CECAN Webinar: Integrating Health, Wellbeing, Nature and Sustainability (HWNS) into local, strategic planning: learning from the co-development of a practical systems approach to place-making

cecan
Centre for the Evaluation of Complexity Across the Nexus

Wednesday 24th April 2024, 13:00 – 14:00 BST

Presenter: Jemma Sharman (Principal Specialist, Chief Scientist Directorate, Natural England)

Welcome to our **CECAN Webinar.**

All participants are muted. Only the Presenter & CECAN Host can speak. The webinar will start at **13:00 BST.**

Jemma will speak for around 45 minutes and will answer questions at the end.

Please submit your questions at any point during the webinar via the Q&A box in the Zoom webinar control panel.

Today's webinar will be recorded and made available on the CECAN website.

E Mail: cecan@surrey.ac.uk
Web: www.cecan.ac.uk
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Integrating Health, Wellbeing, Nature and Sustainability (HWNS) into local, strategic planning: learning from the co-development of a practical systems approach to place-making

Jemma.Sharman@naturalengland.org.uk

April 2024

Strategic Context

- NE Science, Evidence and Evaluation Strategy
- Environmental Improvement Plan
- Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 21: ‘Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision-makers, practitioners, and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity….’

HWNS Project Concept

How are HWNS connected?

We all live in **local authority areas** and depend on resources outside of these areas from across the world.

People have **Health and Wellbeing.**

The **Nature section** reports land use and covers urban and rural.

The **Sustainability section** looks at the environmental impact of the Local Authority economy. This includes both impacts within the Local Authority and globally.

Discovery Phase - Developing the HWNS Concept

Enabling an integrated and collaborative mindset on health, wellbeing, nature, and sustainability by identifying people, resources, and evidence that explain systemic dependencies

We brought the idea to life with prototypes, working openly and transparently with stakeholders to iterate regularly and respond quickly to what learnt.

Learning opportunities:
- 5 interviews with subject matter experts
- 42 replies to online survey
- 2 workshops with stakeholders.

These activities gave us a better understanding of the idea, its assumptions and unknowns, to strategically plan later stages of the delivery of the product.

Opportunities

Facilitating collaboration between anybody wanting to shape local places.

Making it simpler to understand how to locate evidence in a holistic way.

Making it easier to share evidence and raise awareness in a way that influences planning and local communities.

Co-development Partners

NATURAL ENGLAND

Pilot Local Authorities

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Norfolk County Council

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Partnership Group

NATURAL ENGLAND

Environment Agency

UK Health Security Agency

University of BRISTOL

what works wellbeing

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

RENEW

University of Exeter

Initial Advisory Group

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Cheshire East Council

UNIVERSITY of York

ADEPT Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Local Government Association

LG Inform

CENTRE FOR THRIVING PLACES The new name for HAPPY CITY

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Nottingham City Council

Discovery Phase – Key Learning

Learnings on integrated decision making in local planning

"We don't have a shared language, so time is wasted trying to determine if we understand each other."
Interview participant

1. **USERS**
   The tool needs to facilitate collaboration between people who want to shape local places.

2. **EVIDENCE**
   The tool needs to simplify how to holistically understand evidence and where to find it.

3. **NARRATIVES**
   The tool needs to facilitate the sharing of evidence and raise awareness in a way that influences planning and local communities.

"There is a plethora of material that is published but it is really hard to keep on top of what is most recent/relevant to whatever the matter is that you are dealing with."
Interview participant

Discovery Phase – Initial Product Scope

A product that

different actors in a place can use

to imagine, explore, and share **new ways of influencing** local planning

by **becoming aware** of the systemic dependencies of their area of interest

and acquire the **essential information** necessary

to **identify and approach** domain-specific knowledge and experts.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Open to public
over exclusive to local authorities

Planning future scenarios
over analysing current scenarios

Provoking new thinking
over providing final answers

High-level holistic information
over deep domain specific

Qualitative understanding
before quantitative analysis

Discovery Phase to Alpha Prototyping: Developing a Minimum Viable Product

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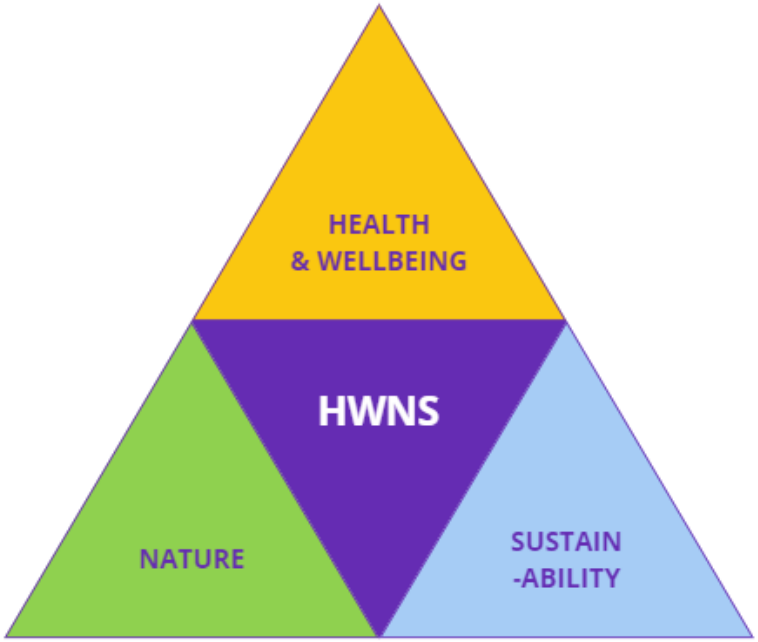
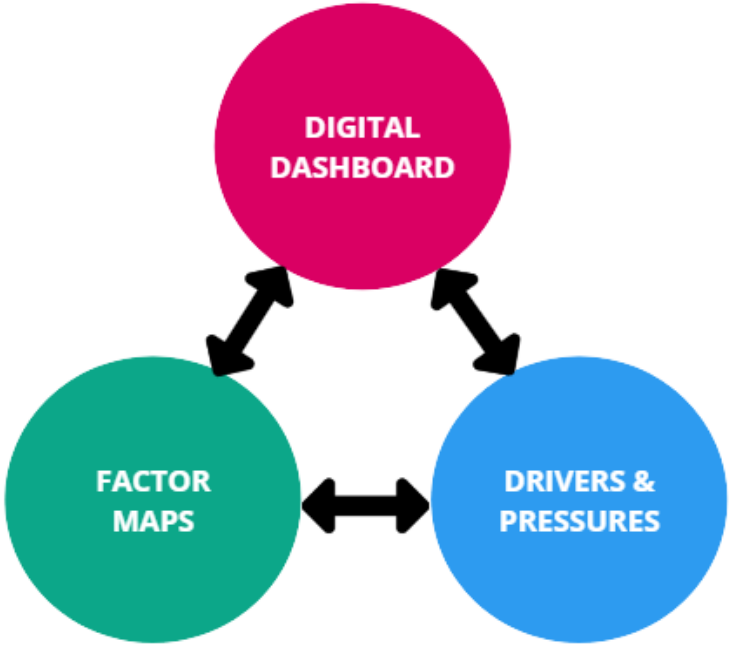
HWNS FRAMEWORK: Domains, Elements and Conversation Process

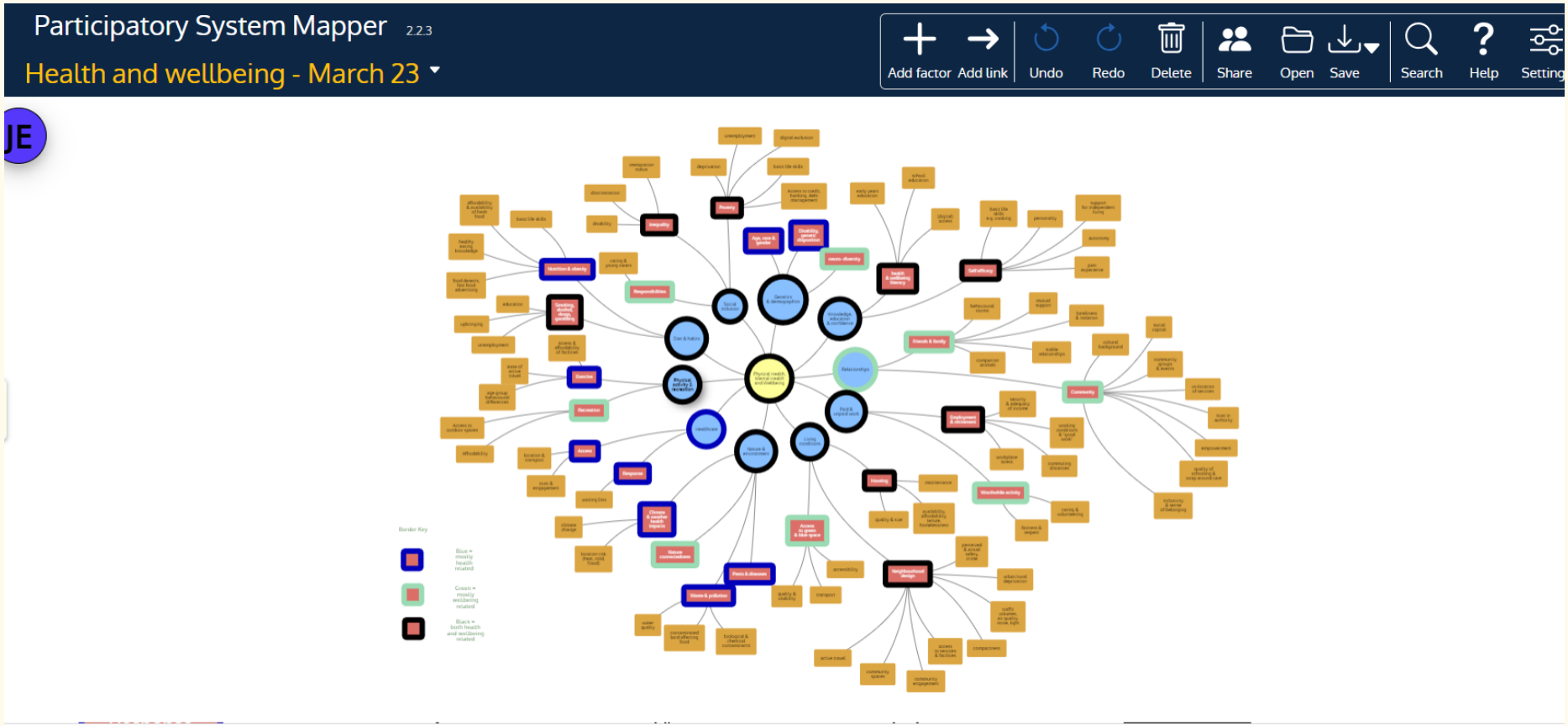
Three Framework DOMAINS



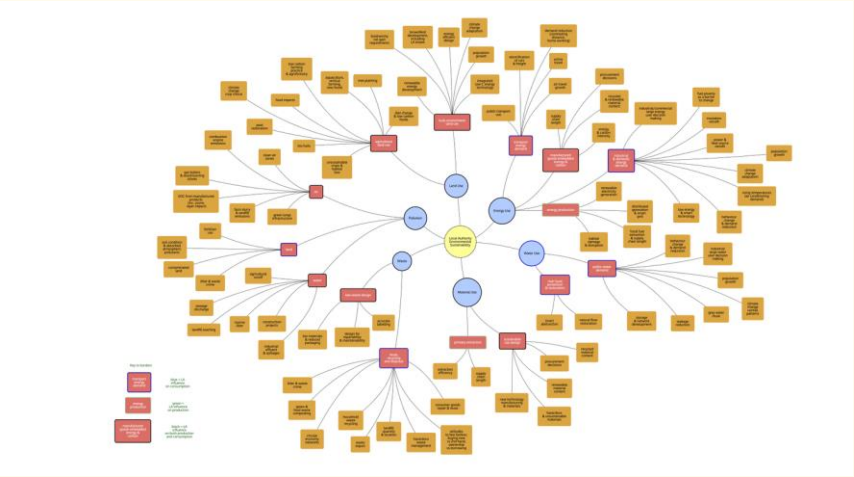
Three Framework ELEMENTS

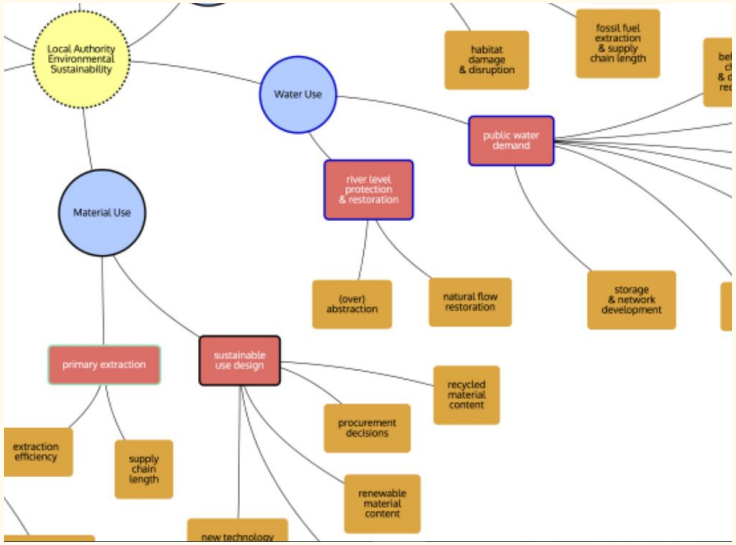


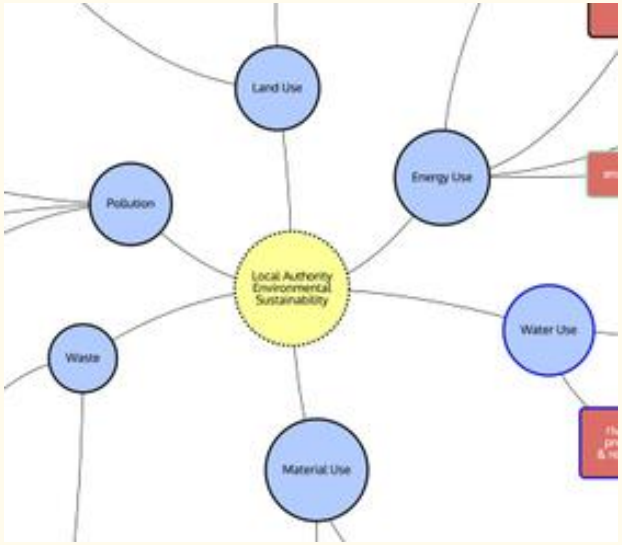
Alpha Prototype Phase - Understanding Dependencies



Developing Factor Maps: Sustainability Example







- Each factor map contains factors which are relevant to improving the outcome. These are organized in high-level groups, and the expanded into further detail.
- Each factor will have a definition linked to a url evidence source
- All 3 factor maps should be used at once to come up with plans which act across HWNS at once.

What the Factor Maps are:

- They show some of the key factors which influence each of the outcomes from a Local Authority perspective
- They provide a hierarchy of categories and sub-categories of factors
- They are designed to provide a framework for discussion to collectively better understand what factors influence outcomes
- They provide a simple and quick insight for users to understand factors outside of their core area of expertise, to help break down silos
- They have an accessible language and design so that they can be used together as a package

And what they are not:

- They are not causal maps
- They are generic, not specific
- They are physical system based, not policy based.
- They do not have weightings
- They are not necessarily complete
- They do not (currently) show links between the different diagrams.

Pilot Workshops – Testing the Factor Maps

- The new spatial strategy for the whole Liverpool City Region
- The new Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Greater Norwich region
- Planning and development in the peri-urban geography from Heathrow to the proposed River Thames Scheme (near Runneymede). Led by Surrey County Council and held online

"This exercise feels relevant and progressive"

"It isn't a "make sure you've covered all of these" [list] because they won't all be relevant and they're not all important to every area. I love the fact there's no score at the end of it, because that actually reflects the complexity and it's not one size fits all"

Suggested Uses for the Factor Maps

- **Horizon scanning** focusing strongly on what might or will change over time
- Anywhere you need to **integrate thinking** between disparate groups and domains, for example in spatial planning, land use discussions, transport strategy
- **First starting point** after a broad vision has been set, to explore issue widely before implementation plans are set and then as a **dissemination vehicle.**
- **Policy and political narrative development**
- **Business case support to ensure full coverage of benefits and impacts**
- **Environmental impact or outcome reporting**, again to ensure coverage
- **Implementation preparation** when launching new policy, major projects or new initiatives – to bring understanding of the domain interactions to the implementation team, who may not have been involved at the design stage.

Suggested Uses for the Factor Maps

- **Exploration of the impact of change** – looking at an approaching or recent change, including in regulation, policy, political leadership, major planning decisions (yours or those of others) or changes in the natural environment itself.
- **Who do we need to talk** to prompt for individuals and teams and then later for a '**what have we missed?**' check-up.
- **Collaboration discussions** with any cross-section of stakeholders to explore places where collaboration might lead to better outcomes and waste reduction
- **Conflict discussions** – where groups competing for resources or policy decisions need to see and understand the wider context of those choices – where their desired outcomes might conflict with those of another group.
- **Public Forums** as an alternative to existing methods with a 'pro/anti' approach.

Suggested Improvements to the Factor Maps and Wider HWNS Resources

- Ensure consistent level of complexity/detail/language across all three maps.
- Identified some key map gaps
- Useful suggestions for the digital tool version – particularly around future functionality and presentation that can be built into the technical requirements
- Without good facilitation in using the Factor Maps, participants could get ‘lost’ or overwhelmed by the maps

Alpha Prototype Phase – Horizon Scanning: Drivers and Pressures for Local Government

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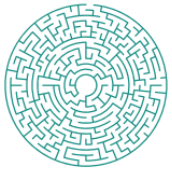
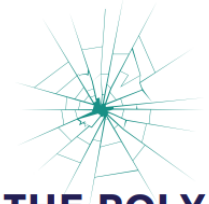


LIVING IN A VUCA WORLD

THE WEIGHT OF MEGATRENDS

THE RISE OF 'PLACE'

NEW WAYS OF WIELDING POWER



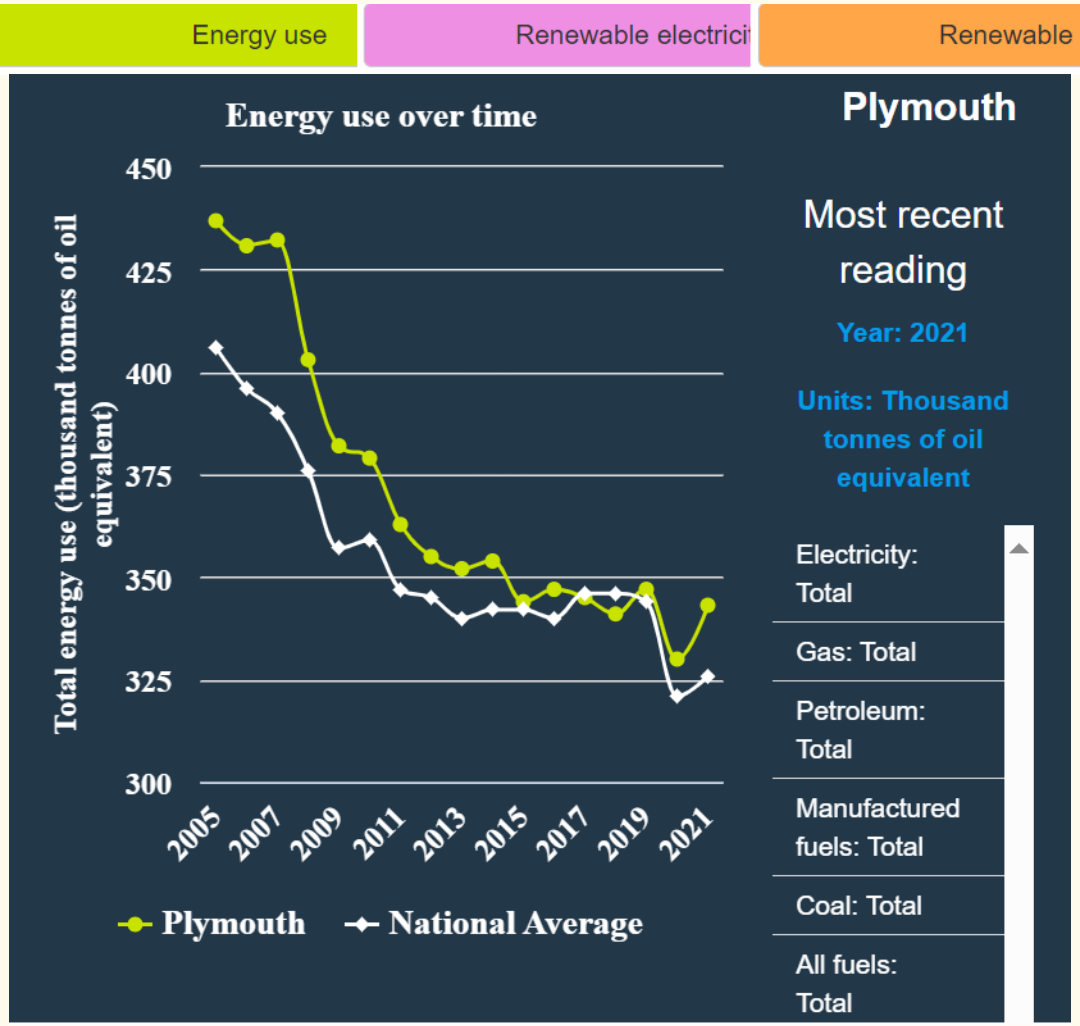
THE POLY-FRACTURED SOCIETY

FUNDING – BEYOND THE SIZE OF THE POT

SHIFTING EXPECTATIONS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND LEARNING

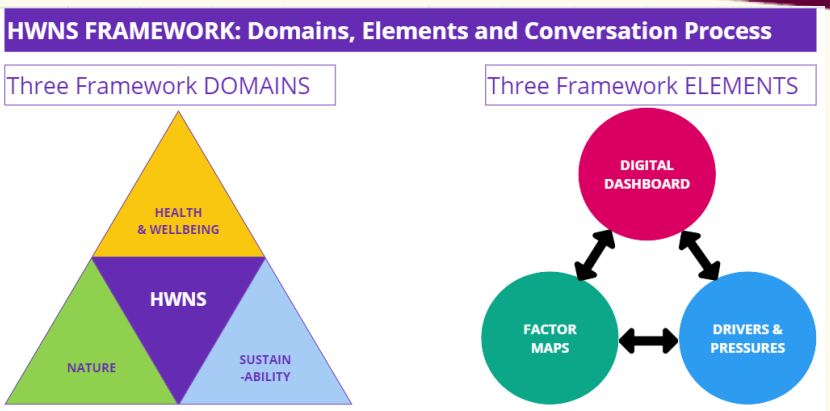
Alpha Prototype Phase – Accessible Evidence: Dashboard Snapshot

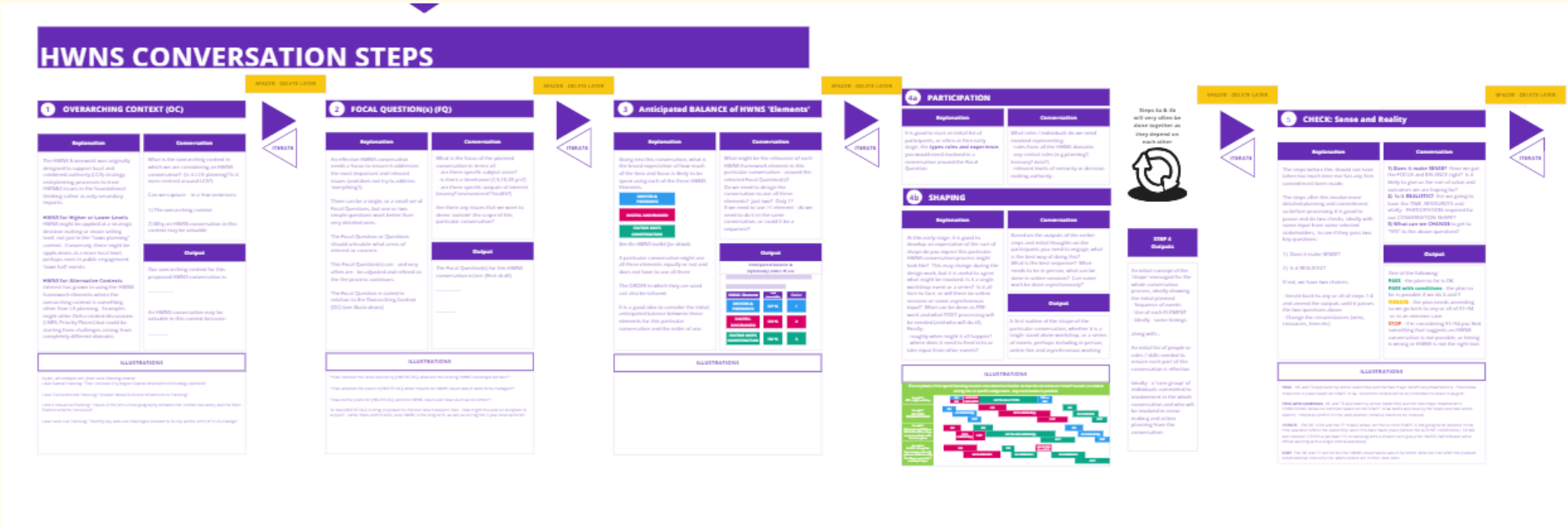


- Early alpha prototype in development
- BETA versions anticipate dashboard development showing:
  - Collective health, wellbeing, nature and sustainability key indicators
  - LSOAs to reveal least well 10% within local authorities for HWB indicators
  - Sustainability dashboard to show global as well as local area impact
  - Improving accessibility and useability standards

Alpha Prototype Phase – Accessible Evidence

Alpha Prototype Phase – Facilitation Framework



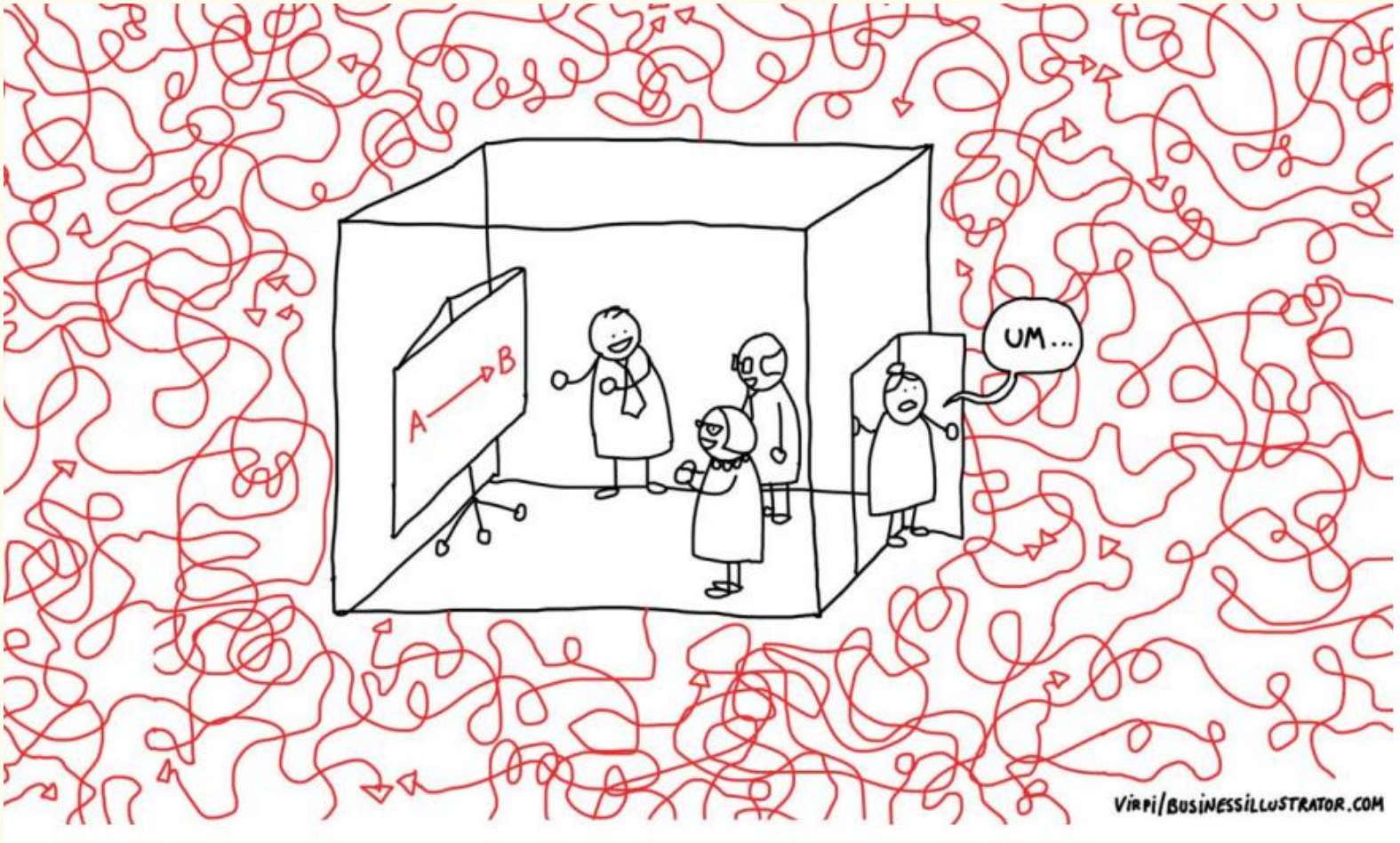


Challenges and Learning So Far….

- Balancing complexity and accessibility
- Moving beyond metrics
- Developing a modular approach
- Facilitating the HWNS conversation
- Geographical context
- User friendly technology on a shoe-string

- Robust, open-source data available at local authority geographical scale
- Increasing challenges for local/combined authorities
- Widening the primary audience
- Developing longer-term case studies

Next Steps and Future Plans

- Secured funding from the Government Office for Technology Transfer (Knowledge Asset Expand Grant)
- Review learning form the alpha phase to inform the BETA HWNS Framework and widen out testing and holistic design
- Develop and implement the audience/marketing plan – including the identification of key levers for change
- Identify open-source data gaps at local authority level and work with partners to address these gaps
- Finalise and test the facilitation package to support effective use and uptake
- Finalise and further test guided facilitation package for online/facilitator use to supporting a 'training the trainer approach'
- Explore potential development to support participatory decision-making and better accountability across HWNS outcomes

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