

LOCALISE WEST MIDLANDS

Annual Report

1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014



Local economic solutions for sustainability

Localise West Midlands
The Warehouse, 54-57 Allison Street
Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5TH

Tel: 0121 685 1155

Fax: 0121 643 3122

Email: info@localisewestmidlands.org.uk

Web: www.localisewestmidlands.org.uk

@localisewm

Contents

Part 1

1. Introduction	p3
2. Activities 2012-2013	p3
3. Strategy and future	p6
4. People	p7
5. Funding report	p11

Part 2: Company information and final accounts for 2012-13

1. Introduction and mission statement

LWM works towards more localised approaches to supply chains, ownership and decision-making for a more just and sustainable economy. We see localisation and decentralising capitalism as key to progressing gently radical economic change.

We do this by:

- bringing people and organisations together to explore ideas and take action;
- providing information and inspiration;
- researching, advising and challenging.

History

LWM was set up in 2002 by a group of individuals keen to propose solutions as a constructive response to the problems of recent economics. Our West Midlands focus is intended to make use of the region's geographical balance of urban and rural. We also look beyond the region, seeking to catalyse ideas across the UK and to make links with the many organisations working on a similar agenda across the world.

Past work has included co-creating the business plan for Birmingham Energy Savers, based on developing local supply chains, work on sustainable procurement, research into tackling fuel poverty through the Green Deal, reviewing Friends of the Earth's environmental rights empowerment activities, evaluation of the West Midlands LEPs proposals on sustainable development and localisation criteria and, more recently, research into mainstreaming community economic development.

2. Activities over the 2013-14 financial year

Mainstreaming Community Economic Development - Localising Prosperity

In October 2013 we began our follow-on work on the Mainstreaming Community Economic Development project, again funded by Barrow Cadbury Trust. This was based on the previous year's research into the social benefits of economic localisation approaches and how to integrate these into mainstream economic development. Alongside Karen Leach and Jon Morris, we recruited two excellent new associates to form the project team: Sarah Longlands, formerly of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), and Conrad Parke, a freelance consultant, previously with Regen WM and Chamberlain Forum.

It was clear to us that the name of the project was in itself a barrier to 'mainstreaming', so our first task was to develop new communications materials and language. This became the [Localising Prosperity](#) website and associated briefings and has made a significant difference to how people from different backgrounds engage with the project.



The project also involves two practical strands of work. The first of these has been engagement with the Right Care Right Here Partnership in Sandwell/Birmingham around maximising the local benefits of the proposed and existing hospitals. The second is an initiative on small and local business collaboration for retrofit supply chains, learning from small business co-ops in Italy and using the current retrofitting opportunities to see if local businesses can work together to win bigger contracts. We have also supported Birmingham City Council in promoting the Business Charter for Social Responsibility, run a session for Birmingham University regeneration postgraduate students on taking the Localising Prosperity approach to regeneration, and coordinated an Action Learning Network for like-minded people involved in economic development, to help and learn from each other. All this work is continuing after the conclusion of our financial year, due to complete at the end of October 2014.

Localising the Green Economy

LWM has been supporting Colin Hines in his *Consolidating the Green Economy* activity, funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. We contributed an analysis of how the local ownership and social benefits of green infrastructure projects can be maximised to ensure green economy activity and investment results in truly sustainable development, based on our knowledge of initiatives in and around Birmingham. This included organising a meeting that brought together private, public and voluntary sector stakeholders with experience of retrofitting schemes such as Birmingham Energy Savers to learn from the lessons of these schemes. Post the year end, we plan to conclude this work with a short briefing on the local ownership and supply chain issues. Involved were Karen Leach, Phil Beardmore and Jon Morris.

Tools: Applications, Benefits and Linkages for Ecosystems



During this year and the previous one, we were a partner in the [TABLES project](#) (Tools: Applications, Benefits and Linkages for Ecosystems) led by Professor Alister Scott from Birmingham City University. This was part of the National Ecosystem Assessment follow-on project for DEFRA, intended to develop and promote the arguments that the UK NEA put forward and make them applicable to decision and policy making at a range of spatial scales across the UK to a range of stakeholders. The TABLES package focused on integrating the principles and thinking behind the ecosystem approach and ecosystem services into the development, adaptation and testing of existing tools to improve policy and decision-making processes. The project's final reports were submitted in June 2014 and one output included the excellent "[NEAT Tree](#)" resource, to guide people through different stages of a decision-making process. We hope to work with Alister again on how this Tree model could be used in other contexts, including community-led economic development.

Alliance for a Better Economy

The Alliance for a Better Economy was established the previous year through a growing understanding by its various partners that collaboration on 'better' economics is essential in

effecting change. The aim of the alliance is to create a greater collective voice for those calling for economic change towards sustainability and social justice. During the year, the embryonic Alliance formalised its membership, agreed a statement, terms of reference and shorter aim and kept in touch by email, skype and a meeting. Members are now seeking funds to continue collaborative activity, including discussion of tactics.

Food And Our Future - speaker event

During the year, we were involved in organising an event on food poverty, access and health with the Lunar Society, Birmingham Leadership Foundation, the Nishkam Centre and Midland Heart. The event, Food and Our Future, was held after the period of this annual report, on 14th May, with over 80 participants. Speakers were Chris Mould, Executive Chairman of the Trussell Trust, Adrian Phillips, Director of Public Health at Birmingham City Council, and Liz Dowler, Professor of Food and Social Policy at Warwick University and a trustee of the Food Ethics Council. It was chaired by incoming chair of the planned Birmingham Food Council, Kate Cooper, and a diverse audience led wide-ranging discussion. The event report and a blog post of salient points can be [found on our website](#). William Adlington Cadbury Trust made a small grant towards our costs for this meeting.



Reflections on Community Forum

LWM associate Jon Stevens began work on an evaluation of the 1970s community engagement initiative Community Forum including lessons for current times. This was mainly funded from remaining Community Forum funds, supplemented by a grant from Barrow Cadbury Trust, who had funded the Forum in the past.

Community Forum was a network of inner city residents' associations and community groups, established in the 1970s, which helped local communities engage in the implementation of Birmingham's Urban Renewal Programme. Jon brought together those previously involved, to discuss what lessons can be learned from Community Forum's history, and, since the year end has been analysing and writing up their findings.

Energy Consultancy

LWM has been evaluating the effectiveness of green energy equipment for Birmingham City Council, with associate, Phil Beardmore, leading on this. Phil also worked with Coventry City Council to evaluate their [Keeping Coventry Warm](#) programme – with LWM associate Rajeev Prakash and our colleagues at [Encraft](#).

Other Activity

Despite scarce funds, we have tried to remain well connected to other better economics initiatives locally and further afield.

In May 2013, LWM board member Paul Cobbing represented LWM at a meeting with Danny Alexander on 30th May, with other organisations, including new economics foundation, CLES

etc. This was positively received, and further collaboration has followed, including the production of a policy briefing paper for Treasury officials.

In October 2013, we were represented on the panel for a discussion on sustainability and resilience by John Blewitt at Aston University on 31st Oct 2013, joined a roundtable CLES discussion on addressing poverty through local governance (JRF funded), and contributed to a business breakfast on youth unemployment (a “mini economic summit” arising from the Social Inclusion Process).

LWM continues to participate in the West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum, particularly around engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS). We made responses to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP spatial plan consultation and to Birmingham City Council’s budget priorities consultation, using Mainstreaming CED evidence as a framework. We were asked to join the extensive expert panel of the Liveable Cities project through the University of Birmingham and have contributed to one of their conferences. In November 2013, we attended an excellent conference on [Rethinking Prosperity](#) in Manchester, with contributions from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change and others, which introduced us to excellent economic good practice in Enfield and Preston.



Thanks to sponsorship from Barrow Cadbury Foundation, LWM coordinator Karen Leach undertook the [Common Purpose](#) Meridian course, a leadership development course focused around Birmingham and the West Midlands, which was extremely useful. Karen is currently working just three days a week, reflecting scarce resources but also with the aim of making room for new people to find a role for themselves within LWM.

3. LWM Strategy and Future

The Localising Prosperity/Mainstreaming CED agenda is opening all sorts of doors for LWM to undertake future work: research, practical, advisory, working with communities and more. In this sense, it feels a good time for LWM to develop – if we can involve people with more capacity to take forward the ideas that are emerging (see section 4 below).

The board and coordinator agreed during the year to put more emphasis on the “hub” and networking roles LWM can play in a more sustainable economic future in the region. As part of this, we explored options for a paid membership base to support our work, sounding out our supporters’ mailing list on the idea, but so far this has not been successful. We would like to further explore a membership base including local business, and to hold more events to allow collaboration opportunities across all sectors, for localising prosperity in the region. An event for the conurbation’s Business Improvement Districts is one such plan, as are community economic strategy workshops with a focus on a particular place. We would like to explore the potential for a West Midlands local currency, like the Bristol and Brixton Pounds,

for its symbolic and actual power in enabling people and businesses to support the local, beneficial economy.

LWM also remains keen to continue our involvement in the Alliance for a Better Economy with partners such as CLES, Reconomy and the New Economics Foundation - or using any other method of raising a collective call for better economics in the UK. There is a strong sense amongst the Alliance's initial members that collaboration is crucial to effect greater change in the UK.

4. People

At the start of the year, Paul Hutchens joined LWM's board (see details below). During the year we have been trying to recruit further new LWM Board members and this remains a priority.

Over the year the following have been Board members of Localise West Midlands:

Jon Morris (Chair)

A housing, planning and regeneration consultant who led LWM's work on Birmingham Energy Savers and contributed to MCED. Former Director of Coventry New Deal for Communities, Chair of Royal Town Planning Institute Housing Panel, Extensive experience in the fields of housing, planning and regeneration, as a practitioner, researcher and lecturer. Jon has also been a member of a number of ministerial advisory groups and an expert witness to the House of Commons Environment Select Committee.

Paul Cobbing (Vice Chair)

(Also LWM associate). Paul has worked for the last 30 years on environmental issues, from operational land management to policy development and implementation across climate change and the natural environment. He is now chief executive of the National Flood Forum, a charity that supports and represents people at risk of flooding. He has experience of developing and supporting sustainable development, climate change and environmental networks across the West Midlands, and working with them to progress strategic action. He is convenor of the West Midlands section of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a member of the West Midlands Forestry & Woodland Advisory Committee and the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership.

Jackie Milton (Treasurer)

Jackie has run her own accounting practice for the last eight years, with a special interest in community projects and new business start-ups. She is also a Trustee of the Cwm Harry Land Trust and involved in Lightfoot Enterprises CIC (Household Energy Services), and was formerly a Trustee of Fordhall Farm Community Land Initiative.

Phil Beardmore

(Also LWM associate). Phil works for LWM and others as an environmental and third sector consultant specialising in thought innovation. He founded the renewable energy co-operative CoRE50. His clients include local authorities, utilities, construction companies and social enterprises. In 2010 Phil was voted one of the top 50 Green Leaders in the West Midlands, is

the Third Sector Assembly Environment Network Champion and member of Birmingham's Green Commission.

Chris Crean

Friends of the Earth's Regional Campaigner for the West Midlands. Chris has been involved with Friends of the Earth (FOE) since the late 80s, initially as a campaigner on air pollution and transport in Birmingham and the West Midlands and now as campaigner, policy officer and spokesperson in the region. Previously he worked for an environmental consultancy specialising in contaminated land and industrial water.

Paul Hutchens

Paul formed Eco2Solar in 2007 to address the emerging market for renewable energy technologies, installing on commercial buildings, social housing and homes. Clients include Birmingham City Council, Sanctuary Housing and Barratt Homes. Paul also launched Eco2Energy alongside Eco2Solar which addresses the need for non-domestic buildings to reduce their energy bills by installing energy efficiency technologies. Eco2Solar won the 2012 Centre for Constructing Excellence's SME of the Year Award regionally and nationally whilst Paul has recently won Midlands Entrepreneur of the year 2013 and an IOD Director of the Year award in the environmental category. Paul sits on steering group of METNET and RESCO and is a visiting lecturer in solar technologies for the European Energy Center.

Andrew Lydon

Andrew was initially involved in the Labour Party, where he developed his interest in decentralisation and economic development in drafting parts of their Birmingham Council manifesto. Since 1992, when he left Labour, he has been involved in the politics of the regions as a spokesman for the West Midlands New Economics Group and later for Birmingham NHS Concern. Andrew runs the Prosperity and Inflation campaign for LWM.

George Morran

Involved also in the Campaign for the English Regions and the West Midlands Constitutional Convention. Formerly Senior Research Associate at Aston and Warwick University Business Schools, Director of the West Midlands Regional Forum of Local Authorities, the West Midlands Regional Economic Consortium and Assistant Chief Executive of Dudley MBC.

Jon Stevens

(Also LWM associate). Jon has worked in the field of community housing and neighbourhood regeneration for almost 40 years. Initially he trained as an architect and went on to work on community action in various posts over this period including Director of Birmingham Cooperative Housing Services, Community Development Worker for Birmingham Inner Area Study, Organiser of Community Forum in Birmingham, Senior Urban Renewal Officer, and Tenant and Association Support Manager for the Housing Corporation.

Hannah Worth

Hannah was chair of LWM until the October 2012 AGM, and at the same time co-founder and associate of the Chamberlain Forum, a neighbourhood think-and-do tank based in Birmingham. She first came to LWM as a volunteer after completing a Masters in Global Ethics. She moved on to manage Birmingham Community Empowerment Network, facilitating

community networks that aim to involve people more effectively in local decision making. Hannah now works for Renaisi in London for the Big Local Lottery programme.

Additional Steering Group Members and Associates

The following have been actively involved in LWM's steering group over the year and attend and contribute to our Board meetings, or act as associates for LWM's consultancy activities – or both.

Barbara Panvel

(Steering group) Barbara produces websites for eight groups, Civilisation 3000 (defence), Vested Interest in Politics, regional SME manufacturers, Fair Deal Farmers Council, New Era Network, India's CHS-Sachetan, Concerned Co-operators and the Thomas Attwood group. She has been involved in LWM since our earliest discussions.

Philip Davis

(Steering group) Phil represents transport consumers nationally and regionally and has extensive public policy experience, consumer and community engagement. A former trade union officer who specialised in lay advocacy and tribunals, he has more recently been a local authority Leader and a voluntary sector CEO. He is now a non-executive director of a number of public and community bodies and is a councillor in Birmingham.

Pat Conaty

(Steering group, associate) Pat Conaty is a Research Associate of the New Economics Foundation. He has produced a number of recent policy reports on local community banking, rural regeneration and community land trusts, micro-credit for small business, and affordable housing finance for low income homeowners with disrepair problems. He was formerly the Development Director of Birmingham Settlement, an inner city voluntary organisation.

Rosemary Coyne

(Steering group, associate) Rosemary is a chartered Landscape Architect with extensive all-sector experience in physical and community regeneration and sustainable development including the water and waste industries and construction. She coordinates the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership and works on the retrofitting agenda with the Accord Group. She has contributed to production of planning policy on a range of issues for Birmingham City Council and other local authorities, and led consultation exercises on sustainability and climate change issues with individuals, community groups and 'leadership' groups. She has worked across the UK as well as living and working overseas including South America, India and Africa.

Colin Hines

Colin is founder and convenor of the Green New Deal group, author of 'Localization- A Global Manifesto' (Earthscan) and of the forthcoming e-book 'Protect and Thrive- the Case for Progressive Protectionism'. Before that he was the Co-ordinator of Greenpeace International's Economics Unit having worked for the organisation for 10 years. He was one of the founders of LWM.

Conrad Parke

(Associate) Conrad Parke is a freelance neighbourhood regeneration advisor supporting a number of regeneration initiatives across Birmingham and the Black Country. Current clients include the Black Country Consortium, Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust, the Big Lottery and University of Birmingham. From 2007 to 2011 he worked for RegenWM – the regeneration centre of excellence for the West Midlands – as Head of Skills Development in Regeneration for the region. Conrad is currently working with LWM on their “Mainstreaming Community Economic Development” initiative.

Rajeev Prakash

(Steering group and associate) Rajeev trained as a town planner and has a background in programme and project management – gained through leading multi-agency partnerships and of successfully delivering major and holistic regeneration initiatives. Rajeev has experience of strategic finance and budget management at the most senior level and he has particular expertise in efficiency and effectiveness reviews, strategy planning and implementation, evaluation and change management.

Tim Render

(Associate) Tim has significant experience in managing major services and resources as Strategic Finance Director at Nottingham CC and previously as Head of Corporate Finance at Birmingham CC. He has wide ranging experience of successfully managing and developing strategies. He is now active as a non-executive director of a number of public / private partnership companies, an independent member of a police authority, trustee of several advice and housing charities, governor of a secondary school and academy and chair of a FE college board.

Helen Ryman

(Steering group) Helen is a knowledge specialist and policy strategist in regeneration and economic development, and a Groundwork West Midlands board member, with an MSc in Public Policy. She currently works for Birmingham Voluntary Services Council on evaluation. Recent work with Localise WM includes developing an evaluation strategy, identifying key contacts and MCED dissemination. Previously Helen led the good practice programme at Regen West Midlands, performance managed a £5m ERDF neighbourhood programme at the charity Groundwork, and worked with leading aid agency World Vision.

Chris Williams

(Associate) Chris has a campaigns and tactical background, having worked for Birmingham Friends of the Earth and for strategic and organisational roles in local, regional and national levels of the Green Party. He is a Councillor on Solihull Council. Chris has particular expertise in social housing and local government.

Staff and Volunteers

Karen Leach is LWM’s coordinator, having been in this role since October 2002. She reports to the Board on its strategy, activities and systems as well as undertaking projects. She previously created the role of Campaigns Support Worker with Birmingham Friends of the Earth, and from this developed interests in planning, trade and local food. She is also on

Birmingham FOE's Management Committee, responsible for the running of community environmental building The Warehouse in Digbeth - where LWM rents office space.

We are grateful for the voluntary help of:

- Andrew Jolly of CoSec Ltd for once again kindly administering our payroll during the year.
- Natasha Williams for help with website redesign and exploring funding sources
- Andrene Miller for communications advice and copy editing
- Jamie Stone – for work on the website.
- as well as for the time of all LWM members and board members.

If you are interested in getting involved with the work of LWM, as part of the Board, an associate, or as an active member, please contact [Karen Leach](#) to discuss this further. We are keen to involve a much greater diversity in background, age, gender, culture and experience in the work of LWM, not least to benefit from the insights that this diversity brings. [More information on our website.](#)

5. Funding report

During this financial year LWM was grateful to receive funding – whether charitable or contract - from:

- Barrow Cadbury Trust
- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation
- Birmingham City Council
- William Adlington Cadbury Trust
- Coventry City Council.