



Neighbourhoods That Work

Year 3 Evaluation Report

Summary - August 2019



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1. HEADLINE IMPACT

About this report

- 1.1 In March 2019 ERS was commissioned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council to evaluate the Neighbourhoods That Work Programme (NTW). This is the Year 3 Evaluation Summary Report that considers the activity undertaken to date, the impact of the investment and opportunities for the future as the NTW Programme progresses into the final 15 months of activity. This summary report is based on a more detailed evaluation report and is intended to draw out the headline messages from the evaluation.

Supporting the Economic Growth Agenda

- 1.2 The investment has directly **evidenced supporting 114 long term unemployed people into sustainable employment¹**. The actual number is likely to be much higher due to the complexity of tracking the impact of community-based support and intervention. More widely, **almost 300 people with complex needs reported improved confidence in competing for jobs** following volunteering or work placement/taster. Almost 700 local people have enhanced their skills as a direct consequence of programme activity. Future monitoring will continue to track their journey, and potential transition into work.
- 1.3 The total estimated **net economic impact (net GVA) across Great Yarmouth is almost £1.2m**. In addition, additional tax-payer savings from a reduction in employment related benefit is estimated at £562,577, with housing benefit savings of a further £187,320 per annum. On a local level, **sustained employment has increased Council Tax generation by £24,497 per annum** through a reduction in non-working households.
- 1.4 Since October 2018 there has been less direct emphasis upon the employability agenda since the emergence of the complementary Building Better Opportunities programmes and the cessation of NTW roles that previously underpinned employability support activity. However, the NTW programme still contributes to this agenda through communitybased opportunities. Our research has identified that **more could be achieved by building relationships with local businesses and matching work placement, apprenticeships and job opportunities to residents supported via NTW**. There is also scope for the NTW approach to more effectively support residents into opportunities generated through large capital projects emerging via the GYBC economic growth agenda.

Strengthening Communities, Improving Services and Overall Wellbeing

- 1.5 Around **4000 people have participated in community events** and made new connections within their community. Almost **500 people have progressed to join a new group or network**, reinforcing community infrastructure.

¹ The definition of sustainable employment used in the NTW programme is 'A job (part time or full time) that lasts for more than six months or a work-related skill or capability that enables a person to be in continuous work via temporary contracts'

- 1.6 Over **900 people have experienced smooth, seamless referrals into services from single contact points** and in excess of **50 service providers** reported that the investment has improved their reach to most vulnerable residents. Almost **500 people have reported improved well-being** from having issues addressed, half of which were supported to overcome at least one personal challenge.
- 1.7 Over £1.5m of additional funds have been levered into NTW communities via Community Development and GYBC Neighbourhood Management support since 2015, through supporting voluntary and community groups to apply for and secure external grant funding.

The Neighbourhood Approach and Theory of Change

- 1.8 The focus on three geographical areas provides the programme with a clear focus on a cohort of local people who statistically are in significant need. **The approach of targeting NTW Programme activity at the most disadvantaged communities remains appropriate, enabling a real focus of resources on the people most in need of support.**
- 1.9 The continuation of the neighbourhood management model is a priority. The GYBC Neighbourhoods and Communities staff underpin the whole approach and are a lever for improving mainstream/externally funded services (reducing duplication, etc.) whilst also potentially providing the bedrock for any future bespoke community development programme/projects. However, a greater resource commitment from partner agencies should be explored to progress this work post 2020.
- 1.10 The evaluation has identified the scale of work undertaken and the ‘golden threads’ that link activity and positive outcomes for participants. However, there is limited discernible change in headline indicators for neighbourhoods – the areas benefitting from NTW remain the most disadvantaged across the borough. To some extent this reflects the scale of the problem, especially in relation to wider social changes. For example, welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit, in addition to the continuing reduction in services to support the most vulnerable.
- 1.11 We also know that the communities (albeit some more than others) are dynamic in nature. In addition to those already living in the NTW neighbourhoods, many new people to the borough, especially those most in need of additional support services, tend to arrive into the three identified neighbourhoods, presenting a continual challenge for those seeking to lead the creation of resilient communities.
- 1.12 The NTW programme is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and for the final year of funding, the amount has tapered. However, additional funding has been sourced and aligned from Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG and NCC, via the integrated commissioning group. This has been utilised to retain a full complement of Community Development work, as the underpinning function of the success of the NTW Programme. In addition, a part-time post has been established to provide development support to small VCSE organisations.

Transforming Services

- 1.13 NTW has had an impact upon the design and delivery of a number of key services:

- The Head of Integrated Commissioning for Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG and Norfolk County Council (NCC) understands the value of the connector-type approach, and in 2016 championed the alignment of VCSE infrastructure development resource with the NTW programme;
- The NCC Better Together Programme aims to tackle loneliness and isolation via a team of NTW inspired Life Connectors and a complementary Community Development Worker, aligned to NTW delivery;
- The health led Social Prescribing programme has connector posts, directly modelled on NTW learning and in line with the programme's theory of change;
- The East Coast Community Healthcare project is undergoing service redesign, being shaped by NTW partners to develop a model embedded in communities;
- Mancroft Advice Project drew from the NTW model and utilised it to develop a successful application to the Youth Investment Fund, creating a youth focussed delivery model to operate alongside NTW and link into neighbourhood management teams and projects;
- DIAL have extended their core delivery to better meet community needs by operating out of hours in evenings and over weekends, based on intelligence gained from working within NTW;
- Voluntary Norfolk has adopted a more 'systems' approach mindset to how it plans and delivers services. For example the Carers Matter service for young carers has adopted a 'Life Connector' type approach;
- MIND created a replica volunteer coordinator in Waveney as they found the Great Yarmouth volunteer coordinator post to be a great benefit; and
- East Coast College directly drew upon the NTW approach and were able to present a convincing and successful bid for ESF BBO Programme funding, including a micro grant scheme directly investing in employability via community based infrastructure.

2. NEXT STEPS

Programme Funding and Future Planning

2.1 The NTW Programme has a high profile across the neighbourhoods it supports and with key services providers/wider stakeholders. Partners understand why it was established, the priorities and core activities. This is a key strength. **There is a need however to more fully articulate and publicise the impact generated.**

2.2 There is a requirement to establish a timetable for GYBC to consider the model for future neighbourhood management and community development activity. It is recommended that this is undertaken during 2019, to enable necessary evidence to be collected, options to be appraised and future funding sources identified. The willingness and commitment of partner agencies to support this kind of work in the future needs to be explored as part of this thinking.

2.3 As the projected end date moves closer, there is a need for a strategic review to answer the following key questions:

- Have the outcomes and impacts generated been worth the investment made?
- What outcomes and impacts would we expect to see generated with further investment post October 2020?
- How has the NTW programme approach contributed to the strategic priorities of GYBC and other partner organisations? And what is the scope from 2020 onwards?
- What is the mechanism to bring partner agencies together to identify specific outcomes which they can have a strong impact upon only by working together much more effectively or redesigning services across organisational boundaries?
- What is the mechanism for securing a dialogue with all public sector partners about co-funding successful elements of the NTW programme from 2020?

2.4 There is a need for the NTW to identify a prioritised list of services to be improved, the reasons why this is important, etc. Such an approach, if presented the correct way, is likely to appeal to senior decision makers to deliver stronger outcomes. This could include:

- Housing providers i.e. to better support vulnerable people, particularly those with insecure tenancies;
- Adult and Children's Services i.e. they support a large number of parents and there is scope for family support plans to include access to a wider range of more suitable community-based activities;
- Environmental Services i.e. to work with communities on environmental issues such as recycling and improving street cleanliness;
- Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust to develop the recovery centre model further so that it uses community assets as part of building resilience and recovery for residents;
- Probation Service i.e. to link probationers more effectively into community-based support networks and provision to prevent re-offending;

- Training and employability support providers to ensure that employability support is more person-centred, flexible and bespoke to the individual and employers;
- Young people's services i.e. for delivery to be more reflective of the preferences of young people; and
- Voluntary sector to make volunteering more creative, dynamic and inclusive.

2.5 There is a need for senior management and political leaders to understand the added value of the NTW approach and the added value generated to some of the most vulnerable people and key services.

2.6 Whilst the programme can evidence clear positive impact in a number of areas, there is an emphasis during August/September 2019 to scrutinise the programme database to identify the wider impact of community development work, including the importance of social connection, on employability and health outcomes. The next evaluation report due later in 2019 will present a more comprehensive picture of the impact to date.