

# LOCALISE WEST MIDLANDS

## Annual Report

1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017



*Localising prosperity for a more just and sustainable economy*

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## 1. Introduction and mission statement

LWM works towards more localised approaches to supply chains, ownership and decision-making for a more just and sustainable economy. We see localisation and decentralising capitalism as key to progressing gently radical economic change.

We do this by:

- bringing people and organisations together to explore ideas and take action;
- providing information and inspiration;
- researching, advising and challenging.

### History

LWM was set up in 2002 by a group of individuals keen to propose solutions as a constructive response to the problems of mainstream economics. We remain a West Midlands regional organisation, for the benefit of the region's geographical balance of urban and rural. We also look beyond the region, seeking to catalyse ideas across the UK and to make links with the many organisations working on a similar agenda across the world. We have developed as a consultancy alongside our 'NGO' activities and are able to support organisations in their efforts to maximise social value and ownership of the economy in a range of sectors and cross-sector areas.

Past work has included co-creating the business plan for Birmingham Energy Savers based on developing local supply chains, work on sustainable procurement, research into tackling fuel poverty through the Green Deal, reviewing Friends of the Earth's environmental rights empowerment activities, evaluation of the West Midlands LEPs' proposals on sustainable development and localisation criteria, and programmes of research, action research and practical work on mainstreaming community economic development, or Localising Prosperity.

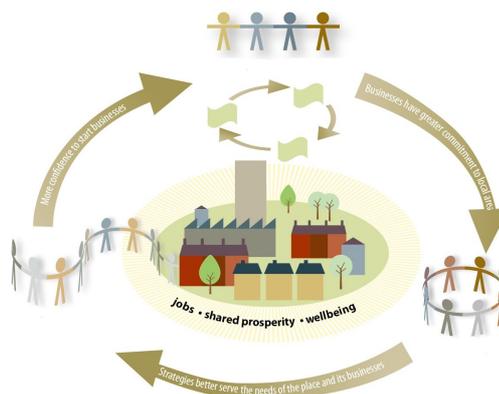
## 2. Activities over the year - 2016-17

### Localising Prosperity

Localising Prosperity is a LWM programme of activity, funded by Barrow Cadbury Trust, based on making the most of local enterprise, existing business supply chains, networks, community assets and human potential. We are now working on the fourth stage of this programme.

The first stage, [Mainstreaming Community Economic Development](#), produced groundbreaking research into how a localising approach to economics can contribute to prosperity, social inclusion and local distinctiveness, and how this can be integrated into conventional economic development. The [second stage](#) built on these findings by collaborating with partners in case study and practical work, and developing the excellent [Localising Prosperity](#) web resources. The third stage enabled us to bring in a second member of staff, important for sustaining LWM. Priority activities over those two years were:

- Progressing a Localising Prosperity agenda with the Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, to ensure the new hospital can create more local money flow and reduce disadvantage
- Exploring the potential for local currencies in the West Midlands (see [Birmingham Pound](#))
- Exploring opportunities to influence the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and other devolution towards maximising local value
- Exploring opportunities for local and national collaborations with likeminded groups



#### - Midland Metropolitan Hospital

The USE-IT! project is now well under way with contracts agreed. We are involved in the work package that is looking at social enterprise, community business and work experience. We will be providing the “ideas bank” section of the work package web portal and are working closely with Co-op Futures on making some of these ideas happen. This role seems a good fit for us within our limited time allocation as we can focus on how the local economy will develop.

We were instrumental in getting the regeneration potential of the Midland Met Hospital recognised and the USE-IT! project’s development, so it’s good to see how well the whole project is developing.

#### - Birmingham Pound

LWM has been leading a steering group aiming to initiate a local currency for Birmingham. Initially this also included members from other parts of the West Midlands conurbation but the main appetite and capacity was for a Birmingham currency so this was pursued. The group were following what seemed to be a straightforward local adaptation of the Bristol Pound model, known as a transition currency and effectively a sterling based voucher to be exchanged between locally owned businesses.

The group explored community and business interest, worked on project planning, secured in-principle support from Birmingham City Council, planned marketing strategies and produced a financial model of how the currency would operate. Unfortunately, the latter concluded that such a currency could not financially sustain itself and that a different model would be needed, without the extensive development funding that Bristol had received.

The group is now working on proposals for a mutual credit circle/local currency combination. Since the year end we also advised on and attended a BCC/NEF event on local banking which links to this agenda.

LWM remains closely involved in this group and keen on the enormous potential for local currencies in communicating how purchasing locally can generate more local income and keep money in the “real” economy that benefits local people. Although it was not possible to progress a currency on the Bristol model, it has led to increased awareness of the local money circulation concept, which should assist behaviour change, and has given us a good foundation of knowledge for a future currency initiative.

#### **- Civil Society Forum**

While problematic, the Civil Society Forum work produced and sent to the mayor 4 theme papers, in particular one on economics which we coordinated. The CSF list represents around 30 local organisations, and its economics subgroup around 25 (overlapping). All these organisations are more informed on WMCA issues and have opportunities to voice priorities and challenges collaboratively: a good grounding for next year’s work.

#### **- Social Care, inclusive prosperity and the WMCA**

From November 2016 to August 2017 LWM was working with New Economics Foundation, New Start and local partners on some research into how social care has the potential to become a driver of the West Midlands economy. This report has now been published.

The report, *Social Care as a Local Economic Solution in the West Midlands*, proposes that rather than social care being viewed solely as a problem, policy changes at Combined Authority level could harness the potential of social care to generate inclusive prosperity across the region. Re-framing of the sector away from large-scale providers towards community and cooperative care models could transform the sector, creating high quality careers, living wage, and improving standards of care across the region. Moving towards such a model can redirect the third of spend that goes to big providers’ shareholders into care quality and wages. It calls for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to prioritise new models of care and establish a community care innovation unit.

This re-framing of social care models a new approach to local economics, one that is aligned with the assets and needs of communities rather than focused narrowly on economic growth and inward investment. This ‘foundational’ approach to local economies could be extended to other sectors such as housing, food and utilities. This approach resonates with West Midlands mayor Andy Street’s calls for greater diversity in the provision of all public services and enthusiasm for mutual models, as well as with the Combined Authority’s aims of ‘inclusive growth.’

The report was written by Dave Powell at New Economics Foundation as part of the Good City Economies programme in which LWM is a partner. LWM’s work in this was funded by Barrow Cadbury Trust. It was scoped and refined by a group of organisations active in the region on inclusive economics and social care.

LWM will be working on taking progress not only this work on social care but the wider possibilities of a focus on the ‘foundational’ economy and a fully integrated approach to inclusive prosperity.

More about this work can be read here:

<http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/activities/wmca-socialcare/>

### **Anchor Institutions**

LWM has been supporting the Centre for Local Economic Strategies in working with Anchor Institutions in Birmingham. Funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the work is seeking to understand the existing impact of 8 institutions and influence their behaviour.

Anchor institutions, such as the local authority, hospitals, universities and housing providers are significant spenders in the local economy, with large annual budgets for staff, food, energy and other supplies and services. Examining the economic power of these anchors, the project will analyse:

- which goods and services are locally purchased;
- which local people are employed and from which areas;
- how land and property has the potential to create wealth which communities truly benefit from.

LWM is providing advice and assistance with the project overall and with specific anchors.

### **Lessons from Community Forum**

During the year 2013-14, LWM member Jon Stevens produced a report, Reflections on Community Forum, evaluating the 1970s community engagement initiative Community Forum, funded by a small grant from Barrow Cadbury Trust. A workshop was held with the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham in May 2015 to use its findings to explore lessons for current times. Due to personal circumstances the work was delayed for many months, but Jon finally completed and published this work in June 2017.

The report can be found here:

<http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/activities/residents-renewing/>

### **Consultancy**

Over the year, associates have carried out projects around environmental issues. These may lead to further work in 2017-2018.

### **Other collaborations**

We have increased our collaboration with other organisations over the year. In addition to larger projects, we have contributed to workshops or panel discussions at: a Lucas Plan event in November 2016, Reconomy's Future of Local Economies day April 2017, a Cities Project event July 2017 and report launch for previous project September 2016. Also locally by engagement in a 'Principles for a Progressive Alliance' agenda, winter 2016-17; New Economics Drinks February 2017; speaking at a Common Purpose economics event April 2016 and chairing the economics table at the Hall Green district convention. We also recently met with Joseph Rowntree Foundation staff to discuss collaboration.

### 3. The Future

#### **Localising Prosperity funding**

The Barrow Cadbury Trust have awarded us three years' funding for continuation of our work on Localising Prosperity, starting 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017. This is to support 'community economic development' including the Midland Metropolitan Hospital and influence the West Midlands Combined Authority's approach to the localising prosperity agenda.

#### **Board review session**

Before the end of the year reviewed, we agreed to hold a review session for current board members, which was held in August 2017. This helped restate and clarify our purpose, and concluded that LWM needs better engagement from board members in supporting our limited capacity and shaping how we address our need for diversified income sources and new and more diverse board members. An action plan to address these is now in progress.

#### **Localising Prosperity film**

We are working with local film-maker Susan Jones to produce a short film showcasing the Localising Prosperity approach to economics. This will pick up on four case studies that take this approach, some involving LWM and some external to us, demonstrating different aspects of how economic development can deliver better impact, power and redistribution locally through policy and practice. This film will be ready later in the autumn.

#### **Renew**

We are working on the early stages of a proposal with Transition Network, Permaculture UK and others to pilot an adaptation of Renew Wales' peer mentoring for sustainable community enterprise in the West Midlands with a view to an England-wide roll-out.

#### **CED with Soho First**

Local community development organisation Soho First has been awarded Local Innovation Fund funding to produce a Community Economic Plan for the area. LWM has been asked to support this process as an adviser.

## 4. People

### Staff and Volunteers

LWM has two coordinators sharing a four-day-a-week role. As our sole permanent staff post, this is effectively our chief executive, company secretary, administrator, website manager and finance manager as well as leading on various projects.



Karen Leach has been LWM coordinator since 2002 and during this year has been leading on the Birmingham Pound. She previously created the role of Campaigns Support Worker with Birmingham Friends of the Earth, and is on their Management Committee, responsible for community environmental building The Warehouse, where LWM rents its office. She also chairs the Moseley Road Baths Action Group, which aims to secure a future for these historic community swimming baths, and works part time as a gardener.



Karen McCarthy was employed in November 2015 to share the role of Coordinator with Karen Leach, and is leading on the Midland Metropolitan Hospital aspect of Localising Prosperity. Karen has worked in the public and third sectors in a variety of roles. Most recently, she has run care services both as a social enterprise and for a local authority. Her interests include co-production, practical devolution and dignity in care. She is looking forward to working on initiatives around the new Midland Metropolitan hospital, but also contributing to LWM's wider work. She is also a councillor in Birmingham and a youth leader for St John Ambulance.

We are grateful for the voluntary help of Andrew Jolly of CoSec Ltd for once again kindly administering our payroll during the year, as well as for the voluntary time of all LWM members and board members.

### Board members

Over the year the following have been Board members of Localise West Midlands:

#### **Jon Morris (Chair)**

A now retired housing, planning and regeneration consultant who led LWM's work on Birmingham Energy Savers and contributed to our Mainstreaming Community Economic Development project. Former Director of Coventry New Deal for Communities, Chair of Royal Town Planning Institute Housing Panel, Extensive experience in the fields of housing, planning and regeneration, as a practitioner, researcher and lecturer. Jon has also been a member of a number of ministerial advisory groups and an expert witness to the House of Commons Environment Select Committee.

#### **Paul Cobbing (Vice Chair)**

Paul has worked for the last 30 years on environmental issues, from operational land management to policy development and implementation across climate change and the natural environment. He is now chief executive of the National Flood Forum, a charity that supports and represents people at risk of flooding. He has experience of developing and

supporting sustainable development, climate change and environmental networks across the West Midlands, and working with them to progress strategic action. He is convenor of the West Midlands section of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a member of the West Midlands Forestry & Woodland Advisory Committee and the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership.

### **Phil Beardmore**

(Also LWM associate). Phil works for LWM and others as an environmental and third sector consultant specialising in thought innovation. He founded the renewable energy co-operative CoRE50. His clients include local authorities, utilities, construction companies and social enterprises. In 2010 Phil was voted one of the top 50 Green Leaders in the West Midlands, is the Third Sector Assembly Environment Network Champion and member of Birmingham's Green Commission.

### **Chris Crean**

Friends of the Earth's Regional Campaigner for the West Midlands. Chris has been involved with Friends of the Earth (FOE) since the late 80s, initially as a campaigner on air pollution and transport in Birmingham and the West Midlands and now as campaigner, policy officer and spokesperson in the region. Previously he worked for an environmental consultancy specialising in contaminated land and industrial water.

### **Rose Poulter**

Rose Poulter is a Board Member of Localise West Midlands. Now a freelance consultant with a focus on securing decisions, policy development and organisational change, she was previously Director of the west midlands regional grouping of local authorities (WM Councils; WM Leaders' Board; WM Local Government Association) for fourteen years. She also spent two years on a secondment to regional development agency Advantage WM, and held various economic development posts with Birmingham City Council. Rose also works with Age UK Birmingham's Information and Advice Team on a voluntary basis.

### **Hannah Worth (standing down 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017)**

Hannah was chair of LWM until October 2012, and at the same time co-founder and associate of the Chamberlain Forum, a neighbourhood think-and-do tank based in Birmingham. She first came to LWM as a volunteer after completing a Masters in Global Ethics. She moved on to manage Birmingham Community Empowerment Network, facilitating community networks that aim to involve people more effectively in local decision making. Hannah now works for Renaisi in London for the Big Local Lottery programme.

### **Andrew Lydon (stood down 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017)**

Andrew was initially involved in the Labour Party, where he developed his interest in decentralisation and economic development in drafting parts of their Birmingham Council manifesto. Since 1992, when he left Labour, he has been involved in the politics of the regions as a spokesman for the West Midlands New Economics Group and later for Birmingham NHS Concern. He also worked on prosperity and inflation issues for LWM.

**Jackie Milton (Treasurer)** (stood down 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017)

Jackie has run her own accounting practice for the last eight years, with a special interest in community projects and new business start-ups. She is also a Trustee of the Cwm Harry Land Trust and involved in Lightfoot Enterprises CIC (Household Energy Services), and was formerly a Trustee of Fordhall Farm Community Land Initiative.

**Additional Steering Group Members and Associates**

The following have been actively involved in LWM's steering group over the year and attend and contribute to our Board meetings, or act as associates for LWM's consultancy activities – or both.

**Barbara Panvel**

(Steering group) Barbara produces websites for eight groups, Civilisation 3000 (defence), Vested Interest in Politics, regional SME manufacturers, Fair Deal Farmers Council, New Era Network, India's CHS-Sachetan, Concerned Co-operators and the Thomas Attwood group. She has been involved in LWM since our earliest discussions.

**Philip Davis**

(Steering group) Phil represents transport consumers nationally and regionally and has extensive public policy experience, consumer and community engagement. A former trade union officer who specialised in lay advocacy and tribunals, he has more recently been a local authority Leader and a voluntary sector CEO. He is now a non-executive director of a number of public and community bodies and is a councillor in Birmingham.

**Pat Conaty**

(Steering group) Pat Conaty is a Fellow of the New Economics Foundation and a Research Associate of Co-operatives UK. He has produced a number of recent policy reports on local community banking, rural regeneration and community land trusts, micro-credit for small business, and affordable housing finance for low income homeowners with disrepair problems. He was formerly the Development Director of Birmingham Settlement, an inner city voluntary organisation.

**Rosemary Coyne**

(Steering group, associate) Rosemary is a chartered Landscape Architect with extensive all-sector experience in regeneration and sustainable development including the water and waste industries, construction, energy sector transformation and housing. She coordinates the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership and works on policy, technical research and market development supporting creation of an energy efficient, high quality, affordable housing stock in the UK. Rosemary developed draft planning policy for Birmingham City Council and other local authorities and has led consultation exercises on sustainability and climate change with individuals, communities and 'leadership' groups. She has worked across the UK as well as living and working overseas including South America, India and Africa.

### **Colin Hines**

(Steering group) Colin is founder and convenor of the Green New Deal group, author of 'Localization- A Global Manifesto' (Earthscan) and of the forthcoming e-book 'Protect and Thrive- the Case for Progressive Protectionism'. Before that he was the Co-ordinator of Greenpeace International's Economics Unit having worked for the organisation for 10 years. He was one of the founders of LWM.

### **George Morran**

Involved also in the Campaign for the English Regions and the West Midlands Constitutional Convention. Formerly Senior Research Associate at Aston and Warwick University Business Schools, Director of the West Midlands Regional Forum of Local Authorities, the West Midlands Regional Economic Consortium and Assistant Chief Executive of Dudley MBC.

### **Conrad Parke**

(Associate) Conrad Parke has worked as a freelance neighbourhood regeneration advisor supporting a number of regeneration initiatives across Birmingham and the Black Country, including the Black Country Consortium, Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust, the Big Lottery, University of Birmingham and Sandwell MBC. From 2007 to 2011 he worked for RegenWM – the regeneration centre of excellence for the West Midlands – as Head of Skills Development in Regeneration for the region. Conrad worked on our “Mainstreaming Community Economic Development” initiative. He is currently working for Sandwell MBC, including on the USE-IT! project.

### **Rajeev Prakash**

(Associate) Rajeev trained as a town planner and has a background in programme and project management – gained through leading multi-agency partnerships and of successfully delivering major and holistic regeneration initiatives. Rajeev has experience of strategic finance and budget management at the most senior level and he has particular expertise in efficiency and effectiveness reviews, strategy planning and implementation, evaluation and change management.

### **Jon Stevens**

(Steering group) Jon has worked in the field of community housing and neighbourhood regeneration for almost 40 years. Initially he trained as an architect and went on to work on community action in various posts over this period including Director of Birmingham Cooperative Housing Services, Community Development Worker for Birmingham Inner Area Study, Organiser of Community Forum in Birmingham, Senior Urban Renewal Officer, and Tenant and Association Support Manager for the Housing Corporation.

If you are interested in getting involved with the work of LWM, as part of the Board, an associate, or as an active member, please contact [Karen Leach](#) to discuss this further. We are keen to involve a much greater diversity in background, age, gender, culture and experience in the work of LWM, not least to benefit from the insights that this diversity brings. [More information on our website.](#)

## **5. Funding report**

During this financial year LWM received funding from:

- Barrow Cadbury Trust (for Localising Prosperity)

We also received income from consultancy undertaken by associates. We developed other projects during the year, which will result in income during 2017-2018.

The full financial accounts for the year can be found in Part 2 of this Annual Report.