

Audit Wales local government studies

Key messages from our work on community
resilience and social enterprises

Challenging times



- Years of austerity
- Reductions in capacity
- Growing demand
- Challenging targets and responsibilities – e.g. carbon emissions
- Efficiency savings becoming exhausted?
- Post pandemic recovery
- Cost of living crisis impact on public bodies

Cost of living crisis impact on public services



- Higher costs for capital projects as result of inflationary pressures.
- Utility cost increases on key services – schools, day centres, etc.
- Impact of inflation on external contracts and staff costs.
- Rising fuel prices for transport.
- Result - need to invest/spend more money to stand still.
- Setting future budgets extremely challenging.



Councils have opportunities to offer new approaches and solutions building on their recent work in the pandemic



Making more of social enterprises

- S16 of SSWBA 2014



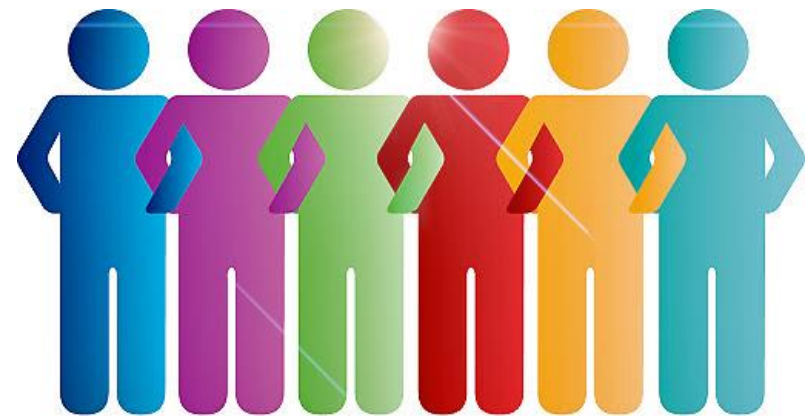
Social resilience and self-reliance

- Changing the relationship between the council and citizens

The case for prioritising community resilience



- Recognition that councils cannot do what they always have done.
- Community and self-resilience has begun to appear as a priority in more council corporate plans and strategy documents.
- Emphasis on equipping people to do more for themselves.
- Prioritising where to focus council activity.
- **Importantly**.... the pandemic showed us councils can work differently and communities can do more.



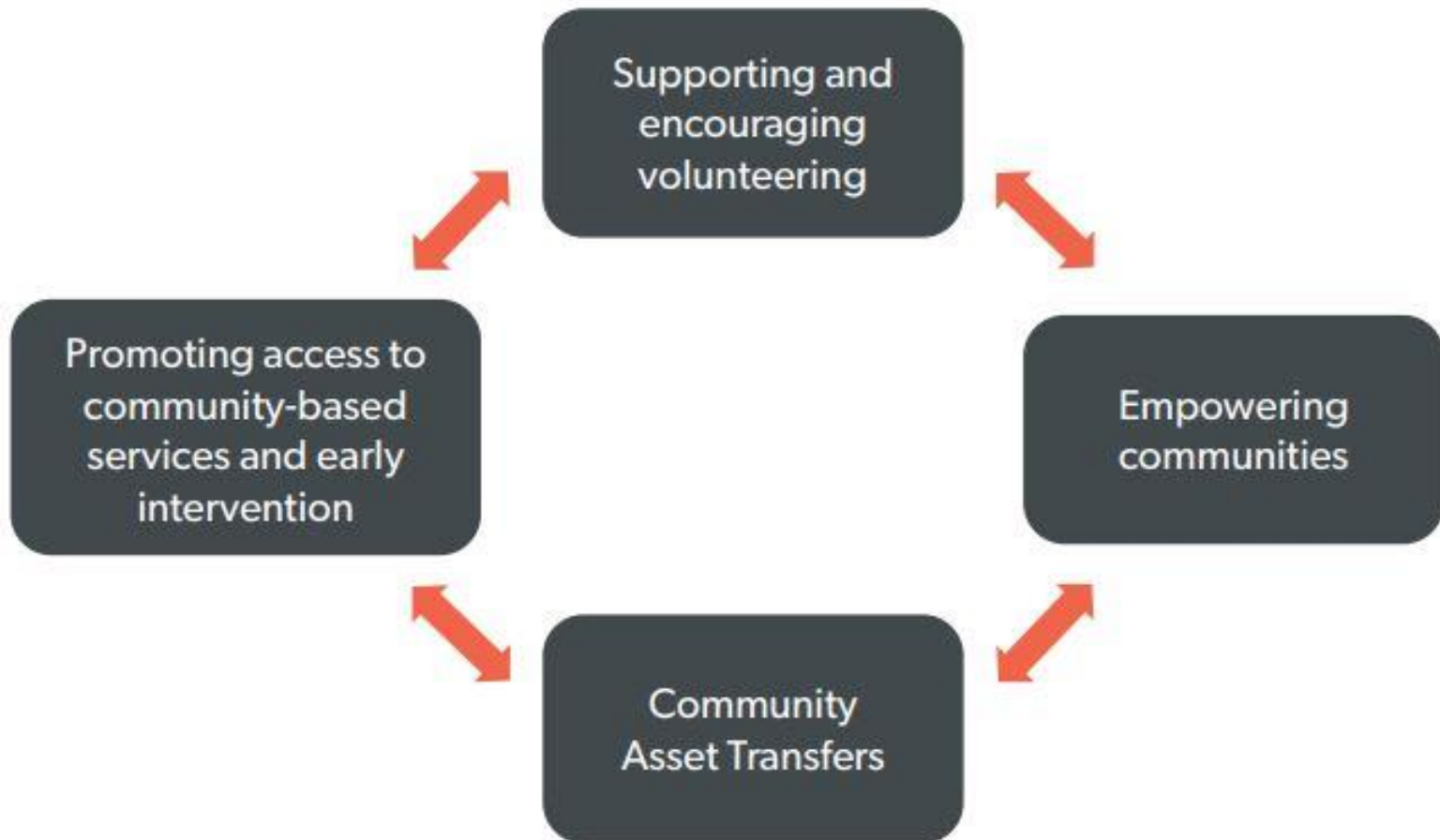
Community **Resilience**

Community resilience – where we are now

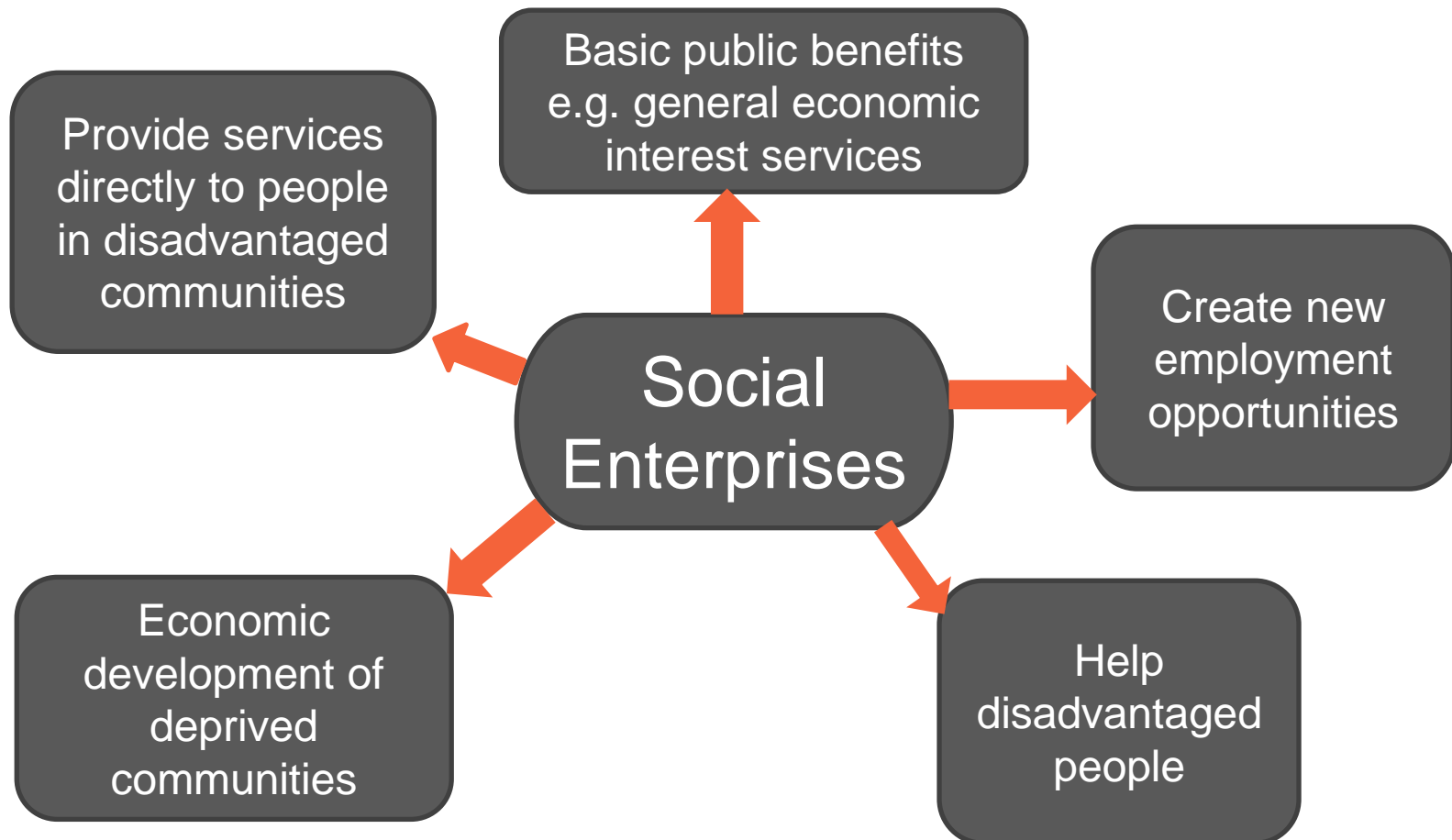


- Much of the current narrative on community resilience is framed by the need to respond to emergencies and civil contingency requirements.
- Most councils are not effectively prioritising work to encourage self-reliance and where actions are agreed, these are often too narrow to support the level of change needed.
- Despite some progress in volunteering, community asset transfers, community hubs and the work of community navigators, the pace and scale of change is not sufficient to strengthen community resilience.
- Capacity, resources and skills are limited both within councils but also communities.
- Councils risk returning to their pre-pandemic ways of working and the opportunity to shift to being an ‘influencer’ and ‘enabler’ rather than ‘direct provider’ is being lost.

Councils can build on their work to enhance community resilience



Social Enterprises keep wealth within communities so they can help people in poverty by...



Social enterprises - where we are now

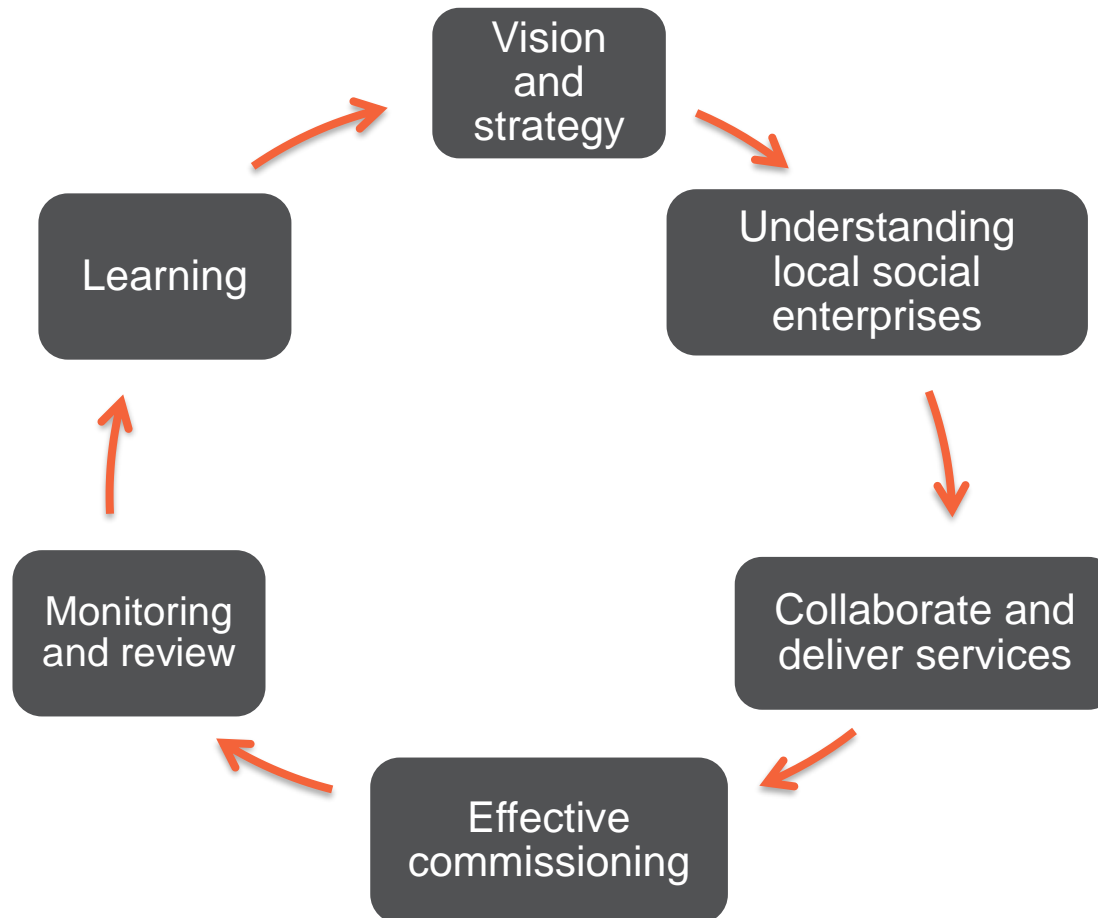


Social Enterprises can provide important services, but most local authorities lack a coherent strategy and are not working collaboratively to help support their growth and development

Local authorities do not have the right mechanisms in place to maximise value for money from their work with Social Enterprises

Local authorities are not delivering their responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act and weaknesses in data and evaluation limits their ability to promote Social Enterprises

What would 'good' look like?



Barriers to change



- Resources, skills and capacity



- Inability to redirect resources



- Trust and appetite



- Culture



- Limited joined up working and involvement focus



- Lack of strategic vision and understanding



- Prevailing challenges such as poverty, rurality and exclusion

Looking to the future



- Creating a clear vision



- Holding a two way dialogue to underpin change



- The role of members as community champions



- Refocussing officers' work



- Not a 'one size' fits all approach



- Ensuring wealth stays local

