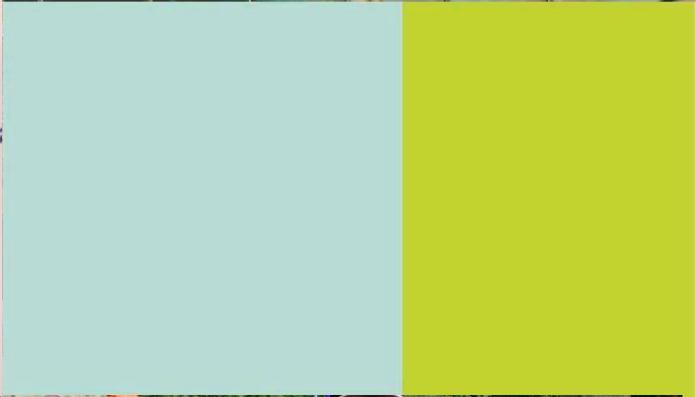


Neighbourhoods That Work Final Evaluation Report 2020

Neighbourhoods
that work



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. In March 2019 ERS was commissioned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council to evaluate the Neighbourhoods That Work Programme (NTW). The delivery model is based principally on the theory of connection; strong communities that are well connected and supported by appropriate community development, and other specialist expertise, are resilient and reduce the demand for support from statutory services.
2. This report summarises the impact of the investment and opportunities for the future. It covers the impact on people; the neighbourhoods as geographic places; service providers; and wider stakeholders. It also considers the economic and social impact generated alongside evidence that supports the approach to community development and its continued relevance looking forward.

Programme Rationale

3. The NTW Programme was established to:
 - Support thriving communities and its idea of how to achieve this is to link up individuals within their communities (increase social capital and resilience);
 - Enable public and voluntary services to better meet the needs of people (responsive and effective public services); and
 - Provide employability support for those who are long-term unemployed (build up skills and training of residents and encourage employment opportunities that match local resident's capabilities) and engage local employers with their community.
4. The NTW Programme was informed by a clear evidence base on the need for improved person-centred approaches to linking local people into services they need but were not likely to access.

The Impact on People

5. The NTW Programme has made a significant impact supporting people, including some of the most vulnerable people with nowhere else to turn. People benefit from having access to the social networks and relationships which form a community. This may be, for example, the benefits to someone's mental health of being able to meaningfully converse with a friend or neighbour regularly, thereby reducing social isolation and lowering the risk of experiencing other physical health conditions. We know that:
 - Almost 4,000 people have made new connections, with 1,399 new friendships formed, having a significant impact on tackling social isolation;
 - 633 residents have become more confident in taking part in community activity by joining a new group or network;
 - Over 400 people have been supported to overcome at least one personal challenge; and
 - Over 1,300 people who engaged at the gateway to NTW experienced a smooth, seamless introduction into wider services. 636 people reported improved wellbeing from having their issues addressed.

6. We have interviewed local people and understand how the support from NTW funded staff have improved lives in so many ways. The community development work undertaken did not involve doing everything for every person or every group but identified opportunities to offer support that acted as a catalyst and widened expansion of services that became self-sufficient.
7. We know that 170 separate groups have been supported that provide a space for local people to take a more active role in their community; and that in excess of £1.5m of additional funds have been levered into NTW communities.

The Place-based Impact

8. The focus on three geographical areas provides the programme with a clear focus on a cohort of local people who 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.
9. The evaluation has identified the scale of work undertaken and the ‘golden threads’ that link activity and positive outcomes for local people. However, there is limited discernible change in headline indicators for neighbourhoods – the areas benefitting from NTW remain the most disadvantaged across the borough. This reflects the fact that deep-seated poverty cannot be resolved in such a short time period and that the NTW Programme was intended as part of a wider, longer-term interventions to reduce disadvantage.
10. The wards around Great Yarmouth town centre have a transient population, as the ‘arriving point’ for new people seeking cheaper housing. Such households new to the borough also require additional support services. The housing offer in such neighbourhoods presents a cyclical challenge for those seeking to lead the creation of resilient and stable communities.



Influence and Impact on Partners

11. We know that NTW has had an impact upon the design and delivery of a number of key services, across a range of organisations including Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group, Norfolk County Council, East Coast College and range of voluntary sector organisations including: Voluntary Norfolk; Mancroft Advice Project; DIAL; and Norfolk and Waveney Mind.
12. By working across partners to enhance awareness and increase collaboration, a total of 25 services reported a decrease in their service being duplicated elsewhere and that 79 separate service providers reported that the NTW Programme has improved their reach to the most vulnerable people in communities. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring there is a voice to articulate ideas for ongoing service improvement based upon the real-time perspective of service users.

Impact on the Economic Growth Agenda

13. The investment has directly evidenced supporting 158 people into employment. The actual number is likely to be much higher due to the complexity of tracking the impact of individuals. More widely, almost 300 people with complex needs reported improved confidence in competing for jobs following volunteering or work placement/taster. Over 700 local people have enhanced their skills as a direct consequence of programme activity.
14. In total, the estimated net economic impact of the project is just over £750,000. In addition, additional tax-payer savings from a reduction in employment related benefit is estimated at £584,241, with housing benefit savings of a further £204,205 per annum. On a local level, sustained employment has increased Council Tax generation by £22,624 per annum through a reduction in non-working households.
15. Since October 2018 there was 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 contributed to this agenda through community-based opportunities.

Wider Social Impact

16. The NTW Programme has been successful in improving the lives of people across the three target areas. Through direct action – advice, support, advocating – often in areas ‘between the cracks’ of mainstream service provision, they have generated significant added value, in the form of:
 - Reduction in: social isolation; worklessness and associated benefits to DWP and NHS, substance misuse alleviated; reoffending; homelessness and failed tenancies; debt and improved money management.
 - Improvements in: skill levels; active citizenship and volunteering; confidence; mental health; physical health; and digital inclusion.
17. The impact has been established by scrutinising the NTW management information database and sense checking the scale of attribution made with the programme management team. The overall social and economic impact generated is circa £16.5m, based upon known monetary values attributed to each of the benefits identified in the bullet points above.



18. To find out more about the NTW Programme visit the YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPY-3UJGGy0>

1. INTRODUCTION

About the Programme

1.1 The Neighbourhoods That Work Programme (NTW) was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The five-year programme commenced in 2015 and was led by Great Yarmouth Borough Council together with seven partner organisations. The NTW Programme was established to:

- Support thriving communities. Its idea of how to achieve this is to link up individuals within their communities (increase social capital and resilience);
- Enable public and voluntary services to better meet the needs of people (responsive and effective public services); and
- Provide employability support for those who are long-term unemployed (build up skills and training of residents and encourage employment opportunities that match local resident's capabilities) and engage local employers with their community.

1.2 The NTW Programme was informed by a clear evidence base on the need for improved person-centred approaches to better link local people into services they need but were not necessarily likely to access. It aimed to build upon existing community development infrastructure, incorporating active and engaged local residents, neighbourhood boards and an array of varied and diverse community and voluntary based organisations. There was a clear emphasis upon championing a humanised approach to service provision, helping people overcome challenges.

1.3 The objective was to connect local communities to the benefits of economic growth by increasing community resilience, by improving the responsiveness of voluntary sector support services and by increasing the participation of communities in driving forward sustainable economic development.

About this report

1.4 In March 2019 ERS was commissioned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council to evaluate the NTW Programme. The evaluation aims to explore the validity of the theory of change by uncovering evidence to demonstrate contribution of the programme to key indicators along the pathways to change.

1.5 This is the Final Evaluation Report that considers the activity undertaken to the end of September 2020, the impact generated and opportunities for the future of NTW-type activity in Great Yarmouth in 2021 and beyond. Previous evaluation reports in 2019 provided real time assessments of activity and included ideas for improving delivery and sharing evidence of impact.

1.6 The report has also been informed by a detailed review of wider documentation and programme data, including the original business case; project management reports and a comprehensive review of the management information database that recorded programme interactions and impact.

1.7 We have interviewed project delivery staff; community leaders; strategic management and frontline officers across range of partners; community and voluntary sector bodies; and people who have engaged with NTW. Their involvement has enabled the evaluation process to identify the impact of the support and ideas for further delivery. To find out more about the NTW Programme visit the YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPY-3UJGGy0>

2. PROGRAMME CONTEXT

Local Context

- 2.1 At the outset there was a clear ethos of supporting the most vulnerable people living in the most disadvantaged communities. A foundation stone for the NTW model was the previous Community Development delivery, and within it the Family Connector Model pilot. This was a proactive approach that sought to work with people to guide them into support to reduce social isolation and begin to consider a raft of other personal issues. The funding from the National Lottery Community Fund enabled a more expansive programme of activity to be delivered between 2015 and 2020.

Rationale for Investment

- 2.2 The lack of close social bonds is the key driver for the connector model adopted. The evidence was that so many individuals were not resilient and not connected to public and voluntary services that meet their needs at the right time or in the right way. The wider benefit of greater local connections to others in their community has considerable value in reducing social isolation, building confidence and sharing of knowledge and resources.
- 2.3 Empowering communities to look after themselves has particular resonance in times of scarcity and declining public resources. In fact, the ability of people to join together and mitigate the worst aspects of poverty and unemployment independently of the state has a long pedigree in UK history. Indeed, it was from this tradition that UK governments of the 2010s drew inspiration in highlighting the need for reciprocity and voluntarism in communities where poverty and unemployment were rife, including the 'Big Society' agenda and the promotion of social prescribing.



- 2.4 Studies have illustrated the positive outcomes associated with the building of community capital. In 2015, for example, the RSA published research which showed that investment in programmes to build and strengthen networks of social relationships generated four types of benefit to members of a community, namely a wellbeing dividend, a citizenship dividend, a capacity dividend and an economic dividend.¹

¹ <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/community-capital-the-value-of-connected-communities>

- 2.5 The What Works Centre for Wellbeing, meanwhile, has published a number of reports drawing on research from across the UK testifying to the value of projects designed to empower local people in neighbourhood-based communities².

Key Finding 1: There was a clear rationale for the NTW Programme approach, underpinned by an understanding and commitment to providing intensive support to vulnerable people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Focus of the Programme

- 2.6 The NTW Programme set out to tackle:

- Social capital in the community. This needs to be strengthened in order to improve individual, household and community resilience, through access to networks for advice, support, and resources.
- Public and voluntary services need to be more approachable and responsive so that the vulnerability and disadvantages of individuals, households and communities are addressed.
- Long-term unemployed residents need to be supported in developing their skills in order to improve access to paid work and meaningful occupation.
- Employment opportunities need to be developed that match the skills, capabilities, strengths and assets of local people to drive forward sustainable economic growth, providing more appropriate economic activity.

- 2.7 While all four points relate to improving local people's individual and community wellbeing, the first two focus more on social resilience and living well together, as individuals within a community, while the latter two focus more on employment and linking people to opportunities in the local economy. Since October 2018 there has been less emphasis upon the latter two bullet points above since the emergence of the complementary Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programmes and the cessation of NTW roles that previously underpinned employability support activity.

Key Finding 2: At the outset of the NTW Programme the objectives were clear and understood by staff and wider partners.

Focus on Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

- 2.8 Great Yarmouth had 13 neighbourhoods in the bottom 10% nationally in terms of relative deprivation. Typically, households and communities in these areas have low levels of resilience, with low ability to cope with gradual, moderate or sudden changes in their lives, making them especially vulnerable to the impacts of changing social, economic and environmental factors.

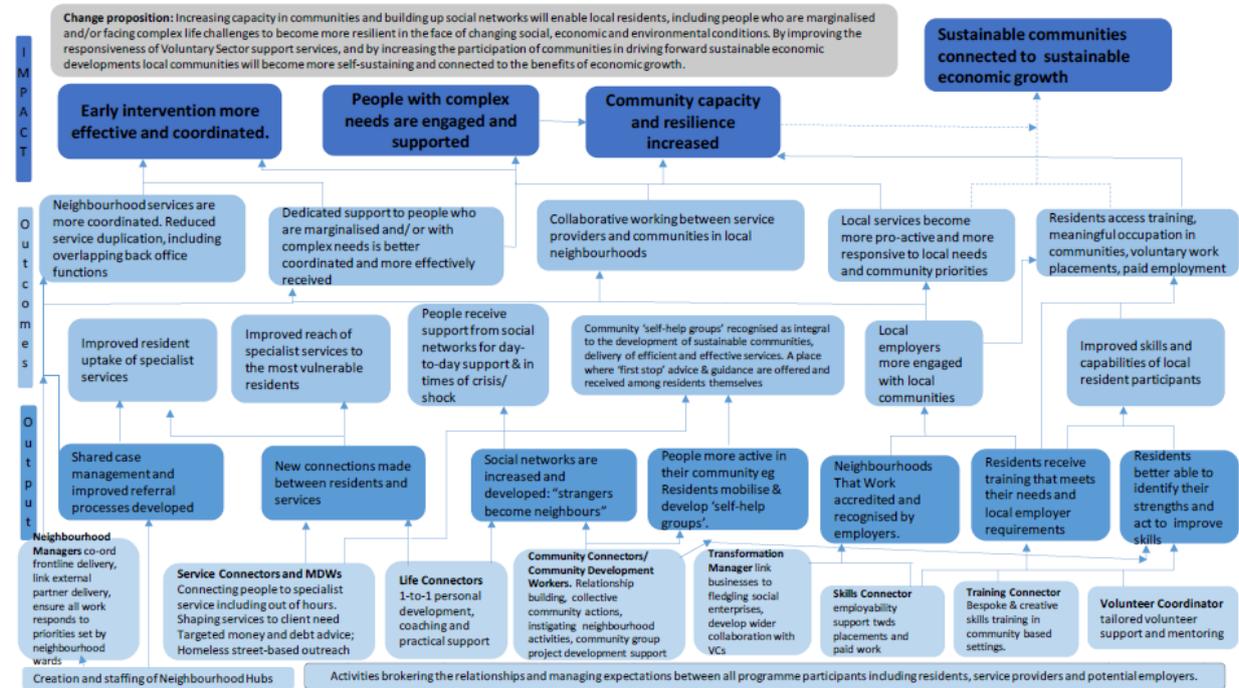
Key Finding 3: The approach of targeting NTW Programme activity at the most disadvantaged communities was entirely appropriate, enabling a real focus of resources on the people most in need of support.

² <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/category/places-and-community/>

Theory of Change

2.9 The NTW Programme was underpinned by a clear and robust theory of change that articulated how the activities delivered would lead to improved outcomes and impacts.

Figure 1: NTW Programme Theory of Change



2.10 As part of the data gathering exercise to inform the evaluation it has been straightforward to gather insight into the progress made in terms of the outputs agreed including:

- New connections between residents and services;
- Shared case management/improved referrals processes developed;
- Helping “strangers become neighbours”;
- Residents receive training;
- Residents better able to identify strengths and act to improve skills; and
- People more active in their community.

2.11 One of the key challenges in evaluating the NTW Programme is identifying the added value on those people directly supported and the additionality generated through each of the distinct roles funded via NTW. Whilst it has been possible to track the journey of improvement for some local people directly impacted, many other people are either unwilling to disclose the impact or are simply not able to be tracked down. Our approach has made the optimum use of data available alongside interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders to identify what has been delivered and the difference this has made.

3. THE DELIVERY MODEL

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the report outlines the background, activity and impact of key elements of the model. Our research with frontline delivery staff has revealed a broad awareness of the approach and examples of how this has been shown to benefit those local people interacting with NTW. The approach concerns itself principally with the quality of the relationship that develops between those providing the service and those being supported. Working in a collaborative way promotes the opportunity for local people to be co-producers of services and support rather than solely consumers of those services.

Delivery Model

- 3.2 The NTW Programme was delivered by Great Yarmouth Borough Council in collaboration with seven delivery partners from the voluntary, public and private sectors: GYROS, Voluntary Norfolk, Business in the Community (BITC), DIAL, East Coast College, Great Yarmouth and Waveney Mind and Future Projects.
- 3.3 The model was delivered by three neighbourhood management hubs. Each provides shared office space for Community Development Workers, Community Connectors and Life Connectors and Skills Connectors, forming the 'patch team', coordinated and led by a Neighbourhood Manager.
- 3.4 In October 2018 a number of partners ceased as active partners, as the roles they hosted were discontinued. These roles included: Service Outreach Connector; Business Connector, Complex Case Manager - Service Transformation, Volunteer Connector; Training Connector; and Skills Connector. At the time the model of delivery was formulated the assumption was made that such roles would not duplicate existing provision. However, the emergence of the Building Better Opportunities Programme (BBO) part-funded by the National Lottery Community Fund resulted in a change of focus for NTW away from employment and skills support that subsequently became the priority for a number of BBO programmes covering Great Yarmouth from 2017. The background to the specific roles outlined above were covered in detail in the Year 4 evaluation report.
- 3.5 The cessation of the NTW Programme roles outlined above was expected and managed, given the lead in time for the BBO Programme and the fact that NTW Programme staff engaged in shaping the successful BBO bid that aligned with both the ethos of NTW, including the Connector role approach.



3.6 Included below is a summary of the key roles active across the lifetime of the programme. At this point it is worth highlighting that whilst programmes such as NTW are underpinned by systems and processes, that success is driven by the expertise and commitment of the staff team who deliver. This has certainly been the case across the NTW Programme.

Neighbourhood Managers

3.7 Neighbourhood management is an important element of the NTW delivery. Although funded and employed directly by Great Yarmouth Borough Council, the three Neighbourhood Managers had a key role in task managing NTW-funded staff and overseeing activity across their hub.

3.8 It is evident that each neighbourhood is different in regard to both the key issues faced by residents and the wider support network of local voluntary and community sector partners. Each Neighbourhood Manager delivered the role in a way that responded to these circumstances.

3.9 Our research has identified real added value generated by Neighbourhood Managers in driving forward changes in their neighbourhood. They have utilised connections to encourage the reshaping of services and via their Neighbourhood Board provide an important link to and from residents. They were well respected by residents and local partners delivering services in the area, providing a flexible and proactive resource to turn ideas into action and challenges into opportunities.

Key Finding 4: Neighbourhood Managers performed an important dual role in managing the NTW patch teams whilst also ensuring that wider services continued to reflect the needs of communities.

Key Finding 5: There remains an ongoing need for Neighbourhood Managers. Against a backdrop of continually evolving services, largely as a result of the need for increasing efficiencies, a role in connecting services and presenting opportunities remains valid.

Community Development Workers

3.10 The Community Development Worker role was established to support community activities to complement and align with each neighbourhood action plan; to support the start-up of community groups and community led projects; and to provide developmental support for community groups, for example groups wishing to access funding for their work, or wishing to improve their governance arrangements. Section 5 of this report outlines in detail the scale of success achieved, and the Community Development Workers have underpinned these achievements.

3.11 In the final year of the NTW Programme the funding was tapered. However, additional funding was sourced from Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Norfolk County Council (NCC), to retain a full complement of Community Development Workers, albeit with an increased focus on health and wellbeing from this point in time.

Key Finding 6: Community Development Workers worked closely with local organisations and groups to improve what they offered to local communities. They understood the patch, the people and the potential for what could be achieved.

Key Finding 7: Community Development Workers provided additional local capacity to understand what was needed and translate this into tangible improvements that will outlive the NTW Programme.

Community Connectors

- 3.12 Community Connectors were paid members of the community with the ability to instigate and build relationships in their designated neighbourhood, or 'patch'. They identified and built relationships with local residents by proactively engaging in natural locations (e.g. school gates, corner shop, parks) through 'pop-up' events and other channels. In doing so they were able to find out 'what matters' in the neighbourhood, link residents to one another to form friendships, and also to ensure residents in need of additional support were introduced to appropriate support, both within the NTW Programme and beyond. They served a valuable function in engaging local people at crisis and at pre-crisis point.
- 3.13 Beyond this, the Community Connectors were involved in generating positive community activity. They identified and shared ideas and priorities, linking people into Community Development Workers to support the emergence of projects, groups and activities.

Key Finding 8: The Community Connectors took a proactive and innovative approach to identifying local people in need of support. There has been a real benefit of recruiting Community Connectors from the area within which they operate. This brought a real understanding of local issues, establishing credibility and trust with local people.

Key Finding 9: The community engagement element is critical to gathering grassroots evidence on how services need to better respond to the needs of local people.

Life Connectors

- 3.14 The Life Connector role engaged with residents as a 'professional friend' to help people to understand the help they needed. The initial aim, to increase resilience through widening their circle of friends and increasing their support network, evolved to a more structured case management approach. Support ranged from single interactions to more intensive support over an extended period of time via providing coaching, practical advice, techniques on coping and linking people to support networks.

Key Finding 10: Life Connectors had an important role in ensuring that 'no-one falls through the gaps' through the intensive approach to engaging those people who are less likely to proactively seek support.

Key Finding 11: There is evidence that Life Connectors had a significant positive impact upon the lives of vulnerable people.

- 3.15 We know from interviewing local residents that the programme has made a significant impact in reducing social isolation by engaging people on a one-to-one basis to develop trust and confidence.

“It brings people together, which is important. We get to speak to people that we wouldn’t otherwise have the chance to speak to”

“I can’t walk down the street or go in the supermarket now without two or three people every time I’m accosted ‘hello, how are you?’, I was like ‘Oh, I know you from the community centre”

“They’ve made a big difference to all the communities. And they have made it come alive”

Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers

- 3.16 The Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers were employed and hosted by DIAL, a local voluntary organisation established to provide free, confidential information and advice to disabled and vulnerable people across the borough on benefits, money and debt, as well as housing and other issues.
- 3.17 The Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers were allocated high volume targets. Such an approach can drive operational activity towards providing light touch support, albeit to more people, that doesn’t resolve some of the root causes of need. This element of the programme was designed to make, long-lasting change to people, and having sufficient time to deliver this was important.
- 3.18 The Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers served an important function given the roll out of Universal Credit and the cessation of other advice and support services during 2018 and 2019. Many residents often face more than one challenge simultaneously, so the Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers advise on a range of issues that need to be addressed. We know from interviewing DIAL staff and wider stakeholders that the value of their expertise and experience has been vital in resolving difficult cases much sooner than would have been the case had NTW not been available.

Key Finding 12: The Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers were well regarded and their complementary expertise has been vital in ensuring people get high quality, specialist advice at the earliest opportunity.

- 3.19 The nature of the NTW Programme means that it is often difficult to identify the impact of support on each person who encounters support. We have heard examples of ‘light-touch’ support that has led to significant benefits to people. Conversely, we also know that the NTW team have supported people for a number of years without any significant progress made in terms of becoming more likely to progress into employment, etc. However, in some cases ‘standing still’ can be regarded as success for some people given challenges faced in their life.
- 3.20 Included below are a number of direct quotes from stakeholders in Great Yarmouth.

“Community development is really central to any service like this because it’s that capacity building work that builds robust community infrastructure. The whole theory of change of Neighbourhoods That Work is based on building that individual resilience, building those networks and support structures within the community, so that people don’t always have to rely on statutory services”.
Lucy Hogg, Voluntary Norfolk

“They are all really enthusiastic, really compassionate, they’re real people who’ve had real lives, so they can engage with young people, old people, all people in the community”. Alisha, Senior Youth Worker at MAP

“One of the biggest impacts that we’ve been able to do is that we’ve been able to connect with other organisations and groups, charities which are in the area. They have also been able to show us where there’s funding available for us to be able to continue with what we’re doing. It’s not a ‘them’ and ‘us’, it’s actually everybody working for the same principle which is community at the end of the day”. Richard Baker, Kingsgate Community Church

“NTW brings key stakeholders together. We have a really good partnership working where key stakeholders come to the table with a skillset, and the skillsets are used in the best interest of participants”. Kevin Bayes, East Coast College

Programme Management and Governance

- 3.21 The approach of different organisations employing different members of the NTW team has had benefits and disbenefits. The benefits have included: widening the service offer amongst the voluntary sector, enabling them to evidence an understanding of key issues and demonstrate their competence and capacity to deliver such projects. This will be helpful for NTW when providing evidence for future funding bids.
- 3.22 Disbenefits have been largely procedural e.g. IT systems that don’t integrate across organisations, and occasional uncertainty of staff balancing line management and task management priorities.

Key Finding 13: On balance the approach of employing NTW programme staff via multiple organisations has worked well. It has boosted organisational knowledge and profile, especially in voluntary sector organisations.

Key Finding 14: The neighbourhood-based NTW teams were a vital interface between local people and key frontline officers and managers across service areas. Importantly, the NTW staff were well regarded and trusted to represent the views of local people.

Key Finding 15: The staff demonstrate a broad skillset from relevant experience prior to NTW. For example, a number have experience having worked at Jobcentre Plus, advice services providers, local authorities, health services and the voluntary sector. Others have progressed from being helped to actually working on the team. The benefit of having local people in the roles cannot be underestimated.

- 3.23 Annual delivery plans were prepared for each of the NTW neighbourhoods. The plans demonstrated the community drivers for change and identified how the Neighbourhood Board priorities supported the delivery of the GYBC corporate objectives. There was also a separate action plan for the service transformation element of delivery. Whilst we accept that each Board currently does work differently, it would have been advantageous for all action plans to follow a consistent format, to ensure that best practice is adopted e.g. learning from other areas. It would have presented a clearer picture to senior staff within GYBC and other key partners.

Key Finding 16: The NTW Programme was underpinned by multiple patch plans and strand activity plans. Greater clarity on priorities and impact could have been achieved by standardising the approach and presenting priorities in a single NTW action plan.

- 3.24 The NTW Programme utilised a bespoke database to record data and track individual journeys. Whilst the system was largely effective as a means to record and store beneficiary data, certain structural limitations prevented some reporting functions to be performed e.g. whilst it could automatically generate reports and findings according to individual themes, diary entries within these themes are anonymised making it difficult to cross-reference themes and trace the outcomes and links of different areas of support.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

- 4.1 This section of the report outlines how the NTW Programme has improved outcomes and impact through closer partnership working and the wider coordination of activity. It also highlights the achievements in relation to transforming services and potential next steps.

Neighbourhood Boards and Wider Partnership Structures

- 4.2 Neighbourhood Boards emerged as a result of the NTW Programme governance and forward planning approach. The boards are composed of local residents and wider partners such as local Elected Members, local voluntary sector leads, police and health professionals. The approach of creating and supporting Neighbourhood Boards was one mechanism in which local people could play a key role in influencing activity in their area.
- 4.3 The Neighbourhood Boards each operate differently, and the degree to which they reflect local priorities and take a lead in driving forward improvements also varies considerably. This is not necessarily a problem and it is entirely appropriate that local people are able to inform the model that operates in their neighbourhood rather than operate within a rigid, predetermined model.

Key Finding 17: The three Neighbourhood Boards were a mechanism for residents and partners to meet to identify local issues, discuss ideas and agree upon solutions. Each board reflected the local area and operated differently. One of the key strengths was that the boards were not regarded as local authority led, as residents and local community groups had a key role in determining the priorities.

Key Finding 18: Looking forward, there remains a place for Neighbourhood Boards but consideration will need to be given to learning from best practice about what works and involving local people in this process.

- 4.4 The NTW Programme has influenced the activity of a number of other partnerships, including the local element of the Norfolk Resilience Partnership; Safer Neighbourhoods Partnerships; Great Yarmouth Seafront Car Enthusiasts. The NTW Programme, via the Make it Happen hub, established firm links to the traveller community on the Gapton site. Funding was accessed to provide events on the site and the community building on site is a hub of activity.

Key Finding 19: The NTW Programme has been the local conduit to increase both community involvement in a range of local partnerships and service involvement in particular communities.

Contribution to the Covid-19 Response

- 4.5 In the weeks leading up to and during the initial period following the Government announcement that the UK would be entering lockdown, NTW Programme staff were already well placed to provide an agile and immediate response to the needs of groups and individuals in terms of the difficult situations and additional needs for supported resulting from the Covid-19 public health crisis.

- 4.6 During the initial phase of the pandemic it quickly became apparent that arguably the best and most effective response would involve a network of organisations and services pooling together resources, connections and skill sets from across the Borough, to deliver localised support. The process of making this a reality was made considerably easier by utilising the networks already established by the NTW Programme teams.

Key Finding 20: The NTW Programme, in terms of the staff resource and the community networks established over previous years, enabled the immediate community response to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown measures to be more responsive and comprehensive than otherwise would have been the case.

Service Transformation

- 4.7 A key priority of the NTW Programme was the need to gather intelligence on how services reflect and respond to local communities; identify how improvements can be made; and then encourage implementation with relevant partners. Through their everyday interactions with local people and organisations, staff delivering the project – Neighbourhood Managers, Community Development Workers, Community and Life Connectors, Service Transformation Officers and Multi-Disciplinary Workers – understood what worked and what needed to change. This section of the report outlines some of the changes influenced.
- 4.8 NTW has had an impact upon the design and delivery of a number of key services.

- The Integrated Commissioning Manager for Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group and Norfolk County Council understand 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 tackled loneliness and isolation via a team of NTW inspired Life Connectors and a complementary Community Development Worker;
- The health led Social Prescribing programme has connector posts, directly modelled on NTW learning and in line with the programme's theory of change;
- 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;
- Early Help Hub development;
- 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. They have also created partnerships with non-traditional advice and guidance organisations to better reach under-served groups. E.g. the sports project.
- 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 adopted a 'Life Connector' type approach;
- Shrublands Trust launched the 'Community Checkers' project, modelled directly on the NTW community connector activity, following the end of the NTW programme in 2020;

- CAB recognised that their advice and guidance style was a ‘problem in/solution out’ style which wasn’t effective for people with multiple and complex issues. One of their staff members had previously been a community connector and then a service connector for NTW and she essentially created a job role for CAB where she could work in a more integrated way using her NTW experience to focus her work.
- MIND created a replica volunteer coordinator in Waveney as they found the Great Yarmouth volunteer coordinator post to be a great benefit;
- 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 community-based infrastructure; and
- Caister Children’s Centre recognised that their support sessions for families with young children were attended primarily by families from more affluent neighbourhoods in the centre’s wider catchment area, rather than local residents who had higher levels of need. Following discussions with NTW staff, they funded two days a week of Community Connector hours to engage with local families and find out why provision was not being accessed in the immediate area. Following engagement, the Connector introduced the ‘swap stop’ model, which was successful and has continued to run weekly, led by a group of parents.

4.9 There will be a continued need to reshape services. Neighbourhood Managers and Community Development Workers are well placed to understand what is important in reducing poverty, etc. and the impact of changes on communities.

4.10 Simply put, there is more to do. It is inevitable that other potential priorities will emerge based on the experiences of local people accessing services. Neighbourhood Managers and Community Development Workers have a key role linking aspirations from the neighbourhood level to service commissioners and service providers.

Key Finding 21: There are some clear examples of how the NTW Programme approach has influenced how other partners and their services are now delivered. Looking forward, there is a need post-NTW to consider how Neighbourhood Managers continue to drive forward this agenda.

5. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The Impact of Community Development

5.1 People benefit from having access to the social networks and relationships which form a community. This may be, for example, the benefits to someone’s mental health of being able to meaningfully converse with a friend or neighbour regularly, thereby reducing social isolation and lowering the risk of experiencing other physical health conditions.

5.2 Table 5.1 below outlines the progress made in relation to community development indicators.

Output Indicator	Lifetime Target	Achievement
1.1a People making new connections within their community	1400	3980
1.1b People reporting new friendships	530	1399
1.2a People participating in at least one community event	2500	4001
1.2b People progressing to join a new group or network	625	633
1.3a Groups of residents supported to work together to address community priorities or to further common interests	120	170
1.3b Residents report feeling more active in their community	265	302

5.3 The NTW Programme has over-performed in all but one of the output indicators:

- A total 3980 people have made new connections, with 1,399 new friendships formed, having a significant impact on tackling social isolation;
- 4001 people have participated in at least one community event and 633 residents have become more confident in taking part in community activity by joining a new group or network; and
- 302 residents reported feeling more active in their community.

5.4 The community development approach did not involve doing everything for every person or every group. It has involved identifying opportunities to offer support that will act as a catalyst and widen expansion of services that become self-sufficient. We know that 170 separate groups have been supported that provide a space for local people to take a more active role in their community; and that in excess of £1.5m of additional funds have been levered into communities with the support of NTW Programme staff.



5.5 Table 5.2 below outlines the progress made in relation to the agreed specialist service transformation indicators.

Table 5.2: Progress in Relation to Outcome 2 – Specialist Service Transformation		
Output Indicator	Lifetime Target	Achievement
2.1a People supported to overcome at least one personal challenge	400	403
2.1b People maintaining first-time involvement in community activity / employment	200	221
2.2a People experience smooth, seamless referrals into services from single contact point.	800	1316
2.2b People reporting improved well-being from having issues addressed	400	636
2.3a Specialist services report decrease in duplication	15	25
2.3b Residents receiving first-step support via community-based groups/ networks	2000	2003

5.6 The NTW Programme has achieved all its targets in relation to the specialist service transformation outcome.

5.7 Table 5.3 below outlines the progress made in relation to wider service transformation in relation to the impact on wider services, employers, commissioners and grant-making bodies.

Table 5.3: Progress in Relation to Outcome 4 – Wider Transformation		
Output Indicator	Lifetime Target	Achieved so far
4.1 Service providers will report that the project has improved their reach to most vulnerable residents	50	79
4.2 Local employers will report being more engaged and involved with their local community	100	135
4.3 Commissioners and grant-making bodies have aligned resources to the project	10	18

5.8 The programme has exceeded all of its lifetime wider transformation targets. Increased reach and resource alignment, alongside reduced duplication, are a key test of the NTW transformation agenda.

5.9 Output indicator 4.1 relates to service providers reporting that the NTW Programme has improved their reach to most vulnerable residents. In total, 79 examples of improved reach were recorded against a target of 50. However, not all of these demonstrated consistent changes to services, or evidenced actively seeking the most vulnerable residents i.e. some examples reflected organisations holding a stall at community patch events, or using NTW channels to promote their core services.

5.10 The NTW Programme has laid the necessary groundwork to ensure that external funding is successfully attained for other projects. Examples include:

- The successful £1.1m Freshly Greated Project funded by the Arts Council Creative People and Places Programme application was supported by NTW Programme staff.
- The Making Waves Together community arts and heritage project, delivered by the Great Places partnership, received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund following work by NTW to ensure that arts activities were more responsive to the specific needs of Great Yarmouth communities.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council was awarded a Regeneration Fund grant to create a post working with Middlegate Estate residents to shape local regeneration; the promise to build on existing connections established by NTW was key to funding bids and negotiations.
- The NTW Programme provided a formal letter of support that enabled MAP to receive a grant from the Big Lottery's Youth Investment Fund. The sum was awarded on the condition that delivery would be aligned with NTW patches by having new Youth Workers placed within patch teams. This joint working enabled significant progress towards the Cobholm Skate Park renovation and the annual Youth Arts festivals.

5.11 Although 'resources' usually refers to funding in the reported cases, there are a few notable non-monetary examples. For example, GYBC approved the lease of its Southtown Common facilities for NTW to use for sport, leisure, and community engagement activities. Furthermore, one of the largest and most complex examples of resource alignment is the social prescribing pilot launched by ComeUnity staff with the Lighthouse Medical Centre. The GP Practice aligned funding, staff time and other resources to this approach, aiming to reduce reliance on primary health services.

5.12 The amount of funding generated by NTW Programme activity to date is £1,556,739. In total 72 organisations and groups received funding enabled by NTW, either directly or in the form of donated pro bono hours and resources. Three groups received a significant level of funding including:

- £602,117 for DIAL, including £498,677 from the National Lottery Community Fund to tackle income and employment deprivation;
- £402,775 for Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Young Carers, including £136,173 from the Henry Smith Charity to employ a manager and administration assistant; and
- £222,594 for Shrublands Youth & Community Centre Charitable Trust, including £154,799 from the National Lottery Community Fund to employ a manager and a programme of community activities.

Introductions to Groups and Services

5.13 Across the lifetime of the NTW programme 194 introductions have been recorded. 162 people were introduced to 61 different groups and services. NTW staff referred people to a diverse range of groups. Only two organisations had more than ten people introduced to them (33 to DIAL and 14 to GYBC); almost half of all groups have only had a single person introduced to them. This demonstrates the breadth of NTW networks and the diversity of requirements within communities.

Wider Social Impact

5.14 The NTW Programme has been successful in improving the lives of so many people across the three target areas. Through direct action – advice, support, advocating – often in areas ‘between the cracks’ of mainstream service provision, they have generated significant added value, in the form of:

- Reduction in: social isolation; worklessness and associated benefits to DWP and NHS, substance misuse alleviated; reoffending; homelessness and failed tenancies; debt and improved money management.
- Improvements in: skill levels; active citizenship and volunteering; confidence; mental health; physical health; and digital inclusion.

5.15 The impact has been established by scrutinising the NTW management information database and sense checking the scale of attribution made with the programme management team. The overall social and economic impact generated is circa £16.5m.

Taking a Place Based Approach

5.16 Our research has identified the scale of work undertaken and the ‘golden threads’ that link activity and positive outcomes for participants. However, we understand that 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.

5.17 Great Yarmouth town centre wards have a transient population, as the ‘arriving point’ for new people seeking cheaper housing, from the UK and beyond. Such households new to the borough often, but not always, require additional support services. The housing offer in such neighbourhoods presents a cyclical challenge for those seeking to lead the creation of resilient and stable communities. The challenge is compounded for a place that relies on the availability of cheap housing to support the seasonal tourism economy. The long-term plan therefore needs to be based upon making neighbourhoods safer, well connected and with a sense of community, good schools and wider facilities.

Key Finding 22: The community development work undertaken did not involve doing everything for every person or every group. It has involved identifying opportunities to offer support that will act as a catalyst and widen expansion of services that become self-sufficient. We know that 170 separate groups have been supported that provide a space for local people to take a more active role in their community; and that in excess of £1.5m of additional funds have been levered into NTW communities via Community Development and Neighbourhood Management support since 2015.

Key Finding 23: Since the commencement of the NTW Programme in 2016 over 4,000 people have participated in community events and made new connections within their community; and 633 people have progressed to join a new group or network, reinforcing community infrastructure.

Key Finding 24: The NTW Programme had an impact upon the design and delivery of a number of key services, across a range of organisations including Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG, Norfolk County Council, East Coast College and range of voluntary sector organisations including: Voluntary Norfolk; Mancroft Advice Project; DIAL; and Norfolk and Waveney Mind.

Key Finding 25: By working across partners to enhance awareness and increase collaboration, a total of 25 services reported a decrease in their service being duplicated elsewhere and that 79 separate service providers reported that the programme has improved their reach to the most vulnerable people in communities.

Key Finding 26: The NTW Programme has positively impacted the lives of residents. The evidence suggests that many problems are solved at an early stage, preventing the escalation of issues that would demand additional resources to resolve. The overall social impact generated has been calculated at approximately £16.5m.

Key Finding 27: The NTW Programme is a place-based approach to regeneration. The clear aspiration from the start was to ensure that the target wards become places where people want to live for the long-term. A transient population, where there is considerable churn in tenancies means that there will continue to be a new cohort of people arriving with issues to be resolved.

6. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYABILITY AGENDA

Introduction

- 6.1 This section of the report identifies how the programme has supported the economic growth and employability agenda. This was a key priority at the outset and remains highly relevant looking forward into 2021 and beyond.
- 6.2 Across Great Yarmouth in 2015, 20% of working age residents were in receipt of at least one out-of-work benefit. In some urban areas, like the Nelson Ward, this figure rose to almost 50%, alongside high levels of income and related deprivations. Meanwhile, the local labour market suffers from the structural deficits associated with seasonal employment, meaning there is high competition for sustainable jobs. Information from the local partners indicated that at the outset of operations over 1,000 economically active residents were finding it difficult to compete in the jobs market because of their additional learning, physical or mental health support needs.

Supporting the Economic Growth Agenda

- 6.3 A range of support was given to residents to enable them to apply for jobs successfully. The investment has directly evidenced supporting 158 people into employment. 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, 284 people with complex needs reported improved confidence in competing for jobs following volunteering or work placement/taster.
- 6.4 In total, the estimated net economic impact (GVA) of the project is just over £750,000. In addition, additional tax-payer savings from a reduction in employment related benefit is estimated at £584,241, with housing benefit savings of a further £204,205 per annum. On a local level, sustained employment has increased Council Tax generation by £22,624 per annum through a reduction in non-working households.
- 6.5 Since October 2018 there was less direct emphasis upon the employability agenda since the emergence of the complementary BBO programmes and the cessation of NTW roles that previously underpinned employability support activity. However, the NTW Programme still contributed to this agenda through the removal of barriers such a confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Table 6.1 outlines the progress made in relation to employment, employability and skill development.

Table 6.1: Progress in Relation to Outcome 3 – Employment, Employability & Skill Development

Output Indicator	Lifetime Target	Achieved so far
3.1a People complete at least one training session	750	804
3.1b People report improvement in skill level following completion of at least one training session	600	709
3.2 People with complex needs report improved confidence in competing for jobs following at least one volunteer position / taster day / work placement	200	284
3.3 People will have overcome issues preventing them from getting and holding down a job, resulting in them sustaining employment	150	158

6.6 NTW has achieved the lifetime targets for soft outcomes of training sessions and volunteer positions, and is making good progress towards the number of people completing one training session, and the number entering and sustaining employment.

Supporting the Wider Employability Agenda

6.7 The ESF Inclusion Project, conceived, prepared and managed by GYBC was influenced significantly by the NTW Programme. The project focusses upon the eight most disadvantaged wards in the borough and NTW Programme staff were represented on the Inclusion Grants Panel that determined funding applications. There was also an expectation that those organisations receiving grants would work with NTW staff.



6.8 The project operates from a number of the neighbourhood hubs and provides training courses, workshops and one-to-one support, working closely with NTW staff. Engagement through Neighbourhood Boards has facilitated effective and valuable relationships with wider partners e.g. they are now present in a local housing office, engaging and supporting tenants.

6.9 There is real potential to work with local people to ensure that opportunities linked to key capital projects are fully exploited. As part of our research we have heard often of the expectation that the people most likely to benefit through employment opportunities generated locally i.e. through wind energy or new bridge construction, would most likely live beyond the NTW neighbourhoods and borough boundary.

6.10 There is a role for Neighbourhood Managers to explore how such a model of 'community economic development' approach could be delivered to enable:

- Real opportunities for work trials;
- Increased access to local people for those local jobs;
- More wages earned and spent in the local community;
- More stable communities, with lower turnover of tenancies as people still want to live close to where they work;
- Consideration of establishing new social enterprises to deliver local services, and;
- More scope to support people turn hobbies into lifestyle businesses.

Key Finding 28: In total, the estimated net economic impact (GVA) of the project is just over £750,000. In addition, additional tax-payer savings from a reduction in employment related benefit is estimated at £584,241, with housing benefit savings of a further £204,205 per annum. On a local level, sustained employment has increased Council Tax generation by £22,624 per annum through a reduction in non-working households.

Key Finding 29: The NTW Programme has influenced the delivery model of the ESF Inclusion Project, ensuring that support reflects the requirements of local people.

Key Finding 30: 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.

Key Finding 31: There is a role for Neighbourhood Managers to explore how such a model of 'community economic development' approach could be delivered from November 2020 onwards.

Key Finding 32: There is a role in ensuring that local people from disadvantaged areas are supported to access opportunities generated by large local contracts, especially those that have clauses encouraging the recruitment of local labour and apprenticeship opportunities.

7. KEY FINDINGS

Key Finding 1: There was a clear rationale for the NTW Programme approach, underpinned by an understanding and commitment to providing intensive support to vulnerable people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Key Finding 2: At the outset of the NTW Programme the objectives were clear and understood by staff and wider partners.

Key Finding 3: The approach of targeting NTW Programme activity at the most disadvantaged communities was entirely appropriate, enabling a real focus of resources on the people most in need of support.

Key Finding 4: Neighbourhood Managers performed an important dual role in managing the NTW patch teams whilst also ensuring that wider services continued to reflect the needs of communities.

Key Finding 5: There remains an ongoing need for Neighbourhood Managers. Against a backdrop of continually evolving services, largely as a result of the need for increasing efficiencies, a role in connecting services and presenting opportunities remains valid.

Key Finding 6: Community Development Workers worked closely with local organisations and groups to improve what they offered to local communities. They understood the patch, the people and the potential for what could be achieved.

Key Finding 7: Community Development Workers provided additional local capacity to understand what was needed and translate this into tangible improvements that will outlive the NTW Programme.

Key Finding 8: The Community Connectors took a proactive and innovative approach to identifying local people in need of support. There has been a real benefit of recruiting Community Connectors from the area within which they operate. This brought a real understanding of local issues, establishing credibility and trust with local people.

Key Finding 9: The community engagement element is critical to gathering grassroots evidence on how services need to better respond to the needs of local people.

Key Finding 10: Life Connectors had an important role in ensuring that 'no-one falls through the gaps' through the intensive approach to engaging those people who are less likely to proactively seek support.

Key Finding 11: There is evidence that Life Connectors had a significant positive impact upon the lives of vulnerable people.

Key Finding 12: The Multi-Disciplinary Advice Workers were well regarded and their complementary expertise has been vital in ensuring people get high quality, specialist advice at the earliest opportunity.

Key Finding 13: On balance the approach of employing NTW programme staff via multiple organisations has worked well. It has boosted organisational knowledge and profile, especially in voluntary sector organisations.

Key Finding 14: The neighbourhood-based NTW teams were a vital interface between local people and key frontline officers and managers across service areas. Importantly, the NTW staff were well regarded and trusted to represent the views of local people.

Key Finding 15: The staff demonstrate a broad skillset from relevant experience prior to NTW. For example, a number have experience having worked at Jobcentre Plus, advice services providers, local authorities, health services and the voluntary sector. Others have progressed from being helped to actually working on the team. The benefit of having local people in the roles cannot be underestimated.

Key Finding 16: The NTW Programme was underpinned by multiple patch plans and strand activity plans. Greater clarity on priorities and impact could have been achieved by standardising the approach and presenting priorities in a single NTW action plan.

Key Finding 17: The three Neighbourhood Boards were a mechanism for residents and partners to meet to identify local issues, discuss ideas and agree upon solutions. Each board reflected the local area and operated differently. One of the key strengths was that the boards were not regarded as local authority led, as residents and local community groups had a key role in determining the priorities.

Key Finding 18: Looking forward, there remains a place for Neighbourhood Boards but consideration will need to be given to learning from best practice about what works and involving local people in this process.

Key Finding 19: The NTW Programme has been the local conduit to increase both community involvement in a range of local partnerships and service involvement in particular communities.

Key Finding 20: The NTW Programme, in terms of the staff resource and the community networks established over previous years, enabled the immediate community response to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown measures to be more responsive and comprehensive than otherwise would have been the case.

Key Finding 21: There are some clear examples of how the NTW Programme approach has influenced how other partners and their services are now delivered. Looking forward, there is a need post-NTW to consider how Neighbourhood Managers continue to drive forward this agenda.

Key Finding 22: The community development work undertaken did not involve doing everything for every person or every group. It has involved identifying opportunities to offer support that will act as a catalyst and widen expansion of services that become self-sufficient. We know that 170 separate groups have been supported that provide a space for local people to take a more active role in their community; and that in excess of £1.5m of additional funds have been levered into NTW communities via Community Development and Neighbourhood Management support since 2015.

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