

**Power to  
Change**

Backing  
community  
business

# 2026-2030 strategy

Shaping a future powered  
by community business



# Community business: the time is now

You do not have to look far to see that our high streets, neighbourhoods and public services have changed. For many communities, that change has meant loss and disillusionment with many communities feeling powerless to bring about change. At the same time it has sparked a call for renewal – to rebuild connections, reimagine the ways we support and care for one another, and shape an economy that works for everyone.

The next five years will be decisive in this fight for renewal. We believe there is a different way of doing business – one that puts more power into communities’ hands and serves both people and planet. We believe community business has a crucial role in reshaping the economy from the ground up.

What is missing isn’t energy or innovation, it is the conditions that enable community business to thrive. Our strategy focuses on closing that gap.

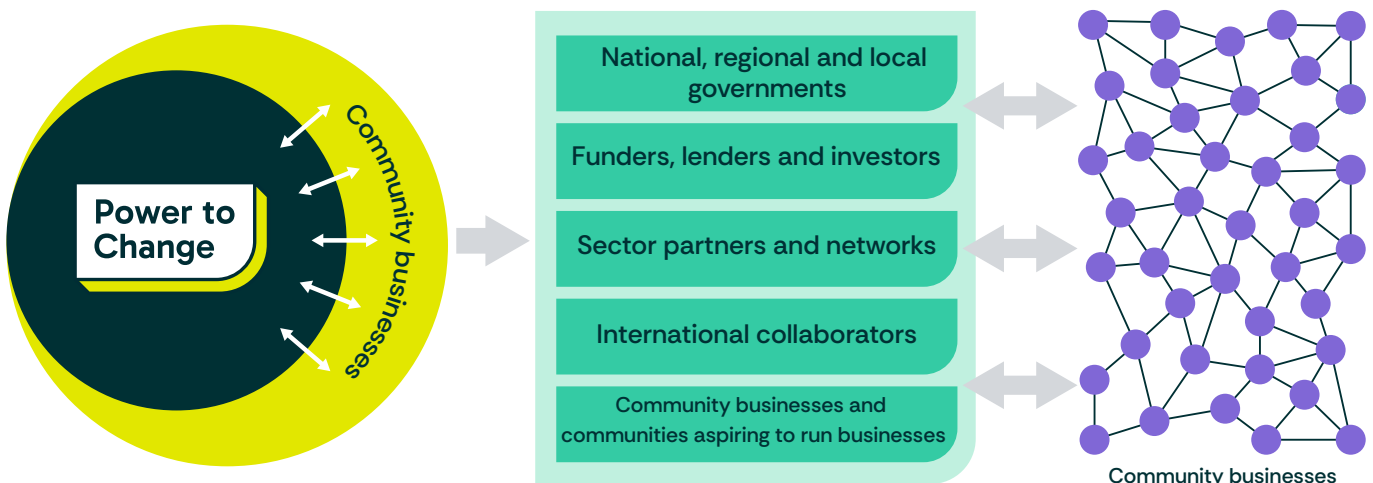
Building on a decade of experience, we recently renewed our approach and transitioned to a think-do tank model (see figure 1).

Our goal is to achieve a step change in the scale, impact and recognition of community businesses, both in the contribution they make and the innovation they create for the future. We’ll work hand in hand with community businesses to achieve this goal. Ultimately, our vision is a future where more communities in England run businesses that give them the power to change what matters to them.

This is a moment of opportunity. If we want local economies that work differently, communities that are strong and connected, and services designed around people’s lives, community business must be part of the solution.

We hope you’ll join us.

**Figure 1: Our think-do tank model**



# Our strategic priorities

As we aim to achieve these goals, over the next five years we have three connected priorities:



## **Growing community-led local economies**

The economy is not delivering for all. Income inequality, wealth inequality and poverty are widespread and growing. Community businesses put economic power directly into the hands of communities. They are central to thriving local and regional economies as they create, own, share and reinvest wealth locally. We will work to make community business a common-sense approach to economic development.



## **Creating community-powered places and spaces**

The places and spaces which enable communities to come together are disappearing. Community business brings people closer together and gives communities a real say in how their neighbourhoods, high streets and shared assets are run. We will work alongside community businesses, and other partners, to help grow what works to revive our local places and spaces and reconnect our communities.



## **Building community-centred public services**

Many public services – from homelessness to mental health and employment support – continue to be delivered without the involvement of those they are there to support. Real prevention and resilience start when communities are involved and have the power to lead. Community businesses are run by, and directly accountable to, local communities. We will test and grow community-led models that work alongside public sector partners, showing how trust, local relationships and innovation can improve outcomes for everyone.

All of this work means challenging outdated systems and demonstrating there's another way – one that works better for everyone. We will remain grounded in community business as we deliver these three priorities. Alongside this, we will continue to evolve our business model and ways of working to strengthen our organisational conditions for impact.

# Our theory of change

Our approach (see figure 2) involves working hand in hand with communities who are running businesses, and those who aspire to, and aims to shift power to communities and places experiencing structural inequalities, helping to tackle entrenched disparities in our society.

To grow the powerful ways community businesses are delivering positive change, often against the odds, we aim to drive four key shifts.

First, a more **enabling policy environment** which removes the barriers preventing community businesses playing a bigger role in our economy and society.

Second, a **shift in the mindsets and behaviours of public and private sector institutions**, with leaders equipped with the skills to empower communities through community business.

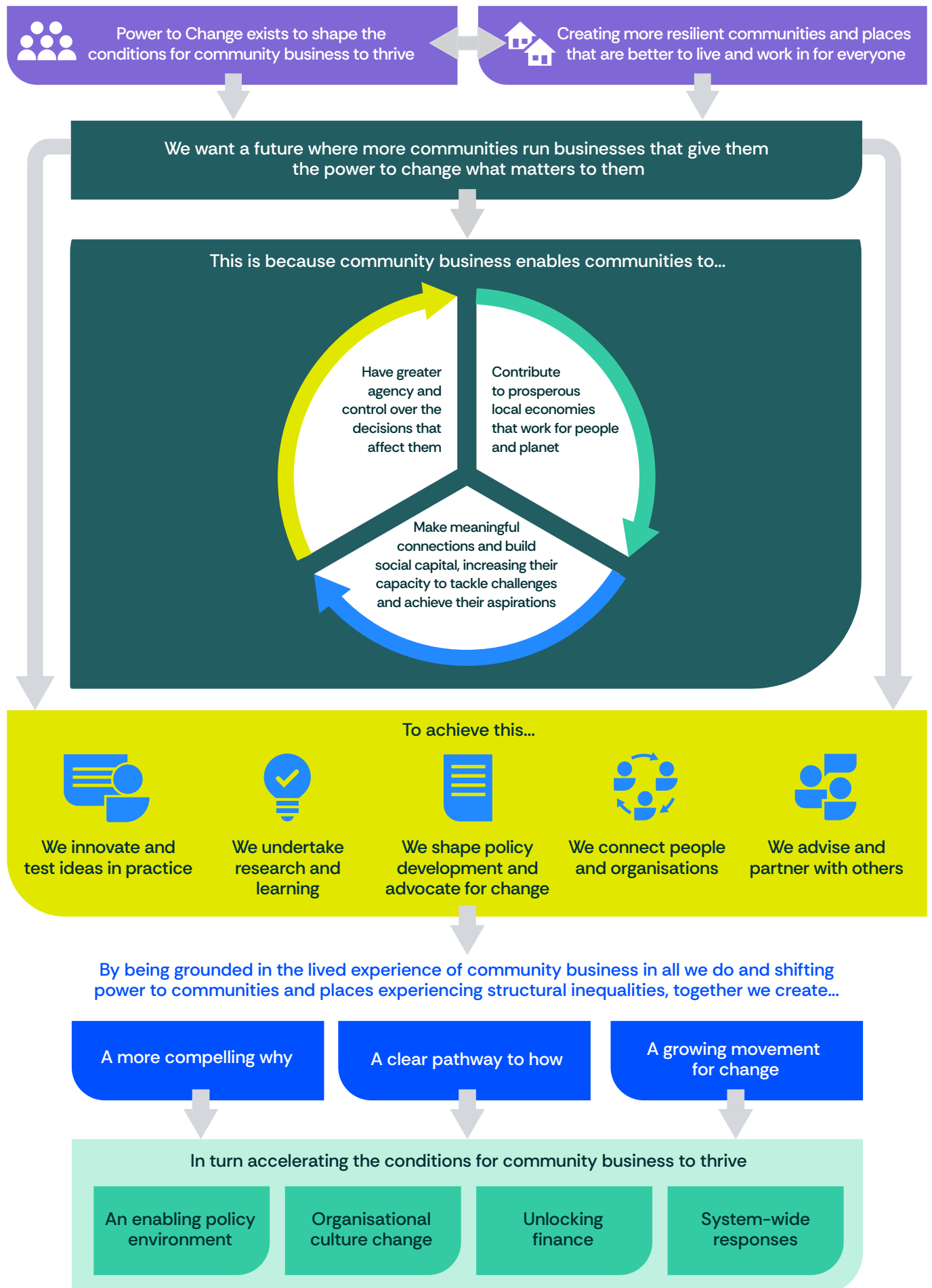
Third, **unlocking the finance required for community-led change** among public, private and social sector funders, lenders and investors.

Fourth, a **shift in how governments, businesses, social sector organisations and communities work together** to plan and deliver fundamental change, now and into the future.

We aim to bring about these shifts by evidencing why they are needed, by demonstrating how they can be achieved, and by growing the coalition of individuals, organisations, and networks who can catalyse further change.



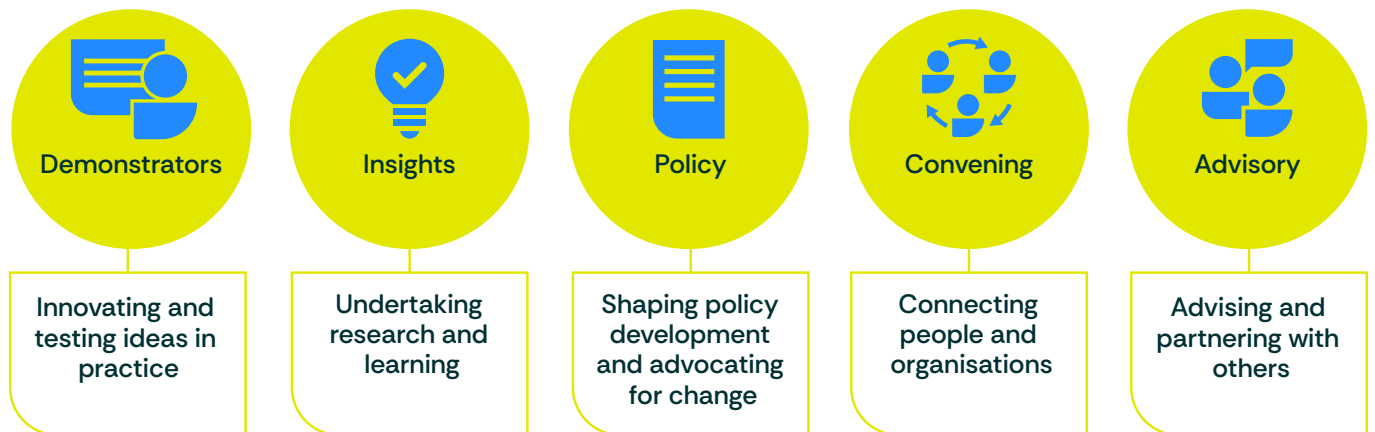
**Figure 2: Our theory of change**



# How we'll get there

Over the next five years, we will bring together the innovation, evidence and networks needed to grow the contribution of community business to our economy and society.

We will deliver our strategy through five main activities.



Underpinning our approach is a recognition of the importance of impactful communications to shape the conditions for community business to thrive – to demonstrate the art of the possible, to advocate for change, to influence mindsets and behaviours, and to bring together the networks and coalitions that will grow the movement for change.

## Want to collaborate with us?

With a new business model, and a bigger focus than ever on the coalitions of individuals, organisations, and networks who can catalyse further change, we'd love to hear from anyone keen to explore how, together, we can shape a future powered by community business.

### Get in touch:

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## About us

Power to Change is the think-do tank that backs community business from the ground up. We turn bold ideas into action, so communities have the power to change what matters to them.

Power to Change is an organisation with charitable status established in 2015 with an endowment from The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). We received further funding from TNLCF in 2021.

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