CLES

Centre for Local
Economic Strategies

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RESILIENCE IN WALKER, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
Draft final report prepared by
Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Building Futures East
Presented to
Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear and Northumberland

1   INTRODUCTION

CLES and Building Futures East (BFE) are pleased to present this final report on a 2 year programme for work designed to develop resilience in Walker, Newcastle. This was an innovative and pilot approach to community, local economic and place development.

This report details:

- ❑   The aim of the work
- ❑   Background to Walker
- ❑   The approach and resilience assessment
- ❑   The actions
- ❑   Lessons learnt
- ❑   Conclusions

1.1   The aim of the work

The overarching aim of the project was to encourage and promote greater resilience within the Walker area. This included the development of both top-down and bottom-up sustainable solutions sensitive to particular local needs and aspiration. CLES and BFE played the roles of catalysts in this process, stimulating the work of others to advance resilience activity in Walker. There was a research component in this work, but importantly it was about wider public, social and commercial sector activity in shaping Walker's future destiny.

The objectives were to:

- ❑   Develop a baseline resilience assessment of Walker;
- ❑   Following the baseline work, determine local needs and develop a locally responsive plan of actions to strengthen resilience;
- ❑   Work with public and commercial sectors to advance those actions
- ❑   Change approach and behaviours within public sector;
- ❑   Embed work within the wider strategic context locally and nationally, in particular with regards to localism, city deals and collaboration via cooperative models;
- ❑   Work to support the community of Walker in the development of new approaches and strengthening existing activity.

The work was funded by Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear and Northumberland (CFTWN) and through resource in kind by the project catalsyts – Building Futures East(BFE) and Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

1.2   Background to Walker

Walker is located on the North bank of the Tyne in the east end of Newcastle, and was the traditional home to the shipbuilding community in the city. As the dockyards in the city declined, the locality experienced significant economic restructuring which brought about major socio-economic challenges. A legacy which it is still grappling with today.

The population in the area has declined over time and life expectancy levels are around 10 years lower than the city average. Walker suffers from significant deprivation amongst a range of indicators and is afflicted by high levels of worklessness. Job growth in the city has not benefited local residents, many of whom live on very low incomes. The issues facing the locality are summed up in the Walker Riverside Area Action Plan highlighting the multitude of interdependent factors which have contributed to the decline:[1]

'With low levels of skills and income, high unemployment and poor access to jobs and services, residents of Walker have become increasingly excluded from the facilities taken for granted by the majority of Newcastle's residents. This has a knock on effect on health, crime and education in the area, while the environment has suffered from piecemeal and reactive demolition in response to low housing demand.'

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[1] Source: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/wwwfileroot/legacy/regen/ldf/Walker_Riverside_AAP.pdf

Figure 1: Location of Walker ward

Walker was chosen as the focus for this project in order to understand the nature of the systems in place which perpetuate the issues and assess how we could affect change in this system to catalyse a more positive future.

BFE are located in Walker, and along with CLES they have a driving passion for making stronger places where inequality and hardship is addressed. The challenges are significant, and it was hoped that this work could lay the foundations for making a stronger Walker, creating the synergies needed to effectively address the issues.

The future destiny for places like Walker, obvious involves the community itself, however in the face of public sector cuts and transformation, the future is also about a reconfiguration of how public and commercial sectors operate and reshape relations with local communities for local regeneration and development. The future of Walker and many places like it, requires community action and the development of social capital, to sit alongside a change in public and commercial sector behaviour.

2   THE APPROACH AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

2.1   Resilience

CLES ideas about place resilience started with a recognition that the approach to neighbourhood place development was becoming outdated in an operating climate of the global economy, in a period of recession and change.   Initial international research[i] served to develop the thinking. Following this work, a number of pilot studies were undertaken and CLES developed a model for assessing resilience. The model has now been tested and applied, across a wide range of locations in the UK and internationally.

This approach offers a fresh and innovative way of diagnosing the issues, but more importantly helps places to move forward positively. The economic landscape has fundamentally changed and this demands a new way of thinking about how places operate.   In this we are not starting from an understanding that this is about more resources, more interventions, more bureaucracy and more initiatives; instead we argue for more fundamental practical solutions, based on local systems of collaboration and relationships.

CLES believes that neighbourhood regeneration, to date, has often placed too little attention on the interests of local communities and smaller independent enterprises which make up the fabric and unique character of places. That is not to say that both large retail and property companies should be overlooked – they can and should be powerful partners. However, a new 'network of networks' approach to neighbourhood development, with a broad range of constituents, is required.

The key is building a vibrant creative community that in turn builds new creative and economic life into our places. There are many good examples of initiatives which have proven to be innovative models in strengthening many places – the challenge is to build on such successes as well as tackling areas of weakness.

2.2   The action group

From the outset of the project CLES and BFE set up an action group which provided further local insight and strategic direction for the work, particularly in agreeing the actions and in the delivery of these. This group included representatives from third sector organisations, Newcastle City Council, and members of the local private sector (See appendix 1). The group met at the outset, then at intervals throughout the lifetime of the project. However, this group, was not a traditional 'steering group', in that they were tasked and expected to take forward action, either as individuals or/and within the organisations they represented.

2.3   Data and history of place assessment

A key first stage of understanding the resilience of Walker was to undertake a data assessment. This assessment was designed to develop an appreciation of Walker, in terms of socio-economic trends, economic performance relative to the wider governance area it sits within, and the key blockers and drivers for the area to realise its potential (See appendix 3). It informed the resilience diagnostic stage of the project (see below).

2.4   Initial Resilience baseline diagnostic

CLES has successfully developed and tested the resilience model across a range of locations, and this formed the basis for the delivery of the first stage of this study. What makes the resilience model stand out is that it acknowledges the relative strength of the reciprocal relationships between the public, private and social sectors that helps generate resilience within an area. Stronger mutual relationships allow a locality to be more flexible and reactionary if faced with adversity and be take to take on emerging opportunities.

The resilience model is broken down into ten different measures which are considered in the sections below. This is how the resilience model was turned from a conceptual framework into a structure that could be effectively mapped to a locality to assess resilience through research (See appendix 3)

The model is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: The CLES resilience model
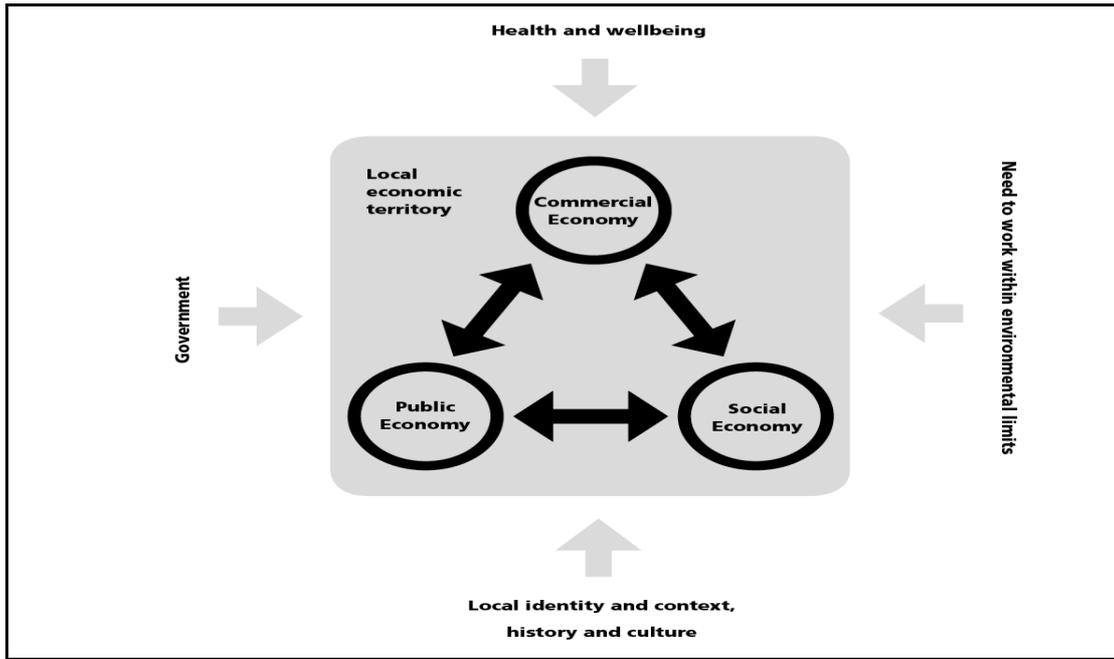
This was a relatively 'light touch' assessment, and included both data work and consultation with stakeholders across the private, social and commercial sectors. Figure 3, Highlights the basic summation of what was found as regards relationships within walker.

Figure 3: Spider diagram of resilience in walker
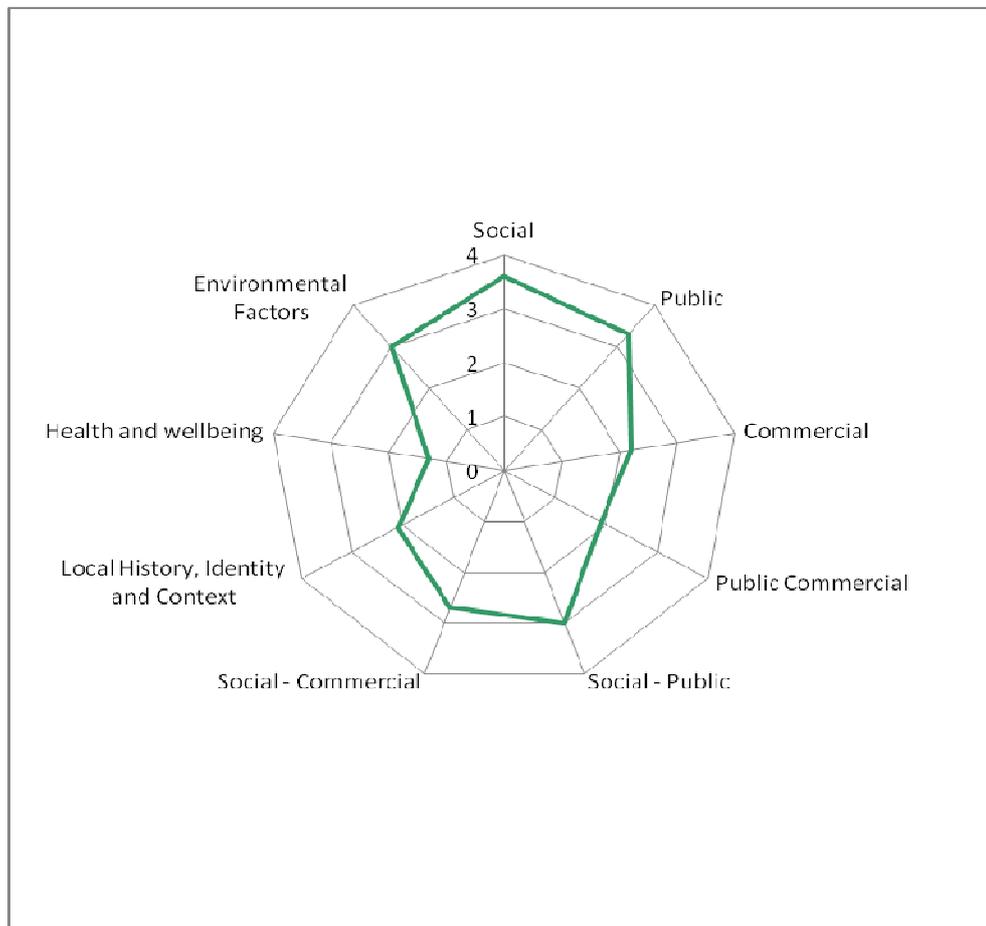
2.5   The resilience issues

For full Resilience report see appendix 3. However, the key elements revealed in the resilience assessment were as follows:

1)   Deep relationships were not yet in place to develop collaborative working.

2)   The neighbourhood of Walker experiences a number of good resilience indicators, with strengths particularly in the social sector, the public sector and in the interaction between the two.

3)   There was a number of key actors in the local area who work hard to improve the lives of individuals, groups and families living in the neighbourhood, from community volunteers to local councillors.

4)   There was a strong sense of community in Walker which supports residents and the community generally, with the voluntary and community sector organising more formal support, performing formal roles and acting as a signposting service for other support mechanisms.

5)   The public sector, in particular the Communities Team, is very well regarded locally.

6)   Health and wellbeing in Walker is very vulnerable, with embedded health problems affecting different generations across the population.

7)   The area is dually influenced by poor health and unemployment, which together can grind communities down.

8)   There is evidence of some activity from the private sector, and interactions between the private sector and the social and public sectors, working together to create benefits for Walker. There is significant opportunity to build upon the connections which already exist, and to build new connections with the private sector, to strengthen local resilience.

9)   Walker's resilience is both dependent on, but also independent to the city centre. As regards its relationship with the city centre, the city centre does have the potential to be increasing its economic connectivity with Walker.

From this an initial portfolio of possible actions were produced.

3 THE ACTIONS

3.1 The draft actions

The above work revealed a potential range of actions that were posited and discussed at the action group. These actions were discussed and members of the action group were tasked with taking elements of the ideas forward. These included:

❑ Increasing flows of knowledge transfer – engaging with FSB, Chamber of Commerce, with business and social sectors, using the values and strength of the social sector into the private

❑ Establishing a local employer forum to link local businesses with the social sector - to identify skills, and to explore procurement practice and potential for supporting the VCS sector.

❑ Accelerate Apprenticeships, through better business connections

❑ Business Ideas Generator. With spinoffs

❑ Experiments in Self Build Housing

❑ Third sector mentoring - to develop a new generation of community stewards from the local area coming through within the sector, addressing the issue of lack of capacity should people retire or leave the sector. This is something which was mentioned through interviews with community groups;

❑ Establishing mentoring schemes:

- third sector mentoring to develop a new generation of community stewards from the local area coming through within the sector, addressing the issue of lack of capacity should people retire or leave the sector. This is something which was mentioned through interviews with community groups;

- approaching influential private sector individuals to become business mentors to promote engagement between the sectors; and

- engaging individuals from successful local businesses to become business mentors to help out other smaller business;

❑ Events - for example open days which highlight the role of philanthropy in the community, and communications to bring the community and the three sectors together to discuss community needs openly.

❑ Asset management and Suitable community space – what is the offer and how can it be maintained?

❑ New use of Open space and buildings. Meanwhile space use

❑ Public procurement pledge across city- Advancing local economic activity

3.2 The actions progressed

The progression of actions were dependent upon a set particular qualities and behaviours:

❑ Drive. There needed to be a commitment by members of the action group and/or others, to drive the actions forward. In some instances, whilst the idea may have been strong, there was not the determination or fertile conditions to ensure the idea could be realised.

❑ A home or host. Some ideas to be realised needed a home or host organisation. In some instances this was not forthcoming or apparent. Often the reason for this failure to find a host was related to capacity or worries as regards risk and exposure to failure and being seen as carrying the responsibility for this.

❑   Relationships. Some of the ideas, required sophisticated collaboration and relationships to allow the action to progress. In some instances this was not strong/sophisticated enough for the action to move forward.

❑   Iconic sparks. In advancing the ideas, it was important that we honed in on actions which were demonstrative of community resilience. We believed these 'iconic sparks' were likely to have the appeal, by which drive, relationships could be sustained, and where a clear home or host could be found. It was only in this context that the required strength and momentum, could be maintained and continued sustainably.

Through an identification of the above via a process of engagement, events, discussion and dialogue, 5 eventual actions emerged. At the time of writing this report, many other ideas including those identified above, either remain active or contain as yet un-realised potential. It is possible that these could be accelerated in the future, albeit out with the auspices of this project, but within the networks and relationships that this project has stimulated.

3.2.1   Walker Horticultural Nursery Project.

Following discussion among members of the action group a proposal was developed for use of the southern part of the current St. Anthony's Allotment Site. Over recent years has been largely problematic with the land untended and prone to fly-tipping and a range of anti-social activities. The proposal led by Building Futures East is to develop a horticultural nursery on the site with provision for a Community Garden. This would assist in maintaining a positive momentum and community confidence in the broader local physical and spatial development programme. This site would thus serve both as a commercial proposition and as a means of boosting local training and employment opportunities.

This land had been earmarked for housing development following the refurbishment of public allotments on the northern part of the site. However, emphasis on housing development had moved to an adjacent and central area of land within the ward/. It was seen that this area would deliver deliver a higher volume and density and a more diverse range of housing products on offer.

Who is involved
BFE have been assisted in this by a range of local stakeholders that include Your Homes Newcastle and the local Ward Committee and Newcastle City Council. BFE worked with Newcastle Business School in the preparation of a comprehensive draft business plan to develop the site.

Contribution to resilience
This action, makes a strong contribution to resilience. By its very nature it is collaborative, involving large city stakeholders as well as local community groups and organisations. It is also visually significant in demonstrating change and contributes to building community strength and pride. It has potential outcomes as regards health and well-being, jobs, training and apprenticeships.

Progressed made and future
Work on the draft business plan was completed at the end of August 2014 culminating in a formal presentation of the plan to key partners. At this point a detailed action plan will be developed and looking to implementation in 2015.

A key consideration in the preparation of the plan has been the contribution of the initiative to a critical mass of activity in Central Walker that would support this area of the Ward as a "destination". In addition to the general production of plants and shrubs both for internal consumption and as a commercial proposition there is ongoing work with both the University and MBA Graduates who undertook to study that has a focus upon the issues of:

❑   Vertical Growing Systems, their technical application on the site and the potential for the development of a separate social business that would manufacture and distribute these systems.

❑   The development of a "Garden Cafe" as part of the vision for the site.

❑   The potential for the limited production of soft fruit on the site and the production/sale of syrups and preserves.

❑   Access to social finance to support the initiative. There has already at this point been some interest generated.

3.2.2   Walker SOUP

This is a crowdfunding and new democratic micro-grant aid initiative, focused on Walker, which has the potential to bring together the whole community, integrate local economies around increased local social capital and social impact, maximize the use of available local resources and offer a new range of opportunities for community support, local philanthropy and entrepreneurialism. This will be done largely by retuning through consensus elements of the wider local economy to focus upon small scale local economic and social growth.

Walker SOUP will be a micro-granting dinner celebrating and supporting creative enterprise and community projects in the Walker Ward. For an agreed donation (which does not preclude sponsorship, grant aid, philanthropic giving etc) attendees receive food, consider four presentations on proposals around micro-business or community support ranging from, for example, art, urban agriculture, social justice, social entrepreneurs, education, technology and more.

At the events, attendees eat, talk, share resources and vote on the project they think benefits the Ward the most. A ballot is taken and the winner takes all of the money raised to carry out their project. Winners come back to a future SOUP dinner to report on their project's progress. Events may be hosted by local organisations giving an opportunity to showcase to a wider audience the work they are involved in. SOUP will also by design provide direct opportunity to introduce greater practical assistance and more particularly in creating links and positive relationships between community and local business For example two display boards entitled: *1. I need….., 2. I can offer…* will feature at all SOUP events. The benefits of these interactions will be much more far reaching than the event itself. We also anticipate spin-offs in terms of local business network, improved local supply chains, local focus on jobs etc., with the outcomes publicised locally and though social media/websites, company publications etc.

There will be 2 primary areas of activity:

Objective 1. E-Platform Crowdfunding
This would serve to develop the capacity to engage local groups and organisations of varying sizes and across sectors throughout the Ward. Part of this work is around creating transformational relationships that builds local social capital with the development worker as anchor and catalyst. We are working with Spacehive as the platform host.

Objective 2. Walker SOUP will be:

❑   a collaborative event

❑   a public dinner

❑   a platform for local connection

❑   a theatrical environment

❑   a democratic experiment in micro-funding

❑   a relational hub bringing together local communities

❑   a forum for critical but accessible discussion

❑   an opportunity to support creative people and creativity and innovation in Walker

Who is involved
An embryonic action group has already been established and met to develop a project action and implementation plan. This includes BFE, Federation of Small Business (FSB), Business in the community (BITC), Food Newcastle.   There has been significant conversation with business representatives within the ward, who have conveyed strong support for the initiative.

Contribution to resilience

This action, is one of the more potentially transformative resilience action to emerge from this work, as it connects all stakeholders in the walker community. In particular it accelerates the extent to which commercial philanthropy, is woven into the needs of the community. This was identified in the initial resilience work, as key areas in need of development.

Progressed made and future

Funding for almost all of the 2 years costs of a Development Worker to develop and deliver the project has already been sourced. We anticipate that the post will be filled by April 2015. Discussion can now proceed, on formal governance structure and procedures for the project. The project can be agreed in advance of the recruitment of the development worker.

3.2.3   Self –Build Walker

The issue of the opportunity for self-build was originally raised within the action group and a commitment given by the CEO of YHN that land would be identified to facilitate this.

Initial discussion focussed upon the availability of land as part of the of the prestigious Central Walker development. Phase 1 of the new development is due to commence in February 2015 which will include new housing development and the construction of a new supermarket. A second phase of housing will follow shortly after with both Phases 1 and 2 being completed over the course of the next 2 years. Phase 3 of the scheme is able to operate independently and therefore could potentially have been developed as soon as a coherent scheme for the site can be brought forward. The recommendation from the Planning authority however is that a Self-Build scheme would best be treated as "stand-alone" and therefore not contained within the Central Walker Scheme. At present consideration is being given to two alternative sites where the development might be located. Both alternative sites are in close proximity to the larger scheme and their viability therefore would not be compromised by a separation from that larger development.

Who is involved

Work continues within YHN as the lead organisation for this project in conjunction with the Strategic Housing Division within Newcastle City Council. The project proposal will also necessitate liaison with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) over access to appropriate funding.

Contribution to resilience

The project contributes to community cohesion in Walker. The availability of affordable housing both the rent and buy is of significant importance in a place where families and extended family wish to continue to live in relatively close proximity. The project proposal will seek to safeguard the opportunity only for those with close ties to Walker and exclude speculative acquisition.

Progressed made and future

In September 2014 Newcastle City Council received a report considering the Housing Delivery Programme and Land Asset Plan. Further to this discussion has followed on the need for greater strategic focus in collaboration linked to the following:

❑   Assessment and final agreement on the preferred development site.
❑   Develop a register of interested persons and groups and provide them with regular information and advice all stages of the process.
❑   Identify of suitable sites and premises for self-build or small scale development.
❑   Provide support, through advice and guidance and up-front preparation of sites, recouping our financial commitment through the sale of the land.
❑   Provide community led projects that meet identified need with an option of project development input, less than best disposal of land or longer term development finance support.

Discussion with officers has taken place and has identified the need for the preparation of a promotional/communications to then engage with local communities on the opportunity. At that point it would be feasible to produce promotional materials for circulation within Walker and commence the process of engagement and consultation. Additionally, there has been some early consideration as to the availability and options for financial products to assist those local people interested in pursuing this offer.

3.2.4 North Bank Skills Programme

Discussion within the action group together with wider conversations with local stakeholders over the past 12 months has led Building Futures East to embark upon a major reshaping of their vocational skills training offer.

Consultation with community and business partners, local business, Newcastle City Council (Planning, Economic Development) and the Federation of Small Business has informed their decision to open training routes in Logistics, Warehousing, Port and River Skills at their location in the heart of Walker Riverside in order to provide direct links between vocational skills training and local communities and the expanding economy of the North Bank of Tyne. It is anticipated that the new programmes will open in the next academic year (August 2015).

The weak relationship between local communities and the continuing development of the Industrial North Bank of Tyne has featured prominently in many discussions around local resilience. The physical orientation of many businesses towards the river together with the spatial separation of business from community is powerfully symbolic. With a few notable exceptions local residents are significantly underrepresented in the workforce on Walker Riverside. Unsurprising therefore that access to European funding that contributed to the start-up of Building Futures East in 2006 was in fact ESF under spend levered by the failure to connect major investment in the Tyne Corridor with local employment opportunities.

Contribution to resilience
This action is clearly making progress on collaborative working between businesses and local communities and making a contribution to address high levels of unemployment in the ward. As this involves significant commercial and strategic players across sectors, include the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), it offers potential for different agendas to combine in Walker for the benefits of walker residents. This reach of the work hooks walker and its future economic destiny into wider strategic economic development activities on the Tyne and within the wider city region.

Progress made and future
BFE are advanced in planning on the delivery of a suite of accredited and non-accredited related vocational skills programmes, in the next academic year i.e from August 2015. Discussion on the content of these programmes, is fully supported by BFE's major FE partner- Tyne-Met college.

3.2.5 Programme for accelerating Social Enterprise in Walker

The initial resilience assessment work, identified a lack of entrepreneurships within walker. In this it is desirable to provide a means by which social enterprise awareness and development could be elevated. This emerging programme, offers this opportunity.

This project proposal therefore, will embed Walker into a programme for social enterprise development activities and training.

This activity involves 3 elements:

❑ research into historical models and examples of social enterprise businesses across the North East (successes and failures) to develop and inform support for future in Walker. Project research will include oral interviews with key people and involve gathering material from a range of archival and public sources to enrich 6 case studies.

❑ 6 case studies, we will liaise with our partners to ensure appropriateness to local needs, but which have applicability and value to a wider audience. The partnership will be assisted in identifying case study enterprises by Sustainable Enterprise Strategies, a North East based organisation with over twenty years experience in working with social enterprises in the region.

❑ Learning Materials. learning materials and vehicles for learning aimed at mature learners and school children in Walker will be produced. These will include online accessible podcasts by key social entrepreneurs, organised talks by interviewees and interactive learning tools and packs highlighting the keys points to be learned from the case studies.

❑   Development of social enterprises. From this it is expected that this context creates a solid basis by which social enterprise within walker can be developed. For instance it is evident that this work can support other actions detailed here (i.e Walker Soup).

Who is involved

To support delivery a partnership has been developed between Northumbria University, WEA and Building Futures East.

Contribution to resilience

The project proposal offers further opportunities for growth in cross sector collaboration and to further extend local networks and relationships. Modest contributions might be achieved in both learning and business development that have practical implications for social business start-up and quality of life improvement.

Progressed made and future

There will be a key event to launch the project and the learning materials, which will be integrated into the activities supporting social enterprise development organised by Building Futures East and partner organisations in Walker. Some of these activities will be aimed at schools, others at older learners.

Project funding is currently being sought to support the costs of:

❑   Relevant staff training

❑   Research and produce six case studies

❑   Archive case study materials

❑   Produce learning tools and materials

❑   Design and deliver online content and activities

❑   Launch event

4   LESSONS LEARNT

This section details the key lessons for this work. This work revealed a number of issues in terms of the ability of public, social and commercial stakeholders to address issues and build resilience in a small neighbourhood, with significant social and economic issues. These lessons resonate within Walker and the wider Newcastle, but perhaps more importantly they reflect wider national issues, in terms of collaborative action for social and economic development. In this these lessons reveal the opportunities but also the challenges.

4.1   Austerity limited innovation

Public sector austerity has meant that the public services and public sector inputs to areas such as Walker have been in decline. This has meant that there has been a loss of public sector staff, a drop in morale of remaining staff, general uncertainty and monetary resource restrictions. This context created difficulties for public sector staff on the action group and meant there was very little additional monetary resource to support new and 'experimental' activity. Furthermore, this context meant that there was perhaps a tendency to hunker down and play safe, with less desire to take risks and embrace fully this innovative approach to neighbourhood development

As such the action group momentum and the potential for catalysing actions were influenced by an austerity context which limited proactivity and momentum building. In this there were particular issues for local government.

4.1.1   Local Government austerity

Local government is a key element to the life of local places, like Walker. In resilience terms they are important in a network of relationships and collaborations which support people, communities and business. Services such as education, roads, parks and social services all create a context in which public, social and commercial life can take place.

Local government should be at the centre of facilitating and brokering networks, collaborating and connection across all sectors within a place. They are the host, ensuring social life and commercial success can get on and do their thing. However, if Local Government loses the ability to host - to act as a key networker - commercial and social life will suffer. Furthermore, networks are crucial for developing economic, human and social capital. Vibrant economies are predicated on business being connected to other businesses and having skilled, healthy and happy staff. Individuals and communities must feel safe and live in clean and green places.

However, the cuts to local government have weakened two things. On the one hand they have eroded the ability of local government to act as a good host, as they now have less resource and capacity to support social and commercial life. They no longer can ensure that effective connections and collaborations and relationships are made. Secondly, the cuts have eroded economic, social, human capital. As a result the UK and many local areas are becoming less resilient and less able to deal with negative change and grab emerging opportunities. In short, many local places are losing their ability to bounce back from adverse events, protect the most vulnerable and grow society and the economy.

The irony is that in times of pressure on public spending, we must pay more, not less, attention to local networks and look to see how they can be strengthened. In hard times, there is a need for closer, well connected networks. Public services, private endeavour, people and communities must rally round. We know that strong networks in place can improve synergy and come up with innovative and new ideas.

4.2   Embracing a different approach?

This process was designed to be fundamentally different to previous forms of partnership, regeneration or project activity. This approach was not about implementing projects, with an identified pot of monetary resource, instead it sought to identify areas for collaboration and catalyse and stimulating action through the action group, who sought to work and stimulate new ways to working.

In this, some self-motivated and innovative input from the action group was in evidence and some successes were made. Some members of the action group, clearly revelled in the new approach and developed their organisations and their own approach as a result. However, this was far from universal and consistent.

Where the new approach was not fully embraced, members of the action group tended to either focus on their own pre-existing projects, or looked to BFE and/or CLES to instigate and take the lead. One could surmise that this restraint was driven by institutional pressures and/or a dominant regeneration and project based mentality.

Issues of social and economic hardship within areas like Walker, are only likely to be fully addressed, when a deeper sense of obligation and willingness to flex and bend is in evidence.

4.2.1 Honesty as to what works or fails

Some within the public and social sectors are reluctant to admit that longstanding ways of working are not achieving results. This includes a failure to provide appropriate solutions to changing needs now and in the future. It was noted that on occasion some stakeholders within this process, were driven by a desire to prove that they were already doing very good things, with failure to recognise flaws of inadequacies in their prevailing activity. Linked to this was a tendency for activity to self-serve their own needs rather than the communities of Walker.

4.2.2 Scale of aspirations

It is common in areas such as Walker for individuals, community, public authorities and businesses to have low aspirations. Walker is no different. In this, years of disadvantage have eroded hope and expectation. This was an issue in this work. In attempts to try something different we were occasionally confronted by comments which suggested that these sorts of things had been tried before (with no success), and that instead of relatively small scale action the area needed a complete 'game changer'.

4.2.3 Community weariness

Walker has been subject to a range of initiatives over a generation. As such, the community has become both dependent on initiatives and funding, as well and have become sceptical and perhaps jaded by the raising of expectations and occasionally unrealised outcomes. To be frank, Walker has not changed that much in last 25 years. This means that as a consequence this work, was initially received within a community which had a degree of scepticism, with some reluctance to engage and embrace.

4.2.4 Co-produced solutions are comparatively new in Walker

The long standing problems facing Walker for many years have been subject to much action over a number of years. From the 1980's a succession of initiatives have sought to address the problems, many of them with targeted outcomes, outputs and constrained timelines. Whilst these approaches had merit, they arguably failed to tackle the under-lying and systemic issues.

In this, there is an evident paternalism toward Walker, which is laudable, but not unproblematic. Some of the professional agencies wish to provide for, rather than produce solutions in true collaboration with local citizens. However, Co-produced solutions involving a partnership between citizens and public services to better achieve agreed objectives, is not a strong feature of service activity or project activity in Newcastle. There is little history of citizens developing greater control over resources and decisions. Nevertheless, this work sought to make a break with this type of response and sought to look at the creation of solutions with the community.

In this work we found that whilst some in the action group and citizens were willing, we have some way to go before the culture of paternalism and top down agency approach is altered.

4.3   Over emphasis on Economic growth and rising economic tide

This work took place against a backdrop of ongoing economic turbulence and uncertainty. Clearly, this created a problematic context, as many of the problems within Walker and its people were being driven by lack of economic opportunity. However, arguably the recent history of Walker- even in the good times of economic buoyancy- were not that positive. The pre 2008 growth, did change the fortunes of some in walker, but it still remained one of the most deprived areas in Newcastle and the North east. As such the work sought to 'break the mould' of previous activity, by looking to catalyse more independent Local economic activity and raising the levels of self esteem and local entrepreneurship.

However, this emphasis was in part stymied, by a dominant city growth narrative, which focussed on large infrastructural investments, the city centre and traditional routes to economic and social development. So local communities, people and society were often seen as mere downstream recipients of economic success via trickle down. Instead we should see local people as active upstream parts of a system which creates success in the first place.

The role of civil society, human and social capital are community resilience were poor relations in this narrative.   As such the work in Walker, in part suffered as human and social capital were perceived as being largely dependent on wider economic growth and buoyancy, rather than an alternative and sustainable input to it.

It is evident that the concept of stimulating local resilience without concomitant economic growth was difficult for some to grasp. Some individuals found it antithetical to consider growth in social capital and local innovation and the positive reconstruction of local stakeholder relationships across sectors without an expanding local economy or additional financial resource.

This reliance upon conventional regeneration and economic development thinking and practice, may be dominant in Newcastle and the country more generally. However, it is no longer viable or sustainable in relation to the scale of the issues faced and/or the national fiscal or global economic context.

4.4   Failure to identify key local advocate/connector

It was an expected output of the activity to identify a key connector/local activist who would act as a clear champion for actions. Initially we sensed this may have came from the action group. However, in the absence of this emerging leadership, the role of instigator more often than not passed to the action group chairs.

Whilst the activities undertaken naturally interacted with key local groups, organisations and activists. It is perhaps due to the contextual scale of the challenge, that leadership was sought for the action group leads for direction.

In many respects this might have been expected. However, the primary purpose of the work was to catalyse new advocates. Where relationships were advanced we witness the product of these in the early actions detailed.

We anticipate that an outcome of initiatives such as "Walker Soup" will, though not exclusively, produce an ongoing crop of key local advocates, mentors and connectors across sectors.

5   CONCLUSIONS

These conclusions, briefly reflect on the overall activity and indicate some key future messages, in undertaking work of this type in the future.

Overall, the walker resilience work, has been an innovative and experimental approach to neighbourhood development. This has come with key successes. This includes:

- ❑   Understanding of the community resilience in Walker and what needs to happen to make Walker more resilient

- ❑   Creation of new and productive relations between people and organisations and across sectors who may not have collaborated, in the absence of this project.

- ❑   A set of actions which are making a difference and will continue to do so in the future as they progress.

- ❑   Some participants in the process have developed and learnt new skills and knowledge, which are being taken in the actions and in their work more generally.

As regards the key future messages there are four key points.

1)   Flexible outcomes. This project had clear aims and objectives. However, they were not rigid or restrictive. This was of great importance. They allowed the activity to be unfettered and did not place limitations on thinking and allowed previously unimagined activity to blossom. This of course represents some risk for the funder. However, as the actions have shown, this leap of faith has been and will continue to be rewarded.

2)   Leadership and coordination. Projects of this type are very heavily dependent on effective local leadership and coordination. This project benefitted greatly from having a local organisation, with the necessary drive, commitment and abilities to maintain momentum and catalyse key collaboration. Without BFE and the people qualities, projects of this type would struggle.

3)   Resources of time, not just projects. It was important that this project resourced time. This includes time to facilitate, time to discuss, time to explore. In this we recognise that project money and grants are important. However, as the actions have shown, it is the funding of the time to develop the ideas, which is all too often overlooked. It is imperative that time to develop decent and workable ideas is planned for. This project allowed that to occur and many of the actions have earmarked resources or have plans in the pipeline.

4)   Sharing of learning and communication. In undertaken this piece of work, it is vital that the learning derived is openly available to a range of stakeholders. This was a principle throughout this work. Indeed on a number of occasions as part of the action progression we have met with range of other stakeholders, shared our work, and explored collaborations.

APPENDIX 1

Action group

Members of the action group

❑   Anthony Woods-Waters, Chair. Chief Executive, Building Futures East (BFE)

❑   Neil McInroy, Chief Executive, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

❑   Father Conaty (MBE), Parish Priest, St Anthony of Padua, Walker

❑   Cllr John Stokel-Walker, Walker ward, Newcastle City Council

❑   Sally Young, Chief Executive, Newcastle CVS

❑   John Lee, Chief Executive, Your Homes Newcastle

❑   Jo Curry, Chief Executive, VONNE

❑   Simon Hanson, North East Development Manager, Federation of Small Business (FSB)

❑   Roy Stanley, Entrepreneur.

❑   Edward Banks, Economic Development Officer, Newcastle City Council

❑   Jan Cromarty, Co-Head of Communities Service, Policy, Strategy and Comms, Newcastle City Council

❑   Chris Sayers, Trustee of BFE/ Chair of Board of Northumbria University

❑   Debra Lagun, Communities Officer, Newcastle City Council

APPENDIX 3

Workshop report

RESILIENCE EVENT – BUILD FUTURES EAST

On 14th October a group of stakeholders from the Walker community met at Building Futures East's office to discuss the actions proposed in the recent CLES resilience analysis. One aim of discussion was to consider these actions and reflect upon their appropriateness and who might be responsible for delivering these. A second aim was to consider which priority actions the group thought needed greater emphasis or had been missed out from the report.

The group focussed on a number of themes:

❑ Reducing health inequalities;

❑ An improved living and working environment;

❑ Access to services, facilities and information;

❑ Realising aspirations and strengthening relationships within the community; and

❑ Supporting young people.

This briefing presents key messages along each of these themes from discussion, focussing on the priorities identified by stakeholders, with a final section highlighting the additional points raised for consideration.

Reducing Health Inequalities

The resilience report highlighted the vulnerability of Walker in terms of health inequalities, so this was a key area for discussion during the stakeholder discussion. The group supported the notion that health is a significant problem in the area, though emphasised mental health as a key concern which is increasing, as opposed to physical concerns which are perceived to be relatively stable. Mental health was considered to be very closely linked to unemployment, with a reciprocal feedback loop between the two trapping some people in a cycle of poor mental health and very limited access to employment.

ISOS Housing Group, who has stock in Walker, offers dedicated support for people who may be struggling with their mental health. In the face of austere economic times and the relative unavailability of jobs, there has been a rise in the need for these services. In addition to the legacy of post-industrial disease and diseases of poverty (for example poor nutrition), mental health issues are limiting the population of Walker.

There are also local issues around social care. Stakeholders at the discussion said that there are 'always' vacancies in Walker which they struggle to fill. The opportunities offered by this type of employment are also problematic for those who take the work. Minimum wage combined with poor terms and conditions make this sort of work unpopular and challenging. There remains a need for suitable care workers who choose the profession. There is a perceived risk that often those who fill local vacancies do so because they feel forced by economic circumstance to take the work, rather than necessarily having the personal desire to work in social care. Needs for social care are rising in the area, so work needs to be done to ensure vacancies are both filled, and filled by appropriate staff who have a genuine interest and skills for caring.

Participants in the discussion said that they have seen evidence that community involvement improves mental health, and so community involvement may be a start to tackling this issue in Walker. A more significant factor in mental health in the area is the urgent need to get local people into work. Conversely, mental health is considered to be largely 'hidden' as people do not wish to disclose them for fear of stigma preventing future employment. This can leave problems to remain unaddressed, leaving people to struggle alone.

An Improved Living & Working Environment

One suggestion highlighted in the resilience paper was self-build homes, which was discussed in the stakeholder group. Generally, further clarification around this point is needed. The group were not convinced that this was realistic, or who would take the lead on this, or indeed its objectives in terms of supporting Walker's development. It was suggested that individuals living in Walker might not be sufficiently resourced with the skills, confidence or finance to self-build their own new homes.

A more pressing issue for Walker is the lack of 1 bed housing stock, an increasingly pressing issue in light of the single room subsidiary measures the Coalition Government has enforced. There are also problems with the existing housing stock, and improvements are needed in many homes.

The discussion group suggested that Section 106 agreements could be used more effectively to deliver project and improvements within Walker. The Social Value Act and the Community Infrastructure Levy might also be used more effectively to generate local improvements. There may be gains to be had through assessing local procurement methods for businesses operating in Walker – identifying local opportunities and benefits of using the local work force could support this.

In terms of the assets which Walker has at its disposal, the group notes that there is a lot of unused, open land. Though some sites might need remediation if there are contamination issues created by their industrial legacy, one use for these might be allotments. Allotments are in high demand across Newcastle, and this could bring links between residents from different areas of the city.

Realising Aspiration & Strengthening Relationships within the Community

The group suggested that people in communities across the country, not just in Walker, tend to act individualistically and in 'selfish' ways. This contradicts how the group think the community needs to work in order to have strong, resilient relationships. It was agreed by many in discussion that children should be a key focus of initial community engagement exercises to enable people to identify from the outsets the benefits of community relations to their own lives.

In Walker, there are high levels of community engagement in certain groups, particularly older cohorts of residents. In particular, many of the community organisations are organised and ran by, as well as populated by, older people from the community. There is a real need to get younger people involved in these groups in order to preserve their longevity, or there is a risk they will disappear as people become unable to continue their current roles.

It was also noted that the ways in which people engage, particularly for younger people, has evolved. Some of the newer means of communication, in particular using social media, may not be readily accessible to older groups. There is a need to train groups with both general and specific IT skills so they have the capacity to engage communities online. This can be used to demonstrate to harder to reach groups the opportunities available in their local area.

ISOS Housing Group has a Community Investment Strategy which has identified Walker as one of its six key areas for investment. It has consultants and staff who are working towards issues which the community has identified in Walker. ISOS is directly investing £300,000 into Walker as part of its investment strategy. Its key areas of focus are:

❑   Employment;

❑   Up-skilling;

❑   Working with young people; and

❑   Investing in stock.

ISOS also has a small grant aid pot called 'My Community Fund' which can be used for community initiatives, though they recognise that the process of application can take a long time.

There is a need to avoid duplication of resource and effort between local actors who might be working towards the same or very similar objectives. There are also difficulties which might be encountered through partnership working as diverse organisations may have diverse motivations and political slants. The group noted that often organisations 'think they can do it all' and this might not be the most effective way of working at the neighbourhood level.

Supporting Young People

The group notes that many young people are not entitled to JSA, and so their support is 'hidden' issue as they do not show up in statistics. Possible ways of engaging these people is working within schools, investing in targeting these groups or running simple projects such as community art schemes or local

competitions. Involving young people in designing local features, such as community art, can develop a sense of neighbourhood ownership which may reduce vandalism in the long term.

There is a need to match employers' needs to skills and experiences of local people. This might be achieved through creating a link between employers and school, perhaps offering mentoring schemes or a programme of getting professionals into schools to give talks about the realities of qualification requirements in different fields. It is evident that functional skills levels are low in Walker, and this may be due to students not recognising the need to have these for many of the jobs they will be seeking. As the construction industry has picked up, there is a shortfall in suitable local staff and this needs to be addressed through education. However, engaging schools is considered more difficult in Academies (of which the local school is one) as the local authority no longer has direct control over their curriculum or activities.

One good example of engaging young people in volunteering through demonstrating personal benefit is Manchester University's 'Manchester Leadership Programme'. This offers, alongside coursework requirements, accreditation for local volunteering. Its emphasis is on training young people to recognise the role of local leadership. There may be scope for getting Newcastle-based Universities involved in delivering programmes in Walker.

Additional priorities

The group discussion also identified a number of additional areas for discussion and ideas which might be developed in future. These are bulleted below:

❑ There is a danger of reliance upon traditional public sector responses to local need or responses which are top down in a time of limited resources;

❑ There is a need to used the excellent work and strategic planning/ activity of organisations/ exemplar organisations as a framework for wider social action;

❑ There is a feeling that real issues are much more local and relationship focussed at a ward level. This local focus is needed to build upon local trust and the credibility of local organisations on the ground;

❑ Resilience is developed through smaller scale projects, such as time banks, digi banks and dualistic advisors;

❑ Wider local connections must be activated and focussed around an agreed and shared vision for Walker. This could be supported by a 'Big Conversation' type event;

❑ There needs to be an assessment of the capacity for engagement from smaller organisations, and who might lead on strategic work;

❑ A notion of 'What Walker Wants' in terms of work, opportunities and health might be developed;

❑ There may be issues of accountability and organisational insularity which need to be addressed for complementary working and integration;

❑ An alliance of stakeholders committed to a better future for Walker needs to be developed to take forward ambitions for the local area – this will need careful consideration of who should be involved, what would be the roles and responsibilities of this group and how would it be accountable. There could be a conflict risk with other organisations if this group is set up;

❑ 'Sticky messages' coming out of this group would be important for people to recognise its work as relevant and important to them and their local community; and

❑ There is an opportunity to engage with staff in Human Geography at Northumbria University to undertake a local survey.

APPENDIX 2

Resilience in Walker Report

RESILIENCE IN WALKER, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
Final report prepared by
Centre for Local Economic Strategies
Presented to
Community Foundation

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FIGURES

TABLES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About CLES

Established in 1986, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) is an independent organisation and network of subscribing organisations involved in regeneration, community development and local governance. CLES brings together incisive and independent policy research with robust consultancy work, as well as providing membership, events and training services. CLES acquired New Start magazine in 2010 and launched a new online service; teaming up with New Start has increased CLES' capacity to disseminate research findings to a wide audience of policymakers and practitioners across the economic/community development and regeneration sector.

1.2 Background to the research

> 'Resilience is an emergent property of a system – it's not a result of any one of the system's parts but of the synergy between all its parts. So, as a rough and ready rule, boosting the ability of each part to take care of itself in a crisis boosts overall resilience.' [1]

In July 2009, CLES published a piece of research entitled '*Towards a new wave of local economic activism: The future for economic strategies.*'[2] This piece of research introduced the CLES resilience model, a conceptual framework designed to show the structure of a local economy and the relationships that exist and influence it. CLES believes resilience is an important aspect of any local economy as it allows a locality to be change ready and adaptable, riding global economic punches, recovering quickly, working within environmental limits, and having high levels of social inclusion.

To achieve a better understanding of a local economy and therefore its resilience, the research acknowledged a better understanding is needed of how different economic spheres – broadly categorised into public, commercial and social – interact with each other and are mutually dependent for achieving positive development outcomes. Based on these interdependencies, the research found that a truly holistic approach, but not necessarily the same blend of factors in each area, is needed to achieve prosperous local economies which can be translated into a better quality of life for all people living in a locality.

While the framework provides a useful model, there was a need for CLES to understand whether the resilience model could be practically applied to a local economy. CLES released a call for local authorities that would be interested in partnering CLES in the first wave of a pilot resilience research project. Following a great deal of interest, CLES selected eight localities across England that covered a range of different geographical areas:

1) Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils;
2) Cambridgeshire County Council[3] and West Suffolk[4];
3) Cherwell District Council;
4) Manchester City Council;
5) Northumberland County Council;
6) Southern Staffordshire Partnership[5];
7) Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Councils;
8) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

The pilot projects were designed to be collaborative and were carried out as a full partnership process. It provided CLES with an opportunity to test their new methodology while allowing the participating authorities to be involved with an innovative piece of research that will provide the areas with recommendations around how they can improve the relationships that exist and therefore the resilience of the locality.

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[1] Thomas Homer-Dixon, The Upside of Down, Souvenir Press Ltd, 2006
[2] Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Towards a New Wave of Local Economic Activism: The Future for Economic Strategies. 2009 http://www.cles.org.uk/files/104252/FileName/Newwave%28webversion%29.pdf
[3] Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council
[4] West Suffolk is made up of St Edmundsbury District Council and Forest Heath District Council
[5] East Staffordshire District Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Lichfield District Council and Tamworth District Council

Following on from the resilience pilot work in 2010/11, CLES launched a new research programme for 2011/12, which takes some of the learning from the previous research and explores the application of our work on resilience in town centres, neighbourhoods and within communities.

1.2.1 A new approach

Our approach is to provide a functional evaluation of how a local economy is structured by using a mix of data and local intelligence; and then, more importantly, using a bespoke set of evaluation tools to understand the relationships that flow internally through the local economic territory, and the impact of the external relationships on the area.

The level of resilience is judged by analysing information about a place through the lens of ten resilience measures. These measures relate to the different types of relationship that exist within a locality, and how these relationships mutually reinforce the resilience of local areas, such as:

❑ Sense of place;
❑ An attractive public realm;
❑ Supporting local trade, trust and reciprocity;
❑ Planning with communities for success;
❑ Ensuring accessibility, safety and security; and
❑ Building a supportive local governance regime.

We face a time of great change in our local areas as the impacts post-recession bite deeper; this does not mean they have no future, but it does mean they need to shape a different destiny by meeting communities' ever changing needs. We believe that prevention is better than cure (and generally requires lower investment); and that a programme of monitoring the resilience of local areas is crucial for future economic success.

2   CLES' RESILIENCE MODEL

Figure 1: The CLES resilience model
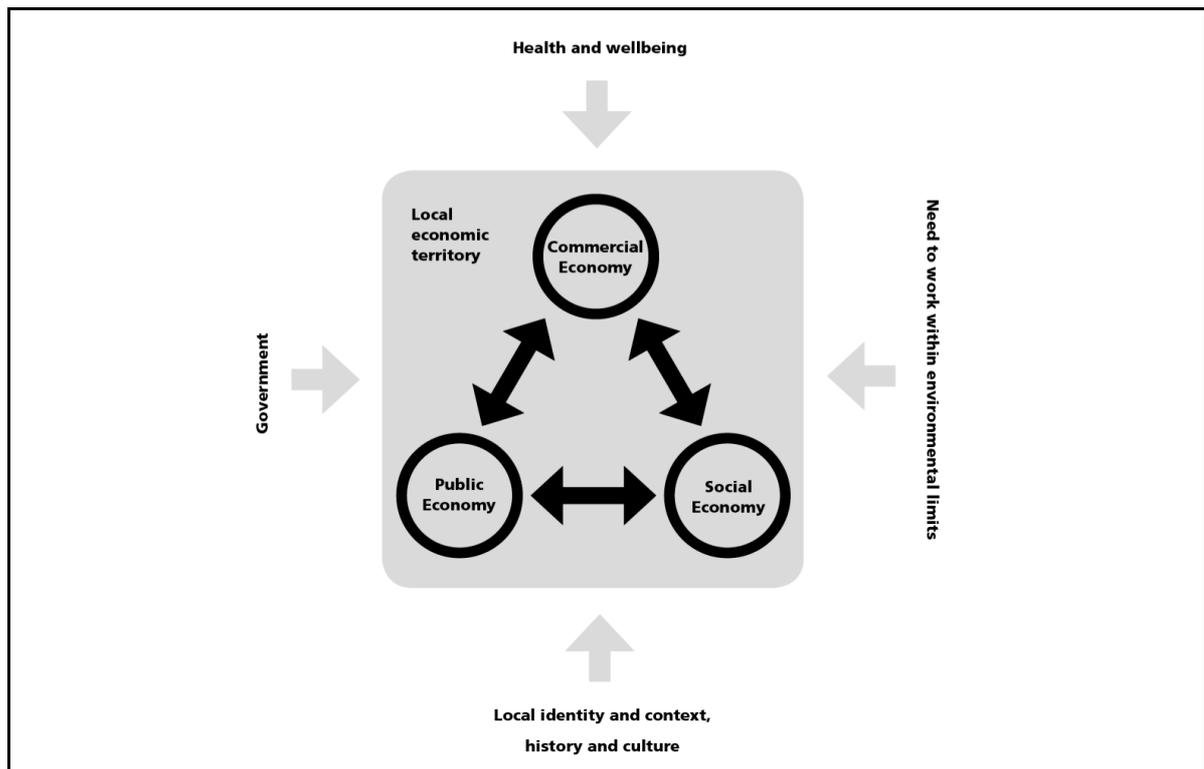
2.1   Introduction

The CLES resilience model provides a visual representation of how a local economic territory is structured and identifies the outside influences that have an effect on how it functions. The model has been designed to ensure all parts of the economy are represented: the commercial economy is often seen as the most important part of a local economy; the public sector can have considerable influence on a locality through procurement spend and employment opportunities; and the social sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy by employing local people, delivering local services and contributing to local supply chains.

What makes the resilience model stand out is that it acknowledges the relative strength of the reciprocal relationships between the public, private and social sectors that helps generate resilience within an area. Stronger mutual relationships allow a locality to be more flexible and reactionary if faced with an economic or environmental shock; however the model remains a developing concept and, as the projects continue, we are continuing to mould and adapt our ideas.

The resilience model is broken down into ten different measures which are considered in the sections below. This is how the resilience model was turned from a conceptual framework into a structure that could be effectively mapped to a locality to assess resilience through research.

2.2   The commercial, public and social sectors

Measure 1 – The commercial economy
The commercial economy is defined as economic wealth creation generated by businesses that are privately owned and profit motivated.

Measure 2 – The public economy
The public economy consists of services delivered on behalf of government organisations whether national, regional or local, and funded by the public purse.

Measure 3 – The social economy
The social economy embraces a wide range of community, voluntary and not-for-profit activities that try to bring about positive local change.

2.3   Cross sector relationships within the local economic territory

Measure 4 – Relationship between the commercial and public economies

This measure looks at the attitudes of the commercial sector to the public sector and vice versa. It explores the existence and effectiveness of partnerships between the two sectors and the level of interaction between the two parts of the economy (e.g. does a locality have an effective Chamber of Commerce that meets regularly with public sector partners? Is the economic development policy right to stimulate a successful private sector?)

Measure 5 – Relationship between the public and social sectors

Measure 5 looks at how the public and social sectors interact, and the strengths of the relationships that exist. This part of the study particularly explores how the social sector interacts with the public sector, and how much influence they have in shaping the economy of the local economic territory.

Measure 6 – Relationship between the social and commercial economies

Measure 6 explores how the social economy works together with the commercial sector. This involves looking at the level of corporate social responsibility within a locality as well as other areas, such as funding volunteering programmes or working together strategically to develop positive local change.

2.4   External factors

Measure 7 – Health and wellbeing and the relationship to the local economic territory

Measure 7 examines how local health and wellbeing issues relate to the local economy. This includes ill health, quality of life and leisure patterns.

Measure 8 – Relationship between the local economic territory and working within environmental limits

Measure 8 explores how the sustainability agenda has been integrated into the economy of the local economic territory. The study looks at climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, how these have been integrated into strategy and policy, and the propensity of green space.

Measure 9 – Relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and context

To a large extent, individual histories, identities (self-identified and perceived), culture and places shape the baseline that local economies start from and the direction they take in future development. Local conditions, in terms of society and the labour market, economic strength, specialisation and sectoral mix, and the urban and natural environment, are highly influential on determining outcomes.

Measure 10 – Governance

Measure 10 looks at how policy has affected the local economic territory, and understanding how the various levels of government encourage or restrict the development of a resilient economy. It can also involve looking at whether the locality has developed cases of best practice that have been translated to a national level.

3   METHODOLOGY

We conducted a 'light touch' qualitative review of the relationships, working practices and strengths of Walker between the three sectors in order to define the resilience of the locality. This took two stages, and is ongoing as more interviews are scheduled which may influence our current conclusions.

3.1   Stage 1: Qualitative research

The objective for Stage 1 was to gain a greater understanding of the strengths of the relationships that exist between the public, private and social sectors within Walker, and assess how all influences (Measures 1-10) affect the local economic territory. We also looked at secondary data to understand in more detail the strategic issues facing Walker and the Newcastle area.

This stage of the research looked to examine qualitatively how the private, public and social sectors interacted and worked together. To do this, CLES have so far undertaken around 10 strategic interviews with representatives from across the three sectors, with more scheduled as the work progresses. The strategic interviews seek views from each interviewee around any resources that exist to stimulate and strengthen relationships within the economy, and what responses have emerged.

3.2   Stage 2: Collating the evidence and determining resilience

Stage 2 involves using the information accumulated through Stage 1 to determine the resilience of Walker as a locality. The first step was to use the information from the policy analysis and interviews to describe how the relationships indicated by Measures 1-10 were structured in Walker. Based on these findings, conclusions about the resilience of the Walker economy could be made.

Each measure is positioned on a scale ranging from 'resilient' to 'brittle'. The four descriptive 'rankings' are defined as follows:

1)   Resilient – there is compelling evidence of robust relationships within and between the different spheres of the local economy, and these relationships have been developed in bold and innovative ways. The three sectors are working together very effectively and are having a clear positive impact on the locality, evident in partners' responses to local challenges and wider economic influences. The strong relationships and resources present make the area very well prepared to deal with economic, social and environmental shocks;

2)   Stable – there is evidence of sound relationships within and between the different spheres of the local economy; and adequate communication within and between the sectors, often facilitated by dependable forums. There is some evidence that the sectors are working together well or they have robust internal dynamics, supported by examples of where the sectors have come together to develop local responses to challenges. The relationships and resources present make the area relatively prepared for shocks, and there is some evidence that partners are responding to wider economic influences; however more creative collaboration is required in order to strengthen local resilience;

3)   Vulnerable – the relationships within and between the different sectors are significantly underdeveloped. Whilst there may be some communication, it tends not to be sustained or strategic. As such, relationships may be precarious. There is very limited evidence of the sectors coming together to respond to local challenges or wider influences; without improvement, the local economy will be vulnerable to shocks; and

4)   Brittle – there is little evidence of relationships within and between the different sectors. Where internal and cross-sector relationships exist, they are often characterised by tension and conflict. The sectors are not working collaboratively to respond to local challenges or to address wider influences on the area. The locality is therefore very susceptible to economic and social shocks.

Following the assessment, we outline recommendations (for discussion) to further embed resilience in Walker in the future.

4 WALKER: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section provides an outline of some of the key challenges that Walker ward faces, as well as outlining some of the opportunities through recent regeneration activity. It therefore provides a context for the rest of the study as we aim to demonstrate the 'readiness' of structures, people and institutions within Walker to be able to address the issues the locality faces.

4.1 The socio-economic challenges facing Walker

Walker is located on the North bank of the Tyne in the east end of Newcastle, and was a traditional home to the shipbuilding community in the city. As the dockyards in the city declined, the locality experienced significant economic restructuring which brought about major socio-economic challenges which it is still grappling with today. The population in the area has declined over time and life expectancy levels are around 10 years lower than the city average. Walker suffers from significant deprivation amongst a range of indicators and is afflicted by high levels of worklessness. Job growth in the city has not benefited local residents, many of whom live on very low incomes. As a result of these challenges poverty levels are high. The issues facing the locality are summed up in the Walker Riverside Area Action Plan highlighting the multitude of interdependent factors which have contributed to the decline:[6]

'With low levels of skills and income, high unemployment and poor access to jobs and services, residents of Walker have become increasingly excluded from the facilities taken for granted by the majority of Newcastle's residents. This has a knock on effect on health, crime and education in the area, while the environment has suffered from piecemeal and reactive demolition in response to low housing demand.'

Figure 1: Location of Walker ward
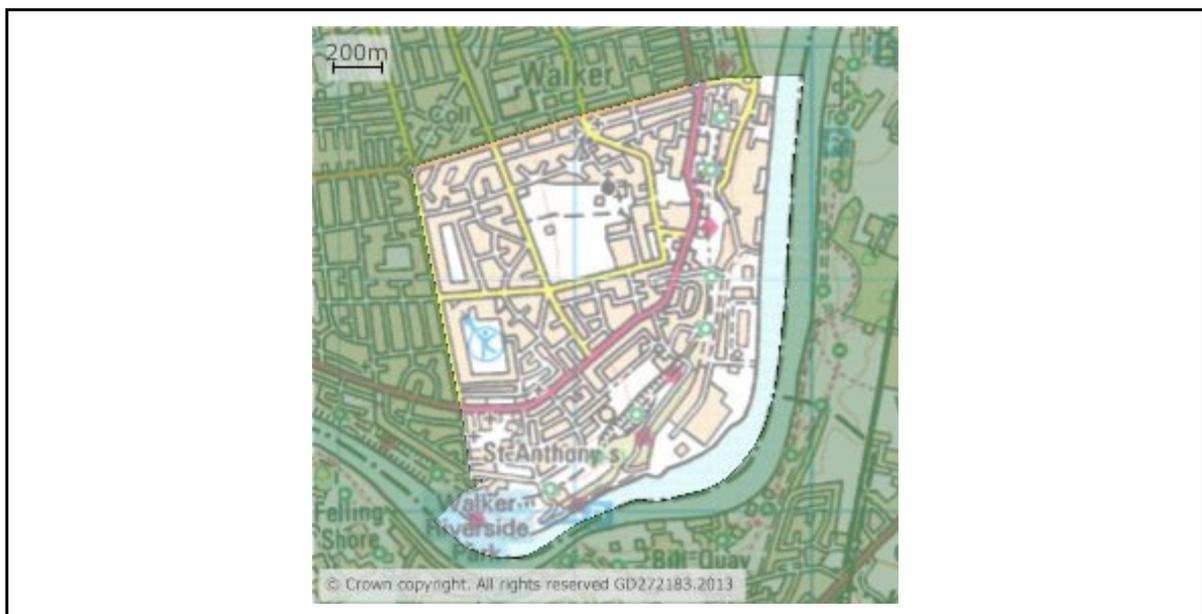
4.1.1 The local labour force

Figure 2 shows the disproportionately high number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in Walker (over 850 in February 2013). Only Elswick ward has a higher volume of claimants across the city. The JSA rate as a proportion of the working age population stands at 11.9%, considerably higher than the Newcastle (5.2%) and Great Britain (3.9%) levels.

It is possible that a relatively large proportion of these have moved across to JSA from Employment and Support Allowance as part of the ongoing Work Capability Assessment. But a third of the JSA claimants (33.3%) are aged 18-24, and this is high compared with the Newcastle (27.9%) and Great Britain (27.0%) figures. This suggests entrenched youth unemployment and lack of opportunity for many either within Walker or beyond, combined with low skills and educational attainment.

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[6] Source: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/wwwfileroot/legacy/regen/ldf/Walker_Riverside_AAP.pdf

Figure 2: Jobseekers Allowance claimants across Newcastle's wards, February 2013
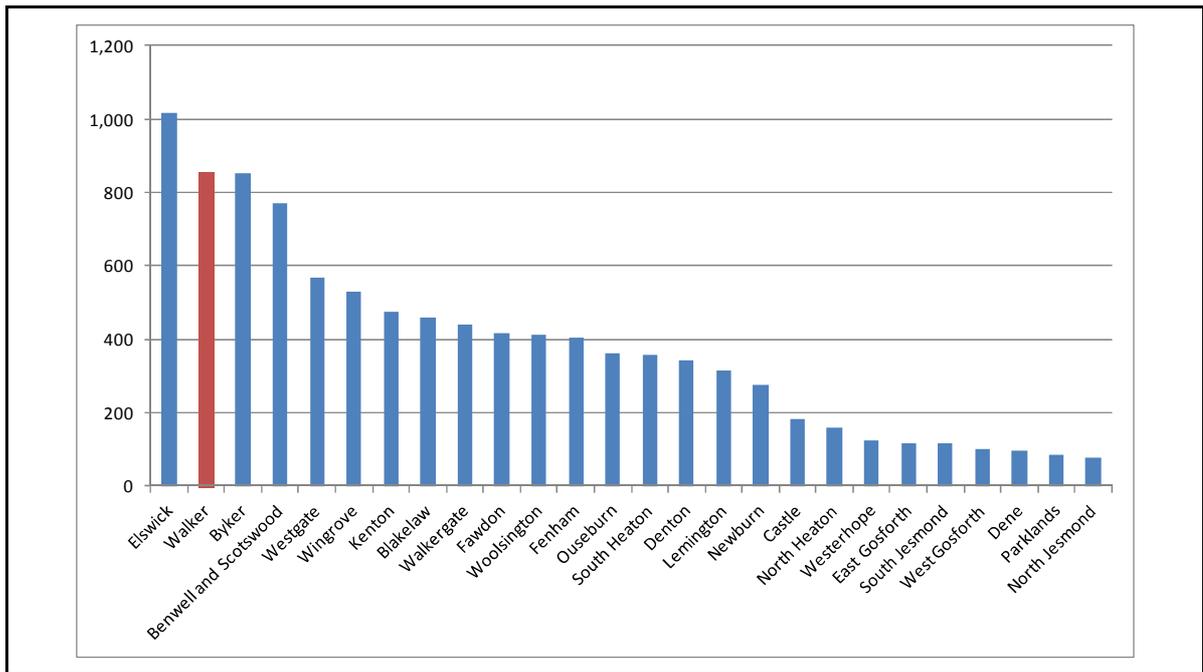
Figure 3 shows the volume by ward of total out of work benefits across Newcastle's wards. Walker is the fourth highest with over 1,750 claimants (this does not include other benefits such as Housing Benefit). In terms of the relative size of the out of work cohort it is particularly high with 35% of people claiming benefits. This is also reflected in Figure 4 showing the proportion of those claiming Employment and Support Allowance. 735 people across Walker claim this benefit. At 14.6% of the working age population this is double the Newcastle level (14.6%) and much higher than the Great Britain level (6.3%).

Table 1 illustrates these benefits and more. Due to the high ESA and incapacity benefit levels this means that there are relatively more carers in Walker, and added to this the proportion claiming Lone Parent income support benefit is high. Therefore the data shows that there are a multitude of challenges facing Walker's residents, from short to long term unemployment and long term worklessness. This constricts the opportunities afforded to local people and outlines the complex challenges facing practitioners, which requires a multi-sector and agency approach in order to strengthen the local labour market.

Figure 3: Total out of work benefits across Newcastle's wards, February 2013
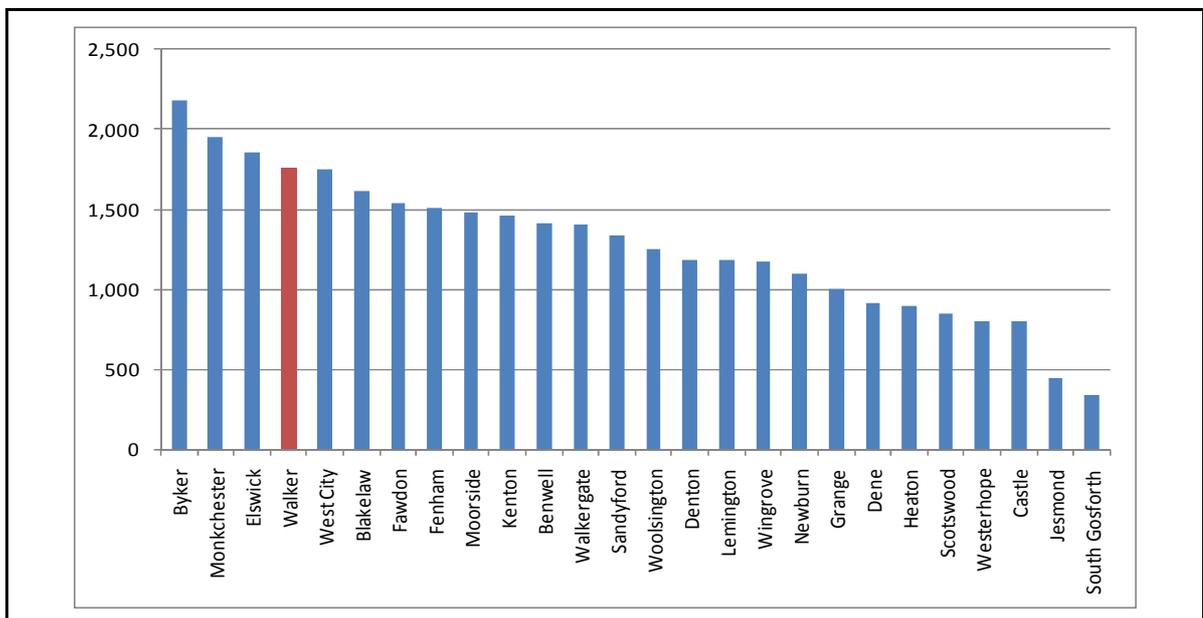
Figure 4: Total Employment and Support Allowance benefit across Newcastle's wards, February 2013
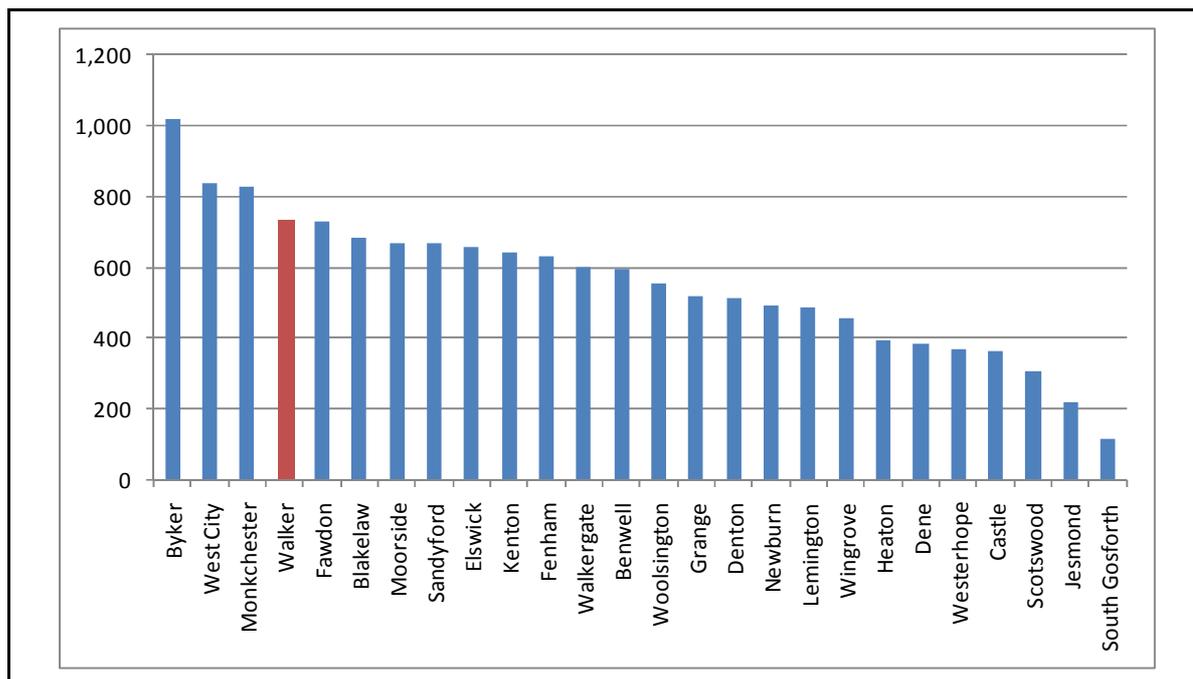
Table 1: DWP benefit claimants, February 2013

Benefit	Walker (numbers)	Walker (% of 16-65 pop)	Newcastle (% of 16-65 pop)	Great Britain (% of 16-65 pop)
Total claimants	1,760	35%	17.3%	14.3%
Job Seekers Allowance	555	11.0%	4.9%	3.7%
ESA/Incapacity Benefit	735	14.6%	7.5%	6.3%
Lone Parents	190	3.8%	1.7%	1.4%
Carers	140	2.8%	1.5%	1.2%
Others on income related benefits	55	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%
Disabled	80	1.6%	1.0%	1.1%

4.1.2 Other social indicators

The recent publication of Census 2011 data provides us with an opportunity to understand some of the social issues facing Walker's residents in more fine grained detail.

Poor levels of health and wellbeing

There are a number of health and wellbeing statistics which relate to the industrial restructuring the area suffered. For instance, 36% (nearly 2,000) of people within households in Walker report a long term health problem or disability compared to 27.6% across the wider city; 1,350 people state that they are in 'bad' or 'very bad' health, constituting 28% of the whole of Walker's population. This compares with only 19% in Newcastle as a whole and 17.3% in England. These statistics clearly relate to the low life expectancy levels in the ward.

The above links closely to the number of people not in work within Walker; 52.2% of adults report they are not in work and this has important implications for future generations – for many of the adults not working, unemployment will appear to be a 'norm'; therefore aspirations will remain low and future issues around health and wellbeing will be further entrenched.

Low levels of health and wellbeing are often linked to housing tenure. Unsurprisingly social housing tenure is particularly high within Walker. 68.4% of people live in socially rented accommodation compared with 29.7% for the city and 17.7% nationally.

Economic activity and skills

Economic activity is relatively low in Walker, at only 58% (4,700 people). This compares with 63% and 70% for Newcastle and England respectively. Of these 44.8% (3,671) are in employment with 10% (over 800) being unemployed but stating that they are looking for work. This wider measure of unemployment (double the Newcastle and England levels) highlights the lack of opportunity for many and also lack of appropriate skills. 15% (1,200) report they are working part time and this highlights the shift in the labour market to shorter hours and lower paid jobs which is creating a new working poor. This is reinforced by figures showing that 37.6% of those employed in Walker work under 30 hours per week – higher than both the wider city and England proportions. Importantly there is a particularly hard to reach pocket of people in Walker who are very hard to reach, with 2.8% (230 residents) stating that they have never worked.

One of the key barriers to people entering sustainable and higher level employment is a lack of relevant skills, as shown in Figure 5. Within Walker a high proportion of residents (44.5%/4,000) have no formal qualifications. This compares markedly with Newcastle (23.6%) and England 22.5%), and highlights the scale of the skills challenge in Walker. The proportion of those who have achieved intermediate and higher level qualifications (Level 3 and 4 respectively) is very low – 16% in total as compared to Newcastle (44.3%) and England (39.8%). There are a higher number of apprentices within the resident population however and this could point towards future opportunities related to high proportion of people working in skilled trades/manufacturing and the still existing opportunities within industry.

The low skills equilibrium is reflected in the occupational structure of the resident population. Over a third (34.6%) are employed in either process, plant and machinery operations or elementary occupations. This compares with 19.7% for Newcastle and 18.3% for England. Only 15.4% are employed in managerial, directorial or professional roles, which compares unfavourably with Newcastle (39.2%) and England (41.2%). There is therefore a major skills gap in Walker which needs to be addressed before residents are able to maximise their potential.

Figure 5: Qualifications profile for Walker, Newcastle and England[7]

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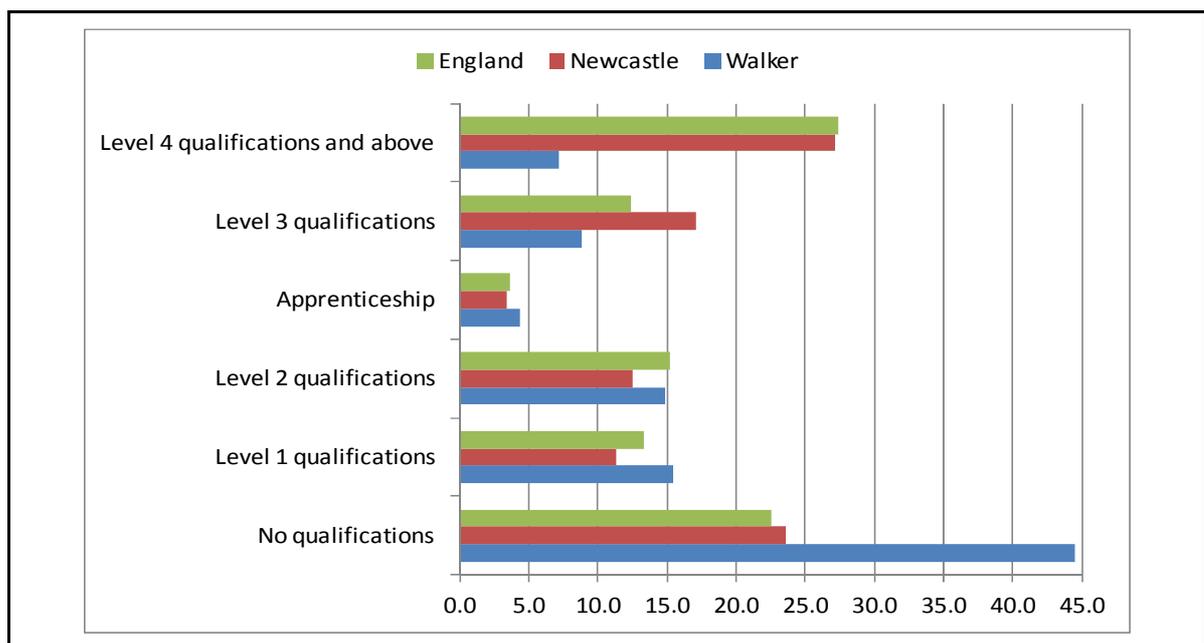
[7] Source: Census 2011

Figure 6: Occupations of those in employment by major SOC code[8]
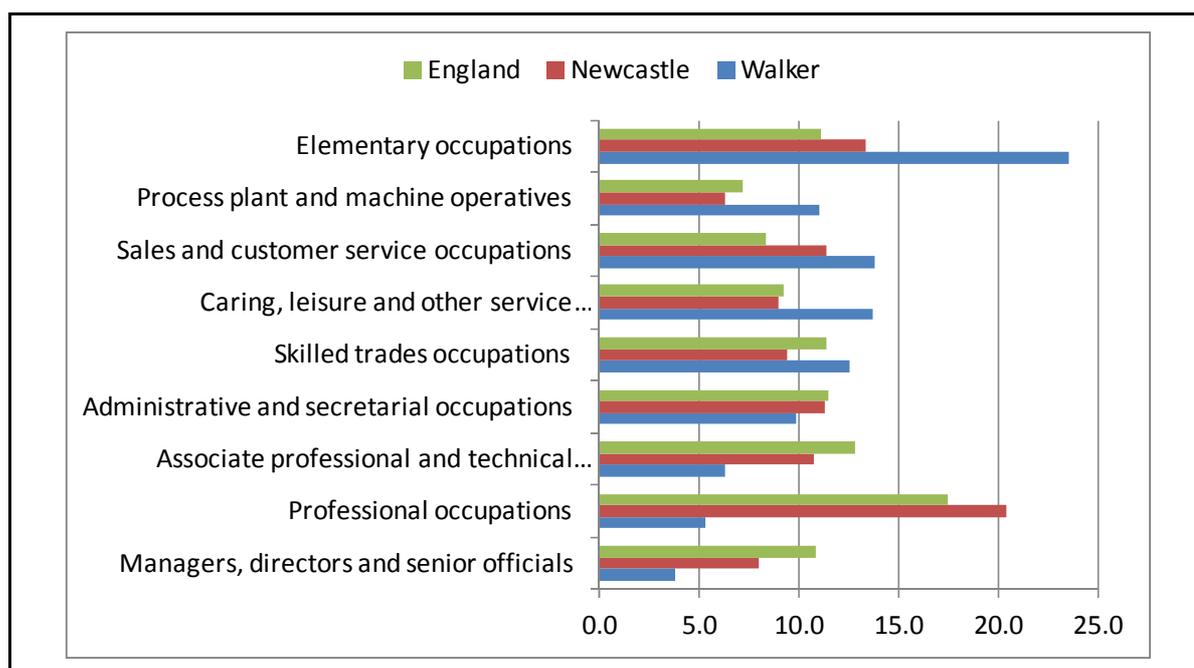
Table 2: Key Census 2011 statistics for Walker[910]

Census indicator	Walker (%)	Newcastle (%)	England (%)
No adults in employment in household	52.2%	39.0%	33.3%
One person in household with long term illness or disability	35.9%	27.6%	25.7%
% of people with bad or very bad health	11.5%	6.8%	5.4%
Housing tenure - owned	23.3%	49.5%	63.3%
Housing tenure – private rented	5.5%	19.1%	16.8%
Housing tenure – social rented	68.4%	29.7%	17.7%
Economically active (in employment, unemployed or full time student)	58%	62.9%	69.9%
Economically inactive	42.0%	37.1%	30.1%
Less than 30 hours per week worked	37.6%	32.5%	29.0%

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[8] Source: Census 2011
[9] Source: Census 2011
[10] This excludes employment by SOC code and qualifications which are provided in Figures 5 and 6

5   THE RESILIENCE MEASURES

The following section provides an assessment of each of the ten resilience measures, outlining evidence from the primary and secondary research and providing a list of recommendations to further improve resilience in the locality. This is set out as follows:

1)   providing an overview of the evidence collated, by theme, primarily through the qualitative research;

2)   based on this evidence, an assessment of the resilience of the measure.

5.1   Measure 1: Understanding the commercial sector

5.1.1   Overview of the commercial sector

Economic activity and skills
The local commercial sector has struggled against both prevailing economic headwinds and the high levels of deprivation in the locality which have long pre-existed the economic downturn. Retail has suffered in particular – for instance in the Church Walk area there was a decline from 40 shops in 1962, to 15 in 1985, to 6 in 2007. Despite this local shops and services do still make a contribution to service sector employment. There is a reported tension between large retailers and small businesses as smaller businesses feel threatened by the presence of large companies.

##### *Decline in industry but still opportunities*
The nature of employment in Walker has changed markedly in recent decades. Historically Walker's prosperity was always linked to the industrial riverside, this being a location for exports and ship building. There is still much employment located there but the nature of employment has changed in the past 30 years and the reliance on the area for employment for local residents has reduced. There is still employment in major offshore and gas functions at Duco and Wellstream. It is uncertain how much employment in these offer local residents however due to the specific skills sets required.

There are also a range of small businesses and larger engineering firms located in Walker. This could potentially provide opportunities for a drive on local apprenticeships, and correlates with the relatively high proportion of people working within skilled trades, as outlined in Figure 6.

Future employment opportunities beyond Walker
Walker is close to job opportunities across Newcastle and the wider city region. There are nearby employment centres in Newcastle city centre and shopping areas such as Shields Road. There are also a number of business and industrial parks in the North Tyneside area, such as Newcastle Great Park and Newburn Riverside. The challenge is to effectively connect the residents of Walker to such opportunities, which is about changing travel horizons, raising aspirations, and of course, driving up skill levels. The current workforce lacks skills and education and lacks spending power to attract businesses to the area.

Figure 7: Resilience assessment for Measure 1 – the commercial sector

| Brittle | Vulnerable | Stable | Resilient |
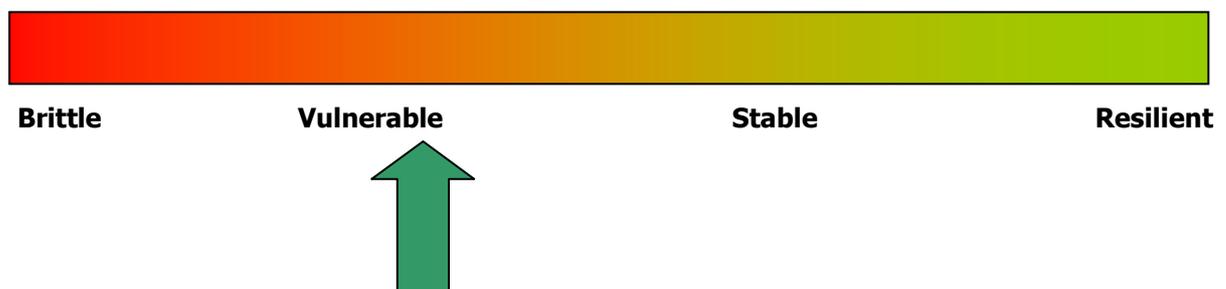
5.2   Measure 2: Understanding the public sector

5.2.1   Overview of the public sector

The public sector relates very much to wider district trends, as data at such a local level is very limited. The public economy has been large in Newcastle; using data from the 2011 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), 31.5% of jobs in the Newcastle economy were across the broad public sector categories of education, health and public administration, compared to the England average of 20.5% and the North East average of 26.6%. 47% of the net additional jobs created in Newcastle between 1998 and 2007 were in the public sector. Clearly, the effects upon Newcastle of the public spending cuts are deep and further enhanced by increased austerity measures outlined in the 2012 Budget (30% cuts to local authority budgets), which further threatens an important sector in the city's economy.

The public sector has high aspirations and is determined to bring improvements to Walker but this is very challenging due to the cuts to public spending and the need to respond to additional challenges caused by welfare reform. The bedroom tax poses a particular challenge to the local authority since Walker has the highest volume of social housing in the city.

The local authority is carrying out regeneration work in Walker, including riverside developments, a new school and a £2m Lottery funded project to improve Walker Park. The Safer Neighbourhoods Problem Solving meetings (SNAPs) enable a coordinated, joined-up approach to improving local areas although the boundary changes mean there are fewer resources available. However, there are still lots of different projects being carried out but it will take a long time to change public perception.

Changes in the way that cross public sector agencies work together

Due to cuts in public sector budgets there will be an increasing need for different public sector agencies to work even more closely together. Respondents from the police and council have both noted that this is a necessity and that they welcome a deepening of collaborative working. There are currently some areas of partnership working where this could be improved and where communications could be more effective. For instance youth services have been cut by the council. This may impact considerably on Walker considering the youth based anti social behaviour issues, and therefore affect local community cohesion. This would mean more resource required from police, as many of those young people helped by the youth services were at an age considered to be a tipping point into more serious crime. The implications of this would be spiralling costs in the long run; provision of services should not solely focus on cutting costs in the short term, rather thinking ahead to the increased monetary resource and cost to society of public sector cuts.

Joined up working is perceived as being a strength. For instance, within the community the police have good working relationships in place with council representatives working within Walker. Neighbourhood policing complements a neighbourhood based approach taken by the council.

Working together to create a stronger community

Small measures can be a catalyst for further collaborative working in the future. For instance there was recently a fireworks display at Walker Park, partly meant to curb 'back street' firework issues in the community. This was funded by the local ward budget and attended by the council, representatives from a local sports centre, police and fire staff who volunteered their own time to help in setting up and running the event. In addition voluntary organisations provided catering. This has highlighted the potential for joined up working and from the perceptions of those interviewed, shows the culture of a whole place approach across the public sector and increasingly across different sectors.

Figure 8: Resilience assessment for Measure 2 – understanding the public sector

Brittle   **Vulnerable**   **Stable**   **Resilient**
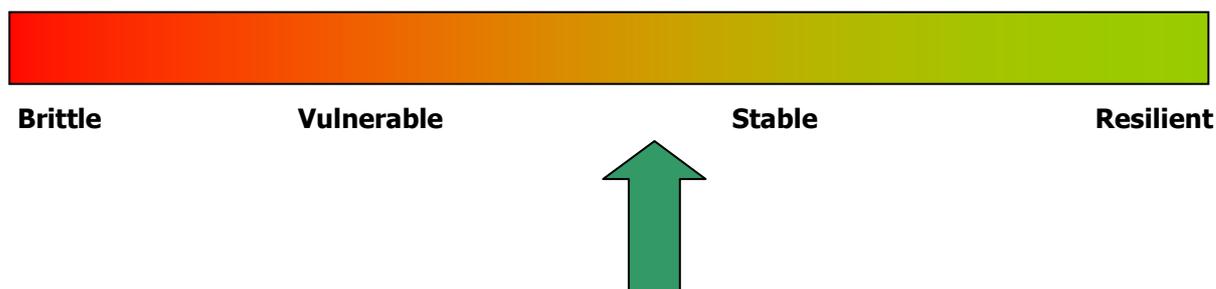
5.3   Measure 3: Understanding the social sector

5.3.1   Overview of the social sector

The social sector incorporates a wide range of community, voluntary and not-for-profit activities. It is characterised by a number of different types of organisations, including: community enterprises; credit unions; charities and voluntary groups; development trusts; and cooperatives.

The types of organisations captured under the banner of the social sector play an important role in our communities and in society more broadly. For example, they:

❑   deliver services, often to groups that are underserved by mainstream provision;
❑   advocate and lobby on behalf of community causes;
❑   facilitate local economic development;
❑   often help improve the local environment;
❑   build residents' capacity through volunteering.

For the last fifteen years, the social sector has risen up the political agenda: from New Labour's rhetoric of 'partnership' to the current Coalition Government's drive towards Localism and open public services. Yet despite the prominence of the social sector within policy making, there is a gap in understanding how it operates, both internally and with other partners.

CLES' piloting of the place resilience model[11] exposed a paucity of data and information about the scale of the social sector at local authority level. As many activities undertaken under the umbrella of the social sector are carried out relatively informally (i.e. not by registered charities), it is easy for this to go 'under the radar'.

Strong community spirit

There is a strong community spirit in Walker and many community activists who provide a range of local support services. Many of the services are based around care and raising aspirations across the community, with the sector being perceived to be proactive at responding to local need. The community infrastructure is strong and the 'Walker Hub' enables people to come together, while having facilities in different areas encourages people to move around and build new relationships. The 'Walker Hub' is a semi-formal arrangement of community services which link together to improve their working practice and efficacy in the community. The strong and active voluntary and community sector are something that was commented upon by many of the respondents, with the Monkchester Community Centre being seen as a significant resource in the area.

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[11] See: http://www.cles.org.uk/research/resillience/

> ### Case Study: Greater Walker Community Trust
>
> One good example of the relatively strong social capital in Walker is the Greater Walker Community Trust, based in Monkchester Community Centre. They provide a wide range of activities and support services for young people and adults, up to the age of 90+. Many of these are vulnerable adults with complex needs and the services provided have evolved over many years, including outreach groups for those who cannot or will not visit the centre, which is open seven days a week. It is a good example of an organisation and hub based on delivering preventative actions and supporting people's independence. It is the first point of contact for many people and is used for youth clubs, older people's events, and vocational training for young people, so is central to raising people's aspirations. However the Trust is experiencing significant funding cuts, despite earning some of their own income, and with limited capacity in terms of staff, there is a fear that services may be cut and this could have major implications for the local community.

Potential for more joined up working across the sector

The various community organisations work together on different projects however there is not a joined-up strategic approach to partnership. There is potential for more joined up working though as there are several networks and good awareness from individuals within the sector about what is delivered and by whom. There are already instances where organisations are pulling together more and considering how to work together to increase cost efficiencies, and putting together consortium bids; and local networks are coming together to mitigate against the impact of cuts on the vulnerable in Walker.

Danger of weakening community links

Voluntary and community sector organisations are under pressure to become social enterprises and generate surplus through their activities. Public sector funding cuts mean that there is less support from the public sector and volunteers need to take on more work, but many of the volunteers are older people. Walker is known as having a stable, resilient community but this may become weaker because people are leaving the area to find work elsewhere and there is some tension between the white working class population and asylum seekers who have been re-homed in Walker.

Perhaps the sector's biggest challenge within the locality is that as capacity is being stripped from social organisations, this lessens the potential for driving innovation in what it does. Innovation has been important for social sector delivery in Walker for a long time. In addition as funding falls away many of those under the radar type activities – such as lunch clubs for instance – have already been disappearing in the area. These may appear small scale but they are important for social connections, particularly for the large older population in Walker. An increase in isolation will have a huge impact.

Respondents noted that the current strong social sector offer is fortified by the presence of particular individuals who are nearing retirement. There is a real concern that there will be no people adequately skilled or locally engaged to continue the good work which is currently taking place. There is a real need to plan for the future of the social sector and to start to train the social leaders of tomorrow to ensure continuity of service, or the community and neighbourhood resilience may suffer.

Figure 9: Resilience assessment for Measure 3 – understanding the social sector

Brittle   Vulnerable   Stable   Resilient
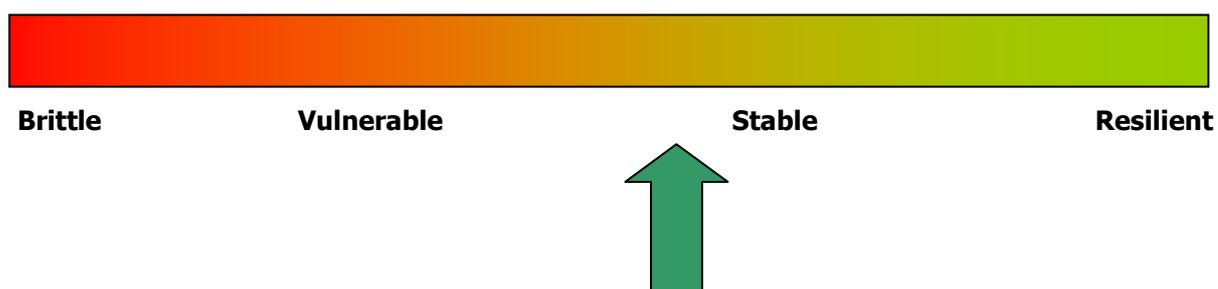
5.4   Measure 4: The relationship between the social and public sectors

The aim of this research is not only to enhance understanding about the nature of the local sectors and how they function as a sector, but also to develop a picture of how groups engage across the sectors. Measures 4-6 explore the key findings.

5.4.1   Overview of the relationship between the sectors

There are a number of initiatives which have or are strengthening the relationship between the public and social sectors:

❑   Church Walk Action Group joined with Walker College to paint a mural in the Church Walk area to improve the appearance of Church Walk and build a sense of community spirit and pride;

❑   community organisations worked with the public sector to deliver a cohesion project to facilitate the merging of two schools in Walker;

❑   Walker Workers is an initiative delivered by the public sector and community and voluntary service organisations to provide vocational training resulting in a recognised qualification for young people living in Walker;

❑   Walker Community Hub, an organisational grouping of local community facilities, was a very proactive intervention which involved three capital builds, gap analysis and sharing service provision between the social sector and the public sector;

❑   the public sector worked with the social sector to deliver training courses in the Pottery Barn Community Centre for Walker residents;

❑   the Probation Service has benefited Walker voluntary and community sector organisations by providing cleaning services on the Walker Community Centre land.

Formally strong relationship threatened by funding cuts
Before the cuts to public sector funding, the Communities Team was heavily involved with social sector projects and provided lots of guidance and support, and there had been considerable support for bid writing (which is still available albeit to a lesser extent). There is limited funding available for community engagement and this is only done through the community centres so always reaches the same groups. Most of this support is no longer available although the Communities Team signposts organisations to funding opportunities and provides support to voluntary and community sector organisations to secure external funding.   Voluntary and community sector organisations are becoming more independent from the local authority as a result of funding cuts and the requirement to bid for contracts. The voluntary and community sector still requires financial support, though this is increasingly difficult to access and increasingly competitive.

Local councillors have been identified as having a strong role in encouraging the local youth to take advantage of opportunities in the area. As the local authority has less funding available for community engagement work, local councillors could be important in progressing and developing this work.

Uncertainties within a new funding regime
In addition to this and related to changes in the funding regime, there is still considerable uncertainty about how changes in procurement and commissioning will affect the local sector. Will the local voluntary and community sector retain its own voice or will be by definition an extension of the public sector within the community with little room to innovate? In terms of the links to NHS commissioning, there have been no gains from Commissioning Groups as yet, and the expectation is that they are likely to redirect monies back into health services rather than make use of voluntary and community sector providers:

'Too many voluntary and community sector organisations no longer know their clients well enough and this will be reinforced by the changes with procurement and commissioning. People are going to become numbers and it is all too impersonal – that is not what the voluntary and community sector should be about and it will impact on preventative care.'

Another key message was that it is still important for the social sector to be able to receive grants where possible and appropriate. This is because many of the organisations in Walker (and indeed across the city) will not be large enough to take part in future procurement exercises and cannot therefore deliver the public services agenda on any scale.[12] They operate under the radar and require other means of support - these are not the type of organisations that can survive or thrive within a competitive environment. This is something that officers within the public sector need to appreciate and respondents comment that those working in the sector need to be viewed as professionals in their own right. But there is also an onus on the smaller organisations to be able to respond, and there is a perception from several respondents from the social and public sectors that too many will not and will 'bury their head in the sand', leading to serious viability concerns.

There is a need to retain the responsiveness of the smaller providers and the value of the social sector isn't solely about procurement. This requires developing a depth of understanding about the sector and its areas of operation that does not currently exist. This is particularly important with regards to health and wellbeing activities, as it is perceived that there is a danger that the public sector may come to use the sector to support people cheaply who have complex needs – in an area like Walker where there is high demand from such groups, the long term consequences of this could be damaging.

Potential to open public sector assets to the social sector
There are public sector assets which could be opened up to the social sector to build social capital. For example, respondents note that schools could make their playing fields available for community use outside of school hours, which would also improve stewardship over these facilities by communities outside of operating hours. Other public spaces, such as the library, the YMCA building and the local housing office could host voluntary and community sector activities to support the local community. Another example is a large youth centre in Walker which is falling into disrepair. Together with the cuts in youth services, there is little to engage and support young people in the area. However money is needed to effectively transfer assets and it is not just about transfer – does the social sector have the sufficient mass, skills and capacity to be able to manage public or former public sector assets?

Potential for more flexibility within the relationship
There is a perception from several in the social sector that the city council's approach is too rigid and top down, is not often based upon need, and that this comes down to a lack of understanding of the nuances of the issues in Walker and what the social sector already does to address these. There is a fear that the wider public sector is going to rely on the voluntary and community sector to deliver the public service agenda where there are cost implications, and this will not be a sustainable model. It is perceived that local councillors are very supportive but accessing the council is more difficult:

> *'People will not bother going to consultation events anymore – there just isn't the confidence that views will be considered properly and changes affecting the community will just go ahead regardless – they seem to be just tick box exercises.'*

### Social sector needs to be more proactive in engaging with public sector
In order for the public sector to work more effectively with the social sector, the social sector needs to be more proactive in communicating with the local authority. Voluntary and community sector organisations need to take ownership of local assets and show initiative in responding to local issues, though there are resource implications if the voluntary and community sector are to extend their local remit. The public sector needs social sector organisations to come forward and share their knowledge about local priorities so that the public sector can work collaboratively with them on these issues.

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[12] For instance in Manchester nearly two thirds (64%) of organisations are micro (annual income under £10,000), with only 13% having an income of over £100,000
http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/sites/manchestercommunitycentral.org/files/State%20of%20the%20Voluntary%20Sector%202013%20-%20City%20of%20Manchester.pdf

5.4.2   Assessment of the relationship between the social and public sectors

Figure 10: Resilience assessment for Measure 4 – understanding the relationship between the public and social sectors

Brittle   Vulnerable   Stable   Resilient
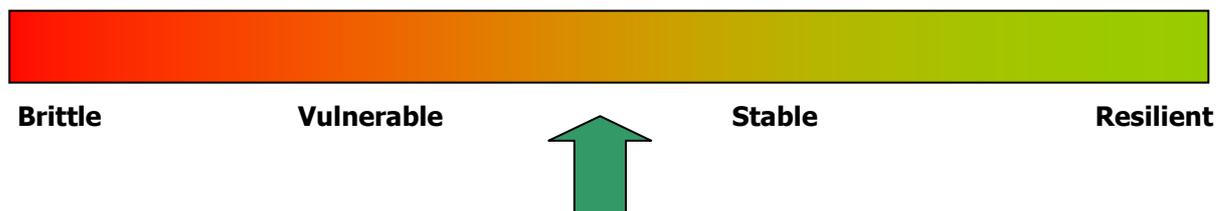
5.5   Measure 5: The relationship between the social and commercial sectors

5.5.1   Overview of the relationship between the social and commercial sectors

There are specific programmes which enable relationship building between the social and commercial sectors. Building Futures East and Places for People are proactive in engaging the local community and supporting Walker residents, which the local authority now struggle to do due to spending cuts. Building Futures East provides training opportunities for people in Walker and Places for People have worked to revitalise the south side of Walker. These programmes invest in developing the capacity of the local workforce, linking skills training to areas of demand for local businesses. This helps to embed local businesses fully both within the local area and within the local community.

Little communication between the two sectors
The social sector is strong and active but has very little communication with the commercial sector other than to ask for one-off support for fundraising events. The larger businesses have shown the most interest in supporting the Walker community through occasional actions, such as a litter pick but this is sporadic and not strategic. The greatest contribution comes from the housing providers; Building Futures East and Places for People who do engage with their tenants and provide services for the local community. A number of respondents from the social sector feel that there is a need for better relationship management from their side which means inviting people from the business community to visit them and see for themselves what they contribute to Walker. Overall though, the key message is that of a lack of time and resources from both parties.

Potential for the commercial sector to provide important support to the social sector
In light of the loss of public funding for the social sector, local businesses have an important role to play in supporting the social sector. Currently, vacant units are not offered to voluntary and community sector organisations because they are not in a suitable state of repair. There is potential for businesses to offer considerable support to the local community if their interest and imagination can be captured (e.g. when Morrisons opened near Walker they provided training for local people and employed Walker residents; however when Asda opened four or five years ago, they did not engage with local residents and few Walker residents are employed by Asda).

Some support is provided to the sector through donations for some of the larger local organisations, which do tend to have a number of contacts and communications with local businesses. For example the Greater Walker Community Trust recently had a cash donation and a mini bus donated for use in its outreach activities. Some fund raising activities have been undertaken and the response from local shops has been positive, with donations of goods and monies; and some of the local pubs use their position as community connectors to host fund raising activities for the sector.

Skillsbridge, a brokerage organisation connecting private and social sector organisations in the area, are active and provide support for the sector, but more is needed on a larger scale. For a number of respondents this needs to go beyond basic CSR type activity. Volunteering – at least for the larger social organisations – is of limited value and they seek longer term relationships with local firms who can provide specialist support in terms of things such as finance and operations and branding. For example, one social enterprise recently had support from a local entrepreneur for a heavily discounted fee to develop their website and to provide advice around branding and marketing activities:

'One day volunteer stints from local business staff and being given heavily worn second hand furniture and equipment, is not good for us and causes more problems than it alleviates.'

Develop capacity through skilled business acumen on Boards

One of the most important ways of percolating private sector expertise into the social sector is through having skilled business representatives on the boards of voluntary and community sector organisations. It is an effective way of ensuring that social sector operations are more commercially minded, and that the private sector is more community focused, particularly important where funding is being cut so drastically. This is particularly important for smaller voluntary and community sector organisations which arguably need the support of trustees the most – the smaller the organisation the less time and capacity there is to develop and implement the skills needed within a rapidly changing financial and operative context.

5.5.2 Assessment of the relationship between the social and commercial sectors

Figure 11: Resilience assessment for Measure 5 – understanding the relationship between the social and commercial sectors

| Brittle | Vulnerable | Stable | Resilient |
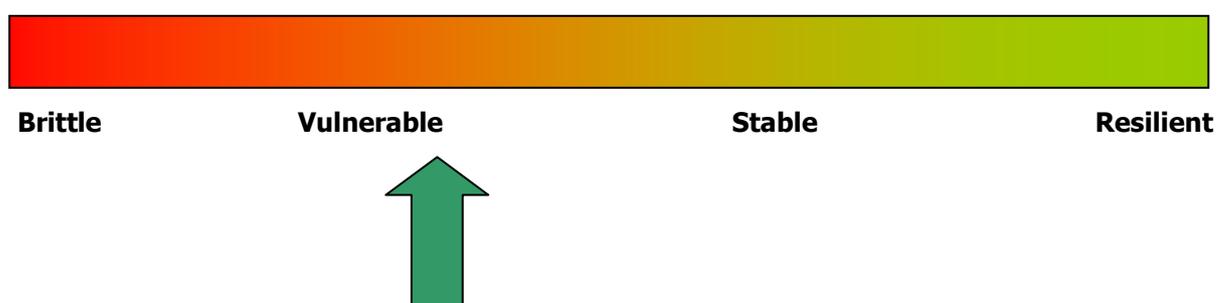
5.6 Measure 6: The relationship between the public and commercial sectors

5.6.1 Overview of the relationship between the sectors

Collaboration is focused on industry specific developments

The Local Authority's Communities Team has little involvement with the commercial sector but the Economic Development Team engages with businesses on industry specific development. This relationship could be developed further to ensure Walker residents have the necessary skills to take advantage of the new industrial developments. The public sector could also explore the possibility of attracting a large supermarket to the area since the presence of large retailer may benefit other smaller local businesses by increasing footfall in the area. Some of the larger businesses in Walker have contacts who are known to the Council, and who are considered to have good local knowledge of the community and the workforce. This presents an opportunity for partnership working between the public and commercial sectors to better tailor support towards helping residents into training or work. Large local employers may be able to predict their future resource demands based on their on-going workload, which could in turn help to guide specific skills training provision, supporting both local business growth and developing local workers.

The public sector is working to improve the business environment

The primary efforts of the Council's Environment Team to improve the business environment focus on improving the physical appearance of Walker and its streetscape. The Neighbourhood Management Team has been successful in reducing fly tipping and there is an on-going dialogue about providing broadband to the area. In discussion with respondents it was noted that more strategic efforts to attract business, such as more favourable business rates in the local area, might prove effective in securing more interest in Walker from the commercial sector. Efforts to improve the appearance of the physical environment are considered not to have attracted new business, but to have made existing businesses appear more attractive and welcoming to residents.

Lack of clear mechanism for communication

The Safer Neighbourhoods Problem Solving meetings (SNAPs) are a good model for communication between the public sector and other organisations; establishing a similar business forum could be useful for increasing partnership working between the public and commercial sectors. It is important for the public sector to have a better understanding of what the commercial sector needs and what the local authority can do to support business development in Walker.

If there is some disconnect between the public and commercial sectors, it can only be to mutual benefit that lines of communication are developed. There are people from both sectors who could work effectively on this but the cuts to the local government's budget may limit the potential for more dialogue and knowledge sharing. It is possible that elected members could become more active in this area to assist greater collaboration between the commercial and public sectors.

5.6.2 Assessment of the relationship between the public and commercial sectors

Figure 12: Resilience assessment for Measure 6 – understanding the relationship between the public and commercial sectors

| Brittle | Vulnerable | Stable | Resilient |
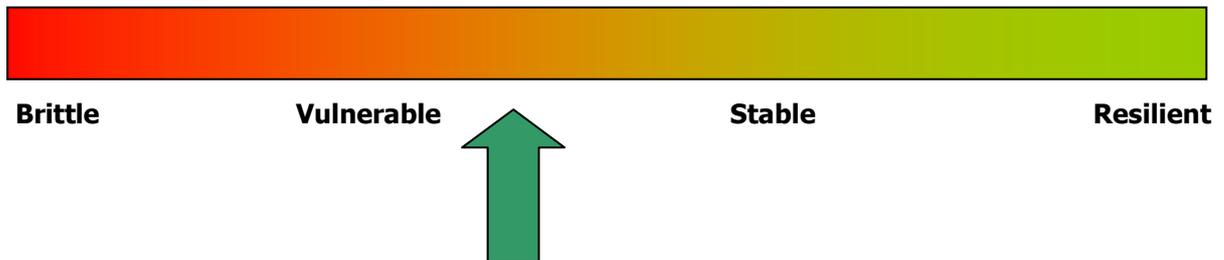
5.7   Understanding the external influences

There are a range of external influences which impact upon a locality that need to be taken into account when assessing how resilient it is to change, and these are important in terms of considering policy prescriptions.   These influences are explored below, guided by interviews with various stakeholders.

5.7.1 Measure 7: Identity, culture and history

Strong place based identity
The residents of Walker describe being proud to say they are from Walker and feel a strong sense of belonging to the area, and indeed to sub-sections of Walker itself around key landmarks. There is variance in the feedback with some feeling that all age groups have this identity and others that this is across mainly the older age cohorts. Older generations in particular express a strong commitment to Walker although they tend to be more pessimistic than younger generations about the future of the area. Walker has a steady population and close-knit communities who have retained different identities based on previous community structures, such as the Rochester housing development. Crime tends to be dealt with within the community rather than being reported to the police. This highlights one of the potential drawbacks of having a highly localised community where many residents have not left the area. In terms of police resourcing, ineffective crime reporting may lead to inappropriate levels of support for the local community. Though existing community networks highlight the presence of local social capital, these would be better utilised for more productive endeavours. There is an overwhelming view that there is a need to establish new networks within and between communities which are positive and forward looking.

Heritage and culture based on former heavy industry
Walker has a strong white working class tradition based on the former *'good days of work, wages and food on the table'.* Walker's heritage revolves entirely around the former shipyards and the riverside; when this industry declined and people left the area, a new culture and identity has not emerged. The new generation has not experienced the prosperous days of heavy industry and so cannot relate to the area's cultural heritage. Therefore beyond this there is no strong heritage in the area.

Need to create a new vision and economic identity
Walker has taken a generation to recover from the loss of heavy industry and loss of cultural identity which went with it. Walker now needs to develop a new vision and economic identity to anchor its residents within the locality, to attract new finance to the area and to develop a prosperous community. Reinvention is difficult and this is a challenge that is faced across the wider North East. For a community experiencing such significant deep seated issues, this is especially hard to do.

There is a strong perception that the area needs to connect much more to the fortunes of the wider city area, and that this can only be achieved through all stakeholders and partners working closely together at higher strategic scales than the neighbourhood level. Linking Walker into city-wide development might make the physical routes for Walker residents to the city feel more permeable, opening up employment opportunities and allowing residents to gain confidence in going to new places and experiencing new things to enhance economic identity.

5.7.2   Assessing identity, culture and history resilience

Figure 13: Resilience assessment for Measure 7 – identity, culture and history

| Brittle | Vulnerable | Stable | Resilient |

5.7.3   Measure 8: Health and well-being

Figure 14: Total Employment and Support Allowance benefit across Newcastle's wards, February 2013
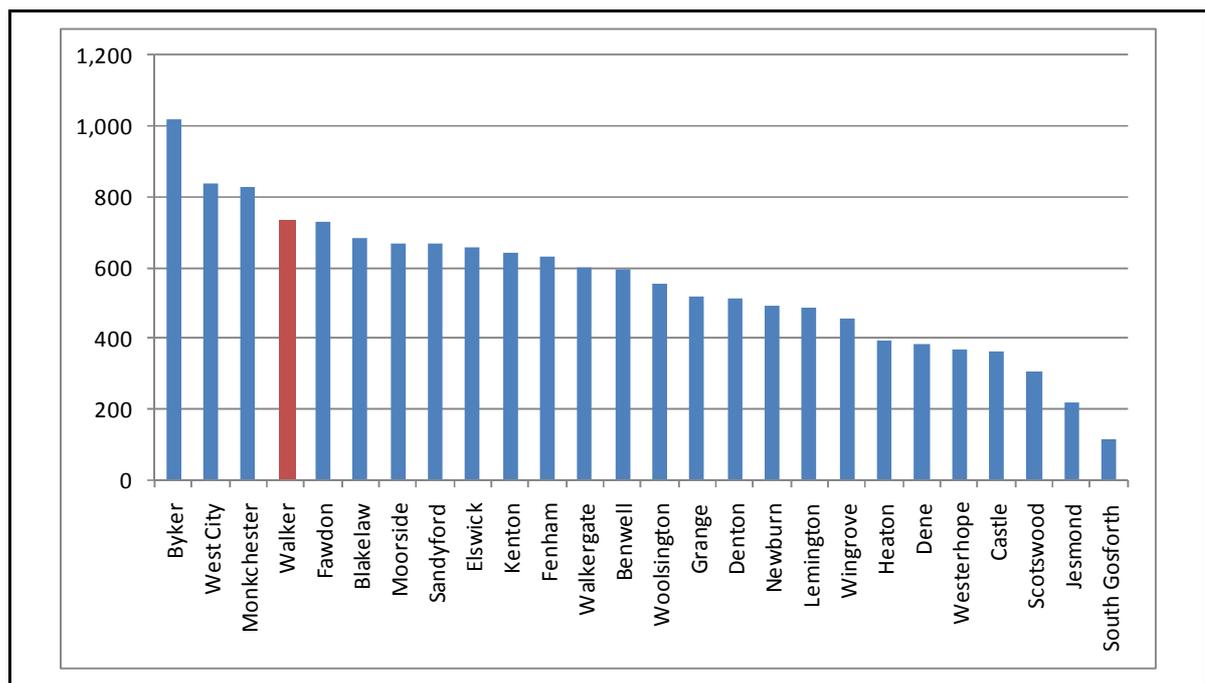

Figure 14 shows the high proportion of carers, which reflects the number of residents on sickness related benefit. Walker and its adjacent communities of Byker and Monkchester continue to suffer the long term impacts of economic restructuring. As a result of this, the locality has suffered from a particularly low skills base, low income and constrained sustainable employment opportunities. This in turn has had the effect of developing clusters of deprivation and poverty, which results in considerable health and wellbeing issues. The low skills equilibrium that Walker and the wider district finds itself in means that the main way to improve health and wellbeing outcomes in the long term is to improve skills levels, which result in accessing better job opportunities with the knock on effect of improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

In the short to medium term, however, the challenge for many of the unemployed is to overcome challenges of apathy, and being helped in terms of basic behavioural changes to raise aspirations (e.g. a number of people will not even recognise or be willing to travel further than their own housing estate, particularly those brought up in households where more than one generation has not worked).

Respondents noted high levels of drug and alcohol abuse in Walker, though this might be improving. The health and wellbeing issues are reflected in the spatial distribution of benefit claimants, which are particularly high in Walker. 11.6% of Walker's population are claiming out-of-work benefits, with over 85% of these aged between 16 and 49, accounting for a large number of local residents of young to mid working age who are not working (May 2013 statistics). Additionally, whilst a significant proportion are suffering from musculoskeletal and respiratory issues as a legacy of Walker's industrial past, the largest volumes of claimants are suffering from mental health problems (225 in Walker alone). This highlights issues such as depression, which may be triggered or exacerbated as people go longer without work.

Clearly, the policy challenge around Walker is a major one, which will require close collaboration between the different agencies within the public sector, and effective utilisation of the social sector operating in the local area. The concerns are increasing pressure on social sector organisations as the budgets to deliver essential services are cut further at the same time as the public sector is pulling back from frontline delivery – social services, Citizens Advice Bureau and welfare advice, amongst others. This is a critical issue for residents in the ward, but also for the future health and prosperity of the locality itself, which is reflected in the communities around it.

As healthcare provision shifts to community-based provision, there are questions raised as to the appropriateness of the local environment for this role, both in terms of the physical environment and the social context. There is also the issue of lower health literacy which means that, in places such as Walker, many people are only going to visit GP's once problems are more advanced. This means more demand for services when there will be less resource – self help and voluntary groups cannot fill the void and there is a need for coordinated cross sector action which negates such factors.

5.7.4 Assessing health and wellbeing resilience

Figure 15: Resilience assessment for Measure 8 – health and wellbeing

Brittle   Vulnerable   Stable   Resilient
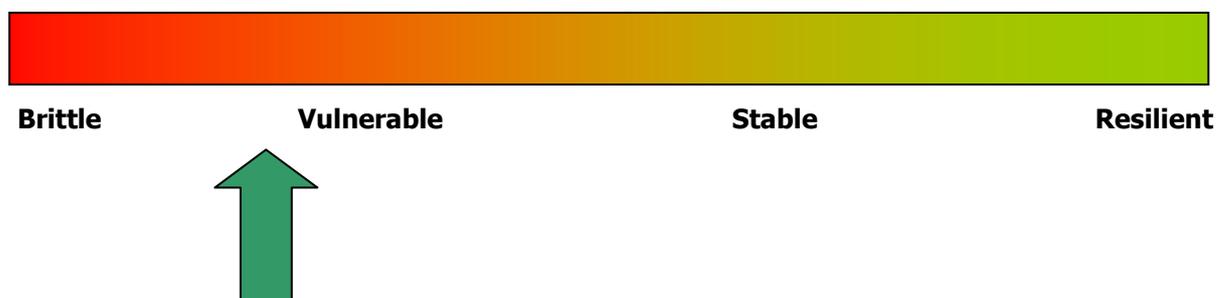
5.7.5 Measure 9: The environment

Some local level work has been done to improve the physical appearance of the environment around local businesses, which has made the area more aesthetically attractive in parts. Respondents noted that this has made the area more pleasant to walk around. Generally, however, this is very much a wider issue relating to activities of Newcastle City Council. The City Council are currently preparing their final draft Core Strategy document, which sets out their plans for economic, environmental and social growth across the city. The draft document (2011) and the major proposed changes (2012) give a clear indication of the local priorities with regards to the environment. The presumption in favour of sustainable development, which has been adopted nationally, supports proposals for development which are considered to improve economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. It is for individual local authorities to determine how contribution to these criteria is demonstrated in plans.

Policy 5 of the draft Core Strategy seeks to improve the pedestrian environment and develop a comprehensive cycle network citywide to: support economic prosperity; improve health and wellbeing; support commitments to tackle climate change; connect communities; and create a better quality of place for all people living in the City. The Core Strategy links pleasant built environments to happy, healthy and prosperous communities, and so aims to build attractive and safe neighbourhood environments through packages of improvements to local areas. These packages would benefit Walker in terms of the physical environment and would also contribute to the health issues which the area faces.

The Council's plans for the environment of the city support an approach which recognises the far reaching and beneficial impacts of a positive local environment. This approach, if taken in Walker, might help to improve the sense of identity felt by local residents:

'The design and layout of the built environment can help to reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. A contributory factor to improving safety is to create and sustain a 'sense of place', where people take pride in their surroundings.'[13]

Quality of place is recognised throughout council policy as essential for happy, prosperous communities. New homes are planned for Walker Riverside, along with industrial growth and a potential bridge linking Walker with Felling across the river. It appears that Walker will be a focus for growth, and this is likely to bring environmental improvements in the area as new homes, new businesses and new jobs are developed.

5.7.6 Assessment of the resilience of the environment

<u>Figure 16: Resilience assessment for Measure 9 – the environment</u>

Brittle   **Vulnerable**   **Stable**   **Resilient**
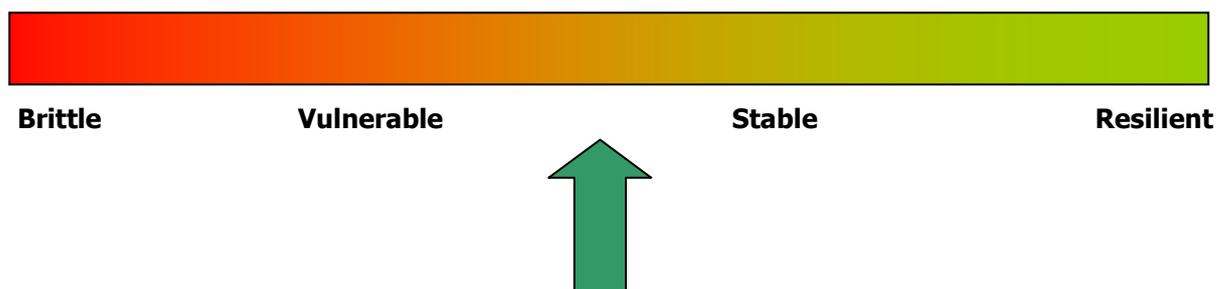
5.7.7 Measure 10: Governance issues

Wider Newcastle governance context

This measure, to an extent, relates to the wider governance issues across Newcastle, and how the Council works to implement central government policy at the local level. In line with the national picture, Newcastle is facing significant pressures as local authority budgets are cut; indeed, Newcastle has arguably received a disproportionate volume of cuts in comparison with other local authorities. Communities like Walker are being dually impacted by the necessary changes taking place within governance structures which support them and modifications to their personal support through welfare changes. Increasingly, local statutory roles are being commissioned out to third parties, such as within the voluntary and community sector. This may lead to ambiguity over governance for the persons involved, not being sure of who to turn to for help or what support they can expect.

Additionally, commissioning practices in combination with significant financial pressures may lead to services being provided by the least expensive, and not necessarily the most effective, provider. Fragmentation of governance through diversified service provision may be confusing or unhelpful to residents, where previously local authority services appeared as a 'whole' or a 'one-stop-shop'. Such changes are taking place nationwide, though Newcastle is arguably facing greater pressures than most local authorities; therefore the growing role of the voluntary and community sector through these changes should be seen as an opportunity to create more responsive and locally sensitive service provision through the new roles being taken on. The voluntary and community sector has a growing presence in service provision and local development, which should be reflected through governance structures which engage the sector strategically.

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[13] Newcastle City Council (2011) Core Strategy, Newcastle: Newcastle City Council

6   CONCLUSIONS

In the final part of the report, we make a valued judgement of the resilience of Walker based on our analysis of Measures 1-10. The qualitative rankings for each measure can be summarised and plotted on a spider diagram. Each measure is given a rounded score where: 1= Brittle; 2 = Vulnerable; 3 = Stable; and 4 = Resilient.

Figure 17: Walker neighbourhood resilience spider diagram

Whilst some of the subtleties are lost in the above graph (i.e. it reduces the assessments made in the report to clear cut categories), it nevertheless provides a useful overview of our research findings. Based on this summary, and informed by the wider qualitative data with regard to the measures, we can make a judgement about the resilience of Walker, as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Overall resilience assessment for Walker

6.1   Key conclusions

We have concluded that Walker as a place is best described as lying somewhere between 'vulnerable' and 'stable', where the structural relationships are not yet in place to develop collaborative working, but the constituent components are there.

The neighbourhood of Walker experiences a number of good resilience indicators, with strengths particularly in the social sector, the public sector and in the interaction between the two. There are a number of key actors in the local area who work hard to improve the lives of individuals, groups and families living in the neighbourhood, from community volunteers to local councillors. There is a strong sense of community in Walker which supports residents and the community generally, with the voluntary and community sector organising more formal support, performing formal roles and acting as a signposting service for other support mechanisms. The public sector, in particular the Communities Team, is very well regarded locally. Historically, the public sector is considered to have offered a great deal of support to Walker and its residents. This support has been significantly diminished due to public sector budget cuts, and so focus of teams across the council has frequently had to turn to signposting other support services. It may be due to the increasing need for collaboration that the relationship between the public and social sectors is so strong, or this might have been the case regardless. It remains that the positive relationship between these two sectors strengthens neighbourhood resilience in Walker.

Health and wellbeing in Walker is very vulnerable, with embedded health problems affecting different generations across the population. Poor health undermines community sustainability and the local economy. Patterns of poor health in Walker reflect patterns of out-of-work benefit claimants. The area is dually influenced by poor health and unemployment, which together can grind communities down. Local plans suggest the imminent house building and industrial growth in Walker will offer local jobs, which may reduce unemployment. Local environmental improvements related to this development should support health and wellbeing by making the area more attractive through improvements to walking routes and public areas, in line with policy. These efforts seem promising, but piecemeal – a more sustained programme of work in the area might yield more sustainable growth, from which further activity might be engendered to continue the momentum of development and build up future capacity for resistance.

There is evidence of some activity from the private sector, and interactions between the private sector and the social and public sectors, working together to create benefits for Walker. There is significant opportunity to build upon the connections which already exist, and to build new connections with the private sector, to strengthen local resilience. As the public sector has to step back due to service cuts, greater collaboration with the social and private sector offers real potential to fill this gap for mutual benefit. Increased collaborative working is critical to enhance Walker's resilience. The challenges faced across Newcastle and Walker are significant and will require changes in behaviour and practice between all three sectors. The embryonic activities currently taking place in the community are very promising, and could be a catalyst for future work if this can be stabilised and built upon. Building a resilient community with strong public, social and commercial sector collaboration has the capacity to create a happier, more prosperous community with the momentum and scope to develop the new cultural identity which Walker needs.

Relationship with the city centre
Walker's resilience is both dependent on, but also independent to the city centre. As regards its relationship with the city centre, the city centre does have the potential to be increasing its economic connectivity with Walker. In order to further enhance the resilience of Walker, future planning around the city centre should focus on providing opportunities for local residents. There are opportunities to train the local populations towards the demands of the commercial sector and public sector procurement practices both within Walker and within the city centre supply chain.

7   FUTURE ACTIONS

A whole raft of interventions is needed to create stronger communication between the public, social and commercial sectors. Social media could be used to communicate the needs and priorities of the community as well as what the local authority and businesses are doing to address them, as well as what the community can do too. The local community need to see how their involvement creates outcomes in their area and collaboration between the sectors must be flexible and responsive to needs as they emerge:

❑   increasing flows of knowledge transfer – engaging with FSB, Chamber of Commerce, business and social sectors, using the values and strength of the social sector into the private sector;

❑   local engagement policies to promote engagement between all the sectors – getting more people into work by understanding what people and what businesses want;

❑   establishing a local resilience panel – with members representing the three sectors, exploring potential to access different community funds such as Community First funds;

❑   establishing a local employer forum to link local businesses with the social sector – to identify skills, and to explore procurement practice and potential for supporting the voluntary and community sector;

❑   mapping businesses who are willing to engage with the public and voluntary and community sector – to help steer public sector and voluntary and community sector involvement and for mutual support;

❑   events – open days which highlight the role of philanthropy in the community, and communications to bring the community and the three sectors together to discuss community needs openly;

❑   asset management – suitable community space; what is the offer and how can it be maintained?

❑   how to increase the number of trustees on different boards – from local businesses? Possibly a local marketing campaign aimed at local businesses;

❑   establishing mentoring schemes:

•   third sector mentoring to develop a new generation of community stewards from the local area coming through within the sector, addressing the issue of lack of capacity should people retire or leave the sector. This is something which was mentioned through interviews with community groups;

•   approaching influential private sector individuals to become business mentors to promote engagement between the sectors; and

•   engaging individuals from successful local businesses to become business mentors to help out other smaller business;

❑   fitting Walker and the actions emerging from this work into the Newcastle policy agenda and more locally – neighbourhood based strategy; raising aspirations; widening residents' horizons.