



Centre for Local  
Economic Strategies

**HOW RESILIENT IS YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY?  
A PILOT RESEARCH PROJECT**

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## Local Resilience Pilots: How resilient is your local economy?

### Introduction and objectives

CLES has recently developed a model for local economic resilience. This was forged through two pieces of work. Firstly, research work which assessed economic resilience in six local authorities areas around the world<sup>1</sup>, funded through the Norfolk Charitable Trust. Secondly, through research work into local economic strategies, where we call for a 'new wave of local economic activism'<sup>2</sup>.

CLES is now seeking to work with local authorities to apply our resilience model in the UK. Specifically, we would like to explore how the model can be used to assess and understand how resilient your economy is via the model (overleaf), as trialled in the global resilience work. This should assist in informing revisions to current economic strategies, meeting the obligations of the new economic assessment duty and in planning for new economic challenges such as rising unemployment, climate change and demographic shifts.

### The economic resilience model

The recent worldwide research (deliberately focused on six very different places, reflecting the good, the bad and the ugly in terms of local government practice and possible resilience. The researchers visited Portland (USA), Culiacan (Mexico), Gdansk (Poland), Coimbatore (India), Yokkaichi (Japan) and Haiphong (Vietnam). This research tried to uncover what local government can do to assist resilience and the reasons why some places were more resilient than others. It concluded that a new wave of local economic activism is required.

Before the recession, we relied on growth to create social and economic inclusion and hoped to move toward green growth. Now the recession and its effects pose significant new challenges, such as a tightening public purse, whilst the problems of social exclusion and environmental change are still with us and likely to get worse.

Resilience is an ability of local places and local government to be capable of riding the global economic punches, working within environmental limits, being 'change ready' and adaptable in dealing with external changes, and having high levels of social inclusion.

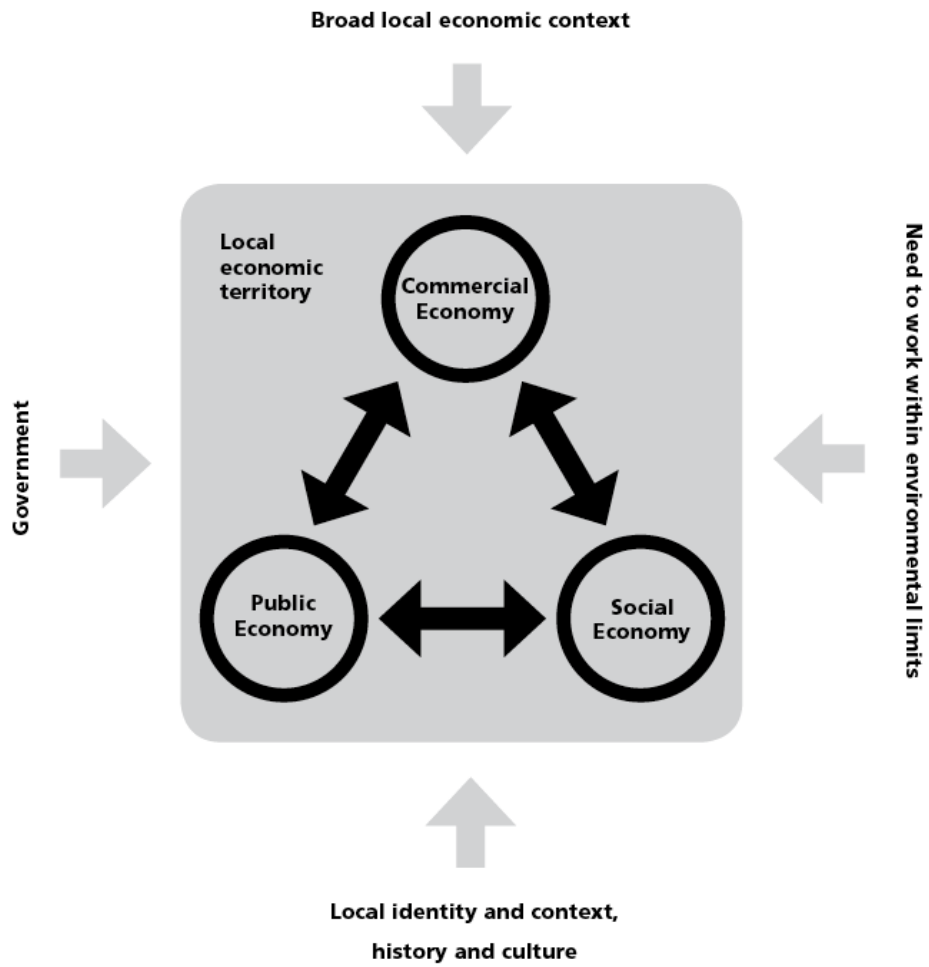
The resilience model illustrates the working of the local economic territory – centrally characterised by the commercial, public and social economies – and the influences upon these. These economic spheres and external influences are all vital components of local economic resilience. Indeed, all of these aspects, arguably, need to be assessed as part of the new economic assessment duty, which all upper tier local authorities will need to undertake by April 2010. Furthermore, all aspects need to be considered within any local economic strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Ashby, J, Cox, D, McInroy, N and Southworth, D (2009) *An international perspective of Local Government as stewards of Local economic resilience*. Norfolk Charitable Trust. Available at

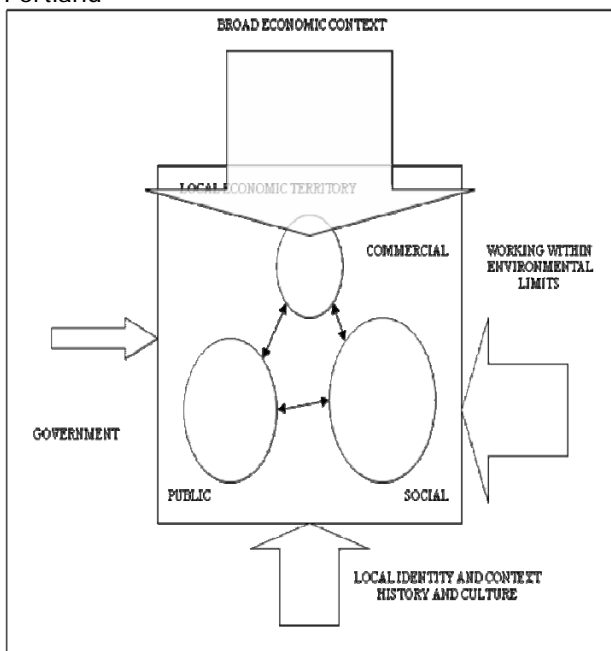
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<sup>2</sup> CLES (2009) *Toward a new wave of local economic activism: the future for economic strategies*. Available at [http://www.cles.org.uk/information/104257/copy\\_of\\_pp26/](http://www.cles.org.uk/information/104257/copy_of_pp26/).

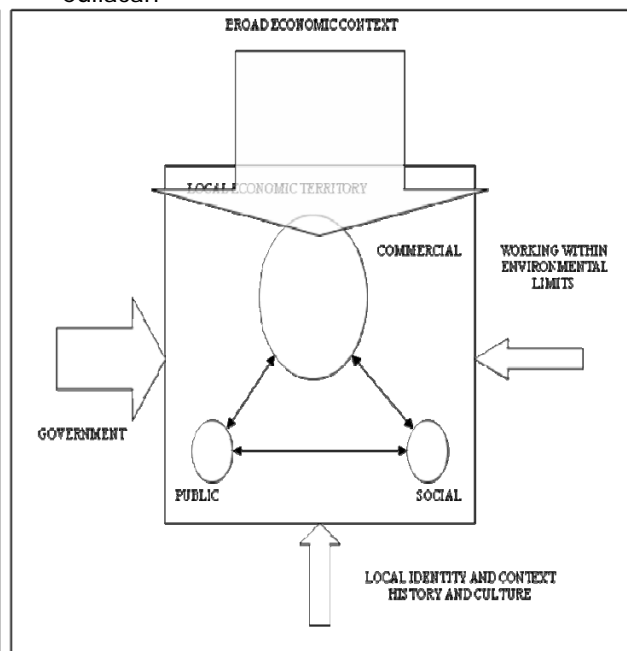


The model was deployed in each location and relative elements of the model were gauged. This included qualitative and quantitative assessment of resilience, and produced different summary models for each place, for example, the diagrams below indicate a resilient Portland and an un-resilient Culiacan.

Portland



Culiacan



## Research questions for the pilot

- ❑ What are the general strengths and weaknesses of the local economy in relation to size and shape of the social, commercial and public economies, and how do the relationships/interactions between these sectors of the economy operate?
- ❑ What was the specific role of regional/sub-regional/local policies to support resilience in terms of commercial, public and social economic aspects of the economy?

## Methodology

If you are interested in becoming a pilot for this piece of work, we would discuss in detail the approach with you and wherever possible, fit this work alongside existing activity you are involved in. This might include:

- ❑ economic strategy development
- ❑ ongoing assessment work as part of the statutory economic assessment duty.

This work is not a substitute for either of the above, but could assist and provide added value to this activity.

## Work in locations

We would arrange to visit your area and explore the use of the resilience model with local practitioners. This work is likely to include:

- ❑ collating any other relevant evidence/documentation about the nature of the economy in the area;
- ❑ facilitating a workshop with economic development professionals in the locality to discuss and debate the resilience model and what it means for their locality;
- ❑ conducting desk research into the size and scale of the social, commercial and public economy in each area. This will not attempt to fully quantify the total size of each of these economies, but aim to understand their overall importance, role played in the local area and strengths/weaknesses;
- ❑ conducting interviews with stakeholders from commercial, social and public elements of the economy;
- ❑ analysing existing economic strategy in terms of testing its resilience.

## Reporting

Following the research, we would develop a report which summarises our main findings, detailing CLES' views/observations/ideas on improving resilience in the locality. In addition, it would make suggestions for filling the gaps and weaknesses in their locality and/or strategies.

## What does a local authority get out of it?

- ❑ an **understanding** of how resilient your own economy is;
- ❑ **assistance** with the development of their local economic assessment in line with the implementation of the statutory duty from April 2010;
- ❑ external **facilitation** to provoke discussion within your authority about your future economic strategy and development of key priorities;
- ❑ **ideas and thoughts** about how your authority might be able to begin tackling some of the key challenges you face in the future and make your locality more economically resilient;
- ❑ external comment (**critical friend advice**) on the nature of your current economic strategy and ideas about how this could be revised and improved in the future.

## Relationship between CLES and the local authority

This is a pilot project and we are looking to work **in partnership** with participating local authorities for mutual benefit. There may be some resource implication, but this can be discussed at any initial visit.

For a further conversation, please contact:

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