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North of Tyne Community-Led Local Development 2017-2022

Summative Assessment

European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

Newcastle
City Council

HM Government

Wavehill: Social and Economic Research

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Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
AB	Accountable Body
CCT	Cross-Cutting Themes
CLLD	Community-led local development
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EOI	Expression of Interest
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESF	European Social Fund
GVA	Gross Value Added
LAG	Local Action Group
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale – *Link between Activities for Development of Rural Economy*
LSOA	Lower Super-Output Area
MA	Managing Authority
NCC	Newcastle City Council
NEET	Not in Training, Employment, or Education
NE LEP	North East Local Enterprise Partnership
NTCA	North of Tyne Combined Authority
NT	North of Tyne
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
VCS	Voluntary and Community sectors

Contents page

Table of figures

Table of tables

North of Tyne
Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme

Newcastle City Council | HM Government | European Union — European Structural and Investment Funds

Programme ran between 2017 – 2022 in the West and East End of Newcastle and Wallsend in North Tyneside.

Programme was supported by Newcastle CLLD Project Team, who provided expert management, guidance, and administrative support.

£4.1m Total investment value

31 Projects in total were supported by project end, with

£1.75m combined total investment

£460k of this was for **ERDF**

Breakdown by funding of 31 projects supported
23 ESF funded projects, totaling **£1.3m**
6 ERDF revenue funded projects, totaling £325k
2 ERDF capital grants funded projects, totaling £136k

the average project support value for **ESF** per project was **£56,174**

the average project support value for **ERDF** per project was **£57,068**

Delivery

The Local Action Group (LAG) has been at the centre of the CLLD approach. It has:

Provided direction, steer, and development of the CLLD programme.

Collaborated to meet the needs and challenges faced by local communities.

Worked with organisations in the local community to leverage their good ideas.

Value for money

The CLLD Programme has demonstrated excellent Value for Money.

The primary output of CLLD, supported 31 community-based social and entrepreneurial projects across CLLD areas in Newcastle and Wallsend (North Tyneside).

The average cost per project was £56,405 across the whole programme.

Project impacts include

improved social capital

improved governance

enhanced results

Achievements

ESF indicators achieved

156% ethnic minority participants engaged (CO05)
171% employed participants engaged (CO05)
113% inactive participants engaged (CO03)
102% women participants engaged (CO16)

ERDF indicators achieved

142% Sqm of buildings built or renovate(output P12)
100% employment increase in supported enterprises (C8)
99% enterprises supported (C1)
91% potential entrepreneurs assisted (P11)

The funded projects sought to tackle one or more of the 4 programme objectives

Improve social fabric in the CLLD area

Support community assets and organisations to become entrepreneurial.

Strengthen the business community in the CLLD area.

Help local organisations to tackle barriers to employment

Evaluation by **wavehill** Social and economic research

Executive Summary

This is the final report for the Summative Assessment of the North of Tyne Community-Led Local Development (CLLD Programme) undertaken between November 2022 and February 2023. The evaluation has drawn on a review of project documentation, interviews with six LAG members, three members of the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team, eight external stakeholders, seven project partners, and a survey of 29 project beneficiaries.

Overview of the Programme

CLLD was launched in 1991 as part of LEADER, which was originally conceived for rural development. At the time, LEADER was funded by the Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the UK Government, and co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). In the investment period 2007-2013, CLLD was trialled as part of development in fisheries and aquaculture areas specifically. In the subsequent programming period, 2014-2020, CLLD was integrated for the first time into the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).[1]

ESIF is focused on supporting economic development through a range of means.

The ESF supports employment-related projects, particularly for young people and those facing barriers to find suitable work. ERDF promotes balanced development in different regions of the EU.

The European Commission sets out the main features of Community-led local development (CLLD) as being:

a) Focused on specific sub-regional areas.
b) Led by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests.
c) Carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies.
d) Design taking into consideration local needs and potential, and shall include innovative features in the local context, networking and, where appropriate, cooperation.

Central to the CLLD approach is the implementation by Local Action Groups (LAGs). The main responsibility of the LAG is the implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the CLLD strategy that it has produced. More specifically, their role includes:

- To motivate the local area in CLLD initiatives and the work of the LAG, promoting and publicising development opportunities and encouraging project applications.
- Engaging, collaborating and working in partnership with other organisations and initiatives on CLLD measures.

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[1] The European Network for Rural Development, EU Commission, 2017

- Consideration, recommendation and selection of proposals whilst ensuring coherence with CLLD strategies.
- Fixing the amount of support available to proposals.
- Delivering activities directly through the Administrative Body.
- Networking with other LAGs, sharing knowledge and best practice.

The North of Tyne CLLD Local Action Group (LAG) was established in 2017 and concluded at the beginning of 2023. Its membership has remained largely consistent over the years of activity and has been presided over by the same Chair until December 2022, when the incumbent Vice Chair was selected to be Chair for the remaining weeks until conclusion of the programme. It consisted of members from the public, private, voluntary and community sector, and includes key stakeholders from the two local authority areas that make up the North of Tyne CLLD area, Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council.

Newcastle City Council were appointed to act as the Administrative Body for the LAG which includes providing the secretariat to the group and submitting reports and claims for funding to DLUHC and DWP.

One of the main values of CLLD is the ability of the LAGs to operate in the community and encourage and support individuals and groups to present projects that contribute to the strategy and that is the focus of the 'animation' role.

Animation can involve:

- Information campaigns: via events, meetings, leaflets, website, social media, press.

- Exchanges with stakeholders, community groups and potential project promoters to generate ideas and build trust and confidence.
- Support for community organisations and the creation or strengthening of community structures.
- Promotion and support for the preparation of projects and applications.
- Post-start-up project support.

Funding

The investment value of the North of Tyne CLLD LAG project is £4.1 million, of which £3.6 million is public sector funding with £443,000 private sector funding. Match funding of the ESF and ERDF grant funding has been provided by the Accountable Body (Newcastle City Council) and partners. The funding allocations are as follows:

ERDF total budget **£1,494,300**:

- ERDF- £896,580
- Public match- £448,093
- Private match- £149,627

ESF total budget **£2,584,000:**

- ESF - £1,292,000
- Public match - £999,000
- Private match - £293,000.

North of Tyne funded projects

By programme conclusion, a total of 31 projects have been funded in the North of Tyne LAG region with a combined total

investment of £1.75 million, and ERDF for projects almost £460K.

A range of activities have been funded. Many of the funded projects focus on developing entrepreneurial skills, readiness for work and employability and developing confidence and skills for young people. Examples include the FLYING SPARKS project led by FIRST, A Chance to Trade led by The Millin Charity, Passion to Paycheck led by Junction Point, Routes to Work led by Reviving the Heart of the West End, Steps to Employment led by Riverside Community Health Project.

Another theme of projects is tackling social isolation and strengthening community networks. These include: Truly Home led by the Chinese Learning Centre, and Stitch Sisters and BEaT led by Building Futures East. Many projects worked with vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities (Drama Works led by The Twisting Ducks Theatre Company), ex-offenders (Recruitment Junction's ex-offenders Employment Programme), carers of those supporting people with addiction and those fighting addiction (PROPS' project Engage and Progress).

There were also two projects funded by ERDF capital funding: Cobalt CIC's Top Floor Creative Work Hub, and Riverside Community Health Project's Expansion of their Community Hub Facility.

Main Findings

The LAG

The North of Tyne LAG has brought together a group of individuals that are representative of the local areas, with detailed and unparalleled knowledge of the issues that the communities that they represent are experiencing.

LAG meetings have worked well, and members feel equal and confident to input when necessary. This is essential to the success of any LAG as it ensures that the experience and insight of the range of members it has can be utilised to their best.

Projects and external interviews spoke very highly of the LAG and recognised their passion, commitment and determination to deliver the programme in the face of challenging circumstances (in particular, the Covid-19 pandemic). The group, guided by the Chair, collaborated well with each other and with external stakeholders and projects. Many LAG members dedicated considerable personal time to the programme and showed a generosity of spirit.

There is also a clear set of benefits reported by LAG members for engaging with the group. For example, the ability to help allocate funding that is beneficial to members' communities, and the opportunity to collaborate across the community and voluntary sector in the North of Tyne area. Such benefits are essential to the longevity of any group as it ensures that members see the benefit of remaining involved which makes them more likely to continue to engage.

The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

The LDS is the key document for each LAG area. Its purpose is to set out a detailed explanation of the area, an analysis of that area through a SWOT assessment, a series

of aims and objectives for the area and proposals for activities or initiatives that would achieve those aims and objectives.

The North of Tyne LAG's LDS clearly sets out its goals and there is a strong alignment between the ERDF and ESF objectives and the four specific objectives of the LDS. The four objectives are as follows:

- **Objective A:** Making community assets, organisations, and the social fabric in the CLLD area more entrepreneurial.

- **Objective B:** Strengthening the business community in the CLLD area.

- **Objective C:** Supporting first steps towards economic activity within the CLLD area through learning, tackling multiple barriers and integrating support services, and;

- **Objective D:** Enabling entry to and progression along the pathway to employment and connecting local employers with communities.

  All four objectives have been addressed by the projects to varying extents.

For future iterations of the programme, the strategy could be updated by reflecting on the learning since the document's inception, and by taking into account how the current situation in which it finds itself (both internally and externally) has changed in comparison to the situation at the time the document was produced.

In particular, this should reflect changing circumstances following the pandemic, as well as increasing pressures on communities and community and voluntary sector organisations due to the cost-of-living crisis and changes to the funding landscape associated with Brexit.

It was inevitable that the pandemic has had an impact on what the LAG has been able to achieve and also how it has functioned. Nevertheless, the North of Tyne LAG succeeded in delivering a highly successful programme. Therefore, it could serve as a point for further learning and reflection with regards to the difficulties the LAG may have faced and identify any positive aspects that came out of the experience.

The Managing Authority

Newcastle City Council, as the Managing Authority, was highly regarded by the LAG and projects alike and considered to have undertaken its role effectively with LAG members, external stakeholders and project partners speaking highly of their work. LAG officers were also spoken of very highly by those individuals interviewed and were seen as taking a very active role in ensuring the LAG was functioning as it should be, and in ensuring that project ideas were being developed and that applications were being submitted.

A suggestion for improvement put forward by the LAG was that there could be more resource available to support community-led projects, as the small CLLD Delivery Team at Newcastle City Council were stretched between supporting CLLD activities as well as other projects and programmes.

We hope that this evaluation will reflect on the positive feedback that has been provided and that they have the opportunity to continue to deliver to the high standard that they have set.

Animation

There has been positive feedback of the way in which the animation activities had been undertaken. The LAG opted for a direct and "hands-on" approach to engaging with potential project partners through email or phone call, with face-to-face meetings with projects as well as structured events such as the Signal workshop.

A concern was voiced that some of the ideas for the projects the LAG has funded were developed within by LAG members themselves. Due to the representation of local communities on the LAG and their understanding of local needs this could be considered a bottom-up approach demanded as part of the CLLD method. This is a relatively common occurrence in CLLD programmes more generally.

Outcomes

In terms of the projects that have been funded, the wealth of evidence available to the evaluation to assess what has been achieved should be noted. In particular, detailed and accurate recording of monitoring data and a rich dataset from the Signal tool. This has been a key success of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme.

In terms of project outcomes, the largest area of focus for projects has been on pathways to employment, developing community resilience, and those requiring additional support to improve their confidence and motivation. These projects have been received well by LAG members, project partners and beneficiaries.

There has been an emphasis on the sustainability of the projects being funded. Members have reported that this has often been a focus when approving applications and steps have been taken to ensure the legacy of projects, in particular the steps taken to build resilience in the community and voluntary sector and strengthen networks.

From the perspective of the LDS all of the projects that have been funded fit within the LDS and many of the specific objectives have been covered.

Main conclusions

The findings of this evaluation are very positive. The North of Tyne LAG has made excellent progress towards its goals and delivering the programme using the CLLD approach, with a key focus on direct communication with those with the potential to deliver projects.

Over this latest funding period, the North of Tyne LAG, much like many other European Union funded projects has faced uncertainty regarding its funding and its future, and it has had to adapt to the pandemic. It is key to note that adaptations to the initial project design strategy have been viewed as positive by the majority of those who have been involved in this research, and that, the North of Tyne LAG has continued to fulfil its purpose to the best of its ability and deliver a highly successful programme.

1. Introduction

Community-led Local Development (CLLD) is a local development method which has been used for over 20 years to engage local people and organisations in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of urban areas facing multiple social and economic challenges. The unique element of CLLD is the bottom-up nature of policy development and delivery that encourages local communities to help develop a targeted approach specific to their local area and ensures that interventions focus on areas of the greatest need. The approach also seeks to encourage new ideas, knowledge, and techniques, as well as strengthening and improving existing ideas and applying them to new areas.

The CLLD approach facilitates innovative ways to create jobs locally, strengthen local businesses to help them grow, remain viable, and improve levels of entrepreneurship, and help local people to develop new business ideas. It also seeks to support people to access the skills they need to find a job, and help them build the confidence to get into training. This includes helping people to find training and work locally, and help them develop skills and qualifications once they secure employment.

The point of departure for implementation of the CLLD is the Local Development Strategy, which identifies areas of need and defines how these challenges should be addressed. Central to the CLLD approach is the Local Action Group (LAG), who lead the development of CLLD and support the preparatory work for delivering interventions in their local area. The LAG is composed of members from the public sector, private sector, voluntary and community sector organisations, and local residents.

This final evaluation follows a mid-term evaluation produced in 2020. The final evaluation builds on findings in the mid-term evaluation to assess the implementation of the CLLD programme in Newcastle and North Tyneside, throughout project delivery and performance up to completion The final evaluation therefore spans the five years of the programme, from 2017 until 2022. The North of Tyne CLLD falls within the ERDF and ESF funding cycle 2014 to 2020.

This report presents an analysis of findings from the Summative Assessment (Final Evaluation) of the North of Tyne Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme. The programme, and the summative assessment as the programme's final evaluation, has been funded by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the England 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme.

1.1 Final Evaluation

Newcastle City Council (NCC) commissioned Wavehill, a social and economic research consultancy, to conduct an independent summative assessment of the North of Tyne Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) programme. The summative assessment captures the impacts and benefits of the CLLD programme in Newcastle and adjacent North Tyneside ward. The summative assessment has been commissioned by Newcastle City Council as the Accountable Body on behalf of the North of Tyne CLLD (NT CLLD) Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG leads all elements of CLLD delivery and are the decision-making vehicle for the programme, while keeping Newcastle City Council informed of project developments. This also includes submission of regular progress reports.

This report draws upon monitoring and evaluation data that has been collected during the delivery of the programme to date. Primary research undertaken for this report included face-to-face and telephone interviews with six members of the LAG, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as three members of staff from the team in Newcastle City Council supporting programme delivery. It has captured findings from a workshop with the projects delivered under the programme. The lead researchers for the evaluation also attended LAG meetings in November and December 2022 to discuss emerging findings of the evaluation. The information collected to date provides a valuable insight into the views of stakeholders.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides a brief overview of the CLLD approach and the context of implementation in North of Tyne.
- **Chapter 3** reviews Local Development Strategy and the Logic model, as well as the programme expenditure, outputs and outcomes to date.
- **Chapter 4** considers the Value for Money of the CLLD project.
- **Chapter 5** assesses the implementation of the CLLD approach in North of Tyne to date.
- **Chapter 6** considers outcomes and impacts of the project; and
- Finally, **Chapter 7** provides main findings and lessons learned for the future.

2. Economic and Policy context

Chapter Summary

- Community-Led Local Development was originally designed to address the challenge of urban and rural inequality across the European Union. It stemmed from LEADER; the first European-wide programme focussed on bottom-up community development.

- At local level, CLLD programmes are supported by Local Action Groups, or LAGs. LAGs are responsible for overseeing project activities and delivering on the vision developed as the first step of CLLD, the Local Development Strategy.

- The CLLD approach is structured around the pillars of innovation, networking, and cooperation. The fundamental idea is to facilitate new ideas sourced and delivered by, and to the benefit of, local communities.

- The North of Tyne CLLD programme was delivered across wards in West and East ends of Newcastle and Wallsend in North Tyneside which face complex challenges related to multiple deprivation. This context needs to be taken into account when assessing performance against target indicators.

- The design of the North of Tyne CLLD programme has been carefully considered and coordinated and it aligns strongly with regional development priorities in the North of Tyne area and the wider North East.

- Through the six year delivery period of the North of Tyne CLLD, changes in context to project delivery have posed challenges for the LAG and the Project Team. This includes worsening of socio-economic factors at a time when fuel costs and cost-of-living is rising. Public sector and voluntary budgets are stretched more than ever before while a social crisis continues to spiral, with those in the most deprived communities suffering the most.

- The CLLD Project Team have taken a proactive and innovative approach to match funding, leading to the LAG being in the position to 100% fund successful projects.

- This has been a major contributing factor to ERDF and ESF programme-level indicators, coupled with additional time and dedication of the LAG. In many cases, some LAG members provided far beyond the agreed minimum 24 hours per year (i.e. a two-hour LAG meeting each month) although this is not reflected in the capture of results. Additional to the minimum 24 hours support per year, LAG members also attended Expression of Interest panels, Final Application Panels, task-and-finish work groups, Signal sub-group meetings and read documentation and responded to emails from projects and potential applicants outside of meeting times.

2.1　CLLD: What is it?

CLLD was originally launched in 1991 as part of LEADER, which was originally conceived for rural development. At the time, LEADER was funded by the Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the UK Government, and co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). In the investment period 2007-2013, CLLD was trialled as part of development in fisheries and aquaculture areas specifically. In the subsequent programming period, 2014-2020, CLLD was integrated for the first time into the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)[2].

ESIF is focused on supporting economic development through a range of means. The ESF supports employment-related projects, particularly for young people and those facing barriers to find suitable work. ERDF promotes balanced development in different regions of the EU.

LEADER was designed as a local development method over 30 years ago to engage local groups in the design and delivery of strategies that would impact their local area. This encompassed strategies, decision-making, and allocation of resources in rural areas.

Following LEADER's historical roots in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), EU member states were given a choice over whether to fund CLLD with European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFDP), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the European Social Fund (ESF). For the North of Tyne, the CLLD is supported by ERDF and ESF, as part of the ESIF Growth Programme in the programming period 2014-2020.

CLLD is strongly based on seven principles known as the "LEADER Method" or "Leader Approach," as well as experience and influence from other programmes such as URBAN, URBACT, EQUAL, and Axis 4 of the EFF[3].

At the local level, CLLD is implemented by Local Action Group (LAG) activities. The LAG provides a Local Development Strategy (LDS), which outlines the overall vision for the CLLD Programme and approaches to capacity-building activities within the local community. The North of Tyne CLLD Strategy 2017-2022 was endorsed by the North of Tyne CLLD Local Action Group in August 2016.

There are three main pillars around which the CLLD approach is structured: innovation, networking, and cooperation. These pillars should be embedded in the development of the LDS.

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[2] The European Network for Rural Development, EU Commission, 2017
[3] Article 177, Official Journal of the European Union

Pillar 1: Innovation

The purpose of CLLD is not to support or promote "business as usual," but to introduce new ideas, approaches, and ways of working to the CLLD area. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to designing an innovative project or approach; innovation can take a range of different forms, all of which can make a valid contribution to the strategy. Innovation may commonly include introduction of new services, new products, new governance methods, social innovation, but the list is not exhaustive. Evaluating innovation, particularly social innovation, is a complex undertaking, and therefore it should be assessed in reference to the local situation, referencing the effectiveness of new methods and ways of working compared with existing methods and solutions already applied in the area of study.

Pillar 2: Networking

Networking enables local partnerships to share learning and experiences with each other. Under CLLD, networks can take a formal character where the LAG, managing authorities or accountable bodies and other stakeholders are involved, and supported by voluntary units at regional and national levels. LAGs can also be organised on a voluntary basis where national or regional LAG networks are informally developed to share learning on a wider scale.

Pillar 3: Cooperation

Working with other areas outside of the immediate CLLD area, but at the local level, is a key feature of CLLD. This might also include working across the different partnerships represented in the partnership. Cooperation can take multiple forms, for example information exchanges of experiences, to supporting common actions. Local groups can use cooperation for some projects that might require critical mass or a need to pool complementary resources and experience.

2.2   Socioeconomic context

Economically inactive people can face a range of barriers to employment, including caring responsibilities, issues related to low educational attainment, disruptive life events, mental health problems and poverty. Individuals who have spent time out of work may experience low confidence and poor self-belief, which may limit their progression into employment.

Supporting vulnerable communities and individuals to remain in or return to employment has been a consistent feature of Government policy for the past two decades, driven largely by the increasingly higher age profile of the population. The barriers outlined above can limit the employment options available to flexible or part-time opportunities and hamper confidence to improve skills and develop learning required to enter the labour market. Individuals also must balance employment options against the impact this will have on entitlement to benefits such as Universal Credit or Carer's Allowance.

2.2.1   Regional policy priorities

The North of Tyne LDS undertook extensive analysis of the wards covered in by the CLLD programme. The LDS recognises the role CLLD can play in meeting the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP)'s strategic aims of inclusive growth, reducing barriers to the labour market through improved opportunities for learning, and creating a clearer role for community assets in contributing to a thriving North East economy. There is evidence of a strong community base and relatively high degree of community cohesion in the CLLD area with an existence of local social and community-based innovation activities.

In preparing the LDS, extensive consultation undertaken across the CLLD area identified a number of prevalent issues amongst residents in Newcastle and North Tyneside, which act as a barrier to labour market entry and prohibit people moving forward with their lives and careers. These included: low confidence; lack of references; anxiety and other mental health problems; and lack of recent work experience. It was acknowledged that some barriers may be more tacit or may emerge over time from the intersectionality of issues related to deprivation.

These were triangulated with key strategies at local, regional, and national level. This includes linkages to NELEP's **ESIF Strategy** and its **Strategic Economic Plan** (SEP) which state that inclusive growth is a key priority for the economy of the region.

The NELEP ESIF notes specifically that tackling economic disparities in the region, in particular educational disparities, is a key local challenge and this has remained constant over the six-year lifespan of the project to date. A key strength of the North of Tyne CLLD has therefore been consistency in addressing priority issues identified in the preparation of the LDS, while balancing this with flexibility to prioritise emerging key issues as the delivery context has evolved over the duration of the programme.

The city of Newcastle is locally governed by Newcastle City Council, and North Tyneside is governed locally by North Tyneside Council. Newcastle City shares a boundary with Northumberland to the north and west, Gateshead to the South (demarcated by the River Tyne), and North Tyneside to the east and north east. The Newcastle City Council area covers the most densely populated urban zone in Tyne & Wear, and it is the largest city in the North East of England. North Tyneside borders the City of Newcastle to the east and Northumberland to the north, and covers the coastal areas including Whitley Bay, Tynemouth, North Shields as well as population centres further inland including Wallsend, Killingworth, Northumberland Park and Forest Hall.

The role of each council is to deliver a plan with strategic goals which is informed by a set of priorities unique to each council plan. Further, each local authority must have a medium-term financial plan which sets out how services will deliver these priorities outlined within the council plan, how resources are used, and the changes needed to ensure the council is working within a balanced budget.

Newcastle has a population size of 306,800 of which 49% are female and 51% are male.[4]

For Newcastle, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the city and communities. This has inevitably shaped and influenced many of the key priorities set out within the **Newcastle City Council Plan for 2022-2025**. The plan sets out five themed priorities:

1. Creating more and better jobs: **Employment**
2. The best learning opportunities for all: **Education and Skills**
3. A healthy, caring city: **Health and social care**
4. More and better homes: **Housing**
5. A clean, green and safe city**: The Environment**.

North Tyneside has a population size of 208,900 in which 48% are male and 52% are female.[5]

The **North Tyneside Council Plan for 2021-2025** similarly sets out to address the key challenges the area faces because of the pandemic. It primarily aims to restore confidence in the future by tackling inequalities and aims to ensure an equitable delivery of services. The priorities include:[6]

1. More good quality jobs: **Employment**
2. More good quality apprenticeships and access to skills training**: Education and Skills**
3. Business support**: Economic growth**
4. Investment into cultural resources such as libraries: **Culture and Heritage**
5. Provision of affordable homes**: Housing**
6. Carbon net-zero by 2030**: The Environment.**

2.2.2   Key Industries

The data below generated by the ONS Population Survey (2021) indicates the relative strength of the employment base in both Newcastle and North Tyneside for different industries, thus showing the key industries within each area. In line with the UK as a whole, most of the economically active population in both Newcastle and North Tyneside are engaged in Human Health and Social Work Activities (17.7% and 13.8%, respectively).

Further, and especially in North Tyneside (13.8%), the data indicates a concentration of employment within the Wholesale and Retail Trade industry, again in line with the wider trend for the UK.

Finally, education, as an industry, also appears to be key in terms of employing the economically active in both Newcastle and North Tyneside. As such, this indicates a focus of jobs in the public sector, services, and wholesale and retail.

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[4] NOMIS, 2022
[5] ibid
[6] Council Plan 2021-2025, North Tyneside Council, 2022

2.2.3   Employment and Skills

Figure 1 below illustrates that the economically active population in Newcastle has consistently been lower than that of the UK and mostly lower than that of the North East (NOMIS, 2021). This is not consistent with trends in North Tyneside where the economically active population has most been in line with that of Great Britain and consistently above the North East average.

Figure 1: Economically active population (%)
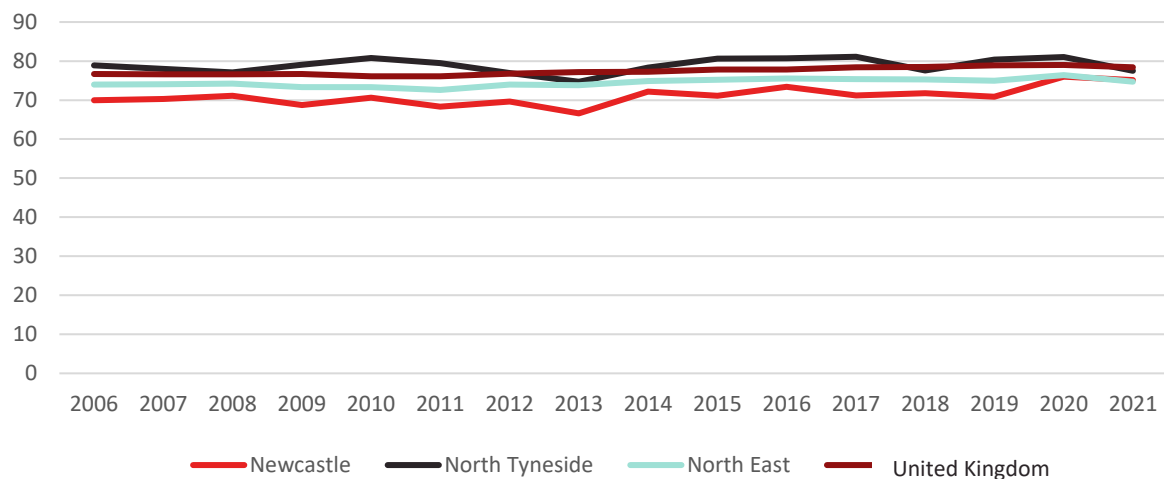
Source: NOMIS, 2021

Newcastle has consistently had a substantially lower proportion of people who are both economically active and in employment than both the North East and the UK as a whole. Contrastingly, North Tyneside presents a trend in line with the wider UK and mostly above that of the North East.

Figure 2: Unemployment rates (%)
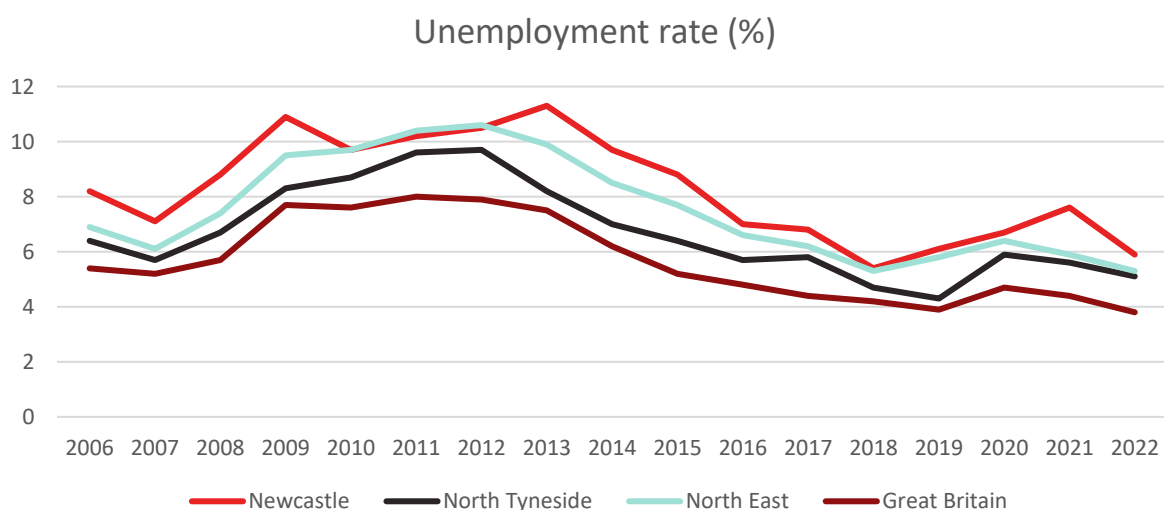
Source: NOMIS 2021

2.2.4   Education

The continued development of skills and training to promote new job opportunities in Newcastle as well as working with businesses to minimize job losses from the Covid-19 crisis is therefore shown to be crucial. However, the data does show that both Newcastle and North Tyneside have consistently had a higher proportion of people holding a NVQ qualification or above (this includes a higher education certificate/BTEC). Further, in 2018 Newcastle had a higher proportion (40.5%) of people holding this qualification than the UK average (39.3%), with this trend continuing to 2021.

However, the emphasis on upskilling the population in both Newcastle and North Tyneside should not be understated. Figure 3 over page illustrates that Newcastle, in particular, has a substantially lower proportion of people holding NVQ1 and NVQ2 level qualifications (83% and 75.4% respectively) than the North East and wider UK average. As such, it is clear why the development of skills and training to promote new job opportunities remains a clear priority for Newcastle.

Figure 3: Skills attainment per population (%) achieving NVQ1 and NVQ2 and above, 2021
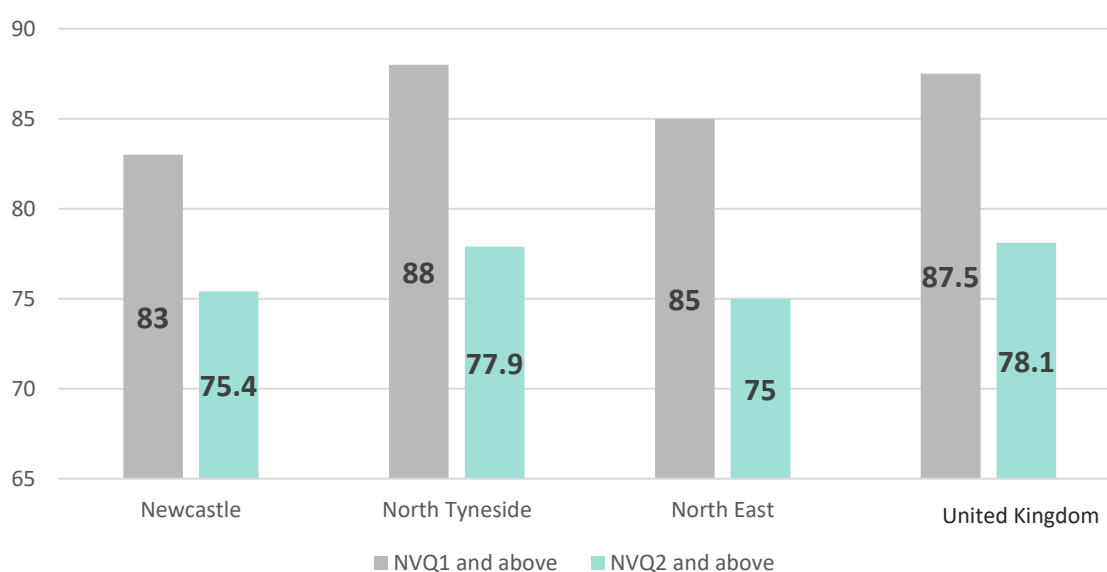
Source: NOMIS, 2021

2.2.5   Health

Unemployment and a lower proportion of skilled people is commonly regarded as a wider determinant of poorer health in a region. ONS (2021) data for Newcastle showing health indicators is in line with this, where life expectancy for both males and females is consistently lower in Newcastle than that of England as a whole but does appear to be in line with that of the North East. However, female life expectancy in North Tyneside, though lower than the average for England, has consistently been higher than that of the North East and only in recent years has lowered slightly (Nomis, 2021).

2.3 Key policies

2.3.1 North East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) works with partners in Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and County Durham to help grow the region's economy. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) frames the priorities for the region around four key sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Digital, Energy, and Health & Life Sciences.

The SEP covers the period 2014-2024. There are six targets for the region, to be achieved by 2024:

- Increase the number of jobs by 100,000
- 70% of all jobs created from 2014 will be better jobs.
- Reduce the gap in private sector employment density by 50%
- Close the gap in the employment rate for people aged 16-64 by 100%
- Reduce the gap in economic activity for people aged 16-64 by 50%
- Reduce the gap in GVA per hour worked by 50%.

The North of Tyne CLLD programme contributes to the targets of the SEP in several ways. The focus on jobs, skills, and employability will support a reduction in economic activity and will create the conditions for a more skilled workforce. Support provided to the CLLD projects will also contribute to the creation of new jobs, which is one of the programme indicators for ERDF. The ESF targets focus on improved productivity and increased resilience in terms of skills and confidence. Overall, the North of Tyne CLLD objectives are closely aligned to the strategic priorities for the North East region.

2.3.2 North of Tyne Combined Authority Inclusive Economy Goals

The Combined Authority is committed to providing opportunities for all and supporting efforts to remove the barriers which make it difficult for people to take up employment and training opportunities. The Inclusive Economy Policy Statement outlines an ambition to empower local people with the skills and resources they need to take ownership of their futures and secure good jobs with fair living wages.[7]

The policy statement articulates a focus for the Combined Authority in narrowing the gap both between the North of Tyne area and the national average (outside London) and within the area to reduce inequality. This includes:

- **Closing the gap on average earnings**: Increasing the earnings, qualifications levels and progression routes for local residents will be an important issue as an inclusive economy to ensure residents have access to new higher skilled jobs in future.

- **Closing the unemployment gap**: Remove the barriers which make it difficult for people to take up employment and training opportunities.

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[7] Inclusive Economy Policy Statement, NTCA, 2020

- **Closing the skills and education gap**: Through good schools and colleges, make sure our young people have the skills, experience and qualifications to take up quality training and jobs.

- **Closing the aspiration and ambition gap**: So that local people own their own economic future and all young people to have high aspirations and confidence, with support to enable them to make good choices.

The CLLD programme has the potential to contribute to all four objectives, most notably efforts to close the unemployment gap by removing barriers for people to enter the workforce, and closing the skills and education gap, particularly for young people.

2.3.3 North of Tyne Combined Authority: Opportunity for All

The North of Tyne Combined Authority published their Skills Plan in 2021, "Opportunity for All." The plan aims to frame a vision for the region as having a more dynamic and inclusive economy, that "brings together people and opportunities to create vibrant communities and a high quality of life, narrowing inequalities and ensuring that all residents have a stake in our region's future."[8] It seeks to do this in five ways:

1. Providing a clear direction of travel to skills commissioners, provider networks and employers
2. Influence local skills provision and curriculum design.
3. Act as a tool to set priorities, allocate resources and potential funding
4. Put skills at the centre of NTCA's economic ambitions
5. Build in partnership working to ensure the skills system is informed by employers, and able to supply high quality employees for jobs of the future.

The priority areas of focus for the Skills Plan include improving outcomes for young people, investing in skills to support the local economy, and helping people progress into work.

The objectives of the North of Tyne CLLD programme therefore are squarely aligned to all three of these priorities. It also contributes to the strategy in terms of supporting employers in the voluntary sector to improve skills in the local community, and influence local skills provision in geographies of the city which face high levels of deprivation. At the heart of the CLLD programme, therefore, is the creation of a more inclusive economy.

2.3.4 Other relevant policies and forthcoming strategies

The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council noted that the pandemic has been a catalyst for a shift in priorities and ways of working in local authorities. Previously, strategic plans and priorities tended to focus on one policy area at a time. However, since the pandemic the local authority policies reflect interdependencies between multiple policy areas, for example health and wellbeing, poverty, housing, energy supply, and jobs and skills.

This reflects the multiple challenges our society faces today, ranging from the impacts of climate change to an ageing society and jobs and skills shortages across most sectors. The

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[8] Opportunity for All, NTCA, 2021

CLLD approach has provided a working example of how inequality and an inclusive economy can only be built by considering how multiple policy areas interface with each other.

To reflect a change in strategic policy direction for Newcastle City Council, there are new policies and strategies forthcoming in 2023. This includes the new **Inclusive Economy Strategy**, and an **Anti-Poverty Strategy** which is under development.

2.4 Focus areas of North of Tyne CLLD

The Local Development Strategy identifies three themes for the outputs for North of Tyne CLLD. These remained consistent throughout the programme, and the ERDF and ESF target indicators are aligned the one or more of each of these themes.

Employment and employability form the first thematic area for these outputs. As recent figures indicate, the North East, as a region, has the highest unemployment rate in the UK, overtaking London for the first time since September 2020. Figures for the three-month period of September-November 2021 show North East unemployment rose by 0.5% compared with the previous three months, reaching 5.7%. Coupled with this, the North East's economic activity rate rose by 0.6% to 25.1%, the UK's highest – there are now 406,000 economically inactive people in the region.[9]

This is mirrored in the CLLD sub-region area, which includes all of Newcastle's neighbourhoods found within England's 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). The total population of the CLLD area is 149,766 and 75% of these residents live within 20% most disadvantaged LSOAs.[10] As such, the CLLD approach intended to boost employment by working directly alongside employers with the intention of creating more sustainable employment.

Education, skills and qualifications also forms a key focus area. It is evident that large sections of eight wards in Newcastle are in the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in education: Newburn, Benwell and Scotswood, Lemington, Elswick, Byker, Walker, Walkergate and Blakelaw. The indicators for CLLD residents show significant underperformance in educational attainment: about a third of the CLLD residents have no qualifications (32.8%), are less likely to have a Level 4 qualification as their highest, and less people in the CLLD area are likely to be a full-time student from 18 and above.[11] Consequently, the CLLD identified opportunities for greater and improved collaboration across providers to deliver more effective, timely, and strategic interventions to raise the level of local skills. The corresponding activity to this was to improve low level skills amongst all beneficiaries including communication, ICT and digital skills, primarily through community-based learning.[12]

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[9] ONS (2022) Labour market in the regions of the UK: January 2022
[10] North of Tyne CLLS Local Action Group (2022) North of Tyne Community Led Local Development Strategy 2017 – 2022.
[11] ONS, Census 2011
[12] North of Tyne CLLS Local Action Group (2022) North of Tyne Community Led Local Development Strategy 2017 – 2022.

Business support, as the third thematic area, worked to contribute to both the social and economic resilience within the CLLD area. The CLLD identified that there is a role for existing anchor organisations and small organisations within target neighbourhoods as catalysts for new local entrepreneurism.

As such, stimulating small business activity/micro enterprise within the CLLD area is a key focus area to the Strategy in terms of economic development. Such an approach has aimed to provide local provision of tailored and accessible packages of both direct and indirect support and worked in and with communities to provide greater and more holistic support. This was done through the provision of new, and the expansion of, existing small scale community hub facilities to support small and medium enterprises, small grants to entrepreneurs, and tailored business support[13].

2.5   Market failure

The main objective of CLLD aligned to ESF and ERDF objectives is to provide additional and localised support to people in areas of multiple deprivation so that they can move towards or into employment. Generally, this is in the context of groups identified as marginalised and/or individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.[14] All activities must address needs identified locally to support growth at community level and as such, CLLD priorities are determined locally from the communities themselves. These reflect a multitude of challenges faced by local communities, for example:

- Debt
- Digital exclusion
- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Lack of motivation and confidence
- Family, parenting, relationship problems

- Health, mental and physical well-being problems
- Homelessness
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Learning difficulties and disabilities
- Offending.

The programme has at its heart local people. It seeks to ensure local people are involved at a decision-making level, engaged, and willing to participate in developing projects that aim to increase employment, skills, and social enterprise in defined CLLD areas.

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[13] North of Tyne CLLS Local Action Group (2022) North of Tyne Community Led Local Development Strategy 2017 – 2022.

[14] European Social Fund Community-Led Local Development, Annex 1, UK Gov

The CLLD programme provides a bottom-up approach which seeks to bridge the disconnect between available institutional support (from providers such as local authorities and government-led programmes delivered by e.g. DWP) and local communities. In many cases, there has been a breakdown of trust in the relationship between authorities and local communities. LAG members observed that some individuals were reluctant to join the support offered by the CLLD-funded projects initially for fear of impact on their universal credit and sharing information with DWP.

In this sense, it took careful preparation to build up trust with local communities, even with those organisations who are best placed to work with communities as they are known, trusted, and have longstanding relationship with the local community in which they operate.

In interviews with LAG members, they noted that the lack of community engagement when designing interventions related to improved jobs and skills is one of the main contributing factors in the disconnect between government authorities and local communities. The holistic bottom-up approach of CLLD has proved a valuable mechanism for overcoming this gap and promoting a community-centric approach tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals within CLLD areas.

LAG members and the CLLD Project Team spoke with one unanimous voice when stating that the CLLD model is the only way in which isolation, lack of purpose, and weakening of social ties within communities can be tackled.

2.6   Changes in context

In interviews with LAG members and the CLLD Project Team, members noted that there has been a worsening of economic conditions since the implementation of the North of Tyne CLLD programme in 2017 and in particular since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public services have been stretched to breaking point, and there has been a decrease of resource and support provision available for those suffering from physical and mental health despite increasing demand. Child poverty, of which in the North East have been consistently among the highest in the UK for many decades, has increased significantly as well as relative poverty indicators more generally. In September 2022, the North East Child Poverty Commission (NECPC) published a report highlighting that the child poverty rate in the North East is at 38%, joint highest in the UK together with West Midlands.[15] Health and wellbeing indicators closely linked to poverty have also worsened.

As the North of Tyne CLLD programme comes to a close, fuel poverty and cost of living crisis following rising inflation is a major concern. This has led to a period of rapid change as well as uncertainty in the voluntary sector. While new grassroots organisations are forming in response to immediate challenges, such as fuel poverty, funding in the landscape is constrained and available funding is stretched thin. This poses a risk to mid-sized charities who have been well-established in the city landscape, and who have consistently had a positive impact on their local communities for a far longer duration than the CLLD

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[15] Child Poverty in the North East Region, Child Poverty Action Group, 2022

programme, but are now facing increased operational costs and surging levels of demand while funding is decreasing.

The major challenge for local authorities such as Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside is how to use available economic levers to respond to challenges of such a magnitude and support voluntary sectors doing critical work with local communities.

Following the pandemic, [we] are seeing more and more people suffering in-work poverty which is a big change from when the programme started 6 years ago. Issues related to domestic abuse have also worsened, and there has been a marked increase after the pandemic.

From a social perspective, things are a lot more challenging. There needs to be a refresh in terms of the operating environment, which integrates [voluntary sector] thinking within a city-wide employability strategy, inclusive economy, and what this entails as a city encompassing the whole population.

Developing [the CLLD model] has come at a great time. Many organisations in the LAG have specific niche areas of knowledge, but the common element is social and economic resilience.

LAG members

2.7   Funding

Support from the ERDF and ESF funds for CLLD is available to cover a range of activities. Running costs related to management and implementing the Local Development Strategy (LDS), which includes operating costs, personnel, training costs, marketing and communications, and other financial costs related to monitoring and evaluation should not exceed 25% of the total public expenditure incurred within the CLLD LDS. Similarly, animation of the CLLD LDS should not exceed 25% of total public expenditure incurred within the strategy. The types of activities supported by ERDF and ESF funds cover:

- **Preparatory Support:** Capacity building, training, networking related to preparation and implementation of the CLLD LDS. This can include training for local stakeholders, studies of the area concerned (e.g., developing socio-economic baselines), costs related to the design of the LDS such as consultancy costs and stakeholder consultations to support preparation of the strategy, administrative costs for preparatory support during the preparation phase, and support for small pilot projects (e.g. feasibility studies).

- **Operational support**: Implementation of operations under the CLLD LDS.
- **Local Action Group support:** Preparation and implementation of the Local Action Group's cooperation activities.
- **Operating costs:** Running costs associated with management of implementing the CLLD strategy.
- **Animation of the LDS:** Facilitation of information exchange and promoting the strategy between stakeholders and supporting potential beneficiaries in preparing funding applications.

2.7.1   Financial allocations for North of Tyne CLLD

The budget for North of Tyne CLLD is over £4.1 m consisting of £3.6m of public sector funding and £443k private sector funding. This was in line with project change requests (PCR), which were approved by DWP in March 2023 and DLUHC in September 2022. The change request for management and coordination costs was approved by DLUHC to be increased from £648K to £733K, which is around 20% of the public sector funding. This is in line with the requirement that no more than 25% of the total amount of public sector funding can be used for coordinating the LAG and managing the delivery of the Strategy. Match funding for this part of the budget has been provided by the Accountable Body and by partner/partners.

The tables below illustrate the split of the total budget according to funding stream and activity.

Table 1: ESF Project – total budget (ESF and match funding)

North of Tyne CLLD Programme	Forecast in CLLD ESF funding agreement (PCR approved in 2023)
Projects delivered by local organisations	£2,584,000

Table 2: ESF Project – sources of funding

North of Tyne CLLD Programme	Forecast regarding sources of funding in CLLD ESF funding agreement (PCR approved in 2023)
ESF (50%)	£1,292,000
Public match funding	£999,000
Private match funding	£293,000
TOTAL:	**£2,584,000**

Table 3: ERDF Project – total budget per budget heading (ERDF and match)

North of Tyne CLLD Programme	Forecast in CLLD ERDF funding agreement (PCR September 2022)
Management & Administration – Salaries	£538,218
Management & Administration – Overheads	£80,733
Management & Administration – Marketing	£214
Management & Administration – Professional Fees	£107,735
Management & Administration – Other Revenue	£6,493
Projects delivered by local organisations – Revenue	£540,907
Projects delivered by local organisations – Capital	£220,000
TOTAL:	**£1,494,300**

Table 4: ERDF Project – sources of funding

North of Tyne CLLD Programme	Forecast regarding sources of funding in CLLD ERDF funding agreement (PCR September 2022)
ERDF (60%)	£896,580
Public match funding	£448,093
Private match funding	£149,627
TOTAL:	**£1,494,300**

2.7.2   Match funding

In the original project design, the CLLD Project Team assumed that the majority of match would come from public sources, for example, grants from foundations, funds, and trusts secured by local projects. They were expecting private match to come only from those local businesses that would also be beneficiaries of the support. In other words, if there were a grants scheme for local businesses to purchase new equipment, specialist support, creating a website, then they would be required to fund part of the investment.

However, since none of the ERDF projects that came forward decided to include a grants scheme, there was no match funding available from local businesses. Instead, many of the local projects were delivered by organisations that have a dual status, i.e., they are both charities and also companies. When they offered their own resources as match (from reserves or income from trading), this was classed as private match for the purposes of reporting. In addition, some projects included in-kind match funding, for example volunteer time, in their budgets. This was also classed as private match.

The initial public to private match funding ratio in the original project design was therefore different to what was originally secured. In addition, the CLLD Project Team always strived to secure match at source, so that they were able to offer grants of up to 100% of the project value (instead of up to 50% for ESF and up to 60% for ERDF). Following early discussions with the Community Foundation, the Newcastle Fund internal to Newcastle City Council, and Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE), as well as a presentation to the North East Funders Network, this did not result in securing concrete commitments to provide match funding.

In 2019, Newcastle College provided match funding of £13K for a pilot joint "employment pathway" project. This allowed the College and CLLD to fund an organisation to recruit and support local people to access Newcastle College's welding course held at the Energy Academy in Wallsend. This would support progress into employment. That same year, the CLLD Project Team were also successful in securing £333K of Life Chances Fund. This was approved by Newcastle City Council as match funding for ESF projects to support Newcastle residents.

The CLLD Project Team were then successful in July 2021 in securing an additional £245K of funding from Newcastle City Council's allocation of the UK Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Public Health budgets to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19. This supported the North of Tyne CLLD Programme's alignment with the aims of COMF as many of the CLLD target groups have been disproportionately affected by Covid, for example BAME communities.

The match funding at source made it much easier for organisations to access CLLD funding. This started from the Round 3 call for projects, when 100% grants were first offered. This led to almost triple the number of projects being funded than in the two previous calls. It also allowed the Project Team to extend delivery by 9 months, from the original end date of 31st March 2022 to 31st Dec 2022.

Author's observations The need to source and provide match funding as per ERDF and ESF funding requirements is a barrier to especially small, micro, and community sector organisations. This was recognised by the North of Tyne CLLD Project Team as a challenge early on in the project design phase. The Final Evaluation recognises that the proactive and well-considered approach of the Team to sourcing match funding to support 100% funding of smaller projects and implementing measures to overcome barriers for participation for companies who would otherwise find it difficult to access the grant funding. As evidenced by the tripling of funded projects in Round 3, this should be reflected as a successful achievement of the project.

3. Project delivery

Chapter Summary

- The Local Action Group is at the core of delivering the North of Tyne CLLD programme. The group have remained highly engaged and consistent over the duration of the programme and have collectively acted as a strong driver of bottom-up community development in the North of Tyne CLLD areas.

- The Signal tool, procured for North of Tyne CLLD and implemented by the Signal sub-group within the LAG, has proved to be a useful tool for capturing indicators that are not reflected in the ERDF and ESF targets. Nevertheless the indicators captured by Signal are equally or even more important that the programme-level performance indicators in terms of sustainable impact, and the level of nuance they provide in measuring impact at micro-level. The Signal tool has been well integrated into the overall programme delivery mechanism of North of Tyne CLLD.

- The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council have provided excellent and dedicated support to the LAG. They have ensured that robust processes for monitoring and evaluation performance have been put in place, and have provided additional support to the LAG in terms of cross-communications, and alleviating the administrative burden on projects.

- The project application process has been iteratively improved over the five year programme duration, highlighting the LAG and CLLD Project Team's proactive approach and willingness to learn from feedback. Process improvements led to an increased volume of applications.

- Covid-19 had a major impact on the North of Tyne CLLD Programme, however the LAG and the CLLD Project Team showed high levels of adaptability and determination to deliver in face of challenging external circumstances.

3.1   Local Action Group

The LAG is a key part of the CLLD approach and is designed to be a group which represents the local area and its population. It leads the development process with no interest group nor public authorities having a majority in the decision-making process.

The CLLD, as a bottom-up approach for local development, encourages local people to form a Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG is defined by the EU as "a partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy for [the local] area." [16]

The LAG membership is on a voluntary basis, and it represents a dynamic body, continuing to review its membership throughout the duration of the implementation of the Strategy with the aim of responding to local needs on an ongoing basis. In terms of the CLLD's strategy, the role of the LAG is therefore to make funding decisions and decisions related to the progress, monitoring, and evaluation of the CLLD Strategy implementation[17].

The indicators used to monitor the progress included ERDF, ESF, and CLLD outputs, financial targets, and other economic/social indicators.

As a minimum, EU guidelines[18] state that LAG activities should include:

- **Capacity building:** empowering local actors to develop and implement operations, including animating their project management capabilities
- **Developing suitable criteria:** Drawing up a fair, transparent, non-discriminatory selection process and objective criteria for selecting projects and activities.
- **Ensuring consistency:** ensuring that the projects that align most closely and can contribute to meeting the local development strategy's aims, objectives, and targets.
- **Receiving and assessing applications:** preparing and publishing calls for proposals: using the defined selection criteria on a rolling or wave basis.
- **Selecting projects:** Selecting projects and operations and fixing the amount of support, and presenting short-listed proposals for final funding decisions.
- **Monitoring and implementation:** Ensuring the local development strategy is supported, and carrying out evaluations aligned to the strategy.

LAGs must be composed of members representing the four sectors; public, private and third, as well as local residents. It must also have enough representatives present to reflects the breadth of the public organisations, the companies and the third sector organisations in its local area.

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[16] The ESF and Community-Led Local Development: Lessons for the Future, ICF, 2022
[17] North of Tyne CLLS Local Action Group (2022) North of Tyne Community Led Local Development Strategy 2017 – 2022.
[18] See Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) EU No 1305/2013 Articles 32 – 34 in COMMON GUIDE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1   North of Tyne LAG

The North of Tyne LAG is central to delivery of the CLLD programme. It consists of an experienced partnership, originally established in 2016 and maintaining most of the original members for the duration of the CLLD scheme. The LAG members are drawn from two neighbouring local authority areas, those served by Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council.

The North of Tyne LAG has been relatively unusual in that it has maintained the same Chair and Vice-Chair for the six-year duration of the programme. This has provided an additional benefit of a consistent approach throughout the programme lifecycle. In addition, the core membership has remained rather consistent throughout the six years. At the close of the North of Tyne CLLD programme, there are 11 LAG members in total, although over the 6-year duration of the programme there have been seven further members. LAG members were keen to highlight that the six-year duration of the project was a good timeframe in which to get to know each other and collaborate well as a team. This improved continually over the programme duration.

The collective nature of the LAG came across clearly during interviews with LAG members. The recognition that while each individual holds a deep level of knowledge of their local community and each member has been actively engaged with their local communities over many years, the collective knowledge of the LAG is even greater than the sum of its parts. As such, the LAG collectively holds a deep and intimate level of knowledge and understanding of the North of Tyne CLLD communities that is unparalleled in any other institution in the city. As such, the LAG not only provides a valuable resource for the North of Tyne CLLD programme but indeed, the city as a whole.

LAG members are drawn from the private sector, public sector, voluntary sector, and residents. Interviews with the LAG members noted that it was difficult to recruit from the fourth group, residents. They concluded that this is due to the commitment required by LAG membership, particularly with regards to time. In addition, the monthly LAG meetings take place on weekday mornings.

For local residents who are in employment, or who have other commitments on their time such as caring duties or being involved in training programmes or education, it would be difficult to find the time required of them for LAG membership. By the nature of activities, it would mean that those who are economically inactive (for example, retired) would be better placed to become a LAG member. This group may not necessarily provide a good cross-section of representation for local communities. For residents who are perhaps not used to working in policy environments or are unfamiliar with the voluntary and community support sector, it may be a daunting prospect to join a group of people who have been active in this space for many years and several of whom are at Director level or have founded their own organisations in this space. There was therefore discussion in LAG interviews about the potential to engage with more residents.

RECOMMENDATION #1:	Create 'associate' LAG member status.

An 'associate' LAG members status could be created for those who cannot commit to being a full LAG member but can contribute on specific tasks, for example, the project application process, local knowledge, insights from specific sectors and/or communities. This could help to attract representation from residents, who can contribute important knowledge and insights to the CLLD programme but may have to balance LAG membership with other commitments, such as employment or caring duties. This could help improve the diversity of the LAG and strengthen representation from residents of the CLLD areas.

RECOMMENDATION #2:	Strengthen training and/or onboarding process for new LAG members.

An onboarding process for new members could help encourage and increase confidence of residents who can provide a valuable contribution to the LAG but who lack direct experience in working with the voluntary sector, or within the institutional context of local authorities. While external sessions for LAG members were provided to support skills in project application assessment and scoring, and post-training materials were developed, further approaches to bringing in new members could also serve as a team-building opportunity for the LAG and encourage members to work as a collective, regardless of experience or prior knowledge. This would support confidence-building for new members to help them feel part of a team.

3.1.2   Perceived benefits of being a LAG member

LAG members who were interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences of the group. It should also be reflected that they provided a significant contribution of value and knowledge. Interview findings also reflect that the LAG members were highly generous with their time and provided additional support to projects and participants far beyond the minimum requirements of LAG membership, as well as task and finish groups to target specific initiations. These factors must be recognised although they are not captured directly in the performance indicators.

> As a LAG we have learned so much together. Particularly, in regard to managing contracts and packaging up work into project tasks, which is the biggest thing some projects have struggled with.

- LAG member

A range of benefits were identified when LAG members were asked to describe how, if at all, they benefited from being a member of the LAG. All of the LAG members interviewed noted that the LAG was hugely beneficial to them on an individual level. Key themes that emerged were as follows:

- Networking opportunities.
- Contributing towards tackling challenges in their local communities.
- Becoming aware of projects and activities – outside the individuals' usual area of work.
- Raising awareness about the organisation they represent.
- Becoming more strategic in their thinking (due to awareness of other activities).
- Learning new ways of working and solving problems.

Author's observation: These benefits are an important outcome of the CLLD approach and need to be considered alongside any discussion about outcomes achieved by projects funded by the programme. The positive response in LAG interviews is evidence of these benefits being widely realised across the group.

3.1.3   LAG Meetings and attendance

LAG meetings took place on a monthly basis and were overall very well attended. Outside of formal LAG meetings, sub-groups and task and finish groups also met to work on key projects. Analysis of a sample of attendance of LAG meetings shows that all meetings were quorate, which means a minimum of five LAG members attending in the first 30 minutes of the meeting. Frequently, 10 members or more were in attendance, with the lowest attendance occurring in August 2021 (although with five LAG members still achieving quorum), which is to be expected in the holiday period.

In the rare instances where LAG meetings were cancelled, written updates were provided by the Chair and Project Team to all members which ensured the regular communication. It should also be noted that even during the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns and move to remote working, the monthly LAG meetings continued in remote form via Teams.

Figure 4: LAG meeting attendance in 2020-2021
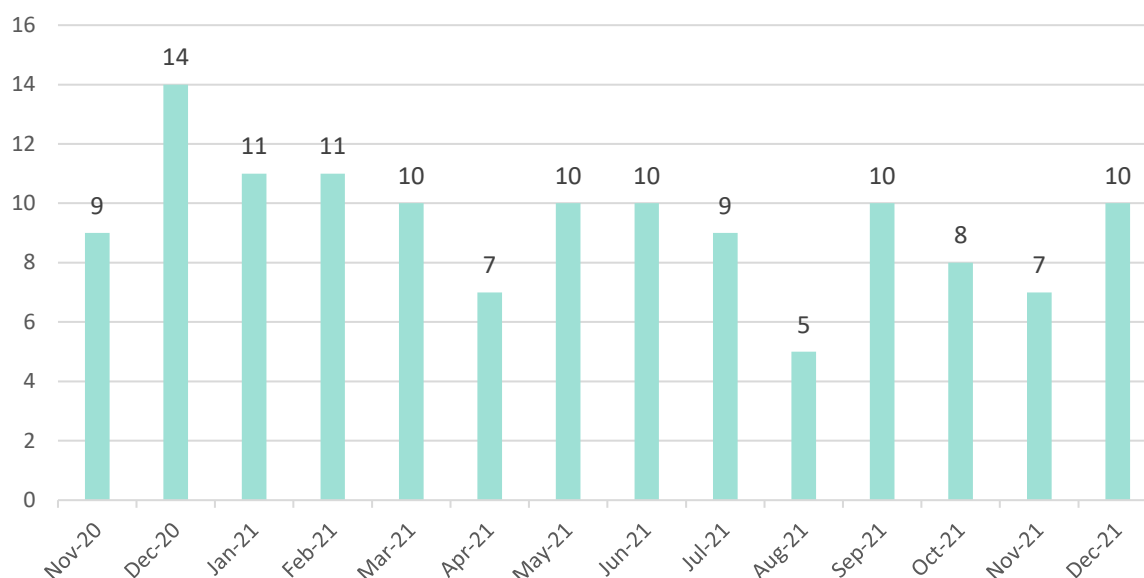
Source: Analysis of data provided by the CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council

Interviews with the LAG highlighted that views on the monthly meetings were unanimously positive with no significant issues being identified. LAG members were keen to note that while they shared common values and had a shared vision for the North of Tyne CLLD programme, are all highly committed to their local communities, levels of trust among members were high and they all felt secure enough to disagree on specific points and share their points of view honestly and openly. The LAG members were happy with the amount of information that was provided to them regarding projects, expenditure and so on and in particularly praised highly the way in which meetings, and the regular communication between meetings, were administered by the Newcastle City Council team.

Author's observation: The strong attendance rates of the monthly LAG meetings demonstrates an engaged group, led by a highly competent and knowledgeable Chair. The LAG meetings also provided a forum for sharing a huge amount of knowledge of the local communities in the CLLD area, which is a valuable resource for the North of Tyne area.

3.1.4 Signal sub-group.

The vital role played by the Signal sub-group to the main LAG meeting was noted with the importance of their role as an opportunity to review and discuss a more targeted approach to capturing project benefits and contributing to community development on a micro, hyper-local level was emphasised.

The sub-group was set up to focus on providing meaningful insight to support alignment of the Local Development Strategy, and to provide a personalised approach for the target groups of the CLLD. The Signal tool and the strategic added value it contributed to the North of Tyne CLLD programme is discussed in further detail below.

3.2   Signal

The North of Tyne CLLD programme measured the social impact using a methodology called SIGNAL. This tool was created as both a metric and a methodology to enable households to assess their level of poverty and to carry out personalized strategies to overcome their specific deprivations and is also validated by Oxford University's Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The primary purpose of the tool is to help people identify their needs while inspiring them to make the change and, coupled with this, enable organisations to gain clarity on the best way to respond to those needs in any context.[19]

Consistent with the OPHI, SIGNAL's key dimensions include income and employment, education and culture, health and environment, housing and infrastructure, organization and participation, and interiority and motivation. By dividing these dimensions into 54 indicators, SIGNAL represents each indicator by three images, with each image indicating one of three situations: 'I'm stuck and need help' (red), 'needs some work' (yellow) and 'I'm ok with this' (green).[20]

SIGNAL therefore works to implement a person-centred approach to tackling poverty and deprivation, with each individual being given a Life-Map to focus on actions and develop a plan to move their survey results from red to yellow to green.

SIGNAL therefore works to capture more than economic-related issues to poverty and deprivation. Poverty is recognized as a multidimensional issue that goes beyond economics and encompasses various deprivations, including poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, disempowerment, and living in areas that are environmentally hazardous[21]. In terms of the CLLD, SIGNAL is therefore being utilised to measure the social value of interventions by taking qualitative data into account, primarily through giving people the opportunity to give feedback and tell their stories.

3.2.1   Added benefit of Signal

The major benefit of Signal was to provide insight on target indicators that are not captured within the ESF and ERDF targets identified at programme level. This supports translating "real" benefits of the North of Tyne CLLD programme for the communities in which programme activities took place and connects these indicators with the everyday realities and lives for the participants of the projects funded by the programme.

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[19] SIGNAL (2022)
[20] ibid
[21] ibid

> Signal helped capture things that weren't necessarily captured in the paperwork. It helped engage with people and have conversations about reporting. Those projects who looked like they weren't performing well on paper added real value which shows in the Signal data. Sometimes data at programme-level doesn't show the impact of real activities.

<div align="right">-   LAG Member</div>

The additional nuance provides a more developed picture of the impact of the CLLD programme beyond the statistical target indicators. It also helps to connect the socio-economic baseline to CLLD programme outcomes, and provides insight on trends and correlations between multiple factors affecting local communities in the CLLD area.

Author's observation: The CLLD approach integrated with the use of Signal to capture achievement of complex indicators has provided evidence of a working model that can be used in future projects, schemes, and/or programmes led by the voluntary and community sector. In addition, it provided a rich suite of data which is not captured through more institutional methods, for example, through DWP reports or census data.

In addition, the LAG highlighted that the procurement process to secure the use of Signal and apply it to the CLLD approach was a good learning experience for the group.

RECOMMENDATION #3: **Embed Signal within future delivery models.** Signal could be used as a tool for other community-led programmes or schemes delivered by local authorities. A strategy could be developed to understand how, and which, data generated by Signal could be translated into insights to better inform policy related to community development and avoid negative unintended consequences.

3.3 External stakeholder perspectives

The evaluation considers the perspectives not only of the LAG members, the Local Authority as the Management Authority of the programme, and the project delivery partners, but also from external stakeholders involved in the wider Voluntary and Community sector in the North East and those in strategic positions in regional and local government. This includes perspectives from the North of Tyne Combined Authority, wider Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Connected Voice and Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE), as well as organisations from the Voluntary and Community Sector who have not received project funding from the CLLD Programme.

These external stakeholder perspectives provide balanced and impartial insight into two key areas: (1). An understanding of the strengths of the CLLD Programme delivery model (2). Assessment of how the CLLD Programme aligns to wider regional and local policy priorities.

3.3.1   Visibility of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme

Stakeholders in the wider community and voluntary sector in the North East stated that although they were not directly involved in the CLLD programme, they became aware of the programme and its activities through various events throughout Newcastle and Gateshead. One example is Connected Voice's Newcastle Gateshead funding fair where Newcastle City Council promoted the CLLD programme.

Findings from engagement with the external stakeholders show that the efforts and the hard work of the LAG was widely recognised by those working with and in communities in the North of Tyne area. Their commitment and passion to their local communities, and the challenging nature of their jobs, particularly regarding a difficult funding landscape in the face of increasing external pressures and social challenges, was commented on and highly commended.

> "It's clear the partners involved in the project provide vital services in their local communities. They are reaching some of the hardest to reach client groups, offering support that goes beyond the mainstream services. Their understanding of their areas and strong links with other local services means they are able to offer wrap around support which many of their clients need."

External stakeholder

Overall, the external stakeholders interviewed appreciated that the North of Tyne CLLD Programme filled clear gaps in institutional provision and capacity at regional and local government level to offer support that goes beyond mainstream service provision, and particularly working with those hardest-to-reach groups who would often slip through gaps in regional and local government-led support schemes.

3.3.2   Perceptions of the CLLD Programme model

The regional body for voluntary organisations in the region stated that they are a strong advocate of the bottom-up approach applied by the CLLD programme, and that with adequate support, this has the potential to secure a sustainable legacy for the projects and residents participating in the CLLD-funded projects.

> "We believe that people, communities and organisations within areas are best placed to identify the needs of that place and develop or support interventions to address them. In addition, engaging local communities builds their capacity and community cohesion, leaving a legacy beyond these sorts of programmes."

External stakeholder

However, while the bottom-up nature of the CLLD programme was viewed as an important mode of delivery and a better model than the top-down institutionally led models of support that have historically been the modus operandi, the external stakeholders did express some reservations. This referred to a perspective of the CLLD programme being labour-intensive, and a limited scale of delivery in relation to the amount of effort required to drive the project.

This is a comment on the CLLD model more widely rather than the North of Tyne programme specifically; the aim of CLLD is not to achieve radical impacts, but to work directly with communities to support incremental change. In the challenging, unpredictable, and economically unstable period that has been the backdrop for much of the North of Tyne CLLD programme, from an external stakeholder perspective the scale of the CLLD programme is simply too limited.

However, it should be noted that the CLLD programme is not a singular solution to macro-level problems, rather it should form part of a critical mass of community-focused projects and provide a model of how a bottom-up approach can and should work.

From an institutional perspective, three external stakeholders noted that the CLLD Programme model has been an effective mechanism for delivering targeted funding to projects with the potential to provide direct positive impacts to their local communities, for small-scale projects that would perhaps be otherwise excluded from European funding or unable to navigate the process for securing ERDF and ESF funding due to the limited knowledge, experience, and organisational capacity of particularly small organisations.

The CLLD Programme delivery model has therefore been successful in bringing in a wider range of stakeholders into decision-making processes, and developing a participative grants making model which is a relatively unique mode of delivery in the North East. The CLLD Programme model was also useful in supporting a more coordinated effort in a fragmented policy landscape, and helped to streamline community support schemes to avoid duplication of efforts.

3.3.3   Awareness of the funded projects

Those external stakeholders who are already engaged in the voluntary and community sector in the North of Tyne area were aware of some specific CLLD-funded projects, although this depended on level of involvement of the external stakeholders in specific activities. For example, those involved in employability schemes in the city were aware of projects such as those led by Recruitment Junction, Big River Bakery, Reviving the Heart of the West End, the Millin Charity and The Chinese Learning Centre.

Several of the stakeholders noted that although they weren't aware of the specific CLLD-funded projects, they were aware of all of the organisations delivering projects, which are listed on the North of Tyne CLLD website. One of the external stakeholders noted that the diversity and range of projects the CLLD Programme supported was impressive and there were no elements of duplication, which illustrates the strength of the CLLD Programme model in avoiding duplication of efforts in the complex and fragmented landscape of the community and voluntary sector. One external stakeholder also noted that the quality and innovation of the projects delivered was higher than they would have anticipated.

> "I'm aware of many valuable and innovative projects that have been supported. The diversity of projects has also been amazing […]".

External stakeholder

All of the external stakeholder respondents were able to provide a high-level view of the projects and their impact, and the findings from the evaluation are clear that the projects provide an important function in bridging the gap between public sector institutions and local communities in tackling challenges related to employability, skills improvement, and public health elements including social isolation and effects of poverty.

Two external stakeholders highlighted that the CLLD programme has been instrumental in addressing local-level challenges in a joined-up, cohesive manner. One of those interviewed noted that the organisations delivering projects within the CLLD Programme are the "glue that binds communities together," and although while a lot of their work ordinarily goes unseen, the CLLD Programme has provided a platform to raise awareness of organisations in the North of Tyne area. The CLLD Programme has highlighted the important work that community organisations and the voluntary sector do, so that this can be recognised by those in regional and local government who are otherwise one or two steps removed from front-line delivery and direct engagement with local communities.

> "[CLLD] approaches are often very effective ways to address these challenges in a joined-up way, building on the assets of our local places in a responsive way."

3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council have developed and implemented a robust mechanism for capturing key outputs and achievements. Information is collated by the CLLD project delivery team using data provided by projects on a set of forms designed to capture relevant outputs in line with ERDF and ESF requirements.

Interviews with LAG members highlighted that the project delivery team have provided diligent and thorough support to the project, and LAG members were impressed with the level of dedication to the project of the CLLD Project Team. It was noted that the team is small and while their achievements and hard work were impressive, the task of monitoring and evaluation of the multi-faceted approach of a CLLD programme is complex. As such, additional resource to the team was considered to be needed if a similar project were to be implemented.

The CLLD Project Team noted that they did not have sufficient resources to create a communications plan and social media strategy to promote the CLLD programme. Working within the limitations of available resource, they decided not to develop a social media presence, noting that irregular updates and ad hoc engagement with, for example, Twitter and Facebook would be more detrimental to the project that not having any social media presence at all. Instead, they focused their resource on delivering high-quality projects.

If the CLLD Project Team were to be allocated additional resource to include a business development or communications officer, this would help raise the profile of CLLD programme activities and increase its visibility in the institutional landscape of North of Tyne and the voluntary and community sector more widely, without impacting on project delivery.

In addition, this could help increase the volume of applications coming forward at project applicant stage, although as a word of caution it is also important to note that this alone would not necessarily translate into quality outputs.

RECOMMENDATION #4:	Provide additional resources for Project Delivery teams.
	The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council made the most of available resources and the small team consistently performed very well considering their limited resource.
	However, their capacity was stretched, and the team reported that they always worked at maximum capacity. Additional resources would have strengthened their ability to deliver the CLLD programme, build in more resilience, and allow the team to explore new ideas in more depth.

3.4.1　Monitoring progress

Progress monitoring forms are submitted by projects on a quarterly basis, following the relevant template according to the funding stream relevant to the project (either ERDF or ESF). The progress monitoring forms discuss the following:

- Activities and outputs (which were shared on a weekly basis or even, at peak times, daily)
- Budget
- Compliance with funding requirements (e.g., state aid, procurement, addressing cross-cutting themes).

The CLLD Project Team's task was then to check the reports, output lists, and evidence of achievements including client files, event materials (leaflets, posters, social media tools, signing in sheets etc), photos, and videos. These achievements are compared against plans described on the initial application form. The project delivery team used a RAG system (Red-Amber-Green) to assess how the project is performing.

Assessment ratings are as follows:

- Green: Project is progressing well and on track to achieve agreed targets
- Amber: Minor issues with guidance on how these can be corrected
- Red: Serious issues or delays which require a plan of action on how they can be resolved in the next quarter and may result in delayed payments
- Black: Issues have not been adequately addressed and may result in termination of grant agreements.

3.4.2　Project results

Upon completion of the project, project partners were required to complete a form capturing the results of their project. For those projects aligned to ESF funded activities, the Participant Result Form captured improved educational skills and employment resulting from the project. Participants were required to complete the form in the period up to four weeks from completion of support.

For ERDF funded activities, there is a form to register increased employment for SMEs, and a support record for potential entrepreneurs to capture how many hours of support were received.

3.4.3　Evolutive

The CLLD Project Team capture data on all projects and collate it using the CRM tool Evolutive. The implementation of the tool prevents double counting of participants, and allows the Project Team to effectively monitor how the programme is performing against the agreed target ESF and ERDF indicators against the four objectives and their associated activities.

3.5 Governance and management

As previously noted, Newcastle City Council was appointed as the Accountable Body to assist the North of Tyne LAG. The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council is responsible for the day-to-day management of the LDS and associated CLLD budget on behalf of the LAG. Among other things, the CLLD Project Team is also responsible for ERDF and ESF compliance, procurement, state aid compliance, working with DLUHC and DWP on eligibility issues, monitoring and verification of outputs, generating progress and financial reports for ERDF and ESF claims, and animation. In addition, the team act as convenor for the LAG and ensuring regular communication and updates are shared across the LAG and the wider project in between monthly LAG meetings.

3.5.1 Animation

Animation is a key feature of CLLD. The animation function is led by the Communities Officer at Newcastle City Council, and this enables the LAG to engage with prospective activity deliverers to raise awareness, promote the opportunities available via CLLD and encourage ideas for participation in the programme.

This function involves:

- Engagement with local organisations
- Marketing & comms e.g., updating the CLLD website, representing CLLD at events (e.g. Funders Fairs)
- Generating interest in CLLD funding opportunities
- Supporting local organisations with project development
- Support with organising calls for projects and assessment panels,
- Supporting local organisation to apply for CLLD funding,
- Organising events, workshops, masterclasses etc.,
- Facilitation of networking for local projects and linking them up with opportunities e.g., match funding sources.

In addition, the LAG members have a key role in acting as "animateurs" within their own sectors to promote the opportunities and to disseminate the results and impact of the activities undertaken.

3.5.2 Delivery Team Structure

The table below outlines the roles of the various members of staff that deliver the CLLD programme in North of Tyne. All posts exist within Newcastle City Council, operating in their capacity as the Accountable Body for the LAG.

Table 5: Newcastle City Council CLLD staff and their responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Project Manager (Economic Development Officer)	• Act as first point of contact for DWP and DLUHC • ERDF and ESF compliance and guidance for local projects • ERDF and ESF claims and other requirements (e.g. Project Change Requests) • Procurement (together with the Procurement Team), • Ensure compliance with state aid • Supporting the LAG and providing admin for LAG meetings and assessment panels • Delegated Decisions and Grant Funding Agreements with local projects (together with the Legal Team) • Arranging calls for projects • Accountable Body checks of applications.
Project Support Officers (x1 position although 3 individuals have been involved throughout the programme)	• Monitoring of outputs and results and verification of evidence • Checking financial claims from local projects and processing payments • Main point of contact for Evolutive, Signal and Signable (e-signatures) • Generating financial reports and output/result reports for ERDF and ESF claims • Supporting local projects.
Communities Officer	• Responsible for animation (see Section 2.3.1 above).

Source: Newcastle City Council

3.6   Project selection criteria

The original design of the application process, assessment methods, and project approvals were included in the LDS. In the original application process design, CLLD projects in North of Tyne were invited to apply to the scheme following a two-phase process. Organisations would submit an EOI. Successful applicants were then invited to a second stage requiring full application. Approval of second stage applications would then be taken at by assessment panels consisting of at least five LAG members.

3.6.1   Engagement with local communities

A big launch event with a key note speech by IPPR North and video messages from local MEPs started the process of initial engagement and raising awareness of CLLD in the local communities. This phase of engagement also included a series of roadshow events in local community venues within the CLLD areas. Both of these included presentations and Q&A sessions with Newcastle City Council staff.

The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council also supported idea generation for projects that may be eligible for CLLD funding by leading two "conversation events," which generated discussion and a forum in which to generate ideas for projects. The Communities Officer then provided one-to-one support to discuss project ideas and funding criteria, and to help align those ideas to the requirements of securing CLLD funding.

The project selection process outlined in the LDS was used for Round 1 call for applications in Nov 2017-early 2018.

3.6.2   Round One call for projects

The first round of calls for projects largely followed the design as set out in the Local Development Strategy. This consisted of a single-stage application, which required submission of a Full Application Form and proposed outputs/results spreadsheet as well as a proposed budget breakdown.

In this first iteration, projects could either be 'small' (less than £10k) and considered on a rolling basis, or 'large' (over £10k) with a set deadline for delivery. Regardless of size, all projects were required to complete the same paperwork.

Applications were assessed by the LAG who met as a panel to consider and score applications. This approach resulted in only **two ESF** projects approved for funding, and **no ERDF** ones. Following the low response rate, the CLLD Project Team and the LAG decided to amend their approach to try to boost uptake.

3.6.3   Round Two call for projects

The second round of calls for projects commenced in 2018. The North of Tyne CLLD Project Team held roadshow events in the CLLD area in local community venues which included a presentation on the programme. It also provided updated information on the new application process.

As in the first iteration, potential applicants were invited on a one-to-one basis to discuss project ideas and funding criteria with the Newcastle City Council Communities Officer.

Round Two differed from Round One in that it required applicants to follow a two-stage application process, which consisted of an Expression of Interest (EOI) and then a Full Application. This reflects learning generated by the process of Round One. At EOI stage, this included an outline of initial project ideas and some 'rough figures.' To ease the administrative burden of the application process, the CLLD Project Team gave potential projects the option to submit a video to support their EOI.

Successful projects at EOI stage were then invited to submit a Full Application. These projects were invited to attend a workshop on completing the application, which included information required to complete the form and supporting spreadsheets. Videos were provided on the call for projects website on how to complete supporting spreadsheets. In addition, the Project Team offered "drop in" sessions offered for projects completing EOI and Full Application.

As in Round One, projects could either be 'small' (less than £10k) and considered on a rolling basis, or 'large' (over £10k) with a set deadline. All projects, regardless of size, were required to complete some paperwork.

The process for scoring applications was similar to Round One in that the LAG met as a panel to consider and score applications.

However, this amended approach did achieve a measure of success in improving uptake. As such, in total of **five ESF projects** and **two ERDF projects** got approved and progressed to delivery.

However, the CLLD Project Team and the LAG felt that improvements could still be made to ensure that projects in the local community could be brought forward to reach their full potential.

3.6.4   Round Three call for projects

The third round of calls for projects started in 2019 to early 2020. The CLLD Project Team and LAG reflected in learnings in Round One and Round Two and considered that it worked well as an approach to invite applications on a one-to-one basis to discuss project ideas and funding criteria with the Newcastle City Council Communities Officer.

The two-stage application process was also continued in Round Three, but with some tweaks following learning from Round Two. For example, the EOI stage included a presentation to the LAG, where appointments were offered to members at monthly LAG meetings. After the presentation applicants were informed whether the project was not suitable, or they were invited to full application. For those where the LAG could see real potential and alignment with the goals of CLLD, but the framing of the project could be improved, the applicants were offered the opportunity to come back to the LAG with revised proposal.

If applicants were invited to re-submit, the LAG made suggestions for improvements and how to fulfill the requirements of full application. In addition, LAG members and the CLLD Project Team offered support with refining the applications and re-submission.

If the project was successful at EOI phase, those invited to Full Application were offered support to complete the paperwork by the CLLD Project Team. After the applicant completed a first draft of their full application form, the CLLD Project Team worked with them to fine-tune the final version and to correct any errors. This also included a meeting (approx. two hours) to go over the application and a detailed look at the outputs/results spreadsheet and budget spreadsheets in line with CLLD requirements. Applicants could then submit a full application as soon as they were ready.

As in Rounds One and Two, the LAG met as a panel to consider and score applications. To remain consistent, the CLLD Project Team aimed to keep the same LAG members to consider both the EOI and the Full Application for a given project.

Round 3 differed from the first two rounds in that it was the first round where grants of up to 100% of project value could be offered to applicants. The LAG and CLLD Project Team noticed a significant increase from organisations and application volumes were boosted. Round 3 also included a separate application process for the joint pilot project with Newcastle College.

To support application to the scheme, the CLLD Project Team:

- Held a joint info session for interested organisations at the College's Energy Academy in Wallsend including a tour of the facility.
- Held a 'pitch day' which was a panel consisting of the LAG members, the College and a recruitment agency for the energy sector.

The result was that one project within the joint pilot project was selected to submit a Full Application. Round Three secured **12 ESF projects**, two ERDF revenue and two ERDF capital projects were also approved and progressed to delivery.

3.6.5   Round Four call for projects

The fourth round of calls for projects started in 2021, which was during the period of Covid restrictions. The round therefore was fully carried out via Teams, website, email, phone calls etc. due to Covid restrictions.

The two-phase process was maintained but following feedback from applicants in the previous rounds, the CLLD Project Team further simplified the EOI form and added additional questions about deliverability during Covid-19.

The result of the approach taken in Round 4 was **four E SF projects** and **two ERDF projects** approved and progressed to delivery, despite the difficult circumstances due to Covid-19.

3.6.6   Round 5 – 2022

Round Five differed markedly from previous calls for projects in that it was carried out only for ERDF. This was a targeted approach to seek projects that would help contribute to ERDF target outputs, in particular for indicators that were expected to underperform (C1 and C5).

As it was a targeted call, the CLLD Project Team reached out directly to the organisations that were expected to be potentially interested to encourage them to apply. As a quick turnaround was needed to allow enough time for delivery before the end of programme in Dec 2022, the CLLD Project Team prepared a very simple and informal EOI. They also changed the Full Application and removed a number of questions that became less relevant due to the tight timescales and the programme ending.

In the final call, the North of Tyne CLLD programme received **one EOI** and following a quick Full Application process the project got approved.

> **Author's observation:** The iterative improvements to the project application process demonstrates a great example of the adaptable nature of the CLLD Project Team and the LAG, and their willingness to reflect on lessons learned and translate these into actions. It also demonstrates that the LAG and Project Team facilitate as many good ideas as possible and removed as many barriers to this as they possibly could within their control.
>
> This provided a real benefit to the CLLD programme which is reflected not only in the increased volume of applicants, but also improved quality of projects successfully securing CLLD funding.
>
> In addition, the two-phase approach and additional support provided to projects by the LAG and CLLD Project Team to improve their funding application skills and alleviate the burden of administrative requirements for project applicants reflects the significant hard work and the generosity of both the LAG and Project Team in contributing their time to CLLD.

In interviews with external stakeholders, one respondent urged a note of caution related to the move to 100% match funding from Round Three onwards. While this change to the funding opportunity did result in an increased volume of applications, the issue was that this perhaps resulted in attracting applicants from organisations, particularly larger ones, who were not aligned to the Programme ethos of bottom-up development. Several of these organisations did not have a presence in the North of Tyne geographical areas and were not directly invested in the local communities.

Many of these had considerable experience in funding applications, often from larger organisations with in-house capabilities facing organisational pressure to secure funding from as many sources as possible. The relatively rare offer of 100% match funding was an attractive prospect for these organisations, and many of them had sufficient bid-writing skills to align their application to the eligibility criteria of the North of Tyne CLLD programme. However, this did not necessarily translate to the delivery of their projects.

In sum, the 100% match funding offer perhaps led to a volume of applications at the detriment of quality projects. One solution for overcoming this issue and to ensure that small organisations with genuine CLLD-aligned values and innovative project ideas are not overshadowed by larger organisations with experiencing in securing external funding would be a tapered approach to match-funding, as suggested in **Recommendation 5** below.

To safeguard quality over quantity and ensure small organisations with limited operational capacity are not overshadowed by larger organisations with skilled in-house bid writing teams and experience in securing external funding, an approach could be adopted to match-funding as follows:

100% for micro/small organisations (0-10 employees)

75% for medium sized organisations (11-249 employees)

50% for larger organisations (250+ employees).

3.6.7   Feedback from Projects

Survey results from the projects show that most of the projects who succeeded to secure CLLD funding (78% or 14 out of 18 project organisations interviewed) received support from the LAG in preparing their application. Only 17% (3 out of 18) stated that they did not receive any support, although the reasons for this were not interrogated and it may have been the larger organisations who already had in-house competency in completing funding applications. One respondent stated that they were not sure or could not remember.

Of those who received support, most of them received help in creating a successful application. Interviews with the LAG highlighted that this entailed supporting development of a stronger project narrative in some cases, and in some cases, it was a case of refining the project scope to produce a more focused project to maximise the chance of having a positive impact on the local community. In other cases the LAG supported the projects to align more closely with the North of Tyne CLLD programme aims.

The LAG stated that in the first stage of the interview process, they were simply looking for projects with potential to have a positive impact on the community in which they operate. The task was then to ensure the project potential was translated into a project eligible for CLLD funding and with a clear design that would be able to facilitate positive outcomes. This latter task was where the LAG added significant value to the CLLD programme.

The projects who received support were in general very satisfied (57%, or 8/14 respondents), or satisfied (36%, or 5 out of 14 projects). None of the projects responded that they were dissatisfied with the support. In particular, the respondents highlighted that informative information from the LAG was the most positive element of the support they received.

Figure 5: Most positive element of support received from LAG
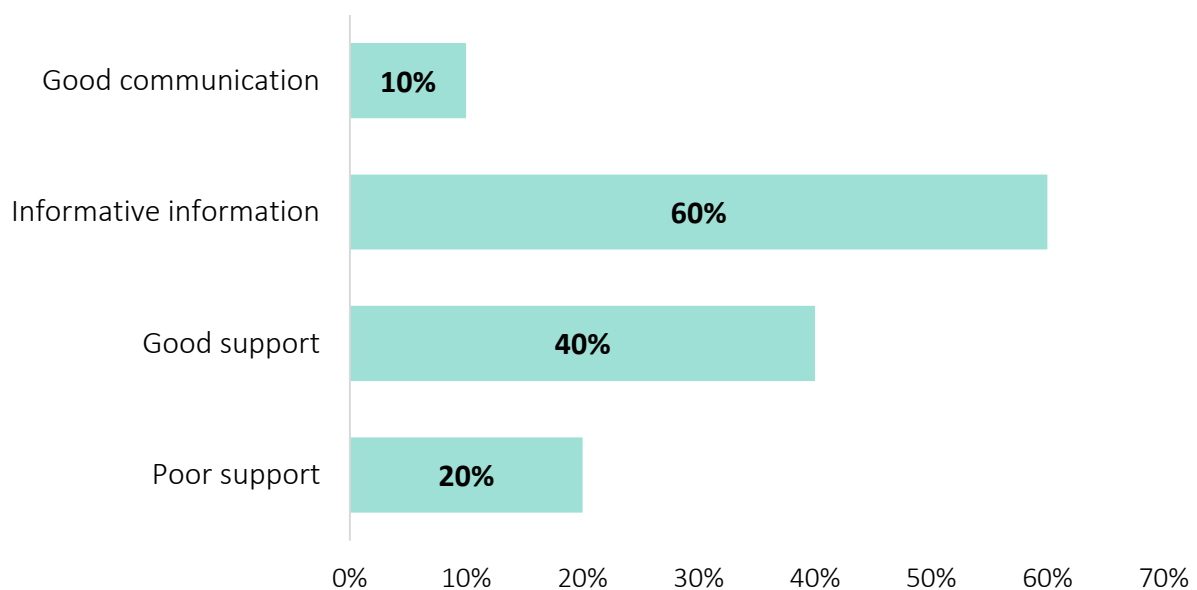
n = 10

The result of support provided by the LAG primarily led to an improved application (60% of respondents or 6/10), but it 20% of project respondents (2/10) noted that it translated directly into improved outcomes for the local community.

Figure 6: Outcomes of LAG support
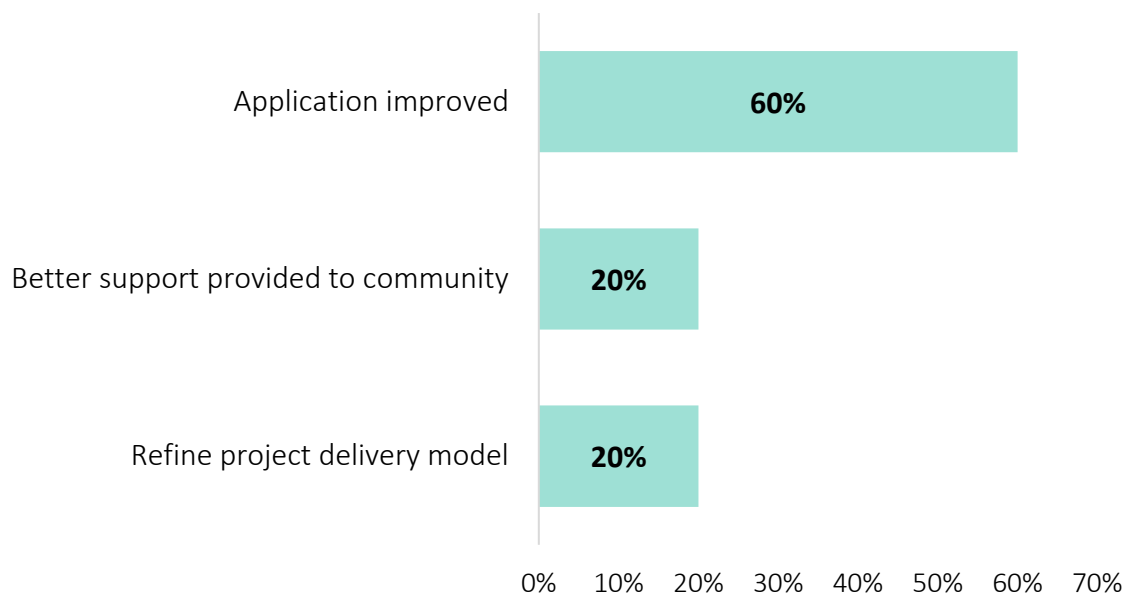
n = 10

When asked about the application process, survey respondents stated that it was improved by clear guidance (67% or 6/9) and a clear process (67% or 6/9). A third agreed that staff support improved the application process (33% or 3/9).

When asked about how the application process could be improved, 36% (4/11) survey respondents noted that the process could be made more user friendly. Equally, 36% (4/11) noted that nothing needed to change, and they were satisfied with the process. 27% (3/11) noted that there could be more information provided on the monitoring and evaluation process.

Figure 7: How the application process could be improved
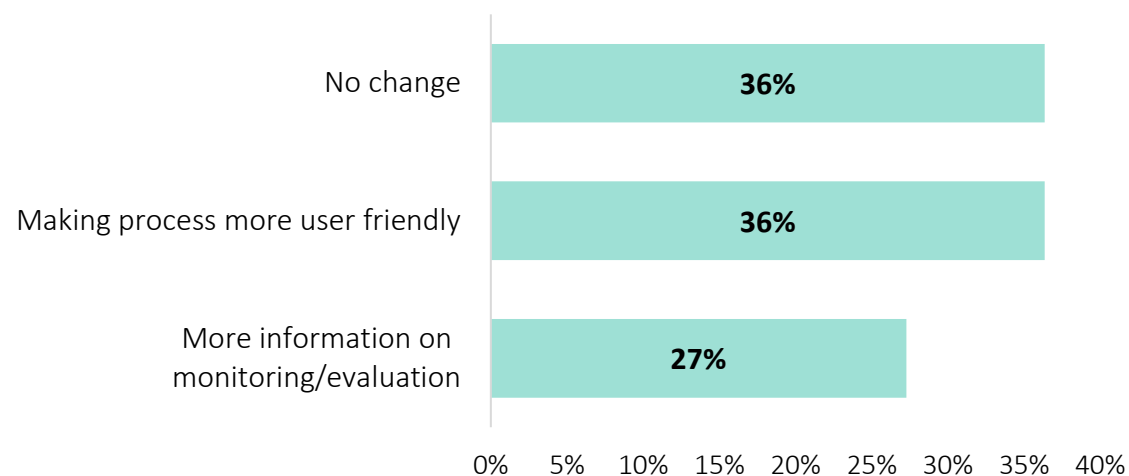
n = 11

Across the board, survey respondents were satisfied with the application process and none of the respondents stated that they were dissatisfied.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with application process
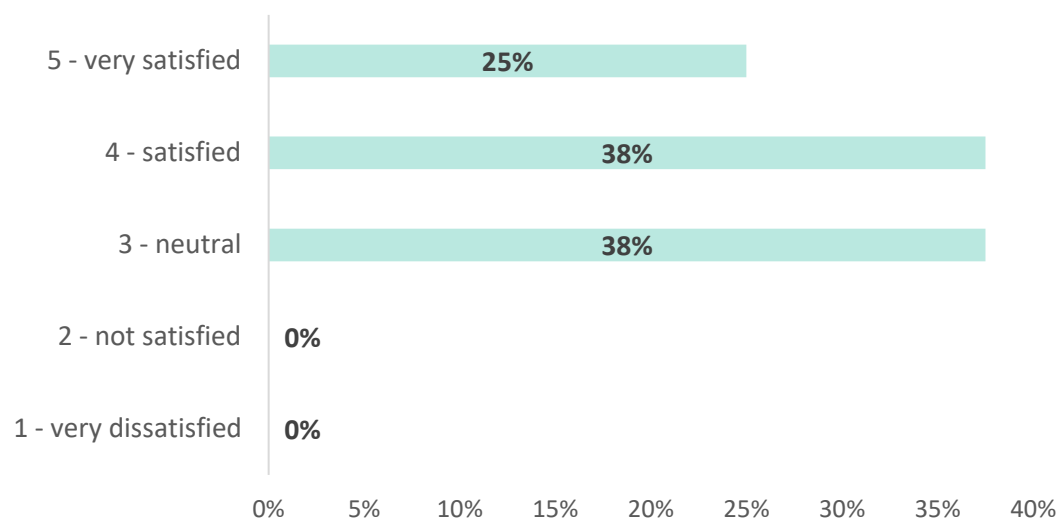
n = 10

3.7   Covid-19 impacts

While the global Covid-19 pandemic had a detrimental impact on projects of all different sizes and scales and across almost all sectors across the UK, the nature of the voluntary sector and the communities they work with means that the impact was particularly challenging. The target communities of the North of Tyne CLLD project included vulnerable individuals, both in terms of physical health and wellbeing as well as material circumstances. Many individuals in these communities were at risk of social isolation and poverty even before the pandemic, and Covid-19 exacerbated most of these indicators.

Digital exclusion was a particular risk during the first lockdown where any form of social contact was severely restricted beyond immediate healthcare settings. This meant that members of the community who did not have access to internet connectivity or equipment at home were unable to connect with support networks. In addition, LAG members noted that instances of domestic violence increased markedly in 2020 and has continued to rise in the years following the Covid-19 lockdowns. Those struggling from addiction issues saw worsening conditions because of decreased support and disruptions to their regular routines. Some struggled with additional burdens related to childcare following the closure of schools and a move to online learning for much of 2020 and into 2021.

Nevertheless, both the LAG and the projects funded by CLLD proved to be resilient and adaptable in the face of immensely challenging external circumstances. While the CLLD programme was in effect put on hold for the quarter following the lockdown in March 2020, LAG members noted that the projects took additional measures to allow socially distanced contact with members of the community as soon as they were able from autumn 2020 onwards.

Most projects put in place additional measures to mitigate the impact of digital exclusion and continue delivery of their community programmes. Examples of these measures include provision of IT equipment for those who otherwise could not access training remotely at home, and by offering more flexible options for attending training courses around caring duties and childcare commitments. In response to a suggestion by one of the LAG members, the team purchased access to an e-signature platform to allow CLLD projects to remotely collect signatures from participants on CLLD forms, which could then be used as evidence for the project outputs and results. This was free-to-charge for all projects funded by CLLD to use.

3.7.1   Views from the LAG and CLLD Delivery Team

In terms of target indicators, the pandemic did cause some loss of momentum during 2020 and 2021, and many of the networking opportunities which were built up in the years preceding the pandemic were lost. Priorities in the voluntary and community sectors shifted to emergency responses to Covid-19, and this had an impact on the number of projects seeking funding for CLLD support.

However, the CLLD Project Team successfully identified alignment with Newcastle City Council's Covid response funds and the North of Tyne CLLD project, which unlocked additional funding to use for match funds and this allowed those projects in the years following the pandemic to be 100% funded through CLLD.

The CLLD Project Team noted that each successful project thinks about individuals primarily, rather than profit and money. This was reflected in the sensitive, empathetic approach of the projects working in their communities, and this was particularly evident in their response to the challenges resulting from Covid-19.

3.7.2   Views from External Stakeholders

External stakeholders noted that they were aware that Covid-19 posed a challenge for the LAG in that they were not able to meet in person and facilitate networks between the project delivery partners for much of 2020. They also noted that while the LAG was adaptable and effective at moving some of the projects online where possible, in some cases projects could not adapt to an online method of delivery due to their design and need for face-to-face interaction, particularly those with vulnerable groups at risk of digital exclusion.

The most successful projects delivered during this period were those that were directly rooted in their communities and had staff available during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Some of the projects initially seeking funding no longer had capacity to deliver during Covid-19 as either resources for project delivery were withdrawn or project teams had been re-deployed to manage immediate frontline crises related to the lockdown.

However, several external stakeholders recognised that the LAG were available during the lockdown to support those projects assisting individuals and communities in overcoming various issues at the time when the wider Council was inaccessible and focussed solely on Covid response.

> "[The LAG] has been able to assist CICs and projects that may not have survived throughout Covid and lockdowns and this continued at a time when Council moved to only frontline Covid handling."

External stakeholder

3.8   Summary

The Local Action Group (LAG) is located at the nexus of institutional priorities, the voluntary sector, and local communities in the North of Tyne area. The LAG has developed well over the six-year lifecycle of the CLLD programme and has collaborated effectively to provide an anchor the CLLD programme to the needs and challenges based by local communities.

The LAG has been well supported by the CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council, who have overseen the management and governance of the programme and provided invaluable support in terms of delivering a complex administrative requirement.

The circumstances in which the CLLD Programme has been delivered have been exceptionally challenging. Covid-19 provided a major challenge, however other factors such as rising fuel costs and inflation contributing to a cost-of-living crisis have severely impacted local communities within the CLLD areas. Nevertheless, the LAG and CLLD Project Team have demonstrated a trusting working relationship and a real commitment to the objectives of the CLLD programme to continue to deliver a high-quality programme against ESF and ERDF target indicators.

4.   Project progress

Chapter Summary

- The North of Tyne CLLD Programme has supported a total of 31 projects. Of these, 23 were funded under ESF, 6 were funded under ERDF revenue, and a further 2 were funded under ERDF capital grants.

- The projects represent a final value of £1.3m for ESF and £400K for ERDF revenue and a further £132K for ERDF capital. Together, this represents a total investment of £1.8m.

- For ESF, the average project support value was £56,354 per projects, and for ERDF average support value was £53,944 per project.

- The project has met or even overachieved against many of the ESF and ERDF target indicators. For ERDF this includes – Enterprises supported (C1), Employment increase (C8), Sq. m of buildings renovated (P12), and Potential entrepreneurs supported (P11). For ESF this includes - Inactive supported (CO03), Employed supported (CO05), Ethnic minorities supported (CO05), Women supported (CO16).

- Significant overachievements have been made specifically for ERDF P12 (Sq. m of buildings renovated), ESF CO05 (Employed supported), and ESF CO05 (Ethnic minorities supported).

- The project has also delivered some remarkable achievements outside of ERDF and ESF indicators (but better captured within Signal), especially taken into consideration the challenging external circumstances surrounding programme delivery.

4.1   Review of the Local Development Strategy

The Local Development Strategy (LDS) is an essential element of the CLLD approach described within programme guidelines issued by the European Commission as the roadmap for implementation (reference). It defines how the LAG select and support projects, how well they can contribute to the goals of the strategy. For the purposes of the Final Evaluation, it is important to note that the way in which the LDS was developed is not considered, as this is outside the remit of Final Evaluation. Rather, the focus is on the coherence of the LDS as a strategy for guiding the implementation of the programme in North of Tyne, the extent to which it has been delivered via the projects supported to date, and reflecting on any changes to social and economic context as outlined in **Chapter 2.**

Author's Observations: The policy and strategy review within the LDS are comprehensive, and the analysis of key statistical information about the North of Tyne CLLD areas in Newcastle and North of Tyne are robust. Feedback from interviews with the LAG highlighted that the social and economic context has changed considerably in the six years since the original LDS was published, for example due to Brexit, Covid-19, energy and cost-of-living crisis, political uncertainty and worsening economic conditions across the UK. As such, the LAG note that the original LDS would need to be updated for any future iteration. The original LDS serves as a "springboard" from which the project was initially implemented, but it is noted that the LAG has been sensitive to contextual changes and this has been reflected in a flexible approach to projects.

The LAG's approach has been agile and allows for changes in context and shifting priorities to be accommodated, and this has been a success factor in delivery of the North of Tyne CLLD project delivery.

The North of Tyne LDS identifies four objectives, under which are divided six activities in total.[22] Performance indicators are attached to each activity, and these are aligned to the needs of ERDF and ESF investment priorities.

- **Objective A:** Making community assets, organisations, and the social fabric in the CLLD area more entrepreneurial.

- **Objective B:** Strengthening the business community in the CLLD area.

- **Objective C:** Supporting first steps towards economic activity within the CLLD area through learning, tackling multiple barriers and integrating support services, and;

- **Objective D:** Enabling entry to and progression along the pathway to employment and connecting local employers with communities.

These four headline objectives are broad and well-aligned to the overall ethos of CLLD. In the six-year timespan of the programme, the role of CLLD can only realistically be to contribute to achieving them with a longer-term strategy, or developing pilot and innovative approaches to addressing those ambitions. This is however not unusual for CLLD, and comparison with other CLLD programmes shows that most LDSs present a broad strategy for an area.

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[22] North of Tyne CLLD Local Action Group (2022) North of Tyne Community Led Local Development Strategy 2017 – 2022.

4.1.1   Views of the LAG

There was a recognition amongst interviewees that the strategy set out within the LDS is very broad, and that this reflects an understanding that it was designed to allow as broad a range of activities as possible to be implemented over the lifetime of the programme. As such, the LAG interviews clearly demonstrated a common understanding that the aim of the LDS was to provide guidance and a framework to bring forward innovative ideas and approaches from the community, rather than act as a barrier to them.

> The LDS acted as a springboard for initial action. Many of the issues identified in the LDS remain, and the programme contributed towards addressing these issues. In many respects, the initial issues identified have worsened rather than improved, new challenges have materialised and there's been increased regression due to external factors. The only way to move forward is if there is adequate funding to address these issues.

-   **LAG Member**

There was also recognition that whilst there was reference to the priorities of the LDS during discussions about projects and applications for support, the level of direct guidance it provides to discussions and decisions was limited.

LAG interviewees were careful to note that rather than providing direct guidance on how projects should be designed, the LDS was particularly useful in demonstrating to potential project applicants that their project ideas were part of a bigger narrative, and provide a clear illustration of how they relate to and could directly benefit local communities in the CLLD area.

Interviewees also recognised the risk that a more focused or restricted LDS could be problematic, emphasising the role CLLD plays in respect to supporting a bottom-up, grassroots, or 'community led' approach to local development. The importance of supporting innovation and 'good ideas' from wherever they came was a key theme that emerged during discussions. To support this, the LAG took an iterative approach to bringing new projects into the CLLD programme and listened to feedback from project applicants on the application process. It must be recognised that some LAG members also went above and beyond in supporting project applications for projects that showed strong potential and close alignment with the aims and ethos of the North of Tyne CLLD but perhaps struggled to accurately reflect this in their project application forms.

4.2   The range of supported projects

As the programme draws to an end in December 2022, the CLLD programme in North of Tyne has supported total of **31 projects**. Of these, **23** were funded under ESF, **six** were funded under ERDF revenue and a further **two** were funded under ERDF capital grants. Together, they represent an final investment of **£1.3m** for ESF and **£325k** for ERDF revenue and a further **£132k** for ERDF capital. A full list of all supported projects is attached in **Appendix 5.**

Across ESF and ERDF (revenue and capital), this represents a total investment of **£1.75m**. The average value of the financial support provided for ESF is **£56,354 per project** with a **high of £143,914** (for a project to provide on-site education and training targeted at supported housing tenants to enable them to build resilience and skills to maintain successful tenancies and navigate changes in the benefits system, e.g. Universal Credit) and a low of **£9,241** (for a project to support people with learning difficulties and autism through dramatic arts).

For ERDF revenue projects, the average value of the financial support provided is **£53,994 per project** with a **high of £137,074** (for a project to support pathways to grow and develop existing businesses and raise aspirations, improved confidence, and remove barriers to work in the West End of Newcastle) and a **low of £30,990** (for a project to provide workshops for early-stage young business founders covering the North of Tyne area). ERDF capital projects include an expansion of a community hub facility supporting health through community development in the West End of Newcastle, and operation of an arts facility in the east of the city. The value of the **two capital projects** is expected to be **£78,404** and **£53,590** respectively.

This illustrates the range and scale of the projects and actions being supported by CLLD in North of Tyne. This also reflects the careful approach that the LAG has implemented in ensuring that no idea is too small to make a contribution. Interviews with LAG members also highlighted that in fact, some of the smaller projects were indeed highly innovative and provided more of a contribution to the overall goals of CLLD that anticipated in relation to their small scale.

While the supported total of 31 projects within the two funding mechanisms is in itself indicative of a strong output, it must also be acknowledged that these were successfully delivered in spite of Covid-19 hampering CLLD project applications where priorities of potential applicants changed and their ability to deliver was impacted by the pandemic.

The North of Tyne website provides a substantial amount of information about the projects that have been supported[23], categorising projects into ESF and ERDF projects. This includes short descriptions of the projects, project achievements, case studies, and a summary of the CLLD programme outputs. What is clear from the review is that a substantial amount of activity has taken place in North of Tyne communities over the lifetime of the CLLD programme.

4.2.1   Distribution of the projects per strategic objective

The LDS clearly outlines four strategic objectives and a total of six activities allocated across the strategic objectives. However, the link between ESF and ERDF indicators and the LDS objectives and activities is less clearly illustrated in the monitoring and evaluation processes and progress reports. This reflects a high level of administrative requirements for ESF and ERDF process monitoring which was carried out by a very capable and dedicated small team.

However, if there were more resources available to the CLLD Project Team to support administrative capacity, it could be recommended that consistency across ESF and ERDF indicators and LDS objectives and priority activities is maintained in reporting on programme-level performance throughout delivery of the North of Tyne CLLD programme.

RECOMMENDATION #5:	Closer integration of LDS strategic objectives.
	The Local Development Strategy highlighted four key strategic objectives, but there is a sense that ERDF and ESF performance indicators were not explicitly linked to these objectives in the monitoring and evaluation framework. This reflects the administrative burden of ERDF and ESF monitoring requirements on the small Project Team. With additional resource, target indicators could be linked more closely with Objectives A to D to give a clearer picture of how the CLLD programme performed against LDS strategic objectives.

4.2.2   Views of the LAG

The LAG members and CLLD Project Team expressed a consistent view that they were very happy overall with the range, scale, and scope of projects supported. They highlighted that the projects are diverse, which does make it challenging to compare one against the other. They also noted that some projects, particularly those at micro-scale, exceeded expectation in terms of the quality of their delivery and performance against targets. Conversely, some of the projects led or supported by larger institutions with more available institutional capacity and knowledge did not perform as well as expected.

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[23] NORTH OF TYNE COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT 2017-2022 - Home (weebly.com)

Over the duration of the North of Tyne CLLD programme, the LAG drew on their deep collective knowledge and experience of the voluntary landscape in the North of Tyne area as well as intimate knowledge of the local geographies in which they operate to distinguish project potential at application stage. This allowed them to identify early on which projects, no matter how small, brought forward innovative ideas and new ways of working in the voluntary sector.

> CLLD has provided a real level playing field between huge organisations and micro-sized ones. For example, [one project] started as a tiny company in a storeroom, and they really made it work and have achieved some great things. The projects have been really committed – passion and determination to make it work has been the real key ingredient.

LAG Members

4.3   Performance against expenditure

The table below sets out the latest expenditure figures for the programme as of December 2022.

Table 6: Programme expenditure against allocated budget

Funding stream	Budget	Contracted	Expected final values	%
ESF Value	£1,292,000	£1,474,927	£1,283,427	-99%
ERDF Revenue	324,544	£328,416	£317,106	-98%
ERDF Capital	£132,000	£132,000	£131,994	~100%
TOTAL	**£1,748,544**	**£1,935,343**	**£1,732,527**	**-99%**

Source: Newcastle City Council project monitoring

Over 99 per cent of the project budget is expected to be committed at programme end. This is a very healthy position for the programme to be at. For ESF, the expected underspend is £8,573. For ERDF revenue projects, there is an expected underspend of £7,438. For ERDF capital, the underspend of just £6 is so minor that for the purposes of the Final Evaluation we assume that this counts as 100% of the allocated budget.

The underspend for ESF would likely be rectified if the Covid-19 lockdown had not impacted project delivery and given the difficult circumstances within which this project was delivered (highlighted in Chapter 5), the evaluator finds that this is a successful execution of the project expenditure within allocated budgets.

4.4   Programme level performance indicators

The tables below show the data on the performance of the CLLD programme for the two funding streams in North of Tyne against the targets agreed with Newcastle City Council and other funders.

Table 7: ERDF Activities and Target indicators

Indicator	Target approved in PCR (2022)	Number claimed	Final achievement (%)
Enterprises supported (ERDF output C1)	104	103	99%
New enterprises supported (ERDF output C5 – subset of C1)	55	32	58%
Employment increase in supported enterprises (ERDF output C8)	8	8	100%
Sq. m of buildings built or renovated (ERDF output P12)	200	283	142%
Potential entrepreneurs assisted (at least 12 hours of support) (ERDF output P11)	300	273	91%

In addition to the above outputs, the CLLD projects have also provided support to people and businesses that did not reach the required 12 hours of support.

Table 8: Additional ERDF outputs (not claimed)

	Number of participants not reported as outputs	Total number of hours support (collectively)	Comments
P11 Potential Entrepreneurs	124	236.50 hours (total)	Equivalence with 19 potential entrepreneurs supported with 12 hours.
C1 Enterprises	47	177.75 hours (total)	Equivalence with 14 additional enterprises supported with 12 hours.

Table 9: ESF Activities and Target indicators

Indicator	Targets approved in PCR (2023)	Number claimed	Target achieved (%)
No of participants of activity total, of which: (ESF output O1)	1,527	1,349	88%
Unemployed (ESF output CO01)	1,069	783	73%
Inactive (ESF output CO03)	381	434	114%
Employed (ESF output CO05)	77	132	171%
Over 50 (ESF output CO04)	290	257	89%
Ethnic minorities (ESF output CO05)	324	507	156%
Disabilities (ESF output CO16)	443	284	64%
Women (ESF output CO16)	764	779	102%

Indicator	Targets approved in PCR (2023)	Number claimed	Target achieved (%)
Participants moving into education or training	290	255	88%
Unemployed into employment (incl. self-employment upon leaving) (ESF result R1 – subset of CO01)	171	119	70%
Inactive into employment or job search upon leaving (ESF result R2 – subset of CO03)	110	32	29%
All participants	1,527	1,349	88%

4.4.1   Re-profiling

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, a no-cost re-profiling of target indicators was requested in 2021 and approved in 2022 to reflect project delivery when the project was essentially put more accurately on hold for a quarter in 2020 during the first Covid-19 lockdown. The target indicators for the ESF outputs were reduced, although these are modest given the difficult circumstances within which the project was delivered because of the lockdown. This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 5.**

4.5   Assessment of performance against targets

The indicators suggest that the programme has performed well against some targets with achievements exceeding prediction in four instances. For ESF indicators, 171% of targets has been achieved for indicator CO05 (participants who are employed), 114% for indicator CO03 (participants who are inactive), 156% of target for CO5 (participants who are ethnic minorities) and 102% of target for output CO16 (women). For ERDF indicators, 142% of target ERDF output P12 (Sqm of buildings built or renovated) has been achieved. In addition, 3 further targets where either achieved or close to achieving (90%+). For ERDF, this includes 100% of target for C8 (employment increase in supported enterprises) has been achieved, 99% of target achieved for C1 (enterprises supported), and 91% of target for P11 (potential entrepreneurs assisted).

All targets except one (ESF indicator R2, Inactive participant into employment or job search upon leaving) achieved 50% of indicators or more. Of ESF indicator R2, the achievement of 29% may reflect the longer-term nature of this target indicator and results are unlikely to happen immediately following the CLLD Programme.

The threshold for the minimum number of participants was met for both ERDF and ESF indicators (tolerance threshold of 15%).

For those indicators which the project was not able to meet, one reason may be that the target indicators were overestimated during the project design phase. This was mitigated in part by the re-profiling of some of the indicators, as described in the section above, although this was a result of changes to the project due to the impact of Covid-19. One recommendation for any future iterations of the project may be to refine target indicators based on the performance of the North of Tyne CLLD programme during the funding cycle 2014-2020. This could draw on the indicators captured within Signal and embed them within the project design in a future iteration of a similar scheme or programme.

It is important to note here that the range and level of targets set are in line with ESF and ERDF funding requirements. The relatively limited number of indicators means that the data available to judge the success of the programme, based on these performance indicators alone, is limited. This increases the reliance of the evaluation on the data collected by the individual projects. It should be noted that additional value added of the programme, particularly related to softer metrics such as increasing confidence of those seeking work, supporting those with mental health, increasing community participation, and/or promoting willingness to take action are not reflected in the current performance indicators. In addition, the performance indicators are not reported per LDS objective meaning that they cannot be used to assess progress against those specific objectives.

A review of the targets agreed in the funding application shows limited correlation between the performance indicators (which should be anticipating the achievements of the programme) and the social value achieved by the North of Tyne CLLD programme which determines overall success of the programme. Specifically, the achievements anticipated in the performance indicators would not allow the objectives, as set out in the LDS, to be achieved in full. The information that the project can provide is through additional interviews is therefore very important.

The main weakness of these indicators is that they say nothing about the nature of the benefit, only that there has been one. It may however be that such an indication is enough with more detailed data and analysis being provided at a project level, which has been provided qualitatively through interviews with key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Refine target indicators.

Softer metrics and broader indicators could be added to the list of target indicators, linked to those captured by Signal. This would reflect more accurate performance of the CLLD programme beyond the hard metrics related to e.g., numbers of enterprises and individuals supported. It would also ensure that data captured in Signal is more deeply embedded within the monitoring and evaluation of CLLD at programme level.

4.5.1 Signal indicators

As discussed in Chapter 3, the procurement of the Signal tool and establishing the Signal sub-group has brought additional benefits to the North of Tyne CLLD programme. It has allowed the CLLD Project Team and the LAG to capture and recognise the significant achievement of the programme beyond those performance monitored against ESF and ERDF targets indicators.

The projects funded by the CLLD programme identified a number of key priority indicators for their project or scheme. They asked participants on the project to complete an individual survey to provide a baseline of how they felt and the challenges they faced prior to participation. They were then asked to complete the same survey following participation on the training course or skills development offered by the CLLD-funded project.

Results were categorised using a traffic light system, where respondents were asked to select Green, Yellow, or Red to resemble their reality according to each poverty indicator.

Figure 9: SIGNAL indicators

Source: Example stoplight indicators, SIGNAL demo

Signal has proved to be an excellent fit with the CLLD approach. This is because the tool provides a nuanced reflection of complexities related to measuring relative poverty and the multi-faceted nature of measuring socio-economic indicators, as well as performance considering different baselines.

In summary, the ESF and ERDF targets can provide a part of the picture, but they are a blunt tool in measuring the real impact of socio-economic interventions, many of which are too small to be captured by ESF and ERDF indicators. ESF and ERDF are useful for providing an overall narrative for the programme and identify structural barriers, whereas Signal provides a more detailed story.

4.5.2   Feedback from the CLLD-funded projects

In the telephone survey, the organisations leading CLLD-funded projects were asked how useful they considered Signal as a tool to measure the success of their project. Many respondents (57%, or 8 out of 14) stated that they considered it to be a useful tool. The others (43%, or 6 out of 14) did not consider Signal to be useful.

Figure 10: Was Signal a useful tool for capturing project impacts?

■ Yes ■ No
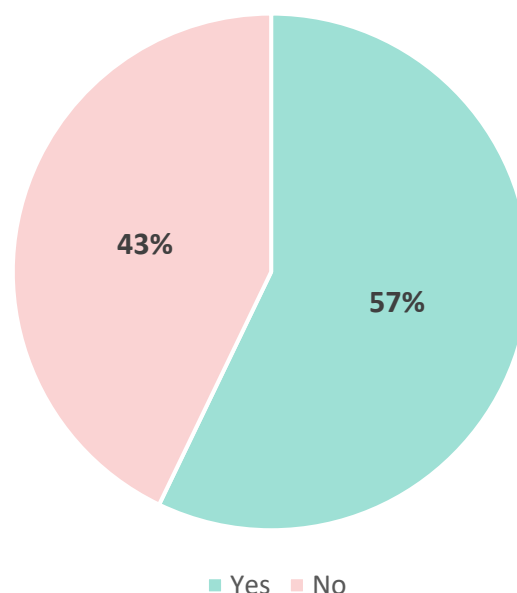
n=14

There was an overwhelming positive response to the support that the LAG Signal Working Group provided to projects on using Signal, with 88% (14 out of 16) stating that there was sufficient support and guidance provided to use the Signal tool. Only 13% (2 out of 16) said that they wanted more information and guidance on using the tool.

Figure 11: Was enough support provided on using the Signal tool?
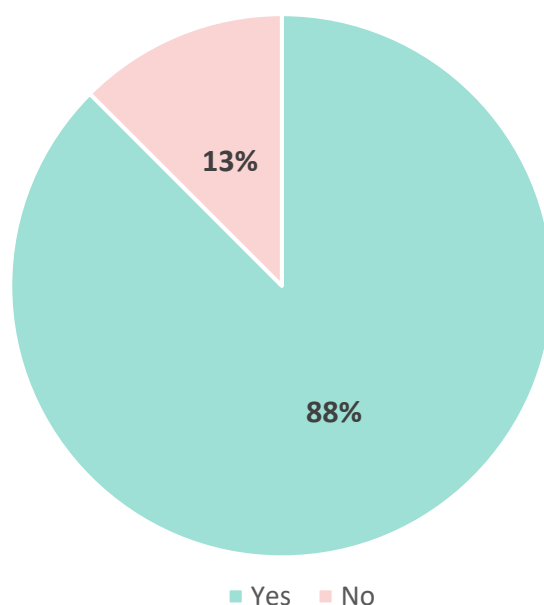
n=16

4.5.3   Other potential performance indicators

As noted in the previous section, the KPIs in place for the CLLD programme (following ERDF and ESF outputs) are output (activity) focused and narrow. The evaluation has therefore considered the potential to introduce additional indicators to provide further data on the performance of the programme in North of Tyne CLLD.

- The full utilisation of the funding available
- The stimulation of new and innovative ideas
- Capacity building 'soft' outcomes such as confidence and a willingness to take-action.
- The sustainability of projects supported by CLLD (their existence beyond the end of CLLD programme funding)
- The sharing of ideas/concepts developed via CLLD and their repetition in other projects/activities.

In including some or all these additional indicators, the performance against targets of the North of Tyne CLLD programme would be improved. During interviews with the LAG, the above elements have all been highlighted as successful examples of strategic added value of the North of Tyne programme.

As previously noted, a key challenge to the evaluation of a programme such as CLLD is that the projects and activities funded can vary substantially in both scale and scope. This makes it challenging to develop a set of common indicators that can be used across all projects, especially in respects of capturing the outcomes of activities.

Other potential generic indicators that could potentially be used however include:

- The number of organisations applying for funding to deliver a project for the first time.
- The number of those new organisations developing other or follow up project proposals (i.e. continuing their involvement in regeneration).
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they have benefited as a result of their involvement in the project funded by CLLD.
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they are more likely to get involved or continue to be involved in actions within their local community as a result of their involvement with the CLLD programme.

4.5.4   Views of the LAG

LAG members and staff were asked during interviews to comment on how the success of the CLLD programme in North of Tyne should be measured. In general it was highlighted that softer metrics, such as those suggested above for example increasing confidence and participation, would more accurately assess the success of the CLLD programme.

A good suggestion was also brought forward in that it would be worth recording and capturing the in-kind benefit provided by LAG members in terms of time and specialist knowledge. For example, LAG members provided project applicants with detailed feedback on how they could improve their application, and how to frame their project ideas in relation to the CLLD programme to support a more successful application project. The LAG also spent considerable time and effort gathering feedback from all project applicants on the application process. In response, they iteratively improved the application process to make it as accessible as possible for all applicants, regardless of the levels of experience of the applicants with developing funding proposals.

They also acknowledged the administrative burden of project reporting requirements, and spent considerable time on supporting with administrative processes to streamline monitoring and reporting requirements as much as possible. In addition, all LAG members interviewed highlighted the substantial contribution and hard work of the Newcastle City Council team in supporting the CLLD project, despite being a small team with limited resource.

> The team at Newcastle City Council have been great. It's a small team, but they've supported [the LAG] every step of the way and been extremely dedicated to CLLD.

-    LAG Member

The time dedicated to LAG work and additional support to CLLD by both LAG members and the Newcastle City Council team should also be captured in performance indicators to indicate accurately how much work and dedication has gone into achieving the target indicators and the overall impact of the CLLD.

A further common theme that emerged in discussions with LAG members on this issue was the legacy of projects, and whether they continue or evolve once the funding that has been provided by the CLLD programme has come to an end. This was considered by many LAG members to be perhaps the key indicator of the success of CLLD and is consistent with the core objective of CLLD as a mechanism for piloting new and innovative approaches to community development.

The LAG highlighted the fact that not all projects will succeed, and this is important as it is a key part of any intervention in support of new and innovative activities.

However, the logic of indicators relating to legacy for a CLLD programme might include:

- The number of projects still active 12 months post the end of the CLLD funding
- The amount of additional funding drawn into the area by the project.

4.6   Programme performance: Views from external stakeholders

4.6.1   Programme successes

Interviews with external stakeholders provided insight into how the North of Tyne CLLD Programme was conceptualised from the outside. These discussions highlighted which project successes were visible to those not involved in the day-to-day delivery of the CLLD Programme.

Proactive LAG

The proactivity of the LAG did not go unnoticed by several key external stakeholders. Two external stakeholders noted that they were impressed that the LAG members regularly went to see the projects and meet the delivery teams in their community hubs. The fact that the LAG took the time to see the projects in action contributed to their deep understanding of each of the projects and allowed the LAG to share information with each other to gain broad oversight of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme as a whole.

In addition, another external stakeholder noted that the 1:1 sessions with the projects were particularly helpful and provided important extra support for those projects who only had limited staff and volunteer teams.

Funding process support

External stakeholders noted that the support provided by the LAG in navigating the funding process was exemplary and was a key success factor for the programme. This has secured a positive legacy for the project in that many of those who applied for funding for the first time during the CLLD Programme, have built up confidence in tender writing, reflecting on the learning from their experiences with the CLLD funding application process.

At least three of the projects interviewed supported this observation by stating that following the delivery of their CLLD-funded project, they have successfully applied for and secured funding from elsewhere, for example through open tenders on the North East Procurement Organisation's Portal. In interviews, the three projects who cited this example all noted that probably they would not have been able to complete a successful funding application if they had not gone through the CLLD funding process.

Diversity of projects

The diversity of the projects delivered was highlighted as a key success of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme. This particularly refers to those projects who may not have been able to leverage funding if the CLLD Programme had not been in place, or may not have had the confidence to apply for funding themselves without additional support.

4.6.2   Strengths of the delivery model

Interviews with external stakeholders identified that the CLLD Programme has been well-received by wider stakeholders. When asked to review the CLLD delivery model, external stakeholders identified three main strengths, as outlined below.

Bottom-up mechanism

The bottom-up community-led model was articulated by all external stakeholders interviewed to be the main strength of the delivery model. This is because it was considered to be more effective at targeting support to communities, rather than a more diffuse form of top-down support where activities may lack nuance or fail to directly address the diverse needs of the local communities.

However, one external stakeholder noted that while the CLLD model worked very well, it is worth investigating other models, such as a hybrid model of community-led projects with additional top-down support. This is outlined in the Peer Review Report completed in March 2022 by representatives from three projects: North of Tyne CLLD, North Tyneside's Building Steps for Young People to a Brighter Future, and North Tyneside's Building Steps to a Brighter Future for the unemployed and inactive 50+.

The Peer Review found that the bottom-up approach was ideal for leveraging granular local knowledge and expertise and drawing on the wealth of experience of the community and voluntary sector in the relevant geographies. However, increasing the resources for the Local Authority as the Accountable Body would help draw in additional expertise when required, as well as offering additional financial stability to the project to support the longevity of the interventions.

Focal point for the sector

Interviews with the external stakeholders highlighted that the CLLD Programme has been a useful activity not only for local communities but also for drawing the community and voluntary sector, which has in recent years become increasingly fragmented and vulnerable to changes in political and external funding landscapes.

The CLLD Programme has allowed those active in their communities and the voluntary sector to coalesce around one focal point: the CLLD Programme. This has supported collaboration which contributes towards stronger networks and ultimately will help build resilience in the sector.

Scope for scale-up

The CLLD Programme has been a successful pilot project which demonstrates that the community-led model really works. By drawing on its many successes and learning from its weaknesses, the programme is well-suited to scale-up. Reflecting the findings in the Peer Review report outlined above, scale-up would require additional resource from the Local Authority and stronger support from senior levels at the Council.

Communication process

In interviews with external stakeholders, it was highlighted that the two-way communication process of between the LAG and organisations seeking funding for projects led to positive outcomes. Following the first rounds of applications LAG members noted that funded projects were struggling to meet their outcomes and illustrate project returns in order to meet reporting requirements.

This was identified early on by the LAG as a barrier to success, and the LAG recognised the need to discuss with the projects early on in the delivery process about what specific challenges they faced in delivering their projects. The LAG was then able to advise and support overcoming these challenges.

Going through this diagnostic process early on in the project lifecycle meant that solutions can be put into place, and this increases the chances of local development occurring in the long run. The two-way, open, and transparent communication right from the beginning is a major strength of the CLLD delivery model.

4.6.3   Challenges

While the external stakeholders interviewed received the North of Tyne CLLD Programme very positively and recognised the approach as much more effective at solving challenges at community level than top-down methods of delivery, they also observed some challenges related to the design and delivery context of the North of Tyne CLLD programme. These are summarised below, with recommendations provided where relevant for improvements to inform the design of future projects.

Community Representation

A challenge that was highlighted in interviews with the LAG as well as those with Newcastle City Council delivery staff and external stakeholders was the challenge of getting local residents to apply to join the LAG.

From an external stakeholder perspective, it was identified that this could lead to imbalance in the LAG where many of the LAG members were already active in the same space and knew each other to varying degrees.

While the LAG and Newcastle City Council delivery team tried to encourage members of the community to apply, the overall LAG model is not well suited to members of the community who many have other commitments. The time commitment of being a LAG member is therefore a major barrier to entry for local residents. In addition, local residents may need extra support to feel sufficiently confident to fulfil their role as an active LAG member and contribute towards the policy direction of the North of Tyne CLLD programme.

One solution to this challenge is presented in **Recommendations 1 and 2** related to creating an "associated" LAG member status, and developing an onboarding process to new LAG members.

The difficulty in attracting (and then retaining) residents to apply to join the LAG is not a unique challenge to the North of Tyne CLLD Programme nor the CLLD model as a whole; facilitating community participation is a key challenge of many types of bottom-up community development models. If the CLLD model is to be utilised in future as a mode of delivery for community development in the North of Tyne area, facilitating local community representation will require a focussed strategy and approach. There are Community Engagement Toolkits available to provide best practice examples of how this can be done, for example Community Places produced a Community Planning Toolkit (available here) and the EU has produced a Societal Engagement Toolkit for involving citizens to participate in co-creating development strategies for their cities (available here).

RECOMMENDATION #7:	Develop a focused community participation strategy.
	Draw on existing toolkits and identify case studies of best practice to inform the development of a community participation strategy. This should focus on ensuring that residents are engaged in decision-making activities and Local Action Groups for any future bottom-up community development programmes in the North of Tyne area.

Misconceptions of the CLLD Programme ethos

In stakeholder interviews with members of Newcastle City Council but who were not involved in the delivery of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme noted that there a sense of misunderstanding of the ethos and unique features of the CLLD delivery model. This was attributed to the fact that the CLLD Programme was different to other social intervention schemes implemented by the local authorities to date. In particular, the bottom-up nature was a new experience and as such, some of the wider and members in the local authority initially struggled with the delegation of responsibilities to community organisations and the voluntary sector.

This led to a degree of tension between the Council's usual modes of delivery and processes, and those implemented by the LAG in line with the CLLD Programme design. Analysis of the feedback pinpoints an initial lack of trust in the LAG to deliver the CLLD Programme aims without top-down guidance from the Council. This was due to a cultural response to risk in local authorities, who operate within tight budgetary constraints and are held accountable by central government and Council members.

One solution to overcome this challenge could be organising a training event or awareness raising event about the CLLD Programme and its historical roots, as well as presenting best practice case studies from the UK and EU member states to illustrate that there is historical evidence that the CLLD approach works.

This could draw on theoretical approaches outlined in the European Commission's CLLD/LEADER Toolkit (available here), as well as practical considerations for local authorities. This could support development of the bottom-up approaches, and transfer knowledge to the wider Council teams to illustrate that the programme is part of a well-established international programme.

RECOMMENDATION #8:	Hold an awareness raising event on CLLD approaches for the local authority.
	Present best practice examples on CLLD and provide practical guidance for teams in the local authority, including procurement, IT, Council members, employment, housing, and others who may not directly encounter CLLD but should be aware of the programme and its ethos. This would highlight the advantages of innovative delivery models and help secure political support for community-led local development activities.

Inflexible procurement

Linked to the above challenge, external stakeholders noted that inflexible procurement systems within the Council posed a challenge for the LAG and the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team in implementing the project. This was particularly relevant in the early call for projects application rounds.

As outlined in Recommendation 7, an awareness raising event, with a workshop specifically focused at procurement teams in the wider Councils would perhaps provide a solution to this issue and highlight that piloting more experimental modes of project delivery requires more flexibility than business-as-usual approaches.

Long-term nature

The objectives of CLLD cannot be realised overnight; the delivery model requires a long-term approach. In addition, the LAG requires a "bedding-in" period of at least a year to get to know each other, develop methods of collaboration and work out a strategic policy direction. Securing trust of the wider local authority, particularly at senior/director level, as well as both the community and voluntary sector within the North of Tyne area and the local communities themselves requires time.

External stakeholders noted that while the five-year timeframe of the programme worked well as an initial pilot of a new way of working, any future community-led local development programmes could span an even longer period of a decade. This should include a formal process of 1-2 years for project implementation, and reviews at 5, 7, and 10 years to identify emerging longer-term trends and project impacts.

> "[…I] do think when you're working with different organisations, it takes time to get a sufficient amount of applications in. It takes time to build up that publicity and time to make the application process as streamlined as possible – which is why I think in the beginning there wasn't much uptake."

External stakeholder

Reporting requirements

In interviews with external stakeholders, it was noted that the reporting requirements related to quantitative outputs overshadowed the true value of community-led development programmes. These were in line with the ESF and ERDF reporting requirements, and it was noted that the emphasis on collecting quantitative outputs related to, for example, jobs created, and number of people supported detracted from the opportunity to understand the wider project impacts.

This was echoed in interviews with both the LAG and the supported projects, as well as the Newcastle City Council CLLD delivery team who had overall responsibility for monitoring project outputs and performance targets. In future schemes, the programme should be designed in such a way to allow for flexibility of project targets, with more focus on qualitative impacts rather than quantitative outputs.

External threats to the sector

External stakeholders from the Community and Voluntary Sector and from regional and local administration noted that in the wake of Covid-19, Brexit, and external factors due to global instability, war in Ukraine, and consequent impacts on energy prices and disruption to supply chains have created the most challenging circumstances in decades for those working directly with local communities. Pressures on budgets for the Community and Voluntary Sector and a lack of clear and timely policy direction from Central Government in transitioning out of the European Structural Funds has had an adverse impact on the sector as a whole, and by extension the communities they operate within.

While there is no immediate solution to this challenging environment, the evaluation notes that the North of Tyne CLLD Programme has been delivered during a particularly demanding period of time and the fact that such a successful programme has been delivered by the LAG in face of a range of external and unforeseen challenges must be recognised by the local authorities in the North of Tyne area.

Potential conflicts of interest

In interviews with both some partners delivering CLLD funded projects and some external stakeholders, the question was raised as to whether there was a potential conflict of interest arising from some of the LAG members also receiving CLLD funding for delivering projects.

The EU Commission's Leader Toolkit (pg. 8) confirms that this is a relatively common situation in CLLD Programmes and is not an issue where robust processes are implemented to avoid direct conflicts of interest. Evaluation of North of Tyne CLLD Programme's Monitoring Data and Management Information clearly identifies that processes are in place to mitigate for conflicts of interest. As such, LAG members who applied for CLLD funding are not allowed to assess their own funding applications and must follow the same call for projects application process as any other partners seeking funding. The Evaluation confirms that this process was followed rigorously, and no conflict of interest is found.

However, to reassure project partners seeking funding but who are not members of the LAG, one solution which has been implemented in other CLLD Programmes across Europe is the formation of an Executive Committee. Membership of the Board may function as a sub-group of the LAG, meeting on an annual basis and constituting of a 4-6 LAG members. While it would be the remit of individual LAGs to develop a constitution for such a Board, it may be that nominating only those LAG members whose organisations do not receive CLLD funding would allay any concerns about conflicts of interest. The Executive Committee would then provide an additional level of strategic oversight, financial and legal functions and scrutiny.

More support at senior level

Those external stakeholders who had interacted with the LAG recognised that the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team provided excellent support and were instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the programme. They provided a strong foundation to support the LAG's activities, which was echoed in interviews with LAG members.

However, as summarised in the reference to the Peer Review Report in the section above, to ensure buy-in from key stakeholders in the Council and protect the legacy of the project, there needs to be additional support from senior members of staff at the Council, especially at Director level. This would ensure that the CLLD Programme remains closely aligned to the priorities of the Council at strategic level. Furthermore, at delivery/operational level the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team was small in relation to the size of the task at hand. Additional staff dedicated to the role at officer level would be a requirement should the programme be repeated, and particularly if it were to be scaled-up and extended over a longer duration.

4.7   Summary

The programme level performance indicators in line with ERDF and ESF which are collected to monitor the implementation of the CLLD programme in North of Tyne provide only a small part of evidence of what the programme has achieved. The LAG and the CLLD Project Team recognised this and adopted the Signal tool to capture the broad range of additional indicators that provide a fuller picture of what is being achieved.

Project evaluation forms will also have a crucial role in terms of demonstrating what has been achieved upon completion of the North of Tyne CLLD programme, as well as capturing lessons learnt at a project level.

Sharing of learning is also a key element of the CLLD programme. It may therefore be valuable to capture indicators of activities relating to that process as part of any set of 'legacy' indicators.

Overall, external stakeholders considered the North of Tyne CLLD Programme to have performed very well in relation to the resources available. The commitment and activities driven by the LAG and supported by the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team were considered to have been key success factors to the performance of the programme as a whole. They identified some additional areas where performance could be improved further for future iterations of community-led programmes contributing to local development, in particular actions for the local authority to take in terms of securing further support at senior levels in the Council and additional resources at officer level for delivery of future interventions.

5. Value for Money

Chapter Summary

- The North of Tyne CLLD Programme has made the most of available budget and resource and successfully delivered an ambitious programme with relatively little resource. The achievements of the programme outweigh the allocated resource, particularly in terms of project team staffing.

- Qualitative findings examine how the programme has contributed to improved social capital, improved governance, and enhanced results. However, any monetary value of these factors will only become apparent in the longer-term.

- Beyond the lifecycle of the programme, a value-for-money assessment could be conducted to understand programme legacy and any longer-term impacts in, for example, 18 months from programme end.

5.1 Value for Money analysis

Value for money is a judgement as to the optimal use of public resources to achieve stated objectives, as outlined in HM Treasury's Green Book[24]. Assessing the value for money of CLLD is challenging. There is an argument that its value for money should not be seen in isolation, but rather should be understood and assessed as part of the wider strategy for North of Tyne. The CLLD approach seeks to encourage community-led actions at local level to tackle complex and multifaceted challenges related to local development and resilience. Furthermore, projects successfully piloted by CLLD could then be funded on a larger scale in future or provided with support to unlock future funding.

Undertaking any kind of cost–benefit analysis for CLLD is also challenging due to the broad range of activities funded and/or undertaken and it is therefore difficult to make a like-for-like comparison. This leads to a lack of consistency in terms of 'benefit' (outcomes), which makes it difficult to draw robust conclusions. The need to consider the outcomes of projects funded over the longer term also needs to be considered. In terms of cost-effectiveness, calculations such as the cost per LAG or by project are possible, but comparing those figures to those of other CLLD schemes or programmes is challenging due to the unique nature of each scheme and the local community in which it seeks to benefit.

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[24] The Green Book, HM Treasury, v2 2022, p. 52

5.1.1 Quantitative analysis

If we use the achievement of 31 pilot projects to be implemented as the primary output of the CLLD programme, which has an investment value of £1.75m, this represents an average cost of £56,405 per project.

Of the total £1.75m, ESF represents an investment total and the average cost per project is £56,174. The corresponding figure for ERDF (revenue and capital total) is £57,068.

These figures do not however consider the outcomes of the process of delivering CLLD, which is important when considering the added value of the approach. Whilst quantifying the benefit is difficult, CLLD is an approach that generates multiple outcomes because of the way in which it is delivered and also via the activities that it funds.

> **RECOMMENDATION #9:** **Value-for-Money assessment.**
> A robust value for money assessment could be conducted in the future to understand the cost effectiveness of the programme and therefore informing legacy provision. This should reflect the in-kind contribution of LAG members, for example a calculation of cost per time contributed.

5.1.2 Qualitative findings

The guidance on the added value of CLLD (as produced by the EC) describes the 'components' of the approach as being 'intimately intertwined' and forming 'an inseparable whole'. This essentially states that the added value of the scheme is generated by the implementation of the approach *as a whole* and treated as a model cannot be replicated by the implementation of individual elements of the approach.

This was echoed in interviews with the LAG who stated that it is difficult to pinpoint one specific thing that the CLLD approach does well; rather the key benefit of CLLD is the entire delivery model and the bottom-up way in which it is implemented. This is important because there are examples in North East England of other schemes and projects that might implement elements of the CLLD approach (particularly in terms of community engagement), but not the approach as a whole, which is key. As such, CLLD is a specific model for local development and should not be considered merely "a programme" or a "scheme."

CLLD adds value through:

- improved social capital,
- improved governance, and
- enhanced results (better projects).

The evaluation has found evidence of each of these outcomes being generated by the North of Tyne CLLD programme. Each of these elements are discussed in further detail in **Chapter 6**.

It is important to note that the impact of the individual projects and the programme is, however, always local and relatively small-scale. Larger-scale projects, such as improving infrastructure or running long-term training programmes is not the role of CLLD.

RECOMMENDATION #10:	Use CLLD as a model for future delivery.
	The North of Tyne CLLD programme demonstrates that a holistic approach to community-led development works well and creates direct impacts for the local communities in which CLLD operates. This model should be seen as an approach for tackling poverty and developing community resilience and cohesion more broadly, and not as a standalone programme or scheme. CLLD should be considered as a mechanism for developing regional and local strategic priorities in Newcastle and North Tyneside. The CLLD approach, however, should be delivered "in its entirety" and not diluted. This would require a commitment to the provision of long-term funding to the LAG to deliver CLLD activities.

6. Impacts and outcomes

Chapter Summary

- One of the main outcomes of the programme has been its contribution to enhanced social capital in the North of Tyne CLLD area.

- The LAG has been instrumental in developing a narrative to provide visibility to the voluntary and community sector in the North of Tyne area, which has helped formulate a network and increased cohesion in the sector. Projects have supported each other and developed joint initiatives as a direct result of their participation in the programme.

- The CLLD approach contributed value in providing evidence of a working model for a bottom-up, community-led approach. The holistic nature of the CLLD model and the success in achieving real impacts at local community level should provide a blueprint for designing future interventions.

- The programme highlights the necessity of a community-centric approach and the need for engagement with individual local community members for jobs, skills, and employability initiatives to be successful.

- The Cross-cutting themes of Improved Equality and Sustainability have been robustly monitored and evaluated by the CLLD Project Team throughout the programme. Case studies attached in Appendix 6 highlight that projects have kept these themes at heart when delivering their projects.

Assessing the added value of the programme is a key part of the CLLD evaluation. The EU has guidelines on how this should be measured using the CLLD approach.[25] Specifically, the approach is expected to add value at the local level by:

1. **Implementation of the LDS:** How the LDS has been operationalised in the form of projects, and what have been the results and impacts they have produced.
2. **The LAG Delivery mechanism**: What were the rules, procedures, management and governance arrangements, which ensure the strategy is translated into actions on the ground.
3. **Capacity building support/animation:** Support provided to encourage and enable beneficiaries (i.e., activities aiming to raise awareness, readiness, cooperation, and networking capabilities of local people to contribute to developing their area).

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[25] Guidelines Evaluation of Leader/CLLD, European Rural Helpdesk August 2017,

Figure 12: Capturing Added Value of CLLD
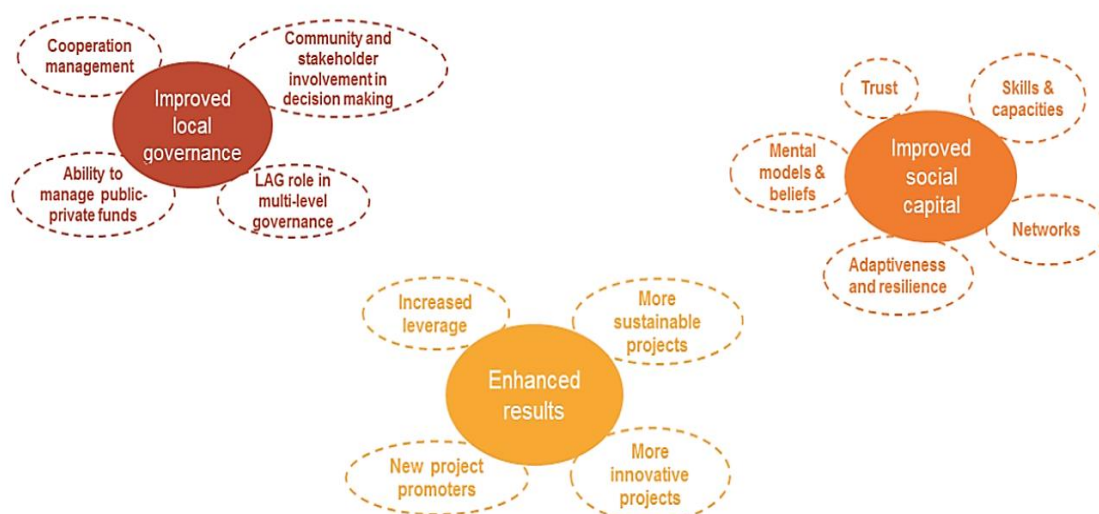
Source: European Rural Helpdesk

The North of Tyne CLLD programme has successfully increased the understanding of the value and impact that different sectors have within the local economy. In turn, this has led to improved decision-making. The CLLD approach has also provided a framework for encouraging local people (for example, by encouraging residents to apply to join the LAG) to become involved in decision-making, of the nature that would typically be conceived by local communities as happening in Council buildings "behind closed doors."

6.1   Views from projects: Review of CLLD programme

While the target indicators are good measure of how the projects were performing at programme-level, the challenge CLLD seeks to address is bridging the gap between policy at institutional level and the challenges faced by local communities by leveraging assets from the community by taking a bottom-up approach. The success of the North of Tyne CLLD projects in facilitating this bottom-up approach within the CLLD framework is where the significant value of the approach has been realised.

A telephone survey was conducted with the projects to discuss how the CLLD programme has supported the aims and ambitions of their organisation, and the impact the support has had on the local communities in which they operate. In total, 19 of the organisations leading projects responded to the telephone survey out of a total of 27 organisations covering all 31 CLLD-funded projects who were invited to participate. This included two projects funded under ERDF capital funding, 15 projects under ESF and two under ERDF revenue.

Most of the organisations receiving CLLD funding are engaged with activities related to primarily employment and skills (71%, or 10/14 respondents). Around a third (29% or 4/14) are primarily engaged in health and wellbeing, and the smallest group (14% or 2/14) were primarily involved in arts.

Figure 13: Primary activities of organisations receiving CLLD support

■ Skills/education charity   ■ Health/wellbeing charity   ■ Arts charity
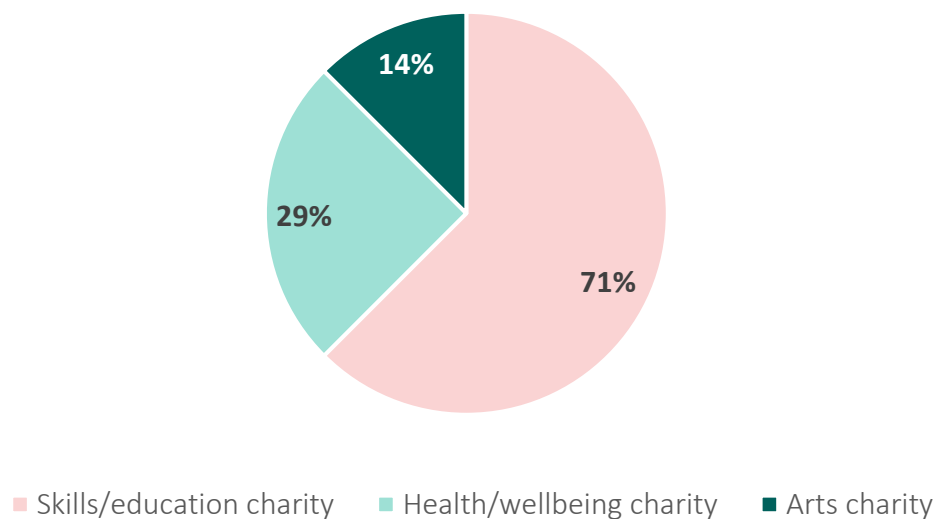
n = 14

Of the projects funded by CLLD, most of these were involved with employment and skills support (68%, or 14/19). The second focus of the projects was on business support (21%, or 4/19). The remaining projects were split equally between digital skills support and mental health support (2/19 for each, or 11%).

Figure 14: Primary activities of the CLLD-funded projects
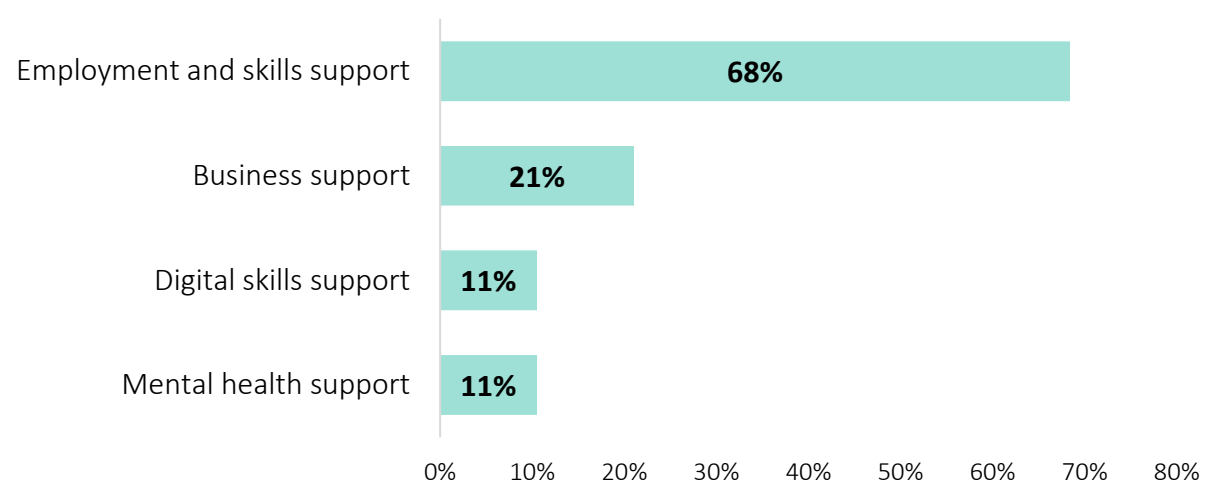
n = 19

The telephone survey results from the project beneficiaries indicated that the support offered by the LAG was aligned to the needs of organisations working with the communities, whereby 57% of those responding to the question stated it was very useful (8/14), and a further 36% stated that it was somewhat useful (5/14). None of the respondents stated that the supported offered by the LAG was not useful to their organisation.

Figure 15: Extent to which support offered by the LAG was useful to the project organisations.
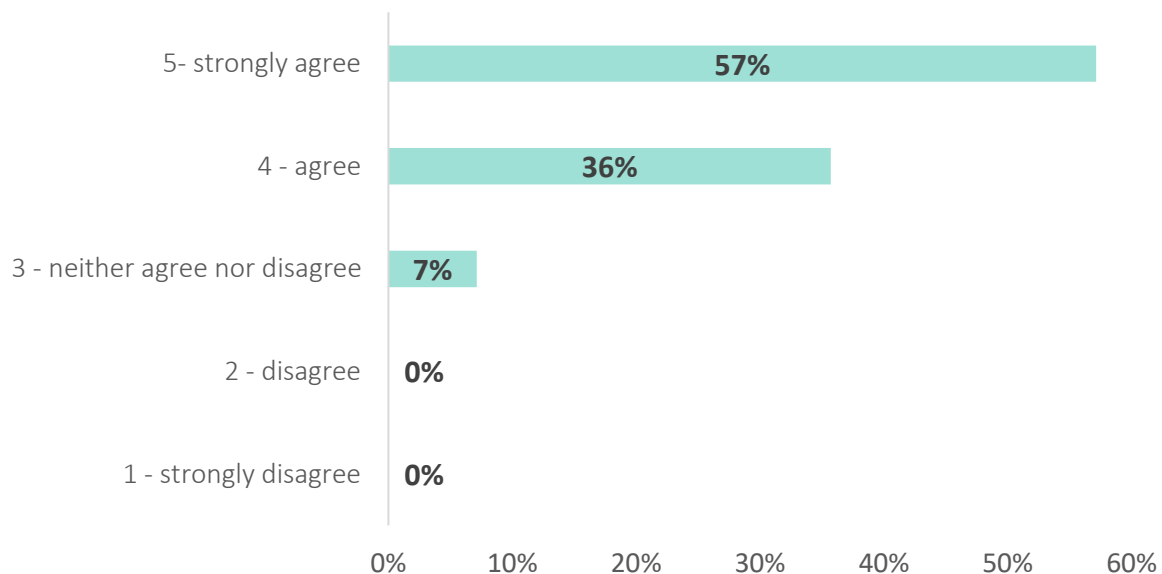
n = 14

Following funding, the nature of support offered to the project has been general advice and guidance from the LAG (75% or 9/12). Feedback on issues and challenges was important to a quarter of respondents (25% or 3/12). Advice on Signal and financial matters were important to 17% of respondents equally (2/12 for each).

Figure 16: Nature of advice offered by the LAG to projects following funding.
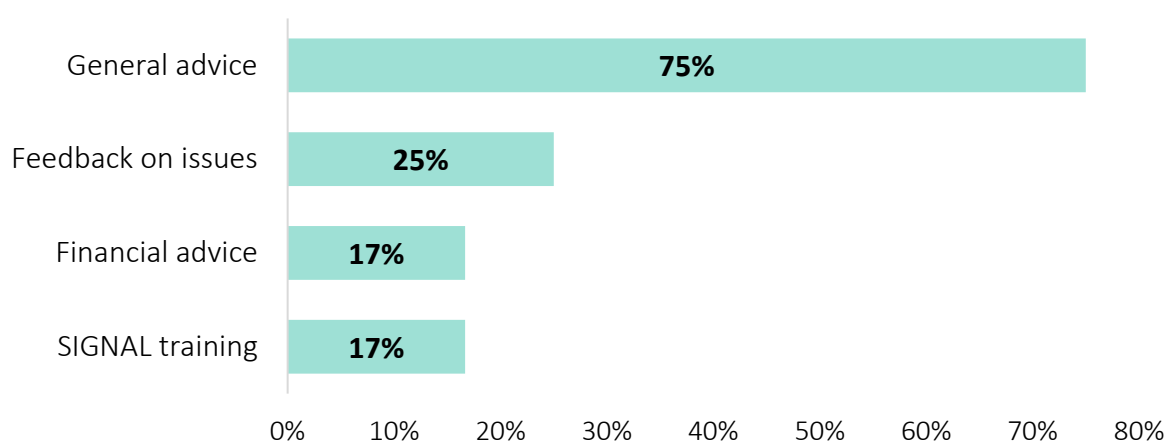
n = 12

The projects surveyed were highly satisfied with the support overall, with 79% (11/14) stating the support was very useful. Only 14% (2/14) stated that the support was not useful.

Figure 17: How useful the projects found the support provided by the LAG.
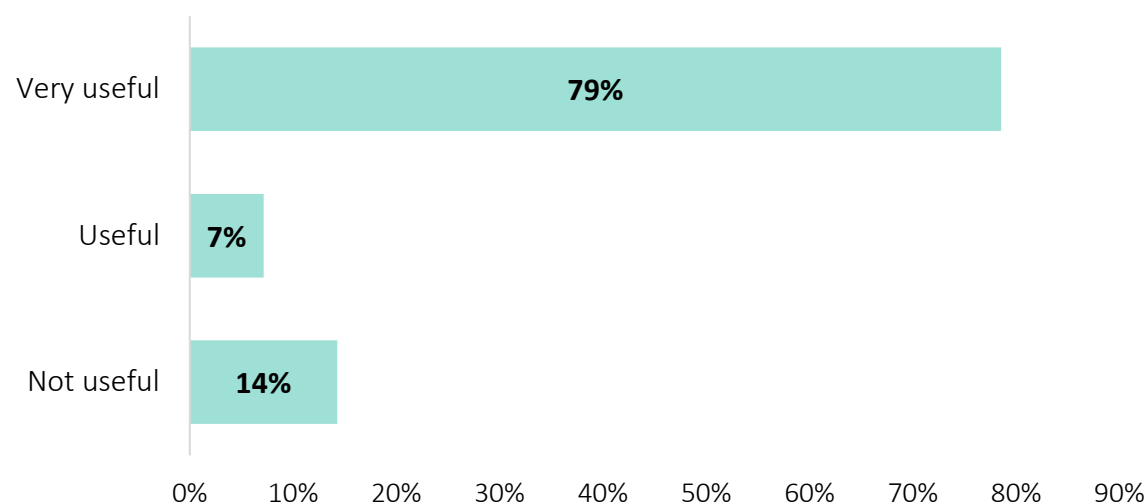
n = 14

In terms of impact, most of the projects surveyed noted that the most positive result was impact on individual project participants (72%, or 13/18). Three of the projects (17%) stated that their participation in the CLLD programme led to the establishment of a charity within their local community, and one participant noted that they exceeded their project targets (6%). 17% (3/18) noted that participation in the CLLD programme have lacked tangible achievements.

Figure 18: Impact of projects
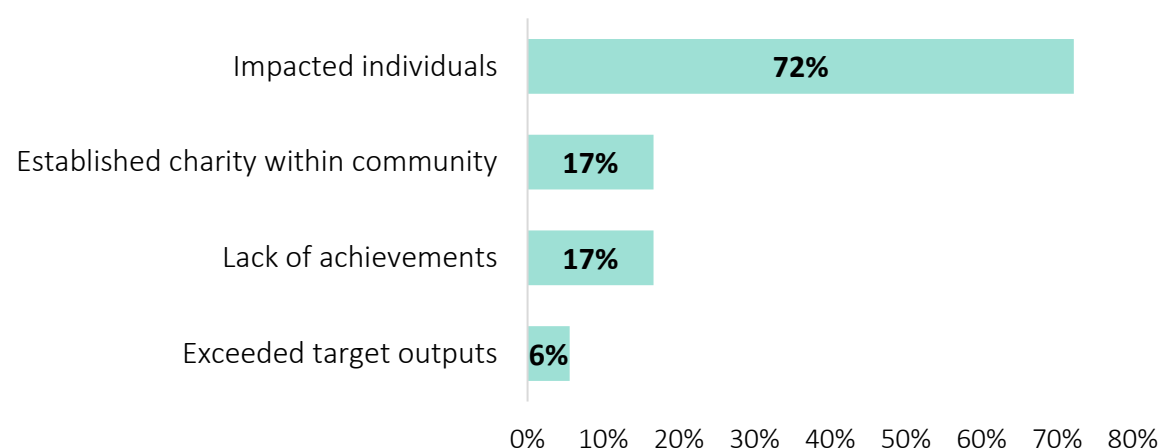
n = 18

The largest share of respondents noted that the impact of their CLLD-funded project was greater than anticipated (44%, or 8/18). 33% (6/18) noted that it was less than anticipated, and the remainder (22%, or 4/18) stated that the impact of their project was as expected.

Figure 19: Impact of projects according to initial expectations
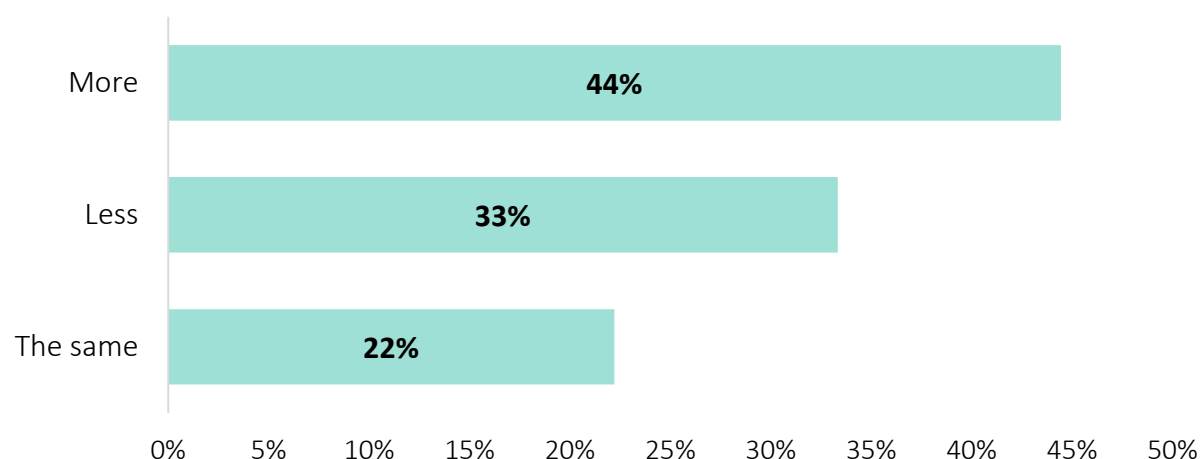
n = 18

6.2   Impacts on project participants

The 31 projects supported by CLLD (23 under ESF and 6 revenue projects under ERDF; 2 ERDF capital project did not have targets for the number of individuals supported) combined supported a total of **1,505 individuals** across 18 wards in Newcastle and North Tyneside (17 and 1 respectively). The number of project participants per ward supported by ERDF and ESF projects combined are illustrated in Table 11 below.

Table 10: ERDF/ESF Participants per ward

Company District	No of ERDF/ESF participants	Ward population
Arthur's Hill	119	14,505
Benwell & Scotswood	99	13,759
Blakelaw	76	11,186
Byker	191	12,038
Callerton & Throckley	35	9.447
Denton & Westerhope	28	12,169
Elswick	271	16,118
Fawdon & West Gosforth	34	10,595
Kenton	75	11,605
Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall	62	10,209

Company District	No of ERDF/ESF participants	Ward population
Lemington	27	10,228
Monument	55	9,685
Ouseburn	62	8,699
Walker	167	11,701
Walkergate	49	12,403
Wallsend	17	10,304
West Fenham	66	10,646
Wingrove	72	12,773
Total	1,505	

Source: *Newcastle City Council Monitoring Data and 2021 Census data, ONS*

The spread of individual project participants for ERDF projects (i.e., potential entrepreneurs) and the location of CLLD-supported enterprise is shown in **Appendix 4.** This clearly illustrates the link between the location of the supported enterprises and the individual participants who benefited from the CLLD-funded projects. This provides visual representation of local development targeted at those specific communities in which the community and voluntary sector enterprises are located and is clear evidence of the community-led ethos of the programme.

The figures below and over page show how many participants were supported per project. It is important to note that this should not be used as an indication of the success of each project; instead it shows the variation in scale of each of the projects. Signal data, as outlined below, provides a better analysis of project impact, as it is not possible to compare quantitative outputs given the diverse nature of the projects: some, such as PROPS acted as a point of referral to direct individual participants to relevant programmes. Others, such as The Twisting Ducks Theatre Company, were of a small-scale and working with a specific target group of people with disabilities, and similarly FIRST were working with young people seeking to learn new skills in a specific sector.

Figure 20: Number of participants supported per ESF Project

Project	Participants
Twisting Ducks Theatre Company	7
Skill Mill	9
Sunderland Software City	11
PROPS	12
Tyne Housing Association	12
Cygnet North East	13
First Step North East	15
Children North East	16
Scotswood Natural Community Garden	18
FIRST	22
St Martin's Centre Partnership	22
Pottery Bank Community Centre	37
Sport Works	44
Gateshead College	45
Earth Doctors	57
The Chinese Learning Centre	86
Riverside Community Health Project	92
The Millin Charity	101
Building Futures East "Stitch Sisters"	114
The Recruitment Junction	125
Building Futures East "BEaT"	155
Northern Learning Trust	190
Reviving the Heart of the West End	284

Source: Newcastle City Council Monitoring Data

Figure 21: Number of participants and enterprises supported, ERDF

Number supported

■ Total ■ Number of Enterprises supported ■ Number of Potential Entrepreneurs supported
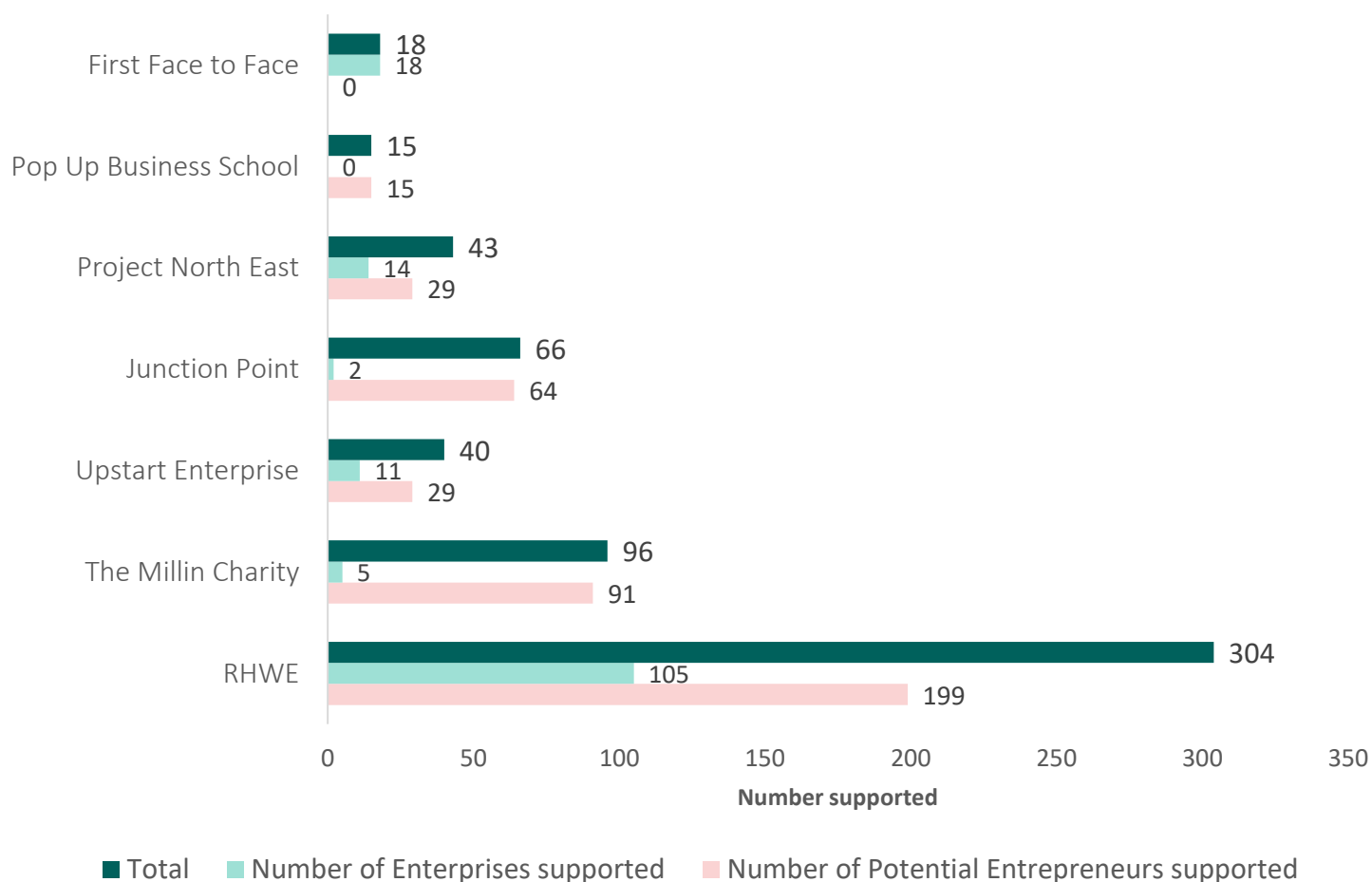
Source: Newcastle City Council Monitoring Data

The Newcastle City Council team had a robust system in place using Evolutive for collecting and monitoring data related to project participants, that recorded individuals who were directly engaged with and benefited from the CLLD-funded project activities. This provides some insight into where the impacts of the projects were targeted at a high level. For a more nuanced insight into project impacts on individual participants, Signal provides a detailed and rich dataset on key areas which improved as a direct result of the projects.

Figure 22: Breakdown of participants by category (ESF)
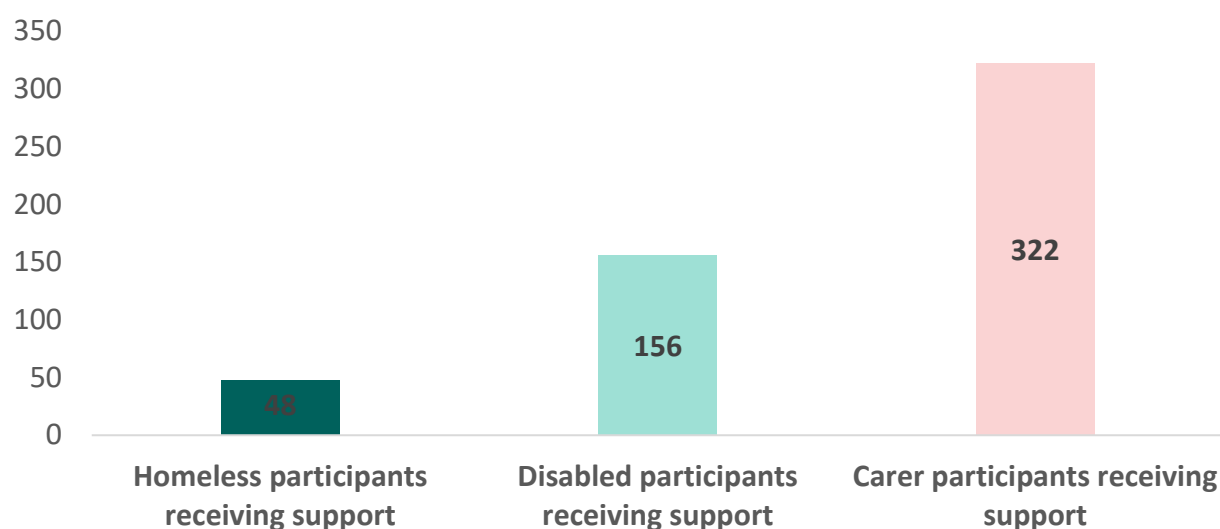
Source: Newcastle City Council Monitoring Data

Figure 23: Number of participants receiving support by category (ERDF)
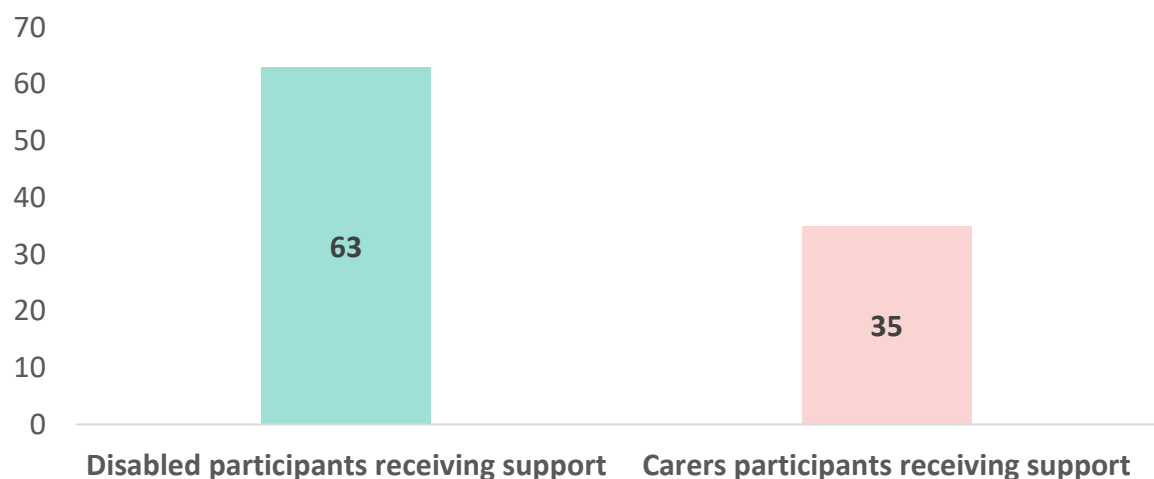
Source: Newcastle City Council Monitoring Data

This demonstrates where the projects add value to local development which would not have otherwise been realised without the support of the CLLD Programme, in other words provides a strong evidence base that the funding was used to support innovative and effective interventions, rather than simply supporting deadweight, i.e. outcomes that would be realised regardless of the CLLD Programme due to other external factors.

An overview of Signal is provided in Chapter 4, Section 4.5. The case studies in Appendix 6 illustrate how the tool was used to capture tangible programme outcomes.

6.3   Project Impacts: Views from external stakeholders

The external stakeholders were asked in interviews what they considered to be the main impacts of the projects that were delivered by the CLLD Programme. While they were unable to talk about impacts of specific projects, the external stakeholders offered a valuable high-level overview of this, as follows below.

Building resilience in the sector

External stakeholders highlighted that having different organisations working together in the voluntary and community sector because of the LAG was a very positive result of the CLLD Programme. This shows that the CLLD Programme is already beginning to make a positive impact on the sector: there are organisations who as a result of the CLLD Programme are now working together independently from CLLD. As such, the CLLD Programme has acted as an important catalyst for strengthening networks of community and voluntary organisations across the North of Tyne area.

Added value for the Council

External stakeholders from the two local authorities in the North of Tyne area noted that the programme has provided added value for the Councils in that the CLLD Programme has acted as a conduit between the Councils and the local communities. The LAG has provided knowledge, expertise, and access to highly local-specific data which the Council would otherwise not have access to. Through LAG activities and the CLLD Programme as a whole, this local-specific knowledge has been translated into useful insights which should be used to inform future interventions.

> "Having a LAG means we can learn from different organisations and communities about the real issues on the ground and issues within the LAG area."

External stakeholder

Contribution to local development

Addressing the needs of communities was understood by key stakeholders as a fundamental element of sustainable local development. The partnership working facilitated by the CLLD Programme helped put the needs of local communities at the forefront, particularly in the devolvement of targeted funding directly to local communities.

> "When people/communities are consulted and are able to have ownership of their own development, local development is likely to be more sustainable and of good quality."

Working model for future regional programmes

External stakeholders noted that at national-level, there are many changes to the funding landscape ongoing and yet there is little clarity around the role of regional governance and how budgetary responsibilities for local-level regeneration will be managed in the post-Brexit era.

External stakeholders from the local authorities noted that community-led regeneration should be the definitive model for delivering meaningful and targeted levelling up, and the CLLD Programme delivery model is a working example of how effective such a model can be. One external stakeholder highlighted that the North of Tyne CLLD Programme should be used as an "inspiration" to further inform this discourse.

6.4   Review of programme outcomes

The impacts of the projects together inform the overall CLLD Programme outcomes. The following section illustrates the critical mass of the outcomes and impacts of the projects within the CLLD programme beyond the target indicators as defined within the framework of ERDF and ESF. This provides perspectives on how the programme has or will in future influence change in local communities.

6.4.1   Improved social capital

EC guidance anticipates that improvements in social capital will be achieved by triggering the behavioural change of key actors and/or the population at large. These behavioural changes could relate to:

- Improved motivation and self-esteem to engage in a behaviour.
- Abilities and capacities of individuals and groups (trust, cooperation and networks).
- New opportunities (i.e., access to resources and social support, skills, knowledge, and advice).

Feedback from the LAG interviews evidenced several examples of improved social capital through the North of Tyne CLLD programme. It is important to note that while the programme, at time of writing, has not met some of the ERDF and ESF indicators, this not a reflection of the overall performance of the programme. Much of the value of the CLLD approach has in fact been through improved social capital. In other words, in evaluating the CLLD Programme it is necessary to examine the delivery approach and process, rather than assessing performance against target indicators in isolation.

6.4.1..1 Increased trust

Interviews with the LAG and CLLD Project Team illustrate how trust both between (1) LAG members; (2) LAG members and the CLLD Project Team; (3) CLLD Programme and external stakeholders have evolved over the six-year duration of the delivery.

One example given was the way in which LAG members worked together to develop a common narrative for the programme. This strengthened the role of the LAG and secured its place in the institutional landscape of community development across Newcastle. The LAG members formed a single voice in an environment of political change and competing institutional and policy interests in the wider context in which the CLLD programme was delivered.

This example illustrates a change of behaviour leading to improved development and support for local projects.

> The LAG has been one of the key features of the North of Tyne CLLD programme. They have developed as a group, gelled very well together, and been consistent along the way [...A]t first they were nervous about how [their role in the LAG] would be received by their sector, but gradually they became more confident in their role. It took a bit of time to create trust [with CLLD Project Team], but at the end of it they were offering support in their own capacity and helping organisations find suitable funding. It was great to see the group develop over time.

CLLD Project Team Member

6.4.1..2 Enhanced participation

The consistently and sustained high level of attendance in the LAG meetings, as well as participation in the meetings from external stakeholders (such as attendance from council members) illustrates an enhanced participation of stakeholders in the design and implementation of CLLD. This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 3.**

6.4.1..3 Effective communication

The LAG members highlighted how communication between stakeholders improved throughout delivery of the CLLD Programme. Beyond the monthly LAG meetings, the group regularly interacted with each other and shared updates, and the CLLD Project Team facilitated updates and shared information broadly across the group between monthly meetings. The procurement of Signal and establishing a Signal working group supported improved communication with projects.

In addition, the iterative improvements made to the project application process reflecting in an evolving approach to each call for applications demonstrates a willingness to learn from feedback provided by project applicants and participants. Further, it also shows how the CLLD Project Team, and the LAG acted on this feedback. The result was an increase in cooperative activities and developing further trust between the LAG and the supported projects.

6.4.1..4 Enhanced capacity

The LAG and stakeholders involved in CLLD implementation demonstrated enhanced capacity to deliver by improving their knowledge and skills throughout the implementation of the programme. In interviews, LAG members were unanimous in summarising their experience as a LAG member as highly beneficial in terms of personal development and expanding their knowledge of their communities. While many of the LAG members already had a deep knowledge of the communities in which they operate, bringing together members from various parts of Newcastle and North Tyneside supported intimate knowledge of the wider community across the West and East of the city as well as Wallsend.

This reflects the role of the LAG meetings as a forum in which to share knowledge with the wider group. The CLLD Project Team added value by anchoring the programme to a wider institutional context, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation on a continual basis and sharing their findings across the group.

6.4.2   Improved governance

Improved local governance may be expressed by:

- the readiness to broaden the decision-making processes by including wider parts of the communities and more stakeholders, respecting social, geographical, institutional and gender balance.
- the ability and capacity to accept shared leadership of the area.
- the capacity to manage funds from various public and private sources.
- strengthening the capacity to build partnerships and cooperative management, and an active role in shaping multi-level governance.

Following interviews with the LAG, improvements to governance identified are summarised below.

6.4.2..1 Improved decision-making

The decision-making processes at the LAG were taken on a consensus basis, which is evidenced in increased collaborative working across sectors delivering projects at the local level. The wide range and scale of supported projects is a result of this improved collaboration.

The LAG membership included membership of Councillors from Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council. This provided some continuity with the policy and institutional priorities of the Councils, and at times offered a counterbalance or a "critical friend" approach. While LAG members reflected that the relationship with the local authorities was not always straightforward, they concluded that the link between LAG membership and the Councils ensured that the LAG priorities remained consistent with the wider national, regional and local policy contexts.

The North of Tyne CLLD Programme was also shaped by consultation with external stakeholders, for example North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE), and further education colleges.

This both helped raise the profile of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme and ensured continuity with area-wide policy priorities. The links with Newcastle College also supported the CLLD Project Team to leverage a further source of match funding, as identified in **Chapter 2.**

6.4.2..2 Enhanced networks

The enhanced strategic planning the LAG and the CLLD Project Team to deliver the programme encouraged those involved to consider issues from different perspectives. The LAG provided a forum to steer projects outside of day-to-day working practices, and the cross-sectoral nature of the approach provided a framework for breaking down barriers.

The LAG members who were interviewed reflected that a key success of the overall programme was showing project participants that they are part of a much wider network or project ecosystem. This increased motivation to deliver their initiatives and develop new ideas at community level. In addition, the projects supported each other, and shared learning as they went. This was supported by networking events for project leads to interact with each other and share lessons learned from delivery projects in their local communities. Examples of this include several Signal workshops, most recently in December 2022 where project leads were encouraged to create and share a storyboard of their project and its impact on participants.

> One of the main benefits of CLLD has been that projects realise they sit within a wider network, and can support each other. The LAG has helped consolidate an ecosystem that was in effect already there. Even tiny organisations realise that they are part of something bigger, and [CLLD] means a lot more when you talk about it in its entirety.
>
> The LAG has been really proactive in showing people that they are part of something bigger, and acknowledging that they are out there. Small organisations have always had to seek validation and show their existence, but they've not had to do that with the LAG. The LAG has helped them flourish within CLLD.

-   **LAG Members**

6.4.2..3 Piloting new ways of working

The key benefit of the CLLD approach has been delivering a model of working that is innovative and has not been trialled before in the North of Tyne CLLD area at this scale. The North of Tyne CLLD programme has illustrated that community-led projects can and do work, and indeed are more effective at creating real impact for people living in the most deprived wards of the city. The programme has created far more trust and developed deeper relationships between community organisations leading projects and their participants than other employability schemes, for example the DWP's Employability Programme.

Feedback from project leads as well as the LAG indicated that the CLLD's bottom-up approach is a far better fit for working with communities than the top-down method of delivery of the Employability Programme.

One finding from the Signal workshop is that many of the participants on the CLLD supported projects form informal networks (for example, via WhatsApp groups) beyond the training and support offered by the project. The participants stayed connected with each other on a social basis and formed friendships because of their participation in projects such as training courses. The projects also brought together participants from a range of diverse backgrounds who would not necessarily interact with each other in their daily lives.

Examples include highly qualified individuals who face barriers to work related to physical and/or mental health issues who formed friendships with people facing barriers to work due to low levels of education or language barriers. It was observed that each brought different skills to the mix, whereby participants with low levels of educational attainment may have practical skills in crafts such as joinery and woodworking or cookery, but who suffered from a lack of confidence. They shared their skills with participants who had Masters level of educational attainment, and this resulted in a mutual exchange of new skills which led to increased confidence and motivation.

RECOMMENDATION #11:	Showcase lessons learned from CLLD at a city level.
	A next step in learning from the success of CLLD could be to showcase individual project successes in comparison to existing Council and government approaches and integrating those lessons into local structures at the local authority and Combined Authority level. This would ensure the sustainable legacy of the CLLD programme beyond the funding lifecycle.

6.4.2..4 Managing funding

A key success of the North of Tyne CLLD programme has been the innovative approach to match funding and developing a strategy to ensure it is targeted at the right place. The initial strategy outlined in the LDS to securing sufficient match funding to projects to be 100% funded proved to be the right approach. At project design stage, it was identified by the team involved in development of the LDS that match funding may be a barrier to application for some potential projects, particularly small and micro-organisations. Potential sources of match funding available to applicants were identified early on, which included future rounds of the Newcastle Fund, Community Foundation, Big Lottery programmes, and other local funds and foundations.

In the early phases of programme implementation, it was not possible to unlock enough match funding to allow the CLLD Project Team to be able to provide 100% of funding to projects. The CLLD Project Team considers that this is one of the main reasons for the low response rate to Round One and Round Two call for projects. This proved that the initial hypothesis that the need to provide match funding by small organisations who already face budget cuts and financial constraints will be a barrier to their participation in the project. However, by partnering with Newcastle College and later recognising alignment between Covid Community Support funds and the CLLD programme, as well as securing match from other appropriate funding sources, allowed the CLLD Project Team to provide 100% match for projects. This resulted in an increased volume of applications, including micro-organisations who would not otherwise be able to participate in the programme due to inability to contribute their own match funding.

6.4.3   Enhanced results

Enhanced, or improved, results may include improvements to the project because of the advice/support that they receive during the development phase via project officer support (animation) and from the LAG as part of the appraisal process. If they are better projects because of this engagement with the CLLD approach, the results that they generate (e.g. the benefit to the business or individual supported) should be better than they would otherwise have been.

One example of how the CLLD Programme has led to enhanced project results is reflected in the additional support provided by LAG members to potential projects in the application process. This is reflected in particular by the introduction of a two-stage approach to application in Round Two, and was iteratively improved in Round Three and Four.

The LAG noted that adding the EOI phase allowed potential projects to bring forward ideas in their "raw" form. For those projects that showed real potential and alignment with the North of Tyne CLLD programme priorities and ethos at EOI phase but did not succeed in framing these ideas in their application form, the LAG team provided additional support in the appraisal and project application process. It should be reflected that some LAG members made a significant contribution and displayed high levels of generosity with their personal time to support project applications requiring development of application writing skills and framing the narrative of their project.

This approach acted as a leveller between larger organisations with the in-house knowledge, capacity, and experience to develop successful funding applications and those micro-organisations who had a genuinely good idea which showed strong potential to directly improve lives of the local community, but perhaps did not have the wherewithal or experience of navigating the funding environment and completing funding applications.

Improved results also saw CLLD supporting projects that could not happen if the scheme did not exist. For example, animation activities in the early phases of call for projects, at Round One and Round Two, helped engage individuals or groups for the first time. These took place in local community venues rather than at the City Council, which demonstrated the bottom-up approach of CLLD.

Additional 1:1 consultations were offered by the CLLD Project Team with people who had good project ideas and needed support in developing them into a concrete proposal. Some of these project ideas would not have been realised, as the organisations would have not been able to commit, developed ideas or implement projects without the CLLD in place as a delivery mechanism.

The focus on innovation is also relevant here. CLLD is designed to support innovative and pilot projects that would not be funded by other schemes — to try new things and learn from the process. Even if innovative projects are not a success, they should lead to learning and improve project results. This is why it is so important that CLLD programmes are not measured simply on performance against ERDF and ESF target indicators.

Learning outcomes are, however, only generated if further activity is undertaken to share that learning via, for example, networking. Therefore, it is recommended that the strong network and engagement of project participants is sustained beyond the funding cycle of the North of Tyne CLLD programme.

RECOMMENDATION #12:	Develop a post-support network.
	A framework could be developed to keep in touch with funded projects beyond CLLD support in order to build up additional case studies, maintain a strong network and also capture any longer-term indicators that occurred as a direct result of the CLLD beyond the timescale of the funded projects.

6.5   Analysis of Signal Data

Methodology

Eight case studies (Drama Works, Truly Home, Passion to Paycheck, FLYING SPARKS, Steps Together, Engage to Progress, Chance to Trade, and Routes to Work) and accompanying Signal data for a selection of projects (ESF and ERDF) are included in **Appendix 6.** This section will explore the findings generated by the Signal Data for each project profiled.

At the beginning of each project, the project teams asked each participant to complete a survey in the Signal platform to indicate their given situation at that moment in time. Red represents "I'm stuck and need help," yellow indicates "needs some work," and green indicates "I'm OK with this."

The indicators are spread over 6 different dimensions:

- Income & Employment
- Housing & Infrastructure
- Education & Culture
- Organisation & Participation
- Health & Environment, and
- Interiority and Motivation.

The method recognises that all communities are different, and all individuals within communities are different. Therefore, the Signal tool helps organisations leading CLLD Projects understand what the needs of their participants are and provides a baseline for the project. For those individuals ranking mostly red or yellow, this helps the project teams decide whether these individual participants may need some extra support or where the project should target its efforts. Once the first surveys are completed, the project team can therefore position the best way to assist project participants.

Where survey results were mostly yellow, this indicated that the projects could see areas where improvement is possible within the scope of their project while those results which were mostly red may be more complex and require additional support over a longer time period.

Towards the end of each project, participants were asked to complete a second survey. The results of the second survey were then compared with the results of the first (baseline) survey to identify where project impacts had taken place. Successful outcomes would be red indicators turning yellow or green, yellow indicators turning green, and green indicators staying the same.

ESF-Funded Projects

The case studies below illustrate "before" and "after" Signal data for a sample of indicators for each project. This highlighted the indicators that project participants considered to be the most important to them, and then provided an overview of how they felt about those indicators at the time they completed the survey.

For Twisting Ducks' project **Drama Works**, which was focused on people with disabilities, the most pressing concerns included Human Rights, Personal Identification, Vaccinations (likely following Covid-19), cost-of-living related concerns (gas and electricity, household appliances), interiority concerns (self-esteem, moral conscience, entrepreneurial spirit), Needs Awareness, and household violence. At the beginning of the Drama Works project, Human Rights, Personal ID, Vaccinations, and cost-of-living related indicators were showing the most reds. Self-esteem was mostly amber, which indicates that there is scope for the project to have a positive impact on this indicator.

By the end of the project, Human Rights had improved with some reds turning yellow, and some yellow turning green. Self-esteem and moral conscious remained the same, but indicators related to household budgeting moved all reds up to yellow. Skills to generate income were mostly yellow and green, which was one of the objectives for ESF projects in the CLLD Programme.

For **Truly Home** led by the Chinese Learning Centre, the biggest improvement was in the interiority and motivation dimension, which includes aspects such as self-esteem, confidence, moral conscious, and entrepreneurial spirit. For this indicator, there 2% were ranked as red in the first survey but this dropped to 1% in the second survey. 19 of those ranked as yellow in the first survey (54 in total, or 21%) had turned green in the second survey. In the first survey, 199 (77%) indicators were ranked as green, but this increased to 224 (86%) by the second survey. Income and employment also showed an improvement, where 93 (60%) were ranked as red in the first survey, but the second survey showed that this dropped to 64 (41%) while yellow (50, or 32%) increased from 34 (22%), and green increased to 39 (35%) from 28 (18%) in the first survey.

Junction Point's project **Passion to Paycheck** showed increases from red and yellow to green across the six dimensions. The greatest improvement was shown in income and employment, where 23 (43%) in the first survey ranked indicators related to this dimension as red, and 11 (20%) ranked them as yellow. 19 (35%) were ranked as green. By the second survey, indicators related to the income and employment dimension showed 10 (19%) ranked as red, while many of them turned yellow 22 (41%), which doubled from the first survey. Those marked as green also increased in the second survey at 22 (41%). The organisation and participation dimension also increased, 11 (24%) were ranked as red in the first survey dropped to only 2% in the second survey, while yellow increased from 7 (16%) to 11 (24%). Indicators ranked as green in the first survey (26, or 58%) increased to 33 (74%) in the second survey.

The **Engage to Progress** project led by PROPs also saw the greatest improvement in the dimension related to Income and Employment. In the first survey, 3 (17%) indicators related to this dimension were ranked as red. In the second survey, this dropped to 2 (11%). Many of those ranked as yellow in first survey (8, or 44%) had turned green by the second survey, so yellow decreased overall to 5 (28%) while green increased from 7 (49%) to 11 (61%) in the second survey.

For FIRST's project **FLYING SPARKS,** participants ranked indicators related to income and employment (varied income, income, stable income, access to credit, savings) as mostly red, as well as stable housing. By the second survey, these had improved with many of the reds for access to credit turning yellow, and some yellows turning green. By the end of the project, the greatest improvements were seen in entrepreneurial spirit, budgeting, safe home, communication, savings, needs awareness, regular meals, eating a healthy diet, and personal ID.

ERDF-Funded Projects

The **Routes to Work** programme led by Reviving the Heart of the West End (RHWE) has shown the greatest improvement in the dimension related to Income and Employment. In the first survey, 37 participants (56%) ranked indicators related to this dimension as red. By the second survey, red indicators had decreased to 25, or 29%. Some of these turned yellow, from seven in the first survey (11%) to 8 in the second survey (12%). The greatest increase was in those turning green, which increased from 22 (33%) in the first survey to 33 (50%) in the second survey.

Millin Charity's projects **Steps Together** and **Chance to Trade** have also shown the greatest improvement in the dimension related to Income and Employment. In the first survey, 17 participants (28%) ranked indicators related to this dimension as red. By the second survey, red indicators had decreased to eight or (13%). Some of these turned yellow, from eight in the first survey (13%) to 13 in the second survey (22%). For those turning green, these increased from 35 (58%) in the first survey to 39 (65%) in the second survey.

Summary

The four objectives of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme reflecting to ERDF and ESF investment priorities as outlined in detail in **Chapter 2**. These are as follows:

- **Objective A:** Making community assets, organisations, and the social fabric in the CLLD area more entrepreneurial.

- **Objective B:** Strengthening the business community in the CLLD area.

- **Objective C:** Supporting first steps towards economic activity within the CLLD area through learning, tackling multiple barriers and integrating support services, and;

- **Objective D:** Enabling entry to and progression along the pathway to employment and connecting local employers with communities.

The Signal tool has provided clear qualitative evidence of the project impacts related to the North of Tyne CLLD Programme objectives, to support the quantitative outputs outlined in **Chapter** 4.

From the case studies outlined above, the greatest improvements have been seen in dimensions related to income and employment, interiority and motivation, and organisation and participation, which are directly aligned to Objectives A, C, and D and indirectly contribute to Objective B.

The Signal data has also provided a useful method for drawing comparisons between a wide range of projects of different scale rooted in different geographies of the city, and focused on working with communities facing diverse sets of challenges.

6.6 Project legacy

6.6.1 Findings from external stakeholders

Engagement with external stakeholders, including Newcastle City Council teams who were not directly involved with the delivery of the CLLD programme, for example the Skills Hub, actors in the voluntary and community sector in Tyne and Wear, and city Councillors unanimously noted that the bottom-up approach worked very well. In particular, they recognised that the projects delivered directly by organisations working with local communities in response to needs at a micro-scale provided a considerable amount of value compared with a more institutionally led, top-down approach to community support.

> "There is a sense of ownership in both development, delivery and the LAG based management. It is based on collaboration and partnership, which smooths the rough edges of competition. The providers know their patch better than anyone. They are recognised and trusted, and can build relationships with clients where there may be suspicion addressed to larger more mainstream provision."

External stakeholder

Overall, external stakeholders recognised that giving locally based organisations a stronger role in deciding how community assets should be leveraged and what is and what is not funded in their areas leads to a more seamlessly joined-up approach. This mitigates a problem that is faced by the city with institution-led, top down approaches: duplication of initiatives which has the effect of "watering down" impacts and compromising achievements. This can also lead to a loss of faith and trust in institutions by the local community, and therefore reinforcing challenges of excluding and isolating some communities deemed as too challenging to target with the limited resources of top-down interventions. The bottom-up approach of CLLD mitigates this challenge by putting the local communities in centre place, listening to what they need and acting on that information.

6.6.1..1 Bridging the gap

Particularly the local councils understood that the CLLD programme fills an important gap in the social infrastructure provision of the city. Some external stakeholders also saw the CLLD programme as a benefit for strengthening relationships between the VCSE sector and the local council. It was understood that the VCSE organisations in the city hold a wealth of information that the council does not necessarily have access to, gained purely through their experiences of working directly with local communities and understanding the challenges, some specific to the community and others shared more widely with other areas. It was broadly acknowledged that this type of intimate knowledge should not be undervalued.

It should be noted that the CLLD programme therefore occupies an important place in the fabric of the city, and without the programme it would leave a clear gap in social provision. The legacy of the CLLD programme should therefore be safeguarded.

> "I see these organisations as the glue that binds communities together. A lot of what they do goes unseen, but without it communities would be worse off. In addition, they build bridges into mainstream provision. There is a flexibility and responsiveness to their offer which is invaluable."

External stakeholder

6.6.2 Findings from CLLD-funded projects

The survey results show that the projects collected data generated by their CLLD-funded project which could provide useful insights and an evidence-base for a need to continue targeted activities beyond the funding lifecycle of the CLLD programme. 79% (11 out of 14 respondents) noted that they are gathering project impact data, and a further 36% (5 out of 11) are collecting case studies to evidence the impact of their project. 14% (2/14) and 7% (1/14) are using project outputs and Signal data to evidence project impacts.

Figure 24: Evidence collected to demonstrate project impacts

Impact data — 79%
Case studies — 36%
Project outputs — 14%
SIGNAL data — 7%
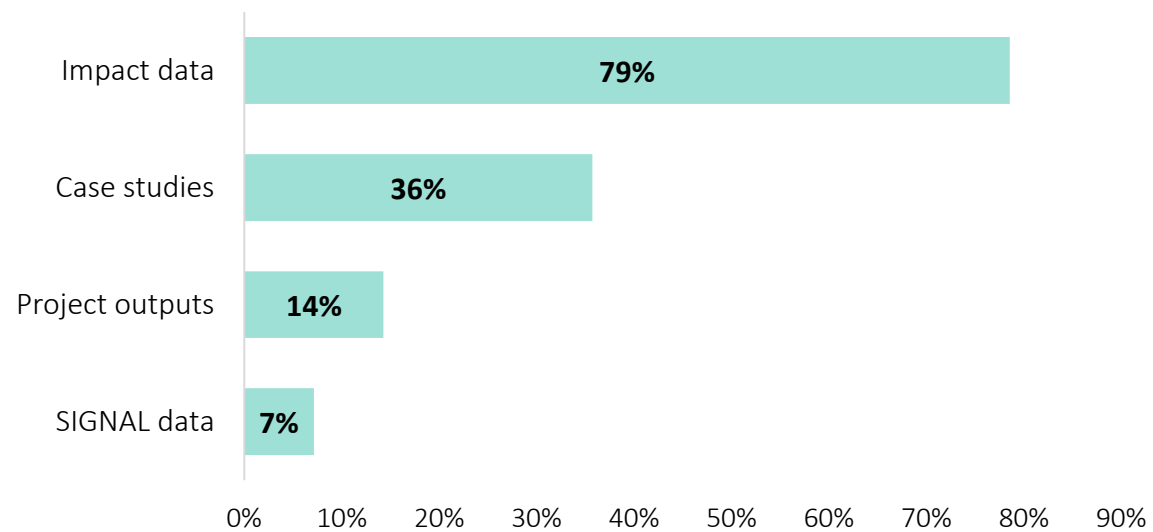
n= 14

In terms of project legacy, three-quarters (9/12) of those responding noted that the main legacy of their project beyond CLLD-funding will by the impact on individual project participants. A further 17% noted equally that it had been helpful in unlocking further funding (2/12) and recruiting new permanent members of staff. One project noted that the direct impact of their project was leading to more people in employment (8%).

Figure 25: Main legacy of CLLD-funded projects

Impact on individuals — 75%
Further funding — 17%
Permanent members of staff — 17%
More people in employment — 8%
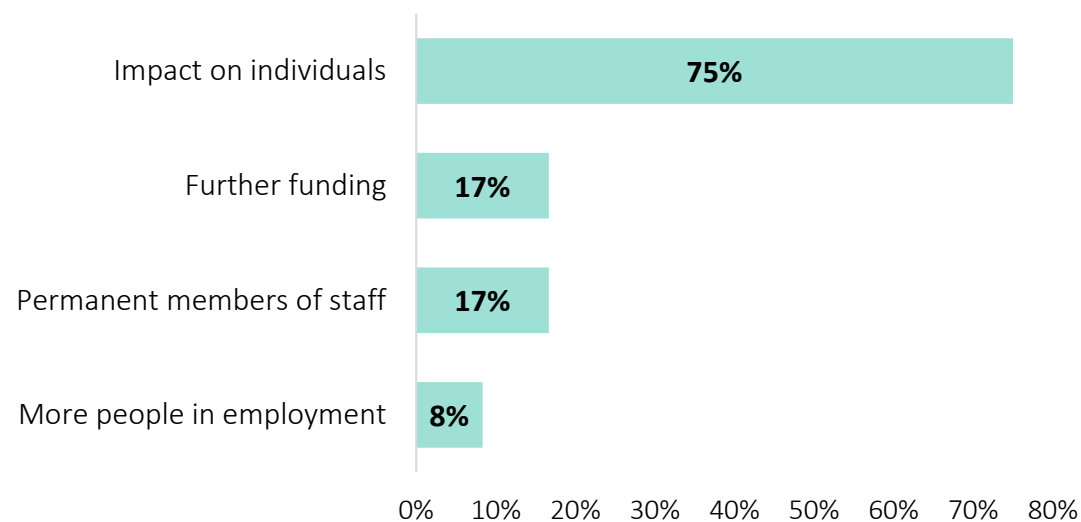
n = 12

The survey asked project leads what steps they are now taking to ensure that their CLLD-funded project leaves a sustainable legacy. Of those who responded, 82% (9/11) noted that they will be seeking further funding to continue or develop their project further. In equal measure (18% each, or 2/11) respondents noted that because of the project they will continue to strengthen their relationship with the local community, and employ volunteers drawn from the community to continue the project legacy.

Figure 26: Steps taken to ensure a sustainable project legacy
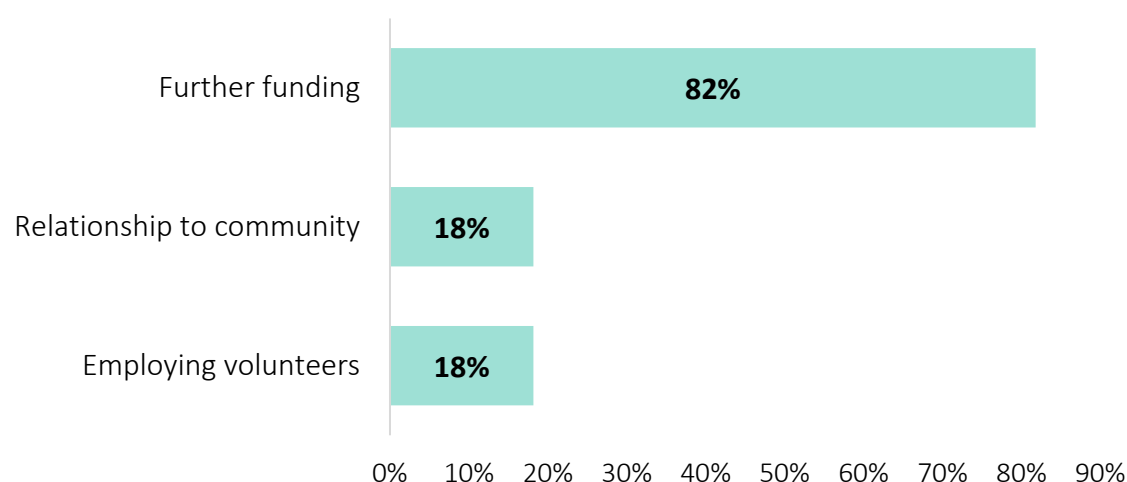
n = 11

6.7   Cross-Cutting Themes

The North of Tyne CLLD programme seeks to address two Cross-Cutting Themes (CCTs), in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the ERDF and ESF funding requirements. These are: (1). Sustainable Development, and (2). Equality.

As such, North of Tyne guidelines for applicants states that all projects receiving support from North of Tyne CLLD are required to demonstrate what practical measures they are taking to address these two CCTs.

In addition, projects were requested on a quarterly basis to review their activities in response to both cross-cutting themes through in-depth project reviews and surveys. The findings of these were submitted in the quarterly progress reports to the CLLD Project Team. It should also be stated that CLLD projects have continued throughout the six years of the programme to support people from disadvantaged communities (for example, BAME groups, women, minorities, and those facing mental and physical ill health) facing multiple barriers to employment and wellbeing. This reflects both a commitment to Sustainable Development and Equality.

Examples of project initiatives responding to the two CCTs are as follows:

6.7.1   CCTs addressed by ERDF projects

In Q4 2021, live projects were invited to repeat a survey regarding practical examples of how they have been implementing Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development principles into the delivery within the preceding 12 months. Examples that were provided by the projects in respect to the theme of Sustainable Development include:

- **FIRST Face-to-Face:** Where possible, all meetings, communication and reports for team members were in digital format. They undertook recruitment from Newcastle Jobcentre and public transport was used for all meetings. All suppliers have been chosen based on their sustainability values and are local businesses. No one travelled from outside the area and all venues are within close distance of participants' homes. In their courses they also provided vegan snacks from a local start up.
- **Upstart Enterprise CIC:** They reduced project staff travel by holding courses nearer to home. In addition, rather than print out lots of resources they emailed them out to participants for use after the sessions and used resources on screen in sessions/workshops.
- **Reviving the Heart of the West End:** They took measures to reduce printing costs by emailing handouts or sending via WhatsApp, and it was noted that very few people have no access to either one of these. The project team continually look at ways to recycle their products and have recycling bins around their facility to encourage this.

Examples provided by the projects in respect to the theme of Equality include:

- **FIRST Face-to-Face:** All project participants were asked if they have any medical, dietary, accessibility or support needs that we need to be made aware of to ensure they are comfortable on the programme. All venues used by the project were checked to ensure they have disabled access and any additional support was required was in place. The project also targeted under-represented groups in entrepreneurship including women, black, Asian and ethnic minorities, people with mental/physical disability.
- **Upstart Enterprise CIC**: Accessible venues and toilets were made available in all venues used by the project. Times of workshops were adjusted to 10am for parents. The project targeted those who are harder to reach via local community centres / fun days / family events, and council ward newsletters were provided for those who don't use social media.
- **Reviving the Heart of the West End:** The project delivered activities at accessible and commutable locations. Where travel has been an issue, they reimbursed travel costs. They also asked clients what their best availability was to ensure that activities took place on a date and time that met the majority's needs. They also asked clients from the first engagement if there is anything additional, they needed to put in place to support their learning / progression.

6.7.2   CCTs addressed by ESF projects

For ESF-funded projects, live projects were invited to repeat a survey regarding practical examples of how they have been implementing Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development principles into the delivery within the preceding 12 months. Examples that were provided by the projects in respect to the theme of Sustainable Development include:

- **The Recruitment Junction:** 2 staff work 4:5 and 5 days across 4, minimising two people's travel (40% of total workforce) by 20%. They also encouraged staff to car share for events e.g. to attend the prison which cannot be accessed by public transport. In addition, they incentivised participants to take public transport by reimbursing them the cost of the ticket.
- **Big River Bakery / Earth Doctors Ltd:** The organisation tries to locally source ingredients wherever possible that are used in baking sessions, and any unsold products are distributed to food banks / homeless charities. They also recycle and compost as much as possible (they have a council recycle bin). They are looking to work with local groups to set up a community compost site. In addition, all food packaging they use is recyclable, and all aprons and protective clothes are washed next door at a community laundrette.
- **Building Futures East:** The team purchased a new printer that is more energy efficient and have now moved to using 100% recycled paper. Since June 2021 they have recycled BEaT participant paperwork folders and sourced more environmentally friendly page dividers to eliminate wastage and reduce overall costs. All project staff started to coordinate their diaries to increase opportunities for car sharing to and from appointments. As a result, 20% more staff now cycle to work at least two days per week, and some have started to share bikes whenever possible. They also changed the room booking system across the building in order to reduce the number of rooms used for service delivery and reduce energy costs. For the CLLD-funded Stitch Sisters project, they no longer provide services from the large open-spaced classroom in their training centre and have instead moved to a smaller classroom which offers better insulation and needs 60% less heat to use.
- **The Chinese Centre (North of England):** Since the Covid-19 pandemic, all training provision has been online via Zoom classes and WhatsApp tutorials. As a result, both the staff and project beneficiaries save a lot of travel costs. In terms of energy efficiency measures, all teaching handouts have been sent via WhatsApp and printing has massively reduced. They also provided donated tablets, donated data sim cards and mobile Wi-Fi for project participants to learn from home, which has made learning possible for the young parents with toddlers and babies. They only use an indoor unit in Lynnwood Enterprise Centre from where the project manager works with project beneficiaries for registration and reviews. Staff and project participants only attend the centre for achievement and progression events and one-to-one support as and when required. The Centre also pay for the participants' travel costs if they cannot afford them.

- **PROPS:** Since March 2020 the team have been home working, and adapted quickly to this way of working. The service recognises that working from one location can be sustained and reduces the amount of driving that had previously happened. They continued to offer outreach support when government and service policy allow this, but as an alternative they were are able to offer support via Teams. This not only reduces the travel for workers but also for carers. PROPS has also reduced the amount of paper, printing and copying. In addition, they have a membership with Forest Carbon to compensate for unavoidable impact by helping to create a new woodland or restore a degraded peatland. They aim to look at a new initiative each year to contribute to the sustainability of the environment.

Examples that were provided by the projects in respect to the theme of Equality include:

- **Project North East:** Due to the pandemic the team have seen an increase in self-diagnosed disabilities such as mental health concerns all of which are documented in their initial diagnostics. Much of the support they provided has been digital including Zoom, Skype, telephone, social media and email; and they have ensured that anyone who needed help on the programme was asked for their preferred method of support if one-to-one was not available and they have been very flexible to meet client needs. Where there was an issue with digital methods, they ensured that phone support was given and that documents and courses they would deliver or share digitally has been posted out.
- **The Millin Charity:** All engagement methods were carried out remotely. This included using different methods of being able to reach out to women and inform them of services available. This was carried out through telephone calls, mobile messaging, increased Facebook marketing, use of Instagram, Linked In, WhatsApp, Twitter, a range of social media platforms were used wherever possible. They also carried out work on the website and made amends to ensure that the website was more user friendly and met the needs of their clients as the team observed that more enquiries for project support were coming through online. The project team supported women to access online Zoom and trained them on Google Classroom to get online to help them continue with their ongoing learning and development. In addition, extra support for women with low IT skills was provided and time spent on supporting women for e.g. enrolling on a college course online was provided by the team on the telephone when required through step by step support. Laptops through the City Council were made available for women who needed them, and the project team worked alongside the CLLD team to help distribute these to the women who needed them to enable access to online services. They also posted out workbooks to those who couldn't always access material online and for those who didn't have a printer so women could take part in workshops without any issues. Finally, programmes were delivered around women's personal circumstances, for example childcare commitments.

6.8   Summary: Long-term strategic added value

'Economic' impacts, specifically in terms of jobs and setting up new businesses, are unlikely to become apparent in the short term. Behavioural changes and advancing social capital are a long-term process. However, it is anticipated that the outcomes discussed above will develop 'capacity' within the communities in the CLLD area and this will have a long-term impact if they lead to sustained behavioural change. For example, positive development in local governance structures (in for example, Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council) because of CLLD could well lead to long-term, permanent changes.

Another example would be individuals, either through projects or through the LAG, who engaged in 'community-led development' for the first time via CLLD become involved on a long-term basis. This may be by developing further projects or even by engaging in different ways, such as by becoming members of community councils. These are potentially important impacts.

RECOMMENDATION #13:	"Exit" interview for LAG members. Informal discussion with each LAG member could reflect on their learning and identify additional added value arising from CLLD to the voluntary sector and the local communities they support. It could also help maintain links between each LAG member and Newcastle City Council beyond the programme lifecycle to help sustain the wider impact of CLLD, and help develop a network within the city.

It is, however, also important to recognise that there is uncertainty in relation to the long-term impact of CLLD activity as well as the sustainability of such impact, which is inevitably influenced by several factors such as the availability of ongoing/continued funding. This is especially the case in the current situation, wherein CLLD funding in the UK, for the first time since the 1990s, will not continue beyond the current programme period due to Brexit. While UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) is due to be implemented for another round of £2.6 billion of funding for local investment until March 2025, the conditions and pathways to delivery are still in their early phases and at time of writing, remain unclear in relation to further delivery of CLLD.

Projects will also lead to impact both directly and indirectly. For example, projects engaging with businesses will conceivably lead to a positive economic impact within the area. The scale of the interventions that CLLD commonly funds, however, means that such impacts are unlikely to be substantial at a larger scale. This is, however, not to say that there is no impact. There may, for example, be a noteworthy impact for an individual business or for communities in which projects have taken place. That impact is, however, unlikely to be substantial enough to witness a sustained change in the area. It is important to note however that achieving such an impact is not the primary purpose of CLLD.

Importantly, North of Tyne CLLD also has an impact via the projects and activities that the CLLD approach has tested and/or initiated which will in future by subsequently funded by other sources (often referred to as being 'mainstreamed'). Those projects/activities may not exist (or would have taken longer to develop, not be as effective, etc.) without the support provided to them by CLLD, which provided the opportunity for a pilot/prototype stage. Although this will not become apparent until after the CLLD programme ends, if any projects funded by North of Tyne CLLD succeed in leveraging additional funding, their ultimate impact can therefore be directly linked to CLLD support even if the 'mainstream' version of the project is funded by another source.

At this early stage, it has not been possible to assess the project outcomes in any long-term way and this will become apparent only with time. As discussed in Chapter 3, the limited number of performance indicators being used for CLLD at a scheme level means that they provide little insight into the outcomes being achieved. However, this has been greatly enhanced by the incorporating of data from Signal.

7.   Conclusions and recommendations

7.1   Main conclusions

This chapter sets out overall conclusions for the Summative Assessment of the North of Tyne CLLD Programme, as well as summarises recommendations developed to inform the future legacy of the programme and design of policy interventions for the North of Tyne area.

The Local Action Group (LAG) has been at the centre of the CLLD approach. The North of Tyne LAG has fulfilled its role very well and has shown incredible commitment and strong development over the six-year lifecycle of the CLLD programme. The LAG collaborated effectively to anchor the CLLD programme to the needs and challenges faced by local communities.

The LAG has been well supported by the CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council, who have overseen the management and governance of the programme and provided invaluable support in terms of delivering a complex administrative requirement. Sharing of learning has been a key element of the CLLD programme. It could therefore be valuable to capture indicators of activities relating to that process as part of any set of 'legacy' indicators.

The circumstances in which the CLLD Programme has been delivered have been exceptionally challenging. Covid-19 provided a major challenge, however other factors such as rising fuel costs and inflation contributing to a cost-of-living crisis have severely impacted local communities within the CLLD areas. Nevertheless, the LAG and CLLD Project Team have demonstrated a trusting working relationship and a real commitment to the objectives of the CLLD programme to continue to deliver a high-quality programme against ESF and ERDF target indicators.

The programme level performance indicators in line with ERDF and ESF were collected to monitor the implementation of the CLLD programme in North of Tyne provide only a small part of evidence of what the programme has achieved. The LAG and the CLLD Project Team recognised this and adopted the Signal tool to capture the broad range of additional indicators that provide a fuller picture of what is being achieved. Sharing of learning is also a key element of the CLLD programme. It may therefore be valuable to capture indicators of activities relating to that process as part of any set of 'legacy' indicators.

North of Tyne CLLD also had an impact via the projects and activities that the CLLD approach has tested and/or initiated which will in future by subsequently funded by other sources (often referred to as being 'mainstreamed'). Those projects/activities may not exist (or would have taken longer to develop, not be as effective, etc.) without the support provided to them by CLLD, which provided the opportunity for a pilot/prototype stage.

Although this will not become apparent until after the CLLD programme ends, if any projects funded by North of Tyne CLLD succeed in leveraging additional funding, their ultimate impact can therefore be linked to CLLD support even if the 'mainstream' version of the project is funded by another source.

In summary, while the North of Tyne CLLD Programme may not have achieved all its target indicators against ERDF and ESF, it has achieved a significant contribution to developing community organisations in the North of Tyne area to bring forward innovative ideas and implement them. While on a small scale, as is the nature of CLLD, these actions have had a real and tangible impact on improving the lives of those in local communities facing a complex set of challenges. This is reflected in the data collected and analysed via Signal.

The Signal tool has provided clear qualitative evidence of the project impacts related to the North of Tyne CLLD Programme objectives, to support the quantitative target outputs. Signal data showed that the greatest improvements for project participants were in dimensions related to income and employment, interiority and motivation, and organisation and participation, which are directly aligned to all four of the Programme-level objectives.

The Signal data has also provided a useful method for drawing comparisons between a wide range of projects of different scale rooted in different geographies of the city and focused on working with communities facing diverse sets of challenges.

The LAG, supported by the North of Tyne CLLD team, has been instrumental in the success of the North of Tyne CLLD approach. The question remains however as to how to safeguard the legacy of the programme, retain knowledge, and develop the lessons learned over the last six years to continue community-led local development in the North of Tyne area.

External stakeholders considered the North of Tyne CLLD Programme to have performed very well in relation to the resources available. The commitment and activities driven by the LAG and supported by the Newcastle City Council CLLD Delivery Team were considered to have been key success factors to the performance of the programme as a whole. They identified some additional areas where performance could be improved further for future iterations of community-led programmes contributing to local development, in particular actions for the local authority to take in terms of securing further support at senior levels in the Council and additional resources at officer level for delivery of future interventions. This feedback has supported the development of the recommendations below.

7.2   Recommendations

LAG members and the CLLD Project Team offered insight into some of the areas they would like to see improved if the project were to run again in a next iteration. The report notes several key recommendations which should help with any future delivery and are set out below as a summary. These can be used by the CLLD Project Delivery Team and the LAG, as well as external stakeholder such as policy makers and local authorities designing similar interventions.

7.2.1   Recommendations to inform design of future programmes

RECOMMENDATION #1:	Create 'associate' LAG member status.
	An 'associate' LAG members status could be created for those who cannot commit to being a full LAG member but can contribute on specific tasks, for example, the project application process, local knowledge, insights from specific sectors and/or communities. In particular, this could help to attract representation from residents, who can contribute important knowledge and insights to the CLLD programme but may have to balance LAG membership with other commitments, such as employment or caring duties. This could help improve the diversity of the LAG and strengthen representation from local residents of the CLLD areas.

RECOMMENDATION #2:	Strengthen training and/or onboarding process for new LAG members.
	An onboarding process for new members could help encourage and increase confidence of residents who can provide a valuable contribution to the LAG but who lack direct experience in working with the voluntary sector, or within the institutional context of local authorities. While external sessions for LAG members were provided to support skills in project application assessment and scoring, and post-training materials were developed, further approaches to bringing in new members could also serve as a team-building opportunity for the LAG and encourage members to work as a collective, regardless of experience or prior knowledge. This would support confidence-building for new members to help them feel part of a team.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Adopt a tapered approach to match-funding.

To safeguard quality over quantity and ensure small organisations with limited operational capacity are not overshadowed by larger organisations with skilled in-house bid writing teams and experience in securing external funding, an approach could be adopted to match-funding as follows:

100% for micro/small organisations (0-10 employees)

75% for medium sized organisations (11-249 employees)

50% for larger organisations (250+ employees).

RECOMMENDATION #4: Closer integration of LDS strategic objectives.

The Local Development Strategy highlighted four key strategic objectives, but there is a sense that ERDF and ESF performance indicators were not explicitly linked to these objectives in the monitoring and evaluation framework. This reflects the administrative burden of ERDF and ESF monitoring requirements on the small Project Team. With additional resource, target indicators could be linked more closely with Objectives A to D to give a clearer picture of how the CLLD programme performed against LDS strategic objectives.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Refine target indicators.

Softer metrics and broader indicators could be added to the list of target indicators, linked to those captured by Signal. This would reflect more accurate performance of the CLLD programme beyond the hard metrics related to e.g., numbers of enterprises and individuals supported. It would also ensure that data captured in Signal is more deeply embedded within the monitoring and evaluation of CLLD at programme level.

RECOMMENDATION #6:   Develop a focused community participation strategy

Draw on existing toolkits and identify case studies of best practice to inform the development of a community participation strategy. This should focus on ensuring that local residents are engaged in decision-making activities and Local Action Groups for any future bottom-up community development programmes in the North of Tyne area.

RECOMMENDATION #7:   Showcase lessons learned from CLLD at a city level.

A next step in learning from the success of CLLD could be to showcase individual project successes in comparison to existing Council and government approaches and integrating those lessons into local structures at the local authority and Combined Authority level. This would ensure the sustainable legacy of the CLLD programme beyond the funding lifecycle.

RECOMMENDATION #8:   Develop a post-support network.

A framework could be developed to stay connected with funded projects beyond CLLD support to build up additional case studies, maintain a strong network and also capture any longer-term indicators that occurred as a direct result of the CLLD beyond the timescale of the funded projects.

RECOMMENDATION #9:   "Exit" interview for LAG members.

Informal discussion with each LAG member could reflect on their learning and identify additional added value arising from CLLD to the voluntary sector and the local communities they support. It could also help maintain links between each LAG member and Newcastle City Council beyond the programme lifecycle to help sustain the wider impact of CLLD and help develop a network within the city.

7.2.2 Recommendations for policymakers

RECOMMENDATION #10: Embed Signal within future delivery models. Signal could be used as a tool for other community-led programmes or schemes delivered by local authorities. A strategy could be developed to understand how, and which, data generated by Signal could be translated into **policy** insights to better inform policy**makers on the best options** related to community development and avoid negative unintended consequence resulting from a disconnect between the policymaking environment and the needs of local communities.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Use CLLD as a model for future delivery. The North of Tyne CLLD programme demonstrates that a holistic approach to community-led development works well and creates direct impacts for the local communities in which CLLD operates. This model should be seen as an approach for tackling poverty and developing community resilience and cohesion more broadly, and not as a standalone programme or scheme. CLLD should be considered as a mechanism for developing regional and local strategic priorities in Newcastle and North Tyneside. The CLLD approach, however, should be delivered "in its entirety" and not diluted. This would require a commitment to the provision of long-term funding to the LAG to deliver CLLD activities.

7.2.3 Recommendations for key decision-makers at strategic level

RECOMMENDATION #12:	Provide additional resources for Project Delivery teams.
	The CLLD Project Team at Newcastle City Council made the most of available resources and the small team consistently performed very well considering their limited resource.
	However, their capacity was stretched, and the team reported that they always worked at maximum capacity. Additional resources would have strengthened their ability to deliver the CLLD programme, build in more resilience, and allow the team to explore innovative ideas in more depth.

RECOMMENDATION #13:	Value-for-Money analysis assessment.
	A robust value for money assessment could be conducted in the future to be understand the cost effectiveness of the programme and therefore informing legacy provision. This should reflect the in-kind contribution of LAG members, for example a calculation of cost per time contributed.

Appendix 1: Logic Model for North of Tyne CLLD

North of Tyne Community Led Local Development

Click on the arrows to navigate around the model. Tables can be edited directly in the model. To edit free text, click Edit under each title

Context

Edit

- high levels of deprivation in areas in Newcastle and Wallsend - in Newcastle 38% of the population live in the 20% most deprived areas; some words in Newcastle are among the most deprived nationally;
- rates of economic inactivity and unemployment are significantly higher and levels of self-employment lower across the CLLD area compared to Newcastle and national average;
- residents living in the most deprived neighbourhoods disconnected from economic opportunities are more likely to be inactive as a result of poor skills, health disparities and caring responsibilities;
- census data shows that groups with protected characteristics face multiple disadvantages and are more likely to be excluded from the labour market;
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation research found that geography of poverty matters - there is often a mismatch between where people live and where jobs are located.

Market Failure Assessment

Edit

- the mainstream provision do not support hard-to-reach groups with multiple barriers to make a transition into entrepreneurship (e.g. neighbourhood enterprise);
- cuts in public spending presented additional difficulties to low income communities and their ability to be effectivaly engaged and empowered;
- there is very little investment in local infrustructure in the most disadvanatges communities and there is lack of suitable local business space

Project Objectives

Edit

A. Making community assets, organisations and the social fabric in the CLLD area more entrepreneurial (ERDF).
B. Strengthening the business community in the CLLD area (ERDF).
C. Supporting the first steps towards economic activity within the CLLD area through learning, skills, tackling multiple barriers and integrating support services (ESF).
D. Enabling entry to and progression along the employment pathway and connecting local employers with communities (ESF).

Rationale

Edit

- CLLD creates a forum and platform where communities can access funding to re-build their capacity and confidence to respond to economic, social and environmental challenges and stimulate co-responsibility and ownership;
- CLLD provides opportunity for small-scale, localised and micro-interventions as well as testing new approaches and piloting innovative activities to enable beneficitaies who are unlikely to access mainstream provision to access support services within their community;

Inputs

What	Value
ERDF	896,580
Delivery organisations (public)	285,400
Newcastle City Council (public)	259,320
private sector	53,000

Intended Impacts

What
Delivery organisations with increased capacity, skills and experience to deliver similar projects post-CLLD.
Local Action Group members empowered to continue to be a voice for their communities post CLLD.
CLLD to inform local policies and future funding programmes post-Brexit.
Local business community strengthened
Local communities more entrepreneurial

Outcomes

ID	Intended Outcome	How is it Measured?	Level	Baseline	Actual
1	Employment increase in supported enterprises	staff count provided by the enterprise before and after	Business		
2	Changes in turnover in supported enterprises	turnover figure declared by the enterprise before and after	Business		
3	New enterprises registered (including sole traders)	feedback from potential entrepreneurs supported	Business		
4	New trading arms registered by supported organisations	feedback from organisations supported	Business		
5	More space for local enterprise support and businesses	monitoring info re usage of the renovated space	Business		

Outputs

What	Value
Number of enterprises receiving support	104
Number of new enterprises supported	75
Employment increase in supported enterprises	79
No of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	300
Sq metres public or commercial building renovated in targeted	200

Activities

What
Animation activities and project development
Local Action Group - maintaining links with local communities; support
Calls for projects; project assessment and selection
Delivery of local projects
Monitoring and evaluation; local grant management

Appendix 2: Interview questions for key stakeholders

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Project Delivery		
To what extent has the LAG implemented and is delivering "cooperation activities"?	• Review of cooperation activities and projects.	• Number of cooperative activities and projects • Expenditure of cooperative projects
To what extent has the LAG worked across geographical and administrative boundaries?	• Review of projects supported.	• Number of cooperative activities and projects • Expenditure of cooperative projects
Was project delivery impacted by COVID-19?	• Project activities and main achievements (outputs and outcomes)	• Project level indicators and evidence of achievements • Evaluation data recorded by projects. • View of the LAG members • View of delivery staff.

How? How were any delivery challenges resulting from COVID-19 overcome?		

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Impact and effectiveness		
How appropriate is the delivery model for the local (North of Tyne) context?	• The extent to which the CLLD activities fits with and adds value to local activity. • The extent to which the CLLD activity has delivered regional and local strategic objectives.	• View of the project delivery team (including administration) • View of the LAG members • View of external stakeholders (e.g., Newcastle College, NTCA) • View of those delivering projects
To what extent are the LAGs activities integrated and aligned with other regional priorities and programmes, e.g., North Tyneside Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-23, Newcastle City Council's Working City Strategy and NE LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, the projects and activities of other	• The extent to which the CLLD activity has delivered national, regional, and local strategic objectives.	• View of the Project Team (including administration) • View of the LAG members • View of external stakeholders (e.g., Newcastle College, NTCA) • View of those delivering projects

LAGs, and any other European Programmes and funding streams?		
What are the emerging areas of innovation in funded projects?	• How innovation has been defined and promoted within the programme • How each project funded is 'innovative' • How innovative have LAG activities been (including animation)?	• View of Project Team • View of the LAG member • View of those delivering projects • Benchmarking against other LAG activities elsewhere in the North East of England
Are there examples of innovation in the LAGs implementation and deliver of CLLD? (e.g., working in new ways, developing new products and services, adapting proven approaches to new circumstances).	• Activity at LAG and project level considered to be particularly effective or ineffective	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • Views of those delivering projects

Impact and effectiveness		
Are there examples of best practice (in relation to management and delivery) in funded projects?	• Activity at LAG and project level considered to be particularly effective or ineffective	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • Views of those delivering projects
Are there instances of best practice in relation to implementation and delivery of CLLD? Are there any changes that could be made? What are the key lessons that have been learned?	• Activity at LAG and project level considered to be particularly effective or ineffective	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • Views of those delivering projects
How suitable are the project target indicators? Are any changes needed to capture the data processes?	• The extent to which questions in this framework can be answered using the M&E data available	• Summative assessment evaluation.

How sustainable are the activities funded under the LDS in term of the likely effects on future policy and practice (mainstreaming)?	• Comparison of the CLLD activities and projects against the key strategic priorities outlined at national/local level	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects
To what extent do the projects integrate Equal Opportunities into their delivery of activities?	• Review of the extent to which projects are integrating Equal Opportunities into their activity • Review of support and guidance being provided to projects (including applicants) • Review of KPIs (captured in progress reports)	• Analysis of project monitoring data • View of the LAG members • View of Project Team

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Impact and effectiveness		
What is the awareness and perception of CLLD among key LAG members, project/activity deliverers, and local communities?	• Awareness of CLLD • Views on the value of the approach and explanation of the reasons for those views.	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects
How well have the messages communicated by CLLD by the Project Team, and Activity Deliverers been conveyed?	• Review of key messages • Methods of delivery and reach	• Data on coverage for messages, social media, hits, views etc • View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects
To what extent have local communities and people in the region been engaged by the LAG?	• Number and range of individuals and organisations engaged • Geographic spread of those engaged	• Analysis of engagement stats (number and range of stakeholders engaged) • Number of participants • Other data on community engagement as reported by approved projects • View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects
What were the major factors in the LAG's activities, which positively or negatively influenced the achievement of the objectives?	• SWOT analysis of LAG activities • Review of external factors (beyond the control of the LAG) that have influenced the achievements of the programme.	•Desk research – review of key economic data over the lifetime of the programme • View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Social and economic outcomes		
What have been the outcomes of the CLLD activities? Have the agreed programme targets been met?	• The extent to which outcomes as anticipated in the LDS have been achieved	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects • Review of individual project achievements • Review of collective project achievements
To what extent can identified outcomes be attributed to CLLD?	• Evidence of improved social capital • Evidence of improved governance • Evidence of enhanced results and impacts of projects	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects • Review of individual project achievements • Review of collective project achievements
Have there been any additional effects (positive or negative) that occurred as a result of CLLD?	• Evidence of any other / additional outcomes of project or LAG level activity	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Social and economic outcomes		
To what extent can wider changes in the LAG area by attributed to the activities delivered?	• As above and changes in key socio-economic data for the North of Tyne and Newcastle / North Tyneside	• Review of impact on communities within North of Tyne (sample where there has been activity) • Review of impacts (positive and negative) on supported organisations and unsuccessful applications • View of LAG members
To what extent have LAG activities helped to develop trust and positive working relationships amongst and between local communities and businesses?	• Perception of local communities and businesses of the levels of trust, and working relationships, in the local area.	• View of Project Team • Online survey of supported businesses / project applicants • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects

Evaluation question	Judgement criteria	Indicators
Conclusions and recommendations		
What have been the key lessons learned? What could be done differently?	• Stakeholder perspectives • Findings generated by data analysis, desk review, and fieldwork	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects
What are the possibilities of future funding beyond the lifecycle of the North of Tyne CLLD?	• Stakeholder perspectives	• View of Project Team • View of LAG members • View of external stakeholders • Views of those delivering projects

Appendix 3: Project survey questions

1. As an introduction, please briefly describe your organisation and what you do.

2. Please briefly introduce your application / project (vary depending on whether the application was successful).

A few questions to begin with about the process of applying for funding...

3. How did you find out about the support and funding that was potentially available to you via the CLLD project in your area?

4. What were the key things that attracted you to the CLLD project in your area?

5. Did you receive support or advice from the CLLD team during the development of your project? (This is the team within Newcastle Council that supported the CLLD programme)

    a. Yes
    b. No (go to 11)
    c. Not sure (go to 11)

6. (If yes) Please briefly tell me about the support that you received from the team.

7. How useful was that support? Please use a scale of 0 (useless) to 5 (very useful) to respond.

8. Please explain your answer

9. What was the impact of the support you receive on your proposed project, if any?

10. How likely is it that you would have submitted your application for funding if the support you received from the CLLD team was not available?

    a. Certain that I/we would have submitted the application without the support
    b. Likely
    c. Not sure
    d. Unlikely
    e. I / we definitely would not have submitted the application without the support.
    f. Can't answer / no response.

11. Did you receive any other advice and assistance when preparing your application? We're interested in any advice or assistance that you received from, for example, a business advisor, an accountant, etc.

    a. Yes
    b. No (go to 13)
    c. Not sure (go to 13)

12. If yes, what support did you receive and who / which organisation provided that support?

13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement about the guidance you received when preparing your application for funding?

The guidance about how to apply was easy to understand	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	DK
The guidance provided all the information needed	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	DK

14. Please explain your answer:

15. How, if at all, could the guidance be improved?

16. How would you rate the following? Again, please use a scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very good) to respond.

The application process in general		DK
The application form		DK
The efficiency which the application was dealt with		DK

17. Please explain your answer

18. How, if at all, could the application process be improved?

19. Just to confirm, your application for funding was….

Successful	Go to BLOCK 3
Unsuccessful	Go to BLOCK 2
Withdrawn	Go to BLOCK 2

20. (IF UNSUCCESSFUL) Did you receive feedback to explain why your application was unsuccessful?

    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not sure / don't know.

21. (If yes) How useful was that feedback?

22. (IF WITHDRAWN) Please explain why you withdrew your application.

23. (ALL PROJECT NOT FUNDED) Did the project or activity for which you applied for funding progress in any way even though your application was not successful/withdrawn?

      a.   Yes (all or in part)
      b.   No (not in any way)
      c.   Don't know.

24. (If yes) Please explain how much of the project or activity has progressed.

25. (If yes) How was the project or activity funded?

26. (if no) Do you have any plans to try to implement the project or activity in the future? If yes, please tell me a little bit about those plans.

Now moving on to what's happened since your application was approved…

27. How would you rate the funding administrative process? By this we mean the process of accepting the offer of funding, the reports that you were required to provide, claiming the funding, etc. Again, please use a scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very good) to respond.

28. Please explain your answer.

29. What improvements – if any - do you think could be made to the administrative process?

30. What support have you received from the CLLD team since your project was approved by the LAG?

31. (If appropriate) How useful has that support been and why?

32. What support, if any, would you like to receive in support of your delivery of the project?

The next few questions are about what your project has or will achieve. We're aware that your project has not finished yet and, therefore, that the outcomes and impact may not be apparent yet. The focus in on what you've achieved to data and what you think you'll achieve before the project ends.

33. How should the success of your project be judged? Think about activities undertaken as well as what this activities will achieve.

34. Was there sufficient guidance on how to use SIGNAL? Could this support have been improved?

35. Do you think SIGNAL was a useful tool in terms of measuring the success of your project?

36. How would you describe what your project has achieved to date?

37. Is that more, less or the same as you had anticipated?

38. What are you hoping your project can achieve before it comes to an end?

39. Is that more, less or the same as you had anticipated?

40. What evidence are you collecting to demonstrate what your project is (or will) achieve?

41. Is there any kind of 'evaluation plan' for your project? Are you planning on just using SIGNAL?

    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not sure

42. What will be the legacy of your project?

43. What steps are you taking now to ensure that your project leaves a sustainable legacy?

44. Please describe how, if at all, you believe your project is 'innovative'? By that we mean trying something for the first time. We're interested in anything that you consider to be innovative about your project.

45. Would you be happy to be contacted again in future by our Evaluation team to include your project as a case study in the Final Evaluation?

46. What was your previous experience of applying for funding (from any source)?

47. Had you applied for funding from the North of Tyne CLLD more generally previously?

48. Have you applied for other funding since (not just CLLD funding)? For the same project/activity or something else.

49. Are you developing other projects or ideas for which you may be looking for funding in the future?

50. How has your experience with the CLLD project influenced your future plans?

51. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make in relation to the CLLD project in the North of Tyne area?

Thanks and close.

Appendix 4: Distribution of impacts

Figure 27: North of Tyne CLLD: Spread of people supported (ERDF Participants / potential entrepreneurs).

Source: Newcastle City Council North of Tyne CLLD Programme Monitoring Data
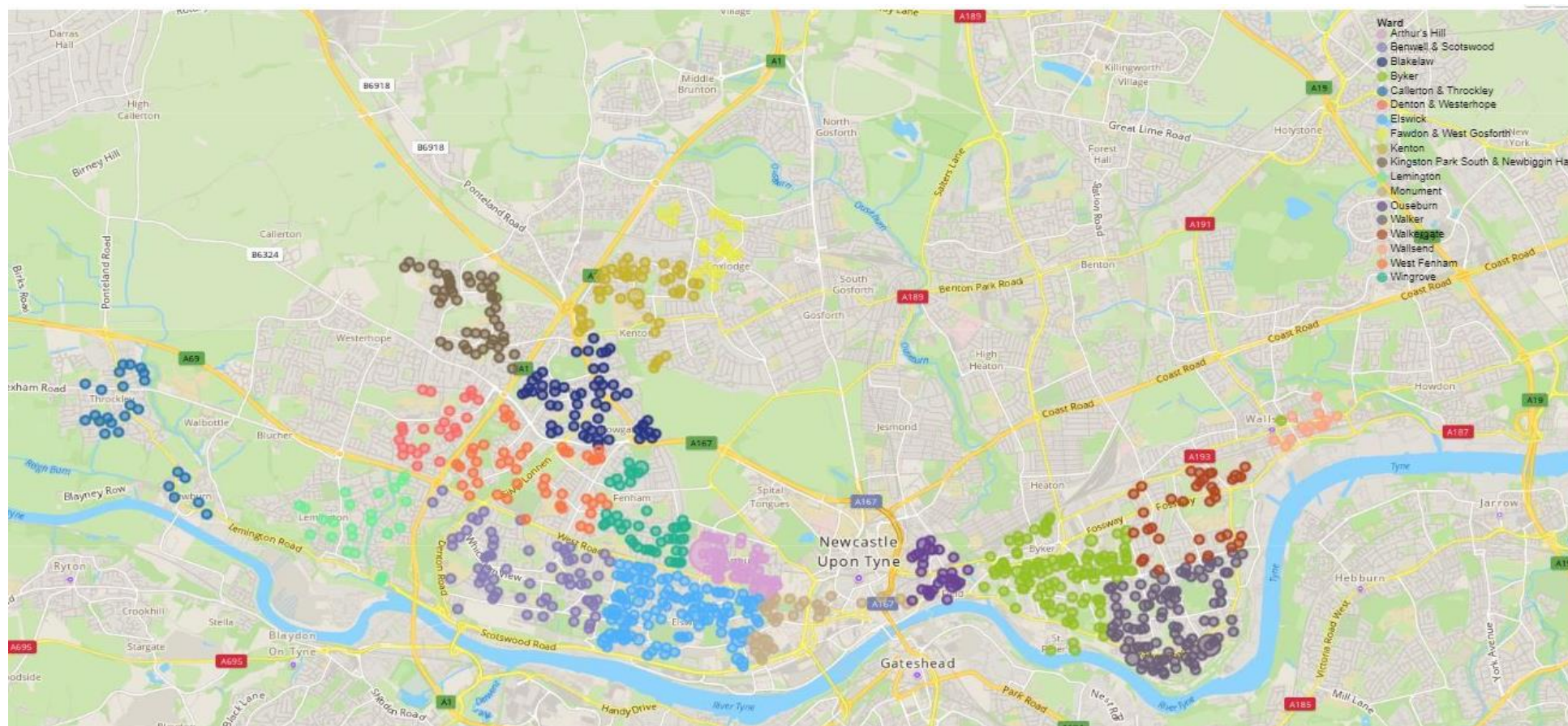
Figure 28: Location of CLLD-supported enterprises (ERDF and ESF)
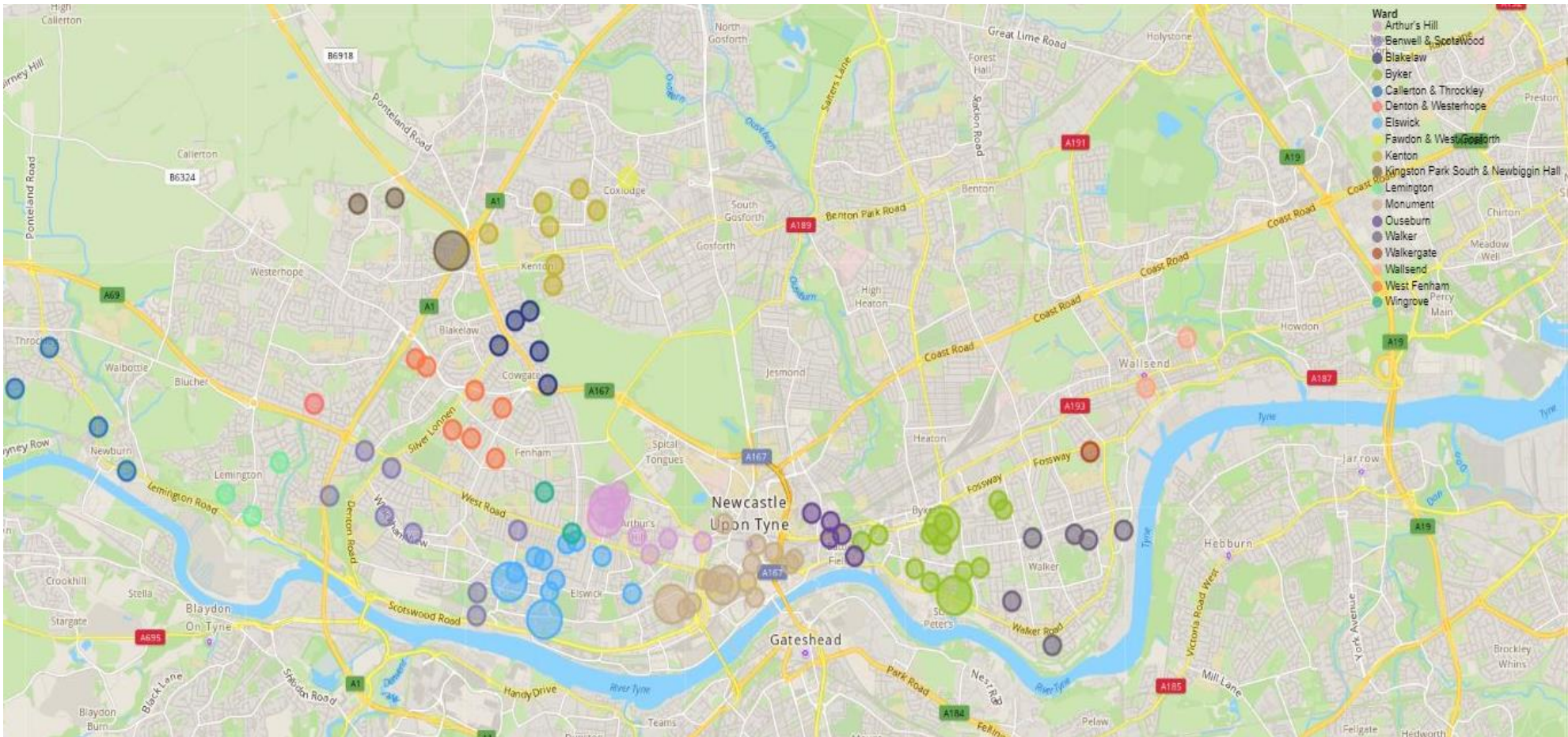
Source: Newcastle City Council North of Tyne CLLD Programme Monitoring Data

Appendix 5: Full list of projects

ESF-funded projects

Lead Organisation	Project code	Project Title
Building Futures East	LR1-ESF-1004	BEaT
Reviving the Heart of the West End	R3-ESF-1003	Routes to Work (R2W)
Earth Doctors	R3-ESF-1001	One Loaf at a Time
The Millin Charity	R3-ESF-1007	Steps Together
Chinese Learning Centre	R3-ESF-1010	Truly Home
Building Futures East	R3-ESF-1013	Stitch Sisters
Riverside Community Health Project	R4-ESF-1016	Steps to Employment
The Recruitment Junction	R4-ESF-1015	Ex-offenders Employment Programme
Unisus (previously Cygnet North East)	SR2-ESF-1002	Create Your Future
FIRST Face to Face	R3-ESF-1001	Flying Sparks
Children North East	LR2-ESF-1004	Confident Adults Can
Scotswood Natural Community Garden	LR1-ESF-1003	Growing Together

Lead Organisation	Project code	Project Title
First Step	SR2-ESF-1003	Our Time Now
Pottery Bank Community Centre	LR2-ESF-1001	Home Grown
Tyne Housing Association	R4-ESF-1018	Moving On
Sunderland Software City (NEBIC)	R4-ESF-1017	Go-Reboot Plus
Gateshead College and FareShare	R3-ESF-1005	Pathways to Progress
PROPS NE	R3-ESF-1011	Engage and Progress
Twisting Ducks Theatre Company	R3-ESF-1009	Drama Works
Sport Works	R3-ESF-1014	Revive
The Skill Mill	R3-ESF-1008	Skill Mill Urban Green
St Martin's Centre Partnership	R3-ESF-1002	The Avenue to Success
Northern Learning Trust	LR2-ESF-1002	Learning Hives

ERDF-funded projects (capital)

Lead Organisation	Project code	Project Title
Cobalt Too CIC	R3 - ERDF CAP - 1003	THINK - A Top Floor Creative Work Hub
Riverside Community Health Project	R3 - ERDF CAP - 1002	THINK - A Top Floor Creative Work Hub

ERDF-Funded Projects (revenue)

Lead Organisation	Project code	Project Title
The Millin Charity	LR2-ERDF-1002	A Chance to Trade
Reviving the Heart of the West End	LR3 – ERDF - 1010	HOW2 Start and Grow Your Business
Upstart Enterprise	R4 – ERDF - 4002	Are you an Upstart?
FIRST Face to Face	R5–ERDF–5001	Destination Growth
Junction Point	R4 – ERDF - 4001	Passion to Paycheque
PNE	LR2-ERDF-1001	The Business Hub

Appendix 6: Case studies

Case studies were developed for eight projects in total, five funded through ESF (**Drama Works**, **Truly Home**, **Engage and Progress**, **Routes to Work** and **Flying Sparks**), one funded through ERDF (**Passion to Paycheque**) and two complementary projects funded by ESF and ERDF and delivered by one organisation (**Steps Together / A Chance to Trade**). These highlight the diversity and innovative nature of the projects supported by the CLLD Programme, which was facilitated by the selection processes implemented by the LAG. Signal data has also been captured to clearly illustrate the project impacts on participants, and ultimately the valuable contributions at a project-level.

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

The Twisting Ducks Theatre Company supports people with learning disabilities and autism to produce creative work that gives voice to their lived experience. The organisation successfully secured CLLD funding for their program 'Drama Works'; an outreach initiative to help participants develop their employability skills and ultimately secure a job. Throughout the programme, Twisting Ducks identified people from the local community and offered them opportunities to gain work experience, engage in one-on-one support with staff and develop their skills and confidence. The project's aim to support three people into employment was in keeping with the company's general objective of raising community visibility and tackling social inequalities.

CLLD SUPPORT

The LAG was available to provide guidance at every step of the project; from the application process, to finance management, to data monitoring and collection. The LAG and CLLD team maintained an ongoing rapport with the project team and responded to queries concerning eligibility, budgeting and ESF requirements with clarity and efficiency. Through CLLD guidance on remote working and Teams, the project team were to adapt their delivery plan to maintain communication with participants and partners throughout the pandemic period. Staff members also received comprehensive training on data collection and monitoring tools such as Evolutive and SIGNAL; the latter of which was used to identify issues that participants were facing, and to explore solutions to these issues.

DRAMA WORKS

> " It was really valuable learning for us. It made us think about how to structure our support and enabled us to make processes like our staff induction more accessible. Now we're in a better position to take on more employees with lived experience, and give them the support they need. "

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

With the support of the CLLD programme, the project's outcomes had surpassed expectations, with 'Drama Works' aiding **five** clients into employment over the aspirational target of three. As well as attaining positive outcomes throughout the project, Twisting Ducks has also built up the network and infrastructure to continue supporting participant development beyond its duration. Its renewed links with partners (such as local colleges, for example) has enabled for employed community members to give peer support to those with learning disabilities and autism, helping them build confidence to re-enter education and /or employment.

Signal data for Drama Works

Figure 29: Participants' baseline data upon joining the Drama Works programme

Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

PROPS is a specialist drugs and alcohol carer service based in Newcastle that has been working within communities for 25 years. The aim of the charity is to support people affected by someone else's drug or alcohol misuse and offer practical help and emotional support. The charity, where appropriate provides a range of interventions and builds a team around an affected family which may involve inviting other services to be apart of this team. After successfully applying for CLLD funding, PROPS established their project, Engage and Progress, which aims to support carers who have left employment or are on long term sick from work due to their caring responsibilities. The overall objective of the project therefore primarily centres on supporting carers back into education, training, or employment, but within that provide the necessary support to build up peoples confidence and aid their overall wellbeing.

CLLD SUPPORT

CLLD engagement helped PROPS to provide reassurance and support the project in finding new ways to increase their direct interactions with carers in need. The projects use of SIGNAL played a central role to this as it gave the charity an effective platform to delve deeper into carers lives and gain a better understanding of the underlying factors causing unemployment or long-term sickness leave. The factors had not arisen during PROPS' previous interventions, demonstrating the significance of SIGNAL in gaining insight into factors within people's social environment that may be acting as hidden barriers. Through identifying these barriers, the project was able to have more direct interactions with carers through more open conversations and 1:1 support. After the success of using SIGNAL for Engage and Progress, PROPS hopes to incorporate the measuring tool into the wider work of the charity to provide a clearer vision of the hidden obstacles within carers lives and thus increase the effectiveness of their support.

ENGAGE AND PROGRESS

> " We aren't the usual CLLD client, but using SIGNAL gave us the platform to talk to people about their lives in detail and help them overcome those hidden barriers. The SIGNAL survey opened everything up and gave us a clearer vision of those obtacles in carer's lives - allowing us to help restore their confidence and build a plan to reach their goals. "

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

One of the key impacts of Engage and Progress, and the projects use of SIGNAL, has been to uncover underlying barriers within carers' lives and thus signpost them to the correct services when these services were not available in house. This led to more participants/carers involved in the project entering into employment, with one carer starting their own business and becoming self-employed. Moreover, and in terms of social impact, PROPS found that most carers involved with the project found that giving back to their local community was often an effective step in enriching their own lives. Before Engage and Progress, the charity had not considered how people can contribute to their local community, and as such, PROPS gained three volunteers and a care coordinator through the project to carry on the work started with CLLD funding. Further, given the collaborative structure of CLLD funding, PROPS has been able to engage in effective partnership working with other CLLD funded projects and, given that they're a signposting charity, this has been particularly beneficial.

Signal data for Engage and Process
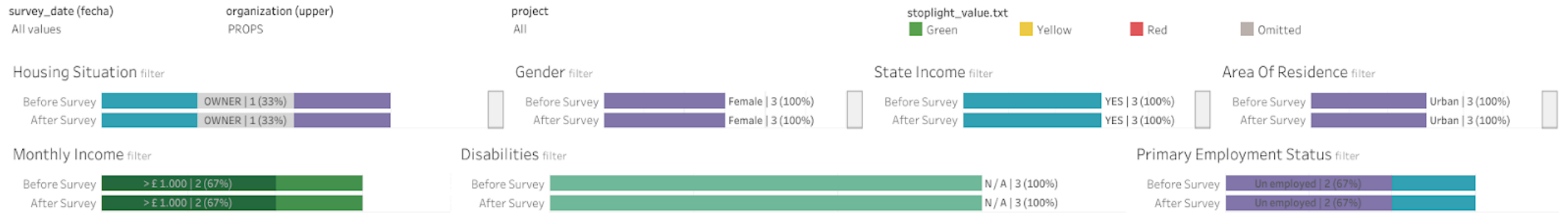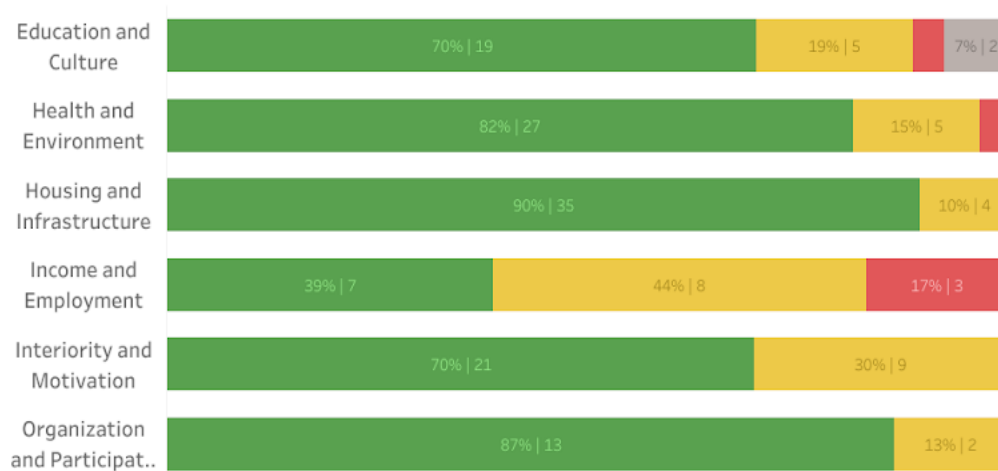
Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

FIRST is a small independent business with a social mission. Based in Gateshead and operational around Tyne and Wear, FIRST is a learning and development organisation that supports an inclusive economy approach to empowering enterprise skills and supporting residents into employment. FIRST recognises that supporting residents to overcome barriers to learning and developing their skills is critical to solving some of the most complex problems in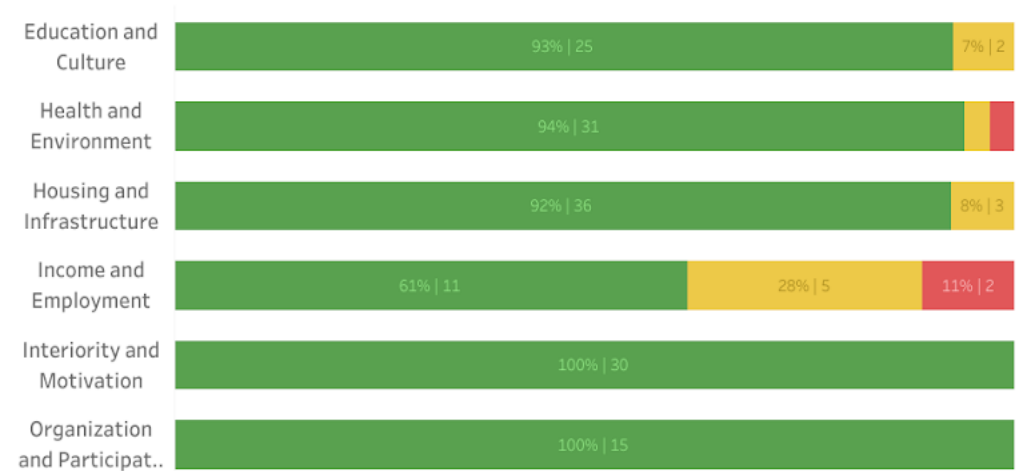 society, and key to doing this is developing the confidence to engage in entrepreneurial thinking or become an entrepreneur.

FIRST were brought into the Flying Sparks project through engagement with Newcastle College and Newcastle City Council, for their expertise in supporting residents facing barriers to skills, and their trusted relationship with the learners. FIRST offered a bridge between the learners and the College's approach to education.

CLLD SUPPORT

FIRST initially came into contact with the North of Tyne CLLD programme through a market engagement event at The Core in Newcastle Helix, and then saw the tender opportunity for 100% match funding in the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) procurement portal. This was an attractive prospect for a small company (at the time FIRST had only three full-time employees), where securing match funding had otherwise been a challenge for them in accessing funded opportunities, particularly for ERDF and ESF projects.

It was also the first time FIRST had tendered for work, and the team at Newcastle City Council offered invaluable support and advice on the tender process which FIRST have seen been able to draw upon to engage in other tender opportunities.

FLYING SPARKS

> " *Overall, the scheme highlights the need for equitable opportunities rather than equal opportunities* "

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

One of the key achievements of the FLYING SPARKS scheme was getting so many learners through the qualification, despite the range of barriers and challenges they faced to their personal development. The model of joined-up working between Newcastle City Council, Newcastle College, and FIRST has been a groundbreaking model and has the potential to be scaled up further.

Following the FLYING SPARKS project, FIRST are now engaging more closely with industry to identify their skills needs and develop apprenticeship schemes. FIRST then offer development workshops to meet these needs. This includes both communication and enterprise skills
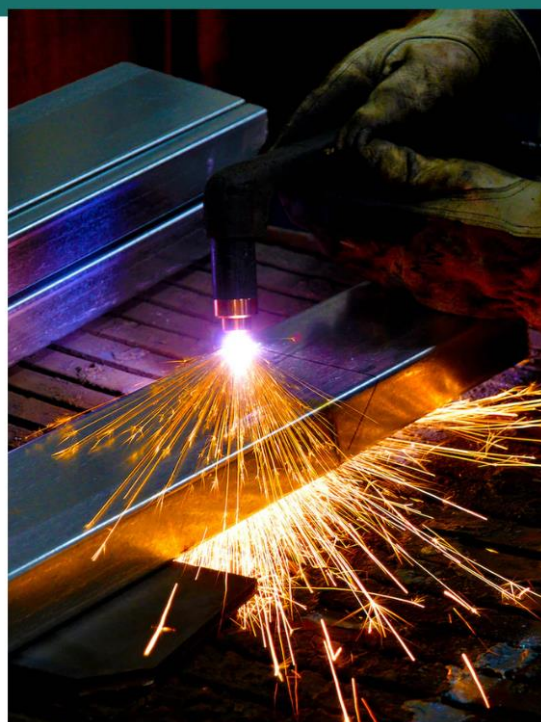
Signal data for FLYING SPARKS

Figure 30: Participants' baseline data upon joining the FLYING SPARKS programme

Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

Junction Point supports change makers to achieve any kind of sustainable and positive change. After successfully applying for CLLD funding, Junction Point's project, Passion to Paycheque, worked with residents in Newcastle to provide support and seed funding to develop new activities & projects to benefit the local community. The objective of the project was to allow participants to pilot their own projects and engage the community to understand what works well and identify any issues. Following this, participants deliver their pilots and measure their impacts. The aim is to turn these pilots into social enterprises and registered businesses working within the community.

CLLD SUPPORT

The main attraction for Junction Point in applying for funding was the desire to expand their offering of business support to individuals. With CLLD support, Passion to Paycheque supported individuals in mapping out their vision and supporting them in ways they could achieve it. Reflecting this support, the project uncovered that people often have the right passion, but maybe lack the confidence or resources to make a social impact. CLLD support therefore meant people could explore ideas without having a registered business, allowing them a space to make mistakes and understand how best to engage the local community, whilst also enacting improvements along the way.

PASSION TO PAYCHEQUE

The CLLD programme empowers local communities to address their own needs. When communities can identify their own issues and collaborate to implement solutions, development becomes a lot more sustainable. Communities are able to take pride in what they do. It allowed us to support community and individual aspirations and achieve a substantial social impact.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

A key achievement of Passion to Paycheque has been getting participants to go on and register their companies and start work within the local community. This provides a huge multiplier effect from the initial CLLD funding in terms of social impact, given these organisations are growing and expanding within the community and employing increasing numbers of full-time staff. For individuals that did not go on to deliver their pilot, Junction Point was able to signpost them to relevant organisations that could offer more suited support. Further, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Junction Point offered a number of online sessions and online resources which are still available and are highly encouraged to use, demonstrating a real legacy to the project.
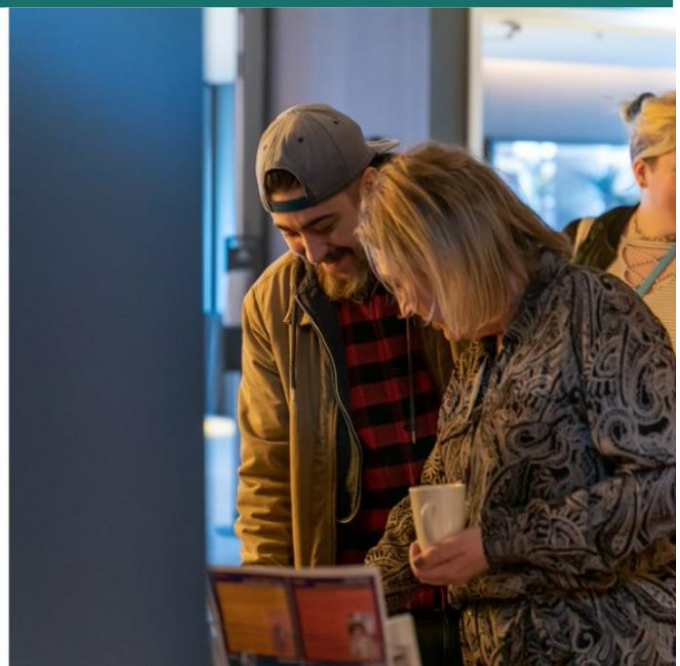
Signal data for Passion to Paycheque

survey_date (fecha)
All values

organization (upper)
JUNCTION POINT

project
All

stoplight_value.txt
■ Green   ■ Yellow   ■ Red   ■ Omitted

Housing Situation filter
Before Survey | COUNCIL/HOUSING ASSOCIATION | 6 (67%)
After Survey | PRIVATE RENTAL | 4 (44%)

Gender filter
Before Survey | Male | 4 (44%) | Female | 4 (44%)
After Survey | Male | 4 (44%) | Female | 4 (44%)

State Income filter
Before Survey | YES | 7 (78%)
After Survey | YES | 4 (44%) | NO | 4 (44%)

Area Of Residence filter
Before Survey | Urban | 8 (89%)
After Survey | Urban | 7 (78%)

Monthly Income filter
Before Survey | > £ 1.000 | 3 (33%) | < £ 100 | 5 (56%)
After Survey | > £ 1.000 | 4 (44%) | =< £ 1.000 | 3 (33%)

Disabilities filter
Before Survey | N/A | 9 (100%)
After Survey | N/A | 9 (100%)

Primary Employment Status filter
Before Survey | Un employed | 7 (78%)
After Survey | Un employed | 4 (44%) | Employed | 3 (33%)

Before Survey Dimensions

Dimension	Green	Yellow	Red
Education and Culture	74% | 60	17% | 14	6% | 5
Health and Environment	78% | 77	12% | 12	9% | 9
Housing and Infrastructure	87% | 102	12% | 14	
Income and Employment	35% | 19	20% | 11	43% | 23
Interiority and Motivation	61% | 55	29% | 26	
Organization and Participat..	58% | 26	16% | 7	24% | 11

After Survey Dimensions

Dimension	Green	Yellow	Red
Education and Culture	74% | 60	21% | 17	
Health and Environment	76% | 75	23% | 23	
Housing and Infrastructure	74% | 86	25% | 29	
Income and Employment	41% | 22	41% | 22	19% | 10
Interiority and Motivation	79% | 71	20% | 18	
Organization and Participat..	73% | 33	24% | 11	

Before Survey Type
Before Survey

Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

CICT Open Learning Centre is an Ofsted accredited adult training provider which seeks to 'promote social inclusion, equality and diversity' through the provision of education to local and newly settled residents.

The Chinese Learning Centre (CLC) secured CLLD funding for the 'Truly Home' project. This is targeted BAME communities within Newcastle, Gateshead and Wallsend and offered 'holistic learning support' in the form of online and in person classes, day trips, and welfare checks. The overall objective was to support clients onto positive outcomes e.g. securing employment, passing exams, entering education. More widely, the project sought to encourage collaboration across BAME communities towards the general goal of 'education', and to promote confidence and independence amongst clients.

CLLD SUPPORT

LThe LAG primarily supported The CLC in the lead up to and throughout the application process. The CLC's funding of 13 years ended in 2018 and therefore their knowledge and experience of applying for grant funding was limited. They were encouraged by the CLLD Delivery Team at an outreach event to apply for the grant. The LAG team assisted The CLC with costing and budgeting e.g. working out how much needed to be allocated for tutors and advisors. They kept in touch with the LAG in regular meetings whereby The CLC were educated on programs such as Evolutive,. They also discussed project ideas and definitions of terms within the application were clarified.

TRULY HOME

> " I think one of our key achievements is the assertiveness of our female clients now. Before the project, they might not have been in education or employment. Following support, they're keen to get into college, and they have the confidence to make new friends and create their own social circles. "

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

PThe primary outcome was CLC's success in securing and delivering an Adult Education Budget. The CLC believe met their ESF target to support 85 clients to a positive outcome (e.g. passing exams, employment and education). They highlighted that the partnership structure of the project meant that VCS organisations did not have to compete with each other for clients and could instead refer clients onto partner organisations. This promoted collaboration between partners and worked towards their vision of local disadvantaged communities engaging in mutual support towards the goal of 'learning'. The CLC hope to maintain partnership after program end.

Signal Data for Truly Home
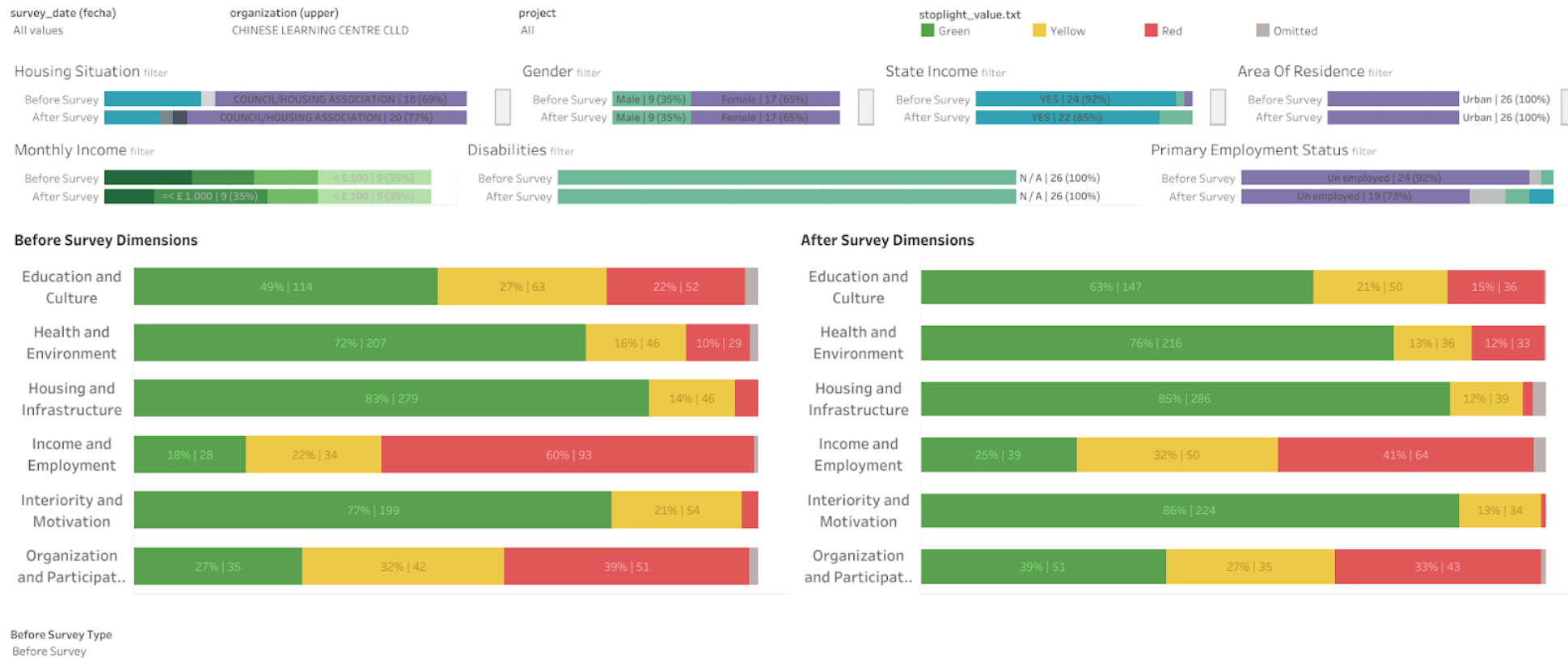
Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

Reviving the Heart of the West End (RHWE) has been based in the West end of Newcastle for over 20 years. The charity focuses on employability support for the most disadvantaged wards of the city, and RHWE's work is centred on restoring people's self belief and developing an environment where people trust the organisation to support them on their journey. Their CLLD funded project, Routes to Work (R2W), naturally reflects the wider work of RHWE on offering employability support, but also delves deeper into the barriers to employability. The project provides a 7 week STEPs course, which is also a Pacific Institute Accredited course, where people are offered transformational, rather than transactional, support. This includes how to practice positive self-talk and workshops with an array of engaging activities, including identifying how personality types connect to employment and advice on financial wellbeing. R2W has also been able to adapt and be flexible to what people's needs are. For example, there has been clusters of people that have all needed support in a particular area or others that required shorter courses - R2W have accommodated for all these needs thus demonstrating true community-led local development.

CLLD SUPPORT

CLLD support naturally aligned to the objectives of the project. The funding recognised that there needs to be an initial point of contact that allows a person to build a connection and trust with RHWE and is then able to flourish with ongoing support. CLLD support therefore allowed the project to evidence that, in general, people facing inequalities in both opportunity and outcome, need between 8 and 19 months before they feel a sense of control restored over their lives. It is at this point where the effectiveness of employability support increases. Further, and importantly, through ESF and ERDF funding, R2W has been able to create referral pathways to other partners offering a more technical service, for instance financial wellbeing expert services. This has therefore allowed R2W to be people focused and creative in its approach to supporting employability - recognising that a traditional, transactional method is less appropriate. The project also used SIGNAL to capture impact, commenting that it gave them the ability to unlock conversations that they wouldn't normally have around more sensitive issues, allowing the project to capture various and perhaps more hidden barriers to employment in people's lives.

ROUTES TO WORK (R2W)

> CLLD mirrors who we are the support we want to offer - grassroots, people focused, and place-based. CLLD support is creative and innovative in its approach, allowing us to give people a purpose and provide communities with stronger links to build a community of support around them.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

There have been clear outcomes in increased numbers of people in education, training or employment - fulfilling the objectives of the project. In terms of impacts created by CLLD funding, partnership and networking has been key for R2W, particularly in overcoming challenges. For example, after quickly realising that volunteering is often the first step in easing people back into employment, RHWE was able to partner with another CLLD project to offer a volunteering course, also demonstrating a huge legacy to the project. This legacy is also backed up by a number of people completing the STEPs course going onto becoming STEPs mentors, where they're able to mentor other participants. This has been particularly successful given their lived experience and desire to give back. RHWE has also been able to develop a RHWE Champions programme where people can become Champions in their communities and feedback to the charity about the sort of issues communities are facing thereby acting as a focus group to the communities the charity strives to serve - demonstrating the core values of CLLD and showcasing the social value to the initial funding. This social value is heightened by the sense of community created by R2W. This has grown exponentially amongst participants, with most of them staying in regular contact, providing support and encouragement to each other especially when they have common and shared experiences.
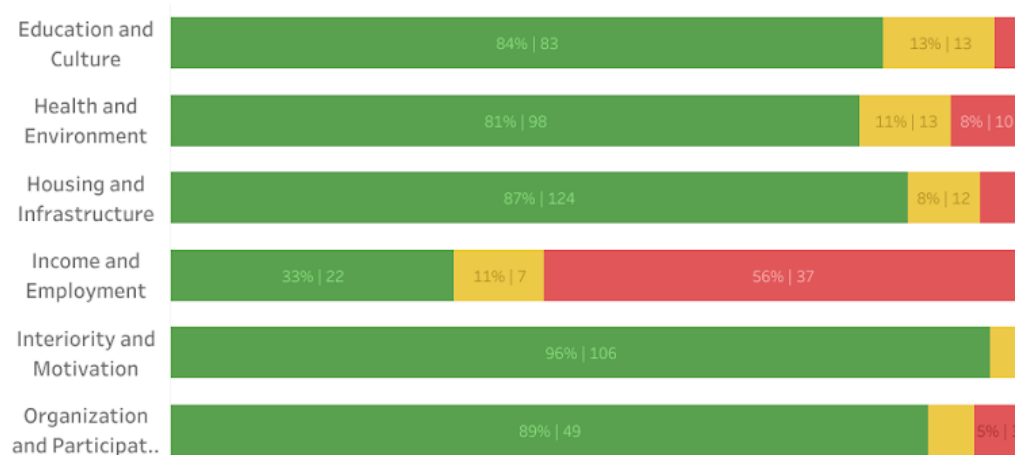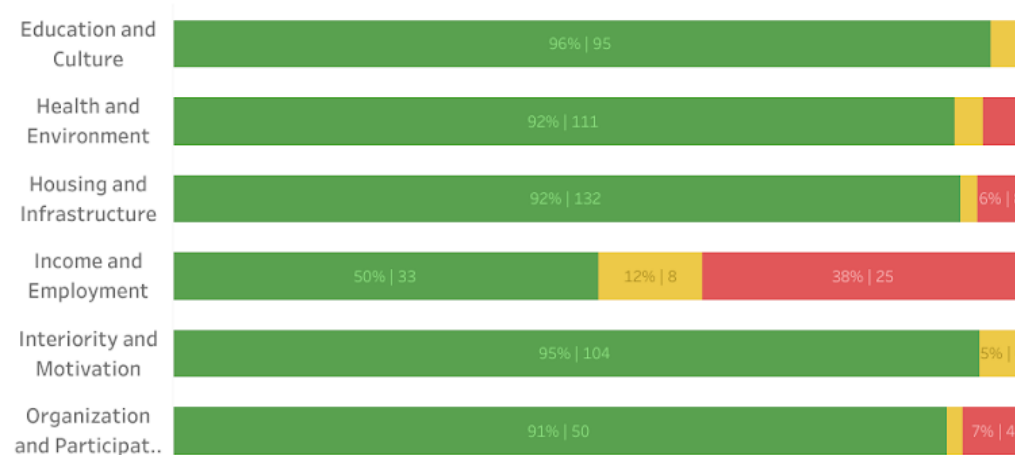
Signal Data for Routes to Work
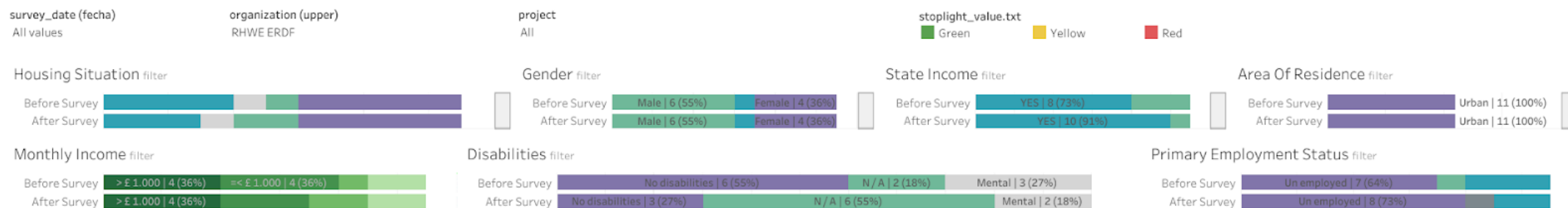
Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data j

CASE STUDY

TheMillinCharity

SUMMARY

The Millin Charity provides enterprising and employability services to women living in marginalised communities within Newcastle and Gateshead. Having supported the financial and educational progression of BAME and economically inactive women for several decades (since 1999), the charity was initially attracted to CLLD funding due to its targeting toward disadvantaged groups. Following approval, the funding contributed towards the upkeep of two different projects; Steps Together and A Chance to Trade. The former offered clients training, educational services and one on one sessions to the end of developing employability skills and building confidence. The latter offered enterprising women the opportunity to sell their products at the local Grainger market on a monthly basis. Both were inkeeping with the charity's overall aim of promoting the financial and personal independence of women within its targetted communities.

CLLD SUPPORT

SThe team were highly positive about the CLLD support with regards to the application process. The application itself was straightforward and easy to understand - there were opportunities to ask the LAG for clarification, such as what CLLD wanted funded projects. to achieve The Millin Charity team engaged in a training day with the LAG focused on monitoring tools such as Evolutive and SIGNAL – (although the charity had already been introduced to the latter beforehand).

During project rollout, the LAG were prompt with their responses to queries. They also supported Millin on paperwork, e.g. helping to claim back expenses at the end of each quarter.

STEPS TOGETHER / A CHANCE TO TRADE

" Some of our clients may not have known what the term 'enterprising' entailed when they first took part. What the funding allowed us to do was to break these barriers and reach out to the communities... to help people access opportunities and build confidence' "
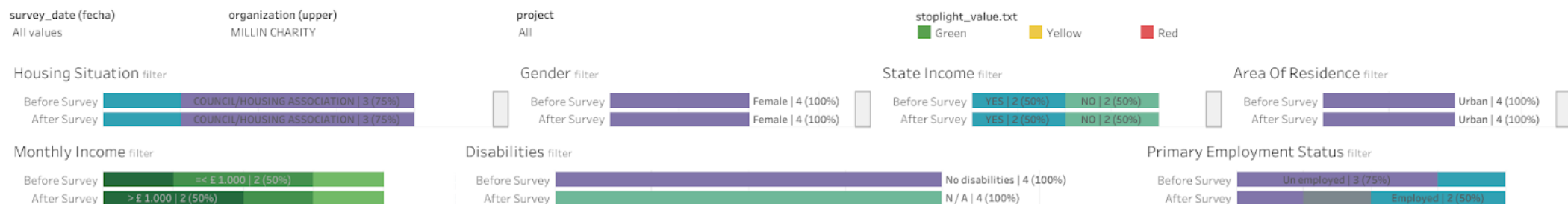
IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

Through the two CLLD funded programs, the charity was able to support more clients than expected as local women fell on socioeconomic hardship during the COVID pandemic and sought out support. S & K said that the programs' key achievement was helping these women to maintain motivation and build confidence throughout the pandemic - even supporting them to gain employment during an especially difficult period. A primary outcome for the charity itself was their enhanced portfolio - charity now has credentials associated with managing a large grant from an ESF fund, and due to the use of monitoring tools now has more data to demonstrate their outcomes and success.

CHALLENGES

There were a range of challenges to delivery due to COVID - including adapting to online delivery, finding clients and maintaining engagement with them. They met the latter challenge by organising online emotional motivation workshops to keep clients pursuing their goals. One example was the difficulty in acquiring signatures from clients during ID processes. With support from the LAG team the charity developed a pathway to acquire the signatures remotely.

Signal Data for Steps Together / Chance to Trade

| survey_date (fecha) | organization (upper) | project | stoplight_value.txt |
| All values | MILLIN CHARITY | All | ■ Green ■ Yellow ■ Red |

Housing Situation filter

| Before Survey | | COUNCIL/HOUSING ASSOCIATION \| 3 (75%) |
| After Survey | | COUNCIL/HOUSING ASSOCIATION \| 3 (75%) |

Gender filter

| Before Survey | Female \| 4 (100%) |
| After Survey | Female \| 4 (100%) |

State Income filter

| Before Survey | YES \| 2 (50%) | NO \| 2 (50%) |
| After Survey | YES \| 2 (50%) | NO \| 2 (50%) |

Area Of Residence filter

| Before Survey | Urban \| 4 (100%) |
| After Survey | Urban \| 4 (100%) |

Monthly Income filter

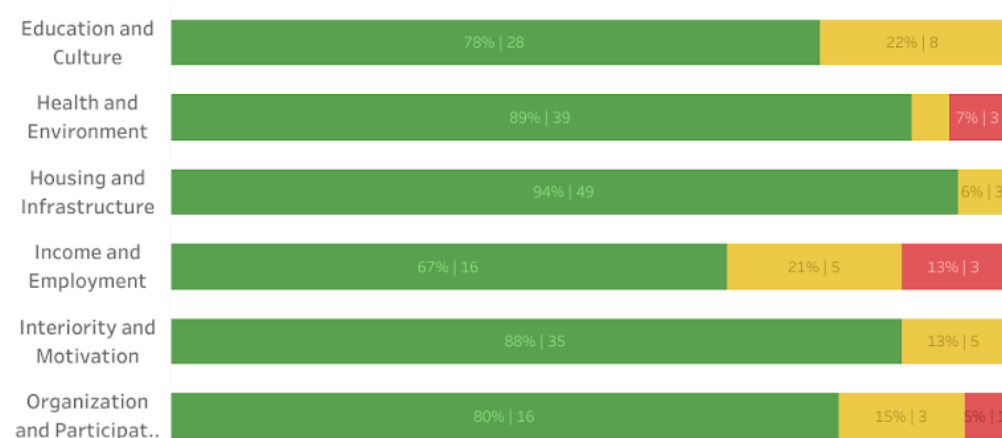| Before Survey | =< £ 1.000 \| 2 (50%) |
| After Survey | > £ 1.000 \| 2 (50%) |

Disabilities filter

| Before Survey | No disabilities \| 4 (100%) |
| After Survey | N / A \| 4 (100%) |

Primary Employment Status filter

| Before Survey | Un employed \| 3 (75%) |
| After Survey | Employed \| 2 (50%) |

Before Survey Dimensions

Education and Culture	94% | 34
Health and Environment	89% | 39	7% | 3
Housing and Infrastructure	94% | 49
Income and Employment	46% | 11	33% | 8	21% | 5
Interiority and Motivation	85% | 34	15% | 6
Organization and Participat..	85% | 17	15% | 3

After Survey Dimensions

Education and Culture	78% | 28	22% | 8
Health and Environment	89% | 39	7% | 3
Housing and Infrastructure	94% | 49	6% | 3
Income and Employment	67% | 16	21% | 5	13% | 3
Interiority and Motivation	88% | 35	13% | 5
Organization and Participat..	80% | 16	15% | 3	5% | 1

Before Survey Type
Before Survey

Source: Signal team, CLLD Programme Monitoring data

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