



Education/employer partnership working and place-based skills development: a Social Ecosystem Model

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Three challenges

- 1. The recent English experience** - understanding shifts in the English skills policy and environment and their potential trajectories
- 2. Regional and place-based developments and experiments in education and employer co-production** – understanding the conditions for their success
- 3. Conceptual** – thinking beyond market and statist logics – a place-based Social Ecosystem Model as ‘45-degree activity’ to support an ‘inclusive local development’

Area-based developments:
How significant are they for skills
formation in the English context?

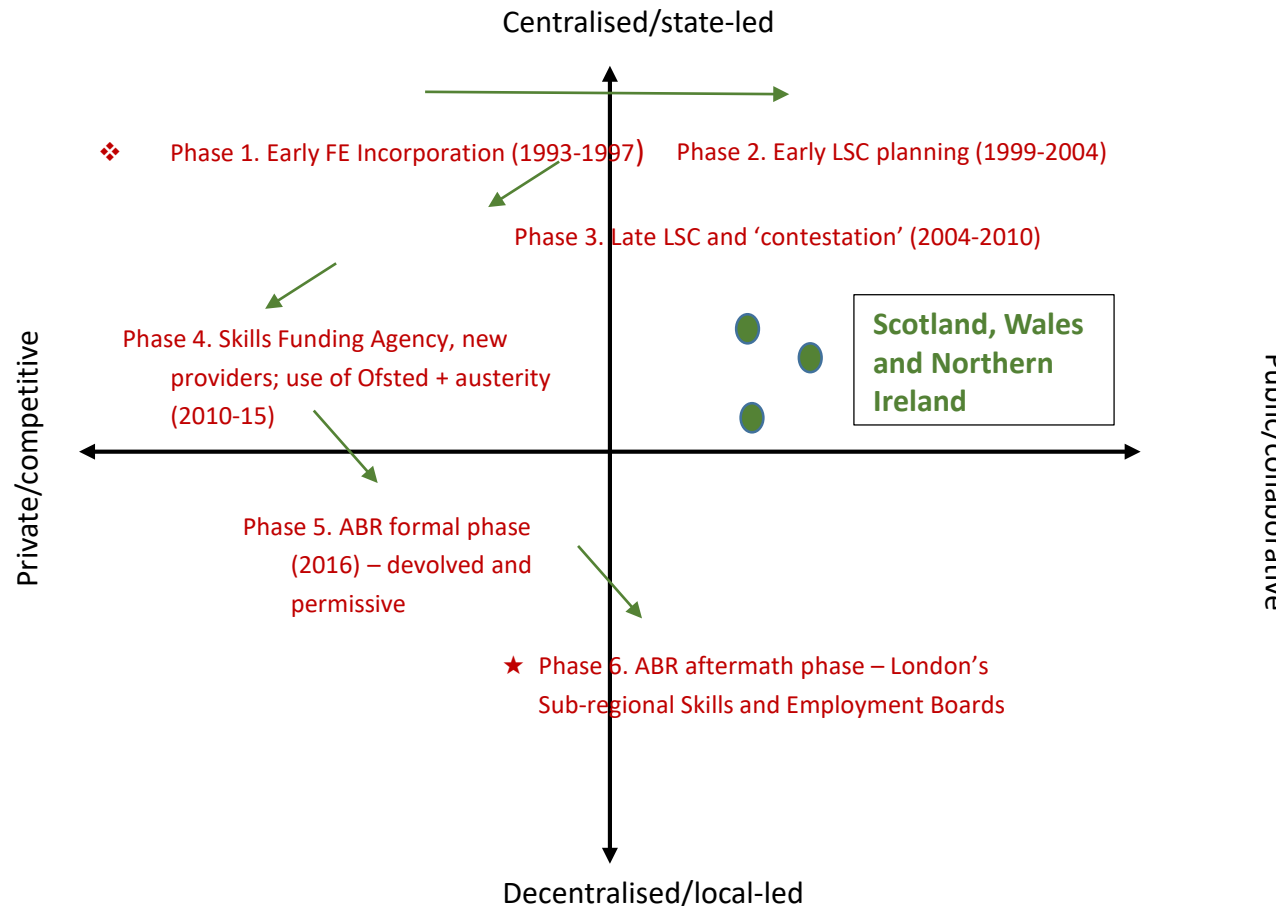
Dominant English education and skills culture

- Dominant academic culture
- Weaker voluntarist vocational system
- Highly marketized FE sector since early 1990s
- Skills supply 'orthodoxy'
- Concept of education engagement with employers – 'One Way Street'

Established orthodoxies breaking down

- ‘Vocational Turn’ in policy – New Standard Apprenticeships, T-Levels qualifications, Technical Institutes, Area-Based Reviews and FE college relationship with employers
- Devolution of Adult Education Budget to local level – combined local authorities and ‘Devo-deals’
- New collaborative forums post FE Area-Based Reviews – Sub-Regional Skills and Employment Boards (SEBs)
- Policy learning between the four countries of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) – FE moving from a ‘market’ to a ‘system’?
- Big upcoming challenges – Brexit and Fourth Industrial Revolution

English FE governance historically compared



- England's trajectory has shifted significantly over 25 years through different policy phases
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be clustered due to their more collaborative approach
- England has moved tentatively towards greater collaboration following Area-Based Reviews
- These new 'system locations' open up the possibilities of policy learning by checking 'accelerated divergence'

A social ecosystem model:
45-degree thinking beyond the top-
down state and market

Key principles of a social ecosystem model

- Focused on developing ‘polycentric cities’ to counter the ‘supernova’ tech/finance urban model
- Connects working, living and learning through focus on inclusive economic, social and educational growth
 - Particular concern with regeneration and major infrastructure projects and the involvement of local populations
 - Social ecosystems spatially defined –local/sub-regional nexus
 - Prioritises development of place-based ‘collaborative horizontalities’
 - Recognises the role of ‘facilitating verticalities’ from national and local states

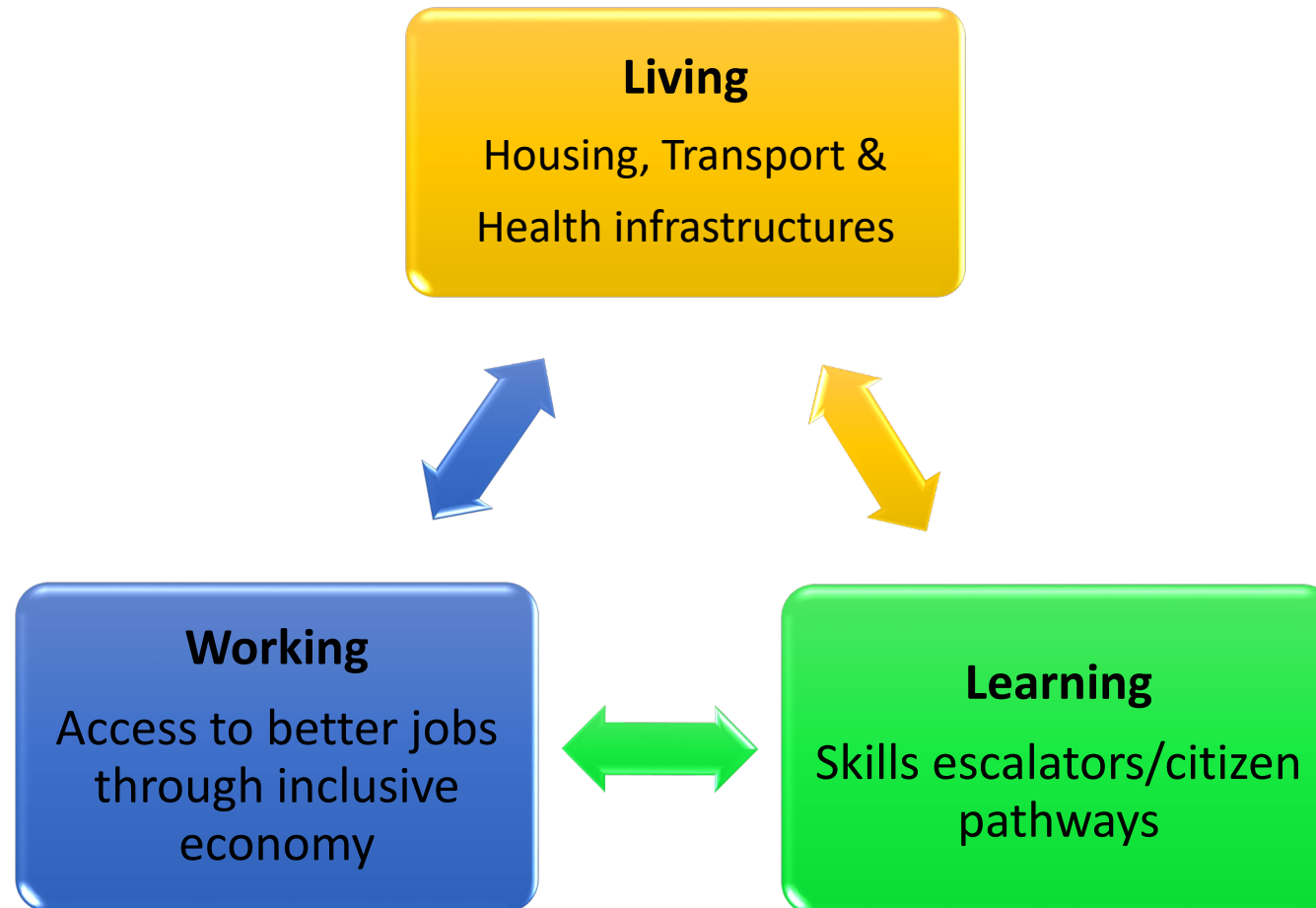
The elite entrepreneurial ecosystem model – the case of Silicon Valley

Characteristics	Elite entrepreneurial ecosystems	Inclusive social ecosystems
Dimension 1. Mission, effects and perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private wealth production • Widening inequalities, and social displacement • Retrospective understanding of elite ecosystem formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive economic growth and sustainable living • Important role for common mission and ecosystem leadership locally • Prospective theorizing of SEM formation
Dimension 2. The horizontal terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Place using’ to act as ‘magnet’ • Entrepreneurial connectors and privatised civil society networks • ‘Flat’ companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Place-shaping’ (integration of education, housing, transport, high/low skills) • Public, private networks and anchor institutions • Popular participation
Dimension 3. Facilitating vertical structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of existing infrastructure; venture capital and business support from government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Planned confluence of ‘catalytic factors’ (e.g. public investments; private sector initiative; empowered local state and national policy steers)
Dimension 4. Integrative role of education and digital technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation role of universities and the ‘talent magnet’ for graduates • Dominant role of digital/finance nexus for market expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between higher, further education, employers and state/civil society actors • Assistive socially designed digital technologies to support collaboration and urban development
Dimension 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time bound – degeneration & regeneration cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term project for social ecosystem ‘building’

Social Ecosystems: a definition

*Social Ecosystems are evolving place-based, comprehensive **social formations** that connect the **worlds of working, living and learning**, comprising local anchor institutions and horizontal networks and involving a variety of social partners in the public realm and private sector (e.g. further education colleges, universities, employers, local authorities and voluntary bodies). The purpose of social ecosystems are to **nurture inclusive, sustainable educational, economic and social development** in diverse communities, localities and sub-regions. Social Ecosystems are **supported** by an enabling national state, devolved local state and **mediated** through local ecosystem leadership, education activity and socially designed digital technologies.*

Connecting working, living and learning



Social ecosystems: 45-degree activity

Facilitating verticalities

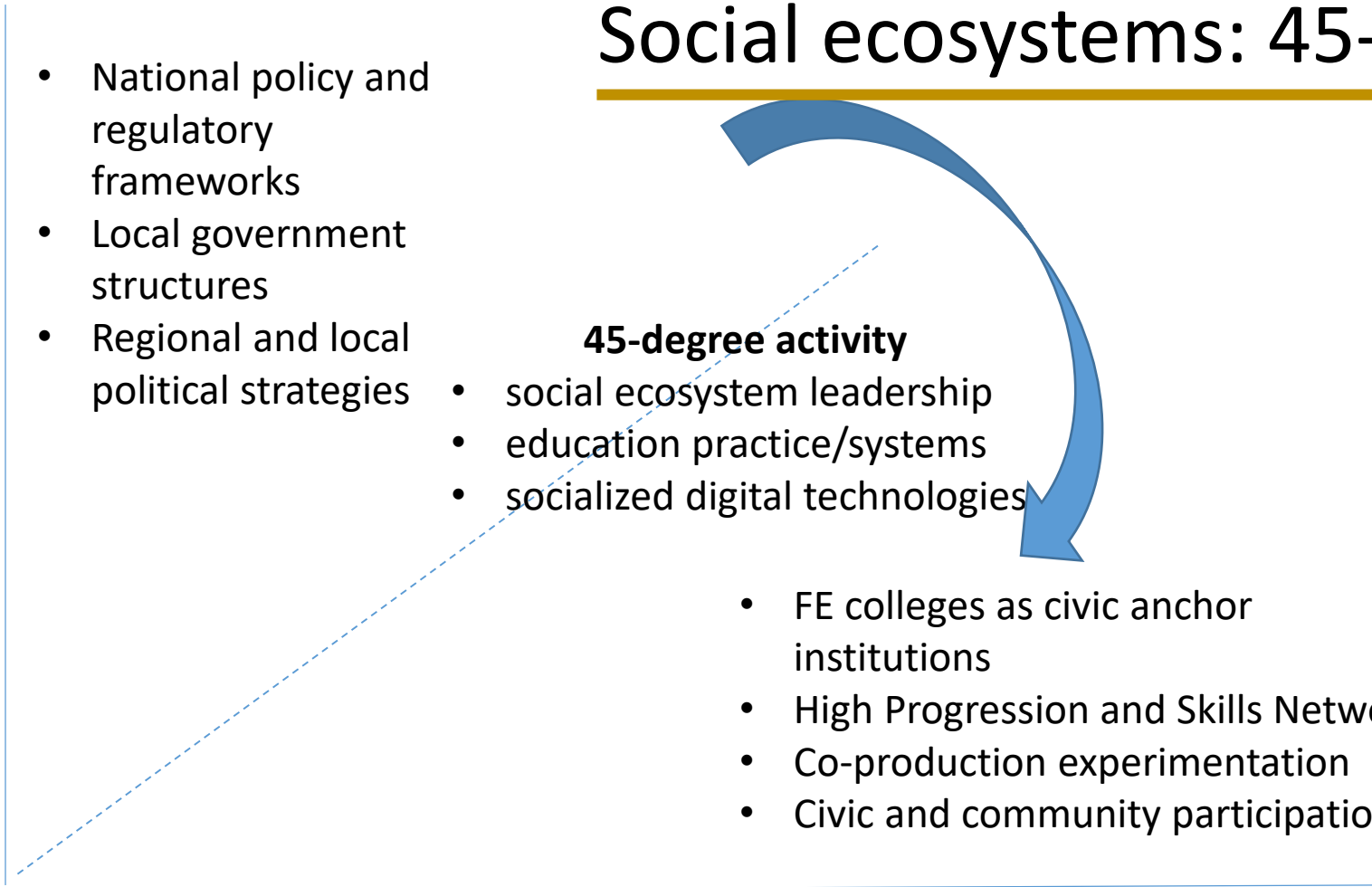
- National policy and regulatory frameworks
- Local government structures
- Regional and local political strategies

45-degree activity

- social ecosystem leadership
- education practice/systems
- socialized digital technologies

- FE colleges as civic anchor institutions
- High Progression and Skills Networks
- Co-production experimentation
- Civic and community participation

Collaborative horizontalities



Place-based social ecosystem leadership

Common mission innovation – defining the problem terrain and the goal of inclusive and sustainable economic, social and educational development

Skills escalators as ‘citizen pathways’ – progression within education; access to employment and progression within work – to higher paid jobs

Transforming combinational economies – linking low, intermediate and high skills levels for inclusive growth in city and regional economies

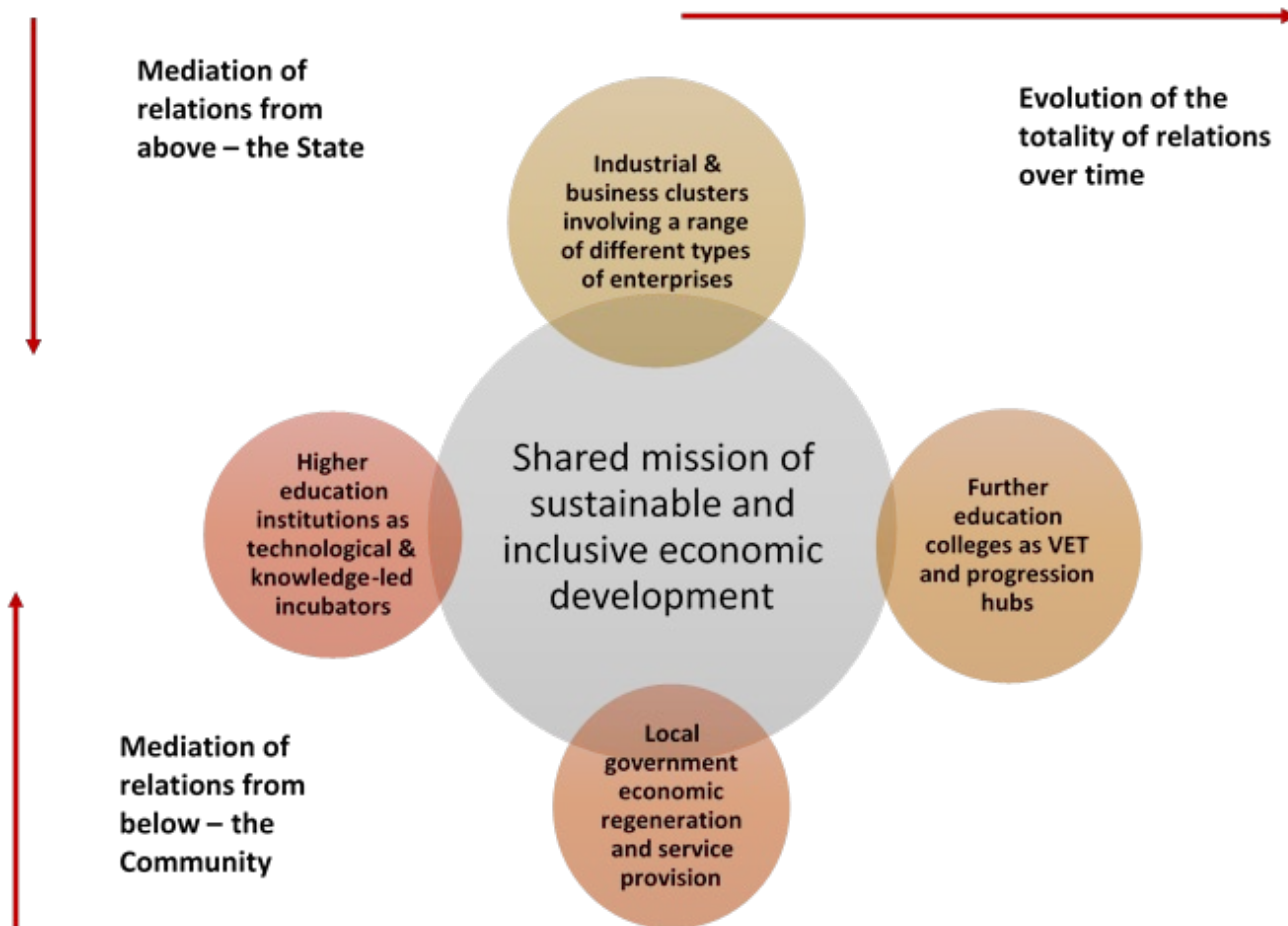
Co-production experimentation – strategic collaborations employers (particularly SMEs), local government, higher education and further education and training providers that help produce new levels of skill and the demand for skill

Leadership composition – collective with key role for local government

FE colleges as ‘inclusive civic anchor institutions’

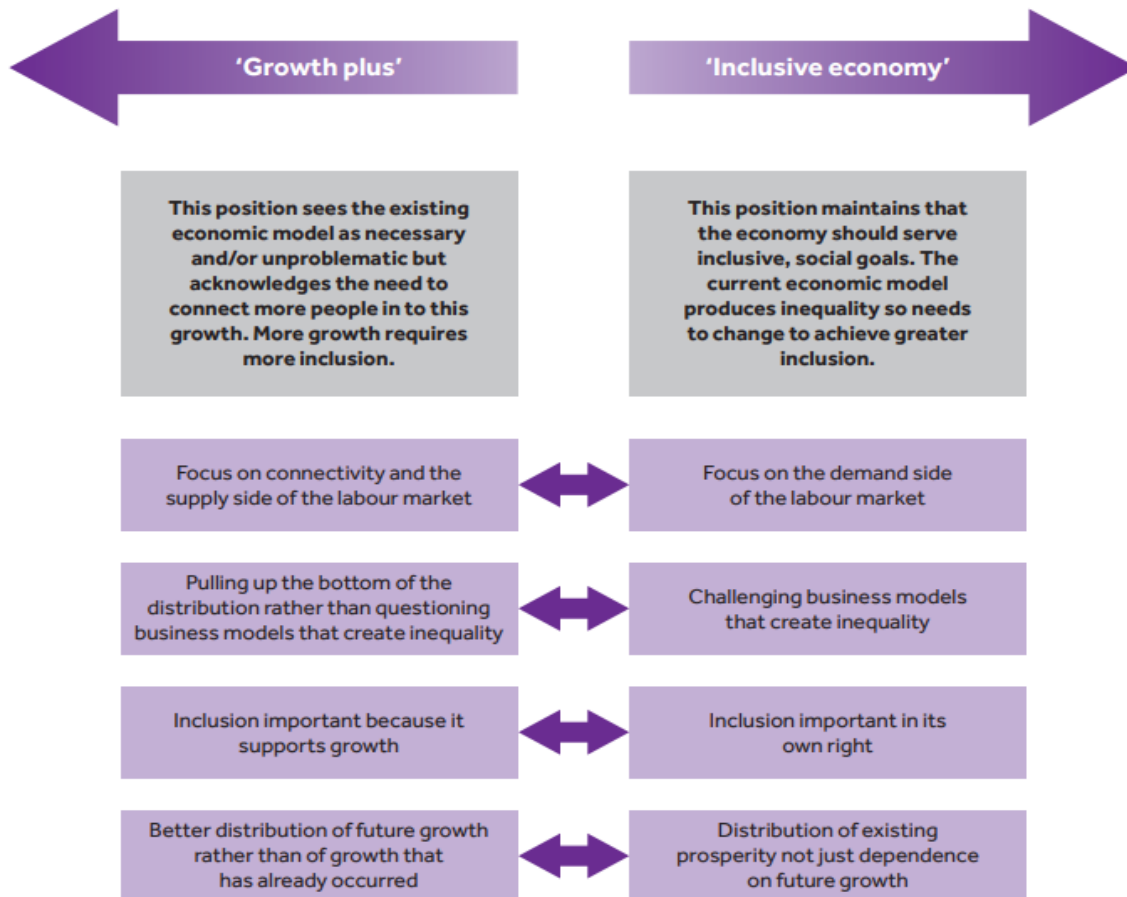
- Make a significant role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy – as a large employer and with significant purchasing power
- Act as a magnet for other companies/economic organisation and a ‘hub’ to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- A strong civic role in promoting local inclusion and social cohesion
- Dual aim of cohering horizontalities and mediating verticalities

High Progression and Skills Networks (HPSNs)



- HPSNs emerging through new Sub-Regional Employment and Skills Boards (SEBs)
- FE colleges have crucial roles in promoting skills escalators
- SEBs will have to develop both inclusive skills supply and experimental co-production strategies

From Growth Plus to the Inclusive Economy



Social ecosystem approaches to Inclusive Growth would contain elements of Growth Plus and Inclusive Economy

Inclusive Growth strategies now being pursued by local councils and regional authorities in England (e.g. Preston and Barking and Dagenham)

Next step is the integration of skills strategies into the

From 'skills supply' to 'skills co-production'

Employers and education providers linking education and work:

- Co-constructing an understanding of future work opportunities
- Co-designing programmes and progression routes/skills escalators to meet current and future skills needs
- Co-teaching and assessment
- Sharing facilities, resources and CPD

Social ecosystem dynamics

Horizontal and vertical relationships (45-degree politics) supporting:

- Local connective infrastructure (e.g. housing, production, transport, health, education, digital connectivity)
 - Strong local civic institutions and local collaborative networks
 - New collaborative activity that develops new types of economic activity, civic capacity and strengthens demand for education and skill
 - New Local Lifelong Learning Systems
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- Mediating leadership becomes more horizontal and participative
 - Social ecosystems evolve through phases of development

Some questions

1. How to break with dominant market and statist models?
2. How to develop collaborations around ‘synergies of difference’?
3. What role for ecosystem leadership to cement common mission?
4. What role for regulatory frameworks?
5. A new type of professionalism?
6. A new concept of lifelong learning?