Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Evaluation of the Coastal Communities Fund

Final Report

Foreword

This report outlines the findings from the evaluation of the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) programme, which ran over five bidding rounds between 2012 and 2022. The report was commissioned in response to the House of Lords Select Committee report in to Regenerating Seaside Towns, chaired by Lord Bassam, in April 2019

The CCF encouraged sustainable economic development of coastal communities by providing funding to create sustainable economic growth and jobs so that people are better able to respond to the changing economic needs and opportunities of their area. The programme focused on a single outcome that coastal communities will experience regeneration and sustainable economic growth through projects that directly or indirectly attract sustainable jobs, and safeguard existing jobs.

The evaluation study used a multi-methods approach in order to understand the impact of the programme, including interviews with key people who were either involved in the implementation of the programme or were key stakeholders in it on a national level; a retrospective review of data gathered by the CCF programme during implementation; and twenty one in-depth case studies of projects funded by CCF, including schemes across all five rounds of funding

I would like to thank the team from IFF Research, and also Professor Pete Tyler of Cambridge University for his peer review of the report and findings.

I would also like to thank stakeholders who participated in the research, and the policymakers, operation delivery colleagues and analysts in the Department who provided input to the research materials and reviewed the outputs.

DLUHC continues to develop its evidence base in this area, with a view to informing policy and improving outcomes across our remit for levelling up and bringing left behind communities up to the level of more prosperous areas.

Stephen Aldridge
Chief Economist & Director for Analysis and Data
Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Numerous coastal areas in England were built around the development of the domestic tourism industry, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries; many developed as fishing ports or around boatbuilding industries. All these industries have seen significant decline throughout the late 20th century. In this sense, some coastal areas have much in common with inland post-industrial cities in the UK, which faced major economic change in the late 20th century. Yet in February 2007, a House of Commons report found that no national strategy existed to regenerate these areas, and no national or regional funding streams were specifically targeted at coastal areas[1].

The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) is the largest amongst a series of interventions set up subsequently to tackle this issue, offering since its establishment in 2012, several hundred grants totalling £188m in value to a range of projects targeted at creating jobs and wider economic regeneration in coastal areas. The Fund's source of income derives from a percentage of the Crown Estate's charging of rent for activities taking place in the UK's coastal waters, known as the Marine Revenues.

The fund is administered separately in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland; this evaluation covers the fund in England only. The Fund is currently delivered by Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC),[2] in partnership with Groundwork UK.

1.1 Methodology

Research questions

This report, commissioned by DLUHC and carried out by IFF Research, seeks to evaluate the programme in England. It was required to answer the following questions:

- What did the programme deliver?
- Who benefited from it and how?
- What would have happened without the intervention?

The key elements of the evaluation were as follows:

- Six depth interviews with key people who were either involved in the implementation of the programme, or were key stakeholders in it on a national level (August-October 2020)
- A retrospective review of data gathered by the CCF programme during implementation, covering funding rounds one to four. Impacts data for funding round five is not yet available, since these projects are not yet complete (September 2020, repeated in May-June 2021)

---

[1] House of Commons. Communities and Local Government Committee (2007). *Coastal Towns: Second Report of Session 2006-07.* February 2007.
[2] Prior to September 2021 known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

- 21 in-depth case studies[3] of projects funded by CCF, including all five rounds of funding (September 2020 to June 2021).

The results of all of these strands of research are synthesised in this report.

Limitations

This research did not include a quantitative assessment of the impact of the CCF relative to what might have happened if the policy was not put in place[4]. The quantitative elements of the research are limited to assessment of the delivered outputs of the projects. While the evaluation can comment on the *perception* of additional impacts among those interviewed regarding individual projects, this limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn regarding the net impact of the CCF.

1.2 Distributing funds

Application process

Nearly all case study interviewees felt that the process of applying for funding from CCF was straightforward, including those who had experience of applying to other funding sources. This was felt by many interviewees to be a strength of CCF, enabling it to reach community-based projects which might have a lesser capacity for administration.

However, some of those interviewed who were involved in the process of assessing projects did say that it was challenging to effectively assess the viability of the larger, more complex projects with the information available to them from the application forms.

Recommendation: Create a two-tiered application process by amount of funding requested; this would enable more detail to be gathered for larger projects on their plans and their projected economic impact, making project selection more efficient, while retaining the much-valued simplicity for smaller projects.

Selection process

The CCF was widely praised for its flexibility, and willingness to fund projects which were eclectic in nature, rather than being narrowly focused on one particular way to achieve economic growth or create jobs. The process of releasing and drawing down funding was also praised as being simpler than many other public sector funding sources, which it was suggested were frequently excessively complex and burdensome.

It was, however, suggested that too many projects were taken to second stage, and there was some criticism of the speed of awards being made in England relative to Scotland and Wales[5]. The key issues were thought to be the requirement for very high-level approval of recommended projects at both stages of the two-stage application process, and the

---

[3] 18 of these were full case studies, while three 'mini case studies' had limited numbers of interviews, mainly due to the delay between project and evaluation meaning those involved could not be contacted.
[4] Usually termed a 'counterfactual'.
[5] Stakeholders were not able to comment on the relative speed of the processing of applications to the CCF in Northern Ireland.

relatively large number of projects invited to submit a stage two application. Some of those involved nationally felt that MHCLG input had sometimes resulted in less good value projects being taken forward to the second stage or awarded funding, although this may reflect a need to take wider priorities into consideration.

Recommendation: Consider reducing the extent of high-level involvement from DLUHC in the selection of individual projects at both application stages, to increase the speed of the decision-making process, and focus it more on the CCF England Funding Panel recommendations based on objective criteria relating to projected outcomes.

Several national stakeholders also highlighted that the one-off and short-term nature of the funding made it difficult to build projects into a wider strategy, or into a long-term plan. This also influenced the design of projects.

Project types

Over the four rounds for which data was available, although most CCF projects were small (41% less than £0.5m in grant value), most of the funding was dedicated to the larger projects. There was a shift in priorities toward funding larger projects as the Fund developed, although spending on the smallest projects was retained; it was mid-sized projects (£1m to £2m in value) which received less funding.

The priorities for spending varied over time; in the first round a high proportion of funding went to training and skills projects (37%), but these were a small proportion of the total in rounds two and three. Infrastructure projects made up a large proportion of spending in rounds one (43%) and three (41%), but property projects dominated in round 2 (73% of grants)[6].

Geographical distribution

For this study, a new measurement of the coastal population was undertaken, using 2011 Census data, combined with the ONS BUA (Built-up area) classification. It found that the total coastal population was 12.3m of 53.4m in England, or 23% of the total. More information about this estimate is provided in Appendix A.

The CCF's grant giving funding across the coastal areas of England amounted to £15.20 per head from rounds one to five. On a per head basis, the funding was strongly tilted toward rural areas. Across rounds one to five, coastal areas with less than 10,000 population received £33.43 per head, compared to only £3.82 per head in the largest places with 500,000 or more population.

Within coastal areas, CCF funding was targeted broadly, without a particular focus on areas of the most need. The data indicates a lower level of funding per head in areas with high levels of long-term unemployment[7] than areas with low levels of long-term unemployment. This may relate to the targeting of funding at smaller towns and villages, which even in Local Authorities with relatively high levels of deprivation on the whole, tend

---

[6] No data for round four was available on this metric.

[7] Long term unemployment is used here as a proxy for economic performance, since the most widely used direct measure of economic deprivation (the Index of Multiple Deprivation) is not available at ONS Built-up Area level.

to have lower levels of long term unemployment than urban areas (see Appendix A). In addition, the CCF relies on communities putting forward projects for consideration, and more economically disadvantaged areas may tend to have more fragmented communities[8].

While the number of projects funded was, as intended, broadly similar in each region of England, other than the South West due to its much longer coastline, the regional distribution of funds and projects provided by CCF is, however, patchy when compared to the coastal population of each region. A substantial tilt toward Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and away from the South East was seen. It could be argued that this funding could have been more evenly distributed relative to the coastal population.

Recommendation: Take into account the size of the coastal population, and level of deprivation when setting geographical targets for grant-giving, although not necessarily to the exclusion of other factors.

Match funding

CCF monitoring data indicated that it was most often the majority funder of projects, but most (83%) attracted at least some match funding. Total match funding amounted to £210.7m, compared to £134.8m of CCF direct funding across Rounds 1 to 4. This suggests that for every £1 spent on CCF grants, an additional £1.56 was gathered in match funding.

Depth interviews suggested that it was far more common for CCF funding to be the 'seed funding' leveraging other sources of funds, than it was for CCF to 'fill gaps'. Nearly all case study projects felt that the CCF funding had been essential, and many felt that match funding arose because CCF funding was already there, giving the project credibility.

1.3 Project design

Achieving successful design

From case study interviews, there were a number of similarities found in projects where the design led to successful economic outcomes. Wide consultation at an early stage was found to be a key feature of projects where the project had a strong economic impact. Organisers of the most successful projects consulted with a variety of people (e.g., local businesses, residents, and stakeholders) during the idea generation phase, and gathered information from a range of people in an open-minded fashion.

A focus on designing an economically viable business model was also critical. The most successful projects met an unmet need locally, using a proven business model. Projects which were focused around restoring an existing building or structure, rather than putting into place a new service or facility, seemed find this more difficult. A few case study experiences suggested that understanding the seasonal nature of the local economy was also important, particularly for projects in areas with an economy strongly oriented toward

---

[8] Local Trust (2018). *Empowered Communities in the 2020s. IVAR Research Briefing 2 – Countries Dialogue.* https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/local_trust_ec2020_countries_report.pdf. January 2018.

tourism. Projects needed to take into account both the impact of seasonality on their own viability, but also the impact on local businesses, to avoid impact falling during an already busy period.

Improving project design

Key weaknesses in project design, with long term consequences, tended to relate to the viability of business plans. This often related to a lack of consultation, or relatedly, not taking sufficient notice of local circumstances. Importantly, problems here tended to occur early on in a project when the initial design idea was forming, perhaps before much engagement with CCF would have taken place. Any measures taken to improve this therefore need to influence projects very early in their development.

The creation of Coastal Communities Teams (CCTs) could be argued to have partly addressed this, and indeed many of the projects most affected by early failures in business planning were those without input from a CCT. However, interviews suggested that these Teams are often created in response to a project idea, rather than beforehand. Guidance is provided to projects: the guidance published by the Coastal Communities Fund[9] is very comprehensive in terms of what is required to apply, and the administrative and legal processes of obtaining funding. However, although it clearly states that a well-supported business plan will be required, it does not signpost to advice on how to put this together.

Recommendation: Investment in generic support materials for community groups, or signposting toward any existing materials, would be valuable. This has already been put in place in London, by the Mayor's office,[10] but some similar guidance, with promotion to the intended audience – and perhaps wider in scope to cover regeneration and heritage – might be useful nationally.

Stakeholders felt that the short-term and one-off nature of the fund created little incentive for long term planning for projects. One national stakeholder also suggested that the structure of the fund created a natural bias toward capital projects, because they would take a short time to implement, giving more certainty regarding spending occurring within the financial year. However, funding awarded for a specific financial year must be spent within that financial year due to long-established public spending principles, and budgeting takes place on an annual basis. There may be ways to reduce this, however:

Recommendation: Future rounds of funding could take more of a strategic approach to investment in specific local areas. A portion of funding could, for example, be ring-fenced for projects in the same location, with a preference for funding development or expansion

---

[9] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018). *Coastal Communities Fund Round Five: Guidance Notes England.* February 2018. Accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683603/CCF_Guidance_Notes.pdf

[10] Mayor of London (2017) *Community Projects Handbook.* March 2017. Accessed at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_projects_handbook_web.pdf

of existing projects[11]. This would decrease the spending power of the CCF in a single year, but might increase overall impact by giving confidence to applicants.

CCF does require extensive information regarding a project prior to awarding funding. However, it may be useful to review these to ensure that they routinely provide robust evidence of:

- Local consultation including feedback on the basic design, not just the final detail.

- Having taken into account lessons learned from other similar projects.

- A business plan not excessively reliant on the success of a small number of business ventures, bearing in mind the failure rate of new retail and leisure businesses.

1.4 Project delivery

Challenges to delivery

The most commonly occurring challenge was construction problems, apparent in several case studies. Many were not foreseeable; however, there were some commonalities. Ground conditions and flooding related to working near the coast, and in some cases building structures in the sea were often particular challenges. Most projects overcame these challenges, although some required additional funding. CCF provided significant support for projects to network with each other and learn lessons from other projects, and there is no strong evidence of projects feeling unsupported in this area. This perhaps speaks to a wider lack of available specialist knowledge in the architecture and engineering sectors of the issues around construction on the coast, rather than an issue specific to CCF.

Issues with partnership working were a frequent challenge for projects at this stage; for example, a partner dropping out of a project at a late stage, or difficulties with setting up a crucial partnership.

Another area which seemed challenging for several projects was in implementing training and apprenticeships. Often this overlapped with issues around partnership working, since training was often delivered by an external partner, but also related to difficulties connecting training to jobs.

Finally, a handful of projects had problems identified with basic project management. In some cases, this was noticed and addressed internally; in others the issue was not addressed and impeded project progress. It is likely that these issues occurred at other projects as well; such issues are by their nature difficult to detect from outside.

---

[11] This approach was taken to some extent in Round 4 and again in Round 5, through the portfolio project approach, where a partnership-type organisation was funded to deliver a range of projects. However, because the majority of these projects were in Round 5 for which no outcomes data is available, it is too early to judge whether this approach is more successful in quantitative terms.

Recommendation: CCF should ensure at award of funds that larger projects funded have a suitable and robust process of audit and/or challenge in place, whether external or internal. For smaller projects this might be overly onerous; they could instead be contacted mid-project to check that they have basic project management processes for a small project in place, and encourage them to put them in place if they do not.

Monitoring project delivery

The monitoring of projects was widely praised by projects; they found it 'light touch' and felt it fairly represented their projects. The burden, unlike some other funders, was not found to be unreasonable by any project. However, there were limitations to the monitoring outputs, significantly affecting the quality of the data. The monitoring data, although comprehensive in terms of categories of information gathered, contained some errors and omissions, most significantly an inability to distinguish between a project genuinely achieving nothing by a particular metric and that project not submitting data for that specific metric. These data quality shortcomings presented some analysis difficulties; in this report we must in most cases compare the outcomes and projected data only for projects which had submitted a non-zero actual outcome.

Recommendation: CCF should define outcomes clearly so that they can be understood by all projects, and allow for non-response in how data is gathered, rather than recording this as a zero.

Recommendation: CCF monitored outcomes once, at a fixed point in time. Many projects reported longer term outcomes to this evaluation, which could have been captured with multiple snapshots of data monitoring, although this need not be across the full spectrum of items monitored. Monitoring for schemes intending to stimulate long term economic regeneration should be extended for a longer period of time to take this into account.

Recommendation: CCF should separate out elements of larger projects for monitoring and reporting, and separate out the funds given to each element of the project. To avoid losing the simplicity of funding drawdown, this allocation could be notional based on initial project budgets rather than closely monitored during the drawdown process.

1.5 Outputs and Impact

Direct economic outputs

Many projects created jobs directly; nearly all created at least some jobs in the construction and/or administration of the project. However, for other projects this was reportedly a key source of impact, for example in business centres or market developments, which created substantial numbers of jobs directly. At least 16 of the 21 projects examined in-depth through case studies showed evidence of establishing a sustainable, on-going project with a plausible route to attracting or generating further investment, with a further two of the 21 where evidence was as yet unclear. Three of the 21 could be said not to have had the outputs intended.

However, the larger reported impact tended to be in terms of indirect employment. Numerous projects had an impact on the wider economy; local beneficiaries frequently

spoke about how a project had transformed a high street or a local area, or attracted more tourists, and created opportunities for other businesses.

Interviewees in case studies often said that it was often hard to quantify the true extent of economic impact from the projects, primarily because of the difficulties of attributing impacts directly to the CCF funded project. One national stakeholder highlighted that assessing the economic impact of tourism on a locality was a specialist skill, and that standard techniques might miss significant elements of this, for example the impact of a change in an area's image.

Although as previously noted, recording was patchy, numerous CCF projects created and maintained jobs. In total, the programme over its first four rounds was reported to have created 2,680 jobs directly, and 4,485 indirectly, as well as safeguarding a further 1,835 jobs. However, projects not reporting any actual indirect job creation accounted for a further 5,730 forecast jobs; it seems likely from examples of case studies that in reality at least some of these forecast jobs were created but not reported to CCF. In proportion to the population, more jobs were created in smaller towns and villages than in large towns and cities.

In total, 960 vocational training places were created, and 4,520 non-vocational training places were created. Nearly 400 trainees gained employment as a result of the projects; but nearly 2,000 trainees gained qualifications. This imbalance is quite significant and speaks to an issue spotted in several case studies, where one of the key difficulties was providing training at the right time to lead to employment. In at least one case where a project was delayed, training was delivered in an attempt to deliver at least some elements of the project on time, thus severing the link between training and the employment it was intended to lead to. In other cases, other practical difficulties or design issues prevented this connection being made.

CCF projects recorded 6,712 private businesses supported and 482 new businesses started and supported across the four rounds as a result of the funding. CCF projects also recorded an increase in business sales totalling £29.7m.

CCF projects reported an increase of 3.2m visitors across Rounds 1 to 4 and £226.7m in expenditure from new visitors.

Wider impact

Many projects' impact reportedly went beyond the immediate effect of the intervention funded. Project extensions took place in a number of cases, after the conclusion of CCF involvement. Of the 21 projects examined in qualitative case studies, 12 were able to show persuasive evidence of further investment and/or economic growth following on from the CCF project outside the project itself, for example new businesses being created or existing businesses moving to the area, or increased tourism footfall benefiting existing businesses. In three further cases, the evidence for additional investment was unclear, although this did not mean it did not occur. Interviewees often felt that the impact of a project on an area was quite diffuse and difficult to attribute directly and solely to the project itself.

Case study participants often spoke of an image change, or an improvement in 'morale'. Several case study projects received positive media coverage – typically at a local or

regional level, and occasionally even at a national level. This was often credited for an increase in visitor numbers or private investment. These longer-term effects are perhaps the most difficult to measure, since CCF may be one of many factors influencing a visitor to come to an area, or a business to invest or expand.

Recommendation: CCF should encourage relevant projects to spend some funds on promotion of their project, not only for the immediate benefit in terms of custom and community engagement, but due to the knock-on effects (in terms of investment and community cohesion) of improving the image of a location.

Where partnerships were working well, there were also examples of further collaboration, leading to new projects or wider community networks providing resilience (particularly during COVID-19) being created. Enhanced stakeholder relations were a key outcome from some projects, which would not be reflected in monitoring data. Sometimes strong ongoing relationships were formed between local authorities and charities who had worked with the CCF funding.

Recommendation: CCF and similar funds going forward should consider retaining or implementing a similar approach to Coastal Communities Teams, to assist in ensuring wider consultation and community buy-in for projects funded.

For some projects, their success became a catalyst for further successful funding applications, since the evaluation of the first project could be cited as support subsequently. This is undermined a little, though, by the lack of systematic evaluation of CCF projects, particularly smaller projects where little resource or expertise exists for this.

Recommendation: CCF and other similar funds should consider ways to better support and assist projects, particularly small projects, to estimate their actual economic impact.

Maximising delivery

Analysis of CCF data showed that some types of project were more efficient than others in terms of the creation of jobs, selected as a metric due to its wide availability for all projects. In particular, smaller projects seemed to achieve greater returns per pound spent. Property-based projects (e.g., restoration of a building) were less effective per pound spent, although in some cases they may be essential to regenerating a specific location.

Recommendation: CCF and other similar funds should reconsider the balance of funds between small and large projects, given the value for money apparently represented by these smaller projects.

Generally, projects in the North and South West of England generated stronger returns (in terms of job generation) than projects in the South East and East, possibly due to lower property costs. Projects in smaller settlements were slightly more efficient in terms of jobs generated per pound spent than those in larger towns or cities. Finally, efficiency of job generation was greater in areas of moderately high long term unemployment, and least in areas with the least unemployment of this type.

Recommendation: CCF and other similar funds should continue to target a range of urban and rural areas, but should also take account of the level of deprivation and unemployment in the area of projects when awarding funds.

1.6 Conclusions

The fundamental rationale for the programme has been found to be sound; prior to CCF coastal areas, despite suffering similar economic shocks as former industrial cities, had not previously seen the level of focus on regeneration experienced by those cities. The focus on rural areas or smaller towns is also supported by the data; projects in these areas seem to have greater returns in terms of jobs gained.

Generally, the administration of the Fund was found to be good, but with some improvements possible in areas such as speed of decision-making, and support or advice made available to community-led projects for project design (as opposed to making their application).

The programme delivered £187m of grants over nine years and five rounds to a wide range of projects around England's coasts, case studies suggest that most of which could with reasonable confidence be said to have contributed to job growth and prosperity. Participants often expressed strong support for the CCF, and appreciated its simple and flexible design.

There is also a strong case from the qualitative case studies that CCF funding is generally additional rather than displacing other spending; the vast majority of those case studies spoken to felt that their projects could not have gone ahead without CCF funding. Several projects had, for example, been seeking funding for some years prior to the CCF. Many of the projects were also reported to have had knock-on effects which also would have been absent. While it did not prove feasible to produce an estimate of economic impact in a quantitative sense as part of this research, this does suggest that the net impact of the CCF on some local areas was substantial.

Key factors in the success of projects in generating economic impact were also identified from the case studies, including:

- Wide consultation at an early stage, prior to key design decisions (already encouraged by CCTs introduced at round four, but could be further improved)

- Strong partnership working (already encouraged by the CCTs introduced at round four)

- A focus on long term economic viability from the start (which could be encouraged further by CCF)

- Good project management and project leadership

2. Background and methodology

2.1 Background

History of the programme

Numerous coastal areas in England were built around the development of the domestic tourism industry, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. While domestic tourism is still a key industry in England, in volume terms domestic tourism peaked in 1973, in the face of competition from overseas holidays[12].

Many other coastal towns and cities developed around the fishing industry, or around ports and ship-building. All of these industries have seen significant decline in employment and activity since the mid-20th century; for example, around 10,000 people were employed as fishermen in the UK in 2015, compared to 38,000 in 1938[13]. In this sense, some coastal areas have much in common with inland post-industrial cities in the UK, which faced major economic change in the late 20th century, but where substantial regeneration efforts have been made to address this.

Yet in February 2007, a House of Commons report found that despite 21 of the 88 most deprived Local Authorities being in coastal areas, no national strategy existed to regenerate these areas, and no national or regional funding streams were specifically targeted at coastal areas[14].

As a result of awareness raised by this report, a series of initiatives were put in place to address these problems, starting with the Sea Change programme in late 2007. This programme, operated and funded by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund, offered £45m in grants for heritage and culture projects in disadvantaged coastal resorts around England from 2008 to 2010, intended to stimulate wider improvements and economic benefits for these areas[15]. In the event, £38m was given in grants to Local Authorities, but an extra grant fund of £5m for Local Authorities in the most deprived seaside towns was additionally made available in 2011[16].

When that programme came to an end, it was widely viewed as a success, and it was decided by ministers that this investment in coastal areas needed to be replaced and built upon. In 2011, the Treasury identified a source of funds for this from the Crown Estate,

---

[12] House of Commons. Communities and Local Government Committee (2007). *Coastal Towns: Second Report of Session 2006-07.* February 2007.

[13] Marine Management Organisation (2017). *Statistics about fishing in the UK and beyond.* August 2017. Accessed at: https://marinedevelopments.blog.gov.uk/2017/08/10/statistics-about-fishing-in-the-uk-and-beyond/

[14] House of Commons. Communities and Local Government Committee (2007). *Coastal Towns: Second Report of Session 2006-07.* February 2007.

[15] Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (2007). *Press release: £45 million cultural investment in seaside resorts.* November 2007.

[16] House of Lords. Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities (2019). *The future of seaside towns: Report of session 2017-19.* April 2019.

which receives Marine Revenues, paid to the Crown for the use of the coastal waters of the UK. Half of funds from this source were initially allocated to the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) programme[17], with grants given totalling £22m in the first year (2012/13)[18], on total spending from Marine Revenues of £23.7m[19]. This represented a significant increase in grant-giving relative to Sea Change, and a broadening of focus toward wider economic development objectives, while Sea Change had focused on heritage and culture projects. Sea Change projects also typically provided a large sum to a specific seaside town through the Local Authority, whereas CCF provided a wider range of grant sizes suitable for community-led projects, without a specific geographic focus in any given year.

One element of continuity with Sea Change was that the Big Lottery Fund were also the initial delivery partners[20]. Policy responsibility for the CCF in England passed in 2012 (shortly after the Fund was announced) from the Treasury to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), later renamed the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), who continue to administer the programme at a policy level. The three devolved administrations were given responsibility for the administration of the Fund in their territories.

Current programme

The CCF evolved over time into a larger programme, with funding in England increasing over time. Five rounds of the programme (issuing grants totalling £188m) have now been delivered, with each taking two years on average to deliver, although the first and second rounds covered shorter periods of time. Initially for Rounds 1 to 3 the programme was delivered alongside broadly similar CCF schemes in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, administered by the devolved administrations. However, from Round 4 onwards its operation has tended to differ between all four territories. In Scotland, following the Scotland Act 2016, the territory gained control over all of Crown Estate Scotland's annual revenues, including those from its marine assets. Since 2019 no further CCF rounds have been held in Scotland. Under new arrangements, Scottish coastal local authorities now receive an annual allocation of funds directly from the Crown Estate's marine assets, to support local projects benefitting coastal areas[21].

The delivery partners changed over time; the Big Lottery Fund delivered the first three rounds; the fourth was delivered in-house at MHCLG; and the fifth by Groundwork UK. In 2015 for Round 4 and 5, an important new funded element was added, of Coastal Communities Teams, intended to bring together key stakeholders in coastal areas to drive

---

[17] Department for Communities and Local Government (2014) *Government Policy on Coastal Communities (Presentation).* October 2014.
[18] Sourced from MHCLG/DLUHC annual databases of grants, combined by IFF Research
[19] House of Lords. Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities (2019). *The future of seaside towns: Report of session 2017-19.* April 2019.
[20] House of Lords. Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities (2019). *The future of seaside towns: Report of session 2017-19.* April 2019.
[21] The Fishing Daily, 13 Jul 2020. *£9.7 million Revenue to be distributed to Scottish Coastal Communities.* July 2020. Accessed at: https://thefishingdaily.com/latest-news/9-7-million-revenue-to-be-distributed-to-scottish-coastal-communities/

forward CCF funded projects and other activities locally, and receiving £10,000 each of set-up grant funding[22]. In total, 146 of these were put in place between 2015 and 2017.

This evaluation focuses on the programme in England, from its inception in 2012 to the present. No firm decision has yet been made on whether further rounds of funding will be made available. However, the government has stated that there are currently no plans for further rounds of CCF funding in England.[23]

2.2 Evaluation

Research questions

The evaluation was required to answer the following questions:

- What did the programme deliver?
- Who benefited from it and how?
- What would have happened without the intervention?

Rationale for the programme

Key to answering these questions is to understand the goals and rationale of the programme, and how it was intended to deliver those goals. The problem to be addressed was identified at the outset as economic decline in coastal areas. The programme therefore had an economic focus; it should *"help coastal towns and villages provide training and employment opportunities, and… stimulate economic growth"*.[24] The desired outcome was described in CCF's first Annual Report as being that *"coastal communities will experience regeneration and sustainable economic growth through projects that directly or indirectly create sustainable jobs, and safeguard existing jobs"*.[25]

One of the key characteristics about the programme is that it is neutral regarding how this objective is achieved. The programme is not specific to a single model of *how* they should create employment and economic growth, although priorities were set for each round. For Round 4, the priorities were[26]:

---

[22] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2015) *2010 to 2015 government policy: economic development in coastal and seaside areas.* May 2015. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-economic-development-in-coastal-and-seaside-areas/2010-to-2015-government-policy-economic-development-in-coastal-and-seaside-areas

[23] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). *Future of seaside towns: updated government response to the select committee report.* June 2021.

[24] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2015) *2010 to 2015 government policy: economic development in coastal and seaside areas.* May 2015. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-economic-development-in-coastal-and-seaside-areas/2010-to-2015-government-policy-economic-development-in-coastal-and-seaside-areas

[25] Big Lottery Fund (2015) *Coastal Communities Fund: Annual Progress Report 2014.* November 2014.

[26] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2016) *Coastal Communities Fund Round 4: Assessment Process.* September 2016.

- Deliver economic diversification and innovation
- Provide support for small and medium sized enterprises
- Address seasonality by creating new patterns of demand for tourism
- Deliver improvements to public places that will increase the number of visitors
- Deliver jobs and economic growth through integrated regeneration initiatives

2.3 Methodology

The evaluation was a multi-stage project, using several methods. The key elements of the project were as follows:

- Six in-depth interviews with key people who were either involved in the implementation of the programme, or were key stakeholders in it on a national level (August-October 2020)
- A retrospective review of data gathered by the CCF programme during implementation, covering funding rounds one to four. Impacts data for funding round five is not yet available, since these projects are not yet complete (September 2020, repeated in May-June 2021)
- 21 in-depth case studies[27] of projects funded by CCF, including all five rounds of funding (September 2020 to June 2021).

The project was delayed significantly, in particular the case studies, due to the impact of COVID-19. Many of the interviews needed to be with retail or tourism businesses which were temporarily closed due to the pandemic, or with council officials who were on secondment to COVID-19-specific activities during the peak of the outbreak.

National interviews

These 45 to 60 minute telephone depth interviews with national stakeholders were carried out in August to October 2020, and included the following key organisations:

- Big Lottery Fund (who managed the CCF project for MHCLG until 2017)
- British Destinations
- Groundwork UK (who now manage the CCF project for DLUHC)
- Coastal Communities Alliance
- Crown Estate (who provide the funding for the CCF programme)

These interviews provided context to many of the views expressed in the case studies, and provided an inside view of the workings of the Fund on a day-to-day basis, crucial to understanding the Fund's strengths and weaknesses.

Due to COVID-19, interviews were carried out exclusively via video conference call or telephone, by interviewers from IFF Research.

---

[27] 18 of these were full case studies, while three 'mini case studies' had limited numbers of interviews, mainly due to the delay between project and evaluation meaning those involved could not be contacted.

Case studies

Depth reviews were carried out, investigating 21 CCF-funded projects around England, from Round 1 to Round 4. Each full case study consisted of between five and ten depth interviews with project organisers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. Due to the diversity of the projects in terms of type and size, the profile and number of people interviewed varied substantially between case studies. In three cases, only partial 'mini case studies' could be carried out, mainly due to the length of time that had passed since the Round 1 and Round 2 projects were completed, meaning that key people involved had moved on to new roles in different organisations, or could not recall the project.

A full list of case studies is provided in Appendix B, together with a profile by size of project, round, region, and project type. A representative cross-section of all CCF projects was achieved. There was no particular focus on successful or less successful case studies; the focus was on improvement of the programme as a whole, rather than providing examples of best practice.

Quotes and material from these interviews is used throughout the report, and each case study has also been written up in a separate document.

Due to COVID-19, interviews were carried out exclusively via video conference call or telephone, by interviewers from IFF Research.

Retrospective data

MHCLG and DLUHC's sub-contractors, the Big Lottery Fund and Groundwork UK (or MHCLG in-house in Round 4) gathered data from individual projects for each round of CCF funding, around one year after the project was intended to have completed its CCF funded work.

This data was collated for this evaluation into a single data file for all four rounds, and combined with data on the cost of the projects as well as geographical data for analysis.

Limitations

Conventionally, an evaluation of this type would include a quantitative analysis of the economic impact of the spending on the policy concerned. This is not included in this research. Therefore, although the report does draw on the case studies to comment on the economic impact perceived by those affected by the projects, and is able to document the delivery of policy outputs, it does not contain an estimate of a cost-benefit ratio or the net impact on the projects on England's coastal areas.

This exclusion was the result of several factors preventing this type of analysis. Usually, an analysis of impact would require considering the result of a policy's delivery against a hypothetical situation where that policy had not been in place, or a 'counterfactual'. There are several methods of constructing a counterfactual for impact analysis, all of which were ruled out at the feasibility stages of this research:

Temporal counterfactual
A typical approach to an evaluation would involve measurement of various economic metrics before the policy was implemented, and measurement again afterwards. The

analysis would be based around a comparison of these measurement points. However, this was not possible in the case of the CCF:

- Although some of the projects were large, the majority of projects funded by CCF were small in scale. On average, an area targeted by the CCF received £15.20 per head of population over several years. This means that the impact would typically be small compared to other economic factors, such as the closure of a major local employer, a situation encountered in one of the case studies in Redcar.

- This is compounded by the fact that economic data in England is compiled only at a Local Authority level. Generally, Local Authorities in England combine coastal settlements with other – often larger – inland settlements. For example, Northumberland is a single administrative unit. The result is a further dilution of the recorded economic impact of CCF interventions focused only on the coast.

- Many projects were also part of wider programmes, from which the impacts are difficult to separate. For example, the Lightpool project in Blackpool was part of wider regeneration efforts in the town also seeking to cause economic change.

- The evaluation occurred after the Rounds 1 to 5 of the CCF programme, and therefore was not in a position to put in place bespoke local monitoring or data collection prior to projects starting to address the issues above.

Geographical counterfactual
Another approach to constructing a counterfactual would be to find areas where no funding, or a lesser level of funding, has been received and to compare these against locations where funding was put in place. In this case, several factors prevented this:

- Over the period of the CCF, nearly all coastal areas received at least some funding, and it was relatively evenly distributed across England.

- Generally, the fund was targeted at areas with less favourable economic conditions; this means that the areas receiving less funding tend to have more favourable economic conditions due to other factors. This makes them unsuitable for consideration as a counterfactual.

- Comparing the performance of inland towns in a local area to the performance of coastal towns might be a possibility were data available; however, this is hampered by the fact that economic data is gathered at a Local Authority level.

Therefore, while this report contains a full assessment of the programme's planning and delivery, including quantitative outputs, the assessment of net impact is based solely on qualitative case studies and depth interviews.

3. Distributing funds

3.1 Application process

Nearly all case study interviewees felt that the process of applying for funding from CCF was straightforward, including those who had experience of applying to other funding sources. For example, it was consistently compared positively by numerous respondents to the process required to access European Regional Development Funding (ERDF). This was felt by many interviewees to be a strength of CCF, enabling it to reach community-based projects which might have a lesser capacity for administration.

However, some of those interviewed who were involved in the process of assessing projects did say that it was challenging to effectively assess the viability of the larger, more complex projects with the information available to them from the application forms. This is to some extent inevitable with such a wide range of sizes of project being covered through a single process; it may be that a tiered approach with different application processes for the largest projects might have been desirable.

3.2 Selection process

All five CCF rounds attracted strong interest from projects seeking funding; all were substantially oversubscribed.[28]

There was therefore a two-stage process for selecting projects, as shown in the flowchart below. This process takes approximately 12 months from the announcement of funding to the release of funding. The first stage is a sift of applications. For Rounds 4 and 5 applications were encouraged from or evidence of support by the newly established Coastal Communities Teams, which had developed locally agreed Economic Plans. Information about the project and its links to the Economic Plans (at Rounds 4 and 5) or general economic viability (at Rounds 1 to 3) were taken into account in the first stage sift process, a process designed to provide assurance of the need for the project locally.

The Big Lottery Fund (at Rounds 1 to 3) and Groundwork (at Round 5) provided recommendations, but the final decision resided with MHCLG. At Round 4, the process of producing recommendations was handled internally at MHCLG. A selection of projects are advised that they can move to Stage 2, leading to a more fully worked up proposal (by the end of this stage capital projects must have gained planning consent)[29]. There is final process of selection and approval, including input from ministers.
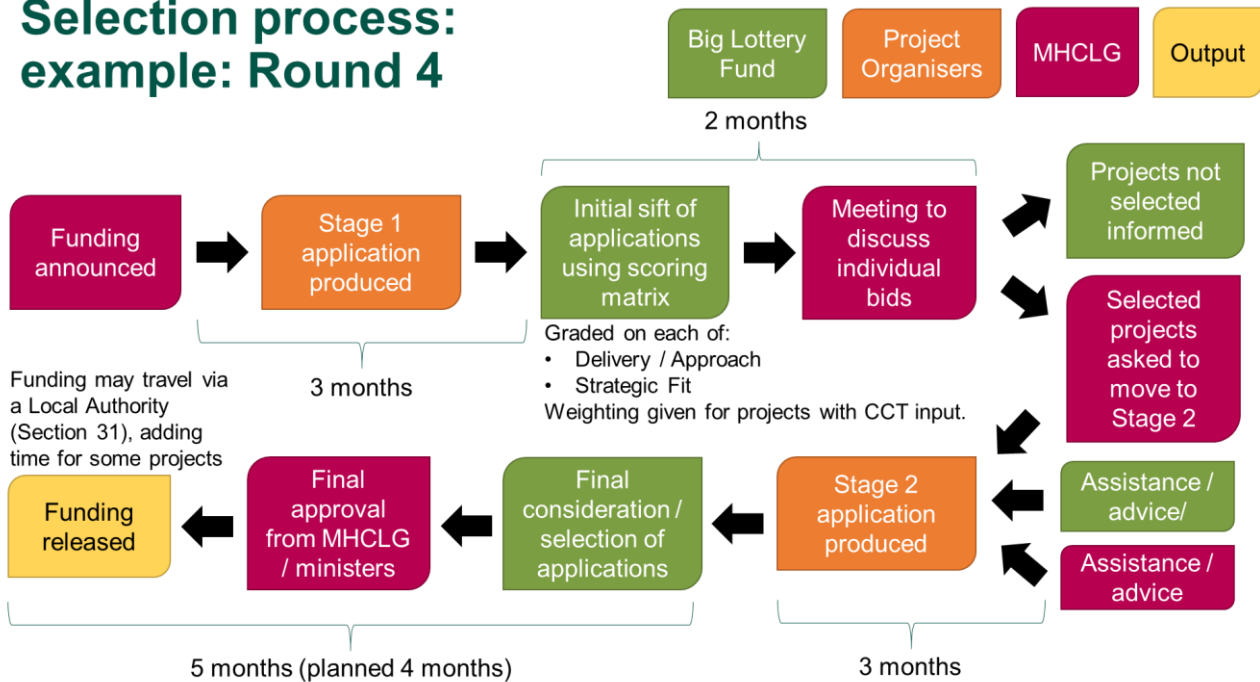
---

[28] Department for Communities and Local Government (2014) *Government Policy on Coastal Communities (Presentation).* October 2014.
[29] Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government (2018) *Coastal Communities Fund Round Five: Guidance Notes England.* February 2018.

Figure 2.1   CCF project selection and funding process

The two stage process was praised by those involved as a good approach to dealing with an oversubscribed source of funding, without putting undue burden on unsuccessful bidders, although it was also suggested that too many projects were taken to second stage.

However, there was some criticism from a minority of projects of the speed of awards being made. Two projects mentioned that delays to the receipt of funding had caused them difficulties, although they did not have any insight into the reasons for the delays. One national stakeholder suggested that the approvals process for the CCF funding was longer and more drawn-out in England than it needed to be, especially compared with processes for releasing funding on the related but separately operated funds in Scotland and Wales[30]. The key issue was thought to be the requirement for very high level approval required for specific projects at both stages of the two-stage application process. Building in time for ministerial approval in particular could take time and add uncertainty over timings:

> *"Sometimes it was quite slow to get decision-making, so once the assessments had been made they would disappear off to [the department] for… it might be… several months before decisions came back – so that could be a frustration... the timeline, particularly for England… would shift, and there would be delays [to projects]."*

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER SM01

---

[30] Stakeholders were not able to comment on the process in Northern Ireland.

3.3 Selection outcomes

The CCF was widely praised for its flexibility, and willingness to fund projects which were eclectic in nature, rather than being narrowly focused on one particular way to achieve economic growth or create jobs.

"The flexibility of the CCF has been brilliant."

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER (JC02)

"CCF was key because it had a wider vision, so was in tune with what we were trying to do."

PROJECT ORGANISER, BREAN DOWN WAY

Only one stakeholder disagreed with this, feeling the fund should have been restricted to a narrower scope (economic development, primarily through tourism), resulting in a narrower range of applications and projects more focused on the needs of the seaside resort towns which had originally spearheaded the drive to put the fund in place:

"If [the core aims of the fund] had been communicated better the number of applicants would have probably reduced and the projects that were delivered would have been better."

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER (JC02)

One stakeholder, however, noted the particular difficulty in measuring the economic benefit of tourism to a local economy using standard tools and techniques, and the need for specialist knowledge of the sector to understand the benefit a project might or might not bring.

Some of those involved nationally felt that MHCLG input sometimes resulted in less viable or less good value projects being taken forward to the second stage or awarded funding, although this may reflect a need to take into account wider government priorities in terms of project types or locations.

There will be some great projects, that probably got half the money but got loads delivered, and there will be some [where CCF] funded the whole thing and [they] were much more costly for the department, [but] may have resulted in fewer benefits. [That's] always the case to some extent, but might be a bit more amplified here given the range of the grants.

Several national stakeholders also highlighted that the one-off and short term nature of the funding made it difficult to build projects into a wider strategy, or into a long term plan. One suggested that five to ten years were needed, but all agreed that current approach – although improved from the initial one-year cycle of funding in round one and two, did not encourage long term planning.

For example, the Hastings Pier project was only going to be viable commercially without ongoing funding if it received sufficient initial investment in on-pier attractions which was long-term enough to see these attractions past any initial teething problems into profitability. As highlighted by market traders spoken to in the Scarborough Market Hall case study, retail businesses in particular have a high failure rate, and it may take some years of investment to reach profitability. In the case of Hastings Pier, this investment did not arrive.

"We have quite a lot of these [capital projects such as] buildings… which is great. But… it's all kind of predicated on being able to generate enough income to sustain that in the longer term, and that isn't always necessarily possible, or there isn't any kind of sustained funding for more longer term work that is going to actually pay for jobs in those industries…"

It is possible to see in other successful projects a similar risk, even if it was avoided in practice; for example, if the Queenborough Harbour project had been slightly less ambitious in scope, and had not been as proactive in seeking further expansion opportunities and business partnerships beyond the CCF funding, it might not have achieved the financial viability brought by economies of scale.

3.4 Funding routes

At the end of the process, the grant is paid to the successful organisation leading the project.

Grants to local authority run projects are paid annually in response to their forecast spend in a particular funding year, under powers in section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

In the case of projects run by voluntary or community sector and private sector bodies, grants are usually paid quarterly in arrears in response to invoiced expenditure using powers under section 126 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. That said, revenue and in some cases capital grants can be paid to voluntary or community organisations in advance where they have insufficient funds of their own to pay invoices without a grant.

However, in some cases where a voluntary or community sector project and their local authority are content, the grant can be channelled indirectly to a voluntary sector project via their local authority under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This does create a further stage in the process, but avoids administrative difficulties which central government may have in making direct payments to community-based groups who may be unused to managing large grant payments.

The process of releasing and drawing down funding was also praised as being simpler than many other public sector funding sources, which it was suggested were frequently excessively complex and burdensome. This view was shared by both case study projects and by those administering the CCF.

3.5 Change over time in funding

The level of funding dispensed through this process each year has varied since the CCF first issued funds in 2012, as shown in Figure 2.2; initially the fund received 50% of all Marine Revenues from the Crown Estate. The total value of this source of funding has been increasing, due to increasing use of inshore waters by uses which require the payment of levies to the Crown Estate (for example by tidal or wind power generation).

CCF funding was reduced to 33% of Marine Revenues from Round 4 onwards. For Rounds 1 and 2 CCF funds were allocated annually. In Round 3, owing to the Chancellor's decision to extend CCF funding, three years' worth of grants covering the years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 were allocated as a block[31]. Round 4 allocated funds for 2017-18 and 2018-19 together with Round 5 covering the funding period 2019-20 to 2020-21. This increase in the number of years covered by each round reduced the number of CCF application and selection processes carried out to one every two or three years. One national stakeholder mentioned that uncertainties over the level of funding remained one year until the last minute, which hampered the process of project selection.

---

[31] The funding was also substantially lower per annum for Round 3 than it was for Rounds 1 or 2. Although initially 50% of Crown Estate marine revenues was allocated to the Fund for this round, after delays to the initial approval of projects early in this round, part of the funding for these years was repurposed for other urgent coastal funding requirements, in particular to flood recovery initiatives following the coastal storm surge of late 2014 / early 2015.

Figure 2.2   CCF funding: per round and per annum

Source: CCF Monitoring Data *ONS Census (2011) **ONS Census 2011, BUA data **London was specifically excluded.

It can be seen that the later funding rounds covered longer funding allocation periods. This had both advantages and disadvantages. It gave projects more flexibility regarding start dates and reduced administrative burdens due to the smaller number of rounds of grant-giving, but on the other hand some pointed out that funding had to come at the "right moment" for projects. This applied not just in terms of the project itself, but in terms of gathering match funding together before the offer of funding expired.

> *"If you're on a one year cycle, it is far easier to sustain and re-submit the bid the following year for match funding."*

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW (TB01)

In addition, the organisation of the funding changed. This was originally overseen by the Big Lottery Fund (for Rounds 1 to 3), and then subsequently taken in-house at MHCLG (for Round 4), and then moved to Groundwork UK (for Round 5). Stakeholders agreed that this move had suited the evolving nature of the fund, as it the focus moved toward funding larger infrastructure-based projects. The Big Lottery Fund in its wider work has a focus on smaller, community-based projects, rather than larger projects where Local Authorities play a key role, and where economic forecasting is more central to decision-making.

3.6 Project types

Activities funded

Over all five rounds, although most CCF projects were small (39% less than £0.5m in grant value), as shown in Figure 2.3, most of the funding was dedicated to the larger projects.

**Figure 2.3   CCF funding: by size of project, Rounds 1 to 5**

	Projects (%)	*Funding, £m (%)*
Less than £0.5m	69 (39%)	£18.9m (10%)
£0.5m - £1m	43 (24%)	£30.6m (16%)
£1m - £2m	39 (22%)	£58.3m (31%)
More than £2m	27 (15%)	£77.8m (42%)

Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5.

This distribution did not remain static, however, and changed markedly from wave to wave. As shown in Figure 2.4, there was a shift toward larger grants in round three, progressing further in round four, such that grants of over £2m accounted for almost two thirds (63%) of spending in that round, falling back slightly to around half (52%) in round five. However, this change was largely at the expense of mid-sized grants of between £0.5m and £2m. The proportion of funds spent on the smallest grants (of less than £0.5m) remained largely unchanged, and in fact was highest at round three (15%).

This fits with the picture outlined by national stakeholders, some of whom mentioned a shift from smaller, more community-led projects in early rounds to larger projects with more professionalised leadership in rounds three to five.

Figure 2.4   CCF funding: by size of project, per annum, Rounds 1 to 5
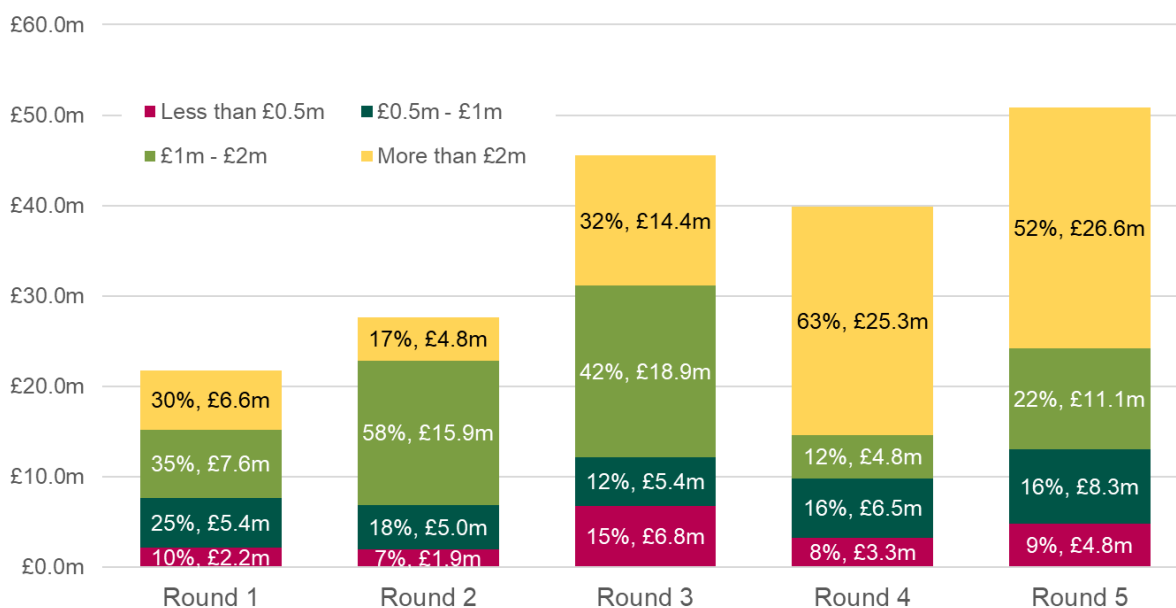
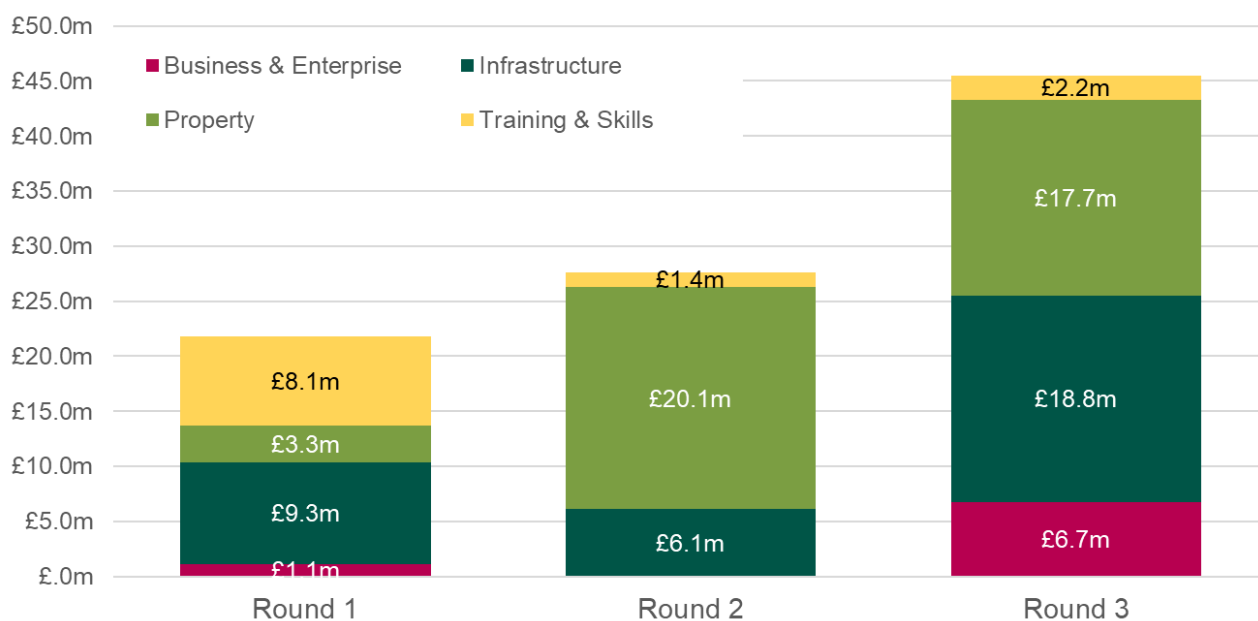Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5.

Opinions differed among stakeholders over whether this move was welcome; some felt that smaller, community-led projects were more valuable and likely to offer greater returns. Others felt that large projects were more likely to take a professional approach, and avoid funding eye-catching but economically weak projects. This is discussed further in the impacts chapter.

As shown in Figure 2.5, the priorities for spending varied over time; in the first round a high proportion of funding went to training and skills projects (37%), but these were a small proportion of the total in rounds two and three[32].

Business and enterprise projects (which would include business centres and business support) were rare in rounds one and two, but became a more substantial proportion of the total granted (15%) in round three.

Infrastructure projects made up a large proportion of spending in rounds one (43%) and three (41%), but property projects dominated in round 2 (73% of grants).

Figure 2.5   CCF funding: by type of project, per annum, Rounds 1 to 3

Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 3.

---

[32] This data was collected by the Big Lottery Fund during their period of administering the CCF, covering Rounds 1 to 3; comparable data could not be replicated for subsequent Rounds which were administered by MHCLG (Round 4) and Groundwork UK (Round 5).

3.7 Geographical distribution

Coastal population

For this study, a new measurement of the coastal population was undertaken, using 2011 Census data, combined with the ONS BUA (Built-up area) classification. This looked at population in settlements within 5km of the coast, including the full population of any settlement with a coastal element. It found that the total coastal population was 12.3m of 53.4m in England, or 23% of the total. More information about this estimate is provided in Appendix A.

The CCF's grant giving funding across the coastal areas of England amounted to £15.20 per head from Rounds 1 to 5, or £1.52 per annum per head.
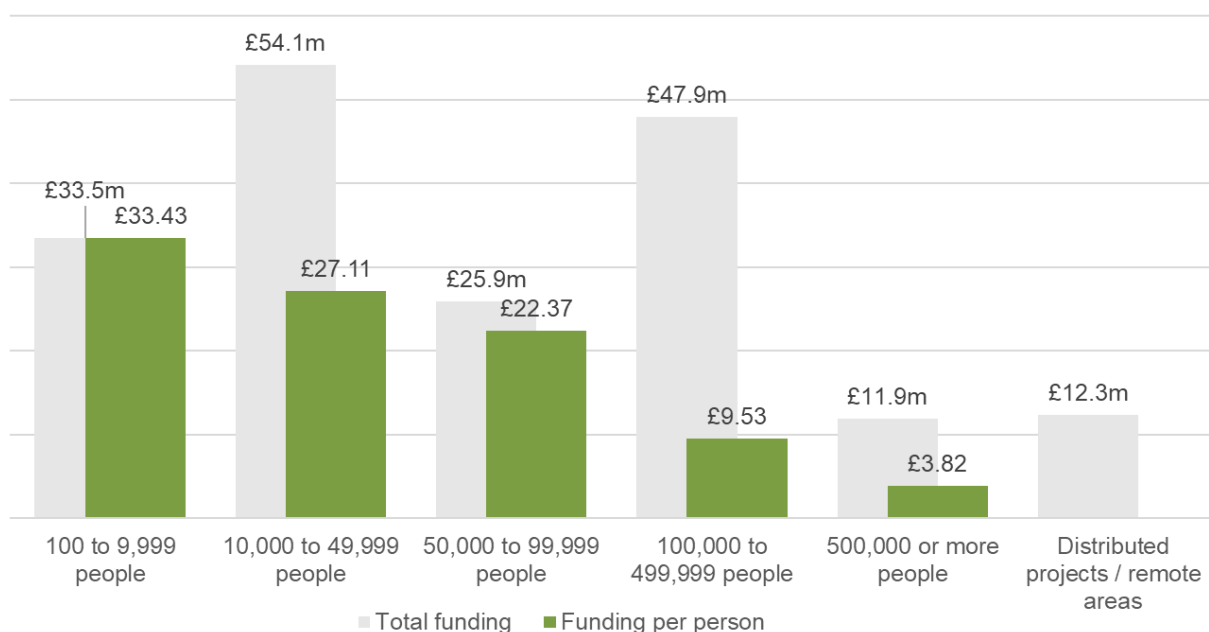
Settlement size

CCF monitoring data shows that about half (49%) of funding to projects which could be attributed a specific location went to towns and cities with 50,000 or more population.

However, when the population of these areas is taken into account, a strong slant toward rural areas is seen, as shown in Figure 2.6. Coastal areas with less than 10,000 population received £33.43 per head, compared to only £3.82 per head in the largest places with 500,000 or more population. This data also excludes a small group of projects (7% of total funding) which could not be allocated a location, for example coastal path or portfolio projects, which were a particular focus in Round 5.

This contrasts with the approach taken by other funds aiming at regeneration, which tend to focus on larger settlements.
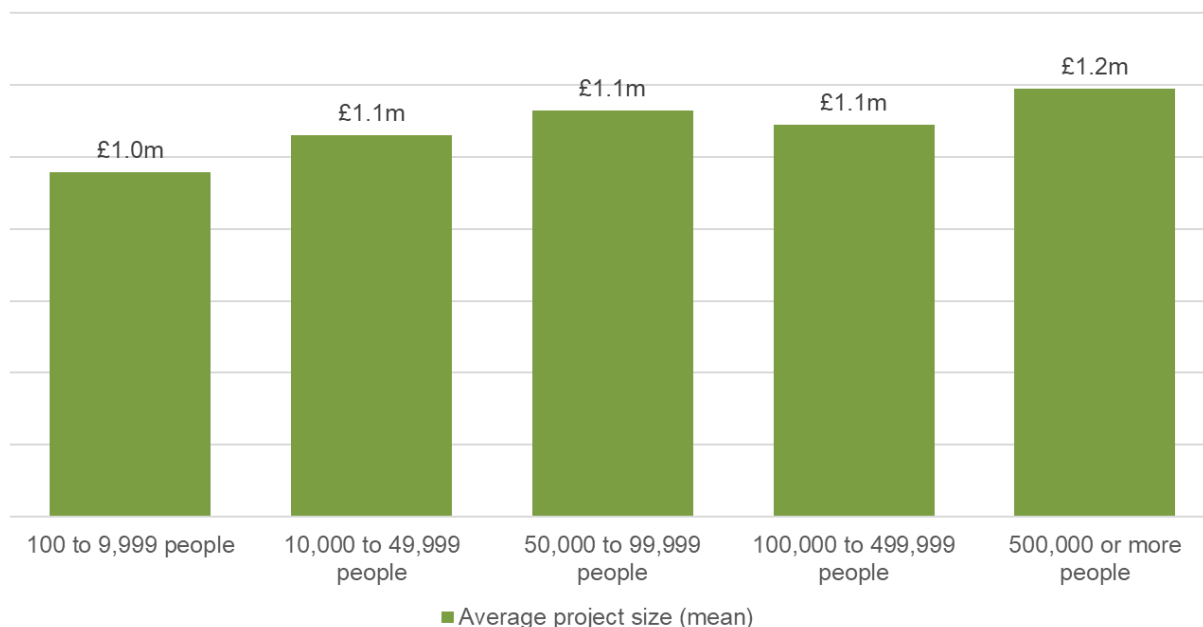
Figure 2.6   CCF funding: total and per person, split by size of settlement, Rounds 1 to 5

Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5. Population of settlements from ONS Census 2011, BUA Data.

Projects tended to be smaller in rural areas, but not by a large margin, as shown in Figure 2.7. This would tend to make the projects more substantial relative to the size of the settlement where they are in rural areas.

Figure 2.7   CCF funding: average funding per project, split by size of settlement, Rounds 1 to 5

Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5. Population of settlements from ONS Census 2011, BUA Data.

Coverage by economic status

Within coastal areas, CCF funding was targeted broadly, without a particular focus on areas of the most need. The data indicates more funding per head tended to be allocated to areas with low levels of long term unemployment[33], in part a consequence of targeting rural locations which tend to have lower levels of long term unemployment. This was a design decision, and contrasts with some other funding methods:

> *It was quite clear from the start that the fund wasn't just targeted on merited disadvantage… although in terms of impact assessment and job creation, obviously it plays quite closely into it, but you don't have to, in order to qualify, demonstrate that you are in an area of disadvantage. It's broader than some of the grant work we have been involved in the past.*

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER, JC01

---

[33] Long term unemployment is used here as a proxy for economic performance, since the most widely used direct measure of economic deprivation (the Index of Multiple Deprivation) is not available at ONS Built-up Area level.

Those settlements with the highest levels of long term unemployment (above 6.7%, putting them in the top quartile of coastal settlements on this measure) do show a lower level of funding per head than average (£10.26 compared to an average of £15.20), as shown in Figure 2.8. This may relate to the targeting of funding at smaller towns and villages, which even in Local Authorities with relatively high levels of deprivation on the whole, tend to have lower levels of long term unemployment than urban areas (see Appendix A).

However, there may be an argument for weighting funding toward areas with higher levels of deprivation.

Figure 2.8   CCF funding: funding provided, split by long term unemployment in the settlement, Rounds 1 to 5
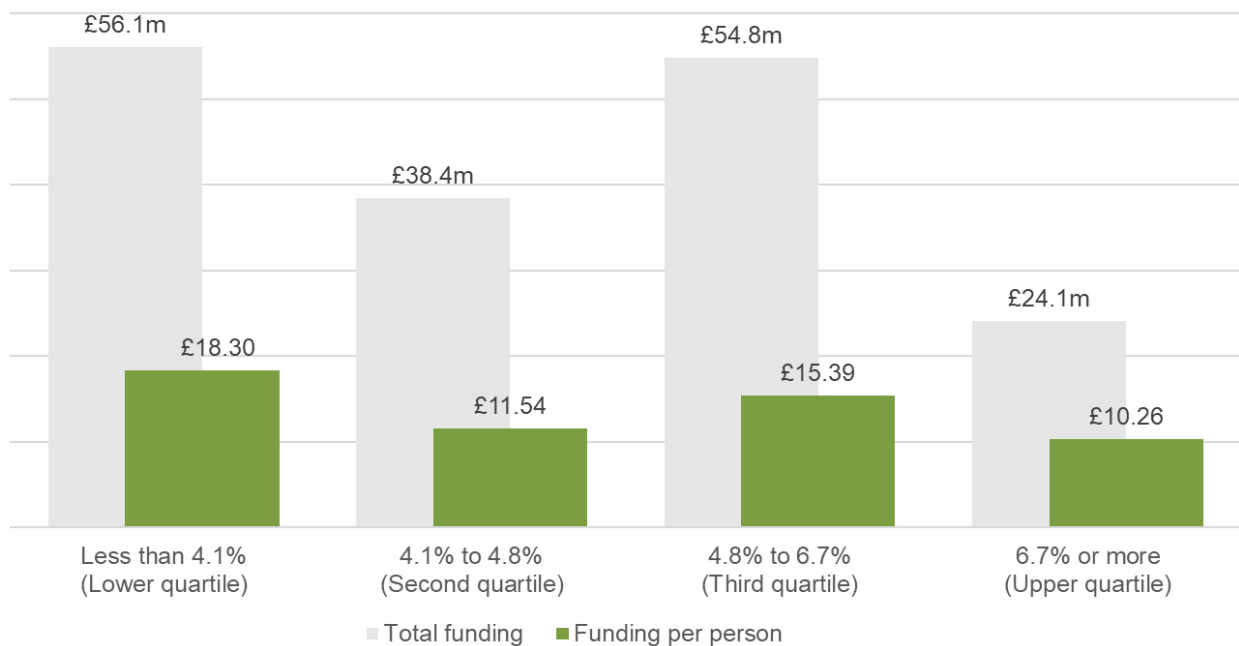
Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5. Long term unemployment rates from ONS BUA Data.

Regional coverage

The regional distribution of funds provided by CCF is patchy, when compared to the coastal population of each region. On average, the fund provided £15.20 per head over the first four rounds. However, this varied substantially by region, as shown in Figure 2.9 and 2.10.

- The **South West** received the largest quantity of funding, 56 projects attracting £62.0m in grant, and was above average in terms of grant per head (£26.65).

- **Yorkshire and Lincolnshire[34]** received by far the highest level of funding per head of coastal population (£34.52) and the second most in absolute terms (£28.4m)

---

[34] Consisting of the ONS region of Yorkshire and the Humber, with the addition of Lincolnshire. These are counted together because Lincolnshire (part of the ONS East Midlands region) cannot be analysed separately due to its small coastal population.

- The **North East** received £12.39 per head (£22.5m in total), a little below the national average.

- The **East of England** received £12.26 per head (£16.2m in total), also slightly below average despite the largely rural character of its coastline.

- The **North West** received £28.8m in total, amounting to only £10.71 per head, significantly below average. This may relate in part to CCF's focus on smaller coastal towns and villages; the coast here, especially in Lancashire, is dominated by large coastal cities and towns. It is worth noting that nearly half of the spend in the North West (46%) occurred in Round 5.

- The **South East** received £8.35 per head (£27.8m in total), well below average on a per head basis[35], perhaps due to the small number of large city-scale projects in this region.
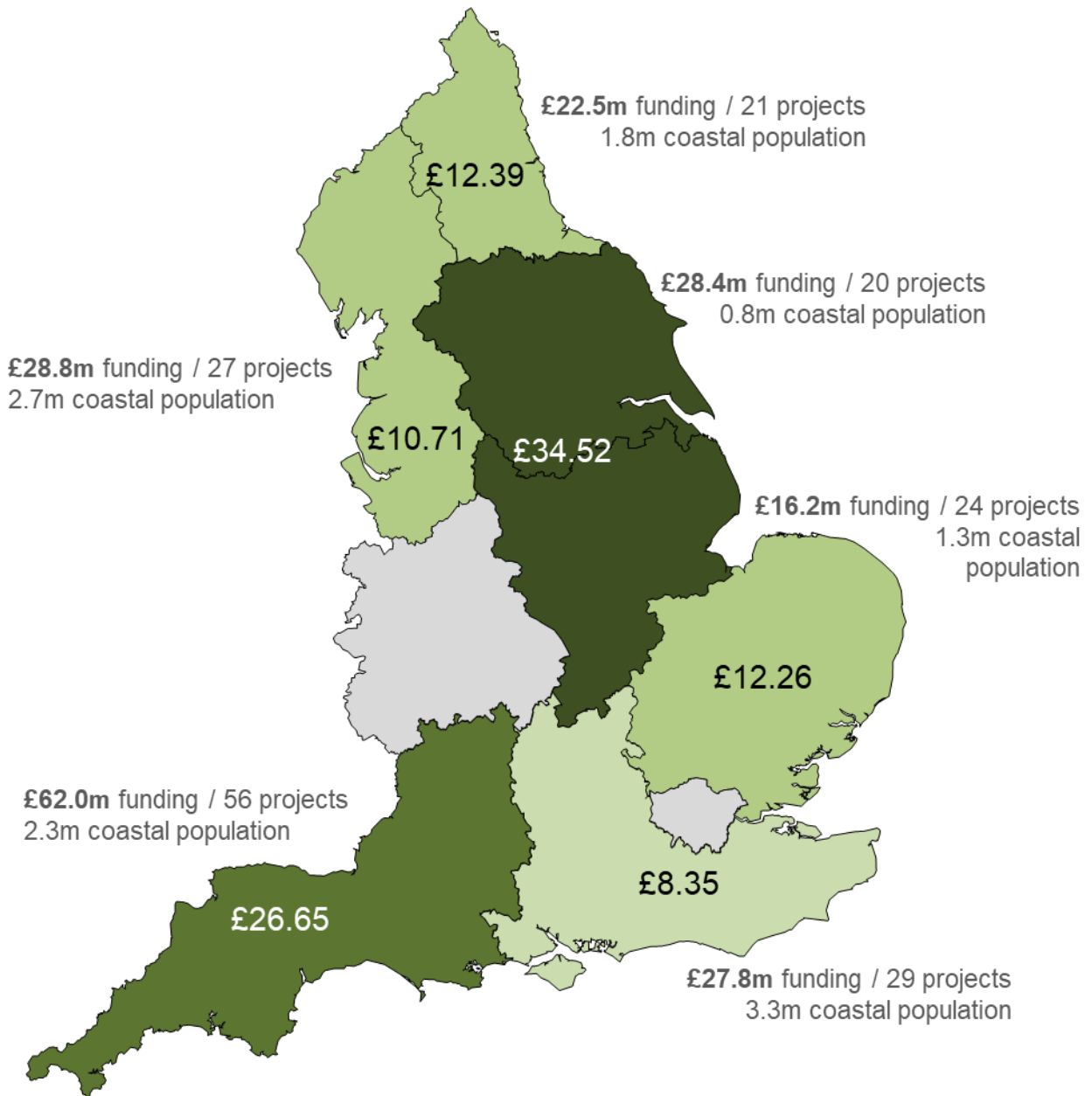
It could be argued that this funding could have been more evenly distributed relative to the coastal population. One stakeholder involved in the distribution of funds did mention that there were regional targets set for the distribution of funds; these were set according to a number of projects, aiming at a broadly equal number of projects per region, except for the South West which has a much longer coastline.

This approach did not take into account the coastal populations of those regions; there may be an argument in fairness terms for taking this into account in future programmes aimed at coastal regions.

---

[35] The South East population calculation excluded London.

Figure 2.9   CCF funding: funding per region, Rounds 1 to 5

£22.5m funding / 21 projects
1.8m coastal population

£12.39

£28.4m funding / 20 projects
0.8m coastal population

£28.8m funding / 27 projects
2.7m coastal population

£10.71

£34.52

£16.2m funding / 24 projects
1.3m coastal population

£12.26

£62.0m funding / 56 projects
2.3m coastal population

£26.65

£8.35

£27.8m funding / 29 projects
3.3m coastal population

Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5.

Figure 2.10   CCF funding: number of projects per region, Rounds 1 to 5

21 projects / £1.1m each
1.8m coastal population

1.2

20 projects / £1.4m each
0.8m coastal population

27 projects / £1.1m each
2.7m coastal population

1.0

2.4

24 projects / £0.7m each
1.3m coastal
population

1.8

56 projects / £1.1m each
2.3m coastal population

2.4

0.9

29 projects / £1.0m each
3.3m coastal population
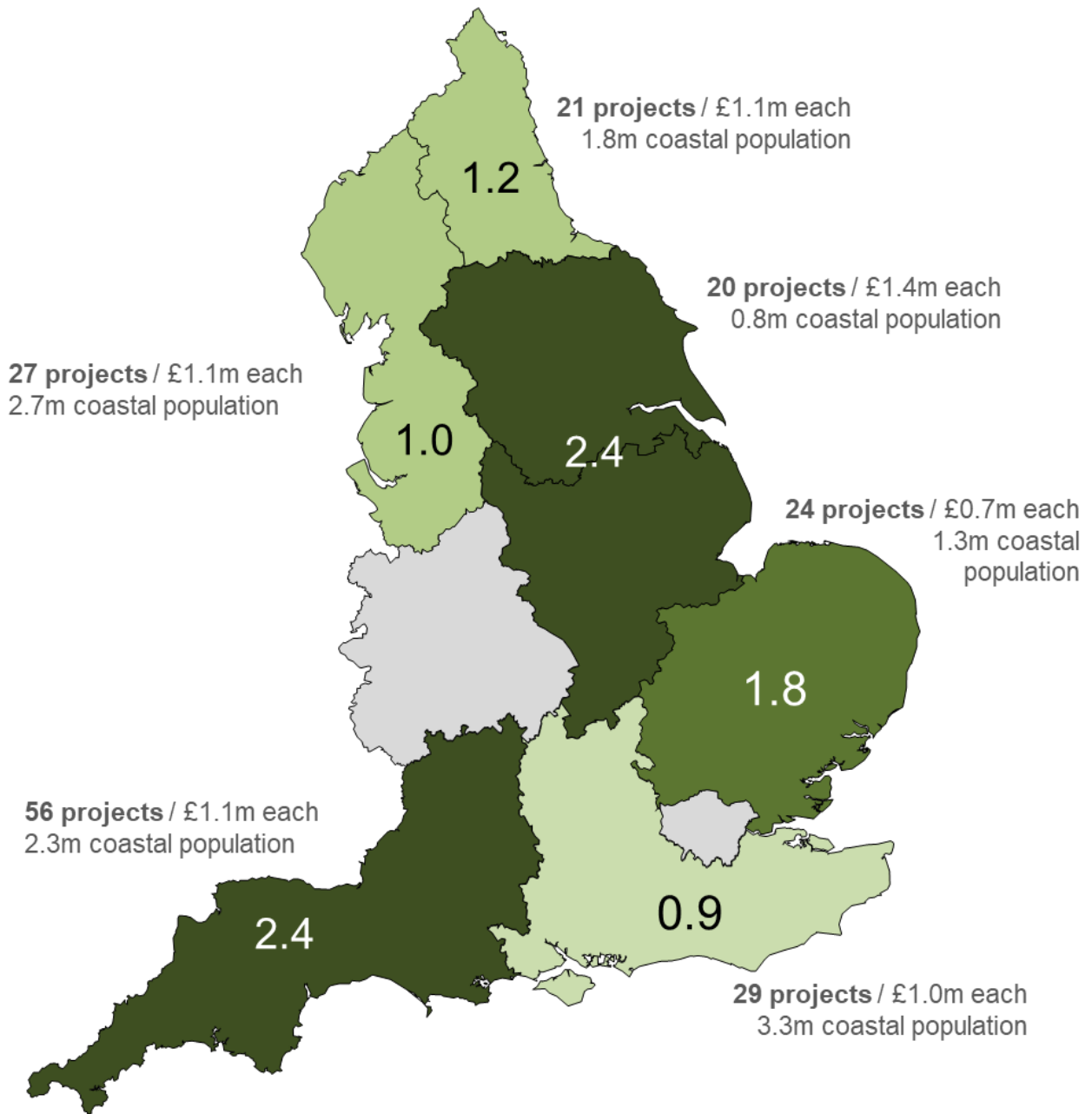
Source: CCF monitoring data, Rounds 1 to 5.

3.8 Match funding

Amount of matching funding

CCF monitoring data for Rounds 1 to 4 indicated that it was most often the majority funder of projects, but most (83%) attracted at least some match funding, as shown in Figure 2.11. Around three fifths of projects (59%) attracted more than 20% match funding.
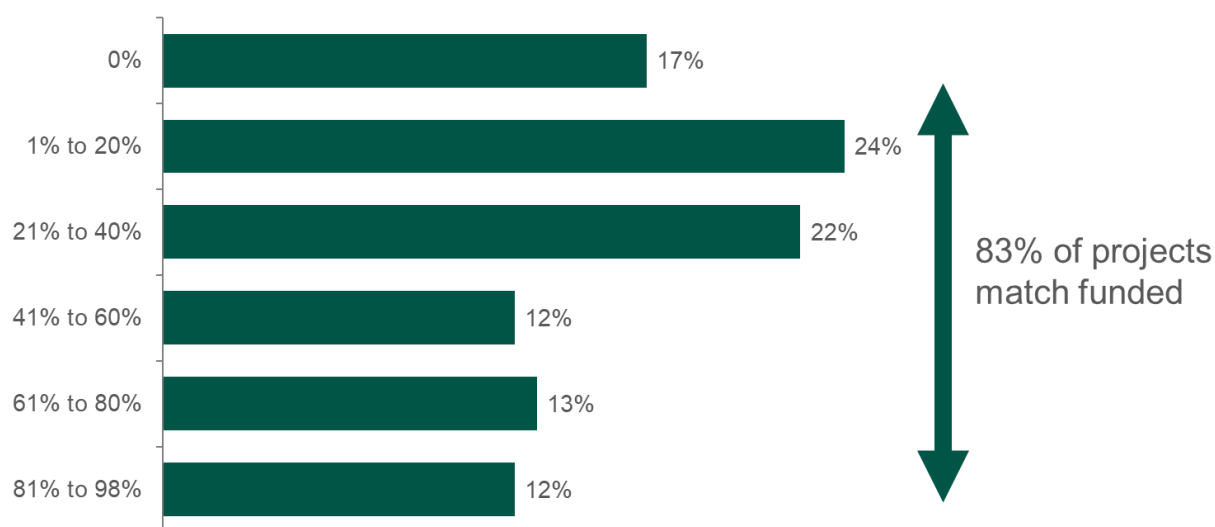
Figure 2.11 CCF funding: match funding from other sources, Rounds 1 to 4[36]

Source: CCF Monitoring Data, Rounds 1 to 4

Total match funding amounted to £210.7m, compared to £134.8m of CCF direct funding. This suggests that for every £1 spent on CCF grants, an additional £1.56 was gathered in match funding.

Sequencing of funding

Depth interviews suggested that it was far more common for CCF funding to be the 'seed funding' leveraging other sources of funds, than it was for CCF to 'fill gaps'. Nearly all case study projects felt that the CCF funding had been essential, and many felt that match funding arose because CCF funding was already there, giving the project credibility:

> *"It absolutely wouldn't have happened [without the CCF] … people wouldn't have put the money in and had any confidence in it. It wouldn't have happened privately funded… I think it would have taken us ten years of scrabbling around for this that and the other [source of funding]. And we would have grown in a much more hotch-potch way…"*

PROJECT ORGANISER, PORT OF BLYTH TRAINING CENTRE

However, there were other (generally larger) projects where CCF was a 'gap filler' in existing funding, often due to its wide eligibility criteria, including broadly cultural activities which are often excluded by other funds. For example, for the Brean Down Way project in Somerset, the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) was the major funder, but its conditions of funding were very narrow. It would fund the path itself, but it would not fund elements of the project which could not be classed as civil engineering – such as signage, hedge planting or project management:

---

[36] Data not available for Round 5.

"Without the CCF funding we would have done a 'bare project'. We would have got a route through, but it wouldn't have been anything like as good. A key bit would not have been built – a bit over some dunes (linking a large caravan site with a local nature reserve) – and we would not have had the signage and the interpretation. And less planting. We wouldn't have built the 'Great Bird Screen of Brean' for the benefit of the public to watch the birds..."

PROJECT ORGANISER, BREAN DOWN WAY

"…a lot of it is the flexibility of the Fund - the fact that it was it was place based rather than sector based allowed us to apply for it… There's never been an awful lot of funding opportunities around for something like the Illuminations."

PROJECT ORGANISER, LIGHTPOOL (BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS)

3.9 Summary and Recommendations

CCF has funded a wide range of projects over nearly 10 years of operation, progressively developing over time, moving toward funding larger, longer-term projects. Spending per head of population was highest in rural areas, and varied substantially by region. It also was somewhat lower in the most disadvantaged areas, partly due to the focus on smaller towns and villages, which typically have lower levels of long term unemployment. In addition, the CCF relies on communities putting forward projects for consideration, and more economically disadvantaged areas may tend to have more fragmented communities[37].

Recommendation: *Take into account the size of the coastal population, and level of deprivation when setting geographical targets for grant-giving, although not necessarily to the exclusion of other factors.*

The CCF was praised by stakeholders and projects for its flexibility and simplicity, and it was felt to allocate the funds it was given reasonably well. Respondents contrasted the CCF's simple approach favourably with the complexity of other public sector funding, in particular EU funding. Having said that, this open structure, while simple for applicants, did make the process of decision-making more difficult since judging very large projects' economic viability was difficult.

Recommendation: *Create a two-tiered application process by amount of funding requested; this would enable more detail to be gathered for larger projects on their plans*

---

[37] Local Trust (2018). *Empowered Communities in the 2020s. IVAR Research Briefing 2 – Countries Dialogue.* https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/local_trust_ec2020_countries_report.pdf. January 2018.

and their projected economic impact, making project selection more efficient, while retaining the much-valued simplicity for smaller projects.

The main criticisms related to the speed of distribution of funding; stakeholders felt that delays primarily related to the level of high-level approval required from MHCLG (or DLUHC). The timescales for implementation attached to the funding were also criticised. The short timescales for spending grants (despite increases in the funding allocation periods covered from Round 3 onwards) were felt by many to artificially restrict the types of projects which could be funded.

Recommendation: Consider reducing the extent of high-level involvement from DLUHC in the selection of individual projects at both application stages, to increase the speed of the decision-making process, and focus it more on the CCF England Funding Panel recommendations based on objective criteria relating to projected outcomes.

Although CCF did often fund multiple projects in the same place over multiple rounds, there was some criticism of the CCF's lack of advance commitment to particular locations or projects over a longer period of time. This is further addressed in the project design chapter.

4.   Project design

4.1 Introduction

The design stage is critical for the success of any project, and those funded by the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) are no exception.

While CCF does not design projects itself, it does have influence over project design through the application process, which is designed to support organisers through the development of their project. Few of the case studies specifically mentioned pro-active support or advice from MHCLG or DLUHC, although some did mention receiving support or advice on request.

No projects studied could be said to have *failed* at the design stage; however, many of the projects studied had shortcomings at later stages caused by poor design. This chapter will explore some of the issues identified.

4.2 Achieving successful design

From case study interviews, there were a number of similarities found in projects where the design led to successful economic outcomes.

Wide consultation at an early stage was found to be a key feature of projects where the project had a strong economic impact. Organisers of the most successful projects consulted with a variety of people (e.g., local businesses, residents, and stakeholders) during the idea generation phase, and gathered information from a range of people in an open-minded fashion.

A focus on designing an economically viable business model was also critical. The most successful projects met an unmet need locally, using a proven business model. Projects which were focused around restoring an existing building or structure, rather than putting into place a new service or facility, seemed find this more difficult. Where a project's distinctiveness came from an iconic building or structure, rather than the service it provided, this tended to be less successful.

A few case study experiences suggested that understanding the seasonal nature of the local economy was also important, particularly for projects in areas with an economy strongly oriented toward tourism. It was important for achieving impact for the project to fit in with the seasonal cycle of business. Projects needed to take into account both the impact of seasonality on their own viability, but also the impact on local businesses, to avoid impact falling during an already busy period.

4.3 Case study examples: successful design

Case study examples: engaging people

The Spanish City Dome project aimed to bring back into use a large concert hall and ballroom building constructed as a tourist attraction in the early 20th century. Rather than

starting with a fixed idea as to the purpose of the building, project managers held open meetings for residents to discuss what they wanted to see from the regeneration. This helped managers balance ideas that would support local business and the economy, versus more community-based initiatives. The result was that the project was well designed for the local market, and was able to attract local custom to businesses based there from the start.

"[With] the help of community engagement, the Dome has become a culmination of what would work and what the community wanted."

PROJECT MANAGER, SPANISH CITY DOME

In terms of projects with training elements, the Moors to Sea project consulted local businesses about their desired outcomes from the training and any knowledge gaps that could be filled. This ensured the training content was relevant and bespoke to businesses in the area, meeting an unmet need.

"We based what we did on knowing what small businesses need. They could go to big training [courses] in the city, but they wouldn't necessarily be helpful to small rural business."

TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR, MOORS TO SEA

The Moors to Sea project also took into account seasonality; it looked to increase footfall in the winter, rather than attracting further tourists during summer when facilities and businesses were already at peak capacity. The project was designed to boost the economy, at 'the right time', to provide businesses with a steady revenue.

"We need to make sure everything [works together]; increasing foot traffic in the summer would place even greater strain on our amenities, parking and small businesses are already coping with the increase in tourists at this time."

PROJECT ORGANISER, MOORS TO SEA

Case study examples: business planning

The Ventnor Enterprise Building project organisers developed their business model from similar initiatives in other areas. Their research showed that business hubs could support local professionals, and increase footfall to the town. Further investigation showed that rent from their expected occupancy would be sufficient to cover costs as well as offer opportunities for reinvestment back into the community. Based on their research, it was determined an initial cash injection would be enough for the business to continue functioning post funding.

"In planning the project and cashflow of the business I was advised by an estate agent to base calculation on no more than 80% occupancy, but we've been running at full occupancy for most of that."

PROJECT MANAGER, VENTNOR ENTERPRISE BUILDING

Similarly, the design for the Marlowe Innovation Centre was based on current evidence showing there were long waiting lists for small businesses and entrepreneurs wanting a professional environment with an easy in, easy out, low commitment office space. The knowledge that there was a desire for greater space and that the project would be meeting needs, allowed for the creation of a sustainable design.

Since opening the site has had more than 170 different tenants, helping to create and sustain over 300 jobs. Others have taken advantage of "virtual office" services. The success of the centre led to the addition of an extension in 2014, doubling its capacity."[38]

PROJECT ORGANISER, MARLOWE INNOVATION CENTRE

4.4 Improving project design

Key weaknesses in project design tended to be around the viability of business plans. This often related to a lack of consultation, or relatedly, not taking sufficient notice of local circumstances.

A key lesson from the CCF projects studied is that a project, to succeed, needs an economic niche. The project should not duplicate an existing activity already taking place locally, and should bring something new to an area, at a time when it can be accommodated. From the case studies, in tourism-focused locations, projects seeking to boost off-season activity appeared to have the largest impact.

To achieve this, consultation with local businesses and learning from previous projects are critical. Partnership building at an early stage is also critical; projects which developed a 'bunker mentality' (perhaps in response to early scepticism from the public or businesses) tended to develop problems over time. The most successful projects overcame initial negative feedback by amending their plans, and continued to engage with the public or businesses as much as reasonably possible throughout.

---

[38] https://theisleofthanetnews.com/2018/09/11/marlowe-innovation-centre-celebrates-10th-anniversary/

4.5 Case study examples: design challenges

Case study examples: business planning difficulties

The Hastings Pier redevelopment, while it sought extensive input from the community, did not seek input from local businesses in the same way. While they did seek to establish a business plan with assistance from professional consultants, the focus remained primarily on the restoration of the Pier to a high architectural standard. The resulting structure was not well suited to the needs of local businesses, and so the approach resulted in a design which was expensive to run and could not develop sufficient income to maintain itself. It was realised soon after implementation that the pier's restaurant (later café) could not be run profitably. This was a serious problem since it acted as the key draw and source of rental income for the Pier, but could only be filled in the summer months.

"A lot of the [pier] design came from the funders… and their ambitions of what people wanted it to look like; there was a lot of focus on heritage, not on business viability, for which they didn't have [clear] plans really."

STAKEHOLDER, HASTINGS PIER

"It was too much about what it was going to look like on paper… rather than creating a blank shell with money put aside to support an operator to [fit it out] and furnish it. It is still a problem for all the operators that have tried to operate it – it's the layout and the structure of it."

POTENTIAL BENEFICIARY, HASTINGS PIER

Case study examples: consultation issues

While Lightpool, a CCF-funded project to improve the Blackpool Illuminations, could not be considered an 'unsuccessful design' overall, it seems that the level of impact on existing businesses could have been improved. The project looked to increase revenue for businesses, by encouraging tourists to not just drive through the well-known Illuminations attractions but stop in the town.

However, businesses interviewed said that the project attempted to attract tourists during annual 'peak capacity'. Project data also showed that 'drive-by tourism' was not reduced because of the project, possibly due to limited parking, although average length of stay was increased. Business owners believed if they had been consulted more meaningfully, suggestions for 'off season' events would have been put forward and could have solved the above issues.

"It was great that the council had been able to secure the funding, but then… inevitably people then [asked] 'how am I going to benefit', 'how does this benefit my business'. [They] didn't have those answers. They were [determined] that October half term was the right time to do this."

LOCAL BUSINESS, LIGHTPOOL

Case study examples: local circumstances

The Scarborough Market Hall project was ultimately successful. However, project organisers felt some aspects of the project could have gone more smoothly; one key reason for this was an over-reliance on case studies of market hall projects elsewhere in the UK. In particular, they had hoped to emulate a project in Altrincham, Greater Manchester, which had been extremely successful. However, as the project was implemented, it was realised that this approach would not work locally, because the retail and leisure market in Scarborough is very different. In the event, a change of plan was executed, and the market prospered in any case; however, more attention paid to local circumstances might have made the project more efficient in terms of how it spent CCF funds.

"One of the mistakes… at the start of the process was [to imagine] that our customers were in Altrincham and the customer base was an Altrincham customer base. Altrincham was an example of a previously successful market hall refurbishment - but they have quite a different demographic of local customers. They created a really swanky food hall, but that's not what the customers in Scarborough are looking for. It's easy to over-estimate what people can do in a working day and how willing they are to adapt and change."

PROJECT ORGANISER, SCARBOROUGH MARKET HALL

4.6 Summary and recommendations

It seems that while most CCF-funded projects were successful, some could have been substantially improved by correcting flaws in the design. The process diagram for the design stage shows a number of opportunities for CCF to contribute. Existing CCF elements are shown in magenta in the process diagram in Figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1   Process diagram: design phase: existing
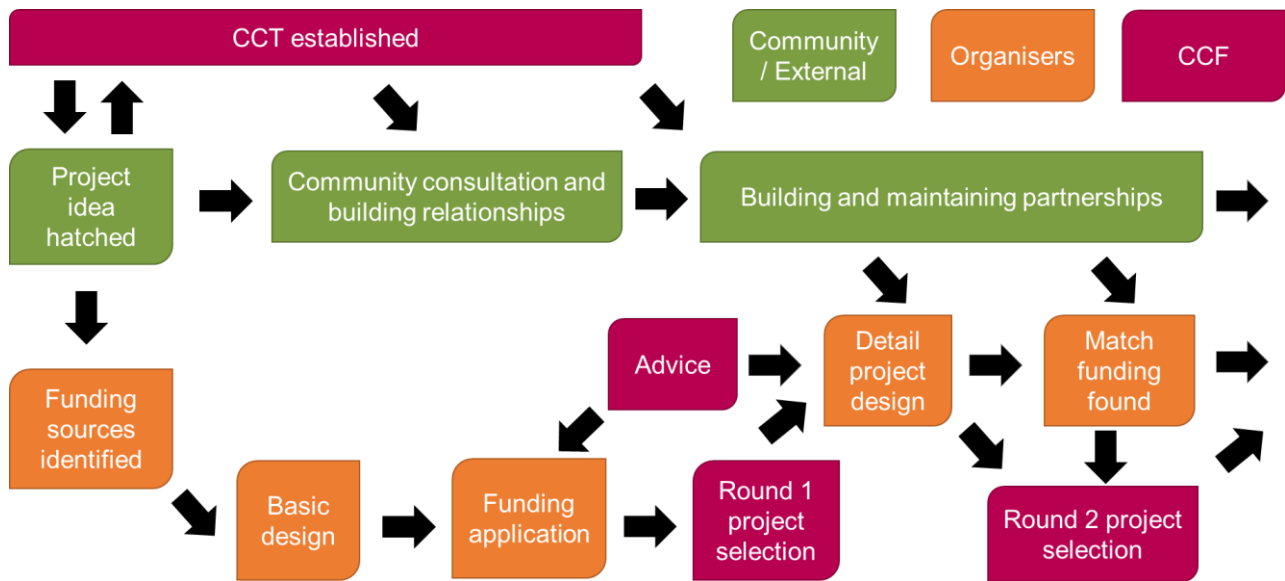
CCF input (shown in magenta in the process diagram) currently comes primarily after the initial funding application. Generally, CCF support was spoken of highly when pro-actively sought. However, numerous projects we spoke to actually had quite a worked-up plan, in the fundamental design and business model, prior to the initial application. Issues with design often seemed to come in early with the initial project vision (especially with projects where the 'vision' is less directly linked to regeneration, such as building restorations), and consultation sometimes came too late to change this; key decisions which might later be regretted would often be made before the application process.

The creation of Coastal Communities Teams could be argued to have partly addressed this; however, interviews suggested that these Teams are often created in response to a project idea rather than beforehand. Availability of advice to people thinking of starting a community regeneration project is therefore important.

The guidance published by the Coastal Communities Fund[39] is very comprehensive in terms of what is required to apply, and the administrative and legal processes of obtaining funding. Although it clearly states that a well-supported business plan will be required, it does not signpost to advice on how to put this together.

Recommendation: Investment in generic support materials for community groups, or signposting toward existing materials, would be valuable. This has already been put in place in London, by the Mayor's office,[40] but some similar guidance, with promotion to the intended audience – and perhaps wider in scope to cover regeneration and heritage – might be useful nationally.

---

[39] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018). *Coastal Communities Fund Round Five: Guidance Notes England.* February 2018. Accessed at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683603/CCF_Guidance_Notes.pdf
[40] Mayor of London (2017) *Community Projects Handbook.* March 2017. Accessed at:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_projects_handbook_web.pdf

The other major CCF input at the design stage is the application and selection process itself. Stakeholders felt that the short-term and one-off nature of the fund created little incentive for long term planning for projects, and indeed created an incentive toward unrealistic projections of short-term profitability. As beneficiaries on one project (Scarborough Market Hall) were keen to emphasise, it usually takes long term investment for a retail business to become profitable, and there is a high failure rate.

One national stakeholder also suggested that the structure of the fund created a natural bias toward capital projects, because they would take a short time to implement, giving more certainty regarding spending occurring within the financial year. This potentially resulted in other projects which might be a better use of funds not being taken forward:

The way it is set up through large investment over a short period of time lends itself to big capital projects which are… assumed to bring in lots of new visitors down the line. Whether or not that is actually the most effective way of generating jobs I'm not sure.

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER (JC01)

Some projects had to depend on taking a risk on future public funding becoming available to take the project to a second stage, through expansion in scale or scope. Often in case studies it was at this second stage (or where CCF funded a second stage to an existing project funded elsewhere) that a project saw its biggest impact.

However, as CCF organisers emphasised, it is difficult to arrange long-term funding through government due to the nature of these smaller single purpose funds where funding is often subject to short-term fluctuations due to political changes. In addition, funding awarded for a specific financial year must be spent within that financial year due to long-established public spending principles.

Recommendation: Future rounds of funding could take more of a strategic approach to investment in specific local areas. A portion of funding could, for example, be ring-fenced for projects in the same location, with a preference for funding development or expansion of existing projects. This would decrease the spending power of the CCF in a single year, but might increase overall impact by giving confidence to applicants.

CCF do require extensive information regarding a project prior to awarding funding. However, it may be useful to review these to ensure that they routinely provide robust evidence of:

- Local consultation including feedback on the basic design, not just the final detail.

- Having taken into account lessons learned from other similar projects.

- A business plan not excessively reliant on the success of a small number of business ventures, bearing in mind the failure rate of new retail and leisure businesses.

Figure 3.2 represents the key recommendations above in graphic form, showing their contribution to the process. Those boxes in bold text are additional or enhanced in some way, while red arrows show new links.

Figure 3.2   Process diagram: design phase: with recommendations
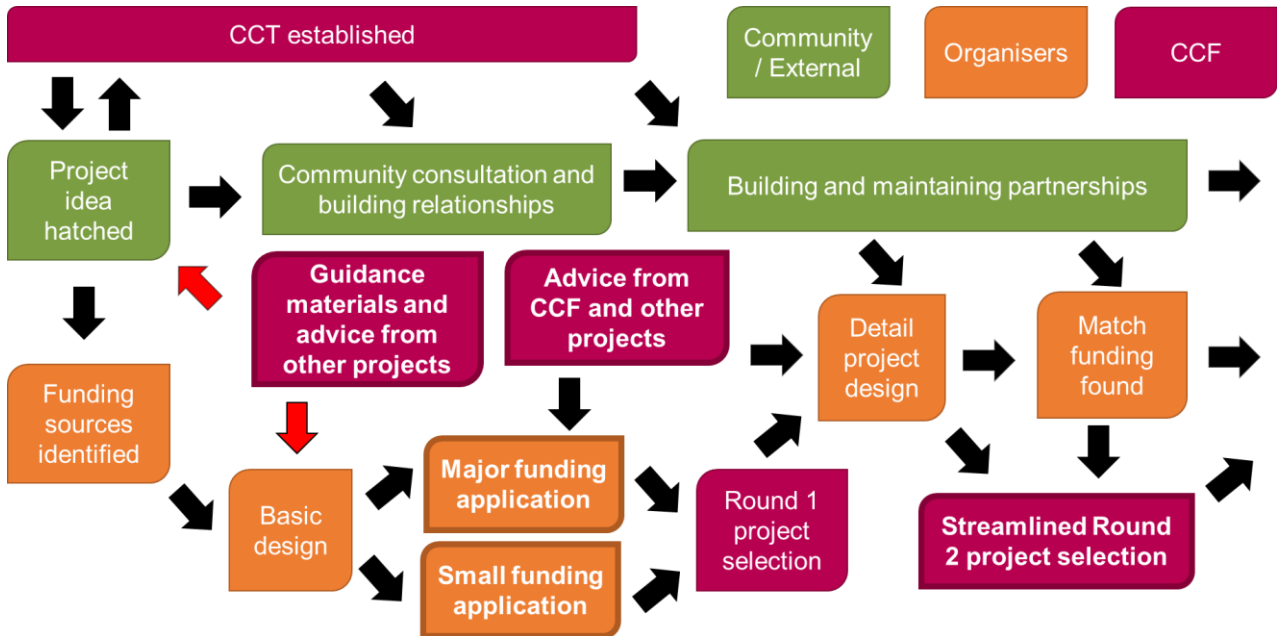
5. Project delivery

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the delivery of projects, from the point of the project being awarded funding to the point at which the project is completed, and moves to a phase of ongoing operation without CCF subsidy. For capital projects, this is typically dominated by the construction process, while for other projects it may include preparation for and delivery of training.

While CCF is at a distance from the day-to-day operation of projects, there are opportunities for CCF to positively influence these elements of the project, both through influence on design and through ongoing support and monitoring.

5.2 Delivery in numbers

As previously shown, the CCF distributed funds over five rounds. Data on delivery is limited to rounds one to four.

Overall, 131 projects were delivered over rounds one to four. Despite the variation in the scale of funding (and length in years) of the rounds, the projects were roughly distributed evenly between rounds, due to the increasing average size of projects over time. This is shown in Figure 4.1, with round three having the most projects (45) reflecting the larger amount of funding in that round.

**Figure 4.1 CCF funding: Projects delivered per funding round**
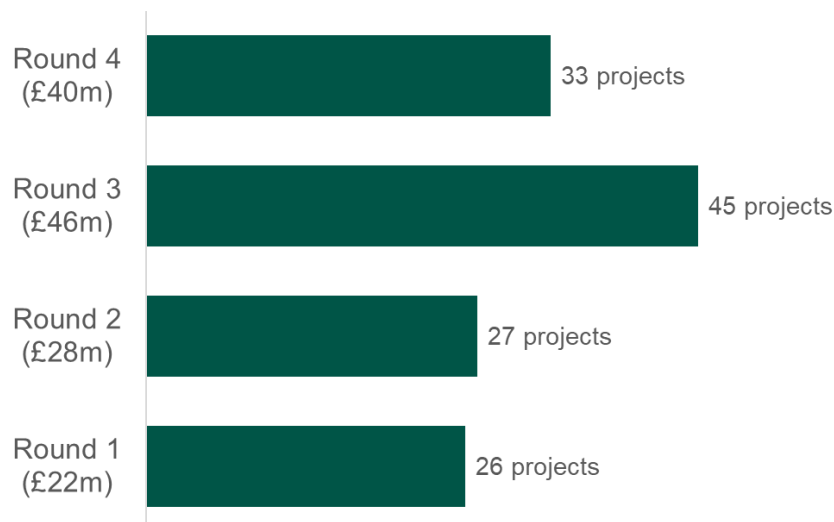
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

When looking at the scale of construction funded by CCF, around 57,000 square metres of actual new or upgraded floor space was recorded, higher than the forecast 30,700 square metres. Figure 4.2 shows that round one had the least new or upgraded floor space, with the most done in round two. This reflects the types of project focused on in each round.

Many projects involved improvements to outdoor spaces, classified as 'public realm'. There is some concern that some projects in their reporting included the floor space as public realm, as discussed below, while others did not, so there may be an element of double counting here.

Figure 4.2   New or upgraded floorspace and public realm per funding round
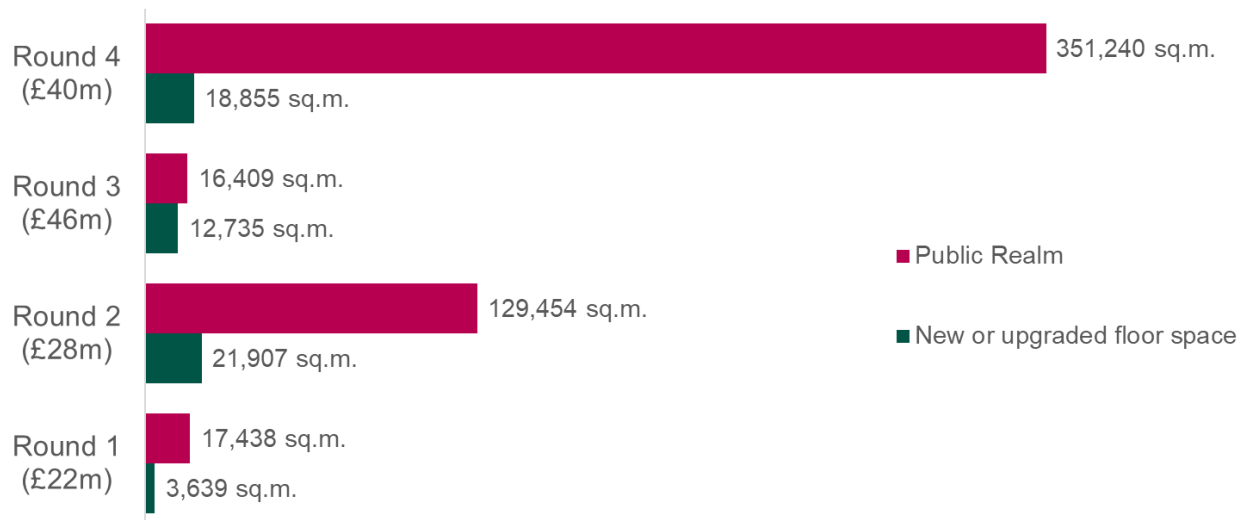
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

5.3 Challenges to delivery

The most commonly occurring challenge was construction problems, apparent in several case studies. Construction problems were varied in terms of their nature and their impact on cost and timescales of implementation. Many were not foreseeable; however, there were some commonalities. Ground conditions and flooding related to working near the coast, and in some cases building structures in the sea were often particular challenges. Most projects overcame these challenges, although some required additional funding.

Issues with partnership working were a frequent challenge for projects; for example, a partner dropping out of a project at a late stage, or difficulties with setting up a crucial partnership.

Another area which seemed challenging for several projects was in implementing training and apprenticeships. Often this overlapped with issues around partnership working, since training was often delivered by an external partner, but also related to difficulties connecting training to jobs. In more than one case, the training was delivered but the project was not able at the end of the training to provide the jobs that the trainees were intended to take.

Finally, a handful of projects had problems identified with project management. It may be that other projects also had these issues, but these are difficult to see from outside, especially at a distance of several years. These issues would only come to the surface in projects subject to non-CCF external monitoring, or where a post-mortem of a failed project element had occurred.

5.4 Case study examples: Challenges to delivery

Case study examples: Construction problems

The Lincolnshire Coast Observatories project arguably encountered the most intricate construction challenges - discovery of unexploded bombs, as well as the need for enhanced piling at both sites, which the project manager described as *"incredibly complex"* and led to delays and cost overruns on the North Sea Observatory site.

Other surprises encountered included discovery of a mineshaft on the Spanish City Dome project and historical remains uncovered at Scarborough Market Hall. The Hastings Pier food court had issues around the restoration of the pier itself being delayed, which led to knock-on effects to the pavilion restaurant work, and also problems with the specification/layout of the new restaurant; the nearby White Rock regeneration incurred increased costs for the regeneration of the fountain and also encountered problems because the White Rock building was built above caves.

The Seaton Carew seafront regeneration experienced minor challenges around ground conditions and facings of the works; the Park 4U site was prone to flooding and also had a high ongoing maintenance cost for the water pumps and sand needed for the playground; and several of the Dorset Coastal Connections projects experienced problems with weather and landslips.

Case study examples: Problems with partnerships

Some case studies reported instances where the funded organisation seemed to have missed opportunities for partnerships – for example in the Lightpool (Blackpool Illuminations) project local businesses interviewed felt the project would have benefited from their involvement at an earlier stage. On the Shipshape East Anglia project partnerships between the project managers and the community were weak; although reportedly attempts were made to forge links early on, the relationship with local businesses seemed to have deteriorated by the end of the project.

Sometimes local authorities were challenging to work with, and while their co-operation was often essential it could be difficult to obtain, especially when working across local authority boundaries. For example, on Brean Down Way, whilst North Somerset Council were a lead partner in the project from the outset, the neighbouring Somerset County Council was less interested but did need to be involved. On the Living Seas project, the organisers tried to set up a partnership to expand the project into Blackpool Council's area but did not succeed.

There were a couple of instances where through persistence or diversification the challenges of partnership working were overcome. At the Port of Blyth Training Centre there was partnership working with the Local Authority, employers, and training providers as well as the local community. Two project partners dropped out – the Local Authority who were providing project management services, and an FE college who were going to provide some of the training. Strong central management combined with not becoming overly reliant on partners kept the project on track and broadly on budget; and ultimately the project won awards for partnership working despite those challenges.

At the White Rock regeneration an obstacle to be overcome during the project was onboarding businesses to take up the support and training. Project organisers said that convincing people to commit to time outside of their organisation and see the value of the support took time. To overcome this, the business communication officer spent around 6 months communicating with local businesses, building relationships, and understanding their needs. The business support officer said that when the training had begun there was a high take-up rate, and other businesses were used to snowball others to gain support for the offering.

Case study examples: Training and Apprenticeships

Often projects had difficulties fitting their ambition to provide training in with the core activities of their project. Apprenticeships were a key part of the Hastings Pier project, and significant numbers were successfully delivered during construction, but the attempted delivery of these in the restaurant / café was among the key reasons that this business was not profitable. A local business owner questioned whether using the apprenticeship model from the outset was a commercially astute decision:

The Skills for Energy project also encountered difficulties in engaging with businesses to take on apprentices and finding mutually beneficial placements; although with persistence over a year, links were gradually forged.

> *"Some of the employers I was speaking to, they probably didn't have much experience working with the local [JobCentre Plus branches], so they had a very stereotypical idea of the candidates. I was out there networking and telling employers [that] these people have the skills they were looking for."*

<div align="right">

SKILLS ADVISOR, SKILLS FOR ENERGY

</div>

In the otherwise highly successful Port of Blyth project, a temporary issue encountered was that the provision of training raced ahead of the creation of marine industry jobs in the wider development. This meant that either those completing the training had to leave the area for work, or they had to work in unrelated sectors for a period.

Case study examples: Project Management

The Shipshape East Anglia project was found to be hampered by project management failings. A change in project managers between the planning and application stage, and the actual implementation caused significant difficulties. To an extent, this is to be expected with a changeover of personnel, but the impact was exacerbated by a lack of groundwork and an inadequate handover.

It was also felt that there was a lack of logistical foresight early on in the project which caused unnecessary delays. The ability to carry out some of the activities planned required licenses and permits, but these had not been secured and were not accounted for in early plans.

> *"The project had not been thoroughly thought through. There were a number of nitty-gritty administrative elements that were not foreseen in the development of the project. For example, Human Resources and the types of benefits people should receive. For the water taxi, permits were needed and licenses … all these things that can be overlooked in the enthusiasm for putting a project together but actually have a big impact on the delivery of the project outcomes."*

<div align="right">

PROJECT ORGANISER, SHIPSHAPE EAST ANGLIA

</div>

In the Lightpool project in Blackpool, early internal management procedures were also criticised by an internal council report, noting issues such as insufficient progress monitoring and plans to earn revenue not implemented in time. In the event, the project went ahead, and the problems were generally agreed to have been addressed subsequently, although some businesses did criticise the last-minute nature of some of the preparations in the early years of the festival.

Good project management is difficult to define, and often taken for granted when it 'just works'. Some projects, however, were notably successful; for example, the Brean Down Way cycle path had to overcome some initial scepticism from local landowners, and yet managed ultimately to bring all the necessary groups on board. They were also widely

praised for the level of organisation put into organising volunteer camps. The project won awards for partnership working at the time.

5.5 Monitoring project delivery

The monitoring of projects was widely praised by projects; they found it 'light touch' and felt it fairly represented their projects. The burden, unlike some other funders, was not found to be unreasonable by any project.

There was some minor criticism in administrative terms; the Lightpool project team were initially unsure when their return needed to be submitted, for example, while Brean Down Way submitted theirs late since they were only prompted to submit some time after the deadline.

The monitoring outputs included both forecast and achieved data on the following categories: jobs, training, businesses, tourism, environment, and infrastructure. Although the many different categories provided a high level of detail for the various elements of different projects, there were also limitations to the monitoring outputs, significantly affecting the quality of the data.

Firstly, the categories included differed between rounds one to three and round four, with round four data having fewer categories. For example, Round 4 data did not include categories on the project type and key sector that was available for Rounds 1 to 3[41].

Some categories were also overlapping, and therefore it was possible double counting occurred for some outputs. For example, there was perceived overlap between measures of "floorspace" and "public realm" projects created; it was clear from the data that some projects responded as if these were mutually exclusive, while others gave the exact same square metreage for both, suggesting they were referring to the same area.

The monitoring data also contained some errors or inputs that did not match the units the category was recorded in suggesting that data validation or checking had been limited. This suggests that there may have been other errors accidentally recorded which were not detectable in this way.

Most significantly, for entries relating to actual outcomes that contained a zero, it was not clear whether this was because they had achieved no success on this metric, or because no follow-up data had been submitted for that particular metric. Analysis of individual projects that took part in case studies suggested a mixture of the two, based on the known activities of these projects.

These data quality shortcomings presented some analysis difficulties; in this report we in most cases compare the outcomes and projected data only for projects which had submitted a non-zero actual outcome.

---

[41] This data was collected by the Big Lottery Fund during their period of administering the CCF, covering Rounds 1 to 3; comparable data could not be replicated for subsequent Rounds which were administered by MHCLG (Round 4) and Groundwork UK (Round 5).

5.6 Summary and recommendations

The process diagram in Figure 4.3 shows the process through which the research found projects typically progress. At this stage of the projects, represented on the left of the diagram, CCF currently has input to the projects only through providing support at design stage.

It could be argued that some projects would have benefited from additional support; however, CCF is constrained by resources. Nevertheless, correctly targeted support might have increased the power of CCF's spending by increasing project efficiency and avoiding some failures of project implementation.

Figure 4.3   Process diagram: delivery and impact

At construction stage, CCF's input was relatively limited, beyond issuing funding, and advising when a problem came up which might result in funding issues. However, many projects had problems at this stage which had commonalities, in particular relating to the coastal location of the projects. This is a specialist area of construction, and there are few sources of advice available, especially which are affordable for smaller projects. This may be an issue that CCF is not well-placed to address directly, given it relates to skills deficiencies in the wider construction, architecture, and engineering industries.

Successful partnership working is something which again CCF has limited influence over, but could potentially impact through pro-active work, if viable in funding terms. CCF already provide advice on partnership establishment in guidance notes, and encourage the establishment and maintenance of partnerships through Coastal Communities Teams. It may be that the risk of overreliance on an individual partner could be incorporated in the advice on project design recommended in the previous chapter.

Project management might be thought to be a similar area, where CCF have little influence, and indeed CCF cannot judge the performance of individual staff at projects. However, the intervention of Blackpool Council's audit team in the Lightpool project almost certainly resulted in improvements which spurred the project to later achievements, putting in place a sounder basis for future projects. Council officials aware of the Hastings Pier

project felt that a similar audit at the right time might have avoided many of the problems the project faced.

Recommendation: CCF should ensure at award of funds that larger projects funded have a suitable and robust process of audit and/or challenge in place, whether external or internal. For smaller projects this might be overly onerous; they could instead be contacted mid-project to check that they have basic project management processes for a small project in place, and encourage them to put them in place if they do not.

It has also been highlighted in this chapter that joining training and apprenticeships together with subsequent employment is a problem area for some projects. This is discussed further in the next chapter, since it relates particularly to project impact.

These recommendations are shown represented on the process diagram in the next chapter, together with the recommendations on increasing impact.

6. Impact

6.1 Direct economic impacts

Delivering effective impact

Many projects delivered jobs in construction during the implementation of projects; however, while beneficial, these are largely short term in nature. Many projects also created jobs directly; nearly all created at least some jobs in the administration of the project. However, for other projects this was a key reported source of impact, for example in the Southport Pier redevelopment which created retail opportunities on the Pier itself.

However, the larger impact tended to be in terms of indirect employment. Numerous projects were reported to have an impact on the wider economy; local beneficiaries frequently spoke about how a project had transformed a high street or a local area, or attracted more tourists, and created opportunities for other businesses.

Most projects were highly focused on delivering direct impact. In some cases, more partnership working and consultation with local businesses might have assisted in optimising the impact of projects.

Impacts in monitoring data

Interviewees in case studies often said that it was often hard to quantify the true extent of economic impact from the projects, primarily because of the difficulties of attributing impacts directly to the CCF funded project. For example, project organisers and stakeholders often stated that they could not say if new jobs recently created in the wider area were caused by the project or not, although they personally would have thought the project had a key role.

This applied to numerous case study projects. The figures supplied to MHCLG (and now held by DLUHC) for monitoring purposes by these organisations are therefore to some extent of unclear accuracy. Comparing project data with information sourced directly from projects during case study research, it is clear that there are likely to be a mixture of underestimates and overestimates in the figures. Some larger projects had privately commissioned economic impact studies, and used these to feed back to MHCLG; however, most smaller projects seemed not to have carried out this type of work and impact-related figures may be very approximate (or missing) in these cases.

One national stakeholder highlighted that assessing the economic impact of tourism on a locality was a specialist skill, and that standard techniques might miss significant elements of this, for example the impact of a change in an area's image.

Limitations

One overarching issue regarding measuring impact is that the data supplied is, by its nature, a measurement of delivery. While many participants in case studies reported substantial economic impacts on their local areas, the data itself cannot take into account what might have happened without the CCF project. For example, another source of

funding might have been found, or a different use found for the site or assets involved.In many cases, impact assessments can be carried out for projects such as CCF. These would typically involve a quantitative analysis comparing the impacts of the policy to a hypothetical situation in which the policy had not been carried out (a 'counterfactual'). As noted in the Methodology section of this report, this type of analysis was not possible for this evaluation.

Monitoring data: Jobs

Although as previously noted, recording was patchy, numerous CCF projects created and maintained jobs. In total, the programme over its first four rounds was reported to have created 2,680 jobs directly, and 4,485 indirectly, as well as safeguarding a further 1,835 jobs. However, projects not reporting any actual indirect job creation accounted for a further 5,730 forecast jobs; it seems likely from examples of case studies that in reality at least some of these forecast jobs were created but not reported to CCF.

Most of the new employment reported to CCF was generated in large towns with more than 100,000 population (38% of indirect jobs, 42% of direct jobs). In proportion to the population, however, more jobs were created in smaller towns and villages than in large towns and cities as shown in Figure 5.1. This meshes with one of the funds' purposes, to spread investment beyond coastal cities to rural areas.

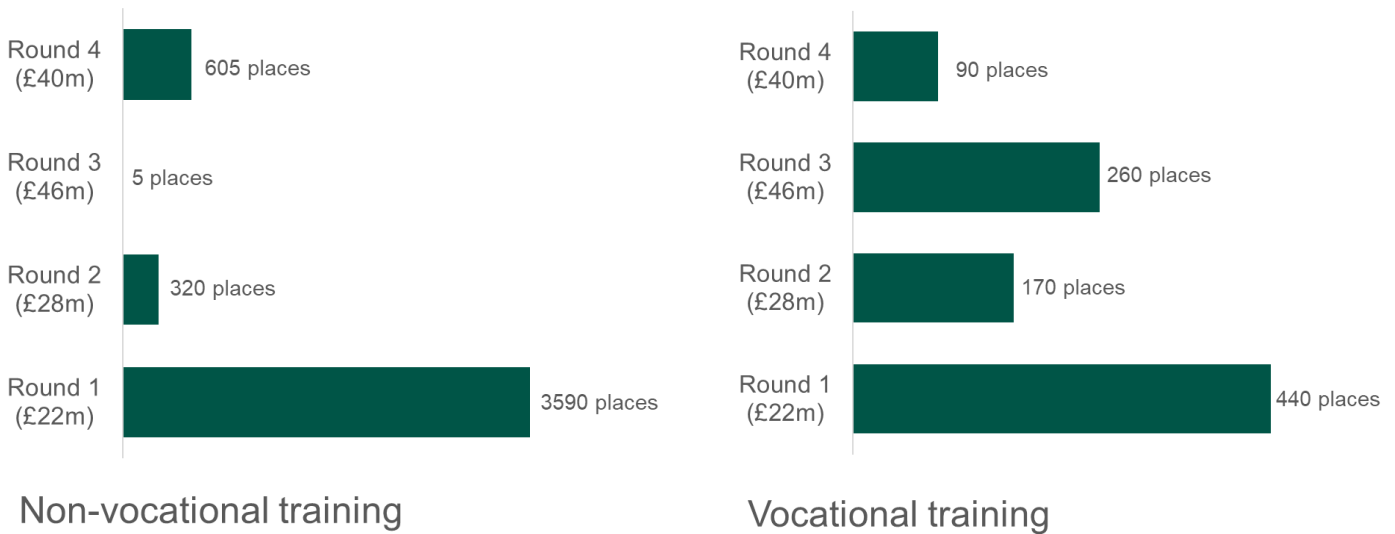**Figure 5.1 Jobs created or maintained per 100,000 population**
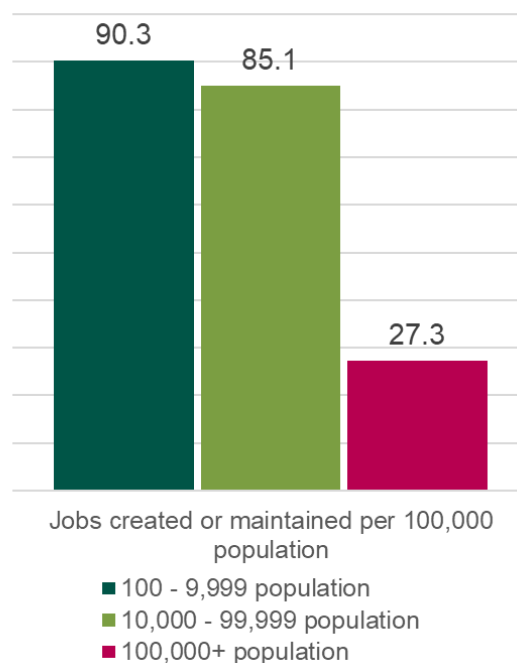
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Training

Many CCF projects involved the provision of training to individuals, as shown in Figure 5.2. In total, 960 vocational training places were created, and 4,520 non-vocational training places were created. More vocational and non-vocational training places were achieved in round one than other rounds, reflecting the much greater focus of round one on training and skills relative to other rounds, despite its small size.

**Figure 5.2 Non vocational and vocational training places per round**

Non-vocational training	
Round 4 (£40m)	605 places
Round 3 (£46m)	5 places
Round 2 (£28m)	320 places
Round 1 (£22m)	3590 places

Vocational training	
Round 4 (£40m)	90 places
Round 3 (£46m)	260 places
Round 2 (£28m)	170 places
Round 1 (£22m)	440 places

Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Nearly 400 trainees gained employment as a result of the projects; but nearly 2,000 trainees gained qualifications, as shown in Figure 5.3. This imbalance is quite significant and speaks to an issue spotted in several case studies, where one of the key difficulties was providing training at the right time to lead to employment. In at least one case where a project was delayed, training was delivered in an attempt to deliver at least some elements of the project on time, thus severing the link between training and the employment it was intended to lead to. In other cases, other practical difficulties or design issues prevented this connection being made.

The level of training delivered was far greater than the forecast, for those projects providing the training. However, there were again numerous projects which did not report on this metric despite forecasting training outcomes. It is unclear what proportion of this was non-reporting and what proportion was non-delivery. It may be that non-delivery is significant here, since training courses are an easily measured outcome. However, issues with data quality make it difficult to be sure of this.

**Figure 5.3 Number of trainees gaining qualifications and employment**
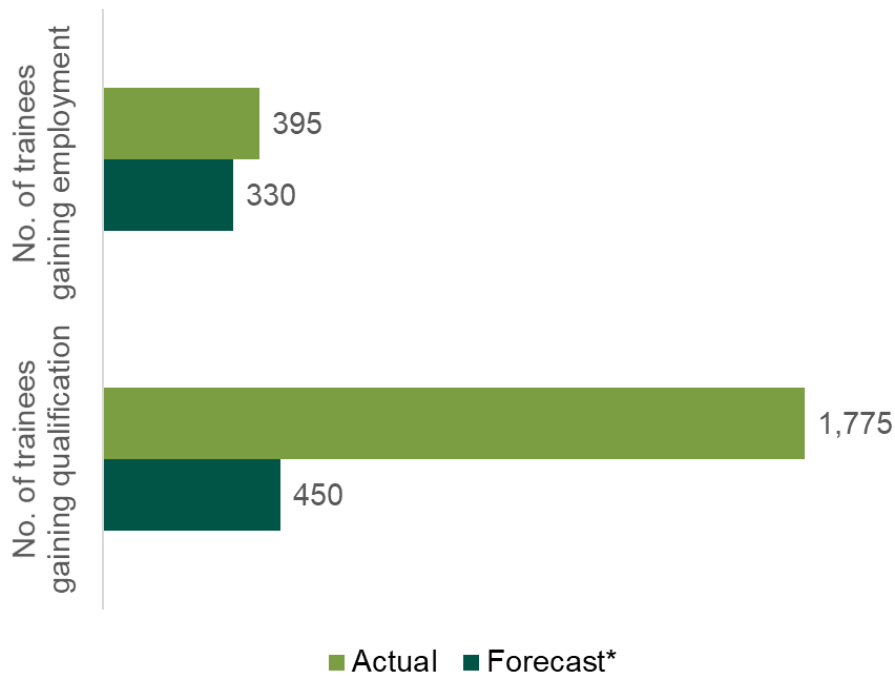
*only including those with an "achieved" value >0
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Businesses

CCF projects recorded 6,712 private businesses supported and 482 new businesses started and supported across the four rounds as a result of the funding. As shown in Figure 5.4, the delivery of new private businesses was relatively even across the four funding rounds.

Figure 5.4 Number of new businesses started, and private businesses supported by projects, by funding round
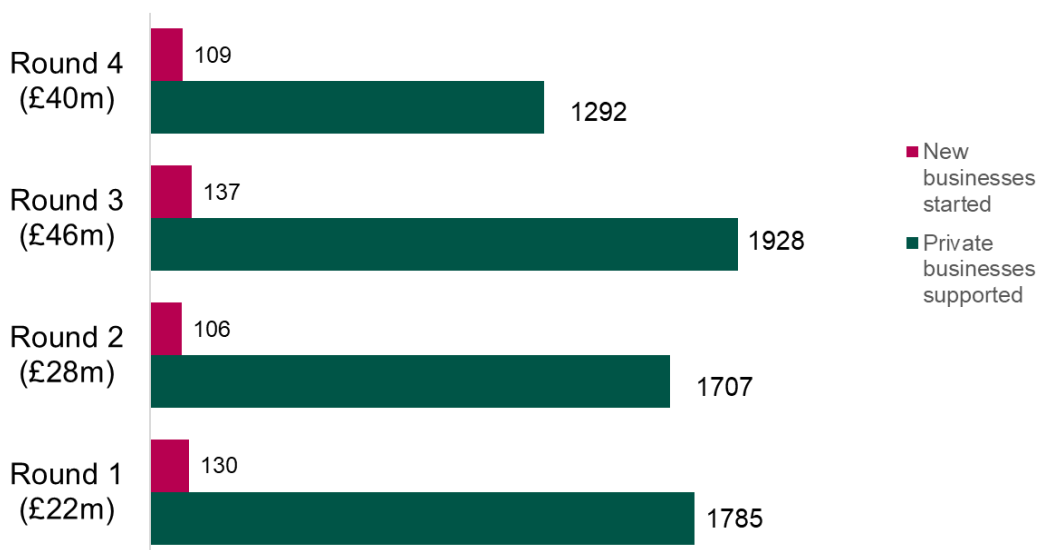
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

CCF projects also recorded an increase in business sales totalling £29.7m; however, this was skewed towards certain rounds. As shown in Figure 5.5, round one and round three saw the biggest increase in business sales recorded, with £13.6 million and £15.0 million respectively. In round two and round four, projects recorded only a £0.5m-£0.6m increase in businesses sales. It is unclear why this is the case, but often figures are dominated by one or two very large projects reporting high levels of change.
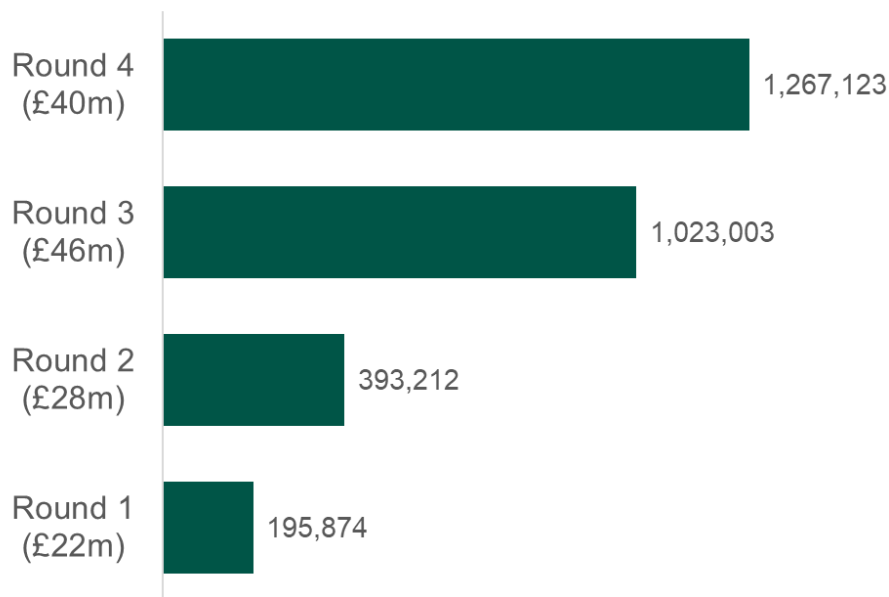
Figure 5.5 Business sales per round
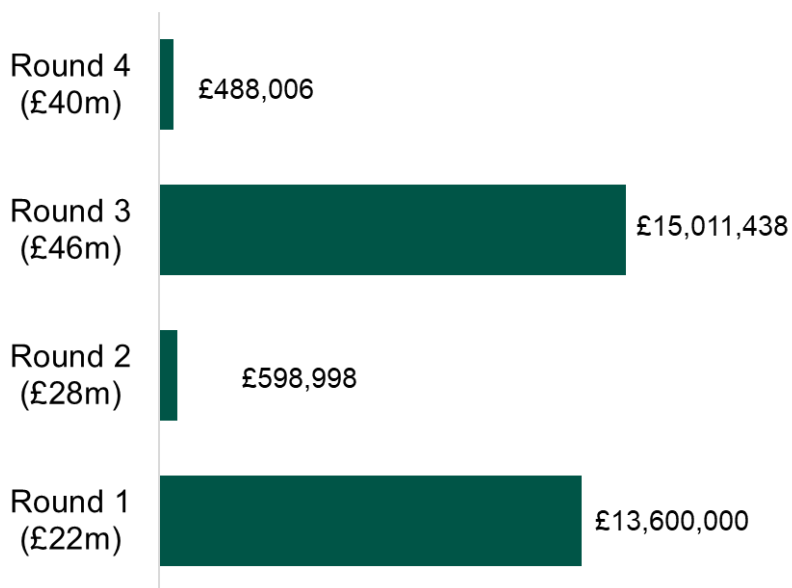
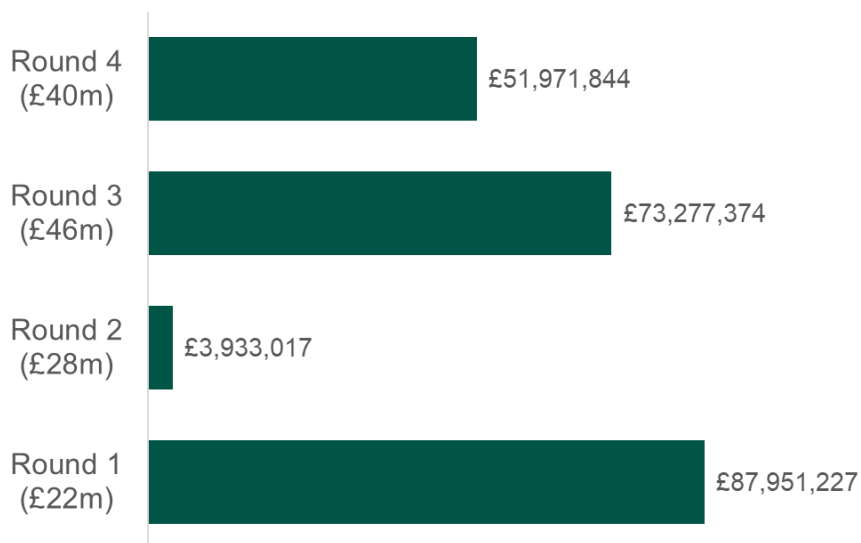Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Tourism

CCF projects reported an increase of 3.2m visitors across rounds one to four and £226.7m in expenditure from new visitors, as shown in Figure 5.6 and 5.7. Visitor numbers generated increased round on round, whereas the total recorded increase in visitor expenditure were highest for round one projects.

**Figure 5.6 Increase in visitor numbers per round**

Round	Value
Round 4 (£40m)	1,267,123
Round 3 (£46m)	1,023,003
Round 2 (£28m)	393,212
Round 1 (£22m)	195,874

Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Figure 5.7 Increase in visitor spend per round

Round	Value
Round 4 (£40m)	£51,971,844
Round 3 (£46m)	£73,277,374
Round 2 (£28m)	£3,933,017
Round 1 (£22m)	£87,951,227

Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

As shown in Figure 5.8, other recorded tourism-related activities included 731 new tourism events supported, 99 new tourism businesses started, and 180 new tourism facilities created (including marina berths).

Figure 5.8 Other tourism-related activities, per round
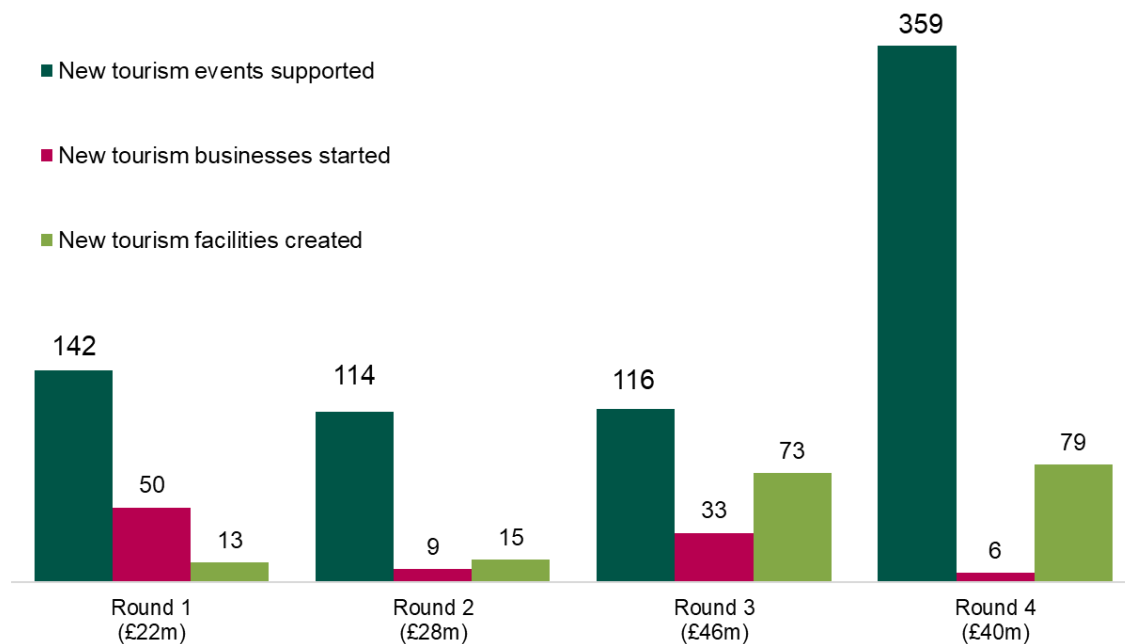
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Case study examples: overall assessment

On a qualitative assessment, of the 21 case studies carried out:

- Nine removed or substantially reduced an existing barrier to investment or economic growth, for example through the successful renovation of a previously neglected or derelict building or structure which was blighting an area, or creating a transport link between two previously poorly connected locations. There were three further case studies where it was difficult to judge from the evidence so far if this had or would occur (e.g., Round 5 projects which were still at an early stage).

- Most projects, 16 of 21, had successfully created an apparent opportunity for investment or economic growth, with a viable and self-sustaining outcome, although in some cases this might require further work before additional investment or economic growth occurred. For example, they might have created a business centre or focus for people or businesses to build upon. There were two further case studies where there was unclear evidence of success, and three where the project had not been successful in doing this.

- In a majority of these cases, 12 of 16, there was qualitative evidence of additional investment or economic expansion being created, for example new businesses being created, or increased tourism footfall.

Case study examples: direct jobs

On some projects, interviewees were confident in asserting that direct jobs had been created through delivery of the business plan, even if the numbers they could be sure of

were relatively low. A typical, clear cut example of this is at Southport Pier where there were two new attractions completed as part of the redevelopment which created jobs. One was a bistro type café, which created direct employment all year round. There was another attraction of fun-fair type rides, which also created jobs, although more seasonally.

At the Lincolnshire Coast Observatories project, they estimated that around a dozen jobs had been created at the two observatories themselves. The refurbishment of the Ventnor Coastal Enterprise Centre also created two new jobs and two apprenticeships through the need for staff to service the building. There were also a number of apprenticeships that were offered to help with the ongoing interest in the business space and the community space, named 'the green room'.

At Scarborough Market Hall there were now new trading pitches within the market hall, and the addition of a food court, with many existing traders now employing new staff. At Dorset Coastal Connections positions were created at the tourist information centre and catering kiosks.

Case study examples: Tourism and tourism spend

Some of the projects that focussed on increasing tourism appeared to have been very successful in increasing visitor numbers to the locality and also increasing visitor spend. Footfall figures in key tourist locations are often gathered by local authorities and relatively easily measured by projects through automated counters, making this a relatively easy and accurate outcome to measure.

Participants reported increased visitor numbers at numerous case study projects such as Dorset Coastal Connections, the Spanish City Dome, Lincolnshire Coast Observatories, Moors to Sea, Queenborough Harbour and Living Seas. Some projects had far exceeded forecasts:

"We tapped into latent demand. The Gibraltar Point visitor centre has 25% more visitors than the old building. In its first year, before the Coronavirus struck, the North Sea Observatory had 75,000 visitors, from nothing; it was that popular, we could have built it three times as big!"

PROJECT ORGANISER, LINCOLNSHIRE COAST OBSERVATORIES

Other case studies talked about achieving the objectives of lengthening visitor dwell time or the visitor season, which should also indirectly increase visitor spend. For example, the Lightpool project commissioned a survey showing that the changes to the Blackpool Illuminations associated with the project seemed to have increased the length of stay among visitors substantially.

The Seaton Carew regeneration also brought people into the area; this is likely to have had an impact on income in existing businesses, and thus indirectly on the creation and maintenance of jobs. However, this connection was more difficult to draw for smaller projects, given the complexity and expense of economic modelling. Even for an individual business seeing significant benefits, it was not always obvious the extent to which the project was responsible:

Case study examples: Indirect jobs

Some projects had the indirect creating of jobs as their key aim, as business centres: some of these were very successful in encouraging new businesses or traders into the locality, and acting a catalyst to growth for existing local businesses. These included Ventnor Coastal Enterprise Centre, Marlowe Innovation Centre, and White Rock regeneration. Ventnor Coastal Enterprise Centre facilitated new businesses relocating to the island, and networking and cross selling between businesses using the centre; whilst Marlowe Innovation Centre cited how around a third of the businesses using the premises had moved on to larger premises since joining, suggesting that the centre was helping companies to grow.

At Scarborough Market Hall, organisers reported that several traders had since gone on to bigger and better premises. The market encouraged businesses to join small, and provided conditions for them to grow. Some have since moved their premises into larger units in the town centre, potentially having a wider impact. The market could therefore be said to play a role in helping independent retail businesses in the wider town. Market traders explained that a market is one of the easiest ways to start up a business in the retail or food and drink sector. Some of the traders spoken to highlighted that the market was particularly inviting for a new business, due to the cheaper rent and shorter term leases:

Some project organisers and stakeholders cited examples of how they had personally seen new businesses starting up as result of the CCF investment, or additional job creation. For example, the Brean Down Way cycle path witnessed new cycle hire shops and a café opening up along the route, as well as expansion of existing businesses; whilst at Seaton Carew a new micro pub, wine bar and pop-up shops had opened.

The Port of Blyth training centre project was a rare example of one where indirect job generation was clear-cut; several employers who had located in the area since reported that the availability of the training centre had been a major factor in their decision to locate in Blyth, given their need for people trained in niche and often hard-to-find skills:

"We're taking the unemployed and NEETs and putting them through that building to give them opportunities."

PROJECT ORGANISER, PORT OF BLYTH

At Southport Pier, as a direct result of the project, the leaseholder of the pavilion upgraded it in line with the repairs, spending around £500,000, increasing the size of the business and creating further employment. The council were not aware that the leaseholder was planning this but were assured that they only invested because of the positive outcome of the CCF-funded pier improvements.

6.2 Potential for wider impact

Types of impact

Many projects' impact was reported to have gone beyond the immediate effect of the intervention funded. Case study participants often spoke of an image change, or an improvement in 'morale'. For a tourism project, this might be credited with attracting a new type of visitor; for business projects, this might be credited with drawing further investment.

These longer-term effects are perhaps the most difficult to measure, since they may be one of many factors influencing a visitor to come to an area, or a business to invest or expand.

Where partnerships were working well, there were also examples of further collaboration between various community stakeholders: local authorities, charities, schools, training providers and businesses, which helped to bring communities together. These communities might in future be more likely to drive further projects to improve the local area. Many projects also had knock-on effects through the establishment of partnerships and better relationships between organisations.

Enhanced stakeholder relations were a key outcome from some projects, which would not be reflected in monitoring data. Sometimes strong ongoing relationships were formed between local authorities and charities who had worked with the CCF funding. Some training provision projects also forged ongoing links with education and training providers.

Evidence in monitoring data

Monitoring data did not cover many of the knock-on effects of projects, partly due to the timing of the monitoring, only one year after the end of the project, and partly due to the intangible or unquantifiable nature of many knock-on effects. It did capture some positive environmental initiatives delivered by projects.

As shown in Figure 5.9, in total there were 49 environmental initiatives recorded as being created as a result of CCF funding: six in renewable energy, 15 relating to flooding or coastal defence, and 28 relating to sustainable transport. Most of these were not forecast, and were unforeseen side-effects of the projects: only 11 initiatives had been expected across all of these. One project in Devon recorded 175 initiatives; however, this is included as a single initiative, since it appears likely to be the result of recording 175 individual domestic solar installations as one initiative each.

Figure 5.9 Environmental elements produced by funding round

Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019

Case study examples: Public opinion and image

Several case study projects received positive media coverage – typically at a local or regional level, and occasionally even at a national level. For example, the Lincolnshire Coast Observatories received positive local and regional press coverage in the run-up to the opening of both buildings, whilst the North Sea Observatory was also featured on BBC's Countryfile programme. The Lightpool enhancements to the Blackpool Illuminations was featured on BBC's Strictly Come Dancing. The Spanish City Dome received a lot of positive press and was awarded many accolades such as an award from the Royal Town Planning Institute among others.

It is likely that these projects have a positive impact on an area's image, and many case study participants commented on this. For example, the Spanish City Dome project was widely felt to have changed the image of Whitley Bay, with real concrete effects on the local economy:

> *"The whole general feeling the Dome gave to the town is positive, it's involved businesses, it's involved residents, it's just encouraged investment."*

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, SPANISH CITY DOME PROJECT

Meanwhile at Seaton Carew, all the people interviewed for the research had noticed how the seafront regeneration funded by CCF had acted as a catalyst to encourage local private property owners (businesses, and even some residential) to invest in rejuvenation of the outside frontage of their own properties. It was now viewed as 'an up-and-coming area' which stimulated investment, both from existing and new businesses.

> *"The businesses, and even the residential properties, just seem to be investing more – whether that is new people coming in, or people taking greater pride – you can actually see people investing in enhancing their properties."*

PROJECT ORGANISER, SEATON CAREW

At the Port of Blyth project, local employers and other stakeholders were positive about opportunities the space provides, for example that the facility's networking opportunities let them build relationships with other local businesses, resulting in them re-investing in the area, or choosing to relocate in Blyth. The improved look and feel of the area, and that it was attracting visitors was frequently highlighted. The facilities were thought to have contributed to a 'virtuous cycle' of demand for a hotel and catering facilities, which had not been available locally previously.

> *'It is now certainly an attractive area to visit, look and learn. And that's a real positive because I think previously the . . . perception in the town was that it was that kind of grubby area where everybody is covered in muck and grease. And I think that aspiration raising of the offshore roles and roles within the industry on the banks of the river and the port… I think it has started to change that perception from a community perspective.'*

STAKEHOLDER, PORT OF BLYTH PROJECT

Negative press from projects was rare; however, one case study, the Hastings Pier Pavilion Restaurant was caught up negative publicity around the pier restoration and subsequent closure, covered in the local, regional, and national press. The community were galvanised to support the pier through crowd-funding and shareholders felt let down when the Hastings Pier charity went into administration. However, the project did restore the town's formerly burnt-out pier which would otherwise have needed to be demolished, incurring similarly negative press.

In contrast, several other projects received little media coverage and the interviewees said these projects had a low public profile even locally, sometimes not known outside the project team. Even if the public were benefitting from certain elements and reacting positively, they remained unaware of the link to the overall project. For example, the Shipshape East Anglia water taxi was very popular amongst the local community when it was running but they did not seem to connect it to the CCF funded project. This low profile might be seen as a project flaw, in the light of the impacts of the higher profile projects mentioned above.

A common recurring theme was how the CCF funded project had helped to restore a sense of positivity and civic pride in their locality. This was raised by interviewees on a diverse range of projects such as Seaton Carew regeneration, Moors to Sea business training, the Spanish City Dome and Dorset Coastal Connections.

"We underestimated the positive impact of the new play area and how well it would be received – especially by families. We got lots and lots of feedback and positive comments."

PROJECT ORGANISER, SEATON CAREW

Linked to this, on a few projects there was specific mention of increased environmental volunteering: at Inspiring the Cleveland Coast there had since been community groups established to voluntarily provide upkeep to the local area, including litter picking on the beach and maintenance of local parks. At Brean Down Way, the cycle path was built through volunteer work camps, from which some volunteers continued to volunteer on the ongoing maintenance of the cycle path. At the Living Seas project, feedback suggests that the environmental improvements to the coastline have resulted in the local community becoming more appreciative of the coastline around them and the issues facing the protection of marine life.

"I think our local community were more aware of the effect of looking after the environment because of the Living Seas programme, they have all gone out … different days [we've had] groups litter picking, handing out bin bags to tourists, talking to the community, so I think there's a big community feel about protecting our beaches now and Living Seas has instigated it."

BENEFICIARY, LIVING SEAS PROJECT

Case study examples: Knock-on effects

The CCF funded projects sometimes had project extensions after the conclusion of the CCF involvement. The examples here were quite varied.

For example, at the Port of Blyth Training Centre, a STEM hub had subsequently been created using the facilities and there were further plans for expansion of the centre going

forward. This was believed to have driven further local investment and improved the attractiveness of the formerly run-down port area to employers. Queenborough Harbour, meanwhile, had subsequently been extended to offer berths for more boats, realising essential economies of scale and further increasing impact, using other sources of funding.

At White Rock Regeneration in Hastings local meetings were continuing to discuss improvements to the area, and at the time of the case study a new building had already been bought with the same plan as the Rock House to increase the provision of low cost housing.

At the Lincolnshire Observatories project, where there was evidence of really good partnership working by stakeholders, the CCF funding facilitated further investment (by the Council and the National Trust) into further enhancements of the coastal location and the bigger vision of creating the coastal country park. Both Council and other stakeholders we spoke with felt these positive developments would not have been happening if the North Sea Observatory had not been built first.

> *"I think the opening of the North Sea Observatory building is just the start of it really. It achieved its goals in terms of a capital project in terms of putting a marker down and attracting interest… we see it as being the start. Long term with the addition of other proposed sites along the coast - the so-called 'string of pearls' - it would contribute to the regeneration of the area both economically and culturally. It feels like there is a long-term goal still to be had."*

STAKEHOLDER, LINCOLNSHIRE COASTAL OBSERVATORIES PROJECT

The Brean Down Way cycle path was extended a short distance, and also acted as a model for bids for other similar cycle paths, and also for technical aspects that could be replicated elsewhere such as the bird hide and sluice crossing. The example of the path's success had also been used to support applications for funding for other cycle paths created by the same organisation, and by the local authority.

Similarly, other projects reportedly had an impact as examples to inspire similar projects elsewhere in the UK. For example, the Marlowe Innovation Centre (a business centre based in a school) has been used as a model to share elsewhere, and other developers have visited the centre with the aim of creation other regeneration projects.

The Lincolnshire Coastal Observatories project provided a particularly clear example of this potential to inspire, since the experience of the project had directly influenced the thinking of one of the co-funders. They said the project had opened up an opportunity to partner with a nearby art gallery, using a similar business model. Partly as a result, they had also gone on to fund other similar projects with the observatory providing a model to follow:

STAKEHOLDER, LINCOLNSHIRE COAST OBSERVATORIES PROJECT

Often, even if the project itself did not expand, teams and partnerships created had endured and led to further work.

For example, the team assembled to run the Lightpool (Blackpool illuminations) project has run other light shows in other towns and cities around the region and further afield, making the Illuminations themselves more financially sustainable.

Several projects said there had been ongoing opportunities for shared learning through business networking and support. A good example of this was the Marlowe Innovation Centre, where there were cross-referrals between participating businesses, because the centre provided opportunities to work alongside other similarly-sized businesses through natural business relationships and helped to increase confidence, motivate, and inspire.

BENEFICIARY, MARLOWE INNOVATION CENTRE

A recurring theme on successful projects was how the CCF funding had been a catalyst to spark further rejuvenation of the area or to bring in further external investment from other parties. At Whitley Bay the redevelopment of the Spanish City Dome was believed to have led to continued investment in the area that wouldn't have happened otherwise, even into the COVID-19 lockdown period, such as a multi-use entertainment centre next to the dome.

However, not all knock-on effects manifested themselves in business terms; some were more around the sustainability of a community as a whole.

For example, at the Port of Blyth training centre, the FE college partner felt the project design worked for the area, in that it was focused on providing benefit for the young people of Blyth, to encourage them to stay and live in the area. They felt the project design was enhanced by including engagement with schools and young people to raise awareness of the employment opportunities and training they could access straight from school (e.g., apprenticeships / NVQs).

The Ventnor Enterprise Centre was an interesting example of how a CCF funded project enhanced the community it serves, in a way which might not be captured in monitoring data.

Ventnor Town Council refurbished and reconfigured the Coastal Enterprise Centre to provide office space for business start-ups and self-employed workers. However, beyond the business impacts, the increased visibility of the Town Council was mentioned as a key success, as it was thought to have created a dialogue between the community and the council. As a result of the Centre being built, residents knew where to go to receive and offer support. Physically, the space gave residents a place to easily access Town Council services, as well as those from other organisations such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Other community organisations, such as food banks also benefitted from increased visibility, with food donations being gathered at the Coastal Enterprise Centre building. Stakeholders felt that these benefits were especially important because of the high levels of deprivation within the area, so there needed to be an accessible location point where people can go for assistance. The profits from this project were reinvested back into the local community.

In some ways the Ventnor Enterprise building was acting as a community hub, enhancing community cohesion.

At the White Rock regeneration project, a number of the businesses and residents did community work as part of being occupants of the building. Beyond providing affordable accommodation, the community feel of Rock House was emphasised as a benefit. Residents and business owners alike were said to have positive relationships, which included collaborating on projects. It was emphasised that a key element of success was the community-led delivery, rather than council involvement. It was believed, the limited red tape and ability to act quickly is what helped the Rock House be successful.

On the Lincolnshire Coast Observatories project, several of the stakeholders we spoke with felt that it was effectively acting as 'a community hub', as a multi-purpose destination for various beneficiaries: tourists, local residents, volunteer groups and even government agencies, and for various uses such as nature viewing, social events for locals, weddings, exhibitions, workshops, training sessions and meetings.

Finally, various CCF-funded projects were thought to have delivered additionality to physical or mental health and wellbeing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the projects enhancing the public realm encouraged greater use of open spaces by the local residents, to gain physical exercise using walking trails, or cycle paths.

For example, on the Moors to Sea project, the business network carried on long past the point when CCF funding ceased; as a direct consequence of this, many acknowledged they felt more supported through the COVID-19 pandemic, when peer-to-peer emotional support was also exchanged between participants.

Subjectively, several projects with a more environment-oriented outlook emphasised the benefits of their project during COVID-19, including Brean Down Way, Lincolnshire Coastal Observatories, Seaton Carew, Inspiring the Cleveland Coast, Dorset Coastal Connections and Living Seas.

Brean Down Way provided a link for tourists in Brean to reach Weston-Super-Mare on a pleasant traffic free walk or cycle but also aimed to encourage Weston-Super-Mare residents to get out into nature. The iconic North Sea Observatory served as a gateway to the new coastal country park, which had a network of footpaths for local people to enjoy, but also allowed people to experience the positive mental wellbeing benefits of looking out

a beautiful vista even on a wet day. At Seaton Carew, in a more urban setting, the seafront was made more accessible with relaxing spaces, and providing a walkway punctuated by points of interest such as play areas and artworks, as well as connections with other paths. At Inspiring the Cleveland Coast, improvements along the coast and river front made public access to these areas easier and well used by the community.

The Dorset Coastal Connections portfolio project provided new cycle trails, walks and footpaths, which were particularly popular during the lockdown at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Living Seas project, interviewees observed that a positive impact of COVID-19 was to increase the volume of local people who visited the coastline for exercise, either walking or cycling, which in turn led to a growth in demand for activities in the local area. Combined with the need to offer small group activities, due to social distancing, the Living Seas projects had to double or even triple the events on offer during the pandemic to meet demand:

"Demand for doing things on the coast has rocketed and we can't keep up with the demand. People feel safe doing things outdoors and because of lockdown, they are prioritising different things."

BENEFICIARY, LIVING SEAS PROJECT

6.3 Maximising delivery

Analysis of CCF data showed that some types of project were more efficient than others in terms of the creation of jobs.

A particularly clear pattern is shown on the left of Figure 5.10, breaking down smaller and larger projects. Generally, smaller projects worth less than £1m in total (regardless of CCF grant size) generated almost double the number of jobs per £100,000 spent as larger projects.

The right hand side of Figure 5.10 shows that (using only data from round one to round three) projects involving property tended to be particularly weak in terms of jobs generated. This may reflect the need to include the purchase or restoration of property. Although business and enterprise projects show a very high return, this is based on only six projects and so should be treated with some caution.

Figure 5.10 Jobs created or maintained per £100,000 spent: by project size and type
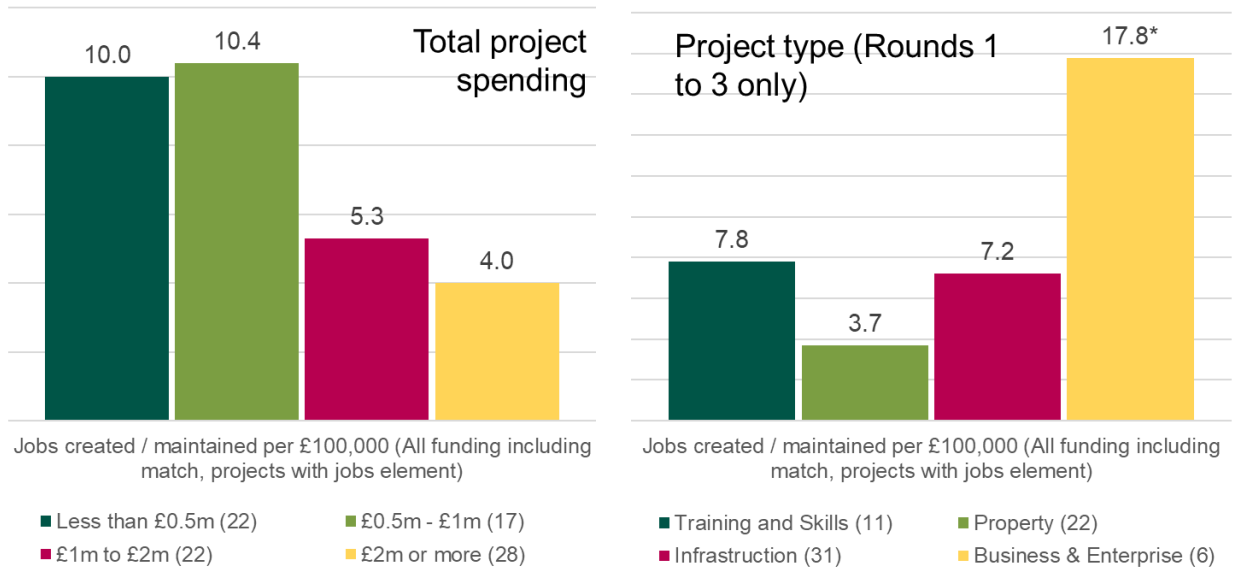
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019 *low base size

The left hand side of Figure 5.11 shows that in regional terms, projects further from London have a substantially greater delivery of jobs per £100,000 spent, perhaps reflecting the lower cost of property further from London, or possibly the economic situation of the locations selected.

In terms of settlement size, there is also a clear trend toward smaller settlements in terms of jobs delivered per £100,000 spent.

Figure 5.11 Jobs created or maintained per £100,000 spent: by region and settlement size
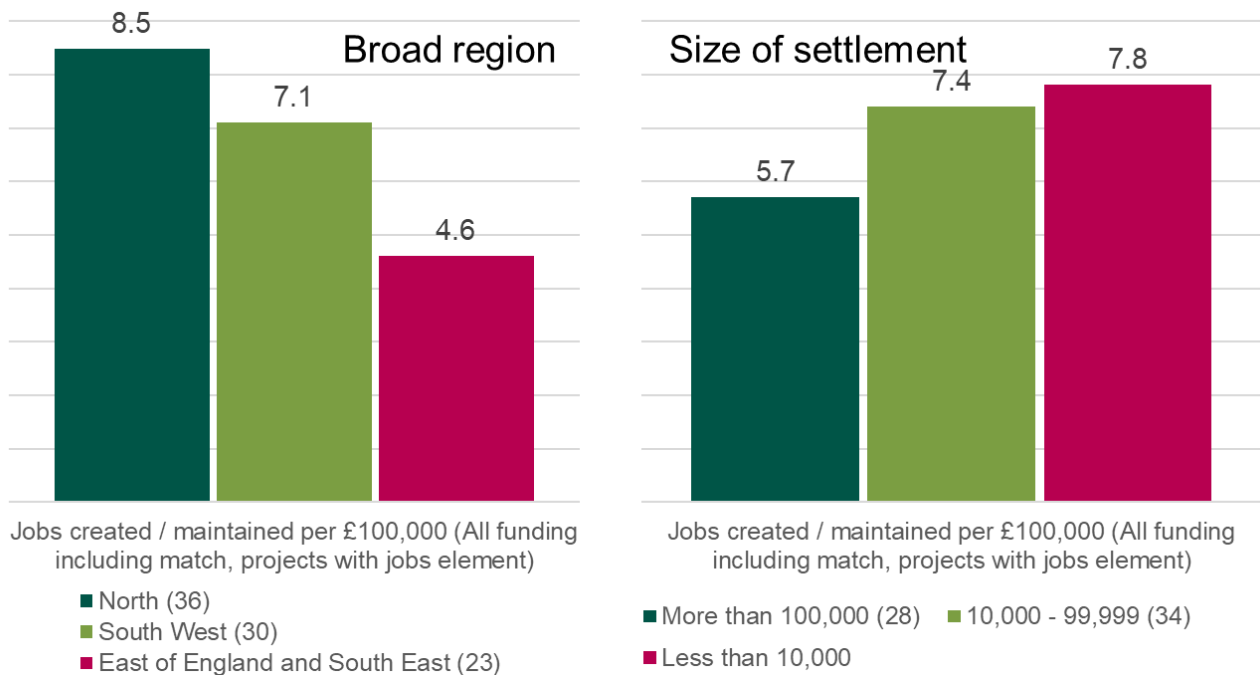
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019 *low base size

Finally, where funding is targeted at an area with moderate to high long term unemployment (used here as a proxy for level of deprivation), as shown in Figure 5.12, more jobs are likely to be delivered , although the relationship is not completely uniform.

Figure 5.12 Jobs created or maintained per £100,000 spent: by level of long term unemployment
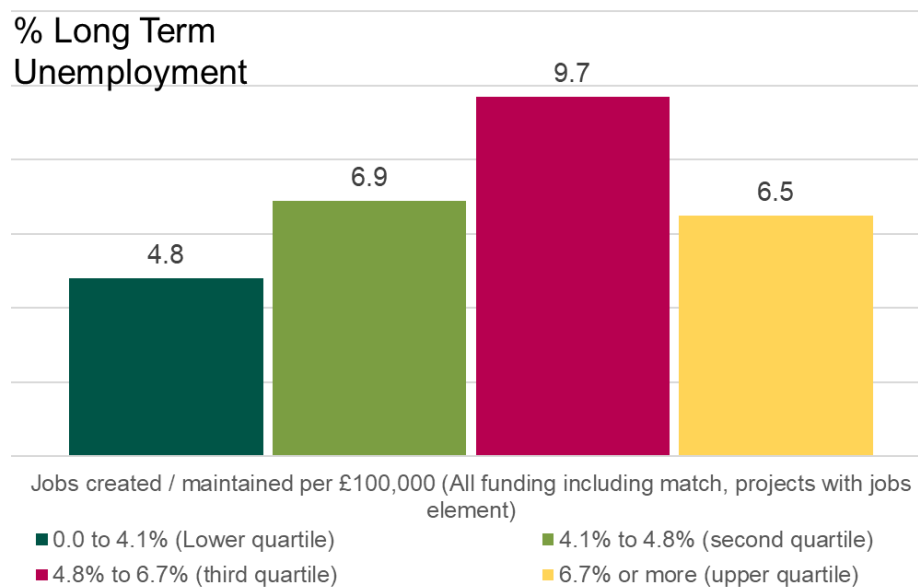
Source: CCF Monitoring Data, 2012 – 2019 *low base size

6.4 Summary and recommendations

As shown in the previous chapter, the process diagram in Figure 5.13 shows the process through which the research found projects typically progress in their latter stages. CCF's main input at this stage is currently through monitoring and evaluation.

While many of the benefits of these projects occur naturally without further CCF involvement, evaluation and monitoring is important; many projects above achieved additional benefits through the fact that they were proven successes which could be put forward to justify further investment.

In addition, having identified these knock-on effects shows that the CCF monitoring does not capture the full benefits of these projects. Arguably, this cannot be fully captured, since the further you get from a project, the more difficult it is to attribute any change to the project itself, as numerous interviewees pointed out.

Figure 5.13 Process diagram: delivery and impact

Many of the benefits identified in this section stem from good principles of project design and project management, covered in previous sections. However, it is clear that one issue which matters particularly for knock-on effects is partnerships. Coastal Communities Teams were mentioned by several case studies as being important to forming partnerships. It is notable, although not conclusive, that nearly all of the projects subject to case studies which underperformed due to a lack of wider community engagement or consultation were in earlier CCF rounds (1, 2 and 3) prior to the introduction of Coastal Communities Teams.

Recommendation: CCF and similar funds going forward should consider retaining or implementing a similar approach to Coastal Communities Teams, to assist in ensuring wider consultation and community buy-in for projects funded.

One area where CCF underperformed significantly was in the monitoring of projects. The data collected, while impressively comprehensive, was inconsistent and quality control of data returns was limited. There were also many longer term outcomes reported to this evaluation, which might have been captured by longer term monitoring.

Recommendation: CCF should define outcomes clearly so that they can be understood by all projects, and allow for non-response in how data is gathered, rather than recording this as a zero.

Recommendation: CCF monitored outcomes once, at a fixed point in time. Many projects reported longer term outcomes to this evaluation, which could have been captured with multiple snapshots of data monitoring, although this need not be across the full spectrum of items monitored. Monitoring for schemes intending to stimulate long term economic regeneration should be extended for a longer period of time to take this into account.

Many projects seemed to have achieved substantial (if difficult to quantify) gains for their local area through publicity and image change. However, not all projects sought to raise awareness of their activities locally. Local Authorities tended to have a separate (non-CCF) budget to publicise their activities.

Recommendation: CCF should encourage relevant projects to spend some funds on promotion of their project, not only for the immediate benefit in terms of custom and community engagement, but due to the knock-on effects (in terms of investment and community cohesion) of improving the image of a location.

In addition, determining 'what works' was impeded by the fact that many projects contained multiple elements which were accounted for together rather than separately. For example, it would be possible to analyse the relative effectiveness of training vs. infrastructure spending if these were itemised separately in data recorded by the programme. This is likely to be a particular issue for portfolio projects, one of which was subject of a case study in Round 5.

Recommendation: CCF should separate out elements of larger projects for monitoring and reporting, and separate out the funds given to each element of the project. To avoid losing the simplicity of funding drawdown, this allocation could be notional based on initial project budgets rather than closely monitored during the drawdown process.

Monitoring was compromised by the fact that some of the measures – notably indirect job creation – were difficult for projects to calculate, especially smaller projects. Larger projects may also have calculated these in inconsistent ways. It may be that projects need some additional support and guidance in this area, particularly small projects. Ultimately for the smallest projects this is a matter of resource; CCF should perhaps consider assisting smaller projects with this through either direct assistance (i.e., accepting lower level data and carrying out an estimate of jobs created centrally) or the ringfencing of an element of grant money for post-project evaluation.

Recommendation: CCF and other similar funds should consider ways to better support and assist projects, particularly small projects, to estimate their actual economic impact.

Finally, analysis of project data does suggest that smaller projects are most efficient in terms of delivery per £100,000 spent. This comes despite the finding in the case studies that smaller projects have significant difficulties analysing their impact, which may make the effect larger than this. This is corroborated by some suggestions made by national stakeholders, that smaller, simpler, community-led projects are often more efficient and lower risk than large-scale projects.

This may of course be explained in part by issues mentioned elsewhere regarding project management of large projects; however, tentatively we would suggest that these smaller projects do represent better value.

This is of course not to say that larger projects should not be funded; often the large projects funded by CCF were crucial to the regeneration of the places in which they occurred.

Recommendation: CCF and other similar funds should reconsider the balance of funds between small and large projects, given the value for money apparently represented by these smaller projects.

Finally, one key strength of CCF is the targeting of projects at rural areas; the evidence from the evaluation shows that projects in small towns and villages are likely to generate more jobs overall per £100,000 spent than projects in larger cities. However, CCF's lack of

focus on areas of the most deprivation does suggest that a greater targeting of these areas would also be helpful for value for money.

Recommendation: *CCF and other similar funds should continue to target a range of urban and rural areas, but should also take account of the level of deprivation and unemployment in the area of projects when awarding funds.*

The process diagram below in Figure 5.14 represents the key recommendations above and from the previous chapter in graphic form, showing their contribution to the process. Those boxes in bold text are additional or enhanced in some way, while red arrows show new links.

Figure 5.14   Process diagram: delivery phase: with recommendations

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 What did the programme deliver?

The programme delivered £187m of grants over nine years and five rounds to a wide range of projects around England's coasts, case studies suggest that most of which could with reasonable confidence be said to have contributed to jobs growth and prosperity. CCF data suggests that at least 5,480 training places and 7,165 jobs were created directly and indirectly, and a further 1,835 jobs safeguarded. The project may have in fact created significantly more jobs and training; reporting by projects was patchy, particularly of indirect impacts, most likely due to the difficulty of calculating these for small projects.

Usually, the economic benefits of any given project were felt by organisers and stakeholders to have exceeded the investment made by CCF, although in many cases a full economic impact assessment was not feasible. Projects also had a wide range of knock-on effects not already captured in CCF monitoring. These were sometimes attributable directly to CCF, such as project extensions or the team involved carrying out further projects. Some were often less directly attributable, such as the project appearing to trigger wider local investment, improve the image of a location causing new tourism flows, or boost community cohesion, thus encouraging more community-led projects. Some projects had also been used as evidence to support further funding applications.

Key factors in the success of projects in generating economic impact were identified from the case studies, including:

- Wide consultation at an early stage, prior to key design decisions (already encouraged by CCTs introduced at round four, but could be further improved)

- Strong partnership working (already encouraged by the CCTs introduced at round four)

- A focus on long term economic viability from the start (which could be encouraged further by CCF)

- Good project management and project leadership

The fundamental rationale for the programme has been found to be sound; prior to CCF coastal areas, despite suffering similar economic shocks as former industrial cities, had not previously seen the level of focus on regeneration experienced by those cities. The focus on rural areas or smaller towns is also supported by the data; projects in these areas seem to have greater returns in terms of jobs gained.

Participants often expressed strong support for the CCF, and appreciated its simple and flexible design. It was compared favourably on these grounds to other sources of public or charitable funding, and often was used as seed funding, subsequently attracting significant match funding, boosting its impact.

7.2 Who benefited from it and how?

The fund allocated grants through a two-stage process. Generally, the administration of this process was found to be good, but with some improvements possible in areas such as speed of decision-making, and support or advice made available to community-led projects for project design (as opposed to making their application).

The beneficiary projects were spread across England's coasts, but with some specific foci. There was more focus on small and mid-size towns than cities. This was in part intentional. There was some unevenness in the regional distribution relative to the size of the coastal population, possibly due to a lack of information available regarding this at the time. Projects varied widely in scale, although toward round four the focus shifted toward larger projects, although with some funds retained for the smallest projects.

There is some indication from the data held by DLUHC that improvements could also be made to the targeting of the fund for maximum economic impact per pound spent, in targeting areas with more severe economic problems, and targeting smaller, less property-oriented projects. However, this needs to be balanced against the reality that in some locations, larger projects focused on regeneration of a specific property may be needed to trigger wider regeneration, despite their lower immediate returns.

7.3 What would have happened without the intervention?

There is also a strong case that CCF funding is generally additional rather than displacing other spending; the vast majority of those case studies spoken to felt that their projects could not have gone ahead without CCF funding. Many of the projects had knock-on effects which also would have been absent.

The vast majority of the 22 projects examined in detail were felt by organisers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries to have contributed value to the local economy, although it was only rarely that this could be attributed *only* to the CCF. Indeed, projects often worked better when carried out as part of a wider programme, or building on existing projects. It may be that CCF spending would have been more efficient if the scheme had made specific commitments to a particular area over time, or made more long-term funding awards. However, public funding generally has limitations regarding making long-term commitments, caused by the annual nature of public budgeting and the risk of changes in political priorities.

7.4 Recommendations

A number of improvements have been recommended in this report, as detailed at the end of each chapter; some of these have wider applicability beyond the Fund itself. The key recommendations are shown in the process diagram diagrams below, in Figures 6.1 and 6.2. The bold text indicates new or revised elements, and the red arrows indicate new linkages. All recommendations are also laid out in Appendix C in text form.

Key improvements suggested were around advice and guidance for projects; while advice and guidance received from CCF was widely praised, projects might have benefited from more support (even in terms of written materials) at an early stage and also later in the project during evaluation. Many projects have learned lessons which they could pass on to

others, something CCF could facilitate. In addition, there are some shortcomings in monitoring, which could be improved; small projects in particular need support with evaluating their work. This evaluation work would not just evidence the work of the fund more effectively, but could also help project organisers support future funding applications and inspire future similar projects.

Figure 6.1   Process diagram: design phase: with recommendations
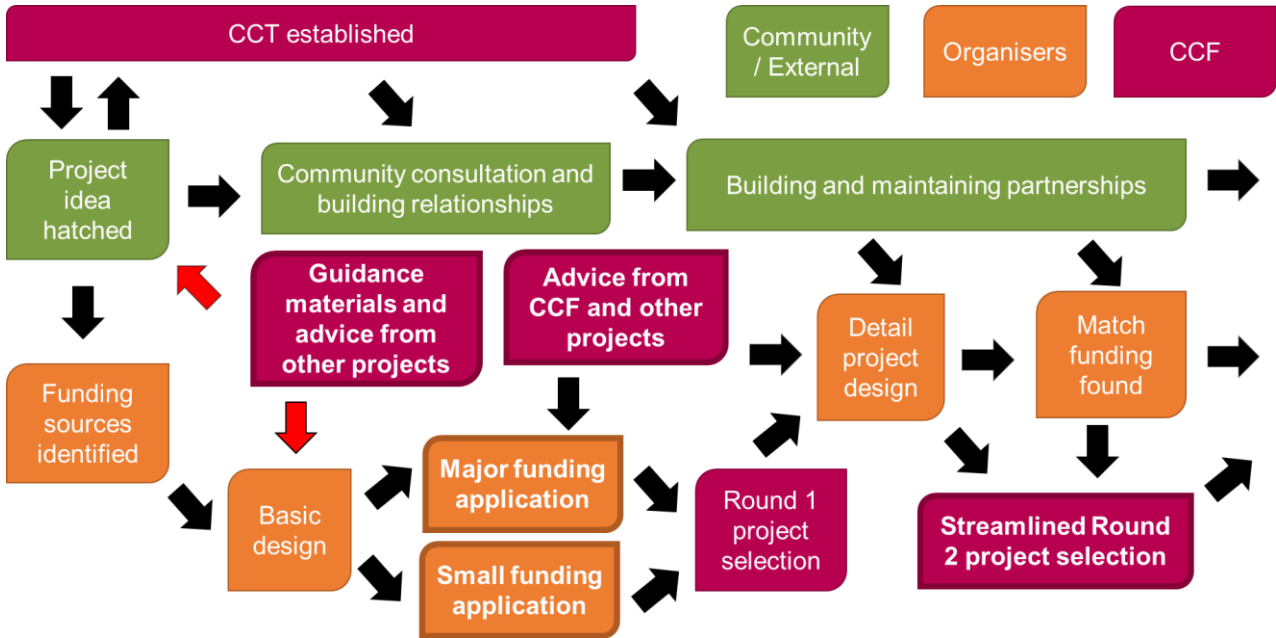
Figure 6.2   Process diagram: delivery phase: with recommendations

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Calculating the coastal population

To enable many of the calculations in this report to be made, a profile of the coastal population of England needed to be constructed. This is not a readily available geography from ONS.

A number of approaches were ruled out; the simplest approach might be to use coastal Local Authorities. However, it was found that Local Authorities were too large to represent the coastal population in a way that enabled analysis of Coastal Communities Fund data. It would be unreasonable, for example, to count all of Northumberland's settlements as coastal, even if it does have a substantial coastal population. To assess the fund's success in reaching cities, towns, and villages of different sizes, it was also necessary to tell apart small settlements and large settlements. The geography selected to base this on, due to its fine detail, was therefore ONS's Built-Up Area (BUA) data. This provides population of individual settlements, down to village scale.

Farms and isolated rural dwellings are excluded from the BUA classification (and hence from the classification used for this report), and settlements connected by continuous urban development (e.g., Portsmouth and Southampton, Bristol and Avonmouth) are counted together.

A list of coastal BUAs was compiled manually, using ONS maps of Built-Up Areas in each region of the UK to identify settlements which fell partly or wholly within approximately 5km of the coastline at high tide, including tidal estuaries. Although qualifying under these criteria, London BUA was specifically excluded since it is outside the intended scope of the Coastal Communities Fund and it would be unreasonable to describe the majority of London as 'coastal' in character, despite the presence of the Thames. However, other large coastal urban areas are included, such as Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Bristol, even where the centre of that city is not directly on the coast.

Data regarding ONS region and settlement size available at BUA level was added onto resulting data file to enable analysis. This exercise found that the population of coastal areas of England broke down as shown in Figures A1.1 and A1.2. Table A1.3 shows the variation in the long term unemployment rate by size of settlement in coastal areas, illustrating the potential contradiction between a focus on areas most in need of economic regeneration, and a focus on smaller settlements.

Figure A1.1: England's coastal population: by region

ONS Region	Coastal population*	Total regional population*	% of total population	% of England's coastal population
East Midlands	110,465	4,533,222	2.4%	0.9%
East of England	1,322,066	5,846,965	22.6%	10.8%
London	0**	8,173,941	0.0%	0.0%
North East	1,819,101	2,596,886	70.0%	14.8%
North West	2,685,710	7,052,177	38.1%	21.8%
South East	3,322,427	8,634,750	38.5%	27.0%
South West	2,326,312	5,288,935	44.0%	18.9%
West Midlands	0	5,601,847	0.0%	0.0%
Yorkshire and the Humber	711,880	5,283,733	13.5%	5.8%
Total	**12,297,961**	**53,012,456**	**23.2%**	**100.0%**

*ONS Census (2011) **London was specifically excluded.

Figure A1.2: England's coastal population: by settlement size

Settlement size**	Coastal population*	% of England's coastal population
100 to 999 people	125,812	1.0%
1,000 to 9,999	875,992	7.1%
10,000 to 49,999	1,996,565	16.2%
50,000 to 99,999	1,159,887	9.4%
100,000 to 499,999	5,027,843	40.9%
500,000 or more	3,111,862	25.3%
Total	**12,297,961**	**100.0%**

*ONS Census (2011) **ONS statistics for Built-Up Areas (BUAs) (2011)

Figure A1.3: England's coastal population: long term unemployment by settlement size

Settlement size**	Coastal population*	Long term unemployment rate**
100 to 999 people	125,812	2.2%
1,000 to 9,999	875,992	2.8%
10,000 to 49,999	1,996,565	3.1%
50,000 to 99,999	1,159,887	4.0%
100,000 to 499,999	5,027,843	4.0%

500,000 or more	3,111,862			4.5%
Total	**12,297,961**			**100.0%**

*ONS Census (2011) **ONS statistics for Built-Up Areas (BUAs) (2011)

8.2 Appendix B: Profile of case studies

Originally the project was planned to include 20 depth reviews of Coastal Communities Fund projects around England. In the event, 21 were carried out including 18 full case studies and three mini case studies.

This was because in several cases it was difficult to carry out a full case study because of the length of time elapsed between the project ending and the research, and consequently some key people involved having moved on to other roles at other organisations.

Figure A2.1: List of case studies, with key characteristics

Case study name	CCF round	Quantity of funding*	Location	Brief description
Skills for Energy	1	£760,000	East of England	Apprenticeships for low carbon energy sector in East Anglia
Shipshape East Anglia	2	£620,000	East of England	Create a marine heritage hub and water taxi
Spanish City Dome	2	£1.1m	North East	Restoration of iconic building in Whitley Bay as retail / business centre
Inspiring the Cleveland Coast (mini case study)	1	£580,000	North East	Visitor centre, business centre and training opportunities at South Gare near Redcar
Port of Blyth Training Centre	3	£500,000	North East	Employer-focused vocational training facility in previously underused port area
Seaton Carew	4	£600,000	North East	Public realm improvements and refurbishments, and public art
Lightpool	3	£2.0m	North West	New festival and technical enhancements to the Blackpool Illuminations
Southport Pier (mini case study)	4	£2.0m	North West	Improvements to the Pier, including additional retail opportunities.
Park View 4U (mini case study)	2	£400,000	North West	Renovation of a park, including play facilities and kiosk

Living Seas	5	£71,000	North West	Events, talks, surveys and workshops to increase engagement with the coast
Marlowe Innovation Centre	1	£350,000	South East	Expansion of a business centre linked to a school, providing training and business opportunities
Hastings Pier Pavilion Restaurant	1	£1.2m	South East	Creation of a landmark restaurant on Hastings Pier to assist in its regeneration as a tourist attraction
Queenborough Harbour	4	£500,000	South East	Expansion and improvement of harbour mooring facilities
Ventnor Coastal Enterprise Centre	2	£120,000	South East	Refurbishment of business centre, providing affordable space for businesses and a centre for local people to access town council services.
White Rock Regeneration	4	£890,000	South East	Portfolio project of renovations, business support and events in the White Rock area of Hastings.
Dorset Coastal Connections	4	£5.6m	South West	Portfolio project of improvements to infrastructure, information hubs and promotion of tourism.
Brean Down Way	4	£84,000	South West	Creation of a cycle and footpath from Weston-Super-Mare to Brean Down, and associated improvements.
Jurassic Coast Volunteer Network	5	£260,000	South West	Creation of a network of volunteers and businesses in Dorset, including IT platform and training.
Scarborough Market Hall	3	£2.8m	Y&L	Refurbishment of a historic market hall, with opportunities for businesses.
Moors to Sea	4	£280,000	Y&L	Portfolio project of infrastructure improvements, signage, promotion of tourism, and business support.

Lincolnshire Coast Observatories	3	£1.8m	Y&L	Two new visitor centres at nature reserves on the Lincolnshire Coast, including cafés and exhibition spaces.

*Rounded to 2 significant figures. **Y&L = Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

8.3 Appendix C: Recommendations

The recommendations included in this report, which could apply equally to future rounds of CCF funding or to other grant-based central government funds for community-led projects, are collated in this appendix for convenience:

8.3.1 Distributing funds

Recommendation (Page 38): *Take into account the size of the coastal population, and level of deprivation when setting geographical targets for grant-giving, although not necessarily to the exclusion of other factors.*

Recommendation (Page 38): *Create a two-tiered application process by amount of funding requested; this would enable more detail to be gathered for larger projects on their plans and their projected economic impact, making project selection more efficient, while retaining the much-valued simplicity for smaller projects.*

Recommendation (Page 39): *Consider reducing the extent of high-level involvement from DLUHC in the selection of individual projects at both application stages, to increase the speed of the decision-making process, and focus it more on the CCF England Funding Panel recommendations based on objective criteria relating to projected outcomes.*

8.3.2 Project design

Recommendation (Page 45): *Investment in generic support materials for community groups, or signposting toward existing materials, would be valuable. This has already been put in place in London, by the Mayor's office,[42] but some similar guidance, with promotion to the intended audience – and perhaps wider in scope to cover regeneration and heritage – might be useful nationally.*

Recommendation (Page 46): *Future rounds of funding could take more of a strategic approach to investment in specific local areas. A portion of funding could, for example, be ring-fenced for projects in the same location, with a preference for funding development or expansion of existing projects[43]. This would decrease the spending power of the CCF in a single year, but might increase overall impact by giving confidence to applicants.*

8.3.3 Project delivery

Recommendation (Page 55): *CCF should ensure at award of funds that larger projects funded have a suitable and robust process of audit and/or challenge in place, whether external or internal. For smaller projects this might be overly onerous; they could instead*

---

[42] Mayor of London (2017) *Community Projects Handbook.* March 2017. Accessed at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_projects_handbook_web.pdf
[43] This approach was taken to some extent in Round 4 and again in Round 5, through the portfolio project approach, where a partnership-type organisation was funded to deliver a range of projects. However, because the majority of these projects were in Round 5 for which no outcomes data is available, it is too early to judge whether this approach is more successful in quantitative terms.

be contacted mid-project to check that they have basic project management processes for a small project in place, and encourage them to put them in place if they do not.

8.3.4 Impact

Measuring impact

Recommendation (Page 76): *CCF should define outcomes clearly so that they can be understood by all projects, and allow for non-response in how data is gathered, rather than recording this as a zero.*

Recommendation (Page 76): *CCF monitored outcomes once, at a fixed point in time. Many projects reported longer term outcomes to this evaluation, which could have been captured with multiple snapshots of data monitoring, although this need not be across the full spectrum of items monitored. Monitoring for schemes intending to stimulate long term economic regeneration should be extended for a longer period of time to take this into account.*

Recommendation (Page 77): *CCF should separate out elements of larger projects for monitoring and reporting, and separate out the funds given to each element of the project. To avoid losing the simplicity of funding drawdown, this allocation could be notional based on initial project budgets rather than closely monitored during the drawdown process.*

Recommendation (Page 77): *CCF and other similar funds should consider ways to better support and assist projects, particularly small projects, to estimate their actual economic impact.*

Enhancing project impact

Recommendation (Page 76): *CCF and similar funds going forward should consider retaining or implementing a similar approach to Coastal Communities Teams, to assist in ensuring wider consultation and community buy-in for projects funded.*

Recommendation (Page 77): *CCF should encourage relevant projects to spend some funds on promotion of their project, not only for the immediate benefit in terms of custom and community engagement, but due to the knock-on effects (in terms of investment and community cohesion) of improving the image of a location.*

Recommendation (Page 77): *CCF and other similar funds should reconsider the balance of funds between small and large projects, given the value for money apparently represented by these smaller projects.*

Recommendation (Page 78): *CCF and other similar funds should continue to target a range of urban and rural areas, but should also take account of the level of deprivation and unemployment in the area of projects when awarding funds.*