

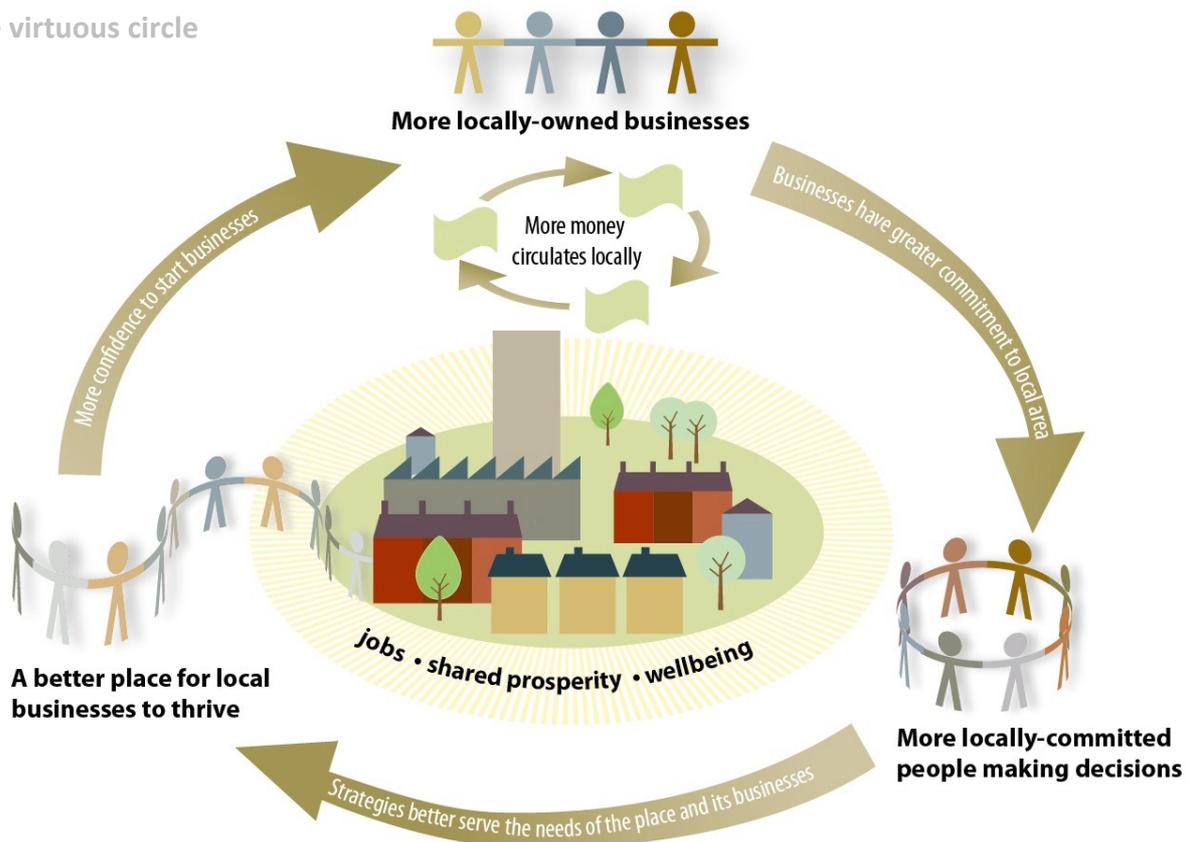
## - an introduction

*This briefing is an update on Localise West Midlands' programme of research into Mainstreaming Community Economic Development and gives an overview of the benefits and characteristics of this new approach.*

### Why is Mainstreaming Community Economic Development important?

Mainstreaming Community Economic Development is about **localising prosperity for everyone** – by building upon an area's existing strengths so that it can develop from within – maximising the local economic and social benefits for all. It involves rethinking how we support our localities, redesign the networks and mechanisms which make up our local economies and rebuild an area's economic and social capacity. It is based on a virtuous circle of local empowerment, thriving local business and wellbeing:

The virtuous circle



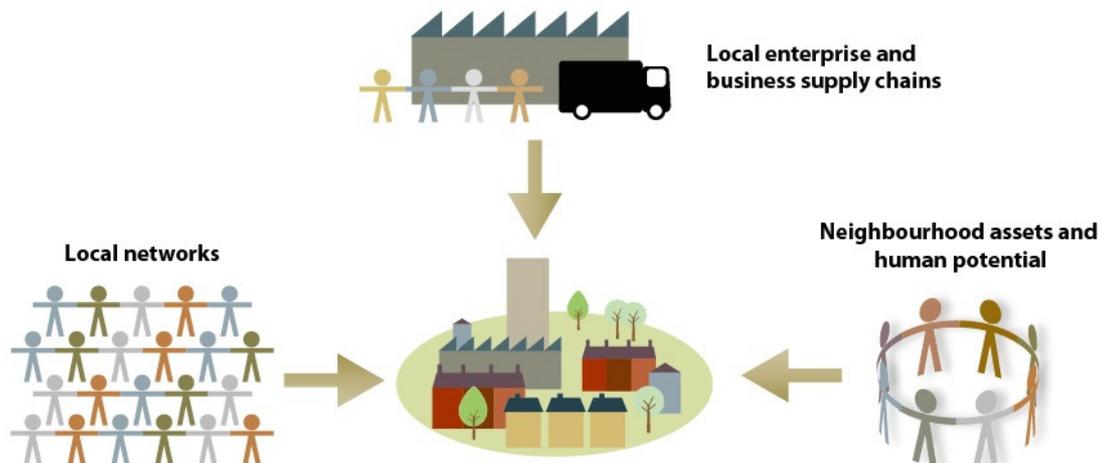
This is key because:

- Higher levels of small business and local ownership have a proven link to better performance including higher levels of job creation, social inclusion, civic engagement, wellbeing and local distinctiveness.
- It is an opportunity to think about the local economy as an interdependent 'ecosystem' of supply and demand chains. This is a strategic approach to building a relationship-based economy in which local people can participate as owners, investors, purchasers and wealth creators.
- We can realise local economic power rather than handing it to 'absentee landlords' i.e. distant private and public sector owners with little understanding of the local area.

## Realising the potential of local economic power

Research undertaken by Localise West Midlands in 2013 demonstrated the significant economic and social benefits of localised economies, and developed an approach based on making the most of local enterprise, existing business supply chains, networks, neighbourhood assets and human potential.

### Using local economic resources



Localise West Midlands' research shows the effectiveness of this approach and how it can be fully integrated into traditional forms of economic development such as inward investment.

Mainstreaming Community Economic Development builds on an area's existing strengths to maximise the local economic and social benefits for all including the potential to create:

- More integrated economies where partners from social, private and public sectors work together
- Local economies which are more diverse and competitive
- Improved levels of resilience within local economies making them less vulnerable to external change
- Higher levels of local job creation particularly in peripheral and disadvantaged areas
- Greater levels of social inclusion
- Stronger local governance with more civic engagement
- Retention of local distinctiveness
- Even better health outcomes.

### Some definitions

**Community economic development (CED)** is about local people using local resources to enhance economic opportunities and social conditions in a sustainable way.

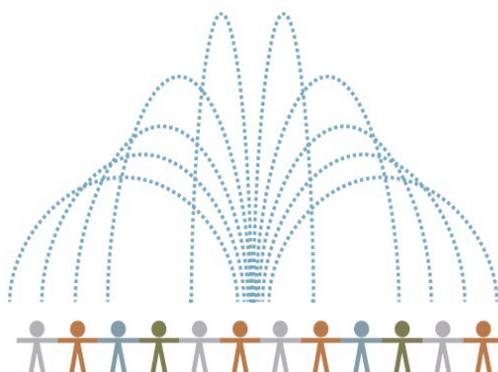
**Mainstreaming community economic development (MCED)** is about embedding the principles of CED and good practice across public, private and social sector organisations in a way that delivers the benefits of CED through core, day-to-day business rather than as a "special initiative".

## A new approach to economic development for your area

Localise West Midlands is now working with other organisations in the West Midlands to explore how they can realise the benefits through this approach. Mainstreaming community economic development has a number of characteristics including:

- **Localising demand and supply chains** and reconnecting people to the local economy through employment, enterprise and investment
- **Becoming more resilient** – reducing the vulnerability of place to economic failure by minimising value extraction from localities: strengthening existing businesses and encouraging the development of local enterprise
- **Resourcefulness** – supporting local autonomy, self-determination and the development of local capacity across the private, public and social sectors which may be supported through opportunities for de-centralisation of powers
- **Investment in local financial institutions** – to serve local economies by providing adequate availability of reliable investment capital for enterprise and investment
- **Networks and networking** – providing the opportunities for open networking and the sharing of ideas to encourage innovation, collaboration and business clustering
- **Social Capital** – encouraging the development of strong ‘bonding’ and ‘linking’ social capital to the support of local supply and demand chains.
- **Local ownership** – recognising the value of local ownership and personal commitment both to the economy and to social inclusion
- **Public procurement** – understanding the opportunity for local procurement to deliver social as well as economic value for local communities
- **A strategic approach** – CED is fully integrated into the strategy and delivery of local public services through partnership working with the private and social sectors, using local knowledge, assets and needs and the development of local trust.
- **Challenging and changing** the way we think about the economic and social issues which impact upon people in our communities

## Maximising social benefits for all



## An opportunity to learn more

Localise West Midlands has secured funding from the Barrow Cadbury Trust to continue their work to make community economic development mainstream in a number of ways:

- Engage and discuss the opportunities offered by Mainstreaming Community Economic Development with project managers, policy makers and politicians
- Develop an informal learning network of practitioners to provide the opportunity for shared learning and wider implementation
- Work with partners to bring community economic development into the mainstream by testing its feasibility and ease of implementation in the West Midlands
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the mainstreaming community economic development approach and the implications for future learning and implementation. This work will include action research with organisations from the private, social and public sectors that are interested in using the MCED approach in their work to improve their local social and economic performance and to maximise the local economic benefits of their work.

Localise West Midlands will be working on this project From November 2013 to Oct 2014 in order to generate practical outcomes from the approach and build on their 2012/13 research.

## I'd like to find out more

If you'd like to find out more about mainstreaming community economic development, become a case study, or for anything else about our work, please get in touch.

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Project webpage: [http://www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk/mainstreaming\\_CED](http://www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk/mainstreaming_CED)

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*Mainstreaming CED is funded by*

