

Making our strategy happen: Creating community-powered places and spaces

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 2: We'll create 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.

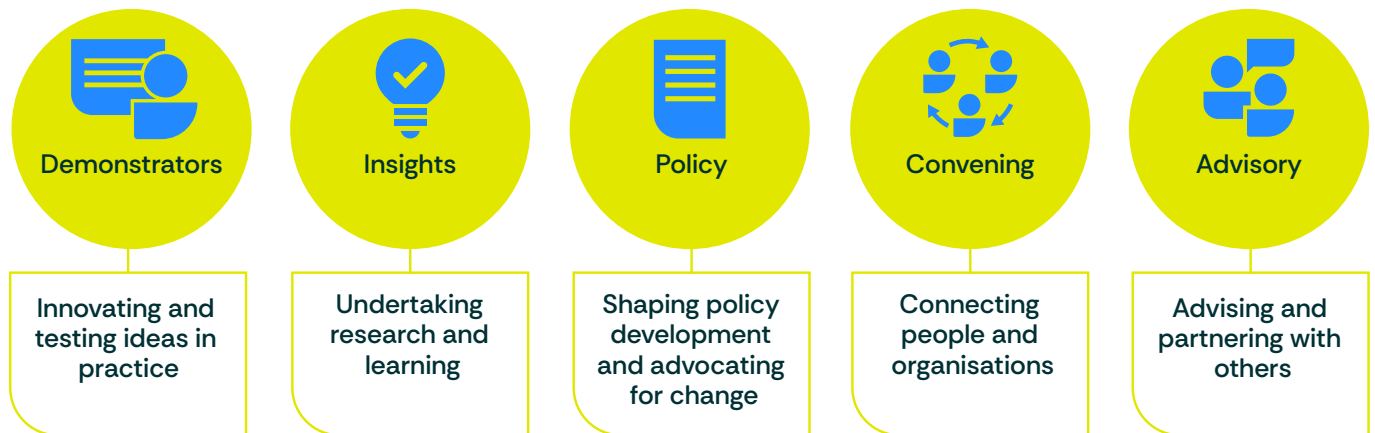
How we will create community powered places and spaces:

- **Making the case:** We will continue to explore ways to level the playing field for community businesses contributing to the regeneration and transformation of their places. We will evidence their contribution to building connections and driving community cohesion, and investigate the role community ownership will play in our future economy.
- **Testing models of ownership and stewardship:** We will explore financial innovations to support community ownership, continue testing community business-led stewardship models on our high streets, and identify ways to support the leadership of community business in building social cohesion.
- **Growing a movement for change:** We will explore the partnerships needed between community and mainstream business, local authorities, and landowners to jointly shape the future of places and assets. We will convene the networks and relationships that enable people to connect and build collective power in their communities.

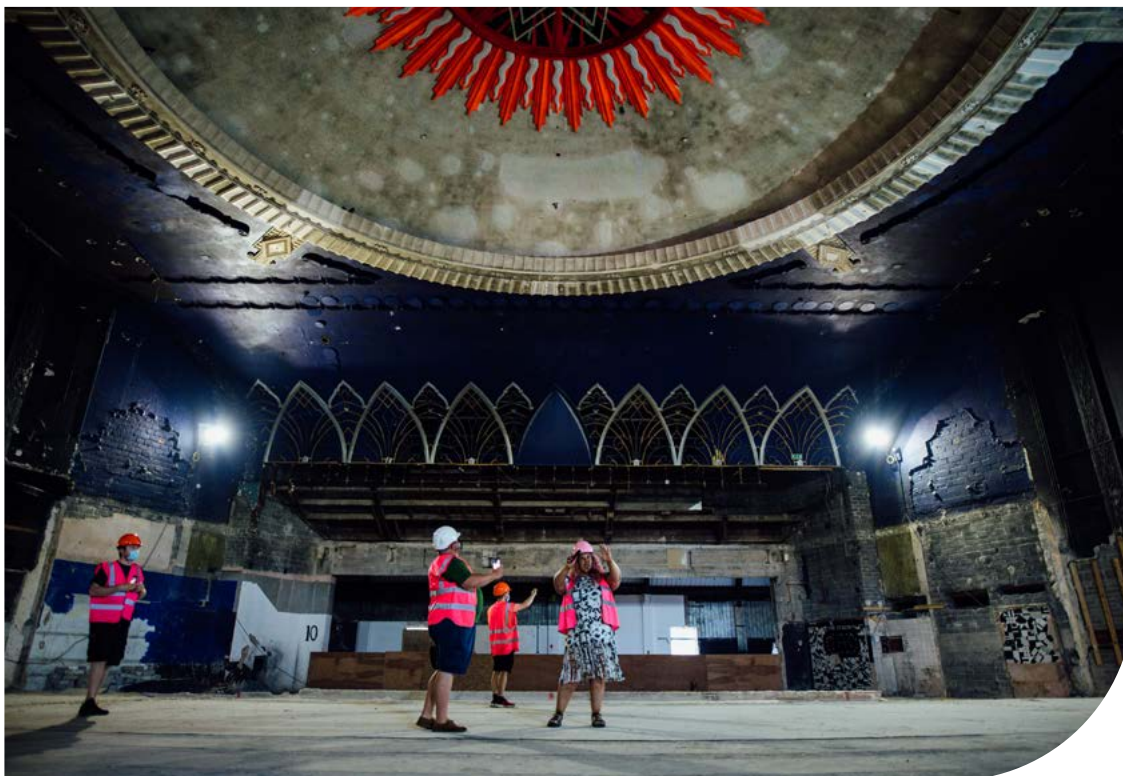
Our aim is for all communities to live and work in vibrant, resilient places, with the power to influence local decisions and enjoy spaces that bring them together.

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.



Nudge Community Builders Renewing Union Street one building at a time

On Union Street in Plymouth, **Nudge Community Builders** is showing how community business can transform a high street, even in a place where regeneration has long felt out of reach.

Founded by local residents in 2017, Nudge set out to bring new life to empty and underused buildings, not from top-down regeneration but through long-term community ownership. What began with small events to reconnect neighbours has grown into a sustained programme of acquisition and restoration, despite the financial, structural and policy barriers that too often stand in the way of community ownership.

Through community backing and flexible finance, Nudge has brought new uses to more than 4,000sqm of land, and helped revitalise 25% of derelict and empty buildings on Union street, creating space for independent businesses, creative enterprise and local activity.

The Plot, now home to multiple small businesses and a food court, has increased footfall and created new economic opportunities. More recently, the long-vacant Millennium building has been transformed for community use. Crucially, Nudge spends 96% of its income in Plymouth, ensuring the value created stays within the local economy.

Nudge demonstrates what happens when community business has the right conditions to thrive and succeed. Regeneration is enduring, wealth stays local, and community pride returns.

Our strategy is about making this model possible in many more places and spaces, while making the path smoother for others to follow.

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Traditional regeneration hadn't had the intended impact on the area. If anything, it was creating divides and edges. We weren't really seeing the ripple effect, so we decided to get together and find a different way.

Hannah Sloggett, Co-director

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