

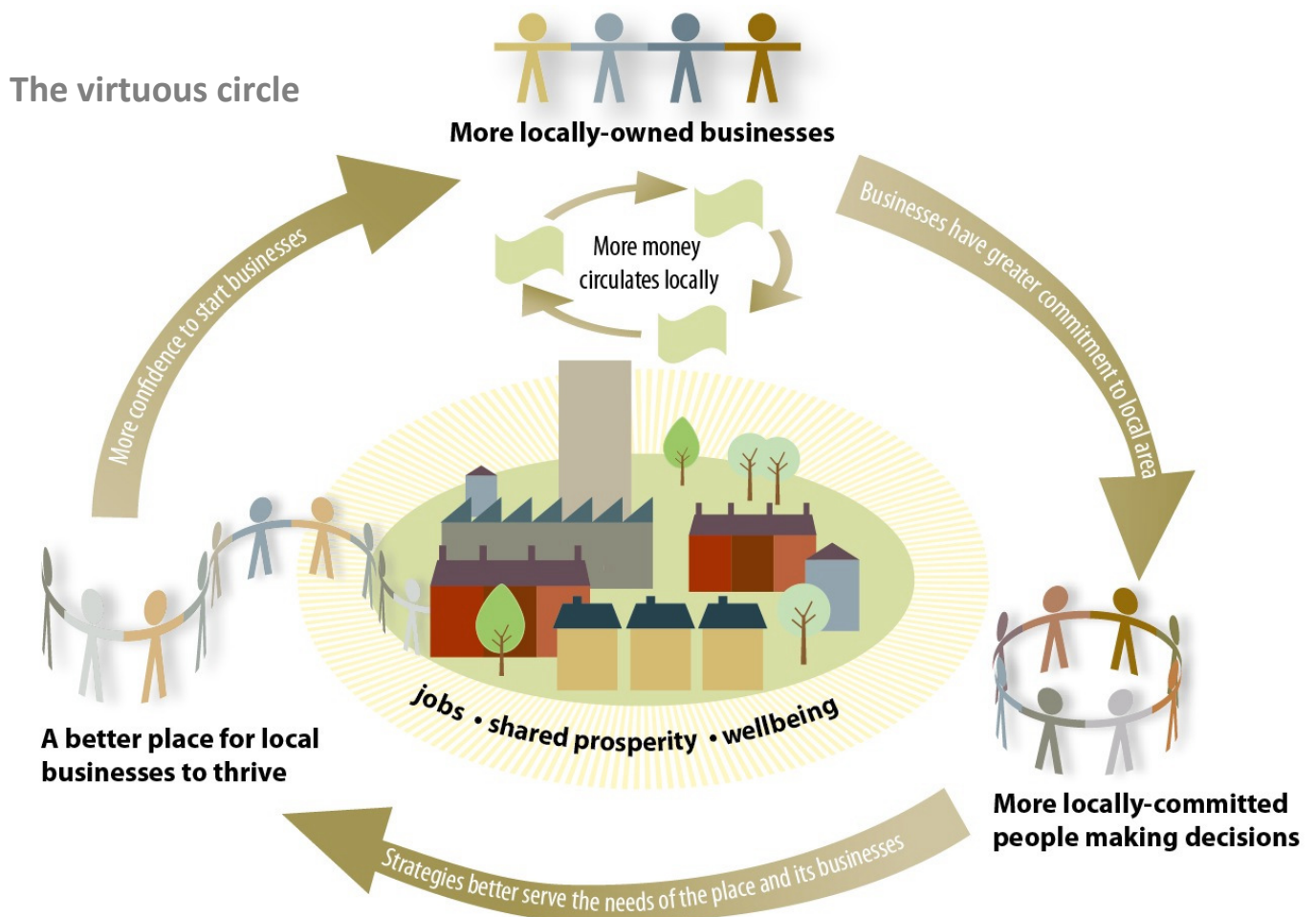


Community Groups

This briefing provides a summary of Mainstreaming Community Economic Development and how community groups can use the approach in their work

Why is Mainstreaming Community Economic Development important?

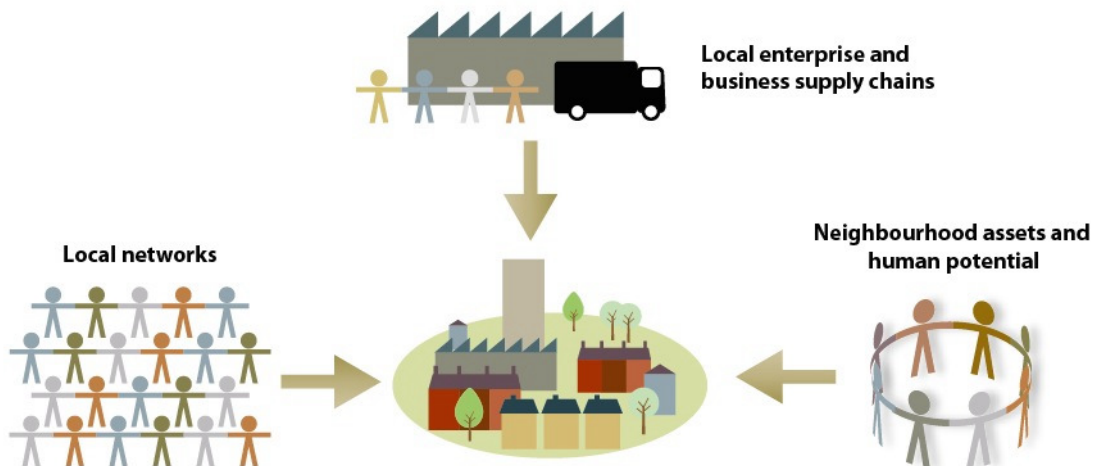
This approach is about **localising prosperity for everyone** – by building upon an area’s existing strengths so that it can develop from within, maximising the local economic and social benefits for all. It involves rethinking how we interact with where we live, and how we rebuild its strengths and sense of identity. It is based on a virtuous circle of local empowerment, thriving local business and wellbeing:



Realising the potential of local economic power

Research undertaken by Localise West Midlands in 2013 demonstrated the link between high levels of locally owned business and significant economic and social benefits. It highlighted the effectiveness of an approach based on making the most of local and social enterprise, business supply chains, networks, neighbourhood assets and human potential.

Using local economic resources



Working together, communities, businesses and the public sector can use this approach to take back more control of their local economy to create:

- Diverse and vibrant local economies
- More local jobs
- Community resilience, empowerment and social inclusion
- Local distinctiveness
- Better health and quality of life.

Definitions we use

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”.

Isn't economic development a job for the council?

People can have a big impact on where they live by their different roles in the economy - as business owners, investors, shoppers, employees and networkers. They have the closest understanding of the community, its needs and the opportunities for the future, so can be well placed to maximise local potential and take back some economic power.

There are many channels through which communities can shape their local economies including: through **neighbourhood planning**; involvement in **partnerships** such as Business Improvement Districts and neighbourhood forums; through community groups that set up **new initiatives** to meet identified needs; through **influencing** the buying and trading behaviours of others; through **community banking**.

See the case studies and links on <http://localisingprosperity.org.uk> for more ideas.

Ideas to help maximise social and economic benefits for your community:

Below are some of the ways (not comprehensive!) in which communities can help maximise prosperity in the local area and bring social and environmental benefits:

- **Taking control** – MCED is all about local communities taking control of their own area and their economy. Reclaiming the power of the local economy to make sure that local residents benefit from all economic activity and inward investment.
- **Local purchasing power** – Thinking about the extent to which your community group and all its members can purchase goods and services from local shops and businesses.
- **Promoting local businesses and services**- to what degree can your organisation help promote local businesses and services? For example if you own or manage a community centre, can you promote local businesses on your website or provide a forum for business networking and sales events?
- **Develop a local loyalty scheme** – work with local businesses to develop a local loyalty scheme or local currency which helps to promote and support local businesses and services
- **Identify gaps in the local economy** – Can you plug the leaks where local expenditure leaves the area? What types of services and goods are available to buy locally in your area? How dependent is your area upon purchasing things from multinationals? For example food shops, childcare, cleaning services?
- **Find ways to fill these gaps** – Can you encourage and/or support local people to start up a new community business to fill these gaps and in doing so, retain more money within the local economy and help provide local employment? Consider co-operative models and social enterprise models for these to safeguard local benefits in the longer term.
- **Match local savings with local lending:** Can you work with a credit union or similar to help make the links between savers and borrowers so that local investments can strengthen the area?
- **Maximise your local assets:** Do you have special or underused buildings, local parks or open space or cultural characteristics have unexplored potential? Can you make space for local enterprise?



Find out more

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

Project webpage:

http://www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk/mainstreaming_CED

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