

Community wealth  
building and our work in Oldham on  
community led energy planning  
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# About CLES

- The **national organisation** for **local economies**
- Progressive economics for people, planet and place
- Thinking *and doing*, to achieve social justice and effective public services

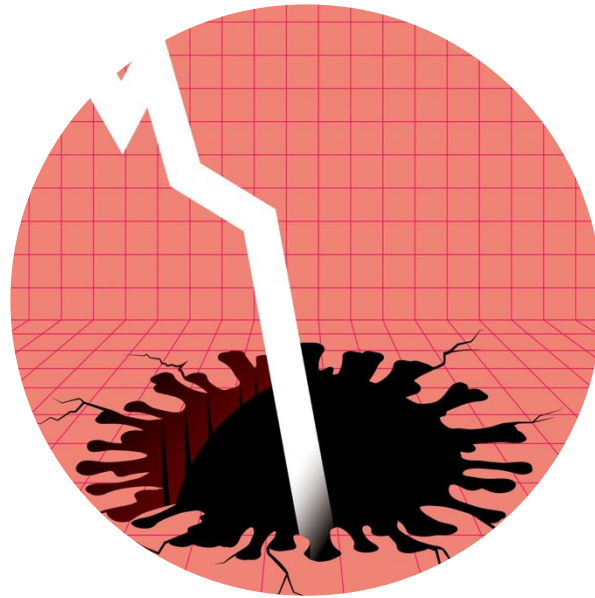


Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, our economy was failing many people



THE  
**PUBLIC  
HEALTH  
CRISIS**  
SURVIVAL GUIDE

Leadership and Management  
in Trying Times



# The impact...



# The outlook...



- Covid-19 has left us woefully underprepared
- Distressed state of our local economies revealed
- We face the good the bad and the ugly...

Three scenarios...



- **Bad** – rerun of financial crisis
- **Ugly** – shock doctrine stuff plus authoritarianism
- **Good** – chance to reform





# Building an inclusive economy



# Community wealth building

- **Uses** combined power of communities, businesses and institutions
- **Aims** to retain as much wealth as possible in the economy
- **Focuses** on generative businesses

# Guiding principles in Oldham



# A community wealth building energy transition.

- 12 local authority referencing partners
- 3 deep dive case studies
- Exploring the enablers and barriers to CWB approaches in energy generation, energy efficiency and decarbonizing energy infrastructure.



# CWB and energy generation.

- Enabling alternative models of ownership.
- Community renewables **retain 7x more value in the local economy** than commercial models of renewable energy.
- Receive strong levels of support from local people, reduce opposition through participation and fairer distribution of economic benefits.
- Also opportunities for municipal energy generation.



# Opportunities to build community wealth.

- Using spare or undeveloped land/ property rooves as space for community renewables – roof leasing and power purchase agreements.
- Utilising staff resource to support energy projects establishing.
- Procuring energy from local community energy groups through installation on council property.
- Use of bridging loans/community share offers.
- Work with relevant local bodies to deliver support for groups seeking to build community renewables.



# Enablers and barriers to CWB approaches to energy generation.

## Enablers

- **Local political buy-in**
- **Resource provided** – financial and human resource to support establishment of projects.
- **Access to land and property** – asset transfer of Ernesettle Community Solar site, and use of Oldham Council properties to mount solar

## Barriers

- **Finance** – challenge of using community share offers in places with significant number of low-income households/community scepticism.
- **Procurement** – Desire to procure energy from community energy companies but procurement attitude to risk was a challenge. Also reality of community energy projects requiring reliable spend from Councils
- **Expertise** – Often doesn't exist within communities, so requires either support or capacity-building.
- **Community buy-in** – Critical to success of the projects. Plymouth managed this well through collaboration with Four Greens Community Trust.
- **Inconsistency/short-termism of national energy policy** – Removal of the FiTs and changes to solar PV on schools presented challenges, particularly re: finance.



# CWB and energy efficiency.

- UK has some of the oldest and least well insulated housing stock in Europe.
- Fuel poverty at 13.4% in England, 24,6% in Scotland, 12% in Wales and 22% in Northern Ireland.
- Currently we lack supply chains to deliver retrofit.
- Retrofit activity needs to benefit local businesses and deliver for fuel poor households.



# Opportunities to build community wealth.

- Retrofitting publicly owned stock and leasing land/property to fledgling businesses working on retrofit.
- Upskilling local workforce to meet skills needed for high-quality retrofit.
- Innovating around finance and building community wealth through government funding.
- Using role as procurers to strengthen local supply chains and identify gaps in the market.
- Direct business support towards SMEs which could deliver retrofit.



# Enablers and barriers to CWB approaches to energy efficiency.

## Enablers

- **Local political buy-in** – particularly significant in getting retrofit pilots moving.
- **Resource provided** – match funding and internal resource to understand the problem.
- **Access to land and property** – finding a solution to their own housing stock has enabled both councils to explore how they can support the development of local supply chains.

## Barriers

- **Supply chains** – Nottingham only had one supplier apply which was suitable to deliver their deep retrofit. More local traders are needed, and a diversity of businesses and relevant skills.
- **Finance** – Places have been reliant on grant funding meaning there is a dispersed and often disconnected range of pilot projects in areas. Connecting efforts and making the most of finance is key, but councils still face the challenge of generating and targeting finance to deliver retrofit.
- **Scale** – Different retrofit approaches require different levels of finance, and different tenures of housing face different challenges to retrofit. This has not been resolved and continues to be a challenge.

# Thank you



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