



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network



Co-operative Case Studies

2021



What works in community asset transfer?

What are the barriers?

What makes them successful?

Download: bit.ly/BeyondAssetTransfer

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 Co-operative Councils
Innovation Network

 People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first

“ We want to reclaim the traditions of community action, community engagement and civic empowerment which can transform communities and which will help us deliver radical and innovative programmes that are designed, led and delivered in partnership with communities and therefore maximise the social dividend they bring. It has also always been the purpose of the Network to share our developing good practice and to support one another in our co-operative aims and values.”



Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE

Chair of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network
Leader of Stevenage Borough Council



It is one of the most challenging periods in local government history. Public Sector funding continues to decline and councils are having to look for innovative ways of providing services with reducing budgets. The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) was borne out of this uncertainty – a direct public sector response to delivering services differently, using the co-operative values and principles of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

These Case Studies demonstrate some of the many ways that Co-operative Councils are working with local people to build strong and resilient neighbourhoods. See more at www.councils.coop/case-studies.

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Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network



The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network comprises more than 100 councils and organisations from across the UK who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.

The Network is a non-party-political active hub for co-operative policy development, innovation and advocacy which is:

- Action-focused: a vehicle for helping councils translate co-operative policy and principles into practice.
- Membership-based: funded by modest membership subscriptions from its member councils.
- Open to all UK councils: members share the belief that working co-operatively with communities holds the key to tackling today's challenges.
- Part of the local government family: the network is a Special Interest Group registered with the Local Government Association where we work to promote innovation in local government.

The co-operative approach to public service

Council policy is informed by real experience and practice, drawing on, influencing, and framing national and international policy and political debates about the future of public services, local democracy, and communities across the country. It has huge potential for sharing its approach elsewhere in the UK and overseas. Our work recognises the need to define a new model for local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities; replacing traditional models of top-down governance and service delivery with local leadership, genuine co-operation, built on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement: collective action, co-operation, empowerment, and enterprise.

The co-operative business model allows people and communities to meet their needs and aspirations, offering a unique answer to contemporary problems. The model is a proven self-help model.

Co-operative enterprises play a major role in driving our economy, showing resilience in tough economic times by creating jobs, adapting to social change and their continuing growth and success.



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Members



Member

Barking & Dagenham Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Birmingham City Council
Brent Council
Bristol City Council
Cardiff Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Glasgow City Council
Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Hull City Council
Kirklees Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Lewisham
Milton Keynes Council
Newcastle City Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
Oldham Council
Oxford City Council
Plymouth City Council
Preston City Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal Borough of Greenwich
Salford City Council
Southampton City Council
South Ribble Borough Council
South Tyneside Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Sunderland City Council
Tameside Council
Telford and Wrekin Council
Torbay Council
Wigan Council



Associate Member

Billingham Town Council
Burntwood Town Council
Edinburgh Labour & Co-op Group
Gloucester Labour Group
Halewood Town Council
Hillingdon Labour & Co-op Group
Kidsgrove Town Council
Medway Labour & Co-op Group
Newcastle-U-Lyme Labour & Co-op Group
North Warwickshire Labour Group
Peterborough Labour Group
Polesworth Parish Council
Renfrewshire Labour Group
Seaton Community Council
Silverdale Parish Council
Staffordshire Labour & Co-op Group
Winsford Town Council
Witney Town Council
Woughton Community Council
York Labour Group



Affiliate Member

40C
The Active Wellbeing Society
Bates Wells
The Behaviouralist
Branding.coop
C.Co
Constellia
Co-operative Care Colne Valley
The Co-operative College
Co-operatives UK
Cooperatives West Midlands
Demos
Development.coop
Evenbreak
Governance International
ICS.AI
Ideas Alliance
Lambeth GP Food Co-op
Locality
Marks Out Of Tenancy
Mutual Ventures
Oxygen Finance
PeopleToo
Powers to Change
Public Service Transformation Academy
RedQuadrant
Royal Society of Arts
SBI/E3M
Social Value Exchange
Stir to Action
Trueman Change
Unlimited Potential
Value Match
West and West
Workers Educational Association

Correct as at 21 August 2021



CCIN Statement of Values and Principles

Our values are what we believe in

Whilst not a registered co-operative, the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network has adopted the Co-operative Values developed by the International Co-operative Alliance.

Co-operatives are based on the values of:

- Self-help.
- Self-responsibility.
- Democracy.
- Equality.
- Equity.
- Solidarity.

In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Our Principles guide the way we and our members put our values into action

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network endorses the principles of the International Co-operative Alliance:

- Democratic member control.
- Member economic participation.
- Autonomy and independence.
- Education, training and information.
- Co-operation among co-operatives.
- Concern for community.

In acknowledging that Councils are not in themselves registered co-operatives, we and our members have developed principles that have grown from those of the International Co-operative Alliance and are relevant within the context of local government.



The CCIN has developed ten icons to illustrate these principles



Social Partnership

We will strengthen the co-operative partnership between citizens, communities, enterprises and Councils, based on a shared sense of responsibility for wellbeing and mutual benefit.



Democratic Engagement

We will support the active engagement of the full range of residents in decision making and priority setting.



Co-production

We will develop systems that enable citizens to be equal partners in designing and commissioning public services and in determining the use of public resources.



Enterprise and social economy

We will promote community-based approaches to economic development that focus on supporting the creation of jobs, social enterprises and other businesses and providing an environment for co-operative and mutual enterprises to thrive.



Maximising social value

We will support the development of a framework and criteria for social value, giving substance to the concept and supporting Councils with the tools to ensure better local social and economic outcomes.



Community leadership and a new role for councillors

We will explore ways for councils to act as a platform for helping the community to contribute to local outcomes, and to re-think the role of councillors as community connectors, brokers and leaders.



New models of meeting priority needs

In exploring new ways of meeting the priority needs of our communities we will encourage models, such as co-operatives and mutuals, which give greater influence and voice to staff and users. in designing and commissioning public services and in determining the use of public resources.



Innovation

We will embrace innovation in how we work with local communities to drive positive change.



Learning

We will capture and 'expand' the experience and learning from individual projects and approaches in order to encourage broader application of co-operative principles within individual member Councils and across the Network.



Walking the talk

As a membership organisation we will make this statement of our principles operational by:

- Co-operation among members: Our members work together to help each other implement our values, sharing experiences and learning.
- Openness of membership: Full, Associate and Affiliate Membership is open to any qualifying Council, organisation or individual who shares our values and is committed to putting them into action.
- Co-production of the Network's work: Members help shape the Network's work programme and the content of events and written products.
- Action-focused: The network is a vehicle for helping councils translate co-operative values and principles into policy and practice.
- Membership-based: The network is majority funded by modest membership subscriptions from its member Councils, Associates and Affiliates.
- Non-party-political: Members share the belief that working co-operatively within and across communities holds the key to tackling today's challenges.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Barking and Dagenham One View: partnership response to Covid-19

When the pandemic hit, LBBD faced unprecedented challenges in public health, employment, domestic violence, homelessness, and financial vulnerabilities. It was essential to act quickly to support our most vulnerable residents and to uphold the public mandated 'Borough Manifesto': one borough, one community, no-one left behind.

As Covid-19 posed significant risks, LBBD had to understand vulnerable groups to enable prioritisation and intervention. Partnering with EY and Xantura, LBBD employed the Covid-19 OneView tool to improve outcomes for residents and strategically target resource allocation.

OneView was built with information governance and ethical data sharing at the heart. Using a unique process of pseudonymisation and access control, it brings together data from multiple service areas into an integrated case management tool and suite of interactive dashboards, providing a more effective and secure way of identifying those at risk and enabling targeted intervention and resource optimisation.

OneView was crucial to identifying residents with direct or indirect risks from Covid-19, enabling LBBD to effectively allocate cases, record assessment outcomes and track proactive contact progress. The Test & Trace function also identified problem settings, localised outbreaks and reduced the administrative burden on frontline professionals.

The OneView Covid-19 tool, developed in record speed in less than a month, is a data management, analytics and predictive modelling platform and was key to the delivery of our strategic priority of improving resident outcomes.

OneView innovatively brings together historically disconnected datasets (e.g. children, adults, homelessness services, NHS Shielding data sets) to provide a single view of a household. Through the integrated case management tool and interactive dashboard, OneView accelerated our Covid-19 response by:

- Identifying 96,000 vulnerable residents with one or more Covid-19 risk factor, enabling us to quickly and effectively distribute essential medicines, emergency food parcels,

arrange around 350 critical welfare check ins and refer vulnerable residents to local services, including social care - some of whom were not previously known. By identifying 93.6% of shielding residents before the official Government shielding lists were even distributed, OneView enabled critical planning of resources to support over 9,000 shielding residents in record time.

- Using advanced analytical modelling, OneView flags at-risk households before they reach a crisis point, enabling early intervention.
- Enabling data-driven decisions on resources through the dashboard function, OneView provides a holistic view of demand and resources across LBBD.
- Embedding the Test & Trace function, we spot problem settings, super spreaders and localised outbreaks, whilst reducing the administrative burden on staff by replacing 10+ manual spreadsheets with a secure case management tool.
- Providing case workers with a comprehensive view of a household, enabling easier recording of assessment outcomes and tracking contact progress.

The project was funded through Public Health. EY and Xantura developed the interactive dashboard that enabled us to prioritise within the most vulnerable cohort by considering direct or indirect Covid-19 risk factors. The in-built case management functionality enables cases to be assigned to teams and interventions to be tracked. The success of the project increased the chances of future funding in data analytics which will be key with future cuts to local government spend.

Stakeholders across LBBD were involved in the design and implementation, including Council Leadership, Community Solutions, Corporate Insight Hub, and service managers. Data protection officers, Information Governance Managers and the IT team were also essential in developing the technology alongside our external partners, EY and Xantura. We have seen increased collaboration internally between non-frontline professionals and case workers, as it was delivered in partnership, with an amazing uptake of ~100 staff using the tool regularly.

Workshops in the development and deployment phase were delivered with front line staff from Adult Health, and Children, Young People, and Families Social Care Services, and Housing and Homeless prevention services. OneView enabled unprecedented cross-service working whilst prioritising the most vulnerable.

The tool vastly improved LBBB outcomes:

Improved outcomes for vulnerable residents

OneView accurately predicted 93.6% of the individuals (9,000 people) on the shielding list before the official Government list was released. Pye Nyunt, Head of Insight & Innovation, said: "because we were able to (predict shielding residents) our deployment of interventions was much quicker than I'd say anyone, certainly across London." Many of these residents were already in a critical situation; without LBBB's efficient intervention, they would have likely ended up with worsened outcomes.

Improved experience for residents

OneView enabled a clear, easily accessible, view of the vulnerable groups, so teams can assign cases, establish lead responsibility and record interventions. OneView identified 96,000 vulnerable residents at the start of Covid-19, enabling an immediate response. It enabled over 20,000 support calls providing information, advice, guidance and connection to support for our most vulnerable residents – emergency food, medication, help with money, isolation and regular welfare check-ins

Enabled technology transformation

OneView includes a secure and auditable case management tool and new information is quickly incorporated as it is received. This enables prioritisation and ensures information governance and data sharing protocols are embedded and audited, replacing reliance on less secure spreadsheets and manual tracking. The case management function enables cases to be allocated to teams and interventions to be recorded, supporting live tracking of responses.

Improved management of resources

OneView's dashboards provide easy access to management information to support statutory reporting and resource allocation through a view of upcoming demand. They provide a strategic framework for recovery planning and understanding the longer-term impacts. The weekly tracking of progress and resident risk factors empowered us to make informed decisions about team resourcing. One Relationship Manager reflected, "I love OneView. . . (it) has saved me a lot of time (and) helped me prioritise who the team should contact first and enables me to allocate cases more easily".

Increased collaboration internally and externally

Through OneView, LBBB combined efforts across services, sharing information securely, and provided the tools and information to staff to do their jobs more effectively. It facilitated cross council learning about services and partner organisations and sparked a deep dive into referrals services.

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**Barking &
Dagenham**



Bassetlaw District Council

Protecting the Vulnerable: using a community-based hub to tackle health inequalities caused by Covid-19, especially targeting extremely vulnerable persons

In March 2020, Bassetlaw District Council and its partners established a support hub in the Community Voluntary Services offices prior to a Local Resilience Forum Hub being set up. The Bassetlaw hub benefited from the Community and Voluntary experience in local delivery, which gave direct access to data on vulnerable individuals. As a result, the hub immediately made contact to assess needs, coordinate service provision and, most importantly, provide reassurance – especially to those living alone across a large geographical area with many isolated communities. The primary focus was to meet the needs of ‘extremely vulnerable persons’ (EVP). Bassetlaw had over 7,000 people in this category; over 6% of the population – the highest level in the East Midlands and above surrounding areas. The initial priority was food provision, the hub taking over from the Foodbank which suspended its operations. Following this a prescription delivery service was established for pharmacies who could not meet this need.

Development

After setting up the hub, the Council faced a much larger demand as welfare checks identified a range of complex emotional support needs beyond the EVP target group. This included those suffering the economic impacts of Covid-19, those entering the welfare system for the first time and those facing delays in universal credit. There was a huge surge in demand for food: four times more than the normal Foodbank demand. The partnership was able to access data from e-Healthscope including age, frailty and those living by themselves or who had dementia. Liaising with its County Council colleagues, it excluded those in receipt of support from social care and targeted those in age bands of 70 and above. As a consequence, a further 1,700 individuals were identified, all of whom were contacted by the Bassetlaw Hub.

Implementation

The Council’s established social prescribing partnership provided an immediate, flexible and holistic response to the myriad of local support requests that sprang from Covid-19. The partnership’s objective is to reduce health inequalities and use community empowerment to bring about long-term improvements. The value of a shared approach between the District Council, Community and Voluntary Service and the Clinical Commissioning Group was clearly shown. The Council will pilot this learning into new models to tackle health inequalities, including responding to a second wave of Covid-19 and other health inequalities, helping to relieve pressure on the NHS. Its objective is to provide a more holistic approach to improving health and wellbeing in Bassetlaw by promoting a population-based service. This will work with local communities using a community development action model to help residents act together to improve their conditions. The approach will include targeted population work dealing with specific issues linked to rurality and ethnicity.



Review

The Council's experience has demonstrated the benefits of a social prescribing link with workers embedded in health and social care settings. The partnership is at a critical point in its development; after working together for several years, the local insight gathered since March 2020 has caused it to pause and look to 'reset' how it works together. The council has discovered that in some areas of Bassetlaw, spontaneous voluntary action, with communities looking after each other, is sustaining itself in a way no partnership or programme has ever achieved. The Council has championed a 'can do' attitude while responding to Covid-19. Traditional barriers of multi-agency boundaries, data sharing etc. were quickly set aside, particularly at local level. The challenge it now sees at a strategic level is to prevent agencies reverting to their default positions. The needs of the district differ greatly, which has been the partnership's collective challenge to date. Too often, it has witnessed how national programmes and city-centric approaches fail to deliver the impact intended. Lasting change is driven by communities themselves and it has begun to see the green shoots of this appearing. The Council will build on the strength of the partnership to improve impact across Bassetlaw. Its collective vision is to work differently and better together so that people get the right support at the right time. It will measure its success by the improvement in the health and wellbeing of its community and the reduction in health inequalities.

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Birmingham City Council

Modern Slavery Charter

In July 2021, Birmingham City Council signed the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery. The charter takes a 10-step approach, ensuring that local authorities work proactively to ensure there are no instances of modern slavery taking place within their supply chains. It commits us to:

1. Training our procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
2. Requiring contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
4. Highlight to suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
5. Publicise our whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
6. Require our tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
7. Review our contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for our suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of our contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of the charter annually through our Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

As Europe's largest local authority, Birmingham is the biggest council to sign the Co-operative Party's charter. We know that the supply chains for our council services are vast, including anything from waste disposal to construction, and so this will continue to be a significant and ongoing piece of work.

As part of the preparation for the charter, we completed a self-assessment against each of the 10 points. We ensured that we provided enhanced training for our procurement staff; reviewed our internal modern slavery training; offered enhanced training to Modern Slavery Champions across the council, and actively encouraged all employees to report serious wrongdoing through a publicised whistleblowing hotline.

Modern Slavery Transparency Statement

The charter requires us to report on its implementation in our annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement, so it was perfect timing to review and sign our 2021/22 statement. We knew that forthcoming legislation would make this mandatory for local authorities, and so in preparation we structured our 2021/22 Transparency Statement in line with the new guidelines.

Modern Slavery Transparency Statements are primarily focused on procurement and supply chain management, but many organisations also use it as a space to briefly touch on some of the modern slavery actions they have been taking. We decided to do the same, and also included some ambitious commitments for the year ahead. These included:



Survivor Care for Adults:

As a local authority, we recognise that we have statutory duties to proactively identify and respond to survivors, and that this extends to both adults and children. We also recognise that without effective pathways to receive appropriate and tailored support, it is extremely challenging for survivors to make themselves known to the local authority and exit exploitation.

We committed to reviewing our modern slavery pathways – both internally and in partnership with key external organisations - to ensure that these are robust and effective; offer effective safeguarding of individuals; and are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation.

Co-Production and Ethical Imagery:

We also made a commitment to including the voices of modern slavery survivors in the development of our work, and to the use of ethical language and imagery around modern slavery. That means not using sexualised, misleading, or triggering images of modern slavery survivors (for example, someone tied up with ropes around their arms) and considering how we talk about the issue of modern slavery and portray survivors.

We want to ensure we are framing this as a structural issue of safeguarding and abuse, where a survivor has agency and dignity, and not resorting to language centred on saving and rescuing helpless people. We want our approach as a local authority to ensure respect, dignity, and choice for survivors of modern slavery. We would encourage others to both hold us accountable and consider how they might do similar in their work.
Morgan Mead

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Brent Council

Reducing Poverty in Brent

Poverty is increasingly an outer London problem. The urgency of the issue has been reinforced by the pandemic, which has proved just how easy it can be to experience poverty – but also how much can be achieved by local action. Brent council has long been committed to tackling poverty, the blight it casts on peoples' lives and the resources we use to help deal with the consequences.

We wanted to supplement the expertise within the council by drawing on wider expertise and experience and learn lessons about what works elsewhere, including understanding the perspectives of people experiencing poverty. Our focus was finding ways of making real change, addressing the roots of poverty – unconfined by what we have thought and done in the past.

To meet this brief, Cllr Eleanor Southwood (Lab) - our Cabinet Member for housing and welfare reform - commissioned an independent Brent Poverty Commission in January 2020.

A Fairer Future - Ending Poverty in Brent - August 2020 (<https://bit.ly/BrentPoverty>) explains why so many of Brent's residents do not have enough money to afford what's needed for an acceptable standard of living and to participate fully in society. The themes within the report are informed by accounts from those experiencing poverty, explaining what it means to them every day and the positive difference that advice and support services can make.

We are taking the report's recommendations forward through delivery plans covering housing; economy and jobs; and financial inclusion and welfare. Work is underway in all of these areas and is progressing well. We are using every opportunity to tackle poverty working with partners across sectors, teams across the council and our residents.

Actions include:

Housing

- Continuing delivery of one of London's biggest council house building programmes in London.
- Securing funding to boost our Housing First Support scheme to give more single homeless people with complex needs access to somewhere they can call home.

Economy and Jobs

- Providing local businesses with training support, including a dedicated helpline.
- Helping residents to get back into work through our #KeepBrentWorking campaign.
- Delivering our Work and Health programme supporting long term unemployed people into employment.

Financial Inclusion and Welfare

- Introducing a Resident Support Fund to provide emergency financial support to residents.
- Reducing digital exclusion – including providing digital packages and laptops to residents and rolling out full fibre connectivity across the council's housing stock and key community spaces.
- Reducing fuel poverty – linked to our Climate and Ecological Emergency activity.
- Working with health partners to help reduce health inequalities including targeted communication working with local community leaders and the establishment of community champions across the borough.

For further detail visit www.brent.gov.uk

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Brent Council

Brent Hubs

Brent Hubs aim to build resilience into local communities; reducing long term dependency on services. They offer alternative ways for Brent residents to connect with local organisations and each other, to access information advice and support, and to use community space to develop ideas and activities that enhance the local area.

The Brent Hubs model was conceived and developed through system-wide reviews of cross-cutting issues, including housing, employment and regeneration. The reviews used a range of community research and engagement techniques to understand issues and challenges and use design-led methodology to create something different: a new way of partnership working that provides responsive local services and activities tailored to local needs.

Since the launch of the first Brent Hub in Harlesden in 2017 the model has gone from strength to strength, with five further Hub locations now operational across the borough; bringing together partners from over 50 organisations to work alongside council services through a joined-up, early intervention approach.

Brent is one of the most diverse places in the country; it was the first local authority in the UK to have a majority black, asian and minority ethnic population and is home to speakers of 149 different languages. The Hub model is now established as a key local asset that successfully supports the diverse needs of Brent's unique population.

The value of the agile Hub model has been repeatedly demonstrated throughout the different stages of pandemic, which required a rapid transition to a remote service offer to support those most in need. The virtual hubs became a cornerstone of the council's response to proactively supporting residents on the Shielding and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable lists, as well as supporting people accessing local testing sites.

Over a six month period the hubs dealt with over 5,000 enquiries, the majority of which directly related to Covid. This included 3,000 foodbank referrals and 1,500 resident referrals from testing sites.

The learning from the pandemic will help shape the next phase of the Hub offer, which will include introducing further new core locations, as well as the development of satellite and outreach services.



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Bristol City Council

New Partnerships and Collaborations: partnered and coordinated response to provide PPE, transport and testing

In the initial period of the Covid-19 response there were daily challenges in responding to the wider health and care system needs around PPE. These ranged from significant shortages of PPE in supply and stock, massive fluctuations on price, quality and demand, national changes to guidance on usage and issues around fraud. The three BNSSG local authorities (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) work closely with NHS partners on integrated, system-wide approaches to health and care issues. As part of an integrated and health and care system response to the pandemic, a Logistics Cell was set up in March 2020 by the partner organisations to coordinate action on PPE issues, transport and testing issues across the BNSSG area.

Development

Initially the work of the Logistics Cell was focused on PPE troubleshooting, and enabling mutual aid in response to shortages. Daily meetings of procurement leads from across the system were set up, and in order to facilitate joint working and coordination of mutual aid, structures and system processes were evolved rapidly, with individual organisations' agreement secured via incident control centre meetings. This included:

- A single currency for recording PPE requirements and stock levels across health and care providers
- The interpretation of national guidance on PPE use for (non-acute) health and care providers to develop estimated daily 'burn rates' for PPE items by provider type and at system level.

- The adoption of StockWatch, a PPE management software tool provided by Advise Inc which enabled daily reporting of stock levels across the system. Local authorities, the CCG (on behalf of primary care) and health providers all committed to providing daily updates
- Coordinated PPE orders placed for PPE via a procurement consortium which previously had supported the system's acute trusts only (via Bristol and Western Purchasing Consortium).

Implementation

The Logistics Cell was formed as part of the wider BNSSG Incident Command Structure. The Cell was structured with key personnel with respective specialisms from across the BNSSG partners. Key posts include: Chair; Management Support Coordinators (x3); Room Manager and Room Coordinator. Reporting structures to Bronze Command were also applied – around reports of activities, management of risk and issue; these followed Project Management principles. The aligned personnel were either seconded into roles or aligned to support roles by agreement with their respective organisations. The Cell had a specific email account established and worked with identified peer stakeholders from across the BNSSG partners and the Local Resilience Forum for Avon and Somerset.



Review

With continued uncertainty about future requirements for PPE storage, stock management and distribution across the wider health and care system, the decision was taken in August to put in place arrangements that build on the learning of recent months for a single BNSSG approach to PPE purchasing, stock management and distribution that can be activated quickly as and when it is required.

As outlined above, the Bristol and West Procurement Consortium has been supporting partners across the wider health and care system in the sourcing and supply of PPE – including with the validation of potential non-approved NHS suppliers, price negotiation and securing certification on quality standards. This has been an optional approach for partner organisations, based on informal arrangements. With the intention of building further future resilience, the Council is also in the process of negotiating a contract variation with its current community equipment provider to cover PPE storage, stock management and distribution for the health and care system (excluding NHS providers in receipt of national PPE deliveries via the Clipper system). This builds on the arrangements already in place for North Somerset Council and it is a service that the company is also providing to a number of local authority areas across England. Costs would closely follow the pricing model for community equipment which is based on the number of deliveries and the amount of notice given for these deliveries. It is set to include the additional service of emergency PPE deliveries to providers at any time during the year (including out of hours and on bank holidays).

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Cardiff Council

An Improved Youth Facility in Butetown

Cardiff Council has recently completed the refurbishment of Butetown Youth Pavilion on Dumballs Road in Butetown. The existing facility offered a valuable but limited range of leisure and recreational facilities, and the refurbishment has enabled the provision of additional facilities, beyond a traditional youth centre, to support young people.

The aim of the project was to deliver a creative youth hub in one of the region's most deprived communities to open up opportunities for skills development and pathways into the creative sector for young people. Young people already identified with the facility in the heart of Butetown and it presented a unique opportunity to develop an inclusive Hub tailored to their specific needs.

The creative industries sector is becoming the fastest growing area of the economy, often driven by the user-generated content of young adults. Cardiff Council and our partners from the public, private and community sectors are committed to positive action to improve opportunities for young people in Butetown, and the challenges and pressures facing young people in Cardiff's most diverse multi-cultural community are increasing. The need to reduce barriers and extend opportunities for 16-25 year olds was recognised and the need to develop an appropriate and forward-thinking facility that attracted interest, created enthusiasm and inspired its young users was put forward and successfully achieved Welsh Government funding under the Targeted Regional Investment Programme.

Development

In order to achieve the step-change in provision, substantial building alterations and improvements were needed to create an open and inclusive environment appropriate to the delivery of advice and support services. The Hub will focus on employability skills, pathways to work and economic outcomes for young people. These services include employment advice, skills development, training and volunteering, with a specific focus on the creative industries.

The building was re-modelled to provide physical space for young people interested in developing creative industries projects, as well as a space for the sector to deliver skills and training programmes. The re-design reflects the requirements of service providers, accommodating small rooms for one-to-one mentoring and support, a range of tailored and flexible media and creative suites, as well as larger multi-use rooms for training and group sessions.



Implementation

Alterations to the Pavilion included the internal re-modelling of ground floor and first floor areas to provide flexible spaces and a customer-friendly environment to actively encourage interaction, engagement, creativity and innovation. These improvements included:

- A new and welcoming reception area.
- Open plan Hub space.
- Interview and partner advice rooms & stations.
- Touch-down computers.
- Multi-use training room (media, wellness etc.).
- Flexible spaces for media production and graphic editing.
- A new film editing suite.
- Improved music and audio space.
- A dedicated youth area.
- A new crèche area.

The building alterations allowed for the retention of a crèche facility to enable young parents to attend training opportunities and workshops within the building. The external environment of the building has also been enlivened with better and safer pedestrian access, and new signage and branding.

Review

The new Creative Hub is managed by the Community Hubs team who have the knowledge base and experience to provide new services to support and enable young people in Butetown. The added focus of creative flexible space providing state-of-the-art music recording studios, film editing, design and media space will further enhance an already well-established facility and look to build upon skills, training and employment within the creative sector.

The project is aligned with priorities set out in the Cardiff Capital Region Regeneration Plan relating to community resilience, reducing inequalities and better employability skills, and with Welsh Government's Programme for Government which recognises that better skills have never been so important for young people and the future of the economy. With a high proportion of the region's unemployed young people living in Cardiff, this investment will have a significant and sustained impact on the regional economy.

The building was completed in February 2020 and has yet to be used in its full capacity due to the pandemic. As we progress through the summer and the national restrictions ease, the facility is finally opening up to young people and service provision will steadily increase over the coming months.

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Cheshire West and Chester Council

Health Care and Social Care: enhancing health and tackling climate change

Cheshire's Natural Health Service uses the best of our county's green space assets to help tackle recognised local health inequalities. This initiative builds on the growing body of evidence that activities in the natural environment can have a significant impact on keeping people healthy. The programme is made up of health-promoting, enjoyable group activities within some of Cheshire West & Chester's wonderful green spaces. It targets the Borough's most at-risk groups and areas of local inequality highlighted in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Since its launch in 2016, Cheshire's Natural Health Service in Cheshire West has seen over 3,000 participants take part in one of the largest community led evidenced-based programmes to date, contributing to influential UK policy and international academic research.

The challenge:

An increasing body of evidence shows that engagement with our natural environment promotes good mental and physical health. Spending time in green spaces can reduce stress, encourage physical activity, boost social cohesion and reduce our exposure to harms such as air pollution. There is a hypothesis that humans are hardwired to need a connection with nature – so called 'biophilia' – and that spending time in green surroundings is an important factor in our overall health and wellbeing.

Evidence suggests that exercise undertaken within green spaces is more beneficial than that taken in an indoor environment. For instance, a study of the Scottish population showed an association between physical activity in natural environments and reduced risk of poor mental health, while activity in other types of environment was not linked to the same health benefit. Another study found that walking in nature produced stronger cognitive benefits than walking in an urban environment, while others have found that exposure to green space reduces chronic stress in adults living in deprived urban neighbourhoods in the UK.

The solution:

The Natural Health Service programme seeks to utilise these proven benefits of green space, introducing more people to the value of undertaking activities within a natural environment in a social setting, improving wellbeing and building lasting friendships close to where they live. In doing so, we also hope to encourage people to become more involved with their local green spaces. Studies have shown that spending time in natural environments may encourage greater pro-environmental behaviour.



The Natural Health Service provides a targeted approach, working in areas identified through the JSNA as those of greatest need across the Borough, and with the most affected communities. It is enhanced by:

- Health asset approach: developing our own green spaces as health assets.
- Evidence-based products: interventions targeted at specific conditions within those communities.
- Research: robust data analysis, providing detailed powerful feedback on our performance.

Each of these elements will be familiar to Councils up and down the country. However, their use in such a collective, strategic and targeted way - with interventions shaped by the specific needs of local communities; evidenced at every stage; and using assets within the Borough - represents a unique and effective approach, and one which continues to support a range of positive outcomes for a considerable number of the residents who need it most.



The impact (including cost savings/income generated if applicable):

Objective 1:

- Engaging over 3,000 people in evidence-based activities over a three-year period.
- Outcome: Exceeded target 3,119 participants were engaged from our targeted, hard-to-reach communities in the service by March 2020.

Objective 2:

- Target: Increasing physical activity by 40%.

Outcome: Exceeded target: Participants complete two nationally-validated questionnaires (The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ)), during the first and final weeks of their programme. Analysis shows that the percentage within the high physical activity category increased by 36% while the percentage categorised as low physical activity decreased by 63% as a result of the intervention.

Objective 3: Increasing the overall wellbeing of those who participate

- Questionnaire results show a 12% increase in overall participant wellbeing.
- Academic data provides a wealth of measurable evidence, but some of the most powerful evidence that we have relates to participant feedback. Many testimonials have included reference to a reduced level of medication, less reliance on the National Health Service and finding new friends and exploring new areas; all of which can radically impact the quality of life of each individual.

Furthermore, a Social Return on Investment study was conducted into an expanded Natural Health Service, predicting a return on investment where for every £1.00 invested in the service, £6.75 social return will be generated.

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Glasgow City Council

The Blankfaces: reversing social decay

The Blankfaces, based in Glasgow, is the UK's first fashion label aimed at ending homelessness. Formed in 2016, from modest beginnings near the city's famous Barrowland Ballroom, the social enterprise has grown to become a vibrant element of Glasgow's fashion sector.

Each of their designs is inspired or created by a homeless person, this inspiration then forms the backbone of their range. The products is available to view and buy online, or at their store on Great Western Road, which was supported by a grant from the Council's Co-operative & Social Enterprise Fund in 2019/20. The Blankfaces also work with fashion students in Glasgow, who donate their time to help run design and production classes with the homeless community.

The Blankfaces pass on a percentage of every product sold directly back to the homeless participant who has shared their story. As a social enterprise they give 100% of all profits to the homeless community and support agencies.

For The Blankfaces it's not simply about raising money: it's also about giving people a voice, an outlet, a way to tell their story. They want to change public perception and erase the stigma about those who are homeless. Homeless people are not just a statistic, they should not be faceless, ignored and forgotten.

For the Council, it is an opportunity to develop a thriving social enterprise with a mission to support people who need a hand up and helping to grow the co-operative and social enterprise sector in Glasgow. It is a joined up approach to economic development and strengthening the social fabric of the city.



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Glasgow City Council

Green City - Greening food deliveries in Glasgow: Bho Glaschu Le Gradh "From Glasgow With Love"

Greencity Wholefoods, Scotland's largest worker co-op wholesaler, has started delivering food to cafes, restaurants and retailers in an electric powered trike.

In an effort to reduce diesel pollution in Glasgow the company is trialling the trike this summer. The Icen trikes are made in Wiltshire and can take loads up to 250kg.

As the company is run by its workforce on an equal pay equal say basis, reducing emissions and plastic use were the two main actions discussed at the company general meeting.

Greencity Wholefoods, established in 1978, employs 56 people, has been addressing its carbon footprint in recent years. The company has installed solar panels at its distribution base in Dennistoun, Glasgow, and is in the process of retrofitting all its existing lighting to LEDs.

The e-cargo trike was funded through a grant of £15,000 in 2019/20 from Glasgow City Council's Co-Operative and Social Enterprise Fund.

Glasgow, the 'Dear Green place', has the highest levels of PM2.5s in the country, with a concentration of 16 micrograms per cubic metre. The main cause of these are particulates from diesel engines. The World Health Organisation's recommended limit value for particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns (PM 2.5) is 10 micrograms per cubic metre of air.

In 2016, along with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland estimated that ambient air pollution causes 40,000 premature deaths, over 6 million sick dates and an estimated social cost of £22.6 billion per year.

Glasgow introduced Low Emission Zones in 2018 with Phase 2 due to be introduced in 2023, so looking at alternative distribution models for inner city deliveries is essential.

Chris Wallace, who had the idea to trial the e-cargo trike, said 'It's great Greencity has supported the idea, and if we can make a success of delivering goods in e-cargo trikes in Glasgow, we would then look to expanding delivery options in other cities across Scotland and Northern England. Communities deserve clean air and this is one method that could help mitigate pollution. We need to see more businesses adapt to create a more resilient society.



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Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

Tackling Inequalities in Greater Manchester

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, tackling inequalities was a recognized priority within Greater Manchester. These inequalities that exist between Greater Manchester and the rest of the country, between localities in Greater Manchester, within localities and across specific groups within our population.

The Covid-19 pandemic has served to amplify and exacerbate these inequalities and two recent Greater Manchester reports have sought to quantify the scale of the challenge and propose potential solutions. The reports make for necessarily uncomfortable reading and should serve as a call to action to both those who provide services to the public and to citizens themselves.

The Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission:

Was established in October 2020 to influence the city-regional recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, providing expert opinion, evidence and guidance as Greater Manchester's economy and society reshapes over the coming months and years. Chaired by Professor Kate Pickett of the University of York, and involving prominent economists, social scientists and community activists, the Commission provided a deep dive, rapid research into the structural inequalities which exist in Greater Manchester, engaging across communities, public and business stakeholders, carrying out research, and gathering ideas, on inequalities associated with health, education, employment, and skills; structural racism; future economic strategy, and the powers that Greater Manchester has to tackle these issues.

The Inequalities Commission looked at the causes of intersecting and interacting inequalities, not simply through the lens of individual communities of identity or issues in isolation but seeking to understand the common drivers of all these inequalities. Their report, published in March 2021, describes the concept of proportionate universalism; how Greater Manchester must ensure that everyone has access to the basics for a good life – no matter who they are or where they live – and target resources at the people and places within Greater Manchester who face the greatest barriers to living good lives knowing that when inequalities are reduced, everyone will benefit.

The recommendations in the Inequalities Commission's report cover five areas:

1. The Essential Pivot – putting wellbeing and equality at the heart of our strategies and actions
2. People Power – putting more power in the hands of the people of Greater Manchester
3. Good jobs, decent pay – providing good employment, paying the Real Living Wage, and creating skills opportunities
4. Building wealth – spreading wealth, asset holding and the benefits from these within and between communities
5. Services for a good life – facilitating a move towards universal basic services

The Greater Manchester Build Back Fairer:

Review was completed and published in July 2021 as a partnership between Greater Manchester, the Institute of Health Equity and Professor Sir Michael Marmot and to signify the establishment of Greater Manchester as a Marmot City Region. The report found that prior to the coronavirus pandemic health inequalities in Greater Manchester were already widening, health improvement was stagnating, and that this was amplified and accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 mortality rates are 25% higher in Greater Manchester than in England as a whole; Covid-19 mortality rates are highly unequal within the city region – 2.3 times higher in the most deprived decile than the least, a gap than is wider than in the rest of England.

The report described how a focus on the social determinants of health (those factors outside health care that affect health) is fundamental to Covid-19 recovery and achieving a permanent reduction in health inequalities. It provides a proposed Build Back Fairer Framework to underpin the approach to post Covid-19 recovery which is built around 6 key themes:

- 1.** Communities and Places – including by redistributing existing resources / assets and seeking greater investment from business and central government.
- 2.** Housing, Transport, and the Environment – including by developing ‘healthy living’ standards for housing, environment, and employment.

- 3.** Early years, Children and Young People – including by prioritising future generations
- 4.** Income, Poverty and Debt – including by developing a minimum income level for healthy living, specific to the cost of living healthily in Greater Manchester.
- 5.** Work and Unemployment – including by seeing a stronger role for business in achieving social goals, including reducing health and social inequalities
- 6.** Public Health – including by providing a guaranteed offer of universal access to public health / wider public services

In addition, the report makes the case for the GM system to adopt a series of ‘Marmot Beacon Indicators’ as measures of the extent to which the system is addressing the factors which impact upon levels of inequality and to identify areas where additional focus is required.

Download the Reports:

Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission – Independent Inequalities Commission - Greater Manchester Combined Authority (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Build Back Fairer - Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives - IHE (instituteofhealthequity.org)

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Hull City Council

Shared lives carers recognised for their hard work during the Coronavirus pandemic

Shared lives carers play a valuable role in society. Shared lives carers support adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems or other needs that make it difficult for them to live a fully independent lifestyle.

Paula Curtiss, Shared Lives manager, said: "For many of us, the pandemic has been extremely challenging. The impact on shared lives carers and those they support is no less so. When you care for someone who is not a family member, but lives with you as part of the family, it makes this caring very unique and specialised."

The scheme matches someone in need with an approved carer who shares their family and community life whilst giving care and support to someone with care needs. The carer provides accommodation and support, with some individuals moving in with their carer.



Paula said: "Throughout the worst of the pandemic, shared lives carers went without breaks from their caring role. It was an extremely testing time. Nevertheless, the commitment of the carers to those they support has been awe-inspiring."

Jez is one such carer who supports Vijay...

Jez said: "Vijay lost his structure and routine with all the activities he had done for the last five years. I needed to keep him occupied. Outdoor exercise helped reduce his anxieties and form a new weekly routine."

"As a lone carer, being on your own in these difficult times is challenging. But because we've been outdoors, getting fresh air and exercise, it's helped the mental and physical health of both of us and allowed us to stay positive."

Jez and Vijay were able to keep occupied with Vijay's horse Blackjack and also enjoy long walks on the beach and trike rides around East Park.

Despite the real difficulties of being a shared lives carer during a pandemic, Jez felt very privileged to be in the situation he's in. His positive outlook on life and his natural flare for this kind of work has enhanced both his own and Vijay's life with experiences that few other care services can offer.

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Hull City Council

Building forward together: a new relationship with the voluntary and community sector

Hull's VCSE sector did an amazing job in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, supporting communities by working with each other and alongside the council. In March 2020 we all had to quickly adapt and work differently, and as restrictions eased over last summer, the council took this opportunity not just to engage our VCSE sector in the recovery process, but to re-imagine and re-design our future relationship.

Hull City Council and the VCSE sector came together to co design the Building Forward Together programme, to improve how we work together and build a proactive, city wide, collaborative approach to shared priorities.

Four initial priorities were developed collaboratively by VCSE representatives, the council and local public sector organisations, focussing on commissioning, volunteering, workforce and sector support. These were endorsed through an Oversight Group and Hull's key public sector organisations made up of representatives from across the city.

Following agreement on the priorities, over 70 VCSE groups and public sector colleagues came together (virtually) to develop recommendations for better working.

The recommendations include issues such as easier secondment processes between sectors, more flexible volunteering opportunities with different organisations, practical support and advice for smaller community groups and more inclusive and collaborative approaches to commissioning. The next step is to prioritise and identify how we work together to make them happen.

When we started this process in summer 2020 we did not envisage further lockdowns and restrictions, and all the organisational challenges that they have brought. The fact that despite this, the Building Forward Together work continues to move forward and all those involved from all sectors continue to devote time, effort and enthusiasm illustrates the value being placed on the future relationships.

Feedback from all involved has been that the approach of sitting round a (virtual) table as equal partners and having open discussions about what works, what doesn't, and what could be different in future is a productive and enjoyable process that they want to continue. We want this renewed spirit of collaboration, co-design and creativity to become the 'new normal' in the way we work alongside our VCSE sector in Hull.

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Kirklees Council

Empowering partners to develop dialogue on difficult topics

In Kirklees we are developing an approach to empower local community groups to discuss difficult topics with residents that they oftentimes are not comfortable discussing with the Council. This has been very successful with the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and COVID Community Champions scheme.

The EU Settlement Scheme offers indefinite leave to remain for EU citizens who had come to live and work in the UK. A number of issues made this a significant challenge:

- The online application process, simple for those with biometric ID and comfortable with a computer or smartphone but difficult for those lacking the necessary ID, digitally excluded, or who lack the capacity.
- The uncertain number of individuals to be reached – estimated by the Home Office at 13,000 in Kirklees – exceeded as in many other places.
- The COVID pandemic making face-to-face awareness raising impossible.

Missing the deadline carried the risk that some of the most vulnerable people could be deemed to have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) with clear dangers to individuals, landlords, employers and the Council itself.

To address this, the Council began work with Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre (KCALC) to run training and engagement sessions for a range of organisations, including small businesses, educational institutions, and community and faith organisations. It resulted in one of our biggest partnership-wide communication campaigns, engaging over 10,000 people and 900 local businesses.

This initial partnership work attracted 6 months' Home Office funding allowing the ramping up of print and online communications including in several European languages. Information on EUSS was made 'core business' for all client facing council services.

Leaflets were distributed to community groups and local shops. Council officers and partners, including faith groups and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) engaged with Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian congregations, as well as other faith and social groups, 135 schools, two FE and sixth form colleges, over a dozen GP surgeries and adult social care providers. The Council's business support service contacted over 900 local businesses, resulting in 56 enquiries for further information and advice.

KCALC and Council officers provided 18 training sessions to over 470 attendees from a diverse range of organisations empowering staff from settings like homelessness support but also nurseries and schools to start conversations about EUSS and signpost those needing further information.

Online initiatives such as the European Christmas Story were adopted to counter the lack of direct contact due to lockdown. This consisted of stories and recipes contributed by individuals from 26 EU countries with the blog, featuring EUSS advice, receiving over 1,000 hits in a fortnight.

We estimate the council and partners engaged with over 10,000 people and encouraged them to apply for EUSS. For those who missed the deadline, the support will continue as long as necessary.

The COVID Community Champions project worked with community organisations to engage residents on a similarly difficult topic aiming to increase engagement of residents and building confidence in the vaccination programme.

Funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government the bid was co-designed with the VCS and the funding has been distributed through a transparent grant process to the local VCS.

As a grant programme for our local third sector it has provided them with funds they desperately needed following the impact of the pandemic, while being deeply embedded in communities they know our residents better than anyone. This means that the person encouraging someone to get vaccinated or giving information was someone they knew, trusted or respected.

Community Champions help build confidence in the vaccination programme and encourage safe behaviour, delivering accurate public health information and building confidence in community testing. They also offer practical help booking transport for vaccine appointments and have played a key role in promoting pop-up vaccination clinics.

In total 49 organisations have been funded through the programme: 12 with 'larger grants' (from £7.5k to £25k) to recruit, and coordinate the activities of 80 individual Champions; 37 with smaller 'community grants' (averaging £1k) building vaccine confidence through their usual activities and managed through Third Sector Leaders, Kirklees' local VCS infrastructure organisation.

Additionally two South Asian community radio stations have been funded to run 10-12 week series of programmes.

As well as lots of people getting vaccinated who were hesitant before speaking to our Champions, the Council has strengthened relationships with community organisations. The programme has supported people to be part of the solution, not just passive recipients.

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Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Knowsley Better Together in action: Covid-19 recovery

By putting its well-established Knowsley Better Together principles into action, Knowsley Council has worked hand-in-hand with local communities and strategic partner agencies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure support for the most vulnerable communities. Building further on this approach, the Council is investing more than £8m to ensure that local communities have the support needed to recover from the pandemic, as we look towards Knowsley's future together.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and disproportionately greater impact on communities across Knowsley. Yet, despite at times having some of the highest case rates in the country, the Borough's "Better Together" ethos has enabled Knowsley Council and its strategic partner agencies to work alongside local residents, businesses, schools, and community groups to support people when they most needed help.

The Knowsley Better Together principles bring people, groups, and organisations together for the benefit of Knowsley and its communities. This longstanding approach in addressing challenges and capitalising on opportunities in the Borough was at the heart of the local response to the pandemic and enabled the Council and partner agencies to work alongside communities to put in place a wide range of practical interventions "on the ground", including:

- Establishing the Knowsley Volunteer and Support Hub.
- Providing thousands of emergency food parcels and prescription collections.
- Sourcing and distributing millions of items of personal protective equipment.
- Establishing a local "check-in and chat" phone service for socially isolated residents.

The same principles have been vital in the co-design and investment of the Council's £2.5m Knowsley Better Together Hardship Fund, which supports residents by ensuring that they get the right help at the right time. By working closely with community groups, local charities, and other Knowsley Better Together partners to support residents whose income has been severely impacted over the last 18 months due to the impact of the pandemic, the Council has been able to provide direct support to households who had previously sourced additional money to pay for such essential items by using routes such as loan sharks. The Fund has paid for:-

- Support with housing costs.
- Packed lunches to support children's activities over the school summer holidays.
- Emergency boiler and central heating repairs.
- Fuel vouchers.

Alongside this, the Council and partner agencies have continued to harness the community spirit and partnership working across the Borough to establish:-

- The COVID-19 Support Fund - £615,000 made available by the Council, Knowsley Chamber of Commerce, One Knowsley, and the Community Foundation for Merseyside to help community groups and organisations in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents.
- The Knowsley Working Well Workplace Grant - £300,000 made available to assist local businesses and employees in returning to the workplace.

As the Knowsley Better Together partners look towards the Borough's longer-term recovery from the pandemic, the local commitment to co-producing practical solutions will remain vital - ensuring that all residents can benefit from the ambitious plans set out in the Knowsley 2030 Strategy.

Despite the challenges faced over the last 18 months, the Council's long-term ambitions for the Borough provide the foundations for a strong recovery - with its robust financial management and decisive decision-making in recent years putting it in a uniquely strong position to invest in Knowsley's future.

Indeed, the Council has established a £8.3m "Knowsley Better Together Recovery Fund" to further support the Borough's recovery - again, underpinned by the Knowsley Better Together principles and focussing on key issues which will have the biggest impact on the lives of people in local communities. These include:

- Supporting Knowsley Residents and Protecting Vulnerable People - through specialist support for adults with complex needs, families with children with disabilities, and those in crisis.
- Supporting Education, Training, and Jobs - helping to mitigate the impact of "lost learning" by setting up a "World of Work" team to support 14-18 year olds to prepare for the transition into employment, providing social care provision in school settings, and establishing extra support for young people who are at risk of not being in education, employment, or training.
- Supporting Businesses and Delivering Vibrant Town Centres - delivering an exciting events programme across the Borough to help to attract visitors to local high streets and maintaining free parking for shoppers - at the same time as continuing to drive forward and deliver the ambitious regeneration plans which are already under way across all of the Borough's town centres.
- Environmental Improvements - delivering environmental improvements and maintenance in parks and greens spaces so that communities can continue to make use of the Borough's much-loved outdoor assets.

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Knowsley Council



North Hertfordshire District Council

Working with Residents to Keep North Herts Clean: adopt an area

As part of our commitment to protect and enhance the environment, it is important that our local areas are kept clean and attractive for our residents. In addition to our usual street cleansing operations, it is essential that we encourage our local communities to take some level of responsibility in supporting, improving, and maintaining their local environment, and keeping their local areas clean.

North Herts has therefore developed its Adopt an Area scheme to work in partnership with our local communities to keep the environment tidy by encouraging residents to adopt their street, neighbourhood, or their dog walking route and make pledges to keep it litter free through doing litter picks.

It is up to the volunteer to decide the size of the area they cover as well as how often they would like to litter pick in their adopted area.

Those who adopt an area are provided with litter picking packs which include a litter picker, a high vis vest, litter picking bags, and a guide to picking litter safely, as well as information on what to do about litter that cannot be picked. These packs have been kindly donated by our waste management contractor.

Residents are encouraged to put any litter they pick in their normal refuse bin or next to it if doesn't fit. Our waste collection crews know who is an Adopt an Area volunteer so that they can remove the bags at the point of collection.

The scheme is helping us to keep our district clean through partnership with local residents, and is allowing us to harness the increased interest in both volunteering and in local areas and environments which the pandemic has resulted in. It exemplifies key co-operative values and principles such as social responsibility, social partnership, and concern for community.

A range of organisations in the borough have engaged as partners in the project, and have such aided the shaping of the role and aim of Lambeth Made in the lives of children and young people. This includes a start-up grant from Guy's and St Thomas' Charity'; ongoing funding from Lambeth CCG for the co-ordination and management of the project and; support from the Strettham Business Improvement District; alongside ongoing support from the council which includes sharing resources and supporting the development of ideas. A number of other groups were consulted in the establishment of the project in the borough, including local VCS organisations, business improvement districts and groups of parents, such as Strettham Mums. This has ensured that the Lambeth Made project is reflective of, and responsive to, the real needs of the population of Lambeth.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4bw3A9JrI4>

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North Hertfordshire District Council

The Community Support Fund: ensuring that community groups were able to continue essential services to residents throughout the pandemic

North Herts is a district with a large older population as well as a number of deprived areas. The pandemic therefore produced a significant challenge around issues like loneliness, and the ability of many to afford basic needs. The Council felt equipped to address these issues by the strong relationships its Community Engagement colleagues had already built with many community groups including food provision services, as well the pot of funding designated for major incidents.

The Council therefore developed a Community Support Fund for groups put under increased pressure by the pandemic, and who were providing support in one of three key areas: food and essentials; mental health support; domestic abuse support. Two funding options were available: a one-off grant open to application from any community group; and funding agreements – on approach from North Herts District Council (NHDC) – to known providers who offer wide provision across the district, including rural areas.

The ultimate aim was to ensure the survival of community groups who provide essential services for residents, in order to avoid the wider harm that could occur in communities if such groups were unable to survive the pandemic. The project therefore exemplified values and principles of social responsibility, solidarity, and concern for community and its sustainable development, all of which are integral co-operative values.

Implementation The Community Support Fund went live in May 2020 and granted financial help to a number of community groups which have provided services for the elderly and the young, families and individuals, and for towns and villages alike.

As we moved into the winter we recognised that there would be different challenges for residents including the issue of fuel poverty. We therefore amended the policy and criteria to reflect that this was covered under 'Food and essentials'. We also incorporated information about period poverty into the policy, recognising it as a key issue, and made explicit that this too was covered under the criteria.

The project represents values of community leadership as well as the principle of social partnership – strengthening cooperation between communities and Councils through finding new models for meeting priority needs.

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London Borough of Lewisham

Sustainable Procurement Strategy (with a particular focus on Community Wealth Building and links to Future Lewisham)

The Council has identified four key themes for 'Future Lewisham', which will help to ensure that the borough not only recovers from the pandemic, but comes back stronger. One of these themes is to help provide an economically sound future for all our residents. It is something that is easy to say but challenging to deliver in these uncertain times.

Building on the success of the Lewisham Deal, a partnership entered into in July 2019 between six anchor institutions in the borough, we are aiming to maximise the social value of spending in Lewisham. We will protect and grow the borough's small and medium enterprises and voluntary and charity sectors by spending our budget as locally as possible and, as a consequence, strengthen the value of the Lewisham Pound. We continue to increase the ambition of our Social Value Policy launched in 2019 and have committed to using the data from equality analysis assessments to focus and amplify social value from procurement. This approach will increase the local impact of every pound we spend.

We remain fully committed to the eradication of modern day slavery and human trafficking, and will deliver a risk map of our supply chain that is bolstered by spot checks, audits and our continued affiliation with Electronics Watch. Furthermore, the strategy has specific actions which will support the achievement of being a carbon neutral borough by 2030, and reduce the 'digital divide' in our borough.

We are engendering a culture of sound financial management, rigour and control across the whole organisation that will provide assurance that our contracts continue to deliver value for money. We are rolling out a central contract management framework, with standardised key performance indicators reported quarterly to senior management. We are also preparing Lewisham's crisis purchasing risk register and action plan in order to ensure that our borough is best placed to respond to any future crises.

So whilst we are investing locally, we are ensuring residents get the best possible value from the money they give us, wherever and however we spend it. This is what we mean by a Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

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London Borough of Lewisham

Lewisham's Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme

Lewisham's ambition is to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 through the borough's Whole Systems Approach to Obesity: changing the environment we live in by making healthier options the easiest choice for children and their families.

In 2019, Lewisham Council was chosen as one of five national Trailblazer Authorities to receive funding to support the borough's work to tackle childhood obesity. The three-year Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme (COTP) is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and the Local Government Association. Lewisham Council is working with advertising industry partners JCDecaux, Outsmart and ISBA.

Lewisham's COTP aims to restrict advertising for products high in fat, sugar and salt whilst simultaneously developing and displaying health-promoting posters co-produced by communities across the borough.

The first co-produced poster was designed by young people, targeting local businesses, encouraging them to become 'Sugar Smart', a campaign to help reduce over-consumption of sugar in communities.

Engaging young people was achieved by collaborating with Lewisham's Young Mayor's Team. The team acts as advisors to the young mayor, helping to advise policy and decision making, while also looking to engage and upskill local young people in youth democracy.

They worked with a group of twelve young people to co-design the health promotion poster over two months.

During the process, advertising partners Outsmart worked with the group to provide an insight into the advertisement sector as well as encourage and empower the young people to see themselves as creatives.

A local graphic designer incorporated the key concepts created by the young people into a final poster that was displayed across the digital and printed advertising boards in the borough.

The process allowed young people to learn more about the wider work of the council and partners, and develop their understanding of the wider determinants of health. A particular benefit was that the young people learnt about the types of careers available to them, such as those in advertising, as well as gaining new skills.

Young people are key stakeholders who provide valuable insight and should be offered an active opportunity to contribute to ongoing discussions about childhood obesity.



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Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes: great parish collaboration

Milton Keynes has always been a place of co-operation. Partnerships between public bodies, business and communities created our pioneering ‘new city’ fifty years ago and help its people thrive today.

We were actually the first unitary authority to become fully parished, with two new parish councils created just this year to serve MK’s growing communities, bringing the total to 48. (We’re expecting to grow from a population of 270,000 today to 500,000 – eventually becoming bigger than Edinburgh, Cardiff or Liverpool.)

We believe strongly in putting the power back in the hands of local communities, and work with our parish and town council partners to make sure the right services are being delivered in the right way, to the right people, at the right level.

In recent years we’ve:

- Transferred 28 popular local facilities to parish councils for them to develop, including a swimming pool, a library, community centres, depots and meeting places.
- Given parish councils £100,000 to help them keep our environment clean, funding amongst other things an innovative green chemical-free weed killing machine.
- Identified parish councils who wanted an expanded role in the delivery of local services, whether that’s by influencing their delivery, topping up services or entirely taking them over. A good example of this is landscaping, where five councils have already picked up the care of green space in their parish, to be followed by eleven more – which will mean parishes care for around 30% of all green space in MK.
- Set up a Parish Advisory Group of parish councillors from across MK, a ward councillor from each main political party (often a parish councillor themselves) three officers and a cabinet member. At meetings, the group discuss and make decisions that affect parish and town councils.
- Helped parishes navigate services and build the right relationships within our unitary authority by appointing specific officers responsible for parish liaison and answering day to day queries. They attend a Parish Quarterly Forum and parish, clerk and area meetings.
- Jointly developed a Draft Framework to aid closer working and help us agree the best custodian of a service or an asset.
- Held a MK Association of Local Councils conference attended by more than 200 parish councillors.

The National Association of Local Councils described us as 'a beacon of good practice' for parish collaboration, and we're proud to be supporting parishes as they use their unique perspective to shape and create better communities.

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Newcastle City Council

New Community Forest in the North East

A new Community Forest in the North East of England will see up to 500 hectares of trees planted by 2025. This 30 year, multi-million pound project will see tens of thousands of trees planted and all new woodland in the region, whether established on land owned by your local council or on a privately owned hillside, contributes to the North East Community Forest and benefits our local communities.

The initiative will bring together six local authorities – including Newcastle City Council, Durham, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside and Sunderland– alongside charities, businesses and landowners. up to 500 hectares of trees will be planted by 2025, with a long-term goal to increase canopy cover across the region 30% by 2050 – almost double the current national average.

Collectively, the work of the Forests has formed the largest environmental regeneration initiative in England, delivering urban, economic and social renewal, championing green infrastructure and creating high-quality environments for millions of people.

By planting trees and bringing woodlands back into use for both people and wildlife it provides new opportunities for leisure, recreation, and cultural activities, enhancing biodiversity, helping us become more resilient to climate change and improving education and healthy lives.

The impact of this work is colossal. Community Forests create healthy, liveable and economically rewarding places and through innovation and a long-term commitment to the areas where they work, empower communities to transform their local landscapes. Together they help to ensure that trees and woodlands are at the very heart of what it is an urban landscape today.

Operating across six local authority boundaries, its intent is to instil a sense of regional unity, sharing solutions and learning from each other's experiences while aligning objectives, funding, and resources to achieve ambitions tree planting targets.

This project exemplifies cooperative principles in local practice and will make a tangible difference across our communities.



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Newcastle
City Council 

Newcastle City Council

Citylife Line

During COVID-19, Newcastle City Council developed a joint response to address food insecurity alongside local voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners, schools and businesses. Initially over 40 organisations supported residents affected by food insecurity who had to self-isolate or were affected financially because of the virus. Food parcels, hot meals and essential items were provided, with food banks relaxing their criteria through the first wave.

Newcastle City Council and ConnectedVoice, the city's voluntary sector infrastructure organisation, set up a helpline for residents - "Citylife Line" where the majority of requests were for food and essential items. Citylife Line developed into the multi-disciplinary Welfare and Wellbeing Team, which established a proactive approach to supporting residents, addressing the causes of food insecurity, typically relating to poverty.

Originally, providing fresh produce in food parcels was a particular challenge. In 2021, the Welfare and Wellbeing team established a contract with the city centre Grainger Market to deliver fresh food parcels to residents, at an optional cost for those with means to pay. This partnership improved food quality and residents' individual agency, and supported local businesses trading during lockdown.

Newcastle City Council received a DEFRA emergency grant for food and essential items. This supported people with No Recourse to Public Funds due to their immigration status, homeless and rough sleeping communities, enhanced provision within the Early Help family support service and a grant scheme for VCS organisations. The Council provided resources and delivery drivers to support the VCS work and funded local membership of FareShare, the national food redistribution charity.

Newcastle City Council also supported free school meal entitlement during school holidays initially providing emergency support in October 2020, with partners including Newcastle United Foundation, then distributing grants through schools to alleviate the harms of 'holiday hunger'.

A Food Support Group was established as part of Food Newcastle, the city's partnership for Sustainable Food Places. This brought together many organisations supporting the food insecurity agenda and allowed them to work more closely together throughout the pandemic.

The strategic approach to food insecurity and its links to covid recovery will be led by the Newcastle Food Poverty Group. This is one of the theme groups for the Food Newcastle partnership and is chaired by Councillor Paula Holland, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.



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Oldham Council

Partnership working for Food, Green Spaces and the Environment

Get Oldham Growing, launched in 2014, had the aim of building skills within communities, reducing loneliness and isolation among residents and offering support to community-based food businesses. This fit well with the aims of Well North, a partnership between PHE, the University of Manchester and Manchester Academic Health Science Centre, to find new ways of creating healthy communities in the North of England. The resulting collaboration resulted in the Well Oldham project, launched in April 2015. This project aimed to work with local people on growing and cooking and work symbiotically with schools and local businesses to promote learning and an entrepreneurial culture around growing and food.

Going forwards focus will be on the development of the GOG brand and training and volunteering activities, many of which were temporarily suspended or reduced during the Covid 19 lockdown. Opportunities are being considered to access further funding to expand volunteering and training at the hubs as they begin to re-open and volunteers return. The Growing Hubs and community food growing generally are seen as important in helping Oldham to move towards greater food security.

Northern Roots

This project began in 2017 and concerns a 160-acre site next to Alexandra Park. To scope out a community-determined vision for the site as a whole, the council commissioned E3M, a national “knowledge community” of social enterprise leaders.

They convened “Oldham Alchemy”, a 24-hour event in July 2018, with 85 participants from E3M itself, the council, a range of Oldham organisations and communities, and social investors. Attendees participated in working groups, which explored how the site could be used for:

- Community growing and enterprise.
- Training, skills and research.
- Leisure and tourism.
- Improving health and wellbeing.

They made proposals for amenities, considered governance and a business model for the site, and proposed principles for taking the project forward.

Over the following years, plans for the site firmed up. By March 2020, these included:

- Community growing and market gardening.
- Walking, biking and camping.
- Outdoor education.
- A programme of arts and cultural events.
- A microbrewery.
- Teaching and workshop space.
- Forestry.

Despite COVID, the project has shown considerable progress since then:

- Local volunteers are growing fresh fruit and vegetables on the site for local communities in need.
- 20 Trainee Beekeepers have completed their free 12-month beekeeping programme and Northern Roots bee products are now on sale.
- Following Mountain Bike Discovery day in early 2020, a consultation took place on the creation of a Bike Hub & Trails facility, running from November to December 2020. The site was widely used by mountain bikers and other cyclists during the COVID lockdown.
- A five-month community consultation has just been completed on what local people & visitors would like to experience or operate on the site as a whole.

Behind the scenes there has been progress too:

- Business model and master planning have evolved considerably.
- The first Board of Trustees has been appointed.
- A Landscape Manager has also been appointed, who will lead on the conservation and restoration of the site.
- Funding has been raised through various sources, including the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, GM Moving, the Rural Community Energy Fund and, most recently, the Towns Fund. This last pot of funding will move the project into its capital build phase and deliver a Visitor Centre and Education Centre.

Monitoring and evaluation of the project as it progresses is being undertaken in partnership with Salford University. There are high-level targets, but also digital sources and participant data are being used to inform the development of the project – for example, the bikers are uploading their routes. Toolkits are being developed during the course of the project for learning from it and the council is considering whether these may have commercial value.

The business model involves setting up a charity which will own the brand and have a long lease on the land. It will sub-licence individual assets to operators. The council has guaranteed funding until September 2021. However, it is determined that in the long term the project will be commercially self-sustaining (besides providing environmental and social benefits). The Northern Roots project team is currently mapping out sources of future revenue and capital funding more generally, which could include ethical investment funds and/or community shares. It is also working on licence terms and assembling a delivery team.

Keys to success

Oldham believes that crucial elements in its success have been:

- A clear co-designed and co-owned vision.
- Building strong partnerships.
- Strong leadership from senior members and officers providing momentum.
- Co-ordination of resources across Council services and the wider Oldham Partnership

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Oldham



Oxford City Council

Growing an Inclusive Co-operative Economy in Oxford

Building on our membership and engagement in the CCIN Network, Oxford City Council's Economic Development Team has initiated 3 x projects in 2020/1 to grow an inclusive and co-operative economy at the city, county and national levels:

- **Owned by Oxford**
- **Growing an Inclusive Co-operative Economy Policy Lab**
- **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership**

Owned by Oxford

Community Wealth Building seeks to prevent wealth leaving the local area by aligning the procurement and asset management practices of local institutions (also referred to as Anchors) towards financially, socially and environmentally regenerative activities within the local economy.

The Owned by Oxford project trial an approach to Community Wealth building that marries a top-down, strategic, anchor-driven approach, with grassroots, network leadership and capacity building, driven by local organisations already embedded in voluntary and community sectors.

The project puts a particular emphasis on supporting the emergence of democratically owned, community enterprises in Oxford's most deprived communities, but will also provide tools, templates, and learning towards a scalable approach to community wealth building for the city as a whole.

The project focuses the efforts of partners across four key areas:

- Supporting, training, and mentoring individuals, organisations, and community business champions.

- Supporting and enabling suitable seed funding and investment for new initiatives.

- Developing toolkits for accessing space/assets, and identifying and providing incubation spaces through creative use of public sector property estates.

- Identifying and enabling tender opportunities within public sector procurement pipelines.



Growing an Inclusive Co-operative Economy Policy Lab

We're leading on a national Policy Lab project in partnership with CCIN Associate members from Stevenage, Luton, Preston and affiliate member The Development Co-operative. The 'Growing an Inclusive Co-operative Economy' policy lab has established a working group, meeting regularly and co-operating to share best practice and case studies on how to support the growth of the co-operative economy in our local authority's areas of deprivation.

Approaches include embedding social value in procurement across anchor organisations; community asset transfers; financial support; advice and awareness-raising.

Between Summer and the end of 2021 Oxford, Luton and Stevenage will undertake test and learn pilots and the learning from them will inform training and toolkits at the end of the project for dissemination across the CCIN network.

The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership is a countywide partnership of organisations from public, private and community & voluntary sectors who have come together to develop an inclusive economy agenda countywide. In March 2021, Oxfordshire inclusive economy work was relaunched, building on a seminar series findings, recommendations and actions, from the final report which can be found at: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/oxsp/homepage/23/inclusive_growth_seminar_series

The Oxfordshire inclusive economy partnership consists of a steering group led by Baroness Jan Royall of Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) and Jeremy Long of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) with oversight from Oxfordshire Growth Board and a series of working groups and work streams in the following areas:

The Oxfordshire inclusive economy charter to be launched, is a statement of our shared commitment to creating a more inclusive local economy, and reflects the emergent ambitions of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership.



This charter will mobilise support for and secure commitment to develop an inclusive economy agenda countywide. The charter is aimed at both people and organisations with the aim to secure sign ups and pledges of support to create a more inclusive Oxfordshire economy.



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Plymouth City Council

Creative Solutions Forum

Many adults with highly complex and extreme mental and social vulnerabilities fall between the cracks. They do not fit into standard care settings and often do not present in a way that allows care services to support them. Indeed, many do not present at all because they resent or fear authority.

People like 'John' a local man previously known to numerous services, an alcohol user, with a brain injury and seizures of unknown cause; no fixed abode, often found inebriated in public and at high risk of harm and risk from others, frequent call outs by emergency services, multiple self-discharges from ED and hospital, continual non-engagement with services.

Plymouth City Council has created a multi-agency system - the Creative Solutions Forum (CSF) - to meet such adults' needs. The forum arose as a result of a wider piece of work and was designed to support a new, inclusive and collegiate culture. The concept was established by multi-agency partners in Plymouth and jointly designed by the public health specialist co-leading complex needs work with a colleague in Adult Safeguarding. The forum is accountable to the Safeguarding Adults Board.

The monthly meeting is comprised of a core group of complex needs providers and commissioners in public health, adult social care and mental health. It is a deliberate mixture of practitioners, managers and commissioners to promote co-operation, build relationships of trust and better support the management and mitigation of risk.

The aim is to provide an additional multi-agency, multi-disciplinary response, which can agree bespoke packages of care, enable better risk sharing and risk management between agencies, and facilitate better outcomes for people than could be achieved with 'usual care'.

Eligibility for the forum is based on presenting need and not on diagnosis or primary label. Any adult over eighteen who meets the criteria of a complex presentation and cannot be managed with a single agency response or standard multi-agency response can be discussed at the forum. It is not intended to replace 'business as usual' social work or healthcare but is reserved for cases with high complexity and high risk where a single agency approach is not adequate to meet need.

It is the combination of the people involved, the use of real time data (case files/databases), the 'rule' that nobody can be excluded from the complex needs system and the requirement that every person leaves with a plan that makes it innovative and unique.

These collaborative co-productions have consistently revealed that services are delivered in 'silos' - narrow systems that do not relate to the needs of people, or effectively join-up with other silos of care needed by the person. These 'silos' are a result of a commissioning process that has been mechanistic and akin to a model of centralised procurement, rather than an inclusive, collaborative and user focused process.

Co-productions revealed people often feel 'done to', rather than 'worked with' and as a result, they feel disempowered and marginalised. This combination of a linear approach to commissioning and competition amongst services conspires to deny people access to things they need, resulting in hand-offs between services and leading to sub-optimal responses to our most vulnerable citizens. Often this manifests in increased demand for expensive unplanned care and people spending longer in services than necessary.

As a complex needs system of 26 services and five commissioners we set off on a shared journey of learning including system approaches, appreciative inquiry and modelling the systems thinking, collegiate and co-operative culture we wanted to build.

'John' was discussed at three meetings. After the first he was placed in specialist rehab for 8 weeks, and we assessed his multiple conditions. At the second forum he was placed in a hostel and reconnected with his family but didn't thrive. At the third forum he was placed in his own flat, where he has remained for 12 months and is living a better life than he has for many years.

Our audit of the first 52 cases found consistent reductions in the use of hospital care, emergency services, evictions, bed and breakfast use and other high cost services. Staff report better risk management, less anxiety over high risk cases and huge improvements in inter-service relationships, trust and co-operation. Around 70% of cases are resolved in one visit and almost all cases in 3 visits.

Bespoke approaches have begun to replace standardised care, there are fewer inter-service hand-offs, better understanding of risk and inter-service co-operation has become the default, rather than the exception. Most importantly, culture right across the system has changed.

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Preston City Council

Community Wealth Building 2.0 and Cooperative Development in Preston

In February 2021 Preston City Council launched a new Community Wealth Building Strategy CWB 2.0 Leading Resilience and Recovery in Preston. The creation of a more diverse and democratic economy in Preston is a key theme. Strategic priorities include promoting cooperative education and training and the conversion of businesses to worker or employee-owned ventures. Cooperative activity to address economic inclusion, including for those communities most affected by the pandemic, is another priority. Responsiveness to the climate emergency is reflected in the promotion of community energy to deliver decarbonisation and community wealth.

Ongoing projects and workstreams are supporting the delivery of these priorities. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) has funded the start-up of three worker cooperatives, including the Preston Cooperative Education Centre, with several others at a pre start-up stage in transport, language translation, community arts and to support employment for people leaving prison. Also as part of the OSF project, consultants from Mondragon and 1Worker1Vote have transferred learning from cooperative experience in the Basque Country and the US to a range of stakeholders in Preston.

Partnerships with Cooperatives UK and Stir to Action have assisted local partners, including Preston City Council and the Preston Cooperative Development Network, to develop a more strategic approach to growing the cooperative economy including a sharper focus on 'pre-technical' activity to raise awareness of – and interest in – cooperatives. A Cooperative Recovery webinar programme for community organisations from Preston's Black and minoritised communities profiled the contribution of cooperatives to community development nationally and globally. Follow up initiatives have included a project to pilot community food buying groups with funding from the Coop Group. A webinar series in partnership with UCLan's Centre for SME Development have focused on worker cooperatives and employee ownership; the growing influence of digital and platform cooperatives in the digital economy; and the role of community share offers in cooperative development. A Community Energy Group is meeting regularly to explore opportunities for cooperative development around renewables and retrofit in Preston.

Link to Report: <https://bit.ly/3keTGDP>

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Preston City Council

Making Spend Matter

Building on seven years' work around the progressive procurement strand of Community Wealth Building (CWB), Preston City Council have for the last three years, been the Project Lead for Making Spend Matter Transfer Network¹. Through this Network, Preston has worked with six European cities² to help them understand more about their procurement spend – how much they spend, where it goes geographically and who they spend it with in terms of type and size of business (“spend analysis”) – and to use this understanding as a basis to enable their procurements to become more sustainable and have greater impact, for example through supporting smaller businesses and delivering social value (economic, social and environmental benefits).

In Preston as a result of the project activities, the procurement practitioners' group (which includes a number of local authorities, local anchor institutions and business support organisations) has developed an Action Plan to guide their work for the next 12 months. The Action Plan is focused on how to further improve engagement with businesses, for example through raising visibility of procurement opportunities and providing training on how to bid for tenders, and how to increase the delivery of social value in their procurements.



An output of the project is the Making Spend Matter Toolkit, which brings together guidance, lessons learned, and recommendations from all the project activities. (<https://www.preston.gov.uk/article/3275/Making-Spend-Matter-Toolkit>), and includes the Spend Analysis Tool, developed by CLES (the Centre for Local Economic Strategies) who have worked with Preston since the beginning of their CWB journey, and the Making Spend Matter Spend Analysis Guide, developed by the Making Spend Matter partners, to provide step-by-step support for any city wishing to understand more about their own procurement spend.

¹ The Transfer Networks were funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the URBACT programme (which is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme enabling cities to work together to develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges).

² Bistrița, (Romania), Kavala (Greece), Koszalin (Poland), Pamplona (Spain), Schaerbeek (Belgium) and Vila Nova de Famalicão (Portugal).

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Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Asset Transfer unlocks the door for a new Supported Living development in Rochdale

In 2014 PossAbilities CIC was formed and the delivery-arm of Rochdale Council's ('RMBC') Adult Social Care department was 'spun-out' into this new independent social business. At that stage, the Cherwell Centre, which provided a base from where PossAbilities provided a range of support services, was leased to the organisation for a peppercorn rent for 10 years.

The Proposal

The council also owned land adjacent to the Cherwell Centre. In 2017 PossAbilities submitted a proposal to build accommodation for vulnerable people eligible for adult care support. The development of the supported living units and their close proximity to the Cherwell Centre, its social lounge and its garden and farm facilities providing a range of community benefits.

The Council needed a greater range of housing options for people with learning disabilities in borough, so this proposal gained support. In 2017 RMBC approved a community asset transfer via a new 99 year lease at reduced market value for both the existing land and the adjacent area, along with a £1,530k loan to fund the development of the apartments.

The Current Position:

This transfer paved the way for development of 17 one-bedroom apartments which are due to open in August 2021. The development is domestic in scale, and with its immediate access to the other facilities on-site, will help individuals to increase independence and also reduce cost pressures on adult social care.

The Council has nomination rights for these apartments and are in the process of referring tenants who will shortly begin to move in.

The Cherwell complex now consists of:

- The Cherwell Village Apartments - 17 supported living units, with high levels of assistive technology and moderate levels of support.
- The Cherwell Garden and Farm - a zoned community garden where people enjoy work, leisure, training and volunteering opportunities.
- The Social Lounge which provides a 364 day a year drop in facility PossAbilities Headquarters and day centre offering professional support and advice along with day time activities.

To get a glimpse of the impact of this development at an individual level please view Ryan's story at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxwly-sQ9vQ>

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Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Food Poverty: a community solution

Rochdale is ranked the 15th most deprived borough in England based on a rank of the average for LSOAs in the area (defined in the Indices of Deprivation). Many of the people in the borough were already significantly disadvantaged when the pandemic struck. Its primary impact was on food and poverty. The initial response saw multi-agency groups coming together to form community hubs. These hubs were reliant upon community groups and volunteers who knew and understood the communities. The hubs met the immediate needs of the most vulnerable.

Development

It became apparent that a long term focus on food poverty was required. Dignity was to be at the heart of the response. A system was required which could flex to need, prevent a culture of dependency from developing, provide support without judgment, which encouraged individual choice and fostered autonomy.

Implementation

The Food Solutions Network was established via Action Together, a community CIO which supports VCFSE organisations to provide an integral role in local solutions. The network facilitates the VCFSE sector, alongside Rochdale Council and other partners to improve access to food in the borough. It provides food to sustain in crisis situations and provides a pathway to self-management through food pantries and food clubs. Cooking skills and dietary support are also provided and with the ease of restrictions, social eating groups are helping combat isolation. Access to support around debt and emotional support is also available.

A Community Food Warehouse was established to assist food distribution. The warehouse is stocked with food and resources which are redistributed through the food providers to residents in need.

There are thirty two food providers in the network. Many of the organisations are not formal co-operatives but the network is underpinned by an ethos of solidarity and co-operation. By working together the reach and accessibility of food support is increased. Volunteers are at its heart, with many providers relying on high numbers on a regular basis. Working co-operatively and sharing resources has enabled the network to harness the buying power and logistics capabilities of anchor institutions, whilst quickly progressing grassroots ideas into action. It connects food provision to other support, enabling a holistic person centred approach.

Looking forward

There is recognition of a need to reduce reliance on crisis food solutions and eventually on food provision all together. Food support is however, often the gateway to a deeper conversation around economic support needs. The next step will be to work closely with the Food Network's sister network, the Economic Support Network (ESN) to support the co-location of food and advice services by hosting debt advisors, expanding on signposting and advocacy support, enabling residents to move easily between support structures.

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Royal Borough of Greenwich

Working together to make a difference: food for thought

Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA), is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. It was established in 1982 as a social enterprise support organisation serving the diverse communities of Royal Greenwich. Its work is focussed on a community needs approach using participatory appraisal techniques to encourage local action to meet the needs of local communities.

The work carried out by GCDA is broad and far-reaching, and includes the following activities:

1. Community cookery clubs; 5-week clubs open to the whole community, providing people with the opportunity to learn new skills and build confidence to make small changes that can have a big impact on health. Participants can also progress to train as cookery club tutors themselves. The clubs run in various community settings throughout the year.
2. Made in Greenwich – A shop that was opened in the heart of Greenwich town centre in September 2019. It stocks locally made gifts and products from 85 artists, makers and food entrepreneurs within Royal Greenwich.
3. Royal Arsenal Farmers Market and Kidbrooke markets – since GCDA took over the running of the Arsenal Farmer's market, it has built a real community hub for local residents and traders, with excellent feedback from both. Through these activities, it provides trading opportunities to the participants from their business start-up courses.
4. Business & Enterprise Training & Support - GCDA has supported the start-up of over 200 businesses including cafes, catering businesses, designer makers, events and administrative businesses, yoga and beauty businesses. To help residents who want to run their own food or any other business but need help in getting started, support is on-hand through the Food Business Start-Up Training. Clients can learn about the practical aspects that are crucial for starting a business. GCDA also offers a suite of training to support new businesses including website building, social media, financial management, market research, food safety systems and more.
5. Food growing and horticultural training; GCDA has helped establish 40+ sites and has delivered courses in schools, care homes, prisons, housing estates, parks and community groups. They currently provide ongoing support to 5 sites across the borough which has helped build community cohesion and confidence amongst local residents.
6. Greenwich Kitchen; located in Greenwich, the centre offers sessional kitchen use to caterers that may not have access to suitable workspace or equipment
7. Training; GCDA offers a wide range of training through the Adult and Community Learning contract with RBG. Courses include businesses courses mentioned above, but also a range of cooking skills, horticultural and sewing skills courses.
8. Good Food Networks; GCDA runs 3 food partnerships - Good Food in Greenwich, Lewisham and Bexley, bringing together innovative and inspiring food projects, businesses, schools, children's centres, third sector organisations, and council departments to work together to make food systems healthier, fairer and more sustainable. GCDA has been successful in achieving the Sustainable Food Places bronze awards for Greenwich.
9. Food Business Network; GCDA also runs a network specifically for food businesses - some already established and others just starting out. The network helps them connect, share experiences, and hear about the latest challenges faced by businesses operating within the borough.
10. Community Centres – Woolwich Common Community Centre has been managed by GCDA for the last six years. In this time user numbers have increased and through this constant community engagement it gives GCDA a real understanding of local community needs

As part of the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, GCDA (working in partnership with RBG, Charlton Athletic Community Trust and a host of other local organisations), quickly mobilised to develop a structure of food support for vulnerable residents, regardless of their ability to pay, and recognising the broad spectrum of vulnerabilities that may impact one's ability to access nutritious food.

The support programme was delivered in record time, due to the excellent relationships already existing in Greenwich between the local authority, community and voluntary sector organisations, and food businesses and enterprises committed to providing healthy, equitable and sustainably produced food. While financial resource is a crucial factor in a successful emergency response, Greenwich proved that mutually supportive relationships and a culture of collaboration are key ingredients in the resilience of a local food system.



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Salford City Council

Tackling Inequalities: the Salford Way

Local economies are posed with challenges of an unprecedented scale. The Covid-19 pandemic has both exacerbated deeply entrenched inequalities and exposed the need for genuine economic and societal change.

As Salford looks to the future and recovery, inclusivity and tackling entrenched inequalities must be at the heart of everything we do as we seek to build back a fairer, greener and healthier Salford for all.

This is why, in early 2021, we were proud to announce the next phase of our economic and social transformation. The Salford Way marks a turning point in our approach to sustainable economic development in the city and sets out a bold five-point plan to:

- Build greater local community wealth – stepping up our efforts to re-direct public procurement spend back into the local economy and drive forward improvements in social value standards.
- Grow the social economy – promoting greater diversity of business ownership, from co-operatives and mutuals to employee ownership, we want to create a rich ecosystem of alternative economic models to support residents to benefit from local wealth generation.
- Accelerate transition to a zero-carbon economy – delivering the new green jobs and industries of the future and investing in clean, renewable energy and transport improvements.

- Identify opportunities for insourcing – which has already begun to happen locally when Urban Vision (responsible for road maintenance, highways, and building control) was recently brought back into local authority control.
- Strengthen our local democracy – focusing on opening opportunities for greater citizen participation in our economy, in our public spaces, and in our institutions such as through our new Crowdfunding initiative working with CrowdfunderUK.

Salford has a proud history of resilience and pioneering progressive change. And this work harnesses the city's roots in the co-operative movement, which has already seen Salford become the Northwest's first Social Enterprise City and more recently, the first place in England to commit to becoming a Real Living Wage City.

It's now time to look to the future and The Salford Way is our plan for how we can create community wealth from within and retain it in the city, tackle poverty and economic disparity, improve population health and support each other to create a more prosperous Salford for all.

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Salford City Council

Salford City Council

Salford Living Wage City

Salford City Council became the first council in Greater Manchester to pay the real Living Wage and be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation in 2013.

November 2019 saw Salford recognised by the Living Wage Foundation for its activity and ambition to become the first Living Wage City in England: tackling poverty, boosting business and creating a fairer society.

Its Action Plan to achieve this being to:

- Target large and iconic employers in the city for accreditation.
- Engage low pay sectors in real Living Wage take-up and accreditation.
- Support small/ medium sized enterprises to commit to the real Living Wage.
- Raise awareness of the Living Wage Movement.
- Spread practical guidance on the real Living Wage within the procurement of services, works and goods across all sectors (but particularly 'anchor organisations').

Whilst Salford is the fastest growing economy in Greater Manchester, nearly 40% of its workforce (44,600 people) earn below the real Living Wage, compared to 30% nationally.

A key target is to double the number of accredited Living Wage employers and employees in the city over a 3-year period (2019-22). To date:

- 59 Living Wage Employers with Salford HQs have become accredited – up from 38.
- There have been 1,993 up-lifted workers – up from 1,744.
- 9% of workers in Salford are now covered – up from 7%.

In December 2020, over 3,000 care workers employed in Salford were given a pre-Christmas pay rise thanks to the Council and Salford NHS Clinical Commissioning Group setting aside £1 million. Their hourly rate increased to between £9 to £9.39 an hour – a step towards them all receiving the full real Living Wage of £9.50 per hour.

Progress is overseen by the Salford Living Wage Action Group, consisting of representatives from local businesses, the Council, the University of Salford, other public sector organisations, trade unions and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Salford's ambition has been recognised earlier this year when it received three awards:

- Salford CVS was awarded the Living Wage Champion Awards, for using their funding and grant-making process to promote the real Living Wage.
- The Salford Living Wage City Action Group was awarded the Places Champion Award for its success in increasing the number of accredited Living Wage employers in the city.
- Worsley-based Anchor Removals won the Against All Odds industry award for being the only real Living Wage, no zero hours removals company in the UK.

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Salford City Council



Southampton City Council

Co-operative education catering service

Since spinning out from the local council in April 2015, we have transformed the way that we serve our local community. City Catering Southampton has evolved from being a provider of meals to a non-for-profit organisation who believes that great quality food, served with kindness and care is a right, not a privilege.

Now, the schools, families and vulnerable adults whom we serve sit at the heart of our organisation. We're the city's principal provider of school meals, serving hot lunches at 63% of the city's 75 school and nursery settings. School meals account for more than 90% of what we currently do. Our Member schools are represented on our board of trustees and are now fully engaged with a range of initiatives that support the modernisation of school meals and the promotion of food education. We also work with school representatives and local business leaders who help shape our charitable impact, allowing us to support Southampton's community through a range of community food projects.



It means that beyond our restricted reserves, any surplus we generate through service delivery is available to the Board to invest in community food projects – to advance the wellbeing of our community.

Our current focus on the issue of 'holiday hunger' is a great example of this investment. It's about feeding children and families that might otherwise go hungry, by exploiting every aspect of our influence and charitable status. We are ambitious in this, and are seeking to lead the campaign against holiday hunger in Southampton, to make significant change happen. To this end, we work hard to increase our influence in local government, business and the Chamber of Commerce. This, together with our recent invite to join the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on school food, provides a new and important feedback route for our Members to Local and Central Government change agents.

Our Members and Board are therefore able to actively steer our initiatives and together we can all support the health, well-being and educational development of our communities. By being a Mutual, this level of communication and engagement is of paramount focus for us, and thus, we ensure that the profits we make are invested straight back into the communities that we work with, focusing on the issues that matter to them - all creating and solidifying a long term and committed dual-partnership. At City Catering Southampton, this unique way of working has sparked new life into our organisation which drives everyone's passion for enacting real local change.



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Southampton City Council

Co-operative Learning in Southampton

Co-operative approaches to learning in Southampton are currently blooming. A third of the City's schools are now members of one of three co-operative learning trusts, which means that 19 Southampton schools are now working in close partnership with the City Council as Cooperative Trust Schools, covering all parts of the City.

2020 has been declared by the City Council as the 'Year of the Child' which provides an ideal focus time for harnessing the pioneering work of the City's cooperative schools movement. The following case study briefly describes the City's longest serving schools co-operative trust.

Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust

The Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust originally started life in 2011 as the Regents Park School Learning Trust and it expanded in February 2016 to embrace seven local schools (mostly on the central/western side of the city) and other community partners (Solent Health NHS Trust, a local branch of the WEA and the City Council) with both a shared identity and commitment to co-operation.



The Trust's objectives include:

- Advancement of the education of pupils in its member schools
- Advancement of the education of and benefits to the wider community
- Promoting community cohesion

The Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust is committed to membership of and active participation in the Co-operative Schools Network. The curriculum and ethos of member schools places emphasis on and a commitment to co-operative values and principles 'with the aim of encouraging all learners to become better citizens, not only while they are learners but during the rest of their lives.'

The Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust schools are:

- Regents Park Community College
- Banister Primary School
- Foundry Lane Primary School
- Freemantle Church of England Academy
- St Johns Primary & Nursery School
- St Mark's Primary School
- Polygon School (special education)

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South Ribble Borough Council

Community Conversations



The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions meant that social interactions were severely limited; and this was reflected in the Council's ability to engage with the community and its' residents. Previous efforts to break down barriers between the Council and the communities it served were strained as a result.

At South Ribble, it was agreed that community engagement needed to be re-ignited, whilst continuing to safeguard the health and safety of both Council staff and residents. As such, it was decided that 'pop up' community engagement events would be created, and 'Community Conversations' was born.

The Community Conversations model was to set up gazebos and sofas in areas of the borough with high footfall, and invite residents to discuss their issues, ideas and thoughts with their local Councillors, and Community Officers from the Council. South Ribble is split into 5 geographical community hubs and 2-3 sites were set up in each hub throughout a couple of weeks in July. Residents are able to engage with the hubs through the localised Facebook pages, but this created a welcoming, relaxed and friendly space where people could stop for a coffee, biscuit and a chat about their local area.

Over the period of 2 weeks, 278 members of the public were engaged. Residents came from a variety of areas, and although some had issues and complaints, many were delighted with the relaxed and open community engagement style, and the ability to have their voices heard directly by their elected Members. The events ensured equal opportunity for everybody, with residents from many different backgrounds attending. Many participants stated that they welcomed the opportunity to speak to Councillors face to face as they do not use the internet, and can struggle with the other methods of communicating with the Council.

Throughout the Pandemic, residents could only contact their local Councillors in either a formal structured setting, or via email or telephone. The option to create an open event within the local communities ensured that residents felt more comfortable and were relaxed enough to voice their opinions on their areas. Residents had the opportunity to sit with staff and Councillors, have a drink and a relaxed discussion. Some were happy, some had complaints, but all were pleased with the opportunity. Many queries and concerns were able to be answered or dealt with immediately, and issues which required work were taken in action plans by the Communities team at the Council- and residents' details were taken to ensure they received a response in a timely manner.

The events also supported the Councils' wider resocialisation agenda. Due to the pandemic and various restrictions, many people have been isolated and alone. Much of the feedback from the Community Conversations, and from work done by the Council to support its vulnerable residents, was that people are feeling isolated and this has impacted on their health and wellbeing. The council has sponsored several new drop-in support cafes across the borough, and the Community Conversations were a great opportunity to share these with residents and gain feedback and additional ideas.

At each event, a variety of literature was distributed; these included leaflets about services, our summer programme newsletter, information about events and Mental Health books. The Mental Health books are part of an ongoing project to destigmatise the concerns around mental health. The books are aimed at adults and are filled with fiction stories that are made to 'make you smile'; these books were extremely well received and many residents took multiple copies to share with friends and family.

Areas with a high footfall were selected to ensure maximum engagement. As this pilot was a success, we are looking forward to running more events in the future and aim to use different locations to ensure that each area gets a fair opportunity for residents to attend. Our landscape varies from rural to suburban within a 10-minute drive and so by creating these events in each area, we created an open opportunity for residents to have a brew and a chat with us no matter the location of residency.

Although Community Conversations were created as a result of the pandemic, the relaxed and casual nature of them has been popular amongst Councillors and residents alike, and many hubs are now considering using a format like this in future instead of the more formalised public meetings of the past. Lessons have been learned from the pandemic, and South Ribble Council is committed to continue to search for more innovative and user-friendly ways of engaging with the residents that it serves.

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South Tyneside Council

Championing a safe recovery from Covid-19

A partnership approach between the Council and charities and voluntary groups across South Tyneside is helping people to recover from the pandemic.

South Tyneside Council successfully secured £500,000 of government money to help the third sector engage with groups most at risk from the virus. The main aim of the fund was to recruit Covid champions to relay accurate and timely information about the virus. In addition, voluntary groups were able to secure funds to support Covid recovery and mental health. Some of the grants ranged between £5,000 and £15,000 while smaller amounts of between £100 and £1,000 were also available.

One charity which has already benefitted from a micro-grant is local charity BLISS-Ability which secured £976 for a part-time project co-ordinator to run a new service to bring socially isolated people together once a month. This is aimed at people suffering from low mood, anxiety or mild depression. In addition to socialising they will have access to short sessions on self-care and digital health with the support of an IT tutor or a volunteer digital champion.

Sharon Bell, Chief Executive of BLISS-Ability said: "We know people with low mood, mild depression, or who are socially isolated or have long term conditions, have been adversely affected by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. To help them regain their confidence, it is important that they can meet in an environment where they feel safe and comfortable and can support each other through difficult periods in their life.



Carolyn Robinson who will deliver the new service with Angela Dunn from BlissAbility

"Knowing who they can 'turn to' in their community enhances the quality of people's lives, impacting positively on their health and well-being, particularly at difficult times such as the pandemic which has only exacerbated people's feelings of loneliness and anxiety."

Another charity which secured funding is South Tyneside's Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB). Funding of almost £15,000 was secured by the CAB to help people from ethnic minorities learn more about the Covid vaccine and help them navigate the government's roadmap in a safe way. The funding will also secure the charity's BAME Advice project, allowing the three multi-lingual staff to expand their roles to enable them to respond to the social, financial and psychological effects of Covid-19.

Older people in the Borough are also now receiving tailored advice and support to help themselves stay safe thanks to the funding.

Age Concern South Tyneside (ACTS) was awarded more than £14,000 to support communities and individuals to navigate the Government's roadmap in a Covid-secure way. The charity is using the funding to train their staff so that they can accurately advise older people on the vaccination programme and integrate their support needs into tailored provision. The money has also paid for training for befrienders and volunteers so that older people can be advised how they can begin to connect with others safely. The charity also hopes to start running community events where people can socialise safely.

Your Voice Counts is another charity which has secured a slice of the funding. The £12,000 grant will enable four Covid Community Champions with learning disabilities to raise awareness about the government's roadmap and increase understanding about safe participation in community activities. The Champions will provide clear and easy-to-read information and organise workshops to help people understand what the guidance means for them. The charity will provide practical support planning to identify community services and activities that their clients may want to use and help them to travel and participate safely so they can access them.

Councillor Moira Smith, Lead Member for the Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Cooperatives, said: "Sadly, the pandemic has left its mark with many people having lost loved ones while others cope with the ongoing emotional or financial misery the virus has left in its wake.

"In line with one of the Council's priorities to support our vulnerable communities, we have, throughout the pandemic, sought to keep those groups most at risk from the virus at the centre of our thoughts. That is why these grants are so important in enabling our wonderful third sector to reach out and help those who may need additional support."

She added: "If there is one silver lining from Covid, it is the way in which communities across South Tyneside have come together to support one another. This spirit of South Tyneside will sustain us as we seek to recover from the pandemic. We will continue to harness this enthusiasm and civic pride through the people-led #LoveSouthTyneside campaign which seeks to highlight the sterling work done by volunteers and stimulate social action."

The funds have been distributed by Inspire South Tyneside, the umbrella organisation for the third sector in the Borough.

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South Tyneside Council



Stevenage Borough Council

Creating skills & employment opportunities for local people through collaboration & innovation

The council worked with a wide range of partners across the education, construction, and employment sectors to create a partnership aimed at ensuring local people directly benefit from skills and employment opportunities through the delivery of the council's £1bn regeneration programme and housing improvement programme.

The council worked closely with key partners in North Hertfordshire College and Job Centre Plus to ensure that local people could benefit from the construction works going on in the town, from private regeneration schemes to Council-delivered housing improvement contracts. The partnership has evolved and formed strong relationships with active contractors and developers in the area, as well as public bodies such as Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The partnership will ensure that on-site construction experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities are made available to local people as part of the council's community wealth building programme, which aims to ensure the benefits of local economic activity are captured and maximised.

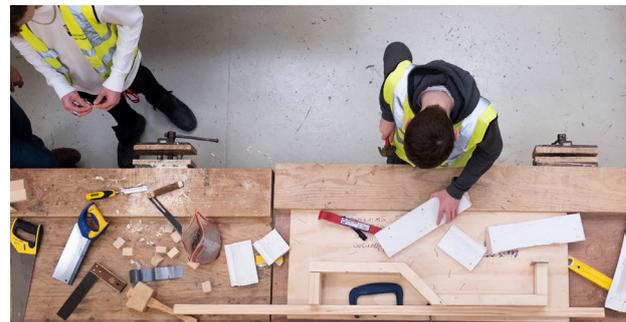
Achievements to Date

- Developed a strong partnership and brand, forming relationships with key contractors, developers and employers.
- Secured over £320k of funding from CITB to offer on-site construction placements as the construction hub for Hertfordshire.
- Provided technical training to local people, including long-term unemployed residents.

- Delivered on-site construction experience, where local people are able to learn and experience a live construction site.
- Adopted the social value toolkit to ensure social benefits are captured and measured for key Council procurement projects.
- Created a website and marketing materials, and recruited a dedicated Officer to act as a link between employers, training providers and referring bodies.
- Launched an inclusive economy charter as part of the town's recovery from Covid-19.

Next Steps

The programme will continue to increase its offer, with more local people provided with training and on-site construction experience. We will support people who go through the scheme with their career and connect them to job opportunities, and continue to maximise the benefits of regeneration for local people.



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Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stevenage Borough Council

Establishing an Equalities Commission



The council has worked with communities across the town to form an Equalities Commission following the tragic killing of George Floyd in the USA in 2020. The Commission has been shaped through a community listening exercise and the appointment of an Independent Chair to drive actions for change and inclusion across the town.

Following the killing of George Floyd in Georgia, USA and the concerns raised through Black Lives Matter movement, nationally and locally the council passed a motion to establish an Equalities Commission. A listening exercise with communities was launched during Black History Month with an Independent Chair appointed to support the formation of the commission. The commission has since formed with a strong community voice and the commitment of key stakeholders from the public, voluntary and private sectors. The council has facilitated this commission and has been keen to reflect on how it can further its own equality objectives.

Achievements to Date

- Conducted a town-wide listening exercise through various mechanisms including; faith groups, street-based engagement, business and employee engagement. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic digital engagement was also important.
- Recruited an Independent Chair to drive an objective community-led commission.
- Has secured initial funding through Cllr Local Community Budgets to facilitate its formation.
- Has pro-actively worked with a wider network of VCS organisations to tackle immediate health inequalities emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Has gained the commitment of the Police, NHS, County and Borough Council along with local businesses to respond to recommendations.
- Is pro-actively linking with other community-led initiatives to drive inclusion, such as the arts and heritage forum driving inclusive mural artwork (pictured).
- Has launched a webpage and a wider community voices network to drive future actions.

Next Steps

The commission is working through a number of themes of inclusion and gathering local evidence to shape a series of recommendations. The commission will report initially in December 2021 with a final set of recommendation in June 2022. This will also inform the council's own review of its Equality Objectives.

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Sunderland City Council

Elemore Eco Park Regeneration – taking a Community Wealth Building approach

Sunderland City Council has its Community Wealth Building Strategy at the heart of a green recovery, regeneration project, in the heart of the City.

Sunderland Council undertook significant resident consultation during 2019/2020 – entitled Let’s Talk Sunderland. The consultation reached over 50% of the city’s population and informed the Sunderland City Plan and Neighbourhood Investment Plans. Residents across the City were very clear what they wanted to see improved.

Following Cabinet approval of the Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Plan in March 2020, the Council and its partners have been working hard to deliver against the priorities within the plan – one of the priorities in the plan was to bring the former Elemore Colliery site back into use. As such, Council has committed to develop the Elemore site and has allocated funding from their Neighbourhood Capital programme.

The former Elemore colliery site, within the Hetton ward of Sunderland is a circa 60-hectare designated open countryside site - the site is home to several rare birds and rich fauna- Elemore has the potential to be transformed into an Eco-Park, Garden, Heritage and Visitor Centre, as well as cycling and walking/running hub linked to the City’s iconic Stephenson Trail, which stretches from the Elemore site, for 11 miles, to the City’s Riverside – the refurbished Stephenson Trail was originally George Stephenson’s first railway line linking the Colliery to the thriving City’s bustling centre and ship yards.

Utilising the Council’s resident engagement strategy, Let’s Talk, significant resident consultation has been undertaken under the banner Let’s Talk Elemore. Engagement has been restricted due to Covid, however the reach has been extensive utilising Council and voluntary sector partner websites, social media, press and leaflets, as well as working with VCS partners who are supporting the City’s COVID Community hubs around the area.

Consultation activity commenced, asking residents what they liked about Elemore and what they would like to see changed. The feedback informed the designs for an Eco-Park, Garden, Visitor and Heritage Centre. The design proposals were then shared, and all feedback has been incredibly positive. All consultation information has now been used to support the final change of use Planning Application.

Social enterprise sits at the very heart of the Elemore project - the Project Manager is working with Bishopwearmouth Co-operative Community Interest Company to extend their enterprise to develop and deliver a garden and visitor centre, from the Building on the Elemore site which will also support Adult Social Care Day Services.

Bishopwearmouth CIC has, since its inception, provided supported employment opportunities to people with mental health and learning disabilities with a view to facilitating a move on to further paid employment. This is funded through the adult social care budget via direct payments. It is envisaged that similar opportunities will be made available as part of the Elemore offer. From a financial perspective this will offer an additional income stream for the Elemore project which will be needed to fund required support workers as well as wider site maintenance. Following full planning permission in November 2021, the Council will procure local contractors to undertake the works on site, supporting local businesses in the heart of the community.

Elemore is a fantastic example of co-operative partnerships – the future for Elemore is bright and Sunderland looks forward to welcoming thousands of visitors over the coming years, to enjoy the wonder that is ‘Elemore Eco-Park’.



Social partnership:

The co-operative partnership between residents, communities, social enterprise and the Council, based on a shared sense of responsibility for wellbeing and mutual benefit is driving the Elmore project.

Democratic engagement:

We have actively engaged with residents to develop the designs and to support the Elmore site in the future through a local trust and offering local volunteering and employment and training opportunities.

Co-production:

Residents are equal partners in designing and commissioning the site and the services to be delivered

and offered therefore determining the use of public resources.

Enterprise and social economy:

Elmore is promoting community-based approaches to economic development through the creation of the Bishopwearmouth CIC – which is providing an environment for co-operative and mutual enterprises to thrive.

Community leadership and a new role for councillors:

Elmore has enabled the Council to act as a platform to helping the local community to contribute to the Elmore project outcomes, the local ward Councillors have been central to the project - community connectors, brokers, and leaders.

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Tameside Council

Tameside Community Champions

Since the launch of the programme on 7th September 2020, around 275 residents have signed up to be Community Champions. Tameside recognised early on during the coronavirus pandemic that there are many in our communities who preferred to receive their information from people that they know and trust. It is for this reason that the “Community Champions” scheme was created.

The programme has proven effective in providing information and support to residents, especially around areas of more complex guidance such as support bubbles. We have not only empowered our champions with the information they need to make and help other people make informed decisions, we have built a better relationship between the council and our residents where people feel more connected and heard. We have seen huge increases in uptake of the vaccine, particularly amongst our ethnic minority communities as a result of the Champions’ involvement.

There are prominent sub groups within the wider champion’s network. These include our Diversity Champions, Black Leaders Champions, Young People Champions and Age Friendly Champions. These groups provide a regular forum for specific communities to come together in a smaller and what can feel like a more comfortable environment where members feel they can speak up to have their voice heard and engage in conversations. The groups come together to discuss and take action on COVID and wider Health and Wellbeing issues and concerns affecting their local communities.

In order to embed Community Champions permanently within the borough, we have received funding in order to recruit a full-time Programme Manager. This post will be responsible for all aspects of the Community Champions programme going forward, including recruiting and supporting volunteers, co-ordinating information and check-in sessions, leading and managing the Champions Network, and contributing to the work on Covid-19 with our local harder to reach communities and organisations. As the coronavirus pandemic recedes, the Council and our partners have now shifted to expand the Community Champions concept onto other areas of work, most notably public health and community cohesion.

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Tameside Council

Tameside & Glossop Inequalities Reference Group

As Tameside & Glossop looks to build back better and fairer from the pandemic, we have taken steps to ensure that we are utilising evidence and research, complemented by the voices of our own communities, in order to place diversity and inclusion at the centre of all that we do. A key part of this has been the establishment of the Tameside & Glossop Inequalities Reference Group (IRG).

The IRG has the overall aim of reducing inequality in Tameside & Glossop. The group makes recommendations and steers action to address inequalities, whilst also providing constructive challenge in an advisory role. The group is chaired by the Tameside Council Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage, with membership of the group drawn from a range of public sector and VCSE organisations from across the area.

The group has committed to a work programme that is centred on a number of areas of focus, based upon feedback from a range of engagement activities. Each area of focus consists of three strands: involving the voices of people with lived experience, data and evidence, and benchmarking against other areas.

Current areas of focus are:

- Barriers to Accessing Information
- Community Cohesion
- Digital Inclusion
- Emotional Wellbeing (Isolation and Loneliness)
- Voice of People With Learning Disabilities
- Young People

Progress has been made on each area of focus. A report on Digital Inclusion is set to be published to spearhead a more strategic approach to tackling the issue in the area. In addition, as part of the "Voices of people with learning disabilities" area of focus, members of local charity People First Tameside have undertaken research about the impact of the pandemic on people with learning disabilities. Emily and Ros, both of whom have learning disabilities, gathered insight into the impact of the pandemic through surveys, interviews and focus groups and presented the interim findings of their research to the IRG.

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Telford & Wrekin Council

Telford & Wrekin Council Street Champions

“All neighbourhoods are a great place to live” is one of Telford & Wrekin Council’s corporate priority. To drive delivery of this, the Council has invested £45m in a “Pride in our Communities” programme which has delivered significant improvement in the physical infrastructure, developed community assets and supported our neighbourhood high streets.

Whilst the Council has made this investment, as a Co-operative Council we know delivering this priority can only be achieved in partnership with our communities. We want to support community groups and individuals to be active in their neighbourhood to build strong communities. To support this commitment, we have developed a series of volunteer programmes.

Telford Street Champions are an amazing team of volunteers who play an active role in their local community to keep it clean, safe and tidy. The Street Champion scheme was set up several years ago to enable local people to play an active role in their local communities and to help us ensure their local areas remain clean and safe places to live. It is a scheme for local people that take pride in their local communities.

There are currently just over 1200 Street Champions - quite literally an army of litter pickers. Whilst litter picking is a large part of the role, it can also involve getting involved with community events and by reporting environmental issues such as fly tipping or overhanging trees. We provide ongoing support to the Street Champions - they have a co-ordinator who processes applications, provides replacement kit, arranges bag collections, provides updated guidance and risk assessments, arranges group events and is there for support as and when it is needed. We provide Street Champions with a full litter picking kit - high viz vest for safety, rigger gloves, a bag opening hoop, a litter picker, blue bags for general waste and recently clear bags for recycling! This scheme is very popular with young people too and we encourage children to sign up with their parent or carer.

The Champions cover all public areas of Telford and Wrekin. Some focus more on their local neighbourhood area, whereas others go litter picking anywhere within the borough. There is no minimum amount of hours required, we simply ask that Street Champions do what they can and when they can. Whether that is one bag every month or one bag a day. Every bag collected makes a huge difference to an area.

People become Street Champions for many different reasons; enhancing their mental wellbeing, to clean up their local environment, to inspire younger generations, for the health benefits of going for a walk, to make friends and learn new skills. But together, the Champions are making Telford a better place to live.



Rob

My name is Rob, I'm a Telford Street Champion. I'm often joined by my 7 year old daughter Tillie, I also joint pick with other Street champions. I have been picking litter as a Street Champion since August 2020. I joined up after picking up litter on lock down walks during the first lockdown & becoming a Street Champion made total sense. It's not always the nicest hobby, but it's personally very rewarding & quite uplifting to see a cleaned up area looking good again.

Leon

Leon has a disability that affects his joints and muscles so can only go out on short walks. However it is amazing the contribution they make when they do go out and support us with clearing litter. It doesn't matter how much or how little you do it all makes a difference and is really satisfying too.



Claire

My name is Claire and I have been a volunteer Street Champion officially since 2020, but started picking up litter at the start of the last lockdown, when I started to notice litter was becoming a big problem. I do it because I want to live in a clean environment. We have so many lovely parks and walks in the area and I want to enjoy it and want others to enjoy it litter free.

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Torbay Council

Collaborative alliance supporting those in food poverty

When the pandemic hit it became apparent very quickly that there were an increasing number of residents in Torbay who needed support in accessing food. To tackle this Torbay Council, who are committed to being co-operative, helped facilitate the Torbay Food Alliance, a consortium of 10 food banks and community voluntary organisations.

When the Food Alliance came together they united with a common goal, which was to ensure that no-one in Torbay goes hungry during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Alliance brought together community food resources and fundraising efforts, so that they could provide a co-ordinated support to those who were, and still are, struggling to access food. These were people who may have been self-isolating, who had no money to buy food, or have lost their usual support networks. The Food Alliance is there to help the poorest and most vulnerable in their local community and they provide parcels of groceries and essentials, or meals for those who are unable to prepare their own.

The Alliance was set up in April 2020 and by July 2021 they had provided over 540,000 meals to those who needed it across Torquay, Paignton and Brixham – the three towns that make up Torbay. This included more than 20,000 food parcels, and over 127,000 prepared meals for people who were unable to safely cook due to mental or physical disabilities, or those who lacked cooking facilities. This also included over 6,600 emergency family meal kits which had been provided to local schools for distribution to families by pastoral support teams. Also in December 2020 the Alliance provided more than 400 Christmas hampers to struggling families. This was to try and give them some normality and a special meal at a very difficult time. Two member organisations also undertook a Christmas present scheme so that children and teens received a wrapped gift on Christmas morning.

A single online referral for food support was co-produced with Torbay Council. This provided a streamlined pathway which is used by both professionals and trusted partners across a range of sectors. This ensures that support is provided by the right local organisation to meet a person's needs. Wherever possible, self-referral for food support through a local Community Helpline was encouraged. The Helpline is community-led and supported by a range of voluntary sector partnerships who specialise in different areas of need. This included financial issues, mental health, domestic abuse, and more. These partnerships work collaboratively with each other, and with local statutory services, ensuring that people are connected with person-centred support, enabling individuals to address the underlying reasons for their situation. The goal is to empower them to improve their current situation.

The organisations and groups that formed the Torbay Food Alliance said that joining up and working together has benefited them all in so many ways. Linking up enabled them to join up all their assets and use them better. As well as sharing their knowledge and contacts, those in the Alliance also learned from each other. By working together in this way they could also bid for a range of funding streams and ultimately get more money. This collaboratively way of working also really improved their trust and relationships with the statutory organisations. A quote from one of the organisations summed it up for all partners, they said "we can move forward by working together and this will really benefit the people we are supporting."



Building on this approach Torbay are now co-operatively developing a sustainable food partnership and plan. This will take a long-term collaborative approach, creating a resilient local food system. The aim is to tackle food system issues and collaborate to explore creative, innovative solutions and establish a vibrant resilient food system, where good, healthy and sustainable food is available to all.

This newly formed food partnership is from a range of sectors and will be working together in a way that involves and connects key players from across all parts of the food system. The partnership will take a strategic and co-operative approach to good food governance.

Their priorities are to:

- Tackle food poverty, diet-related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food.
- Support the creation of a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy.
- Tackle the climate emergency through an end to food waste.
- Build public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.
- Finally, connecting communities through food.

This example of Torbay Council's co-operative approach embodies how they are committed to the principles of co-operation, social responsibility, solidarity and equality.

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Wigan Council

Ethical Homecare

Wigan Council invested £110 million in care and support packages for around 5,000 people. This included £31m for homecare.

The system prior to this involved 25 providers operating across the borough at a varied cost and quality, disconnected from local communities and a poorly valued and rewarded workforce.

The ethical homecare framework changed all this through working with providers who were committed to the borough. This created a co-designed, affordable, and sustainable model that was respectful of profit and return for businesses but also ensured investment in local people and the place.

The selection process for companies was values-driven but with strong procurement support to ensure it was robust.

One ethical provider which successfully applied to be on the framework was Cherish UK. Peter Watson, chairman, said: "The way Wigan shaped the ethical homecare framework with organisations before going to market really showed the art of the possible.

"Being a part of what Wigan has created has been a win-win for Cherish. We now have greater retention rates of local staff, more longer-term employees, and greater consistency. We have good relationships with other providers in Wigan as we no longer feel like we are competing against each other but are working together.

"We have cut down the need for staff to travel significantly and now have five staff travelling to clients on bikes."

The response to COVID-19 from homecare providers has been praised too with staff displaying great compassion, dedication, and care.

Peter added: "People from across the country are looking at what Wigan has done. We love being here in Wigan and we are here to stay."

The Ethical Framework is a key commissioning tool which has helped to transform local care markets and build community wealth, designing a landscape where small and medium sized local care providers can develop, grow, and thrive in Wigan's care market.

Wigan Council are continuing to drive Community Wealth Building through commissioning and the continued reshaping of other significant markets, including Wigan's supported living and day support markets.



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 **Wigan**
Council

Wigan Council

Wigan's commitment to social enterprises recognised nationally

Wigan Borough's commitment to the growth and success of social enterprises has been officially recognised.

Wigan was awarded Social Enterprise Places status earlier this year thanks to the work of the borough's social entrepreneurs and community-focused businesses.

The status, given to Wigan by Social Enterprise UK, acknowledges the borough's commitment to supporting and growing social enterprise activity.

Wigan is now part of a network of 32 Social Enterprise Places nationwide and is the second borough in Greater Manchester to achieve the status, following Salford. The recognition will allow social enterprises from Wigan the opportunity to share skills, experiences and network with like-minded organisations across the country.

There are thought to currently be approximately 650 social enterprises in Wigan borough.

A stakeholder group including Umbrella Arts, based on Bradshawgate in Leigh, Wigan Workshop on Meyrick Street, Abram Community Cooperative as well as Wigan Council and private businesses, plan to use the status to encourage residents and commercial businesses from across the borough to buy 'social' from local social enterprises.

David Baxter, group lead and director of Wigan and Leigh Community Charity, said: "Wigan borough has always been a place where local people roll up their sleeves and solve problems they see on their doorstep. Setting up social enterprises is one way of doing this - and we're delighted to now be recognised for the incredible social enterprise activity that is happening across the borough."

"Hundreds of social enterprises across the borough are reinvesting and donating their profits to transform lives in Wigan."

Councillor Keith Cuncliffe, deputy leader of Wigan Council, said: "It is really exciting and an honour to see Wigan recognised as a Social Enterprise Borough."

"It goes to show just how many of our fantastic businesses are willing to reinvest in our communities by helping create jobs, improve lives and give back to the Borough in which they operate."

"This pandemic has not been easy for local businesses but as we begin to recover, these social enterprises will only become more vital to the Borough. I am very proud to see their work recognised and I am looking forward to seeing how they will continue to change lives and contribute to the future of Wigan."



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Wigan
Council





A practical guide for councils to help and grow **community businesses**

Download: bit.ly/CCIN-unleashed

councils.coop

 **Co-operative Councils**
Innovation Network

 **Coop** People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first

Billingham Town Council

Collaboration through Covid and Beyond

Billingham Town Council, in conjunction with local organisations BCT Aspire, Fighting Chance Boxing Club and BERP launched it's Covid Response on the 23rd of March 2020.

Working with existing organisations within the town meant we were able to scale up a solution that saw over 100 local residents volunteering to assist with shopping for food items, making up emergency food parcels and distributing them to residents that were unable to visit local shops or access supermarket deliveries. By collaborating with Stockton Borough Council's Covid Helpline, we were able to support residents not only with food parcel deliveries, but also delivering their prescriptions, dog walking and making weekly wellbeing calls to local residents to check on their wellbeing and just for a chat. One of the issues we were able to identify early in the lockdown was the lack of access to good quality fresh food. As a result of this, we reimagined our Community Lunch service which had, prior to Covid, brought together isolated residents for a free three course meal in the Town Council managed Café in the Park. With just a small amount of tweaking, we were able to launch a free meal delivery service to shielding residents which saw in excess of 200 hot three course lunches being delivered each week ensuring residents, often with complicated health needs, had access to a nutritiously balanced hot meal. This service was such a success that we have continued this service with funding secured through to March 2022. To date, we have cooked and delivered over 10,000 hot meals and our small team of volunteers won the Mayors Award at the most recent Stockton Borough Council Civic Awards.

As we started to emerge from lockdown, we were keen to build on the great relationships we had established with local organisations and regularly deliver collaborative solutions to shared problems. We continue to work in partnership with organisations such as BERP, BCT Aspire and Billingham Boxing Academy as well as other new organisations to ensure a coordinated holiday enrichment project which provides local residents with access to holiday activities and a free meal throughout the school holidays with over 1000 residents supported across every holiday in the last year.



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Burntwood Town Council

Burntwood be a Friend

Burntwood Be A Friend (BBAF) was set up immediately before lockdown in March 2020. Working in collaboration with St Anne's and St John's Churches, Spark (Burntwood) CIC - a parent-led organisation which runs the local children's centre - local businesses and the Foodbank, the Town Council initially acted as an umbrella organisation to bring numerous partners together. The partnership wanted to ensure that all residents could easily access support, especially families under financial stress and the relatively high number of older adults living alone.

When lockdown was announced Be a Friend immediately set up a telephone helpline, email address and Facebook page, reaching over 13,000 users in Burntwood out of a town of 28,000, by the end of March, with over 130 volunteers. The Council provided an emergency set-up grant of £1,000 and applied for external grant assistance on BBAF's behalf. Volunteers DBS-checked and trained in Safeguarding, facilitated by Spark, and the Council Leader took part in and fed back from district-wide collaboration teleconferences, enabling BBAF to be linked into district and county-wide emerging issues and opportunities.



The cooperation and collaboration has been exemplary and BBAF has now become the town's "go-to" organisation for anyone needing help and advice. By working closely with the Trussell Trust, Citizens' Advice Bureau, local schools, MHA Communities, and other local groups, BBAF has been able to meet needs not met by other providers - a true, strong, collaborative and co-operative partnership.

BBAF has been hugely successful, and all partners want to build on this, promoting greater self-reliance in order to prevent social isolation and increase independence. As well as continuing to BBAF support for anyone in need, the group continues to work with the local Foodbank, FareShare and local supermarkets, is about to set up a Community Shop and has initiated community gardening schemes. It has developed a wide network of support organisations to refer residents to - including local councillors.

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Kidsgrove Town Council

Improving Our Environment – The Kidsgrove Ranger

With the creation of Kidsgrove Town Council’s first five year plan in 2018, the Council resolved to improve not just the appearance of the Town Centre, but to give the population a renewed pride in all of its villages across the whole of the Parish of Kidsgrove.

In June 2018, Kidsgrove Town Council engaged with the local second tier authority, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, to explore the possibility of engaging additional time for cleaning of both its urban and rural areas after residents had start to complain about the appearance across the Parish. As discussions progressed, it became apparent that Kidsgrove needed more than a street cleaner, it needed someone willing to go that extra mile.

What we did

The Town Council worked with the “Green Team” at Newcastle Borough Council to identify an operative who would not only sweep and generally clean the local Town Centre but someone that would be able to take on additional tasks such as clearing fly tipping, liaising with local community groups and working with schools to establish a pride in our local community. After an extensive search, Kidsgrove Town Council was delighted to second ‘Mark’ from the Borough Council to become the Town Council’s first “Kidsgrove Ranger”.

What happened

Mark quickly established long lasting connections with various community groups (including the Covid-19 Vaccination Team) not only across the Parish, but wider a field venturing into Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme amongst other places. He also established a local media profile which not only allowed him to show the positive effects he was making in the Parish but also allowed residents to interact with him on a daily basis.

As well as establishing an established pattern of cleaning across the Town’s and Villages on a fortnightly basis, the Town Council also established a phone number where residents could update the Council on areas of concern and after early reticence, the Park Ranger is now active across the whole of the Parish on a daily basis.

During the planting season, Marks turns his attention to bolstering the appearance of our Town and villages centre, planting additional shrubs and flowers in support of Newcastle’s efforts whilst also maintaining the public rights of way and footpaths, many of which had fell into disrepair over the last decade.

Due to his status within the Parish, Mark is almost daily asked to work with various community groups. Some days it will be a Litter Pick with the local walking group, another will be a Britain in Bloom engagement event at a local school, but all have a basic understanding that we all need to take care of our Environment and have pride in our home town of Kidsgrove.

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Witney Town Council

How Witney's community came together to plant a tiny forest to boost biodiversity

Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, the opportunity to pioneer an exciting joint project, a first in the UK, was one that we, as a forward-looking council and energetic community, absolutely could not turn down.

A Tiny Forest is a densely planted, fast-growing native woodland usually sited in built-up areas. It's around the size of a tennis court and 3000 of them exist worldwide.

The chance to have the very first one in the UK came from Earthwatch, an international charity who offer nature-based solutions to boost biodiversity.

Our Tiny Forest directly supports key elements of the Town Council's climate and biodiversity strategies, and its secondary aim to maintain the town as a green and pleasant place to live.

After the decision taken, everything happened very quickly. A suitable site was identified, and surveys and soil tests carried out. Our grounds maintenance contractors were fully supportive and ready to swing into action, offering equipment, soil preparation and help on planting day all at no cost. Local volunteer group, Witney Land Army recruited a team of community planters, with Earthwatch providing selected native trees which were appropriate for the soil and site.

Our design deviated from the usual rectangle, opting instead for a polygon mirroring the shape of the local church tower - a tangible link to a historic feature of the area.

On the day, wellies were an absolute must as heavy machinery had been on site preparing the soil after weeks of wet weather. 600 saplings were planted by around 70 volunteers over the course of a day. There was a relaxed atmosphere and a feeling of satisfaction at being instrumental in creating this important new outdoor space.



 **Tychwood: Witney's Tiny Forest** 



Councillor Luci Ashbourne, Leader of the Council said:

“Working with Earthwatch has been an incredible way for Witney Town Council to lead the way on creative, proactive and local solutions to the climate emergency. The residents that helped with planting expressed their delight at being able to be part of something so progressive, and to have the ongoing benefits of a beautiful, health promoting space that we can all feel invested in and help nurture as it grows.”

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Community-Led Housing:

a Key Role for Local Authorities

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 Co-operative Councils
Innovation Network

 People-centred councils
driving social innovation
putting people first

The Active Wellbeing Society working with Birmingham City Council

Creating a co-operative community

The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) is a Birmingham-based community benefit society and cooperative working with communities in areas of high deprivation to tackle inequality and promote wellbeing. Ordinarily focused on supporting communities to be more physically, socially and civically active, their work changed overnight in March 2020.

As supermarket shelves emptied and services shut their doors, many were concerned about the devastating impact Covid-19 would have on vulnerable communities. In Birmingham, where 40% of people live in the top 10% most deprived households nationally, poverty was already a significant issue. The pandemic exposed and exacerbated levels of inequality, and TAWS turned their work to help meet the changing needs of its communities.

Action

In less than one week they established a community-led food distribution network, involving mutual aid groups, faith groups and community organisations, which included more than 85 partners and over 1,300 volunteers. Working collaboratively, they set up a distribution hub in the city where they have delivered over 1,000 tonnes of surplus food via 200,000 food parcels and 42,000 cooked meals.

"You've been reliably like clockwork providing me with food parcels for the last 3 months @TAWSSociety. Thank you for keeping me alive. I feel valued by my fellow citizens in Birmingham." Parcel recipient

TAWS were supported to do this by existing funders, Sport England, Birmingham City Council and Our Health Partnership, and new ones, National Lottery Community Fund, BVSC and DEFRA who understood the need to be flexible during a time of uncertainty.

Co-operation

The collective, city-wide action has characterised the emergency food response, none of it would've been possible without everyone stepping up and pulling together, doing what needed to be done.

"I was particularly pleased to see the TAWS work... (they) helped with facilitating everything, which was exactly what it needed." Volunteer

The city-wide emergency food distribution network has now become the Food Justice Network, with over 200 members, working together to tackle food poverty.

TAWS has united the voluntary sector across Birmingham through this network, embodying cooperative principles and working to tackle inequality. Now, they continue to co-operate for system change, whether that's taking action to increase skills and employment opportunities, to support physical and mental health or to improve access to food.



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Bates Wells working with London Borough of Lewisham

Life as a new organisation for Lewisham Music

In 2017, a team here at Bates Wells advised London Borough of Lewisham on all aspects of the transferring of its music services out of the Borough, to an independent charity.

Like many local authorities, the Borough wanted to find a way for its successful Lewisham Music Service to continue to thrive, whilst providing new opportunities for access to new funding streams, new premises and new governance. At Bates Wells, we have a wealth of experience in assisting local authorities consider and put into place new and alternative delivery models and have spun out over 20 different local authority services in the last three years.

We advised the Borough on the options available for delivery of the service, including the tax structure of the different models. Once the Borough had settled on an independent charity, we advised on the establishment of the new entity. This included advising on an appropriate legal and governance structure and obtaining registration of the charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

After these initial stages, we prepared the legal transfer documentation and advised Lewisham Music on the negotiation of documentation. As part of this, we looked at the property, employment, pensions and tax aspects of the transfer.

The asset transfer completed on 1 April 2017, and since then, Lewisham Music has continued to thrive, and has this year found a new home in the Fellowship, an exciting new arts and cultural facility for the Borough. We have been providing ongoing advice to the charity since then.

As an independent charity, Lewisham Music is able to benefit from public donations and gift aid, and pursue other income generation options, as well as the continued support it receives from the Arts Council. It continues to be the music education hub lead organisation for Lewisham, partnering with all of Lewisham's maintained schools, free schools and academies, alongside a range of local and regional organisations.

We're delight to have helped Lewisham Music on its journey – and know that it is well placed for more exciting opportunities ahead!



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Branding.coop working with the CCIN

Building the Co-operative Council network

Established in 2016, branding.coop provides hands-on support and guidance to organisations wishing to promote their cooperative identity.

Since June 2016 Nicola has managed the operations and communications for the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network, providing a central point for CCIN Members, prospective members and other organisations wishing to find out more about the Network.

Committed to exceeding expectations, services comprise:

- Communications & Marketing – production and dissemination of member communication via publications newsletters, member promotions, member specific news, WhatsApp Groups etc. Brand guardian for the CCIN's visual identity.
- Event Strategy – planning, organising, and attending events, conferences, exhibitions (in person and online) on behalf of the Network acting as an Ambassador and Spokesperson.
- Website strategy – managing and updating content on the Councils.coop website including, the collation of case studies, blogs, member news and publications. Case Studies have grown from 70 to 330 over the last five years. Curating the scope and content of a new website, to be launched in Autumn 2021.
- Social Media management, engagement, and content – managing the reputation and profile of the Network on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- Membership recruitment, servicing, and retention – Since 2016 the number of members has grown from 20 councils to over 100 members and supporter. Overseen the creation of four categories of membership: Full, Associate, Affiliate, Supporter.



**L:R Steve Reed MP, OBE - CCIN Honorary President,
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE - Chair of the CCIN and
Leader of Stevenage Borough Council, Nicola Huckerby -
Branding.coop**

- Provision of CCIN Secretariat and Governance Support – organising Governance meetings, managing agendas, taking minutes, recording, and tracking decisions and actions.
- Officer Network Support – engaging officers in Network activity, organising monthly calls, managing agendas / inviting speakers.
- Project management, monitoring and tracking – the number of funded projects delivered by Network Members has grown from six in 2016 to 40 projects in 2021.
- CRM & GDPR – as the Network has grown, so has the volume of member data. Contacts have grown from c100 email addresses to >1000 contacts across seven audiences.
- Strategy and Action Plan – managing monitoring and tracking delivery, and in most cases delivering the actions.
- Dynamic Purchasing System – promoting the DPS and managing relationships with Suppliers.

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CIPFA C.co Collaborative Service Design

Co-designing services together

This Northern Councils Adult Social Care Directorate, like many other Public Sector organisations was operating in a context of the unprecedented challenge, with increasing expectations for more outcome-driven services combined with reducing budgets, the expectation of personalised services, increasing demand, and a challenging policy environment. Recognising this they engaged the C.Co team to help them to think differently about how to deliver their services.

Our starting point was to consider the local context and the legislative requirements of the Care Act and to help scope the need to develop greater diversity in the care market to ensure that there was a wide range of high-quality services.

We helped to ensure the Councils services were accessible, diverse and responsive, enabling choice and control; There was a desire for Adult Social Care and the Council to deliver a diverse choice of services, moving away from traditional models of social care towards a joint health and social care ethos integrating operational and commissioning services where needed. Crucially there was a need to substantially improve choice, quality and cost effectiveness over the next three.

Our approach

Engagement and involvement of those closest to the service, i.e. the staff, service users and their carers, was a central part of any C.Co project. An engagement programme was therefore devised in order to include these audiences in a co-production and co-design exercise to help inform what the future of Adult Social Care services. A range of methods were used to engage staff, service users and their families, and communities to ensure they shaped how services were delivered and shape potential options and delivery models.

The feedback from staff, service users and communities, was, amongst other information, used to inform the future specification for services. Trade unions were also kept updated and actively engaged on a monthly basis. Over 700 staff were engaged and over 550 service users, carers and residents.

The outcome

Using this evidence as a basis we helped to build the case by identify the best way forward for each of the services in scope – whether that be in-house, commissioned from the independent sector, integrated with partners, through a Social Enterprise or Mutual, a mixed economy of the above or, should evidence show, decommissioned. Our analysis and considerations helped to shape the business case and develop the best options for the future.

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Co-operative Care Colne Valley working with Kirklees Council

Great care is possible through co-operation

At Co-operative Care Colne Valley, we started offering care and support in our community in March 2021. We offer quality care that is powered by our community and that goes beyond fulfilling basic needs - we want our members to live good lives.

The local authority has played an essential role in our success. Firstly, we were able to apply and received start-up grant funding which has been key to our set up. Then, despite the hard work we put in, we found it difficult to overcome some of the challenges – like recruitment of the Registered Manager, an essential person for a regulated care service operation. Our local council has stepped in creatively – we were offered a secondment of an experienced and enthusiastic person with the right skills and expertise for the job. With their support, we were able to prepare everything that was needed for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration so that we can start offering care and support in our community.



We have an ongoing dialogue with the local authority who, while being bound by procurement rules, are very keen to work alongside us to pilot new ways of working. The council have found a way to signpost people needing services in our direction, which has been very helpful in our financially fragile start-up period and have worked alongside us to support recruitment of both care staff and volunteers.

We still need to be patient and continue to learn and work hard to establish our fledgling care co-operative. We would not be able to get this far without the support of our local community and the local council as well as co-operators up and down the country. Yet it's great to know that our members already benefit from and value what we do.

Alison, our care staff member says: 'I started work in June and haven't looked back! I absolutely love it. It's so rewarding it doesn't feel like a job. I have already learnt so much in the short space of time I have worked here through the training I have been given.'



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Co-operative College working with the London Borough of Lewisham

Radical co-operative youth project inspires young people to shape their own futures



The Youth Co-operative Action London project, run by the Co-operative College in partnership with 7PK, has seen a group of nine young people work together in the Co-operative Council area of Lewisham to create a full programme of events focused on equipping young people with the skills they need to create change in their own lives and their community.

The event programme covered a wide range of topics including CV writing, Youth Safety, and Money Management. Workshops on subjects such as Effective Communication, Everyday Overlooked Issues and Overcoming Peer Pressure proved to be extremely popular too, whilst the programme culminated in a Careers Fair attended by young people from across the Lewisham area.

Each cohort of Youth Co-operative Action is encouraged to think collaboratively to solve problems in their community, reflecting on the co-operative values and principles and how these can be implemented to bring communities together. Empowered with the skills, knowledge and platform to tell their story, they work together co-operatively to inspire real, meaningful change.

Through taking part in the scheme, all those involved have learnt new skills, met new people and had fun. Focused on teamwork, problem solving, and community engagement, participants have gained the confidence to tackle the issues that matter to them, such as loneliness, highlighted as a key issue amongst young people and emphasised using the projects hashtag #TogetherNotAlone.

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Coop Futures working with Milton Keynes Council

Co-operative Options for Landscaping Services in Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes is a fully parished council with 48 parish and town councils (P&TCs). In 2014 Milton Keynes Council (MKC) began the process of devolving the delivery of some landscaping services to P&TCs. Twelve P&TCs took up this offer and have been successfully managing their local services. All twelve make additional financial contributions from their precept.

In 2020, MKC engaged Co-operative Futures (CF) to explore the co-operative options for P&TCs and the delivery of landscaping services going forward. For a co-operative option to be advantageous for both MKC and the P&TCs it must be able to provide an enabling framework for participation irrespective of size or capacity.

The recommendation from CF was the creation of a Direct Delivery Co-operative Consortium to deliver landscaping services, which will have MKC and the P&TCs as its members. Over time the co-operative will recruit its own staff and all P&TCs will become members to maximise economies of scale.



The speed at which a co-operative could be created is dependent upon the willingness of P&TCs to take the initiative forward. It may be that a group of P&TCs are keen to set up a co-operative within six months or alternatively it may take years to bring all P&TCs on board. MKC aims for the creation of the co-operative consortium over the next five to ten years.

In terms of finance, the total amount of the grant for all the participating P&TCs would be paid directly to the co-operative by MKC (it is currently paid individually to devolved P&TCs). The budgets for each P&TC would then be ringfenced within the co-operative, and each P&TC would draw down the services they need to the value of their budget. P&TCs would then also be able to “purchase” additional services using the precept.

MKC are now working with the P&TCs to implement the recommendations, by facilitating further devolution and collaborative working. They will continue to work with the devolved parishes by supporting them in biodiversity, mapping and equipment sharing.

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**COOPERATIVE
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business for good

Co-operatives UK working with the Mayor of London

Boosting Community Business London

As part of their individual Covid-19 recovery and renewal schemes Co-operatives UK and Power to Change joined forces in January 2021, with support from the Mayor of London, to launch Boosting Community Business London, a new initiative to boost the capital's high streets and civic centres. It is part of the Mayor's commitment to helping London become a fairer, greener, more open and vibrant city as we begin to recover from the pandemic. The pilot aligns with two missions agreed by the London Recovery Board: High Streets for All and Building Strong Communities.

Boosting Community Business London has been designed to empower local people to establish socially trading business and services that their local communities want and need. It is helping them to take on the sustainable management and ownership of locally important assets by supporting fundraising through community shares.

The £150,000 programme has been funded by the Mayor of London and is delivered by Co-operatives UK with support from community business champions Power to Change.

Following an open and competitive application process, the pilot is supporting nine London based community businesses at the early stages of their development. These businesses have been awarded up to eight days of bespoke business support, mentoring and training worth up to £4,000. The support is being provided via a mix of Co-operatives UK extensive network of practitioner and its staff team.

A subsequent open application process was launched in March 2021 for groups at a more developed stage and committed to undertaking a community shares issue later in the year. These groups have been invited to apply for grants of up to £10,000 to support the development of their community share offers. Community shares are a popular approach to raising finance, in which local people invest small sums of money and become co-owners of vital local enterprises – from pools to pubs, community housing to heritage buildings.

Organisations participating in the programme who develop an accredited community share will be signposted to Co-operatives UK Booster programme, where they can apply for up to £100,000 of matched equity investment.

Community businesses are profit generating organisations, run by and trading for the benefit of local people. They are proven to bring resilience, stability and economic benefits to local places and high streets - 56p of every pound spent in a community business stays in the local community.



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CO-OPERATIVES UK
coop

SBI/E3M working with Oldham Council

Northern Roots & Oldham Alchemy

In July 2018, the E3M partners convened a special Alchemy innovation event to support Oldham Council and its partners in developing ideas for a bold new initiative called 'Northern Roots'. The project involves harnessing the potential of a currently underused 65-hectare site and a new brand centred on food growing and production. Together they will be a catalyst for community health and wellbeing, new leisure opportunities, skills development, employment, enterprise creation and service transformation.

The Oldham Alchemy event brought together 85 participants and sought to ensure that 'Northern Roots' reflects Oldham's ambition to be a productive and cooperative place with healthy, aspirational and sustainable communities. The event:

- Shared knowledge about the "art of the possible" with real, successful examples of innovation in social enterprise and service delivery from across the UK.
- Explored ideas for large-scale social enterprises, examining how these could contribute to building an inclusive economy and delivering co-operative services.
- Examined the social impact and value these ideas could deliver, their financial sustainability and the investment or resources they would need.
- Explored how Northern Roots can enable Oldham to develop services which cost less and deliver better outcomes, stimulate local, inclusive, economic growth, and empower and engage local residents in solving problems.

Council representatives and a range of Oldham stakeholders worked intensively for 24 hours alongside members of the E3M Bold Commissioners Club, E3M Social Enterprise Leaders, social investors and the E3M partners

The participants developed a diverse, bold, ambitious, boundary-pushing but realistic set of proposals for co-operative, collaborative and sustainable service delivery by social enterprises in Northern Roots.

Following the event, the E3M partners prepared a special report for Oldham Council and on 28 January 2019, Oldham's Cabinet approved plans to begin development of Alexandra Park Eco Centre, and further develop the Northern Roots project. The inception phase of the project will focus on community, stakeholder and investor engagement.



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E3M

Ideas Alliance working with the London Borough of Bromley

100 Day Challenge in Bromley: improving the wellbeing of families of children and young people with autism

One Bromley is a partnership of health and care services and the voluntary sector in the London Borough of Bromley. They wanted to co-produce an action plan with parents and carers of children and young people living with autism to improve their support and services.

What we did

Ideas Alliance facilitated a rapid-results, action-led innovation process using the framework of a '100 day challenge', a methodology originally developed by the Rapid Results Institute. Parents, local providers, commissioners and staff from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Council came together in a discovery workshop where they shared their insights together to identify the "stickiest" issue: training and autism-awareness. They then formed a mixed team to work on solutions to the problem that could be achieved within the 100 day timeframe.

The 100 day challenge is a "sprint": the idea is to spend far more time doing than talking. This is important both for achieving results quickly, but also because the act of doing in itself spurs further action as people see their own capacity to create real change.

What happened?

The project team produced a host of tangible outputs that made an immediate difference to the profile and awareness of autism in Bromley, including:

- A training and development programme about autism using immersive theatre.
- A parents' leaflet, developed by parents.
- Awareness-raising with staff at Tesco and a partnership with the local shopping centre.
- A peer support group, led by a local parent.
- A film documenting parents' and young people's experiences.

However, for Bromley the major output has been the relationships that have been built and shifts in outlook. Bromley's all-ages autism board is now chaired by the parent of a child with autism who took part in the challenge. The board enables the council and the local CCG to take a coordinated approach to supporting autistic adults and children in Bromley, one that is informed at all stages by the expertise of people with first-hand experience. For parents, the outcome was not just the new tools they had created, but the sense of being able to actively affect change in a system where they previously held very little power. As one parent participant put it: "I've been very frustrated over the last few years in wanting things to change and not knowing what to do. It's been amazing being part of something that really is making changes".

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IDEAS
ALLIANCE



Lambeth GP Food Co-op working with London Borough of Lambeth

Supporting patients self-isolating through a Gardening at Home Scheme

The purpose of this initiative was:

- Provide practical help and support through gardening at home to patients managing Long Covid or stroke.
- Telephone and email support from expert garden buddies.
- Reduce isolation and increase sense of belonging through growing vegetables.



Lambeth GP Food Co-op founding members



NHS courgette grown by a patient at
King's College Hospital

This work started from scratch, and our first step was to recruit a cohort of buddies. Two members, a nurse and a nutritionist became the first garden buddies, and we recruited three buddies through the Lambeth Council's network. This was followed by designing a quality framework for the buddying scheme that met national coaching, mentoring, and buddying standards. One of our members drew on his experience with developing a similar scheme for the NHS, which was then adapted for use for the gardening at home initiative. We went live in November 2020 and continued to support a growing community of people who were self-isolating during last winter and into Spring 2021. Patients were referred to us by clinical staff attached to the Lambeth Community Stroke Team (Guys & St Thomas's Hospital) or local GP's. As all patients were self-isolating, our gardening buddies provided telephone and email support during and after lockdown, which provided sufficient contact to ensure that they felt well supported and became active gardeners whilst remaining at home. Packs of seeds were posted to patients at regular intervals and recipes that could be used with the vegetables being grown. Sutton seeds provided seed packs free of charge. A small grant from the London Community Response Fund helped us design, deliver and support the scheme. We are aiming to continue this work in the autumn and winter of 2022. In the words of one patient:

"...the Covid-19 Pandemic struck, and I was told to shield. The isolation and idleness...damaged my physical and mental health...I found myself spiralling into depression...I was in a very dark place. I joined the gardening at home/garden buddy scheme, receiving seeds and regular contact from Hilda (buddy), who helped me through the lockdown."

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Marks Out Of Tenancy working with Nottingham City Council

Leading innovations in the private rental sector

Technological innovations in the private rental sector don't happen every day, but the latest from proptech company 'Marks Out Of Tenancy' is helping Nottingham City Council to lead the way with a digital service to help local authorities identify unlicensed landlords.

CCIN Affiliate Member and Bristol-based social enterprise 'Marks Out Of Tenancy' has been tapping into collective action, co-operation and citizen empowerment for the last couple of years by enabling renters to rate and review their landlord, letting agent, rental properties and neighbourhoods. These collective experiences are assisting future renters to make better renting choices, find great landlords and decent places to call 'home'.

Marks Out Of Tenancy's recently launched service named 'Vault' provides accurate, timely and legal information to local authorities, helping them identify unlicensed properties and rogue operators.

This collaboration between private and public sector is helping to improve conditions in the private rental sector. Paul Greevy, Safer Housing Service's Strategic Housing Manager at Nottingham City Council said: "Sometimes the plates come together, and the simplest ideas impact on local authorities from another tangent - in this case to the world of raising standards in the private rented sector.

"The cumulative impacts over time - of statutes, accreditation and licensing - are now augmented by what has the potential to be a TripAdvisor for the private rented sector. If you're letting private rented accommodation enjoy that 10-star review, for the one-star landlord, time for a rethink because your local authority should be in touch."

CEO of Marks Out Of Tenancy, Ben Yarrow stated: "We look forward to working with more forward-thinking, innovative authorities as they strive to improve conditions in the private rental sector".

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Mutual Ventures working with Bury Council

Let's do It: the Bury 2030 strategy

Mutual Ventures supported Bury Council to create its 2030 strategy, an ambitious programme of change supporting the recovery from COVID-19.

'Let's do it' is the name of the Bury 2030 strategy, originally the words of the late great Victoria Wood, comedian and proud local girl. Shaped by local people and stakeholders, it clearly sets out how Bury will be a place of ambition where people are helped to make the best of themselves and are partners in public services.

Our support for Bury

Mutual Ventures was asked to support the council to develop a 10-year strategy, working with 'Team Bury', a group of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The strategy needed to be ambitious and based on a shared sense of responsibility, recognising the full potential of the borough and capturing its unique spirit.

The Bury 2030 Strategy document was developed via an iterative process. Engaging with partners and local people, we supported the council to produce:

- A strategy document which presents the overarching vision for the area and outcomes for a set of priority areas (People, Place, Business, Ideas, Infrastructure)
- An action plan which sets out the key steps and initiatives that will need to be taken to deliver the strategy
- A performance framework of high-level outcome measures for the 2030 themes and priorities, which can be used to track progress from the 2020 baseline.

Building back post COVID

A key part of the strategy was to plan how to rebuild from the impact of Covid-19. Much progress had been made in Bury during the crisis on integrated working and community engagement. These features needed to be 'locked in' with innovative structures to allow co-operation to continue.

The strategy draws on best practice nationally but is led and shaped by stakeholders across Team Bury and what is right for the Bury context.

We worked in close partnership with our client as a joint team. This ensured that knowledge of the processes and methodologies were transferred to the local team who will continue work to make the strategy a reality.

Benefits for the Council's Suppliers

The Supplier Incentive Programme has been well-received by Bexley's supply chain, who benefit from access to free e-invoicing, support from dedicated contacts and enhanced cash flow as a result of earlier payment.

Andrew Hubbard, managing director of Bexley-based property management company, Under My Roof, one of the largest suppliers of temporary accommodation to the council, also welcomes the benefits, commenting:

"Cashflow is the lifeblood of a business and having access to swift payment, especially from major clients, is hugely reassuring – we can be confident that we'll get paid as quickly as we can submit an invoice. Using the Supplier Incentive Programme has enabled us to grow our business in, what can only be considered, a very difficult time in the housing market."

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Oxygen Finance working with Warwickshire County Council

A better way of working at Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire County Council introduced its Premier Supplier Service, in partnership with Oxygen Finance in 2015, with the objective of building stronger relationships with the key suppliers that support the council in delivering essential services to the people and businesses of Warwickshire.

The Premier Supplier Service offers its suppliers early settlement of their invoices in exchange for a discount directly related to how quickly the payment is made. Warwickshire though, was also the first council in the UK to pilot Oxygen's Freepay initiative, giving the smallest suppliers access to early payment for free.

The council chose to launch an early payment programme to deliver multiple benefits – suppliers benefit from improved cashflow and reduced time spent chasing payments and the council benefits from improved operational effectiveness, from digitising back-office functions and optimising P2P processes.

"We wanted to demonstrate our commitment to paying suppliers as we said we would. It's about the authority keeping its promise – that's integral to building effective relationships with our suppliers. That in turn meant getting a better insight into our current payment practices and raising the importance of this function across the authority as a whole." CFO, Warwickshire County Council.



Since implementation, the benefits for Warwickshire County Council have been substantial. To date, over 1000 suppliers have signed up to the programme, representing an annual spend of £67m. Typically, payments on average are made on day 8, with £285 million of fast-tracked payments made to date.

Due to the success of the programme, in December 2020, Warwickshire extended their commercial agreement with Oxygen for another 5 years.

Rob Powell, Strategic Director of Resources said, "As our initial 5-year contract was coming to an end, and with the council having secured net savings in excess £2.2m, we were very keen to continue the Early Payment Programme. Oxygen's support was invaluable during the summer of 2020, supporting Warwickshire in our Covid response and quickly complying with the PPNs. This resulted in over £250m being paid to 1,000s of suppliers when they needed it most."

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Peopletoo working with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Strategic Procurement Service Redesign

Peopletoo, and their partners Human Engine, were engaged to design and implement a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for the Procurement Service across the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD). Central to the introduction of a new TOM was the full re-design of the governance process, including the creation of new thresholds, supported by a risk-based approach. This, combined with the coaching of team members to act more commercially, has led to effective and long-lasting transformation to the quality of business cases, decision making, and outcomes for LBBD.

In 2020, the Council undertook a Strategic Procurement review which established baseline performance of the outsourced procurement function. The review highlighted that there was a perception that many key functions were charged back to front-line services as 'additional' and not covered by the lump sum. Recognising this, the Council acted to bring the procurement team back in-house to improve control and oversight and reduce costs. Peopletoo were commissioned to design and implement the recommendations of the programme with the key focus of ensuring that support from the procurement team directly added value to the process of procurement and commissioning. This includes delivering benefits for communities through increasing opportunities to local SMEs and through timely support to major strategic contracts.

As such, the Peopletoo approach focused on undertaking several workshops with the procurement team to develop skills that ensured they were engaged and owned the new approach. This included the development of:

- A purpose and vision for the team that identified their new roles and responsibilities.
- Introduction of a risk-based approach to the support provided by the procurement team which ensured they added value to the procurement and commissioning process.
- Revised governance thresholds which would simplify procurement processes and ensure compliance.
- Clear and concise process maps to support the new thresholds.
- Intranet pages and a training programme to ensure provision of information and facilitate a 'self-serve' approach.

We are already seeing tangible and sustainable benefits being delivered. Improved clarity, efficiency and compliance are demonstrated in how we have reduced 8 previous procurement thresholds down to 3 and introducing a Gold/Silver/Bronze level of risk-based support, which aligned to the Councils existing risk framework. Fundamentally, our work has established a new in-house procurement service to deliver future commercial savings: this has changed the relationship between corporate procurement and services which is 'self-served' whilst being 'centrally-overseen'.

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Power to Change working with Kirklees Council

Supporting the development of cooperative care

Kirklees Council and Power to Change have supported the development of a cooperative approach to social care provision. Cooperative Care Colne Valley (CCCV) is a multi-stakeholder co-operative and community business established to provide both high-quality domiciliary care for older and disabled people in the Colne Valley, and fair and proper terms and conditions of employment for staff. Focussing solely on the Colne Valley, CCCV aims to provide high quality services at a fair price to local people while involving the people it cares for and their families in making decisions about their care. As a co-operative, it will ensure that all members have a stake and a say in how the service is run. It will also ensure staff are highly trained, motivated and that their conditions of employment are significantly better than those generally offered in this sector, ensuring that the co-operative structure will also provide opportunities to contribute to decision making and for career progression.

A key aim is to develop an innovative operational model that integrates social care aimed at tackling isolation delivered by community and family volunteers, working alongside the paid staff members. CCCV intends to raise the required capital through a community share offer, enabling members of the community to have a stake in the business on a one member one vote basis.

Kirklees Council has supported the project from an early stage by providing start up grants and help with staffing issues. The authority clearly understands the need for bottom up community, place-based solutions to the current crisis in social care and a positive partnership has developed.

Power to Change, which supports community businesses, has provided early stage capacity building support, enabling it to develop its legal structure and prepare for the community share offer. Power to Change has also invested in supporting CCCV to gather learning as it develops and starts to deliver care and support to support other places to set up their own community-led and owned care provision.



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The Public Service Transformation Academy working with Somerset County Council

Somerset Commissioning Academies

The Commissioning Academy is a challenging and intensive programme for public service commissioners designed to bring about real behaviour change. It was launched in 2012 by the Cabinet Office and is now delivered by the Public Service Transformation Academy, a partnership led by RedQuadrant.

The Somerset Academies are a local adaptation of our national approach, tailored to focus in particular on challenges in the health and social care sector. Local partners included Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Health Education England through STP local area workforce board, the NHS QI faculty, and the South West Academic Health Science Network.

The academies are first and foremost about why we work together as place shapers and systems leaders. They examine how we build a mutually supportive team ethos across partners in Somerset by developing stronger relationships, a shared understanding and approach, collaborative behaviours, and strengths/asset-based approaches.

A key component of the Academy is through the challenges (identified and agreed upon through discussion with all partners in the system) that participants are working on. The emphasis is about building momentum through action research and creating an action plan (a 100 hundred day plan) by day five to make real change happen.

Outcomes

Our cohorts demonstrated buy-in across the system, with take-up exceeding expectations – we wanted a minimum of 25 participants, but in the first academy there were 40. Participants came from across the local authority (including children’s and adults’ services, economic and community infrastructure, and public health), the CCG, primary care, the police, district councils, the department for work and pensions, and Somerset partnership NHS foundation trust.

The feedback was excellent, with 100 per cent of participants reporting on day five that:

- They had made useful connections via the academy.
- They had learnt from other academy participants.
- The academy had been relevant or highly relevant to their individual learning needs and had been a good or excellent use of their time.

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RedQuadrant working with the London Mayor's Office for Crime and Policing (MOPAC)

Tackling violence against women and girls in London

MOPAC is prioritising reducing the impact of violence against women and girls (VAWG) through its action plan. The Home Office awarded MOPAC funding in 2017 for three projects:

- **Sexual Violence Triage programme: developing a new way for survivors of sexual violence to access support across the services commissioned in London;**
- **Multi Agency Stalking Intervention Project: a multi-agency stalking intervention programme; and**
- **The Drive Programme: reducing reoffending by repeat domestic abuse offenders through a collaborative approach between agencies.**

These projects involve working with several agencies and taking an evidence-based, transformative approach to change the way that VAWG is dealt with.

The challenge:

Following a reduction in the funding available, the Mayor's Office commissioned a review of the feasibility of sustaining its funding for these three projects. This reviewed the effectiveness and value for money of the projects.

The report was commissioned for a tight timeframe over the summer, which posed challenges. Delays meant that the projects had been running for short periods – quantitative data was in short supply. Several key participants were taking summer leave. We therefore needed to use academic literature and interviews with participants. The interviews enquired how stakeholders felt about the benefits of these programmes, and whether changes could be made to improve outcomes.

What we did differently:

We gathered a team with detailed knowledge of the VAWG and criminal justice sectors. We designed a questionnaire and conducted 44 interviews with stakeholders. We also undertook an economic evaluation showing the relative cost-benefits of the interventions. We used case studies to bring the report to life and to highlight the achievements of these projects, as well as the complexities involved when working with perpetrators and victims of VAWG.

The outcomes/the solutions:

Our analysis showed the extent to which the three projects offered value for money and outlined the many potential advantages which were beginning to emerge as well as the challenges encountered. We also made recommendations for each of the projects which we hope will contribute to their futures.

Following recommendations from the feasibility study, MOPAC agreed to sustain the three projects for further period of time.

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Social Value Exchange working with London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Capacity building the VCSE sector

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Tower Hamlets Community and Voluntary Sector are partnering with the Social Value Exchange over the next 12 months to maximise resources for local community projects, with those resources going to where they will most support vulnerable people.

Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector, Councillor Candida Ronald said, "I'm really excited to see what comes out of the Social Value Exchange. We can leverage the Council's buying power more creatively, provide tailored support to our voluntary sector organisations and protect services that residents really value."

Damian Brady, acting Chief Executive at THCVS, told us, "I really welcome this innovative development, which targets community benefits captured from council contracts at the grassroots organisations in Tower Hamlets — the people who most need them. Tower Hamlets CVS is willing and ready to make sure local people can access this new opportunity."

Over the next 12 months, Tower Hamlets Council will be using the Social Value Exchange platform to leverage up to £70m of procurement spend to secure important and necessary capacity building resources for local projects, which are delivering for the most vulnerable in their local community.



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Stir to Action working with Preston City Council

Community Anchors & Community Wealth Building in Preston

In Autumn 2020, Stir to Action partnered with Preston City Council and the Preston Model BAMME advisory group to create a six-week programme that focused on providing targeted support for BAME organisations in the city, stimulating cultural awareness and interest in worker-owned business. Despite the success of Community Wealth Building, as with the wider co-operative movement, there have been some difficulties in ensuring that businesses reflect the diversity of modern Britain and work in the most marginalised communities.

In Preston, the Community Anchors: A Co-operative Recovery programme was co-produced with the groups that participated in the programme, including Pukar Disability Centre, Preston United Youth Development Programme, and Preston Windrush Generation and Descendants UK. The programme supported these local organisations and others to become 'community anchors' that could promote the cultural relevance and benefits of co-operatives through awareness-raising activities, and also signpost their members and users to the latest funding opportunities and business support.

Programme outcomes

"My plans for 2021 are for four or five of my young adults to get off the dole and be involved in setting up a co-operative enterprise." Omar Khan, Preston United Youth Development.

"This programme has changed my perception of co-ops. I didn't know they could be led by immigrant women!"
Neetal Parekh, BAPS Hindi Mandir

Follow-on development

In Spring and Summer 2021, Stir to Action, the Preston Cooperative Development Network, Preston City Council, Co-operatives UK, and Cooperation Town have been supporting the cohort to develop new food-buying co-operatives through a 12-week pilot, with three new groups in development in different wards in Preston. Other members of the cohort are in the pre-start phase of exploring how to create a translators and interpreters co-operative that initially specialises in South Asian languages.

For the cohort to continue to meet as a peer-to-peer network, share project updates, receive funding opportunities, and build contact with the wider co-operative sector in Preston, UCLan are hosting a monthly one-hour meetup for the 'community anchors'.



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**STIR to
ACTION**

Unlimited Potential working with Salford and Rochdale Councils

Dadly Does It – positive fatherhood

The health, well-being and life opportunities of children and young people in disadvantaged communities are much worse than of their peers in wealthier communities. The greatest underused asset in the lives of children and young people is fathers. Communities and child-related services and organisations tend to focus – and put most pressure – on mothers. Some largely ignore fathers.

Dadly Does It started in 2013, and has run in three different neighbourhoods in Salford and Rochdale. The fathers involved in Dadly Does It tended to have long-term histories of economic and social marginalisation. Many experienced various childhood traumas, with associated complex and difficult family relationships and poor educational experiences.

In each neighbourhood, Dadly Does It focussed on 'what's strong, not what's wrong', and drew on the strengths, assets and hidden wisdom of communities. It used a 'positive deviance' approach, following the four Ds: define the problem; determine the positive role models; discover what they do; design ways of sharing solutions. In each neighbourhood, dads came together and designed their own solutions, which included a Saturday Club for activities with children, and a cycling project.

From these activities, we learned that children want time to do things with their dads. The dads become increasingly motivated to change. As a result, children's well-being improves, the pressure on mums reduces, and relationships in some families become more positive.

A social return on investment found that £1 yielded around £3 of savings in children's services alone, and £13 of value for the fathers who were actively engaged.

Amongst other things, we have learned to relate to fathers as fathers (rather than as men). Positive role models are effective – if working 'shoulder to shoulder'. If fathers find purpose, they regain control and well-being improves.

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Value Match

Sourcing Expertise: consultancy support and guidance for an EU procurement

A critical service contract was nearing its expiry date with limited time to conduct a compliant EU regulated sourcing event with customer having little experience of managing complex service contracts.

Solution

The Value Match team working in collaboration with the customer deployed its experienced consultant, together:

- Undertook a qualitative review of the current contract, supplier performance and existing documentation.
- Designed pre-market engagement objectives, engagement process and plan.
- Produced required EU Notices and prepared suitable tender documentation, integrating customers documentation and standards where applicable.
- Designed specification and evaluation standards and processes.
- Supported the customer in the issuing of relevant documentation.
- Ensured the evaluation and award documentation met both the customer requirements and was fully EU compliant.

Results

1. Sourcing event delivered on time, with desired outcomes clearly articulated in the specification and embedded in a revised contract management process and key performance indicators.
2. Increased number of bidders achieved through pre-market engagement process.
3. Expert advice and guidance provided on the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 at each stage of the procurement process.
4. Assurance provided in relation to the full legal compliance of the procurement documentation which eliminates all risks associated with non-compliance and / or potential challenge for the client.
5. New processes and standardised procurement templates developed for customer's future sourcing and contract management activity.



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valuematch



Member benefits

Join the CCIN to be part of a growing and influential network of councils committed to developing a new relationship with citizens. There is a growing interest, across the political spectrum, in how to share power and responsibility with citizens, support the development of community and civic life and find more cost-effective ways to create successful and resilient communities.

By becoming part of the Network, you will:

- Access the **latest ideas** and thinking about putting Cooperative principles into practice.
- Position your council as an **innovator**.
- Help to **influence** policy thinking at national level.
- Share examples of projects and initiatives and **learn from others** about what works.
- Co-produce **tools and techniques** to support the development of cooperative approaches.
- Be invited to **Cooperative Conferences** around the country where you can meet and work with peers.
- Join an **officer network** who are leading the development of new approaches.
- Have access to a cadre of ambitious **political leaders** who are trying to bring change to their communities.
- Access a growing body of **resources** on the new CCIN website.
- Be part of **regional and national networks** in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Join the **debate** on our active social media platforms.
- Access our multi-supplier **Consultancy Framework** of specialist organisations to help you develop policy, implement prototypes and build capacity when you need to move quickly and flexibly.
- Profile your council's **achievements** nationally.

In addition, we have several additional benefits that are specific to each membership category. Ask us for further details.



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Response. Recovery. Resilience.

Co-operative Council learning through Covid-19

Download: bit.ly/CCIN-Covid



Find out more about the UK local authorities who are driving global municipal co-operative policy development with a common belief in the Co-operative Values and Principles

Join us today

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