Evaluation of the Our Place programme: 2014-15

ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

A report to Locality by Shared Intelligence

October 2016
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About the case studies

We conducted a set of eleven detailed case studies, which form the majority of our qualitative evidence base. This annex sets them out in full.

Our case studies are the result of face to face interviews and site visits in each case study area, as well as desk research and in some cases additional telephone interviews. The data on which the case studies are based has helped us examine in some depth how Our Place functions as a programme. The written case studies we have produced deal with areas of progress and success, as well as aspects of the programme which were challenging or did not function as anticipated.

We wanted to conduct some of our case study site visits and interviews early on in the study so they could also help shape the remainder of the research. These were shared with a Sounding Board convened for this evaluation consisting of Our Place area leads, Locality, DCLG and academic advisors. We then conducted site visits for the remaining case studies after to this. The selection of both tranches of case study areas was done in close collaboration with DCLG and Locality. Our primary sampling criteria was to select from different area types, organisation types, and location types. We then used as secondary criteria, the thematic focus of operational plans, scale of ambition, and breadth of issues covered.

We began with a long-list of potential case study candidates. When approached, understandably, some declined. In total we have conducted case study research with 11 Our Place areas. These areas are listed below:

First round of (4) case studies

- Birmingham (three Our Place Pioneers)
- Bradford (Our Place Pioneer)
- Croydon CVS
- Torbay, Hele’s Angels

We identified four case study areas to visit at the start of the study, two of which were Our Place Pioneers and two of which were involved in the first round of Our Place. The areas visited were Birmingham (comprising three separate areas which were all NCB/Our Place Pioneers; Balsall Heath, Castle Vale, and Shard End), Bradford (Bradford Trident – also an Our Place Pioneer), Croydon (Croydon Voluntary Action) and Torbay (Hele’s Angels). Case study visits to these areas were conducted in January and February 2016. We interviewed lead contacts and partners, as well as other stakeholders involved with projects.

Second round of (7) case studies

- Leicester, Well for Living
- Martock, Somerset
- North Huyton Communities Future, Knowsley
- Deneside, Seaham, Co Durham
- Somers Town, Camden
- Stewkley Enterprise Agency, Bucks
- Black Country Make CIC, Wolverhampton

Following analysis of the online survey, we agreed the selection of a further seven case study areas with Locality and DCLG. These were sampled in the same way as before but as a secondary criteria we looked for a mix of areas who had been more successful and less successful in terms of budget pooling. The second tranche of case studies areas were Leicester, Martock, North Huyton, Seaham, Somers Town, Stewkley and Wolverhampton. Case study visits to these areas were conducted in March 2016.
Case study: Birmingham, three Our Place Pioneer Pilots

**Name of area:** Birmingham

**Type of lead organisation:** Charity

**Focus of operational plan:** Workshops run with the communities involved to discuss the outcomes and learning from the Neighbourhood Community Budgeting Pilots; each of the three areas had more specific operational plans based on the needs in their area.

**Notable achievements:** Outcomes varied in each location but included – transfer of assets to community ownership, changes in waste disposal and collection, and greater community involvement in local community groups.

**Sustainability/Implementation progress:** Further pooling or devolution of budgets is unlikely to take place.

**Key lessons on the theme of the impact of cuts on the appetite for risk and judgements about geographic scale:** “Birmingham City Council has moved on [since the early stages of NCB]” and a perception of institutional blockages to neighbourhood budgeting with concerns about the extent of culture change that would be necessary to meet the challenges of new ways of working has prevented further progress.

1. **Background**

Three of the 12 Neighbourhood Community Budgeting Pilots (NCBs) were based in Birmingham. These ran between the beginning of 2012, with operational plans for implementation from April 2013. The three NCBs were: Balsall Heath; Castle Vale; and Shard End.

This case study is based on a half day workshop to discuss the outcomes and learning from the NCBs. This learning has been relevant to continued activity in each area and, by comparing the experiences between and across areas, for the development of Birmingham’s policy and practice on neighbourhood working. The attendance at the workshop included local councillors, residents from the three areas as well as representatives from community organisations and city council officers (a list of participants is included at the end of the case study).

Following a summary description of each NCB (based on its operational plan and the outline that was given at the beginning of the workshop), the case study focuses on the workshop discussion.

**Balsall Heath** is an inner-city area of Birmingham. It is home to a diverse ethnic population and is classed as one of the 20% most deprived wards in the country1. The Balsall Heath Forum was set up in 1994 to tackle drug-related crime and prostitution and improve community safety in the area. Since then both the local environment and resident satisfaction with the area have improved dramatically.

Community-led renewal of Balsall Heath had thus been underway for some time before the area

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became an NCB pilot. The operational plan (Road Map) produced in 2013 drew on an in-depth cost-benefit analysis, which had been carried out by an independent consultant as a key part of the NCB pilot and argued for the net benefits that could be achieved through a pooled and devolved Neighbourhood Budget. The Plan focused on sustaining the Forum’s preventative work via Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with statutory partners in four major areas, described in the Plan as:

- The safety of the neighbourhood
- Cleaning and greening the neighbourhood's environment
- Joining up the way the 15 RSL's operate in the area and transferring the Council's housing stock to a new local association which is tenant led
- Supporting elderly folk, enabling them to live at home for longer, avoid being taken into institutional care and enabling the whole area to become a ‘healthy village’.

This journey along the ‘Road to Renewal’ was to be led by the Balsall Heath Forum’s Executive and senior staff, which would be joined by key members of the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (NSP) in a ‘Working and Delivery’ group. The Plan included members of the NSP increasing the number of officers they seconded to the neighbourhood team and using a devolved Neighbourhood Budget to manage the area ‘in more tangible, personal, joined-up and cost effective ways which make real sense to real people and engages their enthusiasm.

Castle Vale is a large housing estate north-east of Birmingham city centre, which is home to around 10,000 people. Community-led regeneration of the area started in 1993 with a ‘Housing Action Trust’ and has continued since then with the Castle Vale Neighbourhood Partnership Board set up in 2002. This approach is widely credited with transforming a very deprived neighbourhood to an area with desirable homes where people want to live.

The Castle Vale NCB pilot theme for the area was health and wellbeing. A focus upon health and well-being activities for many years had resulted in an increase in life expectancy – although local research showed that issues still existed - only 1 in 5 residents ate ‘5+ fruit and veg’ a day in 2011.

The NCB pilot had two elements:

- The transfer of a local football stadium into community ownership; and
- The provision of services to address health conditions relating to smoking and obesity.

These activities – through partnership working and resident engagement - aimed to achieve:

- More trust and openness between local health providers and commissioners, a commitment to use resources differently, under the influence of a local Health and Wellbeing Board
- More residents engaged on ‘Our Health Voice’ and ‘CHAT’ providing peer-to-peer support and a bottom-up approach to service delivery
- GPs referring into community activities i.e. ‘social prescribing’
- Fully co-ordinated and inclusive health and well-being services
- Increased take up of health and well-being opportunities via a range of community services
and facilities with demonstrable outcomes, better value and more impact

- Services pulling together more effectively and that are truly built around what residents want

The pilot was led by Castle Vale Health and Wellbeing Board (reporting to the Partnership Board) with ‘Castle Vale Health Voice’ acting as a health and overview scrutiny committee and independent champion for patients and the public.

**Shard End** is a community (and electoral Ward) on the eastern edge of the city of Birmingham. It is mostly residential with several large city council estates. It is a deprived area of the city typified by intergenerational unemployment, low aspirations and the development of multiple complex problems.

The NCB pilot in 2012/13 was led by the city council to enable the area to take a community budget based approach to families with complex needs and open up greater dialogue with residents. The operational plan built on the achievements and learning from the pilot and proposed:

- An ongoing programme of **capacity building and engagement** to maintain momentum including through establishing a locally based support hub for community groups and an asset based Community Development Trust to provide a delivery vehicle for future activity

- Establishing a formal **local management board made up of residents and partners** to implement the community budget model and a parish or ‘community’ council for Shard End

- Continuing and refining the **mapping of local authority and other partner expenditure** in Shard End against local priorities and establishing a more robust cost benefit analysis

- Implementing the shared vision for the area that has been developed with residents and has provided a focus for **community action** through:
  - An **Arts and Culture pilot** – to which Birmingham City Council has aligned a proportion of its arts budgets to deliver in order to address the high level of teenage conceptions in the area
  - Continuing **Education, Employment and Enterprise activities** - involving local residents working with professionals and local businesses to negotiate local employment support
  - Developing a business case for a “**Health Village**” in Shard End, co-designed with partners and local residents to identify and experiment with more effective approaches to promoting wellbeing and preventing the need for services in the future.
  - Plans to explore further **transfer of assets** – following the transfer of Moorfield Community Hall to Age UK

<table>
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<th>2. Community budgeting process and support</th>
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<td>Workshop participants from all three NCB pilots agreed that the <strong>community budgeting process had been a catalyst to address key priorities</strong> in each area:</td>
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“Community budgeting was an opportunity to raise the profile…. [and] was the start of rebooting health in Castle Vale”

In Castle Vale the ‘resource mapping’ process during the pilot was seen as potentially useful but was difficult to complete because neither the city council or NHS disaggregated much of their service budgets and spend data to a small enough geographical level. Participants noted that:

“Access to information was difficult and time consuming. Little information is held at the neighbourhood level, particularly NHS data”

“Obtaining timely and relevant data including finance and budget information at a neighbourhood level [didn’t work well]”

“[There wasn’t the] ability to identify the resources that were shareable and potentially transferable to the community”

Nevertheless, Castle Vale “gathered data about spend/ resources in the area” to the extent that this was available and Shard End “did the figures to estimate resources going into the area at around £30 million p.a. although this was difficult without neighbourhood level data”.

An important part of the NCB pilots was undertaking a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) which, together with the resource mapping exercise, was intended to inform the operational plan and encourage the pooling and devolution of local authority and other statutory sector budgets to local community-led organisations. Balsall Heath Forum commissioned independent consultants2 to carry out an in-depth CBA that showed that the total expected benefits of the projects proposed in the Balsall Heath NCB outweighed the costs by a significant margin.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

The community budgeting pilot resources helped all areas to develop and /or build on relationships with statutory partner agencies at governance and operational levels.

“In 2013 we started to deliver the [Castle Vale] operational plan through a good Steering Group of people who put things in train”

“[The NCB] focus has provided dialogue [with partners] and hopefully opportunities”

“Partnerships have been established around key themes in pilot areas that could be a springboard to other greater activities”

Although the wider institutional context was sometimes seen as overly bureaucratic and inflexible, particularly when it came to pooling or devolving budgets, individual officers were praised for their “enthusiasm and commitment”. Representatives from Balsall Heath felt that their relationship with the council as a whole had improved during the community budgeting process, partly due to changes in personnel.

The engagement of local councillors in the three pilots was generally positive although the idea of devolving budgets to community-led organisations in some cases seems to have met with resistance from other councillors and was seen to “challenge their power and control”.

There were some concerns from the three pilots about getting some partners ‘around the table’ and/or with the unwillingness of partner agencies to ‘take a lead’ on issues or themes.

2 From Governance International and the University of Birmingham
“Getting health partners around the table [is challenging]”

“Joined up working amongst sectors [doesn’t work well]”

“There’s lots of potential for health and wellbeing work [in Shard End] but no-one pulls it together”

The NCB pilots were used to build community capacity, especially in Shard End where there had been little history of this, in comparison to Balsall Heath and Castle Vale. Although there was some progress with residents getting involved in environmental action groups, in general representatives from Shard End in this pilot found that:

“Professional partners” [from statutory agencies] were engaged in the [NCB] pilot but it was weaker on the community side

The other two areas also experienced some difficulties with encouraging a wide range of residents to become involved, with one participant feeling that there was an issue of ‘social mobilisation’ and perhaps “needing resources for encouraging volunteering among older people over 65”.

4. Achievements and outcomes

Outcomes varied across the three NCB pilots, although all had achieved some elements of their operational plans, which benefitted local people.

The key achievements in **Castle Vale** were:

- The widely-adopted social prescribing pilot, which was built on partnership working with GPs and other health professionals;
- Taking the leisure centre (including the swimming pool) and football stadium into community ownership; and
- Development of a local obesity strategy action plan ‘Fit for the Future’.

The asset transfer came ‘midstream of 15 – 16 such transfers’ but the city council recognised “it was much bigger and more complex than the others”. Over the last two years the asset transfer has effectively become a ‘service transfer’ to the area. Leisure facilities have been extended by the transfer of open spaces and “the leisure centre and swimming pool now runs without any revenue subsidy from Birmingham City Council”.

**Shard End** Operational Plan included building community capacity and developing governance structures as well as addressing service priorities. These activities resulted in:

- The education, enterprise and employment theme successfully engaging and working with local employers resulting in getting 35 young people into work;

“There’s a transformative power of work [i.e. employment] on young people”

- The healthy villages theme developing work with the Health Centre
- New activities at the Youth Centre
- Community groups have ‘mushroomed’ through local people’s involvement in the development of the environmental theme around ‘Place’

Representatives from **Balsall Heath** stressed that the NCB pilot had not resulted in “making full use of the Balsall Heath Strategic Partnership to reinvest in public services/outcomes”. They felt that,
without this approach, there were limits to the service changes that could be achieved, but the NCB pilot was also “trying to bring about behaviour change” and resulted in:

- The local community taking responsibility for environmental ‘orphan spaces and hot spots’ so the area now has “every small space adopted by a residents’ group”
- Some small changes in waste collection and disposal

Contact with the Head of Commissioning of Birmingham NHS Trust has resulted in some integrated budgeting for a new model of ‘complete care’ which can be accessed by GPs in all three NCB neighbourhoods for adults with complex needs – and to date 650 adults have benefited from the approach. Although this was not explicitly part of the pilots’ operational plans, it was seen by the workshop as consistent with the community budgeting approach.

5. Finance and budgets

Although all three areas carried out resource mapping to a greater or lesser extent and neighbourhood-based staff appreciated the support of local councillors and individual officers at the city council, it became clear that it would not be possible to pool and/or devolve budgets. There was a feeling that “Birmingham City Council had moved on [since the early stages of NCB]” and a perception of “Institutional blockages to neighbourhood budgeting” with concerns about the “extent of cultural change” that would be necessary to meet “the challenges of new ways of working.”

Areas had some sympathy with the difficulties of devolving budgets at a time when severe financial cuts were being made by central and local government. Although there was a suggestion that some level of cuts could help drive change, the scale of the current cuts seemed to go beyond this. Some participants questioned whether devolution to neighbourhoods might be seen as too expensive when the establishment of the West Midlands Combined Authority for services such as economic development and employment support - was being promoted as more cost effective.

“There are conflicting messages on cost reduction and neighbourhood delivery: Devolve and reinvest in services at a lower cost versus consolidate for economies of scale”

6. Legacy from the Neighbourhood Community Budgeting Pilots

Although the plans for pooled and/or devolved budget did not come to fruition, there is agreement that the NCB process provided learning in the three neighbourhoods and for the city council.

“The council never got to give us the budget so there has been no devolution but we have learnt some lessons from community budgeting, including how to do things differently”

This experience of ‘doing things differently’ includes new ways of engaging communities, particularly through environmental projects (in Shard End and Balsall Heath), building effective partnerships (Shard End and Castle Vale), delivering innovative services through large scale transfers (Castle Vale) and carrying out cost benefit analysis to support business plans or proposals (Balsall Heath).

Birmingham City Council (BCC) is using the learning from NCB projects to add to experience from “a devolution agenda in Birmingham [that has been] developing over the last 15 years”. The current policy context is supportive to this with the election of a new Leader of BCC who is keen that there is a bottom up process for neighbourhood devolution and decision making, that local councillors work with the community and that there is a diversity of forms of neighbourhood governance.
Recent work has included establishing a new neighbourhood housing approach with Balsall Heath called ‘Place management’ and developing plans for a Sutton Coldfield Town Council (which was created in May 2016). The city council is also bringing partners from health and police on board to join in a new approach based on driving transformational change in all neighbourhoods (not just the 31 most deprived neighbourhoods that make up one third of the city). The ‘New Deal for Neighbourhoods’ (a working title) is based on eight pillars that offer ‘opportunities for change’ by 2026:

I. Health, economy, education and housing to be in place as the drivers of transformation

II. Co-ordination from the bottom up through community engagement

III. Local/new investment through a small legacy pot /innovation fund

IV. Success with Lottery and other external funding (including through building VCS capacity)

V. ‘Parishing’ in Sutton Coldfield and/or localisation to be looked at in other parts of the city

VI. Citizen engagement with a bottom-up approach

VII. Build on Neighbourhood Management pilots with ‘neighbourhood agreements’

VIII. Radical delivery models using a variety of different mechanisms at neighbourhood level

7. Learning about success factors

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped Birmingham benefit from being an Our Place Pioneer with three neighbourhood community budgeting pilots:

- **Our Place can act as a focus and catalyst** for community engagement and partnership working around agreed themes

- It is important to have **community infrastructure organisations already in place** to use the opportunity that Our Place/community budgeting gives to develop new ways of delivering services. This was the case in Balsall Heath and Castle Vale which had long-established community-led regeneration vehicles, plus a history of community engagement and partnership working. In contrast, Shard End had to spend much of the pilot putting these processes in place

- **A focus on specific project(s)** - service areas and ways of delivering differently - helps achieve results

- **Political support** city wide (e.g. at Cabinet and strategic levels) as well as from local councillors is important in making sustained progress on devolved budgets and decision-making

8. And how to overcome challenges

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3 A working title – the new approach and how it will be funded has still to be fully approved by Birmingham City Council.
Community budgeting was not without its challenges and the pilots were useful in recognising these and learning how to overcome them:

- The neighbourhood level **resource mapping** was difficult because neither the city council nor the NHS collected and/or collated much data at this geographical level. (Most data was kept by service area and if there was a geographical breakdown, it was at a larger scale). All areas used estimation and modelling to use what they did collect, but this only provided a partial picture. Government could encourage statutory agencies to collect neighbourhood (e.g. Ward) level data to support neighbourhood change.

- **Staff turnover in neighbourhoods** was a problem, particularly in Balsall Heath and Shard End, partly because of time-limited contracts. This affects the continuity – and credibility - that is required for building partnerships and community engagement, as well as seeing through operational plans.

- Messages about **pooling neighbourhood budgets** conflicted with other messages about economies of scale that can be achieved through combined authorities. This apparent tension could be reduced through more clarity from central and local government about which geographical scales work best for which service areas.

- The **Our Place timescale** was seen as too short for neighbourhood community budgeting to achieve its aims. Birmingham’s new approach to neighbourhoods may be able to build on and progress to date – providing it is seen as transformational and not just ‘the next project’

> “Transforming services through pooled budgets requires access to ‘big money’ and culture change – neither was possible in the [NCB] timescale”

- It was difficult for the pilots to access council budgets and for the council to pool resources with other organisations in a time of cuts. Government encouragement and/or incentives could help **collaboration between government departments** for pooling of their budgets.
Workshop participants

The NCB workshop took place on Monday 1 February and was attended by:

Ward Councillor, Balsall Heath

Chief Executive, Balsall Heath Forum Ltd.

Chief Executive, Castle Vale Community Housing Association

Neighbourhood Manager, Castle Vale Community Housing Association

Ward Councillor, Shard End

Partnership Development Officer (Shard End), Pioneer Group

Professional Support Officer to the Shard End Core Group, Birmingham City Council

Service Director Localisation, Birmingham City Council

Community Support & Development Officer, Birmingham City Council

District Support Officer, Birmingham City Council
1. Background

The opportunity to apply to be a Neighbourhood Community Budgeting (NCB) pilot (later known as an Our Place Pioneer) in 2012 came at a good time for Bradford Trident. The Community Development Trust (CDT), which had succeeded the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme, was refreshing its priorities and its relationship with the communities it serves. Following the NDC’s notable achievements in education and community safety, as well as in resident participation, the local authority supported the company’s succession strategy by transferring some £7-8 million of assets to the CDT’s trading arm – Bradford Trident Trading – which will be responsible for using these to generate income per year for the charitable company to use in the area. These assets include neighbourhood centres (some with statutory sector tenants) and industrial property and land for housing development as part of its Housing Strategy. Bradford Trident was also instrumental in setting up a Parish Council to provide devolved governance of the BD5 area.

“Bradford Trident applied for community budgeting funding to focus our work in the second most deprived ward in the country. There were still lots of issues after NDC [finished] – young people, single parents, drugs, crime and so on”.

Alongside tackling these priorities there was an interest from Bradford Trident in finding out “who spends what and holds what in BD5 [the local area]”, to support devolved neighbourhood working and sustain Bradford Trident as a CDT. There was also a commitment from Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) to support the bid.

Name of area: Bradford
Type of lead organisation: Trust/Charity
Focus of operational plan: Improve local services in the two interrelated priorities of employment support and youth activities.

Notable achievements: The pilot was able to achieve a positive outcome on the ‘youth’ priority theme through the asset transfer of the Parkside Youth and Sports Centre from BNDC to Bradford Trident on a 125-year lease.

Sustainability/implementation progress: While community budgeting has not taken place, Bradford Trident has been able to secure Lottery funding for the next 10 years to continue to run specific programmes.

Key lessons on the theme of assurances of quality in delivery and governance: The strong community governance arrangements are one of the major reasons the organisation was able to secure Better Start Money to continue its projects.

4 More information about Bradford Trident can be accessed from www.bradfordtrident.co.uk
5 Bradford Trident study in http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/downloads/reports/Delivering_Succession_Strategies.pdf and other NDC national evaluation reports on http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/ndc_reports_02.htm
The original intention of the CDT bid was to look at all service areas but when Bradford Trident started working with their Relationship Manager from DCLG, they narrowed down the focus to devolving budgets to improve local services in the two interrelated priorities of:

- Employment support; and
- Youth activities

There were also two lower priority areas of ‘health’ and ‘community development’.

The application was successful and an officer was recruited to lead the community budgeting pilot/Pioneer in April 2012.

The community budgeting pilot as such has finished now. The original aims could only be addressed to a limited extent as the envisaged pooling and/or devolution of budgets in the two priority service areas did not materialise. However, Bradford Trident is building on the learning from the pilot especially on mapping spend, identifying outcomes and trying to pool/align mainstream resources through the Better Start Bradford programme, which is described below.

2. Community budgeting process and support

The support from the DCLG relationship manager during the 2012/13 community budgeting process was received very positively due to his commitment and expertise:

“Community budgeting was his baby. He helped us [Bradford Trident] focus and move to the DCLG model, which had 5 key features – scoping, partnerships and relationship building, governance, community engagement and cost benefit analysis. Bradford Trident kind of did this already but the CBA was the new bit. The ordering [of the 5 features] may have got in the way a bit but you could be flexible about this”

The DCLG community budgeting was useful in providing constructive challenge to, and new tools for, Bradford Trident’s established ways of working. The main difficulty with the support provided was that “the DCLG tools for Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) weren’t enough without either Bradford Trident or the council having the skills to use them”. It was also frustrating that DCLG appeared to change their language from ‘pooled’ to ‘aligned’ budgets during the pilot. This was taken to mean that the council would still be in control of the budgets, whereas Bradford Trident had the governance arrangements through the Parish Council or the Bradford Trident Board to manage and be accountable for a pooled budget and wanted the ‘clout’ from DCLG to help them secure this.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

The community budgeting pilot resources helped Bradford Trident establish a Community of Practice for the employment support priority. This involved Job Centre Plus (JCP), children’s centres and other local voluntary organisations which meant “everyone knew each other”. This networking was helpful for identifying gaps and promoting co-design based on local residents’ experiences.

Despite the difficulties in pooling budgets described below, the conversations with agencies about how much money goes into the area were very useful. Bradford Trident got “a complete mapping of statutory and voluntary sector youth provision in BD5 and was able to put this alongside related employment and education provision”.
Community budgeting pilot resources were used for extensive community engagement to identify and co-design activities to address the agreed priorities. This process took the form of a major consultation and externally facilitated Planning for Real event enabled priorities and gaps to be identified and then used for the resulting co-design exercise.

4. Achievements and outcomes

The NCB-funded Planning for Real exercise with residents led to the delivery of a number of new activities including:

- A local volunteering initiative through which local VCS and statutory agencies offer volunteering opportunities to help residents gain skills as a route into employment. Residents can find out about these at local centres throughout the neighbourhood before having a 1:1 meeting with Bradford Trident’s Community Development Officer and tailored local training
- Supporting a feasibility study into additional childcare at a new setting
- Some influence on Get Bradford Working (the district-wide employment support programme) including the provision of local workshops in BD5

The pilot was able to achieve a positive outcome on the ‘youth’ priority theme through the asset transfer of Parkside Youth and Sports Centre from BMDC to Bradford Trident on a 125-year lease. This was seen as very much in line with the community budgeting approach. New sports, youth and healthy living activities have been set up in the building that had been refurbished using £150,000 of Bradford Trident’s own funds. These include a Bike Library, Cook and Eat classes, badminton sessions and older people’s meal clubs. These activities are well used by a growing number of local residents.

5. Finance and budgets

The Community Budgeting Plan (i.e. on employment support and youth activities) was supposed to be funded by pooling council and other statutory sector resources. This was difficult to secure in practice as although partners were interested in the community budgeting approach, they faced constraints and barriers connected with going “beyond their [own] agenda” as while they were supportive in principle, devolving pooled resources to community-led organisations wasn’t one of their highest priorities.

On the employment support theme for example, Bradford Trident had used the Community Budgeting Plan to argue for local contracts that could be tailored to local needs including through providing local placements in VCS, statutory and private employers. Job Centre Plus one of the partners involved in the NCB-supported Community of Practice, were initially happy to help facilitate this and had thought that they could “make community budgeting work locally” to this end but then found that they were constrained by national DWP guidance.

At the same time the local authority felt that they were “too late in the process” of going for a Bradford District-wide contract with a single provider for the Get Bradford Working employment support programme (jointly funded by BMDC and JCP) to explore devolving part of the contract to Bradford Trident to develop tailored local employment support. Moreover, there was a view from the council that a considerable degree of devolution had already been achieved as “Get Bradford Working was already seen as a local solution – particularly by the politicians - in comparison to the national Work Programme”.

Despite the successful asset transfer of Parkside Youth and Sports Centre, Bradford Trident felt that pooling budgets for the youth theme of the pilot was affected by cuts in the youth services budget so that there were insufficient resources left for pooling. They were as they saw it, “on the cusp of the council not even being able to provide at the current level”. This meant that when the pilot was looking at pooling the funding that went into youth provision in BD5 and, more widely, Bradford East, there were “only very minimal offers. BMDC had started laying off [youth services] staff and we were never going to get pooled budgets – we were just offered some training budget”.

This experience reflects the financial context that “It was a very bad time in 2012/13 for pooling budgets. Our [Bradford Trident’s] business case helped and brought statutory organisations on board – so they were included in the community budgeting programme, which made it a bit easier. But it was a crunch time for finance – there was a massive impact from the financial situation. They [the council, NHS] didn’t want to pool or align [budgets]”.

In addition to this financial context it seems that pooling budgets under community control might have always been a step too far for the council which possibly “didn’t go into the CB pilot thinking ‘pooled budgets’ – it was more about better partnerships”. Given that the council already delegates some of its community development and environmental budgets through Area Committees, it may not be so much commissioning on an area basis as commissioning under community control that was the problem with pooling budgets.

6. Legacy from the Neighbourhood Community Budgeting Pilot

Though Bradford Trident did not achieve their original aims through pooled budgets, the community budgeting pilot led to the identification and delivery of new activities and facilities such as the Volunteering Project and the development of the Parkside Youth and Sports Centre

Although not a direct impact of the NCB, the biggest legacy from the community budgeting process has been securing £49 million Lottery funding over 10 years for Better Start Bradford- a £53 million, 10-year programme of early intervention for 0-3 year olds. Bradford Trident understands that the main reasons that it got Better Start money was that there was strong community governance, experience of partnership working over a prolonged project with varied partners; and because they had managed £50 million in the NDC programme.

The CBA process had been “useful to get people [partners and residents] together to think in terms of outcomes and how these linked to spend”. This helped when mapping the funding and other resources going into the area. This in turn enabled Bradford Trident to get some £4 million of pooled matching money for Better Start Bradford from BMDC, the CCGs and West Yorkshire Police by negotiating for 0.5% of each of their mainstream budgets going into the area. (When added to Lottery funding of £49 million, this makes a total budget for Better Start Bradford of £53 million.

These changes, which have built on the community budgeting pilot, are benefitting local residents and are likely to be sustained through Bradford Trident’s overall strategy.

7. Learning about success factors

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped Bradford Trident and its partners benefit from being a community budgeting pilot/Our Place Pioneer and should be replicable in other areas:

- Appointing a lead officer with dedicated time and the necessary skills and enthusiasm for the community budgeting pilot was essential for engaging partners and making progress;
• Bradford Trident’s well-established governance arrangements, infrastructure and track record were meant there was an existing neighbourhood programme on which the NCB pilot could build and add value;

• The community budgeting model provided a useful structure for mapping resources and developing an evidence-based business case “which challenged us to do things differently, to change our own practice. You can’t get to a new place by doing the same old things”

• Even though Bradford Trident has a long history of resident involvement, the community participation and co-design exercises funded through the NCB pilot helped it ‘re-engage residents and refresh it’s understanding of their priorities and actions which helped the CDT “know the priorities and what to do”; This process also started the volunteering project which is proving very successful

• The experience of and learning from transferring Parkside Youth and Sports Centre to Bradford Trident has paved the way for other asset transfers by the council; and

• The resources mapping, needs analysis and partner engagement through community budgeting all helped secure £53 million for the Better Start project – an opportunistic bid with different themes from those for community budgeting, but which drew on the experience.

8. And how to overcome challenges

Community budgeting was not without its challenges and the pilot was useful in recognising these and learning how to overcome them:

• It was difficult to produce a full CBA without the skills locally to operationalise the DCLG tool. Bradford Trident learnt from this and, for Better Start, will be using ‘Preventomics”, a tool being developed by LSE with funding from the Lottery and interest from BMDC Public Health;

• It was very difficult for Bradford Trident to persuade BMDC to create pooled budgets under local community control. The only financial element of the plan that was acted on was the Parkside Centre asset transfer. More recently, Lottery funding for Better Start has encouraged some budget pooling from BMDC, the NHS and the police. This suggests that some statutory agencies may need to see small examples of budget pooling operating in practice, before they too can commit. It may also help that Better Start Bradford is doing this in a policy area – children’s health and social care – with the potential for significant savings to be made from statutory agencies taking a joined-up preventative approach (compared to, for example, youth or environmental services);

• The community budgeting process generated insights into partnership working and how proposals to devolve, pool or align finance could be used to test these. These insights led to some fresh thinking about partnership working with other community-led organisations including through Bradford Trident joining ‘Arise’, a consortium of community anchor organisations;

• Although the Planning for Real exercise was very successful, Bradford Trident has concerns that it is not reaching its diverse communities, particularly those from the EU A8 countries such as Romania and Slovakia. It is now arranging some events to target ‘new communities’ and has talked to BMDC and the police about employing more officers from these countries;
- Cultural change in statutory organisations can be slow, which suggests that community-led projects may need financial support post-operational plan sign off to continue to negotiate with partners if they want to influence long-term transformational change. “It took 12 months to get to the operational plan. How long will it take to get it to business as usual? So we have to persevere!”

Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Friday 8 January and included interviewees with:

Chair: Bradford Trident Board (and local councillor)

Programme Director - Better Start Bradford (Previously led community budgeting pilot)

Community Development Officer, Bradford Trident (and local resident)

Director of Environment and Sport, Bradford City Council

Facilities Officer, Bradford Trident through an observation visit to Parkside Youth and Sports Centre
Case study: Croydon CVS

Name of area: Croydon, London
Type of lead organisation: Charity/CVS
Focus of operational plan: Utilising ABCD principles to drive behaviour change and divert people from needing emergency health and social care – helping them to deal with health issues before they require acute care.
Notable achievements: 424 local people were beneficiaries of the services provided through the pilot, with 80% feeling more positive about improving their own health.
Sustainability/implementation progress: The organisation has secured Big Lottery funding to continue the project in the North of the Borough. The cost benefit and logic model have proven useful for the organisations in providing additional evidence of project impact.
Key lessons on the theme of the impact of cuts on the appetite for risk and judgements about geographic scale: While the pilot was successful and local statutory services recognise the value of the new models of service provision, they do not yet see these as viable replacements to existing commissioned services.

1. Background
Our Place in Croydon is focused on New Addington and Fieldway. These two communities sit on the fringe of Greater London surrounded by farmland, and greenspace. Built in the 1930s and expanded in the 1960s they have remained separate from the edge of the South London sprawl because development on all sides is restricted by the Greenbelt.

The lead organisation for Our Place in Croydon was Croydon Voluntary Action a charity who acts as the umbrella for community organisations in the borough, and who deliver several community-led public services themselves. After the 2011 riots, which affected Croydon badly, Croydon Voluntary Action became concerned that much of the support intended to help the borough recover consisted of organisations coming in and ‘doing’ the support to local people – yet local people often felt unable to be part of this effort. What Croydon Voluntary Action wanted was to “create some space to enable residents to see what they themselves have and can do.” To achieve this they began using the language and methods of Asset Based Community Development (or ABCD). They also began writing funding bids to support the development if services based on ABCD principles which would harness the skills and capacity of Croydon’s communities – especially those facing the greatest hardship and with the least influence. They secured funding from Big Lottery, London Fire Brigade, and Our Place enabling them to turn ABCD principles into practice.

The age profile of New Addington and Fieldway is young, and social capital is high with many people active in both informal and organised networks involved in various types of community action. At the same time however, household incomes are among the lowest in England, while unemployment and benefit claimancy are high. Not surprisingly for a community with this profile, life expectancy is
below the Croydon average, with higher than average instances of cardiovascular disease and cancer taking their toll.

Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) had also been developing services focused on diverting people from needing emergency health and social care – again using ABCD principles – and it was from this that the Our Place proposal was developed. CVA’s broader, strategic aim was to use Our Place to promote the adoption of ABCD principles across all areas of local public services.

The original proposal to join the Our Place programme centred on an existing plan by CVA to introduce a volunteer-led service to tackle ill-health and improve well-being. CVA had already secured funding from Croydon’s NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to develop the service - which would be a version of the Make Every Contact Count (MECC) approach which is being adopted in many parts of the country\(^6\). The development of MECC in Croydon had close involvement from local health decision-makers in particular the Director of Public Health. The service was designed to be led by a professional Community Builder who would then recruit a large network of volunteer ‘Connectors’ who would be based in GP surgeries and community pharmacies. The role of the volunteer Connectors would be to provide advice and guidance aimed at helping people who attend their GP or pharmacist to develop skills and knowledge to help themselves and self-manage their health.

This initial pilot phase of MECC in Croydon would start with one paid Community Builder and a network of volunteer Connectors based in two GP surgeries in New Addington and Fieldway. Outreach to local pharmacies was also planned. The ambition was that the MECC pilot would serve as a proof of concept before introducing the service across an entire GP network of 9 GP surgeries and 9 community pharmacies in the area.

The services envisaged by CVA were similar in many ways to other ‘social prescribing’ and ‘health champion’ models being developed across the UK and in other countries.

CVA also saw that using Our Place to support the MECC pilot would give MECC added weight. It would bring additional resources - grants to go towards staffing, support to develop a Cost Benefit Analysis and a Logic model for MECC. Publicly linking MECC to Our Place also had potential to give the pilot a higher profile with other local service providers.

2. **Our Place process and support**

For Our Place in Croydon, the most important elements of the process – besides the grant funding that supported the staffing costs of the MECC pilot – was the support received to develop a Cost Benefit Analysis, and a Logic model.

Unlike many other Our Place projects who used external support the Cost Benefit Analysis was carried out locally by Croydon Council’s Strategic Intelligence Unit using the Our Place model from Manchester New Economy. CBA was used to assess the Community Builder role specifically. This produced a headline figure showing a positive return on public investment for the Community Builder of £1.26 for every £1 spent – in other words, the net financial benefits and savings to the public sector were more than the cost of the Community Builder post.

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\(^6\) **Making Every Contact Count** (MECC) is an approach to behaviour change promoted by Public Health England that utilises day to day interactions between organisations and individuals to support people in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
Having a headline figure produced by a central team within the council was significant in winning support and recognition for the Community Building approach within the council and among other members of the Local Strategic Partnership.

It also provided a framework and language for discussing the scaling-up of the service. For example, another version of the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) was produced showing what the impact would be if the Community Builders had covered the whole GP network, with two rather than one paid Community Builder.

Another consequence of the CBA was that it enabled distinctions to be made between the ‘hard’ monetary benefits and ‘soft’ non-monetary benefits (individual well-being, engagement of the community in healthy-living promotion) which were over and above the hard monetary benefits.

The process of developing a Logic model was also significant in the way CVA was able to use the Our Place project to shape relationships with partners.

It is easy to see why a Logic model approach would be particularly useful for a project concerned with complex health issues, building community capacity for self-help, and creating longer term change. For CVA the Logic model they produced became, just like the CBA, a central piece of evidence which they used to frame discussions with partners. This is different to what we have seen in many other Our Place areas where lead organisations have pointed to the actual process of producing a Logic model as being useful, but not necessarily the product itself.

3. Engagement of partners and residents
The CBA and the Logic Model were used a great deal by CVA to engage statutory partners.

Using these tools was an important way for CVA to explain not just the Our Place project but the wider case for ABCD based approaches. It enabled CVA to explain ABCD through practical examples, into which partners could “really drill down” in terms of how the service led to change (the Logic model) and how the financial benefits accrued (the CBA).

The Our Place project was not the only activity through which CVA was trying to put ABCD principles into practice. CVA were also delivering several other similar projects in New Addington and in other parts of Croydon – also funded by grants including other ‘post-riot’ funding, as well as Big Local which is funded by Big Lottery.

With so many similarly-intentioned projects running in parallel Our Place was seen by CVA as “a way to make sense of the whole patchwork of projects”. In fact, the very title of the programme “Our Place” proved useful as a way of framing the headline aim of enabling local people to see “what they themselves have and can do”. In addition, because it was an official Government programme from DCLG, it also created “common ground” with local statutory providers.

One of the most significant ways in which Our Place and the MECC pilot helped engage of partners, was through Croydon’s Fairness Commission\(^7\) which was set-up in January 2015 as Our Place funding was coming to an end. The Fairness Commission was convened by Croydon Council and chaired by the Bishop of Croydon. Its terms of reference were to investigate the social challenges of the borough and “agree a route map to unlock the potential of all its residents, particularly the most disadvantaged”.

\(^7\) Croydon’s Opportunity and Fairness Commission is an independent Commission that was launched in January 2015 - [http://www.opportunitycroydon.org/](http://www.opportunitycroydon.org/)
When Our Place began, CVA had known the Commission was on the horizon, and knew they would need to work with the Commission. They saw a chance to help the Commission dig deeper into its terms of reference by exploring real examples of what CVA were doing in New Addington in particular.

The Fairness Commission was essentially about helping the Council decide how to meet its challenges around public service reform and service transformation. By encouraging the Commission to look at New Addington, CVA were able to position their ABCD-based projects, including the MECC pilot, as the route to public service transformation on many issues.

The Fairness Commission reported in early 2016, and did indeed acknowledge that asset based community development approaches are central to meeting the borough’s challenges “Support for Asset Based Community Development, and other asset based approaches [...] should be embedded in the culture of all public and voluntary organisations”.8

4. Achievements and outcomes
CVA were careful to measure the impact of the MECC pilot in qualitative and quantitative terms in order to demonstrate what Our Place had achieved, to make the case to funders and commissioners and so they themselves could improve the model. The headline measures of the project formed part of the Our Place Operation Plan and were described in more detail in the full MECC evaluation report9:

- 40 people were recruited as Community Connectors
- 424 local people were beneficiaries of the services provided through the MECC pilot
- 80% of beneficiaries said they felt more positive about improving their own health, and all beneficiaries said they felt better aware of local services as a result of encountering the new service
- Workshops run as part of the ABCD Community Building programme led to members of the community setting up 41 new community-led self-help activities which engaged with and supported 146 local people
- Three GP practices were able to host Community Connectors (one more besides the original two Pioneer Sites)

In terms of qualitative impacts Our Place was able to secure active engagement from senior professionals and decision-makers across the council and also in South London NHS bodies. This is seen as a vital precursor to Our Place having the wider longer-term impact hoped for by CVA – and to begin to influence public service provision across the borough.

In terms of wider community reach and visibility, the Our Place project reached beyond those who simply encountered the new service during a visit to the GP surgery. CVA also put on a number of community events to promote the Community Building model and the idea of embedding ABCD

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principles in public services. These included events and ideas fairs – as well as the creation of an asset map which showed 400+ community resources available in the New Addington and Fieldway.

5. Finance and budgets
The Our Place project enabled CVA to make sense of a ‘patchwork’ of projects with similar goals, but funded by different grant sources. What is notable however, is that almost all the financial resources which have supported Our Place, the MECC pilot and the other activities aimed at applying ABCD principals – have been either grants, or short term innovation funding.

So far, neither MECC Our Place work nor any other services being delivered by CVA in New Addington and Fieldway, have been commissioned by statutory services. The only formal commissioning we have seen evidence of is a discreet and time-limited research project to extend the mapping of community assets.

Although statutory services recognise the value of the new models of service provision being developed by CVA, it seems that ultimately statutory services do not yet see these as viable replacements for existing commissioned services. That said, Croydon Council has set up an ‘external funding group’ to provide practical help to CVA to seek grants and other funding streams (including from Big Lottery) – but their own commissioning budgets for now are not on the table.

6. Legacy and achievements
The Our Place programme and the MECC pilot it supported has not yet led to the tipping point in commissioning which CVA would have liked. But it has left a legacy of practical gains, and added weight to the arguments for new models of public services which have been articulated by Croydon’s Fairness Commission.

In practical terms, the MECC pilot is seen locally as having been successful.

The cost benefit analysis has put a hard monetary number against the benefits of an ABCD approach and the logic model provides a detailed explanation of how the service works which others can engage with (either to provide support or challenge).

Within New Addington the MECC model is being used by other community organisations to provide social prescribing and health champion support based out of a new “Wellbeing Hub” located in an established community centre.

CVA is now embarking on a larger implementation of the MECC model in the north of the borough expanded from GP surgeries to also include pharmacies, schools and children’s centres – but again this is grant funded (by Big Lottery) rather than commissioned.

Our Place has also led to the recruitment of volunteer Social Outcome Reporters in New Addington who are using digital technology to signpost others to services, and capture the impacts of doing so.

In terms of CVA’s strategic goals around embedding ABCD principles in all public services CVA also believe Our Place has left a legacy. In addition to the influence gained over the Fairness Commission they gave other examples e.g. where public agencies have begun using the term ‘consultation’ very differently and with much more care than is often the case – to mean community engagement and capacity building with the aim of enabling communities to become more self-sufficient. CVA see this as evidence of an increased respect for and understanding of ABCD principles, and indeed of genuine community engagement.

10 The online map is openly accessible and shows locations of community groups, places of worship, parent and child activities, health activities and centres, social clubs, and educational groups and classes.
CVA have also been told by NHS colleagues that Our Place and the work in new Addington has enabled the NHS to understand the community better and this in turn has changed the design of public health campaigns.

But we also heard how Our Place in some ways built up an expectation that the initial 12 months of testing and experimentation would be a precursor to an acceleration in scale and impact – yet some partners feel there has only been ‘more of the same’ modest -scale experimentation. This is not seen as the fault of CVA, but the fault of the overall design of Our Place in that there was a start-up phase but nothing to capitalise upon and accelerate what it produced.

More broadly, we heard frustration that Our Place, Localism, and the Community Rights agendas seemed to have little alignment to the devolution and service transformation agendas. For Croydon it has been obvious that Our Place is about the community sector taking over the role of statutory services in a number of service areas – but there is no strong strategic approach to enabling the community sector to take on that role.

7. Learning about success factors
The success factors for Our Place in Croydon were around three issues:

- Linking Our Place to a geographical area and a policy area which statutory providers were already interested in— that is the MECC pilot that the CCG was already backing financially and with leadership effort.

- Focusing on a geography which was easily understood and defined both by residents and service providers – this enabled CVA and agencies to talk about what they were doing differently in New Addington.

- Making the New Addington approach a focus of CVA’s evidence to the Fairness Commission, again enabling the Commission to consider ‘conventional’ approaches with what was happening in New Addington.

- Using the logic model as an important influencing tool.

8. Challenges
The Croydon Our Place project was one of several initiatives instigated by CVA aimed at demonstrating how ABCD principles could unlock some of the most difficult service challenges – around service design, reducing dependence, focusing on issues of most relevance to users. It seems there is agreement these approaches are effective yet there is no viable route for these pilots to become replacements for existing services. The only way they can continue is to secure more short term grant funding.

In terms of achieving a strategic shift from direct provision by statutory services to provision by community organisations – what CVA and Croydon Council both seem to be struggling with is how short term grant funding (much of it from the Lottery) can be relied upon as the basis of providing important public services in a stable and sustainable way.

This seems linked to the frustrations we heard that Our Place was not sufficiently connected with the broader Government agenda on transformation and devolution. The devolution narrative in particular is, in CVA’s view “completely lacking on what the public sector should be doing with the voluntary sector to move them into the spaces we need to move out of”.

When pressed, local authority officers recognise that there are challenges in terms of their own attitudes and that there is a need to “shift commissioner thinking” - but they also believe that an
even bigger issue is that community sector organisations have not yet been able to develop robust enough business cases and rationale for the services they deliver; some of it is still simply (in their words) too “fluffy”.

One suggestion to break this impasse, which could be part of a future version of Our Place, was some form of shared stake or matched funding – perhaps tiered over time.

**Fieldwork and interviewees**

Fieldwork was carried out between February and April 2016 and included interviews with:

- Croydon Voluntary Action, Chief Executive
- Croydon Voluntary Action, ABCD Project Worker
- London Borough of Croydon, Head of Strategy and Communities
Case study: Torbay, Hele’s Angels

Name of area: Torbay

Type of lead organisation: Community Association

Focus of operational plan: Bringing together three different community organisations in a hub model, with umbrella management.

Notable achievements: This was a catalytic process which has challenged and changed relationships culminating in an umbrella organisation which is about to be formed.

Sustainability/implementation progress: Ongoing work from the project has been funded by the Big Lottery as part of the Ageing Well in Torbay scheme.

Key lessons on the theme of assurances of quality in delivery and governance: There was learning from both the statutory partners and community organisations. Statutory partners recognised their own limitations in developing new community-based services while community organisations realised they needed to be far more cohesive and collaborative when dealing with statutory partners and seeking to work with them.

1. Background
Our Place in Torbay commenced against a backdrop of one of the most ambitious programmes in the country to integrate health and social care through the creation of a new Integrated Care Organisation (an “ICO”). The new organisation now known as the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust went live on 1 October 2015 after several years of planning. While the new ICO was bringing together statutory health and social care services under unified management and governance, another NHS change programme ‘integrated care pioneers’ known locally as ‘Joined Up’ was attempting to improve co-ordination between statutory care services and community-led services. This was led by the local Clinical Commissioning Group with the aim of re-designing services from the perspective of the “patients and people who use services... to make sure they can get the support they need without a struggle.”

The original application to Our Place was made by Hele’s Angels, a neighbourhood management partnership comprised of the managers of three community halls in the Hele and Watcombe area on the outskirts of Torquay (each manager being employed by their respective community association). Hele’s Angels also ran two shops and had a paid Neighbourhood Manager whose salary was funded by Torbay Council.

They drew up an Our Place application, focused on their area of Torquay, with the aim of creating an integrated offer to commissioners – consisting of premises and activities to make ‘partnership commissioning with communities a reality’. The main route to achieving this was the development of a new partnership body to bring together the management of the three community halls, the Hele’s Angels neighbourhood management team itself, the Police, and local social housing providers.

The Hele’s Angels ambition was to tackle health in a holistic way as well as to align with the NHS agenda on health and care integration and patient-centred provision. The group had the idea of
creating a ‘Hub’ or centre that could support families around health and child poverty. A key purpose of the Hubs was to develop ‘social prescribing’ as an alternative to existing models of support for older residents. This would be characterised by more holistic or person-centred discussions, and ‘social prescriptions’ which would direct patients to take part in community activities and programmes run by local community organisations. However, to deliver a social prescribing service on a scale and of a quality which statutory providers would need, would also mean bringing together the three separately-managed community venues and the groups they work with in other words “three little operations was not interesting, but a £0.5m enterprise might be”.

In the period leading up to the launch of Our Place in Torbay local NHS managers had already become focused on the challenge of community-level engagement. Their Public Health team had been trying to retrain and re-organise the health visitor service towards a more community-focused model. Assigning health visitors to specific localities or patches was a key feature of the plan. However, the plan did not succeed, due in part to difficulties aligning geographic patches with caseloads. There were also tensions between relying on a top-down change programme to bring about a more grass roots and engaged approach.

The 2013-14 period was also a time when public services (especially council services) began retreating and scaling down in earnest. This opened the eyes of statutory sector decision-makers to the possibilities of working with communities more collaboratively to fill the gaps being left behind.

2. Our Place process and support

As soon as their Our Place application was accepted Hele’s Angels used their Getting Going grant to commission Torbay Community Development Trust, a coalition of voluntary sector organisations, to play a community development role. In doing so this very local Our Place project became linked with the NHS integration agenda, because Torbay Community Development Trust were influential enough to be trusted partners of the NHS, but also local enough to understand the challenges faced by Hele’s Angels.

The Trust began their role by bringing the four organisations together to discuss closer working and providing advice on asset based community development. They used the assigned Our Place Relationship Manager to convene the discussion. It quickly became apparent that the central task of unifying the governance of the four organisations was going to take time and a lot of trust would have to be built first. The trustees and managers of each community venue had different expectations and different views about the direction of travel.

In fact, it is only now at the time of writing in 2016 that this task of creating a single board of trustees is now coming to fruition, almost a year after grant support from Our Place ended.

The role of the Relationship Managers supplied by the Our Place programme was seen as very influential on the process. Facilitating the discussions with the community groups about single governance took up most of the time which had been allocated. These meetings were particularly important as they brought home to the partners how much work was needed to build consensus. Having an external person lead the discussions, and in some cases challenge behaviours, was essential groundwork for the subsequent discussions which now a year on, have led to a new combined governance.

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11 Social prescribing has been developed in areas across England led by NHS organisations. The Torbay model was inspired by early implementations in Rotherham and in Newquay.
A spend-mapping exercise was also conducted which identified 42 services going into Hele and Watcombe. This was useful in creating a language and a basis for engaging other local providers besides the NHS. It also led to a deal being agreed with statutory partners that if savings were realised through Our Place then Torbay Community Development Trust could keep and recycle these. (However, we also discovered that although savings have since been made, the deal apparently evaporated and no savings were returned to the project.)

In terms of the operational plan, this focused a great deal on bringing together the three community venues under some form of umbrella organisation, and the steps to achieving that. This was seen as the essential precursor to being able to develop a community-led ‘social prescribing’ service.

By the time the operational plan was being written another new factor had come into play. Torbay Community Development Trust had been awarded funding for a major Big Lottery programme - Ageing Well in Torbay. This was a six-year programme (April 2015 – March 2021) to which Big Lottery had granted £6 million against which another £9m had been pledged by partners in cash or in kind. Crucially, this project was due to start at the same time as funding from Our Place ended – providing a clear route to implement the Our Place plan.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

Our Place came about when statutory providers (especially the local authority) were looking to scale back spending and services in earnest. As they did so, statutory partners’ eyes “had been opened” to the possibilities of working with communities differently even though they lacked a history of supporting communities to engage and take control. In this respect Our Place was especially influential for Torbay Council.

Statutory partners also recognised their own limitations in developing new community-based services having experienced challenges like those of the Public Health team with their health visitor service.

Starting work on Our Place also opened the eyes of community organisations, to the fact that they needed to be far more cohesive and collaborative when dealing with statutory partners and seeking to work with them. The community groups most closely involved realised that for the statutory agencies it was not enough to see committed and well-meaning people across the table – statutory partners needed to see accountability and assurance of delivery and quality.

The early meetings, which were led by the Our Place-funded Relationship Manager, helped to create the accountability and assurance that statutory partners needed. This was an important part of what Our Place funded support enabled.

Torbay Community Development Trust recognised that statutory agencies would need assurances about new community-led approaches; but the Torbay experience is that the assurances provided by cost benefit analysis and spend mapping were less important. What was more important was that when statutory agencies met with community organisations they saw a group of people building their own capacity and ‘getting their act together’ and with whom they could do business with as delivery partners.

In some cases, what also helped move things forward was when managers from statutory partners had direct experience of working with community partners. For example, we heard how some public health practitioners were cautious about trying out new ways of running community-based activities. In particular, it went against their training to be highly flexible in exploring and responding to community needs rather than following a pre-set service specification; deviating from agreed
processes seemed risky and unauthorised. Nevertheless, the fact that Our Place was an ‘official’
Government-backed programme, which actively encouraged new ways of working, helped legitimise
innovative practice and gave assurance to those statutory workers who could then see innovation as
the expected behaviour, rather being seen as questionable or risky.

In the course of the year-long funded period of Our Place the concept of a ‘Hub’ started to gain
traction within the local community and among public agencies - as somewhere form which to
deliver services around health, families, and social care. For public agencies it would provide new
service models; for the community it served health and care needs; and for community-based
organisations it enabled them to support their community and provided a sustainable model in
which core revenues would come from activities which were central to their original aims and
purpose.

4. Achievements and outcomes - what went well

According to Torbay Community Development Trust, the Our Place process was “a massive learning
experience...”. When it began they “had agencies sat there with action plans, and community groups
not even knowing what these terms meant”... “you also had the Our Place Rep trying to do
something in a year, and us saying this stuff takes ten years.” Yet now, two years later a single
umbrella organisation is finally about to be formed, and a social prescribing offer had been
developed and is being used. Therefore this was a catalytic process which challenged and changed
relationships.

Looking specifically at the Hele and Watcombe neighbourhood the establishment of the umbrella
organisation for the three community venues is significant. This reflects a real shift in the thinking of
those most closely involved in running them who now recognise they need to be more collaborative
and send a more coherent message to statutory providers and commissioners.

The launch of a social prescribing model in late 2015 (based closely on the ‘Newquay Pathfinder’) is
also a significant and tangible outcome and in 2016 this will be rolled out across Torbay in
partnership with Age UK. The model employs wellbeing co-ordinators, backed up by volunteers. It is
funded on a referral basis and not by third sector grants.

5. Finance and budgets

Pooling of statutory budgets relating to Hele and Watcombe has not happened – but in contrast with
some other Our Place projects, this was never in fact the objective. Although there was a strong
leadership message from the NHS about integration, this was not the same as geographic budget
pooling at a neighbourhood scale. It would have been hard also, for Torbay Community
Development Trust as the lead organisation to negotiate budget pooling by statutory agencies.
What they have achieved, however, is pooling of time, pooling of physical resources (the community
venues) and the leveraging of volunteer time (especially through the Big Lottery Ageing Well
programme).

If we take the idea of ‘re-wiring public services’ to mean re-design rather than budget pooling per se,
then this has indeed been achieved. Except that, it is not by a statutory organisation but by a
community organisation, which is now overseeing a significant amount of social care delivery.

Although it has taken longer than the 12-month grant-funded period new referral pathways are now
being created for social prescriptions and crisis support – and for some of these, community
providers will in fact be paid by the statutory services doing the referrals.
What is also notable about the Hele’s Angels Our Place project is the fact that Our Place provided a stepping stone to Big Lottery funding, enabling Torbay Community Development Trust to begin developing new models of social care (e.g. social prescribing). This then allowed them to seek a role in the much larger Ageing Well Torbay programme funded by Big Lottery, which, it should be noted, is a programme conceived specifically to tackle social isolation and not a social care initiative.

6. Legacy and achievements

In many ways the Hele’s Angels Our Place project, or more precisely, this combined project by Hele’s Angels and Torbay Community Development Trust, had all the right ingredients for a successful implementation of the Our Place process.

Torbay Community Development Trust is a well-connected and well-regarded community organisation with good networks both in the local community and with senior figures in statutory agencies especially the NHS. They had a track record of delivery, and were on the brink of securing a significant Big Lottery funding package for an ambitious programme of health and social care innovation. Our Place required them to focus their capabilities on a specific neighbourhood and help the community identify a specific opportunity – which they did. The idea they put their efforts into - bringing together the three community venues to deliver social prescribing came from the community itself, was local, yet was also aligned with the broader ambitions of the statutory sector.

The leadership focus within the NHS has also shifted. Leadership from the NHS had been a significant source of momentum towards integrated models of social care of the kind envisaged by HAND. Although the new ICO (under a powerful Chief Exec) is still the most significant driver of change in social care in Torbay, the NHS ‘Joined Up’ integrated care programme now seems less important on the ground compared to a new NHS change programme – the South Devon and Torbay ‘Vanguard’ project which is focused on reducing pressure on Accident and Emergency.

However, it is without doubt the fact that Torbay Community Development Trust got involved that became the most important factor in the progress made by Hele’s Angels. This would have felt like a very different project without the role played by the Development Trust in bridging between the very local scale of Hele and Watcombe, and the Torbay and South Devon scale of the NHS.

The project still faces challenges in encouraging others to work differently especially those in statutory agencies. For example, the social prescribing model is up and running but it has been slow progress to get the volume of referrals they need to have the scale of impact on demand for GP and hospital appointments. Part of this is because the traditional referral system is designed around referring up as an individual’s or a families’ needs escalate (from basic support, up to crisis management) but the social prescribing model is about trying to refer down - but because social care managers are not used to referring down commonly referrals don’t come through. Those involved in the project believe this will change as communication and awareness raising about the social prescribing model improves. But it is a long haul.

7. Learning about success factors

The success factors for Our Place in Torbay were around three issues:

- Much of the progress has been made possible because of the Big Lottery funded Ageing Well in Torbay programme now being led by the Development Trust; it is large both in profile and in sheer money terms. Other Lottery funding has also been secured; in fact Lottery funding has been crucial for a number of areas of activity linked to the Hele’s Angels operational plan.
• The fact that Torbay Community Development Trust were involved in major projects across Torbay and South Devon and had a significant financial turnover meant they could attract involvement from others – “the reason our big plan works is that we have money – and people talk to us.”

• Our Place does seem to have been a catalyst. This was not because of the re-wiring or pooling of ideas, nor even the Community Rights message. One of the most catalytic element seems to have been the arrival of a relationship manager who was independent and neutral, and who challenged the managers of the three community venues to develop in a way that would make them more credible in the eyes of statutory agencies. The fact it took much longer than 12 months to see the effects of this, should not be seen as a shortcoming of the process.

• The Logic Model was also perceived as catalytic. It encouraged partners to try different things. It got people thinking about different possible routes to their desired outcomes “it got people saying – let’s try guided conversations, let’s try new children’s services”. For some the practical experience of creating the logic model had more impact than the finished product itself “It was the logic model workshop more than the document itself which made the difference... So who was at that, became very important in hindsight.”

8. Challenges

While Torbay Community Development Trust was the lead organisation, the main local partner was the Hele’s Angels neighbourhood management group. Early on, however, the council withdrew their grant funding meaning they had to make their Neighbourhood Manager redundant. In fact, they lost all their council grant and now at the time of writing they are incorporated as a non-profit company and are project fund-raising.

This meant that much of the leadership and the ambition came less from the small community organisations in Hele and Watcombe, but from the Torbay Community Development Trust (even though the central idea did come from the community).

In some ways however, this made it easier to begin creating the new umbrella organisation for Hele and Watcombe in which all the partners have an equal stake. There is now a Programme Co-Ordination Group that enables the three community venues to work together on basics like programmes, and funding bids etc.

As this case study was being written, a year on after Our Place funding ended, the paperwork for a new Board of Trustees for the new umbrella organisation was being drawn up – and would soon have Trustees.

Another challenge was that the overt alignment of Our Place with health and social integration meant that the project was exposed to changes affecting NHS and social care partners to the project. For example, the Clinical Commissioning Group found themselves dealing with a major budget deficit completely unrelated to Our Place which meant the lead NHS staff member for Our Place was ‘hauled back to work on other things’. There had also been an attempt to attract Social Work Innovation Funding to support Our Place but when this came through the Children’s Services decided to run their project in Brixham not Torquay.

Fieldwork and interviewees
The case study visit took place on Friday 8 January and included interviewees with:

Lead Officer, Torbay Community Development Trust

Community Development Manager, Torbay Community Development Trust

Public Health Manager, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Children’s Services Engagement Manager, Torbay Council
Case study: Leicester, Well for Living

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of area:</th>
<th>Leicester</th>
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<td>Type of lead organisation:</td>
<td>Charity/social enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus of operational plan:</td>
<td>Focus and energise discussions between a number of community sector providers in Leicester about co-locating their organisations in a single, centrally located ‘wellbeing centre’.</td>
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<td>Notable achievements:</td>
<td>The operational plan is driving service coordination and integration through operational groups that bring together frontline workers.</td>
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<td>Sustainability/implementation progress:</td>
<td>The local council has recognised that the sector is making positive moves that may make the services provided by these charities less risky, however scale is currently a problem – in the current climate government bodies need to operate contracts more efficiently making it difficult and costly to tender smaller portions of contracts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key lessons on the theme of deadlines drive progress, but Our Place will take 3-5 years to get going beyond the timescale of the programme:</td>
<td>The process of scaling and of co-location has taken longer than the Our Place funding lasted, however the project provided organisations with additional motivation to sit around the table and work towards the co-location goal.</td>
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1. **Background**

Our Place in Leicester had a city-wide focus. The lead organisation was Well for Living, a community-based provider of health services and Our Place was used to focus and energise discussions between a number of community sector providers in Leicester about co-locating their organisations in to a single, centrally located ‘wellbeing centre’. The organisations involved all deliver some services that are funded or commissioned by public agencies – so they represent a group of providers involved in delivering similar services. The centre would be co-owned by some of the partners and rented by those who are not the joint-owners. The objective would be for community led organisations to share costs and be able to present a more integrated offer in the context of funding cuts, pressure for efficiencies, and more complex user needs. Since the work on Our Place began a number of the organisations involved had already begun co-locating with one another in their current premises, with some larger organisations providing space for smaller organisations.

The project is led by a charity and social enterprise called ‘Well for Living’ which evolved out of the Leicester Aids Support Service (LASS), a longstanding charity in the city. The CEO of LASS also runs Well for Living and has been a leading partner in the Leicester Our Place project.

The original aims of the Our Place project in Leicester were very clear and have remained constant during the lifetime of the project. The intention is still to co-locate community-led health, social care
and other services such as debt advice, into one location. Although co-location would create significant savings on the operational costs of all the charities involved, the idea is predicated upon them all continuing to provide services that are in some way funded by public agencies.

As a group, the partner organisations have begun the process of looking at suitable buildings and have come to the shared view that the new shared premises must be within the centre of Leicester so that it is available to all in the city and convenient to reach by public transport. However, at the time of researching this case study the partners were still actively looking for a suitable location for their new home.

2. **Our Place process and support**

The CEO of Well for Living, the lead organisation, viewed the support from Locality positively but questioned some aspects of the Our Place logic model, specifically the assumption that projects would generally be able to continue after the production of the operational plan and the end of the funded period. If there had been another phase of funding and support after the operational plan was signed off she believes the structure of the programme might have had a greater potential for impact. She was also sceptical about whether all the reporting and communication required by the programme was a valuable use of her time. It was thought that this was time that would otherwise have been spent generating funding and support for her organisation in other ways.

Other partners were pleased with the support from the Locality Relationship Manager. One explained that the Relationship Manager assigned to the project had a very good understanding of the community sector, and of the challenges faced by organisations exploring co-location; they felt that having someone from outside the project, with sector knowledge but a neutral perspective was very valuable.

We asked what aspects of joining the Our Place programme had made the most difference. Besides funding, which had enabled partners to commit staff time to focus on the issues, partners felt that it was the support from their Relationship Manager which had made the most difference. Being part of a DCLG programme had also been useful for opening doors within the council.

3. **Engagement of partners and residents**

Our Place essentially created an opportunity for a group of community-based health service providers to discuss a new strategy for the sustainability of their organisations through co-location and sharing of resources. The notion of a wellbeing centre and of co-location of different organisations pre-dated the Our Place programme (as several stakeholders were keen to point out), but the Our Place grant funding, and its profile as a Government backed project acted as a way to take the idea of co-location a step forward. In particular, Our Place created the time and opportunity for the organisations to begin discussing detailed issues such as governance and to open up their discussions to other partners in the voluntary/community sector in Leicester.

“The idea (for co-location in a wellbeing centre) already existed. The idea predated the ‘Our Place’ money. Money gave it a focus” (Community Advice and Law Service)

“It would be disingenuous of the government to claim credit for any success we have. The idea was here already” (Leicester LGBT Centre)

The co-location proposal has given partners a lot of pros and cons to weigh up. One described the situation as a choice between something like a department store (where everything is available but the individual identity of each organisation would be homogenised) and a busy market place, where
the combined footfall could help increase the reach and visibility of everyone who each remained distinct. For example, some stakeholders believed that LGBT organisations might benefit from being located where potential new users might find out about them, but who might not have approached them directly.

 Exactly which organisations would commit to moving into the ‘wellbeing centre’ still needs to be played out amongst those involved. There are important issues at stake around access to funds to make the purchase, willingness to enter into an agreement about shared property, different attitudes to risk and to the opportunity cost of ‘buying in’ to the shared building (or indeed the opportunity cost of staying on the margins). Some partners have tended to lead the discussions and the involvement of some is contingent on specific details especially their own funding and the specific nature of the space available. One location that has been looked at, for instance, is a large hall-type space where it is unclear whether there would be scope to create separate rooms. For some organisations this would be a vital detail (e.g. those who provide one-to-one consultations and treatments), for others it makes less difference (e.g. those for whom the space would mainly be an office for staff). Partners are also keen to see what the potential refurbishment cost might be after the purchase is complete, and what on-going financial risks and liabilities there might be – again these would vary from one property to another.

4. Achievements and outcomes

The proposed wellbeing centre is a large and ambitious project dependent on many factors not least finding a suitable property. It seems unlikely, given the Our Place timeframe of twelve months, that this could ever have been fully realised in that timeframe. What Our Place has done however, is bring partners to the table to focus on the real practical details of co-location and move beyond broad ‘in principle’ discussions. Besides the grants which have enabled staff time to go towards planning, and the benefit of neutral support from the Relationship Manager, a key factor that has brought this closer to becoming a reality has been the process of senior staff and their board members viewing possible buildings into which their organisations might co-locate.

Being part of a central government programme was also perceived by partners as having given the project clout and increased recognition in particular with the City Council.

5. Finance and budgets

If the organisations involved succeed in purchasing a building in which they can co-locate, then this will be a very tangible example of the pooling of budgets – they will literally have pooled a significant amount of their overheads budget. Though this will be their budgets, rather than public sector budgets that have been pooled (although some of their funding is indeed public money).

Generally speaking, Our Place has not so far stimulated much change in the way public sector organisations manage their budgets. For example, the Project Manager from the Leicester LGBT Centre explained that his centre routinely offers their clients the choice of referral to the centre’s own LGBT counselling service for which he receives no NHS specific funding, as well as to an NHS-led LGBT counselling service. His perception was that people overwhelmingly chose the services provided by his own centre over the NHS equivalent. Despite this, he felt that the likelihood was very low that his counselling service would be treated on a par with mainstream NHS services nor that his organisation would be recompensed for their work through NHS payment procedures or through public health commissioning.
The same manager also discussed the fact that the centre accepts GP referrals. Again there are no agreed payment procedures and whilst they do receive small amounts of funding from Leicester City Council to provide service for 13-18 year olds, many referrals come from further afield in Leicestershire. The centre receives no funding at all from Leicestershire County Council.

The situation for LASS is not dissimilar in that they have not been on the receiving end of any devolved budgets, although they have been commissioned by Leicester City Council to provide HIV testing - a commissioned contract they won through a competitive tender process.

The wider picture of public spending, service commissioning, and the role of community-led organisations in public service delivery is reflected in the way Our Place has played out in Leicester. Here, Our Place had been used by Well for Living and their partners to attempt to put community sector organisations on a more sustainable, more efficient footing through co-location. The hope is that this in turn will help them position themselves as organisations that can be trusted to continue delivering the services they are already involved in, and to take on other services currently run by statutory organisations in Leicester.

 Asked about the possibility of more community-led health service providers being treated on a par with statutory services in terms of funding, the Director of Public Health in Leicester gave the impression that the sector still has some way to go. To start with she was unconvinced the voluntary and community sector is at the level of maturity to run services. While she accepted there were a number of occasions when the voluntary and community sector had been successful in running projects, she also focused on the risks commissioners must consider before devolving services to organisations serving specific demographics or communities. It is true that many community-led service providers do not simply serve geographic communities, but communities of interest, ethnicity, or identity and the risk alluded to here is that community-led organisations might advocate their own agendas and set priorities which are not neutral in the way public bodies are supposed to be.

Assuming these kinds of concerns are not unusual among public sector commissioners the implication is that in many cases community-led services are still seen as complementary to, and not replacements for, statutory services.

The Director of Public Health also raised the issue of the scale of contracts. The City Council and other organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups need larger rather than smaller contracts for reasons of efficiency. Overall the capacity of community sector organisations to provide services was an unknown in her view and whilst their work was valued, her preference was that they should be funded by non-mainstream funding streams.

Finally, the Director of Public Health discussed the difficulty in identifying the cost savings of very small-scale holistic health and social care. She did not reject the argument in principle that these might produce savings but she was sceptical whether any methodology would capture this robustly in practice. For example, in a city the size of Leicester it would be very difficult to prove whether counselling for teenagers was having an effect on the overall number of attempted suicides – which at a city level is a headline mental health priority.

6. **Learning about success factors**

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped Well for Living benefit from being an Our Place pilot and should be replicable in other areas:
• Having committed and experienced sector leaders on the partnership who are already proactively pursuing agendas that Our Place can add weight to, is an obvious but important driver of progress.

• Our Place funding provided much needed capacity for Well for Living to assign staff time to focus on Our Place objectives and work on detailed planning and analysis.

• Having an experienced Our Place Relationship Manager who had deep knowledge of the sector he was supporting made the process more productive.

• The fact ‘Our Place’ was well recognised locally as a national DCLG programme was helpful for opening doors at LCC and giving the project credibility.

7. How to overcome challenges

Our Place was not without challenges and the pilot was useful for recognising these and learning how to overcome them:

• The timeline for Our Place activity was 12 months and though having a strict deadline may have been a useful driver for progress in some areas; it was unrealistic to expect significant progress with a large project to be made in the first 12 months.

• There is real scepticism that councils or other statutory partners will devolve significant budgets to a very local level. This view is shared by community sector leaders and public sector managers alike. Public agencies are also already extremely stretched financially. While this means innovation in service provision is a logical step to take - new approaches are seen as risky and councils may for sound reasons be unwilling to take such risks.

• The devolving of budgets to community led service providers operating at small scales geographically or in user base is problematic because of economies of scale. Although providers serving specific groups may have greater insight into the communities they serve, some commissioners see this as a risk too and a potential threat to neutrality.

Fieldwork and interviewees:

The case study visit took place on Monday 14 March and included interviewees with:

Chief Executive Officer - Well for Living and Leicester AIDS Support Service (LASS)

Project Manager - Leicester LGBT Centre

Chief Executive Officer – Network for Change

Executive Director – Community Advice and Law Service

Director of Public Health – Leicester City Council
1. **Background**

Martock is a village in Somerset with a population of fewer than 5,000 residents. It has an active and long-standing parish council, which is responsible for the day-to-day running and maintenance of the place.

Martock is also a “tale of two villages”. At the southern end, you can find houses valued at over half a million pounds occupied by families on comfortable incomes. At the northern end are households who are amongst the poorest in the South West of England.

The lead organisation for **Our Place Martock (OPM)** is Martock Parish Council. OPM covers the whole village but is primarily focused on the north east of the village. According to government statistics (as presented in their operational plan), this area is in the lowest 20% in the country in terms of educational attainment, skills and training, income and employment, and health and disability. Outside of Yeovil and Chard it is the most deprived area of rural South Somerset.

Around a quarter of households consist of people aged over 65 and over a third of people are living alone. A fifth have a long-term illness or disability. Almost a quarter of households get by on an income of £15,000 p.a. or less. A third of people above school age have no educational qualifications. Over 90% of the village’s free school meals are served to children from this area.

As well as affecting the lives of local residents, this high concentration of social need in a relatively small area has created challenges for local public services. Per capita, the residents of North East Martock are costing local health and social services almost twice the South Somerset average (data from the Our Place Martock Operational Plan).
Some local partners were surprised that a village which, from the outside, appears to be an attractive and affluent place, contains such a concentration of poverty and isolation. For some households the isolation is made worse by the shape of Martock. A linear village made up of a number of historic settlements, it has the population of a small town but without a recognised town centre where people can concentrate to access different services and shops.

The OPM vision is that “the lives of people in our community are enhanced and improved by getting them better connected and supported”. Based on that, its practical mission is to “improve the health, wellbeing, skills, financial security and quality of life of the people in our project area and to reduce their dependency on health, social, welfare and other services”.

At the core of the OPM ambition is the idea of ‘community coordination’. This means the front-line integration of local services alongside voluntary and community activity with four objectives in mind:

- Building self-reliance through life skills training and good parenting
- Improving access to services, including integrated support to households and individuals, improved transport and the creation of a local services hub at the Martock Information Centre
- Addressing social isolation, through befriending and intergenerational activities
- Enhancing employability, building on an already successful job club, skills diversification, work familiarisation and employment support

These objectives were identified through extensive consultation with the local community through surveys and conversations in local community venues and at events.

“[Our objective is] to create a more cohesive and less socially divided Martock community, in which residents are more aware of opportunities to become involved and support each other”. (Operational Plan)

2. Process and support

Although the parish council are the lead organisation for Our Place Martock, the village’s community partnership known as Making the Most of Martock (or ‘M3’) has steered the project. Making the Most of Martock was formed in 2001 to create a community plan for the village. It is a partnership made up of villagers, the parish council, Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, Martock School, local churches and community organisations.

Our Place grant funding was used to develop the operational plan, a detailed 64-slide document which sets out a detailed approach, business case, and implementation plan for each strand of activity. Our Place activities are overseen on a day-to-day basis by an OPM Project Team. Once the plan was signed off, the parish council recruited two new members of staff to take forward the OPM operation plan: a full-time community coordinator, with overall responsibility for the whole project; and a part-time ‘Seniors’ support coordinator.

There are three strands to the OPM operational plan delivery:

- Information governance (i.e. sharing of information between agencies)
- Service coordination (i.e. services organised by the paid works and delivered jointly with volunteers), and
- Youth project (i.e. activities involving youth workers and the village youth club)
The information governance strand is focused on the frontline sharing of information and intelligence about people and households. This has been a challenge to implement but as progress is made, the community’s needs can be better met through tailored services.

The service coordination strand is the responsibility of the community coordinator and has three strands of activity:

- running the service hub at the Martock Information Centre;
- running older people’s befriending activities which are organised by the ‘Seniors’ Support Coordinator and delivered with volunteers;
- the Martock Job Club run by a job club coordinator also with the support of volunteers; and
- the community youth project is delivered by a mixed team of youth workers and volunteers.

In line with the focus on service coordination, local partners saw Our Place as a chance to think afresh about how to bring separate projects together in a more coordinated fashion. One such example was the Job Club that was already running. Funded by the parish council, and run by volunteers, the club provides advice and practical support to people looking to get back into some form of employment, training, or apprenticeship.

Taking part in Our Place, spurred partners to review how they could co-ordinate the Job Club better with other services through referrals and the provision of joint services.

“The Job Club was here beforehand, but Our Place gave it a framework and discipline, such as the logic models” (Project stakeholder)

3. Engagement of partners and residents

Our Place Martock has successfully engaged a wide range of partners in discussing broad issues and in managing specific activities. Signatories to the operational plan, alongside the local councils also include the local school, housing association, Christian groups and youth centre. Additional partners include the local police, fire and rescue service, Job Centre Plus and a local college.

The existence of the M3 community partnership and local strategic partnership (LSP) facilitated this process of engaging partners. The Chair of the South Somerset LSP observed the need for “strong support for the Our Place Martock project...it is important to look at effective ways for local partners to work together to reshape services for local communities”.

One way in which OPM is trying to involve other agencies is through working with the NHS Symphony Project. This is one of nine vanguard sites nationally that are piloting new ways of integrating primary and acute care systems. Across South Somerset, around £150m is spent by the NHS and other services on primary, secondary, community, mental health and social care services. Patients with complex and multiple needs account for around half of that expenditure, despite making up only 4% of the total population of South Somerset.

In that context, the Our Place Project is now able to contribute to reducing that expenditure by helping deliver holistic, coordinated care. This includes proactive and preventative interventions and the delivery of joined up services in people’s homes. Practical activities will include working with GPs and community health services to encourage more signposting and referral; support for self-reliance; joint training; and frontline service coordination.

Seeing the benefits of better coordination has energised partners in other ways. One key stakeholder saw the huge potential in Our Place for reforming local services. As they put it, “it’s an opportunity to create an exemplar of re-shaped service-community relationships”.

Alongside partner engagement, the project has undertaken extensive community engagement. This has included two rounds of surveys, leafleting, door-to-door conversations, a community awareness event attended by around 300 residents, and a questionnaire.

Once underway, the project has continued to support a range of community events. One significant event was a fireworks display on the local playing fields with a procession from the northeast of the village. The event was heavily advertised locally, and was used to promote Our Place. Over two thousand people attended, including many who had never previously engaged with local activities.

“For some families, it was their first opportunity to see fireworks...It attracted a range of people. You give people that little bit extra and they respond”. (Project volunteer)

4. Achievements and outcomes
Project stakeholders and volunteers talk in very positive terms about the impact that Our Place has had on the local sense of community. Previously, residents felt that there were not enough local facilities and spaces for people to come together. Our Place has boosted the level of volunteering and created a stronger sense of community through events like the fireworks display.

“When the village get on board, they really make it happen!” (Project stakeholder)

“It’s easier to get involved because there are lots of opportunities”. (Project volunteer)

“People are proud of Martock. The community is coming together”. (Project stakeholder)

The combination of volunteer knowledge and professional skills at the very local level has allowed the project to help some very difficult cases. The Job Club, for example, helped one woman who had been out of work for over 24 years. This was thanks to the supportive persistence of the case volunteer and the multiple contributions of different partners to help track down references, offer practical help and support, and provide training and advice.

The above example is one case of how OPM is driving service coordination and integration through operational groups that bring together frontline workers, overseen by the community coordinator. Such operational groups have also helped isolated older people access support including through the active living centre for elderly people, engaged disaffected young people in constructive activities, and enabled a range of people to access benefit advice, mental health support, and job training.

“By hiring two paid members of staff, they gave an urgency and a good defined structure to volunteer services”. (Project stakeholder)

This kind of coordination has been made possible by the project establishing itself in the service delivery landscape. In a snapshot of three months between 2015 and 2016, OPM received 13 referrals in from local charities and statutory services, and made 43 referrals out.

5. Finance and budget
OPM has attracted investment of £125,000 per year from Martock Parish Council – a significant amount of the Parish’s budget. Part of the reason this is possible is that the parish council charges a relatively high precept of £3.50 per week for an average Band D household against an England average of around £1. The parish council is confident that it can maintain public support for a precept at this level providing it can demonstrate what the money is being used for, and this is more easily done at the village level.

The longer-term intention is to attract funding from other agencies so the parish can deliver services directly at the village level. The parish council’s contribution is also matched by many hours of
volunteer time. In the same snapshot three months between 2015 and 2016 mentioned above, the project attracted just under £21,000 worth of volunteer time.

In terms of return on investment, the Our Place cost-benefit analysis for Martock suggests the investment of time and effort will generate, over the first 3 years:

- A fiscal benefit of £670,000, derived from getting more people into work, while reducing the pressure on local services
- An economic benefit of £819,000 also from increased employment, and from reducing the amount of lost earning due to the issues like drug dependency
- Social benefits of £66,000 from increased wellbeing and reduced dependency

As DCLG’s own case study of OPM observes, these are “ambitious” estimates, but the project can already demonstrate early wins along the way.

6. Learning about success factors

Communities know best. Partners in Martock are clear that local people best understand what the local issues are and how they can be addressed. Localised services delivered by a combination of frontline professionals and volunteers are best placed to understand the local context.

“Communities better understand local needs and can provide cost-effective low-level services with voluntary help”. (OPM Proposition)

Volunteers need support. OPM has utilised a wide range of volunteers to deliver low-level services in a highly flexible and fluid way. Partners are, however, also clear that more complex cases of need require the intervention of professionals either alongside or instead of volunteers. Close and regular communication between volunteers and professionals is important for ensuring that the former know when they need to refer particular cases to the latter.

Tailoring services at the village level is vital in rural areas. In a large, low density, rural area, there is a risk that centralised services delivered by a large and distant council become uniform and inflexible. In contrast, OPM has demonstrated that coordinating services to meet the specific needs of individuals and households delivers better outcomes for local people and lowers costs by reducing need and encouraging lasting solutions.

“Our Place has opened up conversations about the possibility of many things within the community”. (Project stakeholder)

The importance of “glue”. It’s been important from the launch of OPM that it was not seen as another new initiative or short-term project. Rather, it was designed to be a mechanism whereby existing services, activities, and programmes are coordinated and integrated in response to specific needs. One stakeholder described the project as acting like “glue” in sticking together previous separate interventions.

Parishes can raise their precepts. Martock has demonstrated that it is possible to set a comparatively high parish council precept with the support of the local community provide it can demonstrate local impact. It is at the parish level, where people can directly see changes being made, that this is most feasible.

“People feel invested in. They can see what the precept is used for”. (Project stakeholder)

“The parish council is important because they have a prestige and are an organisation whom people can trust”. (Project stakeholder)
The benefits of long-term partnership working. While a great deal of the success of Martock is due to effort by individuals living in the village, there is no doubt that the project has benefited from a history of effective partnership working in South Somerset. The South Somerset LSP, and the Making the Most of Martock partnership, provided ready platforms for Our Place to tap into existing networks, motivation, practical knowledge and joint-working arrangements.

How to overcome challenges

Information-sharing management and governance. Coordinating services at the local level requires effective and timely sharing of information about individual and household cases. Some of this data is sensitive and requires management and governance arrangements to ensure data security and protection. The parish council recognised that this was the case and openly discussed the challenge with their partners. The county council was particularly helpful in finding a technical solution.

Focus on the real need. In some cases, the different elements of Our Place Martock have had to adapt what they are trying to achieve in response to real need. For example, some of the people accessed the job club because they were referred there in relation to employment or training. However, it quickly became clear that there were deeper problems such as debt or, in some cases, hunger. In these cases, the Job Club helped those individuals with debt advice and food parcels first.

Fieldwork and interviews

The case study visit took place on Monday 21 March and included interviews with:

Martock Parish Clerk - Martock Parish Council
Our Place Community Services Coordinator – Martock Parish Council
Parish Council Services Committee Chair – Martock Parish Council
Chair – South Somerset Together
Coordinator – Martock Job Club
Volunteers – Martock Our Place

Follow up phone calls were also conducted in March/April with the following:

Service Manager – Getset Programme, Somerset County Council
Area North Head of Development – South Somerset District Council
Somerset Children and Young People - Youth & Community Development Officer
NHS Symphony Project Director - Yeovil District Hospital
Independent Chair – South Somerset Together
Case study: North Huyton Communities Future, Knowsley

Name of area: North Huyton, Knowsley

Type of lead organisation: Charity

Focus of operational plan: To bring empty Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT) houses into the North Huyton Communities Future (NHCF) ownership and then rent them to homeless people who have links with the area.

Notable achievements: The operational plan was completed which allowed for the process of the housing transfer to begin.

Sustainability/implementation progress: Projected rental income from the properties sustains NHCF’s community activities.

Key lessons on the theme of - getting ready, getting going, but what about the making it happen stage: “The main challenge is that KHT’s disposal process has to be done through the Homes and Communities Agency but this was only mentioned at the eleventh hour and so has affected the timeline.”

1. Background

North Huyton Communities Future (NHCF) is the successor body to the organisation that managed the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme in North Huyton from 2001 to 2011. As a resident-controlled charity focused on the needs of the local community NHCF are now involved in a range of activities funded by grants and trading income. This includes managing North Huyton’s regeneration programme known as Revive. As part of its mission to continue the regeneration of the area, NHCF has also built up a portfolio of homes, many having been empty, and rents these properties, as a private landlord, to local families nominated by the local authority under their Housing Options service. NHCF applied to join Our Place to continue to bring empty houses into community ownership and rent them to homeless people who have links with the area.

NHCF had previously brought back into use eight properties under the DCLG’s 2011 Empty Homes funding and all the tenancies have remained longer than 12 months with no recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the properties from the tenants. In addition, NHCF manages five properties from a previous acquisition programme under the Revive Housing redevelopment.

All the properties refurbished so far have been brought to a high standard and accredited by Knowsley Council prior to being let. NHCF has a small staff team of 4 officers including one with responsibility for housing management/maintenance of the properties while another manages rental collection.

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12 The New Deal for Communities programme was introduced in 1999 as a 10-year programme designed to transform 39 deprived neighbourhoods in England, each accommodating about 9,900 people. For more information, see http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/downloads/general/A%20final%20assessment.pdf
Despite extensive demolition and subsequent new build development as part of the Revive programme, there is an on-going problem of ‘voids’\textsuperscript{13} in the area – mostly concerning Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT) stock. The voids draw complaints from other residents, lead to adjacent homes becoming empty and affect the developers’ ability to sell units near the ‘difficult to let’ streets and roads which subsequently can impact of future land values.

“The council’s housing allocation policy was causing problems – with the wrong people in the wrong place. So neighbours moved out and there was a domino effect [with adjacent houses becoming empty]. And private landlords were buying up ‘right to buy’ houses and putting in unsuitable families with complaints from other residents” (Resident)

NHCF used the initial £3,000 of Getting Ready grant from Our Place to scope out the issue and look at possible options to address the problem. With this research complete NHCF were awarded a further £10,000 Getting Going grant to develop their operational plan focused on extending the Empty Homes model to take a long lease on 10 properties from KHT, which were currently unoccupied. These voids would be refurbished by NHCF and rented out to local homeless families via the Housing Options service at Knowsley Council. As with the existing properties, the new NHCF properties would be allocated on a needs basis with the applications ratified by NHCF community directors.

2. Our Place process and support
The Our Place grants and support were used by NHCF for researching the need, viability and business case for the operational plan (i.e. the plan to bring the empty KHT houses into NHCF ownership and then rent them to homeless people who have links with the area).

This research firstly allowed officers from KHT, Knowsley Council and NHCF to analyse area housing management data, which highlighted three particular streets in Hillside (part of North Huyton) where tenants are often hard to find, tenancies terminate early and ASB predominates. Alongside this analysis, NHCF carried out a house-to-house survey of residents in 108 properties in the area. This included a survey of the existing residents in the Hillside area, which asked about family in the area, attitudes towards the area etc. This work identified the same three streets as the most unpopular and problematic in terms of crime and anti-social behaviour – and for Knowsley Housing Trust this offered a new perspective.

“[We were] really struck by the facts and figures on turnover rates and voids in the area that NHCF produced as part of Our Place” (KHT)

Our Place grant funding also enabled this research to continue and for it to be used to inform the business case for the plan. For example, NHCF then ran focus groups with young people and an Appreciative Inquiry\textsuperscript{14} event about the neighbourhood and proposals to buy the empty houses.

Our Place support was felt to have added value by providing dedicated funding for the research and planning process so that this could be carried out relatively quickly.

“The Our Place funding was useful but we probably would have done it (the research and business plan) anyway. It just would have taken longer” (NHCF)

\textsuperscript{13} Voids are homes that are have remained unlet for some time and are difficult to let

\textsuperscript{14} Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a model that seeks to engage stakeholders in self-determined change through an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach
The Government/DCLG branding and the perceived expectation from Government surrounding Our Place was also useful to secure and maintain support from the local authority and housing association (KHT).

“We could talk about the expectations from Government with partners” (NHCF)

The Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) part of the Our Place process was considered less useful. It included a significant time commitment but “[CBA] didn’t compute for North Huyton” because the New Economy model’s focus seemed to be more on calculating financial costs and benefits linked to individuals (e.g. people getting employment) so “it doesn’t work for housing or calculating social value”. Although NHCF did carry out a CBA for the operational plan, they had to use their previous experience\textsuperscript{15} to adapt the model quite extensively to make it relevant.

In comparison with previous Government schemes, the Our Place process felt very bureaucratic for the amount of grant involved (£13,000). The programme was seen as emphasising process and not implementation.  It would have been helpful if it could have helped NHCF to source finance to implement the Plan e.g. providing information and intelligence about where to go to access social finance and/or brokering direct contact with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

“The issues are about implementation – about the follow on from the Plan – but there’s no finance for this. We’ve got a ‘Getting Started’ and a “Going Forward’. Now we need a ‘Making it Happen!’” (NHCF)

3. Engagement of partners and residents

The Our Place project has been positioned as part of the Revive regeneration programme and is coordinated through a Steering Group made up of NHCF, along with KHT, Knowsley Council and community members.

Knowsley Council and the registered social landlord (KHT) are both aware of how the proposed transfer of empty homes to NHCF can benefit them. The area has become harder for KHT to manage for several reasons. One reason is the bedroom tax, which has meant that they have had to stop under-occupying properties. Another reason is that although the council needs more affordable housing, what it needs most are two to three bedroom houses, which it can find more easily from private landlords than from registered social landlords.  It is also uneconomical for KHT to refurbish just one or two empty houses out of a whole a street so “it was a good time for the [Our Place] project – it suited KHT”.

One potentially challenging aspect of the scheme is that it could be seen as encouraging KHT tenants to move into ‘private renting’ and also causing other social housing properties (the ones NHCF’s new tenants have left) to become vacant. However, discussions are underway to agree procedures to address this and, as several partners stressed, “relationships with KHT are good so this should be able to be sorted out”.

From NHCF’s perspective one of the biggest challenges has been in influencing organisational cultures and attitudes. For example, NHCF believe that Knowsley Council’s Housing Options Team have had to learn how to work with NHCF’s Resident Directors as partners:

\textsuperscript{15} Through the NDC programme, Revive Housing redevelopment and as a DCLG Mixed Communities Demonstration project
“Housing Options have been fine although it’s been a steep learning curve for them with the [NHCF] Resident Directors wanting ownership of the scheme and having the final say [on tenants]. But they’re now asking about how many properties we’ve got” (NHCF)

There has always been considerable resident engagement in NHCF and the Revive housing redevelopment more generally. This is underpinned by the Hillside Residents association, which is active and has led successful campaigns to improve community safety through tackling traffic problems and ASB.

“I’ve great faith in people power. The council had gone as far as they could [in improving Hillside] but the community could go further”. (Resident)

This engagement has been an essential part of the Our Place project, first through residents being actively involved in the extensive research that took place, and then through the role of Resident Directors in the ‘local lettings’ approach that has already been going on successfully and will be used when letting the 10 new properties.

“[The new tenants] have got to have local connections; they’ve got to fit in. We need to know the people hanging around – often people move out because of anti-social behaviour” (Resident)

4. Achievements and outcomes

Following the operational plan sign off, the priority has been to get two houses from KHT back into use as a pilot, and then to bring on another eight properties. The timescale has been delayed because of legal issues, specifically the need for approval from the Homes and Communities Agency (the national agency which has to approve transfers of housing out of the social housing sector).

Although the Agency is supportive of the aims of the scheme “taking houses out of public ownership seems to cause legal problems” and, frustratingly for NHCF these legal requirements weren’t known about fully until late in the process.

“The main challenge has been that KHT’s disposal process has to be done through the Homes and Communities Agency but this was only mentioned at the eleventh hour and so has affected the timeline. The KHT solicitors and NHCF’s solicitors are working together and are frustrated because they are still waiting for [approval from] the Homes and Communities Agency”. (NHCF)

It is hoped that the necessary legal processes will be completed by May or June 2016. NHCF will wait until the properties are purchased before asking Housing Options to find suitable tenants so “there won’t be a bottleneck” although this means that outcomes for residents from the Our Place project will be further delayed.

5. Finance and budgets

NHCF’s previous experience has shown that bringing properties into community ownership to rent to people in housing need is economically viable and brings community benefits:

The [current] stock of 13 houses generates £50,000 - £60,000 a year by charging a similar rent to KHT. There are no turnover problems with only 1 tenant having left to buy his own home” (Councillor)

The proposed financing of the Our Place project means that empty properties would be brought into use for homeless families at no cost to the taxpayer. The projected rental income from the properties sustains NHCF’s community activities, which is important in the current financial climate when grants from Knowsley MBC are being reduced.
However, the major challenge for the scheme is cash flow in that the properties must be purchased and refurbished before any rental income can be achieved. Given the properties have often been empty for some time the renovation can be quite extensive:

“Each property has its own set of problems - drains, no meter or having to reconnect, redoing the flooring - it’s never straightforward” (NHCF)

“Who can finance the business cycle? What we are doing is low risk but we need to borrow long term at low rates” (NHCF)

With NHCF’s previous acquisitions there was always a source of up-front funding or investment to enable works to be carried out before the properties were let. With Our Place it has been left to NHCF to secure financing but there has been little information through Our Place on potential sources of finance. NHCF believe they will have to take their operational plan to the loan market themselves to raise the up-front finance.

6. Learning about success factors

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped North Huyton Communities Future benefit from being an Our Place pilot and should be replicable in other areas:

- **Building on an existing housing and regeneration programme** (in this case the Revive regeneration programme meant that NHCF was not starting from ‘scratch’ and could benefit from the momentum and reputation of the Revive programme

- **Continuing with a specific activity – bringing empty homes back into use** - enabled learning from the previous schemes to tackle empty homes e.g. in terms of how to manage them and achieve low turnover rates;

- **Research into local context, needs and options** – using a range of methods and involving local residents - contributes to the Our Place operational plan and the wider business case;

- **A well-researched business case plus credible track record is essential for getting partners together to appreciate mutual benefits** – i.e. to reduce voids and ASB, to generate income to sustain NHCF and to strengthen the local community; and

- **The ability to show how a project adds value for partners** e.g. through NHCF providing a bespoke service for managing problematic voids with on-going support to tenants via its community centres. This ‘housing plus’ approach is a lot more than KHT – the registered social landlord - could provide given its wide geographic and corporate coverage.

7. And how to overcome challenges

Our Place was not without its challenges and the pilot was useful in recognising these and learning how to overcome them, although additional support from Our Place and/or DCLG would help this process

- **The Our Place CBA model wasn’t relevant to North Huyton project as it couldn’t capture housing revenues or wider community benefits** – so NHCF used its previous experience to design its own but other projects may need more support from Our Place and a more developed, flexible CBA model

- **Having a business model which relies on up-front capital investment before revenue can be achieved has left a big funding gap** and help with how to access social finance to address
potential cash flow issues were both needed – without this NHCF must take the operational plan to market as an investment opportunity although it is unclear what that funding market would be

- Legal issues with obtaining Homes and Communities Agency agreement to the transfer of stock from a registered social landlord into community ownership are being addressed through partnership discussions but have delayed implementation – it would be useful for DCLG to liaise with /open doors to other Government departments and agencies (e.g. the Homes and Communities Agency) in order to support implementation of Our Place

Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Thursday 17 March 2016 and included interviewees with:

Chief Executive at North Huyton Communities Future

Revive Officer at North Huyton Communities Future

Knowsley Housing Trust officer

Secretary: Hillside Residents Association (also resident, Knowsley MBC councillor and parish councillor)

Chair: North Huyton Communities Future (and Knowsley MBC councillor)
Case study: Deneside, Seaham, Co Durham

**Name of area:** Seaham, County Durham

**Type of lead organisation:** County Council

**Focus of operational plan:** “To increase confidence in the police and create opportunities for us [the council] to be responsible for a safe and vibrant community.”

**Notable achievements:** The crime rate for Seaham has fallen by 28%, and anti-social behaviour is down by 11%.

**Sustainability/implementation progress:** The project has ended on a high while helping to maintain momentum for the future.

**Key lessons on the theme of assurances of getting ready, getting going but what about making it happen:** Going to where people are; holding focus groups in safe spaces for the community as opposed to offices of public services helped reach a wider network.

### 1. Background

Deneside is an urban ward within the coastal town of Seaham, County Durham. The ward is dominated by a large estate of tightly-packed bungalows on a grid-iron street pattern. It has a population of 8,500 people, making up a third of the overall population of Seaham.

The area is in the 10% most deprived of wards in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). According to Government data used in the Deneside Operational Plan, it experienced more crime and anti-social behaviour than the rest of Seaham, while admissions to hospital were twice the national average, and rates of educational attainment and employment were low.

Deneside is bordered on one side by a railway line, the other by open countryside, and is some way from the heart of Seaham. These factors mean the neighbourhood can feel isolated and, as one stakeholder put it, “out of sight and out of mind” where public services are concerned.

One of the distinctive factors of Deneside was the historic lack of engagement between the police and other public services, and the community. Relations were marked instead by feelings of mutual suspicion and, in some cases, outright hostility.

“There was a real hatred for the police”. (Project stakeholder)

In turn, this meant that previous initiatives to tackle crime and address other social issues had not taken off.

“The overall view of [Deneside] was that...’Seaham is a good place to live’ but there was no community spirit.” (operational plan text)

The police recognised this and decided to develop and pilot a new police community engagement model in Seaham. The objectives for the community engagement pilot were to:
- Increase community confidence / community engagement in the neighbourhood policing team
- Promote community-driven action resulting in a safer community

Around the same time as the Police launched their pilot, the East Durham Area Action Partnership were successful in applying to take part in Our Place and this overlap of action created opportunities for both initiatives to support each other.

Our Place provided the framework for extensive community engagement, culminating in a participatory budgeting exercise. Our Place also led to the formation of a neighbourhood action plan, and ensured there was a sustained approach through the creation of a Community Partnership and Deneside Action Group.

Continuing the theme of community safety, the overall vision for Our Place was: “[t]o increase the confidence in the police and create opportunities for us to be responsible for a safe and vibrant community”.

It was anticipated that the vision would be achieved by:

- Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour through the provision of opportunities for children, young people, and families
- Providing support for vulnerable people, through the delivery of home security, and tackling social isolation to reduce the fear of crime
- Looking after the most vulnerable in our community
- Making the area safer by encouraging greater community participation

Our Place was initially led by the East Durham Area Action Partnership one of fourteen community engagement structures created by Durham County Council across the county. The Partnership (which covers a large area of the county) subsequently handed responsibility to a group called the Deneside Community Action Group, which was formed through Our Place.

On a day-to-day basis Our Place was delivered by a project team that included the Principal Area Action Partnership Co-ordinator, the local police team, neighbourhood wardens, and volunteer residents.

2. Process and support
Given the low base from which Our Place started in terms of community engagement, the project team were given extra time by DCLG and Locality to prepare their operational plan. This allowed for additional community engagement, in the form of a series of community events detailed below, and for partners to nurture the development of a new group, the Deneside Community Action Group. The result was that the community action group was able to form, including adopting a constitution and setting up a bank account.

3. Engagement of partners and residents
The first point at which local public service managers were introduced to Our Place in Deneside was at a week-long community engagement training course for the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Housing Enforcement Officers, and Community Wardens. Although this was billed as part of Our Place it was funded by Durham Constabulary as part of their own community engagement pilot.

The training covered different methods for engaging and empowering people, including appreciative inquiry, organising and facilitating focus groups, participatory budgeting, and the use of social media.
It prompted the police staff to review their community engagement arrangements and reflect on how they could improve the relationship with the local community.

“Our Place was an opportunity to change the way we engage. To actually empower people.” (Project stakeholder)

This training led to the production by the police, with the support of partners, of a six-month Community Engagement Action Plan that was implemented alongside Our Place. The Neighbourhood Policing Team took on the “public face” of the engagement programme, but with active support and involvement of other partners including Durham County Council and the East Durham Area Action Partnership.

The original plan was to host six focus groups, hold some form of appreciative inquiry event, and to hold a larger community event. The team worked hard to address and overcome community suspicion, raise awareness and get people along to the events.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team knocked on every door in the area to raise awareness of Our Place and ask about people’s issues. This was matched with a commitment to provide a rapid response to the specific problems raised which tended to be typical local environmental issues e.g. dog mess, litter, and graffiti.

The initial events were held in residents’ front rooms. Some local residents were cautious about being seen “working with” the police by attending public events. However, one of the residents who hosted an event at her home was well known and respected by other Deneside residents. Her involvement helped persuade other residents that Our Place and the police engagement pilot were genuine attempts to improve life in Deneside.

The effort paid off. In response to demand from the local community, ten events were held during 2014, including four for young people (one for children between 11 and 14). Several local service providers attended each event, to demonstrate to the community their shared commitment to listen. This also meant that service managers could see that there were local people who were interested in improving the area.

“It was clear the community did care”. (Project stakeholder)

A range of issues were raised but the most common themes were the desire for more community events to bring people together and more activities for young people, along with action to improve health and increase educational attainment.

A consistent strand from the young people’s event was the feeling that they were blamed for things, for example they were moved on when they hadn’t done anything wrong, and were either ignored by local services or “talked down to”.

After the initial meetings which had been designed to build confidence, more focus groups were then held in different community locations including youth centres and local schools.

“Residents attending [events] were taking back information to the community”. (Operation Plan)

Following the focus groups, a world café style event was held in autumn in 2014 at which over 250 people voted on their priorities for the area. The two main issues identified were crime / community safety and the need for environmental improvements. Given the particularly stark statistics about crime in Deneside, residents decided to focus in the first instance on crime and community safety.
Once this was agreed, residents then developed their vision of what success would look like. In their eyes this would be:

- Improvement in the overall safety of Deneside
- Reduction in crime and the fear of crime
- Engaging more people in community safety activities
- Increasing community engagement between the police, community and community safety service providers
- Reducing costs to service providers through prevention initiatives
- Having an empowered and informed community, that will actively promote ‘fact not fiction’ about levels of crime

The operational plan describes this event as being “a pivotal point in the development of the Deneside Action Plan”. It pulled together the contributions from all the focus groups and gave the whole population of Deneside a chance to take part in a group discussion.

Another event which stakeholders also described as a turning point was the community-led clean-up of the ‘back field’. This was a large, open green space behind the estate. It was overgrown and unused except as a dumping ground for white goods and rubbish which was often set fire to.

Many residents cited this as a particular eyesore and wanted action. The project team challenged residents to do the job for themselves and organised a clean-up day. In return, the County Council said they would maintain the improvements.

Over 50 local residents attended the clean-up day during which white goods and furniture and over 40 bags of rubbish were removed. The Council then cut and maintained the grass and the back field was used for the celebratory community event.

Using their list of priorities as a starting point, the project team then began a participatory budgeting process. They wrote to several local organisations asking if they would be interested in seeking funding from the participatory budgeting process. They explained that any expressions of interests would then be voted on at a participatory budgeting event early in the following year.

Several expressions of interest were submitted and a community panel shortlisted the projects based on what they felt were closest to their priorities. Fifteen shortlisted projects went forward to the event itself.

The participatory budgeting event was held in January 2015, with nearly 500 residents taking part in the decision-making. The event was also used to launch the Our Place operational plan.

Seven projects from the shortlist won funding via the event:

- Get Creative in Your Community – supporting inter-generational activities for families
- Camp Champions – running activity weeks for young people over the summer holidays
- Our Park, Our Area – helping to develop plans led by Deneside Action Group for a local play area
- Engaging with Youths Using Sports and Activities – also led by Deneside Action Group to support activities for young people in order to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Volunteers Recruitment, Training and Support – supporting volunteers to help families who were going through difficult times
• Fun Fridays – funding young people’s activities like learning to cook and play a musical instrument
• Seaham Park Cricket Club – developing a cricket academy by running taster sessions and coaching

Even those organisations whose projects were not awarded funding appreciated the opportunity to network and raise their profile.

Taken together, the individual engagement activities, which culminated in the participatory budgeting created a much larger process which the diagram below (taken from the Our Place operational plan) aims to illustrate.

It was from this engagement that local residents with support from partners formed the Deneside Action Group. The plan had been for the Action Group to act as a focus for community involvement beyond Our Place.

The final Our Place event was a project celebration / community fun day held in June 2015. The venue for this event was the newly cleared and maintained back field. One of the most active residents reflected on the progress which the range of attendance at the event reflected.

“Some people who would never talk to the police turned up at the fun day. And they were talking to the police. I was like “Wow!” (Resident volunteer)

4. Achievements and outcomes
Our Place achievements in Deneside can be organised under four headings: crime; environment; community engagement and infrastructure; and culture change.
In terms of crime, the overall crime rate for Seaham had fallen by 28%, and anti-social behaviour is down by 11%, meanwhile the detection rate is now the highest in County Durham. The project was nominated for the Durham Constabularies Problem Oriented Award. It is hard to conclusively attribute these results to Our Place but local stakeholders believe Our Place has played a pivotal role.

“Police involvement has been very successful. There’s trust in the police now”. (Project stakeholder)

These improvements in crime and safety have been accompanied by environmental improvements too. Working with local services, residents have identified ‘grot spots’ such as the back field mentioned earlier, and organised further community clean-ups. It was agreed that the clean-up would branded as an Our Place activity and that improvements would be been maintained afterwards by the local authority and resident volunteers.

The commitment of volunteers is due in part to the community engagement process developed through Our Place. Local people say that for the first time in memory they feel that local services are actively willing to listen to them and, just as importantly, act upon their concerns and ideas. They feel this has created a virtuous cycle as more and more residents come forward to speak.

As trust has grown and community capacity has been developed, the new Action Group has also been created making it more likely there will be local community infrastructure in place in future.

“The action group is not a five-minute wonder. They’ve persevered and that’s to be applauded.” (Project stakeholder)

The combination of all these activities has led to what many stakeholders described as a culture change in the community of Deneside. They say this is characterised by a greater willingness to engage with local services and a much stronger community spirit. The reduction in anti-social behaviour, in fires, as well as improvements to the local environment have all created a feeling that change is possible and improvements should be protected.

Many local residents are now more willing to report problems and play a part in addressing them. For some residents this is reminiscent of an older community spirit in Deneside, when residents created a support network amongst themselves and were more likely to challenge anti-social behaviour.

“I’ve seen a big change since Our Place came in. People are now willing to try. There is pride in the area.” (Project stakeholder)

“The area has changed. It’s a community now.” (Project stakeholder)

5. Finance and budget

Our Place Deneside’s activities have secured match funding at 1:1 or better as well as a significant contribution of support in-kind support. The main £10,000 Our Place grant was used to fund the participatory budgeting process, and was matched by £10,000 from Durham Constabulary, and a further £6,000 combined total, from three local Elected Members’ neighbourhood budgets.

Altogether Our Place attracted funding of £61,150 in the form of direct financial support (including the contributions to the participatory budgeting event described above) and in the form of officer and volunteer time.

6. Learning about success factors
Partners feel the organised approach has been effective. The initial training programme initiated by the police gave all partners a shared methodology for engaging local people. The practical approach was highly flexible, but it was based on a shared approach.

“The focus was on bringing the community together through participatory budgeting, appreciative inquiry, focus groups, forging relationships”. (Project stakeholder)

Our Place has taught public agencies the importance of going to where people are. An early breakthrough point for the project was the decision to hold the initial focus groups, not in the offices of public services but in the front-room of a local resident. While it was also important to go to different venues, in order to reach a wider network, going to where people were felt to be more effective than holding an event in unfamiliar or ‘official’ settings and hoping people would turn up.

Working with recognised local figures. Closely linked to the above factor is the value of working with recognised community leaders. Engaging informal community champions gives the activity legitimacy in the eyes of local people.

Having a mix of formal / organised activity and spontaneous / informal community activity. It was notable that the formal engagement process of focus groups led to a very informal community clean-up day. This demonstrated that services and residents were serious and willing to pull their weight in terms of improving the area. It also sent a very visible and symbolic message that Our Place was about action, not just words.

Building infrastructure to sustain activity – the plan is that the Action Group, which has been created through this process, will take forward the on-going work of maintaining the progress begun by Our Place

The project celebration / fun day was, in the eyes of some project stakeholders and volunteers, the crowning achievement of Our Place in Deneside. This was an opportunity to engage more people and to thank all those who had been involved in the work. This meant the project went out on a high while helping to maintain momentum for the future.

7. How to overcome challenges
Patience and persistence has been key to securing trust in a disaffected community which felt forgotten and was not going to suddenly become engaged overnight. At the same time, there are some households and families who will be particularly resistant to getting involved, particularly when initiatives are led by the police. The project addressed this by offering multiple and different opportunities to get involved, including fun days involving engagement activities, but which were promoted as informal opportunities for families to have a nice day out. This ensured that engagement in Deneside was not a one-off or take it or leave it offer.

“Some families were very resistant. But we just wore them down.” (Project stakeholder)
Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Thursday 24 March and included interviews with:

Seaham and Easington Neighbourhood Inspector – Durham Constabulary
Volunteer Community Activist – Deneside Action Group
Durham County Councillor - Deneside Ward
Business Manager – Durham County Council
Community Worker – Eastleigh Youth Centre
Community Engagement Officer – Durham County Council
Case study: Somers Town, Camden

Name of area: Somers Town, Camden
Type of lead organisation: Community Association
Focus of operational plan: Governance of the Job Hub – a place to assist people in becoming ready for work, and to help them find work.
Notable achievements: The creation of the Job Hub has happened and the Hub has a full-time member of staff who is paid for by the London Borough of Camden.
Sustainability/implementation progress: The project has been implemented and the council pays for this, however scaling the project further is unlikely without further grant funding.
Key lessons on the theme of assurances of the impact of cuts on the appetite for risk and judgements about geographic scale: It appears the local authority does not have an appetite for funding community organisations to take over tasks and functions which they currently deliver themselves.

1. Background
Somers Town Community Association (STCA) is the lead organisation for Our Place in Somers Town. STCA has been in existence since 1979 based at the Somers Town Community Centre just yards from London St Pancras International station. From their community centre STCA runs and facilitates activities and services for residents of Somers Town Ward, a large estate largely made up almost entirely of social housing on the fringe of London’s west end. Services run by STCA include an under-fives programme, a 48-place nursery, a youth programme, yoga, healthy eating, sports clubs and a cafe. STCA’s, grassroots model of neighbourhood working and organising has been applied to new areas of action in recent years via the ‘community rights’ agenda which has been built up by Government using powers in the Localism Act (2011).

The Localism Act introduced new rights for communities to have a role (among other things) in the planning system at the neighbourhood level. New provisions were made for members of the public to produce Neighbourhood Plans with official status in the planning system with the aim of encouraging community participation in the planning process. Neighbourhood plans can be developed by Parish Councils, or by groups who apply to their local authority for designation as neighbourhood planning ‘forums’. STCA did exactly this in 2014 and led an application for a new neighbourhood planning forum (facilitated by STCA) to be designated by Camden Council. The forum received designation and STCA was also given a grant as well as assistance from Locality to develop their Neighbourhood Plan. This is relevant to the process of the Our Place programme because it was through this existing relationship with Locality that STCA found out about Our Place.

As well as the Localism Act, another significant driver for community-led change in Somers Town has been a piece of research called ‘Work It Out’, which was funded by Camden’s Equality Taskforce. The research set out to evaluate issues of high unemployment affecting residents in Somers Town; a high
proportion of whom have BME backgrounds and among whom unemployment is higher than average. This employment inequality was the trigger for the research. Primary research for ‘Work It Out’, was conducted by resident survey and sought to engage all residents of Somers Town, not just those with BME backgrounds. One of the main ideas that came out of the study was the ‘Somers Town Job Hub’ proposal.

The Job Hub model in Somers Town is only partly about connecting those seeking work, to specific job opportunities. It is also designed to assist people in becoming ready for work, especially those who are a long way from being able to secure a job or compete in an interview process. This might mean encouraging them to take part in work-like activities (e.g. volunteering), to acquire skills and qualifications, and to join activities to build personal confidence and develop their CVs. Typical clients of the Job Hub include people with poor spoken English, low literacy and numeracy, low confidence, mental health problems, or other barriers to work. A common situation in Somers Town is that of South Asian mothers whose children have reached school age and who want and /or need to work, but who have never had experience of work. Some also have low qualification levels and are not confident English-speakers.

The Job Hub itself is located on the first floor of the Somers Town Community Centre and opened for business at the end of 2014. Our Place grants provided the initial funding and support, and Our Place also gave focus to the project even though it had already been designed beforehand. The timing of the research with residents and Our Place seem to have been serendipitous. Somers Town has also been selected to receive Big Local funding from Big Lottery, which means the community has been awarded £1m to spend or invest over 10 years between 2016 and 2026. STCA are involved in supporting the development of a Big Local Plan that will guide how the money is spent.

There is also considerable physical investment and change taking place in close proximity to Somers Town. The estate sits between Kings Cross and Euston stations and is close to many educational and media institutions. STCA is a partner organisation of what developers call the Kings Cross ‘Knowledge Quarter’ which is attracting academic, cultural, research, scientific and media organisations in the area including UCL, the Wellcome Trust, The Guardian and the newly constructed Francis Crick Institute which stands just metres from the Somers Town Community Centre.

2. **Our Place process and support**

Neighbourhood working is already very much embedded in Somers Town and STCA’s Executive Director is an experienced and proactive community organiser. Rather than establishing a brand-new activity, Our Place has been used to enable those with existing objectives to find the time to focus on enacting them – this is especially true for STCA’s Executive Director. In similar fashion, governance of the Job Hub (the main focus of Our Place) was delegated to a sub group of the neighbourhood planning forum. The sub-group is known as the BEET group (Business, Employment, Education and Training).

Our Place grants paid for staff time to deliver bespoke Job Hub support to jobseekers, such as connecting users with other services and jobs in the immediate area and across north London.

In terms of the non-cash elements of Our Place support, STCA were happy with the assistance they received, including from the Our Place relationship manager. However, STCA’s Executive Director did question whether the money spent on the relationship manager might have been made available as cash which STCA could have used for something more tangible or directly utilizable.
“The relationship manager was good but rather than spending small pots of money, could there be money for other things?”

Nonetheless STCA’s Executive Director was pleased with the support received and in particular with the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), believing the Manchester New Economy model for CBA gave credibility or a “statutory profile” to the Job Hub, which had turned out to be particularly useful in subsequent discussions with Camden Council. A volunteer economist with Pro Bono Economics undertook the CBA for STCA. However, one downside to the process was that little of the technical expertise for producing a CBA was transferred. In this respect the Executive Director felt the CBA process appeared to be something of a “sausage machine” by which she meant it seemed formulaic and also that it did not turn out to be a process STCA staff themselves played much part in.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

STCA is a well networked organisation. This has been an important factor in what STCA have been able to achieve through Our Place.

For instance, STCA were able to utilise the relationship they had developed with Laing O’Rourke, the construction contractor of the new Francis Crick Institute (which is now situated next to their own office). This led to Laing O’Rourke volunteering to refit the first floor of the Somers Town Community Centre on a pro bono basis to create the Job Hub premises.

The Job Hub have also worked with Office Concierge, the agency which recruits reception, cleaning and security staff at the Francis Crick Institute to enable some Somers Town residents, who have attended the Job Hub, to secure jobs in security, catering and cleaning within the institute.

Demand for the Job Hub from jobseekers is strong. In fact, one of their challenges is balancing demand with the desire to stay focused on the local community. For instance, staff members of the Job Hub mentioned feeling conflicted about having to turn away people who were coming to the Job Hub from outside of Camden. This question about the geographical scale at which STCA and Somers Town partners should aim to serve is an on-going debate for them.

4. Achievements and Outcomes

STCA’s main achievement as part of Our Place is the creation of the Job Hub. The Hub now has a full-time member of staff, funded for the time being by the London Borough of Camden which has delivered a number of positive outcomes for residents of Somers Town:

- An on-going relationship with the staffing agency Office Concierge, which provides access to the jobs at the Francis Crick Institute.

- One member of staff who now works at the Somers Town Community Centre secured her job there having first attended and volunteered with the Job Hub – and this is now a model that can be replicated.

- The objective of linking people to services has worked well because of the well-established voluntary and community network in Somers Town and Camden.

- One of the intentions of the Job Hub was not to replicate existing services, but to create a new service that could link people, who are hard to reach, to jobs and jobseeker support in new ways.
The funding for the Job Hub’s Employment and Training Adviser was secured because of Our Place, but was not paid for by Our Place. The individual was hired before the Job Hub was fully operational and worked with the STCA to plan its location and layout. Initially she had misgivings about the Job Hub being located within the Somers Town Community Centre, as she thought a more designated/professional space would be more suitable. However, she now sees real benefits to having the Job Hub where it is. It is both close to its intended users and it is more informal and people-focused in style than a Job Centre. It is also not financed by or branded as a Job Centre, this is something the Employment and Training Advisor also views as a clear benefit.

5. Finance and Budgets

STCA had hoped that the Job Club created through Our Place could, if it were shown to be effective, secure funding as a mainstream jobseeker service. However, the Chief Executive of STCA currently believes this is something that is “sadly never gonna happen”. Her scepticism comes in part from her experience of offering a service to manage a local street market in place of the local authority. STCA have been unsuccessful in negotiating this, even though they believe they can deliver a better more vibrant market for a lower management fee. STCA believe that the underlying barrier STCA believe, is that the local authority does not have an appetite for funding community organisations to take over tasks and functions which they currently deliver themselves i.e. for organisations like STCA to replace council delivery rather than deliver activities which are net-additional. Replacement provision would mean de-commissioning the council’s own activities to pay for community provision. As for activity with is net-additional, she believes councils might be willing in principle for community organisations to do things which are net-additional – but the reality is there is no longer any budget for this.

The council put a slightly different emphasis on the challenge. For them, commissioning delivery at a very local level involves significant challenges. They accept it is plausible that STCA might be able to run services at lower costs than the council or its mainstream contractors. For them, however, the problem is partly about their own capacity to oversee multiple local providers. Contracts are not currently negotiated at geographical scales as small as Somers Town. In fact everything is geared towards having fewer, larger contracts to manage. At present there is a clash between the pressure to have fewer delivery partners that require less client management, and the recognition that very small community based providers may be more effective. There is a possibility that the council could develop a strategic approach in which large contractors might sub-contract smaller pieces of work out which might be better run by organisations like STCA (similar to the DWP’s model of having Prime Contractors who then sub-let to multiple smaller providers) - but this is something the council has not yet explored.

It seems, therefore, that while Camden Council has shown a keen interest in what is happening in Somers Town, the conclusion that they are ready to begin to transfer some service provision to the Voluntary and Community sector at the geographic scale of Somers Town is premature.

For the council there is no single insurmountable barrier to ward level commissioning, but the reality is that their own understanding of how this might work is at a preliminary stage.

6. Legacy and achievements

The Our Place process has been an enabling tool for a community that was already active in exercising the Community Rights under the Localism Act. Our Place has been useful in providing a route and some funding for STCA to turn the Job Hub concept into a real service:
• It is possible that without Our Place the Job Hub idea might not have secured support or funding to become a reality, or it might have been delayed due to the busy schedules of those involved in working on them. Our Place was able to unlock time in these schedules to dedicate to Our Place.

• Somers Town now has an active Job Hub close to where people live and for which demand has been high. It is beginning to attract those from outside the direct locality.

• A full-time Employment and Training Advisor at the Job Hub has been successful in building a programme of job readiness, and through the partnership with the Francis Crick Institute has helped a small number of Somers Town residents into work.

• Jobs have been created because of the Job Hub and because of proactive networking carried out by those involved with the Job Hub.

7. Learning about success factors

The following factors helped the Somers Town Our Place project to be successful:

• Having an experienced and proactively networked community group as a lead organisation has been a driver for progress.

• Our Place has benefited from the presence of other projects and funding streams present in Somers Town – in particular Big Local and neighbourhood planning.

• The Job Hub project was realised in a short space of time. The size of the project was realistic and benefitted from being led by a group already in their own premises.

• The Cost Benefit Analysis is a recognisable model and the Manchester New Economy model for CBA has brand recognition - although the process of creating it could have been conducted more effectively in order to transfer learning to STCA staff.

• Our Place as a central government programme gave prestige to STCA not just for the Job Hub, but also with its reputation generally.

8. Challenges

Our Place has been one tool among others for neighbourhood working in Somers Town. One of the central ambitions of the Our Place programme was to encourage greater self-determination by communities; however this presents a new set of challenges:

• Currently the London Borough of Camden sees a number of challenges in commissioning and devolving services to be run at the ward level.

• Ward level provision or delivery is at odds with the objective of seeking economies of scale in commissioning.

• There are concerns that if STCA grows and becomes a more complex organisation it will lose some of the personal relationships with residents and service users which are currently its strength.

• The tensions between local authorities needing to reduce the effort required to oversee commissioning, but also seeing the value of community based provision are only starting to be addressed – and community organisations believe that councils only have limited
appetite for community-provided services which would genuinely replace their own provision.

Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Monday 21 March and included interviews with:

Executive Director: Somers Town Community Association
Staff Member: Job Hub/Somers Town Community Association
Employment and Training Advisor: Job Hub
Economic Development Manager: London Borough of Camden
Chair: Tenants Residents Association – Walker House
1. Background

Stewkley Parish Council, as a lead organisation, used Our Place support to expand an existing scheme whereby a devolved County Council grass cutting contract is used to provide part time employment for young people and other local residents and produce a better end result in terms of grounds maintenance.

Stewkley is a village in Buckinghamshire where activities for young people have suffered from cuts in youth service funding by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and where other opportunities for young people to mix socially are affected by the fact that villagers attend five or six different secondary schools each in a different direction. The rural nature of the area and limited public transport means there are few employment opportunities near the village. In response to this, in 2010 a local resident set up a youth club and started to explore other activities to facilitate young people’s involvement in the village, including through employment opportunities.

Two year before, in 2008 the County Council introduced a ‘new deal’ for devolving grass cutting, verge maintenance, and road sign cleaning to town and parish councils. Thirty-one out of the 168 eligible councils took up the deal, which was negotiated individually so the agreed contracts varied between local councils. Stewkley did not take up the ‘new deal’ and along with the other remaining councils continued to receive a service directly from BCC’s highway and environmental services’ contractor, Transport for Bucks (TfB).

Then in 2012 Stewkley Parish Council did finally secure a devolved contract covering (but not restricted to) employing young people to cut the grass verges in the village. The driving force behind this was the same local resident who had set up the youth club two years earlier. A new company, Stewkley Enterprise Agency (SEA) was set up specifically to deliver the contract through employing
young people and other residents as ‘part time mowers’ and is now the largest part-time employer in the village. The Parish used its own precept income to fund the setting-up and development of the new service.

The devolved services contract that was agreed in 2012 between the County Council and Stewkley Parish Council, is sub-contracted to SEA, and covers grass cutting, strimming, weed spraying, minor hedge trimming, drain rodding and road sign cleaning. It specifies that road signs must be able to be seen and read and that grass verges are maintained but the Parish Council can specify the number of cuts. In Stewkley, there are 18,500 sq. metres of grass, which requires around 6.5 hours’ maintenance a month using 2 mowers in each of the three parts of the village; in short this can be done with six people employed for 6.5 hours a month. In addition to this road signs are cleaned once a year.

There is currently a waiting list of eight people wanting to be mowers.

Stewkley Parish Council applied to join Our Place with a proposal to spread the ‘Stewkley model’ to at least four other neighbouring parishes. Five eventually took up this offer – and are known as the ‘Stewkley Cluster’. BCC supported the Our Place application as it too was interested in the Stewkley approach and wanted to use this experience to encourage other parishes to take a similar approach.

2. Our Place process and support

The Our Place funding and support was used mainly to enable Stewkley Enterprise Agency (SEA) to work with the Localities and Communities Manager for Great Brickhill, Wing and Ivinghoe to promote the Stewkley model to the five other parishes who were interested (the Stewkley Cluster) and to Buckingham Town Council. This process included four workshops, organised by SEA, to explain the ‘Stewkley model’ and discuss issues such as governance arrangements, contract management and the employment of mowers, with additional discussions in between the meetings.

“The process took four meetings with the other parishes [in the cluster] and nine months to get going – this is what the Our Place resources were used for” (SEA)

The SEA co-ordinator found that the main benefits of being part of Our Place were access to practical support organised through Locality, including web-based, face-to-face and peer support. The status of being an Our Place project was less important they felt, although helpful to involving partners within a finite timescale.

“80% of Our Place support was benefits through learning (for example about CBA) and meeting others doing something similar and 20% was about the motivation from being part of it [Our Place]”

SEA found that although some of the ‘technical learning’ (such as needs analysis, planning and making a business case) was applicable across most types of Our Place projects, some aspects (such as how to enthuse and engage local communities) were more relevant to community-led social enterprises such as in Stewkley than to local authorities as “you are either a social entrepreneur or you’re not – it’s not something you can learn”.

Although the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) part of the Our Place support was a useful approach to learn about, the Manchester New Economy model did not seem able to quantify the net benefits to

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16 Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) has devolved arrangements in the 168 town and parish councils (within the 4 district councils) in Bucks. The county was divided into 19 local areas in 2007/8 supported by 5 Locality and Communities Managers. Each area has an Area Forum with representation from county, district and parish councils, and a budget from BCC. Stewkley is in the Great Brickhill, Wing and Ivinghoe area.
the community and council from using volunteers – or any environmental benefits (e.g. from avoiding transport costs and reducing energy consumption through local service provision). This could potentially skew the ‘economies of scale arguments’ against devolved services as the model makes assumptions about overhead costs which do not reflect the relatively lower costs of local service provision across a large county area where a centralised service has higher costs of travel and time.

The successful Our Place application enabled BCC to use SEA as a case study on its website and produce a video about the scheme. The model of using devolved budgets to provide employment opportunities for young people has also been included in the BCC Strategic Plan.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

The partnership between BCC and SEA has been mutually beneficial. Although the county council had introduced devolved grass cutting arrangements as long ago as 2008 through its ‘new deal’, from 2012 further devolution had been introduced as a response to the need to make significant savings. By 2014 new, a more standardised system had been designed offering a fixed amount of payment for a fixed amount of work and increasing numbers of Parishes were taking this up.

The County Council hoped that explaining to other Parishes the Stewkley model, aimed at additional social and community benefits, would make the devolution offer more attractive.

The local newsletter, Grapevine, has also been used to publicise the scheme – both to let young people know about the opportunities and to let villagers know how it works. One of the mowers mentioned that when he first started three years ago, “there was a lot of village feedback but new people don’t know how it works”.

Important parts of the Stewkley model include the mowers going on a safety-based training course where they learn how to use tools safely. The work is arranged in ‘twos’ so more experienced mowers can pass skills on to newer ones. Another feature is the involvement of the mowers in managing the SEA and the mowing work. They have meetings at key times of the year (e.g. February before the mowing schedules start) to arrange the work. The contract with BCC specifies certain safety standards – in terms of visibility of signs and sightlines but SEA can agree how many cuts a year and the height of the cuts etc. As another mower explained:

“We have to be organised- it’s left to you [how to carry out the contract]”

The pride in the work – and wanting to retain the ‘Best Kept Village’ award that Stewkley won in 2015 - means that SEA carries out other related work that is not in the contract e.g. litter picking before mowing, mowing private gardens, tidying up bus shelters and re-grassing/seeding some of the verges.

“In the village, we get people walking past saying thank you. One old lady asked if we could mow her garden if we had time, which we did. It helps you meet new people” (Stewkley mower)

“It’s nice to do something for the village – there’s a sense of pride” (Stewkley mower)

The setting up of SEA and the devolved contract also acts as a catalyst for related activity with other residents from the parish as volunteers such as on the yearly ‘Community Clean-Up Day’. This has

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17 See https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/2457479/Stewkley-case-study.pdf
wider community benefits that BCC realised could be replicated in other parishes, when encouraging these to adopt the Stewkley model.

4. Achievements and outcomes
The Our Place funding led to the Stewkley model being taken up by the five other parishes in the Stewkley cluster and by Buckingham Town Council – which in turn has created more local jobs, and generated better end results according to villagers. As an officer from BCC explained:

“The county council has now devolved grass cutting to the Stewkley cluster. The work is organised by SEA and has transferred well – there are now 17 young people involved in part time work across the cluster.”

Since grass cutting has been devolved to Stewkley - and now the cluster – BCC has had fewer complaints from residents. There have been 50% less calls from the cluster parish areas about grass/hedge cutting to the BCC call centre, and only one or two complaints a month to the parish councils involved.

At the same time, the cluster has managed to increase the number of cuts per year from 6 to 12 cuts. This improvement in quality and cost effectiveness has been noticed by BCC with one officer commenting “residents are getting a higher quality service and are happier”.

The mowers in Stewkley are very conscious that, by living in the village, they have a stake in doing a good job and that other villagers give feedback on how well they carry out the contract:

“We’re more careful [than council contractors] – we’ll mow around parked cars and daffodils”

“It’s a waste of time BCC setting standards and dealing with complaints as we only have four a year”

“You bump into people in the village and they tell us we’re better than the council”

“Being local, you’d hear if there was criticism”

The terms and conditions of the mowers and the skills they can learn have been important factors in spreading the approach through Our Place support. The part time mowers are paid a ‘commercial rate’ wage of around £7 per hour. In addition to earning income, they benefit from learning new skills such as how to: invoice, schedule their work and manage their time, collect customer feedback, work on the road side, conduct health and safety risk assessments, use and maintain tools and to work as a team. Comments from four mowers about the skills and self-confidence that they have gained from the experience include:

“It pays well and didn’t need experience. Now I can show [to potential employers] that I’ve got experience in time management skills and team work”

“I can’t drive and this was a possibility of a job in the village”.

“I can’t work full time [because of ill health] and I feel I’m making a contribution”

“It’s nice to see what you’ve done in the village. There’s a sense of achievement”

“It’s given me confidence, which has helped get me involved in other groups – like Men in Sheds in Aylesbury”

5. Finance and budgets
The use of devolved grass cutting contracts to provide local residents with part time employment is seen by BCC and SEA as cost-effective because the council gets a higher quality service for the same price and the community benefits from a higher quality environment and local part time employment opportunities. Transport for Bucks (the highways and environment services’ contractor) is happy with village grass cutting being devolved because it is a very small part of the full contract held by TFB and is relatively expensive because of the transport costs incurred when the workforce – with equipment – have to travel between villages.

SEA offers to create employment at no additional cost to the tax-payer, “there would be 1,000 part-time jobs if all the [Buckinghamshire] towns and parishes took up the devolved service contracts”. (SEA founder)

This is in part possible because the co-ordination and management of the service is mainly done on voluntary time. So the BCC contract price therefore covers the mowers’ wages plus the purchase and maintenance of the mowing equipment and clothing (tabards, boots etc.) – but not co-ordination and management time.

6. Learning about success factors

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped BCC and SEA benefit from being an Our Place pilot and should be replicable in other areas:

- Having a strong local community organisation, in this case SEA backed by the Parish, and a simple service proposition (grass cutting providing part time employment for local residents) already in place to expand to other areas through Our Place;
- Having a large principal local authority (BCC) that was already committed to devolution through area forums (involving county, district and parish councillors) and through their ‘new deal’ for devolving services and budgets;
- Having a parish council that was committed to taking on a devolved approach and happy to support this through their own precept;
- Having a key individual in place to lead the project – an active local resident with vision, enthusiasm and leadership - to set up SEA and expand the approach to other areas; and
- Regularly calculating and monitoring improvements in quality and the cost-effectiveness of the devolved scheme to showcase the model’s benefits.

7. And how to overcome challenges

Our Place was not without its challenges and the pilot was useful in recognising these and learning how to overcome them:

- It’s been a challenge for the county council to get more parishes to take up the devolved offer (only 50% of town and parish councils will have accepted by April 2016). Most of the parishes not taking up the offer are among the smallest Parishes, and have limited capacity to introduce change or manage a service. Barriers still remain to spreading the devolved offer to more parishes - some of these are about attitudes and mind-set (e.g. it’s the council’s responsibility), or that parishes do not feel able/want to organise the work through devolved budgets. Some have other priorities – like engaging in the debate around the HS2 train line. The county council is continuing to work with parishes to overcome these barriers, including by promoting the benefits of the Stewkley model;
Many of the parish councils who have taken up the devolved services are not taking up the opportunity to work with SEA to use their devolved contracts to providing employment opportunities, instead they are “just using private contractors to do the work because they only look at the short-term costs – not the benefit to young people and the communities. Both BCC and SEA have said that they will continue to promote the benefits of a community-led approach that provides employment opportunities; and

SEA would like to develop its activities further but feels that other service areas don’t lend themselves to part time employment of young people in the same way – or would compete with local businesses (e.g. window cleaning). One highly ambitious area which SEA and the Parish Council hope to explore in the future is a local, social enterprise model of Adult Social Care – the gains could potentially be significant but this would also need significant investment to set up. SEA is considering how to address this next challenge!

Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Friday 10 March and included interviewees with:

Parish councillor/SEA co-ordinator and two Stewkley mowers (group discussion)

Two more Stewkley mowers (individual telephone interviews)

Two Locality managers at Buckinghamshire County Council
Case study: Black Country Make CIC, Wolverhampton

Name of area: Heathfield Park/Wolverhampton

Type of lead organisation: Community Interest Company (CIC)

Focus of operational plan: Develop a series of youth programmes and create bespoke space for these programmes.

Notable achievements: The primary achievement was the co-production of the BC Make Manifesto – Our Place operational plan – by young people who are the core members of the CIC.

Sustainability/implementation progress: BC Make continues to work towards self-sufficiency through the provision of commissioned designs.

Key lessons on the theme of – assurances of quality in delivery and governance: statutory partners want to see well developed structures and a broader investment base from partners before committing significant assets to the project.

1. Background

Black Country Make (BCMake) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) whose members are the young people who live in Heath Town, within the Heathfield Park area of Wolverhampton. Our Place funding was used by BCMake as an Our Place lead organisation, to enable its members to produce a ‘manifesto’ explaining their new ‘can-do’ vision of ‘civic action for change’ which is characterised by making things themselves, self-build, and doing things for themselves. Their manifesto also seeks to attract financial support for these.

Heathfield Park has 8,862 residents, 3,600 of whom live on the Heath Town Estate. There is a high level of unemployment on the estate, ‘poorly managed’ public spaces and a shortage of leisure facilities with the recent closure of youth and community services due to government cuts.

A Heath Town Regeneration Programme is now underway to improve the area and tackle these issues by re-building much of the neighbourhood and creating new homes. However, poor community consultation on the local masterplan combined with delays in implementation had caused uncertainty and cynicism. In many respects BCMake CIC was set-up in response to this, and offers a different model for changing the community for the better.

The CIC was established by a local social entrepreneur (‘Jez’) in 2014 and is based in three empty units in the Heath Town estate that are provided free by the local authority. It enables young people from the area to develop their skills and realise their potential through getting involved in a range of activities from film-making and 3D design technologies for Community Self Build Housing to yoga and martial arts dealing with mental health, gangs and drugs. BCMake has also been involved in producing a Local Development Plan (LDP) and using this to make the city council’s master plan for the Heath Field Park area more inclusive.
The members of BCMake have noticed the difference that being involved in the CIC makes to them. They tell of their increased confidence; a reduction in mental health problems and the self-esteem that learning new skills gives them. Several members have enrolled in design courses at Wolverhampton University and others are gaining accreditations in yoga teaching – which they will be able to use within the local community.

“You learn because they do things with you – not to you - it’s not like school” (BCMake member)

“We’re working with [City of] Wolverhampton College as partners in their outreach programme to co-design a curriculum to deliver skills sets focussed on tackling community issues and delivering learning in a working environment” (BCMake Manifesto)

2. Our Place process and support

In the absence of any ‘core funding’, Our Place support enabled BCMake to produce its operational plan, which was written by its members. As explained in the Plan, this was written “in our own words, created and produced to tell ‘our’ story and is our manifesto to effect change for ourselves. It is a true representation of what we want to achieve, to control our own future and deliver the life chances for our community, our children and ourselves, breaking the cycle of dependency on others and their attempts at change that have failed so often in the past”.

The manifesto sets out BCMake’s vision (shown below in an extract from the manifesto) and ambition to attract interest and harness support for taking forward its approach based on a term coined by its members - the ‘Three Pillars’. These include: YamYam – space to listen to ideas, The Foundry – space to develop ideas and The Digi-Tool Shed - space to realise them. In particular, BCMake wants to secure premises to house the ‘Foundry’ and ‘Digi-Tool Shed’ as spaces to facilitate production of the prototypes that have been developed as ‘Live Making Projects’. In time, this would provide the opportunity to use the 3D designs to fabricate units for ‘self-build’ houses in the Heath Town estate.

BLACK COUNTRY MAKE - OUR VISION

Take the lead in responsibility for our own future; Not to make ourselves in ‘their’ own image of the system, for them to then fail to recognise us if we don’t follow; but to be confident and stand behind our own truth and ambition that they can stand behind us in support.

Create a platform for independence that has a ‘co-do’ attitude in a civic action for change; not to reinforce the isolation caused by the hierarchy of power and control over decision making.

To have the capacity to be intuitive and agile, with the right knowledge and tools, so we are quick to respond to problems and opportunities; not to pretend to forecast and speculate and then leave with excuses and broken promises.

To explore and widen our learning and understanding, to secure more robust solutions that are as diverse in representing the community we live in; not to constrict in a culture of risk that’s managed to deliver the lowest of expectations.

To commit to the challenge and shout loud in our achievements so that others may see themselves in us and move instead of waiting for action; not to patronise and dismiss, to raise doubt so they can step in for self-gain.

So we can witness a place where it’s the norm to grow up and be recognised for who you are.
Although Our Place grants were useful for funding the premises costs, staff time and events that enabled the co-production of the BCMake manifesto, being part of the Our Place programme was not without its challenges. In particular, BCMake felt that it seemed “very process driven, too council orientated and wanting to channel [projects] into an Our Place standard [format]”. BCMake did not use the relationship manager support or the cost-benefit analysis training as these were not considered relevant to its aim of co-producing the Plan. These experiences and views highlight the difference between lead organisations which had more traditional ‘service delivery’ cultures in the Our Place programme and the entrepreneurial, innovative approach to co-production that BCMake is trying to take in a local community.

3. Engagement of partners and residents

BCMake has 16 ‘Core Members’ and a Board of Trustees who are all Directors of the CIC. The Trustees include Jez (Founder Director), two local residents, experienced professionals with a mix of academic, business and community backgrounds – as well as representatives from Big Issue Invest and the Accord Housing Group, which have supported BCMake since it was set up.

BCMake’s strength – and its ability to make connections with potential partner organisations - lies in its core membership of young people and connections with other local residents. This has made a strong impression on staff from influential organisations such as the Black Country Consortium (the delivery team of the local economic partnership) and Wolverhampton City Council, who feel that BCMake can reach young people to an extent that other organisations have not been able to achieve. As two different partners explained:

“[BCMake] are local brokers on the ground. They have a delivery model to empower and develop people in Heath Town, which supports them in driving changes. They are able to raise residents’ capacity and skills set” (Partner organisation)

“[BCMake’s focus is very positive. It opens up new avenues of potential by accessing young people who aren’t engaging” (Partner organisation)

Black Country Consortium and Wolverhampton City Council are both keen to support BCMake because the engagement and employment of young people, and the involvement of local residents in the regeneration of Heath Town fits with their policy objectives.

The city council’s links with BCMake are mainly through the Housing Development Team, which is responsible for the Heath Town estate regeneration programme. The plan for this is to ‘take out’ disused garaging, retail and other parts of the estate including 36 units of housing and to build 300 – 400 new homes. Most of the site will shortly be sold to a housing developer.

The council, which owns the freehold and wants to “support BCMake to realise its potential”, has reserved part of the site to lease to BCMake to self-build six to eight units, using their own designs and fabrication. The manager of the Housing Development Team is currently working with BCMake on the financial viability of this plan.

Black Country Consortium has liaised closely with BCMake to improve young people’s health and skills, a priority for the organisation, which believes that this partnership is in their interest as:

“The strength of the [BCMak]e model, the exposure to residents – means Black Country Consortium is getting something from it”
Through Youth Charter a UK-based international charity, Black Country Consortium has funded and worked with BCMake to develop local residents as ‘social coaches’ in sport and culture. This fits in with the government’s national sports strategy and is something that it wants to continue.

Along with other partners Black Country Consortium is now discussing the purchase of a disused building in Heath Town which could be used for sports and leisure facilities and also to provide space for BCMake to fabricate its designs. This is at a relatively early stage and depends on the availability of investment finance and appropriate governance arrangements.

4. Achievements and outcomes

In relation to the Our Place funding, the main achievement has been the co-production of the BC Make Manifesto (also the Our Place operational plan) by the young people who are the core members of BCMake. This role was made possible through BCMake’s investment in supporting local young people to increase their skills, confidence and self-esteem.

The process of doing this helped to reaffirm BCMake’s vision and plans for the future. It also drew more local residents into BCMake through its 3D design skills transfer and health/sports activities, which it linked to wider community consultation events about Heath Town’s redevelopment.

“We have created interlinked events that draw out the ways in which collaboration and social innovation can work in sync – and asked how this can help address some of the most difficult issues we face in society today” (BCMake Manifesto)

BC Make’s current activities, supported in part by Our Place, have led to important outcomes for the young people who are involved and for the wider community. For example, one young man who had been using drugs and had experienced severe mental health problems was being treated by medication through a ‘traditional approach’ by his GP. This was ineffective and so BCMake drew up an alternative plan for him with the help of his GP. This included daily yoga sessions, martial arts training and learning about digital design to develop his skills. He has now been off medication for 12 months and feels confident in himself and the future.

Social media has also had an impact in the Heath Town and has enabled the positive effects of BC Make on individuals to be noticed. It has also shown other young people that there are possibilities for gaining skills and decent jobs.

“Drugs and money lending were seen as an alternative to paid work. Jobs are very short term – say three months – and on zero hours. Of the 27 founding members of BCMake, all are either in skilled labour or in graduate level education and training” (BCMake Director)

BCMake is aiming to become self-sufficient through commissions for its designs. Since January 2015 the CIC has had four commissions for design development. The members have used the proceeds from these to buy equipment and parts to build their own ‘Digi-Tools’ to prototype their products.

“Problem - we had to pay £1,215 for working on someone else’s laser cutter. Solution - design and build our own laser cutter for cost of £4, 500 for parts”. (BCMake manifesto)

The next step is to find premises for the Digi Tools Shed and the Foundry to fabricate BCMake’s designs, including for self-build homes.

5. Finance and budgets

Since BCMake was set up it has only received a small amount of external funding, the main help it receives is in the form of free use of buildings and some officer time. The Founding Director is
unpaid and uses his private architectural commissions to involve and train BCMake’s members in 3D
design.

Wolverhampton City Council provides the three units that house BCMake free of charge plus officer
time to work with the CIC on the regeneration plans including for community consultation and the
proposal for BCMake to lease land for 6 – 8 self-build units.

Cash funding from the council has been limited to a £5,000 contract from the Housing Development
Team to design a 3D model of plans for the redevelopment of Heath Town. BCMake has tried to
tender for other council design contracts. They secured a £7,500 commission for 3D printing
(which enabled the CIC to buy a suitable printer) but have had no further success, resulting in a
feeling that it is “difficult to get in [to an existing list of contractors].”

There is little in the way of support from other council departments, partly because of the effect of
public expenditure cuts, for example, on Youth Services. As one partner put it “Wolverhampton is
not the best place for a Locality agenda [at the moment]. That needs resources into the local
community. If you’re going to release control into the community, you need a devo deal – and that’s
not there”.

BCMake are positive about the support that has been provided by the Black Country Consortium.
This has been provided via Black Country BeActive (a county sports partnership) and via funding to
Youth Charter. Their £5,000 of cash funding amounts to about £40 per week, this enables a yoga
coach and other sessional staff to be employed.

As mentioned above, the Black Country Consortium is currently in discussions with BCMake, Big
Issue, Accord Housing and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) about buying and
refurbishing local premises to house a ‘Digi-Tools Shed’ and ‘Foundry’ alongside a ‘Sports Academy’
that they are planning to establish. However, these plans are likely to require considerable capital
investment of around £6 - 7 million.

All partners seem to have concerns about where this investment finance will come from. BCMake is
frustrated at the difficulties in securing financial backing from the public sector because of what it
sees as “a zero-risk culture” combined with “their problem in transferring any assets to the private
sector”.

From the perspective of statutory sector partners, they say they require more assurance about how
BCMake plans to develop its business plan, governance and staffing structure to establish the type of
organisation and governance that would inevitably be required to manage this level of assets and
related commercial operations. They also feel that Big Issue Invest and the Accord Housing could or
should add some significant financial investment to their backing of BCMake to become full equity
partners.

These discussions raise the issue of where CICs and social enterprises can find investment finance for
the purchase of assets at reasonable rates as other Our Place projects have faced similar challenges.

6. Learning about success factors

The following success factors or ‘enablers’ helped Black Country Make CIC benefit from Our Place
and could be replicable in other areas:

- **Having an entrepreneurial, enthusiastic and knowledgeable Our Place project lead** (the
  Founding Director of BCMake) committed to the aims and ethos of the project in a difficult
  financial climate;
• **Co-creating the ‘Our Place’ project with young people** in Heath Town through ‘new ways of thinking and doing’ i.e. developing skill sets to reshape the local community;

• **Using the operational plan as a manifesto** to set out their ambition and vision, and attract backing from partners for it, including funding through commissions, asset transfer and equity finance;

• **Using an existing masterplan** for the local housing and regeneration programme as an opportunity to engage local residents and influence decision making; and

• **Attracting and maintaining support from a wide range of public and private sector partners to help progress the project’s aims and activities** – particularly the Black Country Consortium, Housing Development Team at Wolverhampton City Council, Black Country BeActive, Youth Charter, Big Issue Invest and Accord Housing.

7. **And how to overcome challenges**

Our Place was not without its challenges and the pilot was useful in recognising these and learning how to overcome them:

• BCMake did not fit easily as a ‘standard’ Our Place project - so it adapted the programme’s support to meet local needs and circumstances e.g. producing the operational plan as a manifesto;

• Previous lack of community consultation on the local masterplan combined with delays in implementation had caused uncertainty and cynicism – so BCMake created innovative events to engage residents e.g. Running ‘open sessions’ in 3D design and other skills;

• Lack of risk culture in public sector has made it difficult for BC Make to attract investment (e.g. for premises for design and build) or commissions (e.g. for 3D design) - but the CIC is discussing with partners how it could develop its commercial credibility and an asset base; and

• Local authority cuts have reduced youth service and community provision in area – but BCMake is working with partners to provide alternatives e.g. Black Country Consortium for social coaches.
Fieldwork and interviewees

The case study visit took place on Friday 18 March 2016 and included interviewees with:

- Founding Director at BCMake
- Yoga/martial arts coach at BCMake
- Three core members of BCMake

This was followed by telephone interviews in April 2016 with:

- BeActive Partnership Director, Black Country Consortium
- Service Lead, Housing Development, Wolverhampton City Council
Europoint Centre
5-11 Lavington Street
London, SE1 0NZ
020 7756 7600

www.sharedintelligence.net
solutions@sharedintelligence.net