

## Scenario Planning

**Integrating health and wellbeing  
into sustainable regional development**

Workshop report for

**The Healthy Regions Project**

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May 2009

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## 1 Introduction

On 21 April 2009, the regional partners in the Healthy Regions project met at Dartington Hall in the South West of England to carry out a scenario planning exercise to explore the factors that might affect integration of health and wellbeing policy into sustainable regional development.

The exercise was designed to build on work done previously in the South West of England and, in particular, to explore further the importance of a number of issues highlighted during a workshop in Bristol (in December 2008) as key to successful integration of health and wellbeing into the South West's regional strategy.

This report documents the outcomes of the day's discussions:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of scenario planning;
- **Section 3** describes the workshop methodology;
- **Section 4** sets out the critical uncertainties identified by partners during the morning discussions;
- **Section 5** describes the scenario storylines;
- **Section 6** records the outcome of the vote held at the end of the workshop on how likely each scenario is;
- **Section 7** offers some conclusions on the discussions; and
- **Section 8** suggests further reading and highlights online resources that support scenario planning.

## 2 Using Scenarios

### 2.1 The purpose of scenario planning

Many organisations plan for the future – or, at least, for a future that they believe or hope will happen. Often, this future is based on ‘best’ or ‘worst’ case projections of current trends and bears an uncanny resemblance to the present. Consumers make similar choices to the ones they make now, competitors offer similar products and services, and the organisation itself does more or less the same things, with some minor changes of emphasis that reflect the trends analysis.

This approach works best for organisations that operate in stable, predictable environments – but most of today’s businesses, educational institutions and other public sector organisations are facing greater uncertainty and experiencing more change than ever before. They need an approach that helps them make sense of what is going on, spot new trends and events that are likely to affect them in future, and, perhaps, make significant changes to what they do and how they work.

Scenarios are a tool that organisations – and policy makers - can use to help them imagine and manage the future more effectively. The scenario process highlights the principal drivers of change and associated uncertainties facing organisations today and explores how they might play out in the future. The result is a set of stories that offer alternative views of what the future might look like.

Through discussion, organisations and policy makers can explore what they would do differently in each scenario. They can identify success criteria, suggest new ways of working and define new relationships. Generally, these differ in each scenario – and the

discussion can help participants build a shared understanding of how the increasingly complex changes taking place in the world are likely to affect their activities.

The great strength of scenario planning is that it can be used to look at today’s challenge from a different perspective. The process of identifying and examining how current factors and trends might play out in the future helps participants focus on the likely impact of those trends on their own organisation. Quite often, participants find that the impacts are going to be bigger – or happen sooner – than they had previously realised.

Ultimately, organisations use scenario planning to help them anticipate, prepare for or manage change. As Stephen Ladyman – then UK Minister for Transport – said at the launch of Foresight’s Intelligent Infrastructure Systems project in January 2006:

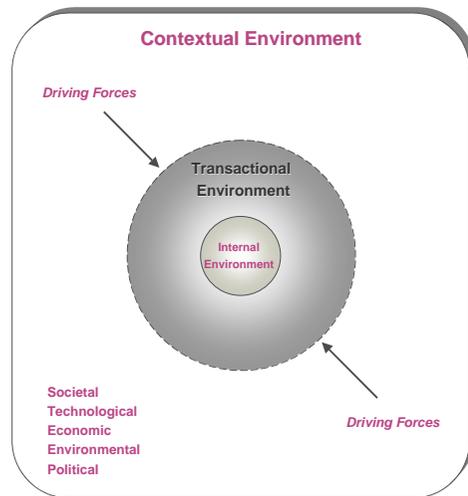
*“We can either stumble into the future and hope it turns out alright or we can try and shape it. To shape it, the first step is to work out what it might look like.”*

### 2.2 The locus for scenario planning

Colin Eden and Kees van der Heijden (University of Strathclyde) describe three elements of an organisation’s business environment:

- the internal **organisational environment**, where decision making is largely focussed on operational issues and resource management;

- the external **transactional environment**, where an organisation's customers, competitors, suppliers and external stakeholders sit. Their behaviours and choices shape the transactional environment and challenge the organisation to respond. When decision makers analyse what is happening in this environment, however, they generally look at the recent past, the present and (at best) the near future – in order to make short term reactive decisions designed to optimise short term performance;
- the wider **contextual environment**. Trends and events in the contextual environment are not – by definition – of immediate relevance to the organisation. These trends (drivers) are, however, shaping development of consumer and competitor behaviour in the transactional environment.



Most organisations are able to successfully track customer and competitor behaviour in the transactional environment and the most successful organisations respond quickly to those changes in behaviour. Generally, however, these are short term decisions designed to optimise short term performance which are based on analysis of current or historic trends.

Scenario planning helps decision makers look beyond the internal organisational and the transactional environment towards the wider contextual environment where long term trends and drivers – typically categorised as societal, technological, environmental, economic and political drivers – are shaping the future.

### 2.3 The scenario process

Scenario planning is a flexible process that can be tailored to different circumstances and different needs. While there is therefore no “definitive” scenario process, most exercises fit within a four stage structure:

- Stage 1: identification and analysis of change drivers;
- Stage 2: identification of predetermined elements and critical uncertainties;
- Stage 3: construction of the scenario matrix;
- Stage 4: construction of the scenario narratives.

#### Stage 1: Identification and analysis of change drivers

Change drivers are factors which are shaping the future contextual environment. Some change drivers are highly visible now, but others are less so; and while it may be possible to determine the effects of change drivers on the present and the near future, it can be less easy to determine their effects in the medium to long term.

It is therefore important during this stage of the scenario process to identify a broad range of drivers and to consider which will be most important in the future – rather than to focus solely on which are most important now. Typically at this stage, therefore, drivers

are prioritised according to their future importance to - or impact on - the policy area.

### Stage 2: identification of predetermined elements and critical uncertainties

Once drivers have been prioritised, the next step is to consider how the important ones might play out in the future. In some cases, drivers will be predetermined elements – that is, their outcome will be quite clear – and in other cases drivers will have uncertain outcomes. It is important during this stage of the scenario process to identify and characterise both types of outcome. For uncertain drivers, it is essential at this stage to identify the nature of the uncertainty and the range of possible outcomes. It is also important to explore the dynamic interplay between drivers over time.

The critical output from this stage is a number of ‘axes of uncertainty’ which describe the range of uncertainties for the future, together with the range of possible outcomes. The uncertainties are used to define the scenario space and to shape narrative production; predetermined elements define strategic issues that need to be addressed across all the scenarios.

### Stage 3: Construction of the scenario matrix

The scenario matrix is a 2x2 schematic that defines the main parameters of the scenarios. It is constructed by juxtaposing the two axes of uncertainty that reflect the most important uncertainties, offer the most insight or provide the most intriguing glimpse of the future.

Matrix construction is an art rather than a science and the final 2x2 is often decided through negotiation, intuition and testing.

### Stage 4: Construction of the scenario narratives

The scenario narratives are constructed within the logical framework provided by the scenario matrix. The narratives can either describe ‘end states’ – what the world looks like in the future, without any sense of how that future evolved – or ‘timelines’ – a description of how the future has evolved from the present day. The narratives should present the perspectives of different stakeholders in order to provide a sense of the different priorities and issues that exist in each future.

## 2.4 Working with the completed scenarios

Scenarios are not an attempt to predict what will happen - they are stories which suggest various possible, even extreme, outcomes. They are designed to stimulate thought, to spell out some of the opportunities and threats we might face in the future and to inform today’s decisions. Once the scenarios are completed, policy and decision makers can explore how they would act in the different futures. They can evaluate different policy options, identify different success criteria and determine the effect of different policy instruments. Generally, these differ in each scenario – and the discussion can help those involved to build a shared understanding of how the increasingly complex changes taking place in the world are likely to affect their activities.

### 3 Workshop methodology

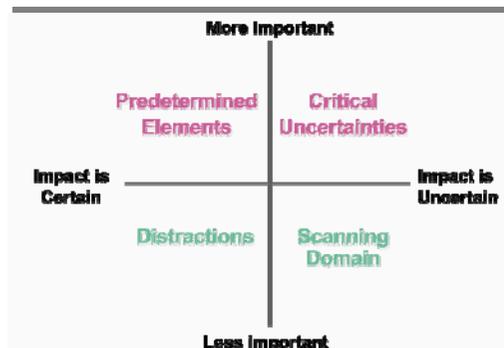
#### 3.1 Introduction

Scenario workshops often begin with a brainstorm of the drivers shaping the future. However, because this workshop was designed to build on the one held in Bristol in December 2008, participants worked with a selection of the issues identified in that workshop as being strategically important for integrating health and well-being into a single regional development strategy. In addition, we asked participants to consider a number of broader socio-economic drivers.

The full list of drivers and issues is set out in section 3.2.

During the morning session, participants worked in small groups to review the drivers from their own perspective and to map them according to their importance for supporting development of healthy regions and the certainty of their impact.

The mapping exercise allowed each group to identify critical uncertainties – drivers which are important but which have an uncertain impact – and then to explore what the nature of that uncertainty might be and what forces might affect the final outcome.



In the afternoon, participants worked in different groups to develop scenario stories.

#### 3.2 The Drivers

##### The socio-economic drivers

- Global warming
- Energy Depletion
- The relationship between regional and national government
- The relationship between national governments
- Pressure to develop agricultural land
- Short termism
- The need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Trade protectionism
- Biodiversity
- Water scarcity
- Food security
- Freedom of choice and action

##### The Bristol issues

- The ability of the public to voice their opinions and influence health and health promotion decisions is increasing but accountability of local health service providers is to the government, not to the local population
- Learning on health still focuses on vocational and practical skills rather than on broader wellbeing issues

- Health education in businesses and organizations is predominantly seen as ‘health and safety’ as opposed to health and wellbeing
- A more integrated approach is needed in providing learning opportunities that join up health messages, social and cultural involvement, and employability skills.
- Cultural activity can play an important role in motivating people to care about and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. In many cases it is the motivation that is the barrier.
- There are clear national, regional and local health strategies demonstrating commitment to health and health promotion but they are not fully integrated
- Health literacy is an underdeveloped area which requires consideration
- Local government is not empowered to deliver wellbeing
- Communities have a strong voice in addressing the factors that determine health.
- A jointly accredited evidence base which could be used in all sectors would be useful
- There is significant scope for improving how health is considered in relation to economic development
- There is a mutually beneficial role that quality infrastructure has to play for both healthcare provision and economic development.

### 3.3 Developing the scenario storylines

#### The natural agenda

At the beginning of the workshop, we asked participants to discuss the question

*If you could speak to someone from the year 2025 who could tell you how effectively health and wellbeing have been integrated into regional development, what would you ask?*

This is the first question in the ‘7 question’ interview methodology used in scenario processes to build up a natural agenda of issues relating to the project topic; we use it in workshops to identify the issues that the scenarios will explore.

The participants identified 17 issues that they would like to ask of the ‘someone’ from the year 2025:

1. How do organisations assess the wellbeing of people?
2. How do we know if people are healthy and happy?
3. Who are the appropriate communities that need to be engaged in the planning and decision processes – and are they engaged?
4. What do we define as a healthy lifestyle?
5. How do we now view ‘health’ and ‘wellbeing’?
6. Are there any public health issues any more?
7. How do we manage immigration flow to maintain integration of health and well-being?
8. Mainstreaming: do regional agencies have health impact analysis on projects?

9. On what level are different actors involved – and how?
10. Is health really an issue? Or do we not separate it from other activities?
11. How do you measure 'integration'?
12. What is the gap between rich and poor? Have we tackled social inequality?
13. How did we manage to change people's behaviour?
14. Where does education sit? Has its integration with health been achieved?
15. How has the nature of working practice change?
16. Has there been a shift towards disease prevention?
17. What is the relationship between health and wellbeing and wealth
  - ...in society? What are the cohesion and social capital issues?
  - ...in policy?

### 3.4 Describing the scenarios

A number of these questions were used to structure the scenario discussion. To write the scenarios, we asked participants to consider four aspects of the future:

- The socio-economic context
  - What is the European economy and society like?
  - How strong is the economy?
  - How cohesive is society?

- What are the common working practices?
- How much movement is there between regions?
- Which regions are doing better? Why?
- Which regions are doing badly? Why?
- Health and wellbeing
  - What do we mean by 'healthy lifestyle'?
  - What is the relationship between health and wellbeing and wealth?
  - How do organisations assess the health and wellbeing of people?
  - Which bodies are involved in planning and delivery?
  - How is 'integration' measured?
  - Are people happy and well?
- The timeline of events leading from now to the future
- The principal challenges of the scenario for
  - ...citizens?
  - ...regional governments?
  - ...national governments?
  - ...businesses?
  - ...healthcare?

## 4 Identifying the critical uncertainties

### 4.1 Introduction

Participants worked in 4 groups to carry out the mapping exercise. Each group worked with a full set of the drivers and each carried out their own mapping exercise. The outcome is presented in this section.

Section 4.2 lists the critical uncertainties and section 4.3 lists the predetermined elements, where outcomes appear to be quite clear. In both sections, we have built a composite list of drivers. Those that appear in all four maps are presented in **bold underlined** text, those that appeared in three maps are presented in **bold** text, those that appeared in two maps are presented in *italic* text and those that appeared once are presented in normal text.

Having identified the critical uncertainties for integrating health and wellbeing into regional development, participants selected one or two most critical ones from their maps and discussed what the dimensions of uncertainty might be and how the forces acting on them might impact on the future. The outcome from these discussions is set out in section 4.4.

### 4.2 Critical uncertainties

- **Biodiversity**
- **Learning on health still focuses on vocational and practical skills rather than on broader wellbeing issues**
- **Cultural activity can play an important role in motivating people to care about and take responsibility for their own**

**health and wellbeing. In many cases it is the motivation that is the barrier**

- *Communities have a strong voice in addressing the factors that determine health.*
- *The ability of the public to voice their opinions and influence health and health promotion decisions is increasing but accountability of local health service providers is to the government, not to the local population*
- *Energy Depletion*
- *Local government is not empowered to deliver wellbeing*
- *Relationship between regional and national government*
- Global warming
- The need to reduce CO2 emissions
- The relationship between national governments
- Water scarcity
- Freedom of choice and action
- Social change
- Security / local tensions
- Food security
- Trade protectionism
- Short termism
- A jointly accredited evidence base which could be used in all sectors would be useful

- There is significant scope for improving how health is considered in relation to economic development
- Health literacy is an underdeveloped area which requires consideration

### 4.3 Predetermined elements

- **A more integrated approach is needed in providing learning opportunities that join up health messages, social and cultural involvement, and employability skills.**
- **Freedom of choice and action**
- **Global warming**
- **The need to reduce CO2 emissions**
- **Short termism**
- *Food security*
- *There is a mutually beneficial role that quality infrastructure has to play for both healthcare provision and economic development.*
- *Water scarcity*
- Ageing population
- Economic situation
- Educational attainment
- Energy Depletion
- Growing population
- The relationship between national governments
- Housing affordability
- Lack of political will
- Lifestyle related sickness
- Local government is not empowered to deliver wellbeing
- Pressure to develop agricultural land
- Pressure to develop land for housing and transport
- Social and economic inequalities
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Urbanisation
- Welfare system
- Cultural activity can play an important role in motivating people to care about and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. In many cases it is the motivation that is the barrier.
- Health education in businesses and organizations is predominantly seen as 'health and safety' as opposed to health and wellbeing
- Health literacy is an underdeveloped area which requires consideration
- The ability of the public to voice opinions and influence health and health promotion decisions is increasing but accountability of local health service providers is to the government, not to the local population
- There are clear national, regional and local health strategies demonstrating commitment to health and

- There is significant scope for improving how health is considered in relation to economic development
- A jointly accredited evidence base which could be used in all sectors would be useful

#### 4.4 Characterisation of the axes of uncertainty

Participants characterised 6 axes of uncertainty:

- Communities have a strong voice in addressing the factors that determine health
- Population growth and migration
- There has been significant scope for improving how health is considered in relation to economic development
- The relationship between national governments
- Local government is not empowered to deliver wellbeing (chosen by two groups)
- The relationship between regional and national government (chosen by two groups)

The group discussing this axis thought that the forces acting on it mean that the level of participation is at the right end of the dimension:

- mental laziness and disenchantment
- loss of civic skills and know-how
- determinism; if people think that their lives are determined by a series of factors and that it is other people's duty to decide about their future, they do not participate

##### 1. Communities have a strong voice in addressing the factors that determine health

The axis of uncertainty is:

*Individuals and communities actively participate in – and feel responsible for – the management of the regional economic strategy*



*Individuals and communities do not participate in the political fora or in the use and management of the regional economic strategy*

## 2. Population growth and migration

The axis of uncertainty is

*People live in cities, close together and in harmony* ← → *Cities breakdown into fragmented, isolated communities and there is no wider community identity*

The group discussing this axis identified forces acting in both directions. Forces pushing towards the left (people living in cities) are:

- economic efficiencies
- new technologies
- investment in the wider community's identity (urban regeneration, targeted programmes in schools on (eg) anti racism, social inclusion)
- current economic policies are driving towards cities (but not to social cohesiveness)
- employment
- better services
- housing policies
- good infrastructure

Forces pushing towards the right (cities breaking down) are:

- lack of resources
- extremism in politics

- size of cities and the level of population that can be sustained
- backlash of climate change
- degrading physical infrastructure
- protectionism
- loss of community identity
- precarious work conditions
- underemployment
- crime and antisocial behaviour
- poor infrastructure

There are a number of policy challenges associated with this axis:

- tracking data for evidence based policies
- multi disciplinary approaches
- addressing people's demands and needs
- mitigation instead of adaptation with regards to the consequences of climate change
- anticipating instead of adjusting
- staving off decisions connected to upcoming elections
- allocating resources to health investment and technology
- encouraging public scrutiny and accountability
- encouraging lay people and local associations to be part of the policy making process

### 3. There is significant scope for improving how health is considered in relation to economic development

The axis of uncertainty is:

*No visible or understandable connections between economic development and health and wellbeing* ↔ *Clear, visible and understandable connections between economic development and health and wellbeing*

The forces acting on this axis are:

- economics
- electoral pressures
- transport/information infrastructure
- health has its own value

The direction in which the forces push is dependent on how they develop.

### 4. The relationship between national governments

The axis of uncertainty is

*Protectionism* ↔ *Unity and collaboration*

The forces acting on this axis are:

- economic recession (which will drive the world towards protectionism) and
- new leadership styles (like Obama), a global pandemic or some other crisis that will bring the world together

### 5. Local government is not empowered to deliver wellbeing

The axes of uncertainty are:

*Nationally delivered outcomes for the wellbeing of local populations* ↔ *Locally accounted identified and determined outcomes for well being and locally owned mechanisms for delivery*

The forces pushing this axis to the left are:

- economics
- efficiency

The forces pushing this axis to the right are:

- personalisation
- taxation and utilisation of taxes
- local accountability

*Better wellbeing* ↔ *Less good wellbeing*

The forces pushing this axis to the left are not clear. Wellbeing is subjective and there has to be some connection with local decision makers who can connect all the domains of life.

## 6. The relationship between regional and national government

The axes of uncertainty are:

*High level of autonomy to meet national goals and strategies* ↔ *Low level of autonomy to meet national goals and strategies*

The forces pushing this axis to the left are:

- economics
- efficiency
- pushing services towards the citizen
- making it acceptable to exchange views

The forces pushing this axis to the right are:

- top down control to deliver efficiency
- politeness – being told what to do

*Centralisation and strong national policies and priorities* ↔ *Decentralisation and strong local policies and priorities*

The forces pushing this axis to the left are:

- increasing quality: evidence based, standard procedures and initiatives (knowledge)
- increasing cost effectiveness

The forces pushing this axis to the right are:

- personal decision making

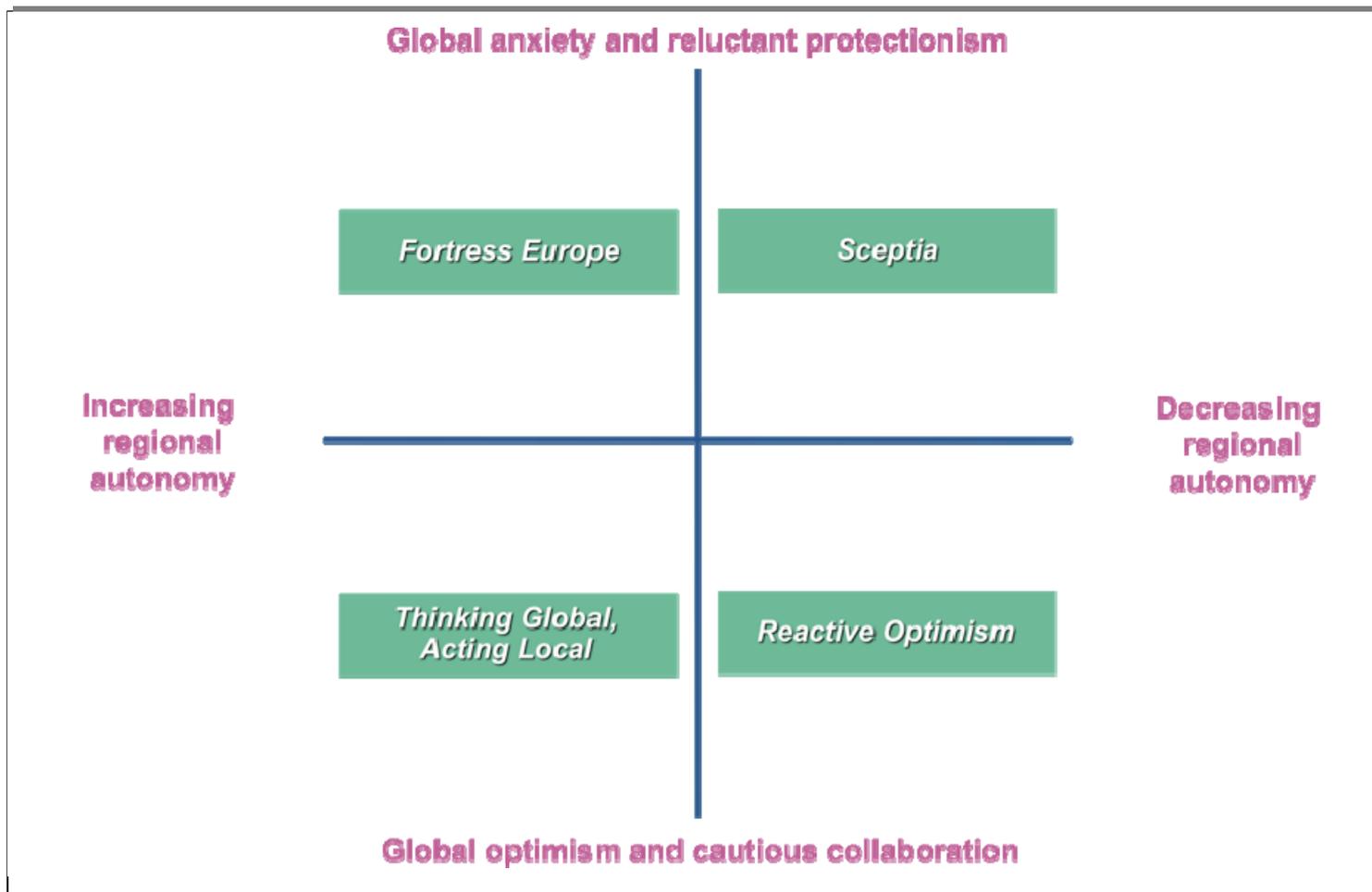
- local ownership
- democracy and empowerment

## 4.5 The scenario matrix

We didn't vote on which axes to use to create a scenario matrix; in reviewing the axes, it became clear that a dominant theme across the morning's discussion was the relationship between local and national government and we therefore adopted this as one axis.

The second axis picked up another theme which resonated with many of the groups in the morning discussions: anxiety over the economy and how to respond at the global level.

As a result, we adopted the following matrix, resulting in four scenarios:



## 5 The scenarios

### 5.1 *Sceptia*

Continued economic crises and fears about global warming, and food, water and energy security have caused nations to look carefully at their resource needs, use and production. Over the last few years, rising prices and falling incomes have weakened all but the most resource rich economies. As regions across Europe have struggled to achieve growth, there has been a sharp rise in Euro-scepticism and increasing calls for more self determination.

Few regions are able to achieve resource self sufficiency, however, and this – combined with growing concerns over social breakdown – has forced national governments to centralise decision making in order to ensure that national interests are met. Local determinism has, for the time being at least, been put on hold.

For some citizens, centralisation is the last straw. After a decade or more of economic uncertainty and (as they see it) inconsistent economic policies and poor leadership, they are concerned that the rise of national government will weaken regional success and deliver little in return. Generally, the sceptics tend to be citizens of the better performing regions that are well resourced and that have planned ahead. These are regions which are managing to ride out the economic storm and which feel they have a lot to lose from centralisation – and who believe they will end up subsidising poorer neighbours.



Although governments are trying to do the best they can in a difficult situation, most people remain unhappy. There has been some redistribution of jobs through national regional development programmes, but it has required a heavy handed approach to make it happen. People feel that their voice is heard less and less and that democratic processes are out of touch with their needs. In some ways, they are right, of course – governments are trying to look after the needs of society as a whole, not of individuals.

Little time or effort is given over to integrating health and wellbeing into regional strategy. This is not because governments don't care – they do - but because they are so overwhelmed by the scale and immediacy of the macroeconomic situation that they have little time for anything other than putting out the next fire. They are not helped, of course, by the fact that there was limited investment in integrating health and wellbeing into regional strategies before the current crisis.

Governments can therefore do little other than manage health and wellbeing through public information campaigns designed to improve people's behaviours. They are unable to back up their campaigns with much in the way of resources and, consequently, health is no more evenly distributed than money; in fact, the correlation between health and wealth is direct.

## 5.2 Reactive Optimism

It may have been a long and hard road, but national governments have finally brought their citizens through the difficult years of the 2010s. It has been a hard won battle.

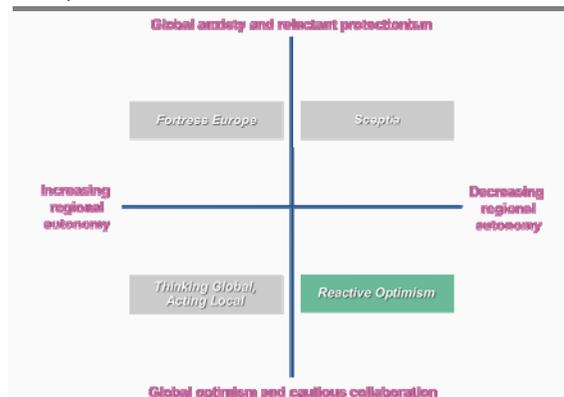
The European economy has achieved a sustainable balance that makes it relatively easy to predict future growth and trade patterns. Some of this has been achieved through economies of scale. Although EU nations retain their sovereignty, their governments have worked closely to create supranational institutions - in banking, trade, education and health, for example - to address pan-European needs. Power generation and food production are co-ordinated at European level and carbon reduction targets are driven from the centre. Local and regional food production has increased and produce is sold locally where possible – but policy is focussed on regional strengths, too. So, the South West of England (for example) is more suited to growing energy crops and producing renewable energy than it is to growing food and is encouraged to do so.

Overall, it has been a successful approach, with the successful regions in Europe acting as home to global corporations. As a whole, the bloc is competing well.

Governments may have delivered stability overall, but they have not built a level playing field. Regional development policies have had to focus resources where there is potential for growth but the consequence has been an inevitable widening of the gap between successful and less successful regions. People are still unsure of

the future and live to work, putting in long hours to get ahead while they still can (in the better performing regions) or simply to keep their heads above water (in the poorer performing regions). The result - right across Europe – is less community cohesion, less equality and less happiness. Southern regions and periphery are worst affected.

No-one is willing to say so aloud, but no-one really minds the long hours - happiness feels like an indulgence and most people are content to get on with the job in hand and create more wealth.



Although it is hard to get into Europe, the internal labour force is highly mobile and – inevitably - migrates towards the more successful regions. While this has put some pressures on the cities and infrastructure, they are mainly coping. The system tends to self correct anyway – with fewer welfare arrangements, people tend to move on if they can't get work. Fewer welfare arrangements also, of course, mean a greater degree of social exclusion.

The approach to healthcare is expedient, with the system treating ill-health rather than preventing it. Wellbeing is poorly defined and, like 'appropriate work life balance', is a subjective term that means different things to different people. The reality is that governments have passed the responsibility for healthcare upwards to PEHS (the pan-European health service, which provides a standardised approach to care) and have delegated wellbeing to the individual. Unsurprisingly, health indices show a correlation between economic prosperity and health. There are no indices for wellbeing.

### 5.3 Thinking Global, Acting Local

The world has woken up to the challenges facing it and has taken concerted and effective action to mitigate the effects of global warming and to prevent further destructive behaviours.

The engine of this change is a global regulatory system that has combined with local manufacturing and production to build regional economies that are self sufficient. Global trade in consumer goods has declined, although trade in know-how and raw materials is sustained between regions that need them to build their own capacity. Trade is regulated to ensure markets operate fairly and although some tensions exist over resources (notably between Russia and China), the system is working effectively.

Regional identities have been strengthened by the resurgence of local communities and cultures. This has led, in turn, to increased cohesion in societies and to a greater sense that people have some control over their own lives. The world is a physically more arduous place these days and life may be more challenging – but it is also more real and more rewarding. People (and particularly those in western consumer societies) have rediscovered what’s important.

There has been a legislative shift as well. Regions have taken more responsibility for their own governance and rely less on state led interventions and solutions.

Although carbon emissions have dropped significantly, the behaviours of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have still had an impact on the geography of Europe. Temperatures have continued to rise: the southern regions have been suffering a combination of heat waves and water shortages that make them quite hostile places to live and the population has drifted north. The eastern regions are doing well because of their natural resource base, but the west and south are weaker.



People are aware of their responsibilities to themselves and each other and there is a growing view – supported by national and regional legislation – that society shouldn’t have to pay for individuals’ poor behaviour. In these resource constrained times, this means that local health providers operate a two tier system: older citizens generally receive free health care, but younger citizens and those who have caused their own poor health through excessive smoking or drinking have to pay. Regions are, however, well aware of the dangers of discrimination and exclusion and have consequently supported passage of the global charter of environmental and social rights through the UN.

## 5.4 Fortress Europe

Having come through a long and dark decade of limited economic growth and increasing isolation, it is hardly surprising that regions and their citizens are rather more inward looking than they once were and that conservatism and risk avoidance are regarded as positive attributes these days.

They are good traits to have. Although things look better than they did (by a long way), Europe is still pretty fragile. The economy is stable, but there is little prospect of growth; there is some regional cohesion, but it is superficial and threatened by the continuing disagreements about trade and migration; and those regions with strong local government arrangements and strong relationships with the centre are treated with a degree of suspicion by their neighbours. Sometimes, it feels as if conflict is not that far away.

The world outside isn't doing much better. National governments have mainly failed to take control of global challenges. Successive administrations have consistently procrastinated on global warming and global resource management or have set targets too low. As the global situation has worsened, governments have sought to protect their indigenous industries by setting trade tariffs and quotas and have pursued self sufficiency where possible. The plan has backfired, however; consumers have been driven by price rather than ethical considerations and retailers have refused to acknowledge the rising costs of production. Supply chains have broken apart across the

globe and producers have given up in droves, unable to sustain their losses.

It's not surprising therefore that the mantra in Europe is 'local jobs for local people' and that who you know really does matter as much (if not more) than what you know. Community and family ties are strong and important for securing work. Despite problems with public finances in the past, the public sector is once more a major employer.



Integration of health and wellbeing into regional development has not really happened. There is, of course, some emphasis on the importance of healthy lifestyles but it is quite superficial in public policy terms, being limited to general discourse about the importance of limiting drug, alcohol and tobacco use and of eating natural produce rather than processed foods that are rich in additives. The emphasis of policy is firmly on primary healthcare and medical intervention to treat illness.

The quality of healthcare that is available depends on where patients live and how much they can pay. The public sector is still seen as the main provider, even although the number of private providers has increased dramatically in recent years. Many of them specialise in mental health, one of the growing problems of the last decade – particularly in those regions that are performing poorly economically.

## 6 The vote

### 6.1 Introduction

Following the scenario development exercise, the group carried out a series of votes to explore which scenario is, in their view

- Most plausible/likely
- Most favourable for individual regions
- Best for supporting health and wellbeing
- Closest to now
- Closest to the future participants like – or aspire to - most
- Closest to the future participants' own government's policy is leading to
- Closest to the future that EU regional policy is leading to

Within organizations or governments, the voting exercise is an important bridge between the scenario exercise and the strategic or policy planning process. It usually highlights a number of important issues surrounding the strategic choices that are open to policy makers. Although each regional partner may have taken a different view of how likely different scenarios are because of the different political, economic and social circumstances of their regions, the vote still highlights some important issues about integrating health and wellbeing into regional strategy.

The outcome of the vote is presented in the table in section 6.2 and section 6.3 offers an analysis of the issues emerging from it.

## 6.2 The vote

	Most Plausible/ likely	Most favourable for individual regions	Best for supporting health and wellbeing	Closest to now	Closest to the future participants like most	Closest to the future participants' own gov't's policy is leading to	Closest to the future EU regional policy is leading to
<b><i>Sceptia</i></b>	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
<b><i>Reactive Optimism</i></b>	3	0	0	9	0	10	7
<b><i>Thinking Global, Acting Local</i></b>	6	24	22	1	24	2	7
<b><i>Fortress Europe</i></b>	15	0	2	13	0	7	10

## 6.3 Analysis

The vote suggests that

- partners unanimously believed *Thinking Global, Acting Local* to be the most favourable scenario for regions and (almost unanimously) thought it the most favourable for creating the conditions to support integration of health and wellbeing into sustainable regional development;
- partners were also unanimous that *Thinking Global, Acting Local* is the scenario that is closest to the future they most like (aspire to);
- ...but 75% of the group didn't believe *Thinking Global, Acting Local* to be as likely as *Reactive Optimism* or *Fortress Europe*;
- ...perhaps because less than one third of the group thought that EU regional policy supports a move towards *Thinking Global, Acting Local*;
- ...and only 2 out of 24 partners thought their own governments are pursuing policies that will make *Thinking Global, Acting Local* happen;
- while partners agreed about the desired future, there was less agreement about where we are now. About half of partners thought that *Fortress Europe* is closest to now, with just over one third of the group believing that *Reactive Optimism* is a closer description of the current situation.

## 7 Concluding observations

One of the most striking observations about the conversations at the workshop is that none of the scenarios described a world in which health and wellbeing are universally available. In three of the scenarios – *Sceptia*, *Reactive Optimism* and *Fortress Europe* – there is a direct correlation between health and wealth which means that the economically excluded are close to being excluded from health and wellbeing too. In the fourth scenario - *Thinking Global, Acting Local* - health and wellbeing is rationed because of high costs, but there is at least some agreement from society that this is necessary (if not desirable). There is a sense in this scenario that rationing can only exist through a collective act of goodwill – and if that goodwill should disappear, the situation might prove less sustainable.

It is also hard to avoid the feeling from the scenarios that wellbeing is perceived in some quarters as a luxury that cannot be easily afforded in times of economic austerity. This suggests that although health will always be important, the opportunity to integrate health and wellbeing and then to integrate them with regional development strategies will depend on economic prosperity. If this observation is true, it suggests there is an urgency to achieving integration if wellbeing is not to fall off the agenda; it also suggests a danger that some regions and governments may need to be convinced of the value of integrating wellbeing into regional development. Marshalling and presenting the evidence of economic and social benefit is therefore likely to be important.

It is perhaps not surprising that *Thinking Global, Acting Local* was universally perceived as a favourable outcome. The timeline described in the scenario is – in our opinion – quite optimistic and

it we believe that it may take longer (or significant events to occur) for this scenario to happen. Nevertheless, *Thinking Global, Acting Local* is a particularly helpful scenario because it describes a number of conditions that, if in place, might make it easier to integrate health and wellbeing into sustainable regional development:

- shared awareness of the environmental and economic challenges ahead;
- increased awareness in the general population of individuals' responsibilities to themselves and to each other (on a global level);
- a shift away from thoughtless consumerism to thoughtful, ethical and responsible consumerism;
- ...supported by regulation of trade to ensure that markets operate fairly; and
- stronger regional identities and stronger links within communities.

Finally, given that almost 25% of the group thought that their own government policies were likely to lead to *Sceptia*, it might be worth discussing further why none of the partners thought it a particularly plausible scenario.

## 8 Further reading

### Online resources

The [wiki page on scenario planning](#) is pretty good – and worth a read.

Three manuals are available on-line.

The first is the Scenario Planning Manual prepared for the Article 6 Project. The manual is designed as a practical tool for organisations who wish to run small to medium scale scenario exercises and can be downloaded from <http://www.regionalkeycompetencies.eu> The manual also contains a set of regional development scenarios developed in as part of the Article 6 project.

The second [is a scenario planning toolkit](#), prepared for the Department for Transport to provide DfT staff with the resources they need to work with scenarios. Although DfT use the toolkit to support a specific set of scenarios (Foresight's [Intelligent Infrastructure Systems](#) scenarios) it offers a range of techniques that can be applied generically.

The third is the UK Government Office for Science's [Exploring the future: tools for strategic thinking](#) which describes scenarios – and many other futures techniques.

There are several examples of scenarios available on-line which show different styles and approaches:

- [Foresight's Brain Science, Addiction and Drugs scenarios](#) are the result of a large scale consultation exercise;

- Three scenarios - developed through desk research rather than a workshop programme – that are part of the Scottish Parliament's Futures Forum report on ageing, [Growing Older and Wiser Together](#), can be downloaded [here](#).

### Booklist

*The Sixth Sense: Accelerating Organisational Learning With Scenarios*

**Kees van der Heijden et al**

John Wiley and Sons

*Powerful Times - Rising to the Challenge of Our Uncertain World*

**Eamonn Kelly**

Wharton School Publishing

*Scenarios in Public Policy*

**Gill Ringland**

John Wiley and Sons Ltd

*Blindsided: How to spot the next breakthrough that will change your business forever*

**Jim Harris**

Capstone Publishing Ltd

*The Art of the Long View*

**Peter Schwartz**

John Wiley and Sons