population with a quality of life above metropolitan districts with similar incomes per capita. There is much to be positive about in a place that currently works better than would be supposed from mainstream understanding in terms of GVA deficiency. Some households are excluded from comfort but for many, a modest income is refracted thorough relatively cheap housing, a car-based mobility system and a social infrastructure of parks, library, high street and all kinds of community-based activities. Morriston also faces many upcoming challenges: the impending loss of pensioner incomes, low and stagnant incomes from work (with the looming threat of loss of retail jobs), car-based mobility and gas home heating with a heavy ecological footprint and an already degraded social infrastructure, symbolised by a large, neglected park and a high street in decline with a narrow retail offer.

This combination of challenges is not unusual in districts which have lost high wage manufacturing; and declining local high streets or neglected parks can of course be found in all kinds of towns at various income levels right across the UK. Such challenges are ubiquitous because they represent hard to solve problems which require coalitions of actors to press for coordinated action at different scales and across several levels of government. Major societal challenges, like our ageing population or car reliance, invariably require this kind of multi-scalar, multi-level approach. Building on Morriston’s many assets is a sensible objective but some of the levers of change will not be located at local level and other levers can only be shifted if regional or national policy is permissive.

Initiative and planning in mainstream economic development policy has migrated upwards from Swansea Borough to the Swansea Bay region under the recently signed city deal consisting of 11 large investment and job creation projects in ‘next generation industries’ spread across the local authorities of South West Wales. But realistically there is little prospect that new inward investment in the form of major projects will (in its present Treasury approved form) produce trickle down/out benefits for Morriston’s settled population. The basic arithmetic is very discouraging: £637 million of public investment and

31 https://www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseabaycitydeal
matching private investment promises to create around 10,000 ‘gross jobs over 15 years’ which would in this best case employ no more than 3% of the Swansea Bay workforce.32

Morriston needs a district town plan for revitalising social infrastructure which engages local specifics and connects bottom up with top down. On the demand side, a town plan would be concerned with delivering social infrastructure as what matters to citizen now (not the Treasury preoccupations of economic policy makers). On the supply side, a town plan for social infrastructure could find economic leverage by mobilising the major investments which are already there (like Morriston Hospital and the DVLA) and will not go away in the next twenty years. Taking demand and supply sides together, this would engage the eco-foundational issues about car dependence and domestic energy use which require political leadership and citizen engagement in a new kind of conversation. New institutions and networks are also likely to be needed as part of this social innovation process.

The good news is that there is scope for quickly delivering some upgraded social infrastructure - like an improved park and community centres - because the financial requirement is modest and political consensus makes it possible to assemble a coalition of local actors capable of addressing the problem. A friends of Morriston Park group already exist. There is also potential for a more ambitious plan for reconnecting the centres of activity in Morriston through coordinated action so that, for example, the local anchors underpin a substantial investment in refurbishing and repurposing Woodfield Street which would help with the ecological reorganisation of the mobility system which requires national long-term transition policies towards a much less car centred mobility system.

Woodfield St is nearly a mile long in two storey configurations with shops on the ground floor and neglected office and residential space above. Part of the retail capacity needs to be taken out so that the main shopping strip is shorter, voids are minimised, and the rest of the street is refurbished as mixed use - residential, workspaces of different kinds and community or leisure uses. The upgrading of the remaining retail and the conversion of the rest of the premises would require large investment which depends upon a redesign of the street and business support measures to safeguard going concern businesses.

The two major local employers - Morriston Hospital and the DVLA - should be asked to play a positive role to help underpin the reuse of property and the demand for local services on Woodfield St. This involves breaking with the established Welsh governmental approach to inward investment which has traditionally focused more or less exclusively on the two phases of entrance and exit; policy makers have offered incentives to capital so as attract new investment and responded with offers of training and job finding for labour when exit is announced. This is changing when the new Welsh Government in its 2019 Economic Action Plan33 envisages an Economic Contract whereby firms obtaining financial assistance from Welsh Government will be obliged inter alia to demonstrate commitment to fair work and progress in decarbonisation. But much more needs to be done to sweat inward investment for social value between entrance and exit.

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32 Earle, J. et al. (2017) What Wales Can Do
33 https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-economic-action-plan

Foundational Economy Research Report | 33
Much of this is confused by well-meaning discussion of how purchasing by public sector ‘anchor institutions’ can deliver local benefits. The confusions begin by separating public from private sector anchors like supermarket chains and then not engaging with the basics of how public sector anchors distribute their revenues and the leverage that can be obtained. Welsh public sector anchors typically spend 70% of revenues on employment costs, so most of their revenue is already distributed more-or-less locally as wages. Morriston hospital and the DVLA are more opaque from the relevant accounts. The ABMU Health Board accounts, combining Morriston hospital and primary care in the community, show in 2017-18 staff costs of £635k in 2017-18 accounted for 94% of value added and 56% of income.34 The DVLA’s 2017-18 accounts show wage costs as £178.5 million or no more than 33% of income; but much labour has been outsourced and is here recorded as purchased ICT, PFI contract on estates and such like.

Purchasing can be a powerful lever at regional level, if there is demand aggregation by several purchasers and if transactional purchasing is replaced by relational building. At local Morriston or Swansea Borough level, it offers very little. Many purchases could be locally invoiced - as with vehicles bought from the local car dealer sites below Woodfield St or stationery from the Enterprise Park - but only a small part of the value added could be located locally. Furthermore, the value of purchases by one or a few local anchors may not be not enough to sustain an SME, while Keynesianism in one borough quickly becomes zero sum and does not build firm capability if several adjacent boroughs pursue similar policies.

But DVLA and Morriston Hospital can play a major role in revitalising Woodfield St in other ways if, for example, they locate some of their workers on Woodfield St in satellite offices and/or encourage their employees to live there. This is a policy lever which has not been pulled in Morriston or elsewhere in Wales. Some of the DVLA’s office workers, like computer programmers, could be relocated onto Woodfield Street; and Morriston Hospital could encourage some of its staff to live on or just off Woodfield St. This would incidentally encourage new ways of travelling to work, shopping or leisure, which become possible because proximity to work and/or attractive social infrastructure makes active travel or public transport more feasible or convenient as mobility choices.

On this basis transformation is possible in three to five years because there would be a business model underpinning the revitalisation of Woodfield St: secure rental income from new office and residential accommodation could underpin major investment in property refurbishment; and a new (younger) demographic working and living on Woodfield Street would increase and diversify retail demand to the benefit of existing residents and users. The benefits could be levered by support for cultural, historical and other community facilities and activities with Tabernacle chapel as a new focus for activity.

The obstacles to revitalisation of Woodfield Street are then more political than financial. This kind of revitalisation through property development with a social purpose would require a coalition of actors playing different roles to achieve shared objectives. Alongside the anchor institutions and the existing businesses, the coalition would need to include the

34 ABMU Health Board Report and Accounts, 2017-18.
local authority, which has technical and financial resources as well as planning powers but cannot on its own solve complex problems. The coalition also needs to include community organisations, cultural and heritage organisations and locally-based intermediary institutions like housing associations which can each bring distinctive capabilities.

We have focused here on a district town plan which is doable by a coalition of local actors and could deliver palpable improvements in social infrastructure which matters now to citizens (and could begin to connect living and working more closely in an ecological way). At the same time, this district town plan needs to be complemented by a radical reworking of higher-level economic development policy for the Swansea Bay region, Welsh and UK economies. The objective of Swansea Bay policy has been to raise GVA through creating high value added jobs in ‘next generation’ tradeable and competitive sectors and improving transport infrastructure to extend travel to work. Incomes do matter and Morriston will lose income over the next generation with the decline of occupational pensions and the contraction of retailing. Morriston is already living off the legacy effects and deferred wages of past industrial labour markets; the current labour market offers little present (and less future) secure, decently paid employment.

But, the current mainstream fixation with getting people into work and promoting high value added, competitive sectors is limited in two ways. First, the strategy involves pouring water into a leaky bucket as good jobs are lost as well as gained; the Swansea Bay City deal promises to create 9,000 ‘gross direct jobs’ in a region which lost 30,000 jobs to deindustrialisation between 1990 and 2010. Second, the prosperity trickle-down effect is limited because good jobs in the tradeable sectors tend to go to young, well qualified newcomers; while getting locals into work means into precarious and badly paid work, so that the City Deal will do little for tenants in social housing churning through bad jobs.

Those seeking to revive the tradeable competitive sectors, as in the City Deal, therefore need to raise their game and buy into policies which should be, but are not currently, within the realm of the thinkable and doable for Westminster or Welsh government.

- Regulation of job quality which goes beyond minimum wage standards through social contract to ensure all larger employers offer living wages, guaranteed minimum hours and spread good practice through their sub contract and supplier conditions. This should mean that large employers like Amazon do not pay low wages and dump social costs onto the state.

- A programme for creation of good, new jobs in the foundational sectors providing essential services like care as part of an explicit effort to create a foundational state for the 2020s, like the welfare state of the 1940s. This requires a reinvention of taxation for the 2020s that tackles unearned income and wealth in land and property, extends risk pooling principles and gets real about higher income tax rates; just as the 1940s welfare

36 Earle, J. et al. (2017) What Wales Can Do, pp. 11-14
state depended on social insurance and PAYE taxation revenues, so tax reform is now essential for the wellbeing state.

- Recognition of the absolute limits of any policy of diffusing prosperity by getting people into work because (in any practically realisable world) there will not be enough good jobs to go around. So that some form of basic income and/or reduction of housing costs through large scale construction of social housing with security of tenure needs to be considered. Just as policy should recognise the absurdity of forcing the low paid to work long hours in sometimes demeaning jobs which are at great cost to the leisure time we should be trying to expand.

- Political leadership on the eco-foundational issues including a commitment to opening conversation with, and deliberation by, citizens: these are what matters for the future but barely figure in discussions about what matters now. This requires something much bolder than setting targets for 2050 without explaining how we are going to reach them; and recognising that in the next generation we need changes which draw on the adaptive qualities of Morriston citizens for social responsibility not private affluence.

The Welsh political classes understand that their citizens have an ambivalent relation to their own identity and aspirations. Thus, Swansea is both Dylan Thomas’ ‘ugly, lovely town’ and for many locals ‘the graveyard of ambition’. This last judgement has always rankled, to the extent that the town council in the 1990s set a new motto ‘ambition is critical’ into the pavement outside Swansea railway station. Thomas and that motto were then both famously mocked by the two bent coppers in the opening sequence of the Twin Town film which was made and set in Swansea. But, to be serious, the scale and scope of our ambition is now critical to the future of Morriston, Swansea and Wales: for politicians and citizens the question is whether an ordinary post-industrial place can be the crucible of ambition for economically grounded social innovation that delivers wellbeing now and for future generations?

8. Beyond Morriston: what we see and who sees the future

At the same time, many of the readers of this report will never visit Morriston nor have much interest in Wales except as a holiday destination. So, for European urban planners, social scientists and citizens who care about other places, it is worth underlining the relevance of this report as a piece of experimental social science that is about changing what we see as well as who is enlisted to see the future of ordinary places.

The frame of reference is not any kind of community studies because we do not claim a ‘community’ did, does or should exist in Morriston. Here common concerns with social infrastructure and the Morriston monkey self-identification coexists with multiple differences of interest and point of view in a citizenry. The empirical question is how to make sense of these differences and commonality in the context of continuous change negotiated by an adaptive population.
The classical English sociological studies of community of the 1950s are not helpful because they understand change as departure from ‘a traditional social structure’. Morriston in the 2010s is not about what happened to the ‘affluent worker’ after the breakdown of traditional working class life, as imagined 50 years ago by the English sociologists who read Willmott and Young on Bethnal Green. Classical American studies are more relevant. Like the Lynds on ‘Middletown’, we see that place is not a fixed map reference because place is continuous ‘upsetting old adjustments’; and we study 40 years of rapid change which, in Morriston as well as Muncie, brought a new mobility framework and adaption to the car. But, unlike the Lynds on Middletown we would not present Morriston in the 2010s as ‘average’ and our terminology about ordinary/ extraordinary is a way of insisting that analysis needs to focus on the important differences between the many places with mediocre GVA. But there are of course echoes of earlier studies.

For this reason, a useful point of reference is James C Scott’s distinction in Seeing Like a State between two kinds of knowledge: metis and techne. Metis is local, specific, and granular like the grounded knowledge of the artisan or peasant farmer about what’s workable with particular materials or in one place; techne is generalisable, decontextualised and abstract working through metrics, repeated connections and standard classifications, so that it allows knowledge at a distance with many places reduced to the same terms. The distinction is important even if we then reject Scott’s argument about how well-meaning state planning and interventions, which rely on techne, generally fail to deliver or go disastrously wrong; as with Soviet collectivization of agriculture or planned capital cities like Brasilia.

We would endorse Scott’s insistence on the importance of metis because Morriston is a place that cannot be understood without engaging local specifics. In a preliminary way, this report is about the attached population of one district town between two bypasses which should not be confused with any other: Morriston is not Llanelli or Neath nor anywhere further afield. But we would question Scott’s dismissal of knowledge at a distance where his anarchist sensibility and suspicion of state power lead to an overstated argument. In this report, Morriston has been partly explained for outsiders through the standard categories of the British administrative state about travel to work, housing tenure, household income and all the rest. In a preliminary way, this report shows how much knowledge for a new kind of district study can be obtained by reworking standard administrative information within a new framework where it is integrated into a new narrative based on multiple sources.

Against Scott, we would argue that in any complex system of multi-level government and governance, knowledge at a distance through standard metrics and administrative categories is both an inescapable necessity and a rich resource because the state (and its civil society critics) at many different levels needs legibility and intelligibility. Such evidence is of course necessary but not sufficient, hence the need for supplementary information.

from survey and interview sources. With these points made, the issue then is how we see economically and who sees politically.

On how we see economically, mainstream economic policy makers have been focusing too much on GVA per capita as the key metric and superordinate objective. This is the wrong kind of metric, for many different reasons. In its own terms, it encourages a preoccupation with fixing the economy for higher rates of growth. This is almost certainly undeliverable through local or regional policy interventions which would be better directed at other objectives. Meanwhile national level monetary policy interventions since 2008 raise all kinds of issues about debt-based consumption and the inflation of asset prices in an unproductive economy where property in London creates divisive wealth and untaxed success. The eco-foundational issues vanish or are demoted with the argument they must be addressed in ways which do not disrupt the pursuit of economic growth.

Worse still, GVA per capita does not engage with the concerns of the citizens of Morriston. If they are anything like UK survey respondents, more than half of Morriston residents do not understand what GDP (and by extension GVA) means.\(^{41}\) If it was explained, citizens would understand it is an imaginary average which does not take account of the sharp differences caused by differences in household type and housing tenure. If we must have income metrics, residual income for different types of household (after housing, transport and utilities) would produce more legibility by giving a first measure of differences in liveability and right across the UK, residual income would highlight the importance of housing problems which are at present excluded from the domain of economic policy.

The other confused and confusing objective of mainstream policy is job creation. This is confusing, because, with a deregulated UK labour market, it is predictably easy to create bad quality jobs. If good quality jobs are created, they will often not be for locals but for well qualified newcomers; policy makers need to remember this will often do little for the attached population. While policy makers obsess about better jobs, Morriston citizens currently in work realistically suppose the good jobs (for many) are gone and they have very limited expectations of getting a better job in the near future: only 26 of 117 respondents (in work who answered the question) believed they had prospects of a better job within the next year or so. And, significantly, while 76% of Morriston citizens define a better job in terms of higher pay, 52% wanted a more interesting job or with more opportunities, 34% want to end mis-match of hours and 47% want more or less flexibility because many combine work with caring responsibilities or just want more leisure. According to a 2019 YouGov Eurotrack poll, 63% of British respondents favour a 4-day week ‘unless it is bad for the economy’; and 45% think we would be just as productive on a 4-day week.\(^{42}\)

More fundamentally, policy makers operate with a binary division between the economy and a distinct sphere of the social; often elaborated with crude ideas about how ‘wealth

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\(^{42}\) M. Smith ‘Europeans support introducing a four day week’ (15 March 2019) https://yougov.co.uk/topics/economy/articles-reports/2019/03/15/eurotrack-europeans-support-introducing-four-day-w
'creation' can trickle down to benefit the economically disadvantaged and will generate tax revenues to pay for the social. There is no evidence that citizens make anything like this kind of sharp binary distinction between the economic and the social domain. As we have seen, there is clear evidence in Morriston that they value social infrastructure as the basis of sociability and also consider that their infrastructure is underfunded and neglected; if they understood taxation they would see that such underfunding is the inevitable consequence of the failure of an income and consumption based tax system to catch up with the wealth and property base of present day British capitalism. The structural inability to fund social infrastructure is the consequence of a socio technic failure combining corporate tax avoidance, low rates of income tax covered by regressive VAT, atrophied social insurance, out of date property taxes and ineffective taxing of land values or wealth.

On who sees politically, of course we do not have the problem of an authoritarian state with a prostrate civil society as in the cases of social planning disasters which concerned Scott. But the UK shows how it is possible to have all the apparatus of representative democracy and functioning civil society without citizen participation in economic and social priority setting and policy making. That certainly seems to be the case in Morriston which consequently neglects what matters now like social infrastructure and ignores what matters for the future like the eco-foundational issues.

If we look back at the UK since 1945, we have had welfare without citizenship and citizenship without welfare.43 The post-war ‘welfare state’ delivered welfare (for all) without citizenship as active participation. For the best of reasons, a Labour government concerned to deliver a new settlement effectively nationalised welfare through health, education and housing in national systems which centralised decision making, made local government the financially dependent agent of the centre and incidentally undermined voluntary action. After 1979, under Thatcher and Blair the UK developed a version of citizenship without welfare (for an increasing number). The ideal was a consumerist version of citizenship as voting with market income subject to a regulator; when disappointed, after mis-selling or service failure, the aggrieved citizen could claim financial compensation. The result was private affluence and public squalor in a society increasingly divided by untaxed inequalities of wealth and income; with policy makers bizarrely focusing on income not wealth.

The question now is whether and how we can combine active citizenship and participation with the objective of wellbeing for all now and for future generations. While Westminster is distracted by Brexit, in Wales there are all kinds of harbingers of a progressive shift in the object of policy; but limited sign of the step change in citizen participation which is the ultimate challenge for the political classes. Thus, the Welsh Government has passed the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act which obliges public bodies to consider the wellbeing of future generations and created new Public Service Boards to strengthen joint working by public bodies. This is a hugely progressive move by the political classes and should be welcomed but it is not enough when citizens need to be enlisted in the struggle to

43 We owe this argument to Filippo Barbera.
define and deliver wellbeing. The conclusion of this report is that the citizens of Morriston deserve no less.
Appendix

Analysis of Morriston questionnaires:
‘A short survey about what it is like to live in your community’, July-September 2018.

Profile of the 200 respondents

*Where do the survey respondents live?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner Morriston (approximately the Morriston ward)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Morriston, including Llansamlet and Mynyddbach wards</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not be identified</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Age and gender*

<table>
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<th>Age group</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not identified</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Specifics of place: patterns of mobility and uses of place**

The role of car vs public transport in a medium sized town like Swansea is different from in the major conurbations.

Morriston is a place where citizen lives are formatted around car use and is full of well adapted car users so that public transport (bus) use has been residualised.
Do you own a car or sometimes have access to a car (e.g. lifts from friends or family)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I/ We have a car</th>
<th>I/ We can usually get access to a car or get a lift</th>
<th>I/ We can occasionally get access to a car or get a lift</th>
<th>I/ We never use a car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

161 out of 189 who answered this question have a car or usually have access to a car. The non-car users are disproportionately older people and those who live close to Woodfield St (the High St). Of the 13 who never use car, 5 are over 70; half are from inner and half from outer Morriston.

What do you use the car for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Shopping</th>
<th>Visiting friends or family</th>
<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Taking children to nursery, school, childminder etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88 yes</td>
<td>157 yes</td>
<td>145 yes</td>
<td>141 yes</td>
<td>73 yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 no</td>
<td>5 no</td>
<td>17 no</td>
<td>21 no</td>
<td>89 no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The car is completely dominant when it comes to non-timetabled activities (i.e. shopping, leisure, family). Use of car for going to work or school run is complicated by timetable constraints and difficulty and/or expense of parking in some workplaces.

Car use is important in inner and outer Morriston. Inner Morriston is organised around a spine of High St with frequent bus services. Of the 88 using the car to go to work, three quarters (78) are in the working age groups 18-59. And, of this 88, 28 are inner Morriston, 54 are outer Morriston, 5 unclassified. Of the 73 doing the school run by car, 23 are inner Morriston and 54 Outer Morriston, with 5 unclassified.

Bus use is residualised because car use is normalised: at the simplest there are 82 respondents who never use a bus as against 13 who never use a car.

Do you ever use the bus?

197 respondents answered this question:

- 115 use the bus (51 inner Morriston and 52 outer Morriston, 12 unclassified)
- 82 non bus users (25 inner Morriston, 52 outer Morriston, 5 unclassified).
What do you use the bus for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Shopping</th>
<th>Visiting friends or family</th>
<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Taking children to nursery, school, childminder etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 yes</td>
<td>79 yes</td>
<td>44 yes</td>
<td>70 yes</td>
<td>10 yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 no</td>
<td>35 no</td>
<td>57 no</td>
<td>43 no</td>
<td>102 no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you use the bus? (for the 115 bus users)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most days</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
<th>At least once a month</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These responses about frequency of bus use reinforces the point about residualisation because only 62 of 115 (i.e. just over half) are regular users (at least once a week).

How does transport mode and location shape the use of local shops and other facilities?

Those doing a weekly food shop drive to Asda, Aldi and Lidl in outer Morriston for free car parking and choice which is limited on Woodfield St (e.g. no green grocer). But Woodfield St has a diverse legacy offer including essentials for older customers (pharmacy, 3 banks, 2 travel agents) plus specialists (butcher, bakers, Iceland frozen food, 2 jewellers).
**Do you sometimes use a local high street for shopping, cafes, bank, library etc? If so, which one(s)?** (Out of 200 respondents.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morriston, Woodfield Street</th>
<th>Swansea</th>
<th>Llansamlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemist</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressing</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betting shop</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pub/ club</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown for food shopping by residency (inner or outer Morriston)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food shopping at:</th>
<th>Morriston, Woodfield Street</th>
<th>Swansea</th>
<th>Llansamlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By residents from inner (total 76)</td>
<td>Inner</td>
<td>Outer</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morriston (or unclassified (U) total 20):</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often do you visit these local shopping areas?

On frequent visits - once a week or more - Woodfield St outscores the shed retailing of Llansamlet. But Woodfield St is strongest in pulling in local demand: 80% of inner Morriston respondents shop weekly on Woodfield St, compared with 40% of outer Morriston respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of visits to:</th>
<th>Morriston, Woodfield Street</th>
<th>Swansea</th>
<th>Llansamlet</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice a month</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of visits to Woodfield St by:</th>
<th>Inner Morriston residents (total 76)</th>
<th>Outer Morriston residents (total 104)</th>
<th>Unclassified residents (total 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice a month</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like many areas, Swansea has been reformatted around car use but the diversity of high street offer ensures that Woodfield St carries on for a while for a local clientele. These uses ensure regular footfall in Woodfield St for many purposes, though parking is a concern for a car adapted population. Deterioration of choice and the physical appearance is a public issue that also emerged in survey responses.
2. Meeting foundational needs is complicated by existing patterns of provision and use with incomes adequate for many basic needs

Meeting foundational needs is much more complicated than it was in the heroic age 1880-1940, when clean water and health services were self-evident goods for the mass of the population and could be provided by benevolent government.

Existing patterns of use and provision complicate current policy options for future provision e.g. on public transport:

- private car use dominates personal mobility in areas like Swansea; unless and until we have driverless, hirable mobility pod, then public transport is likely to remain for a minority (cf. the bus station and works stands in the 1960s).

- interconnection of meeting foundational needs in one area and problems in another e.g. car use provides mobility and flexibility but worsens air quality and reduces physical activity levels; cheap food make it easier to manage household budgets but may encourage less healthy eating.

Asking citizens about wants adds a further layer of complication. A society of high mass consumption is splintered into sub groups, many of which are comfortable in terms of income and many of whom do not need care services at any point in time.

We have residualisation of acute deprivation i.e. it is real enough but affects a minority. Take being cold and hungry which was the lot of many in earlier pre-1914 Britain. Ours is a society of fuel poverty and food banks but not for most people. Hence, the difficulty of getting a political alliance against deprivation in a society of individual high mass consumption where 80% can meet basic needs.
Is your home easy to heat in winter? (193 responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very easy to keep warm. It’s as warm as I need</th>
<th>Quite easy. It’s usually warm enough</th>
<th>It’s sometimes difficult to get warm enough</th>
<th>It’s often very cold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is it easy to find the money to feed your household each week? (197 responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Care for young and old is a universal need but a majority of respondents do not use either service at any point in time: in our survey, around two thirds currently had no care needs. Of those who needed care for themselves or other household members, around one fifth said that could not access the care they needed.

Can you access the care you and/or other members of your household need (for those who need it)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For children: pre school</th>
<th>Yes 50</th>
<th>No 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For children: after school / holidays</td>
<td>Yes 52</td>
<td>No 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For older adults</td>
<td>Yes 46</td>
<td>No 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For other adults</td>
<td>Yes 37</td>
<td>No 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we ask questions about quality of provision, more difficulties are apparent because citizens clearly do live in a world of compromises: healthy food or special dietary needs food is much less affordable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is it easy to afford the cost of healthy food?</th>
<th>Yes 69</th>
<th>Sometimes 77</th>
<th>No 46</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it easy to afford special dietary needs?</td>
<td>Yes 48</td>
<td>Sometimes 45</td>
<td>No 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If we look at sub groups, the finding is that pensioners are more comfortable than younger households.

*Is your home easy to heat in winter?* 37 said it was very or quite easy to keep their home warm out of the 41 respondents over 70 who answered this question.

*Is it easy to find the money to feed your household each week?* 37 replied ‘yes’, 4 ‘sometimes’ and 1 ‘no’ out of a total of 42 respondents over 70 who answered this question.

### 3. The demand for social infrastructure

When you run a pilot survey, the respondents tell you about needs which they rate more important than you did in designing the questionnaire. So it was with what we would call ‘social infrastructure’ which allows social activity at low or no cost.

The survey results show that many citizens are happy enough with the physical facilities i.e. places to meet.

*Is there a good choice of local places to meet friends and family (e.g. café, community centre, clubs etc) for?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young people</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some caution is needed as the responses include perceptions about what is available to these different age groups. For example, half of respondents considered that there was not a good choice of places for young people to meet, though the respondents were all aged 18 or older. Overall, there was more satisfaction with the facilities for adults but with still a significant quarter indicating dis-satisfaction with the choice.

And, we have already seen that the library is the sixth most visited facility in central Morriston in our survey (ahead of hairdressers and cafes), offering a range of services as well as hosting regular groups.

If we take another example of social infrastructure, parks and playing fields, more than two thirds of respondents to this question considered that there were good places nearby. Indeed, residents have access to Morriston Park – a traditional large park, originally landscaped and with all kinds of leisure activities – as well as other smaller recreation spaces.
Are the parks/ playing fields in this neighbourhood adequate for you and your household members?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There are some good places nearby</th>
<th>There are some good places, but they are not convenient</th>
<th>There are some places, but I don’t like them/ they are not pleasant to visit</th>
<th>There don’t seem to be any places nearby</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time, the comments box at the end of the survey elicited a large number of responses about the quality of the social infrastructure, particularly the park and the high street, both of which were seen as suffering a marked deterioration that was problematic. A selection of these comments is below.

- Morriston Park is run down. Problem with the drains.
- Dog mess is a problem in the area
- Better investment from council in centre
- Morriston needs to become more diverse in terms of what it offers: family shops, fishmonger, clothing...
- We need more variety of shops in Morriston centre
- I’m missing a fruit and veg shop in Morriston.
- Coming from a different area, I’ve noticed how dirty Morriston is.
- No more hairdressers and charities. Haven’t got everything we need for food shopping.
- Not many places for children
- Better shops in Morriston. It’s gone all takeaways and hairdressers. More choice – clothes shops, greengrocers – but when we have them, they close within a few months. I think it’s because people don’t use them. People shop in Tesco or Asda.
- Few more shops, such as food shops, clothes.
- Over the last 20 years the swimming bath, tennis, cricket courts have all gone.
- Cinema – for youth
- A supermarket on Woodfield because I could walk there instead of driving to Asda.
- Perhaps more amenities for younger children. People are in poverty so something free for the children to do in the holidays.
- I’d like to see Morriston cleaned up. There always seems to be rubbish hanging about.
- The shops (some) could do with a makeover. Morriston seems a bit run down.
- Clubs for 16-18 years old, after school
- Living on the outskirts of Morriston, there are no shops or community services in the immediate area. Having a car is essential, nothing is in walking distance.
• I would like to see more interesting shops other than betting shops, hairdressers.
• Something that we can all as a community come together.
• This community is desperately in need of a drop in/ community centre in Woodfield St.
• To get the children off the streets to give them something creative and entertaining to do.
• Over the years youth clubs have disappeared and there is nowhere for the children to go unless you’re willing to pay
• Historical and cultural interests need more attention to safeguard the important and special past of the town and area.
• Something for older kids to do e.g. basketball courts. More parks for younger kids. More community centres for mums and tots and for people to make friends.
• We have too many of the same kinds of shops – hairdressers, cafes etc and they close quickly. Should have help to paint them and make them look more attractive.
• Anti-social behaviour needs to be sorted- some space for friends to get together like bike area or skateboard
• Improving Morriston Park. Old duck pond deteriorated, dirty, grass needs cutting. Could do lots there, used to be ducks.
• A local community centre/drop-in centre for teenagers, vulnerable and elderly.
• More resources for young people and children. Something for children to do that’s not too expensive, more modern parks, events at local community centres.
• More community activity
• Bringing more shops and parking to the area would benefit the community and bring jobs
• More things for children/ older children to do
• Morriston Park has potential but needs children’s’ equipment. Investment in Primrose Park Llansamlet means we travel there.
• Morriston library is good, it would be nice to have more activity, shops open on a Sunday when not in work.
• More social groups/activities for teenagers
• The choice in Woodfield Street, especially independent retailers, seems to be worsening. e.g. only one butcher, no greengrocer or fishmonger. Only 2 bank branches left.
• A park/play area for children within walking distance so we don’t have to use the car would be perfect
• Morriston Park – drainage problems prevent the park being used to its full potential.
• I feel the park could be used for children and adult activities and the children’s park could be updated with swings.
- No community hub for everyone to meet and get advice under one roof
- Morriston Park needs improvement and toilet facilities
- Morriston high street is very run down and often I do not feel safe. Attracts drunks
- Lots of drug taking on the high street

And, of course there were also very positive comments about living in Morriston, such as:

- It’s a friendly town
- It’s lovely
- It has everything
- While I hear many people complain about Morriston compared with how it used to be years ago, I still feel it is actually a good area. Woodfield Street has a lot of shops compared to other areas I have lived. It is brilliant!