
REPORT OF THE CITY MAYOR

TO COUNCIL

ON WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2019

TITLE: CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES (CLES)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Note the report which outlines the focus of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) activities as one of the outside bodies which Salford City Council is represented.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Centre for Local Economic Strategies is a registered charity which continues to develop progressive economics for people, planet and place.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Centre for Local Economic Strategies Limited Annual Report 2018
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KEY DECISION: NO

DETAILS:

1. CLES Achievements and Performance

CLES has raised its profile significantly and developed the Community Wealth Building movement nationally and internationally. Of specific note is:

- Over 34 specific pieces of work and activity with resultant reports and other outputs;
- Secured grant funding from the Barrow Cadbury Trust and core funding from the Friends Provident Foundation;
- 16 specific reports, free to view on website and disseminated to members, network and public;
- 23 blogs and articles published on our website and social media channels;
- Over 100 lectures/presentations/workshops;
- 10 specific training events;

- Ongoing Chairing, Board and Steering Group membership.

The Business Plan has focused on building good local economies. Buoyed by demand for CLES work, in 2018/19 the centre achieved a number of the business plan aims despite a challenging wider operating environment. Of particular note was:

- Developing the staff team, roles and responsibilities;
- Internal appointment of a Director of Operations to develop internal processes and staff management;
- Significant grant funding from the Barrow Cadbury Trust secured to support the development of the Community Wealth Building Centre for Excellence;
- Significant core funding secured from the Friends Provident Foundation to advance the Community Wealth Building agenda;
- Deepening relationships in places where the centre are working, with Community Wealth Building diagnostics leading to further work, deepening networks and experience of place, with a particular development of work in London (e.g. Islington, Newham, Lewisham);
- Expanding the reach of CLES with dedicated work generated across the UK and beyond, with speaking engagements and work in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, Slovenia, Barcelona, Gdansk, Nova Scotia, Australia, New Zealand;
- Increased number of policy publications, policy provocations, discussion papers and journal articles;
- Increased rate of regular blog publications and securing more effective communication of the findings of those publications through the media; (e.g. dedicated External Affairs Manager)
- Developed our profile nationally and internationally with highest ever recorded website statistics
- Working with progressive organisations, funders and movements in working partnerships (e.g. NEF, the Democracy Collaborative, The Health Foundation, Power to Change);
- Reducing work which is weak or unrelated to charitable objectives and which has little policy influence;
- Reducing work which is generated through responding to tenders and merely plugging gaps in capacity (e.g. small-scale evaluation work);
- Becoming thought and practice leaders in specific fields. (e.g. community wealth building, deepening democracy, public service reform).

2. Business Development & Operations Plan

In June 2018 CLES published its new Business Development & Operations Plan covering the period 2018-2021, setting out the themes against which CLES will plan and deliver a programme of work. The future plans for each themes are as follows:

Local Economic Development

At present CLES only take up opportunities in this area, which are assessed as strategically or policy important, and concomitant to our key strategic aims.

Community Wealth Building

This continues to grow and is reaching a point where it is becoming self-sustaining – to maintain this movement so that it can affect real change across the UK, the centre will develop new ways to service this interest, by:

- Advancing community wealth building as a key element of economic development across the UK;
- Connect community wealth building to the climate emergency and the emerging Green New Deal;
- Working alongside businesses and communities to develop new forms of democratic control and ownership of wealth, including that which is generated through increased automation;
- Continue to advise and spread the ideas and practice of community wealth building to all 4 nations of UK, and internationally, with work conducted this year in both Canada and Australia;
- At an organisational and funding level this requires a further step change in approach to enable us to meet the demand for support whilst continuing to break new ground.

Deepening Democracy

CLES will seek explicitly to deepen and develop this area of work, to shape thinking and practice on cultivating thriving local democracies, by:

- Developing expertise in deliberative democracy methods which enable citizens to be involved directly in tackling complex policy issues;
- Advancement of New Municipalist ideas into the UK local government context to build capacity of councils to empower, coordinate and up-scale social innovation from community organisation and social enterprises and enable management of resources of all kinds as ‘Commons’, collective properties of communities, which should be controlled by the community and from which the community as a whole should benefit;
- Working with partners to develop our policy understanding of Feminisation of Politics and seek funding and partner support to further its application in the UK and in the context of devolution.

Excellent Public Services

At present this represents a significant portion of CLES work, however, in the coming year there will be a focus on:

- Work with public institutions to co-design their reforms using CLES’ key themes (community wealth building, deepening democracy, great places);
- Continue to push for more investment in our key public services;
- Advocate for the restoration of public values in our public services.

Great Places

CLES are seeking to further their work around place resilience, by expanding and linking their work to broader domains, looking at a reclaiming of ‘the Commons’. CLES are seeking to link their place resilience work to the broader systems which shape great places (such as ownership of land, town and country planning). CLES are currently supporting an ESRC research proposal focused on Left Behind Places, as a partner with Sheffield University and IPPR North, should this funding be successful it will lead a deep level place analysis in Oldham over a three-year period.

3. Partnership working with Salford City Council

Over the past year CLES has been supporting Salford City Council to develop an Inclusive Economy Strategy – this work is still ongoing. At the heart of the work CLES and the City Council are developing is a bold recalibration of how the local economy operates. At the heart of this ambition is realising the huge opportunities from economic growth in Salford to better address issues of longstanding social need and inequalities in the city.

This work will look forward to the next decade and beyond, articulating the Council’s vision as to what the economy should look like over that period. The strategy offers a proactive activist position to enable the economy and aspects of the market to better address social need.

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES: Council Constitution

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS: not applicable

ASSESSMENT OF RISK: not applicable

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: not applicable

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: not applicable

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS: not applicable

HR IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: not applicable

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED: not applicable

CONTACT OFFICER:

Joanne Farrell, City Mayor's Office
Telephone: 0161 793 3432
Email: joanne.farrell@salford.gov.uk

WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: All Wards