Invitation to join the Civil Society discussion with the West Midlands Combined Authority Inclusive Growth Unit

A path to inclusive growth in the West Midlands

Put simply - our model of global economic growth isn’t working for everyone. The West Midlands Combined Authority Inclusive Growth Unit has been set up to make sure economic growth gives more equal benefit geographically and socially.

“Inclusive growth is about all of our residents being able to touch, taste and feel the benefits of rising prosperity within the region. The West Midlands is on the rise again – but we know it will take a proactive, targeted approach to ensure that those communities (currently) left behind can play a full part.

The case for inclusive growth is clear – both in terms of the need for a national economic rebalancing, and the regional case for productivity improvement through closing skills, public health and housing gaps. Our opportunity is to use our Industrial Strategy and the potential of devolution to act boldly where we have the levers to do so.

There is political agreement about the need for a rebalanced economy – that is less dominated by London, more balanced across its sectors, and which enables more people to build meaningful careers that offer a route out of poverty.

The Industrial Strategy recognises this – and calls for place-based plans that set out what this could look like within particular economic geographies.

Through the blending of skills, housing, transport, growth policy, public service reform and public health we have the opportunity to make the case for a new underpinning social infrastructure to enable improvements in productivity and participation”.

1 From a West Midlands Combined Authority Presentation by Dr H Kipping, Director Public Service Reform, West Midlands Combined Authority. 2018.
Proposal
Localise West Midlands has been commissioned by the WMCA Inclusive Growth Unit with funding from Cadbury Barrow Trust to bring civil society organisations together to explore the big questions for civil society:

1. What does inclusive economic growth look like in the West Midlands?
2. What is blocking it - and what is enabling it?
3. How will it be delivered?

The answers to these questions will feed into the vision and draft strategy for inclusive growth in the West Midlands, into the burgeoning 'local industrial strategy', and into other West Midlands Combined Authority business such as the Forum for Growth conference. ²

We would like to agree a vision and recommend a few immediate actions that can demonstrate how civil society can deliver new models of economic growth that will truly transfer the benefit of economic growth to individuals and communities equally across the West Midlands.

We will also ensure that a model for ongoing civil society engagement emerges from this work.

We need to do all this by the end of November 2018. We will bring forward interim conclusions to feed into the Local Industrial Strategy at an appropriate time to be identified by WMCA.

The Invitation
You are invited to join the debate and influence the Inclusive Growth Agenda:

- Join the LinkedIn Group - https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12120828
- Respond to our survey - https://surveyhero.com/c/b15a0a7c
- Discuss our questions in one of your meetings and send your thoughts by 31 October 2018
- Send us information
- Attend a workshop/Host a workshop
- Suggest a meeting
- Contact us by phone and email – 07971 249858; rosemary@localisewestmidlands.org.uk;

Workshop Dates - Birmingham
September – 27th – 10.30 – 1.30
October – 18th – 10.30 – 1.30

Drop in for coffee and a chat
October – 29th – 10 -4.30 - Coventry
November – 1st – 10 – 4.30 - Wolverhampton

² https://www.westmidlandsforumforgrowth.co.uk/ 18.9.18
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The role of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA - https://www.wmca.org.uk) is to work collaboratively on many projects to deliver a shared vision of a more prosperous West Midlands.

It is important that this prosperity is shared by all the citizens and communities within the West Midlands. The WMCA has therefore set up an Inclusive Growth Unit which will develop new ways of organisations working together to transform peoples’ lives as the economy grows so that all residents and communities can benefit equally and we create real value.

*If we cannot define what we mean by value, we cannot be sure to produce it, nor to share it fairly, nor to sustain economic growth. The understanding of value, then, is critical to all the other conversations we need to have about where the economy is going and how to change its course.*

— Mariana Mazzucato, from *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Local Economy*

Civil society organisations in the West Midlands are well placed to inform the WMCA as to what is valued, by them and the people they serve. Localise West Midlands has been commissioned by the WMCA to facilitate civil society discussions on how the WMCA might reshape the economy to grow the things that create that value.

The West Midlands Combined Authority Definition of Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth is about a more deliberate and socially purposeful model of economic growth – measured not only by how fast or aggressive it is; but also by how well it is shared across the whole population and place.

Achieving inclusive growth means that more people need to feel the benefits – in terms of:

- Participation (e.g. creating more ‘good’ jobs, helping people move up the career ladder, feeling dignity in work, participating fully in the economic and social life of the West Midlands);
- Distribution (e.g. making sure the benefits of growth are spread - that marginalised communities benefit, and that structural barriers to economic progress are deliberately addressed and broken down)
- Investment (e.g. encouraging money to be invested where it will have a strong social impact, and in areas that might realise a slower but more sustainable return)

In the West Midlands we are pushing for accelerated inclusive growth that all of our residents can touch, taste and feel the benefits of...

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Five key determinants

OECD: “economic growth that creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society.” This means:

1. Being clearer about what growth is for – shared prosperity, addressing societal inequalities, supporting wellbeing, beyond GDP or GVA as an end in itself...

2. Correcting deep labour market inequities – helping people get ‘good’ jobs, progress from low pay and supporting them to get there

3. Taking the ‘balance’ of growth seriously – sectorally, spatially (across the region), and in terms of who gets to be part of it and who gets to benefit...

4. Changing the way progress is measured, and resources are allocated – ‘patient’ capital and proactive investment in low-value areas/sectors

5. Investing in the social, physical and public service infrastructure that underpins society and economy...

The LWM led workstream

We will be asking for your help as civil society organisations to understand what a vision for inclusive growth for the West Midlands should look like and how existing activity can be strengthened and its impact increased. We will be looking at opportunities to make structural changes to the economy as it currently functions. These changes should support improvements in symptoms of an unbalanced economy, such as homelessness and life expectancy, however this work will not look at specific symptoms and treatments for them. Therefore, we will not specifically look at issues such as homelessness but we will propose a vision and delivery ideas for changes to business as usual in our economy that will help provide solutions. For example, by improving access to skills training and jobs, some of the determinants of fuel poverty, homelessness and ill health should be addressed

LWM and the New Economics Foundation have recently completed a piece of work showing how restructuring of the economy can deliver local solutions that improve local prosperity and the lives of those requiring care. [http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/activities/wmca-socialcare/](http://localisewestmidlands.org.uk/activities/wmca-socialcare/)

Points made already:

There are a lot of similar ongoing discussions and it will be important to link with them as far as possible given the timescales and resources available

- anchor institutions/ (CLES)
- asset based community development work (USEIT/CED)
- Other strands of inclusive growth unit activity
- Fawcett Society WM Women’s Voices
- social economy strand.

WMCA has started to move very quickly on this agenda after several delays so there is plenty to catch up on.

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We feel it is important to start with work to agree not just a definition (ie a sentence) of inclusive growth, but what WMCA inclusive growth looks like so that metrics can be identified impact can be assessed. But this is already very much part of the plan. Other work is also underway through the WMCA IGU on metrics (what to measure and how to measure it).

Examples of what works for inclusive growth are going to be important, but it is primarily about how WMCA can enable more of what works (and less of what doesn’t) – because existing good practice is already happening regardless of the WMCA.

Real projects or initiatives might also emerge from this – ie if we make some very clear and deliverable inclusive growth proposals to the WMCA and they are implemented; so we may find delivery partners within our stakeholder group for these. But this limited project is focused on feeding views back to the WMCA, not on delivery.

Our Steering Group
A Steering Group has been set up, which last met on 16 July 2018.

Steering Group Members are from the following organisations:

- Localise West Midlands
- Fircroft College
- Big Local
- Transforming Communities Together, WPC and Just Finance Black Country

About LWM
Localise West Midlands works towards local supply chains, money flow, ownership and power for a more just and sustainable economy. LWM has been promoting decentralisation and localisation for almost two decades across the region and beyond. We have helped partners from small community groups through to Local Authorities and national bodies, to maximise local economic and social benefits and minimise environmental costs. We advise on strategic approaches to localisation and develop strategic plans and programmes; we carry out detailed studies on specific aspects of localisation; we work with local communities to develop local plans and projects; and we research and develop new delivery models.

Some of our work around inclusive economics has been funded by Barrow Cadbury Trust since 2012, when we researched the inclusive economic benefits of a localised approach to economics and the strategies required. Programmes of activity since then have tested models of activity and policy interventions. Last year we commissioned the New Economics Foundation report into the inclusive economic benefits of a policy focus on social care. We have also always been involved in regional and subregional collaboration including membership of the West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum and attempting to facilitate a civil society forum for the WMCA agenda. We maintain a regular presence at WMCA board meetings and communicate its proceeds there more widely via social media.

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About the West Midlands Combined Authority

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA - https://www.wmca.org.uk) brings together 18 local authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to work together to move powers from Whitehall to the West Midlands.

The WMCA is chaired by Andy Street, the West Midlands Mayor. The WMCA has specific areas of responsibility including local transport and the region’s ‘more and better homes’ agenda. From 2018-19, the Mayor will also have the ability to raise a precept (a % on taxes) and, with the agreement of the relevant LEP, a business rate supplement.

As the devolution agenda develops so the role of the Mayor and the WMCA is also expected to evolve with a vision ‘to deliver the best possible outcomes for the residents and businesses of the West Midlands’.

Definition of Civil Society

The Third Sector in addition to the public sector and business. It’s so many things we do together and for each other, from churches to charities, fluid online movements like #metoo to established local groups. Civil society includes charities; neighbourhood self-help schemes; international bodies like the UN or the Red Cross; religious-based pressure-groups; human rights campaigns in repressive societies; and non-governmental organisations improving health, education and living-standards.

How would you visualise civil society? – Civil Society Futures: https://civilsocietyfutures.org/visualising/

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Current Stakeholders and Partners
The following is the existing loose network of organisations we have already brought together around the WMCA's Inclusive Growth agenda.

Please contact us to join the Group and to recommend anyone you think we should be contacting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Nature of interest in inclusive growth</th>
<th>Geographical focus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Local</td>
<td>Community economic development, regeneration</td>
<td>Black Country, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham Churches Together</td>
<td>Integration of refugees, Modern slavery, Poverty</td>
<td>Birmingham Solihull</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham Settlement</td>
<td>Financial inclusion, Skills and learning, Poverty</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham &amp; Solihull Social Enterprise Consortium</td>
<td>Social enterprise, social value</td>
<td>Birmingham, Solihull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Country Make</td>
<td>Skills and learning, Open source manufacturing, Community resilience, Inclusive regeneration, Poverty</td>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAP</td>
<td>Skills and learning, Business support, Mental health, Innovative commissioning, Equality, Poverty</td>
<td>Birmingham, Warwickshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREME (Centre for Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship)</td>
<td>Diversity, entrepreneurship</td>
<td>National with some Birmingham research focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>Financial security, Poverty</td>
<td>Coventry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shakti Women</td>
<td>Professional development, Equality</td>
<td>Birmingham, Wolverhampton Solihull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM – University of Birmingham)</td>
<td>Financial security, Financial inclusion, Financial capability, Wealth creation, Poverty</td>
<td>Birmingham, National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fircroft College</td>
<td>Skills and learning</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of the Earth West Midlands</td>
<td>Circular economy, Air quality &amp; environmental justice, Pension Fund Divestment</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Hub</td>
<td>Self-build housing, Radical Childcare, Future Jobcentre, Business support; (social) entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localise West Midlands</td>
<td>Localisation of supply chains, money flows, ownership and decision-making, Maximising &amp; sharing local economic benefit</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nishkam Centre</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>Handsworth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right Care Right Here partnership and USEIT</td>
<td>Maximising benefit from anchor institutions (Mids Met hospital)</td>
<td>Smethwick/East Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>Money advice and benefits experience</td>
<td>Sandwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell Crossroads</td>
<td>Social care as an economic opportunity; skills &amp; training</td>
<td>Sandwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Communities Together</td>
<td>Financial inclusion, Modern Slavery, Poverty</td>
<td>Black Country Staffordshire The Potteries</td>
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<td>Wolverhampton Poverty Truth</td>
<td>Poverty, Inclusive decision-making</td>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Education Association</td>
<td>Skills and learning</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
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We will broaden this out through this network’s recommendations and a stakeholder mapping process early in the exercise, as well as ensuring some overlap with other IGU strands and the social economy task force.

How would you visualise civil society? – Civil Society Futures: [Visit Website](https://civilsocietyfutures.org/visualising/)

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