

Community Economic Development Plans as a Tool for Fostering Co-operative Working Between Councils and the Community



March 2022

About CCIN and the Policy Labs

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) is a collaboration between local authorities who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community. The Network recognises the need to define a new model for local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities. The network is open to all UK councils regardless of political affiliation who can demonstrate innovation and a willingness to drive forward the Co-operative Councils agenda. At the time of writing, it has 33 full member councils as well as additional associated and affiliated members.

For more information visit

www.councils.coop .

The CCIN Policy Lab Programme was established in 2016 and provides funding for collaboration between CCIN members to fund co-operative solutions to the challenges facing local government. The Community Economic Development Plans as a Tool for Fostering Co-operative Working Between Councils and the community Policy Lab was led by Birmingham City Council and facilitated by Co-operative Futures. The steering group consists of six CCIN members, Birmingham City Council, Croydon Council, Milton Keynes Council, Sunderland City Council, and the Gloucester City Labour Group.

Birmingham City Council officially joined the CCIN in 2018, this was also the year the Council set up a Localism Star Chamber, produced a *White Paper on Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods* and made an official commitment to community wealth building. Leading on this Policy Lab was an exciting opportunity to not only build a repository of best practice examples on Community Economic Development Plans and engage with partner cities who shared their learning journeys but also build a strong local partnership in Birmingham bringing together the WMCA, GBSLEP and several Birmingham City Council service areas. On the back of the Policy Lab work, Birmingham partners were able to apply the Community Economic Development methodology to a new neighbourhood (Ward End Park).

For more information visit

www.birmingham.gov.uk

Co-operative Futures was founded in 2000 as a business development consultancy specialising in co-operative, mutual and community led businesses. By providing direct advice and support we work with communities to find sustainable mutual solutions for the challenges they face. Over the years we have worked with a range of organisations from community childcare businesses adapting to the changing environment of nursery vouchers, to community hubs becoming sustainable, to small scale fishermen improving their economic wellbeing and even connecting a motorway service station with the local community to create jobs.

For more information visit

www.futures.coop.

Foreword

As Chair of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network, I welcome the publication of this report and its timely contribution to the debate on creating more inclusive and equal economies.

We are entering uncertain times as the full effect of pandemic on the economy slowly unfolds. The last two years have highlighted the inequalities that exist in society but also the resilience of our communities.

This Policy Lab demonstrates that when communities change their roles from passive recipients of economic strategies to active participants in their design it has a lasting impact. Community economic development planning is a process of economic development within a specific geographic area, to make the economy in that area work well for that community.

Successful community economic development planning embraces co-operative values and principles and lays the foundations for a genuinely co-operative economy to emerge.

I wish to thank colleagues from across the Network for their contributions to this report, especially the fabulous examples from which we can all learn so much. I look forward to working together to ensure co-operative values continue to be a force for good in our local communities.

Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE,

Leader Stevenage Borough Council and Chair of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network.

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Executive Summary

This report is funded by the [Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network \(CCIN\)](#), under their Policy Labs workstream. These are collaborative pieces of work that CCIN members work on together to find co-operative solutions to the challenges facing local government.

This policy lab explored how councils can effectively utilise community economic development planning. It was led by [Birmingham City Council](#), in conjunction with [Gloucester City Council Labour Group](#), [Croydon Council](#), [Milton Keynes Council](#), [Sunderland City Council](#) and [Co-operative Futures](#).

Community economic development planning or CEDP is a process of economic development within a specific geographic area, to make the economy in that area work well for that community.

Within CEDP three important attributes are emphasised:

1. The overall focus is the economy. Community economic development is all about re-shaping the underlying economic system in a place, rather than working on improving people's capacity to live well within the existing environment.
2. The economy is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Rather than emphasising economic

growth as the end goal of local economic development, a CEDP approach is interested in economic development which generates human wellbeing within environmental limits, at a community level.

3. It's led by the community. In CEDP, the power to drive the change rests within the community of residents, local businesses, local service providers including councils, community groups and voluntary sector organisations with a direct stake in the economic health of that area.

The case studies outlined in this report demonstrate the value to Local Authorities of working in co-operation with communities to undertake community economic development planning. The key learnings from these examples are:

- The knowledge of what is needed within a community is known by the people and organisations within those communities themselves and so they best understand what those areas need to be able to reach their full potential and thrive.
- The support provided in developing the plans provides communities with the skills and confidence to take a lead in continued community

economic development planning. This has led to a change in the way communities engage with Local Authorities, they are better placed to advocate for themselves and enable constructive conversations.

- Local Authority support in community economic development planning can enable systems change to take place, rather than small scale activities.
- Community economic development planning compliments other activities that Local Authorities are undertaking. Community economic development planning is a powerful tool for change but can only perform

this function if it is embedded within wider policies, strategies, and plans.

The motivation for Birmingham City Council leading on this piece of work stems from the successful use of CEDPs in Birmingham as part of the [USE-IT!](#) programme. Birmingham City Council's commitment to deliver the [East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Programme](#) brings an opportunity to utilise CEDP again and promote its use more widely throughout the city. East Birmingham Programme has been designed to promote inclusive growth and this is only possible if regeneration is delivered jointly with communities and local businesses and not "done to them". The CEDP process provides methodology that creates a level playing field and opens up a conversation about more equitable economic models for local areas.

CCIN Values and Principles

Below are the ten values of CCIN, they provide a helpful framework to guide the approach local places can take to Community Economic Development Planning. These icons appear within the Case Studies below to indicate the Values and Principles that each example demonstrates.



Community Economic Development

Community economic development describes a process of economic development within a specific geographic area, to make the economy in that area work well for that community. The process is led by people living, working, and running businesses in that area¹. As an approach, it tackles environmental, social, and economic issues as interconnected, and recognises the importance of connections between the local, regional, and national layers of the economy. It builds on the knowledge, experience, and resources in that community, to identify and maximise the local economic opportunities available.

A community economic development plan offers a coherent vision of how the local economy should work and identifies the best practical ideas to make this happen. First it is important to identify the characteristics that make a strong local economy:

- Responsible business
- Positive local money and resource flows
- Asset base and enabling environment
- Responsive public sector
- Active citizens
- Interdependence
- Environmental sustainability

The “Mainstreaming Community Economic Development”² report by Localise West Midlands (LWM) in 2013 concluded that: “Adopting a CED approach can make the economy less remote, more linked into place and benefiting people, and inclusive for all parts of the community. The locally orientated option should at least always be considered on its merits with more centralised options. Ignoring or dismissing its potential effectively restricts the future development and shared wellbeing of many localities across the country; it is like entering a boxing ring with one hand tied behind your back.”

Mainstreaming community economic development is about how we enable the success of this form of economic development to be scaled up into mainstream economic approaches. Despite the success of thousands of community economic development initiatives in generating livelihoods, social benefits, vibrancy, and local distinctiveness, it remains seen as ‘niche’ and irrelevant to the real economic development game.

The report also identified where localised and community economies delivered greater benefits than centralised economic development,

¹ [Community Economic Development](#)

² http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/mced_research/reports/

again highlighting the positive impacts that this type of development can have on localised communities. These include:

- Greater job creation, particularly in disadvantaged and peripheral areas
- Economic returns to an area
- Job security, with better pay and conditions
- Better job prospects (particularly for those at risk of economic exclusion)
- Civic welfare
- Civic participation
- Local economic power
- Increased inclusion and equality
- The creation of stronger local supply and demand chains, markets, and ownership

Types of CEDP

For CEDP to be truly effective, it should have a clear focus or remit that it is working to. In many cases, the geographic area is the defining factor and therefore the focus is on specific neighbourhoods or wards. Often, such CED plans build upon existing local plans to deliver wider benefits. Transformation can be achieved where the projects and economic vision work towards connecting community priorities to these broader economic plans and visions in a proactive way.

For other plans, the focus may be a particular asset. This could be an existing asset that the community is at risk of losing and is therefore

undertaking CEDP in order to retain and make best use of that asset. Alternatively, it could be an asset that is present in the area but is not being fully utilised. Again, the CEDP may be focussed on bringing that asset back into community use and building on the foundation that it offers. Asset-led regeneration enable value to be built up within the community by developing these physical assets.

Within this Policy Lab, we have assessed a number of CED plans, covering both asset focussed and geographical, alongside an example that focussed primarily on local procurement.

Local Authority involvement

Given the benefits that CEDP clearly presents, it is important the Local Authorities utilise this type of development and bring it into the mainstream. The purpose of this Policy Lab is therefore to demonstrate some of the best practice examples that have occurred in the UK and pull together learnings from these examples so that CCIN members and other Local Authorities are able to learn from them and build CEDP into their strategies.

The UK currently has a heavily centralised economy and decision-making process, so local areas must be proactive in implementing CEDP against the status quo. Local business leaders, politicians and other key decision makers in the public and voluntary sector must work together to

build a strong vibrant and inclusive local economy.

In order to effectively create CED plans that deliver the best for their communities, they need the following:

- To be created and communicated by local leaders.
- To be participative and act to give everyone a stake in their community.
- To enhance local power over the economy and for local people over their lives.

Case Studies

Of the partner organisations within this Policy Lab, some have already carried out CEDP, while others are considering using it in the future. Case studies have therefore been produced for Birmingham, Sandwell, Gloucester, and Croydon to explore best practice and learnings from this work.

Birmingham

Focus: geographic / asset-based

Summerfield

The Playing Field

The Summerfield CED plan grew out of a coalition of voluntary organisations and local residents as part of the legacy strand of the EU-funded project [USE-IT!](#) in 2019. Initially it focused on bringing a local playing field next to the Edgbaston Reservoir back into community use. The field is owned by [Birmingham Settlement](#) (a local charity) and had not been actively used for a number of decades. As a result of the growing activity in the area, the charity began to think more about how the space could be utilised by the community. Several open community days were held on the field to explore it's potential and raise awareness of the space. Birmingham Settlement have since secured funding and built a community building on the field, as well as



allowing local groups to use some space for food growing.

"Our vision is to create a secure space that will host a programme of wellbeing activities and provide access to shelter and loos to make the field a much more flexible space and enable the community to access it on a more ongoing basis."

One indicator of the success of a CED plan is the emergence of co-operatives, community led businesses and social enterprises following implementation. In Ladywood in 2019, [EAT MAKE PLAY](#) was established. The organisation has gone on to open a 'Share Shack' in a local empty retail unit, in conjunction with another local co-operative, [The Active Wellbeing Society](#). This is essentially a 'library of things', where local residents can borrow tools and equipment instead of purchasing.



"Eat Make Play was to provide everyday opportunities for the people of Ladywood to connect through sharing, learning, making, and doing

together, involving activities around practical skills like food preparation, growing, art, crafts, sewing and DIY and also social activities and events which cost nothing to attend. We have an emphasis on making good use of resources, sharing, and improving our environment while reducing waste. Our project aims to benefit all of the residents of Ladywood working with them to shape the programme and development of the organisation to meet the needs and aspirations of our community."

Edgbaston Reservoir – Community Masterplan



Shortly after the end of the Summerfield CEDP process Birmingham City Council launched a short consultation period on a masterplan for the Edgbaston Reservoir. There had been several previous masterplans which had been opposed by local residents. This time

the community decided to take a different tactic, building on what they had learnt with the playing field. Using a CEDP approach evolved into a mechanism to both empower the

community, and also bring them and the City Council together to explore the future of the whole Reservoir. Rather than residents campaigning against redevelopment plans that they felt did not meet their needs, they instead used the CEDP process to create an alternative. This ultimately led to better partnership working with the City Council and enabled the residents to essentially co-produce the regeneration plans.

Edgbaston Reservoir – A community-led vision

"In terms of successes, the CEDP has galvanised people and given them the confidence to believe that they can affect change."

**Karolina Medwecka,
Birmingham City Council**

Successes	Failings
<p>Galvanised a key group of organisations</p> <p>Made people believe they could affect change</p> <p>Encouraged Birmingham Settlement to take action and invest in the area</p> <p>Led to funding being secured for 2 further CED plans in Birmingham</p>	<p>Hasn't changed Birmingham City Council's regeneration plans – Tower Ballroom is still likely to be demolished</p>

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CCIN Values and Principles:



Soho and Jewellery Quarter Ward

Focus: local procurement

This CEDP took place alongside the Summerfield plan during 2018/9, funded by Birmingham City Council Local Innovation Fund. The process was led by [Soho First](#) and supported by [Localise West Midlands](#).

Soho First is about bringing together the gifts, passions, skills and aspirations of everyone in Soho and Jewellery Quarter to help make the area a better place to live and work. It is about connecting people – young and old, from diverse cultures and backgrounds, long-standing residents and new arrivals – to work together to make a difference to the local community.

Soho and Jewellery Quarter is a ward characterised by a diverse and vibrant economy on both the Soho Road and in the newly incorporated Jewellery Quarter. The Soho Road with its wide range of independent, locally owned shops is largely immune from the troubles of the major retailers on a standard high street; while the Jewellery Quarter is becoming a desired place to live and work. Entrepreneurship is also reflected in other sectors in the ward beyond the retail economy. Both areas have issues related to the changing economy, but these are being faced in a dynamic and positive way. Soho First CDT aims to be part of this process, and to ensure local people gain a full part of the benefits of change. An inner-city ward located to the west of



Birmingham city centre, Soho and Jewellery Quarter is one of 69 wards created following boundary changes in 2018. With a population of 26,490 (2017) it is one of the largest wards in the city.

Recent unemployment figures for March 2019 show that the proportion of unemployed claimants is 7.2% compared with 5.9% for Birmingham as a whole. Youth unemployment is also higher at 6.1% for the ward compared with 5.6% for the city. Focus therefore was very much on creating employment locally.

Soho First organised a number of workshops with local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders. Following this, the steering group was charged with working further over the next few months to develop what emerged as two main areas of work: a) Maximising benefits from Anchor Institutions & supply chains b) Enterprise spaces and marketplaces.

The result of this work was the development of a number of desired outcomes which then fed into the CED plan:

- Increase in local purchasing
- Increase in employment opportunities for residents
- More local businesses especially social enterprises delivering local services
- More investment in developing the potential of residents
- Creative use of space for community-based ventures
- Greater investment in local community-based ventures
- More and better use of vacant land and buildings
- Raise the profile of Soho Ward – building on its unique history and cultural diversity

A draft plan including actions for delivery of the above outcomes was

launched at an event at Soho House Museum on 14th June 2019. Following on from this event, community researchers undertook work to explore the potential for encouraging local businesses and organisations to purchase and procure materials and services locally, and also the idea of developing a meeting/workshop or maker space locally for use by social enterprises.

Although actions were identified within the plan, a timeframe for delivery was not confirmed. Due to lack of capacity and the Coronavirus Pandemic in early 2020, little progress appears to have been made against the plan to date.

Successes	Failings
Identified lots of potential within the area e.g., opportunity for shared space and resources and the potential for start-ups in the area	<p>Didn't really get off the ground</p> <p>Didn't have right people engaged in the process</p> <p>Lack of shared vision / end goal / clear objectives</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>

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CCIN Values and Principles:



Sandwell: Soho and Victoria (Smethwick)

Focus: geographic

Towards 2025

Prior to the development of a CED plan, a Local Neighbourhood Plan had been written in 2010. This outlined a vision for the main residential area of the ward (known sometimes as the "Windmill Eye"). It stated that the area should work towards the following vision:

- A growing family neighbourhood confident and secure in its workplaces, playspaces, and homes
- Rooted in the heritage of its founding industries and diverse people
- Realising the opportunities of its strategic location
- Developing its unique assets – its people, park, and hospital
- Looking forward to a shared sustainable future

The initial CED plan in 2015 therefore built upon this foundation and was aimed at the Soho and Victoria ward of Smethwick, which is part of Sandwell in the West Midlands. This ward is the most deprived of the 4 wards that make up Smethwick. The plan aimed to build around opportunities and resources already in place in the local area.

There were a number of key organisations that came together to work on the first plan, and funding was secured to provide consultancy

Community Economic Development Plan
for Soho & Victoria Ward (Smethwick)

Towards 2025



Final Document submitted 11th March 2015
Gareth Brown – Smethwick Church Action Network on behalf of Partnership Group for
Community Economic Development Plan

support as well. The partners involved were Soho/Victoria Friends and Neighbours CIC, Brushstrokes Comm Project, West Midlands Police, Sandwell Council, Job Centre, and a number of local organisations. The process of producing the plan with local partners

successfully boosted community engagement and helped to ensure that the economic future of the local area is shaped by local people.

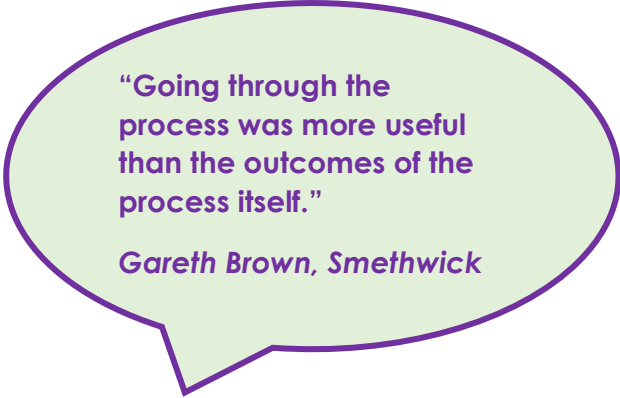
The original CED plan identified six categories of opportunities, and linked each to an objective as follows:

1. Community - Connecting new, emerging, and existing communities where skills, experiences and stories can be shared
2. Resources - Making the most effective use of all the assets and resources of the local area
3. Enterprise- Provide places where creative community

business and enterprises can be established and flourish bringing social and financial benefits to our neighbourhood

4. Employment - move local people closer to the job market through employment support, skills development, volunteering, and training
5. Social - create a culture of participation and mutual benefit that supports individuals within our neighbourhood
6. Local - Make the most of new opportunities to develop the local economy focused on development of new acute hospital

One key outcome of this CED plan was the detailed mapping of community buildings and spaces within the ward. This served well to both highlight the assets already present in the area, as well as highlighting potential collaboration and partnership opportunities. Feedback from one key participant involved in the process highlighted the desire of organisations to have their own building or space. However, this exercise highlighted that there was a great deal of space already available for community use within the ward, and additional groups could potentially utilise this and thus also contribute financially to their maintenance.



"Going through the process was more useful than the outcomes of the process itself."

Gareth Brown, Smethwick

Towards 2025: Second iteration

The second CED plan for this ward was undertaken in 2019 with support from the [USE-IT!](#) project. This aimed to build upon the initial plan and update it, particularly around some new assets within the region. This included the construction of the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital, and the development of the new Olympic sized swimming pool being built in readiness for neighbouring Birmingham hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

As mentioned above, one indicator of the success of CEDP is the emergence of co-operatives, community led businesses and social enterprises following implementation. In early 2020, [Smethwick ChangeSpaces](#) was launched. This was a co-working office based in the old vestry chapel of Holy Trinity Church. This was primarily the main outcome of the second iteration of the CED plan for this area.

Unfortunately, the space closed after a number of months due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. However, a

second co-working space opened in neighbouring Bearwood in 2021 in a more practical space. This is being managed by [Bearwood Community Hub CIC](#) and is now thriving; the space supports a co-working office, childcare facilities, and a community bakery.



Successes	Failings
1st plan – mapped community assets which was a useful exercise and raised awareness	Short term funding – needed longer term investment
Engaged with people really rooted in the community	Needed dedicated worker to maintain momentum
Identified community buildings that were struggling – encouraged joined up working between these	Needed more council buy-in / support
2nd plan – led to development of co-working space	Would have been more impactful if local businesses were more involved

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CCIN Values and Principles:



Gloucester: Matson, Robinswood and White City

Focus: geographic

The Power of Three: 2016

In 2016 a CED plan was developed in the Matson, Robinswood and White City areas of Gloucester led by a local voluntary sector organisation as part of a DCLG funded pilot project.

The Matson, Robinswood and White City communities have a range of issues including concentration of deprivation, low household incomes, high numbers of benefit claimants and a lack of employment opportunities.

Over the years there have been a number of government (local and national) programmes in the ward. This has left a legacy of a large number of community organisations and initiatives, however they tend to 'go it alone' and there has been little co-ordination of effort previously.

The process therefore aimed to bring together a range of VCSE organisations and initiatives, local schools, the local housing provider, City Council officers and local councillors from the City and County Councils to foster the idea of better partnership working. This was a collective of individuals and organisations that had not previously worked together.



At the core of the CEDP process was the development of wider local leadership capacity and a shared vision; the desire to bring the communities closer together, forge stronger relationships and build stronger partnerships to tackle local challenges. At the end of the process, it was recognised that the custodianship and the development of the plan needed to be passed on from the original steering group to another body, the Matson, Robinswood and White City Partnership took on this role. This has led to the Partnership having a much stronger role and voice in the community.

Work on developing the CED plan led to a series of outcomes designed to deliver the vision of local people who are empowered to take an active part in a growing resilient economy. They were as follows:

- Empowering local people to provide leadership in our communities
- Promoting a positive reputation of our communities
- Access to flexible 'wrap around' (child) care

- Better use of our community assets (buildings)
- Improving education, training and financial inclusion
- Access to improved transport links
- Influencing housing refurbishments decisions and planning of new developments
- Supporting local small businesses

Gloucester City Homes had been involved in the partnership that wrote the CED plan. In March 2017 they were awarded £1.25m from the Government's Estates Regeneration Fund to create initial master plans for the regeneration of the Matson and Podsmead estates. The Power of Three CED plan was used to support the successful bid.

[The Power of Three – Matson, Robinswood and White City – Three Communities – One Strong Economy.](#)

The Power of Three: 2020 – 2024

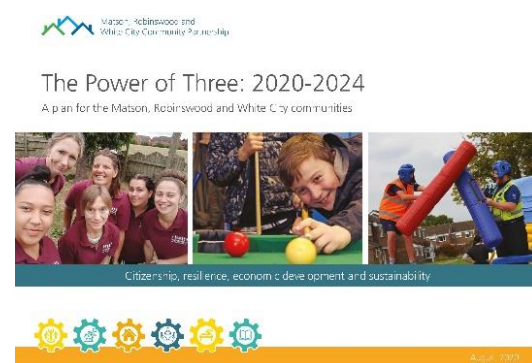
A review of the initial CED plan was undertaken in 2019, with a view to updating and refreshing it. The review identified successes, including challenging the negative opinions about the ward, as well as complications, such as the lack of formal well-recognised schemes for youth work and volunteering.

From the review it was clear that having a common initiative was a positive approach for all those

interested in the ward and prepared to offer leadership; whether as individual residents, managers in community organisations, or as workers representing larger organisations.

The Power of Three (2020 – 2024) is both a continuation of the first exercise and an innovation towards being more strategic and confidently engaged with the structures that hold power, as well with the key issues of Britain in the 2020s.

The top priorities of the first phase remain: reputation, leadership, transport, flexible care, community assets, housing, education and skills, and local businesses; but rather than seeing them as distinct issues to be tackled just from within the ward, the revised plan sees them as part of a richer tapestry of concerns that are on the agenda of the local authorities, the Health Commissioners, the Local Economic Partnership, elected officials, the University, social housing providers, and providers of primary, secondary and tertiary education.



The first plan was very much focused on the reputation of the ward; people wanted to move away from being known as 10% most deprived. The objective for the second plan was more towards creating a tool to engage with the LA, funders, and other community groups.

The second iteration of The Power of Three set out six purposes:

1. To lay out the Partnership's fresh understanding of the ward's economic, environmental, social and development potential
2. To clarify how the Partnership understands the context and construction of the opportunities and challenges
3. To place the micro-local ward concerns over adult skills and economic participation, climate change and funding 2050 development, renewal of the built environment, social imbalance, democratic participation and accountable leadership, and educational attainment up to 21; alongside the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats identified by the public authorities
4. To state what the Partnership can do through collaborative working based on the resources of its individual and organisational participants
5. To set out opportunities for regional, county and city entities to be partners in change by supporting small and large tasks whose results would drive forward a valued project
6. To invite you, as a local resident, employer, service provider, activist, or as an organisation to support people to meet their aspirations for better health, economic and educational opportunity and to encourage and promote positive solutions around climate change and participation in democracy



The second iteration of the CEDP has already demonstrated its effectiveness as a tool for engaging with funders

and the local authority. The council have used The Power of Three to inform their own 3 year plan. The Venture and other members of the CEDP partnership have also gone on to work with the council to deliver a food project over the Summer of 2021 which provided meals for 4,500

children; a third of which were within Gloucester City. The council would have been unable to have that level of impact without the infrastructure and the community outreach that The Partnership provided.

[The Power of Three 2020 - 2024](#)

Successes	Failings
Organisations worked together in a more co-ordinated way	1 st plan – felt that the language used created barriers to involvement
Broke down territorial boundaries within the wards	Lack of resource for the legacy of the plan – not known who will own it and take it forward
Genuinely community led	
2 nd plan – led to partnership projects with both the NHS and the local authority	

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CCIN Values and Principles:



Croydon: South Norwood

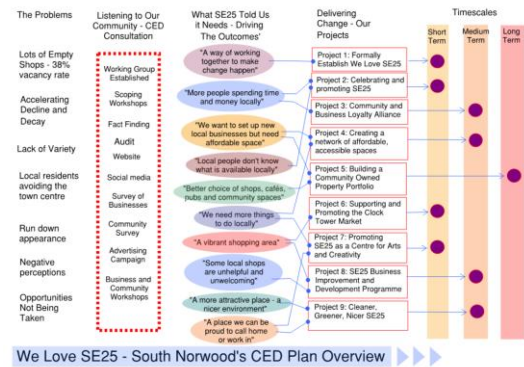
Focus: geographic

Taking control of our Own Destiny - 2017

In the South Norwood ward of Croydon, a [community economic development plan](#) was developed in 2017. The focus of this initial plan was to address empty properties and provide community hubs and workspaces and was led by [People for Portland Road](#).

The plan identified 7 outcomes required for South Norwood to regenerate itself, which were as follows:

1. Developing We Love SE25 to Deliver Change
2. Reconnecting Our Community with Our Local Businesses
3. Strengthening Our Community through Learning, Working and Playing
4. Bringing Empty Property Back in Use through Community Ownership or Management
5. Increasing local employment, business ownership and successful business in SE25
6. Re-creating a Pleasant Modern Market Town Environment – encouraging locals and visitors to spend time and money in SE25
7. Involving the Whole Community in 'Our Community'



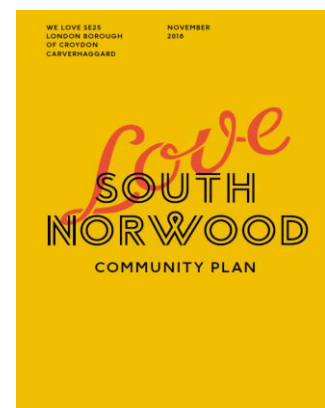
It was recognised in the early stages that an entity was needed that would take ownership of the plan, drive it forward and retain the community engagement. As a result, [We Love SE25](#), a community forum that brings together representatives, organisations and inspirational individuals and key stakeholders in SE25, was established with the aim of delivering on the CED plan outcomes.

In 2018 We Love SE25 was awarded a £50,000 grant from the Mayor's Good Growth Fund to build on the work of the CED plan and develop a further Community Plan.

[Taking Control of Our Own Destiny](#)

South Norwood Community Plan - 2018

The [Community Plan](#) for South Norwood was developed during the Summer and Autumn of 2018 by [We Love SE25](#). The focus of the second iteration of the plan was to




set priorities for future regeneration programmes.

It developed the goals of the CED plan into a set of proposals to address four key themes:

1. Creating a stronger local identity for South Norwood; celebrating its strengths and working to improve its public places.
2. Identifying strategies to reactivate empty units on the high streets as retail space and workspace.
3. Enhancing existing community assets through effective and creative interventions.
4. Strengthening existing community networks; building the capacity of local businesses and groups.

In 2019, following the completion of the Community Plan a successful £1.16m bid to the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund was submitted by Croydon Council with We Love SE25 as partners. Croydon match-funded the value of the bid, creating a total combined budget of £2.3m for the three-year project.

The project will see the council and We Love SE25 work with residents, businesses, landlords and community groups to help bring empty premises back into use as retail and workspaces for creative and social enterprises. Community buildings within the high streets will become active places, bringing together residents, helping to create a resilient town centre reflecting the creativity and diversity of its people.



"It has created a framework and a forum for things to be progressed and discussions about where we can make a difference."

Cllr Clive Fraser, Croydon

In March 2020 South Norwood was selected as one of five new London High Street Heritage Action Zones by Heritage England and was awarded £1.1m. The aims of the programme build on and enhance the Good Growth Programme.

[South Norwood Community Plan](#)

Successes	Failings
We Love SE25 created – a forum for stakeholders	Croydon Council issued a Section 114 notice in November 2020
Socco Cheta community hub established	The regeneration team was reduced so resource reduced
Weekly market established and now has waiting list	
Led to successful joint bid between We Love SE25 and the council: value = £1.16million	

Contact: Michelle Normanly, Croydon City Council, Michelle.Normanly@croydon.gov.uk

CCIN Values and Principles:



Sunderland and Milton Keynes

Although both Sunderland and Milton Keynes have not specifically carried out CEDP, both areas have invested in community development and community wealth building work. Their involvement in this Policy Lab is therefore to both contribute to the learning with what they have done already, and to identify opportunities where CEDP may be a useful tool in their future work.

Sunderland

Sunderland City Council have developed a [Community Wealth Building plan](#) that they are currently delivering. In their words, Community Wealth Building is about:

- Developing assets, of all kinds, in such a way that the wealth stays local
- Using local assets to make communities more vibrant
- Aiming to help individuals, families and communities control their own economic destiny

Essentially, it is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

As can be seen in their [Community Wealth Building Annual Report](#) Sunderland City Council has made significant progress in this area by considering Community Wealth Building as part of every Council

decision and embedding the strategy's core principles in all service delivery plans, as well as in staff performance and appraisals. A great illustration of this is the re-purposing of Elemore Green Space, a former golf course which closed 7 years ago. Following wide ranging resident consultation, Sunderland City Council are now committed to developing the site and supporting the creation of a social enterprise, that will coordinate the running and activities held within the site.

Bishopwearmouth Co-operative

An example of a social enterprise that will operate from the site is [Bishopwearmouth Co-operative](#); a garden centre that provides employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. With the support from both the council and the North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC), and the right social landscape within the City, this organisation has gone from strength to strength.





Critical to the successful implementation of a community wealth building agenda is the ability to draw on the social capital exists in communities. This social capital has been achieved through long-term investment by the Council. Co-operatives have been common in the city since the 1970's, and a Co-op Development Agency was formed in

1983. Although that organisation is no longer in existence, it did lay the groundwork for the social economy to grow and support for co-operatives and other social enterprises continues to be delivered in the city.

Community Wealth Building is about the ability of councils to use their position as anchor institutions to play a defining role in creating and reinforcing local economic ties. However, where community wealth building plans are owned and driven by anchor institutions, CEDP creates an equivalent plan that is owned and driven by local communities. By using both community wealth building and CEDP methodologies there is the opportunity to 'meet in the middle' providing a more holistic approach to local economies.

Contact: Helen Peverley, Sunderland City Council, Helen.Peverley@sunderland.gov.uk

CCIN Values and Principles:



Milton Keynes

The Milton Keynes [Community-Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy](#) states:

'The community-led regeneration and estate renewal programme is an opportunity for residents to work with the Council and its partners to improve the lives of local people. This strategy is fully inclusive and provides an opportunity for local people across Milton Keynes to play a part in improving their area or neighbourhood.'

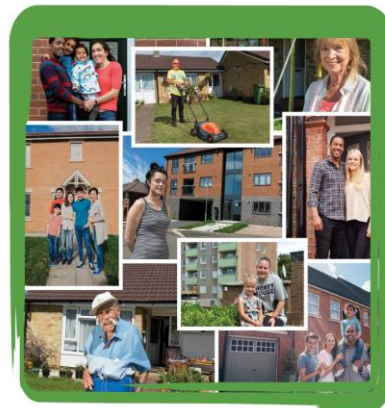
We are committed to a programme which is shaped and informed by people who live locally, local representatives, voluntary and community organisations and other stakeholders like business owners and service providers such as health professionals.

Our vision for regeneration and estate renewal is to build stronger communities, in which every resident of Milton Keynes can live safely and securely in the greenest and most sustainable city in the world.'

To deliver this, Estate Renewal Forums made up of community stakeholders have been established. They are supported by the Council to co-create and deliver effective plans and programmes of work, thus giving local people a level playing field in shaping proposals and ensuring that estate renewal and regeneration is genuinely community-led. Although the

Community-Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy

2020



regeneration is focused on developing and improving the built environment, this way of working also recognises the impact of it on health and wellbeing and the local economy.

Milton Keynes has 48 Parish and Town Councils covering the entire council area. Milton Keynes Council recognises the potential benefits of devolving assets and services to local communities and parish and town councils, which are set out in: [Working Together: An Approach to Devolution of Assets \(Facilities\) and Services.](#)

Milton Keynes Council are pioneering the devolution of some services to Parish and Town Councils and have already undertaken a large piece of work to explore the options for landscaping and biodiversity services to be fully devolved and delivered in a co-operative manner.

Both of these approaches incorporate features of CEDP and would provide a firm foundation should a CEDP be

used as a tool to further focus on the economic wellbeing of communities.

Contact: Will Rysdale, Milton Keynes Council, Will.Rysdale@milton-keynes.gov.uk

CCIN Values and Principles:



Creating and implementing successful CEDPs

A successful Community Economic Development Plan should have **both**:

- a strong vision and strategy for the local economy, collectively generated by partners from within the community and with buy-in from key stakeholders – and,
- this vision is backed up by real, rooted, and achievable practical projects and activities which will play a part in transforming the local economy.

The 5 stages of creating a CEDP:

1. Building the partnership

As the Case Studies have demonstrated, it is vitally important to engage with the right people and organisations to achieve success. Key community and anchor organisations and businesses should be identified and included in the creation process to ensure that the plan meets the needs of local residents, businesses and community organisations.

Creating a strong partnership not only ensures that all voices are heard, but also creates a sense of ownership of the plan and enables people to become more fully invested in it.

It is important to remember that different organisations have differing levels of capacity to take part in a process like this, and some momentum may change throughout the process. Leadership is important to ensure that there is a drive to keep the plan evolving.

2. Framing

It's important to consider early in the process what success actually looks like. Does success look the same for all the parties involved? At this stage, you need to make sure everyone is striving for the same thing and create a collective vision.

The beginning of this process this needs to be understanding the community as it is today; what are the demographics, community assets, challenges, etc. This will help to identify the difference a strong local economy can make.

Strong Local Economy High levels of well-being for all within ecological limits		
Positive local economic outcomes	Positive social outcomes	Positive environmental outcomes
Promoting a diverse, low carbon economy with equitably shared returns	Promoting a fair, equal society, supporting high levels of well-being	Safeguarding natural resources, living within ecological limits
Characteristics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive identity • Good jobs • Strong local multiplier • Diversity of sectors & ownership • A balanced regional economy • Appropriate scale of production of goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being • Shared ownership & control over key economic resources • Ability to effect change • Equality • Interdependence degree of linkage / collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecology & biodiversity • Efficient resource use • Adaptation to climate change

The following questions can help the framing of success:

- What does a strong local economy look like?
- What are the unique opportunities for the area in which you're working?
- What are the opportunities for enterprise?
- How could goods and services be delivered differently?
- How can we mobilise resources to do what we want to do?
- What will be the impact of the plan?
- What is the positive local economic, social, and environmental change that will be created?

3. Generating ideas

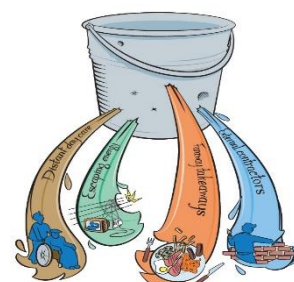
Once you have established what the shared vision is, and identified some desired outcomes for the CEDP, the next stage is to work out how that vision will be achieved in practical terms.



them to identify and quantify the main

flows of money coming into and out of their community. In turn, this process often leads to revealing economic opportunities, which may help community members improve their household and community well-being.

In the simple leaky bucket, the arrow at the top represents money coming into the community from outside. This money usually includes income from sales of goods and services. The arrows from the holes in the bottom of the bucket represent money leaving the community, typically in the form of expenditures on goods and services purchased outside. The level of water represents the level of economic activity: the fuller the bucket, the more money is circulating in the community and the healthier its economy.



Once it has been identified where the money is leaving the local economy, ideas can be generated as to how to 'plug the leaks'. What goods and services could potentially be delivered from within the local area, thus retaining that money within the local economy, or the 'bucket'.

At this stage, it is useful to come up with as many ideas as possible, no matter how viable. The next step is to select, refine and prioritise them.

4. Select and refine ideas

Once there is a big melting pot of ideas, it's time to distil them down and decide which are viable ideas that could be take forward within the CEDP. Ask yourselves:

- How do the ideas deliver the vision?
- What 'leak' does this idea plug?
- How do these projects deliver against the components of a strong local economy?
- Is it a short, medium or long term project?
- Is it realistic and achievable?

Some ideas and projects will have more support than others but that doesn't make them the right ones to be included. Having a clear framework against which to assess ideas will build consensus.

5. Test ideas

Once the ideas have been refined, some testing is also required. No matter how good an idea sounds on paper, it's still important to go out to the wider community and find out what other people think.

It's important to take time with this stage and fully engage all partners and the wider community. Different partners may have differing priorities or needs, so consultation is important here. Take the time to run workshops to bring people together and discuss options, as well as having your plans accessible on-line so people can access them and feedback here as well.

Once you've got your shortlist of ideas for stimulating the local economy, it's important to get buy in. Encourage local organisations and the Local Authority to adopt the plan as part of their strategy and business plans.



Top 10 tips:

1. It's about the process not the plan
2. Can be difficult to keep people on track
3. Keep the focus on the economy
4. Find a leader
5. It takes time
6. Be flexible
7. There isn't a template
8. Get buy-in from everyone
9. Make it real
10. It's not a quick fix to an immediate problem

**“The most difficult journey
brings the greatest rewards”**

Enabling factors for successful CEDP

The case studies above show that CEDP can come from a variety of different starting places and for a range of reasons, but there are common themes in their successes:

Partners

- A strong equal partnership across a range of stakeholders: this can only happen when there is trust between the partners, and where organisations and individuals recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and those of the others in the room.
- Ownership sits with the community, not with the Local Authority; robust consultation is key to success.
- Having a community leader to hold the process together ensures both momentum and continuity.

Resources

- Social capital needs to exist in the community at the outset. This isn't always apparent at the beginning of the process; in some communities there is an expectation that it does exist only to find it doesn't, in other communities the process uncovers the hidden social capital.
- Long-term financial investment is important; although 3-to-5-year projects can have some impacts and are likely to result in a CED plan or something similar, without the resources to follow them through and deliver the proposed activities, the outcomes are never fully realised.

Timing

- Undertaking CEDP when it is the right time for the community, rather than being dictated by external factors such as funding deadlines.
- Taking time; it can be difficult to engage with people around what appears to be an abstract concept. It is a big step moving from community organising to economic planning.
- Long-term commitment from Local Authority, Community Partners and Anchor Institutions; this is not about short-term opportunities, but about committing to the process in the long term and having a strategic approach.

Vision

- The plan must be more than words; the actions in it need to be achievable and the resources required to deliver it must be identified.
- All partners need to identify a shared vision of a strong local economy, with clear goals and objectives.
- CEDP cannot be in a void; it needs to be understood what the community are trying to influence e.g., saving a local asset, or influencing council planning. It must be guided by what is currently happening in the area.

Conclusion

Community Economic Development whilst relatively new as a policy tool in the UK has been common practice in the US and Canada for many years. This is probably due to the greater autonomy given to states and provinces but also to the fact that in a larger geography national economic policy does not always contribute to solving local developmental problems.

This type of development however is not spontaneous although there are small versions of it taking place often without the participants realising it. As shown, there are already good examples of this kind of practice already happening in many places in the UK. To really capitalise on this new economic methodology however requires some infrastructure.

Community Economic Development requires a serious commitment to each of the three ingredients.

Community. Many of the places that need economic development the most have communities with low levels of social capital, so the first task is to address the knowledge gap within education, community development and sympathetic local authorities. There is much activity in all these areas, but it is not focussed on creating community businesses.

The knowledge of what is needed within a community is best known by the people and organisations within those communities themselves. They are the people living and working in those neighbourhoods and so best

understand what those areas need to be able to reach their full potential and thrive. It is therefore essential for communities to take the lead in CEDP. However, it is also recognised that the resources and capacity are not always present at the beginning of the process. Local Authorities have a role to support CEDP and provide resources and financing, but not necessarily lead in the plans in a top-down approach.

In the case studies above, where second iterations of CED Plans have been developed, these were initiated by the communities themselves. The support provided in developing the initial plans provided those communities with the skills and confidence to take a stronger lead the second time around. The social capital within these communities increased significantly. This has led to a change in the way those communities engage with Local Authorities, they are better placed to advocate for themselves and enable constructive conversations.

Economic. CEDP is about viable business formation not charities or enterprises that rely on external subsidy but instead based upon the principles of local ownership and community capital retention.

Local Authority support in CEDP can enable systems change to take place, rather than small scale activities. Their advocacy of the plans raises the profile of areas and can attract further

funding and opportunities to an area, such as in the cases of Gloucester and Croydon.

CEDP compliments other activities that Local Authorities are undertaking, as demonstrated by Sunderland and Milton Keynes. A good CED planning approach takes into consideration how the local economy connects with the world around it and looks for opportunities to tap into the 'mainstream' economic plans, strategies and opportunities that shape the wider economy around the community. CEDP is a powerful tool for change but can only perform this function if it is embedded within wider policies, strategies, and plans. At the least, they must sit alongside other plans and strategies which drive economic development, rather than being understood as an 'optional extra'.

Development. Development has to be both in an economic sense by creating clusters of businesses, which can have a huge impact on a local area, but also in terms of human development. Once people have gained these skills and competences there is a positive spill over into new businesses and economic opportunities.

A successful policy framework for Community Economic Development should follow five principles:

1. Self-reliance. ie bottom up, able to operate without a continuous need for external support
2. Community-based. Of and in the communities they serve.

3. Participatory. High levels of community involvement, democratic where possible.
4. Asset-based. Any physical asset of the activity should be owned by the community.
5. Sustainable. This means they must have a rigorous process of appraisal for investment and be both sustainable as enterprises and environmentally.

Creating this type of policy framework will identify existing assets both human and physical that can contribute to the overall strategy, it will also help identify the missing pieces that will be required especially in terms of access to skills and finance.

Birmingham City Council, as the lead for this Policy Lab, has already recognised the vast potential for CED planning within the city from those completed to date. It is hoped that the learnings from this report can be used to shape future CED planning, particularly in East Birmingham where there are significant development opportunities provided by the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Programme and the Midlands Metro Line and HS2. It is also hoped that this report serves as a useful tool to the other partner organisations and other CCIN members as they develop their own community economic development planning.

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