

Visioning Workshop Discussion Group: Inclusive Growth

Overview

A visioning workshop was held on Wednesday 30th April 10am – 2pm at Castle Green Hotel in Kendal to inform the development of the Westmorland and Furness Inclusive and Green Economic Growth Strategy. A series of thematic discussion groups – covering people, prosperity, place, green growth and inclusive growth - were ran as part of the session. This note captures the feedback gathered at the table focused on 'inclusive growth'.

Focus of Discussion

All workshop participants were asked to spend 10-15 minutes at each thematic table. At the inclusive growth table they were asked to consider the following points which had been identified to date in the strategy's underpinning evidence base:

Table 1: Points to consider relating to Inclusive Growth

- Inclusive growth is **a clear cross cutting theme which needs to be well integrated into the strategy and its delivery** to ensure that the benefits of growth are felt and shared across the local population.
 - **The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda should be integrated into delivery of all aspects of the strategy** – key groups include young people, ageing population, refugees and asylum seekers, SEND, care leavers, disadvantaged
 - **Inclusive growth has the potential to help address key challenges** including deprivation, health inequalities, economic inactivity, youth retention, population growth – this needs to be considered in the identification of thematic priorities. E.G. balancing high growth and / or technical, highly skilled opportunities with accessible opportunities (e.g. entry jobs and pathways)
 - **There is potential to increase opportunities and enhance impacts of social value activities within anchor institutions** to help address local challenges and support inclusive growth
 - **There is a significant role for the well-established VCFSE sector to play in supporting and delivering inclusive growth** (e.g. connecting residents and supporting residents to access opportunities) and this can be facilitated through targeted investment, coordination and partnership. The social enterprise sector can support growth in the sector aligned to local issues and opportunities
 - **Clear linkages need to be made between the Economic Strategy and the Community Power Strategy** (e.g. as part of the economic strategy's delivery principles and subsequently as part of action development and delivery)
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Participants were asked to discuss: (i) What are the priorities for inclusive growth in W&F? and (ii) How can this be embedded within the strategy?

They were also asked to:

- Use the green sticky dots to identify points which should be prioritised and captured within the strategic objectives for each theme
- Use the red sticky dots to identify points which are less of a priority (or less relevant)

This note captures the findings of the discussions within the inclusive growth group.

Table 2: Feedback on points presented on Inclusive Growth

| Inclusive Growth Consideration | Level of Prioritisation | Notes |
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| Inclusive growth is a clear cross cutting theme which needs to be well integrated into the strategy and its delivery to ensure that the benefits of growth are felt and shared across the local population. | 4 x green | <p>Spatial planning for inclusion: commentary from multiple participants that the current description of cross cutting inclusive growth is quite focused on individuals and could also look at inclusion from a place perspective. Some ideas and points raised on this included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of town centres in helping to create vibrant communities and offer/signpost support • Importance of local plans – including the national park and lake district local plans • Spatial disparities in terms of deprivation and housing affordability as well as access to key services and infrastructure (e.g. transport investment, broadband and energy-fuel choices). • Linked to the above, connectivity between areas of deprivation and access to training, education and job opportunities • Links between Westmorland and Furness and Lancaster and Yorkshire • The importance of coastal communities – unique well documented challenges and strong synergy with the tourism sector (associated in the analysis with low wage, seasonal employment). <p>Transport, and the offer for people without a car. Delivering inclusive growth will require support to improve access to reliable and affordable transport (including buses) and housing.</p> <p>Community wealth building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using community wealth building as a framework to inform the strategy considering all associated factors which can support and drive this (e.g. finance, workforce, land and property, spending and ownership) |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of wealth through spend and multiplier effects. Considering how inclusion through growth can be driven by maximising the circulation of wealth (e.g. through local spend in town centres) as well as looking at how to maximise the economic multiplier effects of strategic investments and procurement. It was suggested that this should be prioritised – particularly in relation to capital projects in areas of higher deprivation. • Land – There were comments about the importance of land and land ownership in the area and how ownership can have a generative or extractive impact on inclusion (also a key pillar of community wealth building). |
| <p>The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda should be integrated into delivery of all aspects of the strategy – key groups include young people, ageing population, refugees and asylum seekers, SEND, care leavers, disadvantaged</p> | <p>1 x green 1 x red (based on suggestion that this should be a ‘given’ and is already embedded within systems / processes)</p> | <p>Any references to the EDI agenda should specify which policies these link to (i.e. Council or national definitions)</p> |

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| <p>Inclusive growth has the potential to help address key challenges including deprivation, health inequalities, economic inactivity, youth retention, population growth – this needs to be considered in the identification of thematic priorities. E.G. balancing high growth and / or technical, highly skilled opportunities with accessible opportunities (e.g. entry jobs and pathways)</p> | <p>3 x green</p> | <p>Economic Bedrock: The importance of education and health as foundation of delivering an inclusive economic strategy was highlighted. Specific points raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for greater prioritisation of early years to support the pipeline of future skills and talent. There was also appreciation for the need to support older people to remain active and engaged in learning /employment – life long learning. • Potential to increase careers support for young people in secondary schools – including advocacy of good quality careers available in public sector anchor institutions • The role of the foundational economy (health, education, transport and housing) in helping to address key challenges <p>Labour market progression: There was widespread discussion about the challenges raised in the presentation regarding a tight labour market and how inclusive growth could address this challenge and support labour market participation and progression. Some of the key points raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing economic inactivity – (including young people who are NEET) - exploring how people gave be given a sense of agency and pathways back to the labour market (see role of VCFSE below). • Increasing social mobility and/or ‘progression’. Discussion around the volume of people in minimum wage jobs (many on zero-hour contracts) with limited opportunities to move on and/or progress, and the implications this has for them and for others wanting to come into entry level jobs • Considering how recruitment can support pathways into employment and enable progression. The idea of developing a skills pool or ‘pipeline’ as a mechanism to support recruitment in key sectors was suggested by several people. • Reference made to the Cumbria Talent force. |
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| | | <p>Sectoral strengths- agriculture is a key industry for the area – not only in terms of the employment and output - but also in terms of stewardship and its strong links with identity and sense of place, which is then important when it comes to landscape value, natural assets and the visitor economy.</p> <p>There was discussion around the potential scope for cross sector collaboration (e.g. agriculture, tourism and food and drink) and linking this with supply chain opportunities in key sectors such as education and health, and anchor institutions.</p> <p>Nature and climate- referenced multiple times as an important asset and driver for the economy as well as an integral part of the area's identity and place-based offer. Related points that were discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links being made between the strategy and wider decarbonisation strategies, both in terms of economic opportunities that could emerge but also quality of life and the place-based offer (e.g. following housing retrofit) • Green finance – considering existing opportunities for private sector investment and solutions for green finance in the longer term • Considering links between nature, climate and health and wellbeing agenda |
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| <p>There is potential to increase opportunities and enhance impacts of social value activities within anchor institutions to help address local challenges and support inclusive growth</p> | <p>4 x green</p> | <p>There was agreement that the public sector and anchor organisations can play a role in generating social value (e.g. through procurement policies)</p> <p>It was also recognised that social value is important and requires a collective effort, and there were discussions around the role which businesses / the private sector more widely can play in supporting inclusive growth – building on their role as important generators of employment and GVA . Examples of how the private sector could be harnessed to help deliver economic and social inclusion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employers ‘pledge’ to deliver employment opportunities to vulnerable groups (e.g. employers pledging to offer a young NEET person an opportunity building on good practice in Barrow) • Linking data on local challenges more explicitly to business to help drive innovation and tech solutions. |
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| <p>There is a significant role for the well-established VCFSE sector to play in supporting and delivering inclusive growth (e.g. connecting residents and supporting residents to access opportunities) and this can be facilitated through targeted investment, coordination and partnership. The social enterprise sector can support growth in the sector aligned to local issues and opportunities</p> | <p>3 x green</p> | <p>Significant role for the VCFSE: There was widespread consensus on the economic importance of the VCFSE sector, particularly given Westmorland and Furness' rurality. Participants felt that the VCSFE sector had an important role to play in delivering inclusion for the area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to volunteering opportunities for older people (extending working lives and potentially access to lifelong learning) and for those who are inactive (as part of their progression / entry to employment) • Connecting and supporting residents, including welcoming people to the area and linking them to local sources of support such as childcare. • Social enterprises were also referenced and the opportunities they provide around pathways into business and community ownership – recirculating wealth in communities. Example given of bright starts CLFP providing enterprise opportunities to primary school children. • Reference was also made to the importance of the work of the Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership, highlighting potential to join this up with wider discussions around social value and anchor organisations using community wealth building <p>It was noted that financing solutions for the VCFSE sector may need to be considered, such as alternative finance models and widening access for VCFSE to public procurement and social value opportunities. Support may also be needed to strengthen networks and help organisations access opportunities (including procurement).</p> <p>There was also a suggestion that more could be done to better understand the size of the social economy in the area and its actual and potential economic impact and importance.¹</p> |
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| <p>Clear linkages need to be made between the Economic Strategy and the Community Power Strategy (e.g. as part of the economic strategy's delivery principles and subsequently as part of action development and delivery)</p> | <p>1 x green 1 x red (based on view that the strategy needed to focus more on business).</p> | |
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¹ Some data available from the third sector trends study here- <https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Local-health-and-social-wellbeing-the-contribution-of-the-VCSE-sector-in-Cumbria-May-2023.pdf>

What are the priorities for inclusive growth in Westmorland and Furness and how can this be embedded in the strategy?

- There is widespread agreement that inclusive growth should be embedded throughout the Westmorland and Furness Inclusive and Green Economic Growth Strategy, with all priorities and actions to be delivered inclusively
- There is a need to think about inclusive growth holistically - through both a people and a place-based lens.
- Linked to the above, use of community wealth building frameworks (which capture people and place based factors) and how these can be integrated into strategy design and delivery should be considered.
- Inclusive growth needs to be a collective effort, including partners from across Westmorland and Furness. This should include anchor institutions, the VCSFE sector and private sector (with roles for each to be considered when planning delivery).
- There are opportunities to maximise the impact of existing activities (e.g. procurement and social value commitments, local spend and wealth circulation) and planned investment to support the delivery of inclusive growth (linking opportunities and benefits to residents).