



A Messaging Guide for a Wellbeing Economy

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CORE MESSAGE

A good economy is one that makes it possible for everyone to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life. But we know there will be difficult moments: losing our job, caring for a loved one, falling ill - everyone hits bumps in the *road*. We need an economic system that helps us to absorb these shocks and get back on *track* as quickly as possible.

Right now, our economic system doesn't help *steer* us through the challenging times. Instead, the system has been designed to fixate on profit and growth, taking us down a dangerous and short-sighted *path*. The impact is clear to see: from a widening gap between the rich and poor, to environmental breakdown and the mental health crisis. The current economic system is harming us all.

It doesn't have to be like this. The pandemic has shown that when we choose to prioritise human health and wellbeing big change can happen. We need economic policies that shelter us when it rains and helps us all prosper when the sun is shining. A Wellbeing Economy will prioritise well paid work - making sure we all earn enough to live well on - it will implement policies that will improve the health of our communities, and ensure we all have enough time off to spend quality time with friends and family.

By putting people and health first, we can *steer* the economy in the right *direction* and lay a new *path* to a Wellbeing Economy.



FRAMING PRINCIPLES

1 PUT PEOPLE IN THE PICTURE

A wellbeing economy is about the wellbeing of people, not of the economy. The metaphorical understanding of the economy as a living organism or a naturally occurring state, i.e. a weather condition or a sentient being that can be hurt or have its confidence knocked - asserts that the economy is outside of our control. It focuses on how we can service or soothe the economy itself (and its state) instead of focusing attention on what role we want the economy to play and how we can redesign it to play that role effectively. Wellbeing of ordinary citizens and the growth of the economy do not correlate, which is why the discussion should focus on whether the economy supports the former.

2 LEAD WITH THE SHARED VALUE OF FULFILLMENT.

Values-led messaging has been proven time and time again to be effective at building support and shifting opinion. Research conducted as part of the Framing the Economy project suggests that the value of fulfillment makes an explicit argument for thinking about a broader set of goods, beyond money, when thinking about the economy. This forefronts an argument that our focus on profit and growth is a distortion of the wider priorities we hold as individuals and as a society, and that it undermines our ability to have fulfilling and meaningful lives.

3 TALK ABOUT HOW THE ECONOMY IS DESIGNED AND SHOW THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

We need to join the dots between policy decisions and outcomes to show how the economy has been designed and in doing so build the belief that it can be redesigned. Fatalism (the belief that nothing will ever change) is often our biggest obstacle to building support. Avoid simply reporting facts about how bad the current situation is: facts alone do little to change people's minds. Our framing needs to provide hope and vision by telling a compelling story about how the world could be different.

4 AVOID LANGUAGE THAT CUES THINKING ABOUT THE ECONOMY AS AN ENTITY THAT IS OUTSIDE OF HUMAN CONTROL

Talking about "degrowth" or "post growth" triggers unproductive ways of thinking about the economy by shifting focus towards the economy itself and its internal functionings and away from its role and the wellbeing of people. It also plays into a host of unhelpful naturalistic metaphors of the economy, which imply the economy is outside of human control. Once these ways of thinking are active in people's minds, they block the belief that policy decisions and government interventions not focusing on growth have a role to play in redesigning the economy for the better.

5 METAPHOR: TALK ABOUT THE ECONOMY AS A VEHICLE ON A JOURNEY

Talk about the economy as a means to facilitate a journey. The economy should be helping us get to where we want to go e.g. to arrive at a meaningful life. Research suggests that using the metaphor of economic tracks helps people see how the economy structures opportunities, and, critically, how this results from the way the economy is designed.



WORDS THAT WORK

Don't say ❌	Do say ✅
De-growth / Post-growth/ Clean growth / Green Growth	A wellbeing economy An economy that puts our health and communities first
Growth dependence	Fixation on growth
Green jobs	Jobs for the future Jobs that care for the environment Clean Jobs <i>List example of jobs, beyond solar panels and hard hats e.g. care workers, NHS, teachers</i>
Gross Domestic Product	A measure of some people getting richer A flawed/outdated way to talk about all of our lives A narrow and inaccurate measurement of society <i>Example: Oil spill is a boost to the GDP</i>
Economic policy	How the economy is programmed/ designed Choices made by this government
Community wealth building Creating a local economy	Keeping money within your community Support local business/ shop local Where money is spent to help our communities thrive
Circular economy	Reduce/ reuse/ repurpose your clothes, furniture, packaging An economy that reuses goods and services and ensures nothing is wasted
Sustainable development	Working to meet our needs Thriving people/economies/communities
Inclusive economy	An economy for everyone An economy that is working in the interests of everyone
Regenerative	A society that cares for itself Using resources in a way that helps them replenish
Inclusive growth	Ability for all people to contribute to and benefit from economic progress



COMMON ATTACKS

ATTACK: *"This will take us back to the stone age."*

RESPONSE: *We all want an economy that can help us make our way through life, get us to wherever we need or want to be in the future. A wellbeing economy is a modern economy - and is the only means of getting to a place where we all live fulfilled lives and can weather life's challenges.*

ATTACK: *"How do we pay for public services?"*

RESPONSE: *We need an economy that lays down the tracks to ensure everyone can live a full and healthy life. This means fairer taxes on unearned wealth, such as property and land and calling on The Bank of England to create new money to enable the government to invest in our communities.*

ATTACK: *"You want to put x,y,z out of work?"*

RESPONSE: *A wellbeing economy is all about making sure we all have what we need to support ourselves and our loved ones in life whilst making sure the way we work is good for us and for the planet. So x, y, z will have more stable work with a green job that supports them in living a fulfilling life.*

ATTACK: *"Growth means progress"*

RESPONSE: *An economy blindly fixated on growth is not looking at the long-term. If we want progress and change we have to steer the economy in a direction where people's livelihoods and wellbeing are prioritised. We need an economy that looks at how we use resources, making sure we do so in a way that replenishes what we have and that is forward thinking.*



HOW THE PUBLIC THINK ABOUT AN ECONOMY BEYOND GDP GROWTH

1 There is a high level of public support for prioritising wellbeing

There is a high level of support for prioritising wellbeing over economic growth among Britons. In October 2019, a survey conducted by researchers from Cardiff University asking people to prioritise the protection of one social good or service over another in the context of finite resources showed that people wanted to allocate twice as many resources to the protection of health and wellbeing compared to the increase of economic growth. In May 2020, a YouGov poll found approx. 80% of Britons would prefer the government to prioritise health and wellbeing over economic growth during the coronavirus crisis and six in 10 would still want the government to pursue health and wellbeing ahead of growth after the pandemic has subsided.

2 The public believes that climate change is more important than the economic situation

In October 2019, a survey conducted by researchers from Cardiff University showed that 23% believe that climate change will be the most important issue facing the UK in the next 20 years - an increase from 2% in 2016. Only 10% believe that it will be the economic situation. The 2019 Eurobarometer shows about the same: 20% thinks that climate is one of the two most important issues facing the UK, whereas only 15% thinks it is the economic situation. Strikingly, research suggests this concern has gone up in 2020 with one report finding that the percentage of people agreeing that climate change requires a 'high' or 'very high' level of priority has risen since 2019.

3 Growth is considered natural and good

Research suggests that the term growth uploads two conceptual metaphors of the economy: The economy as a living organism and the economy as a machine. The metaphors entails a perception of growth as natural and good, being a driving force that "moves" the economy "up" and "forward". Correspondingly the absence of growth is perceived as bad.

4 "Degrowth" is a less positive term

Research suggests that the term "degrowth" is associated with a less positive affective reaction than "post-growth", "prosperity without growth", and "green growth". This might relate to the fact that degrowth is a negation of growth, which is perceived as natural and good.