

# Making our strategy happen: Growing community-led local economies

Community businesses across England are showing what's possible. They are turning empty buildings into thriving hubs, creating local wealth and delivering services built on what people need.

They offer hope to the many communities who still face hollowed-out high streets, a sense of powerlessness and disillusionment, and public services under strain, where traditional approaches have not always delivered lasting change. What is missing isn't energy or innovation, it is the conditions that enable community business to thrive.

Our 2026 – 2030 strategy focuses on closing that gap.

## Strategic priority 1: We'll grow 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.

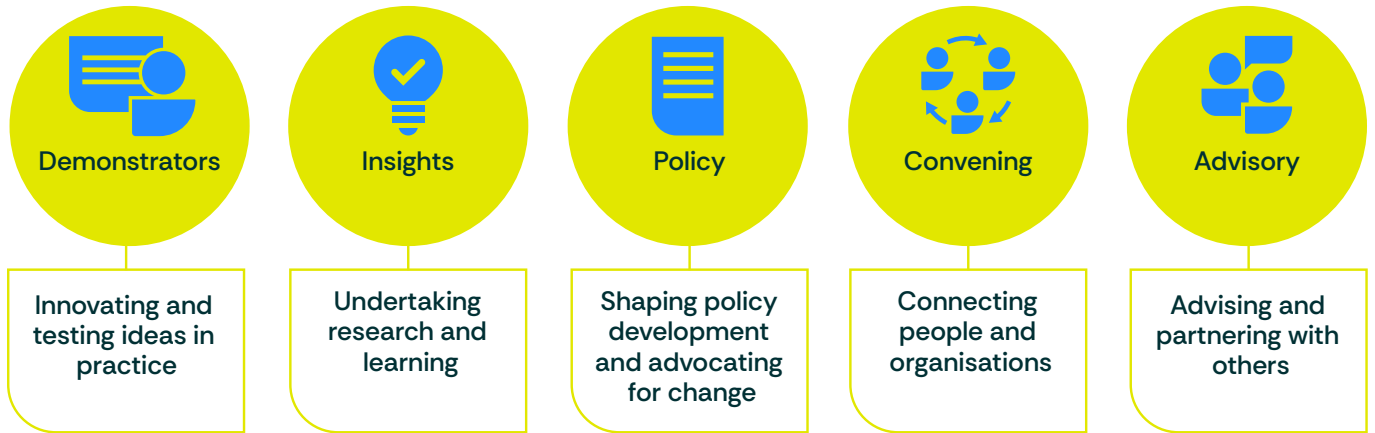
### How we will grow community-led local economies:

- **Making the case:** Community businesses are serious economic actors, contributing over £5billion GVA annually while also addressing social and environmental challenges. We will continue to build the case for community-led economic development as core to the national and regional growth agendas. This will include exploring the role community businesses play in providing employment pathways.
- **Growing regional impact:** We will challenge and support regional and local authorities to scale up the role of community business in their policies, strategies, investments and practice, developing regional approaches that embed community businesses and the social economy in economic development.
- **Building a movement for change:** We will convene leaders, funders, thinkers and community businesses to build a stronger coalition for community economic power. Through this movement, we will unlock new capital and accelerate models that put economic power into the hands of communities.

Through this work we will aim to make community business a common-sense approach to economic development.

## How we'll achieve our aims

As a think-do tank, we work alongside community businesses and other partners to test new approaches to some of our biggest societal challenges. We use what we learn to influence policy, shift mindsets and behaviours, unlock finance and collaborate across sectors.



A decade of experience has shown what community business can achieve. 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.



## Future Yard, Birkenhead

### Where music sparks local growth

In Birkenhead, community business is making economic impact. **Future Yard** is a community-owned music venue building a new cultural future for Birkenhead. Employing 61 people and running creative training pathways, including supporting 150+ young people a year to build skills in the music industry, it keeps income local, reinvesting for the community's benefit.

As part of Argyle Independent Quarter, Future Yard has contributed to a collective overall investment of £11.8million in the area over the past five years. And when communities have ownership, regeneration is rooted and sustainable.

Future Yard has ambitions to build a new, 600-capacity venue and studio complex. This will enable them to deliver 200 additional shows annually – a 50-100% increase in live audiences which will bring footfall and spending to the area. This expansion will unlock income, opportunities, and skills for local people for generations to come.

Future Yard shows the potential of community businesses to generate economic impact if only the right conditions, access to assets and strategic backing, are in place.

**Our strategy is about creating these conditions, bringing together evidence, innovation and partnerships to show how community-led economic development can become a mainstream part of local, regional and national growth strategies.**

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A rising tide lifts all ships. If we can improve this little bit of the area and people can feel part of that themselves, then their immediate community and their own self esteem will lift as well.

Chris Torpey, Co-founder

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